In the fall, the department co-sponsored a homecoming visit of three UT alumni that are making a difference in the global fight against poverty, food insecurity, and disease. All three women are working with organizations committed to improving the lives of those living in developing countries around the world.

Maria Hinson Tobin ('13) graduated with a BS in biological sciences. She went on to earn an MS in global health from Notre Dame and a PhD in public health from the University of Georgia. She is now the senior director of development and corporate partnerships for CARE, an international organization dedicated to ending poverty and achieving social justice. In particular, CARE assists women and girls in developing countries to overcome discrimination, food insecurity, and violence.

Amber Sheets ('07, '10) earned her BA and MA in political science with a focus on comparative politics and international relations. She is now the senior technical advisor for digital health monitoring for Population Services International, an organization that tackles health challenges around the world. Amber lives and works in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Lindsay McClain ('09) has a BS in peace studies and conflict resolution through the College Scholars Program. She completed an MA in peace studies and conflict resolution from Notre Dame. She is now the executive director of Generations for Peace USA, an organization that promotes tolerance, conflict resolution, and responsible citizenship.

All three alumni have close connections to the Department of Political Science, and the substantive policy issues that each works on right now are ones that political science faculty regularly cover in their classes. To celebrate homecoming, the three UT graduates were invited back to campus to meet with student groups, participate in panel discussions on global development, and attend classes to inform undergraduates about their individual career paths and the professional work they now do.

Special thanks go to Professor Will Jennings, a distinguished lecturer in the department, who worked with Jon Ring in the Howard Baker Center, to organize and coordinate the event.

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Many exciting changes are taking place this year in the department. Our study abroad programs returned and welcomed a new cohort of students. Our undergraduate classes, both face to face and online, have filled quickly, showing the interest students have in learning about the critical issues confronting societies today. We also renovated office space in McClung Tower, secured new donations to the department that support graduate research, and brought three UT alumni back to campus to speak with current students about their own personal career paths.

Political science additionally welcomed three new faculty members to the department this past fall, which created excitement and energy inside and outside of the classroom. Xuhong Su, whose research focuses on corruption and accountability in public institutions, came to UT from the University of South Carolina and will be taking over administration of the Masters of Public Policy and Administration program. Stephanie Pierce brings a decade worth of experience working in public policy to the department and our students. Her research on housing policy is important as cities confront the challenges of accommodating an ever-increasing population. Let me end by indicating how thrilled I am to step into my new role as the department head. My role is to help faculty, students, and staff accomplish their educational and career goals. Please be sure to visit McClung Tower and the department when you are on campus. We would love to see you. Go Vols!

-Brandon Prins, Professor & Head
The Department of Political Science offers study abroad programs in Western Europe that enable students to immerse themselves in the vibrant cultures, rich histories, and vivid politics of the United Kingdom and Italy.

**LONDON CALLING**

The London program welcomed fourteen new students that undertook the five-week academic term, during May and June. Nine of the 14 stayed on for an additional five-week internship that placed the students in a variety of settings—a barrister’s chambers, a law firm, at nonprofits, and a think tank. The end of pandemic restrictions meant that site visits were also less constrained than they had been in summer 2021, when many parts of Italy were canceled for two years, the global COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on international travel, with prolonged consequences that the people of Italy faced. In summer 2022, students returned for the first time in three years to Florence, the site of the program.

There were a few concessions that still needed to be made to the specter of COVID. Students wore masks in class and on field trips to museums. The usual weekend trip to Rome was a casualty, though most students made the trip to the Eternal City on their own.

Italy itself was a little different. The streets, cafes, restaurants, and bars were less crowded. Museums, churches, and tour sites were similarly less crowded as the government made an effort to stagger and limit admissions.

Some things did not change. Students were able to take most of the traditional field trips including visits to Siena, Pisa, Orvieto, and San Gimignano. Italy remains beautiful. The food and the gelato remain exquisite. The people were even more friendly. Florence and Italy were waiting with open arms to welcome UT students back. The program had a group of a dozen students who enjoyed their time in Italy and would be happy to share their experiences.

Italy continues to recover and the department looks forward to returning at the end of May.
Welcome to Our Newest Colleagues

Xuhong Su is an associate professor in the Department of Political Science. She joined the department as the new director of the MPPA program after serving in a similar role at the University of South Carolina. Professor Su received her PhD from the University of Georgia in 2010. Her research focuses on public administration and public management, particularly on human resource practices, (anti) corruption and accountability, as well as employees’ motivational and career trajectories.

Professor Su also has a strong interest in scientific workforce policy, exploring how the scientific enterprise structures the careers and incentives of researchers. She has published in a wide variety of disciplinary venues, such as Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, Public Administration Review, American Review of Public Administration, Governance, and Research Policy among others. Su likes to teach courses on public administration, organizational theory, and human resource management.

Stephanie Casey Pierce is an assistant professor in the department and an affiliate with the Howard Baker Center for Public Policy. She joined the department after completing her PhD (2020) in public policy and administration from the John Glenn College of Public Affairs at the Ohio State University and a subsequent two-year post-doctoral fellowship in the same college. Her research centers on housing instability—evictions, foreclosures, and homelessness—and how it contributes to and stems from social and economic inequality.

She also studies the impact of administrative burden on program equity and individual outcomes. She has nearly a decade of experience working in public policy, first for nonprofits that provided research, legislative, and best practices to elected officials, and later as a senior staff member at two state agencies. Pierce served as the outreach director for the Ohio Department of Commerce from 2009-2010 before beginning work as a manager for Ohio’s foreclosure prevention program at the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA). She worked in several roles at OHFA, managing two divisions and eventually serving as Director for the Office of Homeownership Preservation.

She has published in the Journal of Policy Analysis & Management, Housing Policy Debate, and Children and Youth Services Review. Professor Pierce enjoys teaching courses on housing and criminal justice policy, public policy formulation, and research methods.

Kelly Morrison is an assistant professor in the department and a global security fellow with the Howard Baker Center for Public Policy. She joined the department after completing her PhD (2020) from the University of Pittsburgh and a follow-up post-doctoral fellowship with the VDEM (Varieties of Democracy) Institute at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden. She specializes in international relations and comparative politics with a focus on human rights, democratic institutions, and international law and organizations.

Morrison’s research has been published in Democratization and the Journal of Politics. Her research on repression won a best paper award from the SSIP section of the International Studies Association in 2021. Professor Morrison likes to teach classes on international law, human rights, and inter-governmental organizations.

Morgan and Kelly Receive Prestigious Book Award from the American Political Science Association

Each year, the American Political Science Association (APSA) recognizes some of the best research published in political science. The Gladys M. Kammerer Award honors the best book published in the field of US national policy. The 2022 award went to Hijacking the Agenda: Economic Power and Political Influence, written by Chris Witko, Jana Morgan, Nathan Kelly, and Peter Enns. Professors Morgan, Kelly and co-authors demonstrate that members of Congress give more attention in their floor speeches to the economic concerns of wealthy interests in the United States. The greater attention leads to a policy agenda focused much more on the economic issues prioritized by powerful elites. Hijacking the Agenda is published by the Russell Sage Foundation.

ICMA Recognizes Oak Ridge City Manager Mark Watson for Outstanding Professional Achievement

Mark Watson, the Oak Ridge city manager and a recent PhD graduate of the UT Department of Political Science, was honored by the International City/County Management Association for his 45 years of public service. ICMA’s Award for Career Development in Memory of L.P. Cookingham “recognizes an outstanding local government administrator who has made a significant contribution to the career development of new talent in professional local government management.” Watson has helped train dozens of students and young professionals for careers in city management and has served as the city manager of Oak Ridge since 2010.
ARABIC FRIENDSGIVING