





# FACULTY

# FACULTY NEWS

CONTINUED

I have enjoyed the beginning of the new semester and teaching in person. Since the pandemic hit, I have mostly been focusing on my family, doing my part to take care of our children. Timur is now four, and Anya is two, and they continue to amaze us by pushing the limits of cuteness. I have published a piece entitled "Regime Change under the Party of Justice and Development (AKP) in Turkey." That was my contribution to the growing literature on democratic backsliding. I have designed, and am



, Skidmore students and

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING CONTRIBUTORS

MARIA BIDEIWY, ABBY CICCARONE, SHAYNA COHEN, ASH DELMORE, NOAH FRYOU, NESSA GOLDBIRSCH-ROWN,  
EVAN HOLLAND-SHEPLER, SAM HOTZ, EMMA HULBERT, LISLE JAMIESON, ANISSA JOSEPH, SYDNEY KASS,  
RACHEL KONOWITZ, IZZY KROEGER, KATE LANDINO, KAITLYN MOORHEAD, JED PRICKETT, MEGAN SCHACHTER,  
ALEXANDRA STEVE, ZACH TROYANOVSKY, HUNTER WASSER

# INVITED TO THE PARTY

I left class early to make it to Beau Breslin's Constitution Day lecture. Can you blame me? Anyone who spends time in the Political Science department catches word of Beau's "generational constitution" – an idea considered by many of his coworkers and students to be audacious, to say the least. So, when the opportunity arose to hear from Beau directly about his new book, *A Constitution for the Living*, I had to take it. I needed to know the pros and cons, the appeal, and the intrigue, behind a U.S. Constitution that no longer adhered to the will of the Founders, but instead to the will of – put simply – We, the people.

The lecture began with a presentation summarizing Professor Breslin's book. He proposed a new Constitution for every generation (though he cut a few corners, placing the new document at the end of each generation's life expectancy rather than advocating for a new Constitution every 25-30 years). Beau pondered the political questions of each era. In 1825 the Bill of Rights, while still similar in content, would move to the front and center of Article 1, making it a top priority of that generation. In 1903, women's suffrage would take priority, while in 1953 the United States would contemplate unanimous ratification, rather than a 2/3 majority. Perhaps the most unique part of his proposal is the moment when Beau looks into the future: the next generational constitution will occur in 2022, and Prof. Breslin argues that environmental protection will be a major topic of

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I made a commitment to myself that during my senior year, I would make it a priority to engage with Black narratives and explore the politics of Blackness. While this goal was easier to achieve than I expected in terms of finding classes, there was one thing I had not considered when going into these classrooms-- I am usually the only person that looks like me, a Black woman, in that space. While I am appreciative of the ability to learn about these topics, especially at a predominantly White institution, I've noticed what I call the three dangers of teaching Black politics without enough Black people in the classroom. First, that one Black student or those few Black students become the representations/representatives of their race. This enforced representation diminishes the lived experiences of these students and does not consider their other identities in that space. The second symptom is the intellectualizing of continued oppressive lived experiences of these students, while this can be expected of an academic institution, the lack of representation makes this experience more poignant. The final outcome is the lack of teaching about what this means for the future.

This piece is written from my personal experience and I recognize that not every Black student feels the same, but there is a need to initiate greater conversation on this issue. Particularly as Skidmore attempts to promote racial justice, it is important that these conversations are had in every program and department.

concepts and experiences that make up my Black experience. I do not say this to criticize the work that my peers, specifically my White peers, have put into understanding these ideas that either force them to recognize their privilege or break down structures that inherently benefit them. My advice is, read the room. Recognize that though these ideas may feel foreign or fully academic to you, there are people around you who are viscerally experiencing them. When discussing the commodification of Black people, recognize your role in how you perpetuate that, recognize your positionality, think about how it might feel to a Black student as you appear to sympathize, but you are wearing box braids and "streetwear chic". Politics at its root is the study of human interaction, how we make decisions and agreements, it's deeper than structure and election statistics. There is a human element to the work, and we cannot forgo that in these discussions, we have to talk about these issues beyond the text and bring it into the real world. Black people around the world are fighting for the right to live freely every day. The voices that dominate fields such as Political Science, Sociology, and History are predominantly White and often write through the lens of global White supremacy, therefore many of the authors and writings you're using to contextualize the experiences of Black people don't write from a place of understanding, they are writing from a place of oppression and racism. We should aim beyond deeply understanding the texts and aim to deeply understand people.

Utilizing Black narratives and Black political thinkers is crucial to the studying of political science that encompasses all people. Political Science professors have increased the use of these narratives over my time at Skidmore and I have had professors reach out to me personally with articles regarding topics I have either expressed interest in or spoke about in the classroom. The danger of looking at narratives is if we look at them without thinking, what does this mean for





# HIP-HOP IN THE CLASSROOM

# HIP-HOP IN THE CLASSROOM AND BEYOND

: What is the relationship between hip-hop and politics?

: I think it's impossible to separate the two. Hip-hop is political because its origin is rooted out of politics. It is created because of socio-economic conditions, things like being pushed out of your home or redlined or drugs being dumped into your community. There is an inherent social consciousness. The idea that we can use dance production, DJing parties etc. as a way to escape from the social economic conditions that we are in. And also, I think the way in which people who are authentically hip-hop choose to engage their music and make it reflect the things that they have experienced makes it political. I think the music industry makes hip-hop political; and what I mean by that is that the music industry has oftentimes pigeonholed or taken advantage of hip-hop's newness and naivety of people who do not have formal education or exposure to business savvy. Because of that,

# HIP-HOP IN THE CLASSROOM AND BEYOND

: As you became more active in the hip-hop world, what surprised you?

: I think there was a time in my life when I grew up learning the codified language of ballet, and I think having that kind of training when I was younger separated me from things that were naturally in me. And when I look back, I think the thing that surprised me is the fact that I felt like when I was younger, a teenager, that hip-hop was unnatural to me. That was the relationship I had to it because I felt nervous about what if I don't look in pocket, and I am talking specifically to hip-hop dance. And I was nervous to do that because I felt that I was away from the training that I was doing as a dancer, and I did not recognize it in my own body anymore. But in that same time, what was interesting is I am still living my life, I am still surrounded by the things that I think hip-hop is. So, I think it was shocking to me that I could even think about the fact that it didn't belong to me, when it always had.

I always thought hip-hop should be taught in college. It wasn't an if it was a when. I could see the world going in this direction. I think recently for me is with Lil Nas X. I am always excited when something feels put together in a different way-- it's the same thing, it's always the same ingredients, but to see that kind of freedom in Lil Nas X from everything Lil Nas X is about. First, Nas is one of my favorite artists. Then when I hear X I think Malcolm X. Malcolm X to me is fully hip-hop. So, I have Lil Nas X here, and now existing in those two names of Nas and Malcolm X, but also openly gay. And not just openly gay, but visibly doing things I thought would only be seen in women; the way bodies have been shown off, the intimacy on camera. And Lil Nas X has brought that into the world publicly, with something that I am very familiar with because that is what my friends are. That is who my friends are. But brought it so beautifully in public that I was just, shocked is the wrong word, I was just kind of like oh my God.

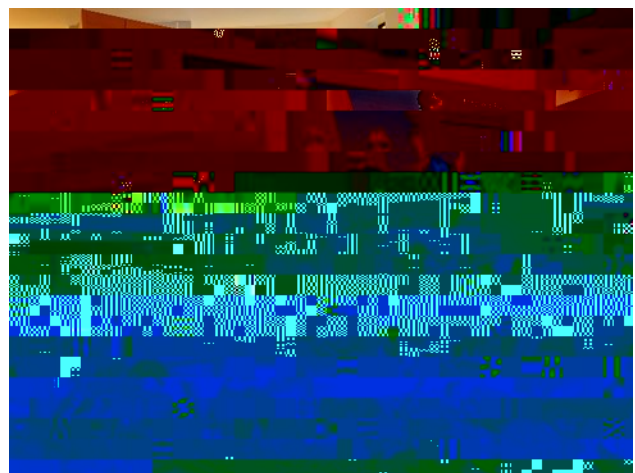
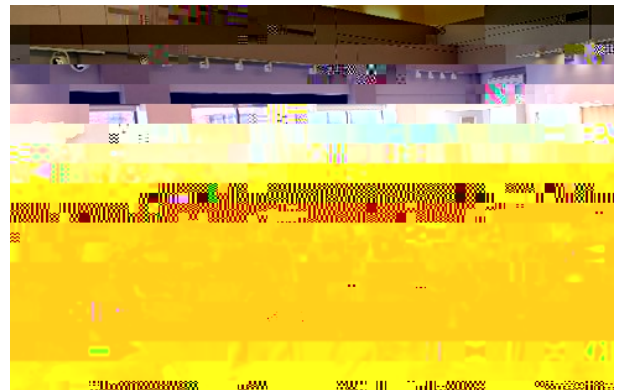
: What is the relationship between hip-hop and politics?

: Everything. Because to really understand hip-hop you cannot (even though people try) to understand, to appreciate, to enjoy hip-hop, is to enjoy Black culture. Black people. Black stereotypes. Black diversity. And it is a protest in itself because politically hip-hop was also silenced or tried to be silenced, during the Regan time, in many different ways. The lyrics were trying to be silenced, the fashion was trying to be silenced, some of the street art was trying to be silenced. So, when you have that approach you know that the origin of it is race, and it is political by nature because it is of the Black people that have been sent out and now it has been popularized. But now it is a reminder. It is always going to

definitely pull at the people who is racist. You can dance to it all you want to, but you cannot deny where it is held and where it continues to be held, and all of the lineage in it.

: Do you see hip-hop as an effective form of protest?

: Yes, I do. And I feel that because it is not just one thing. It has the ability to show up in many different ways. And I think that when you are trying to convey a point, it is always great to find a voice to communicate it. Hip-hop has many different communications, different medias, different arts, but it comes from this origin of Blackness. It comes from slaves. It comes from the oppressed. When something is rooted out of oppression, it can never be denied. It is always going to be a symbol of resistance. It is always going to be a symbol of standing up, and that's what it should be used for as well. And entertainment. But it is highly effective because it is rooted from it.



# STUDENT NEWS: HOW WAS YOUR SUMMER?

I had an internship with my local Democrat group for my county, and I worked a job as a camp counselor for a music camp for kids!

My summer was pretty busy! I went to San Diego and saw some cute seals. I also worked at a cafe, drank three cappuccinos a day, and continued to serve on the Master Planning Committee.

My summer was great! I spent ten weeks working with Professor Biberman as part of the Faculty Student Summer Research Program. We conducted a comparative historical analysis of the US and USSR to figure out how both countries--which were founded in rejection of standing armies--amassed two of the world's most powerful militaries. I conducted archival research, and I used data from the International Institute of Strategic Studies to track military development in the US and USSR/Russia from the 1960s through to present day.

It was very busy; I spent a lot of time working on digital archiving of Black history and family history as well as preparing for senior year. I got interested in looking at the oral tradition in Black narratives and how that has shaped Black unity and community, throughout the summer I worked on developing a small personal archive for my own family and preserving our history and its relations to politics.

This summer, I studied abroad in Costa Rica for 5 weeks. I stayed with a host family in San Jose, took classes during the week at Universidad Veritas, and traveled around the coun-





# HOW TO KILL A SUPERPOWER: LESSONS FROM THE USSR

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# FRIENDS: REAL AND ARTIFICIAL

This semester, myself and three other students have met every Friday with Professor Flagg Taylor to discuss Kazuo Ishiguro's newest novel, *Klara and the Sun*. Klara is a form of Artificial Intelligence called an Artificial Friend who is purchased by a girl named Josie and her mother. Josie is a "lifted" child, which gives her access to many benefits in life such as higher-quality teachers, but may also stunt her socially in some ways. She is also sick with a mysterious and potentially terminal illness. As Klara gets to know Josie and her mother better, she tries to help Josie navigate friends, family, and her illness, while also devising a secret plan to save Josie's life. Klara is surprising in her ability to understand humans, but also in





## PL 251B: International Relations of the Global South

Emmanuel Balogun 3 credits

What is the meaning of sovereignty to those who have experienced colonialism and imperialism? How are the dichotomies of war/peace and failed state/good governance gendered and racialized? This course examines the question of what an IR rooted in the experiences of the global South and the non-West might actually look like. This course critically evaluates the development of International Relations and its Western-centric theories and explores alternative origins of the discipline and its views on the state, security, cooperation, and development that do not have their roots in the West or the North. Students will examine how the global South's encounter with the "international" has been mediated by its invisibility within dominant, universalizing narratives and practices of the West and how to conceive of an IR that challenges and engages perspectives from the global South with mainstream perspectives. Emmanuel Balogun 3 credits

## PL 351A- The Politics of Dystopia

Flagg Taylor 3 credits

This course is devoted to a close study of portraits of tyranny and unfreedom in twentieth century literature. The totalitarian experiments of the twentieth century, combined with dramatic advances in technology demanded to move with them.

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