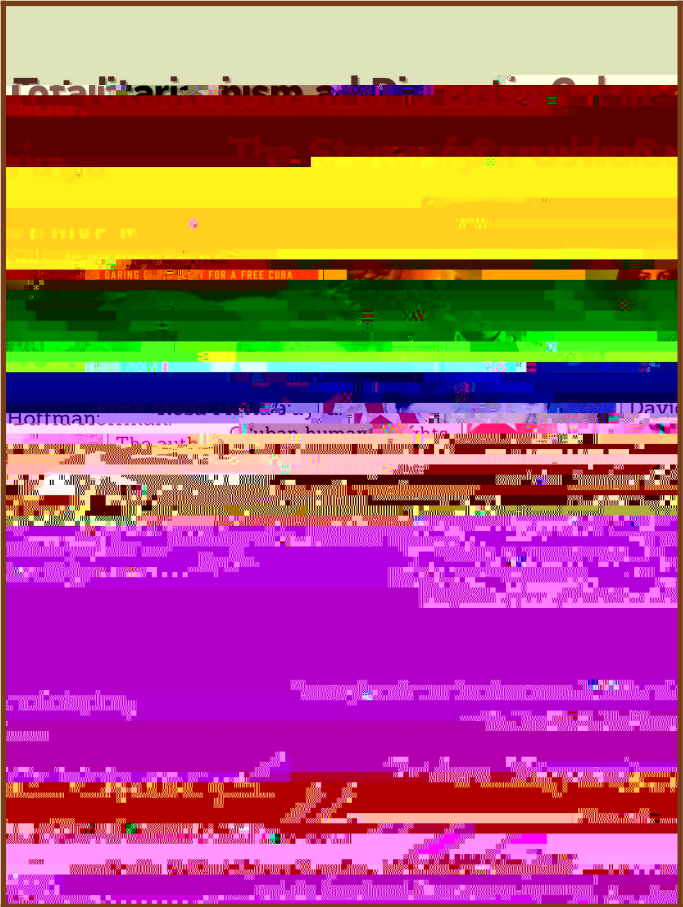





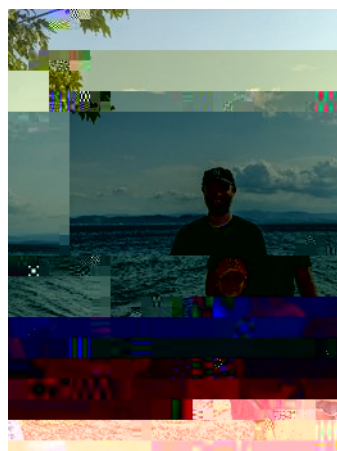
Washington Post



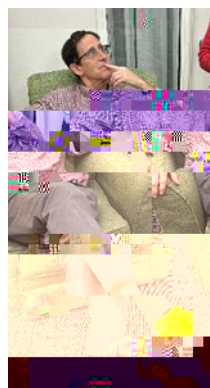


Greetings from sabbatical-land! It's been exciting and challenging, and fantastic. I love living in Turkey (Türkiye)- seeing the different ways people spend their time and live their lives, while learning the Turkish language and enjoying delicious food like iskender kebab, karlı pide, and lahmacun. People seem to spend a lot more time not just with their immediate, but also their extended families. My kids, Timur (6 years old) and Anya (4), are attending a Turkish school and learning about their heritage (from Professor Feryaz Ocaklı's side, that is). We walk, or take the metro, everywhere - which is a great change. Every morning we get fresh bread from a local bakery. There are street cats everywhere. It's like

This past September, I presented some of my work on the topic with my collaborator Zoe Moss (CU Boulder) at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association in Los Angeles. Our presentation was part of a panel titled "Identity, Intersectionality, and Campaigns." I am planning to follow this up by presenting updated versions of some of this work at the Southern Political Science Association conference in New Orleans this coming January, and at the Midwestern Political Science Association conference a few months later in Chicago. Additionally, I am working on a research project with Elliot Jackson-Ontkush to understand the impact of the scandals and resignations of statewide election officials on citizens' trust in government and support for the rule of law. We hope to present this work in Chicago at the Midwest conference this spring as well. Outside of my academic endeavors, I traveled to Indianapolis in late September to attend the 38th annual Farm Aid benefit concert at the old Deer Creek Music Center, where I caught – among a full day of music from legendary performers – a surprise set from Bob Dylan!

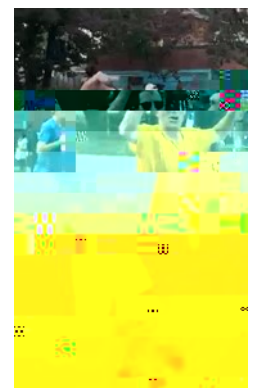


I am on sabbatical this year, and the Ocakli family is experiencing some exciting travel and research adventures. Before we left the United States, I took part in the faculty-student summer research program with Beck Hagopian – which resulted in a poster presentation entitled "The Marginalization of Smallholder Farmers in Indonesia." This helped further my research agenda on food politics among middle powers. I was awarded a Fulbright fellowship to conduct research on this subject, entitled "The Power to Feed or Starve: Middle Powers, International Organizations, and the International Politics of Food (In)Security." The Fulbright award supports my fieldwork in Singapore and Indonesia for the Spring 2024 semester. I will be affiliated with the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore. I am writing this update from Istanbul, Turkey, where I am working on two projects linked to my broader research agenda. I am examining Turkey's food security strategies, and also meeting with refugees from Afghanistan to learn about how they strategize to help their friends and family back home with their food security while living as refugees abroad. I received an American Institute of Afghanistan Studies research grant to pursue the latter. It's been interesting to return to Turkey and live here for an extended time. I haven't lived here full-time since I moved to the US in 2004, and then spent a year for field research in 2008-2009. It is practically a new country, and I sometimes feel like a bit of a relic with all my pop-culture references dating back to the late 2000s. It has been a fascinating, and at times overwhelming experience. I have gained a renewed appreciation for how people living here navigate a labyrinthine bureaucracy that never ceases to amaze me. I might need to gather six more stamped and notarized documents just to deliver this update.



I continue to be mired (or, if you prefer, marooned) in the 1920s and 1930s, sifting through documents and detritus to locate evidence that at least some of the contemporary press's paroxysms can be attributed to the steps (and missteps) that led to the creation of journalistic objectivity during the early 20th century.

In a less musty vein, I am currently negotiating on behalf of the department a contract with a major shoe company, which, if it is finalized, will ensure that all Skidmore Political Science faculty are outfitted with pineapple yellow running shoes for perpetuity. Should I succeed in this endeavor, the department's new credo will be "Look for the Glow, Feel the Intellectual Mojo."





This semester the other Professor Taylor and I have





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WHEN GRIDLOCK GIVES WAY

How the Constitution Drives Consensus

Alexander Hamilton, writing as Publius in the famous Federalist Papers, celebrated a new science of politics in the late eighteenth century. The proposed Constitution was unique, he said, novel in its innova-

WHAT I DIDN'T LEARN IN THE FRENCH CLASSROOM

Last semester I studied abroad through the Skidmore in France program in Montpellier. Montpellier is a beautiful city in the south of France near the Mediterranean Sea. I lived with a lovely and welcoming host family, traveled, and became friends with other international students. However, my classmates and I also had to deal with the strikes over the retirement reform. Macron's government is running out of money to pay for pensions, so they changed the retirement age from 62 to 64. Starting in January of 2023, the general public went on strike to convince the government not to pass this reform, and the public was polling consistently against the change. In March, Macron passed essentially an executive order anyway. Some went on strike over the change in retirement age and some did so over the general principle that the government should not go against the wishes of the people in a democracy. That is a very brief overview of the issue, and if you're interested and want a more informed perspective than mine, I would recommend further research.

My friends and I had a running joke that we were taking the study out of study abroad. By the time we'd been there for a month, any direct enrollment classes were canceled indefinitely because the students and faculty at Université Paul Valéry were on strike and had blockaded the university. We still had classes offered by the program center and the international students program, so my grammar, phonetics, and medieval literature classes continued. Sometimes, however, the transit systems would go on strike and even those classes would be canceled because most students wouldn't be able to get into town. Our grammar professor went on strike a few times and we missed classes. Various universities would open up and then be blockaded again, so classes would meet in random buildings or be canceled because it was hard to find available classroom space. We still had readings and grammar packets to do, and I don't mean to give the impression that we spent no time learning, but academics were not for most in any form.

Despite this dramatic shift from constant work at Skidmore to having whole days with no schoolwork expected of me, I learned an incredible amount. My host family didn't allow English in the house, so I had to speak in French every single day. I had host siblings who were students in other international programs, and we had to speak French together despite some of them being English speakers. At first this gave me headaches, but by the end of the semester speaking French at dinner felt natural to me, and I'm so grateful that my family pushed me.

Watching the strikes was an educational experience. I took French in high school and college, but I didn't really learn to speak French until this semester. I'm so grateful that my family pushed me.



Bridget Coyer. Dutch Quarter in Potsdam, Germany. My program took a trip to Potsdam, and the best part was the beautiful architecture and shopping. A fantastic trip!



Alex Western. This is from a trip I took in Croatia a while studying abroad!

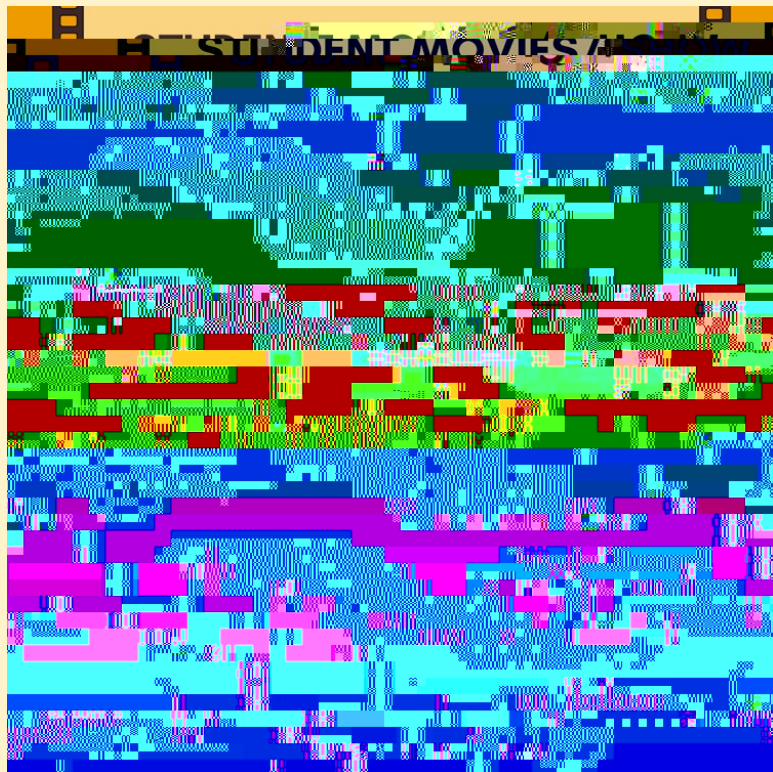


Keilty Archibald. Exploring Notting Hill on my first weekend in London!




Row 1, from left to right: My *Alice in Wonderland* moment in Büyükada. // In Dubai with Burj Khalifa (the world's tallest building) in the background! // I conducted a biotech-focused research in Boston and Cambridge, MA.

Row 2, from left to right:



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When asked what kinds of events and activities students recommend the Political Science department to host, answers included more community-based events and departmental get-togethers!

Students want to get involved with the larger community! Taking inspiration from the Athletics Department's meaningful involvement with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, one student recommended that the department host a bake sale for a local charity. Another suggested that students attend or host more protests and marches. Multiple students wanted meet-and-greets with elected officials, especially those who represent Saratoga Springs. Two students also proposed that the department host watch parties for political and historical movies.

Many had ideas for more involvement within the department itself. A repeat of the bowling party was requested! One student proposed a trivia night, and another an alumni networking event. Students had various ideas for departmental events where students and faculty sit through movies.



American politics has often been an arena for angry minds. While the American historian Richard Hofstadter made this statement in the midst of Barry Goldwater's unconventional presidential campaign in

