

Midterm Election Madness: UH POLS Faculty Shine in Media

Dr. Jennifer Clark, Dr. Elizabeth Simas, and Dr. Brandon Rottinghaus guided the media through the political climate of the midterm elections and presidential leadership strategies. Director of Graduate Studies and Associate Professor Jennifer Clark co-hosted a segment of Houston Public Media's "Red, White, and Blue" on political leadership. In the left photo below, Dr. Clark joins hosts (Left to Right): Dr. Heather Evans of Sam Houston State University, Dr. David Schein of St. Thomas University, and Gary Polland. Professor Brandon Rottinghaus made numerous radio and television appearances during the 2018 midterm elections, and he co-hosts a web series called "Political Perspectives" on Houston Public Media with Jay Ailer of Texas Southern University (middle picture). Associate Professor Elizabeth Simas joined "Red, White, and Blue" as well immediately following the midterm election to discuss post-election analysis. She is pictured with Polland in the right photo. Check out Houston Public Media's [YouTube channel](#) to hear more about their insights.



Congratulations to the Political Science Department's December 2018 graduates!

- PhD Graduates: Roger Abshire, Sophiya Das, Ndifreke Ette, Indrajit Sinha Ray, and Savannah Sipole
- MA Graduate: Pegah Shariati
- BA Graduates: 63!

The department currently has enrolled 10 masters, and 55 PhD students.

Message from the Department Chair A memorable year at UH

We have had a very productive semester as many of our colleagues' hard work continues to be recognized throughout the university and academic community. As you will read in the newsletter, faculty, students, and alumni have been committed to tackling important questions and meaningful projects that benefit our community and seek to impact the state of the discipline.

In addition to making progress on their own research initiatives, we are inspired by the energy of our students and enjoy the opportunities to collaborate with them. In 2018 alone, our graduate students have had 49 external research presentations and 13 referred publications. Please join me in congratulating our recent graduates, the successful initiatives of our colleagues to facilitate critical discussions, and the recent updates that are putting UH Political Science on the map.

-- Kent Tedin

UH Professors Address Research Panic

For anyone who has been following studies in political science or psychology in the past few years, there is a high likelihood that you encountered at least one study that uses Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) to get respondents. Over 15,000 studies since 2014 on Google Scholar mention MTurk, and some psychology journals have had over 40% of their studies include at least one experiment using MTurk participants.

This is why it was so frightening to researchers when scholars from around the world began to report a sharp drop in the quality of respondents on MTurk this past summer. Scholars noticed a sharp uptick in nonsensical and contradictory responses on their surveys. The problem had the potential to invalidate thousands of studies across political science and psychology (and other fields).

Dr. Scott Clifford and **Dr. Ryan Kennedy**, both associate professors in the political science department, along with **Ryan Jewell** (a graduate student at UH), **Dr. Philip Waggoner** (UH PhD. alumnus, currently at College of William and Mary), and **Dr. Tyler Burleigh** (Data Cubed), have looked into this crisis and the methods for solving it. After auditing 38 studies conducted since 2013 (covering 24,930 respondents), they confirmed that there had been a spike in individuals responding to U.S. surveys from foreign locations or using VPNs to mask their location. They also found that those respondents who used a VPN or were responding from a non-U.S. location were far more likely to provide poor responses. The investigators are currently developing a software program to identify bogus responses to MTurk surveys

International Affairs Internship Program Spotlight

Danielle Niangar is a senior at the University of Houston currently interning for the U.S. Department of State for Fall 2018. She is working with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) in the office of Multilateral and Global Affairs (MLGA). The DRL bureau is responsible for promoting democracy, protecting human rights and international freedom, and advancing labor rights globally through bilateral diplomacy, multilateral engagement, foreign assistance, reporting, and public outreach. The MLGA office formulates and implements U.S. Government human rights and democracy policies in multilateral, multi-stakeholder, and multinational forums, particularly at the United Nations, Community of Democracies, Freedom Online Coalition, Open Government Partnership, International Code of Conduct Association, and the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights.



At DRL/MLGA, Danielle serves on the Internet Freedom and Business and Human Rights team. For the Internet Freedom team, Danielle specializes in researching and contributing work towards global internet freedom, machine learning, artificial intelligence, blockchain and bitcoin, and robotics. For the Business and Human Rights team, Danielle works on human rights abuses and regulations for companies and businesses across the globe. Danielle aims to graduate in December 2019, and she plans to go to law school to study international human rights law.

The **International Affairs Internship Program** (IAIP) for undergraduates at UH has placed 70+ students in internships at consulates (e.g. UK, France, Costa Rica, Turkey), numerous refugee-focused NGOs, the Mayor's Office of Trade and International Affairs, the World Affairs Council, the Asia Society of Texas, among others over the past two years. IAIP students receive course credit for spending a minimum of 6-8 hours weekly in their internship and writing a research paper that synthesizes their experience with their academic coursework. In addition to the academic benefit, students also develop valuable professional connections that have already resulted in job opportunities for some. Please contact **Dr. Zachary Zwald** for more information or to apply for Spring 2019.

Conferences

On December 6-7, 2018, a conference arranged by **Dr. Richard Murray** and sponsored by the Hobby School focused on the results of the 2018 election results. Eighteen scholars from around the country participated in the conference. Topics included "Counting American in 2020: The Challenges Facing the Census," "The First Midterm Election in the Trump Era: Results and Implications," and "The Impact of the 2018 Midterm Elections on the 2021 Redistricting Process: Reports from the States."

The Politics of Race, Immigration, and Ethnicity Consortium (PRIEC) hosted its next meeting at UH December 6-7th as well. Through this pre-existing interdisciplinary network of scholars, **Dr. Jason Casellas** invited Matt Barreto from the University of California, Los Angeles, to give a keynote address on the Latino vote in the 2018 Election. Pictured below is Professor Jane Junn of the University of Southern California

Four political science undergraduates presented original research at the UH Undergraduate Research Day poster session on October 18, 2018. **Britnee Chuor** (mentored by **Dr. Justin Kirkland**) presented "Asian-American Political Participation: The Consequences of Social Invisibility." **Isaiah Johnson** (mentored by **Dr. Jennifer Clark**) presented "Measuring Constituent Attitudes on Immigration and its Effects on Legislative Behavior." **Praboda Perikala** (mentored by **Dr. Jeremy Bailey**) presented "Deception in Democracies." And, **Daniel Perez** (mentored by **Dr. Scott Clifford**) presented "Openness & Latinos' Attitudes."



Faculty Notes

NEW HIRES

Dr. Niki Marinov joined us as an associate professor. He received his Ph.D. from Stanford. His published research includes work on countries' post-coup trajectories, peacekeeping and electoral business cycles, foreign aid, election observation, and economic sanctions.

Dr. Alex Badas joined us as assistant professor of political science. Alex has his Ph.D. from Indiana University, and his area of study is judicial politics.

Dr. Kelley Littlepage joined us as a clinical assistant professor in American politics. Her Ph.D. is from Oregon. She has been active as a pre-law advisor in addition to regular teaching responsibilities.

RETIREMENTS

After 50 years as a faculty member at the University of Houston, **Dr. Richard Murray** has officially retired as a full-time faculty member, although he will remain on campus for the next three years taking the Voluntary Modification of Employment (VMOE) option as a half-time instructor. In addition to his teaching, he will be working with the Hobby Center on research about the effects of Hurricane Harvey.

Dr. Bob Carp, who joined the UH faculty in 1969, has completed his three-year stint as VMOE part-time faculty member and advisor to students interested in attending law school, and he will retire from campus at the end of the Spring 2019 semester.

After many years of outstanding work as director of the undergraduate program, **Dr. Jerry Jackson** has retired. He was replaced starting this fall by **Dr. Cyrus Contractor**.

Putting UH on the Map

The department invited **Dr. Pablo Pinto** and **Dr. Dan Engster** of the Hobby School to join as affiliated faculty members. Affiliates may teach graduate courses and serve on Ph.D. committees. Pablo's research focuses on international relations, and Dan is a political theorist.

Dr. Jason Casellas is VP & Program Chair for the Southwestern Political Science Association, and **Dr. Jennifer Clark** has been elected to the Executive Council of the Southwest Social Science Association, which publishes the *Social Science Quarterly*.

After serving seven years as chair of the political science department, **Dr. Susan Scarrow** stepped down on August 31st, 2018. **Dr. Kent Tedin** is serving as chair during the 2018-2019 academic year, and Dr. Jeffrey Church will begin a three-year appointment as department chair on September 1st, 2019.

Routledge Press is preparing the publication of the 10th edition of *American Public Opinion* by Robert Erikson and **Dr. Kent Tedin**.

Dr. Bob Carp's textbook *Judicial Process in America* is about to receive its 11th edition by CQPress/Sage.

In addition to having a new book *Compromise and the American Founding: The quest for the People's Two Bodies* in production with Cambridge University Press, **Dr. Alin Fumurescu** published "The People's Two Bodies: An Alternative Perspective on Populism and Elitism" in *Political Research Quarterly* vol. 71(4) and a book chapter "Une histoire politique et philosophique du compromis" in the edited volume *Politique du Compromis*.

Recently, **Dr. Zachary Zwald** briefed multiple government officials about his findings from the Department of Defense-funded study he recently completed on how individual risk disposition affects willingness to employ deterrence measures in foreign policy. This project was spotlighted in the Summer 2018 PoliSci newsletter.

Dr. Boris Shor received a grant from the Russell Sage Foundation to fund his ongoing work on the ideological positioning of American state legislators and their constituents.

Each year the department awards the recently endowed Nogee Scholarship to an outstanding new graduate student, funded by **Professor Joe Nogee** and his wife. This year the scholarship went to **Jamie Wright**, who started the PhD. Program in 2018 and majoring in Comparative Politics.

Dr. Jeff Church has been awarded a research fellowship by the National Endowment for the Humanities starting the spring semester of 2019. He also has an article forthcoming by the *American Journal of Political Science* entitled, "Exemplary Lives and the Normative Theory of Culture."

Student and Faculty/Student Collaboration Publications

Achury, Susan, Scarrow, Susan E., Kosiara-Pedersen, Karina, and van Haute, Emilie. 2018. "The consequences of membership incentives: Do greater political benefits attract different kinds of members?" *Party Politics*.

Cardone, Rebecca. 2018 "Empathetic British feminists at the crossroads of colonialism and self-determination." *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*.

Schoen, Anna Marisa. Book review of *Imagined Sovereignities: The Power of the People and Other Myths of the Modern Age*, by Kevin Olson (Cambridge University Press, 2016). *Journal of Democracy* 5:2 (Winter 2018), 125-127.

Shea, Patrick E. Shea and Solis, Jonathan A. (2018) "Leaders, Tenure, and the Politics of Sovereign Credit." *International Interactions*, 44:2, 294-320.

Waggoner, Phillip. "The hhi Package: Streamlined Calculation and Visualization of Herfindahl-Hirschman Index Scores." 2018. *Journal of Open Source Software*, 3(28), 828.

Waggoner, Phillip. "Exploring Responsiveness in the U.S. House of Representatives." 2018. *American Review of Politics*, 36(2): 58-85.

Waggoner, Phillip. "The Cost of Doing Business: Congressional Requests, Cost, and Allocation of Presidential Resources." (with Brandon Rottinghaus). 2018. *Political Research Quarterly*, 71(4): 813-825.

Waggoner, Phillip. "Do Constituents Influence Issue-Specific Bill Sponsorship?" 2018. *American Politics Research*.

Casellas, Jason and Wright, Kenicia. 2018. "Political Representation, Coalitions, and Gender." *Oxford Bibliographies in Latino Studies*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Cortina joins Center for Mexican-American Studies Leadership



As the new Associate Director at the **Center for Mexican-American Studies (CMAS)**, **Dr. Jeronimo Cortina** is in charge of designing an interdisciplinary new major. In conjunction with the CMAS Director, Professor Quiroz, he is also revamping the research arm of the Center to include relevant policy research to strengthen the presence of Latinos and Latinas in the policy-making process. We wish Professor Cortina good luck at CMAS!

Thinking about Grad School?

This fall Professors **Jason Casellas**, **Jeff Church**, and **Susan Scarrow** have been conducting “Thinking about Grad School?” sessions for political science majors at UH and other universities in our wider region, including the University of North Texas, Texas Tech, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Xavier University of Louisiana, and the University of New Mexico. At these workshops students learn the difference between graduate degrees (MPA, MPPA, etc.), how various degrees fit into career plans, how to get funded, and how to prepare a strong application. UH Political Science is collaborating with departments at the University of North Texas and the University of New Mexico on this initiative to raise student awareness about grad school opportunities and options. The project is funded by a grant from the American Political Science Association.

Tocqueville Forum brings Timeless Philosophies to the Fore

In 2018, the **Tocqueville Forum in American Ideas and Institutions** arranged by **Dr. Jeremy Bailey** and **Dr. Alin Fumurescu** hosted four speakers: Dan Cullen, Jonathan Marks, Steven Smith, and Norma Thompson. Cullen (Rhodes College) wrote *Freedom in Rousseau’s Political Philosophy and Liberal Democracy and Liberal Education*. Marks (Ursinus College) is author to *Perfection and Disharmony in the Thought of Jean Jacques Rousseau*. Smith (Yale) is best known for his publications on Hegel, Spinoza, and Leo Strauss, and his newest book is *Modernity and its Discontents*. Thompson (Yale) is author of *Herodotus and the Origins of the Political Community: Arion’s Leap, The Ship of State: Politics, and Statecraft from Ancient Greece to Democratic America*.

Many of the initiatives profiled in our newsletters have been made possible by generous friends of UH Political Science. This includes alumni whose organizations have sponsored international politics internships, scholarship donors, alumni who have presented at career days for political science majors, those who have mentored current graduate students, and those who have helped us recruit good students for our programs. We are grateful for your support! Please continue to help us spread the good news about UH Political Science and about our students who are doing amazing things!



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