

POLITICAL SPECTRUM



Maria Hinson Tobin



Amber Sheets



Lindsay McClain

VOLS MAKING AN IMPACT IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



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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MESSAGE FROM
THE DEPARTMENT HEAD

Political Science is on the Move

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 sheltering the homeless. Finally, Kelly Morrison brings expertise in international law and human rights to our program; two critical areas of research that are in demand by graduate students. These three scholars expand our course offerings, introduce new ideas to students, and bring expertise to help solve public policy problems.

Interest in a political science undergraduate degree has continued to increase. The number of majors and minors is at its highest level in years, which coincides with UT's largest freshman class ever.

Currently, there are more than 800 undergraduate students majoring or minoring in political science. The creation of concentrations has also received support from our students. In particular, the international relations concentration and law and courts concentration continue to be very popular, and the department has expanded course offerings in these two areas to meet student demand. The department also welcomed eight bright, new graduate students this past fall. Two of these students come to Knoxville from great distances: Nigeria and Greece. The new class of graduate students joins their more senior colleagues in pursuing important policy-relevant research that will help elucidate difficult challenges confronting Tennessee and our world today, such as climate change, violent extremism, poverty, discrimination, and sustainable development. The department expects great things from these students in the future.

Let me end by indicating how thrilled I am to step into the head role. I have big shoes to fill and hope that I can meet expectations. My research focuses on the behavior of violent non-state actors, such as terrorists, pirates, and rebels. I use geo-spatial modeling tools to map the locations of violent attacks and the subsequent responses by local and regional authorities. I have been a faculty member in the political science department for the past 15 years and absolutely love UT and the Knoxville community. As head, my role is to help faculty, students, and staff accomplish their own 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

Program Provides Student with Unique Perspective

Kristian Derrick, a third-year undergraduate student in political science, decided it was time to step outside of her comfort zone. Kristian grew up in Jackson, Tennessee, and up until fall semester of 2022, she had not been outside of the United States. Rather than the typical trip to western Europe, such as the UK or Italy, Kristian signed up for a SIT (school for international training) program that would take her to North Africa. SIT programs are unique in that they are interdisciplinary and focused on critical global issues. At the same time as Kristian took classes on Arabic language, research methods, and migration, she interned with Forum des Alternatives Maroc (FMAS), an organization that aims to spread democracy, human rights, and social justice.

"The program provided me with a lens that I otherwise would not have had to understand the scope of current global issues, specifically those regarding migration, transnationalism, political perspectives, and the effects of climate change," said Kristen, who returned to Knoxville in December and plans on taking classes in the spring that will help her prepare for a career in the US Foreign Service.



Kristian Derrick outside Zagora, Morocco

Jack Schwartz (far left) attending a forum on the proliferation of nuclear weapons held in Amman, Jordan



Doctoral Student Wins Coveted Boren Fellowship

Jack Schwartz, a PhD student in the department, won a prestigious Boren Fellowship to study Arabic in Jordan for the year. Boren Fellowships are awarded through a merit-based, national competition where applicants distinguish themselves through academic excellence, motivation, career goals, and commitment to public service. These fellowships are awarded to US graduate students who design research projects involving language and culture in regions critical to US national security. Schwartz is combining language training with an internship at the Arab Institute for Security Studies at the University of Jordan.

He heads up a research project focused on the formation of a regional organization that will address the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. He recently attended the Amman Security Colloquium, a conference addressing security issues in the Middle East that included various politicians, policymakers, and scientists. Additionally, he was invited to present research at the Nuclear Forum, a meeting specifically centered on the topic of Nuclear Non-Proliferation in the Middle East. The same research was subsequently presented in Cairo, Egypt to the Deputy Commissioner of the Human Rights Council and the Dean of the Political Science Department at the British University of Egypt, as well as to a group of undergraduate political science students.

UT Political Science Celebrates Arabic Friendsgiving

Matt Buehler, associate professor of political science and chair of the Middle East studies interdisciplinary program, organized the first-ever Arabic Friendsgiving at UT November 10, 2022. Co-sponsored by the Department of Political Science, the event was a celebration of Middle Eastern culture, music, and food in Eastern Tennessee, and serves as the first event in the new Arab Cultural Series program.

The potluck event featured homemade cuisine from several different Middle Eastern countries, such as Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Algeria, Morocco, Israel, and Turkey. More than 150 undergraduate and graduate students, faculty members, and members of the Arab American Club of Knoxville (AACK) attended the event. Yassin Terou's restaurant, Yassin's Falafel House, also provided food donations. *Good Morning America* honored Yassin's downtown Knoxville restaurant with its "Nicest Place in America" award in 2019, describing it as a "gathering place for people of all backgrounds and all walks of life."

Arabic Friendsgiving also included two student competitions, each with a cash prize of \$100 provided by the AACK. Drew Paul and Elodie Buehler, Arabic faculty from the university's Department of World Languages and Cultures (formerly known as Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures), served as expert judges for both competitions, along with former AACK President Samia Hanna.

The first competition was for Best Side Dish. Undergraduate student Qaiss Alattiyat won first place for his combination of Palestinian mezze including humus, mutabal (an eggplant dip), and other dips. The second competition was for Best Traditional Dress. Undergraduate student Yousef Al-Khelaifi won for presentation of his traditional Kuwaiti clothing for weddings, job interviews, and other formal occasions. Around his waist, Al-Khelaifi sported a dishdasha, a long-sleeved, floor length white robe. Atop his head, he wore a *gutrah*—a red and white patterned square headdress (similar to a scarf or handkerchief) folded into a triangle and placed so it rests equally over the shoulders.

Besides the throngs of students enjoying the potluck, several other UT luminaries made an appearance and grabbed some lunch, including UT Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Engagement Tyvi Small, Vice Provost for International Affairs Gretchen Neisler, Political Science Department Head Brandon Prins, and faculty members Krista Wiegand, Phillip Stokes, Erin Darby, Amel Djouadi, Revital Ganzi, and others.

SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES

The Department of Political Science offers students a multi-faceted exposure to American politics, comparative politics, international relations, public policy and political philosophy and theory. We see thousands of students in our introductory classes. Many fulfill their requirements and move on. For others the introductory classes whet their appetites, and they return for more. We have more than 800 majors and minors. It is the goal of the department to provide students with a broadly based, critical examination of politics near and far. Of course, the bulk of that instruction comes in a traditional on-campus classroom setting. Occasionally, though, students can extend the classroom, or more precisely, they can step out of it. The department seeks to create Signature Experiences for as many students as possible. We hope that they have memorable experiences in the classroom and become inspired. But we want to extend their education beyond the classroom as well. Summer 2022 saw the first full strength, post-pandemic study abroad programs. The department supports two 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 sites remained closed. At Westminster Abbey, for example, students were able to access the Queen's Gallery, something that had been closed to visitors previously. At the same time, everyone also had to deal with an incredible post-pandemic surge in tourism to London.

Students were also able to meet Members of Parliament in person again at the Houses of Parliament, where in 2021 the meetings had been forced on to Zoom. Students met with Hywel Williams, MP, Plaid Cymru (the Party of Wales). Other MPs that students met included Mike Wood (Conservative Party), Lisa Cameron (Scottish National Party), and Francie Molloy (Sinn Fein).

BACK TO ITALY

No country felt the initial force of the global COVID-19 pandemic more than Italy. Italians faced a rising death toll, hospitals filled beyond capacity, curfews, multiple restrictions, and economic decline. Travel to Italy was virtually halted. The study abroad programs to Italy were canceled for two years, a minor nuisance compared to the 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 tourist 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.



Students with Hywel Williams, MP, Plaid Cymru (the Party of Wales)



Students at Westminster Abbey





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 (2021) 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.



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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



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.

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