

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

Department of Political Science Newsletter - Summer 2021



Newsletter: Summer 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

This newsletter continues our newly established practice of keeping you informed of important developments in our department. We also hope to continue hearing from you to better understand the type of news that is of greatest interest to you and to learn about your accomplishments so that we can share them in turn with other alumni, current students, and your former professors.

In this issue, we spotlight two recently retired colleagues: Professors [John Frendeis](#) and [Peter Sanchez](#). We also highlight some of the most important achievements our students, faculty, and alumni over the past half year.

In addition, I want to use this opportunity to reflect on perhaps the most challenging academic year for the department, college, and university in recent memory. The pandemic certainly affected us all in multiple ways. Professionally, our work has been dominated by continuous adjustments to online instruction. Although our students have managed to adapt well to remote learning, they tell me that, understandably, they are looking forward to their summer vacation even more than in past years. Throughout this year, our faculty have taken numerous formal courses and attended informal conversations to improve course delivery. My colleagues' collective efforts have allowed us to find ways of making learning as efficient and enjoyable as possible this past year. Of course, we too are looking forward to returning to regular face-to-face classes in late August.

The fall semester promises to be an exciting one for multiple reasons, not only our shift back to in-person activities. Beginning with the next academic year, our students will benefit from an important change in our major and minor requirements, one that adds Comparative Politics as an obvious fourth introductory course to our curriculum (alongside the standing required introductory courses on Political Theory, American Politics, and International Relations). We are also launching the an [MA and BA/MA in International Affairs](#). While this new program is housed in our department, it is important to note that it allows students to explore global problems and interactions from an interdisciplinary perspective that makes use of eight Arts and Sciences academic departments and four additional colleges.

In sum, we are excited about what the next academic year has in store and we plan to continue using this medium to keep you informed of future developments. I encourage all of you to reach out to us and let us know of your professional accomplishments.

Alex Grigorescu, PhD
Professor and Chair,
Political Science Department,
Loyola University Chicago

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Professor John Frendreis

Professor John Frendreis retired after over three decades at Loyola. John taught undergraduate and graduate courses on a vast range of topics ranging from Federalism to Urban Politics to Environmental Politics and Policy.

In addition to teaching untold numbers of students over the years, John is the co-author or author of three books and over forty scholarly articles. In addition to these efforts, John not only served as the chair of the Political Science department, but also as Vice Provost and Provost of the university. In the administration, John earned the nickname “the Butcher of Rogers Park” by identifying ways to trim the budget and revitalize the university’s finances. He also played a critical role in the creation of Arrupe College. Arrupe offers an accessible and affordable path for students from historically marginalized groups to pursue higher education.

When he returned to the department in 2007, he rededicated himself to teaching, including developing new courses on Politics and the Economy and the U.S. Experience. Although he says his experiences trimming the fat from university budgets had their ups and downs, he never spent a bad day in the classroom (though he did spend some bad

days grading essays and exams). Some of his most rewarding experiences involved building relationships with students throughout—and across—semesters. He particularly enjoyed teaching courses that introduced students to American Politics and research design and relished the opportunity to invite students to think about their world in new ways.

Once he finishes his coda at Loyola—facilitating union negotiations this semester—John plans to devote himself to fishing and smoking fine cigars.



Professor Peter Sanchez

Professor Peter Sanchez recently retired after almost thirty years of teaching at Loyola. Known and loved by many students, Peter taught multiple undergraduate and graduate courses in comparative politics, comparative democratization, and Latin America. He also served as the graduate program director from 2003 to 2008 and from 2013 to 2020.

While he greatly enjoyed teaching at the Lake Shore Campus, Peter relished the opportunity to teach for one year and one summer at the John Felice Rome Center and

to take students on two different occasions to Cuba with Loyola's study abroad program. Following his passion for travel, Peter also taught on four voyages with the University of Virginia's Semester at Sea program, visiting over thirty countries.

His research focused on democratization, social movements, and US-Latin American relations. His first book, *Panama Lost?* was the product of a senior Fulbright research/teaching fellowship. Peter recognizes the support of the Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage, which allowed him to conduct research for his second book, *Priest Under Fire*, about an influential priest in the liberation theology and revolutionary movements in El Salvador.

Prior to teaching at Loyola, Peter served for 15 years in the US Air Force, attaining the rank of major, and teaching at the US Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Upon his retirement, Peter is moving to the San Francisco Bay area. He will be truly missed by his colleagues and students.

EVENTS

The 2021 Frank M. Covey, Jr. Loyola Lecture in Political Analysis

They say every crisis is an opportunity. The Political Science Department wasn't able to host any events on campus this spring because of the ongoing pandemic, so we seized the opportunity to Zoom to the other side of the globe for this year's Covey Lecture. Political Theorist Daniel Bell of Shandong University in China, which is thirteen time zones away, gave an engaging talk entitled "Just Hierarchies for a Modern World: Lessons from China." In the spirit of pluralism, Professor Bell argued that the Confucian ideal of political meritocracy is a respectable alternative to Western models of electoral democracy.

Political Science Honors Awards

The Political Science Department Honors Awards Ceremony recognizes outstanding student accomplishments. We congratulate 29 graduating seniors and graduate students on their honors and awards and celebrate the induction of 50 students into Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honors Society. Dr. Katelyn Jones, Director

of Director of Quality and Research at YWCA-Metropolitan Chicago gave the Morris J. Liebman Keynote Address at the April ceremony.

FACULTY NEWS

Twyla Blackmond Larnell

Professor Blackmond Larnell was promoted to the rank of associate professor with tenure. Twyla's research and teaching interests center on American urban/local politics and public policy with a specific interest in racial, gender, and class politics in the areas of local governmental representation, particularly mayors, and local economic development.



She conducts research that answers practical questions regarding the social, economic, and political problems facing racialized groups and low-income neighborhoods. Her research focuses on understanding how local politics and policies influence the distribution of power and resources throughout cities that

contribute to 1) disparities in the representation of racialized groups and women in local government, particularly mayors, and 2) spatial inequalities that trouble those communities with predominantly racialized and low-income populations. Due to the complexity of these issues, she draws on an interdisciplinary literature (political science, public policy, public administration, sociology, and geography) and relies on a broad set of research methods, including spatial regression analysis. Twyla considers herself to be a scholar of racial politics, rather than a scholar of a specific racialized group.



Jennifer Forestal, *Helen Houlahan Rigali Assistant Professor*, has been selected as *Notre Dame Research Fellow 2021-2022*. Jennifer's research focuses on the effects of digital technologies on democratic practices.

Her work considers how digital platforms, such as Facebook, Reddit, and Twitter, are changing citizens' attitudes, behaviors, and interpersonal relationships in ways that are both promising and problematic for democratic politics. Jennifer approaches this question by thinking about design: how the built environment (both physical and digital) shapes the way we interact with other people.



Two of our faculty members were recognized at the Loyola annual Sujack Awards Ceremony. **Amanda Savage** was named one of this year's "Master Teachers." **Meghan Condon** was named one of this year's "Master Researchers."

STUDENT-FACULTY RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Kali Foyle (a junior) with **Amanda Savage** presented a paper titled, "This Claim is Disputed: Using Twitter as a Forum to Discuss the Supreme Court," at the 78th Virtual Midwest Political Science Conference (April 2021).

Martin Flores (a senior) with **Amanda Savage** presented a paper titled, “A Social Storm: Twitter Traffic, Political Engagement, Emotional Valence, and Polarized Intensity in the Supreme Court Confirmation Process,” at the 78th Virtual Midwest Political Science Conference (April 2021).

Sydney Williams (an Undergraduate Provost Fellow) with **Molly Melin** presented a paper titled, “The Building and Breaking of Peace: Understanding Corporate Effects on Conflict Prevention and Resolution,” at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association (September 10th-13th, 2020), the Annual Meeting of the Latin American Peace Science Society, Medellín, Colombia, (January 2021), and at the 78th Midwest Political Science Conference (April 2021).

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS WITH FACULTY

Avdeyeva, Olga and Nellie Bohac. Forthcoming. “Quantitative and Experimental Methodologies.” Chapter in *The Routledge International Handbook to Gender in Central-Eastern Europe and Eurasia*, edited by Katalin Fabian, Janet Elise Johnson, and Mara Lazda.

Doherty, David and Kate Hansen. Forthcoming. “Partisan Identities and Interpretations of Economic Data.” *Politics, Groups, and Identities*. [[Replication Archive](#)]

Sanchez, Peter, Kirstie L. Dobbs, and David Doherty. Forthcoming. "[Skin Color and System Support in Latin America](#)." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics*.

FACULTY PRESS APPEARANCES

David Doherty and **Dana Garbarski** reported findings from the March 2021 pilot survey of Cook County residents regarding [COVID restrictions](#) and [vaccine hesitancy](#) on **WBEZ**.

Doherty and Garbarski are in the process of gathering funding for next year’s survey and identifying opportunities to establish long-term funding for this project which integrates mentorship, research, and engagement with the issues that matter to the local

community. If you are interested in learning more about the project, please contact Professor Doherty at ddoherty@luc.edu. If you would like to support this initiative please visit our [giving page](#).

STUDENT NEWS

Lia Smietanski received the 2021 Feller Scholarship Award. The award, generously endowed by the Feller family, is given to the senior political science major graduating with the highest GPA. Well done, Lia!

Jorge Guzman received the Best Dissertation Award by Loyola's Council of Graduate Programs for his dissertation entitled, "Reducing Inequality and Poverty in Latin America: Conditional Cash Transfer Programs in Chile, Columbia, and Mexico." Congratulations to Jorge on this prestigious award!

MacKenzie Haarlow (Class of 2023) and **Andrea Melaragno** (Class of 2022) received the Anthony and Mary Rudis Research Fellowship, which supports students interested in the comparative study of constitutions. MacKenzie was awarded with a Rudis Fellowship to work on her research, "Social Inclusion and Minority Rights: Analyzing North African Constitutions," under the supervision of Professor Tofigh Maboudi, and Andrea received this fellowship to work on her research, "Constitutional Comparative Analysis: The United States and Germany," under the mentorship of Professor Chris Hasselmann. Congratulations to both MacKenzie and Andrea!

The Loyola Model UN team participated virtually in the National Model United Nations Conference in New York from April 5-8th, representing the Republic of France. The group was honored to be representing one of the five UN Permanent Members this year and our students participated in 14 different simulations of UN committees during the conference. Loyola has participated in NMUN for over 30 years now, and this was the first time that the conference was held virtually. There were over 1,500 students in attendance from around the world. The Loyola Model UN team received two awards this year, an overall "**Honorable Mention**" for the delegation as a whole, and a "**Best Delegate**" in committee award for **Mary Polupan** in the UNAIDS

simulation. **Congratulations to team Loyola and the team advisor Dr. Brian Endless!**

Mock Trial, 2020-2021 season: Loyola had three teams take part in sponsored competition in February. During “regionals,” two of Loyola students, senior **Kate Johnson** (as an expert witness) and junior **Morgan Levi** (as an attorney), won individual awards for their work. Our best team advanced out of regionals and competed in the first round of national competition. While the team came up a ballot short of making the national championship tournament, both **Morgan Levi** and **Payton Winterhof** won awards for their work as attorneys on that team. This marks the second year in a row that Loyola A team has won more ballots than it lost in national competition, which will result in the team returning to the top 25% of teams in the country when the next rankings come out.

Moot Court, 2020-2021 season: Loyola sent one team to the national championship tournament that took place in January. The team consisted of students **Morgan Levi** and **Alina Orentas**. They advanced to the national championship tournament by winning the regional tournament hosted at Loyola in Fall 2020. To advance, the Loyola team beat teams from Patrick Henry College, Duke, and Georgetown.

At the national championship, the Loyola team continued their success. More specifically, **Alina** finished as the 44th ranked orator in the country, and **Morgan** finished as the 13th ranked orator in the country. Putting that into context, the American Moot Court Association placed approximately 500 teams into regional competitions last fall, approximately 1000 undergraduate students competed. Alina finished the year in the top 4% and Morgan finished in the top 2% of student competitors. They were superb! **Congratulations to Alina Orentas and Morgan Levi and to Loyola Moot Court Advisor Michael Walsh!**

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Alexis MacDonald serves as a professional staff member on the U.S. House Veterans' Affairs Committee. She primarily focuses on oversight of the delivery of health care services by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

When Alexis was applying to Loyola, she thought she would be a social work major. After taking U.S. government in high school and volunteering for Hillary Rodham Clinton's first U.S. Senate campaign, she caught the political bug and arrived at Loyola a Political Science major. During her time at Loyola, Professor Robert Mayer was one of her favorites. She took four classes with Professor Mayer, and books from his classes still sit on the shelf behind her during her Zoom meetings.

In addition to taking classes in the Department, Alexis volunteered on political campaigns and spent her last semester studying and interning in Washington, DC. After graduation, Alexis stayed on in DC, working on the Hill for 3 years before returning to school for a Master of Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. With a focus on health policy, Alexis then landed her dream job with the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) where she stayed for 11 years and worked on veterans' health issues. To Alexis, the GAO's nonpartisan, independent work as the taxpayers' watchdog was fulfilling and a great learning experience.

After perfecting the art of the GAO report, Alexis decided she wanted to be closer to the action of policymaking and oversight, and she joined the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. Alexis finds her work to help people who served our country very rewarding. In her free time, Alexis continues to serve this community by volunteering with Honor Flight. Honor Flight flies veterans to Washington, DC, to visit the memorials. Alexis accompanies veterans during their visit, allowing her to have a closer relationship with those that she helps at the policymaking-level. Her appreciation for their service and sacrifice informs her day-to-day work.

SHARE YOUR NEWS

We encourage you to share your news with Olga Avdeyeva (oavdeyeva@luc.edu) and Susan Dimock (sdimock@luc.edu) for a future Alumni News section of the newsletter.

Please consider giving to the Political Science Department.

RESOURCES

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Megan Karwacki

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