

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

SKIDMORE COLLEGE
Government Department

Spring 2012

March 29, 2012

Dear Government majors and minors --

We have a truly outstanding newsletter for you this time around ! We bid a sad farewell to Professor Hoffmann, who'll be enjoying a well-deserved retirement after 45 years of teaching at Skidmore, and introduce you to his successor, Prof. Feryaz Ocakli, who'll be joining us in the fall. You'll read about other faculty and student news, including current senior GO honors theses, study abroad experiences, summer plans, and other student news. You'll also find accounts of recent GO department events, and hear about the impressive accomplishments of some GO department alums. Finally, you'll see a preliminary listing of our fall 2012 classes, including several topics courses. Many thanks to all who contributed to the newsletter, and wishing you all a successful end to the semester.

Kate Graney

Associate Professor and
Chair of the Department of Government



**Thank You to the following students and alums who have contributed
to this edition of the newsletter:**

Warren Bianchi, Matt Choi, Alexis Curry, Wyatt Erchak, Wilson Gibbons, Nina Glatt, Dominic Green,
David Inkeles, Jennifer Kauffman, Olivia Kinnear, Michael Kraines, Emma Kurs, Ellie Nichols, Alex Miller, Erica Seifert,
Aaron Shifreen, David Solomon, Shelby Smith, Naomi Telushkin, Jeremy Wood, Alison Wrynn and Jillian Zatta!

FACULTY NEWS

WILSON GIBBONS '14

The Government Department is very excited to welcome **Dr. Feryaz Ocakli**, who will be joining the department as an Assistant Professor next fall. Prof. Ocakli received his doctoral degree from Brown University, where he wrote a dissertation about the electoral strategies of Islamist parties in Turkey. Prof. Ocakli is an accomplished, award-winning, engaging and energetic teacher, and we urge all of you to welcome him to the department in the fall, and to consider signing up for his courses. In the fall he'll be teaching GO 103 and GO 239: Politics of the Middle East.

This has undoubtedly been a busy year at Skidmore; however **Professor Ginsberg** found time to complete his new book entitled, *The European Union in Global Security: The Politics of Impact*, a riveting look at the role of the EU in maintaining global security. The book attempts to unravel the mysteries of EU security mechanisms through a comprehensive exploration of the decision-making bodies of Government in the EU. Professor Ginsberg, along with his co-author Ms. Susan Penksa, undoubtedly compiled a large volume of research based on complex case studies to finish the publication. The book represents months, and even years of hard work for both Authors and should be a landmark publication in the continued study of the European Union.

In December, shortly after teaching his last class, **Professor Hoffmann** flew to Rota, Spain and spent seven weeks with his grandchildren. In the course of his stay Professor Hoffmann lived in the Town of Puerto de Santa Maria, visited The US naval and air base at Rota, Seville, Cadiz, Granada, Cordoba, Madrid, Jerez, the Sierra Nevada mountains in Andalusia province, towns and historical sites in the Spanish province of Extremadura as well as The Strait of Gibraltar and Tangier, Morocco. Not one to limit his travels, he also visited towns and historical sites in Portugal.

The great playwright, anti-communist dissident, and Czech statesman Vaclav Havel died this past December. Czech mourners have celebrated his legacy and reflected on the Velvet Revolution that he helped lead. One of his oldest allies was Pavel Bratinka, who served with Havel on the Civic Forum, the umbrella group that unified anti-Communist forces. Bratinka was also one of the founders of the Civic Democratic Alliance (a center-right party) and was elected to the legislatures of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic. For the January/February edition of *The American Interest*, **Professor Flagg Taylor** interviewed Bratinka about the legacy of totalitarianism in his country and the challenges facing his country today in a piece entitled "Hope and Change, Czech Style."

Paul Howard of the Manhattan Institute interviewed **Professor Flagg Taylor** about Havel's life and legacy. You can listen to the interview on the Manhattan Institute's website under their Podcast section: <http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/podcasts.htm>

Professor Timothy Burns just completed an article, "Nicias and Cleon in Thucydides and Aristophanes," for a collection of essays called *The Political Theory of Aristophanes: Rethinking the Quarrel Between Poetry and Philosophy*, edited by Bryan-Paul Frost (SUNY Press, 2012). He is now working on an article, "Roman Virtues in a Christian Commercial Republic: Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*," which will be appearing in the June, 2012 issue of *Perspectives in Political Science*. He will be presenting a paper on Francis Bacon at the conference of the International Society for the Study of European Ideas (ISSEI), to be held at the University of Cyprus in Nicosia, Cyprus, July 2-6, 2012. Professor Burns recently signed a contract with Palgrave MacMillan to become co-editor, with Thomas Pangle, of a new series called *Recovering Political Philosophy*. (A brief description is available at <http://tinyurl.com/77uvm4d>). Submissions of book proposals and manuscripts so far already include works on Xenophon, Cicero, Lucretius, the liberal polity, and Sexuality and Globalization. He will spend the summer working on a book on Shakespeare's political thought.

IF YOU COULD DISCOVER THE TRUTH BEHIND ANY POLITICAL SCANDAL OR CONSPIRACY WHICH WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

Professor Breslin: Having grown up in the seventies, and because my Father worked in the Nixon Administration (at the Department of Energy), I'd like to know all I can about Watergate.

Professor Burns: The truth behind the mutilation of the herms in Athens in 415 BC, before the Athenians set sail for Sicily, would be nice to know. Many of the best citizens were jailed and killed in an effort to discover the perpetrators of the sacrilegious deed, which was thought to be part of an impious conspiracy to bring down the democracy. The truth was never found, though the religious frenzy came to an end through a feigned confession as part of a plea-bargain. It is of interest for the following reason. Alcibiades, an outstanding leader and chief proponent of the Athenian expedition, was accused of participating in the sacrilege, and after the expedition set sail, he was tried and found guilty, *in absentia*, of impiety—a capital crime—and escaped from the Athenians that came to Sicily to bring him back to Athens for execution. He went to Sparta, where he succeeded in convincing the Spartans to send a force to Sicily, where only the pious leader Nicias remained in charge of the Athenian expedition. Had Alcibiades remained in charge rather than being persecuted for impiety by his enemies, the Athenians would have defeated Syracuse, gone on to defeat Carthage, and taken over the Mediterranean. It is likely that the Roman empire never would have arisen, and all of Western history (and languages) would have been substantially different.

Another scandal whose truth would be interesting is the awarding of the 1932 Pulitzer Prize to Walter Duranty, for the 13 articles he wrote in *The New York Times* in 1931 about life in the Soviet Union, in which he whitewashed the horrors of life under Stalin. Duranty's articles merely parroted official Soviet news sources, presenting their lies as if they were facts. And in 1933, he denied, from Moscow, that there was any famine in the Ukraine. But there was. And that famine was the direct, planned result of Stalin's forced collectivization of agriculture, whose goal was to "liquidate the kulaks as a class." At least five million people were starved to death (a fraction of all who were murdered under Stalin). Duranty's articles denied Stalin's atrocities and failures, and presented the Soviet Union as a workers' paradise. Duranty did this at a time when the British reporter Malcolm Muggeridge was reporting the truth about life in the Soviet Union. One would like to know why Duranty did this, and why the Pulitzer committee was so eager to believe his fabrications.

Professor Graney: I would want to know the true extent of Rasputin's influence at the court of Nicholas II during the waning days of the Tsarist system.

Professor Ginsberg: How deeply, at what point, and how high up was the French Third Republic involved in the cover-up that was the Dreyfus Affair in the 1890s?

Professor Seyb: The scandal or conspiracy whose truth I would most like to learn is the Burr Conspiracy. I choose it because, first, it has "conspiracy" right in its title. I also have harbored an interest in Burr since I read Gore Vidal's historical novel, *Burr*, when I was 13. I think that this was the first book I had read to that point that did not address either an "NFL Greatest Moment" or an Encyclopedia Brown Mystery. Burr's intentions remain murky. Was he trying to create an independent nation out of the Louisiana Purchase and parts of Mexico? Or was he

"If you could..." *continued from page 2*

just trying to claim land that was rightfully his? Burr's trial for treason remains one of the most famous in American history, and it is still cited by presidency scholars as an important moment in the evolution of the doctrine of executive privilege. Was Burr "Man or Scoundrel?"

Professor Natalie Taylor: Who killed Judge Irwin? Judge Irwin is a central character in Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*. He was an honorable man, who committed a corrupt deed that led to the death of an innocent man. Eventually, Judge Irwin took a bullet in the chest as a consequence of his deed. Although the reader learns the facts of "the Case of the Upright Judge," the truth is more elusive. As the novel's narrator, Jack Burden, tells readers the truth and the facts are not always identical-- the truth is always much more difficult to grasp than the facts. And, so, I would like to know the truth of "the Case of the Upright Judge." Robert Penn Warren is among the most thoughtful commentators on the nature American democracy. Knowing the truth of "the Case of the Upright Judge" would illuminate human nature and the limits of democracy.

Professor Turner: The two conspiracies I would like to know more about are the assassinations of Julius Caesar and Abraham Lincoln. How did Brutus and Cassius and John Wilkes Booth and Lewis Powell manage to build such large and elaborate assassination plots (there were at least 8 members of the Lincoln conspiracy)? What did they think the assassinations would achieve politically? What was their plan for post-assassination regime building? Did they feel any remorse or guilt over their actions?

Professor Vacs: There are many cases of political scandal or conspiracy that I would like to investigate (from the Maine explosion in the Havana harbor to Iran-Contra scandal passing through the Zimmermann telegram and Operation Mongoose) but I think I'll wait until retirement before letting my historical political detection skills flourish. To mention only one of those cases that I find extremely interesting, I would like to find the truth behind the "Business Plot" of 1934 (also

known as the "White House Putsch") in which it was alleged that a group of businessmen and right-wing operators attempted to organize in combination with veteran organizations a coup to overthrow president Roosevelt. It had all the elements of a good political scandal combined with a complicated conspiracy: informers, spies, Gold Standard devotees, retired military officers, Conservative businessmen, Fascist sympathizers, a popular president, Congressional investigations, cover-ups, media neglect, etc., as well as an interesting set of connections to current political, ideological and economic situations (from the "Tea Party" phenomenon to calls for restoring the gold standard passing through accusations of imperial presidential ambitions and unconstitutional initiatives).

On Wednesday, March 21st, Dr. Brigid Laffan, a Professor at University College Dublin in Ireland visited Skidmore and gave a lecture on the Eurozone crisis from an Irish perspective to students. Dr. Laffan also met with many classes during her



stay, and answered questions on topics ranging from Irish public policy to larger international affairs questions. During her lecture, Dr. Laffan discussed in great detail how Ireland's economic status went from being known as a "celtic tiger" to facing one of the largest economic crises since the great depression. Dr. Laffan answered many questions from the Skidmore community, and presented a realistic view on the future of the Eurozone that would ensure that would hold individuals in financial areas more accountable to the people within their country.

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*Thank you,
Professor Hoffmann,
for 45 years of teaching!*

BEHIND THE PH.D.

ROY H. GINSBERG

JEREMY WOOD '13

*I sat down with Professor Ginsberg to discuss his career and how he arrived at Skidmore College. Dr. Ginsberg recently finished his co-authored book, *The European Union in Global Security: The Politics of Impact*, with a colleague from Santa Barbara. His particular focus this term is to work closely with students to improve their writing and research skills. What ensued was a storied session, rich with information I did not know about Dr. Ginsberg.*

JW: *What sparked your interest in political science and government?*

RHG: I developed an interest in international affairs and government as a child when I was intrigued by memorabilia that my father brought back from Germany, where he served in the US Army after World War II. The occupation currency and the photographs of bombed German cities made me think as a child how awful war is and how much more I wanted to learn about issues of war and peace.

In college, I was mentored by Dr. Nicholas Nyaradi, Director of the School of International Studies, Bradley University. Dr. Nyaradi was Hungary's postwar ambassador to Moscow and Hungary's last Minister of Finance before the Communist takeover in 1948, when he left the country for the United States. Dr. Nyaradi taught me a lot about the value of freedom in a world of totalitarianism. I saw that for myself for the first time when I passed through the Berlin Wall from West to East Berlin in 1974 and appreciated the freedom I had to return. No one ever fled freedom in the West for communism in the East during the Cold War.

In graduate school, a doctoral research grant from the European Commission allowed me to spend three months in Brussels and Strasbourg, where I cemented my interest in the topic of European integration from an American perspective.

JW: *Did you have an "aha!" moment in college?*

RHG: My aha moment came in high school (in south Florida) when my contemporary history teacher sparked my interest in studying world politics. My decision to study international relations/political science in college reflected that earlier epiphany to go global.

JW: *What aided in your decision to go to George Washington University for your masters and doctorate degrees? What did you do in Washington D.C. during your graduate years?*

RHG: I had studied at Georgetown University and interned on Capitol Hill in the summer of 1973, and attended many congressional hearings on the break-in at the Democratic national headquarters at the Watergate Hotel. I witnessed Attorney General John Mitchell giving testimony. I was one of the congressional interns brought from Capitol Hill to the White House for the welcoming ceremony hosted by President and Mrs. Nixon for the Shah and Empress of Iran during their state visit. At various receptions, I met and talked with people like Hubert Humphrey, George McGovern, and the last two ambassadors from Iran and the Republic of China. It was during that summer that I got bitten by the Washington bug and knew I would return to the nation's capital for graduate school and work. I graduated from Bradley at 20 years of age in 1975 and began the MA program at GWU in the fall of that year. In 1977, I graduated from the MA program in international affairs and entered the Ph.D. program in political science at GWU as a University Fellow. This meant I received tuition benefits in exchange for being a teaching assistant. It was as a "T.A." that I began to learn what it means to be a teacher and how hard and fun it was.

I chose GWU because of the excellence of its academic programs, the professors who had government experience (my dissertation director was national security advisor for international economic summits during the first Reagan administration), and its proximity to federal agencies. I began working part-time in the federal government in 1977 at the Foreign Agricultural Service at the US Dept of Agriculture, and took graduate classes at night; in time I migrated to the U.S. Foreign Commercial Service at the Department of Commerce, the Office of Management of Budget in the Carter White House, and the U.S. International Trade Commission. In between those jobs, I did research and other jobs in the intelligence field. I finally graduated from my doctoral program in 1985 and left government for Skidmore in 1986.

What I liked about studying and working in Washington was being at the intersection of theory and history on the one hand, and practice and policy on the other. It is at that nexus that I hope to ground theory in practice in my teaching and advising/mentoring of my students.

JW: *What was your favorite part of living and working in DC?*

RHG: The immersion in the life of the nation's capital and capital of the free world was surely a reason to stay for so long before coming to Skidmore. Having friends and professors in all three branches of government meant there was seamlessness across my studies, work, and social life. Wherever I worked and studied, I was well mentored; what I liked about DC and still do is the opportunity for young people with an interest in politics to get experience and exposure to the formulation and execution of national and foreign policy--and then to take that experience to the next level in DC or take it back home. I still think Washington is more open to quality and welcoming internship experiences than most other western capital cities.

JW: *Did you originally pursue a career in academia or government?*

RHG: I always planned to complete a terminal degree AND work in government because I wanted to be at that nexus. There was never a thought of doing one without the other during those years. I thought my research and writing and teaching would be better grounded because of my exposure to government decision-making. So even upon my arrival at Skidmore, and during the past 26 years, I still kept my connections in Washington, not only for consulting and research but also for my students as they pursued/pursue internships, jobs, and graduate school options there.

Coming from DC to Saratoga was an adventure. It remains so. To quote my favorite French chanteuse, Edith Piaf, *je ne regret rien* (I have no regrets). I have had the best of two worlds.

JW: *Why did you come to Saratoga--how did you find your way here?*

RHG: Upon receiving my doctorate in political science in 1985, and after having worked in Washington from 1977 to 1986, I had decided it was time to take a break from life in the nation's capital. There is no academic freedom, so to speak, in government. One writes within statutory constraints and deadlines and changing policy preferences of presidential administrations. One thinks and writes and produces papers on which others make final decisions. I wanted to teach and research, and write books without inhibition and fully on my own steam. The break from life in the nation's capital in 1986 turned into an adventure with Skidmore that is still going strong, thanks to our remarkable government majors who never fail to amaze me with their talents, interests, and accomplishments.

LECTURE: FACES OF ISRAEL

WILSON GIBBONS '14

Since its creation, Israel has been at the center of international political debate, discussion, and perhaps most notably, conflict. The tumultuous political development of Israel has bound its citizens together in a way experienced by few other nations. Israel is an anomaly in its region of the world from a cultural, political, and religious perspective. Its unique national identity and presence in international affairs is often portrayed from a single perspective through the eyes of the Western media. *The Faces of Israel* panel discussion, presented by Skidmore's Hillel and the Honors Forum, shed light on the variety of perspectives regarding the fundamental question of what it means to be Israeli.

The panel discussion consisted of six Israelis from a wide variety of backgrounds. Members of the panel introduced themselves and told the audience about their unique experiences in Israeli society. The variety of lifestyles and perspectives became evident almost immediately. However, there were some commonalities, which exhibited several chronic issues facing the Israeli government and, more importantly, its people.

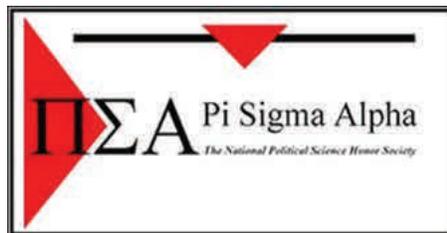
Israel's participation in Middle Eastern conflicts over the last seventy-five years has been well documented. However, what gets lost in translation are the effects these conflicts have on the Israeli people. One speaker, Gal Menasheh, a lawyer from Tel-Aviv, spoke of losing a close friend in a suicide bombing in 1996. While Mr. Menasheh vehemently advocated for a two-state solution throughout the lecture, it is hard to imagine his view of Palestine being unaltered having suffered such a loss. Another speaker, a former sergeant in the Israeli army, lost several soldiers during the conflict with Lebanon whom he trained personally. Despite the losses, he too spoke of the need to maintain diplomatic relations, "They're (Palestinians) not going anywhere and neither am I. We have to have a dialogue." The panel's commitment to upholding political relations with Palestine was uplifting. However, while ideological dialogue is often uplifting, the reality is a compromise must come from both the Israeli and Palestinian Governments.

A fundamental aspect of Israeli national identity is the compulsory military service that all eighteen year olds must endure. While the negative consequences of this service are evident, it also has yielded positive and life altering experiences for some of the panel's speakers. One in particular, Reut Portugal, was put in charge of a squad of her peers shortly after she began basic training. Ms. Portugal was placed in many difficult situations dealing with soldiers' anxiety, apprehension, and, in some cases, apathy. She said the experience she gained from those situations was, and continues to be, invaluable to her maturation.

Another pressing international issue, which has garnered tremendous international attention, has been Iran's nuclear enrichment program. In the light of President Ahmadinejad's notorious diatribes regarding Israel, Israelis are naturally alarmed by Iran's supposed uranium enrichment program for civilian purposes. The panel unanimously regarded the Iranian threat as credible, while simultaneously making a key distinction, "Israel is not enemies with the Iranian people. There is a difference between Iranian regime and the Iranian people." While this may be true, the international community is unsure of whether or not it will be enough to stop a potential conflict between the two countries.

Ultimately, the discussion provided Skidmore students with a unique, personalized, and informative look into the diverse nature of Israeli society and people. However, it also served to illustrate how polarized views on Israel are, particularly on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and mounting tensions with Iran. It also showed how important nationalism remains even in contemporary international politics. With only one exception, the panel's speaker's spoke, on multiple occasions, about the need for a two state solution. However, there were also many controversial statements about the ancestral heritage of Israeli land. These statements highlighted just how much sacrifice each party was or is willing to make to facilitate a peace process. It also became increasingly clear that if peace is to be attained by Israel and Palestine; neither side would walk away from the negotiations having attained all or even most of their original goals.

*The Department of Government congratulates our new and current member of
the Tau Gamma chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honor Society*



Class of 2012

Warren Bianchi, Rachel Bier, Brendan Brust, Lauria Chin, Dominic Green, Alexandra Grossman, Jennifer Kauffman, Caitlin Kohl,
Emma Kurs, Timothy Lueders-Dumont, Devin Mellor, Matthew Rothenberg, Jaclyn Saltzman, Adam Schmelkin,
Eric Shapiro, John Walsh and Alison Wrynn

Class of 2013

Margaret Abernethy, Jean Ann Kubler, Elena Nichols, Aaron Shifreen, David Solomon

A TASTE OF WESTPOINT TRADITION

DOMINIC GREEN '12

As rumor has it, three items are stowed at the very top of West Point Military Academy's highest flagpole: a grain of rice, a match, and a single bullet. Any well-versed West Point cadet will tell you that in the event of an enemy attack on West Point, the last defending cadet is to climb the flagpole and access the hidden treasures. The rice is there to sustain the cadet through his or her final courageous mission, the match to ensure no enemy can seize the American flag, and the bullet to finish the act, leaving no prisoners behind for the enemy!

West Point cadets are positively brimming with stories like this one, never hesitating to recount endless West Point trivia with pride.



Only a visit to the military academy can truly illustrate the necessary role these stories play—in serving as the bedrock of West Point tradition, the constant referral to legend and ritual keeps morale and commitment high in a tremendously demanding environment.

Back in early November, I was fortunate enough to join 225 fellow political science nerds in the 63rd annual four-day Student Conference on US Affairs (SCUSA) at West Point academy, where I got a taste of the tradition, mingled with cadets, and got to hold some pretty cool-looking guns. I came away from the conference with a newfound respect for the American military, an invigorated perspective on US foreign affairs, and a new strategy to protect the honor of the Skidmore flag if Middlebury ever invades us.

Along with Skidmore seniors Michael Kraines and Yinebeb Girma, I made the two and a half hour drive on a crisp Wednesday afternoon to West Point's stunning campus on the Hudson River in Orange County, New York. After somehow managing to get our liberal arts haircuts through tight security, we entered the former fortress that is the United States Military Academy at West Point. As an historical landmark, West Point is most famous for its role defending the colonies from the British Royal Navy after 1778, and for Benedict Arnold's infamous

attempt to surrender the fort to the British. President Jefferson signed legislation to establish the United States Military Academy in 1802, and it has been an educational institution ever since.

The organizational capacity and strict decorum of the cadets was clear immediately upon our arrival, and the entire four-day conference marched along to the same well-tuned, logistical beat. My civilian counterparts and I were consistently floored by the ability of the cadets running the conference to lead, herd, and arrange large groups of conference-goers with ease. From first-years to seniors, the cadets deftly ushered us to countless roundtable discussions and paraded us across the grounds and through the dining hall, all the while spouting military legend and West Point facts (apparently, the lawn of the Parade Ground is the second most expensive in the country, falling only behind the White House lawn in maintenance costs!). And yet, it didn't just feel like a few days hanging out with a big group of school-sponsored tour guides—these guys *lived* for their traditions, boasted the accomplishments of their alums with pride, and attended to minute details of their daily regiment with utmost responsibility and fervor.

SCUSA was broken into many different roundtable discussions on US foreign affairs, which were conducted over the course of four days. Each group of 15 students (including both SCUSA attendees and cadets) worked throughout the duration of the conference to draft a mock US foreign policy proposal. My group was charged with analyzing the lasting effects of the Arab Spring on US foreign policy. Fortunately, I was enrolled last semester in Professor Hoffman's course on nationalism and politics in the Middle East, so I found myself adequately prepared for the discussions and policy drafting that ensued at SCUSA. Most of the students and cadets in my roundtable discussion exhibited incredible expertise in Middle Eastern studies (I had to sit out at times when the discussion evolved into Arabic language practice), so I am grateful to Professor Hoffman for his role in helping me prepare for the experience.

Continued on page 13

THESIS PROJECTS : IN THIS EDITION OF THE NEWSLETTER, SENIORS WHO ARE COMPLETING THESIS PROJECTS HAVE SHARED A BIT ABOUT THEIR WORK

Property Politics: The Implications of Federally Legislated Land Exchanges.
Ali Wrynn '12

I am writing about the implications of conducting legislated land exchanges with regard to the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Every year, federal land agencies trade thousands of acres of government land for privately owned tracts to consolidate inholdings and improve management. I argue that these transactions have become contentious in recent years due to increased public awareness and intensified pressure from third party groups to reform the process. This scrutiny has, in turn, caused members of Congress to display hesitancy in announcing their outright support of many proposals. I hope to show how this niche land policy area provides insight into larger trends about government and stakeholder behavior.

MODEL EU ATTENDS EUROSIM 2012 IN POLAND

EMMA KURS '12

This past winter break, the model European Union club travelled to Wrocław, Poland for the 2012 EuroSim conference. After having spent the whole fall semester preparing for the trip, seven of us students (made up of a wide range of majors—including Government, History, Economics, and International Affairs) were excited and anxious to see Poland and attend the conference. A European Union (EU) simulation is just like the (perhaps better-known) Model United Nations. At EuroSim, however, each student portrays a minister of an EU member state or a member of the European Parliament. This year, the debates centered around the EU's Asylum Policy—which was interesting and pertinent given the large influxes of illegal immigrants and asylum applicants after the tumultuous Arab Spring. Aside from the knowledge we all gained from studying the EU, researching our role's position, and acclimating to the nuances of this institution, the conference was a great opportunity to meet other students from across the world. In an effort to educate both American and European students about the EU's structure, the program invites half of the participants from American universities and the other half from European ones. Even more, the conference is held alternately at an American or European University—meaning that biannually European stu-



dents get to travel to America and vice versa. Next year, the conference will be in Pennsylvania, and the year after that in the Netherlands!

In addition to our three and a half day conference, we had a lot of time to explore Poland. We flew into Warsaw, where we spent a few days sightseeing and adjusting to Polish culture. The city was beautiful; it was still glowing with holiday lights strung everywhere and a Christmas market overflowing with baked goods and Polish crafts. After spending a few days travelling around Warsaw—visiting sites like the Warsaw Uprising Museum, the Old Town, and the Wilanów Palace—we hopped a train to Wrocław for the conference. Compared to the sprawling, metropolitan Warsaw, Wrocław had a much more intimate, student-friendly atmosphere. With our hostel located just minutes from the lovely main square, we could take in the city by foot and see the city's sites before the conference began. Overall, the trip was a great success thanks to our solid preparation and the hard work of the model EU's e-board. To find out more about the club and future conferences, contact president Claire Beihl (bbeihl@skidmore.edu) or just attend one of our meetings!

THESIS PROJECTS

Beyond Multiculturalism: A New Approach to Germany's Integration Woes

Warren Bianchi 2012

As the starting point for my senior thesis, I took Angela Merkel's declaration in October 2011 that multiculturalism had "utterly failed." Given the difficulties of Islam in Europe, this statement struck me due to its finality and extremity. Upon reflection, however, I became more perplexed. What exactly does Merkel mean by "multiculturalism," and in what ways has it "failed?" Surely, I thought, Germany can't be giving up completely on its Muslim populations! This is where my project began, and it has taken me in unexpected and fascinating directions.

I begin by showing the salience of the integration issue through demographic and immigration trends. Fine, Merkel, you can give multiculturalism up, but don't pretend that the marginalization of Muslims in your country is a petty issue or one that is likely to disappear. Next, I delve into the array of theories surrounding the immigration controversy, beginning with the more conservative, xenophobic approaches and then moving onto the liberal multiculturalist theory that we are all, on some level, familiar with. These chapters provide a working definition for what multiculturalism *is*, and the next chapters evaluate how German policy makers have or have not acted in ways that are *multicultural*, whether or not consciously adhering to the recommendations of theorists. Finally, after providing a look at the state of Islam and xenophobia in Germany today, I hope to offer policy recommendations as to how Germany can ameliorate the problems of integration. Has multiculturalism failed? Perhaps not in theory, but it appears that its significance in political jargon has waned. My ultimate goal is to move *beyond* multiculturalism while not falling too far back into right-wing, xenophobic conservatism. Perhaps some aspects of multiculturalism can be salvaged in order to create an approach to integration that is pragmatic, just and humane.

A POST FROM KAZAN, RUSSIA

Skidmore was happy to welcome Professor Oleg Zaznaev to campus this past December. Professor Zaznaev is the chair of the Political Science department at Kazan State University in Tatarstan, Russia, and was visiting Skidmore on a Russian government sponsored trip. During his stay Professor Zaznaev observed classes taught by professors Ron Seyb, Roy Ginsberg, Aldo Vacs, and Pat Ferraioli. When asked about his impressions of the American classroom, Professor Zaznaev said that he was very impressed by the use of video in professor Seyb's class, and simulation pedagogies, such as mock trials, in professor Ferraioli's class. Professor Ferraioli remarked that Oleg had asked her numerous questions on how to best to run a mock trial so he could take the exercise back to Russia. Professor Zaznaev was able to gather material for an electronic textbook he is publishing on North American politics, as well as learn several new teaching methods he hopes to adapt for the Russian classroom. He chose to work at Skidmore in particular, due to its small size compared to Russian schools and because he had worked with Professor Graney in Russia when she was conducting research for her dissertation there in the 1990s. **Matt Choi '14**



My visit to Skidmore College on December 2-17, 2011 was sponsored by the Program of Development of Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Russia. The Program has given me a lot of great opportunities in the United States: to develop my course on American and Canadian government and politics, to gather new resources and curricula, to observe teaching techniques at Skidmore, to meet with American colleagues, to talk to well-established professors, to take part in interesting discussions and express my viewpoints. These opportunities were realized successfully during my stay in Saratoga Springs.

I would like to thank Kazan University for the financial support. I am very grateful to the Government Department at Skidmore College and its chair and professor Katherine Graney for hospitality. She kindly agreed to accommodate me and provided me with office, computer, access to electronic resources and college's library. I really appreciate her advice on the development of my curriculum. I would also like to thank professors Ron Seyb, Roy Ginsberg, Aldo Vacs, Pat Ferraioli and Robert Turner who gave me opportunity to attend lectures and seminars and to speak to them. I would also like to thank Barbara McDonough who welcomed all my requests and was at the ready to help me at every minute. The Department granted me a lot of books on American, European and Russian politics, comparative government. I would like to express my gratitude to professors for support in getting these books.

During my visit in Saratoga Springs I focused mostly on my curriculum development of the course "American and Canadian Government and Politics" and preparing an electronic textbook to support this course. This is a course which is offered for bachelors in Political Science at Kazan University. The major objective of the course is to acquaint students with contemporary Canadian and American government and politics. This course gives students the opportunity to understand the workings of two advanced democracies of the modern world. There are two ways to understand them. One is "to get inside" each of them, to get a sense of each country's political institutions, processes, personalities, and politics. The other way is to compare countries using basic concepts of political analysis. I will point out ways in which the American political system is similar to or different from that of Canada. The course gives students some factual information on these nations and a conceptual understanding of politics within them.

I think that Skidmore College is one of the best liberal arts colleges in the United States. It is an elite college with high standards of education. The wealth of experience of the Government Department at Skidmore is very interesting for professors of my university. I would like to point out some moments of teaching of American colleagues: the creative atmosphere of the Department (interactive lectures and seminars, essays, interesting and nontraditional courses such as "From Genghis Khan To Gorbachev: Power And Politics In Russian History",

Kazan continued on page 13

THESIS PROJECTS

"Testing Twitter: The Role of Social Media in Defying Dictators"

Emma Kurs '12

Fascinated by an article I read this summer about two Bahraini dissidents that "tweeted" straight from their prison cells, I decided to write my thesis paper on the relationship between social media and authoritarian regimes. Given the abundance of praise for websites like Twitter and Facebook (for instance, sensationalist headlines touting "In Egypt, Twitter Trumps Torture"), I wanted to investigate whether or not citizens can employ social media as a tool to defy and destroy repressive states. To do this, my thesis analyzes the role of social media in two recent, prominent revolutionary moments: the Iranian uprisings of 2009 (the Green Movement) and the Egyptian revolution that toppled the Hosni Mubarak regime in 2011.

Given the newness of this debate over the efficacy of social media, I decided to first establish a rooted framework to contextualize this new technology. The outset of the paper will discuss the way that scholars have historically analyzed the causes and mechanisms of revolutions (i.e. does a revolution's success stem from a weak state, the will of the people, or both?). I will follow with a discussion of what theorists predict about social media as a tool for creating opposition movements, mobilizing citizens, and undermining authoritarian regimes. With these two frameworks to work from, I will then apply the theories to my two case studies, one failed and one (at least partially) successful revolution, to analyze what social media's role was and to determine whether it made a genuine difference in either of these uprisings.

Current Student News: Updates from Government Majors

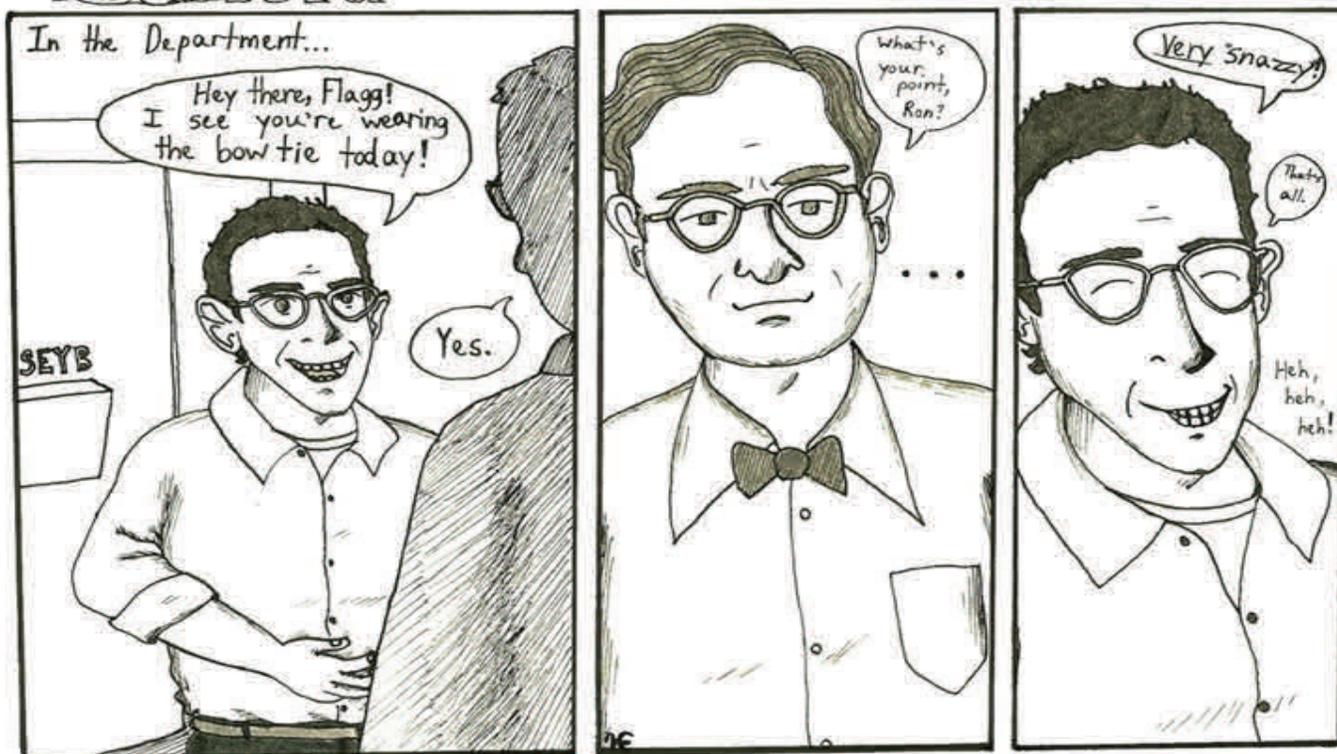
Wyatt Erchak '12 continues as always to cartoon for Skidmore News, and work on his graphic novel projects when he has the time. He is Co-President of one of the newest clubs on campus, FAD (Friends of Anxiety Disorders), which he enjoys immensely and is pleased to report is going very well. After graduating this May, he will be staying in Saratoga Springs for the summer to work and play before traveling to Moldova to work in the National Museum of History of Moldova as a volunteer (Moldova being Europe's poorest country, by the numbers), or otherwise in a Moldovan non-governmental organization.

Dominic Green, '12, has been awarded one of the inaugural SEE-Beyond Awards for summer 2012. This \$4000 award will allow Dom to complete an exciting summer project; he'll be the research assistant for one of the country's leading EU scholars, David Calleo from Johns Hopkins University, who is working on a book about the Eurozone crisis. The best part? They'll be living and working on Elba, an island off the coast of Italy where Napoleon was imprisoned in 1814 (before busting out and enjoying another 100 days of trying to conquer Europe again. Didn't work.). Congratulations, Dom, and have a wonderful time!

Emma Kurs, '12, and Kate Graney, Associate Professor of Government, have been awarded a Faculty-Student Summer Collaborative Research Grant to work on a manuscript tentatively entitled *Re-Orienting Europe: Culture and Politics in Europe's Post-Soviet Periphery*. Emma's grant includes room and board at Skidmore for 10 weeks this summer, plus a \$2000 stipend. She will be working with Prof. Graney on developing maps, charts, and other graphics for the manuscript. Congratulations, Emma!

Jeremy Wood, '13 will be attending the Engalitcheff Institute on Comparative Political and Economic Systems at Georgetown University this summer. While in Washington D.C., Jeremy will intern with a federal agency to complement his coursework. Congratulations!

Seybfield



GOVERNMENT MAJORS SHARE THEIR STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCES

ELLIE NICHOLS '13

LIFE abroad has been an incredible experience so far. I'm enjoying studying in Florence and taking advantage of the many travel opportunities on the weekends. This past weekend I spent in Paris for the Fashion Week, which was a real treat and the weekend prior I spent in Rome, with fellow Skidmore student, Julia Paino '13. I'm living in an apartment in central Florence with 5 other girls, all of which were strangers before but now have become friends. In order to continue my Government studies here in Florence, I am taking a class in conflict and resolution. Unlike Skidmore, the class only meets once a week for 2.5 hours. Nonetheless, it provides an interesting perspective to conflict and resolution. Taking this course in Italy is a challenge because we focus on the Italian approach to conflict and resolution along with the Italian history of Colonialism. It is a good opportunity to learn about a Western Culture in an environment that is not the US. In addition, I am studying Italian language, Public Presentations, Fashion Marketing and Event Planning

BEING abroad is a trip for sure, and despite some cultural adjustments, I'm definitely getting into the groove of the Florentine life!



ALEX MILLER, '13

My experience thus far in London has been absolutely amazing. I am currently living in the Borough of Westminster, a mere 10 minute walk from Buckingham palace. I am housed in a student dormitory called Goldsmid House, which is fairly new (it opened in 2008) in a single room with my own bathroom.

I chose to go abroad to Skidmore in London because of the sheer size of the city itself. I have yet to run out of things to do in this city and don't foresee that happening during my short time here. I chose UCL specifically because of its status as one of the top Universities in the world and the wide array of classes it offered. The Political Science Department here, unbeknown to me, is normally a graduate program, but opens its classes to all UCL students and students

studying abroad. This simply means that I am given considerable independence in how I study and learn in this course, although a British University education in general is based around independent learning and research. This emphasis on independent learning is very different from our system at Skidmore and will definitely benefit me when I return in the fall.

My classes are on an array of topics that I have yet to see being offered at Skidmore. One notable class, Changing Britain's Constitution, has been particularly enlightening as coming into the class I had little knowledge of how the British Political system worked let alone did I even think of Great Britain as having a Constitution (Hint: they do, but its not codified). The class is also being taught by the foremost expert on the British Constitution Robert Hazell, which makes me savor the class even more.

GOVERNMENT MAJORS SHARE THEIR STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCES



DAVID SOLOMON '13

I've been residing in Beijing since August, where I live with a working class Chinese family--no one in the family speaks any English, which has been an interesting challenge that has gotten gradually easier for me throughout the year (I spoke basically no Chinese when I first arrived). I've been in IES's Beijing Language Intensive program, a challenging, but highly rewarding program, in which I have Chinese class for four hours per day, four days per week--taught with no English. This semester, I am making a movie with a script written completely in Chinese. Additionally, I have studied Chinese politics and environmental policy and, last semester took an internship seminar with a weekly internship with an international research NGO, located in Beijing's business district. This semester I am conducting independent research about the Chinese healthcare system, studying how the hukou system (housing certificate system) has been a leading reason for the extreme divide in access to healthcare among urban and rural Beijingers.

The IES center is located at Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU), where Chinese students from all over the country come to study. I have met some great young Chinese people on campus, who love interacting with American students, providing great opportunities to practice Chinese. The Chinese are an unbelievably friendly and welcoming people, so I've had a wonderful experience living and studying here. During my year in Beijing, I have taken two two-week trips with my program, first semester to Manchuria, and second semester to Yunnan province in the south-central region of China. Additionally, I spent long weekends in Nanjing and Shanghai and am planning a weekend trip to Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province (with the particularly spicy cuisine). I remained in Asia over the winter break, traveling to Vietnam, Thailand, and Hong Kong with friends. All of these travel experiences have been fabulous and I'm so pleased to have had the opportunity to be here.

The weather is starting to warm up in Beijing and I'm really excited. Looking forward to catching up with everyone at Skidmore come fall.

SHELBY SMITH, '13

I studied abroad during the fall semester of 2011 in Freiburg, Germany for IES' European Union studies program. Freiburg is in the Black Forest (Schwarzwald) region of southern Germany. I lived in an apartment with six German students who also attended the University of Freiburg. I chose this program because of the many government based classes offered which allowed me to learn about governmental organizations from a European perspective.

My program, which consisted of about fifty other students, traveled a lot. We went to Brussels, Prague, Berlin, Stuttgart, Strasbourg, Madrid, Barcelona, Paris and Luxembourg. We attended meetings at the European Union Commission and the EU Parliament. This trip was an incredible experience that was both highly educational and extraordinarily fun. I would recommend this trip to any government major interested in studying abroad!



AN OLD ENMITY

OLIVIA KINNEAR '15

Tuesday February 7th, Professor Eliot Cohen, the Robert E. Osgood Professor of Strategic Studies at the Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies came to Skidmore to give a talk entitled “An Old Enmity: The Professional vs. the Citizen Soldier, from Colonial Times to Today”. It was a topic that seemed at once familiar and unfamiliar as the lecture went on. It was information most of us had access to, but had never looked at in this light.

A group of students, professors, and members of the broader Saratoga community were in attendance, eager to listen to Professor Cohen. He first began by defining the basic terminology, citizen and professional soldier, and what that really means. Citizen soldiers, for the most part, come from the National Guards of the states. The Guard’s origins date back to the state militias of the revolutionary era. These are part-time soldiers, who serve temporarily and then return to civilian life. Professional soldiers are those for whom military service is their career. Using his new book, *Conquered into Liberty*, Professor Cohen went through American history highlighting famous professional and citizen soldiers and important battles—highlighting instances where these two military types have come into conflict. A good portion of the talk and the question and answer session that followed focused on the two most famous professional soldiers of our time, General David Patraeus and General Stanley McChrystal. General Patraeus especially embodies the idea of the modern professional soldier. His career path has led him up the ranks of the military to become the top officer.

Dinner was an interesting affair, I found myself seated across from Professor Cohen as the conversation ranged from the media and the armed service to the current Republican candidates for President. Professor Cohen barely seemed to take a bite, before another student had a question or a counter-argument for what he just said. Conversation flowed quickly and easily, with everyone at the table contributing.

The post-dinner discussion, led by Professor Ron Seyb, allowed Professor Cohen to expand on other elements and figures from his book. Professor Seyb noted the remarkable treatment of Benedict Arnold in *Conquered into Liberty*. Though now largely known

as a traitor to the American cause, Arnold played an undeniably indispensable role in the American victory in the war for Independence. Professor Cohen raised some interesting questions about national memory and the uses of history by comparing the treatment of Arnold with the treatment of another traitor to his country, Robert E. Lee. A kind of legend has developed around Lee, argued Cohen, which distracts us from the centrality of his fundamental betrayal. Arnold, however, has not received such a favorable hearing by subsequent generations, though his positive accomplishments are legion. History seems to have forgiven Lee his crimes, but never Arnold. It was an enlightening and thought provoking discussion.



Attention Junior Government Majors!

Are you eligible to and interested in writing a senior honors thesis?
If so, read our guidelines and timeline for this yearlong process on the web at
<http://cms.skidmore.edu/government/senior-thesis.cfm> .

A Post from Kazan, Russia, continued from page 8

“Dissident Political Thought”, “What The United States Does Wrong In The World: Views From India and Answers From Washington”); the good contacts between a professor and a student, the dialogue during lecture and a lot of questions from the floor; high requirements addressed to students and professors (in the end of semester students fill in a special evaluation form); modern teaching techniques (power point presentations, documentary movies, extracts from comedy show, simulations etc.); pluralism in teaching (you can see a traditional academic lecture and up to date computerized lecture, serious classes and classes where there is a space for jokes); interdisciplinary approach and a look at politics through economic, historic, legal and sociologic “glasses”; a combination of the theory and the analysis of current politics and political practice, up to date and interesting topics for simulations. All above mentioned characteristics of educational process deserve the attention of professors here at my university in Kazan, Russia.

In summing up my stay the US, I can say that it was an important and useful experience for my professional and research activities. I wish to express my deep gratitude toward the Government Department, Skidmore College, and Professor and Chair Katherine Graney who helped me greatly during my stay there.

Oleg Zaznaev
Professor and Chair
Department of Political Science
Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Russia

A Taste of West Point Tradition, continued from page 6

SCUSA was an academically rigorous and stimulating challenge. What really made my time at West Point, however, was observing the fun, engaging way in which cadets commit themselves to their studies and training. SCUSA attendees spent the three nights in the barracks (the West Point dorms) on cots, sharing rooms with the West Pointers themselves. The speakers and roundtable sessions of the conference were informative and enlightening, but the most valuable part of the experience, in my opinion, was the opportunity for an insight into the lives and training of the cadets.



These West Point men and women - my peers - were qualified to gain admission into the premiere military academy in the world, and their steadfast dedication is leading them into some form of advanced national service. For someone who has spent little time exaggerating my patriotism or considering the US military's impact on my own life, SCUSA left me able to put a more personal face on the US military. I drove out of the academy feeling pride for people that I had previously spent most of my academic career lumping under a banner of US military policy. Despite your stance on the US military's past and present roles in global affairs, a few days with the cadets at West Point will undoubtedly leave you feeling confident about the intellect, passion, and upstanding character of the future of US military leadership. If you haven't seen West Point yet, I highly recommend a visit with a scheduled tour of the campus. Make sure to check out the view of the Hudson from top floor of the library, and make sure you talk to some of the cadets (they're the strong-looking people wearing grey uniforms). I'm sure they'll have a story for you too.

THESIS PROJECTS

The role of unions in supporting active citizenship and democratic stability in Bolivia

Jenny Kaufmann '12

Centered on domestic work in Bolivia, my thesis examines how reliance on the informal economy restricts participatory citizenship and how individuals use unions to combat this limitation. Through the examination of academic articles, union documents, and personal interviews, I evaluate the ability of unions to strengthen individuals' capacity to engage in civil society and exercise full citizenship. I conclude with a speculation about the role that unions may have in supporting democratic stability in the country.

ALUMNI PROFILES: AN INSIGHT INTO GOVERNMENT MAJOR'S LIVES AFTER GRADUATION

Nina Glatt '07

What does your job entail?

At the moment, I'm teaching high school English at a charter school, so my job entails (in a very small nutshell) designing the curriculum for and teaching 9th, 10th, and 11th grade English.

Do you use what you learned in Government in your job now?

I definitely use the critical reading, writing, and analysis skills I learned in my Government classes at Skidmore!

What kind of influence did your Government major have on what you did after college? What did you originally want to do after Skidmore?

I knew I wanted to work in some sort of non-profit job, but I wasn't sure exactly in what capacity. When Teach For America presented itself as an option, it piqued my interest and turned out to be a truly wonderful, life-changing experience.

How did you get to where you are now? Graduate work, etc. How did your Skidmore education help you succeed?

As part of my teacher certification through TFA, I got my Masters in Secondary Education from ASU. After the craziness of doing that while being a first and second year teacher, I felt like I really wasn't finished teaching after my two-year commitment with TFA. I've been teaching for the past five years, and after this year, I plan to make a career change. My first year's class of 8th graders will be graduating from high school this year, so it's sort of a great way to finish up-- with everything coming full circle.

What classes were most interesting to you when you were in college? Who was your favorite professor?

I feel like this is a loaded question, considering these responses are going to be posted in the hallway (right Barbara??)! In all honesty, though, I can say with 100% certainty that I got something different out of all of my Government classes, whether or not a class was my favorite. And I may be biased, but I think the Government department has the most quality professors at Skidmore.

What is your favorite part of your job?

My favorite part of my job is seeing the evolution in students over the course of the year. Seeing the pride they exude after achieving something they previously thought impossible (or undesired) is amazing. It's great to hear updates about how my former students are doing years after they've left my classroom reminds me that the daily grind is worth it!

If you could have any job, what would it be?

That is a great question! If I knew, I'd be going after it! :-)

Naomi Telushkin '11

What does your job entail?

I work on creative and artistic programming for the Jewish communities in St. Petersburg, Russia and Kyiv, Ukraine. I teach journalism classes, conduct dance workshops, lead conversational clubs in politics and culture, and teach classes on traditional and alternative Judaism. I also worked for *The St. Petersburg Times* and write freelance on the region for travel magazines and Jewish and secular publications.

Do you use what you learned in Government in your job now?

Constantly. Having taken classes in Russian history, ethnic conflicts and communism, I felt prepared for the incredibly complex cultural differences between the former Soviet Union and the United States. I was also able to discuss the history of the countries, as well as the past and current

political situation, with locals. It was a great way to earn trust, respect and ingratiate myself within the communities.

What kind of influence did your Government major have on what you did after college? What did you originally want to do after Skidmore?

I wanted to pursue creative writing after Skidmore, which I did through my English major. The Government major was unexpected—after taking an introductory political class my freshmen year, I felt so fascinated I ended up majoring in Government. The Government major influenced me deeply—I ended up working on political journalism at an Israeli media organization in Washington D.C the summer after graduation.

How did you get to where you are now? Graduate work, etc. How did your Skidmore education help you succeed?

Double majoring in Government and English led to a natural combination of the two—pursuit in journalism. I wrote for *The Daily Saratogian* one summer, then for Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* during a semester in Tel Aviv, for an Israeli media organization in Washington D.C. and then for *The St. Petersburg Times* in Russia. All of these jobs had roots in Skidmore Government classes—in classes on Middle Eastern politics, communist history, current Israeli politics, Russian history and American political history.

What classes were most interesting to you when you were in college? Who was your favorite professor?

All Government classes with an international bent fascinated me—classes on the Middle East, Latin America, Eastern Europe. In addition, I was interested in classes that focused on particular minority communities within these regions. As for professors, I genuinely enjoyed all Government professors I took classes with. A very passionate and dynamic group!

What is your favorite part of your job?

My favorite part is teaching journalism classes—especially poignant in a region that for so long, lacked any free press. Teaching belly dancing in Kyiv has been one of the stranger and funnier things I've done. In general, I love living abroad. The experience in the former Soviet Union has been everything living abroad should be—humbling, inspiring, and hugely expanding.

If you could have any job, what would it be?

I still love to write creatively and am currently working on a screenplay. Journalism however, has been an interest since my second year at Skidmore, and working on articles abroad has been fantastic. Ideally, I would love to continue working as a freelance journalist while also pursuing creative fictional projects.

Jillian Zatta '10

What does your job entail?

I am a project coordinator for a large financial services firm in New York, which is a subdivision of their human resources department. I am specifically aligned to support the development and implementation of training for our securities (equities, fixed income, currency, and commodities) division, which primarily focuses on financial products & capital markets, leadership & professional skills, culture & orientation, and new & experienced hire integration.

Do you use what you learned in Government in your job now?

Although much of content I learned in my courses does not overlap with the knowledge I have so far acquired while working in the financial services industry, Government did arm me with the tools to understand where and how policy and legislation impact my business. The American government has been playing an increasingly active role in the finance space since the global economic crisis of 2008 and I feel as though my background has enabled me to see and interpret both sides of the coin.

ALUMNI PROFILE: DAVID INKELES '11

What does your job entail?

I am currently working at Common Cents, a not-for-profit in New York City which administers the largest service-learning initiative in the U.S. Service-learning is the idea that students, especially those in elementary and middle school, are in the position to learn a great deal through participating in various community and service-based activities. My day-to-day duties predominantly involve helping schools that are currently enrolled in our Penny Harvest program. I communicate with, visit, and support the 800 "Penny Harvest Coaches," or school teachers/guidance counselors/school social workers, that run our program. When I'm not supporting these educators, I am tasked with researching and assessing Common Cents' existing theme-based curriculum, and helping to develop and implement new curriculum areas designed to enhance child philanthropy.

Do you use what you learned in Government in your job now?

One of the biggest assets I've accumulated as a Government major, and one that I often times find myself employing at Common Cents, is the ability to coherently and respectfully present oral arguments to groups that have varying, sometimes conflicting, interests. Whether it was a mock trial in Constitutional or Communications Law, or one of Professor Seyb's raucous senatorial debates held in Politics of Congress, I am confident that being a Government major has sharpened my oratorical skills and persuasive abilities. This is something I use on a day-to-day basis whether it be addressing colleagues at program meetings, school children on visits, and in many cases, ornery teachers reluctant about joining our program.

What did you originally want to do after Skidmore? How did you get to where you are now? How did your Skidmore education help you succeed?

In the immediate months following graduation, I was probably still in denial of the fact that college had indeed come to an end (a testament to Skidmore as an institution, of course). I found myself at a crossroads, considering just about every possible career path or entry-level job that had something to do with a varying interest of mine. Overwhelmed as I was, I constantly found myself going back to the idea that politics have historically been driven by grass-roots initiatives and individuals who dedicate their time and talent to some form of service (whether it be on a national level, or your hometown.) More so than anything else, being a Government major helped affirm this desire to

involve myself in some service-based opportunity. I then began browsing local government jobs within Mayor Bloomberg's office, and came across a fellowship program called the NYC Civic Corps. You can check out more information regarding the Corps by visiting nycservice.org, but essentially, it's a 10-month fellowship that places accepted applicants at a local city agency or a leading non-profit located within the five boroughs of NYC. Stressing "education" and "youth development" as impact areas I wanted to serve, helped NYC Service place me at my current host site, Common Cents.

What classes were most interesting to you when you were in college? Who was your favorite professor?

I genuinely believe that every Government course taken at Skidmore has provided me with the much-needed contextual background and understanding of many hot-button political issues of the day. Whenever I read news regarding politics, or watch Meet the Press for instance, I can almost always refer back to a specific class, lesson, or idea, that was developed in one of my Government courses.

The two courses which stand out to be particularly relevant are Politics of Congress and Communications Law. Both courses, taught by Professors Seyb and Ferraioli, respectively, deal with real-life, pressing issues that are currently being debated by politicians, pundits, and everyday people. Whether it was the recent SOPA act, or the ongoing debate on gerrymandering /redistricting, I cannot help but to be fondly reminded to those two classes.

What is your favorite part of your job?

Far and away, my favorite aspect of working at Common Cents has been visiting participating schools and speaking with students, teachers and school administrators. When I speak with students, I am often discussing current events, and helping them understand the issues affecting their local, city-wide, and national communities. As a result, many of these meetings work as mini-social studies lessons and leading related exercises (reading newspaper articles, community mapping, etc.) Through doing this, I have come to find that the passion for U.S. history, politics, and social studies sparked at Skidmore, has been matched almost exclusively with a desire to educate and inspire students regarding these subject areas. As a result, I am currently looking at teaching positions in private and charter High Schools that seek History, Political Science, and like-minded humanities courses. This brings me to the answer of the next question...

If you could have any job, what would it be?

Ultimately, I aspire to become a Government or U.S. History Professor who has the ability to educate and inspire students in the same manner that my Skidmore Professors did for me.

THESIS PROJECTS

From Algiers to Les Banlieues: Algerian Muslims and French Immigration Policy

Lex Curry '12

My thesis investigates the complexities of French immigration policy and anti-immigrant sentiment directed at Algerian immigrants living in France. I concentrate on labor-based immigration from North Africa to France during the post-WWII industrial boom and the economic fallout of the Oil Crisis of 1974. Additionally, I explain how the Algerian Revolution, recent debates on secularism and Islam, and growing crime and poverty rates in the French suburbs affect relations between North African immigrants and French citizens.

Alumni Profile: Erica Seifert '02



What does your job entail?

I do multi-modal public opinion research; my work includes both quantitative and qualitative research and analysis—large n-size websurveys, traditional phone polls, focus groups, in-depth interviews, and big data analytics. I also do a bit of experimental design—at the moment, we are quantifying and analyzing trends in social media. Essentially, I turn people into numbers and then back the other way again. I also do a lot of writing—I produce between 2 and 6 papers, memos, and articles a month. My boss and I both have books coming out this spring, so I've been doing a fair amount of editing as well.

Do you use what you learned in Government in your job now?

Every minute. I took Ron Seyb's American Presidency course in 2000. It was conducted as a mock election—we acted as candidates, campaign managers, speechwriters, etc. It was my first introduction to political consulting. Beyond that most direct and obvious connection, I am constantly grateful that my Skidmore education was as broad as it was thorough. In public opinion research and strategic consulting, we have to be expert at every subject we touch. This month I'm working with the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee to identify post-redistricting competitive House battleground seats. Last month I consulted the Bipartisan Policy Center's Housing Commission on housing policy. A month before that, I worked with the EPI on economic policy. Skidmore gave me the capacity to be intellectually adroit and professionally versatile. I honestly could not do my job without the research skills, capacity for critical thinking, and resourcefulness that I gained at Skidmore. It turns out that creative thought really does matter.

What kind of influence did your Government major have on what you did after college? What did you originally want to do after Skidmore?

A great deal. Before I met Beau Breslin, I wanted to be a lawyer. I decided to go to graduate school instead.

How did you get to where you are now? Graduate work, etc. How did your Skidmore education help you succeed?

I actually have a PhD in political history. My doctoral dissertation relied heavily on Stan Greenberg and James Carville's strategy memoranda and survey analysis for the 1992 Clinton campaign. After I defended my dissertation, I thought it would be interesting to work for them for a few months before launching into the academic job market... I'm still here.

What classes were most interesting to you when you were in college? Who was your favorite professor?

I took every class offered by Beau Breslin when I was at Skidmore. Constitutional Law was probably my favorite—I not only carry the content with me but also the logical reasoning skills and habits of mind that I gained in that class.

What is your favorite part of your job?

I love sitting down with a full output and turning hundreds of pages of numbers into interesting (and occasionally influential) analysis. It is surprising to me that I enjoy it so much; I didn't get a PhD in History because I loved math.

If you could have any job, what would it be?

That's a trick question.

Jillian Zatta '10, continued from page 14

What kind of influence did your Government major have on what you did after college? What did you originally want to do after Skidmore?

My Government minor has a huge impact on my first eight months after graduation. I jumped headfirst into politics, starting with an internship with the Office of United States Senator Robert Menendez. I then transitioned into a short-term position with his Community Affairs team and eventually left to join his campaign office. I was involved with Menendez right up until my current role. If you had asked me in May 2010 what I thought I would be doing now, I would have probably told you that I would be working on a campaign for the 2012 election season.

How did you get to where you are now? Graduate work, etc. How did your Skidmore education help you succeed?

I applied for my current position because I wanted to explore other fields and really find out how versatile my skill set was; I wanted to test the boundaries of my resume and interview skills. As a recent college graduate in an uncertain job market, I wanted to avoid limiting myself to a particular industry or job type. Skidmore forced me to understand the common underlying themes running through all disciplines (I am specifically thinking of the Scribner Seminar here, which I had the privilege of taking with Professor Kate Graney), which during my college career allowed me to draw connections between all of my interests and areas of study. When it came to my career path, I knew that I could translate the experiences from one job to another because I had been used to the practice of identifying touch points of universality in my coursework. A good number of my colleagues went to college for exactly what they are doing now, and while that has served them very well, I was able to study what I loved (Government, History, Classics) and still land a job.

What classes were most interesting to you when you were in college? Who was your favorite professor?

I think I suffered from "short-term academic attention span disorder" during most of my college tenure. Every semester I had a new favorite course and a new favorite professor. I took some downright amazing courses in the Government, History, and Classics departments that I know my friends in other schools did not even come close to taking. I know this because I have asked, and no one can even fathom what "Mother Russia's Daughters" or "Deconstructing Britain" would be about. In good conscious I cannot pick a favorite field of study or professor, but I will throw in a plug for "Introduction to Neuroscience." If you need to fulfill your natural science requirement, you should take that course.

What is your favorite part of your job?

The accountability and level of trust. Although I am very green in my career and quite junior on my team, I feel as though I am an integral part of our operations because I am treated like my contribution matters. It has given me a sense of weight and confidence that has been an enormous boon to my professional self-esteem.

If you could have any job, what would it be?

Any job? I wish I had been born with a solid stage presence and exceptional singing/acting abilities. I am a huge fan of the theatre but never had the talent to full-heartedly pursue it. In my next life, I will be on Broadway.

What Counts for What?

FALL 2012 COURSES

American Government Distribution

- GO 251C Politics of the American Family / N. Taylor / WF 12:20 – 1:40
 GO 252 The Psychology of Politics / Seyb / MWF 11:15 – 12:10
 GO 314 Civil Liberties / Ferraioli / TTH 3:40 – 5:30
 GO 315 Immigration Politics and Policy / Turner / MW 2:30 – 3:50
 GO 334 The United States Presidency / Seyb / MWF 12:20 – 1:15

Comparative Politics Distribution

- GO 239 Nationalism and Politics in the Middle East / Ockali / MWF 1:25 – 2:20

International Relations Distribution

- GO 201 Principles of International Politics / Ginsberg / TTH 11:10 – 12:30
 GO 229 International Law / Ginsberg / TTH 2:10 – 3:30
 GO 309 Latin America and the United States / Vacs / TTH 12:40 – 2:00

Political Theory Distribution

- GO 204 Classical Political Thought / Burns / MWF 1:25 – 2:20
 GO 323 Dissident Political Thought / F. Taylor / TTH 9:40—11:00
 GO 341 French Liberal Tradition / F. Taylor / TTH 11:10 -12:30
 GO 351B Shakespeare's Political Wisdom / Burns / MW 2:30 – 4:20

Fall 2012 Government Classes

GO-101 001 Introduction to American Government

Instructor: Robert Tumer
M/W/F 12:20PM —1:15PM Bolton 281

GO-101 002 Introduction to American Government

Instructor: Patricia Ferraioli
TU/TH 12:40PM – 2:00PM Ladd 307

GO-102 Introduction to Political Philosophy

Instructor: Timothy Burns
M/W/F 11:15AM – 12:10PM Ladd 307

GO-103 001 Intro Comp/Intl Politics

Instructor: Feryaz Ocakli
M/W/F 10:10AM – 11:05AM Ladd 307

GO-103 002 Intro Comp/Intl Politics

Instructor: Aldo Vacs
TU/TH 9:40AM– 11:00AM Ladd 307

GO 201 Principles of International Politics

Instructor: Roy Ginsberg
TU/TH 11:10AM-12:30PM Ladd 207

GO-204 Classical Political Thought

Instructor: Timothy Burns
M/W/F 1:25PM—2:20PM Library 213

GO 229 International Law

Instructor: Roy Ginsberg
TU/TH 2:10PM – 3:30PM Ladd 206

GO-239 Nationalism and Politics in the Middle East

Instructor: Feryaz Ocakli
M/W/F 1:25PM – 2:20PM Ladd 207

GO-251C Politics of the American Family

Instructor: Natalie Taylor
W/F 12:20 PM – 1:40PM Ladd 206

GO-252 The Psychology of Politics

Instructor: Ronald Seyb
M/W/F 11:15AM—12:10PM Tisch 201

GO-309 Latin America and the U.S.

Instructor: Aldo Vacs
TU/TH 12:40PM—2:00PM Ladd 106

GO-314 Civil Liberties

Instructor: Patricia Ferraioli
TU/TH 3:40PM—5:00PM Library 213

GO 315 Immigration Politics and Policy

Instructor: Robert Tumer
M/W 2:30PM – 3:50PM Tisch 308

GO-323 Dissident Political Thought

Instructor: Flagg Taylor
TU/TH 9:40AM—11:00AM Ladd 207

GO-334 U.S. Presidency

Instructor: Ronald Seyb
M/W/F 12:20PM—1:15PM, W 6:00PM— 7:00PM Ladd 207

GO-341 French Liberal Tradition

Instructor: Flagg Taylor
TU/TH 11:10AM –12:30PM Ladd 106

GO 351B Shakespeare's Political Wisdom

Instructor: Timothy Burns
M/W 2:30PM—4:20PM Ladd 207

Fall 2012 Topics Course Descriptions

GO 251C: Politics of the American Family

Instructor: Natalie Taylor

3 credits

Liberal democracies, such as the United States, are defined by their limited governments and the ostensibly strict separation between private and public life. Yet, political philosophers and statesmen have always appreciated the importance of the family to the polity. There is a tension between our desire to allow for freedom from government control on the one hand and our desire to foster a healthy political community on the other. On-going public policy debates often concern a group of social and economic issues commonly referred to as “family issues.” This course will examine several of those issues. By considering a number of the so-called family issues, you should gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between the individual, the family, and the political community. As we weigh each of the public policy issues we will also consider the many competing principles, which influence political decision making.

GO 351B: Shakespeare's Political Wisdom

Instructor: Tim Burns

4 credits

This course will be devoted to Shakespeare's political wisdom. At least since the time of Aristophanes and Plato, major themes of political theory have been explored through fiction rather than in treatises or tracts. Through a careful reading of five of Shakespeare's plays (*Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Tempest*) we will examine the following themes: the justice of a pre-emptive strike; justice in a republic; the pursuit of happiness in the private realm versus civic life; the longing for the noble or beautiful and its political consequences; religion, commerce, and the destruction of the political; the problematic rule of philosopher-kings; tyranny; the effect of Christian theology on political life.