
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

SUNY GENESEO

JUNE 2017

Greetings Political Science and International Relations Alum!

Here is the 2017 summer newsletter, containing information on events in the department, political humor, bios of alumni, and notes on the activities and accomplishments of our students. The department is thriving, there are now more than 500 Political Science and International Relations. I do not know if this high number represents the fabulous professors within the department or the politically interesting times in which we live. We continue to send students all over the world for study-abroad experiences (and we bring most of them back), and students are engaged in a large number of academic and co-curricular activities. Based on what I have seen thus far I anticipate we will welcome a very large class of Political Science and International Relations majors in September 2017.

Senior Dinner



Alumni at the Senior Dinner

The Department held its annual Senior/Honors Dinner at the Big Tree on April 28. We were fortunate to have several alumni in attendance, and more than fifty students. The 2017 dinner was supported by **David Russell '87**. Following Professor **Jeffrey Koch's** Top Ten Reasons to be a Political Science or International Relations major, students were inducted into Pi Sigma Alpha (the national honors society for Political Science) and Sigma Iota Rho (national honors society for Sigma Iota Rho). The Rose Alent award went to **David Gomez** while **Matt Ainsley** received the



Alumni at the Senior Dinner

award for outstanding internship. Matt completed his internship at the office of Congressman Chris Collins. The award for Jesse Rogers Award for Outstanding Junior in Political Science went to **Benjamin Smith** while the Ambassador Apartment award for outstanding junior in International Relations went to **Lisa DeMotta**. Due to the performance of the stock market, we were able to give two awards for the Ken Deutsch Outstanding Senior in Legal Studies. **Darrell Getman** and **James Clarke** were this year's recipients. The award for Outstanding Senior in International



David Case speaking with Professor Koch



Andrew Otis

Senior Dinner

Relations was shared by **Maria Gershuni** and **Anna Biuso**. Recognized as Outstanding Seniors in Political Science were **Claire Shanklin** and **Darrell Getman**. Finally, for their outstanding service to the community, the following four students received the Edward “Dr. J” Leadership Award: **Anthony Serriani**, **Delaney Nolan**, **Matt Cook**, and **Gillian Palmer**.



Jennifer Strazza



Jean Moreau



Professor Anand Rao



Ed Janosik Recipients





Professor Koch's Top Ten



Professor Kang distributes awards



Matt Cook Announces Post-Geneseo Plans

Personal Note:

I wish to note that I will spend the 2017/2018 academic year in Colorado Springs, Colorado, teaching as a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the United States Air Force Academy. I will return to Geneseo during the summer of 2018. While I enjoy teaching Geneseo students, I am looking forward to teaching Air Force cadets, and working within a military-academy environment. Before I go off to the wild blue yonder, I wish you a most enjoyable summer.



Political Science/IR Students at GREAT Day



Professor Aaron Herold at the Senior Dinner



Induction to Pi Sigma Alpha



Induction to Sigma Iota Rho



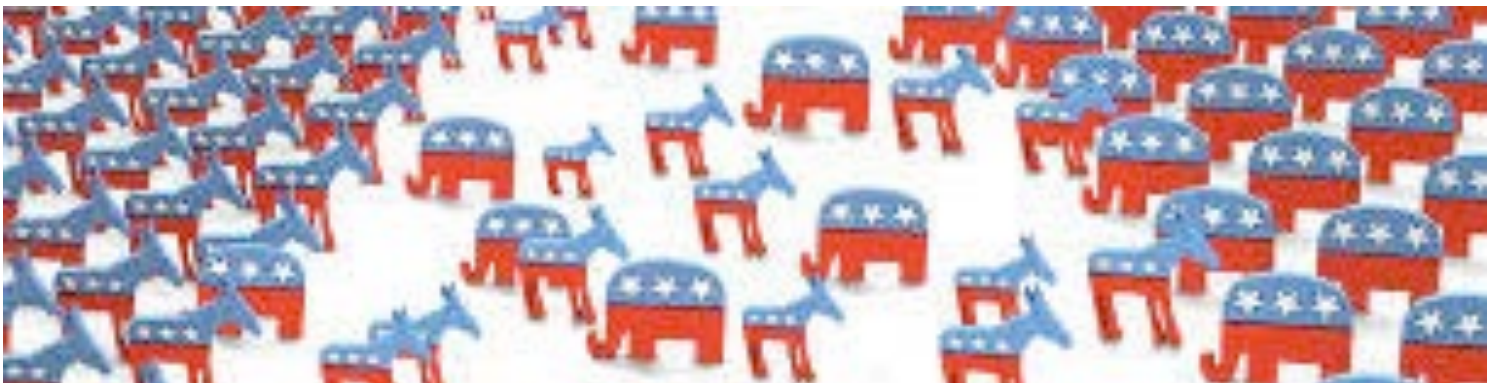
Maria Gershuni'17 presenting her research at a conference



Professor Goeckel at the Senior Dinner



Professor Karleen West



Freshman Dinner



Professor Koch at the Freshman Dinner



Professor Grace at the Freshman Dinner

Political Humor

"I don't know whether it's the finest public housing in America or the crown jewel of the federal prison system." —Bill Clinton, on life in the White House

"There they are. See no evil, hear no evil, and...evil." —Bob Dole, watching former presidents Carter, Ford and Nixon standing by each other at a White House event

"If you can't convince them, confuse them." —Harry S Truman

"I have come to the conclusion that politics is too serious a matter to be left to the politicians." —Charles de Gaulle

"Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard." —H. L. Mencken

Alumni Career Panel

Five Geneseo Political Science Alumni returned to share career experiences and advice with our current students. **Craig Arrighetti'87, David Case'99, Peter Kreinheder'92, Adrienne Muia'06, and Jennifer Strazza'95** participated in the event. The career panel was very well attended, competently organized by **Professor Aaron Herold**. David P. Case, Esq. is Partner in Fein, Such & Crane; Craig Arrighetti works in the

U.S. Intelligence Community; Jennifer Strazza is Office of General Counsel, National Security Agency and Commander in the US Navy's Judge Advocate General's Corps; Adrienne M. Muia is Assistant Attorney General at the New York State Office of the Attorney General; and Peter Kreinheder is Founder & President of Ellicottville Brewing Company.



Adrienne Muia and Jennifer Strazza



David Case

IR Sophomore: Lya Rothmann

"On April 20-21 I attended the Cuba Symposium hosted by the Latin American Studies faculty at SUNY Geneseo. As someone who would like to specialize in Latin America as a region this event was an opportunity I couldn't miss out on. The keynote speaker, Dr. Rafael Hernandez, Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Havana, spoke about the changing political climate in Cuba, and debunked common misconceptions that Americans tend to hold about the country. It was incredibly valuable for me to have a scholar speak at length about a topic as important as the normalizing relations with the US and Cuba. Other topics of discussion included the

role of rap music as political commentary, the implications of renewed relations on the wildlife of the island, and the spread of the Cuban diaspora to Scandinavia. Throughout the day, not only did I attend many of the paper readings and presentations, I also registered for the dinner on the evening of the 21st. That night was a fantastic opportunity to get contact information and to network with scholars that I hope to join the ranks of. Overall, the Cuba Symposium was a once in a lifetime opportunity that I was glad to be a part of."



Mock Trial at Geneseo



Officers

President: Darrell Getman
 Vice President: Courtney Cavallo
 Treasurer: Tom Greeno
 Secretary: Rob Dedona
 SA Representative: Patrick Kanzler

The Mock Trial team at Geneseo enjoyed another successful season, having attended three American Mock Trial Association (AMTA)-sanctioned tournaments, as well as a clinic in St. John Fisher last December. These tournaments were held at the University of Rochester (October), St. Bonaventure (January), and the Regional competition at Buffalo in February. The Mock Trial team fielded two teams (an A and B team) of 10 competing members each, with both teams performing competitively at all competitions. At the University of Rochester, the A Team came in fourth place overall out of 20 teams, earning a trophy. Furthermore, two members of the team were able to capture personal awards. Darrell Getman earned Outstanding Attorney Awards at the

University of Rochester, St. Bonaventure, and Regionals, while Erin Liebermann earned an Outstanding Attorney Award at Regionals as well. The Team usually concludes each year with a GREAT Day performance of the case, and a formal dinner.

The Mock Trial team strives to promote public speaking and analytical skills requisite for a successful career in the legal profession. Each week consists of a team meeting and a general meeting in which members are trained to analyze and formulate case theory, review evidence, and articulate legal arguments. The team holds auditions for all 20 competing roles in addition to 6 understudy roles at the beginning of the academic year. The auditions are opened to the entire campus so all students interested in developing their public speaking skills or pursuing a career in law are encouraged to join this highly driven and impassioned team!



Michael Frimet'95

Michael Frimet graduated from Geneseo in 1995 with a major in Political Science and a minor in Coaching. After graduation, Mike went on to the Syracuse University College of Law and received his J.D. in 1998. Mike is admitted to practice law in New York and Texas, as well as the Supreme Court of the United States.

Mike began his legal career as a prosecutor in the Nassau County District Attorney's Office on Long Island, New York, where he honed his skills as a courtroom trial attorney. In 2002, Mike changed gears and entered the realm of insurance legal practice. He specializes in insurance coverage and reinsurance disputes and represents insurance carriers from all over the world. Mike has handled insurance coverage issues in various jurisdictions throughout the United States and has worked on a variety of insurance coverages, including commercial general liability, property, personal disability, workers compensation, contingency, event cancellation, prize indemnity and professional indemnity. Additionally, he has handled reinsurance disputes in both the courtroom setting and in complex commercial arbitrations.

Mike had the unique opportunity to be seconded as in-house counsel to a syndicate management company in the Lloyd's insurance market on two separate occasions, once in 2004 and again in 2006. This provided a great opportunity to live in London, England. Mike has been a partner in his own firm, Vogrin & Frimet, LLP, since 2009 and practices out of his firm's New York City office in lower Manhattan.

Mike has put his coaching background to work over the past several years by coaching youth hockey. Mike has also integrated his love of hockey into his work life by organizing an annual insurance industry hockey game in New York City's Central Park to raise funds for Ice Hockey In Harlem, a charitable organization whose mission is to improve the social and academic well being of children from the Harlem community through participation in ice hockey.

Mike currently resides in Orange County, New York with his college sweetheart and wife of 20 years, Quenby Monks Frimet (Class of '93). They have two children, Kate, a rising senior at Mercersburg Academy in Mercersburg, PA, and Jack, a rising freshman at Brooks School in North Andover, MA.

Heather Maldonado'95

Geneseo's mission statement promises transformation, and that is exactly what the college delivered for Dr. Heather (Hoffman) Maldonado ('95). Heather did not know that transformation was happening at the time, but in retrospect it is clear that the seemingly arbitrary experiences during her undergraduate days joined together to change her intellectually, emotionally, and professionally in almost countless ways. Heather enrolled as an early decision Political Science major with aspirations of becoming a lawyer, but her experiences with

Geneseo's Residence Life, Orientation, and Greek Life programs shifted her career goals. After graduating from Geneseo with a major in Political Science and minors in Philosophy, Public Relations, and Women's Studies, she completed her master's degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs at The Ohio State University and later earned a Ph.D. in Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education with a concentration in Comparative and Global Studies in Education from the University at Buffalo in 2010. The importance of the liberal arts have stayed with Heather since her undergraduate days and she has always sought to work at public liberal arts institutions with missions similar to Geneseo's.

Heather currently serves as Assistant Dean and Director of Academic Standards for Buffalo State, and is being promoted to the Assistant Provost for Academic Success this summer. She was awarded the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Professional Service last fall based on her work at the campus, regional, and state level. In her current position, she is responsible for reviewing Buffalo State student requests for waivers of all-college requirements, evaluating students' academic standing with the college, and hearing academic misconduct cases – and in this work she uses the reasoned thought that Geneseo honed in her during her liberal arts courses, such as Intro to Logic, and her rigorous classes with Dr. Kenneth Deutsch. In addition to her administrative duties, Heather teaches at both the undergraduate and graduate level and publishes scholarship on the topics of gender in higher education and shared governance.

Heather is an active volunteer. She is the interim chair of the Buffalo State Child Care Center board, is vice president-elect of the SUNY Geneseo Alumni Association (<https://www.geneseo.edu/alumni/sgaa>), serves as secretary on the Dazzle Africa (<http://www.dazzleafrica.org/>) board with fellow Arethusa alumnae Sarah (Riecke) Early ('93) and Hilary Banker ('93), and is a Girl Scout leader for



her daughter's troop. In her free time, Heather can often be found at her son's football or lacrosse games, at her daughter's swim meets, gymnastics practice, softball games, or musicals, or relaxing at a Buffalo sporting event, taking in some live music, de-stressing at the gym or on the golf course, or – on the best of days – with the sun in her face and the wind in her hair during a ride in a convertible or on a sailboat.

Heather's work and life has been informed in many ways by her college days, but Geneseo's impact is best seen when Heather helps her students and children come to realize that there is much to learn and much to do in the world. It is her hope that they will come to understand, as Heather did at Geneseo, that it is best to stay curious and engaged because the world needs well-reasoned critical thinkers with a global understanding and empathic hearts in order to move us forward in positive ways.

Dennis Naylor'95

Very shortly after my graduation from SUNY Geneseo in May of 1995, I had the fortune of beginning my career as a police officer with the City of Oneonta (NY) police department. Since my aspirations from a very early age were always to



work in law enforcement, the timing of the opportunity could not have been better! As an officer in training, I quickly learned that the skills which I developed as a student at Geneseo were equally transferable to my new profession. The ability to read and write well, think critically, retain information, and work hard became the fundamental components of my success throughout my entire career.

I remained with the Oneonta Police Department for the following 21 years, serving as a patrol officer, DARE officer, patrol sergeant, interim detective sergeant, lieutenant, and proudly as the chief of police. In addition to those roles, I also had the opportunity to attend many amazing schools, including the prestigious FBI National Academy. This, along with many other advanced training schools provided me with a unique ability to clearly understand all essential and critical aspects of the law enforcement profession. Most importantly, the

trainings afforded me the skills and ability to deliver quality services to my community.

During my nearly five years as the chief of police, I knew that I had an amazing platform to do great things and to effectively accomplish everything that is most needed for professional, 21st century policing. As chief, I was able to develop my staff through a positive leadership approach, create a collaborative community-oriented policing model, incorporate the best tools and technologies into our policing strategies, and lead the department in earning New York State accreditation. None of these tasks were easy, but my philosophy was always to create the type of police department that I would want to serve me if I was not a member of law enforcement, but rather a citizen in the community that I was serving. This philosophy, combined with the strong work ethic that was honed as a political science student at Geneseo all those years ago, guided me extremely well in this endeavor.

In January of this year, I made a major transition and retired from the police department to accept the role of Director of Research, Development, and Training for the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police. Although retiring was bittersweet, I was extremely proud of what I had accomplished and felt that it was time to use my experience on a much broader platform. Knowing that I can assist and further develop all police departments throughout New York State in my new capacity is something that I am very excited to do.

Over two decades have passed since I was a student at Geneseo, but my memories are just as vivid and fond. Each time that I return to visit, I always feel a tremendous sense of pride in knowing that Geneseo is forever a part of who I have become and what I have accomplished. Whenever there is conversation regarding the best colleges in New York State, I am always the strongest advocate for SUNY Geneseo. Not only will one

receive an amazing educational experience, but so many valuable life skills will be learned that will most certainly transfer over into one's future long after graduation.

Paul Prestia'95

For over a decade, Mr. Prestia has zealously fought for the rights of his clients; defending the accused and protecting the abused. As such, Mr. Prestia has been recognized as one of the preeminent NYC attorneys in his field. In 2016 and 2017, he was selected to New York Metro Super Lawyers list by Thompson Reuters for his efforts in criminal defense and civil rights litigation. Moreover, Mr. Prestia has become one of the leading civil rights and criminal justice reform advocates in New York City speaking at 2016 American Justice Summit and at the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers during their Annual Conference in West Palm Beach this past August.



Paul Prestia lecturing at UCLA

In addition, Mr. Prestia has addressed law students at UCLA School of Law, St. John's University School of Law, New York Law School, American University School of Law, and Miami Law School in his candid lecture series "Kalief Browder and The Extraordinary Quest for Justice"

Attorney Paul Prestia on Huff Post Live talking about the Kalief Browder case. Mr. Prestia has

provided legal commentary on MSNBC, CNN, and Huff Post Live and his cases have been covered by The New Yorker Magazine, The Los Angeles Times, The New York Times., The NY Daily News and The New York Post. In March 2017 Mr. Prestia will be featured as himself in the Spike TV docuseries 'Time: The Kalief Browder Story'. Mr. Prestia is admitted to practice law in the State of New York and in the Southern and Eastern Districts in Federal Court 2nd Circuit. He received his Juris Doctorate from St. John's University School of Law and began his legal career as a prosecutor in the Kings County District Attorney's Office.

Victor E. Scmillio'94

Victor E. Scmillio'94 graduated from Geneseo with a major in political science. Following graduation, Victor attended the Dickinson School of Law, now the Pennsylvania State University, Dickinson School of Law, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Victor earned his Juris Doctorate degree in 1997. Victor credits Kenneth Deutsch, Ph.D. as a significant influence on his career path and for preparing him for the rigors of law school.

Upon his graduation from law school, Victor was selected as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Robert E. Simpson, Jr. of the Northampton County Court of Common Pleas. The Court of Common Pleas is the state level trial court in Pennsylvania, and in Northampton County the Court is a Court of general jurisdiction handling civil, criminal and family court cases. The clerkship provided Victor with the opportunity to hone his legal writing skills and observe trial advocacy.

Victor is admitted to practice in all courts within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Middle District of Pennsylvania,



Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and the Supreme Court of the United States.

In 1999, Victor Scmillio began his career as a litigator in the Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania. Scmillio began as an associate in a civil defense firm focusing on professional defense. Shortly after joining his first firm, Victor was approached by the President Judge of the Northampton County Court of Common Pleas to become a member of the Northampton County Conflicts Team to represent clients as a court-appointed attorney. Scmillio's practice began to expand outside of insurance defense into representation of citizens and businesses in the community.

With his early trial experience, Victor enjoyed being in the courtroom advocating on behalf of clients and interacting with his fellow attorneys. The ability to speak for someone in a courtroom and to be a source of trust and confidence for a client provides the most rewarding aspect to his career as an attorney.

The court appointed criminal defense provided Scmillio with an opportunity to gain trial experience as a young attorney. As his

career progressed, Victor became certified to represent defendants charged with the death penalty. Over the course of his criminal defense career, Scmillio has represented defendants in over ten homicide trials, four of which were capital homicide cases. Many of Victor's cases are high profile gathering local media attention, and some cases have been the subject of a book and television shows.

Concurrently, Victor's career in civil litigation also progressed. He earned a partnership in the firm of Noel, Kovacs, McGuire and Scmillio in 2004. Scmillio transitioned to his current firm, Holzinger, Harak & Scmillio in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and has been an active partner in the firm ever since 2006. Scmillio's work focuses on litigation: civil, criminal and family law. Scmillio has advocated for expanding of the County's mental health court and the creation of a Veteran's Court.

In 2015, Victor was appointed Solicitor for the County of Northampton and was head of the Office of the Solicitor and lead attorney for the County of Northampton in all legal proceedings.

For 13 years, Victor was in a leadership position in the Northampton County Bar Association. Victor's tenure in leadership culminated as President of the Northampton County Bar Association in 2012. To this day, Victor remains active as a Chair and participant in several committees of the Northampton County Bar Association. Victor has moderated or has been a speaker for Continuing Legal Education classes, the Citizens Academy of Northampton County, and the Pennsylvania Bar Association. Victor speaks at career days at local schools.

After entering law school, Scmillio realized his education at Geneseo provided him with a firm foundation to compete in the classroom and in the courtroom with peers who

attended private universities and colleges. Victor is proud of his education and experiences at Geneseo and remains in contact to this day with members of his fraternity, Omega Beta Psi, Pi Pledge Class.

Victor remains active in the community in Northampton County. For over fifteen years, Victor has volunteered as a youth sports coach and is an active fundraiser for the Boy Scouts of America. Victor remains active as a lacrosse official at the collegiate, high school and youth levels. He enjoys his time on the field coaching and officiating young men in the sport they love.

Victor is also an active member in the Knights of Columbus, UNICO National, Roseto Chapter, and the Kiwanis Club of Palmer Township. Victor resides in Palmer Township, Northampton County, Pennsylvania with his wife, Molly Scomillio, their son, Lucca Scomillio, and their yellow lab, M.J.



On April 7th-9th, Geneseo participated in the Boston Model Arab League conference for the second year in a row at Northeastern University. The delegates included Christopher Callery ('18), Ryan Hayes ('17), Maria Gershuni ('17), Jesse Bennet ('17), Angela Rodriguez ('18), Christopher Luna ('19), Michael Brown ('18), Jamie McCormick ('18) and Nora McKenna ('17). The team was challenged with an interesting task of representing the cabinet of the Syrian Arab Republic. Having represented the Jordanian Cabinet last year, Syria represented a much harder conflict having to focus on the civil war, ISIS and the refugee crisis. The team prepared several plans leading up the conference by studying various maps and understanding in depth all of the conflicts that are happening in Syria and the surrounding countries. Representing Bashar al-Assad and his government in light of the chemical gas attack on his own country happening three days prior was not helpful for the case of Geneseo's delegation. As expected, entering the simulation was challenging having other countries, such as the United States, fighting the Bashar al-Assad's inhumane human rights abuses over his citizens. Jesse Bennett represented the Minister of Foreign Relations and immediately began drafting a proposal to take the United States to ICC for disobeying International Law under the United Nations Charter of the United States interfering in domestic conflict by attacking Syria's air bases. The Syrian Cabinet began to weaken the rebels by thinking creatively and infecting a water source with H1N1 in Raqqa. Slowly, through various attacks by foreign cabinets such as Turkey and the United States, Syria felt it was best to collaborate with Russia, who stood by

Syria throughout every attack on Bashar al-Assad and take on a joint force against the United States. This prompted World War III, and unfortunately with the full force of the US military attacking Syria, the Assad government simply could not uphold, regardless of the tremendous Russian support.

Although Geneseo does not have an official Model Arab League organization, the students at the conference still performed well by winning

four awards. Nora McKenna won Distinguished Cabinet Head through her representation of Bashar al-Assad, Ryan Hayes won Distinguished Delegate for his portrayal of the Minister of Defense due to his intricate military planning and knowledge of various weapons that helped execute the

cabinet's ideas through the repeated challenges of military attacks and insurgencies. Maria Gershuni won Distinguished Delegate for her portrayal of the Prime Minister due to her creative ideas that aided the Syrian cabinet in advancing against the rebels such as spreading disease throughout cities by poisoning the water sources and overall, Maria served as an assertive force in collaborating with other cabinets. Christopher Callery won Outstanding Delegate due to his well-rounded knowledge of International Law paired with military strategy to aid Syria in capturing cities such as Palmyra and Raqqa. SUNY Geneseo was able to align closely with Russia and bridge a trust with the Kurdistan Regional Government, Arab Republic of Egypt and the Republic of Sudan. Overall, it was a stimulating and enlightening weekend enjoyed by all at the Boston Model Arab League simulation.



Professor Ashley Jardina, “White Identity Politics in American Politics”

This semester we were able to welcome Professor Ashley Jardina from Duke University present her research on white identity politics. In her guest lecture, Professor Jardina discussed the way the white identity has been affected by shifting racial demographics in the United States, and the consequences these attitudes have on politics.

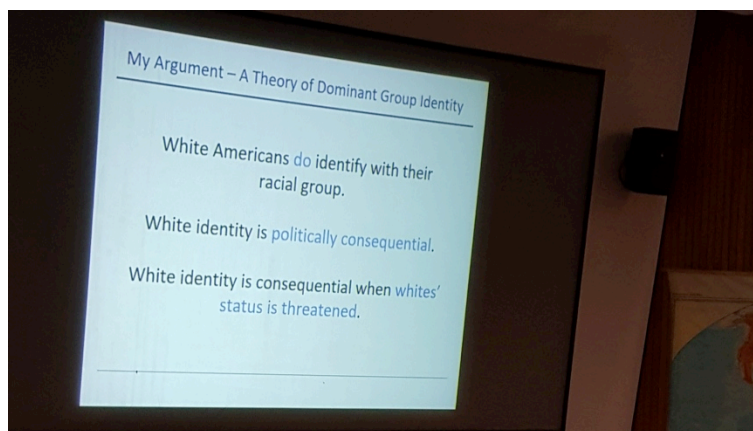
Jardina explained that in the past decades, whites have lost their strong hold on the American majority. As images of the American public become more diverse, whites are motivated to protect their racial identity. Since the 1990s, white Americans have become more likely to identify with their racial group and shape their political preferences around the preservation of white identity.

According to Professor Jardina, inter-group conflict occurs when out-groups encroach on in-group resources. Minority groups continue to gain political power, and demographically, the percentage of white Americans is projected to



shrink in the near future. This perceived threat to white American privilege leads to policy preferences that support whites and disadvantage minorities, assisting in Donald Trump’s success in the presidential election. Trump’s opposition to the Obama administration and support for anti-immigration signaled the “preservation” of whiteness.

In conclusion, Professor Jardina found that white identity exists and is politically consequential. When their group’s dominant status is challenged, white identity shapes political preferences. These preferences can lead to policies that protect in-group power and disadvantage minorities. Although many believe that over time America has become less prejudiced, Jardina found that change has only heightened racial awareness and white Americans’ perception of threat, triggering the creation of policies meant to preserve white identity.



Professor Jardina received her Ph.D in Political Science from the University of Michigan. Many of the publications she has co-authored research the impact of race and gender in politics, such as “Advances and Ambivalence: The Consequences of Women’s Educational and Workforce Changes for Women’s Political Participation in the United States, 1952 to 2012”, “Immigration Opposition Among U.S. Whites: General Ethnocentrism or Media Priming of Attitudes About Latinos?”, and “Experiments on Racial Priming in Political Campaigns.” Currently, she is working on a book manuscript discussing *The New Role of White Identity in American Politics*.

Professor Chris Faricy, “Public Opinion on Spending on Social Policies”

On March 8th, we were lucky to have Chris Faricy, a professor at Syracuse University, join us for a guest lecture. Professor Faricy received his Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina. Dr. Faricy is the author of several articles published in peer reviewed journals, as well as *Welfare for the Wealthy: Parties, Social Spending, and Inequality in the United States*. He has researched many facets of American politics, including social policy, political economy, income inequality, and public opinion. In his discussion of “Public Opinion on Spending on Social Policies”, Faricy introduced a new conception of social welfare, in which tax exemptions are viewed as a form of social spending.

According to the “Two Santa” theory, there must be a division of labor between democrats and republicans. In the 1970s, the Democrats took on the role of “two Santas” fighting for tax cuts and increased social spending, while the republicans did not work to help with either. In order to succeed, republicans took on the role of “tax-cut Santa”, concentrating on tax-rate reduction. Faricy explains that the



Democratic Party is often viewed as protagonists, working to expand government and government spending, while republicans are seen as antagonists who prevent spending. However, Faricy explains that both parties provide social welfare, just in different ways, creating a divide in the social welfare state. Although many believe that social welfare goes to the poor and elderly, Faricy argues that businesses also receive social benefits in the form of tax subsidies. These subsidies act as social benefits because they are offered with the specific goals of giving healthcare and pensions to employees.

Faricy explains that the number of Americans receiving tax subsidies for employment based health care insurance is three times the number of Americans relying on Medicaid and welfare. Additionally, benefactors of pension programs are overwhelmingly white, male, and wealthy. The realization that the majority of people benefiting from government programs are male, white, and economically secure shatters societal perceptions of “welfare queens”. Although democrats do spend more on public spending, republican tax-subsidies on private businesses should also be viewed as a form of welfare. Both parties provide money to their constituencies, just in different ways.



Faricy's discussion on social policy shows that in order to have a comprehensive understanding of welfare, discussions must also include tax breaks. From this lens, both republicans and democrats work to expand social programming. Whether it in form of a direct check or written into the tax code, republicans and democrats both choose winners and losers, and affect income inequality.

Professor Thomas Hirschl, "Chasing the American Dream"

On March 29th, we were joined by Thomas Hirschl, a Sociology professor from Cornell University. Hirschl is the coordinator for the "Program Work Team on Poverty and Economic Hardship", which works to find new ways to understand and eradicate poverty in the twenty-first century. His current research focuses on social class differentiation and its role in development, and the way individuals subjectively experience and understand economic hardship and success. In his discussion, based around his new book, *Chasing the American Dream*, Hirschl discussed the role of idealism in the material world.

Hirschl explained that compared to European countries, Americans are very optimistic, even in times of economic downturn.

According to the "American Dream", hard work should equate to financial success. Hirschl does find that there is a correlation between money and happiness. However, he argues that Americans tend to focus on the more realistic goal of achieving economic security, rather than complete wealth.

According to Hirschl, achieving the American Dream has become much more difficult in recent times. Large portions of Americans have lost their wealth and jobs. Many areas, like Flint and Detroit, have been devastated by the loss of blue-collar manufacturing jobs, especially in the automotive industry, which has moved many jobs towards the Mexican border. Additionally, race and level of education continues to play an overwhelming role when calculating whether or not a person will be impoverished in the future. Hirschl's research depicted the increasing challenges, due to demographics, geography, and income inequality, that individuals face when attempting to chase financial stability and the American Dream.

Anne Clark has contributed to the newsletter the past two years, mostly by writing about the speakers. Anne graduated May 2017, we wish her the best of luck.



"Republican sound bite." "Democratic sound bite."



Join the Official Geneseo PLSC/IR Group on Facebook



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

