

North Hall News

UW-Madison Department of Political Science

Spring 2026



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Civics, Certificates, Changes, and Challenges

Notes from the Chair

Dear friends,

It has been quite the year! As you likely heard, we are undergoing leadership transitions at both the College and the University. I am delighted that our very own John Zumbrunnen has been appointed Provost! John brings needed stability, vision, and a deep understanding of UW to the position. He is also noteworthy for appreciating both the research and the teaching missions of UW, and I expect great things from him. L&S is also experiencing changes, as Dean Eric Wilcots will be stepping away from his job to serve as interim Chancellor. Kristin Eschenfelder has been named as Interim Dean. Kristin brings tremendous experience in academic leadership at UW and in L&S and I look forward to working for her.



As you also recall, we also had to implement a \$500,000 budget cut this past year. We were able to do so by absorbing the retirements of three senior colleagues. Absent new sources of revenue, I don't anticipate being able to replace these amazing scholars and teachers. This is a loss for the department and for our students; not least because we will continue to face pressure to increase class sizes and will have fewer faculty with which to do so. For the department, it means we will need to find other ways of resuming the momentum of the last few years as we strive to climb the rankings (which requires, among other things, increasing the size of the faculty).

Even with these challenges, the department continues to thrive! Our undergraduates are doing amazing things, and our graduate program continues to march from strength to strength. I am happy to report that we are launching a new certificate (think "minor") in National Security Studies in collaboration with the UW ROTC. This certificate aims to provide our future military leaders with the political science education they need to succeed and to lessen the civilian-military divide in our country by providing greater familiarity with military principles and leadership to our political science undergraduates. We will be hosting a series of national-security related events in the fall to promote the program. Stay tuned for more on this front!

The department is also playing a significant part in the new "Civics & Democracy Collective" in L&S. Together with other campus colleagues, we are hoping to more explicitly highlight the

civics education we already provide across the undergraduate curriculum. We will be piloting specific related activities and learning outcomes in a number of classes next year, with the goal of expanding them across the curriculum. As you can imagine, our department already does a lot of this work across many of our classes, and it is terrific to see it also expand to other units. You can read more about this effort [here](#).

Finally, as I'm sure I don't need to tell you, there is a lot going on at home and in the world. If there is an upside to that, it is that political science is more relevant than ever. I am extraordinarily grateful for all of my colleagues who, in addition to their work as scholars and university professors, are out in communities around the state and the country providing light without heat and helping all of us make sense of the current moment. We are all better off for the work they are doing!

On, Wisconsin!

Nadav Shelef

Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science



Professor Nadav Shelef chats with frequent co-author, advisee, and new Ph.D. recipient Ethan vanderWilden at the department's Ph.D. hooding ceremony, May 2026.

Undergraduate Studies

Dear readers,

This year has been an exciting one for Political Science undergraduates at UW–Madison, filled with remarkable student accomplishments, growing alumni engagement, and opportunities that connect intellectual life to public service, professional development, and community building. From nationally competitive scholarships to graduate school placements to student-led civic dialogue, our students continue to remind us that political science is not simply a field of study.

Our graduating seniors also had an exceptional year academically. We had over 350 Political Science majors and around 80 Political Science certificate students graduate this Spring semester. Three of our majors will be heading to some of the nation's leading Ph.D. programs this fall. Izzy Sunby will begin doctoral study at Harvard University, Sophia Piolanti will attend Princeton University, and Ayda Nouman will head to the University of California, Berkeley. Their success speaks to the strength of our undergraduate curriculum, the mentorship provided by faculty, and the intellectual ambition of our students.



Research remains a cornerstone of the undergraduate experience in Political Science. In late April, the department hosted a thesis poster reception showcasing the work of our senior honors students. More than sixty faculty members, students, alumni, and future thesis writers attended the event. Faculty consistently remarked on the quality, originality, and sophistication of the students' research projects, which explored topics ranging from democratic trust and political polarization to international conflict and public policy. For many younger students in attendance, the event also offered an inspiring glimpse into the possibilities of undergraduate research.

Professional development opportunities also continued to expand this year. The department hosted another highly successful LinkedIn headshot event, helping students prepare for internships, graduate school applications, and the job market with polished professional materials. We also offered a resume and cover letter workshop open to all Political Science majors and certificate students. These events reflect the department's commitment to helping students translate classroom learning into professional confidence and opportunity.

Our alumni mentoring program also continued to thrive this semester, pairing fifteen undergraduates with alumni mentors for conversations about careers, graduate school, leadership, and life after UW. The program has become an important bridge between current students and the broader Political Science alumni community. Alumni offered insight,

encouragement, and practical advice drawn from their own professional journeys, while students benefited from candid conversations about navigating uncertainty and opportunity after graduation. We are deeply grateful to the alumni who continue to invest their time and energy in supporting our students.

Beyond the classroom and event spaces, the department's public engagement efforts continue to grow through 1050 Bascom, our weekly podcast featuring conversations with faculty, visiting guests, alumni, and community members. Episodes this year explored contemporary political issues, research insights, democratic challenges, and public life beyond campus. The podcast has become an important way for the department to extend conversations outward while also showcasing the breadth of intellectual life within Political Science.

On, Wisconsin!

Amy Gangl
Director of Undergraduate Studies

Notable Undergrads

Miranda Garcia-Dove

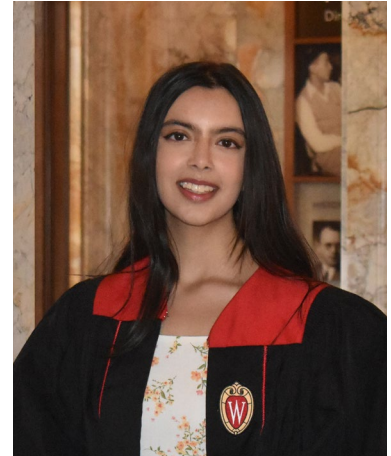
Avid North Hall News readers may remember the name Miranda Garcia-Dove from our recent Fall issue, but she continues to rise above in ways no one could imagine. This year, Miranda's crowning achievement was being awarded a prestigious Truman Scholarship, one of the nation's top honors for students pursuing careers in public service. Miranda has been a close friend of the department for years and is the founder of BridgeMadison, a student organization devoted to bringing students together across political differences for meaningful conversations about political and cultural issues. Through BridgeMadison, students have hosted bipartisan panels, facilitated difficult conversations, and created spaces for thoughtful disagreement in a political climate that too often rewards division over dialogue. Miranda's recognition reflects not only her own extraordinary leadership, but also the values of civic engagement and democratic conversation that continue to animate so much of our undergraduate community.



[Read more about Miranda from UW News here.](#)

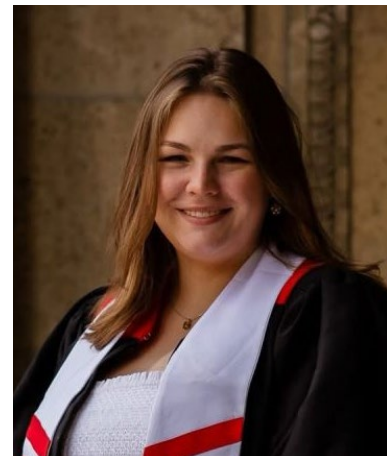
Ayda Nouman

Ayda Nouman has proven herself an exceptional academic over her undergraduate career. She had a very strong start at UW, having earned membership to Pi Sigma Alpha, and working as a research assistant to Jon Pevehouse in earlier years. Her senior year included writing her thesis, titled "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime? The Influence of Remittance's Large-Scale Impacts on Individual-Level Choices," and winning the Diversity, Equity, Justice, and Power (DEJP) Best Undergraduate Paper Award for that very same work. In the fall, she will be pursuing a Ph.D. in Political Science at the University of California - Berkeley.



Isabelle Sunby

Izzy Sunby has been a noteworthy student for a significant portion of her undergrad career. She recieved a Hilldale Undergraduate/Faculty Research Fellowship with Professor Jon Pevehouse, earned an honorable mention for the DEJP Best Undergraduate Paper Award for her paper "Que Se Vayan Ellos: Puerto Rican Sovereignty, American Apathy, and the Path Forward," and recieved the William Jennings Bryan Prize her senior thesis "Advancing Authoritarianism? Domestic Political Stability Outcomes of Chinese Foreign Aid in Latin America" and is now headed to Harvard to pursue her Ph.D. in Government.



Honors Thesis students, including Sunby and Nouman, present their work to peers, faculty, and graduate students in our Spring Senior Thesis Poster Session, April 2026.

Graduate Studies

Dear friends,

Our graduate students had an exceptional year across teaching, research, and professional placement. This April, we celebrated three campus-wide TA award winners this year - the Capstone Teaching Award, the Advanced Achievement in Teaching Award, and the Early Excellence in Teaching Award - with one recipient in each category, making us the only department to achieve this distinction.

We also awarded \$136,000 in research funding through our Summer Research Initiative, supporting 100% of submitted proposals (an increase of 35% over previous years!). These funds support our students in advancing their dissertation and publication projects that span an extraordinary range of topics and methods. Research supported this summer includes fieldwork in Ghana, Cameroon, Brazil, Chile, China, across the U.S. and Europe, as well as surveys, and archival research, just to name a few projects. In addition, three of our students received Rapoport Foundation summer grants, which support graduate student research on political behavior conducted in collaboration with faculty mentors.



Our students also secured an impressive array of fellowships and placements. Natalie Jones Kerwin (American Politics) was named the 2026–27 Henry Roe Cloud Predoctoral Fellow at Yale. We also celebrated three additional postdoctoral placements, including two at Princeton and one at the Kellogg Institute at Notre Dame. Three Ph.D. candidates secured tenure-track positions at the University of Utah, Western Carolina University, and the University of Florida. More broadly, we continue to remain among the top 20 political science departments that collectively account for 67.3% of all tenure-track placements in the discipline.

The landscape of higher education continues to evolve, and this year's updates are therefore not without challenges. The university has significantly reduced support for graduate students by cutting both TA budgets and fellowship funding, the primary mechanisms through which our graduate students are supported. To put this in perspective, just three years ago we had the graduate school resources to fund 16 fellowship years. Last year, that number declined to 9, and this year it was reduced further to 5. At an estimated cost of \$50k per fellowship year, this represents a reduction in university support for graduate student financial packages from approximately \$800k annually to \$250k annually.

Even in the face of these headwinds, we continue to recruit outstanding students and sustain the strength of our graduate program. For the second year in a row, we received a record number of applications, with 447 applicants this year. We admitted 19 students, resulting in a record-low acceptance rate of 4.25%, and placed an additional 19 applicants on our waitlist.

The quality of the applicant pool was exceptional, and while we ultimately lost some admitted students to institutions such as Berkeley, Harvard, Penn, Princeton, and Stanford, this is itself an encouraging sign. It reflects both the national competitiveness of our admissions process and our continued success in identifying and attracting some of the strongest students in the country. From this pool, we will welcome an incoming cohort of 8 students, along with 1 military fellow (Major in the USMC).

Thanks to the generosity and continued support of our donors, we were able not only to increase our annual stipends (up 8% over last year) but also to expand the number of fellowships we offered compared to last year. Each incoming student was awarded at least 1.5 years of fellowship support, including a full first year on fellowship, along with access to a modest research budget throughout their graduate careers and the continuation of guaranteed conference funding.

I'm looking forward to welcoming these new graduate students to our North Hall community in August and seeing them develop as scholars!

On, Wisconsin!

Jonathan Renshon
Director of Graduate Studies



Jonathan Renshon delivers department updates to the Board of Visitors at the spring BOV meeting, April 2026.

The Big Question:

When does one decide to get a Ph.D.?

Hailing from the small town of Vinita, Oklahoma, with fewer than 100 people in her graduating class, Sloane Ward always aspired to go to some sort of professional school. At the time, she wasn't sure what that would look like, but she knew she wanted to end up in a place where she could ask and find the answers to big questions. She set out for Oklahoma State University with open prospects, ready to find the right path on the journey.

When deciding on a major, Sloane (like many prior to starting their studies) assumed that the study of political science would be strictly tied to government, history, and party politics, or serve as a pipeline to law school (where she originally assumed she'd end up). When she attended an event at OSU where new students can explore many majors and take a surface dive into potential career paths, she learned about professor Stephen Nemeth's course on Terrorism and Counterterrorism, in which his students travelled to Northern Ireland and spoke with former combatants from the Troubles. Once she learned political science could mean civil wars, terrorism, counterterrorism, security analysis, and conflict mediation, her whole outlook changed. She sat down with advisors that day to plan her first-year political science courses.



In her junior year, working as an RA and winning an undergraduate research grant, she learned just how much she enjoyed data collection and analysis, as well as the challenges of the research process while working on her project on peacekeeping and civilian protection. In a graduate seminar during her senior year, she learned how much she enjoyed studying and discussing classical political literature. After completing a double major in Political Science and Sociology, she spent one year in the OSU Master's program, where she learned how much she enjoyed teaching; a feeling inspired by working with students who have the same questions and curiosities she had about the world. With each passing year, it became clearer that a Ph.D. was the correct path for her future. With this revelation, a new big question lay before her: "Where do I go now?"

"When I applied to undergrad, I chose schools I was already familiar with, ones friends and family had experience with. Applying to graduate school was completely different. Advisors helped me identify programs where I might be a good fit, but I had never been to Wisconsin, so my main resources were the department and faculty websites. I was struck by the faculty's work and accolades, and genuinely interested in the topics and questions they were pursuing. After my visit, I also came away impressed by the cohort I'd be joining. I wanted to be in a

program with students who would push me to be the best version of myself. At every stage, the people were the draw. Three years in, I'm so glad I picked up early on how important that community would be; I feel like I have the most supportive colleagues and faculty I could ask for."

Sloane joined the department in 2023. Having always had a passing interest in conflict, and with her deep fascination for big questions, she knew very early on what she wanted to study. Two such "big questions" stuck out in her head: "Why do we fight?" and "How do we stop or avoid it?" Through her dissertation "Power and Participation: How Rebel Institutional Arrangements Shape Violence Against Civilians," Sloane seeks to determine how the features of rebel groups shape the violence they carry out against civilians:

"Armed groups are not all alike: they differ in how they organize internally, how they relate to the people under their control, and even how they present themselves to the world. My dissertation focuses on internal and external institutional structure. I argue that how a group is organized internally and how it structures its relationships with the civilians under its authority shapes the forms of violence it perpetrates against them. A related project looks at the names rebel groups choose: I ask whether the kind of identity a group adopts affects its use of violence against civilians. All of my work centers on how armed groups are designed and on whether those choices shape their behavior. I'm also interested in how intervening actors, such as peacekeepers, affect civilian violence during conflict."

Sloane is now preparing her prospective defense, a major milestone in the Ph.D. process, in which she will present her proposed dissertation to committee and officially transition to Ph.D. candidacy - where the real work begins, the big questions start to get answered, and great new questions reveal themselves. With her ambition, curiosity, and tenacity, there's no doubt she'll go on to do great things in the field.



Sloane and fellow Ph.D. students John Hicks and Andrew Fairley pose with Bucky Badger during Fill the Hill, Fall 2025.

Sloane's Favorites

Food in Madison

-Sultan, Willy St

Place on campus

-North Hall

Song of the Summer

-Djo - "Basic Being Basic"

Left, Right, and Center:

Breaking down barriers through the lens of Political Theory

Political theorist, philosopher, and author Jeffrey Church is one of the more recent additions to our faculty. Already a distinguished professor, having spent 16 years at the University of Houston (the last 6 of which were spent as department chair), Professor Church was recruited to UW as part of the state legislature's initiative for hires in Western Civilization and Free Markets. One of his more recent accomplishments is the publication of his latest textbook: *Introduction to political theory: The fundamental debates of politics*.



Jeff grew up with an affinity for philosophy, and in [his appearance on the 1050 Bascom podcast last semester](#), recalled frequently pestering his teachers with questions on "the nature of the soul" and "freedom." Pursuing his undergraduate degree in philosophy, he was introduced to political theory through a political philosophy seminar on "early modern views in natural science and their influence on modern political culture," reading the work of René Descartes, Francis Bacon, and Friedrich Nietzsche. From there, he was hooked, and pursued a Ph.D. in Political Science from Notre Dame after his undergraduate degree, which led to a postdoctoral fellowship at Duke, then to his tenure at the University of Houston, and now to UW.

One thing Jeff brought along from Houston, aside from his commendable scholarship, is a course he has been teaching for nearly nine years, titled "Left, Right, and Center." The course is designed to give students the tools to navigate ideological disagreements respectfully, by examining the traditions and principles of conservatism, liberalism, and progressivism, and identifying the sources of disagreements between the ideologies. They do so through a combination of reading from different political thinkers, such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Mary Wollstonecraft, Alexis de Tocqueville, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and more, discussion-based activities, essays, quizzes, and exams. He started developing the course when he noted the uptick of polarization in American politics, and has seen time and time again the direct positive impact the course has on students. In its first semester at UW, 46 students enrolled in "Left, Right, and Center," and the class performed consistently with Jeff's expectations:

"It was great! The students were really engaged and did great work, which are the standard expectations, but they also engaged constructively across the political aisle, with views they disagreed with, without ire. That's the main civic aim of the class, to heal partisan rancor

among younger voters and to get them into a place where they respect the other side so they can compromise with them.”

Specifically, when asked about the progress students made this semester, Jeff noted that his students were particularly resistant to libertarian thinking (discussed in week two of the course), but upon completion of the unit, became much more open to alternative ideologies. The course proved so successful that it’s been fully adopted into the poli sci course catalog, to be offered as Poli Sci 210 in the spring of 2027 and beyond.

The success of this course at UW can be partially attributed to a growing culture around campus wherein students from across the political aisle have a desire to speak to one another, truly listen to what the other has to say, and learn from each other. Other notable efforts include the student organization BridgeMadison, The Tommy G. Thompson Center for Public Leadership’s “Bridging the Divide” project, and the Wisconsin Union Directorate’s Society and Politics workshop. These many independent efforts across campus speak to the desire of young people today to deescalate political division and understand those with different perspectives. The department is very proud to be able to facilitate some of that work, and is grateful that someone as skilled and tactful as Professor Jeffrey Church is willing to take on that challenge.



Professor Church appears on [an episode of 1050 Bascom](#) to discuss “Left, Right, and Center” ahead of the course’s launch, November 2025.

Awards and Publications

This spring brought another semester filled with exemplary research and teaching. The following is a list of awards, grants, fellowships, and publications received and made by our faculty and graduate students.

Gildfred Asiamah

- M. Crawford Young Award in African Politics.

Allyson Berri

- "Uncovering the Role of Coverture in Hobbes's Political Thought." *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 51, 1-2 (2025): 66-90.

Genevieve Bates

- Bates, Genevieve. 2025. "Threats and Commitments: International Tribunals and Domestic Trials in Peace Negotiations." *American Political Science Review*: 1-16.

Jeff Church

- Church, J., & Hofmann, B. (2026). *The 1812 doctrine of right and other late political writings of J. G. Fichte*. State University of New York Press.
- Church, J. (2026). *Introduction to political theory: The fundamental debates of politics*. Sage Publications INC.

Kathy Cramer

- 2025-26 Faculty Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Mentoring
- Vilas Research Professor
- Wisconsin Hilldale Undergraduate/Faculty Research Fellowship with Jake Leismer
- Larry M. Bartels and Katherine J. Cramer. 2026. *The Politics of Social Change: The Sixties to the Present through the Eyes of a Generation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Soeren Henn

- Henn, Soeren J., Laura Paler, Wilson Prichard, Cyrus Samii, and Raúl Sánchez de la Sierra. 2026. "Seeing like a citizen: Experimental evidence on how empowerment affects engagement with the state." *American Journal of Political Science* 1-19.
- Soeren J. Henn, Horacio Larreguy, and Carlos Schmidt-Padilla. "Missionary Activity, Education, and Long-Run Political Development: Evidence Across Regime Types in Africa." *Comparative Political Studies*.

Natalie Jones-Kerwin

- Yale 2026/27 Henry Roe Cloud Fellowship

Andrew Kydd

- Andrew H. Kydd. 2026. False Flags: A Strategic Approach. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*.

Junda Li

- Junda Li & Dwayne Woods. Are you in the loop? China's co-evolution dynamics. *Journal of Evolutionary Economics* 36, 21 (2026).

Ikhyun Lim

- 2025-2026 Early Excellence in Teaching Award

Adeline Lo

- Vilas Early-Career Investigator Award
- Adeline Lo, Santiago Olivella, and Kosuke Imai. "A Statistical Model of Bipartite

Networks: Application to Cosponsorship in the United States Senate." *Political Analysis*.

- with Jonathan Renshon

- Lo, A., Renshon, J. & Bassan-Nygate, L. The effect of praise from peers on empathy and political inclusion towards racial or ethnic outgroups. *Nat Hum Behav* (2026).

Scott Mobley

- Scott Mobley. "Preparing for the Future Fight: A Blended Career Path for Surface Warfare Officers" published by the Center for International Maritime Security. (January 2026)

Hamni Park

- 2026-2027 Dana-Allen Dissertation Fellowship at the Institute for Research in the Humanities for her project "Between Hope and Despair: Imagining Freedom in Modern Japan, China, and Korea"

Jon Pevehouse

- Hilldale Award for distinguished teaching, research, and service
- UW Housing Honored Instructor
- Mansfield, E. D., & Pevehouse, J. C. W. (2025). Nationalism, Regime Type, and Trade Agreements. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 0(0)

Mario Pino

- Neale-Silva Scholarship from the Institute for Regional and International Studies (IRIS).
- Tinker-Nave Field Research Grant from the Latin American, Caribbean and Iberian Studies Program (LACIS),

Michelle Schwarze

- Michelle Schwarze and Yiftah Elazar. "Leisure and the Market: Adam Smith on Freedom from Toil and Anxiety." *History of Political Economy*, Volume 58, Issue 5

(October 2026)

- Michelle Schwarze. "'We the people': The Moral Psychology of Gouverneur Morris's Nationalism" *American Political Thought*, Volume 15, Issue 2 (May 2026).

Howard Schweber

- Schweber, H. (2026). *Scotus 2025: Major decisions and developments of the US Supreme Court*. Palgrave Macmillan Cham.

Marwa Shalaby

- Vilas Associates Award

Rachel Tan

- 2025-2026 Advanced Achievement in Teaching Award

Andrew Trexler

- Trexler, Andrew. 2026. "The Minimal Effects of Making Local News Free: Evidence from a Field Experiment." *The Journal of Politics* 88 (3).
- Jordan, Diana, Trent Ollerenshaw, and Andrew Trexler. 2026. "New Evidence and Design Considerations for Repeated Measure Experiments in Survey Research." *American Political Science Review* (First View) 1-21
- Trexler, Andrew. 2026. "The Unequal Challenge of Learning from Under-informative News." *British Journal of Political Science* 56 (e9).

Aili Tripp

- Tripp, Aili Mari. (2026). "Instrumentalizing women's rights in the United Arab Emirates." *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 1-23.
- Tripp, Aili Mari. "Trump's framing of Nigeria insurgency as a war on Christians risks undermining interfaith peacebuilding," *The Conversation*, January 28, 2026.
- Aili Mari Tripp, "Women and Politics in Africa" in *Encyclopedia of African Politics*.

Eds. Moses Khisa, and Anne Mette Kjaer, Xichavo Alecia Ndlovu. Edwin Elgar Publishing, pp. 508-513.

- Tripp, Aili Mari. "Women and Politics in Africa." In the *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Gender and Women's History*. Ed. Amanda Capern. New York: Oxford University Press, 2026.
- Aili Mari Tripp, *Why African Autocracies Promote Women as Leaders*, Oxford University Press, 2025.

Andres Uribe

- Bessen, Brett, Susan Stokes, and Andres Uribe. 2025. "Restoring Institutional Confidence in Backsliding Democracies: Evidence from Mexico." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 122 (49): e2516520122.

Ethan vanderWilden

- 2025-2026 Capstone Teaching Award

Jessica Weeks

- Vilas Distinguished Achievement Professor Award
- Jessica Weeks. "Race, Democracy, and Public Support for War" (with Mike Tomz). 2025, *American Political Science Review*.
- Jessica Weeks. "Apology Diplomacy: The International Image Effects of Interstate Apologies" (with Michaela Mattes). 2025. *International Organization*.
- Jessica Weeks. "The Domestic Political Costs of Soliciting Foreign Electoral Intervention" (with Michael Tomz). 2025. *Journal of Politics*.
- Jessica Weeks. "How Public Opinion Matters Inside the Situation Room" (with Elizabeth N. Saunders), 2025. *In Inside the Situation Room: The Theory and Practice of Crisis Decision Making*, ed. Keren Yarhi-Milo and Hillary R. Clinton, Cambridge University Press



One Piece of
Your Past

One Piece of
Your Legacy

Your UW–Madison education played an important part in who you are today – but it’s just one part of you. There are so many things you’ll want to care for as you plan your legacy: your loved ones, your values, your hopes for future generations. With the right team on your side, you can do it all.

When you’re ready to make your estate plan, our Office of Gift Planning is here to talk with you about your goals and options.



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Thank You to Our Supporters

The generosity of our alumni and friends strengthens the Department of Political Science so that we may continue to foster innovative research that informs public discourse, prepare students for leadership and service, and deepen understanding of the institutions and ideas that shape public life. Gifts of all sizes make a difference—thank you!

We are pleased to recognize several significant gifts over the past year that make this work possible:

Rita Braver '70

- in support of the department's highest priorities and the graduate program

Paul Herrnson '83 and Geoffrey Herrnson

- in support of faculty

Mai Family Foundation

- in support of the Elections Research Center

Rapoport Family Foundation

- in support of graduate education

Jonathan Merel '99

- Founding donor of the Alumni Excellence Endowment in support of faculty and graduate students

Dan and Aviva Rosenthal

- in support of undergraduate student learning experiences

Scott Straus and Sara Guyer

- Founding donors of the Faculty Forward Fund in support of faculty and graduate students

Days of Giving

We are grateful to our alumni and friends who participate in Fill the Hill and Day of the Badger. This year during Day of the Badger (the annual spring campaign), we saw an incredible 68% increase in the number of gifts made over last year, bringing in a grand total of \$52,075 raised in support of the department. None of this would be possible without supporters like you. Thank you!



Poli Sci student Ava Singh (right) represents the department with poli sci alumni during Day of the Badger, April 2026.

Poli Sci on Air

1050 Bascom, the official podcast of the Department of Political Science, serves as a platform for our faculty and graduate students, as well as other guests from across academia, government, and the broader community, to discuss their work, upcoming classes, current events, and more! See below for a collection of some of our favorite episodes from this semester.



[Laura Miller](#), poli sci alum and this year's graduation speaker, joined us to talk about her time as mayor of Dallas and her environmental work and philanthropy.



[John Zumbrunnen](#) visited to discuss his appointment as Provost and what the role entails.



[Colleen Shogan](#), while on campus to give a talk, stopped by to discuss her time as the Archivist of the United States.



[Professor Daniel Kapust](#) spoke with us about his upcoming class on the Declaration of Independence.

Meet the BOV

The Department of Political Science Board of Visitors (BOV) is composed of distinguished alumni and friends of the department who are committed to helping the department thrive. Members of the BOV play a critical role in the department's fund-raising efforts, provide career advice and assistance to our undergraduates, advise on strategic initiatives, and act as goodwill ambassadors for the Department. We are extremely grateful for their support.

Rebecca Hogan

Rebecca Hogan ('98) has been developing and advancing policies and related political strategies for Wisconsin lawmakers, administrators and businesses for nearly 30 years, and joined our board this year after speaking at a "Legislative Eat-and-Greet" event the department co-hosted with the La Follette School of Public Affairs at the state capitol last semester. She joined Hamilton Consulting in 2013, where she advocates for clients in policy areas such as health care, general business climate, employment law, and government reform. She became a partner in the firm in 2018.



Before joining Hamilton, Rebecca served as the Director of Health and Human Resources Policy at Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC), the state's largest trade association representing business. While at WMC, Rebecca lobbied the legislature on health care policy and human resources issues such as unemployment insurance, worker's compensation, education and the Family Medical Leave Act.

Rebecca spent eight years in the Wisconsin State Senate working in a variety of positions, such as Chief of Staff, Senate Education Committee Clerk and Legislative Director for a number of senators, and worked under former Governor Tommy Thompson as a Regional Coordinator for his campaign committee and as a research and policy advisor at the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions.

In addition to her legislative experience, Rebecca was the Deputy Director for the Committee to Elect a Republican Senate where she conducted all administrative, financial management and fundraising activities, and has received appointments from the Secretary of the Department of Workforce Development to the Wisconsin Apprenticeship Advisory Council and from Gov. Scott McCallum as the liaison to the United States Mint for the Wisconsin Commemorative Quarter Project.

Christopher Tuttle

Chris Tuttle ('96) holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin, a master's degree in national security and strategic studies from the U.S. Naval War College, and a diploma from the College of Naval Command and Staff. He has also done graduate study at Georgetown University, Johns Hopkins University, and the National Defense University. He is a senior fellow and associate vice president of Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), with responsibilities spanning research, programming, and strategy across a broad range of foreign policy and national security topics. In that capacity, he helps direct and manage the program's more than 80 fellows.

He is also a senior advisor for CFR's Government Affairs staff in Washington, working to ensure that the work of CFR's experts informs and shapes the thinking of policymakers across the executive branch, Congress, and the foreign diplomatic corps.



Chris got his start in 1999 working in the U.S. House of Representatives as chief of staff and senior policy advisor to Representative Mark Green (R-WI), then an assistant majority whip who sat on the International Relations and Financial Services Committees until 2006, when he was appointed to the U.S. Department of State,

Tuttle first joined CFR in 2008. He held two directorships at CFR – leading the Washington Program, where he oversaw CFR's Government Affairs team and managed the Council's Washington staff, and the Independent Task Force Program, where he worked with experts to produce analysis and recommendations on issues of U.S. foreign policy.

From 2015 to 2019, Tuttle was policy director of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's majority staff under Chairman Bob Corker (R-TN), where he supervised the committee in their work to advise the chairman, conduct hearings, oversee the U.S. government's international affairs agencies, confirm executive branch nominees, and negotiate and craft legislation.

From 2019 to 2024, he was managing director in the Council's Corporate Affairs Program, leading CFR's relationships with a select group of top-tier corporate members and advising Fortune 10, 50, and 500 clients on geopolitical risk, federal policy, and international affairs. Between 2022 and 2024, Tuttle led CFR's Renewing America Initiative, a program examining the domestic foundations of U.S. power internationally and their implications for American global leadership and competitiveness.

Retirements



Benjamin Márquez

Professor and Associate Chair for Inclusive Excellence Ben Márquez has retired after 35 years as a member of our faculty. Having earned his Ph.D. from UW in 1983, he has been a member of the UW community since 1975. He is also responsible for significant development of the Chicana and Latinx Studies program. His steady presence in the department will be dearly missed.

[Hear Professor Márquez talk about his career and retirement in this episode of 1050 Bascom!](#)

Obituaries



Ronald Luskin

April 28, 1953 - December 22, 2025

Ron Luskin, former member of our Board of Visitors and passionate friend and supporter of the department, passed away in December. His life was defined by his incredible philanthropy and service to his community, and he is deeply missed.

[His obituary can be found here.](#)

Get Involved!

Alumni Mentor Program

If the Department of Political Science made a difference for you during your college career, you can help make a difference in the lives of our students as well. If you would like to volunteer your time for the benefit of our students, consider joining our alumni mentor program, where you'll have the opportunity to chat with students and impart valuable career and life advice. If this sounds like something you're interested in, reach out to Director of Undergraduate Studies Amy Gangl at agangl@wisc.edu.

Recent Grads:

Please consider taking the time to complete this L&S First Destinations survey. The First Destinations Survey helps L&S learn about the post-graduation plans of our bachelor's degree recipients, and understand how their UW experiences prepared them for their next steps. When students apply for graduation they receive an email invitation to complete the survey: go.wisc.edu/gradplans

Help us stay in touch

If you know other friends or alumni of the department, tell them about the newsletter! We would love to know what our alumni are up to and feature them whenever possible. If you have stories or would like to help someone subscribe to the newsletter, reach out to us at supporters@polisci.wisc.edu.

Give a gift

Our sincere thanks to the many alumni and friends who have generously supported the University of Wisconsin's Political Science Department. Private gifts are increasingly critical to ensure that the Department maintains its stature as one of the nation's premier political science programs. Your donations help us to assist promising undergraduate majors and provide them with a range of extracurricular and leadership opportunities, host a stimulating series of talks and other scholarly activities, and attract and support the research and teaching of top faculty and graduate students. Gifts of any size are most welcome and gratefully received. <https://www.supportuw.org/giveto/polisci>



A pedestrian walks past giant 2026 numbers on Bascom Hill. Photo by Althea Dotzour / UW-Madison

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