

TEXAS
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The rising STAR of Texas

ALUMNI NEWSWIRE

POLITICAL SCIENCE PROGRAM | FALL 2021

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY – DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

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Surviving COVID

Adapting education during the COVID-19 pandemic

The 2020–2021 academic year will be remembered as an absolutely unique academic year — the year of the pandemic and of the Great Texas Deep Freeze. During February, in the face of freezing weather and rolling blackouts, the university and department had to close their doors for a week.

During the remainder of the year, we had to push our way through the new world created by the pandemic. After having gone entirely online in the spring of 2020, the department began offering face-to-face classes again in the fall, requiring masks and social distancing, as well as various protocols to enable quarantining to continue. While events and student organization meetings continued, they were moved online or structured to allow students to attend either in-person or online.

Having weathered the year, we're truly looking forward to returning to normal this August!



Letter from the Chair

Welcome to the Summer 2021 edition of our political science program's Alumni NewsWire!

Despite the pandemic, the past year has been a busy time for our program. On the faculty side, members of our faculty were recognized as “favorite professors” by Texas State’s Alfred H. Noelle Chapter of the Alpha Chi National Honor Society, published books with Rowman & Littlefield and Palgrave MacMillan, were interviewed on Good Day Austin on Fox 7 and ABC Radio Australia, and published numerous articles in a wide variety of journals and publications including *Perspectives on Political Science*, *Law and Liberty*, *Public Discourse*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *Catholic Social Science Review*, *The National Interest*, and the *Journal of Human Rights*. Our students have been busy as well. One delivered a paper at the 2021 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association; ten others participated — and dominated the awards — at the 24th Annual Eugene Scassa Mock Organization of American States (ESMOAS) virtual competition; and another dozen participated in the Southern Regional Model United Nations (SRMUN) where they swept the awards.



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 Mark Graber, the Jacob A. France professor of Constitutionalism at the University of Maryland’s Francis King Carey School of Law; Carl Richard of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette; the University of Pennsylvania’s Jonathan Zimmerman; and Baylor’s Francis Beckwith.

This doesn’t even take into account the annual “Meet the Professors” and Alumni Night gatherings, the Election Night Watch Party, a panel for pre-law students that featured five Bobcat Alumni who are attending law school, and an evening with Beto O’Rourke, who joined our faculty in the spring to teach Texas Politics with Sherri Mora.

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 to update your alumni information.

Dr. Kenneth Grasso
Chair, Department of Political Science



Discourse in Democracy

Despite the complications created by COVID, Discourse in Democracy (DiD) refused to scale back. Even though some events were held entirely via Zoom and others offered students the option of participating either via Zoom or in-person, DiD continued its traditional events.

Meet the Professors

As usual, DiD kicked off the start of the school year with its annual Meet the Professors event. Despite heavy rain and social distancing protocols, on Wednesday, September 9, sixty political science and public administration majors participated in the event, most of them in person and some via Zoom. Students had a chance to meet more than two dozen of the department's faculty members, learn about course offerings, and become acquainted with faculty members' backgrounds

and areas of expertise.

Graduate student Will Lawrence described the event as a success, noting that "even in these crazy times, it is good to see the political science department go to such lengths to ensure a sense of normalcy to the students. I was glad that the students had a chance to meet the faculty and get to know them."

Alumni Night

The Spring DiD programming began with the department's annual Alumni Night on Wednesday, February 10. The event is designed to give current students a chance to interact with recent graduates about transitioning from college to the workforce. The alumni gave presentations about a wide variety of topics including their education at Texas State, the field of political science and the potential opportunities that arise from studying it, their professional careers, the challenges they have faced, internships, and their advice to students who are preparing to transition into the workforce.

This year's alumni were:

Marissa Cooper (2019), who works for the Adult Protective Services at the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

Eric Ramirez (2014), who teaches 6th-9th grade social studies at the Seguin campus of the Southwest Preparatory School.

Kate Moriarty (2019), an aide to Senator John Cornyn in his Austin office.

Hector Alcoser (2019), who works as a lecturer in Political Science at Texas State University.

Ellen Earl (2020), who attends the Texas A&M School of Law.

Fifty undergraduate students attended the event either in-person or via Zoom. The presentations were followed by a question-and-answer session, and informal conversations between the students and alumni.

Law Student Panel



To assist current Bobcats thinking about law school, on March 30, Discourse in Democracy hosted a panel featuring four Bobcat alumni discussing their experiences in law school.

Breanta Boss (M.A., TXST '18) of SMU's Dedman School of Law, Morgan Morrow (B.A., TXST '18) of the University of Houston's Law Center, Angela Estrada (M.A., TXST '17) of the Texas Tech School of Law, and Atticus Finch (B.A., TXST '19) of the University of Texas at Austin's School of Law discussed a variety

of topics including the application process, the LSAT, the law school curriculum, the bar exam, and career opportunities.

Ava Stuart, an undergraduate in political science, noted she found "it helpful to hear about others who are completing and at different stages in their law school journey," saying that the event helped her to be "more confident because it brought me one step closer to familiarizing myself with the language and steps I must take to get into and complete law school."

Constitution Day: Graber on "Disloyal Rebels and Loyal Unionists"

On Thursday, September 17 more than 120 students, some in-person and some via Zoom, attended the department's annual "Constitution Day" lecture hosted by Discourse in Democracy. The speaker, Dr. Mark Graber, is the Jacob A. France Professor of Constitutionalism at the University of Maryland's Francis King Carey School of Law and is widely recognized as a leading scholar on American constitutionalism. His lecture, entitled "Disloyal Rebels and Loyal Unionists: The Fourteenth Amendment as a Whole," concerned the origins of the Fourteenth Amendment and its place in American constitutional law.

Mark Lottman, a political science graduate student who attended the lecture, described it as "engaging and informative," noting that it highlighted "the importance of continuing to work towards ensuring equality in American society by discussing the changes both prior to and since

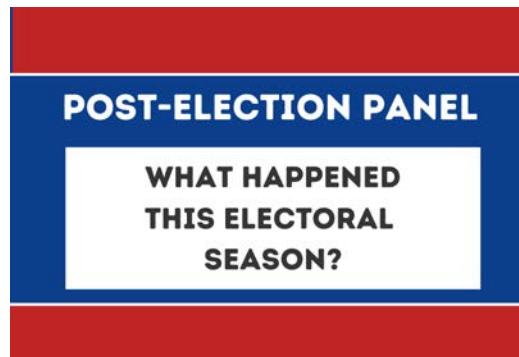
the Civil War." Another political science student, Jean-Marc Pruitt, noted that "Dr. Graber's seminar on interpreting the 14th amendment was an enlightening, in-depth follow-up to his lecture" and involved "interesting discussions about originalist interpretations of the Constitution, Civil War and Reconstruction history, and 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.

Dr. Graber's books include *American Constitutionalism* (Oxford University Press, 2016), *Dred Scott and the Problem of Constitutional Evil* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), and *A New Introduction to American Constitutionalism* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

Election Panel

On October 15, the Discourse in Democracy hosted an “Election 2020” panel moderated by Dr. Ashleen Menchaca-Bagnulo and featuring Drs. Michael Faber, Hyun Yun, Roger Abshire, and Ken Ward. Dr. Faber opened with a brief discussion of the Electoral College, what happened in 2016, and what could be expected in 2020. He reminded the audience that it is the electoral vote that counts, not the popular vote. Dr. Ward discussed the increase in partisanship in 2016 and the increasing ability of candidates to weather controversy. He also talked about how voters believe policy is largely unaffected by their views and the ways in which this fact affects campaigns and party organizations.



Dr. Abshire discussed the importance of local elections, especially their “substantial effect on top-ticket contests.” He pointed out that because local officials “pass and enforce the laws that regulate the election process,” voters should be motivated to act in local elections since they have a real influence on how and for whom they can vote in the future. Dr. Yun talked about her latest article, “Beyond Political Capital: Do Social and Economic Capital Matter,” published in *Polls and Elections*, which compares the social, economic, and political capital of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton in the 2016 election.

Dr. Menchaca-Bagnulo then moderated the question-and-answer session, with questions from the audience addressing topics ranging from election fraud and voter suppression to social justice protests and demographic voting patterns.

Rex Wyatt, a graduate student in attendance, praised the expertise of the faculty members and described the panel as “insightful and highly interactive.” Forty-five students attended the event, which took place via Zoom.

DiD and the Election Task Force

Election Watch Party

On election night, Discourse in Democracy partnered with the university’s Elections Task Force to host its traditional Election Night Watch Party. Students could attend in-person or via Zoom.

About a hundred in-person attendees joined the party, which included the Texas State mascot, Boko, Kahoot quiz games about the election, and de-stress/discussion rooms. Many more students and faculty dropped in on the Zoom stream, making the event a big success.

Dr. Jennifer Lamm of the Department of Political Science directed the quiz games at the party and fielded some questions from students in attendance. She delivered information about

the election process and facilitated a short discussion with the students.

Post-Election Panel

On Tuesday, November 10, DiD followed up on the Election Watch Party by co-sponsoring a Post-Election Panel on the 2020 election season. The department’s Dr. Jennifer Lamm moderated the discussion.

The event was also sponsored by Young Conservatives, College Democrats, NAACP, Student Government, Young Democratic Socialists, the Underrepresented Student Advisory Council, and the Voter Friendly Campus Project.



Zimmerman: Free Speech and The American Campus

On Thursday, October 29, Dr. Jonathan Zimmerman, the Judy and Howard Berkowitz Professor of Education at the University of Pennsylvania, spoke to the Texas State community via Zoom on “Impolitic Politics: Free Speech, Censorship, and Civility on Campus in the Age of Trump”. More than fifty students and faculty gathered in person to hear Dr. Zimmerman speak, and even more participated via Zoom.

Dr. Zimmerman presented his research, starting with his focus on the topic of academic freedom and explaining how he became interested in political speech on college campuses after the 2016 election. After his presentation, Dr. Zimmerman

took questions from attendees and discussed his project at length.

Dr. Shannon Duffy from the Department of History reported that Dr. Zimmerman was “very charismatic” and that his presentation spurred conversations about campus speech that are still going in her classroom weeks later.

Dr. Zimmerman’s books include *Free Speech: And Why You Should Give a Damn* (City of Light, 2021), *Whose America? Culture Wars in the Public Schools* (Harvard, 2009) and *Too Hot to Handle: A Global History of Sex Education* (Princeton, 2016).

Beckwith on Natural Rights

Baylor University's Dr. Francis Beckwith visited Texas State on Thursday, February 11, to deliver a talk entitled "Where Do Natural Rights Come From?" Contesting the idea that rights are mere social constructs or conventions, Beckwith argued that natural rights derive from human nature itself.

Thirty students and faculty members attended via Zoom, while another twenty attended face-to-face. Undergraduate Zachary Poston commented that he enjoyed Dr. Beckwith's "knowledge of both the founders and the ancient world" and the "deep respect" and "passion" he displayed "for the humanities and a liberal education as a whole," and that he particularly "enjoyed" Beckwith's "command of his subject."



U.S.-Russia Relations

On February 23, DiD hosted Dr. Mark Pomar, a Security Fellow at UT Austin's Clements Center for National Security, who delivered a virtual talk to Texas State students about the state of U.S.-Russia relations in the new Biden Administration. Pomar has spent his career in academia, government, and the NGO sector and has worked and lived in Russia. Drawing on his extensive experience in senior positions at Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Dr. Pomar talked about how Russia's domestic political dynamics impact its actions abroad and how

Russia's historical legacy shapes its interest in Eastern Europe.

Over 30 students and faculty were in attendance for Dr. Pomar's talk and had the chance to interact with him after the presentation. Graduate student Kaleb Kelly said, "I really enjoyed hearing Dr. Pomar's expertise regarding Russia. I particularly enjoyed hearing about the psychology of the Russian people and where he sees Russia moving toward in the future."

Richard on the Founders



On Wednesday, March 3, 2021, Discourse in Democracy hosted Dr. Carl Richard, professor of history at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, who delivered a speech titled "The Founders on Religion, Morality and Republicanism." The talk explored the founders' views on the role of religion in public life and the moral preconditions of republican government. The talk was followed by a question-and-answer period. Thirty-five students attended the lecture in person while close to 200 others participated via Zoom. Prior to the talk, Dr. Richard met informally over dinner with several students and faculty members.

The following morning, Dr. Richard presided over a seminar

attended by two dozen undergraduate and graduate majors (some via Zoom, others face-to-face) on "Classical and Biblical Influences on the American Founders." The seminar was followed by a lunch that gave several students a chance to meet Dr. Richard in a formal setting. John Flores, a graduate student in the department, described Dr. Richard's lecture as "captivating," commenting that it "highlighted a useful distinction between civic virtues, as provided by the classics, and personal virtue as provided by biblical teachings. Each of these seemed to have a profound effect on our country's founding."

Professor Richard's books include *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* (Harvard, 1994); *The Golden Age of the Classics in America* (Harvard, 2009); *The Founders and the Bible* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016); and *The Battle for the American Mind: A Brief History of a Nation's Thought* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004). His visit was made possible by a grant from the Jack Miller Center for Teaching America's Founding Principles and History.

Discussion with Beto O'Rourke

On Thursday, March 4, 2021, Beto O'Rourke was joined by more than 100 Texas State University students, faculty, and community members for an hour-long virtual Zoom Q&A. O'Rourke shared his experiences in public service, serving in city government, and as a former member of Congress. He applauded the dedication to students that Texas State University and the Political Science Department show by providing them with opportunities to engage in activities beyond the classroom that are designed to enhance social and personal responsibility. He shared his experiences in the aftermath of the unprecedented February winter storm and the resulting statewide power failures that impacted so many

residents across the state. He also expressed his appreciation of the actions Texas State took, namely running buses as warm-up stations and opening dining halls for those in need.

Texas State student Makena Buchanan said "it was a really refreshing talk" and was appreciative of O'Rourke's in-depth response to the questions posed about "climate change and energy." Elizabeth McNamara, a high school student considering Texas State in the coming year, stated, "It was very interesting to listen to Mr. O'Rourke and I really enjoyed what he had to say."

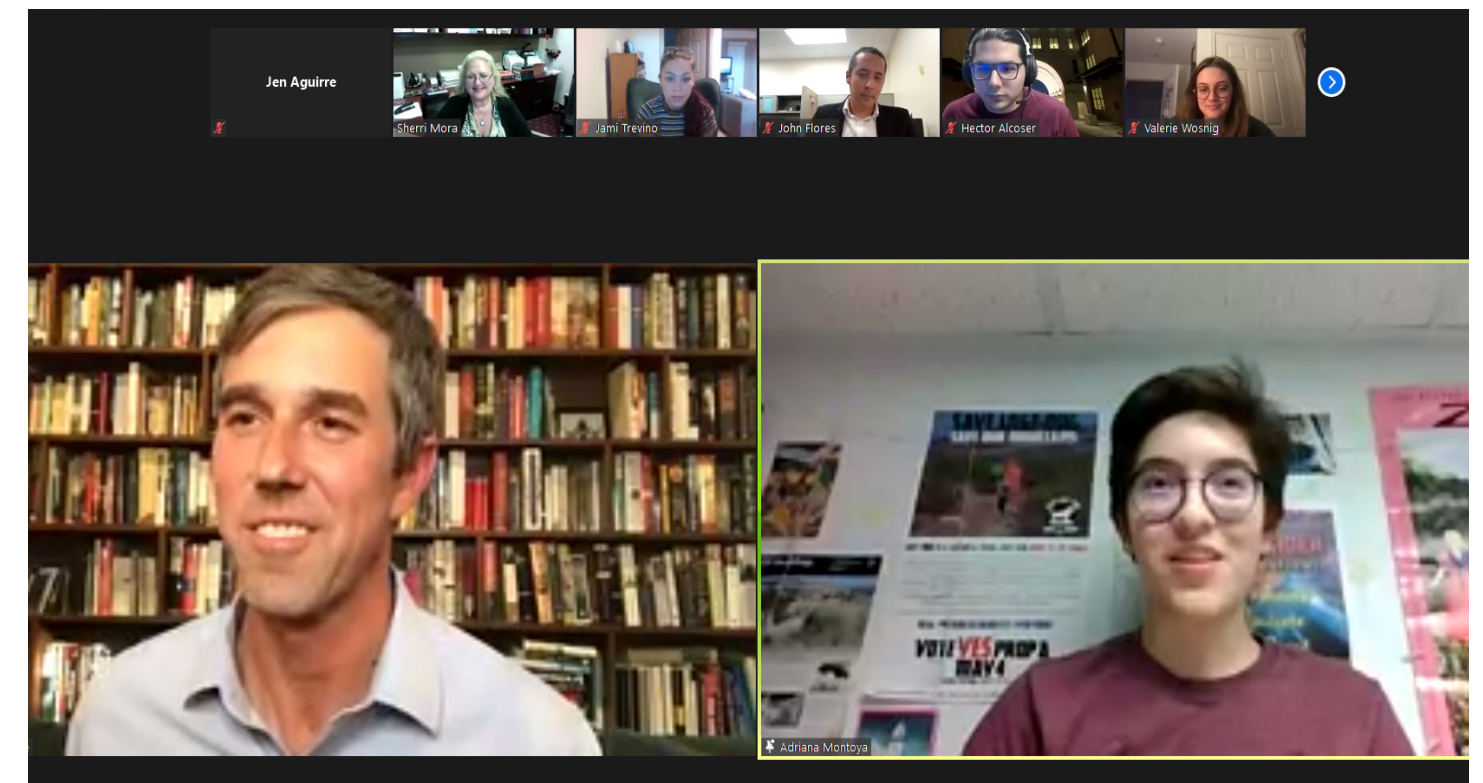




Photo Credit: Kathy Freeman

Cargas on the Great Texas Blackout

On Wednesday, March 24, Discourse in Democracy hosted energy policy expert and sustainability advocate James Cargas who provided insights into the causes of the 2021 Texas

Blackout. Mr. Cargas spoke via Zoom to an audience of over 120 students and faculty. His remarks expanded on his widely acclaimed *Washington Monthly* article on the blackout.

Drawing on his expertise in energy law, national and local policy, and energy markets, Mr. Cargas' talk explored the dynamics of energy procurement, the causes of the Texas blackout, and the role played by human failures. The major cause of the blackout, he contended, was not frozen wind turbines, the Electrical Reliability Council of Texas' (ERCOT) independence from federal regulation and neighboring grids, or the 2002 Texas deregulation of electricity markets. Rather, it was the lack of weatherization by the natural gas industry, poor preparedness and forecasting by the grid operator, and the lack of coordination between state natural gas and electricity regulators. The blackout, he concluded, was "a terrible tragedy that was foreseeable and preventable."

Most of the audience's questions focused on the future of renewables, deregulation, and careers in green energy. Regarding renewables, Cargas observed that "Texas is the sixth largest generator from wind in the world and the largest in the United States" and is about to expand its use of wind further. ERCOT already has a significant number of wind and solar farms scheduled to connect to the Texas grid in 2021, and zero new coal plants. Given the size of the state, the shift



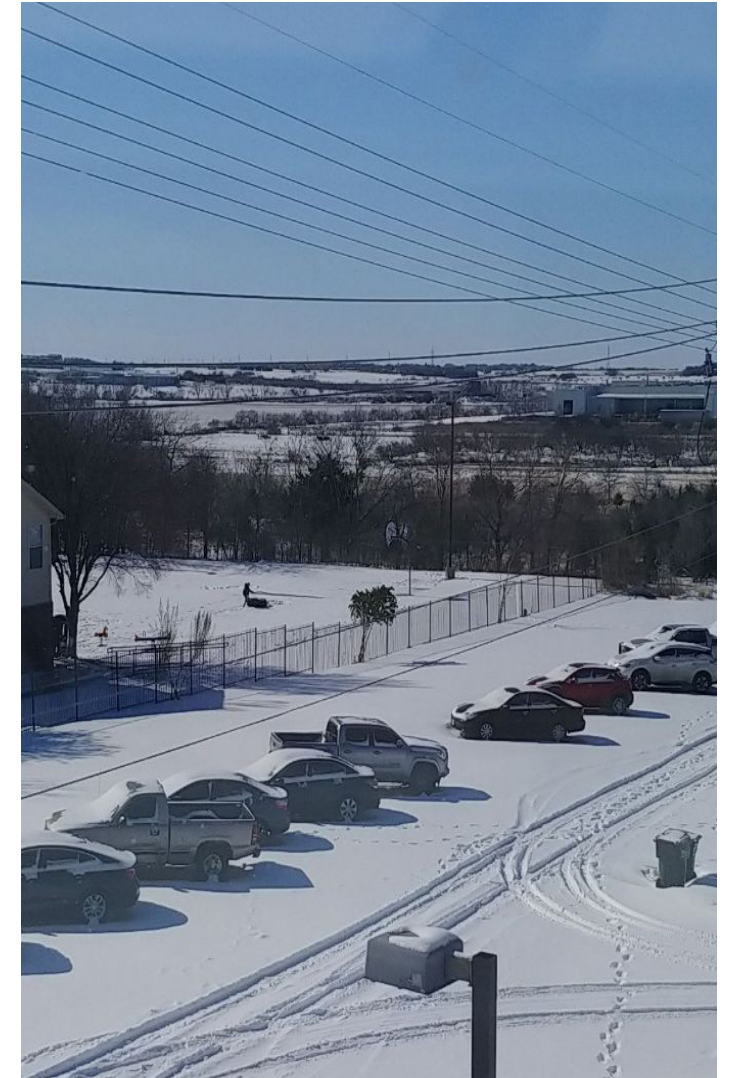
to renewables has taken some time but is finally becoming a significant source of power.

In closing, Mr. Cargas offered advice for people currently working within the oil and gas industry who want to transition to the renewable industry. They will find the oil and gas sectors generally have higher salaries but also tremendous volatility, which results in hiring and firing booms. By comparison, the renewable industry is an emerging market for career growth with more modest salaries but greater job security.

One undergraduate student commented that "I always find it helpful to hear from others much further along in their careers, especially when they are in and helping Texas. I feel more confident after this event because it brought me one step closer to familiarizing myself with the language and world of energy."

Founder of New Energy LLC, Mr. Cargas served as Houston's Senior Assistant City Attorney for Energy from 2008-2019. Prior to that, he had served in the White House on President Clinton's Council on Sustainable Development, in the Department of Energy, and as Deputy Director of the North American Energy Standards Board.

Dr. Marc Wallace, a member of the department's public administration faculty, moderated the discussion. Dr. Wallace and Mr. Cargas attended The American University in Washington, D.C., at the same time and have been friends for nearly three decades.



Supporting Women in Political Science



A non-partisan organization open to all students, delivering professional development and leadership on campus.

For more information, email txstswips@txstate.edu

[@SWIPS_TXST](https://twitter.com/SWIPS_TXST)

Upcoming DiD Events - Fall 2021

Visit our website to stay up to date on all Discourse in Democracy events!
www.polisci.txstate.edu.

Dr. Michael Lind “America’s New Class War”

Wednesday, November 17, 2021
6:30 PM
Virtual Lecture via Zoom

[Register Here](#)



Michael Lind is a professor of practice at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas-Austin. His many books include *The Next American Nation* (1995), *The Radical Center: The Future of American Politics* (2001), *The American Way of Strategy* (2006), *Land of Promise: An Economic History of the United States* (2012) and *The New Class War: Saving Democracy from the Managerial Elite* (2020). His articles have appeared in a wide variety of publications and journals including *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Atlantic*, *Foreign Affairs*, *American Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, and *The Financial Times*. He is the co-founder of the New America Foundation.

For more information, please contact politicalscience@txstate.edu.

If you require accommodations due to a disability in order to participate, please contact 512.245.2143 at least 72 hours in advance of the event.
Texas State is a tobacco-free campus.

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 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. Ken Grasso at kg03@txstate.edu.

Apply for an Internship

In a crowd of applicants, be the one that stands out.

The political science internship program is designed to give students a “hands-on” experience in the workplace. When finished, students will have increased their knowledge of the professional workplace, developed marketable skills, and gained valuable contacts with professionals in the field who can provide support during and after their academic career.

The department offers a variety of internships including positions with non-profits, United States congressional offices, U.S. Attorneys, the Texas legislature, the Hays County Law Library, and private law offices.

We are continuously looking for quality internships for our students. If your organization or agency would like to participate in our program and join our list of internship partners, please contact Dr. Cecilia Castillo at cr09@txstate.edu for more information.

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Gabrielle Perez

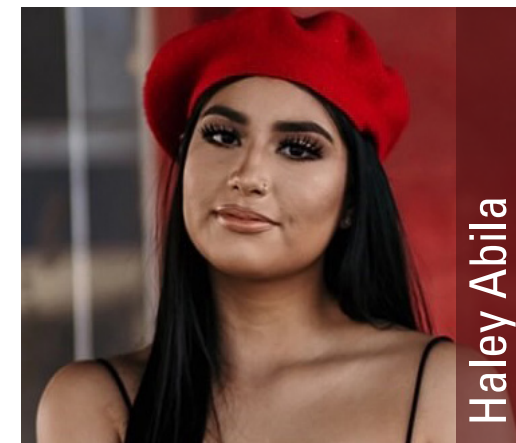
“I served as a Tax Law Intern for Blue Fox Tax Express. I performed administrative support tasks, conducted research, and assisted in the preparation of taxes for local non-profit organizations which helped me develop a clearer understanding on how policymaking directly affects taxation. I also studied various tax codes, exemptions, and allowances which increased my knowledge of legal and financial strategy. I’m grateful for the opportunity to explore my future career path in tax law, gain valuable work experience, and network with professionals in the field. Most importantly, I’ve gained greater confidence in my capabilities and knowledge.”

“I served as a Foreign Media Analyst at the U.S. Department of State where I handled serious matters under close supervision of an experienced foreign affairs officer. Some of my reports ended up in the hands of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and other officials. Every morning, my team received a briefing of scheduled State Department events, the President’s schedule, press releases, and tweets of the Secretary and spokesperson that would be posted later in the day. Being a part of something greater than myself was exciting and fulfilling. This internship gave me an opportunity to participate in efforts to change the world.”



Malec Jebr

“During the Spring 2021 semester, I was an intern in the office of Senator Larry Taylor, the Chair of the Senate Committee on Education, during the 87th Regular Session of the Texas Legislature. I sat in the committee hearings and ran the timer on public testimony. When we were not in hearings, I supported legislative staffers with research data or any given immediate need. I met with prominent Texas Senators and Representatives to learn about current public policy. There are a multitude of internships available in the Texas Legislature and I would strongly recommend anyone to apply for them.”



Haley Abila

“For the Spring 2021 semester, I interned for the Felony Division of the local District Attorney’s office. I archived case files, organized and delivered important legal documents to judges and attorneys, and performed general clerical duties. Overall, the experience was influential in helping me decide crucial career decisions. It was a great opportunity to network within the legal field. If you’re interested in law or politics, taking an internship is a great choice!”



Stefan Garza

“Over the past summer, I had the opportunity to intern with Trent Graham, Attorney at Law, and Parker Johnson, Attorney at Law. Through my time as an intern, I was given similar responsibilities as the paralegals and learned about the legal field from a different perspective. Along with working in the office, I was able to attend a handful of pre-trial hearings and bench trials. The experience from my internship will follow me into my future endeavors. I am so grateful for the opportunity and how beneficial it has been to my career.”



Abi Blackwell



Texas State's ESMOAS Delegation

Model Organization of American Studies (MOAS)

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 participants a chance to sharpen their public speaking and research skills, as well as to gain topical knowledge and receive encouragement from their peers.

Texas State students participated in the 24th Annual Eugene

Scassa Mock Organization of American States (ESMOAS) virtual competition on November 13-14. Over 100 students from colleges and universities in Texas and northern Mexico — including Baylor, Angelo State, St. Mary's, Texas A&M International, Concordia, Our Lady of the Lake, Universidad Regiomontana, University Anahuac, and National Autonomous University of Mexico — competed in the Summit of Americas and Moot Court Competitions.

Texas State students represented the nations of Guatemala and Honduras and fielded a moot court team. Team Guatemala consisted of Catching Valentinis-Dee, Elle Cross, AJ Garcia, and Kaela Thompson. Team Honduras consisted of Aaron Acevedo, Andrea Garcia Rodriguez, Dalton Powell, and Kaitlyn Rodriguez. Adrian Flores and David Moncada rounded out Texas State's moot court team. With limited practice time due to complications created by COVID, our team showed remarkable resilience and spirit and won several top awards.



Texas State ESMOAS Delegation

Catching Valentinis-Dee	Kaela Thompson	Dalton Powell	David Moncada
Elle Cross	Aaron Acevedo	Kaitlyn Rodriguez	
AJ Garcia	Andrea Garcia Rodriguez	Adrian Flores	

ESMOAS Honors and Awards

Outstanding Position Statement (1st Place Overall)

Elle Cross

Outstanding Crisis Address (1st Place Overall)

Aaron Acevedo

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

Kaela Thompson

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

AJ Garcia

Distinguished Delegate (2nd Place in Committee), Committee B

Andrea Garcia Rodriguez

Model United Nations

The Department of Political Science's Model United Nations (MUN) program participated in the Southern Regional Model United Nations (SRMUN) held virtually from March 25-28. The SRMUN competition consisted of 250 competitors, representing 35 colleges and universities including Auburn, University of Georgia, Mississippi State, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and Tennessee State University. Participating students were able to debate a host of important global issues, ranging from the challenges of combating the proliferation of chemically-enhanced illicit drugs to expanding food security for socially excluded and marginalized groups.

At the SRMUN, Texas State swept the awards. Representing the United Mexican States, Kaela Thompson, Catching Valentinis-Dee, Joseph Bahr, and Andrea Garcia Rodriguez won Outstanding Delegation recognition, a 1st Place Award. Representing the Russian Federation, Dalton Powell, Ana Moreno, Kaitlyn Rodriguez, Daniel Amoo, Aaron Acevado, Bridget Negrete, Marie Frere, Samuel Trusdale, Taylor Williams, and David Moncada won Distinguished Delegation recognition, a 2nd Place Award. Beyond these team awards, Texas State students dominated the individual awards. In fact, in all but one committee in which Texas State participated, Texas State students won a Best Delegate award.

Kaela Thompson won Best Delegate in her committee, General Assembly Plenary. Catching Valentinis-Dee, Joseph Bahr, Kaitlyn Rodriguez, and Daniel Amoo won Co-Best Delegate awards in their committee, General Assembly Fourth. Aaron

Acevado and Bridget Negrete won Best Delegate in the World Food Program – Executive Board committee. Andrea Garcia Rodriguez, Marie Frere, and Samuel Truesdale won Co-Best Delegate awards in their committee, Commission on Narcotics and Drugs. Finally, David Moncada won Best Delegate in his committee, the Security Council.

"My experience being part of MUN has been incredible," observed MUN President and political science junior Andrea Garcia Rodriguez. "MUN has given me the opportunity to meet amazing people and to learn more about international relations. I have seen personal growth in my development as a leader but also in public speaking skills. MUN has been the highlight of my college experience and I'm glad I found such an amazing group here at Texas State!" Similarly, political science senior Joseph Bahr remarked that "the conference was really enjoyable. It was a lot of fun to get to interact with students both at Texas State and around the nation. It also provided a great educational opportunity to hone your professional communication and research skills that you wouldn't get in the typical classroom environment. I really enjoyed it!"



Student News

Grad Student Presents at APSA

Students and Alumni Selected as Fulbright Semi-Finalists

Students Recognized at CoLA Awards

Student Awards 2020–2021

Pi Sigma Alpha

Despite the pandemic, Texas State political science students have been very busy over the past year. From presentations at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association to recognition at the College's annual awards, poli sci students have excelled.

Political Science Grad Student Presents at APSA Conference

Political science graduate student Jean-Marc Pruit presented a paper entitled "Dominus Populi: Redefining Tyranny and Domination in the Black Atlantic," as part of a roundtable at the 2020 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association (APSA). The roundtable explored the theme of "Race and National Identity in the American Constitutional Tradition." Pruit's paper argued that radical abolitionists and anti-slavery activists in the Age of Revolution "redefined republican conceptions of tyranny," suggesting that the conception of tyranny evolved from political dominance of an individual to "a social practice of private domination."

Pruit said the conference afforded him with an "exciting opportunity" to present his "original research to a constructive community of scholars" and characterized the roundtable as "a fruitful discussion of race and nationality as they relate to American constitutionalism."

The roundtable was chaired by the department's own Dr. Ashleen Menchaca-Bagnulo, who presented her own paper as part of it. Dr. Menchaca-Bagnulo commented that "Jean-Marc gave an impressive paper on the Black Atlantic Republican tradition and was able to hold his own with established scholars in our field."



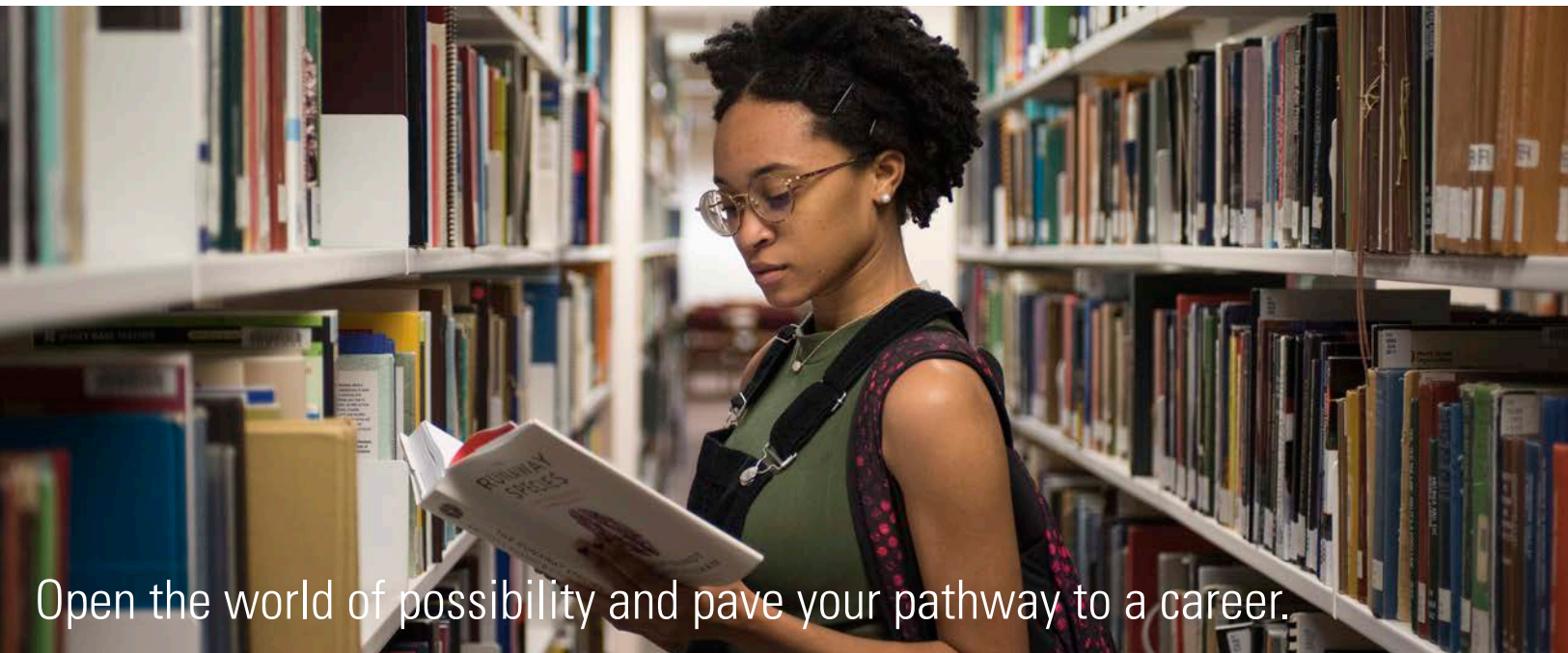
Political Science Students and Alumni Selected as Fulbright Semi-Finalists

Two of the political science department’s graduating seniors were selected as semi-finalists for the 2021–2022 competition cycle of the prestigious Fulbright U.S. Student Program. The students competed with undergraduate, graduate, and recent alumni from institutions across the U.S. in Fulbright’s largest-ever pool of applicants. Allison Tinglov (Political Science and International Relations) and Patrick Moloney (Political Science) worked very hard through the rigorous and highly competitive application process, assisted by Texas State’s Fulbright Advisors and Political Science’s own Dr. Franziska Boehme-Newell on the campus Fulbright committee.

Fulbright’s mission of promoting mutual understanding through cultural exchange attracted both majors, who look forward to being ambassadors and diplomats for the program, the university, and the United States. Tinglov described herself as “passionate about human rights and international law,” and applied for the Fulbright to complete her M.A. in Public Policy and Social Change at the University of Tübingen in Tübingen, Germany. Her proposed project is “a cross comparative analysis of US policy/German policy [on migration] and their effects on international asylum seekers.” Moloney is seeking an English teaching assistantship in Spain, where the experience will

further his perspective while he pursues his goal of working in a national or state-wide non-profit.

Dr. Boehme-Newell enjoyed being part of this year’s review process. “We were very impressed with the level of already-existing study abroad experience as well as the dedication these students brought to their applications,” she said. “They had very good knowledge of their host states and were dedicated to helping students abroad learn more about the US and contribute to intercultural exchanges.” She congratulates Tinglov and Moloney, noting that “having a convincing narrative about who you are, your concrete skills, and how you will be a positive cultural ambassador of the US abroad is key to being successful, and the students this year accomplished that.”



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Political Science Students Recognized by the College of Liberal Arts

At the College of Liberal Arts Award Ceremony on April 28, several political science students were recognized for their outstanding achievements in the past year. Senior Patrick Moloney was recognized for as the College of Liberal Arts’ Outstanding Undergraduate Student and the Department of Political Science’s Outstanding Undergraduate Student.

The department awarded its Daniel E. Farlow Political Science Scholarship, recognizing a 3.0 GPA and an interest in teaching, to Jonathan Ponder. The Howard M. “Prof” Greene Award was given to five students in the program: Maria Contreras Urrutia, Madison Hagen, Benjamin Miller, Zachary Poston, and Sarah Speck. It recognizes students GPAs of 3.9 and above in political science. Maria Contreras Urrutia was awarded the annual Richard B. Henderson Award, which goes to

the graduating political science major with the highest GPA. Elektra Jordan was awarded the Barney and Linda Knight Scholarship, which recognizes “determination and perseverance, by work and efforts, to self-finance life and an education.” Additionally, both Jordan and Ponder were awarded the Walter Richter Scholarship, recognizing “academic merit, leadership and intellectual promise” in political science.

Additionally, the following students received Academic Excellence Certificates, recognizing GPAs of 3.75 or higher:

- Mackenzie Acree*
- Kojo Adu-Nyako*
- Otto Bieker*
- Kevin Brown*
- Rachel Burns*
- Maria Contreras Urrutia*

- Crista Cortes Hernandez*
- Rachel Cutler*
- Tegan Debrock*
- Gavin Dring*
- Caitlin Easley*
- Atlanta Fackenthall*
- Andrea Garcia Rodriguez*
- Erik Gomez*
- Shoval Gurvitz*
- Madison Hagen*
- Chizobam Iheme*

- Daniel Kerins*
- Heather Kumppe*
- Noah Lawrence*
- Calysta Lee*
- Isabel Lozoya*
- Regina Macias*
- Alexia Malcom*
- Johnna McClendon*
- Montana McMahan*
- Benjamin Miller*
- Patrick Moloney*

Student Awards 2020–2021

Outstanding Undergraduate Student in Political Science
Patrick Moloney

Barney & Linda Knight Endowed Scholarship
Kalee Schoonmaker & Hannah Chetwood

Dan E. Farlow Scholarship
Montana R. McMahan

Pi Sigma Alpha

The department's chapter of the national honor society Pi Sigma Alpha had a busy year despite the COVID-19 pandemic. The organization hosted several talks as well as a social outing and an induction ceremony for new members.

Perhaps the highlight of the year was a visit by alumnus Buddy Garcia (BA, 1990), who spoke about the current political landscape and highlighted the need for the involvement of young people in government. Mr. Garcia's talk drew on his long experience in government, which included serving as Senior Advisor to Governor Perry, Deputy Secretary of State and Border Commerce Coordinator, Chairman of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and a member of the Texas Railroad Commission. He advised students to "look for those in government who aren't interested in credit, but rather interested in helping others."

The chapter's incoming president, Nick James, noted Mr. Garcia's deep "insight into the current political climate that engulfs so much of today's conversations."

After the event, Mr. Garcia stayed for another half hour, answering questions about his career and state government.

Political consultant Tim Glassco, a partner at the Cross Oak Group, spoke to the members in March about jobs in political consulting. He covered a wide variety of topics including what a political candidate needs to do to be successful in winning a campaign and how to be proactive during a job search. He also gave a brief biographical overview of his career, including his time in the Obama administration and his continuing work as a lobbyist in Austin. He encouraged students to be on the lookout for any opportunities and stressed that

developing relationships is a key factor in opening doors to new opportunities.

The final speaker for the year was the chapter's faculty advisor, Dr. Tom Varacalli. His talk, "How to Avoid Being a Partisan Hack," distinguished between a "good partisan" (i.e., a knowledgeable, personable, and persuasive individual) and a "partisan hack." Undergraduate student Tennyson Moreno commented that "Dr. Varacalli discussed the importance of education, and reasonable thought when discussing policy decisions, and political beliefs — an important lesson for the next generation of citizens and political activists."

On Friday, March 26, Pi Sigma Alpha held its first social event of the year at The Spot in San Marcos. Ten members gathered to bowl, play pool, and get to know one another better.

The year concluded with an induction ceremony in which it welcomed sixteen new members, the largest group of new members in the chapter's history. The ceremony took place at Palmer's and also served to introduce the organization's new officers:

President: Nick James

Vice-President: Francisco Valdovinos

Treasurer: Otto Bieker

Founded in 1920, Pi Sigma Alpha is the national honors society for political science. The Texas State Chapter, Rho Eta, was established in 1988 and over the last thirty years has hosted a variety of lectures and community-service projects. If you are interested in Pi Sigma Alpha, please contact Nicholas James, nrj16@txstate.edu.

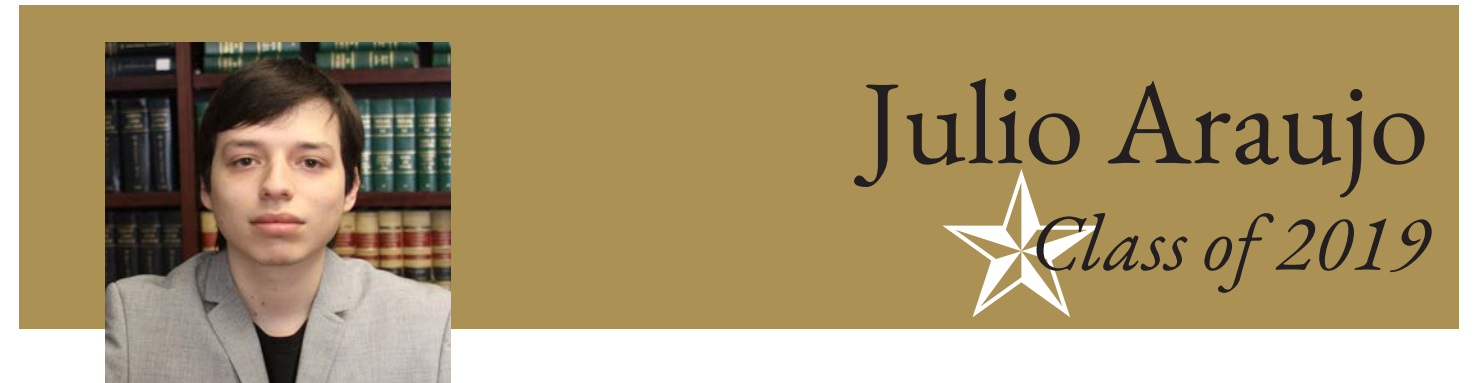


2021 Induction Ceremony



Political Science Graduates

Where are they now?



Julio Cesar Rodriguez Araujo became interested in political science while studying for his master's in philosophy at Houston Baptist University. A course on Aristotle introduced the idea of political science as applied philosophy and he wanted to explore that in-depth. A professor at Houston Baptist referred him to Texas State University as the go-to school for political theory.

Though Araujo's initial goal was to be a political scientist, his studies in the department ignited his interest in several other fields. "My philosophy and political science interests overlap; my interests are ancient and medieval political philosophy and religion/apologetics," he explains. However, he recently completed another master's degree in bioethics at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, where he was also a teaching assistant for the college of medicine and a research assistant for the college of education. He explains his choice of topics to research: "I focus on the role of medical paternalism in health care between physicians and patients. Paternalism is found in political systems as well. How are we supposed to treat a patient? Should a patient listen to their physician? This can be related to the relationship between a regime and its citizens."

Araujo notes that "My time at Texas State were the best years of my life," and "All my professors (especially Dr. DeHart and Dr. Grasso) played a significant role in my life and education. Every class significantly improved my writing and way of approaching different ideas and perspectives."

Asked about the future, Araujo explains that he takes a practical and skeptical approach. Bioethics is a booming field and political science connects so many different fields. Though philosophy jobs are in short supply, the lessons it teaches are applicable everywhere. Above all Araujo advises current students to "read, read, read." "Love what you do," he warns, "if you are not in love with what you are studying, you'll be miserable in your classes and won't benefit from them." Araujo's love for political science is clear — in Fall 2021 he begins a Ph.D. in Political Science at the University of Houston.





Nathan Moore

★ *Class of 2015*

Some of Nathan Moore's earliest memories were "listening to NPR on road trips to visit my grandparents. Even at a young age I enjoyed listening to the news and learning about world events." "Since then," he says, "I have always enjoyed learning more about the news, international relations, and political science." Moore continued this interest during his years at Texas State, where he double majored in Political Science and Microbiology. After graduating in 2015, he pursued an M.A. in Political Science, which he completed in 2017, and then went on to the University of Maine's School of Law from which he graduated in 2021. Now, he works as a specialist in the data security and privacy practice Ernst & Young in Austin.

At the University of Maine School of Law, Moore took the opportunity to specialize, earning a graduate certificate with honors in Information Privacy Law. During that time, he also earned the CIPP/US (Certified Information Privacy Profession – US law) designation from the International Association of Privacy Professionals. "In law school," he explained, "I participated in a trademark law moot court competition and a data security and privacy moot court competition through the University of Helsinki, earning a finalist award." His interest in data and privacy was formed during his M.A. at Texas State: "In my first privacy law class we studied the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in depth, and I knew I loved studying both privacy law and international privacy law. I was able to continue my fascination with international relations I had found in my M.A. program by studying international privacy law."

Moore sought out many internship and employment opportunities during his education. He worked on HIPAA compliance at the University of New England's School of Medicine, he worked on CCPA compliance with Fortune 100 clients at Ernst & Young's (EY) data security and privacy practice, and he was also a law clerk at EY's network advertising initiative in which he learned about privacy in the AdTech industry and the data privacy behind the iOS app ecosystem. He singles out Dr. Ken Ward's constitutional law classes as playing a critical role

in preparing for law school and the employment opportunities he has enjoyed. Dr. Ward, he observed, "had a great way of describing the background of the cases and working through the legal issues. It was a great taste of what constitutional law would be like in the law school setting." He added that although he "was never a political theory person, Drs. Grasso and DeHart made political theory accessible and interesting!"

“If you find a novel area of political science that you love, go with it! Nothing is wrong with thinking outside the box.”

Moore is very optimistic about the future of the legal and specifically privacy-oriented fields; "In my field of work, I see a national privacy law being passed in the next ten years. If a national law is passed, I would imagine either state attorney general offices would grow to accommodate enforcement, or the FCC/FTC would need to grow their enforcement wings. Perhaps even a new privacy bureau would be created. California is already going down that route!" Moore advises current students that "if you find a novel area of political science that you love, go with it! Nothing is wrong with thinking outside of the box and pursuing what you find interesting in political science." Finally, he recommends that "if you can fit an internship into your graduation plan, I highly suggest doing one."



Eric Ramirez

★ *Class of 2014*

Eric Ramirez graduated in 2014 from Texas State with a B.A. in Public Administration and in 2018 with a Master of Public Administration. He is also currently enrolled in the department's Master of Legal Studies program specializing in Tax Law and in Texas State's Master of Social Studies program. He initially became interested in Political Science during a 2013 internship with James E. "Pete" Laney, the former Speaker of the Texas House. He built a relationship with Laney over the summer, which led Ramirez to consider public policy and a political career for the first time.

“You have to get your degree, but at the same time you have to get experience through things like volunteering and internships.”

After teaching at Texas State as a T.A., Ramirez accepted a position at Southwest Preparatory in Seguin, where he currently serves as a Social Studies teacher, including Texas history, U.S. history, and world geography. Ramirez credits Dr. Billy Fields for his interest and ability in social studies and geography, saying Fields's Netherlands transportations study demonstrated how much all these areas overlap.

Ramirez is also employed at Jackson Hewitt, where he has worked as a tax preparer since 2014, and as a bookkeeper at Ledesma Bookkeeping Service since 2017. Ramirez is also working toward becoming an Enrolled Agent, a designation by

the Internal Revenue Service, and is working on his teaching certification.

In addition to his jobs and graduate work, Ramirez is also involved in the City of San Marcos government. When asked why he is involved in so many different things, he answers that "working with mentors and reading biographies showed me what people have done before and how all their efforts were spread out. It is important to be versatile and open to any opportunity that comes your way." In 1994, he met Henry Cisneros, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in the Clinton administration. This meeting planted a seed of interest in housing policy, which unites all his other interests. Moving forward, Ramirez plans to become more involved in local politics in San Marcos and expand his skills in infrastructure, budgeting, and finance, and use his broad skillset to help his local community.

COVID also had an impact on Ramirez, but he treated it like an opportunity. "I was able to venture off into the private sector," he notes. "I was teaching face-to-face classes the whole time, but then got sick. I had to learn to teach with whole new strategies for engagement and develop a whole new skillset." He advises current students to work hard but stay afloat: "It's tough to put 120% into everything; you just have to figure out how to juggle it all. You have to get your degree, but at the same time you have to have to get experience through things like volunteering, internships and jobs."





Buddy Garcia

Class of 1990

Buddy Garcia (class of 1990) has had a long career in public service. In 1991 he began working for District 27 State Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. and later became a senior advisor to Governor Rick Perry. He was appointed as Texas's Deputy Secretary of State and Border Commerce Coordinator in 2004, followed by Commissioner at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality from 2007 to 2012, where he was Chairman for two years. Garcia completed his state service at the Railroad Commission of Texas, when he was appointed Commissioner in 2012 by Governor Perry, before beginning a consulting practice, Modern Stewardship, where he works today.

Garcia's interest in political science came early-on in high school and continued through his Texas State years. He credits the now-retired Dr. Stouffer with inspiring him to think about himself in a new way: "Dr. Stouffer's State & Local Government class had a big impact on me. I can still hear him as class started each day with 'Good morning, future leaders of America.'" Garcia says that his time at Texas State exposed him to many different types of people on campus and that encountering new ideas in his classes inspired him to look at every issue in a variety of different ways. It is this flexible and open-minded approach to politics that has served him well as an advisor on the issues that matter most to him.

Garcia says that he notices politics in general tending toward extremes and he wants to encourage young people to be thoughtful about difficult topics, emphasizing that no issue is as simple or important as partisans make it out to be. "Public service is a noble calling and profession," he explains. "If regular folks are not interested in becoming leaders in government, it will continue to be dominated by ideologues and those committed to self-promotion."

He advises current students to pursue the issues they care deeply about, but to remember that politics is about compromise and the public good. "Politics is very fast-paced and you have to have a thick skin," he says. "The closest thing I can relate it to," he notes, "is working in the food service industry

— no matter what happens you have to be professional and not let personal feelings get in the way, remake the dish, and hope you get a tip." Above all, Garcia says, he used every class and every professor to get background on issues and made himself available for every opportunity. "Doors will always open to people who take advantage of opportunities. You get old and you lose some energy, so I really respect the tough young people coming into politics, but you need background and context on the issues."

He says students have to remember that "one man's freedom fighter is another's terrorist," so it is important to be able to work with people you disagree with and to familiarize yourself with other perspectives. "Democracy is still an experiment in self-government," he says. "No matter how things change, that's still true; without a common thread of love for that, the country will fall apart."

Garcia is very active with Texas State, encouraging students to follow government and consider their place in society. This past year, he spoke at a Pi Sigma Alpha meeting and visited with Professor McMahan's Texas Politics class to discuss lobbying and interest groups. "Where the actual rubber meets the road in politics is in the legal process," he explains, "creating laws and using words properly, talking with the people affected by ideas, these are where politics and causes are furthered, not in moral superiority or making a show of it." He hopes students will continue to thoughtfully engage each other in debate about issues and looks forward to seeing the future leaders of America in action.



Benefits of Advanced Degrees:

Where are our students now?

Advanced degrees provide the opportunity to take specialized classes, participate in research, and grapple with contemporary political problems, topics, and issues. Students who receive advanced degrees earn higher salaries, attain prestigious jobs, and can teach at colleges and universities.

Graduate programs in political science may focus on American politics, comparative politics, political theory, international politics, and more.

Law school includes classes on legal procedure covering various facets of the law, legal writing, and research.



Judith Kheir, B.A. TXST '18
M.A., SciencesPo Paris



Jean-Marc Pruit, M.A. TXST '21
Ph.D., University of Virginia



Atticus Finch, B.A. TXST '19
University of Texas School of Law



Keely Freund, B.A. TXST '19
Golden Gate University School of Law



Sebastian Quaid, B.A. TXST '20
South Texas College of Law



Kyla Wade, B.A. TXST '20
University of Oklahoma College of Law



Jessica Lieck, B.A. TXST '20
Texas Tech School of Law



Ezekiel Loseke, M.A. TXST '19
Ph.D., Hillsdale College



Julio César Rodríguez, M.A. TXST '19
Ph.D., University of Houston



Morgan Morrow, B.A. TXST '18
University of Houston Law



Ellen Earl, B.A. TXST '20
Texas A&M School of Law



Breanta Boss, M.A. TXST '18
SMU Dedman School of Law

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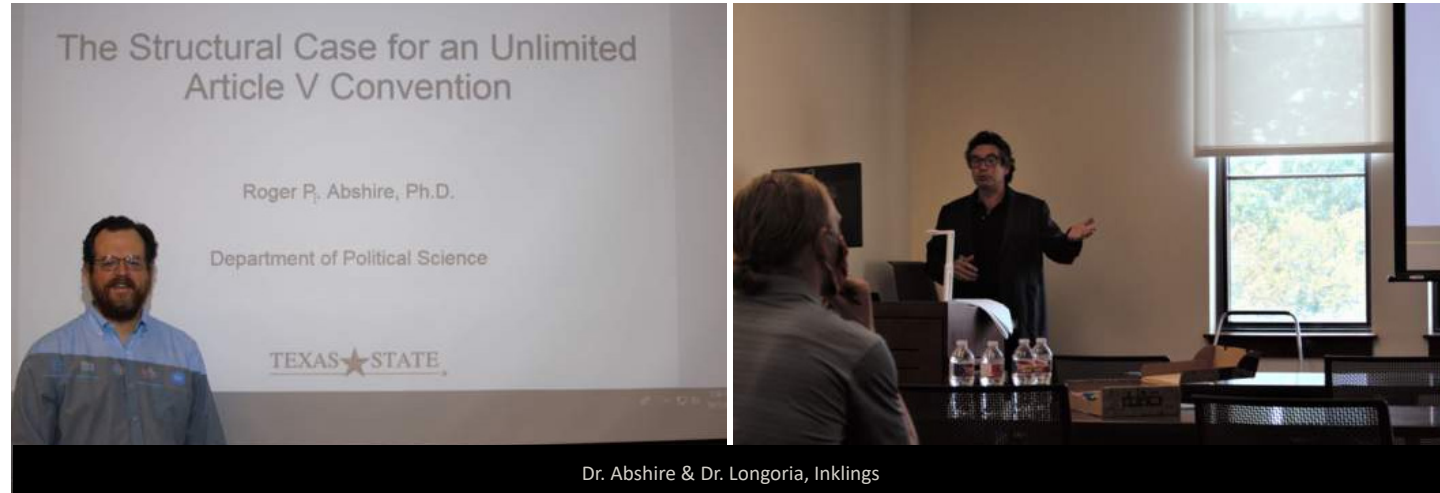
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Faculty News



Dr. Abshire & Dr. Longoria, Inklings

Inklings

For more than twenty years the department has hosted “Inklings” gatherings to allow faculty and grad students to present their work in progress or share their expertise.

Reflecting the diverse interests of our faculty, this year’s presentations included a talk by the department’s newest member, Dr. Roger Abshire, on the history and background of Article V of the Constitution and, more specifically, the provision that allows for the convening of a convention of states to propose constitutional amendments; a talk by Dr. Mike Faber, “Explaining the 2020 Election (or at least trying to),” examining how Donald Trump once again significantly

out-performed the polls, shifts in Senate and House seats, the impact state legislature elections may have on redistricting processes, claims of voter fraud, the Georgia Senate runoff election, split ticket voting, and the credibility of polling; and a talk by Dr. Paul DeHart on “The Image of Science in Political Science: The Quest for a Coherent Science of Politics,” exploring the problems inherent in attempting to model political science on the natural sciences.

Inklings takes its name from a group of prominent intellectuals (including J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis) who met regularly at Oxford to read aloud and share their works in progress.

Dr. Shields Recognized as 2020 Regents’ Professor



On Friday, August 14, 2020, the Texas State University System’s Board of Regents announced their 2020 Regents’ Award Winners. The department’s own Dr. Patricia Shields was one of only three faculty members across the state to be named a “Regents’ Professor,” the highest honor awarded by the system, which recognizes “excellence and exemplary achievement in the areas of teaching, research and publication, and service.” “I am thrilled and humbled by this recognition,” Dr. Shields commented, “and I want to thank my family, students, and friends in the Political Science Department and throughout the University for all their support and encouragement over the years.” During her years at Texas State, Dr. Shields has received many awards for excellence in teaching, including Texas State’s Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching and Texas State Faculty Senate’s Everett Swinney Teaching Award. In 2019, Dr. Shields was elected to the National

Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), which was chartered by Congress to provide independent, nonpartisan, and neutral advice to government leaders and agencies on all levels of government about emerging trends in governance and public administration. She directed the Master of Public Administration Program at Texas State for 17 years and has published extensively on a wide range of subjects including civil-military relations, peace, history of women in

public administration, application of pragmatism to public administration, and research methods. In addition, she serves on the Editorial Board for *Administration & Society* and as a Contributing Editor to *Parameters: Quarterly Journal of the US Army War College*. Since 2001, she has served as Editor-in-Chief of *Armed Forces and Society*, the leading peer reviewed journal on civil-military relations.

Dr. Opheim Retires

The end of the spring semester marked the retirement of a long-time member of the department, Dr. Cynthia Opheim. Dr. Opheim joined the department in 1987. At various points during her time here, she served as Chair of the Department, Interim Chair for the Department of Geography, and Associate Provost. For the past few years, Dr. Opheim also taught in the Honors College, which she enjoyed because “there’s nothing better than a small class with smart students” to make a professor feel like they’re making an impact.

Dr. Opheim is looking forward to travelling in her retirement, visiting places old and new, noting how nice it would be to visit in seasons besides the hot, busy summer. When asked to reflect on her 34 years at Texas State, Dr. Opheim happily said, “If I had to do this all over again, I would choose the very same profession and the very same place. It’s been a wonderful job at a wonderful university.”



Beto O’Rourke Teaches Class at Texas State

In the spring of 2021, Beto O’Rourke team-taught a section of Texas Politics (PS 4325) with the department’s associate chair, Dr. Sherri Mora. A former Congressman and a senatorial and presidential candidate, O’Rourke noted that while he knew “the level of intellectual rigor” was going to be very high, one thing he “had not anticipated” was how much he enjoyed collaborating with Dr. Mora, whom he described as “just phenomenal.” “I’ve been in politics a long time,” O’Rourke remarked, “but I have learned so much about Texas politics by reading what she’s written, having conversations with her as we designed the class, and just having a chance to take in what she is teaching in the class.” Dr. Mora, he continued, is “phenomenal and the students are absolutely terrific. The sorts of questions they’re asking are not questions with easy answers, but just as often the students that pose them are themselves willing to try and answer them. I’m learning a lot, not just from Dr. Mora, but from the students who are part of this class. I’ve been so impressed and just feel extraordinarily

lucky to be here.”

One thing he particularly liked was the “very open sharing of experiences” and “intellectual honesty” that characterized the class despite today’s highly polarized political situation. The class has featured talks by several former Republican officeholders and respected members of the media to illustrate how serious and civil discussions are possible even in today’s highly partisan political environment.

Guest speakers in the class included former Texas state senator and Commissioner of the General Land Office, Jerry E. Patterson; former chairman of the Texas Transportation Commission, Ted Houghton; and CEO and co-founder of *The Texas Tribune*, Evan Smith.

In a letter to President Trauth thanking the university for affording them “an unparalleled academic opportunity,” the

20 students who attended the class noted that “no other course could have granted us this amount of access to an individual with this array of service at both the local and federal levels. More than just the instructive insights that Professor O’Rourke gathered throughout his public service career and thoughtfully shared with us, he also brought to

our discussions a scholarly familiarity with the history and complexity of Texas politics.” They also called attention to how the class exposed them “to a broad range of outlooks on the Texas political landscape” and allowed for the “free” and civil exchange of ideas and viewpoints. Student input “irrespective of . . . individual perspectives or ideologies, was welcomed.”



New Faculty Profiles

Dr. Roger Abshire

In Fall 2020, Dr. Roger Abshire joined the political science program. Dr. Abshire earned his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Houston in 2018, where he specialized in constitutional theory, American political government, and American political thought. Dr. Abshire also earned an M.A. in Political Science at the University of Houston and completed his B.S. in Political Science at Texas A&M University. In the past, Dr. Abshire has taught American political thought and published research on constitutional interpretation. His 2019 article, “Constitutionalized Prerogative and the Pardon Power,” was published in *Presidential Studies Quarterly*.

Dr. Vince Bagnulo

In Spring 2021, Dr. Vince Bagnulo joined the political science program, moving over from Texas State’s Department of Philosophy where he has taught for the past four years. He earned his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Notre Dame, and holds a Masters in Philosophy from the University of Oxford and undergraduate degrees in Physics

and Philosophy from the University of Winnipeg. Dr. Bagnulo primarily focuses on American government and American political thought. His most recent article, “Making Democracy Great Again...or Not: Alexis de Tocqueville on Why Greatness in Democratic Society Requires Justice,” was published in *Perspectives on Political Science* in 2020.

Casey Wheatland

For the 2021–2022 Academic Year, Casey Wheatland, a Ph.D. candidate at Hillsdale College’s Van Andel Graduate School, will be joining the department’s faculty. Previously, Wheatland has been a lecturer at Hillsdale. A specialist in American political thought, American constitutionalism, and political development and political theory, he holds a B.A. in History and Political Science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His articles have appeared in several journals, including *Perspectives on Political Science*, and his conference presentations have addressed a wide range of topics including Alexander Hamilton’s political economy, Henry Clay’s American System, and the thought of C. Wright Mills.

Political Science in the News

Dr. Ashleen Menchaca-Bagnulo Interviewed in *Ms. Magazine*

Dr. Ashleen Menchaca-Bagnulo was interviewed in an article titled “Latinas Had the Highest Unemployment Rate This Year — and It’s Driving Them to Vote” in *Ms. magazine* by Chabeli Carrazana. The article, which highlights the increased turnout among Latina voters due to concern for their families during the COVID-19 pandemic, quotes Dr. Menchaca-Bagnulo on the driving forces of voter participation and draws on her personal experience in her city. She says, “Latina women tend to think about what they need to do to preserve their family. In the past, it’s been hard to see how your vote is something that relates to your family. This year it’s become ‘if I don’t vote, my family is in danger.’”

Former Texas State Professor Appointed to Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board

Former Texas State Political Science professor Dr. William Ruger was appointed to the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board in 2020. As a member of the presidentially appointed 12-member board, Dr. Ruger will supervise the Fulbright Program as it selects students, teachers, and programs from around the world to participate in Fulbright exchanges.

A specialist in international security who received his Ph.D. from Brandeis University, Dr. Ruger was a faculty member in the Texas State Department of Political Science. His books include *Milton Friedman* (Continuum, 2011) and *Freedom in the 50 States* (George Mason University, 2013) and his articles have appeared in a variety of academic and popular venues including *Armed Forces in Society*, *International Studies Quarterly*, the *Washington Post*, the *Austin American Statesman*, *USA Today*, and the *New York Daily News*. He currently serves as Vice President for Research and Policy at the Charles Koch Institute and Vice President for Foreign Policy at Stand Together.

A veteran of the Afghanistan War and an officer in the United States Navy (Reserve Component), Dr. Ruger earned a Special Operations Warfighter Certificate from the Joint Special Operations University in Tampa, Florida, and is the recipient of numerous awards including the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Navy Achievement Medal, and the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with campaign star.

“Dr. Ruger was an extremely valuable member faculty,” noted

Kenneth Grasso, the department’s chair. “We’re extremely proud to see a former Texas State colleague serving in this important post.”

Dr. Don Inbody Interviewed on ABC Radio National Australia

On Sunday, September 20, Dr. Don Inbody, a long-time member of the department’s faculty, appeared on Australia’s ABC Radio National on Annabelle Quince’s show “Rear Vision”, to discuss mail-in voting in America. Dr. Inbody was joined on the discussion panel by Dr. Douglas Jones, Associate Professor of Computer Science at the University of Iowa; Dr. Stephen Ansolabehere, Professor of Government at Harvard University; and authors Brittany Gibson and Thom Hartman. The panel was entitled “Voting technology and democracy in America,” and revolved around concerns for the upcoming election. Dr. Inbody was chosen for the panel because of his expertise in the history of American voting methods. His book, *The Soldier Vote: War, Politics, and the Ballot in America*, was published by Palgrave in 2016. He talked about the history of mail-in voting and its origin during the American Civil War and the elections of 1862 and 1864.

Dr. Michael Faber Appears on Good Day Austin on Fox 7

On August 20, Texas State Political Science’s Dr. Mike Faber appeared on Good Day Austin on Fox 7 KTBC to discuss the Democratic convention. Anchor Amanda Salinas interviewed Dr. Faber about presidential candidate Joe Biden’s upcoming speech. Dr. Faber noted that Mr. Biden was in a delicate situation, in that he had to convince undecided voters to his side while avoiding pushing more moderate voters away. Dr. Faber predicted his speech would emphasize “unity, appealing to the undecided, and arguing that he can bring the country together.”

In his nomination acceptance speech, Biden fulfilled Dr. Faber’s predictions, launching his campaign as Democratic nominee as a “rescue mission” for a country besieged on all sides, according to the *New York Times*.

Dr. Faber also discussed former President Barack Obama’s speech at the convention, observing that it was unusual for a former president to offer such direct criticism of his successor.

Faculty Update 2020-2021



Roger Abshire is working on a book manuscript which argues that the institutional models used by the Constitutional Framers were not well suited to the way that the Constitution divides and allocates political power between the three branches of the federal government.

Ben Arnold was awarded College of Liberal Arts' 2020 Achievement Award for Excellence in Service.

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

Vince Bagnulo's "Making Democracy Great Again . . . or Not: Alexis de Tocqueville on Why Greatness in Democratic Society Requires Justice" appeared in *Perspectives on Political Science* (<https://doi.org/10.1080/10457097.2020.1742535>).

Paul DeHart's article "The Return of the Sacral King: The Christian Subversion of the Roman Empire and the Modern State" was published in *The Catholic Social Science Review* (<https://doi.org/10.5840/cssr20202527>). His "On the First Principles of Moral Reason" appeared in *Public Discourse* (<https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2020/07/64302/>); and his "Why I am a Natural Lawyer" was published in *Law*

& *Liberty* (<https://lawliberty.org/why-i-am-a-natural-lawyer/>).

Bill DeSoto served on the City of San Marcos's Neighborhood Commission.

Tom Doyle's book *Nuclear Ethics for the 21st Century: Survival, Order, and Justice* was published by Rowman and Littlefield (Lanham, MD). His "Contemporary Nuclear Deterrence Dynamics and the Question of Ceding Humanity" appeared in *Moral Responsibility in Twenty-First-Century Warfare: Just War Theory and the Ethical Challenges of Autonomous Weapons Systems*, edited by S.C. Roach & A.E. Eckert (New York, NY: State University of New York Press).

Michael Faber's article "Thomas Jefferson, Federalist," was published in *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26954192>).

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

Ken Grasso's article "The Real Western War of Religion" was published in *The Catholic Social Science Review* (<https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2020/06/64475/>). He also published

two articles in *Mercatornet*: "Dysfunctional Democracy: Politics without Purpose" (<https://mercatornet.com/dysfunctional-democracy-politics-without-purpose/46471/>) and "Pluralism and Its Discontents" (<https://mercatornet.com/pluralism-and-its-discontents/47058/>).

Paul Kens serves on the Editorial Review Board for *The Journal of Supreme Court History*.

Alex Kroeger's "Dominant Party Rule, Elections, and Cabinet Instability in African Autocracies" appeared in *British Journal of Political Science*, 50, 1 (March 9, 2020), 79-101. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123417000497>.

Jennifer Lamm served on the university's Election Task Force and President Trauth's Council on Women in High Education.

Arnold Leder served as an organizer for Good Government Worldwide's forum on "Revolutions and Democratic Journeys: Examining the Experiences of Turkey, Mexico, Indonesia and the Philippines."

Vance McMahan chairs the Political Science Program's Internship Committee.

Ashleen Menchaca-Bagnulo's article "Desire, Conflict, and Tradition in Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity" appeared in *Expositions: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities* (<https://expositions.journals.villanova.edu/article/view/2527>). She also published two articles in *Public Discourse*: "Rethinking the Working Class" (<https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2020/11/72940/>) and "Lessons from King, Tocqueville, and Augustine on Loving Our Black Neighbors" (<https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2020/06/64475/>).

Ed Mihalkanin served on the San Marcos City Council.

Sherri Mora's book *The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy* was published by McGraw-Hill Higher Education in

its 5th edition, and she continues to serve on the University's Financial Aid Advisory, Appeals, and Scholarship Awards Committee, the Teacher Education Council, and as a Faculty Senate liaison for the Department of Political Science.

Franziska Boehme Newell's "Reactive Remembrance: The Political Struggle over Apologies and Reparations between Germany and Namibia for the Herero Genocide" appeared in *The Journal of Human Rights*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14754835.2020.1727729>.

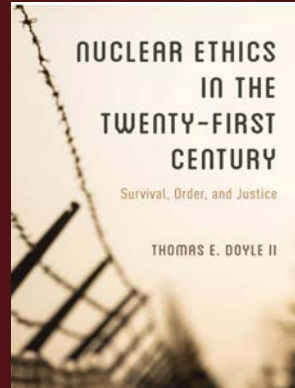
Ionut Popescu's "An Old Grand Strategy for A New Era" was published in *Providence* (<https://providencemag.com/2020/02/old-grand-strategy-american-conservative-nationalism-book-review-colin-dueck-age-iron/>). He published two articles in *The National Interest*: "It's Too Soon for America To Kill Its Grand Strategy" (<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/its-too-soon-america-kill-its-grand-strategy-169398>); and "It's Time to Get Real About Great-Power Politics" (<https://nationalinterest.org/feature/its-time-get-real-about-great-power-politics-144742>.)

Eduardo Schmidt Passos received the Teaching Award of Honor, Texas State University Alumni Association.

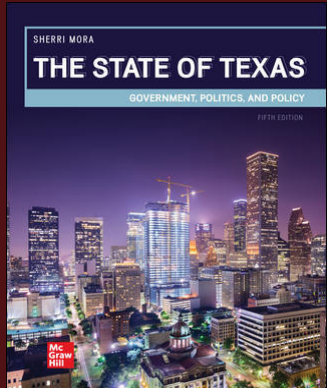
Tom Varacalli's "In Defense of Christian Exceptionalism" appeared in the *Catholic Social Science Review* (<https://doi.org/10.5840/cssr20202526>).

Ken Ward served as the program organizer for the Project on the American Constitution at the 2020 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association.

Hyun Yun's article "Divided and Crosscutting Blogosphere Political Dialogues: Revisiting the Spiral of Silence and the Bandwagon Effect" appeared in *The Quarterly Review of Business Disciplines* (<https://faculty.utrgv.edu/louis.falk/qrbd/QRBDnov20.pdf>).



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