

Department of Political Science

Newsletter



Fall 2016

Message from the Chair

Dr. Matthew Eshbaugh-Soha

The Department of Political Science at the University of North Texas continues to be an exciting place for faculty, students, and alumni. We boast award-winning faculty who have been recognized for excellence in both teaching and research. Our research productivity places us in the top 20 of all political science departments in the nation. We graduate scores of students each year, many of whom go onto law or graduate school. We are simply one of the best departments at the University of North Texas.

Please take a moment to read through this newsletter for some highlights of our students, alumni, and faculty, and keep in touch.

Department News

This fall semester brings several exciting developments to the department of political science. First, after a successful four-year term at UNT, the editors of *American Political Science Review* will pass the journal on to another editorial team. Editing the *Review* has helped to burnish not only the credentials of its editors, but has also enhanced the reputation of the department. Our department will house a new journal beginning in January as **Elizabeth Oldmixon** will be editor of *Politics and Religion*, a top journal in the field.

Second, the department will house the newly-created Latina/o and Mexican-American Studies (LMAS) major to meet student demand for this important area of politics.

Serving as the program's director, **Valerie Martinez-Ebers** leads a core of top faculty, including **Tony Carey**, **Regina Branton**, and **Andrea Silva**, whose research centers on questions related to race and ethnicity in American politics.

Finally, we welcome three new faculty who will contribute to our success. **Ashley English**, who received her PhD from the University of Minnesota and researches women and politics, and **Andrea Silva**, a University of California Riverside PhD who studies Race and Ethnic Politics, have joined the department as tenure-track assistant professors.

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Political Science

Lee Walker (Florida PhD) just completed a two-year term as Program Director for Political Science at the National Science Foundation. He joins the department as an associate professor with tenure.

Faculty Travel

Professor John Ishiyama delivered the keynote address entitled "Is Democracy Necessary for Good Governance" at the 9th International Conference on African Development at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, on May 28, 2016.

Professors Kimi King and Jim Meernik traveled to The Hague, Netherlands and throughout the former Yugoslavia to present the results of their study of those who testified before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.



Jackie DeMeritt



Professor T. David Mason, Johnnie Christian Family Peace Professor, receives the UNT Foundation Eminent Faculty Award in May.

Faculty News

The department's successful run on UNT awards continues into the 2016 academic year! **Jackie DeMeritt** won the UNT Early Career Award, which recognizes her outstanding research accomplishments.

Valerie Martinez-Ebers is our most recent colleague to be recognized as a Distinguished University Research Professor.

The department's receipt of UNT Foundation awards also continues in 2016. After winning the Foundation's Faculty Leadership award last year, **Dave Mason** has earned the Eminent Faculty Award, serving as an inspiration for the entire UNT community. Not to be

outdone, **Wendy Watson** has also won two Foundation awards in a row, adding the Foundation's Outstanding Lecturer Award to her 2015 JH Shelton Excellence in Teaching award.

Three faculty begin the 2016 academic year at a new rank. Congratulations to **Glen Biglaiser**, our current graduate adviser, and **Regina Branton** who were promoted to professor, and to **Bethany Blackstone**, also Honors Faculty In Residence, who was promoted to associate professor with tenure.

All of our award-winning faculty will be honored at the Salute to Faculty Excellence Dinner in September.

Connect with UNT Political Science!



Student Spotlight

A political science major at the University of North Texas, Rachel Torres graduated summa cum laude in May 2016.

Rachel Torres was a McNair Scholar and participated in the department's National Science Foundation-sponsored Research Experience for Undergrads. In 2016, she received the Political Science Department's Outstanding Undergraduate Award.

Rachel's research interests focus on how the push-pull factors of migration influence the political and social acculturation of Latinos in the United States.

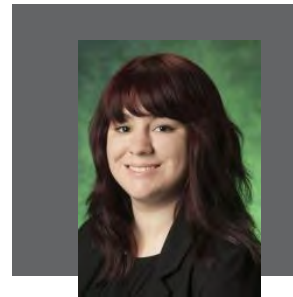
She has presented her research at the Research Experience for Undergrads Scholars Day and the McNair Scholars Day at UNT. Additionally, Rachel presented her work at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual meeting in the spring of 2016. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in political science at the University of Iowa. After completing her Ph.D., Rachel intends to hold an academic position in a research institution where she can continue to pursue her research interests and share her knowledge with others.

Scholarship Winners

Domingo Garcia Scholarship
Keanna Wiggins

Steven Poe Scholarships
Maham Khan
Tyler Yates

Frank Feigert Scholarship
Alexa King



Rachel Torres

Student Awards

Clovis C Morrison Award for Best Pre-Law Student
Demi Allen

Sam B. McAllister Award for Most Outstanding Graduate Student
Samantha Pettey

Pender Award for Best Graduate Paper
Mustafa Kirisci

Support Political Science

Please consider giving to one of the following funds to help students and our research.

* **C. Neal and Carol Tate PhD Fund** Honors the late Neal Tate, former professor at UNT, and provides financial assistance to PhD students in the department.

* **Domingo Garcia Scholarship** A fund to honor Domingo Garcia and provide scholarships to students of political science.



Alumni Spotlight

Chris Fariss (M.S. 2007) will join the University of Michigan in Fall 2016 as an assistant professor of political science.

Now a professor at the University of Michigan, **Chris Fariss** did not take a direct path to a tenure-track position in a top political science program. But rather, Chris persevered, a quality typical of our alumni. Originally an artist and computer programmer, Chris discovered an interest in Peace Studies at UNT, encouraging him to earn not only a BFA in Drawing and Painting, but also a BA in political science. Setting aside his artistic talents, Chris excelled in our MS program and decided to pursue a PhD at the University of California-San Diego. Much to our surprise, Chris's first application was declined. But with a refined statement of purpose--and an award-winning paper on his vita--Chris not only enrolled in this top-ranked program, he exceeded expectations and finished his degree in 2013. He is now considered an expert on human rights. And it all began with a BA and MS at UNT political science.

Research News

Our faculty research important practical questions concerning politics and government.

Paul Hensel is Principal Investigator on a \$751,000 Minerva Research Initiative Grant by the U.S. Department of Defense. Along with three other project investigators, he will collect and analyze all international "identity claims" since World War II. Such claims involve demands by the government of one country over the status or treatment of its ethnic kin in another country, and may range from demands for equal rights to autonomy, independence, or even unification with the country making the demands. The research team will explore whether these identity claims are becoming more frequent over time, when and why they are most likely to begin, which countries choose to manage them through peaceful talks or military threats, which techniques are most effective at settling claims, and what impact these claims have on the treatment of ethnic groups.

Professors **John Ishiyama** and **Michael Greig** are currently in their third year leading a U.S. State Department-funded program to train academics and government workers in the Republic of Georgia in social science research methods and their application to policy analysis.

Semester Events



Constitution Day Speakers

Debating the 2nd Amendment

September 15, 2016



Homecoming

Football v. Louisiana Tech

November 5, 2016

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