

Political Science News

Amherst College

September 2014

Page 1

Inside this issue:

Professor Tiersky Retires	1
Professor Arkes Retires	1
Professors Obert & Gescinska	3
Professor Mattiacci & Xenos	4
Professor Corrales Visits Japan	5
New Courses	5
Faculty Travels to China	6
Major Requirements Links/Info	7
Search	8

2014/2015 Political Science Department Chair Professor Javier Corrales

Office: 105 Clark House

Phone: 542-2164

Email: jcorrales@amherst.edu

Visit us on Facebook



◆ <https://www.facebook.com/AmherstCollegeDepartmentOfPoliticalScience>



Professor Tiersky Retires

This fall will be my last semester at Amherst after a long time together. I believe the College and I owe each other something important and hope I've done my part tolerably well. What's ahead is not retirement; it's continuing to do what I've always done with fewer schedules and more time to roam intellectually and in my commitments to certain values. I'll be living in New York City and hope I'll see Amherst students and colleagues there. My writing will still concern Europe but also a few newer subjects: China, the Greater Middle East and education. For a couple of years I've been blogging on Huffington Post, which is especially stimulating in that you become a kind of op-ed columnist with an audience that you try to cultivate and expand. Often my blogs appear in Amherst in the News. Without getting overly sentimental about moving on, I'd like to salute all

the students who've thought my courses and advising were meaningful in their lives, and all the colleagues who have meant so much to me over the years.



Professor Arkes Retires

Three years ago I had an offer to form a new Center for the study of natural law and the American Founding based in Washington. The teaching would be drawn from my own books and writings and courses over the years. But once the project was launched, it was taken over and given a new life by the same combination of former students and alumni who have supported our Amherst Committee for the American Founding. We have now established a new entity, named after one of the preeminent minds among the American Founders. We've called it The James Wilson Institute on Natural Rights & the American Founding. The Chairman of the Board is Doug Neff '70 and the board contains other alumni and former students. The mission then was to bring to a larger audience outside of Amherst the teaching that I've woven in the years at Amherst. The office is in Washington at 1730 Rhode Island, Ave. N.W. It has been quite a hectic, busy year in this

first year with the new Institute, marked most notably by these projects:

--A seminar twice a year that brings together some gifted teachers of law and philosophy with some distinguished figures on the federal bench, who would like to get a firmer hold on natural law. A certain momentum has been built up, with the judges wanting to keep coming back—and bring their friends. (continued on page 2)

Professor Arkes Retires (continued)

--A weeklong seminar in July in Naples, Florida, with 10 accomplished young lawyers, either on their way to clerkships in the federal courts or coming out of those clerkships. (One "student" here was our own Mihailis Diamantis '03, who wrote theses in three majors in Amherst; went to law school at Yale, but is now completing a doctorate in Philosophy at NYU. He was a fine marker for the caliber of the students drawn to the project).

This seminar was funded in a partnership with the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), a group that litigates over questions of religious freedom. But now we will have other partners, ready to join in funding the same kind of seminar for lawyers and for citizens unburdened with a degree in law. Those seminars will be in the West and in Washington, D.C. And some of them may be organized by former students of mine clustered in different parts of the country. And the seminars could be scaled down, for certain groups, to cover 2-1/2 days on a weekend.

--A program of Judicial Internships for the very best of my Amherst students—placing Jason Barnes '14 this summer in the chambers of Judge Diarmuid O'Scannlain (in Oregon, in the 9th federal circuit) and Will Kamin '15 with Judge Thomas Griffith in Washington in the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals. In both instances the "chemistry" in chambers worked to have our students woven into the life of the crew, welcomed in with respect and affection. Both students worked on drafts of the opinions, and both ended up drafting portions of speeches given by their judges, one in Oxford and another in Vietnam. And as we might expect, the experience seems to have had the most pronounced effect on the plans of Jason and Will for life after Amherst. In addition to placing Amherst students with accomplished federal judges, the Institute sponsored intern positions in its D.C. office. Along with Will, Colman Duggan '15 was also one of our interns during the summer. We worked hard to expose our interns to a wide array of different aspects of D.C. political life—from the gritty, fast-paced work of the legislative branch to the erudite exchanges of printed ideas between think-tank scholars. However, we also provided them with an up-close look at how a small business operates.

--A program of lectures and panels in Washington

--And of course a thick schedule of my own writings, including most importantly, "Recasting Religious Freedom" (*First Things*, June/July 2014) and "The Law and Richard Epstein," the *New Criterion* (June, 2014). The first piece helped launch an argument over the reasoning of the Supreme Court in the Hobby Lobby case on religious freedom. The argument was stirred on by these two pieces of mine in the Library of Law & Liberty: "The New Jurisprudence of 'Beliefspeak,'" and "Post-Hobby Lobby Illusions." And along with that, I continue with my column twice a month for the web journal *The Catholic Thing*.

--Apart from my speaking or lecturing, I gave two talks in August to potential donors to the new project, in Newport Beach in California and Los Angeles. The reactions were quite buoying, and the prospects quite encouraging.

In this year of launching the new Center I've had as my chief aide my former student Garrett Snedeker '09, whose late father, Bill '79, had also been a student of mine. Garrett has not only shown remarkable energy and initiative but the deftest touch in dealing with people and organizations in Washington. We have a couple of projects of our own on the Hill, and Garrett has preserved in the best way our connections with allied groups working at the Capitol.

And so it's been a busy, almost frenetic year—but quite gratifying. Again, it's not a matter of ending the teaching at Amherst but bringing the teaching to a wider public, in other parts of the country. My own wish has been to do one course each semester in this final year so that I would end, with everyone else, in the spring. But my wife reminds me of the hazard of flying back from Washington to Amherst in the winter, with flights and classes canceled, with rides over icy roads from the airport at midnight on Sundays. I'll stay then with the scheme of doing both courses in the fall. But I'll be coming back occasionally in the spring to keep in touch with life on the campus and to go through the melancholy business of closing down the office and the house.



Jonathan Obert, Assistant Professor of Political Science

Jonathan Obert, who just finished his Ph.D. in Political Science at the University of Chicago, joins the Department as an Assistant Professor this fall. He researches and teaches on American political institutions, social networks, the co-evolution of states and markets, conflict and violence, and political geography. He is at work on a manuscript exploring the private roots of state coercion in American political development.

Course Information for POSC 419, *Fences, Frontiers, and Federalism in North America* (offered fall 2014): This course traces the concept, origins and effects of jurisdiction over the past 400

years of history in North America. Beginning with the colonial struggles among European Empires, we explore how processes of border-making (“Fences”) and border-breaking (“Frontiers”) among the various polities (states, tribes, empires, and settlements) in North America have shaped the constitutional and jurisdictional development of the continent (“Federalism”). Although we focus on the U.S., we pay close attention to how American concerns with federalism and economic incorporation have been influenced by the development of bordering states in Mexico and Canada. Readings include Robert Sack, Jack Greene, Frederick Jackson Turner, Richard White, and William Cronon among others.

Course Information for the POSC 219, *Introduction to American Politics* (offered fall 2014): This course provides both an introduction to key scholarly arguments about American political institutions, development and participation as well as a chance to engage with the important question of how distinctive the politics of the U.S. actually are. It is organized around four themes: First, we look into key questions about the founding of the U.S. republic and the writing of its constitution; second, we explore key institutions in the federal government (the Presidency, Congress, Judiciary, and Bureaucracy); third, we examine patterns of participation in American politics, focusing not just on voting and elections, but also on protest and violent conflict; finally, we will try to understand the important role social cleavage plays in making the U.S. a “unique” kind of polity.



Professor Obert



Professor Gescinska

Alicja Gescinska, Karl Loewenstein Fellow

Alicja Gescinska is a Karl Loewenstein Fellow at the department. Her research focuses on different concepts and theories of freedom, and covers many fields, ranging from political theory to European politics, ethics, continental philosophy, sexual ethics and metaphysics. In her writings she explores the validity of different concepts of freedom and also discusses the meaning and limits of freedom in specific social, political and moral issues and debates, such as freedom of speech, sexual liberty, and religious freedom. She obtained a Ph.D in Philosophy at Ghent Univer-

sity (Belgium). Last year she worked as a William E. Simon Research Associate at Princeton University. Besides her academic work, she has written non-scholarly books and articles about philosophy and politics, and is a frequently asked pundit in Belgium and the Netherlands.

Course Information for POSC 346, *Philosophy of Freedom* (offered spring 2015): This course introduces the students to the conceptual history of freedom. Three different concepts of freedom are central to the course: negative, positive, and republican freedom. The work of the main proponents of these

different concepts will be discussed, as well as the common objections against each concept of freedom. We will also discuss specific contemporary social and political issues which revolve around freedom, its meaning, how to safeguard and expand it, and which are often the cause of heated public debates: what are the limits of religious freedom, the limits of the freedom of speech and expression, when does the right of the government and external authorities to intervene in our personal lives conflict with our right to personal autonomy?



Professor Mattiacci

Eleonora Mattiacci, Karl Loewenstein Fellow & Visiting Assistant Professor in Political Science

Eleonora Mattiacci is the Karl Loewenstein Post-Doctoral Fellow and Visiting Assistant Professor in Political Science. She earned a PhD from The Ohio State University and a BA from Università degli Studi di Bologna (Italy). Her research and teaching tackle the conditions under which relations between countries swing back and forth inconsistently between episodes of intense cooperation (i.e., trade agreements, alliance formation, etc.) and instances of bitter conflict (i.e., wars, militarized disputes, etc.), and focus in particular on the role that nuclear weapons and climate change play in shaping such volatile foreign policy behavior.

Course Information for POSC 347, Nuclear America (offered fall 2014): "Recent developments in North Korea and Iran paint the US as a staunch opponent of nuclear proliferation. But why, and since when? This class explores the link between the domestic and the international dimension of the US position on nuclear weapons, connecting it to the domestic debate on uses of nuclear energy and nuclear research: how did the Three Mile Island incident affect the US posture on nuclear weapons reduction, if at all? How did the Cold War culture of containment affect the domestic debate on nuclear energy? How to reconcile President Obama's plea for a nuclear free world and his intent to increase reliance on nuclear energy? To address the foreign policy implications of the porous boundary between nuclear weapons and atomic energy, we will delve into current Academic research, as well as movies, TV shows, and newspaper articles."



Professor Xenos

Nicholas Xenos, Visiting Five College Professor from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst

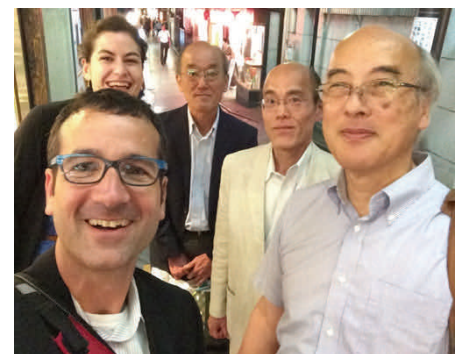
Nicholas Xenos is a Professor of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst where he teaches courses on Modern Political Theory, The Politics of European Film, Issues in Political Theory and various related graduate seminars.

Course Information for POSC 416, The Moral Turn in Political Theory (offered fall 2014): Over the past decade there has been a noticeable and often remarked upon "moral turn" in political theory as writers have sought to ground political action in conceptualizations of the self, of the relationship between self and Other, of obligation, or more generally of the central moral question, "What ought I to do?" In truth, there has long been a tendency toward the conflation of moral and political theory, and this seminar will be devoted to coming to terms with that conflation. The texts will be drawn from Kant, Max Weber, T. W. Adorno, Judith Butler, Michel Foucault, Alain Badiou, Wendy Brown, John Rawls, Raymond Geuss, and others. Students will be required to complete several response essays during the course of the semester and a seminar paper upon its conclusion.



Professor Corrales Visits Japan this Year

Javier Corrales spent three weeks in June visiting Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan as this year's Amherst-Doshisha Faculty Exchange Fellow. This was his first visit to Japan. He gave three lectures: 1) Latinos, Asian-Americans and U.S. presidential elections; 2) The new geopolitics of South America; and 3) Venezuela post-Chávez. He also had dinner with alums in Tokyo. He spent July and part of August working on various research projects in collaboration with summer interns.



Amherst College Department of Political Science New Courses offered for 2014-2015

Fall 2014

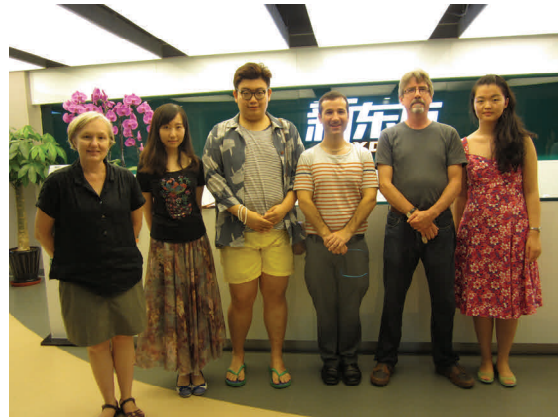
- FYSE 119: Justice in Question (Poe)
- POSC 219: Introduction to American Politics (Obert)
- POSC 316: Politics of Place: Poverty, Policy and Housing (Burns)
- POSC 347: Nuclear America (Mattiacci)
- POSC 416: Moral Political Theory (Xenos)
- POSC 419: Fences, Frontiers, & Federalism in North America (Obert)

Spring 2015

- POSC 119: Violence and Politics (Obert)
- POSC 130: Climate Change and Civil Unrest (Mattiacci)
- POSC 156: Policy Choice as Value Conflict (Burns)
- POSC 260: African Politics (Dionne)
- POSC 319: History, Time, and American Political Development (Obert)
- POSC 346: Philosophy of Freedom (Gescinska)
- POSC 380: Kremlin Rising (Pleshakov)
- POSC 403: Social Policy in China (Ratigan)

Faculty Travels to China

Profs. Javier Corrales, Tom Dumm and Jyl Gentzler (Philosophy), pictured with students, traveled to Shanghai in August as part of an education program organized by Amherst students Shiyuan Chen 16 and Dian Yu 16. The two-week, short-course program was to familiarize advanced high school students from all over China with liberal arts studies in the United States.



Major Requirements

Majors in Political Science must complete 10 courses for rite or 12 for honors in courses offered or approved by the Department, including at least one introductory course numbered in the 100's and at least one advanced seminar. In addition they must fulfill a distribution requirement and complete a core concentration within Political Science.

Introductory courses: Courses numbered 100s are introductory courses. Because these courses are designed to introduce students to the study of politics, the department recommends that they be taken in the first and second year. Students may count a maximum of two introductory courses toward their major. FYSE courses taught by members of our department count toward the introductory course requirement.

Advanced Seminars: These courses are generally numbered in the 400s. They have prerequisites, limited enrollment, and a substantial writing requirement.

Distribution Requirement: To fulfill the distribution requirement, majors must take one course in each of the following areas: Institutions and Law: States, institutions, parties, political economy, the law and public policy [IL]; Society and Culture: Civil society, social movements, rights and identities, cultural politics [SC]; Global: War, peace, diplomacy, foreign policy and globalization studies [G]; Political Theory: Power, norms, and justice [PT].

Core Concentration: Political Science majors shall also designate a core concentration within the major. The core concentration will consist of a minimum of four courses organized around a theme chosen by the student in consultation with the advisor. Students may count up to two courses from outside the Political Science Department to fulfill the core requirement. These courses will count for the completion of the major. Ordinarily students shall designate a core concentration by the end of the sopho-

more year or at the time they declare the major. Advisors will certify that graduating students have completed their core concentration requirement.

Credits for study abroad and transfer students: Two courses for those going abroad for 1 semester; 3 courses for students going abroad for 1 year.

Courses must 1) be taught by someone with a degree in political science or have substantial political content; and 2) must not be redundant with other courses already taken in the Five Colleges. The chair of the department will decide whether courses will be given credit toward the major.

For students transferring to Amherst, the Department will accept three courses for the major. We may waive the introductory course requirement if the transfer student has had an equivalent course.

For students coming to the College with a BA in hand (e.g. from Japanese universities), we will accept 4 courses and waive the introductory course requirement.

Decisions regarding credit or requests to vary the requirements for completion of the major: Decisions regarding credit or requests to vary the requirements for completion of the major shall be made by the Department Chair.

Useful Links/Information

Faculty Office Hours: https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/departments/political_science/faculty-office-hours

Connect with Political Science Alumni: https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/departments/political_science/poliscialumni

Five College International Relationships Certificate Program: https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/departments/political_science/five_college

Honors/Thesis Requirements: https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/departments/political_science/honorsthesis

Latham Internships: <https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/careers/students/jobs/internships/funding>

Events and News: https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/departments/political_science/events



Political Science Faculty Search 2014/2015

The Department of Political Science at Amherst College invites applications for a full-time tenure-track position at the rank of Assistant Professor in European Politics, with a background in comparative politics and/or international relations. The appointment will begin in July 2015. Candidates should have a deep knowledge of the history and politics of a particular country, such as Britain, France or Germany, and broad interests in the European Union. We encourage applications from candidates whose scholarship places Europe in comparative perspective. Areas of research that we would welcome include multiculturalism, varieties of nationalism, right-wing populist parties, immigration, political and economic refugees, political economy, European geopolitics and world markets.

Amherst College is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate in its employment policies on the basis of such factors as race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, nationality, or disability. The College is committed to enriching its education by hiring a diverse faculty, administration, and staff. It has diversified its student body with respect to socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and nationality. Today, nearly one quarter of Amherst's student body consists of Pell Grant recipients; an even greater number of students are first-generation students, and nearly half are non-immigrant minorities. The successful candidate should demonstrate competence and sensitivity working in a college in which students, faculty, and staff are broadly diverse along multiple lines.

We seek a colleague with a record that demonstrates high-quality teaching and research, who is committed to excellence in education at the undergraduate level. Candidates should be comfortable teaching courses both within and outside his or her specialty and be able to direct undergraduate research projects.

The successful candidate must have the Ph.D. in hand or have fulfilled all requirements for the degree by the start of the appointment.

Candidates should submit electronically to <https://apply.interfolio.com/25260> a letter of application, a CV, three confidential letters of recommendation, and one writing sample not to exceed thirty pages. Review of applications will begin September 22, 2014, and continue until the position is filled. Candidates who submit their materials by November 1, 2014, will be assured full consideration.



Watch for our spring newsletter for new spring course information and introductions of Professors Dionne and Pleshakov!

Amherst College

Department of Political Science
P.O. Box 5000
Amherst, MA 01002-5000
Phone: 413-542-2318
Fax: 413-542-2264
Email: polisci@amherst.edu

We're on the Web at
https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/departments/political_science