

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Revamps Undergraduate Major

In an auspicious move within the School of Arts and Sciences, the Department of Political Science put itself under a microscope and took a serious look at its entire undergraduate curriculum. The department completely overhauled and redesigned the political science program to transform it into a much more intellectually rigorous major.

This extensive review of all course offerings came as an outgrowth of a University-wide assessment process. "While we were involved in compiling information for the University assessment, it was a perfect opportunity to reevaluate our major and look at how we could improve the student experience," explains Michael Goodhart, director of undergraduate studies for the political science department. "We rebuilt this major from the ground up, expanding it into a richer, more robust program for students."

The most significant change in the political science major is the shift from a contextual focus to a skills-centered approach. "Because of the vastness of material that is available, we realized that it was impossible for us to cover all of the information," says Goodhart. "Our major now has a much broader focus emphasizing analytical, communication, disciplinary, and research skills that can assist students in a larger context. Essentially, we provide students with the nuts and bolts, and then they can apply these fundamental skills to master any content that interests them."

In the process of reviewing the curriculum, the political science department assessed and addressed inconsistencies and deficiencies in the major. In the past, students majoring in political science could take an upper-level course without having to complete the core course. The new major, launched in the fall of 2009 and expanded from 24 to 33 credits, makes it necessary for students to complete the introductory courses in all four traditional fields of study (American politics, comparative politics, world politics, and political theory). There also is a new core course in research methods. This approach ensures that all students have a solid understanding of the foundational knowledge in the discipline. It also enables students in the upper-level courses to be involved in a more sophisticated kind of research.

Throughout the entire rebuilding process, faculty members redesigned courses to achieve a greater program cohesiveness while maintaining the flexibility needed to ensure that faculty research contributes significantly to the undergraduate learning experience. Many opportunities exist for students to work on faculty-led or student-initiated research projects, allowing students to tailor the major to their distinct interests and needs.

This curriculum provides students with an appreciation for the diversity of the political systems and problems in the world, an awareness of the challenges and opportunities this diversity presents, and a balanced understanding of international politics and world affairs. The new major better prepares students to solve problems through sound critical thinking, to speak and write clearly and persuasively about politics, to identify and assess trends and patterns in political and social phenomena, and to design and implement studies of their own.

Upon graduating, political science majors will possess valuable attributes, skills, and knowledge to pursue careers successfully in a variety of fields, including business, education, finance, government (local, national, and international), journalism, law, public service, and research.

In addition to the Bachelor of Arts degree, the political science department also offers two new degree programs. The Bachelor of Philosophy (offered jointly with the University Honors College) and the Bachelor of Science provide motivated students with an even more challenging academic experience, especially those considering graduate school.

"This is a tremendously exciting time for students in the political science department," says Goodhart. "With the redesigning of the major; the addition of two new degree programs; and the growth of a diverse, internationally recognized faculty, Pitt students can draw upon these intellectual and institutional resources for an outstanding academic experience."

For more information on the Department of Political Science, visit www.pitt.edu/~politics.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Daniel Armanios, who majored in political science, was a 2004 Goldwater scholar, a 2005 Truman scholar, and a 2007 Rhodes scholar. He is the first University of Pittsburgh student to win three such prestigious awards.
- The Department of Political Science works closely with the University Center for International Studies to offer students certificate programs in African studies, Asian studies, European Union studies, global studies, Latin American studies, Russian and East European studies, and West European studies. For more information, visit www.ucis.pitt.edu.
- Internship opportunities are available with national, state, and local political campaigns and with governmental and nongovernmental organizations.



MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

A Global Perspective

Recognized worldwide as a leading institution in international scholarship and education, the University of Pittsburgh provides many opportunities for students to embark on international exploration both inside and outside the classroom. Most recently, students witnessed an exceptional case study in global politics and collaboration, as Pittsburgh transformed itself into the world's capital for the G-20 Summit in September 2009.

During a monthlong celebration, School of Arts and Sciences students took part in many extraordinary programs to commemorate this historic event. Distinguished speakers included Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and European Commission President José Manuel Barroso.

Uniquely aligned with the University's commitment to international studies is the School of Arts and Sciences Department of Political Science. Through its extensive course work in comparative political systems, it offers students tremendous insight into the complexities of national and international political developments. The department also works closely with the University Center for International Studies to provide students with a wealth of additional resources through certificate programs in Asian, European, Latin American, and Russian and East European studies. With the addition of the Bachelor of Science degree and a shift in focus to a more skills-based curriculum, the political science major provides a more challenging academic experience for our undergraduate students.

As we move from the fall to the spring term, students are advancing and making great strides in their course work. Many students already have declared a major, while others still are exploring and discovering their academic options. It is imperative to remember that when students choose a particular field of study, it may not be their final career choice. A liberal arts education embraces a global perspective on learning. It provides the infrastructure—the skills and knowledge—for students to pursue graduate studies successfully or to go out into the workforce and become flourishing citizens of the community.

I extend to you my best wishes for a joyous holiday season and a happy new year!

Juan J. Manfredi, PhD

Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies



FACULTY PROFILE

Taking on the West Virginia Judicial System

One of the most controversial issues in politics today is how state supreme court judges acquire and retain their seats on the bench. Should they be appointed by government leaders or be elected through popular opinion? In the fall of 2009, Associate Professor of Political Science Chris Bonneau traveled to West Virginia as an expert witness to speak in favor of judicial elections and in the process enjoyed an intense, lively exchange with retired U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

Bonneau spoke in front of a judicial reform panel holding hearings throughout the state of West Virginia on the question of whether the state should forgo judicial elections and replace them with appointments.

O'Connor, the panel's honorary chair, is an advocate of ending judicial elections. Bonneau stands on the side of keeping the current judicial process intact. On more than one occasion during Bonneau's testimony, O'Connor challenged his evidence on the subject.

The panel's interest in Bonneau stems from his recent book, titled *In Defense of Judicial Elections* (with Melinda Gann Hall), in which he empirically illustrates the reasons for retaining this contentious method of judicial selection. Using more than two decades of data on state supreme court elections, Bonneau shows that the current system of letting the people decide who sits on the bench actually enhances the quality of democracy and creates an inextricable link between the citizens and the judiciary. "If individual state governments want to make significant policy changes to judicial elections, there should be factual data to back up the shift in ideology," says Bonneau. "Currently, there is no such evidence that shows that judges should be appointed. In fact, research indicates that voters know exactly what they are doing when voting for judges."

For many years, Bonneau has had a profound interest in the workings of the judicial system. "The [U.S.] Supreme Court fundamentally changes how we think; it is a super legislature," says Bonneau. "Unlike Congress, which may have 1,000 bills to review in a year, the Supreme Court has no more than 85–100 cases. It is responsible for making policy on fundamentally important issues, such as separation of powers and civil rights and liberties."

Having extensively researched and studied the American judicial system, Bonneau concedes that the system has its flaws. "It is virtually impossible to overturn a judgment by the Supreme Court," explains Bonneau. "I definitely would like Supreme Court justices to admit that errors are made and subsequently be quick to act upon those errors. The current system is a slow, laborious process."

A faculty member at the University of Pittsburgh since 2002, Bonneau primarily focuses on American politics with an emphasis on judicial politics and public law. "One of my favorite classes is the writing-intensive Seminar in American Politics: The Supreme Court," says Bonneau. "Not only are students highly motivated, the questions they raise challenge me to think in different ways. For me, it is truly an exhilarating learning experience."



News & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- *Dean's Stars*

Undergraduates who complete the fall term with a minimum of 12 credits and a term GPA of 4.0 will receive a \$50 Dean's Stars gift award posted to their PeopleSoft accounts. These awards will be posted by the end of January 2010 to allow for the processing of grade changes. If your student qualifies for this award but does not see it in his or her account, please contact us at pittpride@as.pitt.edu.

- *May 2010 Graduation*

The 2010 University of Pittsburgh Commencement Convocation will be held at the John M. and Gertrude E. Petersen Events Center on Sunday, May 2, 2010. Academic departments often host special receptions to recognize graduating seniors. If you have a senior graduating this spring, please contact your student's academic department for more information about planned festivities. You can find a complete list of academic departments at www.pitt.edu/academics.html.

- *Summer Sessions*

The School of Arts and Sciences once again will offer summer session classes. Students can choose from more than 500 classes in 4-, 6-, 12-, or 14-week sessions to meet their academic needs in most disciplines. Students can complete both general education requirements and upper-level courses to ensure that they are on track to graduate in four years. Registration for summer sessions begins February 22. For details, go to www.summer.pitt.edu.

FUTURE LEADERS



Learn Today

SURVIVING THE GREEN REVOLUTION

Fate definitely had a hand in placing junior political science major Katie Manbachi in a particularly precarious situation this past summer in Iran. When a U.S. Department of State internship fell through, Manbachi decided to do some independent study and enroll in Farsi classes offered through the University of Tehran's intensive language program at the Dehkhoda Center for Persian Studies.

Upon arriving in Iran, Manbachi took advantage of her Iranian citizenship (her father is Iranian; her mother is Irish) to cast her vote in the presidential election between Mir-Houssein Mousavi and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Three weeks after she arrived, chaos erupted, and Manbachi suddenly found herself in the middle of the "green revolution," a social movement of Mousavi supporters who denounced the election as fraudulent. Although protests started out peacefully, they soon became increasingly more violent. As hundreds of thousands of dissenters took to the streets, the Iranian government, known for ruling with an iron fist, tracked down the opposition and had its members arrested and tortured.

Being thrust right in the middle of this politically charged environment, however, did not frighten Manbachi. "It was a surreal and exhilarating experience for me to be part of a historic event in the world of international politics," explains Manbachi. "As the social movement kept building momentum and wouldn't back down, I seriously wanted to call my professors and tell them what was going on. I actually was living through what we had been talking about in class."

Now, more than ever, Manbachi appreciates the freedoms that come with living in the United States after experiencing firsthand the travesty that transpired in Tehran. "We definitely take for granted the right to protest our beliefs without reprisals," says Manbachi. "That's why it was so exciting for Pitt students to see global politics in action and the demonstration of differing opinions when Pittsburgh hosted the G-20 Summit in September."

Safely back in the United States, Manbachi's days are busy ones. In addition to taking classes for her political science major, she also is working on a religious studies minor, a certificate in Asian studies, and a Bachelor of Philosophy in international relations and area studies offered jointly with the University Honors College. She is president of the Pitt chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the political science national honor society; is an undergraduate teaching assistant for Office of Freshman Programs classes; and reaches out to many volunteer organizations.

Her long-range goals include working toward a PhD in Islamic law or political science. In addition, she dreams of one day coming back to the University of Pittsburgh and developing a Middle Eastern studies program.

For now, she continues to follow what is going on in Iran. As she recounts those dramatic summer days in Tehran, she is thankful for fate's taking her to Iran for an experience that has forever changed her life.

Advising Instant Messaging and Forums Now Available

Through a newly launched instant messaging and forum Web site, students now have a more convenient way to speak with the School of Arts and Sciences Advising Center staff. With a quick question or for specific information, students can chat online with peer and professional advisors to get the answers they need without having to make an appointment or leave the comforts of their dorm rooms.

While the most effective advising still occurs face to face in a one-on-one appointment, instant messaging and forums provide students with an additional resource for an enhanced student experience. In addition to the chat function, students have a wealth of information readily available through the question-and-answer forum. Once a student submits a question, both the question and the advisor's reply will be posted online within 48 hours, at the discretion of the Advising Center staff. Questions deemed too similar to those already posted may not be answered, so students should carefully read the forum before submitting a question. Because questions posted to the forum are made public, students should e-mail their assigned advisor or make an advising appointment for all personal questions.

Students who still want to drop by the Advising Center without an appointment can do so at specified hours and speak with an on-call advisor. The hours for both the Web chat and on-call advising are Monday–Friday, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. and 2–4 p.m.

For more information regarding the Advising Center instant messaging and forums, visit www.as.pitt.edu/undergraduate/advising/imforum.



ENJOYING WINTER BREAK WITH YOUR RETURNING STUDENT

by Mary Koch Ruiz, University Counseling Center

The year-end winter break can be stressful for students and their parents. It is a period of adjustment because it is the first time since classes began that more time can be spent together.

Students and their parents can have different expectations regarding how much time to spend together. Students may envision spending more time with high school friends, while parents may look forward to more time spent with their adult child.

Conflicts can emerge because house rules for the student have remained the same since high school. Students may perceive that their parents are reluctant to view them as adults.

It also is possible that changes in the family may have occurred while the student was away. A single parent may have started dating. Parents who put divorce aside while the children were young may have decided to end their marriage. For students with blended families, decisions have to be made regarding how much time to spend with each parent.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Plan ahead. Talk in advance about your adult child's plans for the break. Recognize the importance for your child to reconnect with old friends. Include your child in the planning stages of home projects and other activities if you want assistance or just time spent together.

Be realistic. Look forward to seeing your returning student, but expect some old struggles for the bathroom, car, and remote control. Reconsider the house rules and whether they can be changed.

Set aside time to deal with potentially explosive topics. Discuss important issues directly and sensitively; don't let disagreements about money, grades, and house rules pervade the entire break.

Communicate. Conversations within families can be very comforting and rewarding. Winter break can be a good time to reflect on the term, affirm your adult child, and acknowledge changes that have occurred.

RESOURCES

University of Pittsburgh
University Counseling Center
334 William Pitt Union
3959 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15260
412-648-7930
www.counseling.pitt.edu

College Parents of America
www.collegeparents.org

When Kids Go to College: A Parent's Guide to Changing Relationships by Barbara M. Newman and Philip R. Newman



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IMPORTANT CONTACTS:

- Advising Center412-624-6444
- Academic Resource Center412-648-7920
- Office of the Associate Dean
for Undergraduate Studies.....412-624-6480
- Office of Freshman Programs412-624-6828
- Office of Experiential Learning.....412-624-6828
- Office of Student Records412-624-6776

www.as.pitt.edu/undergraduate

Questions or concerns? E-mail us at pittpride@as.pitt.edu.

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCHERS PRESENT WORK AT SCIENCE2009—UNPLUGGED

For the first time in its nine-year history, the University of Pittsburgh's annual celebration of science and technology, held October 15 and 16 on Pitt's Oakland campus, showcased undergraduate student research. As part of Science2009—Unplugged, students from across the University displayed their faculty-mentored research in science, medicine, and engineering at a special reception open to all Science2009 attendees. Poster presentation topics ranged from traumatic brain injuries to energy solutions.

This two-day science spectacular featured presentations by some of Pittsburgh's leading researchers as well as keynote lectures by distinguished guest scientists. The annual celebration, which was free and open to the public, also included exhibits, poster sessions, a career development workshop, a technology showcase, and networking opportunities. The addition of the undergraduate presentations exposed the University community to the extraordinary and highly developed research conducted by undergraduate students under the guidance of Pitt's world-class faculty.

In this inaugural poster presentation, 53 of the 76 student researchers came from the School of Arts and Sciences, representing eight departments:

biological sciences, chemistry, communication, geology and planetary science, history and philosophy of science, mathematics, neuroscience, and psychology. A sampling of faculty-mentored research topics that were presented at Science2009 included investigating sex-related differences in umbilical cord stem cells, reviewing a mathematical model of human lactation, looking at the interrelatedness of depression and anxiety in women with pelvic organ prolapse, striving to improve the care of breast cancer patients by examining quality of life, researching new tools in the drug discovery process, and tracing domestic water inputs to Pittsburgh streams.

For more information about Science2009—Unplugged, visit www.science2009.pitt.edu.



The University of Pittsburgh, as an educational institution and as an employer, values equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic and cultural diversity. Accordingly, the University prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or status as a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam era. Further, the University will continue to take affirmative steps to support and advance these values consistent with the University's mission. This policy applies to admissions, employment, and access to and treatment in University programs and activities. This is a commitment made by the University and is in accordance with federal, state, and/or local laws and regulations.

For information on University equal opportunity and affirmative action programs and complaint/grievance procedures, please contact the University of Pittsburgh; Office of Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Inclusion; Carol W. Mohamed, Director (and Title IX, 504 and ADA Coordinator); 412 Bellefield Hall; 315 South Bellefield Avenue; Pittsburgh, PA 15260; 412-648-7860.

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UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES • THE PITT PRIDE

For the online academic calendar, go to www.provost.pitt.edu/information-on/calendar.html.

| Month | Event |
|-------|--|
| March | 5 Spring term deadline for students to submit Monitored Withdrawal forms to the dean's office |
| | 7-14 Spring recess for students (no classes) |
| | 12 University observance of Spring Holiday (University closed) |
| | 18 Fall term registration and add/drop begins; first two days reserved for seniors |
| April | 23 Spring term last day for undergraduate day classes |
| | 24-May 1 College of General Studies classes, all graduate classes, Saturday classes, and evening classes will continue to meet during this period; final examinations should be held during the last scheduled class meeting |
| | 26-May 1 Final examination period for undergraduate day classes |
| | May 1 Spring term ends; official date for degrees awarded in spring term |
| May | 2 Residence halls close (except for graduating seniors); annual Commencement Convocation |
| | 5 Spring term grades must be approved by instructors |
| | 6 Spring term grades available online |

| Month | Event |
|----------|--|
| December | 20 Residence halls close |
| | 20-January 5 Winter recess for students (no classes) |
| | 22 Fall term grades must be approved by instructors |
| | 23 Fall term grades available online |
| January | 24-January 3 Winter recess for faculty and staff |
| | 4 All University offices and buildings reopen |
| | 5 Residence halls open |
| | 6 Spring term registration period ends for all students; spring term classes begin |
| February | 4 Deadline for students to submit Grade Option (S/NC) forms to the dean's office |
| | 22 Summer sessions registration and add/drop begins |
| | 26 Honors Convocation |
| | February 19 Spring term add/drop period ends |
| January | 18 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday observance (University closed) |
| | 19 Spring term add/drop period ends |

CALENDAR OF EVENTS