

POLITICAL SCIENCE NEWSLETTER



FALL 2025

Dear Faculty, Students, and Anteater Community,

We are delighted to share our quarterly newsletter—the first prepared by our own Political Science majors. On behalf of the Department, thank you to our student authors for your initiative, creativity, and collaborative spirit. And thank you Prof. Matt Beckmann for coordinating. This is a wonderful contribution to our community.

Befitting a new newsletter, the Department has had a newsworthy Fall. Political Science now has a record-setting 1,100+ majors, meaning 1 in 5 students in the School of Social Sciences is a Political Science major. Tumultuous times, it seems, are inspiring UC Irvine students to better understand politics and public life.

On that score, we are elated to welcome a new assistant professor, Crystal Robertson, whose scholarship and teaching add exciting depth to the Department.

Our fall calendar has been filled with vibrant intellectual activity. Kevin Olson hosted the Critical Genealogies Workshop; Sara Goodman led the Southwest Mixed Methods Workshop; and the REP Workshop, coordinated by Michael Tesler and Jordie Davies, continued its strong momentum.

Looking ahead, winter promises to be just as lively with the launch of our departmental speaker series and a full calendar of events. As always, please stop by the Department, say hello, and stay engaged—a lot is happening, and we are excited to share it with you.

Warm regards,

Sara Goodman, Department Chair

Contributors

- **Shahin Amos, Author and Editor**
- **Christopher Rodriguez, Author**
- **Casey Mendoza, Author**
- **Connor Maruska, Author**
- **Rebecca Do, Editor**
- **Ryan Murphy, Contributor**
- **Raymond Park, Contributor**
- **Arianne Domingcil, Contributor**



Zot the Vote

In the run-up to November's election, the Political Science Executive Committee set up a Get Out The Vote (GOTV) table on Ring Road. Poli Sci students shared details about registering and voting while handing out flyers and PETR "I Voted" stickers. Professor Beckmann was impressed: "Our students were typically terrific - knowledgeable, helpful, and fun." (A special shout-out to Connie Dahl for helping with the plan and Ron Rothstain for helping with the execution!)



Eater Achievers

- **Danielle Thomsen, Professor**
 - Thomsen recently published her book, *The Money Signal* (Univ. of Chicago).
- **Samantha Vortherms, Associate Professor**
 - Vortherms was recently named a Public Intellectual Fellow at the National Committee for US-China Relations.
- **Jordie Davis, Assistant Professor**
 - Davis recently published her riveting article, *Fundamentals of Solidarity: Race-Based Caucus Organizing in Houston*.
- **Marek Kaminski, Professor**
 - Kaminski edited a special issue of *Public Choice* about mixed electoral systems.
- **Sergii Glebov, Visiting Professor**
 - Glebov recently published "Surviving Hybrid Warfare: A Case Study of Ukraine."
- **Rein Taagepera, Professor Emeritus**
 - Taagepera and Kaminski recently published their new article, *The Tailor of Marrakech: Western Electoral Systems Advice to Emerging Democracies*.
- **Etel Solingen, Distinguished Professor**
 - Solingen received the Stockholm Business School's Emerging Markets Inspiration Conference Lifetime Achievement Award.
- **Kevin Olson, Professor**
 - Olson received the Charles Taylor Book Award for his latest work, *Subaltern Silence: A Postcolonial Genealogy*.
- **Jeffrey Kopstein, Professor**
 - Kopstein's *The Assault on the State* was listed as a 2025 Foreign Affairs Best Book.



To read the full story, click the image above.

Student Spotlight

Tauhid Bin Kashem, a UCI Ph.D., has been hard at work researching refugee policy at UC Berkeley. Kashem studies how different countries (Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand) have handled refugees fleeing ethnic cleansing in Myanmar. Kashem recently won the Best Dissertation Award from the American Political Science Association (APSA) Migration & Citizenship section.

Law Panel

On November 20th, the Political Science Executive Committee hosted a student-focused panel about Law School and the legal profession.

1. **Mark Sacks**, an LSAT instructor, former civil litigator and career criminal prosecutor at OCDA.
2. **Frank Davis**, a retired public defender and criminology professor at UCI.
3. **Hardip Passananti**, a product liability attorney and former deputy district attorney at OCDA.
4. **Ben Kwak**, the UCI Law admissions counselor.

Students asked a wide range of questions about the LSAT, law school, practicing law, and more. Thanks to the panelists for offering such great insights!



Faculty Spotlight

With a Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin and teaching stints at Yale, Pittsburgh, and Harvard, Continuing Lecturer **Steven Bilakovics** brings his thought-provoking classes to UC Irvine, including Liberalism & Conservatism and Free Speech & Democracy. Bilakovics authored the book *Democracy Without Politics*, which examines political cynicism through the lens of Tocqueville. Bilakovics kicks off his book by noting, “Politics’ has probably always been something of a dirty word,” before diving into the ways American citizens increasingly disdain politics and distrust their government.

To read the full story, click the image above.

Zot @ Top



- **Mohammed Amaan Siddiqui, PhD Student**
 - Siddiqui recently published “Rhetorics of Counterinternationalism” in *Nations and Nationalism*.
- **Nathan Bui and Jayla Kamilla Pete, both 3rd-year Political Science majors**
 - Bui and Pete each received a 2025 Social Sciences Moore Scholarship (\$1000) for Community and Social Change. The award recognizes UCI students who demonstrate outstanding academic promise and the potential to impact their community.

Week 10?

Sweeeeeet!



As fall classes came to a close, PS ExComm students hosted a holiday-themed sugar cookie decorating event for all Poli Sci students, staff, and faculty. Senior Rita Korail brought cookies and cheer, and while Professors Goodman and Brunstetter showed true decorative talents, it was Senior Natasha Bianca Herrera's exquisitely detailed Santa Claus cookie that stole the show.

Happy Holidays to All!

Our faculty, staff, and graduate students recently gathered for the annual holiday party—a chance to celebrate the end of the quarter and enjoy time together before the winter break. This year featured a friendly “Best Cookie” competition, and graduate students swept the awards: Reiya Bhat for her brown butter chocolate chip cookies, Ana Schugurensky for her mini pavlovas with blueberry compote, and Hana Abdulla for her Biscoff cheesecake.

Thank you to everyone who joined us!