

GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS



Naomi Nubin Wins Third Place in Graduate Research Showcase Competition at UH

On 11/1/19, the University of Houston held a Graduate Research Showcase that included 100 participants from across the university. This event was intended to showcase the breadth and depth of groundbreaking research being undertaken by UH graduate students. Naomi Nubin took third place in this competition, an immense achievement.

Nubin's research for this competition was in the form of a poster, and focused on the impact of social

diversity on the relationship between state-level political environments (Legislative competition, citizen ideology, governor's party) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program benefits at the individual level. Her results support the notion that citizen ideology has a major impact on TANF actual recipient benefits when social diversity (Black and Latino populations) within a state is high. So, when states are more racially heterogeneous, citizen ideology has a strong impact on TANF cash benefits at the individual level. The goal of this project was two-fold, to further understand the impact of state level political

environments on the states' most vulnerable populations, and to shine light on prevalent perceptions in American society regarding welfare cash benefits and minority communities.

In addition, Nubin won the 2019 ICPSR Scholarship for Public Administration, Public Policy & Public Affairs this summer. This fall, Nubin was also recognized by the American Political Science Association and the Hewlett Foundation as one of the Emerging Congressional Scholars. She was offered an honorarium of \$1,200 from APSA and attended the Emerging Congressional Scholar dinner in DC during the APSA meeting.



JEFFREY CHURCH
Professor and Chair,
Dept. of Political Science

This semester marked a leadership change. I am honored to become the chair of a department that has been continually doing exciting, innovative work. I am also pleased to assume this role, since my colleagues and our students are such generous and interesting people. These features of our department are on full display in what follows.

*I'd like to also ask you to **MARK YOUR CALENDARS** for our upcoming **200th PhD celebration party on February 6, 2020**. Details should arrive in your email, if you haven't already received them. Please join us!*

GRADUATE STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Akinrinola, A. A., Adebayo, S. B., **Onakpoya, Lulu U.**, & Nwaozuru, U. C. (2019). Toward Culturally-Inclusive Educational Technology in a Globalized World. In B. Adeoye, & G. Arome (Eds.), *The Roles of Technology and Globalization in Educational Transformation*. Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Clifford, Scott, **Yongkwang Kim**, and **Brian Sullivan**. Forthcoming. "An Improved Question Format for Measuring Conspiracy Beliefs." *Public Opinion Quarterly*.

Kim, Yongkwang. 2019. "How Conspiracy Theories Can Stimulate Political Engagement." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties*.

Liu, Junqiang, **Hui Zhou**, Lingrui Liu, and Chunxiao Wang. 2019. "The Weakness of the Strong: Examining the Squeaky-Wheel Effect of Hospital Violence in China." *Social Science & Medicine*, forthcoming.

Simas, Elizabeth and **Doug Murdoch**. Forthcoming. "I Didn't Lie, I Misspoke": Voters' Responses to Questionable Campaign Statements." *Journal of Experimental Political Science*.

Waggoner, Philip D., Ryan Kennedy, Hayden Le, and **Myriam Shiran**. 2019. "Big Data and Trust in Public Policy Automation." *Statistics, Politics and Policy*.

Zhu, Ling and **Hui Zhou**. 2019. "'Two Chinas': Social Equity, Social Policies and the Urban-Rural Divide in China." In *Social Equity in Asia-Pacific Region*, 109-136. Ed. Morgan Johansen, Palgrave Macmillan.

GRADUATE STUDENT GRANTS AND AWARDS

Cassandra Khatri, an PhD Candidate & Associate Professor at Lone Star College, won the Faculty Excellence Award- Lone Star College- University Park and also was awarded an APSA P4 Grant for instructional simulations creation.

Ulkar Imamverdiyeva received: the Cullen Graduate Travel Grant; a Women and Gender Studies Grant, and an APSA travel fund.

Haimo Li was awarded: APSA-2019 Travel Grant ; SPSA - 2020 Prestage-Cook Travel Award ; University of Houston - Cullen Fellowship Travel Grant 2019

Li Zheng was awarded the following grants: Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation Doctoral Fellowship 2019 to 2020; APSA travel fund; SPSA travel fund

Hui Zhou received an ICPSR Summer Workshop Fellowship over the summer to provide methodological training.

PLACEMENTS

Ryan Jewell accepted a position as Applied Data Scientist at Civis Analytics in Houston. Adam Ozer has accepted a post-doctoral position at the London School of Economics.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT NEWS



UH Election Lab Launched

In 2019, Professor Brandon Rottinghaus launched the UH Election Lab, in which a team of undergraduate students work closely with faculty to explore the process of voting, focusing on how we vote and how elections are administered.

Current and future projects including how successful high schools are at registering eligible students, the growing frequency of recall elections, the impact of mobile polling locations, the

effectiveness of countywide vote centers, and turnout on college campuses.

UH student Brittney Grimm has been particularly “excited” about the Lab’s analysis of how well public high schools carry out voter registration for their students, which is required by Texas law. Voting is “a way of expressing your voice. So finding out why voter registration is higher in some places than others can help the state

possibly do more to get schools to comply with that law,” Grimm said.

Another student, Syed Naqvi has also found the experience rewarding, stating that “I plan to obtain my PhD in political science one day and highly recommend others with a similar career path to participate in research studies being conducted by the political science department or UH as a whole to expose them to the world of research.”



Ed Gonzales, City Year Worker

Next year, Edward Gonzales (class of 2020) will devote himself to underserved inner city schools as part of the City Year program, which is part of AmeriCorps. As a City Year worker, Gonzales will be a peer assistant to teachers within the New York education system, as well as a liaison to the students and the teachers. The aim of

the program is to build positive relationships with students, to foster the success of the neediest students, and to reshape the school culture for the better. Gonzales says that, “many of the schools I will be working with are filled with students whose family and backgrounds have major obstacles in their life currently, and as a City Year worker, we aim to let those students know that their current life situations do not correlate to them being less successful in life, but that they can and will be more than just a statistic.”

Former Student Danielle Niangar on a Fulbright in Italy



Last year, eight Political Science undergraduates won Fulbright Fellowships, a record number for our department and college. I followed up with Danielle Niangar, who this year is studying the societal integration of immigrants in the Italian National Institute of Statistics in Rome, Italy. In her spare time, she is also volunteering at the Joel Nafuma Refugee Center, one of the largest refugee centers in Rome. Danielle became interested in international human rights when she began to work with law firms on asylum and refugee cases.

I asked her about how her Political Science degree has helped her. “I believe that my UH political science degree has prepared me for a future in research and human rights through the proper classes such as Arguments, Data, and Politics, International Relations, and Human Rights,” she responded. “I think these classes established a strong foundation for me to build upon. Additionally, the UH faculty has been extremely supportive, and I could not have done the things that I have done without professors who assisted me, like Dr. Kennedy, Dr. Shea, and Dr. Zwald. After my Fulbright, I plan to apply for a PhD in political science and focus on immigration and human rights.”

Ms. Niangar graduated in May 2019. While she was at UH, she majored in Political Science and Sociology. She did a Spring 2019 PURS with POLS faculty Ryan Kennedy, in which she tried to determine the extent of the American public’s concern for human rights. She used innovative techniques, such as mouse tracking, to determine the extent of a survey participant’s concern for human rights, in an experimental setting. She was awarded an NSF grant to pursue this research, and presented this research at the Society for Political Methodology’s summer 2019 meeting (which very few grad students even attend). She has worked for three immigration law firms, interned for Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, the British Consulate, Human Rights First, Refugee Services of Texas, and the Department of State.



Gregory R. Weiher
1948 – 2019

We were saddened to learn of the passing of Gregory R. Weiher, Ph.D., who died Sunday, Sept. 29, 2019, in Houston, Texas. Our colleague Greg joined the Department of Political Science in September of 1984 after receiving a Ph.D. from Washington University. He was promoted to associate professor with tenure in 1991 and promoted to professor in 2003. Greg served the department and the university in a number of administrative positions. He was Director of the Center for Public Policy from 1991 to 1995; he was Director of the Master's Program in Public Administration from 2007 to 2008, and chair of the political science department from 2008 to 2011. Throughout his time at the University of Houston Greg played a major role in the public administration program and helped train many MPA students who went on to successful careers in the public sector. Greg was also a prolific scholar. His major field of interest was urban and educational policy, and he published a number of well received books and articles on those subjects. His book, *The Fractured Metropolis: Political Fragmentation and the Metropolitan Segregation* was chosen by the Gustavus Myers Center as the Outstanding Book on the subject of human rights in 1992. He also published more than twenty peer-reviewed articles or chapters in some of our best outlets for academic research. Most of his articles were on urban affairs or education. They include four articles published in the *Journal of Politics*, one of the top three general audience journals in the discipline. He also published articles in *Political Research Quarterly*, *Social Science Quarterly*, the *Policy Studies Journal* among others. Greg also raised a voluminous amount of grant money for the University. During his career at the University of Houston Greg was Principal Investigator or Co-Principal Investigator on grants totaling \$1,959,863. He contributed to the department and University on all the metrics for excellence. He was a scholar, an administrator, a grantsman, an excellent teacher, and most importantly a first class friend and colleague to all who knew him.

- Kent Tedin

DEPARTMENT EVENTS



Faculty Brownbag Series

In Fall 2019, the Department of Political Science began a brown-bag research seminar. Every two weeks, a faculty member or graduate student in the department had an opportunity to present and discuss research in progress. In the picture, Sebastian Vera, visiting post-doctoral scholar, is presenting his text-analysis of speeches in the Ecuadorian Parliament, part of a project in which he is trying to understand how quickly women are interrupted while speaking in the legislature.

Seminar with Arnold Kling

Noted economist and blogger Arnold Kling visited the department on November 8 to discuss his recent book, *The Three Languages of Politics*.



Welsh Minister of Education Speaks to Undergraduates



Kirsty Williams, Wales' Minister of Education, visited our department to give a lecture to our undergraduate students on September 4. She spoke about the state of the European Union and its future in the wake of Brexit.

Faculty Collaborate with Univision to Conduct Poll

Professors Jason Casellas, Jeronimo Cortina, and Brandon Rottinghaus collaborated with Univision to administer a poll of registered Latino voters in Texas. Univision's national poll of Latinos last year received much media attention at the national and local levels, and our Political Science professors were asked to collaborate on the follow-up in Texas. The survey asked a sample of non-Latino Texans (n=504) and Texas Latinos (n=500) a number of questions ahead of the 2020 Presidential Election.

Texas registered voters are eager to vote in next year's election, and Latino registered voters seem to be particularly enthusiastic. However, the turnout gap between women and men is about 4 points. In 2018, women played a critical role in the midterm election giving Democrats a competitive edge.

In terms of the U.S. Senate race, none of the candidates, including Republican Sen. John Cornyn enjoy high favorable ratings among Texas' registered voters. Sen. Cornyn only has a 38% favorable impression among registered voters, while Sema Hernandez, M.J. Hegar and Royce West are among the candidates from the Democratic Party that enjoy the highest favorability among registered voters with 26 percent, 24 percent, and 24 percent, respectively. A significant hurdle that candidates face is that around two out of five voters have not heard enough about the candidates to have an informed opinion, which opens a significant opportunity for the field to make significant strides among voters' preferences.



FACULTY AWARDS AND ACIEVEMENTS

Jason Casellas was invited to join the editorial board of the *Social Science Quarterly* journal.

FACULTY RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS



“An important book for anyone interested in domestic politics and international relations.”

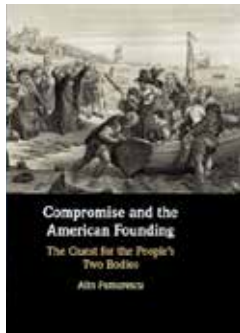
– Jon Pevehouse – University of Wisconsin, Madison

“Foreign election meddling is a timely topic, yet it remains poorly understood. **Johannes Bubeck** and **Nicolay Marinov** break new ground with *Rules and Allies*.”

–Sarah Bush – Yale University

In an *APSR* article, **Scott Clifford** and **Elizabeth Simas** challenge the assumed benefits of empathy, arguing that empathy fuels partisan polarization. Their article is the **top** trending paper in Political Science, and was recently discussed in *Scientific American* and *Wired*.

AMERICAN
POLITICAL
SCIENCE
REVIEW

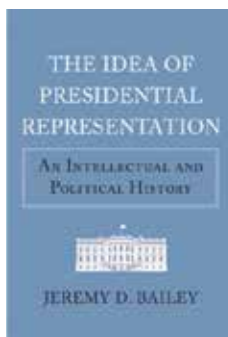


In this unprecedented work, **Alin Fumurescu** investigates how colonists and early Americans – largely through competing and evolving conceptualizations of ‘the people’ - re-imagined the nature of compromise, its potentials and perils. In light of our current, increasingly polarized and uncompromising politics, the nuanced analysis here is as timely as it is valuable.’

–Robert Martin – Hamilton College

In an *APSR* article, **Francisco Cantu** investigates how autocracies rely on voter fraud, and he introduces a new methodology to audit the integrity of vote tallies.

AMERICAN
POLITICAL
SCIENCE
REVIEW



“**Bailey** combines political science with history to produce a truly magnificent book that will be of significant interest to historians, political scientists, and legal scholars.”

–Benjamin A. Kleinerman – Michigan State University

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