Homo Politicus
The Newsletter of the Political Science Department at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York

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The Graduate Center (GC) is the principal doctorate-granting institution of the City University of New York. Offering more than 30 doctoral degrees and fostering globally significant research in a wide variety of centers and institutes, the GC affords rigorous academic training in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences. It is home to a core faculty of approximately 140 teachers and mentors, along with 1700 faculty from across the CUNY colleges and New York City's cultural, academic and scientific institutions. Through its public programs, the Graduate Center enhances the City's intellectual and cultural life.
Dear Colleagues, Students, and Alumni,

As Executive Officer, I have the privilege of learning about many of the achievements of our faculty, students, and alumni. In order to share this information with colleagues and friends of the Program, we have inaugurated a Department newsletter, *Homo Politicus*. Launching this newsletter is part of our ongoing work to nourish intellectual community in the Program and foster strong connections with our alumni. To that end, it includes interviews with new members of our doctoral faculty, current students, and recent M.A. and Ph.D. graduates, as well as information about new courses and highlights of recent and upcoming events and conferences.

As we near the close of the semester, our Program continues to bustle with numerous workshops and colloquia, featuring our own exceptional faculty and students as well as renowned scholars, such as Mark Beissinger (Princeton), Jodi Dean (Hobart and William Smith), and Jack Snyder (Columbia). The renewed sense of vitality and collegiality within our Department is palpable and, for me at least, infectious.

Reading through the long list of publications, presentations, prizes, and other achievements by the diverse members of our community of scholars, I am reminded of what an honor it is to have my current administrative post. As you peruse the pages of this newsletter, please also take note of the incredible contributions of our students in organizing and facilitating so many of these activities. With that in mind, I want to extend special thanks to Adam Bell, André Guzzi, Beth Newcomer, and Isa Vásquez for their outstanding work assembling this first issue of *Homo Politicus*.

Warmest regards,

Alyson Cole
Keena Lipsitz is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Queens College and joined the consortial faculty here at the Graduate Center in the fall of 2015. She is the author of Competitive Elections and the American Voter (2011).

By Beth Newcomer

Beth: Some reports have suggested that the 2016 election cycle will be filled with more negative ads than ever before. Based on your research on political communication and campaign advertising, what effects on voter information might you expect from an exceedingly negative tone in this election?

Keena: This race without a doubt will be the most negative we’ve ever seen. In every presidential election since 1988 we’ve seen an increase in negative ads. That’s just the trend. Negative ads – which in political science are ads that criticize an opponent – are actually correlated with higher voter knowledge. In fact, they are more informative than positive ads that tend to be mostly fluff. Ads run by super PACs are another story, however. Super PACs run more negative ads and their ads tend to be more misleading. This is especially true of groups who use dark money. They don’t have to disclose who their donors are and usually hide behind made-up names so it’s impossible to hold the sponsors of these ads accountable. These are the ads to watch for in 2016.

B: Tell us about the project you’re currently working on.

K: My research is moving more in the direction of political psychology. I’m looking at how political ads – positive, negative, or contrast ads – affect cognitive processing. One normative argument you’ll often find in the literature is that we want candidates to use contrast ads. These are ads where a candidate says, “I stand for this and my opponent stands for that.” We assume these are the best kind of ads but there hasn’t been much work showing that this is true – i.e. that voters learn from them or that they cause viewers to think more deeply about their vote choice. What I’ve found so far is that viewers engage in more cognitive processing when they watch contrast and negative ads than positive ads. I’m now trying to understand if the types of cognitive processing generated by negative and contrast ads are fundamentally different in any way.

B: How are you measuring “cognitive response” in this instance?

K: This is the fun part about this project. I’m working with a survey I helped design of over 17,000 Americans who were asked to watch Romney and Obama ads online in 2012. After viewing the ad, they were asked to describe them. Since I can’t code all 17,000 responses, I’m using computer analysis software to look for certain kinds of words associated with cognitive processing. I’m drawing on the work of a social psychologist at UT, Austin, James Pennebaker, who studies how written language reflects different kinds of psychological processes. That’s really the most exciting part of this project for me – drawing on the literature and methods of a different field to understand advertising effects. Nobody’s done this kind of thing.
Lennie Feldman is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Hunter College and joined the faculty at the Graduate Center in the fall of 2015. He is the author of *Citizens Without Shelter: Homelessness, Democracy, and Political Exclusion* (2004) and serves as the Associate Editor of the journal, *Polity*.

By Adam Bell

Adam: Lennie, your recent work focuses on the construction of a “legal grey hole,” a concept originally put forth by David Dyzenhaus, in regard to the use of force by police. Can you please expound upon how you see it functioning?

Lennie: I’m arguing that one of the core elements of this legal grey hole in the realm of policing is the doctrine of “Qualified Immunity” which has been greatly expanded in the last 15 years to provide protection of police officers from civil rights civil litigation. Basically the Supreme Court has gradually built a legal logic that requires that a case present almost factually identical circumstances to a past case in order for it to proceed. Otherwise modest differences in facts mean that the law was ‘not clear’ at the time the police officer acted, and the officer is thus granted immunity from civil litigation.

A: What advice do you have, in terms of course of study or methodological approach, for students interested in the intersection of law and politics?

L: From where I’m situated, the first path is fairly traditional—through legal doctrine: As a political theorist it’s natural for someone like me to go to other texts as potent sites of political meaning, and judicial opinions are obviously extremely important. I think political theorists can bring something important to the study of legal texts because we are attentive to the circulation of political meanings and as (partial) outsiders to law we bring fresh eyes to legal logics. But there is also a wider tradition of empirical research into “law in action” and “law in everyday life.” The law and society approach can involve interviewing legal actors (understood broadly to include both official legal actors and private persons who mobilize law or are within its grasp), doing fieldwork in legal spaces, and exploring how law gets represented and imagined in other social locations and media. And that’s only one portion of scholarship at the intersection of law and politics, the part that links up most directly to my work in political theory. From the starting point of American Politics, law and courts are studied historically, through APD approaches, and with a focus on contemporary decision-makers, through the study of judicial behavior. So for students interested in the intersection of law and politics there are a lot of ways in!

A: What new projects are you working on?

L: I have just taken up the role of faculty head of the Human Rights program at Hunter College where I work with the program director and an interdisciplinary faculty committee to continue to develop a thriving undergraduate program and further the project of human rights. And as of this past summer, I’m serving as associate editor of the journal *Polity* along with my colleague Roger Karapin who is editor-in-chief. Both of these are great experiences and I’m learning a lot in the process.
Faculty News

Professor Susan Buck-Morss (Political Theory) was part of a panel with Kandice Chuh, Eric Lott, and Lisa Lowe to discuss Lowe’s book *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, at the Graduate Center, Oct. 15, 2015.

Professor Peter Beinart (Writing Politics) led “Conversations in the Commons with Peter Beinart: Understanding Election 2016” on Oct 20, 2015 featuring Joy-Ann Reid, national correspondent for MSNBC, and Reihan Salam, executive editor of the National Review.

Professor Michael Fortner (Public Policy) wrote *Black Silent Majority: The Rockefeller Drug Laws and the Politics of Punishment*, released by Harvard University Press on September 28, 2015. It was selected as an “Editors’ Choice” by the New York Times Book Review. The book has been covered by the Atlantic, the New York Times, the New Yorker, New York Magazine, the Daily Beast, Time, and WNYC. In the spring, Fortner will be teaching a new course, “Race, Class, and the Politics of Crime,” which will explore how racial and economic inequalities have shaped crime policy development in the United States.

Distinguished Professor Frances Fox Piven (American Politics) has written a series of articles during the past academic year with Lorraine Minnite, an alum of the program, on recent developments in the welfare state, both internationally and in the United States. She is now embarking on a book that will focus on the interplay of space, collective action and electoral politics in the development of black politics in the U.S. She was awarded the Bronislaw Malinowski prize by the Society for the Study of Applied Anthropology, the Puffin Award for Creative Citizenship by the Nation Institute, and an honorary doctorate from Rutgers University.

Professor Emerita Joyce Gelb (Public Policy) wrote the chapter “Gender Equality Policy in Japan” in the *Sage Handbook of Modern Japanese Studies*, London, 2015. On September 10th, 2015, she was quoted in a New York Times article on Women in Taiwanese politics. Also, on September 22nd, she was quoted in a Chicago Tribune article on Pope Francis’ impact on diversity in leadership.

Professor John Goering (Public Policy) will be presenting his latest research on “Austerity Politics and Housing Policy Outcomes” at the November 27th meeting of the European Network on Social Housing in Dublin. His co-author is Prof. Christine Whitehead of the London School of Economics. This research will lead to a book on these topics comparing the United States and the United Kingdom.

Professor Stephanie Golob (International Relations/Comparative Politics) has been appointed the Associate Director of the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies here at the Graduate Center, as of fall 2015. In July, she presented a paper on mass grave exhumation within international, regional and domestic legal contexts at an international conference in Madrid entitled “Bodies, Science, Memory and Politics in Contemporary Exhumations.”

Professor Janet Gornick (Public Policy) co-authored a book chapter, titled “Gender and Poverty” which will be published this fall in *The Oxford Handbook of Poverty and Society*. On Oct. 1, 2015, she moderated a conversation with Paul Krugman about inequality in NYC, at a conference sponsored by the CUNY Institute for State and Local Governance, the Center for Urban Research, and the Luxembourg Income Study Center (LIS). On Oct. 13, she and her colleagues from the LIS Center – Paul Krugman and Branko Milanovic – were interviewed about LIS’ work and related issues on the Bloomberg Radio show “Taking Stock with Michael McKee and Kathleen Hays.”
Distinguished Professor Carol Gould (Political Theory) is currently a Member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, NJ, in the School of Social Science, where she is participating in the theme seminar on "Borders and Boundaries." Her book Interactive Democracy: The Social Roots of Global Justice (Cambridge University Press, 2014) was awarded the 2015 Joseph B. Gittler Prize from the American Philosophical Association, which recognizes “an outstanding scholarly contribution in the field of the philosophy and of one or more of the social sciences.”

Professor David Jones (American Politics) recently published the article “Partisan Polarization and the Effect of Congressional Performance Evaluations on Party Brands and American Elections” in the latest issue of the journal Political Research Quarterly.

Professor Peter Liberman (International Relations) joined a group of four dozen security studies scholars who published a defense of the Iran nuclear deal in the New York Times on Sept. 8, 2015. The group included all the living signatories of a similar ad, published in September 2002, opposing war with Iraq. The 2002 and 2015 statements can be found at http://irscholars.weebly.com and IRScholars2015.weebly.com. Right after the publication of the Iran ad, enough senators announced their support for the deal to block a vote on a resolution against it.

Distinguished Professor Uday Singh Mehta (Political Theory) presented the lecture Putting Courage at the Center: Reflections on Gandhi at the Sixth Annual Carol Breckenridge Memorial Lecture in South Asian History at the New School for Social Research on Oct. 21, 2015.

Distinguished Professor John Mollenkopf (Public Policy) was quoted in the Gotham Gazette on voter confidence and campaign finance reform on July 23, 2015.

Professor Jillian Schwedler (Comparative Politics) just received a Travel-Research-Engagement (TRE) Grant from the Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS) to travel to Jordan this winter to complete the research for her current book project on political protests and neoliberalism in Jordan. Recently, she published a short online piece, “Is the U.S. drone program in Yemen working?”

Professor Mark Ungar (Comparative Politics) received a grant from the Gerta Henkel Foundation of Germany to write a report on organized crime in Central America; and a grant from the government of Canada for the Human Rights in Iran Unit of CUNY, for which he is the Principal Investigator.

Professor Thomas Weiss (International Relations) presented in mid-October in New York to the Utstein Donor Group the findings of the report from the FUNDS Project (Future UN Development System) called Peacebuilding Challenges for the UN Development System. Later in the month at SOAS, University of London, he will be part of a public debate chaired by Sir Jeremy Greenstock (former UK ambassador to the UN) with participation by Lady Valerie Amos (former UN Emergency Relief Coordinator) and Winnie Byanyima (executive director of Oxfam) on “The Global South, 1945 and 2015.” In mid-November, he will lecture at the Royal Academy on the “United Nations—Before, During, and After 1945” (which will appear in the next issue of International Affairs) and at the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform “Building Peace 2030: Facing a New Strategic Landscape of Conflict.”

Professor Susan Woodward (International Relations/Comparative Politics) was in Belgrade, Serbia, in late September and early October. She made a keynote address to the Partnership for Peace Consortium, the Study Group on Regional Security in Southeast Europe, on the theme “Countering Violent Extremism." She also made an inaugural address for the new Regional Masters' Program in Peace Studies, Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade.
Many students joined the protests against the grand jury decision not to indict the police officers involved in the homicide of Eric Garner, including the #ThisStopstoToday: Justice for Eric Garner/End Broken Windows Policing protest, Foley Square, Dec 4, 2014

Emma Jacobs went to Tanzania during summer 2015 on a pre-dissertation research fellowship to study the role of U.S. foreign policy in governing forests (Photo courtesy of: Emma Jacobs).

Beth Newcomer joined the Pink Out rally to protest attempts by Republican Congressmembers to prevent Planned Parenthood from receiving federal funds to provide reproductive healthcare to low-income women, Foley Square, Sept 29, 2015 (Photo: Beth Newcomer).

Emma Jacobs attended a rally calling for global divestment from the fossil fuel industry on Wall Street, Feb 13, 2015 (Photo: Emma Jacobs).

Alumni, faculty, and students rallied outside the Chancellor’s apartment to demand a new contract, Oct 1, 2015 (Photo: Professional Staff Congress).

Scenes from the Street

One of the great strengths of the Program is that, in addition to being exceptional scholars, our students, faculty, and alumni are active in field research, international and domestic social movements, and contentious politics.

Beth Newcomer joined the Pink Out rally to protest attempts by Republican Congressmembers to prevent Planned Parenthood from receiving federal funds to provide reproductive healthcare to low-income women, Foley Square, Sept 29, 2015 (Photo: Beth Newcomer).

Emma Jacobs went to Tanzania during summer 2015 on a pre-dissertation research fellowship to study the role of U.S. foreign policy in governing forests (Photo courtesy of: Emma Jacobs).

Emma Jacobs attended a rally calling for global divestment from the fossil fuel industry on Wall Street, Feb 13, 2015 (Photo: Emma Jacobs).

Rosa Squillacote is supporting the Correctional Association of New York’s campaign to pass the 2015 NYS Anti-Shackling Bill, to strengthen a currently unenforced law preventing women in prison from being shackled during childbirth. The law awaits the Governor’s signature. You can reach Governor Cuomo’s office at 518-474-8390 to urge him to sign the bill into law. This protest was held outside Governor Cuomo’s NYC office, Oct 5, 2015 (Photo: Rosa Squillacote).

Elena Cohen at a PETA protest outside a Hermes boutique in Boston, protesting the luxury accessory company’s cruel crocodile and alligator farms, Sept 1, 2015 (Photo: People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, courtesy of Elena Cohen).
**Student Spotlight**

Young-hwan Byun successfully completed his Ph.D. at the GC in the fall of 2015, majoring in Comparative Politics with a minor in Public Policy. He is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Swedish Institute for Social Research, Stockholm University.

By André Cavaller Guzzi

André:
Congratulations on passing your dissertation defense last month! What are the next steps of your career?

Young-hwan: Right after defending my dissertation I moved to Sweden. I received a two-year postdoctoral research position at the Swedish Institute for Social Research at Stockholm University.

A: What is your dissertation about?

Y: My dissertation research is about an understudied yet increasingly widespread type of income inequality—middle class decline or income polarization. Whereas prevailing economic theories attribute the decline of the middle class to common developments in industrialized democracies such as globalization or technological change, I found significant national variation. I explain why the middle class has declined in some countries but grown in others since the 1980s, and I argue it is contingent on the type of right party that is dominant in the country.

A: What were the most challenging aspects of completing your dissertation, and how did you overcome them?

Y: To me, the most challenging part was to get funding for the last year, the sixth year of my study. But thanks to the support from the department, especially from Alyson Cole, I was able to get a WAC fellowship, which allowed me to finish the dissertation. Academically, the most challenging moment was when I received really harsh feedback from Gøsta Esping-Andersen, one of the most famous scholars of welfare state studies. This came just a few months before my defense and I could not sleep for several nights until I crafted solid answers to his critiques. But that experience helped me build confidence in my work.

A: What was the most valuable experience you had during your years at the GC?

Y: My greatest experience at the GC was getting to know and study with the most amazing friends and colleagues. Being an international student from South Korea, the department provided all the support that I needed. One of the best things I have ever done was to form a comparative politics study group with my classmates in my first semester. Thanks to the amazing effort of my friends, especially Mike Miller, the group continued and supported me through the entire process of conducting research and writing the dissertation.
Aaron Shapiro is a Ph.D. candidate majoring in American Politics with a minor in Comparative Politics.

By André Cavaller Guzzi

André: Before coming to school you were working in electoral politics. What were you doing exactly and why did you decide to pursue an academic career?

Aaron: I did campaign work, mostly in the field for a number of Democratic campaigns including Obama in 2008. I went into academia because there were questions and frustrations involved in practical politics that I thought I needed to step back from if I wanted to gain leverage on them. And I was interested in teaching.

André: Tell us about your experience as a lecturer at CUNY.

Aaron: It’s great. Obviously teaching is time consuming, but it’s a real benefit to have to relate your academic knowledge in plain English to undergraduates. The diversity of the typical CUNY classroom is really an incredible and unique political laboratory.

André: What is your dissertation topic and how did you come up with this idea?

Aaron: It's about Democratic Party organization in the age of Obama. Basically we've seen over the last few years a return to electoral strategies based on the mobilization of sporadic but loyal party voters, and so I'm tracing how this has affected the party's organizational infrastructure. I guess the idea came out of a combination of the things that interested me in my professional experience, especially in regard to voter mobilization, and all the political science literature that I've read, along with on-the-ground developments since I've been in grad school – in particular, the development of a presidential electorate that favors Democrats, despite their struggles in mobilizing this electorate in the midterms.

André: What are your views about the 2016 presidential elections?

Aaron: Well I think what I find fascinating – both for my research but maybe more importantly for American democracy – is how the Democratic Party and electorate will respond without Obama on the ticket. On the one hand I think broadly most elite actors in the party now recognize the importance of mobilizing strategies in presidential elections, but the million-dollar question is, can the Obama electorate be reconstituted without Obama as a candidate?
Student Spotlight

Isa Vásquez is a second-year M.A. student majoring in Public Policy and minoring in Political Theory. She is also the Education Programs Associate Coordinator at the American Social History Project.

By Beth Newcomer

Beth: What led you to choose the Graduate Center to pursue your M.A.?

Isa: The GC, and CUNY as a whole, is a model of what public education can and should be. We learn under scholars whose academic work is unparalleled and whose expertise is sought out by institutions from the UN to the ACLU to advise on policy. I could not imagine a more influential group of scholars with which to study.

B: Do you have any recommendations for incoming MA students, things you wish you’d known or were helpful in getting acclimated to the program?

I: Get to know your fellow students. I’ve found they’re not only wonderfully kind, supportive, generous, and super willing to answer questions – about courses, requirements, faculty, etc. – but they are also impressive intellectuals. Also, CUNY gives students access to tons of online journals and research databases, but navigating the library system can be a little daunting at first. Make an appointment with a librarian to walk you through how to access the wealth of material; they’re all very nice and helpful.

B: In addition to taking classes part time, you also work full time at the American Social History Project/Center for Media Learning. Tell us about ASHP and the resources it offers for educators.

I: First, folks should know that the interdisciplinary research centers and institutes – including ASHP – are part of what makes the GC so vibrant and special. They are a major link between the academic work that happens in the departments and the practice of this scholarship in the greater community. ASHP provides multimedia materials, primary sources, curated collections, and pedagogical tools that reflect the diverse social and cultural histories of the nation. These materials come directly from teachers’ classroom experience through our own professional development programs. The foundation of these materials is the textbook and documentary series “Who Built America?” All of our online resources are considered outstanding in the field of history education professional development and are free and accessible to the public.

B: Give us an example of one of the techniques provided by ASHP that you could use in a political science course?

I: One example would be using visual evidence to engage students in critical inquiry. An introductory lesson could be an in-class comparison between the U.S. dollar and the Costa Rican colón. It provides something concrete for students to engage, and can start a conversation about how the design and images on money reflect political choices and what these choices tell us about the priorities of the state. It can help them identify how the political is all around us when they see it in something they interact with every day. We find students interact more critically with content when they see that things that seem fixed are actually the result of contentious politics and people’s actions.
Sumru Atuk is a Level II Ph.D. student majoring in Political Theory with a minor in Comparative Politics.

By Beth Newcomer

Beth: As an international student, having moved from Istanbul to NYC to study at the GC, what was that experience like and what advice would you give to incoming international students?

Sumru: I won’t lie, it was difficult as hell. Starting a Ph.D. is hard and doing it miles away from everyone and everything you know is harder. The worst part, I think, is not knowing where home is any more. But the good news is it only gets better especially if you have awesome colleagues and mentors like the ones in our Department. I found nothing but support here!

B: You’re currently a co-chair of the Social and Political Theory Student Association, tell us about the organization and the workshop planned for the Spring?

S: SPTSA is an interdisciplinary student association for people who “do” theory. SPTSA organizes or co-sponsors 3-5 events each semester. One of them is the Annual Interdisciplinary Theory workshop, where students present their in-progress works, receive feedback from other students, and expand their networks. This year’s theme is “Failure;” we will discuss potentials and problematic aspects of “failure” as a subversive political strategy. See the CFP here.

B: At the National Women’s Studies Association Conference in November you’ll be presenting a paper titled “Keeping ‘Women’ Alive by Letting Women be Killed.” Tell us about it.

S: This paper is my way of starting my dissertation project, which will focus on femicide in Turkey. I am looking at how the category of “women” is created in ways that significantly reduce one’s life chances. The very problematically determined standards of “propriety,” discourses of “creation,” “motherhood,” “chastity,” and their institutional appropriations render the “non-conforming” members of the category justifiably killable. Killing a woman is made a very easy and “rational” decision to make in the presence of such justificatory discourses especially since there are not enough institutional deterrents.

B: You were at the LGBTQ Pride parade in Istanbul this summer that was violently disrupted when the Governor suddenly banned the event. Tell us about that experience.

S: Yes, they took us by surprise. Not that we aren’t used to tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannons. They always attack the Mayday marches but they have never attacked the Prides, so we weren’t expecting it. For the first time in years we couldn’t march. I don’t think it is a coincidence though. This was the first big gathering after the June elections in which the Kurdish party, HDP, passed the election threshold for the first time and the ruling party AKP couldn’t win the majority of the seats in the parliament. It is no secret that HDP and LGBTQ organizations have a good relationship. One of the best features of the movement is that, unlike many other human rights groups, they actually manage to stand in solidarity with all oppressed groups regardless of their identities.
Student Accomplishments


Sarah Kostecki, a level II doctoral candidate majoring in public policy, received an ARC Research Praxis Fellowship to aid her in the development of her dissertation proposal which will focus on the issue of work precarity in a cross-national perspective. Kostecki was also awarded The Gittell Fellowship to facilitate the research for her project entitled “Women's Employment, Unpaid Work, Government Provided Services, and Economic Inequality.”

John McMahon, a level III doctoral candidate majoring in political theory, published “Behavioral Economics as Neoliberalism: Producing and Governing ‘Homo Economicus’” in Contemporary Political Theory as well as “Training for Neoliberalism” in Boston Review. McMahon is also co-host of the Always Already Podcast, a critical theory podcast hosted by fellow Graduate Center Political Science students Rachel Brown, B Aultman, and Emily Crandall.

Emily Crandall, a level III doctoral candidate majoring in political theory, was awarded a grant to participate in an NEH Institute at Michigan State University during the summer. The theme of the institute was “Development Ethics and Global Justice: Gender, Economics, Environment.”

Hugo Barreca, President of National Standard Finance and a doctoral candidate majoring in public policy, had his article “Financial Services Impact on Society” published in The Guardian, Nigeria. The article articulates the need for fair and equitable access to capital at the local level in order to promote infrastructure building and individual entrepreneurship.

Nick Micinski, a level II doctoral candidate majoring in international relations, published two editorials in September: “Seven key proposals to ease the Syrian refugee crisis” in New Internationalist magazine and “The EU Needs a Migration Human Rights Watchdog” in the World Policy Journal blog.
Tom Waters, a doctoral candidate majoring in public policy, recently published his article “New York’s de Blasio bargains with FIRE” in Metropolitics.

Elena Cohen, a level III doctoral candidate majoring in political theory, was elected President of the New York City chapter of the National Lawyers Guild.


Flannery Amdahl, a level III doctoral candidate majoring in American Politics, received a Moody Research Grant from the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library. The grant will fund Flannery’s research to be conducted at the library in Austin, Texas.
Alumni Spotlight

**Gifty Abraham** graduated from the Political Science M.A. program in May 2015, majoring in International Relations. He is currently an Administrative Assistant at Global Kids.

**By Beth Newcomer**

Beth: What made you choose the Political Science program at the GC for your graduate work?

Gifty: I chose the GC because it was the best value for a high-quality education and because of the faculty. With the flexibility of the program schedule I was able to finish my M.A. in three semesters rather than four, which was also a big plus. I needed to be able to quickly get back to full-time work.

B: What have you found most valuable about your education at the GC?

G: The most valuable thing I got from the program was that I learned what I’m most passionate about. I want to work on eradicating infectious diseases. Where I’m working now is a great place to work and to learn and I know I’m making an impact. But I ultimately want to work with campaigns to eradicate infectious diseases, specifically malaria.

B: Why malaria?

G: Malaria is fascinating. Most epidemic diseases have been with us about as long as we’ve had stable population centers, about 10,000 years ago. But malaria has been around much longer than that, and according to some estimates has contributed to as many as half of all human deaths ever. So much of history and politics is shaped by disease. Today malaria is entirely treatable and it has a pretty low death rate. But it makes many people sick in areas where people are already very poor and missing a day’s work means their family doesn’t eat. The cost to some countries is huge in terms of economic output. We often ask questions like, can Africa compete in the world economy? But we can’t even have that discussion until we consider if people in certain areas of Africa have a fair chance at a reasonable life without debilitating disease.

B: So where do you begin on an issue as big as malaria?

G: There are some international coalitions doing great work, and what I have to contribute is my knowledge and skills to one of those organizations. There are no silver bullets for malaria. They’ve been tried and failed. All parts of the problem have to be addressed and it will take all stakeholders working together to really make a difference.

B: That leads us to your thesis. Give us the elevator version?

G: My thesis is a conceptual puzzle with two parts. One, why do states cooperate to eradicate diseases in the face of structural and situational incentives not to do so? Everything we know about the international structural system says that this will fail. For example, Smallpox was successfully eradicated during the height of the Cold War and its eradication required the cooperation of the US and the USSR. Either of these countries could’ve just aimed for elimination, that is, ending the disease within their own borders, and then stopped, not caring if other countries, especially their enemies, hadn’t eliminated it. Why would these countries care about what happens in other countries? The second part of the puzzle is that when these countries somehow do decide to cooperate, how do you get to global zero? In my paper I claim there are five necessary but insufficient factors.

B: And those are?

G: You’ll have to read it to find out.
Alumni Spotlight

Peter Kolozi graduated from the Ph.D. program in 2011, majoring in American Politics with a minor in Political Theory. He is currently Associate Professor of Political Science at Bronx Community College, CUNY.

By Beth Newcomer

Beth: Describe your experience in the program. What did you value the most about your time at the GC?

Peter: The best thing about the program was the faculty. They were easy to talk to and available. And my student colleagues were great. When I was here they started the teaching fellowship program and through that I got to teach classes at BCC. There I met a colleague who became a mentor. He really took me under his wing and helped me learn how to teach, navigate the bureaucracy, and learn about the culture of the college and get involved in service for the department.

B: Tell us about your dissertation, Conservatives Against Capitalism.

P: It’s essentially a history of ideas. I chart the conservative critique of capitalism from early U.S. history starting with pro-slavery arguments against Northern industrial capitalism to modern-day people like Pat Buchanan and the neo-cons. Conservatives used to be very critical of capitalism but that criticism hardly exists at all any more, or is relegated to the far margins and is more of a cultural critique.

B: How does this manifest today?

P: I just submitted a paper co-authored with my colleague James Freeman on Donald Trump and conservatism. Basically we argue that Trump personifies what conservatism is today. He’s a market fundamentalist, but he also taps into this white resentment. There’s a general sense of insecurity that for many whites, especially working-class whites, they’re doing worse than their fathers and grandfathers. This is true for everybody, but this economic problem is being translated into racist resentment against Muslims, Latinos, and African Americans, when the real culprit is capital. But from the conservative side there’s no critique of the economic system. If you accept the system as it is, then you have to find someone to blame. Trump signifies a turn in what conservatism is today. He doesn’t bother with any of the “culture war” issues, but still social conservatives support him.

B: You’re a member of the executive committee of the PSC chapter at BCC. What has that experience been like, and what are the next steps in negotiations for a new contract?

P: It’s been a great experience, working and organizing with the union. We’ve been planning teach-ins for students and union members about what the union does, why it’s important to be an active member, and what social unionism is. We’re trying to build a more organic community; building solidarity, if you will. As far as the contract, we got over 1,000 people to the protest at the Chancellor’s apartment. That was great but I know the PSC is planning to escalate things a little bit. The next step is teach-ins at various campuses. After that there’ll be some disruptive actions to put pressure on the Chancellor and the Governor as well.

B: Last semester you were on the faculty hiring committee at BCC. Do you have any advice for current students who are on or about to enter the job market?

P: I’m speaking from a community college perspective, but generally, there are three things a prospective candidate is evaluated on: teaching, scholarship, and service to the department/college. So be aware of those and try to strike a balance between the three. Also know the institution you’re applying to. Do some research, find out what the students are like, what the service and committee structures are like, and what the institution emphasizes. If it’s a big research school, teaching may not be as important. But at BCC we try to look for people who cover all three of these areas.
Regina S. Axelrod (1978), Professor of Political Science at Adelphi University, was awarded the SAGE Cornerstone Author Award to commemorate the 4th edition of *The Global Environment; Law, Institutions and Policy*, (Washington: Congressional Quarterly). The book, which Regina first co-edited 15 years ago, has remained at the cutting edge of global climate scholarship and was also awarded the Choice Award for Outstanding Academic Title.

Bruce Altschuler (1980), Professor Emeritus of Political Science at SUNY Oswego, recently published “Is the Pentagon Papers Case Relevant in the Age of Wikileaks?” in *Political Science Quarterly*.


Jeffrey Broxmeyer (2014) received an Honorable Mention for the 2014 Walter Dean Burnham Dissertation Award from the APSA Politics and History Section, for his dissertation *Politics as a Sphere of Wealth Accumulation: Cases of Gilded Age New York, 1855-1888*.

João Feres Júnior (2003), Professor of Political Science at IESP-UERJ in Brazil, had his dissertation, *The Concept of Latin America in the United States: Misrecognition and Social Scientific Discourse* published as a book in four different languages (Portuguese, English, Spanish, and French). He also served as a consultant to the Brazilian Supreme Court on the implementation of affirmative action in public institutions.

William Friedman (1999), President of Public Agenda, traveled to Adelaide, South Australia, and met with Premier Jay Weatherill. While in South Australia Dr. Friedman consulted with the state government on the evolving work they are doing engaging constituents and communities in governance. He recounted his experience in a piece in the *Huffington Post* “South Australia: Innovators in Democracy and Public Engagement.”

Jill Gross (1999), Associate Professor in the Department of Urban Policy and Planning at Hunter College and Director of the Hunter College Graduate Program in Urban Policy and Leadership, was elected to serve as Chair of the Urban Affairs Association in the spring of 2015. The Urban Affairs Association is the international professional organization for urban scholars, researchers, and public service professionals.

Christopher Malone (2001) was named Associate Dean of the Lehman College School of Natural and Social Sciences on August 24th. One of Dr. Malone's objectives in his new position is to expand internship opportunities for Lehman students in the Bronx.

J. Patrice McSherry (1994), Professor of Political Science and Director of Latin American and Caribbean Studies at Long Island University, has recently published *Chilean New Song: The Political Power of Music* (Temple University Press 2015). The book was awarded the Cecil B. Currey 2015 book award from the Association of Third World Studies. Additionally, her article “The Víctor Jara Case and the Long Struggle Against Impunity in Chile” was published in *Social Justice* in March 2015.

Toni Pole (2005), Associate Professor of Political Science & Law at Montclair State, recently co-authored “Life and Death in the Mental Health Blogosphere: An Analysis of Blog Content and Survival” in *World Medical & Health Policy*, as well as “Segmenting CSA Members by Motivation: Anything but Two Peas in a Pod” in *British Food Journal*.

Patricia Stapleton (2012), Director of the Society, Technology, and Policy Program at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, recently co-edited *Biopolitics and Utopia: An Interdisciplinary Reader* (Palgrave 2015). Patricia is also co-author, with GC alum Daniel Skinner, of the forthcoming article “How Will the Affordable Care Act Impact Assisted Reproductive Technology Use?” which will appear in *Politics and the Life Sciences*.

**Recent Graduate Placements**

♦ William Adler (2011) is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Northeastern Illinois University.

♦ Jeffrey Broxmeyer (2014) is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Toledo.

♦ Young-hwan Byun (2015) is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Swedish Institute for Social Research, Stockholm University.

♦ Hisseine Faradj (2013) is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Bronx Community College, CUNY.

♦ Jonathan Keller (2014) is Assistant Professor of Government at Manhattan College.

♦ Fanny Lauby (2014) is assistant professor of Political Science at William Paterson University.

♦ Alex Zamalin (2014) is Director of African American Studies and Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Detroit, Mercy, and recently published *African American Political Thought and American Culture: The Nation’s Struggle for Racial Justice* (Palgrave 2015).
In Memorium

Professor Emeritus Ben Rivlin passed away on Wednesday, September 23rd, 2015. Dr. Rivlin served as an Executive Officer of the Graduate Center’s Political Science Department and was a former Director of the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies.

Besides his service at CUNY, Dr. Rivlin served as a member of the United Nations secretariat for three years, was a founding member of the Academic Council on the United Nations System, and acted as a project director at the National Committee on American Foreign Policy.

Dr. Rivlin was a consultant for various organizations including the U.S. State Department, the Hoover Commission, the World Bank, and the World Jewish Congress. He is survived by Professor Emerita Leanne Rivlin, who founded the Graduate Center’s environmental psychology program in the late 1960’s.

The Department is deeply grateful for the contributions Dr. Rivlin has made to the political science community and the Graduate Center at large.

Dr. Mesfin Araya, a program alumnus who received his Ph.D. in 1988, passed away in February of 2015.

Dr. Araya was an Associate Professor of Black Studies at York College for nearly 20 years, until his retirement in 2013. During his tenure at York College, Dr. Araya was deeply involved in advancing the study of Africa and the African diaspora by serving as the coordinator of Afro-American Studies and by acting as Director of the African American Resource Center.

Dr. Araya will be deeply missed by the Graduate Center political science community, and by CUNY as a whole.

Dr. Donatus Keith St. Aimee, a Graduate Center alumnus, passed away on April 9th, 2015, at 70 years of age. Dr. St. Aimee was an integral part of St. Lucia’s civic life.

He served as St. Lucia’s Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, was a candidate for office on the United Workers’ Party ticket, and was a founding member of the Laborie Cooperative Credit Union.

He is survived by his wife, Joan Keenan; two daughters, Marilyn Alexander and Romelia Sophia Gervais-Brown; two sons, Alexander Danny Joyeux and Terry Jn Baptiste; and numerous grandchildren.

He will be greatly missed by all in the GC Political Science community.
Political Science Department Colloquium

The Department Colloquium speaker series is designed to promote community among members of the Political Science department, stimulate cross-subfield discussion among faculty and students, and facilitate student engagement with the wide network of scholars in the tri-state area. The format of the colloquium usually consists of a forty-five minute to hour-long presentation of a recently published paper or excerpt from a book project, followed by commentary from one or two student discussants. Following the presenter’s response to this initial feedback, the conversation will be opened up to professors and students in the audience. If you are interested in presenting your work or being a discussant at a future Colloquium event, please contact Jessica Mahlbacher at JMahlbacher@gradcenter.cuny.edu.

Events held this semester included:

♦ Sept 18: Professor Mary Anne Madeira of Queens College, CUNY, presented a “model” job talk, “The New Politics of the New Trade: Intra-Industry Trade and Political Coalitions in Developed Economies”
♦ Oct 1: Professor Heath Brown of John Jay College presented “The Tea Party Divided: The Hidden Diversity of a Maturing Movement” with discussant Laura Walters Tamman, Graduate Center, CUNY
♦ Oct 16: Two practice job talks by doctoral candidates, Muhammad Kabir presented “The Role of Side Payments in Asymmetric Alliances” and Elizabeth Nelson presented “Power and Proximity: The Politics of State Secession”
♦ Oct 22: Janet Johnson of Brooklyn College, CUNY presented “Boxing in Fast-Tracked Women: Lessons from Russia about How Informal Politics Undermine Women’s Representation”
♦ Nov 3: Hilary Wainwright, editor of Red Pepper magazine, spoke on “Disruptive Elections: Bernie, Jeremy, and the Future of Left Parties in the US and the UK” with our own Distinguished Professor Frances Fox Piven and current student Aaron Shapiro.

Political Theory Workshop

The Political Theory Workshop provides a forum for theorists to develop conference papers, book chapters, and peer-reviewed articles in a relaxed, collegial setting. Now in its second year, the workshop draws presenters from across the US as well as faculty from CUNY and other NYC institutions. Papers are distributed in advance of the workshop. At the workshop itself, the presenter briefly discusses the interventions the paper was intended to make and a graduate student discussant provides a critique/commentary. Most of the workshop is devoted to a wide-ranging question and answer session. The event ends with a wine and cheese reception. If you are interested in presenting at the workshop or being a discussant, please email gcpoliticaltheoryworkshop@gmail.com.

Events this semester include:

♦ Sept 10: Professor Lennie Feldman of The Graduate Center, CUNY presented “Policing as a ‘Legal Grey Hole’” with discussant Francisco Fortuño Bernier
♦ Oct 8: Professor Jodi Dean of Hobart & William Smith Colleges presented “The Passional Dynamics of the Communist Party” with discussant Joshua Sperber
♦ Nov 12: Professor Banu Bargu of The New School presented “The Althusserian Swerve.”
Comparative Politics Workshop

The Comparative Politics Workshop is a venue for comparativists—faculty, students, and alumni—to workshop conference papers, peer-reviewed articles, or book chapters. Our goal is to provide a relaxed, informal, and collegial environment to share and develop our work. This workshop is a student-run initiative that relies on the support and energy of the GC comparative politics faculty, students, and alumni. Generous support is provided by the Ralph Bunche Institute and the Journal of Comparative Politics. If you are interested in presenting your work, please email: gccomparative@gmail.com.

Events held this semester included:

- Sept 8: Professor Till Weber of Baruch College presented “Party Agendas, Issue Yield, and Political Inequality”
- Sept 29: Francisco Fortuño Bernier, current Ph.D. student at the Graduate Center presented “Puerto Rican Nationalism: national and popular struggles on the road to the foundation of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico”
- Oct 6: Professor Roy Licklider of Rutgers University presented “Alternative Models of Collective Memory in Preventing Renewed Civil Wars: the U.S. and Nigerian cases”
- Oct 13: Jack Snyder of Columbia University presented “Reading Weber in Anatolia: How Pious Turkish Entrepreneurs Think About Rights”
- Nov 3: Nick Micinski, student at the Graduate Center, will present “Are You A Terrorist? Comparing strategies for screening for suspected terrorists during refugee status determination in the U.S. and Sweden”
- Nov 10: Oeindrila Dube of NYU will present “Can the Wounds of War be Healed? Experimental Evidence on Reconciliation in Sierra Leone”
- Nov 17: Philip Johnson, student at the Graduate Center will present “Guantánamo Bay: State of Exception, Emblem of Terror, Fun in the Sun”

Political Science Graduate Students’ Association, AKA Team Pegasus

The PSGSA coordinates administrative functions for the students in the Political Science program including yearly student elections, soliciting ideas from students for community activities and events, promoting department community and sociability, organizing activities of interest to students, fostering relationships with program alumni, and improving any aspect of the program in which students have a rightful role.

Team Pegasus held the second annual Fall Brainstorming Party on Oct 1 after the Department Colloquium event with Heath Brown. The Team asked students for input on how to spend the department's DSC funding allocation, and for requests for books to buy that are on the first exam reading lists but are unavailable through the CUNY library system. Thanks everyone for your participation, and for eating all the pie! Based on your input, Team Pegasus will be funding this semester: the fall brainstorming party, the redesign of the department newsletter, bi-annual department refrigerator cleaning, partial travel funding for a Comparative Politics Workshop speaker in the spring semester, and purchasing a limited number of essential texts for first exams. Have thoughts about how Team Pegasus should allocate the Spring funding allocation? Contact Alison Parks at aparks@gradcenter.cuny.edu.

The newsletter editors thank Team Pegasus for their support for this newsletter’s design.
Upcoming Department Events

*All events are in the Political Science Lounge Room 5200, unless otherwise indicated.

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**Dec 1 Tues, 4:15-6:15pm, Comparative Politics Workshop:**

Mark Ungar of Brooklyn College, CUNY will present “Iran’s Security Sector: Power, Rights, and Democracy in Comparative Perspective,” Rm. 5200.07.

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**Dec 3 Thurs, 4:30pm, Political Theory Workshop:**

Professor Nichole Shippen of La Guardia Community College, CUNY will present “The Politics of Multi-Ethnic Comedy: Comedy as a Critical Political Education” with discussant Nick Reynolds.

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**Dec 8 Tues, 4:15-6:15pm, Comparative Politics Workshop:**

Sarah Lockhart of Fordham University will present “Assessing the Political, Economic, and Social Justifications of Rebellion: A New Dataset,” Rm. 5200.07.

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**Dec 11 Fri, Department Colloquium:**

Celina K. Su of Brooklyn College will present “Between Bottom-Up and Top-Down Governance: On Agency-Community Collaborations in Participatory Budgeting” with discussant Elizabeth Eisenberg.

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**Dec 11 Fri, 5pm, Political Science Department:**

End of semester party! Join us for food, wine, and camaraderie as the semester comes to a close.

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**Feb 26 Fri, 9am-6pm, Department Colloquium:**

The Graduate Center Political Science Program Graduate Student Conference

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**Apr 8 Fri, Social and Political Theory Student Association (SPTSA):**

Interdisciplinary Theory Workshop, Theme: Failure

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**April, TBD, Political Science Department:**

Alumni Awards Night, an evening to celebrate contributions to the Program and the discipline, featuring awards for Distinguished Alum, Faculty Mentor, Faculty Citizenship Award, Best Student Published Paper, Best Student Conference Paper, Best Dissertation Proposal in American Politics, and two NEW awards: Student Citizenship, and Best M.A. Thesis
## Spring 2016 Course Schedule

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday 2-4pm</th>
<th>Monday 4:15-6:15pm</th>
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<td>♦ Beinart, “Writing Politics I” (G)</td>
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<td>♦ Shippen, “The Politics of Death: Hegel, Fanon, Mbembe, Lewis Gordon, Judith Butler, Orlando Patterson” (PT)*</td>
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<td>♦ Bowman, “Basic Methods and Concepts in Comparative Politics” (CP)</td>
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<td><strong>Wednesdays 2:00-4:00pm</strong></td>
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<td>♦ Woodward, “Civil War: Causes, Dynamics, Settlements” (CP)</td>
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<td>♦ Su, “Participatory Democracy and Social Movements” (PP)</td>
<td>♦ TBA, “Teaching Political Science” (G)</td>
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<td>♦ George, “States and Legitimacy: Autocracy, Democracy, and Hybrid Regimes” (CP)</td>
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### Upcoming Submission and Award Deadlines

- **Dec 4, 12 noon**: 2016 Graduate Student Conference abstracts due to the Colloquium committee at poliscistudentconference@gmail.com
- **Dec 8**: Social and Political Theory Student Association (SPTSA) abstracts due for CFP: Failure – Interdisciplinary Theory Workshop
- **Jan 8, 12 midnight**: APSA deadline for submissions, 2016 conference on “Great Transformations: Political Science and the Big Questions of Our Time”
- **Jan (date TBA)**: Doctoral Student Research Grant application for June 2016 - May 2017
- **Feb 15**: Interpretive Policy Analysis 11th International Conference, deadline for paper proposals
- **Feb/Mar (date TBA)**: Student Affairs Conference Presentation Support for Ph.D. Students for the Spring 2016 semester (January 1, 2016 through May 31, 2016) accepted on a rolling basis
Published an article? Received a grant or fellowship? Have an idea for an alum who should be featured in our next newsletter? Doing fieldwork and have pictures or stories to share? Contact the editors, Adam Bell and Beth Newcomer, at homopoliticus.editors.gccuny@gmail.com.