THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

FRESNO STATE

POLITICAL SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT
The Department of Political Science at Fresno State aims to put students, alumni, and faculty first. For this reason, we have put together a periodic newsletter that addresses the needs of all parties.

This newsletter will aim to inform readers about campus events, job opportunities, internships, and faculty projects, and keep the Department of Political Science connected even beyond graduation.

However, Political Science is about more than just examining government structures and the elites currently in office.

It is the study of who has the power to make laws for a society.

It is the study of the institutional structures that guide how this power is used, who benefits and who loses when this power is used, and how this power creates policy in society.

Political Science is about serving our community by understanding the political world around us, and then using that knowledge to act and improve both the community and ourselves.

Since knowledge is power, we hope that this newsletter will provide the tools and insight to accomplish these goals, and bring Fresno State to the forefront of learning in California.

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### Spring 2014 Calendar

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Faculty travels to Ghana to teach

Teaching, learning, and exploring on the other side of the world

Hand towels, paint brushes, lint rollers, super glue, clothing, Jesus pictures, electrical supplies, maps of Ghana, lottery tickets, an end table… these are just a few of the motley assortment of items hawkers are selling as they weave in and out of the stalled traffic in Accra.

Most of the items are atop people’s heads—a plastic basket, crate, or tray full of peanuts, sugar cane, ears of corn, plantain chips, cassava, watermelon slices, water sachets, over a dozen loaves of bread, two dozen mangoes, several dozen cartons of eggs… even a large basket packed to the brim with live chickens.

Welcome to Accra, the bustling capital of Ghana, a country of 25 million nestled between Côte d’Ivoire and Togo on the coast of West Africa. This is where I spent six weeks teaching a course on “Global Governance and Human Rights” at the University of Ghana, Legon.

Selected to be a Visiting Professor for the University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC) summer session, my students—all Americans—were mostly adventurous young women who had never before left the U.S. but were eager to embrace the eye-opening experience of studying abroad. Having only visited Africa once before while working in international development, I, too, was eager to broaden my experience on this diverse continent. Teaching in Ghana also allowed me to highlight some African perspectives on international human rights.

(Photographs by Melanie Ram)

Notable Alumni Megan Bailey accepted into Harvard for PhD

International Relations MA student Megan Bailey was accepted into the PhD program in Public Policy at Harvard University in 2013, where she began her studies this fall.

Megan Bailey was the College of Social Sciences’ graduate Dean’s Medalist for 2013.

Bailey also received the prestigious National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, which will pay for her doctoral studies.

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Ghana Trip
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rights issues, and for students to encounter these perspectives firsthand.

A British colony (known as the Gold Coast) until 1957, Ghana was the first black sub-Saharan African country to gain independence from colonial rule. The slave castles one can visit on Cape Coast are a stark reminder of our shared history, Ghana having been a primary port of departure for African slaves.

Ghana is also where W.E.B. Dubois, civil rights activist and co-founder of the NAACP, lived out his final years in the early 1960s after a lifetime fighting for racial equality and an end to colonialism in Africa. Poet and writer Maya Angelou recounted the years she spent in Ghana in All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes.

Today a peaceful, stable, multi-ethnic, democratic country, Ghana is a study in contrasts. The large mansions in parts of Accra, the cars clogging the busy roads, and the flashy shopping malls and supermarkets for those who can afford them amply demonstrate that many people are thriving here.

Yet the gross domestic product (GDP), a measure of an economy’s output, still hovers below $4000 per capita, among the lowest in the world (though higher than most countries in sub-Saharan Africa).

Although some luxury accommodations are certainly available, those traveling on a budget will find constant reminders that they are in a still developing country. These include the water buckets one must keep on hand for when the water goes out, the periodic electricity outages, the cold showers, the dilapidated shared mini-vans (‘tro-tros’) that somehow manage to fit 22 people into a space intended for 9 (but for only 25 cents a piece), the rocky and pothole-filled dirt roads outside the big cities, and even the ubiquitous plastic bags and water sachets that litter the landscape.

Visitors will be welcomed by Ghanaians’ friendly hospitality, and no doubt cheerful bands of smiling children if walking through a village.

And what is made by hand or comes from the earth is readily available here. Craving a fresh coconut, a tasty banana, or a lusciously sweet mango or pineapple? All are easily obtained. Want a dress made from vibrant African textiles? Pick out your cloth in the market, locate a tailor in the next aisle, describe what you’d like, and you’ll have it handmade by Friday, or so.

Beautiful African beads are another staple. There is plenty more to experience of course – a steady supply of spicy, jollof rice and chicken; drumming and dance performances; sightings of elephants, warthogs, antelope, baboons, and monkeys at Mole National Park; a visit to the largest manmade lake in the world (Lake Volta) and a 15th century mosque; a walk along a swinging canopy high above a tropical rainforest at Kakum National Park; and swimming under Wli Waterfall and its wall of bats to name a few.

Fresno State students can get university credit studying in dozens of countries around the world through USAC and other study abroad opportunities on campus – whether for a summer session, a semester, a year, or just a winter break. Some scholarships and financial aid are available.

While we can learn much about the world by reading about it from our comfortable armchairs, nothing can replace the knowledge and understanding that comes with personal experience. In an unfamiliar place, every day can be a learning experience — and an unforgettable adventure!
Yishaiya Abosch


Jeffrey Hagaman-Cummins (with David G. Lawrence)


Thomas T. Holyoke


“A Dynamic Model of Member Participation in Interest Groups.” Interest Groups & Advocacy 2(October): 278-301. 2013


Marn J. Cha


Recent Faculty Publications for 2013-2014

Dr. Ram researches Roma issues in Europe

Dr. Melanie H. Ram is on sabbatical leave this semester.

She is currently continuing her research on European Union influence and NGO advocacy on minority rights issues, specifically related to the Roma (formerly known as Gypsies). Her latest publication on this issue — entitled “European Integration, Migration and Representation: The Case of Roma in France,” will be published in the journal Ethnopolitics in the Spring (and is already available online).

It is based in part on her interviews in 2011 with non-governmental organizations working on Roma issues in Paris.

Faced with poverty and discrimination across Europe, Roma are a hot topic for the European Union and other international organizations. One of a handful of experts on Roma in the U.S., Dr. Ram was invited to present her research on Roma earlier this year to staff at the World Bank in Washington, DC as well as to other academics at a specialized conference at the University of Texas at Austin.

She was also selected to present her work at the Association for the Study of Nationalities (ASN) 2013 World Convention at Columbia University in New York.
Marn Cha’s Koreans in Central California

Joan Schoettler
Former CSU Fresno Faculty

Cha illustrates how the Christian church played a central role in the spirituality and patriotism of Korean Americans. Living within their close-knit communities provided opportunities for Korean Americans to maintain their sense of identity. Building churches in their communities was important and church leaders influenced the children to learn about Korean culture and language. The church played an important role in the religious, social, cultural, and political activities of Korean immigrants in small towns in the Valley. Koreans felt secure in their church, and social and political organizations found roots in the church community. For instance, nationalism and ethnic identity held true in the development of the Korean National Association. Christian faith and the Korean independence movement inspired the poor and the frustrated to remain strong in the light of discrimination and tough social conditions.

The author explores the racial discrimination in occupational opportunities encountered by Korean Americans and other Asian Americans at that time, as reflected by Korean immigrant life stories that portray their survival amid discriminations and injustices. For instance, Korean Americans experienced segregation in shops, swimming pools, and theatres, while banks would not loan to them and laws prohibited them from owning land. Cha details the changes after WWII and how the government eliminated discriminatory laws. Koreans were granted naturalization and civil rights, while self employment in small businesses and in educational opportunities opened doors for better jobs.

Turning his attention to

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Chair’s Corner

Hello all. We would like to introduce you to our inaugural issue of the Social Contract, the new department newsletter. This biannual newsletter will celebrate some of the good things going on in our Department. It is an honor to be part of such a hard-working group of scholars, students and staff – please enjoy this issue and let us know what you’d like to see in any future newsletters. You can write the Department directly at polsci-ws@csufresno.edu with any ideas.

As we celebrate the end of one calendar year and move into the next, let me mention a few students who earned some of the top Department recognitions in 2013:

♦ Megi Hakobjanyan won the Rodney A. Anderson Memorial Award
♦ Gavin Baird won the Harlan Hagen Scholarship
♦ Ryan Ditchfield won the Karl E. Buckman Memorial Scholarship
♦ Brent Hanson won the Robert & Faye Coyle Scholarship
♦ Sean Kiernan won the John and Ida Marie Manning Scholarship
♦ Ernesto Meza and Qaboos Muthana earned two spots in the prestigious Sacramento Semester Program
♦ Barry Heads has spent the past semester in Washington DC as the Panetta Internship winner.

Congratulations to all of these outstanding Political Science students!

Respectfully,
David Schecter
Department Chair
PSA hosts career forum Nov. 21

Ryan Ditchfield
Political Science

The Political Science Association hosted a career forum at the University Student Union last month, marking a revival of the organization after remaining dormant for several years.

Club Officers Jenna Mersereau and Anne Badasci organized the event, which took place on Nov. 21.

The event incorporated a panel of speakers who graduated from Fresno State, representing various professions in Political Science and related fields. This panel included Michael Lukens, Mayor Swearengin’s Press Secretary; Amy Fuentes, a Local Business Initiatives Manager in Fresno; Mika Petrucci, who works in the Office of Assembly Member; and Catherine Campbell, an Attorney at Law. These individuals spoke to attendees about potential careers in the field.

The Political Science Association is a non-partisan club that seeks to promote political education and awareness. Anyone can join the Political Science Association, regardless of major or affiliation.

Next semester, Mersereau and Badasci hope to expand the club to include more member-based participation.

“There has been an outpouring of interest this semester,” said Mersereau. “The goals for the club as of now are mostly event-based, meaning we will focus on putting on events rather than mostly being meeting-based. I think that is what would be most helpful to the people interested in the club.”

However, she noted that the Political Science Association is open to ideas and is looking to expand. Although new, Mersereau believes that the club serves a good purpose, and that it should be able to gain a foothold at Fresno State once it is fully established.

The panelists included:
- Michael Lukens, Mayor Swearengin’s Press Secretary
- Amy Fuentes, a Local Business Initiatives Manager in Fresno
- Mika Petrucci, who works in the Office of Assembly Member
- Catherine Campbell, an Attorney at Law

From Left to Right: Michael Lukens, Amy Fuentes, Mika Petrucci, and Catherine Campbell were guest speakers at the event.

(Photos by Jenna Mersereau)

Review

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political organizations, Cha explores the important role they played in Korean immigrants’ lives. Strong ties to Korea remained and were then strengthened as the immigrants’ patriotism grew.

The patriotic loyalties of Koreans grew as the Japanese invaded Korea, and Korean Americans looked to the Korean National Association for leadership and guidance.

They gave generously to their home country, sending money they raised to needy groups in Korea. Cha analyzes why the nationalist organizations formed and how they influenced Korean Americans.

Stories are told to remember a person, a people, an event, and Marn Cha reveals much about the lives of Korean Americans.

Reading personal narratives can provide an accounting of a time, a place, and, more importantly in this case, an understanding and appreciation of the role Korean Americans have played in California’s Central Valley.
Eight justices make appearance at Constitution Day

Jeffrey Hagaman-Cummins
Political Science

On September 17, 2013, Fresno State celebrated Constitution Day by hosting eight justices from the 5th District Court of Appeals for the state of California.

Each year educational institutions are required by federal law to provide educational activities related to the Constitution.

For the past 6 years, the Department of Political Science has coordinated panel discussions on different topics, ranging from presidential war powers to civil liberties to the Affordable Care Act.

This year, the justices from the 5th District Court gave presentations about their background, path to court appointment, and how the court functions.

It was a rare opportunity for students, some aspiring lawyers and judges, and the public to hear about the daily inner workings of the court.

Several of the justices are Fresno State alumni and were very excited and nostalgic to be back on campus.

Moot Court travels to Long Beach for Western Regionals

Ryan Ditchfield
Political Science

Fresno State’s Moot Court team will travel to Long Beach for Western Regionals this December.

Moot Court uses a fictional case on appeal to expose students to the basic elements of legal research, brief writing, and oral advocacy.

Students work with a teammate to represent a fictional “client” who is a party to a legal conflict.

The Moot Court teams often compete in intramural events.

Some compete in statewide competitions, and they can enter tournaments sponsored by the American Collegiate Moot Court Association (ACMA).

Fresno State has earned 4 National bids in the last four years. This year’s competition will include over 350 teams competing to earn one of the 80 bids to nationals. One of those students is Moses Menchaca, the ASI President for Fresno State.

ASI President Moses Menchaca hopes to earn a National bid this December.

(Photo by Gina Wallace)
Department of Political Science

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All Political Science students are assigned to advisors by last name. To find out who your advisor is, visit http://www.fresnostate.edu/socialsciences/polysci/students/.

With the exception of the chair, Dr. David Schecter, and unless otherwise specified, students do not need to make an appointment with their assigned professor. However, students will need to make an appointment if they wish to meet outside of faculty office hours. Please note that students are required to bring in a current DARS report with them to all advising appointments, or they may be sent away. Faculty office hours change every semester, so be sure to check the professor’s syllabus or with the department. For any further questions, please contact us at the Department of Political Science.

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