Political Science

ELECTION WATCH 2016
Political Science hosts the best party on campus during the November election.

POLITICAL SCIENCE GOES TO THE UK
Two OSU professors teach counterterrorism at the University of Cambridge

IEAM SHOWS EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE
From hurricane cleanup to community preparedness, students spring into action.
Welcome to the Department of Political Science. What an exciting year this has been!

I am honored to continue to serve as department head and help lead a vibrant group of faculty, staff and of course, students. This year we continued our efforts to engage students outside of the classroom and held many events and guest speakers for the community.

Three events in particular stand out- the 2016 Constitutional Day lecture honoring the 40 year anniversary of the Craig v Boren Supreme Court decision, the inaugural Hannah Atkins Memorial Lecture featuring Dr. Kelly Dittmar, and the 2016 Election Watch Party.

Our students are the cornerstone of the department and this year we are fortunate to have students recognized for their successes across the department and University. At the Arts & Sciences annual awards banquet, political science was well represented:

- Taylor Todd was awarded the Arts & Science Alumni Scholarship
- Chase Laspisa & Kiaralexis Rogers received the Fourjay Foundation Scholarship
- Chelsey Johnson was named the Outstanding Departmental Senior for Political Science. She was also selected as the Orange Gown Graduate for Arts & Sciences and will lead the Arts & Science procession at graduation.
- Preston (John) Cullison was the Outstanding Departmental Senior for Military Science
- Chelsey Johnson & Christina Liotta were named Top 10 Seniors in the Arts & Sciences

We also have an amazing faculty dedicated to helping students succeed and bring recognition to themselves through their research. Numerous faculty presented their research this year and participated in a series of panel discussions on campus- including a co-sponsored event addressing the recent immigration and travel ban in early 2017. This year we will also see the retirement of Will Focht who has served our department and the University for 23 years.

And, last but certainly not least, I cannot say enough wonderful things about our staff. The department has been successful because we have the best staff in the University! We couldn’t do what we do without relying on them daily to help guide us through.

As we end this academic year, I am already looking forward to the plans we are working on for next year and we look forward to updating you all about these next May. Until then- Go Pokes!

Dr. Jeanette Mendez
DEPARTMENT HEAD
On November 8, 2016, Pi Sigma Alpha - the Political Science Department’s student honors organization - helped host a campus wide non-partisan Election Watch Party in the OSU Student Union atrium.

Other event co-sponsors included the Young Democrats, College Republicans, OSU’s Oklahoma Intercollegiate Legislature (OIL), and the No Labels group.

This event followed up on our very successful Primary Election Watch Party on March 1, 2016, providing a larger forum for students, faculty, and members of the wider Stillwater community to come together and watch the election results roll in on election Tuesday.

More than 200 members of the OSU community attended the event, participating in election-themed trivia and games. Not only did the event highlight the importance of the U.S. political process and promote greater political awareness, it also directly connected with student research projects on election forecasting in their political science courses.

New speaker series honors pioneer in Oklahoma politics

Hannah Atkins had a profoundly influential career in public service. Among her many accomplishments, she was the first African-American woman state legislator in Oklahoma and was the highest-ranking woman in the Oklahoma state government.

Beginning September 2016, Dr. Farida Jalalzai, the current holder of the Hannah Atkins Endowed Chair in Political Science, instituted The Hannah Atkins Memorial Lecture to pay tribute to Atkins' legacy as a political trailblazer. This speaker series seeks to foster timely discussions on minority politics and diversity. The inaugural lecture featured Dr. Kelly Dittmar, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University–Camden and Scholar at the Center for American Women and Politics. She discussed the prospects for women’s success in the 2016 elections and the role of gender dynamics in electoral politics more generally.

It kicked off a larger speaker series that continued in the Spring of 2017. In March, Dr. Alissandra Stoyan, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Kansas State University, presented on constitutional reform in Latin America and how these changes affect minorities. In April, Dr. Amy C. Alexander, Associate Professor of Political Science and member of the Quality of Governance Institute at the University of Gothenburg, presented on the topic of gender egalitarianism in Muslim societies.

Each of these speakers also visited numerous classes to speak about minority related issues. Next year, we will continue to prominently feature speakers focusing on the political empowerment of minority groups. We hope to see you there!
One major applies her political science skills to student government elections.

Stephens wins SGA Presidency

The Political Science Department is proud to announce that one of its very own, Erica Stephens, was elected as the President of the Student Government Association at Oklahoma State University for the 2017-2018 academic year. A political science and strategic communications (pre-law) major from Oklahoma City, Stephens attributes much of her success to what she has learned from being a political science major.

Stephens states, "My political science classes have given me the necessary tools to know how the government works, to run a successful campaign, and the confidence to lead a Student Government."

Upon graduation in 2018, Stephens plans to attend law school in Washington D.C. and work on political campaigns. Some day, she hopes to eventually run for political office again.

We congratulate Erica on her victory, and look forward to seeing what she achieves next year as the leader of student government!

Another year, another group of awards for OSU's O.I.L. Team

OSU's Oklahoma Intercollegiate Legislature (O.I.L.) team, a student team competing in mock legislative sessions, continues to shine in state-wide competitions this year. After coming off a sweep of the prizes in Spring 2016, the OSU team won Best Overall Delegation during the meeting this past fall.

They also won 2nd best delegation in the Senate and 2nd Best overall delegation in the House. Individual team members won prizes of their own, including 1st place Best Delegate in the House, 2nd and 3rd Best Delegates in the House and Senate, 1st and 3rd Best Legislation in the House and Senate (and 2nd place Best Legislation in the House), and 1st place for Best Freshman in both the House and Senate.

The Spring 2016 semester saw the team receive further awards. OSU's delegation brought home a 3rd place for: Best Overall Delegation, Best Delegation in the House, and Best Delegation in the Community Service Contest. Individual team members won 2nd Best Freshman in the House, 1st Best Freshman in the Senate, and 3rd Best Delegate in the Senate.

In addition to the above awards, two members of OSU's (continued on next page...)

OSU Political Science
Meet the 2017 Habiby Scholarship Winner

An Interview with Taylor Todd

Taylor Todd is an OSU sophomore by year (but junior by credit hours), and is currently pursuing her Bachelor of Science in Political Science on the honors degree track. She also is working on a minor in Economics, is active in a number of campus organizations, and works as a research assistant in her spare time.

"The faculty here have served as amazing mentors who have encouraged me to chase my dreams, work hard, and step out of my comfort zone."

She feels extremely honored to be the recipient of the 2017 Raymond and Afaaf Habiby Scholarship, and has this to say about her award:

Upon receiving the award, I wanted to know more about Dr. Habiby. I was taken aback by the incredible life he lived, his talent, and passion for international relations; I am humbled by the fact that I was thought worthy to receive an award in the Habiby's name. This award was a huge relief financially to me, and it gives me peace of mind about my continuing education, as I will be pursuing a Juris Doctor upon the conclusion of my undergraduate studies.

After law school, I plan to become a lawyer who specializes in international trade or intellectual property. Both fields would marry my love of international relations, comparative politics, and the law. The faculty here have served as amazing mentors who have encouraged me to chase my dreams, work hard, and step out of my comfort zone. The experience I have had here in the Political Science Department has shaped me as an academic, a professional, and a person. It was wonderful to have this growth and my achievements recognized. Upon becoming an alum, I hope to be able to give back and aid future students, so that they grow as I have in this program.

O.I.L. (continued)...

delegation where elected by delegates from across the state of Oklahoma to serve as Speaker and Speaker Pro of the House Chambers for the upcoming academic year.

Oklahoma Intercollegiate Legislature is the largest and one of the oldest intercollegiate student legislatures in the United States. OSU has a strong tradition of participation in this organization, and has historically brought the biggest delegation to competition.

Congrats to the 2017 Department Scholarship Award Winners

Taylor Todd
The Raymond & Afaaf Habiby Scholarship

Bridget Flynn
The Dianne & Stanley Sheldon Scholarship

Jeffrey McNaughton
The Paul Matthews Scholarship

Savannah Titus
The Franz Von Sauer Scholarship

Seth Anderson
The Harold V. Sare Scholarship
In Action

A Cowgirl in D.C.

Callyn Maxwell is spending her final semester as an undergrad at Oklahoma State in an unusual place – Washington, DC. Maxwell, a dual major in Political Science and Psychology, is OSU’s first participant in the SUNY Washington Internship Program this Spring. During her internship, she will earn 16 credit hours to completing her political science degree.

“I have lived in D.C. for about 5 weeks and I love every second of it!” says Maxwell. “There is usually never a dull moment and always something fun going on.”

Maxwell is working as a judicial intern for four Magistrate Judges at the Superior Court of D.C. While on the job, she helps complete some administrative tasks for the Judges and observes court cases of all types. “I love my internship and have learned a lot during the short amount of time I have been here so far,” Callyn said. “One of my favorite things about D.C. so far has been going to the National Mall and seeing all the monuments and museums.”

As part of the program, Callyn receives credit for participating in her internship 4 days per week, along with two academic components – Friday seminars and a research project that she works on throughout the semester.

“One of the biggest adjustments to moving to D.C. is getting used to the city & subway system – it can be really confusing and intimidating,” said Callyn. “All in all, I am so happy that I pushed myself out of my comfort zone and took advantage of this amazing opportunity.”

The SUNY Washington Internship Program is affiliated with Oklahoma State University. Students can participate in the program in the Fall, Spring or Summer. Students earn 16 credits for the experience during the semester, 6 in the Summer. There are internships available for almost any major through the program. The on-campus liaison for the program is Chad Hankinson, Political Science For more information on the SUNY Washington Internship Program: www.brockport.edu/washington

OSU Faculty & Students present their research at the 2017 Midwest Political Science Conference.

In April 2017, a group of OSU Political Science and FEMP scholars traveled to Chicago to present their research at one of the largest conferences in the field of political science. We’d encourage you to check out our Facebook photo album for the full list, but some highlights (pictured here) include junior Savannah Titus presenting her NSF-funded research on "The Effects of Drought on Terrorism" and Drs. Haley Murphy, Alex Greer, Tristan Wu, and Ray Chang presenting their work on household preparedness.
Cowboys Go to Cambridge
Political Science professors teach counter-terrorism in the UK & Northern Ireland

In July 2016, OSU professors Drs. Holley Hansen and Stephen Nemeth had the unique opportunity to take their skills overseas and teach in the hallowed halls of Cambridge University.

Their course, "Counterinsurgency & Counterterrorism: The British Experience," was the latest offering in OSU’s prestigious Cambridge Scholars Program – and the first Political Science class to be offered. Accompanying the professors were 18 of Oklahoma State’s brightest students, including two political science undergrads. In class, students learned about British counterinsurgency operations from the Revolutionary War to the War in Iraq.

The students participated in community service, working at a local Oxfam store and a soup kitchen. One of the people they met while doing community service got them an invite to tour the grounds of the Cambridge United Football Club (CUFC), where the chairman invited them for tea and cake and led some of the local fans in an impromptu chorus of "Oklahoma!" in honor of the students.

The highlight of the course was a 3-day excursion to Belfast, Northern Ireland. While there, the class toured local communities, led by former IRA (Catholic) and UVF (Protestant) militants. These tour guides, who were on opposing sides during the Northern Ireland conflict, provided gripping personal accounts of their experiences.

Students also met two police officers who served during the conflict and now act as consultants for law enforcement agencies around the world. These officers talked about the lessons the Northern Ireland police learned during the Troubles, how they apply these lessons to the post-conflict society, and how these lessons may be applicable to current US law enforcement agencies.

OTHER NEWS
PROFESSORS ACTIVE IN ON-CAMPUS TALKS

Our professors play an important role in promoting awareness of real-world political issues. While they sometimes take their knowledge to the national stage, such as when Dr. Farida Jalalzai was featured on the PBS NewsHour this past January talking about the women protests, most of our efforts focus on improving the campus learning environment.

And they have been quite busy! Drs. Amber Dickinson, Joshua Jansa, and Professor Chad Hankinson hosted a discussion following an on-campus screening of the Frontline documentary "The Choice," about the 2016 presidential candidates (with special thanks going to Dr. Laura Vinson for helping to arrange things). In the spring, Dr. Jacob Mauslein gave a guest lecture on cyberwarfare, while Drs. Farida Jalalzai, Stephen Nemeth, and Erica Townsend-Bell participated in a round-table discussion of the Trump administration's immigration ban. Finally, Dr. Eve Ringsmuth served on a panel discussing the nomination of Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court.

PROFESSOR RECEIVES OSU TEACHING AWARD

In April 2017, Dr. Holley Hansen was awarded the Marlene Strathe Distinguished Educational Leadership Award at the Annual President’s Leadership & Service Recognition Ceremony.
FEMP student group gives back to community in 2016-17

It has been a very busy year for Oklahoma State’s student chapter of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM).

In the summer of 2016, Steven Melton (IAEM-OSU President) participated in a community recovery program headed by George Navarini (IAEM National Student Region President, IAEM-OSU Secretary). Numerous student chapters worked together to help residents of Tybee Island, Georgia clear debris following Hurricane Matthew during the 64th Annual IAEM Conference in Savannah, Georgia.

IAEM-OSU also honored veterans and active military personnel with the help of Wreaths Across America last November. Decorative Wreaths were displayed below flags honoring U.S. military branches at Boomer lake and local veterans and active military were invited to be honored and thanked for their service. In January, Steven Melton (IAEM-OSU President) attended the 45th Presidential Inauguration in Washington D.C. with his father, James Melton.

Finally, Dr. Chang (IAEM-OSU Chapter Advisor), David Yonko (IAEM-OSU Vice President), and Steven Melton (IAEM-OSU President) were invited to complete a FEMA Public Assistance Administration for Community Recovery course at the National Fire Academy and Emergency Management Institute in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Stillwater Fire Department and members of OSU Housing and Residential Life participated in a Virtual Table-Top Exercise hosted by FEMA and administered by IAEM-OSU members to help prepare for a tornado emergency.

Dr. Will Focht announces his retirement

Dr. Will Focht, Associate Professor in the Fire and Emergency Management Program, officially announced his retirement this year. A graduate of the Environmental Science PhD program at Oklahoma State University, Dr. Focht was one of the five founding faculty members of the Fire and Emergency Management Program, playing a key role in the development of the program and the mentoring of a number of our students.

Dr. Focht also directed four other programs during his tenure here, including the Oklahoma Water Resources Research Institute, Institute for Sustainable Environments, Environmental Science Graduate Program, and Certificate Program in Environmental Studies.

We thank Will for all he has done for the department and wish him a happy retirement!
Recent FEMP Alumni Put Learning into Practice

Dr. Alyssa L. Provencio, PhD (2017)

Dr. Alyssa L. Provencio graduated from OSU this past spring. While in our program, she taught Aim and Scope of Emergency Management, was a teaching assistant for a number of political science courses, and worked as a research assistant on a National Science Foundation-funded grant with FEMP faculty member Dr. Tristan Wu, investigating Emergency Evacuations and Risk Communication during the 2013 Colorado Flood. Provencio also participated in the respected Graduate Internship program for the City of Los Angeles’ Emergency Management Department.

Her current research focuses on understanding the opportunities and obstacles that face women who work for local emergency management agencies, and her dissertation on this topic was awarded the prestigious OSU Summer Dissertation Fellowship. She has also been an active participant in the Emergency Management Higher Education Symposium and the Natural Hazards Conference, serving on working groups through these organizations.

While completing her dissertation, Provencio was hired as a faculty member at the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) in the Master of Public Administration program. In this position, she is a part of a new initiative for blended learning, working with the Center for e-Learning and Connected Environments to develop online and hybrid courses. Additionally, she leads an initiative to create the first graduate certificate program in Disaster Management in the Oklahoma City region. Her experiences in the Fire and Emergency Management program also gave her the knowledge and skills needed to expand the course offerings in her department at UCO, including Qualitative Research Methods, Populations at Risk, and Fundamentals of Emergency Management.

Provencio has worked for a number of non-profit organizations and attributes her passion for emergency management to the time she spent in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina.

Jim Aleski, MS (2016)

Mr. Jim Aleski graduated with a Masters of Science from OSU in the Summer of 2016. He focused his studies on how emergency services agencies communicate with their stakeholders, with this research culminating in his thesis, “Getting Engaged: Facebook and the Fire Service.”

After graduation, Aleski began working part-time as the Social Media Director for the Professional Firefighters Association of New Jersey (PFANJ), a State Association of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF). He previously served as the Social Media Specialist for the Cherry Hill (NJ) Fire Department, where he has been employed as a career Firefighter/EMT since 2007. He started as a volunteer in the fire service in 1997 and previously worked as a producer in the film and television industry for more than a decade.

Aleski credits his FEMP studies at OSU with broadening his views of the fire service from one looking at mostly physical science factors to one looking more at social science factors. He says firefighters are commonly taught how, but rarely focus on why. His FEMP experience allows him to better take into account the needs of stakeholders and the political realities surrounding these needs.
The "Rising Star" Award is given to honor a recent graduate (within the last 10 years) whose accomplishments place them on a trajectory for outstanding professional, leadership, or service achievements. This year's winner, Courtney Baker, is making strides in all three areas of excellence.

Courtney Baker grew up in Rochester, New York. Halfway through her senior year of high school, she moved to Stillwater, Oklahoma when her parents were offered jobs at OSU. She made the decision to attend OSU and majored in Political Science at OSU, with a minor in Leadership Studies. She studied abroad twice during her time at OSU traveling to Egypt and Spain.

After graduating from OSU, Courtney earned her Juris Doctorate at the University of Minnesota. During her time in Minneapolis, she worked with the local legal aid office representing migrant farm workers. She also participated in a legal clinic, representing a 19 year old who fled persecution for his political beliefs in Honduras. The highlight of her law school career was when she was able to call this client on the last day of class and inform him that the judge had granted his application for asylum.

Courtney Baker
Class of '2012

The 2017 "Rising Star" Recipient

After law school, Courtney was admitted to the New York State bar. She worked as a legal fellow with the D.C. Volunteer Lawyers Project. Courtney represented domestic violence victims who were seeking protective orders, custody of their children or divorces. She also served as a court-appointed guardian ad litem in high conflict custody cases.

Following her fellowship, Courtney moved to Albany, New York where she currently works at the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York. Courtney represents tenants who are facing eviction.

When asked what a Political Science degree from OSU meant to her, Courtney had this to say:

"Attending OSU was one of the best choices I have made. My experience at OSU made me more willing to take risks, try new things and challenge myself. I specifically remember telling Professor Darcy that I was going to take Professor Adkinson's very difficult Constitutional Law class and that I felt up to the challenge. Professor Darcy said that it might be a good opportunity for me to see that a limit exists. I know Professor Darcy meant that I probably would not get my coveted “A” in the class.

The grade I actually got in Constitutional Law does not matter as much as the lesson I learned, that challenging myself is worth a little struggle. I wasn’t the smartest student in Professor Adkinson’s class, but I also wasn’t the smartest person at law school either. I am always up for the challenge. And as an attorney at Legal Aid, I face many struggles fighting on my clients' behalf.

Learning to challenge myself, to accept that I won’t always be the smartest or most talented, but trying my best anyway is the most important lesson I learned at OSU. I can only imagine the challenges I will face through the rest of my legal career. Working with clients living in poverty certainly isn’t easy, but I am confident that OSU prepared me to rise to the challenge."
Two former OSU professors passed away this past summer. Both were influential in the shaping of our department, and they will be sorely missed.

Dr. Michael "Bill" Parle passed away June 4, 2016, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, at the age of 73. He joined the faculty at Oklahoma State University in 1981, having prior served on the faculty at Central Michigan University and American University of Beirut. He served as Head of the Department of Political Science from 1991-1997 and retired from faculty in 2009.

Dr. Parle was an active and engaged citizen within the department. His research interests were within budgeting and financial administration, environmental policy, urban administration and politics, public personnel administration, comparative public administration and emergency management. He was a significant leader in the establishment of the M.S. in Fire and Emergency Management Administration degree within the department and taught within the newly established Ph.D. in the same area prior to his retirement. He was a well regarded scholar within these areas.

Students spoke highly of Dr. Parle as a professor, especially the graduate students within the FEMP programs. He was an asset to the department for his intellectual abilities and his applied knowledge. Students found his stories entertaining and his teaching style relatable.

Dr. Raymond Habiby passed away July 17, 2016 in Dallas, Texas, at the age of 94. He was born Nov. 11, 1921 in Cairo, Egypt. An avid scholar, he finished high school before the age of 15. Being too young for university and law school, he was admitted into American University in Beirut after the registrar changed his birthdate so he was eligible. He finished his political science degree within 3 years and then attended law school in Jerusalem.

When western Palestine was divided, he was front row to the increasing political violence. He and his sister narrowly missed a roadside bomb in Haifa. Dr. Habiby traveled to Egypt and became unable to return home when Israel declared statehood in 1948. Looking for opportunities since his law degree was not recognized in Egypt, he came to the United States and received his Master's and Ph.D. in political science from the University of Minnesota.

Dr. Habiby joined the faculty at Oklahoma State University in 1965. He retired from the faculty in 1988 yet taught as an emeritus faculty until 2008. Dr. Habiby was an expert on Middle Eastern Politics. His research and teaching focused on this area and he was sought after by many media outlets for his commentary. He befriended students, especially international students and was known to cook dinners and host gatherings for these students.

Students were always interested in classes taught by Dr. Habiby as he brought the Middle East to life with his stories of his upbringing and time there.

...and to our Masters and PhD students who successfully defended their theses this year!

Jonnathan Hicks * Abdel Darou-salim * Kimberly Hill * Steven Melton * Joshua Jones * Thom Swanson * Marion Blackwell * Kevin Milan * Njoki Mwarumba * Alyssa Provencio

Our students represent the best and brightest in OSU's College of Arts and Sciences. Pictured above is John "Preston" Cullison, a dual major named as Outstanding Senior for Military Science, receiving his award from A&S Dean Danilowicz. To the left are Christina Liotta (Top 10 Senior in A&S), Taylor Todd (A&S Alumni Scholarship winner), and Chelsey Johnson (Department Outstanding Senior + Top 10 Senior in A&S + Orange Robe Recipient)

Learn more about how to support the Department of Political Science's teaching and research mission by going to http://polsci.okstate.edu/alumni-friends/giving