

ALUMNI NEWSWIRE

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
POLITICAL SCIENCE PROGRAM - FALL 2020

TEXAS
STATE
UNIVERSITY

The rising STAR of Texas

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Political Science Online

Adapting education during the COVID-19 pandemic

During Spring 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had a serious effect on the university's classes and activities. Administration, faculty, and students alike scrambled to ensure the safety of their peers and the continued functioning of the University's work and research.

The Political Science Department, like the University at large, responded to the crisis by moving all classes to an online delivery system after Spring Break in March and worked hard to ensure that graduate projects continued and research went uninterrupted. Focus groups, online conferences with University administration, and government orders yielded a safety plan for Summer 2020: all classes would be online in Summer 1, Summer 2 would be online with contingency plans to shift back online should the situation demand it. In the Fall, the University plans to go back to face-to-face instruction, and the Political Science Department has shown its prudence by preemptively preparing hybrid- and online-delivery

material for its classes in the event that the COVID situation changes.

Thankfully, during the crisis essential university services remained open -- the library and student business services were both accessible at all times with extra safety precautions. Likewise, the department's student services, such as advising, were and will be available remotely in order to lessen the hardship on students.

For the future, University administration has designated research and focus groups to plan for the 20-21 academic year and continues to monitor the situation. Social distancing and personal safety measures have been implemented all over campus, and incoming students this Fall will be in classes with distanced seating, hybrid-delivery lectures, and a new environment still committed to delivering the best quality education.



Letter from the Chair

Welcome to the latest edition of our program's *Alumni NewsWire*!

As you'll see, the past year has been a busy time for our political science program. On the faculty side, members of our faculty were recognized as "favorite professors" by Texas State's Alfred H. Nolle Chapter of the Alpha Chi National Honor Society, published books with Rowman & Littlefield and Kendall Hunt, published a new edition of an award-winning textbook, were interviewed on NPR, and published numerous articles in a wide variety of journals. Our students have been busy as well. Among many other things, our students have participated in – and dominated the awards – at the 22nd Annual Eugene Scassa Mock Organization of American States (ESMOAS); traveled to College Station to participate (and win awards) at Texas A&M's annual Student Conference on National Affairs; participated in UTSA's Model United Nations; attended in a fall seminar on immigration at the University of Dallas sponsored by the Texas Network for the Study of Public Issues; and presented their research at conferences in Florida and Corpus Christi.



Further, no account of what we've been up to here would be complete without a mention of our ongoing Discourse in Democracy (DiD) project. This past year's DiD speakers included Tom Ricks, a Pulitzer Prize winning reporter for the New York Times, the University of Virginia's Dr. James Ceaser, Northwestern University's Dr. David Zarefsky, and the University of Texas at Austin's Dr. H.W. Perry. This doesn't even take into account the annual "Meet the Professors" and Alumni Night gatherings, our ongoing film series, and the Election Night and State of the Union Watch Parties.

By all means, stay in touch! You can reach out to us at politicalscience@txstate.edu with any questions you may have about the department or update your alumni information.

Dr. Kenneth Grasso
Chair, Department of Political Science



Discourse in Democracy

Richard Castanon
Meet the Professors

Dr. James W. Ceasar - Constitution Day

Dr. H.W. Perry Jr.

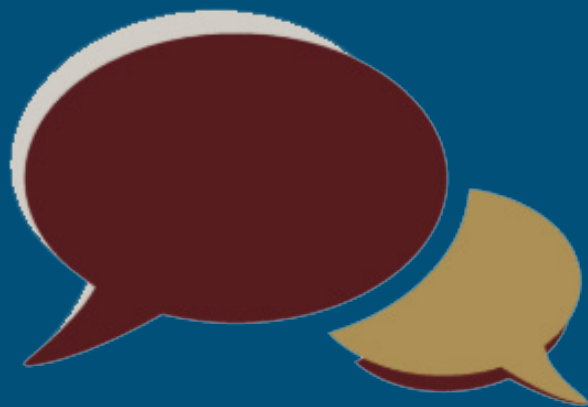
Dr. Joshua Blank & DiD Film Series

Tom Ricks, Pulitzer Prize Winner

State of the Union

Alumni Night

Dr. Zarefsky at the LBJ Museum



Despite Covid-19, 2019-2020 was another successful year for Discourse in Democracy. The year kicked off on September 10th, when Richard Castanon, a Partnership Specialist with the U.S. Census Bureau for the San Antonio-Austin region visited campus to speak to Dr. Lamm's Congress and Political Parties classes and Professor Henderson's "Functions of American Government" class. Castanon spoke about the process used in collecting the census data, the importance of participating in the census, how to access information on one's area, the various uses to which the data is put, and why college students play an important role in collecting census data.

As a Partnership Specialist for the Bureau, Mr. Castanon is responsible for partnering with local government and civic organizations to educate people and maximize participation in the 2020 Census. Political Science junior Jonathan Koenig described Mr. Castanon's presentation as "informative" and added that it was "fascinating to learn about all the areas in which census information is used." His presentations were followed by questions from the audience.





Meet the Professors

150 students attended the department's annual Meet the Professors event. Hosted by DiD, Meet the Professors gives political science and public administration majors the opportunity to meet and talk with the department's faculty. Some two-dozen faculty spoke briefly to attendees about their backgrounds, classes, interests, etc. After the presentations, students and faculty were able to mingle informally over pizza and cookies. Political Science student organizations such as Pi Sigma Alpha, the national political science honor society, SWIPS (Supporting Women in Political Science), and ICMA (International City/County Management Association) were also present and distributed information about their organizations. One student present observed that Meet the Professors "was a great way to learn more about my professors outside of the classroom setting." He added that, "it also allowed me to meet other professors from the department with whom I haven't yet taken classes, but whose projects and

backgrounds really interested me." A junior political science major agreed, noting that the event showed him that "the department wants you to find your home there." He added, "the department has so many resources to use that I feel it's going to be hard for me to not get the support I'm looking for."



Pi Sigma Alpha

Since 1988, the Political Science Department at Texas State University has sponsored a local chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the national honor society for political science students. Founded in 1920, Pi Sigma Alpha currently has more than 700 worldwide chapters. Texas State's well-established Rho Eta chapter has hosted a variety of guests, panels, and lectures during its more-than thirty-year tenure.

Though interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, Pi Sigma Alpha remains strong and hopeful for the fall semester. Typically, the organization inducts new members at their annual induction banquet during the spring semester, but during fall of 2018 Pi Sigma Alpha inducted members due to high demand. They are optimistic for the turnout this fall with new students coming to campus, hungry for a deeper understanding of political science and an interest in making like-minded friends.

For more information about Pi Sigma Alpha, please contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Tom Varacalli, at tfv2@txstate.edu or visit them on Facebook.

ΠΣΑ



Dr. James W. Ceasar - Constitution Day



On Tuesday, September 17th, more than 300 students and faculty members attended Discourse in Democracy's annual Constitution Day Lecture. Delivered by Dr. James W. Ceasar, Professor of Politics at the University of Virginia, the lecture was entitled "James Madison: The Founder of the Modern Founding."

William Lawrence, a first-year master's student in political science, described the lecture as "refreshing," saying that he appreciated Ceasar's "defense of our Constitution." The lecture was followed by questions and an informal meeting between students and Dr. Ceasar. Jean-Marc Pruit, a graduate student in the department, said "Dr. Ceasar reminds us that although deadlock can be frustrating, Madison was right that hasty change can be much worse."

Prior to the lecture, a group of a dozen students and faculty met with Dr. Ceasar over dinner. Earlier that day, he also conducted a seminar attended by fifteen majors examining the evolution of America's political institutions and how the U.S. Constitution compared to other founding documents. Austin Lyttle, a senior political science major, prized "the opportunity to get know Dr. Ceasar as a person," adding that it "makes



me all the more impressed with the academic prowess" he displayed.

Dr. Ceasar's books include *Presidential Selection: Theory and Development*, *Liberal Democracy and Political Science*, and *Nature and History in American Political Development*. The department's Constitution Day activities were made possible by a generous grant from the Jack Miller Center for Teaching America's Founding Principles and History.

Constitution Day and Citizenship Day is an American federal observance recognizing the adoption of the United States Constitution and those who have become United States citizens by birth or naturalization.



Dr. H.W. Perry Jr.



On October 7th, Discourse in Democracy hosted Dr. H. W. Perry Jr., a University Distinguished Teaching Professor at the University of Texas Austin, where he holds a joint appointment in the Department of Government and the School of Law. Nearly 400 students and faculty packed Alkek Teaching Theater to hear Perry's lecture entitled "Deciding to Decide: How the U.S. Supreme Court Selects Its Cases." The lecture drew on his book *Deciding to Decide: Agenda Setting in the United States Supreme Court*, which explores how the U.S. Supreme Court's case selection process works given the many thousands of cases which the court is asked to review each year. This volume has won many awards including the Wilson Prize of the Board of Syndics of Harvard University Press and the Pritchett Award for the best book in Public Law from the Law and Courts Section of the American Political Science Association. After the lecture, Perry fielded questions from the audience and spoke individually with students and faculty members. Earlier in the day, Dr. Perry held a seminar for undergraduate political science students, graduate majors, and faculty members on "The Elitification of the U.S. Supreme Court." It explored the significance of the fact that most of the cases argued in the Supreme Court are argued by an increasingly small pool of Ivy League-educated appellate lawyers with connections to members and former members of the court.



Dr. Joshua Blank



On October 29th, Dr. Joshua Blank, the Research Director of the Texas Politics Project, visited campus to speak to several political science classes. His presentations focused on internship opportunities around the state of Texas, as well as the importance and limits of polling. The Texas Politics Project undertakes research and sponsors internships and

events to foster civic education and involvement. It is particularly interested in encouraging citizens to engage with their local governments. Samantha Martinez, a political science student, commented that Dr. Blank's presentation was "especially helpful to students doing research."



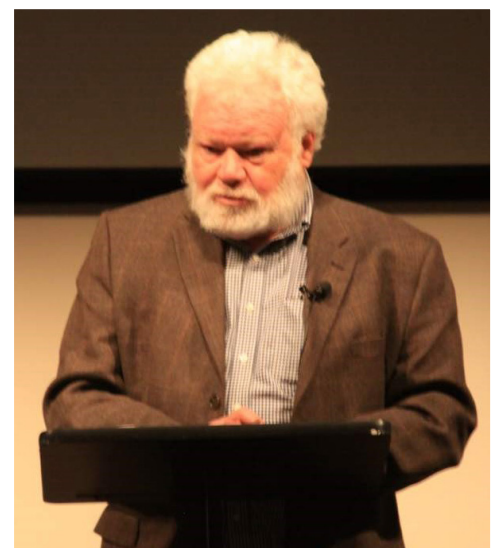
Discourse in Democracy Film Series



The fall installment in the Discourse in Democracy Film Series, took place on November 14th. In keeping with the university's Common Experience theme of "Truth," this fall's event featured "The Insider", an expose about the tobacco industry. Nearly 400 students and faculty were in attendance. The Discourse in Democracy Film Series is coordinated by Professor Rick Henderson.



Tom Ricks, Pulitzer Prize Winner



On Tuesday, November 12th, the *New York Times'* Tom Ricks, a two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting, gave a talk titled "George Orwell on Politics & the English Language" in the Alkek Teaching Theater. Discourse in Democracy was proud to host the reporter, who spoke at length about George Orwell's 1946 essay *Politics and the English Language*.

Ricks' talk explored both Orwell's famous 1946 essay as well as the speeches of Winston Churchill, emphasizing the common ground that united Orwell and Churchill despite their very different positions on the political spectrum of their day - in particular, their shared commitment to individual freedom and opposition to totalitarianism - he explored contemporary American political life against the backdrop of Orwell's insistence on the importance of straightforwardness in speech and writing.

Political science major Zachary Poston noted that Ricks' talk "offered unique insights" into two of the most "inspiring figures of the twentieth century," while another undergraduate major, Ariel Long, was struck by the light the talk cast on contemporary issues such as "fake news."

Earlier in the day, Ricks had spoken to Dr. Menchaca-

Bagnulo's "American Political Thought: From Reconstruction to the Present" class, as well as to history and mass communication classes. He also had lunch with several political science majors and faculty members.

Ricks won his Pulitzer Prizes in 2000 and 2002 for his reporting work with the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Washington Post*. The Yale-educated writer has published several books within his military and national security specializations, including the bestselling *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (2006) and its sequel *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008* (2009). Ricks was raised between New York and Afghanistan, attending the American International School in Kabul until his freshman year, and has even taught abroad at Lingnan College in Hong Kong.



State of the Union

The department's annual State of the Union Watch Party, on February 4th, kicked off the Discourse in Democracy spring events. Over 150 students and faculty turned up to enjoy pizza, soda, and cookies while watching the president's address. Before the president spoke, students had the opportunity to watch excerpts from previous State of the Union addresses delivered by Presidents Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton and to talk with faculty about the speech and current events. Students also heard from Dr. Tom Varacalli, who gave a brief background lecture on the history and structure of the State of the Union address. One junior reported that watching the State of the Union was "even more interesting around people who are just as interested in politics as I am." One graduate student expressed surprise at the size of the turnout, adding that this was "probably due to the fact that our politics today are extremely interesting, regardless of [one's] party preference." Another student was happy to discover that "even in the face of today's polarization, there were moments in the address where all of us could come together and celebrate those who served and sacrificed to protect our rights."





Alumni Night

On February 19th, DiD hosted the department's annual Alumni Night event. Four alumni shared their post-graduate experiences and explored topics ranging from federal employment, interview etiquette, and strategy for turning internships into jobs. The panel included M.A. Program alumni Clint Johnson, a Special Investigator for the Department of Homeland Security, and Kate Moriarty (B.A., 2019) who works at Senator John Cornyn's Austin office. After the panel, students, faculty, and alumni enjoyed pizza and snacks along with some informal conversation at the department's reception. Additionally, undergraduates were able to meet current grad students and ask questions about the department's three graduate programs.

Graduate student Victor Jubril said that he learned "a lot of lessons" at the event, such as how "connection is key to finding that dream job in the real world," and the importance of "internships . . . and keeping an updated LinkedIn profile." Most importantly, he noted that the wide range of experience on the panel encouraged him to "never feel 'not good enough' to fill a position, because [you] just might be the perfect fit." Graduate student Maribel Rodriguez said she felt the event was "really helpful" and appreciated the comment that "one should apply even when the job posting seems unattainable."



Four distinguished alumni spoke to students at February's Alumni Night. The panel consisted of (from left to right) Nicholas Funari, Clint Johnson, Kate Moriarty, and Sabrina Rodriguez.



Dr. Zarefsky at the LBJ Museum



As part of its ongoing collaboration with the Lyndon Baines Johnson (LBJ) Museum of San Marcos, the Department of Political Science co-sponsors events at the museum each fall and spring semester.

On March 5th, Discourse in Democracy partnered with the LBJ Museum to sponsor the museum's annual spring lecture. The speaker, Dr. David Zarefsky, is a professor of communications and history at Northwestern University and the author of several books including *President Johnson's War on Poverty and Lincoln, Douglas, and Slavery: In the Crucible of Public Debate*. In his talk, which was titled "War on Poverty – 50 Years Later", Dr. Zarefsky spoke about different definitions of poverty and how they influenced the debates in the 1960s surrounding the war. He also explored the different approaches employed by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations and highlighted the aggressiveness of President Johnson's approach and the legislation that resulted from it.



The event was preceded by a reception honoring Dr. Zarefsky and followed by a question and answer session. After the program ended, Dr. Zarefsky stayed to talk with people individually about his lecture.

Political science student Kelly Torpey noted the lecture was "extremely rewarding" and added it gave her a "better understanding of LBJ's social reform policy." More than forty people from the department and the community attended the lecture entitled "War on Poverty – 50 Years Later."



To learn more about the LBJ Museum of San Marcos, please visit their website at lbjmuseum.com.

Upcoming Events - Fall 2020



DISCOURSE IN DEMOCRACY
POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT • TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

MEET THE PROFESSORS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH
6:30PM - 7:45PM
VIA ZOOM & CAMPUS LOCATION TBD

CONSTITUTION DAY

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17TH
7:00PM - 9:00 PM
VIA ZOOM & CAMPUS LOCATION TBD

ELECTION NIGHT WATCH PARTY

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD
6:00PM - 10:00 PM
VIA ZOOM & CAMPUS LOCATION TBD



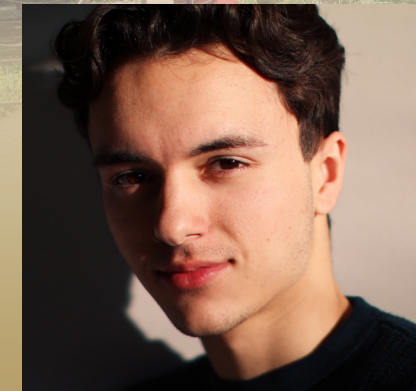
Discourse in Democracy is a series of events designed to engage students in political and philosophical debate about today's most important issues. DiD provides opportunities for students to become more deeply involved in their Texas State community by offering lectures and seminars conducted by public officials and prominent academics and chances to collaborate with professors, other students, and prominent professionals in the field at the federal, state, and local levels.

DiD wishes to thank the Hatton W. Sumners Foundation, the Texas Bar Foundation, the Association for the Study of Free Institutions, the University Lectures Committee, and the Jack C. Miller Center for Teaching America's Founding Principles and History for their generous support of our activities.

For more information, please contact Dr. Sherri Mora sm43@txstate.edu.

Political Science Internships

The Department of Political Science offers a variety of internships including positions with non-profits; US congressional offices, US Attorneys, the Texas Legislature, the Hays County Law Library, and many other federal, state, and local offices. The programs are designed to give students a "hands-on" experience that leaves students with and increased knowledge of the professional workplace, developed marketable skills, and a chance to network with professionals in the field to provide support after their academic career. If you are interested in participating in our internship program, please contact Dr. Cecilia Castillo, cr09@txstate.edu, for more information.



Blake Mieth

For the past year, I have had the opportunity to intern at the IRS Office of Chief Counsel as a Student Trainee Legal Assistant, reporting directly to the Office Manager in Austin, Texas. Since beginning at Chief Counsel, I've become well versed in case management systems, electronic filing systems, and legal proceedings. I work with government Tax Attorneys on a day-to-day basis on cases concerning small businesses, the self-employed, tax-exempt and government entities, and large international businesses.



Brandon Garcia

Over the past two semesters, I have had the opportunity to intern with Congressman Vincente Gonzalez (TX-15). Aside from my many duties working in the congressman's office, I was able to help many constituents with their DACA status, to get a family member's visa approved, and to see the joy in the eyes of so many people who were reunited with their families. The memories I made in the congressman's office will last a lifetime and I truly benefited from every aspect of it.



Zachary Poston

Over the past semester, I had the opportunity to intern with the Texas Public Policy Foundation. Aside from my responsibilities in researching and writing, I was able to meet many people in the capitol and beyond, attend notable events, have conversations with numerous policy experts, and make friends that I will have forever. The experiences I had at the Foundation will be with me for years to come and I appreciate every aspect of the experience.



Model Organization of American Studies (MOAS)



Model Organizations

Model Organization of American Studies (MOAS)



Model United Nations



Supporting Women in Political Science (SWIPS)



Directed by Professor Ben Arnold, the political science department's Model United Nations (MUN) and Model Organization of American States (MOAS) programs afford Texas State students the opportunity to develop their leadership capabilities and to learn about diplomacy, parliamentary debate, and current issues around the globe by participating in simulations and competitions.

In these competitions, students are expected to represent the interests of their assigned nations through diplomacy and parliamentary debate on a simulated world stage.

They argue for and against resolutions in mock sessions, employing their knowledge of international relations theory, current hemispheric and global issues, and parliamentary procedure. The competitions give the participants a chance to sharpen their skills at public speaking and research, as well as to gain topical knowledge and receive encouragement from their peers.



In November, more than two dozen Texas State Students attended the Eugene Scassa Mock Organization of American States (ESMOAS) Summit of the Americas competition.

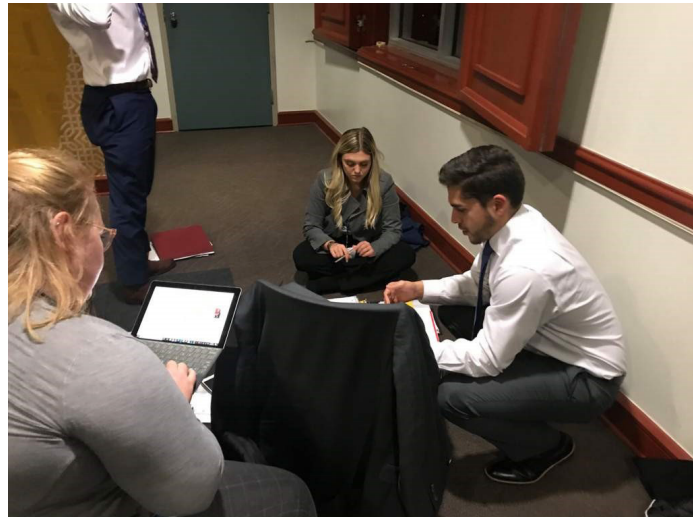
The event, which took place on the 14th-16th at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas, brought a total of 125 students from all over the state and region for a competition simulating the meetings of the Organization of American States, an academic conference on Inter-American Relations, and a model Inter-American Court of Human Rights competition. Participating universities included Baylor University,

POLITICAL SCIENCE PROGRAM
 University of Louisiana Lafayette, Texas A&M Commerce, and the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

The keynote speaker for the event was Miguel Mendivil Ruiz, a former advisor for the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations. He spoke about his UN experiences in multilateral chemical weapons negotiations and the Syrian situation and exhorted the students to take their education and training seriously.

As is now traditional, Texas State's delegation was recognized for its excellence at the competition. Representing Venezuela, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Guam, the twenty-five-member Texas State delegation received numerous awards. Texas State's Venezuela Team, consisting of students Ethan Strickland, Ciana Seddon, Adrian Flores, and Jasper McDonald, won Outstanding Delegation, the competition's top award. Outstanding Committee went to Texas State's Secretariat for Multidimensional Security team: Zack Abnet, Darian Bear, Kevin Brown, Allison Cason, Dani Hancock, Natalie Hernandez, Jasper McDonald, Andrea Garcia Rodriguez, and Catching Valentinis-Dee.

Several Texas State students also received individual recognition. Amanda Beck was named to the Student Advisory Committee, Darian Bear, was named Outstanding Delegate on the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security, and Ethan Strickland was named Outstanding Delegate in the General Committee.



Texas State ESMOAS Delegation

Zekarias Abnet	Adrian Flores	Bryan Reines
Catherine Albright	Andrea Garcia Rodriguez	Christian Sears
OJ Alvarez	Dani Hancock	Ciana Seddon
Laura Banos Lugo	Natalie Hernandez	Timothy Stone
Darian Bear	Acasia Humphries	Ethan Strickland
Amanda Beck	Seth Lott	Kaela Thompson
Kevin Brown	Jasper McDonald	Catching Valentinis-Dee
Allison Cason	David Moncada	

ESMOAS Honors and Awards

Student Advisory Committee

Amanda Beck

Outstanding Committee, Secretariat for Multidimensional Security

Zack Abnet, Darian Bear, Kevin Brown, Allison Cason, Dani Hancock, Natalie Hernandez, Jasper McDonald, Andrea Garcia Rodriguez, Catching Valentinis-Dee

Outstanding Crisis Speech (1st Place in Committee), General Committee

Ethan Strickland

Outstanding Delegate (1st Place in Committee), Secretariat Multidimensional Security

Darian Bear

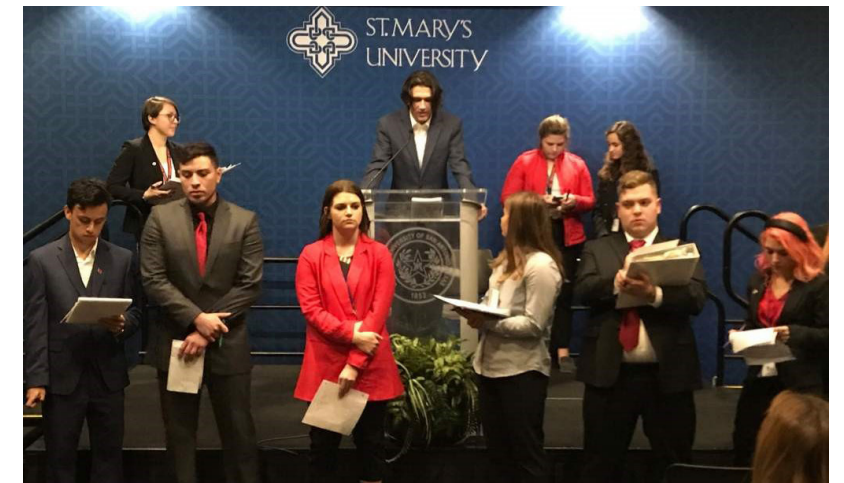
Outstanding Delegate (1st Place in Committee), General Committee

Ethan Strickland

Outstanding Delegation (1st Place Overall)

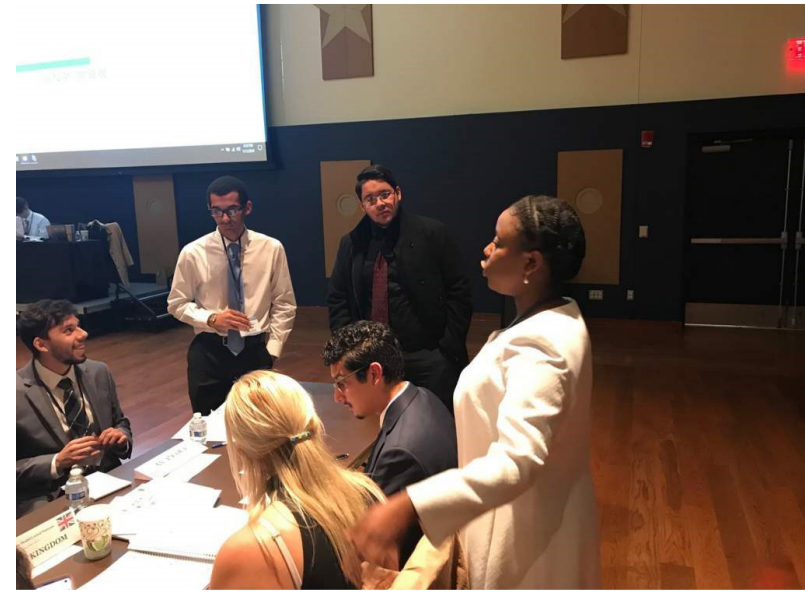
Ethan Strickland, Ciana Seddon, Adrian Flores, Jasper McDonald (Team Venezuela)

Junior political science major Darian Bear reported that “the MOAS group at Texas State has been one of the most fulfilling experiences of my collegiate career.” Ethan Strickland, a senior major, commented that his involvement in the competition “not only gave me skills that I can utilize in a career in diplomacy, but real life skills, and a perspective that could be used in any other career. I consider myself blessed to have been given the chance to join up with the Texas State team.” Kaela Thompson praised MOAS for giving students a “hands-on and interactive approach” to international politics.



Model United Nations

On November 1st-3rd, the Texas State Model United Nations team participated in University of Texas at San Antonio's Model United Nations competition. Over 120 students from all over the region were in attendance. Texas State's delegation included students Amanda Beck, Jasper McDonald, Bryan Reines, Christian Sears, and Kaela Thompson. Of the four awards available at the competition, Texas State students took two. Amanda Beck won the Most Ruthless Delegate award for her work representing the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Christian Sears won the Best Delegate award while representing the Kingdom of the Netherlands.



Supporting Women in Political Science (SWIPS)



Supporting Women in Political Science (SWIPS) is a non-partisan student organization established in 2017 at Texas State University for the purpose of professional development and leadership on campus by offering opportunities for support, mentorship, and networking. Current President Isabel Lozoya explains that SWIPS helps “create a forum for discussion about current political events,” especially for people “who may not want to express their views and just want to learn from others,” encouraging them “to talk about what they think of the political climate.”



SWIPS kicked off the 2019-2020 academic year in September with an introductory meeting at which members were given the opportunity to share their experiences and goals for the year and their careers. In connection with Hispanic Heritage Month, former President Marliza A. Marin shared an article about the achievements of Hispanics at the university and in Texas government.

Since one of SWIPS' focuses is encouraging members to reach out to and serve their local communities with the skills they are learning at school, the organization is always on the lookout for opportunities to serve San Marcos. On October 27th, five SWIPS members attended a San Marcos River cleanup day organized by

the Texas State Student Government. At the meeting, they cleaned up litter around Sewell Park, paying special attention to catching biologically-harmful microtrash in the river.

On November 12th, City Council Member Dr. Joca Marquez visited SWIPS' meeting and answered questions about her career and city government. Specifically, Dr. Marquez talked about her background

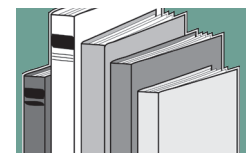
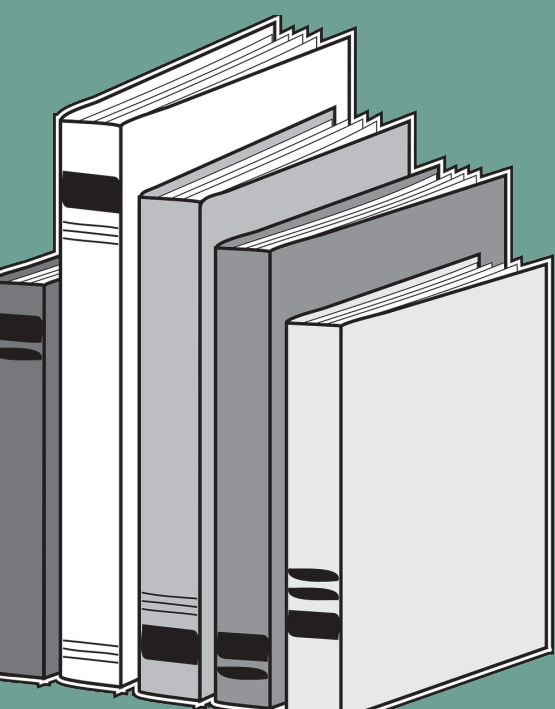
and hometown and the factors that influenced her to run for public office. President Isabel Lozoya said “It was an honor hosting Dr. Marquez at a SWIPS meeting ... she elaborated on why not seeing her community represented in local politics influenced her decision to run for office and encouraged people to believe in themselves and take risks.” She highlighted strategies for making a difference in the community without sacrificing the balance of one's public and private lives.

Though their 2019-2020 activities time on campus was cut short by the Coronavirus pandemic, SWIPS was able to host a meeting on February 28th. The meeting featured Student President/Vice President candidate team Cody Desalvo & Eduardo Camargo, who presented their Students First–Bobcats Forever platform and answered questions about becoming involved with Student Government. The pair were elected in the recent elections.



Student News

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Texas State at the Federalist Society

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

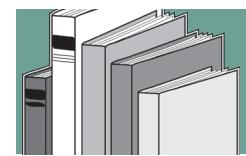
In September, political science majors Nicholas James, Austin Lyttle, and Victoria Collazo attended the 2019 Texas Chapters Conference of the Federalist Society at the AT&T Conference Center in Austin, TX. The conference included academic panels on Texas judicial selection, nationwide injunctions, and election security.

The speakers included Chief Justice Nathan Hecht of the Supreme Court of Texas, Texas Solicitor General Kyle Hawkins, and United States Assistant Attorney General Beth Williams. Senator Ted Cruz delivered the luncheon address on the topic of the Constitution and state courts.

Over two hundred lawyers, judges, public officials, and students from a variety of institutions – including Baylor Law School, St. Mary’s Law School, Southern Methodist Law School, Texas Tech Law School, and Texas Wesleyan Law School – were in attendance.



Political Science majors Nicholas James (left), Austin Lyttle (center), and Victoria Collazo (right) at the conference.



Texas State at TNSPI

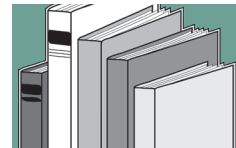


Dr. Thomas Varacalli alongside two of the six political science students attending the TNSPI event.

Four undergraduate political science majors (Austin Lyttle, Isabel Lozoya, Zulma Castelan Balbuena, and Sabra Woodward) and two political science graduate students (Robert Wilson and Julio Rodriguez) attended the fifth Texas Network for the Study of Public Issues, hosted by the American Public Philosophy Institute at the University of Dallas from Friday, September 27 to Saturday, September 28.

The seminar centered on the contemporary debates

concerning legal and illegal immigration. Speakers included Paul Hunker, the Chief Counsel for the Dallas Immigration and Custom Enforcement, who provided a summary of United States federal law and an overview of ICE’s responsibilities; Liz Cedillo-Pereira, the Chief of Equity and Inclusion for the City of Dallas, who addressed the positive contributions of immigration; and Kevin Roberts, the Executive Director of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, who spoke about the distinction between legal and illegal immigration. Other presenters included James F. Hollifield of Southern Methodist University, Kevin Stuart of the Austin Institute, Christopher Wolfe of the University of Dallas, and Susan Hanssen of the University of Dallas. More than forty students attended representing a variety of universities from around the state including the UT-Austin, Baylor, SMU, Houston Baptist University, the University of St. Thomas (Houston), and Tarleton State University. Dr. Thomas Varacalli served as the faculty chaperone for the event.



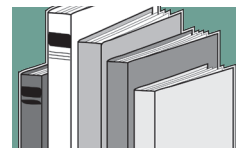
National Conventions

Two Texas State University political science majors have been selected to represent the university at the Washington Center's National Convention Seminars in Summer 2020. Maria Bego Contreras will represent the university at the Democratic Party's National Convention in Milwaukee and Zachary Poston will represent Texas State at the Republican Convention in Charlotte.

At the seminars, the students will be part of briefings and panel discussions designed to involve them in the exciting daily business of the conventions and give them the opportunity to meet with members of the media, campaign professionals, and political party leaders. From security to campaign logistics, the students will navigate the conventions' real fieldwork with the guidance of experienced faculty and subject experts. They will also have a placement within one specific aspect of the convention business, gaining even more hands-on experience with the political world.

Contreras mentioned the "real life experiences" and "real life perspective" as her chief reason for applying. Meetings with media members, campaign professionals, and political party leaders will allow the students to interact with and learn from the people both on- and behind-the-scenes. Poston hopes that the seminars will give the students the chance to clarify "the differences" within each party.

In the fall, the returning students also look forward to being able to share their experiences with the student body at an Honors College forum. Poston expects that "the dynamics between the constituents and the coalitions and the candidates will be hard to miss," and writes that he is eager to witness the process in-person and share his experiences. Contreras too hopes that the convention seminar will foster "a better understanding of the political arena and the many factors that come into play" in party conventions.



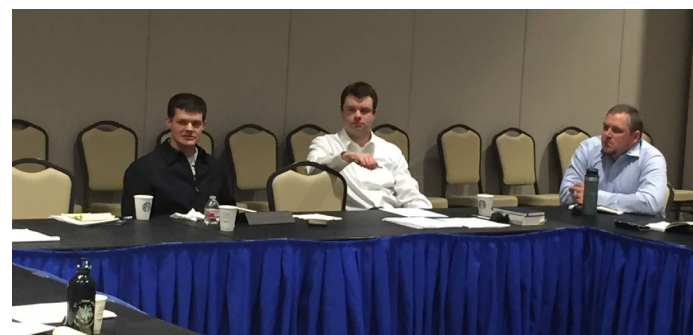
Adam Henley, Lone Star Conference

Political science graduate student Adam Henley recently presented a paper on John Courtney Murray's account of American liberalism at the Lone Star Conference for Political Science at Texas A&M Corpus Christi on March 6-7th.

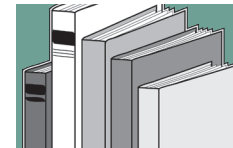
The Lone Star Conference is an annual meeting of political scientists and grad students. Papers were presented by faculty and graduate students from a variety of universities including UT Rio Grande Valley, UT Austin, University of Houston, and Jacksonville State University.

Presenters were allowed an hour to share their essays and take questions from the other attendees. Henley particularly enjoyed the questions and feedback saying "I was probably the most junior person in a room of Ph.D. candidates and professors," and it really helped him to talk about his "work with people further along in the field."

Henley's paper grew out of a paper he wrote in one of Dr. Kenneth Grasso's courses. Henley reported that "the value of the feedback on my political thought from seasoned political scientists is immeasurable." He added that he hopes "more students from Texas State will endeavor to put their work out there in future years."



Adam Henley presenting at the Lone Star Conference at Texas A&M Corpus Christi.



Kendall Allen, Florida Conference



Kendall Allen, undergraduate political science major, presenting her paper: "For Their Greatest Good: Education as a Diplomatic Tool in Negotiations with Native Peoples."

Kendall Allen, an undergraduate political science major, presented an original research paper titled "For Their Greatest Good: Education as a Diplomatic Tool in Negotiations with Native Peoples" as part of a panel at the Florida Conference of Historians (FCH) in Lake City, Florida on February 27-29th. Kendall said her research "spanned a pretty large timeline starting with the philosophies of Washington and Jefferson and working towards the fruition of the boarding school era." Her thesis was that "the purpose of schooling young tribe-members was to strategically reduce the landholdings of Native American nations and pacify troublesome tribes."

The paper, which had already been presented once and refined by the Phi Alpha Theta History Conference at Texas State, received "stellar" feedback from audience and commentators alike, according to the conference's faculty liaison, Dr. Ronald Johnson. Dr. Scott Heerman from the University of Miami called Kendall's research "ambitious, well-polished, and thought provoking."

Her paper was one part of a three-person panel featuring papers by two other Texas State students, Hannah Thompson and Ileane Marquez.

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Maisha Mumu, Medal of Hope Award

Maisha Farzana Mumu, a senior political science major, was recently awarded the Medal of Hope from the Dean of Students. The Medal of Hope is an award only for students in their graduating semester that have made significant contributions in student leadership during their time on campus. Mumu is an international student from Bangladesh who has worked very hard to become involved and make a positive difference in the Texas State community. Besides working as a Student Lead Representative for the Common Experience at Texas State and as a Team Lead and Media Coordinator in the University College Dean's Office, Mumu has also personally hosted the Common Experience speakers Dr. Samantha Nutt, Bryan A. Stevenson, and Anthony Graves.

Her work with numerous university offices including PACE, the LBJ Distinguished Lecture Series, and the New Student Orientation productions made her a clear choice for an award recognizing someone with many skills and a wide range of action. Mumu says that her message to students is "I was told my dreams were too big for a little girl, so I flew across the world to see how big my dreams could be. Realized they are only as big as I am destined to see them come true."



Maisha Mumu with her Medal of Hope Award

Student Awards 2019-2020

Outstanding Undergraduate Student in Political Science

Patrick Moloney

Barney & Linda Knight Endowed Scholarship

Kalee Schoonmaker & Hannah Chetwood

Dan E. Farlow Scholarship

Montana R. McMahan

Student Conference on National Affairs



Texas State students at Texas A&M's SCONA

The department continued its tradition of sending a team to the 5th annual Student Conference on National Affairs (SCONA) at Texas A&M University College Station. SCONA brings together students from across Texas and around the world and gives them a chance to engage with leading scholars, prominent professionals, and well-known public figures and to discuss the role of the United States in the global community.

From February 13th-15th, political science majors Kevin Brown, Pauleana Morang and Jesilyn Williams visited A&M to hear speakers like Colonel Mike Fossum (former NASA Astronaut), Brigadier General Kim Field (Executive Director of the Albritton Center for Grand Strategy at the Bush School of Public Service), Casey Fleming (Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of BlackOps Partners) and Major General Patrick Hamilton (Commanding General, 36th Infantry Division, Texas Army National Guard) and to participate in student teams that analyzed U.S. policy in regards to topics ranging from infrastructure and climate change to great powers conflict and the new space race.

The object of the conference, which focused on "Forging America's Future: Exploring Solutions for Current Challenges", was to introduce students to the decision-making process in the global community. Each of the Texas State students participated in different small teams based on their areas of interests. Kevin Brown, for example, worked on a team tasked with developing cybersecurity initiatives to strengthen U.S. based cybersecurity and to prevent intellectual property theft. Brown's team won the second-place award for the best overall presentation. Pauleana Morang worked on a team studying the challenges of the Great Power Competition posed by China and Russia while Jesilyn Williams worked on the natural resource security team.

In addition to learning from experts and their peers and developing expertise on current issues in international security affairs, the students also greatly appreciated the opportunity to network with professionals in the field. Upon returning, the Texas State team described SCONA as an "amazing" and "enlightening" experience.



Kate Moriarty *Class of 2019*



TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

“I see political science becoming even more relevant in the lives of everyday people in the years ahead.”

Political Science Graduates *Where are they now?*



- Kate Moriarty
- Todd Fey
- Cheyenne Izaguirre
- Theo Warner
- Ezekiel Loseke
- Jordan Mandujano
- Morgan Morrow, law placement
- Atticus Finch, law placement

Kate Moriarty first became interested in politics when she heard her parents talking about the 2008 presidential election. When she came to Texas State, Moriarty knew for certain that she wanted to work in government but did not yet know in what capacity. The classes she took and the professors with whom she studied helped her sort out exactly what she wanted to do. Not only did the faculty push her out of her “comfort zone” and make her take on new challenges, but the exposure the department gave her to a wide variety of perspectives, problems, and strategies gave her an excellent general understanding of the political world and, in particular, of the workings of government.

While still a student here, she began working as an intern in Senator John Cornyn’s office in Austin in 2018 – now she works for Senator Cornyn full-time. The research and writing skills she learned at Texas State, she told us, have “definitely” assisted her in preparing materials for the senator and senior members of his staff. Dr. Ben Arnold in her introductory courses and Dr. Rodolfo Hernandez’ Basic Political Institutions class are classes she says made a particular impact on her academic passions and skills. Additionally, Moriarty was a part of the Model Organization of American States (MOAS) with Dr. Arnold. “Without those skills and the knowledge of government I received here,” Moriarty said, she’d “be lost” at work.

Since her work currently centers on constituent services and many of the constituents who contact the senator’s office need legal assistance, in January she began working on a Paralegal Certificate in the department’s Legal Studies Program. Moriarty looks forward to “learning more about our judiciary,” and believes that this knowledge will enable her to be of greater service in “whatever agency or area of the government” she works in moving forward.

Moriarty sees political science “becoming even more relevant in the lives of everyday people” in the years ahead. Whether they are active in politics or not, people need to be educated about the workings of government because it impacts their lives. The general perception that the government is not very efficient is something that Moriarty says she’d like to remedy by “being as helpful” as she can in her interactions with the public. The advice that helped her the most during her undergraduate career was “be as interactive as you can,” whether with professors, staff, peers, or people outside the university community. “Person-to-person interaction is so important” and networking, meeting people, and hearing new ideas are some of the most powerful tools for expanding one’s education. In fact, she says that the ability to be comfortable communicating with people is one of the field’s most important practical skills.



Todd Fey first became interested in political science while serving in the Marine Corps. While in the service, it became clear to him that “political decisions directly affect our lives and responsibilities.” This recognition eventually set him on a new path.

After retiring from the Marines, he decided to pursue a Masters in Education, graduating in 2007 with the intention to work in secondary education. The fifteen credit hours comprising his minor in political science reignited the curiosity Fey had felt in the Marines and “awakened a long-held desire for a classical education.” The main thing that attracted him to Texas State was the depth and breadth of the course offerings, the ability to take many different courses with many different professors. His interest in political philosophy, furthermore, fit perfectly with the department’s offerings. “I was eager,” he said, “to read the classics under the supervision of experts.” He identifies Drs. Ken Grasso, Cecilia Castillo, and Robert Gorman as the faculty members who were most influential in his intellectual development.

After he graduated with an MA in political science, Fey found a teaching position at Texas A&M Kingsville that afforded him the opportunity to teach and to help students obtain the same type of classical education he desired. In fact, he says the background he received at Texas State enabled him to go from listening to lectures to delivering them to “sections of students in a matter of days and I’ve been there ever since.”

Of course, he added, “you’re not going to get rich teaching as a lecturer, but it is in keeping with the life of service that began in the Marines.” He noted that he “often think about the teachers, coaches, and professors that helped and influenced [him] along the way.” As far as his plans for the future are concerned, he intends “to continue learning and teaching.”



If it was exposure to graduate studies in political science that “awakened” the need to engage with ideas about politics and philosophy, certainly his position now will spur him on to his longtime ambition for a Ph.D. in political science. He thanks again Drs. Grasso, Castillo, and Gorman for being the people who contributed most to his education.

“The background I received at Texas State enabled me to go from listening to lectures to delivering them.”



“My study of political science helped hone my understanding of not only political strategy, but also effective writing and networking.”

Cheyenne Izaguirre became fascinated with political science during her undergraduate studies in history here at Texas State. She decided to pursue this interest through Texas State’s M.A. program with an eye toward broadening her resume and areas of expertise. She was especially impressed by the breadth of the program and the “wide range of variety of subjects” it gave students the option of exploring. “It was,” she says, “a wise choice” because the program allowed her “to grow and advance” in both academic and professional aspects of her life.

Izaguirre’s long-standing goal of becoming a Foreign Affairs Officer at the Department of State informed both Izaguirre’s undergraduate study of history (which gave her the context necessary to understand the contemporary Middle East and South Asia), while her study of political science helped hone her understandings not only of political strategy, but also of effective writing and networking. Izaguirre notes specifically the usefulness of internships that the department helped her secure, as well the mentorship supplied by faculty members. She particularly credits Drs. Cecilia Castillo and Robert Gorman for their “guidance” and mentorship during her political science studies.

Since graduation in 2019, Izaguirre has been working her dream job as a Foreign Affairs Officer. She says her “portfolio covers a wide range of political-military policy, security assistance, and agriculture assistance” and focuses on “ensuring U.S. taxpayers’ funds are well spent.” In the future, Izaguirre’s goal is to work on Capitol Hill and make “a lasting impact on U.S. foreign policy.” It is her belief that the “United States’ role in diplomacy is critically important to our prosperity,” and she hopes through her work to help stabilize “complex regions around the world” and to promote of peaceful solutions.

To current students, Izaguirre stresses the importance of internships, advising them to “apply early and often!” She particularly urges students to consider the Pathways Internship, which is a program that links students of all levels and majors with federal offices. In the future, she sees the field of political science heading to a greater emphasis “on cyber warfare, political interference/disinformation, and navigating global crises,” further reinforcing the need for rigorous, firsthand experience in government and organizational work that internships can provide.



In his senior year of high school, Theo Warner began to study the Russian language. What began “on a whim” led him to become “engrossed...in Russian culture, history, and politics.” Now Warner is serving in a State Department internship in Riga, Latvia. Toward the end of high school, Warner’s studies and growing love of foreign relations led him to search out political science programs that featured professionals in international relations and decided on Texas State, where his “growing fascination” with political science could be satisfied.

Warner says that Texas State rounded out his understanding of public policy and political science through the thoughtful and rigorous courses the department offers and that his undergraduate coursework, especially the International Conflict and Security course taught by Dr. Ionut Popescu, gave him “a solid basis for comprehending the philosophy behind [political structures], as well as the historical roots for state development and interaction.” Dr. Popescu’s course was particularly helpful because it taught him “how to write policy papers,” and “confirmed that [he] wanted to pursue further research in diplomacy and national security.”

Since graduating in 2019, Warner has had the opportunity to continue his research as a graduate student at the University of Texas Austin. He is in a dual-degree program in Global Policy studies and Russian, East European, and Eurasian studies. His particular interest is in post-Soviet political culture, which he is certain will lead him – along with his excellent language skills – to a job at the State Department after graduation.

Warner advises current students to pursue a foreign language to “a high level of competency,” saying that his knowledge of Russian has opened many doors in his studies and in his professional life. Overall, he

reports he is “optimistic for the future of public policy and foreign relations,” and “incredibly impressed” with his fellow students and colleagues’ work and ethics, saying he looks forward to realizing important policy with them.

“Texas State rounded out my understanding of public policy and political science through rigorous courses the department offers.”



Currently, Loseke is a Ph.D. student at Hillsdale College, studying the social and cultural effects of enlightenment thought on American politics. His favorites among the many thinkers and scholars he was introduced to here are Donald Lutz, Daniel Elazar, and Alexis de Tocqueville, all three of whom are figuring prominently in his doctoral studies. For the future, Loseke plans to continue refining and practicing his studies with the goal of bringing the insights of ancient and medieval thought to contemporary politics.

After the completion of his studies, he looks forward to pursuing a career as a professor.

Loseke’s advice to current students revolves around his perception of the field’s purpose and position today. He says one of the field’s biggest weaknesses is offering “solutions to problems without first understanding the nature of its subject or its mission.” Political science, he is convinced, must retain its status as what Aristotle called it “the Architectonic Science” by engaging the fundamental and perennial questions of politics. He offers current students here the advice he himself followed at Texas State: “shun the distractions of popular culture and instead read good books,” especially Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*.

Ezekiel Loseke graduated from Texas State in 2019 with an MA in political science. Initially, he chose to study political science because he was drawn to the study of “the greatest questions regarding politics,” questions about the nature of justice, the character of the good society, and the role of politics in the overall scheme of human life. He enjoys reflecting on these questions so much that for him doing so borders on recreation.

He credits the masters program at Texas State for equipping him to pursue these questions. Loseke’s time at Texas State was made rewarding through the books he encountered and the mentorship given by the faculty. Describing the faculty as “exceptional and brilliant,” he credits them with his developing his potential and working with him tirelessly to realize it. Drs. Ken Grasso, Thomas Varacalli, and Paul DeHart were especially invaluable to his studies and drove him “to discover new depths” in thinkers new and old.

“The Political Science faculty are exceptional and brilliant, and helped me realize my potential through working with me.”

Jordan Mandujano

Class of 2018



On his high school speech and debate team, Jordan Mandujano was once required to speak as Robert F. Kennedy. The assignment was to look deep into the person and formulate his thoughts on a proposed issue. The process of learning about Kennedy and his family's political life sparked a deep interest in Mandujano that led him to want to explore the world of politics. "From ethics to aesthetics," he says, "politics touches on virtually all fields." The breadth of political science's implications made him confident that a degree in the field would benefit him no matter what he chose to do with the rest of his life.

At Texas State, Mandujano majored in both political science and theatre, enjoying the philosophical dimension of both. The broad scope of political science let him explore ideas that in many cases were also found in figures like Shakespeare he encountered in his theatrical studies. To Mandujano, one of the most important parts of his time in the department was "having professors who cared for the well-being of their students." "Most importantly," he says, he "cannot forget the support and mentorship that the faculty at Texas State" – especially professors Drs. Thomas Varacalli and Rudy Hernandez – gave him. "There have been countless times" when he "would knock" on a faculty member's door "just to say hello or talk about an idea or [ask for] support. Being doubtful in college is common. A sympathetic and kind professor can really help during those times of doubt."

Two classes that he says had a particularly important influence on him were International Security with Dr. Thomas Doyle and Ancient Political Thought with Dr. Ashleen Bagnulo. He says that the Melian Dialogue (from Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War) "is still fresh in my mind." One of the most valuable things he learned, he notes, was "how the ancients dealt with survival, ethics, and the meaning of a good

life," and how to relate their thought to contemporary culture.

Since graduating in 2018, Mandujano spent some time working odd jobs while he sharpened his language skills. His dream was to study Chinese philosophy in Asia. This year, he has been awarded a full scholarship to the top-three Fudan University in Shanghai, China, pursuing a masters degree in Ancient Chinese Philosophy. His thesis, which represents the culmination of his varied interests across multiple fields, will explore the subject of Daoism, aesthetics, and the philosophy of dance.

Not surprisingly given the breadth of his interests, Mandujano recommends that students should not be afraid to "wander off" into different fields of study to satisfy the itch to explore. From starting as a theatre major, then moving to political science, now on to ancient philosophy, he keeps the lessons and principles learned in each discipline ready to synthesize and apply to life. Above all, he suggests doing what must be done practically to keep one's studies grounded and connected to the community.

“Most importantly, I cannot forget the support and mentorship the faculty at Texas State gave me.”



Morgan Morrow

Class of 2018

“The Political Science Department has helped me build strong connections with my former classmates and professors, and has greatly assisted me in the development of my legal career.”

Morgan Morrow graduated from Texas State in Spring of 2018 and went directly to the University of Houston's Law Center to pursue a J.D. degree. She first became interested in law while watching a female attorney in action, saying that it ignited her desire to pursue a legal education and "become a powerful attorney." Houston is Morrow's hometown, so she hopes that by attending law school there she can build community connections that can help to address problems in the city. She is specifically interested in property rights and how people are impacted by the laws addressing these rights.

Currently in her second year of law school, Morrow is president of the Black Law Students Association and a member of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Team. Additionally, she writes and serves as the General Administrative Editor for the Houston Business and Tax Law Journal, with her most recent piece revolving around Airbnb regulation within the city.

Morrow says that Texas State's political science department helped her "build strong connections with my former classmates and professors" and has greatly assisted her in the "development of [her] legal career." She particularly credits Dr. Menchaca-Bagnulo for her help, saying that the work she did in Menchaca-Bagnulo's "Constitutional Law: Basic Structures and Principles" gave her an excellent background for law school classes. She also credits Dr. Menchaca-Bagnulo for her work supervising Morrow's honors thesis on Texas voter laws. Morrow says her writing and research

skills were improved by the experience and she draws on what she learned while working on the thesis in her work at Houston Business and Tax Law.

In the future, Morrow wants to work as an in-house general counsel attorney for a Fortune 500 company and to use her expertise to do pro bono immigration and civil rights work. In the future, she sees the legal profession becoming more diverse. She adds that between Texas beginning to offer the Uniform Bar Exam in 2021 and many businesses needing legal help, there will be many opportunities for people with varied backgrounds to find a footing in the field.

Morrow wishes to encourage other prospective law students to pursue their goals: even though "becoming a licensed attorney is stressful, expensive, and demanding," she says "that strong commitment and focus resolute will make achieving the goal possible." She adds that "it is important to always remember why you chose to pursue a career in the legal field and keep it at the back of your mind. It will be your reason for pursuing a career in law that motivates you to continue working and ensuring you are doing your best to achieve your goals".

Atticus Finch

Class of 2019



The old blues song *The Midnight Special* is not typically what draws a person to study law, but Atticus Finch is an atypical student with an atypical name. The Spring 2019 graduate from Texas State's Political Science undergraduate program is now studying law at the University of Texas Law School in Austin. *The Midnight Special* is a song Finch heard a lot growing up, and he would think about its message of a chance at freedom while he listened to late-night trains roll by his grandmother's house on their way to the Sugar Land Prison Farm. He says, "I would lie awake and listen to it go by and wonder if the prisoners a few miles away were doing the same thing." Ever since those days, Finch has had an intense interest in the rights of prisoners.

At UT Law, Finch is currently in his first year. He has already worked with the INCLUDE project for disability rights, the Law for Black Lives narcotics conviction program, Texas Here to Stay immigration rights program, the Court Debt Relief/Drivers License Recovery program, and the Expunction projects in criminal law. Though prisoners' rights is his main interest, Finch says he is taking the general "public interest" route with his career, focusing on the impacts of law on people and the area of law and economics. Additionally, he is also researching the current work involved with fighting the for-profit prison industry.

Finch says that Texas State's political science department helped him by refining his skills and encouraging him to pursue his goals during his years here. "Through my classes and student organizations in which I was involved," he notes, "I met a bunch of really driven people who helped motivate me. I was fortunate to have a few professors mentor me throughout my time here and the application process." Dr. Thomas Varacalli's "rigorous Con Law courses

and unwavering support for student projects made him an invaluable resource on campus." Likewise, he writes that "Dr. Vicki Brittain's Legal Research course was essential for learning strategies and presentation methods for legal information."

Finch expects that in his immediate future, he will find no shortage of work and projects to become involved with as Immigration and DACA clinics are currently inundated with people seeking help. He is a little concerned, however, about the impact of Covid-19 which has resulted in "some private firms [becoming]

“The Political Science Department helped me refine my skills and encouraged me to pursue my goals.”

skittish about hiring 1L associates." Finch has an optimistic perspective, however, saying that "law is something that will always be needed," and that "it's still too early to tell whether this is a long-term trend or a temporary wrinkle" in the field of law.

The advice that Finch offers to students considering law reflects his own path to a significant degree: the most important things students can do is to decide on their field of interest and start building competence through mentorship and study skills. He advises that although it may be tempting to study law heavily during undergrad, it is more important to favor "theoretical

courses," saying, "you'll learn about the law in law school and during bar prep. Knowledge of the underlying theories, however, is an incredibly useful tool." Outside of class, he specifically recommends talking with people who have been through law school and learning about their experiences. He says that "law school has changed a lot in the last decade or two," so "advice from earlier attendees may not be entirely accurate anymore. You should make sure to corroborate with more recent students, preferably from the school you're considering." Finally, the importance of mentorship throughout one's career cannot be understated.





Dr. Sherri Mora Recognized for Service

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

On August 20th, at the College of Liberal Arts' Fall faculty meeting, Dean Mary Brennan presented a Presidential Distinction Award for Service to Dr. Sherri Mora. Dr. Mora, a senior lecturer in the department, also serves as the department's associate chair and undergraduate coordinator.



Pictured from left to right: Dr. Sherri Mora, Dr. Nandhini Rangarajan, Dr. Dianne Rahm.



Remembering Dr. Al Sullivan

In September, the department was saddened to announce the passing of a long-time and legendary member of its faculty: Dr. Alfred B. Sullivan.

Dr. Sullivan received his doctorate in political science from the University of Utah in 1967. He joined the faculty of Texas State's Department of Political Science in 1970 and retired in 2012. At Texas State, he was the founder of the Foreign Studies Committee, serving as its Chairman from 1972-1987.

Dr. Sullivan was named an Outstanding Educator of America in 1972 and received the university's "Outstanding Professor" award in 1973. During his four decades at Texas State, he taught a wide range of courses in political science, including the "Government and Politics of Asia", "Government, and Politics of Europe", "Arab-Israeli Conflict", "Constitutional Law", "Principles of American Government", and the "Texas Politics and the American Presidency" classes. His publications include *Government in Texas* and *Texas Government Today*, which he co-authored with another long-time member of the Texas State faculty, Dr. Randall W. Bland.

Renowned for his quick mind, he was widely sought out as a speaker and emcee at public events where his celebrated wit kept audiences jovially entertained.



During his time in San Marcos, he managed several campaigns for both local and county elections.

His career in academia was preceded by a long and distinguished career in the United States Navy in the course of which he served as Director of the Naval Leadership School and the personal pilot of General Mark Clark who served as commander of the United Nations forces in Korea in 1952. He retired from the Navy in 1967 with the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

Faculty News

- Dr. Sherri Mora Recognized for Service
- Remembering Dr. Al Sullivan
- Political Science on NPR
- Dr. Vicki Brittain Retirement Gathering
- Inklings
- Faculty Update 2019-2020



Political Science on NPR

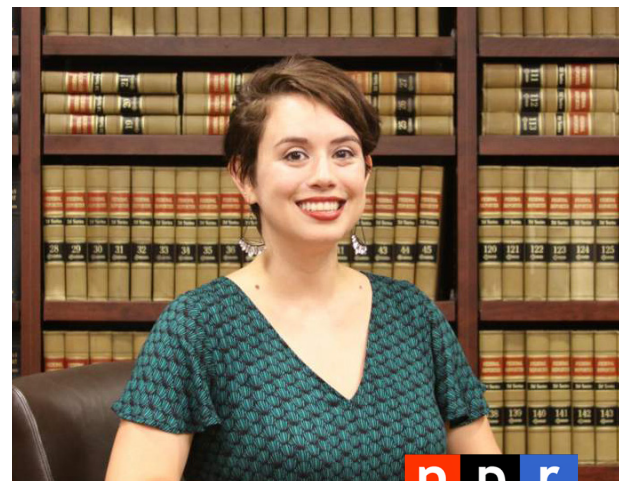
Two Texas State Political Science faculty members appeared on NPR in 2019, offering their expertise on various issues. Dr. Ionut Popescu, a member of the department's international relations faculty and an officer in the United States Navy Reserve, spoke to The Texas Standard on KUT, Austin's NPR affiliate, about a recent article of his that appeared in the *Political Science Quarterly*. Dr. Ashleen Menchaca-Bagnulo, a member of the department specializing in political philosophy, also appeared on NPR in an interview with Leila Fadel entitled "After El Paso, Some Latinos Divided on Trump."

In his piece, Popescu outlines the principles of a new American grand strategy. He argues that the theory of offensive realism — the idea that nations engage in aggressive acts of self-interest directly as a result of opportunity afforded by the chaos and instability prevalent in international politics — is better suited to the new era of geopolitical competition with China and Russia. This article represents the beginning of a second book project for Popescu, which builds on his first book on U.S. foreign policy, *Emergent Strategy and Grand Strategy*. The book "covers eight US presidential administrations, ranging from Truman to Obama, to demonstrate that senior policymakers should be skeptical of the idea that formulating and implementing a long-term grand strategy is the road to a successful foreign policy legacy." It was published by Johns Hopkins University Press in 2017. For future readers, Popescu explains the second book's motivating idea: "It will be titled *The Return of Offensive Realism: American Grand Strategy for the Era of Great Power Competition*." It will argue that "as China and Russia increasingly challenge US strategic interests in key regions of the world, it is high time for the United States government to adopt a new set of grand strategic principles suitable for this new era of Great Power Competition."

In her interview, Dr. Bagnulo discussed the possible impacts of the El Paso shooting on Latino voters' opinions in the upcoming elections. In a piece showing the divided feelings of Latinos in America about their position in the country, Bagnulo identifies and discusses the confusion in her own life and work.



Dr. Ionut Popescu spoke to The Texas Standard on KUT, Austin's NPR affiliate, discussing his recent article outlining the principles of a new American grand strategy.



Dr. Ashleen Menchaca-Bagnulo appeared on NPR in an interview with Leila Fadel, discussing the impacts of the El Paso shooting on Latino voters' opinions in the upcoming elections.



Dr. Vicki Brittain Retirement Gathering

On Tuesday, March 10th, the Department of Political Science held a retirement reception honoring Dr. Vicki Brittain in the Reed Parr Room of JC Kellam. Attendees from across campus, including President Denise Trauth, gathered to thank Dr. Brittain for her many years of service to the department and university. Dr. Kenneth Grasso, Chair of the Department of Political Science, and Dr. Mary Brennan, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, addressed the gathering and paid tribute to Dr. Brittain's career.

Vicki Brittain joined Texas State's faculty in 1980. During her years here, she served, at various times, as director of the Legal Studies Program, Acting Chair of the Department of Criminal Justice, Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, Chair of the



Department of Political Science and Assistant to the President.



Inklings



For more than twenty years, under the direction of Dr. Army Leder, the department's faculty and graduate students have been gathering to discuss their current research or offer their expertise on the issues of the day. Reflecting the diverse interests of our faculty, this year's presentations included a talk by Dr. Franziska Boehme Newell (left) on "A Resurgence of the Right? A Deeper Look at Changing German Politics"; a presentation by Dr. Marc Wallace (center) entitled "Governmental Technology and the Diversion of Prescription Drugs" which explored prescription drug use, abuse, and misuse; a talk by Dr. Alex Kroeger (right) on "The Algerian and Sudanese Revolutions: Prospects for Reform"; and a presentation by Dr. Vance McMahan, a U.S. former Ambassador and Representative to the

United Nations Economic and Social Council, entitled "At the UN: The Good, the Bad, and the Surprising," which focused on his experiences there and touched on topics including the presidential appointment process, General Assembly voting patterns, the role of non-governmental organizations and the budget structure of the UN.

The department's "Inklings" gatherings take their name from a small group of intellectuals (whose ranks included J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis) who met weekly at Oxford University in the early and middle decades of the 20th century to read aloud and discuss their works in progress.



Ben Arnold coordinates the department's award-winning Model Organization of American States and Model United Nations programs.

John Boersma delivered a paper on "The Interplay of Popular Sovereignty and Natural Right in Chief Justice Taney" at the 2019 Annual Meeting of American Political Science Association in Washington, DC.

Cecilia Castillo serves on the Texas State Advisory Committee to the United States Civil Rights Commission.

Paul DeHart's "Why Why Liberalism Failed Fails as an Account of the American Order" appeared in *The Catholic Social Science Review*. His "The Rise and Fall (and Restoration) of Western Civilization" was published in *Public Discourse*. His essay "Wise Politics" was published in *Where Wisdom May Be Found* edited by Edward P. Meadors (Eugene, OR: Pickwick).

Bill DeSoto's "Non-Medical Prescription Drug Use Among Latino Students at a Hispanic Serving Institution" was published in the *Journal of Latinos and Education*.

Tom Doyle's *Nuclear Ethics in the Twenty-First Century: Survival, Order and Justice* was published by Rowman & Littlefield (Lanham, MD). He was named a Favorite Professor by the Alfred H. Nolle Chapter of the Alpha Chi National Honor Society.

Mike Faber's book, *An Anti-Federalist Constitution: The Development of Dissent in the Ratification Debates*, was published by the University of Kansas Press (Lawrence, KS). His essay, "Organized Opposition: The Anti-Federalist Political Network" appeared in *Public Choice Analyses of American Economic History* edited by J. Hall (NY: Springer).

Blake Farrar serves on the City of Buda's Sustainability Commission.

Ken Grasso's essay "The New Politics of the American Public Orthodoxy" was published in *Diversity, Conformity and Conscience in America* edited by Bradley C.S. Watson (Lanham MD: Lexington Books). His "Getting Liberalism Right" was published in *The Catholic Social Science Review* as part of a symposium he edited on Patrick Deneen's book *Why Liberalism Failed*.

Rick Henderson coordinates the department's Political Science Film Series and serves on the City of San Marcos' Zoning Board of Variance.

Rudy Hernandez's article on "Decency, Hope, and the Substitution of Memory in Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go" was published in *The Political Science Reviewer*. He was selected as the 2019-2020 Postdoctoral Fellow in Political Thought and Constitutionalism at the Kinder Institute on Constitutional Democracy at the University of Missouri.

Paul Kens is a member of the *Journal of Supreme Court History's* Editorial Review Board.

Alex Kroeger published "Conquering and Coercing: Non-Violent Anti-Regime Protests and the Pathways to Democracy" in the *Journal of Peace Re-Search*.

Jennifer Lamm succeeded Don Inbody as the director of the department's ongoing Discourse in Democracy project.

Arny Leder has joined *Good Governance Worldwide* as an Editorial Consultant.

Vance McMahan chairs the department's committee on internships.

Ashleen Menchaca-Bagnulo's article "Predatory Politics: The Limits of Consent in Machiavelli's Mandragola" appeared in the *Political Science Reviewer*, and her article on "Marriage, Courtship and Aristotle's Spoudaia in Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice" was published in *Perspectives on Political Science*. Her essay on "Deeds and Words: Latreia, Justice and Mercy in Augustine's Political Thought" was published in

Augustine's Political Thought (Suffolk, UK: Boydell & Brewer).

Ed Mihalkanin serves on the San Marcos City Council and is president of the LBJ Museum of San Marcos.

Sherri Mora published the 4th edition of *The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy* (NY: McGraw-Hill) and *Invitation to Political Science* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt). She received a Presidential Distinction Award for Service from the College of Liberal Arts.

Franzi Newell's article "Cultural Diversity and the Politics of Recognition in International Organizations" was published in the *Journal of International Organizations Studies*.

Cynthia Opheim's "Response to Spotlight on Promotion Letters: An Option Worth Exploring" appeared in *PS: Political Science & Politics*. Her paper "Guns on Campus: Implementing Campus Carry in Texas" received American Association of University Administrators' Bert Allan Watson Award for Outstanding Presentation.

Ionut Popescu's article on "American Grand Strategy and the Rise of Offensive Realism" appeared in *Political Science Quarterly. Armed Forces and Society* published his "Pragmatism and Practicality: Rethinking U.S. Civil-Military Relations for a Turbulent Era."

Omar Sanchez published "The Political Economy of Taxation in Latin America" in the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Latin American Politics*.

Eduardo Schmidt Passos published "Eric Voegelin and the Natural Law Tradition" in *Perspectives on Political Science*.

Tom Varacalli's book *Invitation to Political Science* was published by Kendall Hunt and his article "In Defense of Catholic Fusionism" appeared in *The Catholic Social Science Review*.

Political Science Program Faculty

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Senior Lecturer

Areas of Interest: Electoral
Politics, the Judiciary,
International Institutions

John Boersma, Ph.D.
Lecturer

Areas of Interest: Constitutional
Law, American Institutions,
Political Theory

Cecilia Castillo, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor

Director, Masters in Political
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Areas of Interest: Political
Theory, American Political
Thought, Literature and Politics

Paul DeHart, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

Areas of Interest: Political
Philosophy, American Political
Thought, Jurisprudence

Bill DeSoto, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

Areas of Interest: Local
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Thomas E. Doyle, II, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

Areas of Interest: International
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International Ethics

Michael Faber, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor

Areas of Interest: American
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Development, Early American
Political Thought

Blake Farrar, M.A.
Lecturer

Areas of Interest: American
Politics, Political Behavior,
Elections and Media

Kenneth Grasso, Ph.D.
Professor

Chair
Areas of Interest: Political
Theory, Religion and Politics,
American Political Culture

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Politics

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Senior Lecturer

Areas of Interest: Political
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Thought, Religion and Politics

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Constitutional Development,
Judicial Politics

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African Politics

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Democracy Issues, Economic
Reform, Political Economy of
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Areas of Interest: Political
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