

Department of Political Science



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Fall 2023 Newsletter

Welcome from the new
Chairperson,
Dr. Molly Melin



We are excited to update you on recent events in the [Department of Political Science](#). We also hope to continue hearing from you about your accomplishments so that we can share them with our network of alumni, students, and professors.

In this issue, we spotlight two recently hired colleagues: [Professors Sooyeon Kang and Justin Pottle](#). We also celebrate recent dissertations defenses by three Ph.D. students: [Adam Hii](#), [Tommy Callan](#), and [Elisa D'Amico](#). They are each conducting timely research. And we highlight some of the most important achievements our students, faculty, and alumni over the past half year.

There are several important changes in the department's leadership. Professor [Alexandru Grigorescu](#) stepped down as Chair of the department after guiding our department through three tumultuous years. He is now running the newly established [Center for Research on International Affairs](#). I was asked to serve as the new department Chair. Given growth in our graduate programs, we now have two Graduate Program Directors. Professor [Eric Hansen](#) became the new director for the [Political Science Masters](#) and [PhD](#) programs, and Professor [Tofigh Maboudi](#) is directing the [Masters in International Affairs](#). In addition, we are currently hosting a visiting Fulbright Scholar from Medellín, Colombia, [Santiago Sosa](#), who is conducting research with the newly launched [Private Enterprise and Peace Lab](#).

We are excited to share our news and accomplishments with you and hope to hear from you about the form and content of the newsletter, as well as about *your* news. Please share your ideas and accomplishments with us by reaching out to Dr. Patrick Boyle at pboyle@luc.edu.

Dr. Molly M. Melin
Professor and Chair

Department of Political Science



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In the Spotlight

Welcome to New Faculty

The Department of Political Science is proud to welcome Sooyeon Kang, left and Justin Pottle to the faculty in fall 2023.



Professor Kang's research and teaching interests are in the areas of international relations, political violence, conflict processes, and mass mobilization, with a focus on East Asia. Her current research looks at the role of external actors and transnational dimensions of mass movements, comparing the politics of leader-led and leaderless mass movements. Her work has been published in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *The Duck of Minerva*, *The Washington Post - Monkey Cage*, *Political Violence at a Glance*, and at the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

Professor Pottle's research and teaching interests lie at the intersection of political theory, social epistemology, and American politics. His research explores the epistemic dimensions of democratic values and institutions – that is, how principles like equality and liberty and institutions like elections and news media shape what ordinary people know about politics. He is currently writing a book on how social, racial, and economic inequalities undermine civic knowledge and exacerbate problems of misinformation. His work has been published or is forthcoming in journals like the *American Journal of Political Science*, the *Journal of Politics*, and *Political Science Quarterly*.



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Dissertation Defenses

The Department is happy to announce the successful defense of dissertations by three of our PhD students, Elisa D'Amico, Adam Hii, and Tommy Callan.



Elisa D'Amico's dissertation entitled "The Climate-Conflict Nexus: Urban Migration and Methodological Innovations" delves into the climate-conflict relationship. Through innovative quasi-experimental analyses, novel geospatial data, and case studies, she explores climate-induced displacement and urban unrest amid economic shocks. Since completing and defending her dissertation, Dr. D'Amico has been awarded a post-doc at the University of St. Andrews so she can join their PeaceRep team and contribute to the building of their Global Fragmentation database.



Adam Hii's dissertation, "Can One-party Dominant States Be Democratic? A Macro-Level Analysis of the Playing Field in Hegemonic Party States" seeks to fill a gap in the regime classification literature on how to approach one-party dominant states. Historically, these states have been difficult to classify with



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Dissertation Defenses, continued

numerous scholars expressing struggles in approaching these cases. Using the level electoral playing field, Hii's study proposes a new meso-level classification scheme to create clearer regime classification for one-party dominant states. He uses three cases studies of current one-party dominant states to see if any of these regimes can realistically be considered democratic. The case study of Botswana in comparison to Tanzania and Azerbaijan, as well as compared to three benchmark democracies, shows that some one-party dominant states can indeed be considered democratic.



Tommy Callan's dissertation entitled "One Tiger, Many Lions: Uneven Adoption of China's Political and Economic Investment Among Democracies in Sub-Saharan Africa" examines how unique qualities of democracies in Sub-Saharan Africa and their foreign policy decision making processes affect their ability to exercise state agency. Specifically, democratic qualities affect a state's receipt of investment from China and how well those investment projects fare once accepted. A primary hypothesis is that a strong executive branch leads to decreased or inconsistent Chinese investment while a strong legislature may have the opposite effect. This project turns the focus away from the great power and instead towards the recipients who exercise state agency despite a clear power imbalance.



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Lectures and Events



On September 26, 2023, the College of Arts and Sciences' (CAS) new "Center for Research on International Affairs" (CRIA) held its first Morris Leibman Fall Lecture. The lecture on "Chinese-American Relations: Where We Are and Where We Are Going" was delivered by Professor Dali L. Yang from the University of Chicago. CRIA is an interdisciplinary center that so far has brought together faculty from ten different CAS departments and four Loyola schools. In addition to Professor Alexandru Grigorescu serving as its founding director, CRIA benefits considerably from our department's support with about a dozen of its almost 50 affiliated faculty from the Political Science Department.

As part of the CAS strategic planning process in 2020 and in coordination with the University's new capital campaign, our college identified nine core projects that are key to its future, including CRIA. The center represents a hub where Loyola faculty, students, and alumni, as well as many national and international partners, come together to further knowledge about international affairs through research-oriented activities. Contributing to Loyola's efforts to promote global connections and partnerships, CRIA fosters a culture of research and increases research support infrastructure enabling faculty and students to pursue and disseminate new and translational knowledge about an ever more connected world.

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Lectures and Events, continued

In addition to the Leibman Fall Lecture, CRIA has hosted a meeting with a representative of the National Science Foundation, a talk on supporting Global South scholars to publish with Global North editors, a roundtable for undergraduate students interested in pursuing research on international topics, and a book launch. It is also active in pursuing external grants for collaborative research between Loyola scholars and academics from other parts of the world, including Indonesia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Chile. For more information about CRIA, please see <https://www.luc.edu/cria/> and/ or contact Professor Grigorescu at agrigor@luc.edu.

The Political Science Department Hartigan Lecture

On November 7, the Department welcomed Paulina Ochoa Espejo, who gave a talk entitled "Border Control in Times of Climate Change." Dr. Ochoa Espejo is the William Penn Foundation Professor at Haverford College. Her most recent book is "On Borders: Territories, Legitimacy and the Rights of Place" (Oxford University Press, 2020).



Visit from the State Department.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Rafik Mansour visited Patrick Boyle's course on Politics in Africa in early October and discussed state department careers and US strategic goals, especially in Africa.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Rafik Mansour



A career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, Rafik Mansour is currently the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy at the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. From 2019 to 2021, he served as the U.S. Chargé d'Affaires/Chief of Mission in Singapore, leading an embassy of 24 U.S. government agencies which strategically strengthened bilateral and regional ties ranging from security cooperation to economic prosperity in Singapore and Southeast Asia. Prior to his assignment to Singapore, he served as Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan, Armenia (2016-2019).

Earlier in his career, he was the Senior Deputy Director of Public Diplomacy (PD) in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, helping lead PD efforts, policy, and resources in 50 countries. Other assignments include Public Affairs Officer in Libya and Algeria, Cultural Counselor in Iraq and France, Political Officer in Italy, and Political/Economic Officer in Russia. He started his Foreign Service career as Vice Consul in Haiti.

Mr. Mansour is the recipient of numerous Superior and Meritorious Honor awards from the State Department. The Italian President awarded him the Italian Order of Merit in 2019. In 2009, he was the runner-up for the Edward Murrow Award for Excellence in Public Diplomacy for exemplary use of soft power in combating violent extremism in Algeria.

Mr. Mansour obtained a B.S. in Biology and a B.A. in French Literature from the University of California, Irvine. He later received a master's degree in National Security Strategy from the National War College. He speaks Arabic, Russian, French, Italian, and Creole.

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Lectures and Events, continued

Polish Human Rights Advocate and Law School Dean



Polish Academic, Human Rights Lawyer and Senate Candidate Adam Bodnar gave a lecture on Poland's "The Rule of Law Crisis" for students in PLSC 102 International Politics in a Globalized World. The talk was hosted by Loyola's Polish Studies Program and included remarks on Polish elections, the war in Ukraine, and relations between Poland and the European Union. Bodnar was Commissioner for Human Rights for the Republic of Poland and now serves as Dean of the Faculty of Law at SWPS University in Warsaw.

Alumni Spotlight

Laurette Liesen, Ph.D. Professor of Political Science at Lewis University



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Alumni Spotlight, continued

Dr. Liesen has been a friend and supporter of the Department of Political Science for many years. Most recently, on October 26, she participated in a lunch with our graduate students during which she discussed her work and “Life after Loyola!” Ten graduate students and several faculty attended this new departmental series for graduate students.

Dr. Liesen received all of her degrees at Loyola University Chicago: BA in History and Political Science in 1987; MA in Political Science in 1989; and PhD in Political Science in 1996. Her areas of concentration are political theory, public policy, and biopolitics (which at the time was defined in terms of evolutionary perspectives on politics and behavior). Dr. Liesen is a Professor of Political Science at Lewis University in Romeoville, IL, and she has been teaching there since 2000. She served as department chair for 10 years and currently serves as their Prelaw Advisor. Dr. Liesen has been active in faculty governance at Lewis, serving as chair of their University Faculty Affairs Committee from 2012 - 2016 and again in 2022 to the present. She also served as their first Faculty Senate President from 2016 - 2019, and continues to serve as a Faculty Senator representing her college.

In terms of Dr. Liesen’s scholarship, she has taken an interdisciplinary approach to various questions about sex and gender, reproductive strategies, aggression and status seeking, and human nature theory since she finished her dissertation in 1996. She has presented papers and published articles and book chapters on feminism and the politics of reproductive strategies, the contributions of feminist evolutionists to the understanding of female behavior, female aggression and status-seeking, and the contributions of evolutionary and developmental perspectives and the policy implications for individuals with different reproductive and life history strategies. Since her sabbatical in 2021, Dr. Liesen have been working on a book manuscript entitled “The Right to Reproduce: Cooperatively Surviving and Thriving in a Competitive World” for Lexington Books.



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Undergraduate Students

A New tradition: Welcome Reception for students

PLSC Chairperson Molly Melin and 10 faculty welcomed students back to the new semester. With over 100 students in attendance, faculty answered questions about internships and special programs in the department, including the Washington Semester Program and a new concentration leading to a Minor in Law and Politics.

Connecting with Undergraduates

Dr. Jay Kao has coordinated three additional supports for departmental undergraduate programming, a PLSC Instagram site and after school Mixers where students can socialize. Our fall mixers have brought students together in the Damen Center's Ireland Pub. Please follow our PLSC Instagram QR.



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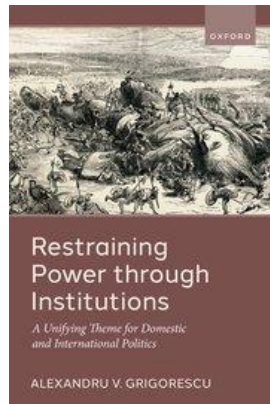
Undergraduate Classes

New Courses to pilot in Spring 2023

“Politics and Mindfulness” is an Honors course offered by Dr. Meghan Condon. This new course explores the connections between Politics and Mindfulness with a specific focus on research in the field of political psychology.

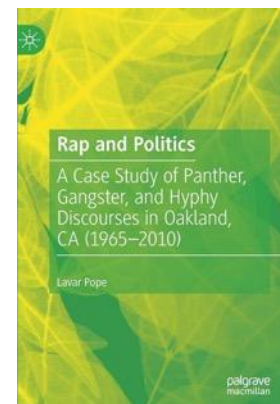
Dr Amanda Savage is offering a new course for J-Term, “Hollywood and Law.”

Faculty Publications



Professor Alexandru Grigorescu has recently published *Restraining Power through Institutions: A Unifying Theme for Domestic and International Politics*, Cambridge University Press, October 2023.

Dr. Lavar Pope, Clinical Associate Professor of Political Science at Arrupe College of Loyola University Chicago and an affiliate of the Political Science Department, recently published a book titled *Rap and Politics: A Case Study of Panther, Gangster, and Hyphy Discourses in Oakland, CA (1965-2010)*.



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Share Your News

We encourage you to share your news with Patrick Boyle (pboyle@luc.edu) for a future Alumni News section of the newsletter.

Interested in mentoring students? Need an intern? Please reach out to Eric Hansen (ehansen4@luc.edu) or Susan Dimock (sdimock@luc.edu).

Please consider [giving](#) to the Political Science Department.



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