

POLITICAL SCIENCE

SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY/MAY 2011/ISSUE 4

Ambiguous Warfare

What is Political Science?

-Specialists in comparative politics analyze power dynamics in communities, states, and regions throughout the world.

-Specialists in international relations focus on the power relationships between countries and between citizens and organizations of different countries.

-Specialists in American politics look at the exercise of power domestically, through American institutions and processes ranging from the state to social movements.

-Specialists in political theory address fundamental normative and explanatory assumptions, such as the nature and purpose of the state; who should have power and why; and what would constitute a good society.

Newsletter

Editor: Erika Brown

Faculty Editor: Ruth Groff

Tim Lomperis writes and teaches in the area of International Politics. He was invited to give the first “Last Lecture” at SLU, and his “Politics of the Future” course has been described as “the class I came to college to take.” His latest book is *The Viet Nam War from the Rear Echelon: An Intelligence Officer’s Memoir, 1972-1973*, University Press of Kansas, 2011.



Photo Credit: Chad Williams

What issues stand out for you in teaching courses about wars and warfare?

In general, students come in with a black-and-white mindset: there’s good and there’s evil, and they want their country to be on the side of good. But wars are fought in a mix of darkness and blazes of light. War is ambiguous. Seeing this fosters a deep sense of humility in students, and cuts through false pride.

Are students still interested in the Viet Nam War?

Yes. The Viet Nam war persists as a huge stain on the American soul, and students and their parents still wrestle with it. This is no less so in the aftermath of September 11.

I have been teaching courses related to the Viet Nam War since the 1980’s, and I always have to turn students away because the class is full. Interest is unabated. The experience was akin to a civil war for Americans. We can’t forgo reflecting upon our actual civil war, and the Viet Nam War has the same cache.

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ATLAS Week

April 2 - April 9

By Mallory Schwarz

This April SLU hosted its Eleventh Annual Sam and Marilyn Fox Atlas Week with the theme of Global Justice: Meeting Basic Human Needs. The Atlas Program is a week-long program that seeks to highlight the international dimension of SLU's academic programs and celebrate our role in international education and service in light of our Jesuit tradition. The primary goal is to increase awareness of current global issues in order to promote discussion, but more importantly to inspire and inform action. Thanks to the support and hard work of faculty and students this year's Atlas Week was the largest ever with over 100 events.

As a Political Science Graduate Assistant I acted as a liaison between the Political Science Department and the Atlas committee to coordinate events hosted by Political Science Professors and Students. It was a pleasure to work with such an enthusiastic and committed group of people, though I dare say the department is glad to be rid of my endless onslaught of emails!

For more info regarding the Atlas Program, check out: <http://www.slu.edu/x29391.xml>



Students at the Billiken World Festival



Professor Michelle Lorenzini and the Atlas Week Keynote speaker, Irene Khan

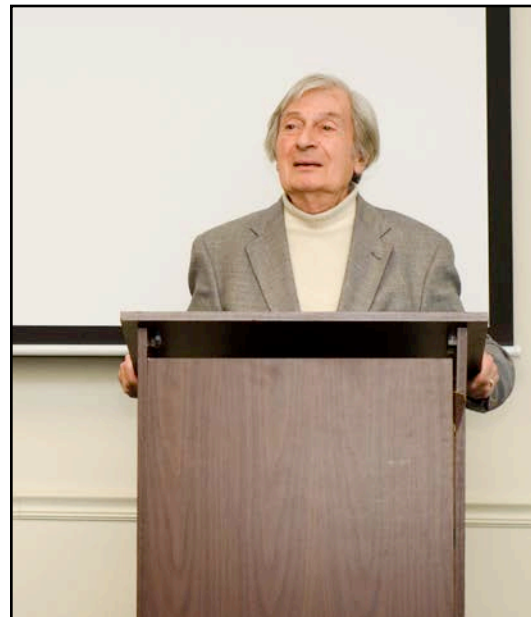


POLITICAL SCIENCE EVENTS

“After Genocide: STL Bosnians Speak”
“Global and Local Social Justice, Student Presentations”
“A Global Look at Food: Examining Heifer International”
“Apocalypse Never: The Urgent Problem of Nuclear Weapons”
“Towards a New Mexican Masculinity”
“Mexico, The U.S. and the War on Drugs”
“China, Northeast Asia and the 21st Century”
“The New European Imperialism? Turkey and the E.U.”
“In Defense of Victims of Persecution: Asylum and Protection under the UN Convention Against Torture”
“Turmoil in the Middle East”
“Sustainability and the UN Millennium Development Goals: A View from El Salvador”
“Political Change Around the Globe”
“Protest and Democracy”



Political Science Administrative Assistant Phyllis Forchee (left) and Mallory Schwarz (right) at the Billiken World Festival



Professor Jean-Robert Leguey-Fellieux speaks at “Turmoil in the Middle East”



(left to right) Dr. Seung Kim, Dr. John Zhao, Dr. Larry Taylor, and Dr. Lomperis discuss China, Northeast Asia, and the 21st Century

Strategic Planning

By Ellen Carnaghan

This academic year, the Political Science department engaged in an extensive process of strategic planning. Three committees worked throughout the year.

Faculty Expertise

One committee, headed by Dr. Christopher Witko, investigated the department's need for additional faculty members. They collected data on staffing levels and disciplinary coverage in a variety of peer institutions, and they compared the student-teacher ratio in our department to that of other departments in the College of Arts and Sciences. This committee identified a new faculty hire with a specialization in Western European politics as a top priority.

Visibility and Collaboration

A second committee, headed by Dr. Timothy Lomperis, interviewed members of the SLU community to learn what observers identify as the department's strengths and weaknesses. We were pleased to learn that we have a reputation for outstanding teaching to undergraduates, but we found that other aspects of our work are less well known. Expect to see more public events highlighting the work of the department in coming months. In September, for instance, there will be an exhibit in Pius Library celebrating the department. In conjunction with that exhibit, the department will sponsor two public lectures. Dr. Jeff Gill from Washington University's Political Science department will speak on the effect of war on children's mental health, and our own Dr. Timothy Lomperis will reflect on his new book on his experiences as an intelligence officer in Vietnam.

Mission

The third committee discussed the centrality of citizenship to the identity of the department. In our research, members of the department seek to understand the exercise of political power at all levels: local, national, and international. Insight of this kind is crucial to potentially solving fundamental social problems like war, poverty, and oppression in all its forms. In our teaching, we aim to enable SLU students to assess the root causes of political phenomena, thereby preparing them to be truly men and women for others.

Each committee produced a report and a number of recommendations. In late April, the department spent a Friday afternoon discussing various proposals and plans for the future. Overall, the process was very helpful in shaping our thinking about where we want to be and what we need to do to get there. I thank everyone involved for their hard work this year and their readiness to contribute to the department's bright future.

Thoughts from an ... *Americanist*

By Christopher Witko

A sense of frustration about the future and perceived lack of opportunity for the younger generation was probably a factor in the recent uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa. What does this have to do with America? A recent Gallup Poll of Americans indicated that fewer people think the next generation will have a better life than at any time since the question was first asked in 1983 (<http://www.gallup.com/poll/147350/optimism-future-youth-reaches-time-low.aspx>). While the United States is a far cry from Tunisia and Egypt in terms of economic opportunity and political liberty, economic inequality is actually greater in the US than in Egypt, and social mobility is lower in the United States than in France.

Americans are generally quite tolerant of inequality, and certainly most people would rather have the opportunities that the U.S. economy provides than those available in Egypt or Tunisia. And there is nothing necessarily wrong with economic inequality as long as people think the system is fair and that they have a chance through their hard work to obtain "the good life," which for many Americans means material comfort. The fact that people are so pessimistic about the future suggests that many people no longer feel this way about America.

A solid economic boom would surely make people less pessimistic, but unfortunately in recent economic recoveries the benefits of growth have not been as widely shared as in prior generations.

From roughly the 1940's through the 1970's the United States became more economically equal, but since the late 1970's this trend has reversed with major increases in economic inequality and wage stagnation for most ordinary citizens. Though increasing economic inequality has been attributed to broad economic forces like globalization, political scientists have convincingly argued that increasing inequality also has political causes such as the growing political power of corporations and the decline of labor unions. While most Americans are obviously materially and politically better off than the people fighting for basic democratic rights, these recent world events can help us to understand the potential pitfalls of the path the US has been heading down for a few decades. America's political stability has often been attributed to its large middle class, but the recent poll results indicate that many people think that the future of the middle class is not so bright.

Honors Theses

Dino Hadzic, "A Just Peace: The Tribunal, Elites, and Reconciliation in Bosnia-Herzegovina"

My political science honors thesis is an exploration of whether or not the International Criminal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) encourages political/social reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I investigate the relationship between Bosnian political elites from the country's various national groups and the ICTY. Does the tribunal encourage cooperation among Bosnia's political elites by holding alleged war criminals responsible for their past behavior, or does it inflame tensions by bringing these figures into the public eye, only to be defended by their respective ethnic communities? The results indicate that the tribunal does not facilitate reconciliation, primarily because the country's elites consistently use the work of the tribunal in a cynical, self-serving fashion. If the international community intends to foster reconciliation in post-conflict societies, reforms are needed which will increase the independence of these judicial organs from other international governing bodies.

Courtney Anvender, "Peace with Justice"

In examining the role of the Church in Northern Irish politics during the Troubles, I illustrate why and how the Church behaved as a major political actor during the civil rights movement of 1968 and again in response to the IRA hunger strikes of 1981. In doing so, I analyze how well the Church was able to both uphold its mission and maintain unity among its members in response to political developments throughout the Troubles. Overall, I examine the Church's role in terms of the political process model of McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly. I show how the Church was able to affect social change by responding to opportunities, acting as a locus of mobilization, and framing political issues in the language of shared Catholic beliefs.

Emily Reid, South African Women's Organizations in the Transitional Period: Assessing the Value of Gender Mainstreaming as a Political Approach

In South Africa, democratic transition was not only struggled for by traditionally male-dominated anti-Apartheid parties, but also by women's organizations that worked for anti-sexist goals within the context of national liberation. In my paper, I analyzed efforts of women's organizations during the transitional period of the 1980s and 1990s to understand how their efforts manifested in the creation of gender mainstreaming policies in the new South African democracy. Gender mainstreaming is a strategy for remedying gender inequalities through taking issues of gender into consideration in every department and through every policy. Looking at three themes- women in government, reproductive and sexual rights, and women as caretakers, the paper looks at the relationship between the results of gender mainstreaming as a set of formal provisions, and their material realities for women.

Katie Schlechter, Gender and Globalization: neoliberal economic policies and their effects on women in Mexico and India

The global nature of modern free-market economics has connected individuals across borders in ways that have drastically affected their dynamic lifestyles. Entire nations undergo revolutionary changes simply as a result of their "plugging in" to the global capitalist economy. This economy was born out of various theories within the liberal free-market capitalist tradition. While most of these theories are deemed successful in the realm of two-dimensional spreadsheets, some can be rendered questionable when examined from the critical analysis of actual well-being. While the consequences of these neoliberal policies and global economic integration are as varied as the people whom they influence, they are always tied to gendered bodies. Globalization and the neoliberal capitalist policies that it embraces have promoted the feminization of the international labor force and often exacerbated existing gender disparities.

Katie Schlechter, continued:

Therefore, I would like to examine the dynamics around gender inequality in two “developing nations,” specifically as they are framed by processes of globalization. Public discourse on the gendered implications of neoliberal policies has been limited, due to a preference to view the economies of individual nations as homogeneous entities. To accurately observe the daily repercussions of globalization, critical examinations of the interactions between international economic policies and local contexts are in order. Therefore, I will consider the influence of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in Mexico and India’s New Economic Policy (NEP) on existing gender-based disparities within the two countries.

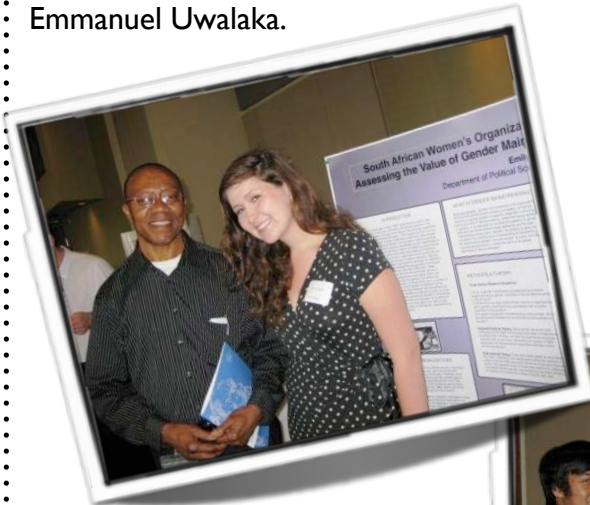
Senior Legacy Symposium 2011

The Senior Legacy Symposium is a celebration of outstanding student work across the University. In 2011, the Political Science department nominated three students: Courtney Anvender, Dino Hadzic, and Emily Reid.

Courtney Anvender (below, right) presented a poster based on her honors thesis on the role of the Catholic Church during the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

Dino Hadzic (below, middle) presented a poster based on his honors thesis on the effect of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia on elite reconciliation in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Emily Reid (below, left) presented a poster based on her honors thesis on South African Women's Organizations and the value of gender mainstreaming. She is shown with one of her faculty mentors, Dr. Emmanuel Uwalaka.

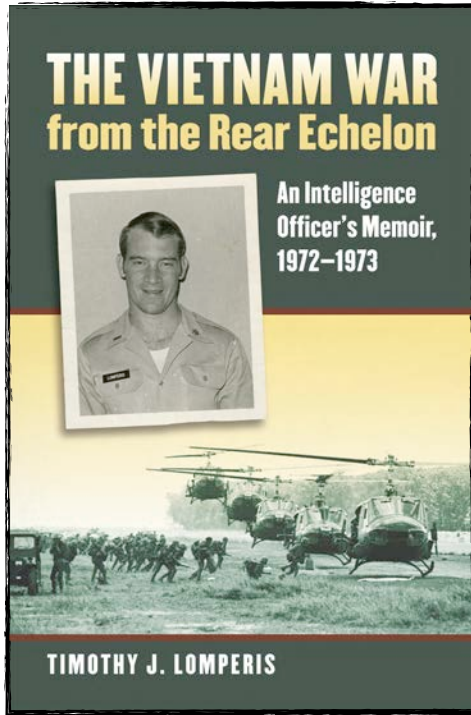


Additional Political Science students were nominated for other departments. Benjamin Stephan and Katrina Becherer presented a poster on the emergence of urban economies for Public Policy Studies.

Danny Jendusa gave an oral presentation on North St. Louis: A case study of neglect and opportunity.

Are there lessons to be learned from the Viet Nam War?

The lesson that I try to convey is that so-called "lessons" must be applied with great caution. It is important not to be led astray by generalizations. There is a danger of ideological lenses distorting our perceptions of the different realities of new wars.



The Vietnam War from the Rear Echelon University Press of Kansas, 2011

From the Publisher's Blurb: In exposing the inner workings of a military headquarters during wartime, Lomperis recounts the tensions of a command caught between the political imperatives of Washington and the deteriorating military situation on the ground. He also offers a portrait of life in wartime Saigon, writing with genuine respect for and curiosity about Vietnamese culture. Ultimately, he describes his own moral conundrum as the son of missionaries and an initial Cold Warrior who undergoes a gradual disillusionment that resolves into peaceful reconciliation.



Talk: "Afghanistan: A Strategic and Tactical Analysis"

By Richard Gabriel, Ph.D.

Speaker: Richard Gabriel, Ph.D., Retired Army Officer and author of more than 30 books on ancient to modern wars, military strategies and tactics, the psychology of warfare, and military ethics. Professor Gabriel has taught war and politics at the U.S. Army War College, the Royal Military College of Canada, and Marine Corp University. He has reached celebrity status because of his frequent appearances on national television as a war analyst, but especially for his commentary on the History Station's series on "Ancient Wars."



When: March 28, 2011 from 4:00 to 6:00 PM

**Where: Pius Library, the Knight's Room,
Saint Louis University Campus,
St. Louis, MO. 63108; Pius Library Tel.#: (314)977-3302**

**Admission:
Free**

- Sponsors: The Department of Political Science, Saint Louis University.
- Co-Sponsors: History Department, International Studies, and the Russian and East European Studies Program.

On March 28, 2011, Rick Gabriel spoke to students and faculty at Saint Louis University. Dr. Gabriel analyzed US and Soviet strategy in Afghanistan. He provided an infantryman's view of the terrain, culture, history, tribes, etc., considerations that make fighting in Afghanistan a problem.



Photo credits: chad Williams