

Spring 2013



PROVIDENCE COLLEGE

# Politicus

## Letter From The Chair

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Greetings from the Chair,

Happy Spring! As I write this, we're still in the thick of mid-semester activity, and the end of the semester seems far off. However, it's already time to begin thinking about next year as well as graduation. As always, the PSC Department will hold its annual Senior Reception for family and friends of our graduates. This year the reception is scheduled for Friday, May 17th, from 3-5 pm in Aquinas Lounge; invitations will be sent shortly.

A number of events scheduled during April showcase our students' scholarship. In late April the two Forand Research Scholars in the senior class, Jessica Ulbricht and Laura O'Neill, will give presentations on research projects they have been carrying out during this academic year. Students, faculty, friends, parents, etc., are welcome to attend the event, which is tentatively scheduled for the afternoon of Tuesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> (more information to follow). Also coming up is the College's Annual Celebration of Student Scholarship and Creativity, which will be held on Wednesday, April 24 between 3 and 5 pm in lower Slavin. This year a number of our majors and minors, ranging from freshmen to seniors, will participate in the Celebration, which highlights student art and research. It's a great opportunity for all of us to see what our fellow PSC students are doing, research-wise – show up and give your fellow majors your support!

Another event happening on April 24 is a symposium on Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Justice in the Middle East, organized by Dr. Jeffrey Pugh of our Department. Dr. Pugh won a prestigious grant from the US Institute of Peace to organize this symposium, and with some of those funds we're bringing Dr. Marc Lynch of George Washington Uni-

versity, an expert on the Middle East, to campus for a lecture. The symposium will also involve student and faculty-led panel discussions on the Arab Spring and Mideast conflict resolution.

Also scheduled for late April is the annual Pi Sigma Alpha Honors Society Induction Ceremony and Banquet. That event happens Saturday, April 27 from 4-6 pm.

A special note for PSC majors in the class of 2014: this edition of *Politicus*, like all our Spring editions, contains information about the Senior Capstones offered in the 2013-20 academic year. By the time this is out, Capstone surveys will have already been sent to you, and hopefully completed and returned. Five different capstones will be taught next year: three in the fall by Drs. Affigne, Blum, and McCarthy, and two in the spring by Drs. Bellhouse and Jordan-Zachery. Please note that many of the Capstones overlap with next year's Political Theory course offerings in terms of when they are scheduled. For this reason, rising seniors who plan to take Political Theory next year should probably plan on doing so during the semester when they do not take the Capstone.

This is my last semester as Chair of the Political Science Department, and consequently my last Chair's letter for *Politicus* (at least for a long while!). Next year Dr. Bill Hudson will take over the position. It's been an honor to serve as your chair. Over the last three years I have gained a real appreciation for how much all of you – students, faculty, and staff – contribute to our program.

Many thanks,

Susan

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## An Interview with Dr. Guardino

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It is no secret that the mass media is highly influential in shaping public opinion. Over the past twenty years research has indicated that reporting in the mass media tends to favor neoliberal, pro-free-market, conservative economic policies. Current scholarly research into the media has focused on how it influences public opinion. However, with independent agencies being taken over by a few conglomerates,

the question arises what factors determine the slant of coverage?



Dr. Matthew Guardino has taken up this project. His research analyzes media bias, and takes the slant of media coverage as the dependent variable. Economic deregulation over the last two decades has resulted in the corporatization of the large information outlets. Increasingly the industry has focused on cost cutting, resulting in staff reductions and cuts in investigative reporting. “Journalism in a crisis” Guardino states, “there is uncertainty as to its future as a democratizing force.” Researching the causes of bias in media coverage is a tricky affair. Dr. Guardino’s research uses comparisons of the coverage of similar economic policies before and after deregulation of the media business. Historical analysis might help to explain

what factors determine the coverage of policy. Additionally, Dr. Guardino’s research includes examining the impact of massive cost-cutting by media corporations — for instance, by cutting journalistic staff — on the coverage of economic policy debates. Dr. Guardino is in the process of collecting raw data; over the course of the research process he hopes to clarify the role corporations have had on media coverage and thus public opinion. Through gathering information on this issue, Dr. Guardino hopes to “open the debate” regarding the media and corporations. “We get the media we want”, says Guardino, “If we’re not aware that we have choices, we’ll suffer the consequences.”

By Matt Schuhriemen

# Pi Sigma Alpha Welcomes Spring 2013 Candidates for Induction

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On behalf of Providence College's Epsilon Chi Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honor Society, I would like to formally congratulate the Spring 2013 candidates for induction. These outstanding students have demonstrated superior academic achievement in their studies of political science and government. Through membership, new inductees will not only gain a competitive advantage in the employment process by listing Pi Sigma Alpha as an achievement on their resumes, but inductees will also gain access to opportunities including scholarships for graduate studies and Washington internships.

In addition to the individual benefits of Pi Sigma Alpha membership, new inductees will become part of an active chapter that seeks to share political science scholarship with the greater PC community. Our first event of this semester was a lecture by United States Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, entitled "Achieving an Effective Congress." This lecture provided students with the opportunity to ask a sitting U.S. Senator questions about politics and issues at the forefront of current political debate. Epsilon Chi is also in the judging phase of its annual Best Paper Competition, which awards cash prizes to students in the department with the best research papers.

This spring, Epsilon Chi will also host Dr. Marc Lynch, Director of George Washington University's Institute for Middle East Studies, for our Symposium on Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Justice in the Middle East for his analysis of the status of countries after the Arab Spring movement. Additionally, we are excited to announce that Ricardo Lagos, former President of Chile, will speak at PC on the topic of human rights, transitional justice, and democratization in Chile as a tribute to the late Father Ed Cleary, O.P. of Providence College.

Lastly, the Pi Sigma Alpha induction ceremony and banquet will take place Saturday, April 27, 2013 from 4-6PM in 64 Hall. All candidates for induction are encouraged to submit their membership dues to Emerald Lopes at their earliest convenience so that new inductees can join current members at our bi-weekly meetings to help with the organizing of upcoming events. Epsilon Chi excitedly welcomes the following candidates for induction:

**Class of 2013: Matthew Connolly; James Erwin; Marc Freda; Stephanie Jackson; Alexandra Miga; Laura O'Neill; Samantha Schlich; Stephanie Silkowski.**

**Class of 2014: Jenna Bessette; Lucas Caruso; Samuel Conley-Elgee; Christopher D'Errico; Kerry Fleming; Patrick Mahoney; Zachary McKeown; Amanda Schaefer; Melissa Scott; Simone Tubman**

By: Amanda Nelen '13

## The Political Climate of a Young Democracy: Spain

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Political Scientists seek to study and understand several different aspects of the field of politics, both domestically and internationally. One specific field of interest within the discipline of political science is the study of the development of democracy in other states in terms of: the cause and commencement of the political transition and the state of the political system post-transition. Often, the political climate post-transition can determine the sustainability of democracy in that state. As a fairly young democracy, the political climate of Spain post-transition is a very interesting and important phenomenon.

The current political system of Spain was established by the Constitution of 1978 as a social democratic state of the right, like most European democracies. Prior to the political transition to democracy, Spain was controlled by the authoritarian regime of Francisco Franco. Near the end of his death, the dictator Franco re-instated the monarchy with his appointment of King Juan Carlos I. Despite his appointment by Franco, Juan Carlos I was an important contributor to the Spanish transition to democracy after the end of *franquismo*. The monarchy was thus maintained and Spain adopted a parliamentary monarchy as its form of government. Under a parliamentary monarchy, what some call “el subjuntivo del gobierno,” the king is the head of the state and the prime minister, whose title is “president of the Government,” is the head of the government. Although it is possible to have a president or prime minister be of a different party than the party that has a majority of seats in parliament, this phenomenon is never the case in Spain. Unlike some cases in the United States, there is rarely legislative gridlock due to an absence of divided government in Spain. For example, if a political party has not only a majority, but also an absolute majority in parliament, all proposed legislation by that party will pass. One disadvantage of this political system is that it is common to pass several laws, but apply very few. Comparatively, it is rather difficult to create new laws in the United States. An example of the attainment of an absolute majority by one political party is the 1982 and 1986 democratic elections with the major Spanish Socialist Party known as PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español) under the direction of President Felipe González.



By definition, Spain is a multi-party system. However, since the 1990s, two parties, the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) and the People's Party (PP) have dominated Spanish politics. Despite being from different ends of the spectrum of political ideals, PP and PSOE both agree on basic policies, such as the need for government spending on a minimal level of education and healthcare. Currently, the People's Party has a majority, but not an absolute majority, in the Cortes Generales (Spanish bicameral legislature). The current president of Spain, Mariano Rajoy, is a member of PP and has been in office since December 21, 2011.



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The political system of Spain is a cross between a federation and a confederation, and is defined as an autonomous state. This autonomous and asymmetrical system is very “expensive” to maintain and makes it difficult to overcome the current economic crisis. Some Spaniards believe that switching to a federal system may help regulate the economy. However, this task would prove to be difficult because a federal system is symmetrical while the current political system of Spain is asymmetrical; the two are incompatible. There are constant negotiations of power between the central and regional governments. Slowly, the power of the central government is being transferred to the regional governments. The legitimacy of the central government in Spain is in danger because of what some call the “el vaciamiento del estado” (the emptying of the state). The Spanish constitution states the responsibilities of the regional and state governments in articles 148 and 149 respectively. According to Article 149, point 3, the responsibilities of the state may be transferred to the regional governments or “comunidades autónomas.” However, nowhere in the constitution does it state that the reverse is possible, i.e. that the responsibilities of the regional governments may be transferred to the central government.

Another issue of concern is the high level of corruption at every level of Spain’s government that has resulted in part from the on-going economic crisis. There is a significant amount of corruption within both major political parties, PSOE and PP. Political corruption within the parties stems from the hold that business and banks have both on the economy and on politicians. The system for financing parties in Spain is not clear. In terms of legality in financing political parties, all is permitted and all is prohibited at the same time. This flaw in the law is the “cancer of the state” where many laws are passed, but few are applied and reinforced. Unfortunately, there is no system to control the “buying” of politicians by large banks and business as of right now. Many politicians have also robbed the state of money without being reprimanded, as in the case of PP politician and former treasurer Luis Bárcenas, alleged to have stolen 38 million euros. Many of these cases do not see justice because a judge will simply “file” the case away for five years or more. A majority of the population will have forgotten the specific case of Luis Bárcenas five years from now because many new cases of corruption will have surfaced in the meantime. In reality, there is a significant absence of transparency in the Spanish government. Everyday, Spain is going downhill in terms of transparency, which poses a threat to the sustainability of democracy in Spain.

A special thanks to the input and direction of Dr. Julio Ponce Alberca, Universidad de Sevilla.

Article by: Amanda M. Schaefer, Providence College ‘14



# Interdisciplinary Faculty Seminar on Justice: A Look from Dr. Jordan-Zachery's Perspective

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Note: In the Fall 2012 edition of *Politicus*, I wrote an article that detailed the upcoming spring Interdisciplinary Faculty Seminar on Justice. This article acts as its extension, providing a second look at the seminar as it currently takes place.

The Interdisciplinary Faculty Seminar (IFS) on Justice is well underway this spring semester, gathering professors from the Psychology, History, Health Policy and Management, Public and Community Service, Philosophy, and Political Science departments for their weekly engagements. The Political Science department is fortunate enough to have two members of their faculty partaking in the seminar this year. Last semester, Dr. Pugh shared his expectations and what he hoped to gain through his involvement in the IFS. This semester Dr. Jordan-Zachery explains what she has achieved thus far by participating in this collaborative experience.

Dr. Jordan-Zachery is no stranger to faculty dialogue. She recently participated in the Women's Studies Summer seminar, which prepared her well for this semester's seminar focused on Justice. Dr. Jordan-Zachery said that before the start of the seminar she knew there would be an intense exploration of various texts on the issue of justice, discussion on the tensions within and among the texts, and conversation on the implications of the texts in their current understanding of justice. Halfway through the semester, Dr. Jordan-Zachery states that the seminar has lived up to its expectations and has been very thought provoking for her. She often leaves the seminar with more questions than answers, which she finds to be a very enjoyable learning experience. She looks forward to integrating much of what she is learning into her future teaching.

When asked which discussion topic she found most interesting, Dr. Jordan-Zachery had a hard time thinking of just one. She said that since all of the discussions have been so thought provoking, she cannot name one as being more interesting than another. Thus far, the seminar has explored early definitions of justice, justice and health care, justice and architecture and its meaning for the community, along with other topics. She said that each conversation, individually and as part of the group, has made a significant impact on her and stays with her beyond their meeting times. That is what she calls the beauty of the seminar.

Each faculty member partaking in the seminar is in charge of leading one discussion that is centered upon their particular focus of justice. Dr. Jordan-Zachery's presentation is named "Where My Girls At? Notions of Justice and Girls of Color in a "Post"-Radical Society". More specifically her topic looks at the "meaning" of justice for Black girls. She explains that this group tends to be marginalized in our culture and in our political and economic discourses. As a society, we often frame the understanding of Black girlhood in negative terms. Her topic explores this framing and begs the question: how is this invisible population treated and what are the consequences of this treatment.

Lastly, Dr. Jordan-Zachery spoke about how two Political Science professors are partaking in the IFS. Of course there is common overlap between them when discussing justice and equality, but their specific topics are actually quite diverse from one another. They have their own emphasis on a specific population and region. She mentioned that having two political scientists on



the seminar, each taking a unique approach to the broader question of justice, enhances the conversation for her even further. Yet still, her favorite thing about the Interdisciplinary Faculty Seminar is the opportunity to hear from others outside of her training. She states that this is very intellectually stimulating. It is clear that Dr. Jordan-Zachery is finding this faculty seminar to be very beneficial and it is great to know that she plans on taking the knowledge that she has gained to enrich her own classes in the future.

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## Tim Wise Commentary

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Tim Wise, an anti-racist writer and educator, visited Providence College on Feb. 20 to give a lecture called “Beyond Diversity: Challenging Racism in an Age of Backlash.” This event was sponsored by several groups, including the Department of Political Science. Wise has worked against racism for 23 years, spending 18 years on the road speaking to schools and organizations.

Wise opened with an anecdote from his post-college years. A roommate made gumbo for dinner, and when nobody volunteered to clean up, the mess sat in the kitchen for days. Wise eventually washed the dishes himself, thinking, “It doesn’t matter who made the mess, I was tired of living in it.” He explained that this is a metaphor for the inequality in society today. A lack of equality in schools and the workforce is “the residue of what others did in generations past.”

Wise explained that he knew that the diversity discussion may be new and uncomfortable for some, saying, “Nobody has this conversation before they get to college.” He then provided concrete examples of inequality in society, explaining that students of color are 12 times as likely as white students to attend schools in a poor area. These schools do not have the same funds or advantages as schools in wealthier areas, which leads to fewer students of color going to college and finding employment.

Education reform was Wise’s primary solution to the diversity problem. He applauded the College’s diversity initiatives and stressed that affirmative action was not giving special privileges to students of color, but rather recognizing that those students, who may not have the advantages and connections of white students, may be just as qualified to receive a college education.

Wise concluded his speech by telling the audience to make an effort to understand people who have different experiences and perspectives. He then came full circle and stressed the importance of “cleaning up the mess in the kitchen,” encouraging the audience to take action against inequality rather than pass the burden to future generations.

By Courtney Buohl

**PSC Department Course Offerings**

**DEPT: Political Science**

**SEMESTER: Fall 2013**

Course Number	Course Title (limit 30 characters)	Series	Limit	Instructor	Day	Time
PSC 101 001	Politics	C	18	Katrina Norvell	T, W, F	8:30am - 9:20am
PSC 101 002	Politics	F	18	Neil Romans	T, W, F	9:30am - 10:20am
PSC 101 003	Politics	G	18	Neil Romans	T, W, F	10:20am - 11:20am
PSC 101 004	Politics	J	18	STAFF	M, W, F	1:30pm - 2:20pm
PSC 101 005	Politics	K	18	Rick Battistoni	T, R	11:30am - 12:45pm
PSC 101 006	Politics	K	18	Doug Blum	T, R	11:30am - 12:45pm
PSC 101 007	Politics	L	18	Doug Blum	T, R	1:00pm - 2:15pm
PSC 101 008	Politics	M	18	STAFF	M, W, F	2:30pm - 3:20pm
PSC 101 009	Politics	A	18	STAFF	M, R	8:30am - 9:45am
PSC 101 010	Politics	E	18	STAFF	M, R	10:00am - 11:15am
PSC 102 001	Empirical Political Analysis	G	25	Mark Hyde	T, W, F	10:30am - 11:20am
PSC 102 002	Empirical Political Analysis	I	25	Matt Guardino	M, W, F	12:30pm - 1:20pm
PSC 201 001	American Govt and Politics	J	25	Matt Guardino	M, W, F	1:30pm - 2:20pm
PSC 205 001	Comparative Politics	E	25	Susan McCarthy	M, R	10:00am - 11:15am
PSC 207 001	International Relations	H	25	Jeff Pugh	M, W, F	11:30am - 12:30pm
PSC 207 002	International Relations	I	25	Jeff Pugh	M, W, F	12:30pm - 1:20pm
PSC 211 001	Public Administration	A	25	Katrina Norvell	M, R	8:30am - 9:45am
PSC 217 001	Environmental Politics	K	25	Anthony Affigne	T, R	11:30am - 12:45pm
PSC 305 001	The Legislative Process	E	20	Joe Cammarano	M, R	10:00am - 11:15am
PSC 311 001	Am Constitutional Law (Crs AMS)	I	17	Neil Romans	M, W, F	12:30pm - 1:20pm
PSC 315 001	Elections and Electoral Behavior	L	20	Anthony Affigne	T, R	1:00pm - 2:15pm
PSC 316 001	Poli Parties & Interest Groups	F	20	Mark Hyde	T, W, F	9:30am - 10:20am
PSC 319 001	Poli Attitudes & Pub Opinion	O	20	Matt Guardino	M, R	2:30pm - 3:45pm
PSC 325 001	Comparative Revolutions	K	20	Susan McCarthy	T, R	11:30am - 12:45pm
PSC 329 001	Middle Eastern Politics	H	20	STAFF	M, W, F	11:30am - 12:20pm
PSC 336 001	Latin American Politics	J	20	Jeff Pugh	M, W, F	1:30pm - 2:20pm
PSC 343 001	Contemp Poli Theory	N	20	Mary Bellhouse	T, R	2:30pm - 3:45pm
PSC 343 002	Contemp Poli Theory	U	20	Mary Bellhouse	T, R	4:00pm - 5:15pm
PSC 382 001	Politics & Culture: The 60s (Crs AMS)	P	18	Mary Bellhouse	M	2:30pm - 5:00pm
PSC 382 LAB*	Politics & Culture: 60s (Crs AMS):Film Lab	X	18	Mary Bellhouse	M	5:01pm - 6:30pm
PSC 430 001	International Political Economy	N	20	STAFF	T, R	2:30pm - 3:45pm
PSC 450 001	Political Science Internship	V	20	Mark Hyde	T	4:00pm - 6:30pm
PSC 470 001	ST: Race, Gender & Pub Pol (Crs BLS, WMS)	L	14	Julia Jordan-Zachery	T, R	1:00pm - 2:15pm
PSC 488 001	Cap: Pol of Climate Change	P	12	Anthony Affigne	M	2:30pm - 5:00pm
PSC 488 002	Cap: Global Pol of Religion (Hwy 320)	R	12	Susan McCarthy	R	2:30pm - 5:00pm
PSC 488 003	Cap: Globalization	V	12	Doug Blum	T	4:00pm - 6:30pm

\*Note: PSC 382 LAB is scheduled Mondays, 5-6:30 (immediately after PSC 382 in series P).

**Fall 2013 Course Offerings: LAW**

Course Number	Course Title (limit 30 characters)	Series	Limit	Instructor	Days	Time
LAW 201 001	General Law	T	25	Patricia McLaughlin	M	4:00pm - 6:30pm
LAW 201 002	General Law	A	25	Ilisabeth Bornstein	M, R	8:30am - 9:45am
LAW 201 003	General Law (T R 5:30-6:45)	X	25	Susan McGuirl	T, R	5:30pm - 6:45pm