

# POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

SUNY GENESEO

JANUARY 2017

## Greetings Political Science and International Relations Alum!

Happy New Year and Greetings to Geneseo Political Science and International Relations alumni!! This past year marked significant change and success for the Political Science/IR department at Geneseo. We received a record number of incoming Political Science freshmen. Say what you will about the state of American politics, a large number of exceptional students majoring in Political Science chose Geneseo. The 2016 Presidential election was like no other, controversy over the election is likely to continue, the result was unforeseen, and partisan divisions remain, to put it mildly, pronounced. Moreover, events in Syria continue to capture attention, as well as concern about terrorism at home.

The department remains vibrant. This fall we welcomed **Aaron Herold** to the Department. Dr. Herold fills the line previously held by **Dr. Kenneth Deutsch**, he focuses on Judicial Politics and Political Theory. Professor Herold received his Ph.D. from the University of Texas. We warmly welcome him to our team. The department hosted several lectures this past semester, a couple dealt with the 2016 Presidential election, and another concentrated on Brexit. We also sent students to Washington, D.C., to a conference at West Point, and many to Model UN simulations. We are most grateful to our alumni who provide valuable support by giving their time or by making financial contributions that are restricted to the Political Science. Many of the co-curricular activities we offer would not happen without your support.

In the newsletter you will find information about the department, student activities, political humor, and our speakers. We wish you a happy, health, and joyful 2017!!

## Political Affairs Club Trip to Washington, DC

On Sept. 22 — a bright, sunny Thursday — 23 students left Geneseo at 7 a.m. to begin a weekend of career exploration in the heart of Washington, D.C. Hosted by the department of Political Science and International Relations, the trip helped bring their academic studies to life. Students met with 10 alumni during 10 different meetings, making for busy days and long nights.

The trip is organized and led by **Jeffrey Koch**, professor and chair of Political Science and International Relations, the D.C. experience exposes students to a variety of career options and successful alumni who reflect the value of a liberal arts education in the work they perform.

“The students are kind of ‘awestruck’ because our alumni are tremendously successful,” said Koch. “I also think it reassures them of their college choice because they see alumni who were once students themselves here at Geneseo.”



*Liz Allen with students*

Koch has been leading the trip every year since 2007; this year, Assistant Professor of Political Science **Karleen West** joined the group. The trip is offered on a priority basis first to students in the Political Affairs and International Relations Clubs, then to those majoring in political science or international relations, and then to all other students. This year's trip included one student majoring in accounting, and another majoring in philosophy.

Highlights of the trip included meetings with the following Geneseo alumni:

- Foundation Board members **Jennifer Dunlap '81**, president & CEO of Development Resources Inc., and **Kristin Graham Koehler '91**, partner at Sidley Austin LLP;
- **Elizabeth Allen '06**, deputy communications director and deputy, assistant to the president at The White House — and Geneseo's 2016 commencement speaker;
- **Ryan Callanan '06**, associate at Booz Allen Hamilton (defense contractor);
- **Constance Christakos '83**, analyst at the Office of Human Resources and Accountability, U.S. Department of Labor;
- **John Pekarik '98**, associate chief financial officer, corporate planning and internal control, Internal Revenue Service;
- **Michael O'Brien, '81**, Chief Financial Officer, American Society of Landscape Architects;
- **Andrea Delgado '07** senior legislative representative, policy and legislation department at Earthjustice, a non-profit environmental law firm;
- **Matt Walter '94**, president, State Republican Leadership Committee; and
- **Beth Semel '11** and **Sky Wilson '12**, program associate and program assistant, respectively, the Aspen Institute — a nonpartisan forum for values-based leadership and the exchange of ideas.

The informational meetings allow students not only to learn more about the career trajectories of alumni but to also gain a “deeper dive” into the organizational entities themselves. As Koch noted, for example, students learn what a lobbying firm is, how it operates and the role it plays in the legislative process.

In addition, students have the opportunity to attend an evening reception — this year, generously sponsored by **Jim Leary**’75 at Dechert LLC, an

*Liz Allen and Professor Koch at the White House*



International Law Firm. “The reception is a great opportunity for students to hone their networking skills, and I think they feel tremendously flattered to be the central focus of such an event,” Koch observed.

Grace Sundstrom, a sophomore philosophy major, remarked that “it was really interesting to see how these people didn't necessarily major in what they ended up doing.” Trips such as these can help students realize that they don't necessarily need to have their entire life planned out, which is extremely reassuring. Sundstrom went on to say that “their job was a result of circumstance and luck and they just chased their passions.”

Following a jam-packed two-day itinerary, students



*Professors Koch & West with Students at WH Press Room*

were free to explore the nation's capital on Saturday. Some were even able to catch a glimpse of President Obama from a distance during the opening of the new National Museum of African American History and Culture at the Smithsonian.

Unfortunately, as Professor Koch's iPhone battery fried in December, a number of pictures taken during the Washington, DC trip were lost.



*Students at the Sidney Austin visit*





*Andrea Delgado of Earth Justice*



*Ryan Callanan with students*



*Students at the Sidney Austin visit*



*Kristin Graham-Koehler and Students*

# Department Update

*Political Science Faculty October 2016*



*Professors Grace, Herold, and West*



*Dr. Goeckel at the Department Meeting*

## Political Humor

"Well, I learned a lot....I went down to (Latin America) to find out from them and (learn) their views. You'd be surprised. They're all individual countries" —Ronald Reagan

"If you don't mind smelling like peanut butter for two or three days, peanut butter is darn good shaving cream."  
—Barry Goldwater

"Politics is the only art whose artists regularly disown their masterpieces."  
— Raheel Farooq

"I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as cause for withdrawing from a friend." --Thomas Jefferson

"The more you observe politics, the more you've got to admit that each party is worse than the other." --Will Rogers

"Never believe anything in politics until it has been officially denied." --Otto von Bismarck



*Department Meeting*



## Political Science Lectures

### “Party Decisions: How a Failure to Coordinate Broke the 2016 Election” - Hans Noel (September 15th)

Many of our guest lectures this year focused on political analyses relating to the 2016 Presidential election. On September 15th, the Political Science department welcomed Hans Noel, a Professor of Political Science at Georgetown University. His guest lecture on “Party Decisions: How a Failure to Coordinate Broke the 2016 Election” focused on coalition building and political parties in the United States, specifically relating to Donald Trump and the Republican primaries. Noel is the author of *Political Ideologies and Political Parties in America*, and a co-author of *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform*. He also co-directed and produced the award-winning feature film *The Rest of Your Life*. Much of his work focuses on competing policy demands and how they effect the election process.

Although Donald Trump had not been the leading choice of Republicans and Democrats, many factors impacted the outcome of the 2016 election, contradicting previous political theories. In his influential book, “*The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform*”, written in 2008, Noel and his co-authors argued that political parties decide their winner long before the primaries take place, rallying around the candidate they believe would best promote party goals. Once a candidate wins this “invisible primary”, they should win the vote. However, the 2016 election was not consistent with this argument. Trump did not have the support of the party, yet was able to win the primary, then the presidency itself. In his lecture, Noel admitted that the “party decides” theory proved incorrect. Pinning their faith on the theory, Republican leaders became too comfortable in their power, and did little to prevent Trump.

According to Noel, factions were one of the biggest factors contributing to Trump’s political success. The party was unable to



### Birthday Wishes!

On January 15 Dr. Ed Janosik celebrated his 99<sup>th</sup> birthday. Let us all wish Dr. J a very happy 99<sup>th</sup>, and many more.



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coordinate and coalesce around one candidate, which led to the nomination of a leader who appealed to a smaller, more radical group. Had Senator Cruz, Governor Bush and Senator Rubio unified, Noel argues, there would have been less opportunity for a Trump presidency.

Although the “party decides” theory may not be applicable when the party cannot decide *which* politician to rally behind, it is clear that political parties do have an opinion when it comes to selecting a President Elect. Noel points to the DNC’s controversy regarding Hillary Clinton as an example of party’s ability to shape political outcomes. After such an expectation-shattering election, we look forward to the next edition of *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform*, which is expected to come out after the 2020 election.



*Julia Azari delivering her lecture to Geneseo students on September 28*

## “The Political Geography of Populist Presidential Rhetoric” Julia Azari (September 28th)

This semester we were happy to host a guest lecture from Julia Azari, who is an Associate Professor and Assistant Chair in the Department of Political Science at Marquette University. She regularly contributes to the *The Mischiefs of Faction* and Nate Silver’s *538.com*. Her work has also been featured in the *Washington Post’s Monkey Cage* blog and in *Politico*. Much of her research employs qualitative methodology, focusing on the bond between the American presidency and party system, as well as the impacts of informal and formal rules. On September 28th, Professor Azari presented her newest research project, speaking on “The Political Geography of Populist Presidential Rhetoric.”

We were the second audience to see Azari’s research, which she had completed over the summer. In her study, she hoped to discover whether presidents use similar language and ideas when addressing different audiences throughout the country. She spent most of her summer examining speeches from George W. Bush during his second term in 2004, specifically focusing on his use of populist rhetoric. Using untelevised speeches from town hall meetings, relief efforts, fundraisers and memorial events in different geographical locations, Azari found that there was regional variations in populist rhetoric across the nation. This was most apparent in the differences between the Midwest and D.C. metropolitan area. In the midwest, Bush often talked of the antagonism between elites and regular people. However, in D.C. he avoided populist expressions in his speeches.

In her final words, Azari discussed some of the dangers of antagonistic rhetoric. Although it often appears



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to be anti-political, populist rhetoric really acts as carefully-crafted political strategy. She argued that populism does not generally offer solutions, but instead merely states issues and places blame. Azari warned that it is important to understand that this rhetoric must be approached with skepticism, especially during the 2016 election.

## “The Making of Trump,” by David Cay Johnston (October 12th)

On October 12, we were honored to have Pulitzer Prize winning journalist David Cay Johnston join us to discuss his New York Times’ bestselling biography, *The Making of Trump*. Johnston is an

award winning investigative reporter, previously with *The New York Times*, and now a columnist for *The Daily Beast*. He won the 2001 Pulitzer Prize for Beat Reporting after exposing the way corporations use loopholes to avoid paying taxes. His findings later led to tax reform. He has also received the IRE Medal and the George Polk Award. Johnston has also acted as a journalist consultant for the Netflix series *House of Cards*.

Although he did not publish his book on Donald Trump until August of 2016, Johnston had been collecting material on him since the two met in 1998. Before writing *The Making of Trump*, which took him only twenty-seven days to complete, he had already written nearly two dozen articles on Trump throughout the year. This research allowed him to dive deeply into the history of the controversial President Elect, and expose “basically everything Donald Trump wants to make sure you do not know”. Johnston shared his in-depth look into Trump’s origins, from his grandfather’s murky past as a brothel owner and draft dodger in Germany, to his father’s fraudulent business dealings in the real estate industry. He argues that while his familial ties certainly shaped Trump’s P.T. Barnum-style showmanship, his later connections to the mafia and Roy Cohn, Senator McCarthy’s assistant during the Red Scare of the 1950s, also impacted



*Pulitzer Prize winner David Cay Johnston on October 12*

Trump’s moral code.

Without indulging in partisan rhetoric, David Cay Johnston’s detailed investigation focused on the facts of Trump’s past relationships, business ventures, and legal troubles. Johnston shared anecdotes which highlighted Trump’s decades of deceit and greed. Trump’s attempts to avoid taxes, employ illegal immigrants while refusing to give them proper safety equipment, and refusal to provide medical coverage for his ailing great-nephew, are just a few of the shocking examples that Johnston highlighted in his exposé of the future president.

Johnston warned that we have never had a President with such a deep running criminal history. He believes that his peers in media have

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avoided this type of hard-hitting news coverage, intimidated by the threat of a Trump lawsuit. Luckily, Johnston was unswayed by Trump's threats and was able to complete his book. We were very grateful to have the opportunity to hear about his findings before the presidential election.

### Lecture by Jae Jae Spoon, 4:00 (October 27)

Professor Jae Jae Spoon from the University of Pittsburgh visited Geneseo to discuss Britain's decision to exit from the European Union. Professor Spoon discussed the likelihood other European nations might leave the European Union, as well as the voting patterns within Britain. She also recounted the political posturing by members of the Conservative and Labor Parties, as well as the potential long term consequences of the decision for the E.U. and Britain.



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Check out the new video on the Political Science and International Relations Department at:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZY3x0VpXoI&-feature=youtu.be>

**When you give to Geneseo, please restrict your contribution to the Department of Geneseo Political Science & International Relations**

## Student Participation in West Point Conference—James Clarke'17

Thanks to the generous Political Science and International Relations department, this past November fellow students Ryan Hayes and Madeline Vars and I were fortunate enough to attend the 68<sup>th</sup> annual Student Conference on US Affairs (SCUSA) at West Point Military Academy. The original purpose of this conference was to foster a dialogue between future civilian and military leaders to facilitate greater cooperation however, the conference has since grown and taken on even more meaning. SCUSA gave us the



opportunity to debate contemporary issues in US affairs with highly achieved students from around the world. My policy group alone consisted of students from South Korea, Australia, Japan, China, and Thailand, each with a unique perspective on current events.

*Students at the West Point Conference*

Following three days of policy debate, each group completed and presented a policy proposal urging the United States to take new action on a specific issue. My group aimed to address the need for economic development with hopes of this leading to democratization in developing nations. The process of debating these issues gave, Ryan, Madeline, and I an opportunity to showcase the array of knowledge we've acquired during our studies at SUNY Geneseo. In addition to policy debate, highlights from the trip included the keynote address delivered by Dr. Richard N. Haas, president of the Council on Foreign Relations, which discussed the role of the United States in foreign affairs and the recent presidential election. Also, living in the West Point barracks for three days gave us an opportunity to socialize with Cadets and realize how luxurious our college lifestyles have truly been.



## 2016 Alumni Donors

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