

# POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER



**D**ear Political Science Majors and Minors,

I think that spring has finally arrived! Our first sign of spring was the induction of 21 new members of the Pi Sigma Alpha Political Science Honor Society in March. Now, as the days get longer and the temperatures get warmer, we are delighted to announce the recipients of our departmental awards. Congratulations to Morgan Hidalgo, Hunter Wasser, Michael DeCarlen-Bumiller, and Sydney Kass for their outstanding work in the study of political philosophy, international relations, comparative politics, and American politics, respectively. We look forward to celebrating their accomplishments at Honors Convocation on May 3.

This spring's newsletter offers ample evidence that political science majors and minors —past and present—have not been hibernating this winter. We have updates from some of the department's former student assistants and several current students. Shayna Cohen details her experience at the Student Conference on United States Affairs held annually at West Point. The newsletter also includes descriptions of the senior theses that are soon to be completed.

The faculty have also been busy. You will learn about the work that Professor Balogun is doing at the State Department during his time away from Skidmore. For those of you who are looking forward to study abroad, you will get a lesson in packing as much travel as possible into one semester from Professor Breslin. Sydney Kass traces the enviable number of places that Professor Breslin visited while teaching in Skidmore's FYE program in London. And, of course, there are pictures of pets.

Thank you to Barbara McDonough and the students (Shayna, Sam, and Sydney) who assembled the newsletter. We have a lot to be proud of on the third floor of Ladd and I am grateful to them for reminding us of all the incredible work that happened during the long winter!

Good luck with your final papers and exams!

Professor Natalie Taylor  
Associate Professor & Chair

# FACULTY NEWS

**Professor Balogun** As you all know, I am currently on leave doing a detail with the U.S. Department of State. I started my detail as a policy advisor to the Assistant Secretary of State for Africa. My portfolio covers U.S. multilateral engagement with Africa, specifically U.S. engagement with the African Union and other African regional economic communities, U.S. engagement with Africa in the United Nations, and U.S. engagement with Africa in venues such as the G7 and G20. I also advise on U.S. “strategic competition” in Africa, which focuses on PRC and Russia. My portfolio also covers strategic partnerships with South Korea, India, and Brazil in Africa. During the remainder of my detail, I will be working directly with the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield (a member of President Biden’s cabinet) at the U.S. Permanent Mission to the United Nations (USUN) as a political advisor. I will be covering similar issues there, but mainly working on UN Security Council reform and improving relations between the African Union and the United Nations. In both of these roles, I work closely with the National Security Council, as well as other members of the “interagency” such as the Department of Defense, Treasury, and Commerce.



I joined the administration at a time where there is an unprecedented amount of attention on Africa. In my first few weeks on the job, I contributed to U.S. Strategy towards Africa, which underscores the President’s key priorities on the continent and linkages to the President’s overall foreign policy strategy. In September 2022, I was part of the U.S. delegation to the UN General Assembly high-level week (aka the Super Bowl of Foreign Policy). There, I was able to meet with numerous leaders and diplomats and was part of the strategy team that contributed to President Biden’s announcement indicating U.S. support for UN Security Council reform. After UNGA, a team of us in the Bureau of



Africa Affairs, as well as the Special Envoy for the Horn provided integral support to the African Union to facilitate the historic Cessation of Hostilities Agreement to end the war between the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front. While the process to fully end the war is still underway, this agreement stopped over two years of fighting and internal displacement within Ethiopia.



One of the more significant initiatives I took the lead on was the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, which took place in December 2022. The U.S. invited leaders from 48 African countries for a 3-day summit which covered topics such as food security, climate change, peace and security, youth and diaspora engagement, and U.S.-Africa commercial ties. This was the first U.S.-Africa Leaders summit since 2014. I was one of 3 key organizers of the summit and was responsible for shaping the majority of the Leader’s day sessions—sessions that included the all of the African Heads of State. On the first day of the summit, I organized and led the first ever U.S.-African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) Engagement forum. We had the presidents of several African RECs as well as key leaders from the African Union participate. Alongside the African Leaders, we had high

-level U.S. engagement from President Biden, Vice President Harris, Secretary Blinken, and nearly every other cabinet member. We also brought together young African diaspora members, celebrities such as Yvonne Orji and Idris Elba, and African philanthropists to discuss ways to harness and unlock the potential of African Youth and the African business environment. The summit was an incredible success and as a result, we’ve had several high level members of the U.S. government visit Africa in the last three months to build on the success of the summit. During the summit, President Biden announced over \$55 Billion in U.S. investment in a range of issues on the continent. As a part of this announcement, President Biden also announced U.S. support of the African Union joining the G20 as a permanent member, turning the body to the G21. This was one of the first ideas I had when I joined the administration and it was cool to see my idea turn into a policy initiative driven by the President.



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# FACULTY NEWS CONTINUED

## Prof Balogun, continued

It has been a journey and a whirlwind during my time in government and I am enjoying it so much! I have been keeping a notebook of things I want to bring back to Skidmore to inform my teaching and research. One of the other benefits of living in DC right now is that I am gaining access and insight to a lot of the programs, jobs, and opportunities that our students will be pursuing. I am looking forward to being a resource for you all as you look for jobs and graduate school opportunities.

I miss you all! I wish the seniors all the best as you finish up the semester and head to graduation. It's a bummer I will not be around to wish you well in person, but it was a pleasure to get to know you all! Those who will be around next year, I look forward to seeing you all. Have a great rest of the semester!



Institute of Regional Studies in Islamabad, Pakistan.

**Professor Biberman-Ocakli** It has been a busy and exciting few months. In November 2022, I gave an invited talk at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, RI, as part of the Ethics of Technology Program. My talk was entitled "The Ethical and National Security Implications of Genetic Weapons." As word continues to spread in the policy and academic circles about my work, I was invited to the University of Waterloo in Canada. There, I spoke on the Emerging Technologies panel (which was the inaugural panel and included quantum computing and nanotechnology) at the "Research Security in Today's Geo-Political Era" Conference in February 2023. My talk on the ethics of biotechnology at Professor Bernie Possidente's Biology Senior Seminar in February 2023 was also illuminating, as it offered an opportunity to engage with future practitioners. The predicaments arising from the intensifying great power competition in Asia and beyond are at the heart of my work. In January 2023, I gave an invited talk (virtually) at the "Regional Dialogue: Contemporary Traditional and Non-Traditional Security Threats in South Asia" Conference held at the

I also published with former student Jared Schwartz '20 a peer-reviewed article, entitled "China's Security Strategy in Pakistan: Lessons for Washington," in journal Asian Security. With research assistance from Avik Nandy '24, I published a commentary for the Carter Center's India Policy initiative, "What Kind of Neighbor is India Becoming?" My former student Sophie Mae Berman '22 and I published an analytical article, entitled "To Support Afghan Women Activists, Prioritize Local Knowledge Over Numbers," in the Atlantic Council's SouthAsiaSource in September 2022, and it was reposted by Peace Research Institute Oslo. The article draws on Sophie Mae's senior thesis research, including interviews with Afghan peacebuilders and U.S. policy practitioners. In October 2022, I presented my research on Kashmir at the New York Conference on Asian Studies and, in December 2022, organized Kashmiri scholar Dr. Samir Bhat's extended visit to Skidmore, where he visited classes and shared an insider's perspective from a region that is at the center of conflict between two nuclear powers. I subsequently presented my collaborative work with Dr. Bhat at the International Affairs Senior Seminar and Introduction to Asian Studies class.

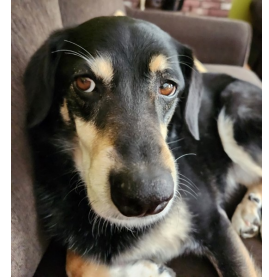
Over the Spring 2023 semester, I helped to make big and exciting curricular changes to the Asian Studies Program as Steering Committee member. My five-part podcast "How to Kill a Superpower: Lessons from the USSR" with former student Zach Troyanovsky '21 continues to attract interest, and I was interviewed about its ideas by the Business Insider. Finally, I continue to serve as an associate at Harvard University's Davis Center, nonresident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council's South Asia Center, and "New Voice" at the Andrew W. Marshall Foundation. While recently visiting Washington, D.C. as part of those endeavors, I had a wonderful time catching up with Professor Emmanuel Balogun.





# FACULTY NEWS

**Professor Graney** I have been enjoying the winter weather, hiking with Bean and skiing when the weather allows. I am looking forward to traveling to NYU in April with Michael DeCarlen-Bumiller to present his senior thesis at the North East Slavic, East European & Eurasian Studies Conference. I will also be traveling to Washington, DC in April on behalf of Skidmore, to host an event for alumni at the NPR studios with Skidmore Class of 2014 graduate Elissa Nadworny, who has been reporting from Ukraine over this past year.



**Professor Perelló** This spring, I've mostly enjoyed teaching my classes: Introduction to Comparative and International Politics, Comparative Revolutions, and Latin America and the United States. I've also focused on research. I published articles on coups and democratic backsliding in *Studies in Comparative International Development* and the *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. I will present at this year's Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) and World Association for Public Opinion Research – Latin America (WAPOR-LA) conferences in Chicago and Oaxaca in April. I also wrote the country briefs on Honduras and Nicaragua for the 2023 Freedom in the World Report published by Freedom House. I've thoroughly enjoyed teaching at Skidmore this past academic year. The students and faculty have been exceptional. Next fall, I'll start a new tenure-track position as an assistant professor at Marist College. I leave Skidmore College thanking everyone for such a wonderful experience. Please stay in touch. ¡Nos vemos!

**Professor Seyb** I have spent the last several months discharging my responsibilities as the Political Science Department's "town character."

I taught a Scribner Seminar in the fall on the evolution of the American media, a seminar in which I was fortunate to have a number of extraordinarily tolerant and forgiving first-year students (all of whom, I think, do not hold a grudge). I am currently teaching my "Demagogues, Demons, and Democracy" course, which inspired Oscar Hammerstein and Richard Rodgers to write "Cockeyed Optimist," and my "The Politics of Congress" course, which inspired Kevin McCarthy to sue me for defamation.



My wife and I plan to travel to Paris this June to cavort with some friends. We will also be making our long-awaited post-COVID Connipions return to New York City to attend some plays and to try to find Mayor Eric Adams' cot in the Brooklyn Borough Hall.



**Professor Flagg Taylor** This month Enduring Interest (my books podcast) is completing its series on American identity and culture. The February episode was on William Alexander Percy's memoir *Lanterns on the Levee* and in March we're discussing Norman Podhoretz's memoir *Making It*. Later in March I'll be recording an episode of The American Idea podcast on banned books and censorship. In May I'm looking forward to attending a conference at the American Enterprise Institute, "The Future of the University." This July will be busy: I'm teaching in the Political Studies Program of the Hertog Foundation. My course is on the war-time statesmanship of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Winston Churchill. That same week I'll be teaching for the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation in their National Seminar for High School Educators. Last September I presented a paper at the American Political Science Association meeting, "Václav Havel and the Problem of Dissent." I'm working on getting that essay in shape for publication.



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# FACULTY NEWS



**Professor Natalie Taylor** In March I attended a conference in Arlington, Virginia and had an opportunity to see my friend and colleague, Susan Hanssen. We both study Henry Adams, a nineteenth-century historian and novelist, as well as the great-grandson and grandson of two U.S. presidents. For Adams, Mount Vernon represents the great contradiction of American democracy. Susan and I couldn't miss a chance to visit together.

**Professor Turner** Keilty Archibald and I worked to bring the first Congress to Campus program to Skidmore. I am working on developing two new classes that examine issues of politics and policy in Saratoga satisfy the bridge requirement.



**Professor Breslin** I continue to work on my next book project – tentatively titled, *FOUNDING EDITS* – focused on those clauses and passages that were edited out of America's most famous early documents. The work is slow, but it's also fascinating. In addition, I've been fortunate to "appear" on the Thomas Jefferson Hour radio show/podcast, as well as teach a seminar on the "First Amendment Goes to School" at James Madison's home (Montpelier) in Orange, Virginia. So, in short, I've been living in the eighteenth-century more or less. (Churning my own butter is brutal!)

## THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING CONTRIBUTORS

Maddie Aikin '23, Sophie Mae Berman '22, Warren Bianchi '12, Bella Bruno '25,  
 Shayna Cohen '23, Lizzy Collins '17, Bridget Coyer '24, Claire Crosby '25,  
 Michael DeCarlen-Bumiller '23, Nadine Dodge '10, Marvelous Ekeh '23,  
 Emma Gill '24, Nina Glatt '07, Grace Grbach '25, Sam Hotz '23, Anissa Joseph '22,  
 Sydney Kass '23, Izzy Kroeger '24, Jean-Ann Kubler '13, Trevor Lai '25,  
 Phoebe Marwill '24, Aysha Mendez '23, Dean Mendez '22, Rory Millar '23,  
 Maddy Morency '16, Kate Morrison-Willoughby '25, Avik Nandy '24,  
 Amber Soucy '23, Ashley Storrow '11, Eli Turkel '08, Hunter Wasser '23

# SCUSA Reflection

Shayna Cohen '23



A plethora of burnt orange and auburn leaves sprinkled amongst bright green, fresh-trimmed grass. A constant view of the shimmering and still Hudson River. Buildings decorated with phrases and places reminiscent of United States military achievements. D-Day, Normandy; the cannons that began and ended the Civil War. Halls and statues dedicated to our country's most memorable heroes. Ulysses Grant; Dwight D. Eisenhower. A strip of gray stone fortification, seemingly out of a vintage European postcard, that aligns with the massive buildings of the same material. The United States Military Academy at West Point felt like something out of a movie, but at the same time, extraordinarily familiar and similar to our own campus.

I spent four days at West Point at the beginning of November participating in the 73rd annual Student Conference on United States Affairs (SCUSA), a largely cadet planned and organized event at the United States Military Academy. This year's SCUSA conference had the theme of American Foreign Policy in an Era of Polarized Politics and Revisionist Powers. Our goal was to assess twenty-first century geopolitics through the lens of America's role, obligations, and national goals. The SCUSA conference had 16 roundtables, tackling the various regions in the world and pressing issues pertaining to the theme. My roundtable topic was "The Middle East: The Future of U.S. Involvement." With the actors somewhat specified but the approach left vague, I was excited to see what path to geopolitics my group would take.

In addition to dedicating nearly ten hours to discussing our topic, SCUSA was all about fostering relations between the next generation of military and civilian actors: nearly 300 of us in total. To accomplish this goal, the other SCUSA delegates and I had the privilege to listen to and be in the attendance of distinguished academics and diplomats. On the first night of the conference, a West Point graduate and former U.S. representative to NATO moderated a panel with four renowned professors, thinkers, and scholars whose careers focus on our conference's topic. Over ninety minutes, the five guests spoke passionately about the primary challenges the United States faces in regard to political polarization and revisionism. The panel members deliberated over how current domestic and international issues were tied to historical events, such as the American Civil War and its failures during Reconstruction, as well as the impacts of current conflicts like the war in Ukraine. I really enjoyed the panel and the foundation it set for our group conversations.

The current Biden-appointed Ambassador to the United Nations, Ms. Linda Thomas-Greenfield, delivered the keynote address in which she talked about her journey from segregated Louisiana to one of the highest-ranking diplomatic seats in the world. It was fascinating to hear about her personal work (she was previously the Ambassador to Liberia) and especially about her experience as a member of the United Nations. More particularly, what stuck out the most to me was hearing Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield talk about the racism and stigmatization she has faced as the Southern Black woman representing the United States on the global stage. It reminded me that although she may be one of the highest-ranking women in the country, Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield's position does not shield her from the harsh realities of the world. It only further showed me how much work we have to do, as a global community.

# SCUSA Reflection

Shayna Cohen '23

The participants SCUSA inspired serious and lively debate for our group discussions and a launching pad for the issues we were to tackle. My group, especially, was given a very broad topic: The Future of U.S. Involvement in the Middle East. There were so many initial questions we had to answer. What is the Middle East? What are the United States' interests there? What is the history of U.S. intervention in the Middle East, and what are the legacies of that history?

After about two hours of intense discussion about all things Middle East, past and present, we decided on one issue that stood out in gravity and urgency: nuclear proliferation, specifically coming from Iran. My group agreed that nuclear weapons pose the gravest threat to safety in the Middle East, and Iran's hostility, in the region and with the U.S., ultimately could be a trigger for nuclear action. Our main goal for the next two days of long discussion was to figure out how best to deter Iran from amassing a nuclear arsenal, and what the long-term goals of this effort would be. What is the importance of deterring Iran? What effects would it have on the rest of the Middle East and the general power balance of the region?



It would be far too complicated of me to go through what my group discussed over eight hours of intense conversation, research, and writing. Instead I will attach [here](#) the final policy memo in which we lay out our suggestions. In return for Iran rejoining an international nuclear de-proliferation agreement, the JCPOA, the accord would remove the IRGC, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, as a terrorist organization. Hopefully this move would incentivize the Iranians to rejoin the JCPOA. There are also other recommendations for how best to proceed, capitalizing on the civil unrest in Iran as incentive for them to make a strong diplomatic move. Overall, I was really proud of the policy proposal that my group wrote. It was influenced by not only civilian democratic standards but also by those of U.S. Military policy proposals. During the final morning of the conference, each group presented their policy proposals. Since the groups together covered nearly every topic and global region possible, I left that day feeling informed and motivated for how to approach future diplomatic and geopolitical processes.

Every part of my experience at SCUSA was memorable, and each moment provided me with lessons about military experience, especially at West Point, and life as a U.S. citizen. Since I got to stay in the cadet barracks, I watched all the cadets interact with one another and contribute to their community. I was shocked that there are barely any "superiors" around— the cadets keep each other in line, make and enforce community rules, and are their own support and retribution systems. This was one of the most memorable things about SCUSA— how much responsibility the cadets took on to lead each other. Coming from a college campus where there are many older superiors around, it was refreshing to see a community of people with a sense of collective responsibility.

Attending SCUSA at West Point was my first true introduction to the U.S. Military. I learned about their morals, routines, goals, and structure. I also got to meet bright Political Science students from across the country who gave me fodder for my views of the world. I am so thankful to the Skidmore College Political Science Department for choosing me to represent the department at SCUSA. It was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience that I will not forget.



# SENIOR THESES

## ATTENTION JUNIORS!

Students who wish to write a senior thesis must complete a thesis questionnaire form and submit it to their prospective thesis director by June 15 prior to their senior year.

## The T-Shirt and the Table:

### Comparing tropes of militarized masculinity in Zelenskyy and Putin's leadership styles during the Ukraine War

Michael DeCarlen-Bumiller '23

To fully understand the ever-changing political landscape of geopolitics, it is crucial to go beyond the traditional International Relations theories of realism, liberalism, and constructivism when analyzing phenomena. Accordingly, this thesis will examine the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine using feminist and queer IR theory to better understand the role of gendered hierarchies and processes in the instigation, conduct, and, potentially, resolution of international conflict. Specifically, it will look at the leaders of each country, Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and the type of militarized masculinities they have utilized as leadership strategies both before and during the present war, which began when Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. To conduct this analysis, I will first examine the existing literature on masculinity in politics, with a particular focus on the ideas of hegemonic masculinity and militarized masculinity; this helps me provide the necessary background framework to conduct my analysis of the two leaders. This analysis will yield conclusions regarding the pervasiveness, various forms, and potential utility of militarized masculinities as a tool of leadership in various contexts (in my cases, authoritarian and democratic contexts in Russia and Ukraine, respectively). My analysis will demonstrate the benefits of going beyond mainstream theoretical constructs when interpreting international conflict.

## Peace and Reconciliation:

### Is it Time to Revisit the Good Friday Agreement?

Rory Millar '23

As Northern Ireland approaches the 25th anniversary of The Good Friday Agreement the days of sectarian violence and the daily threats of violence towards civilians are mostly gone, but the country remains in a constant political conundrum. The Good Friday Agreement proved the answer to some of the most pressing issues of The Troubles – most critically, it marked the official end to the paramilitary violence which had plagued the country for 30 years. The Agreement also demilitarized the Irish border and made it practically invisible, allowing for the free movement of people and trade across the island of Ireland. The open border marked a recognition by the British and Irish governments, together with the people of the island of Ireland, that hard borders in Ireland are, and were always, incompatible with a sustainable peace between the North and South. However, in the 25 years after the signing of the Agreement, actors in Northern Ireland have struggled to move on from its legacy of using violence to express political frustration. Key social and political institutions remain religiously segregated and overwhelmingly ineffective, while the emergence of Brexit in 2016 has only further renewed sectarian tensions within Northern Ireland. My project seeks to analyze the Good Friday Agreement and determine if it can be categorized as a successful peace agreement as defined by peace studies theory.

Specifically, I will examine the mechanisms within the Good Friday Agreement that were designed to address the desire for cultural recognition/autonomy for both the Catholic and Protestant communities and to address past human rights violations in the hopes of bringing about lasting cooperation and peace. I will compare the Good Friday Agreement's mechanisms with those in other peace agreements also defined as "successful" in accordance with peace agreement theory. Necessarily, this will also entail trying to understand what aspects of the Good Friday Agreement have "failed" (or are showing signs of strain) and why. Examining this question will help us better understand how post-conflict states deal with complex legacies of past violence and historical narratives of grievances and also help us to be able to craft more effective peace agreements in the future. For the specific case of Northern Ireland, this thesis aims to try to identify contemporary strengths and weaknesses of the Good Friday Agreement with the goal of preserving and enhancing the gains of that peace in the post-Brexit era.



# SENIOR THESES

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## A State of Mind:

### Reconciling Theory of International Borders with Philosophy of Mind

Hunter Wasser '23

What *is* a border? Is it a wall in the desert, a line on a map, or something else entirely? These are the questions that have driven me as I've worked on my thesis over the last half-year with Professor Yelena Biberman-Ocakli. Broadly speaking, the aim of my research is to develop a new theory about interstate borders that accounts for philosophies of mind and consciousness. Pre-dominant ideas of borders often focus on material or social phenomena, but I don't think that's enough. Borders do not cease to exist simply because a fence is knocked over, nor are they defined solely by a line on a map. A fence is not a border until it is called one; a line on a map is useless information unless there is someone there to read it. Indeed, borders exist only when and how they are observed, and the act of observation requires an observer. Cases where borders are "contested" illustrate this explanatory deficiency. Palestine-Israel, Kashmir, and Korea are the empirical cases that I use to show the value of my new approach.

Working on this project with my advisor, Professor Biberman, has been an invigorating experience so far, and I look forward to seeing where exactly it takes me by the time I'm finished in April. What's been most surprising so far is simply the breadth of topics we've covered. Last fall, we discussed theories of quantum social science that offer analytic approaches to political science that are modeled after the properties of subatomic particles. I presented my work on this topic in Prof. Biberman's PL 103 class at the end of the Fall semester (photo 1). I also interviewed in-person Dr. Samir Ahmad Bhat, a professor at Gandhi Memorial College in Kashmir (photo 2). We discussed the line of control in the Kashmir Valley, and because of our meeting, I will be conducting interviews with some of his students later this month. This spring, I also had the pleasure of attending dinner with Professors William Lewis and Peter Murray, alongside guest speaker Asad Haider, a Political Science professor at York University who has a Ph. D. in History of Consciousness. I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to share my ideas with my peers and professors throughout this entire process—it's refreshing to see so many other minds willing to engage with a rather unorthodox approach to IR. One such highlight was a presentation and discussion that I led in Prof. Biberman's "Technology and International Politics" class earlier this semester (photo 3). So, to all who have heard me out in some way, thank you, and thank you in advance to all who have yet to do so.



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# Congress comes to Skidmore

## TALKING BIPARTISANSHIP IN THE MIDST OF POLARIZATION

BY PROF BOB TURNER

Former Representatives William Flores (R-TX) and Bill Enyart (D-TX) visited Skidmore as part of the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress' (FMC) Congress to Campus Program. The Congress to Campus sends a bipartisan pair of former House members to colleges to share their experiences in government. Rep. Enyart said he participates because he wants to dispel some of the myths of what happens inside the beltway. "Congress is sometimes not portrayed entirely accurately in the media. And so, we get an opportunity on a one on one basis to share our experiences, both in Congress and in, in our non-elected life," said Enyart.

The two former representatives gave great insights about everything from campaign financing to artificial intelligence, with a particular focus on polarization. Rep Flores said, "Both parties in the House have an issue with the fringes on each end of the spectrum, that are that are framing the narrative. So, if you look at Kevin McCarthy, it was the Freedom Caucus that was causing the disruptions in his ability to be elected. If you'd look at when Nancy Pelosi was speaker, she had trouble with the far-left branch, trying to frame the conversation. And so, at the end of the day, most Americans don't live in those ends of the ideological spectrum, they live somewhere closer to the middle. And so, I don't think that we are well served in the House by having the fringe elements control the narrative for either party. I'm hoping that somehow, we as Americans can begin to figure out that those people are not doing us any favors on the fringes and we can start to elect people that reflect broader views in the House, and the Senate as well."

Associate Professor Bob Turner said, "I thought the students enjoyed hearing from speakers outside of their geographical and ideological bubbles." Both representatives said they were really impressed by the knowledge, curiosity, and questioning from our students.

The two members were real workhorses; they gave two talks, attended classes with Professors Turner, Taylor, Seyb, Biberman and Schneller. They also had two lunches and two dinners with faculty and students over the two days. All told, they met with 250-300 students in their events. The two Bills particularly enjoyed eating in the Dining Hall for chicken finger Friday. Prof Turner said, "I talked with my colleagues and we are excited to bring another pair of members of Congress in 2025."

The idea for the visit was the brainchild of Keilty Archibald '24 who interned in Fall 2022 for the FMC. The former members do not receive a stipend for their time and also pay for their own travel expenses. The representative's meals and hotels were paid for by a grant from the Presidential Discretionary Fund for which we are very grateful.

Photos by Addison Callaghan '25





The Political Science Department inducted new members to the Tau Gamma chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honor Society, on March 9th.

#### Class of 2023

Shayna Rose Cohen, Michael DeCarlen-Bumiller, Mark DeCoursey, Jai Gil, Emily Anne Gilbert, Evan Holland-Shepler, Samantha Hotz, Sydney Leah Kass, William Skyler Lee, Gregory McInnis, Rory M. Millar, Mia Mirzayan, Katherine M. Phillips, David Strange, Hunter N. Wasser

#### Class of 2024

Ilena Berro Pizzarossa, Maria Bideiwy, Oscar Czarnecki, Ash Delmore, Joseph Aidan Demarest, Grace Geurin, Emma Gill, Conrad Kassin, Isabel Kroeger, Kate Landino, Nathaniel Lowell, Phoebe Marwill, Kaitlin McQuade, Harlan Power, Claire Thomas, Alex Western

#### Class of 2025

Sydney Borak, Addison Callaghan, Zander Chown





# Spring Break in Homestead, Pennsylvania

## Professor Natalie Taylor



This spring I was invited to lead a seminar for high school teachers on women's suffrage in Homestead, Pennsylvania. I was happy to go for personal, as well as professional, reasons. I had been going to Homestead during the spring for as long as I could remember. My mother grew up in Homestead and we made the relatively short drive from my hometown, Columbus, Ohio, for Easter and other holidays. Homestead is located in the "Mon Valley." That's pronounced "Mawn" in Pittsburgh's distinctive accent and is short for the Monongahela River Valley, which is on "the south side" of Pittsburgh. Steel mills ("still mills") lined the banks of the river in towns like Homestead and Braddock. (Braddock may sound familiar to you. Senator John Fetterman was once the mayor of this steel town and still calls it home.) My great-grandparents immigrated from eastern Europe around the turn of the twentieth century. Three generations of my family worked, and some died, in the mills. I can vividly recall my grandfather returning from the mill, face covered in soot, the residue of melting iron into steel. He always sat at the bottom of the "cellar" stairs, elbows on his knees and head bent down, resting, maybe contemplating the back-breaking, monotonous work that he had been doing all of his life. In a moment, he would have had to start getting ready for church. My mother's family was Russian Orthodox and, so, visiting at Easter meant several church services that stretched over the weekend. By the time that I graduated from high school in 1988, most of the mills were closed, empty, and beginning to decay. Professor Delton, who studies labor history at Skidmore, could explain the long economic process that eventually led to the mills' demise, but my grandfather, a lifelong New Deal Democrat, blamed Ronald Reagan.

Pittsburgh has gone through an impressive urban revitalization. It is home to health care corporations, tech companies, and two major universities. In 2004 John Kerry, the Democratic nominee for the presidency, came to Pittsburgh to announce his running mate, John Edwards. Kerry who had raised the suspicions of his political opponents by speaking French and windsurfing off the coast of Nantucket, sought to affirm his loyalty to more traditional Democratic voters. Edwards might help. Edwards, who also ran for the nomination, campaigned on the promise of uniting "the two Americas", a reference to the economic stratification that had been devastating to places like Homestead. But, instead of returning to the banks of the Monongahela, Kerry made the announcement from his wife's, Theresa Heinz (yes, the ketchup) Kerry's estate, pointing to the changing composition of the Democratic Party.

Twenty years later the mills have mostly been razed. In their place stand big box stores (my sister sometimes runs into Senator Fetterman at Costco) and a shopping district, "The Waterfront." But, just a few blocks from the river, the once thriving Eighth Avenue, Homestead's main street, a working man's Broadway, is mostly abandoned, a ghost town. Two Americas indeed.

The seminar on women's suffrage that I lead was held at the Waterfront. Sitting at the seminar table, I could look out the window, past the Old Navy, and up the hill to see the onion domes of my grandparents' church. The money my grandfather earned in the mill and my grandmother earned cleaning a nearby hospital had paid for their children to go to college and helped to pay for my graduate education. My grandmother was born three years before the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment secured women the right to vote and for much of her life was not able to hold her own credit card. I enjoy a life that my grandmother could not have imagined—almost. I still went to her church.



# Here, there, and everywhere

## Sydney Kass '23

Last fall, some of you might have wondered where Professor Beau Breslin was all semester. Well, look no farther, for the answer to the mystery is here: he was teaching on the London First Year Program.

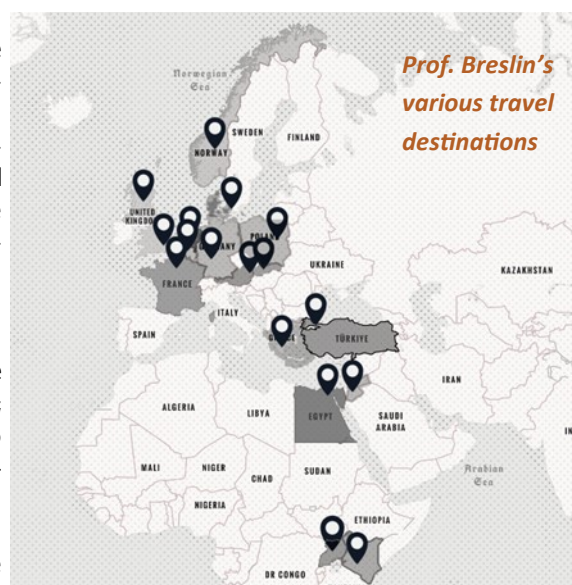
Each year 36 adventurous students spend their first semester of college in London, and two Skidmore Faculty Coordinators go with them. This year, Beau had the opportunity to be one of them, and the experience exceeded his expectations. In addition to serving as the students' mentor, he taught a Scribner Seminar tailored to their time in London. In "Dissolving the Political Bands," his students studied the American Revolution from the British point-of-view. Using London as a laboratory for his classes, he and his students visited places like the last remaining Ben Franklin house, Kew Gardens, and the National Archives, where they got to touch a copy of the Declaration of Independence—without even wearing gloves!

There was a lot going on in the United Kingdom last semester. Queen Elizabeth II passed away and the British Parliament selected two prime ministers. While we watched them on the news—or on our social media feeds—Beau and his students got to witness these transitions first-hand. How awesome is that?

While in London, Beau relished the opportunity to travel. Taking advantage of weekends and fall break, he visited a whopping 16 other countries: Scotland, Poland, Slovakia, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Denmark, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Kenya, Uganda, Germany, Austria, and Norway. During these excursions, Beau visited many museums and World War II-related places—museums, Auschwitz, bombing sites, etc. In his opinion, none of the museums beat our Tang Teaching Museum and their edgy, provocative handling of exhibitions. (Go Skidmore!) Of all his visits, Turkey was his favorite; there, he got to ride in a hot air balloon!

If you know Beau, you know that he is a major Alabama fan. The 5-hour time difference did not stop him from watching their football games in real-time; he would set an alarm, sleep, and wake up in the middle of the night to cheer on his team. (However, I'm not entirely sure the game against Tennessee was really worth waking up for...)

Despite the blast he had teaching in London, Beau missed us here across the pond in Ladd Hall. He cherishes last semester and is happy to be back with us at Skidmore, teaching what he loves.



ESRI, FAO, NOAA, USGS, Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, Sydney Kass '23

### Prof Taylor's Spring Break in Homestead, Pennsylvania *Continued from page 12*

Captions for Professor Taylor's photos—top: My twin sister, Diana, and I outside St. Nicholas Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church. And lower: My daughter, Maggie, who is named for my grandmother, outside of Carey Furnace. Carey Furnace is an old mill and is being transformed into a special events venue. We were there for my nephew's wedding in October.

If you are looking for a study break, consider watching a movie about Pittsburgh. You might like early Tom Cruise in *All the Right Moves* (Twentieth Century Studios, 1983), Christian Bale in *Out of the Furnace* (Relativity Media, 2013) or Robert De Niro in *The Deer Hunter* (Universal Pictures, 1979). Or read a book! *Out of This Furnace* by Thomas Bell is a novel that recounts the lives of three generations of a Slovak family in Braddock.

# First-Hand, In-Person

Avik Nandy '24

In November 2022, Professor Yelena Biberman's "Politics of Modern South Asia" class was visited by Dr. Samir Ahmad Bhat from Kashmir. Dr. Bhat talked to our class about what life is like under military occupation. His visit supplemented our learning about the rise of authoritarianism in South Asia. Speaking with Dr. Bhat after learning about India's democratic backsliding under Narendra Modi was highly instructive. As I look back to Dr. Bhat's visit, it was very insightful to learn about the specific policies and tactics, such as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, that lead to human rights violations in the region. Dr. Bhat also introduced us to Kashmir's history, first as a princely state under the British Raj and then as a region contested by India and Pakistan (two nuclear powers). I personally enjoyed Dr. Bhat's in-person visit to our class – as a person of South Asian descent myself, I could see these issues in a personal light.

Shayna Cohen '23 put it best when it comes to the sentiments of the class towards Dr. Bhat: "I felt extremely lucky to be able to talk with Professor Bhat. It is rare that we get to hear stories from authoritarian or militaristic systems first-hand, in-person, and not through third-party literature or documentaries. It's especially rare that we got to have a conversation with someone whose home state is virtually cut off from the outside world and unable to speak freely online. It's such a contrast from everything I am used to. I was fascinated by Dr. Bhat's research on South Asian diplomatic methods and even used his research as the basis for my final paper in the class. Overall, I am super grateful to Professor Biberman for allowing me the opportunity to meet Dr. Bhat."

Evan Holland-Shepler '23 also reflected positively on the experience: "Professor Bhat's firsthand experience with the trials and tribulations that Kashmiris face, combined with his deep understanding of South Asian politics writ large, made him an extremely compelling guest speaker."



*Pictured left to right: Dr. Samir Ahmad Bhat, Professor Biberman-Ocakli, Emma Balon '24, Will Tone '23, Shayna Cohen '23, Avik Nandy '24, Oliver Wilson '23, Phoebe Marwill '24, Pablo Gonzalez '24, Evan Holland-Shepler '23*

## Class trip to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point

Bridget Coyer '25

In Fall 2022, Professor Yelena Biberman's "Politics of Modern Warfare" class took a trip to U.S. Military Academy at West Point. We toured the facilities and met with cadets, who are set to be leaders in the U.S. Army. We took a bus from the Skidmore campus to West Point, NY. We began by visiting a military museum, which highlighted philosophers such as Machiavelli and Clausewitz – whose work we read in class!

The cadets then took us on a walking tour of campus while explaining the history surrounding West Point and their daily lives on campus. The campus architecture was incredible and styled like a castle with high stone walls and medieval-style turrets surrounding athletic fields and greenspaces. The cadets described a heavy course load of 21 credits alongside morning drills and military training. Two of the three cadets on our tour were women and held seniority over the first-year male cadet, a *Plebe*. He and the other *Plebes* are only allowed to speak when spoken to and are required to be the other cadets' alarm clock and provide entertainment during meal times. The extent of this first-year initiation was slightly shocking to me. Though I expected some level of seniority, the extra work assigned to the first years was overwhelming. If I were put in their shoes, I don't know how well I'd fair.

The trip to West Point helped me better to understand our future officers' training and dedication and compare how the theories I had been learning in class directly apply to our military.

After all of the excitement of experiencing the Military Academy, we went to get dinner from the surrounding area. Most of the group decided to go for either Chipotle or McDonald's, which was directly outside the campus gates. My group decided on Chipotle, but ran into a bit of trouble ordering our food. The restaurant had no in-person service option, so we all stood outside with our phones, trying to download the Chipotle app while slowly running out of time before the bus was to leave. Our mad rush to get food ended in a few of us making mobile orders for the rest of the group and waiting for our food to be cooked by an understaffed kitchen. Luckily, all of us made it back to the bus on time with most of our food correct, but it was definitely a sight to behold – a group of Skidmore students clustered outside of a Chipotle with the West Point sign looming in the background.



# ALUMNI UPDATES LIFE POST-SKID AND ADVICE FOR CURRENT MAJORS

## Jean-Ann Kubler '13

I live in Brooklyn, New York and am currently the Manager of High School Culture Support for Uncommon Schools, a large charter school network. In this role I am responsible for designing and managing the student culture and discipline systems for the network's four Brooklyn high schools, and I directly coach and manage the student support teams at each school.

More than anything, my time studying in the Skidmore Government department taught me to work thoughtfully and thoroughly, and to always seek to understand the “why”—the purpose of a law, system, or government decision. These “soft skills” have directly impacted my career in education and education administration. Working in education requires the ability to balance the needs and interests of multiple stakeholders (dare I say...factions?) and to create consensus among often competing priorities. I think regularly about how often Ron Seyb or Natalie Taylor would ask us to play devil's advocate in a contentious debate, or to consider what outcomes the Founders might have sought with a particular line in a particular Federalist Paper. These exercises taught me to consider all viewpoints and only then craft an argument, a way of thinking that has been incredibly useful in my career.

Take the small, niche classes! I learned the most, and my thinking was pushed the most, in the smaller classes that were a little outside my comfort zone such as French Political Thought. The seminar style classes, with the attention and time of such brilliant professors and other students, is an unmatched experience.

## Warren Bianchi '12

I'm stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. I'm a judge advocate in the Army and am currently deployed to Iraq. My practice covers criminal law, international law, and the law of armed conflict.

My time at Skidmore gave me the confidence to confront tough issues. The Government department exposed me to a variety of perspectives that drive current events. Studying Political Science teaches you to neutrally evaluate and interpret information and opinions.

Embrace writing. Effective communication is invaluable. And take risks. You have what it takes to succeed doing

something you care about! Cherish your time at Skidmore, and use it to ground yourself in kindness, openness, and adventure.

## Maddy Morency '16

I live in LA and work for a branding agency as a creative project manager and brand strategist. We work on brand building and marketing, including brand strategy, business design, brand identity, packaging, web design and development, photoshoots, and ad campaigns.

It's not a straightforward connection, but my Gov classes taught me a framework for how to make sense of an increasingly complex world, including the ability to make connections between seemingly disparate concepts and find comfort in uncertainty.

The Gov department is great because it allows for and encourages you to take classes within so many different specialties and disciplines. Some of my favorite classes—the Prague Travel Seminar with Prof Flagg Taylor and Prof Graney, The Psychology of Politics with Prof Seyb, and States Rebels and Warlords with Prof Biberman-Ocakli—vary greatly in subject matter and specialty, but all helped to give me a better context for understanding and making sense of the world around me.

## Nadine Dodge '10

I currently live in Wellington, New Zealand. I work for the New Zealand Infrastructure Commission. Broadly, we try to address issues facing the infrastructure sector and improve investment decision making in the public sector. For me, it's a mix of writing research reports and providing advice on infrastructure projects and policy proposals.

The Government Department taught me how to write. The writing assignments in Professor Turner's and Professor Ginsberg's classes—briefing papers on specific topics—are quite similar to what I do in my current job. Government classes also provided me with an understanding of theories of policy change and the psychology of politics, which is useful now as a public servant.

Take a mix of classes that give you both a mix of writing and quantitative analysis skills. Yes, my supervisor Bob Turner was right, it's important to take statistics!

# ALUMNI UPDATES

## LIFE POST-SKID AND ADVICE FOR CURRENT MAJORS

### Ashley Storrow '11

I live in Putney Vermont and work as the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Director and a music teacher at an independent high school, Vermont Academy.

I completed a self-designed major in International Development and Social Change of which government classes played a large role. Right after college, my first job was in Refugee Resettlement. The courses I took on immigration in the Government department helped me understand some of the intricacies of the U.S. immigration system, which helped prepare me for this job. Most importantly, my government classes taught me how to ask critical questions and the importance of looking at all information from multiple perspectives.

I highly recommend grounding theory in practice through an internship and real-world experience

of teachers who are passionate about and skilled in their subject matter.

If you have the opportunity to take a class from a visiting professor, do it! Also, don't be afraid to take classes that might not be directly related to your career path—if you take classes you care about and are interested in, you can apply those lessons to whatever path you take.

### Eli Turkel '08

I live in Wilmington, DE where I am a Senior Research Associate for the Community Health Department at Christiana-Care Health System. I evaluate and develop programs that seek to address the social areas of individual and community health such as substance abuse, financial security, housing insecurity, and food insecurity. Political science is interesting because there are very applied and very abstract approaches.

Even though it's quite difficult, while I was at Skidmore I engaged with both sides of that divide in political science. I volunteered on political campaigns, wrote columns for the paper, and took political theory. Working to strike that balance is something I do on a daily basis now in my work life. I am always attempting to build new relationships or maintain existing relationships. I am always staying up on news and research and trying to understand how researchers view the problems our programs seek to address. So, I think that Skidmore prepared me to view social and political problems in sophisticated ways, but also taught me that it is best to communicate my perspective in as straight forward a manner as possible.

Get out into the community. Do your reading. Develop either communications or computer skills, or both! Volunteer on political campaigns, at food kitchens, and homeless shelters. Think about big ideas, write papers about subjects you care about, write papers about subjects other people care about. Put yourself in situations where you are forced to confront the problems communities face and use your education to think about strategies to respond.

### Lizzy Collins '17

I currently live in Yerevan, Armenia, after spending 2017-2022 in various cities across Russia. I left Russia on March 8th of 2022, two weeks after Russia invaded Ukraine. I'm tutoring English online and hoping that it will be possible to return to Russia in the next few years. In Armenia Russian is widely spoken, particularly by those who grew up in the USSR and took Russian classes in school.

Professor Graney's brilliant classes inspired me so much! The information and concepts I learned in my PL classes continue to develop and teach me, even several years after graduating from Skidmore.

Take Professor Graney's classes!

### Nina Tinsley (Glatt) '07

I now live in Phoenix, AZ with my husband and two kids. I joined the team at EY just about two years ago working with the Audit teams in Phoenix, Seattle, and Portland.

The PL Department taught me different ways to think and improved my organization skills. I learned perseverance and was given many opportunities to succeed. The engaging classes and caring professors further taught me the power

**What do these alumni  
have in common?** Answer on page 23

# ONE YEAR OUT: CLASS OF 2022

## The Best Decision: A Political Science Degree for Future Lawyers



### Dean Martinez

As a 1L student at Albany Law who majored in political science at Skidmore, I cannot be more grateful to my professors for preparing me for my experience. Law school challenges you in more ways than you can possibly imagine, but I've found these challenges easier to bear—and have in turn been more successful—due to my political science background. Entering law school with an understanding of why the law exists, its importance, and its underlying philosophy is invaluable. This gave me an automatic advantage. Political science uniquely exposes you to the concept and practical application of

law, how it affects people, and its utility. If you are considering attending law school post grad, studying political science is one of the best decisions you can make. It was for me, and I cherished my time in such an incredible department.

### Bonus Tip: Take the Quantitative Plunge!

Piece of advice: take a statistics, economics, or a computer science class. Your methods training in a political science PhD program can be very difficult if you've never had any experience with quantitative methods, but Skidmore is a great place to get some of that exposure with professors that have the time and ability to guide you through the material.

Anissa Joseph

## The Peace Research Institute Oslo, Norway

### Sophie Mae Berman

In September I moved to Norway to conduct research at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) as a member of the project "On Fair Terms: The Ethics of Peace Negotiations and Mediation." My research has looked at the risks that digital tools including AI will present for the inclusivity of peace negotiations. I have also been developing a project, which looks at how accountability is defined between intervenors and locals in peacebuilding in Afghanistan. I have additionally supported FAIR's forthcoming publications and podcast series, which will look at the role of ethics in high-pressure negotiation and mediation settings. Outside of research, I have been enjoying the outdoor spirit and arts in Oslo.

I am very excited to announce that I was recently offered a place in the Oxford University MPhil International Relations course, where I will begin studying in the fall. I am very grateful to the Political Science Department and specifically professors Biberman-Ocakli, Ocakli, Graney, and Taylor for their support.





# ONE YEAR OUT: CLASS OF 2022

## Doctoral Candidate at UC Davis: Reflections and advice for Political Science students

Anissa Joseph

### One Year Post-Skid

I miss Skidmore every day. The community fostered on campus is unmatched. I never truly realized how lucky I was to go to a school where I knew my faculty very well and felt comfortable enough to reach out and ask for help and opportunities. Without Skidmore faculty, I don't think I would have applied to grad school or even thought of it as an option for myself.

UC Davis has been amazing, it's a beautiful campus, Davis is a wonderful town, and I have the privilege of working with amazing scholars and faculty. The biggest adjustment was honestly the size of the campus. Going from 2,500 students to 40,000 was a big transition. Working as a teaching assistant (TA) has also made me treasure my experiences at Skidmore. Being a TA has truly shown me how much our professors do for us to make sure we're well-rounded students and good writers. They offer us a level of feedback that is unique to the small liberal arts college experience.

### Undergraduate to Doctoral Candidate

Being a PhD student is challenging. Some days I wake up and I am so grateful to be where I am and have the opportunity to get paid to learn. On other days, I struggle with feelings like imposter syndrome, fomo, and exhaustion. The hardest part of being a graduate student is taking care of your mental, physical, and emotional/spiritual health. Once you're in a graduate program, it means you're capable of completing the degree, but the challenge is working through the difficult coursework, the (sometimes brutal) feedback, and developing good study habits and a work-life balance. It may sound intimidating, but my advice is to ask for help and look for resources (because they're there)! All that aside, I love being in an environment where people are excited about political science! Every day I have conversations about new research, different methodological approaches, interesting literature, and people's passions.

My professors and the students I work with are inspiring and make me feel really excited about the future of our field.

### Taking the Next Step: Applying for Scholarship/Fellowship Programs

I won't lie, the process of applying to graduate school is intimidating, but I have a few pieces of advice that may be helpful when applying for fellowships and scholarships:

1. **Reach out to your professors at Skidmore.** I am incredibly privileged to be an APSA Diversity Fellow, but it's an opportunity I never would have heard of without asking professors at Skidmore for help. I met with almost every professor in (and outside) our department when looking for programs, but I had several meetings with Professor Emmanuel Balogun, Professor Bob Turner, and Professor Bieberman-Ocakli about applying to graduate school and funding opportunities. Those meetings were incredibly helpful, and I am so grateful that they took the time to help me navigate a difficult process. You have amazing resources at Skidmore, do not hesitate to ask for help!

2. **Fully-funded programs.** If funding is a concern for you, which it is for most people in graduate school, look at programs that are fully funded or have partial-funding opportunities. There are a lot of websites that will give you that information without having to look at a bunch of different schools' pages. I looked up fully funded programs before I ever looked at any programs I wanted to go to, because I knew that I wanted to get my PhD at the lowest cost possible. If a school you want to attend does not offer funding or does not have a lot of information about it on their websites, ask for a zoom meeting with the head of the program, and they can talk to you about how their current students are handling funding issues.

3. **Google.** If you're considering going to graduate school, Google will become your best friend, so start building the skills now! I have found so many awesome opportunities for graduate funding, retreats, and support groups by spending some time on Google. It's not life changing advice, but being a graduate student requires a lot of initiative, so taking some time and compiling a list or spreadsheet of various opportunities will help you get organized as well as develop skills you will use throughout your graduate education.

Graduate school funding is complicated and can feel overwhelming, but there are a lot of resources out there to help you.

# STUDENT NEWS

## How did you spend your winter break?

At home, and went to Iceland for a week! -Claire Crosby '25

At home with friends and family. -Emma Gill '24

Read some fantastic books and was lucky to have time in the Aruban sunshine.

-Shayna Cohen '23

I stayed at home and spent time with my family and cat :) -Avik Nandy '24

Working, learning, and resting -Marvelous Ekeh '23

Helping my mother move into her first owned home! Very exciting and tiring time, but overall extremely proud of my mother. -Aysha Mendez '23

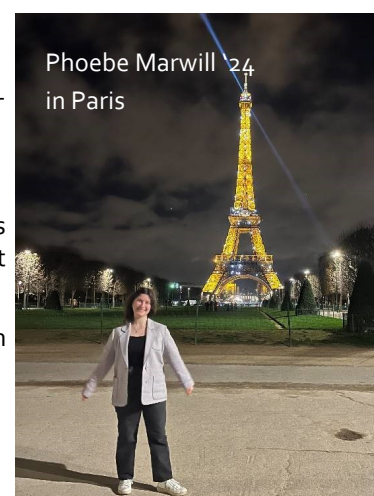
CrossFit-ing and traveling -Bella Bruno '25

I skied at Mont Tremblant in Quebec. Then I went to Portugal with my father. Both places were fantastic, especially Portugal. I stayed in Porto and the atmosphere was so different compared to both New York and the U.S. as a whole. -Trevor Lai '25

Working, playing lacrosse, going to a Washington Capitals game, and spending time with family! -Grace Grbach '25

I spent my break at the beach with my family knitting and needle felting. -Maddie Aikin '23

I spent my winter break getting ready to study abroad in Paris. I took a January term class in Paris which took up a good portion of my break. -Phoebe Marwill '24



Phoebe Marwill '24  
in Paris

## Which co-curricular activities keep you busy?

Pre-Law and democracy matters -Claire Crosby '25

Working on a podcast about Saratoga's Black Lives Matter (BLM) organization with Professor Biberman -Emma Gill '24

I am co-Editor-in-Chief of the Skidmore News, Skidmore's entirely student-run publication. -Shayna Cohen '23

I'm currently in the Skidmore Dynamics Acapella club and am considering joining the MUN club that recently started again (since several MUN members have been bothering me to join) -Avik Nandy '24



Evan Holland-Shepler '23  
in Rome

Honors Forum, Investment Club, Skidmore News, Pre-law Club.  
Marvelous Ekeh '23

I am a member of Law Club and I am currently applying for Big Brothers/Big Sisters. -Trevor Lai '25

Women's Lacrosse, Morgan's Message, and Pre-Law Club. -Grace Grbach '25

I'm the president of Lively Lucy's and we have music events every Thursday, 8 pm at Falstaff's! We've brought a number of awesome bands to campus and are bringing more in April! -Maddie Aikin '23

I'm currently the co-president of the Skidmore Democrats. -Phoebe Marwill '24

## Senior Reflections: we asked the Class of 2023 to share about their time in the Political Science department. Here's what they had to say

My time in the political science department has been formative. The courses I have taken have been both challenging and rewarding, and I believe I am a better scholar and person because of my time in Ladd Hall. Reflecting on my experiences, working with Professor Biberman has been a highlight. Professor Biberman pushed me out of my comfort zone, encouraging me to tackle difficult research questions related to U.S. Foreign Policy. She gave me an opportunity to lecture her Intro to Comparative Politics class and lead a discussion on Afghanistan during the Fall 2021 semester, and that day changed my academic and professional trajectory. I discovered that I had a passion for teaching—something I had never imagined myself doing—and ultimately decided to pursue a career in education instead of government, like I had planned. This fall I will be attending a graduate program for social studies education. As my time at Skidmore ends, I look back on all my experiences in the political science department fondly and with immense gratitude. **-Sam Hotz**

I came into Skidmore knowing I was going to be a Political Science major. However, what I didn't know was how diverse the major itself is- the four subdisciplines provide so much space to explore different topics within Political Science. I also love the enthusiasm and friendliness of all of the professors in the department; my experience as a PL major would definitely not have been the same without the support I've gotten from the professors. And Barbara, of course, who is the best Administrative Assistant at this institution. The PL department is a close-knit community and it has made my college experience so much more wholesome than if I were in a department that wasn't so community-oriented. **-Shayna Cohen**

Found the political science lounge space last semester and I love it. **-Marvelous Ekeh**

It's been a quick and unusual 4 years, but without the support of the Political Science department I'm not sure how I would've gone along with my undergraduate experience. I've learned, argued, and built game boards! It's been a fun and stressful 4 years but I couldn't imagine it with any other department! **-Aysha Mendez**

I've loved all of my professors and I'm so glad that I've had the opportunity to not only learn from them, but also get to know them and connect with them. **-Maddie Aikin**

## Confessions of a *West Wing* Wannabe by Sydney Kass '23

By now, if you attend any of your political science classes, you've probably seen me around. Whether I'm working for the department as a research assistant, doing homework, or just bothering Barbara and my professors, I'm always in Ladd Hall; Ladd Hall is practically an extension of my soul.

My work in the Political Science Department has undoubtedly been my favorite. As a research assistant, I get to help the department run smoothly while simultaneously keeping my finger on the pulse. From rearranging our gorgeous new lounge to photocopying readings for our classes, from interviewing Skidmore alumni and professors to creating content for the newsletter, I have relished the opportunity to contribute to the department. (And now I know how to use a copy machine too—score!)

In all seriousness, my passion for working in Ladd strongly correlates with my long-standing love for the department. When each of us chose to major or minor in political science, we not only chose a discipline to study but a community to join. In no other place on campus have I felt so welcomed, and that is why it has been my honor and pleasure to work for the department these past few semesters. Ladd Hall, thank you for having me.



# STUDENT NEWS

## WHAT'S CURRENTLY CATCHING YOUR ATTENTION IN THE WORLD OF POLITICS?

Since I'm currently abroad in Paris, I've been fascinated by the huge grève (strike) movement currently happening in France over the pension reforms proposed by Macron. I've been fascinated because the broad movement of strikes is so unlike anything I've seen before in the United States.

Personally I have been very interested in bipartisan polarization that we've been learning about in the majority of my politics classes.

The UN high seas treaty has been on my news feed a lot

I think there is not enough discourse around the way the media discusses Israeli atrocities in Palestine. It's very one-sided and the verbiage tends to villainize Palestinians and treat Israelis as martyrs. Western media needs to stop sensationalizing and be more transparent about who is committing acts of violence, towards whom and why.

Mostly just Russia and Ukraine. However, thanks to professor Biberman, she has turned my focus towards biotechnology, since I've been helping her research India's growing role in the biotech sector.

Russia-Ukraine and its political and financial implications. I think we don't talk enough about how technology is changing the international political landscape.

I've currently been focusing my attention on international politics. I noticed how narrow my view of the world is. Something that caught my eye recently was the new mega-prison which was opened in El Salvador.

The student loan plan.

I'm taking a Food Politics class so I'm paying particular attention to issues regarding food accessibility.

## TELL US ABOUT YOUR STUDY ABROAD PLANS

I'm currently abroad in Paris, France studying French and taking a political science course at the Institut de Langue et de Culture Française which is hosted at the Institut Catholique De Paris. -Phoebe Marwill '24

I am hoping to study abroad in Florence or Rome through the Classics program! -Claire Crosby '25

I studied in the Spring 2022 semester through CET Academic Programs in Prague, Czech Republic. -Shayna Cohen '23

I'm currently studying abroad with the Skidmore in France program! I'm in Montpellier, France. It's amazing!!! -Izzy Kroeger '24

I spent last Spring semester 2022 studying abroad in London at Goldsmiths University with IES. It was some of the best experiences of my life. Learning about European/UK politics in London added more to it and how I was able to understand it. Study abroad showed me the world is much bigger than my little bubble, and has pushed me to explore more abroad opportunities for my future! -Aysha Mendez '23

I plan on going to London for the year. -Bella Bruno '25

I plan to study abroad Spring semester of my Junior year. I want to go to Tokyo. -Trevor Lai '25

I plan to study abroad in Madrid, Spain in Fall 2023 -Grace Grbach '25

# STUDENT NEWS

## PODCAST, BOOK OR STREAMING RECOMMENDATIONS

*The Daily, On the Media, Up First* and the NPR politics podcast are all great resources for current political events in audio format. Emma Gill '24

*The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida* by Shehan Karunatilaka (winner of the 2022 Booker Prize and wholly, scathingly wonderful). For anyone interested in "postcolonialism", specifically in South Asia (the book takes place in Sri Lanka), authentic queer representation, or biting political satire. Shayna Cohen '23

I've recently started watching *Sharpe*, which is a British historical-fiction drama show following the exploits of British troops in the Spanish Peninsular War in 1812-1813. Definitely an interesting show, especially for anyone interested in the Napoleonic Era and figures like Wellington and Napoleon. Avik Nandy '24

I just finished *The Buried Giant* by Kazuo Ishiguro and it was so good! Technically it's not about politics, but I think the themes can be related to political life. Highly recommend. Izzy Kroeger '24

*Girls* on HBO Max. Trevor Lai '25

## WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE SUMMER?

This summer I am hoping to find an internship in either Washington D.C. or New York working on something related to politics, nonprofit, or think tank work. -Phoebe Marwill '24

I will be staying on campus all of June for the Storytellers' Institute program. After June I have no specific plans (yet). -Emma Gill '24

Working as an intern at the RI District Attorney's Office and living with my friends in Newport. -Claire Crosby '25

After graduation, I plan to return to Prague to explore it in the summer warmth rather than the wintertime. For the rest of the summer I hope to get a job in communications or publishing. -Shayna Cohen '23

Hopefully secure an internship of some sort and spend more time with my cat. -Avik Nandy '24

When I return from Montpellier, I'll work at the local bookstore in my town and enjoy life on the Cape! And prepare for senior year... scary. -Izzy Kroeger '24

Full-time investment banking analyst at UBS in NYC. -Marvelous Ekeh '23

Intern at a law firm and travel a little. -Bella Bruno '25

Probably get an internship. -Trevor Lai '25

Working and training for a half marathon! -Grace Grbach '25

I plan to get an internship at a booking agency in Nashville, Tennessee and work with artists and venues to plan concerts. -Maddie Aikin '23

I will be working and living at home. -Kate Morrison-Willoughby '25

# TOPICS COURSES

# FAALL 2023

## PL 365: East Asian Politics

Examines the internal political processes and regional and global dynamics of one of the most important regions in the world. Will be looking at China, North and South Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong, as well as countries close to the region, such as the Philippines, Mongolia and Australia. Prerequisite: PL 103 or permission of instructor.

## PL 366: International Organizations and Global Governance

Professor Emmanuel Balogun

International Organizations and Global Governance -An exploration of the structure, variations of design, and processes of International Organizations. The design of this class is to focus on international organizations as sites of politics, specifically the politics of: cooperation, collective action, and contention. Students will examine international organizations using a macro-approach to consider and assess the contributions and shortcomings of international organizations in the management of international relations and global governance. Students will explore the pros, cons, and utility of multilateralism, how international institutions adapt to better reflect ongoing shifts in political and economic power among global actors, and re-imagine the role of international institu-

## What has brought Professor Seyb to his knees?

See page 23 for the answer





# WHAT COUNTS FOR WHAT?

| AMERICAN POLITICS                       | POLITICAL THEORY                    | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS                                   | COMPARATIVE POLITICS                                       |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| PL 224: Campaigns and Elections         | PL 323: Dissident Political Thought | PL 201: Principles of International Politics              | PL 209: The Latin American Puzzle                          |
| PL 252: Psychology of Politics          | PL 354: Feminist Political Thought  | PL 309: Latin America and the United States               | PL 246: Contemporary African Politics                      |
| PL 311: Constitutional Law              |                                     | PL 366: International Organizations and Global Governance | PL 327: Politics in Russia and the Soviet Successor States |
| PL 314: Civil Liberties                 |                                     |   | PL 365: East Asian Politics                                |
| PL 315: Immigration Politics and Policy |                                     |   |  |
| PL 317: Real Democracy                  |                                     |   |  |
| PL 334: United States Presidency        |                                     |   |  |

## Answers to the questions from pages 15 and 22

Jean-Ann Kubler, Warren Bianchi, Maddy Morency, Nadine Dodge, Ashley Storrow, Lizzy Collins, Nina Tinsley (Glatt), and Eli Turkel each had worked in the GO/PL department while they were students.

The two photos on page 22 captured the moments just following a Valentines Day acapella serenade to Professor Seyb. The musical interlude was arranged by Professor Biberman-Ocakli. We are all friends here...

FALL 2023