FROM DEPARTMENT CHAIR
MICHELE ANGRIST

Dear PSC Students,

Greetings and Happy New Year!

As we all begin planning for Spring 2018, I wanted to bring a special curricular opportunity to your attention. Prof. Dallas will be co-teaching the Spring 2018 Minerva course with Prof. Schmidt from the Economics Department. The course title is Political Activism & Community Engagement. A working description of the course follows. It is an exciting, outside-of-the-box offering, and I urge you to consider enrolling.

The course will be listed as ISC 244, and thus will not show up under the Political Science (PSC) listings. However: this course *will* count toward the PSC major or minor, as a comparative politics elective. If the course is full when your registration date/time comes around, know that there will be a waiting list posted on Prof. Dallas’ office door (Lippman 211). Professors Dallas and Schmidt will be admitting up to 15 students from the wait list, and, PSC majors/minors will be given priority in this regard. Please contact Prof. Dallas if you have any questions or concerns.

We are all individuals, but we also find ourselves belonging to various communities. We were born into some communities, while others we chose to join. There are local, national and even international communities. Some derive from civil society, others are formalized in our political system, and in recent years, some develop on social media. What makes us a member of a community? What does it entitle us to, and what commitments do we make? Being a member of a community both enables us and places requirements on us. We may have to be politically active, or otherwise take part in collective deliberation about what our community should do and how it should be done. We may have

ATTENTION JUNIOR PSC MAJORS

There will be a must-attend meeting on Friday, February 23, at common lunch, in Lippman 016, regarding the senior thesis. Professor Angrist will explain the requirements of the thesis and the process by which you will be matched with an advisor. In addition, several current seniors will be in attendance to share their projects with you to give you a sense of the range of types of theses that are possible. Pizza and cookies will be served. Mark your calendars and spread the word!

Senior Thesis Submission Information

Seniors: If you are working on a Fall-Winter thesis, your finished work is due on the last day of classes, Tuesday March 13, in the Political Science office (Lippman 117) by 12:00 pm noon. Do not submit your thesis directly to your advisor – it must be submitted to the departmental office. You need to submit one hard copy, and it must be bound in some secure way (any type of binding is fine other than a staple or paper clip). If you are working on an ID thesis and have two advisors, you should submit one copy to each department. No special cover page is necessary, including if you hope to be a candidate for departmental honors. If you are on track for honors, you will be contacted in the spring and given thesis-related instructions at that time. When you turn in your thesis, Ms. Fortsch will require you to fill out an evaluation of the senior thesis experience as a condition of your submission, so be sure to allow 10-15 minutes to complete this in the PSC office. The college administration requires that we collect these evaluations. Have a workable printing plan (taking into account that many, many seniors will be submitting on that date) and do not be late: if your thesis comes in after 12:00 pm, the time will be noted and communicated to your adviser. More details regarding thesis submission can be found on the PSC department website’s FAQ section.
obligations to provide for the needs of members of our communities who cannot provide for themselves. We may have shared values or common interests that we seek to promote, whether those be for a small group such as the Union College academic community, or for the population of the entire world.

If half of the course examines community and citizenship through the lens of different disciplines, the other half of the course is about “engagement.” Each student will go beyond the university gates and directly engage with organizations and community members through various social and political activities. In small groups, students become involved in local organizations and appropriately participate in community organizing. In addition, students will learn how to fully engage as a political activist. We will meet with people involved in political campaigns, non-governmental organizations such as charities, advocacy groups, religious organizations, and community development groups, and understand why they do what they do and how it contributes to creating stronger communities for us all.

PROFESSORS SOUND OFF

Imagining the Unimaginable: Trump and the Pardoning Power

By Professor Bradley Hays

I spend a good amount of time reading with my daughters. One of their favorite books is about an imaginary friend that does the unimaginable. The book invites young minds to consider the boundlessness of imagination and the layering of the real and the imagined. It posits that imaginary creatures exist before they are imagined and, then, once imagined, appear to the child to have unimaginable adventures. So, in the spirit of what is imagined and what is unimaginable, I turn to Donald Trump.

ATTENTION SENIORS

Requirements for Graduating with Honors in Political Science

--GPA of 3.50 or better in PSC, and 3.3 cumulatively.

--Completion of a PSC seminar with an A- or better [if you do not attain an A- in the seminar, you may still be eligible for honors if your PSC GPA is 3.70 or higher. Either way, you must complete a seminar.

--At least three PSC course grades of A- or better [not including thesis courses].

--A grade of A- or higher on the senior project.

--Delivery of an oral (not poster) presentation on your senior project at the Steinmetz symposium.

**ID majors must meet the requirements for honors in both departments**

Important announcement regarding the Term in Washington, DC

Each year, the department of Political Science takes students on a full term away to Washington, DC. There, students pursue a politics-or public-policy related internship and take two additional courses. Historically, this term has taken place in the spring. Beginning in the 2018-2019 academic year, the Term in Washington, DC will be moving to the Winter trimester. Contact Prof. Lobe if you have questions or are interested in applying for Winter 2019.

Imagine that President Trump engaged in a criminal act related to Russian involvement in the 2016 election. Already, given what we know, the obstruction of justice case is plausible and, if a Keystone Cop-version of collusion is criminal, then that too seems plausible. And, whether or not Trump himself is guilty, clearly some of his trusted inner circle appear to be in hot water. This
has led to speculation about whether Trump might use the pardoning power to plow his way out of the blizzard of legal problems he faces. Most intriguing, scholars have turned to the question of whether the president can pardon himself.

Prominent legal scholars have taken up the question of whether a president could save himself from federal criminal prosecution by exercising clemency. While academic lawyers disagree on the answer, they acknowledge that we simply don’t know. The courts have never weighed in on a self-pardon. However, in the few cases in which the Supreme Court has addressed the extent of the pardoning power, they have construed the power broadly and deferentially, which suggests there is little limitation on the authority other than its applicability only to federal crimes and its inapplicability to impeachment. So, given this, the legal argument that the president may pardon himself is not unimaginable.

Yet, this analysis misses two important considerations. By focusing on constitutional law rather than constitutional culture, those in the “yes” camp seem to forget how language, practice, and culture shape the legal terrain. As scholars like Jack Balkin and Reva Siegel have observed, constitutional meaning occurs in the terrain of our history and the national stories we tell about ourselves. What the Constitution means turns on what we believe it means in light of our understanding of national principles and values. Constitutional law, Balkin argues, is a subculture within this system and what lawyers argue the Constitution means within this subculture is highly important but the legal meaning fashioned by lawyers tends to reflect broader understandings of principles in practice.

Given the importance of culture, we need to account for more than just the law of the pardon. We need to account for the political construction of the pardoning power. On a warm spring day in May of 1952, President Truman spoke before an assembly of Cadets at West Point. In the speech, almost as an aside, Truman noted the limitations on his authority, saying, “the President has power to pardon anybody for anything but impeachment. Of course, he couldn’t pardon himself.” He picked back up on this thread just four days later, in Annapolis, noting again that a president cannot pardon himself because “the reason he can’t do [so] is because that would be himself.” Truman was pointing to a principle in American constitutionalism so fundamental that Justice Chase argued in 1798 that “a law that makes a man a judge in his own cause…[goes] against all reason and justice…To maintain that our federal or state legislature possesses such a powers if it had not been expressly restrained would, in my opinion, be a political heresy altogether inadmissible in our free republican governments.”

Truman was not arguing that a president cannot pardon himself as a matter of constitutional law but rather as a fundamental premise of American constitutionalism. And this fundamental element of American constitutionalism has become so deeply ingrained that Truman took it as a political axiom.

Legal scholars who argue that presidential self-pardon is plausible also miss an important element of pardoning practice throughout its history. Too often, pundits and scholars treat the pardoning power as a random walk down presidential history without exploring the connection among pardons. (Warning: Gratuitous Self Promotion Ahead) Recent scholarship reveals that clemency does not occur in a political vacuum but rather depends heavily on past exercise for its present legitimacy. This does not mean that presidents do not innovate when exercising the power but they do so in ways that attempt to utilize the resources created by past pardons. In other words, pardons tend to reflect both past episodes and the present’s contemporary innovative demands. While the resources created by the past can enable quite a bit—one can think about Ford’s pardon of Nixon—there are certain actions that simply lack the necessary resources. President Obama’s use of pardoning authority to address racial inequities in drug sentencing is instructive. Given Obama’s explicit concerns, many interest groups and
intellectual elites urged him to use the pardoning power to provoke reform and remedy past sentencing wrongs. Indeed, Obama himself expressed a desire to do so and used his authority to commute an unprecedented number of sentences. Yet, the sweeping change that many on the left desired never occurred because the resources for such a pardon did not exist. What resources that did exist were tied to notions of merit, which significantly limited the scope of eligibility for the pardon. Without the necessary resources, Obama’s attempt to innovate through the pardon was constrained.

This takes us back to Trump and the unimaginable. The idea that Trump could pardon himself fails to account for the complete absence of resources in the history of the pardon that would justify such an action. Trump has proven willing to do the unimaginable before. He has also used the pardon for clearly partisan purposes (see his pardon of Joe Arpaio). But, Trump himself framed his pardon of Arpaio as responsive to Obama’s own racialized use of clemency. In other words, thus far, while Trump regularly does what is unimaginable in certain areas of policy, when it comes to the pardon, he has faced the typical presidential requirement of reconciling the past with his present objectives. Thus, from the perspective of presidential history and institutional practice, breaking fully with the past by pardoning himself would truly be unimaginable. And, in this area, such a break should trigger other mechanisms designed to protect what is fundamental in our very real constitutional traditions.

ALUMNI INTERVIEWS

Aubrey Heydrick

What is your current professional title?

Legislative Analyst for the New York State Assembly

What does the work involve?

The New York State Assembly is the lower house of the State legislature. As part of the Assembly’s central staff, each legislative analyst is assigned to one of the house’s standing committees. After serving two years as the legislative analyst for the Racing and Wagering Committee, I have just recently accepted a new position as the analyst for the New York State Assembly Standing Committee on Labor.

My job involves examining bills referred to the Committee, helping to develop new proposals, and collaborating with the Chair of the Committee, as well as key stakeholders, to advance legislation with regards to important issues that affect the private sector workforce in New York State. This includes planning Committee meetings, briefing Assembly Members and staff on various proposals, conducting extensive research, and drafting and amending legislation on topics such as minimum wage, equal pay, workers’ compensation and disability benefits, unemployment insurance,
workplace safety, workforce development, the right to organize, and the State’s new paid family leave program. Another key component of my job is working on the annual New York State budget. For this, I am responsible for reviewing and analyzing budget proposals, making recommendations on policy issues, and negotiating a final budget with the staffs of the Executive and the New York State Senate.

How did your time at Union prepare you for your current position?

I cannot emphasize enough how much the skills I developed as a Political Science major have aided me in my current position. Research, writing, analysis, and public speaking are all major components of my daily work at the Assembly. However, since graduating, I have discovered that the key to these skills is not just acquiring them, but rather learning how to use them in the most effective ways. Union College taught me how to conduct useful and relevant research, how to write in a clear and concise manner, and how to adequately communicate important information as well as my own opinions. Learning how to productively utilize these skills is an invaluable resource for the future.

What is your fondest recollection of majoring in Political Science?

During my time at Union, I participated in the Model United Nations course for three years. In addition to all the great experiences and stories that resulted from our annual trips to New York City for the national competition, I thoroughly enjoyed the process of researching a new country every year and learning more about international relations and policy issues on a global scale. Working on current, real-life topics also brought a greater understanding and relevance to our coursework.

What advice would you have for current majors for life after Union?

Soak up as much knowledge, experience, and advice from your professors as you can! They are offering you important skills and key insights that will become critical tools when you begin searching for your first post-college job and building a career.

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!
To keep up to date on all events, talks, requirements, deadlines, etc., please “like” our new Facebook Page, which you can find at https://www.facebook.com/UnionCPoliticalScience

PSC Major Research Requirement

All PSC majors are required to take two research-focused courses:
- An R course (the R indicates that the course is research-intensive)
- Either a 2nd R course, a seminar, or a research methods course (PSC 220 or 223)

[Note: Normally, students must have a GPA of at least 3.0 to gain entrance into a seminar.]

PSC Interdepartmental (ID) majors must take one R course to fulfill the research requirement. Students are strongly recommended to complete this requirement before the end of their junior year, as preparation for their senior thesis.

SPRING 2018 POLITICAL SCIENCE COURSES

**Introductory**

PSC 111: Introduction to American Politics (Hays) MWF 9:15-10:20AM
PSC 112: Introduction to Global Politics (Dallas) MWF 8:00-9:05AM
PSC 113: Introduction to Political Theory (Cidam) MWF 9:15-10:20AM
Political Theory
PSC 235R: African American Political Thought
(Marso) TTh 1:55-3:40PM
PSC 334: CCT/Democracy in a Globalizing World (Cidam) 11:45AM-12:50PM
PSC 339: Seminar in Political Theory (Marso) Wed. lab 1:50-4:40PM

Comparative Politics
PSC 240R: Comparative Ethnic & Racial Politics (Hislope) TTh 10:55AM - 12:40PM

International Politics
PSC 350: Theories of International Politics (Brown) TTh 10:55AM-12:40PM
PSC 353: Terrorism and Torture (Angrist) MWF 1:50-2:55PM

U.S. Politics
PSC 260: Policy Making and American Society (Plencner) TTh 1:55-3:40PM
PSC 266: Women and Politics (Oxley) MWF 10:30-11:35AM
PSC 364: Law and Film (Hays) TTh 9:00-10:45AM

Internships
PSC 277: Capital Region Political Internships (Oxley)

UPPER-LEVEL COURSE DESCRIPTIONS FOR SPRING TERM 2018

PSC 235R: African American Political Thought
This course will introduce students to the critical and constructive dimensions of African American political thought. We will assess the claims that Black Americans have made on the polity, how they define themselves, and how they have sought to redefine the basic terms of American public life.

PSC 240R: Comparative Ethnic & Racial Politics
An introduction to the trends and patterns of ethnic conflicts in the contemporary world. Issues pertaining to the rise of nations; theories of ethnic mobilization; the attempt to build general, cross-national explanations; and current efforts to solve ethnic conflict.

PSC 260: Policy Making and American Society
In this course students will learn the basic structure of the US public policymaking process, with special attention paid to the impact of policymaking on American society. Broad policy arenas discussed will include healthcare and welfare policy, among others, with focused case studies analyzing immigration, drugs, and prisons.

PSC 266: Women and Politics
The political, social, and economic circumstances of women in the U.S. Topics include history of women's rights, feminism, women as political actors (voters, candidates, and government officials). Issues including work, reproductive rights, violence against women and poverty are covered. Special attention to the role of minority women.

PSC 277: Capital Region Political Internships
This class enables students to become politically active and/or gain political experience by working for elected officials, government agencies, election campaigns, interest groups, non-profit organizations, lobby firms, etc. Students draw on their internship experience and related academic work to reach a better understanding of the complexities and dynamics of politics at the state or local level. Students are permitted to enroll in this course twice, although the course will count toward the Political Science major only once. Prerequisite(s): Sophomore standing and permission of the instructor. Note: This course does not count towards the PSC portion of an ID major.

PSC 334: Contemporary Continental Theory on Democracy in a Globalizing World
In the latter half of the twentieth century, theorists working in the continental tradition have developed new approaches to modern political concerns about the power of the state, the possibility of democracy, the importance of language, media and rhetoric, and the connections
between knowledge, ethics, religion and politics. Students in this course will grapple with some of the most important figures and theories at the leading edge of this tradition. While this course presumes no background in continental theory, students must be prepared to wrestle with difficult texts, ideas and thinkers. Authors may include: Agamben, Badiou, Butler, Cavarero, Cavell, Deleuze, Derrida, Fanon, Foucault, Ranciere, Zizek.

**PSC 339: Seminar in Political Theory: Feminist Futures in the Trump Years**
This course will explore realism and fantasy in feminist futures imagined under the threat and the reality of the Trump presidency. As strong forces try to turn back the clock on hard won victories for gender and racial equality, full franchise, reproductive freedom, and freedom from violence, what can feminist imaginings show us about a renewed call for struggle? In addition to reading several recent books in feminist political theory that map the realist/fantasy tension and help us think about problems and possibilities for feminist resistance, we will also explore the ways the feminist future is imagined in recent popular visual culture.

**PSC 350: Theories of International Politics**
In-depth investigation and evaluation of the major perspectives on world politics. Mainstream theories will be compared and contrasted to critical/alternative paradigms. Special attention is given to modes of theory evaluation.

**PSC 353: Terrorism and Torture**
This course considers the definition(s) and history of terrorism, as well as its causes and manifestations in the contemporary era. Next, strategies for combating terrorism will be explored - with a major focus on the so-called "war on terror" the U.S. has been engaged in since 2001. A particularly controversial aspect of U.S. actions in the past decade has been the use of torture against detainees at Guantanamo Bay, Abu Ghrail, and other locations. The course will therefore consider a broad-ranging literature on torture - from its history, to the conditions under which it is used in the contemporary era, to questions regarding whether or not torture is effective (and for what purpose).

**PSC 364: Law and Film**
This course uses the medium of film as a springboard to introduce and explore concepts in legal theory, American legal culture, and the exercise of public and private power through the legal system. Specific topics of discussion include law as morality, higher versus positive law, law and gender, and the heroic lawyer mythology.