

Dear Students,

I hope that you are enjoying the fall semester and that your midterms are going well. It is hard to believe that we are already heading into the second half of the semester!

I am delighted to welcome Professor Collin Grimes to our department. Professor Grimes will spend the year with us, offering courses in comparative politics and international relations. His region of expertise is Latin America. Gabi Morris-Flores has written a column on Professor Grimes so that you might get to know him better. We are also very happy to have Professors Breslin and Taylor back in Ladd Hall. Both have had restful and productive sabbaticals.

We have already had a busy fall in the Political Science Department and are looking forward to another terrific talk on Thursday, November 14. Professor Alan Draper of St. Lawrence University will offer a lecture entitled, "The Divided Soul of American Liberalism." Professor Draper suggests that the two souls of liberalism--economic justice represented by unions and racial justice represented by civil rights groups--began to diverge in the 1960s. The first soul of liberalism defended bedrock union principles, such as seniority, as essential to economic equality. The second condemned them as contributing to racial inequality. The divergence of these two struggles helps explain the resurgence of conservatism, culminating in the election of Donald Trump. The lecture will take place on Thursday, November 14 at 5:30 in Davis Auditorium.

Have you ever wondered about the connection between political science and Skidmore's ultimate frisbee team? Emma Hulbert explains it. We are proud to boast so many members of the team as PL majors!

The newsletter is - as always - full of your interesting and enviable experiences abroad and at home. It also contains some information regarding our spring courses. Thank you to all of the students who

FACULTY NEWS

GAMBLING WITH

CONSTITUTION DAY LECTURE 2019

This year's lecture was presented by Professor Marc DeGirolami, professor of law at St. John's University. Professor DeGirolami is known for his scholarship on law and religion, freedom of speech, constitutional law, and criminal law. His lecture at Skidmore, however, focused on a specific aspect of constitutional law: constitutional theory. He structured the lecture in a way that kept the audience engaged, as it was easy to grasp the progression of his thoughts and arguments. The room was full from start to finish of the lecture, and the question portion at the end of the lecture demonstrated how interested the audience was in the subject.

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SPENDING A SUMMER AS A FREELANCE JOURNALIST

This summer, I embarked on my very first independent media project. After spending a semester in Washington, DC to study journalism and

LIVING AND WORKING IN KOLKATA, INDIA

I am grateful to Professor Biberman-Ocakli, Jael Silliman, Anuradha Kapoor, Amrita Dasgupta, Namrata Bose, the Skidmore Political Science Department and the Career Development Center for supporting my work this past summer at Swayam, a women's rights organization based in Kolkata, India. Swayam, which means "oneself," was founded in 1995 with the goal of empowering survivors of violence to become self-reliant and self-confident. Although India's laws address violence against women, survivors often are isolated from these protections by social stigma, which fuels communal silence and state inaction. Swayam helps survivors to access rights and entitlements by serving as bridge to institutions including: the judiciary, police, and government representatives. The organization also empowers survivors to be change-makers, to begin discussions in their communities about violence against women, gender roles, and patriarchy.

As an intern with Swayam, I designed a research framework and survey questions to gather the stories of its survivors, and learn how they have renegotiated the underlying social narratives of community exchange. I was given the opportunity to interview members of Ki Insaaf Awaz (The Sound of Justice) an independent group of women who serve as leaders in their community, sustaining a support network of women, and working to change how the community perceives gender-based violence and

misogyny.

Women described forming Insaaf Ki Awaz as "getting their lives and respect back."

Receiving

trainings in basic civil and criminal law, starting tailoring programs to help community members gain economic freedom, and holding strategy meetings, core members have created Ki Insaaf Awaz as a source of refuge and power.

Living in Kolkata, I experienced a small portion of India's resilient, vibrant syncretism and pluralism. As the workday ended, I walked through the streets, each with their own teashop at the corner, crowded with locals drinking from small clay cups. I could feel the rush of traffic, of bullock carts, autos, and motorcycles, honks ringing through the air. I passed by Hindu and Jain Temples, Synagogues, and mosques, hearing the melodic call to prayer during the last days of Ramadan. I also visited Kumartoli, a city within the city of winding streets lined with idols, which artisans craft from straw and clay for the Durga Puja festival in October. As I approached my mentor's flat, I would always turn the corner at the banyan tree shrine covered with rainbow flowers of every hue. At work everyone gathered in a circle for lunch, generously passing around their food from rotis, to lentils, rice, and Rasgula. I learned not only valuable lessons

INTERNING FOR STATE REPRESENTATIVE CONROY [D, IL]

This summer, I interned with Illinois State Representative Deb Conroy. Representative Conroy is a Democrat known for her work on issues of mental health and addiction. In fact, Conroy started and leads the Mental Health Advisory Committee.

Conroy enlisted the help of local high school and college students who are passionate about advocacy and politics and the epidemic of vaping plaguing young adults. For ten hours per week, interns were responsible for researching these topics, formatting the information, and presenting in front of Conroy and other community members.

As interns, we represented Conroy at many social events. I was responsible for tabling at a resource fair for senior citizens, where I listened to their concerns about state politics. While many of them

REPORTING FROM ABROAD

This past semester, Spring 2019, I had the privilege to study abroad in Morocco with SIT's (School for International Training) "Field Ethics in Journalism and New Media" program. After approximately two months of learning and living with a host family in the city of Rabat, my peers and I were tasked with pitching a story to a board of professional journalists. I subsequently relocated with several friends to report out of Tangier. For the following five weeks we all traveled, interviewed, researched, and worked hard to create quality news stories with the intention of *hopefully* getting them published. I'm happy to announce that U.S. News and World Reports just recently published my story!!

BLOGPOST FROM SRI LANKA

On April 21, 2019 three Christian churches and three hotels were struck in a series of coordinated bombings throughout the island nation of Sri Lanka. 259 people were killed while another 500 were injured, among them both Sri Lankans and tourists. These terrorist attacks were the worst the world has seen since the Al Qaeda September 11 attacks. Shortly after, Sri Lankan intelligence blamed them on National Thowheeth Jama'ath, a previously little known domestic Islamic terror group. Two days after the bombings, the Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attacks despite providing sound evidence to support [this](#). As a result, Islamophobia and Sinhalese ultra-nationalism became rampant throughout the country. As I watched these events unfold thousands of miles away, I mourned for the loss of life and worried for my family but also felt the urge to observe and study this case more closely.

Sri Lanka is a very diverse country both ethnically and religiously. Prior to gaining independence, the country had been the site of colonization at the hands of many world powers, leaving a long-lasting effect on its population. Its history as an independent country is one filled with violence and infighting amongst the Sinhalese majority and Tamil minority. The religious make-up of the nation is Buddhist (69.3%), Christian (7.3%), Hindu (13.6%) and Muslim (9.8%). The primarily Sinhalese Buddhist majority have been known to oppress the many other ethnic and religious minorities such as Tamils, Muslims and Christian, however the country's devastating civil war (1983-2011) was largely the result of divisions fostered during the period of British colonial control. The uniqueness of this country's ethnic and religious composition made it a perfect location to study population divisions and power dynamics. Is one isolated incident such as the Easter Bombings enough to spark conflict between two previously allied groups? (In this case, the X and Y [groups](#).) If so, this would depict the extreme scale to which rash emotions and reactions play in the human thought process.

I am a political science and prospective anthropology double major with a regional concentration in South Asia. My area of interest typically pertains to security studies as I have aspirations of working in the intelligence field. This project

presented an opportunity to diversify and deepen understandings of how social and cultural contexts impact politics, particularly in the context of Sri Lanka, [something](#) I really wanted to work on. The financial support I received through the SGA's Academic Pursuit Request Fund made it possible for me to travel to Sri Lanka and conduct ethnographic research regarding the devastating Easter Terror Attacks. The focus of my research was to analyze the ways in which ethnic and religious cleavages form following a traumatic incident. To yield accurate data I produced a set of questions aimed at extracting both emotional and impersonal answers. With the assistance of my family in the country, I was able to interview a number of religious leaders as well as many other citizens directly affected by or related to the attacks.

HOW BEING A POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJOR RELATES TO PLAYING ULTIMATE

The political science department has dominated my academics at Skidmore; and when I'm not in the political science department, I am playing Ultimate Frisbee. I have come to realize two major ways in which these otherwise disparate activities are actually quite similar.

The first is logistical, since many of the skills required to run an Ultimate team are the same as those required to be effective in politics. Last spring, I was elected co-president of my team, a role that requires being a team player off the field; with SGA on the budget and on issues of equity, with the Office of Leadership Activities and with other sports teams. As a leader I work to keep people on task to make our case to the departments that have the power to fund our team, and foster an environment of inclusion on the team. These skills of organization are similar to those I needed when working on Capitol Hill, advocating for social justice issues.

For example, our eboard had to learn how to work with one another while recognizing individual needs, and how to balance our discussions. These skills are needed to be effective in the political world as well. Our duties on the Ultimate Frisbee team's eboard range from the financial to the social agreement of the team, just as politicians must balance fundraising on the campaign trail with their duties to their constituents needs once elected.

The second way in which politics and Ultimate are similar is more ideological: how to deal with disagreement. On the field, not every-

one always gets along yet we still throw to one another and play the game in good spirits. This represents the political divide. This ability our team has to play with those we don't always agree with should ideally be the way that that our representative on capitol hill exercise bipartisanship.

Ultimate is mostly a very progressive, liberal community. For example, the sport is based on community values and there are no referees, because of something called 'Spirit of the Game'. This is the ideology central to Ultimate, an understanding that players will truly respect and be friendly with one another. Because of 'Spirit of the Game', players call their own fouls, and if a player on the opposite team disagrees, the two discuss until a compromise is reached with which both players are comfortable. This is a sport about open communication and understanding.

(3 credits)

What is peace? Merely the absence of war? Merely something John Lennon, Yoko Ono and Bruce Springsteen like to sing about? How can one talk about non-

: Politics and News
Media (CM) 3 credits

: American Political
Development (PC) 4 credits

: Civil Liberties (BB)
4 credits

: Politics of Congress
(PC) 4 credits

: Presidential Nomi-
nations (CM) 4 credits

: American Political
Thought (NT)

: Tocqueville'