

POLITICAL SPECTRUM

VOL PhD ALUMNI EARN FACULTY POSITIONS NATIONWIDE

Our doctoral alumni launch careers in a variety of fields with foundational experience in the UT Department of Political Science. Three recent PhDs let us know about the valuable faculty roles earned through their continued scholarship.

Sambuddha Ghatak, a 2014 political science PhD graduate, joined the School of Public Affairs at San Diego State University (SDSU) as an assistant professor. He teaches in the criminal justice and homeland security program at the SDSU Imperial Valley campus. Before taking on this role in fall 2023, he was an assistant professor at San Jose State University in their criminal justice program. Ghatak's research focuses primarily on the structural causes of terrorism. He has published in journals such as *International Interactions*, *Conflict Management and Peace Science* and the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. Ghatak's current research focuses on the strategies and target selection of terrorist organizations and exploring the logic on civil war onset by terrorist groups.

Simon Rotzer, a 2022 PhD graduate, recently returned to Tennessee to start a tenure-track position at Austin Peay State University in the newly established Institute for National Security and Military Studies. With the support of his colleagues and the Tennessee State Legislature, Rotzer endeavors to foster relations with European institutions in support of the Institute's focus on transatlantic partners and strategic interests. His research in civil-military relations and conscription, background in teaching security-related topics, and history of working with former students enable him to promote scholarship, community outreach, and the National Security Studies degree program.

Hayoun Ryou-Ellison, a 2020 PhD graduate, joined the College of International Security Affairs (CISA) at the National Defense University (NDU) in Washington, DC as an assistant professor this year (spring 2024). Previously, she taught at Howard University, the Catholic University of America, and Virginia Commonwealth University. Ryou-Ellison's research focuses on Asian security and maritime conflicts. She has published in journals such as *International Interactions* and *International Area Studies Review*, and is working on a forthcoming co-edited book concerning culture and the law of the sea.

what's inside:

- pg. 2 Message from Department Head
- pg. 3-4 Student Spotlights
- pg. 4-5 Signature Experiences
- pg. 6-7 Faculty News + Generous Gifts

MESSAGE FROM **THE DEPARTMENT HEAD**

New Stats, New Faces

Greetings alumni and friends,

As head of the Department of Political Science, I wanted to share some exciting updates from the past year as we begin 2024. First, the number of undergraduate political science majors and minors continues to grow. We have seen a nearly 30% increase since 2019. The department also welcomed 10 bright, new graduate students this past fall. Four of these students come to Knoxville from great distances: Nigeria, China, and Turkey.

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.

Second, political science welcomed four new faculty members to the department this past fall, which created excitement and energy inside and outside of the classroom. Vasabjit Banerjee, whose research focuses on insurgencies, civil-military relations, and state formation, came to UT from Mississippi State University, where he had spent eight years as a faculty member in their department of political science. We are happy that he relocated to Rocky Top.

Carolyn Holmes also joins us from Mississippi State University after seven years spent teaching in the Department of Political Science. Her research on nationalist and post-conflict transitions to democracy in sub-Saharan Africa adds an important new regional context to comparative politics course offerings.

Wayde Marsh joins us from the University of Notre Dame. His research explores polarization and voting behavior in the United States.

Jordan Carr Peterson brings expertise in regulation and public law to our program; two areas of research that are in demand by both undergraduate and graduate students.

These four scholars expand our course offerings, introduce new ideas to students, and bring expertise to help solve public policy problems.

Third, we are thrilled about the recent successes of our doctoral students. A Fulbright Fellowship (one of 13 awarded to UT students this past year), a US Department of Education Award for language training (maybe the first won by a student at UT), and a pre-doctoral fellowship at the University of Illinois-Chicago. Our graduate students continue to shine and we are proud of their accomplishments.

Fourth, as you may be aware, the College of Arts and Sciences has moved to a divisional structure, with three distinct sections: Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, and Natural Sciences and Mathematics.

Each division has a divisional dean that reports directly to the executive dean of the college.

The new divisional structure is a pilot and will be reviewed after two years. The college's 21 academic departments, eight centers and institutes, and nine interdisciplinary programs continue to exemplify the best of Rocky Top. We are hopeful that this new college structure will better support the needs of students, faculty, and staff.

Finally, the department would like to gratefully acknowledge the long service of Professor Yang Zhong. He joined the department in 1991 while completing his doctoral dissertation at the University of Kentucky. Over his 33 years of service to the department, Zhong taught thousands of students about East Asia, Chinese politics and culture, and US-China relations. The department will miss Zhong and we wish him the very best in his retirement.

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



Muhammad Awarded Yearlong Water Policy Predoctoral Fellowship

Jeremiah W. Muhammad, UT political science PhD student, has been awarded a yearlong predoctoral fellowship at the University of Illinois-Chicago's (UIC) Freshwater Lab.

The fellowship—aimed at graduate students specializing in public policy and administration with a focus on environmental policy and management—is pivotal for Muhammad's academic development. It aligns with his research interests as it supports him with essential funding and resources.

As the inaugural recipient, Muhammad will lead an important project on flood mitigation in Illinois. His research will also encompass water remunicipalization efforts both nationally and internationally. He will develop pricing strategies for recycled water within an affordability framework. His work is poised to contribute significantly to the field of environmental policy and governance, echoing the Freshwater Lab's mission of fostering innovative solutions and community engagement in water management.

The Freshwater Lab is an initiative dedicated to communicating Great Lakes water issues to the general public, creating tools for visualizing current and future water scenarios, engaging groups in water planning, and training new leaders for the Great Lakes region. With its focus on the Great Lakes basin and extending its reach globally, the Lab builds relationships with water stewards worldwide.

This holistic approach of the Freshwater Lab underscores the importance of the fellowship awarded to Muhammad, reflecting the Lab's commitment to impactful environmental policy and governance.



Boyd Wins US Department of Education Fellowship for Arabic Language Study

Calista Boyd, UT political science PhD student, won a Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA) Fellowship to study Arabic in Jordan for the academic year. She is studying both Levantine Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic at the Qasid Arabic Institute, located in Amman, Jordan.

In addition to classes, CASA fellows must show commitment to service through a volunteer internship in the spring semester to further their immersive efforts. In her free time, Boyd has volunteered with the American Center of Research on their Abdoun Community Archaeology Project and with the non-profit Squashdreamers, helping young Syrian refugee and underprivileged Jordanian girls excel in their studies.

In the spring semester for her internship, Boyd will be volunteering at Al-Quds Center for Political Studies, which is an independent think-tank that conducts research and explorative and survey-based studies to produce reports and policy papers. Boyd also has accepted a paid student internship with the State Department working on Near Eastern Affairs for the summer of 2024 and is awaiting her assignment.

CASA fellowships are awarded through a skills and merit-based, national competition where applicants distinguish themselves through Arabic language, academic excellence, career goals, and commitment to public service. The fellowship is awarded to US graduates and graduate students who are advanced Arabic students and are planning careers that require advanced Arabic proficiency in fields such as academia, government, or international development.



Shaneberger Among 13 at UT Earning 2023 Fulbright Fellowships

Jennifer Shaneberger, a PhD student in comparative politics, won a prestigious Fulbright Fellowship to conduct qualitative research in Sweden.

The Fulbright Program is devoted to increasing mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people in other countries. Being selected to represent the US and UT reflects Shaneberger's leadership and contributions to society.

While in Sweden, she partners with Linköping University's Division of Migration, Ethnicity, and Society (REMESO) to investigate how political rhetoric affects migrant labor market integration. She will interview politicians, business representatives, citizens, and migrants to complete the qualitative chapter of her mixed-methods dissertation. She presented her research at the Swedish Political Science Association conference and will continue to share her work at universities throughout Sweden during her Fulbright year.

Recently, Shaneberger's Fulbright research received the prestigious Lois Roth Award. Lois Roth was a US Fulbright grantee to Uppsala, Sweden, in the early 1950's, whose legacy continues through the important work of the Lois Roth Foundation.



Read more about the Department of Political Science online at polisci.utk.edu.



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. 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 2023 saw the second full strength, post-pandemic study abroad programs. The department supports two programs in western and southern Europe that enable students to immerse themselves in the vibrant cultures, rich histories, and vivid politics of the United Kingdom and Italy.

LONDON CALLING

Summer 2023 saw the largest group of students undertake the London Program. Twenty students undertook the five-week academic program during May and June. Six of the 20 stayed on to undertake five-week internship placements in a variety of settings—a barrister's chambers, a law firm, two NGOs, and a college.

Amongst other places, students visited the Houses of Parliament, Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, Windsor Castle, Bath, and Hampton Court Palace. The post-pandemic surge in London tourism that we observed in 2022 showed no sign of abating in 2023. London remains the most cosmopolitan and diverse of cities, something students got to appreciate in their free time exploring the city.



As in previous programs, students were able to meet with a number of Members of Parliament, a representative of the Church of England, a public affairs firm director, and others. Students met with Hywel Williams, MP, Plaid Cymru (the Party of Wales), Mike Wood (Conservative Party), Sara Olney (Liberal Democrats), and Francie Molloy and Mickey Brady (Sinn Fein).

VIVE ITALIA

The Political Science in Florence Program returned to Italy in May 2023 with 11 students and a new faculty leader. Assistant Professor Kirsten Widner took the mantle from Professor Rich Pacelle, who founded the program and came along to ensure a smooth transition.

With a new leader came a new course option: summer 2023 students took POLS 461, a course comparing the governments and public policies of the US and Italy. Students also continued the previous tradition of diving deeply into political philosophy in the land of Machiavelli, taking either POLS 200 or POLS 475. Together, these courses helped students to understand the history and current context of this beautiful country.

In addition to coursework, program enrollees explored the museums and churches of Florence, the agriculture of Tuscany, and the beautiful cities of San Gimignano, Sienna, Orvieto, and Pisa. They climbed hills and towers, dined on pasta and gelato, and learned from experts about the great Italian art masters. Several students have called it "the best experience of my life."

The program will return to Rome in 2024 for an excursion for the first time since before the pandemic. This will give students the opportunity to see the institutions of the Italian national government, as well as historical sites like the Colosseum and the Forum. We plan to continue to incorporate these experiences moving forward. If you are interested in joining this signature program next year, visit the Vols Abroad Office for more information: volsabroad.utk.edu.



WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST COLLEAGUES!

Vasabjit Banerjee joined the department as an assistant professor in fall 2023, coming to UT from a position at Mississippi State University. He completed his PhD in 2012 at Indiana University with concentrations in comparative politics, international relations, and history.

His current research focuses on comparative defense industrial policy, civil-military relations, as well as domestic politics and foreign policies of South Asian countries. He also maintains an interest in the domestic politics and foreign policies of Latin American societies. His prior research focused on comparative electoral competition, social movements, insurgencies, and state formation, as well as foreign policies of developing countries.

His first book, *Undoing the Revolution* was published in 2019. His publications have appeared in *International Political Science Review*, *Asian Survey*, *Representation*, *Armed Forces and Society*, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, among other outlets. He also publishes in policy-oriented outlets such as *War on the Rocks* and *The Diplomat*.

Banerjee enjoys teaching introductory courses in comparative politics, as well as upper division and graduate courses on South Asian politics, Latin American politics, social movements, globalization, and civil wars.

Carolyn Holmes joined the department as an assistant professor in fall 2023, also coming from a position at Mississippi State University. She completed her PhD in 2015 at Indiana University with concentrations in comparative politics, political philosophy, and African studies. Her research focuses on nationalism and political identities, and how they interface with democracy, with a particular interest in Southern Africa.

Holmes has also been part of a team of researchers, funded by the American Political Science Association, that hosts workshops, roundtables, and pursues publications examining the role of descriptive research in political science.

Her first book, *The Black and White Rainbow*, was published in 2020. Her publications have appeared in *African Affairs*, *Comparative Politics*, *PS: Political Science and Politics*, *Politics, Groups and Identities*, and *Nations and Nationalism*, among other outlets.

Holmes enjoys teaching introductory courses in comparative politics, as well as upper division and graduate courses in nationalism, African politics, democratization, and post-conflict peacebuilding.



Wayde Z.C. Marsh joined the department as an assistant professor in August 2023. He completed his PhD in political science at the University of Notre Dame in 2022 and had a one-year postdoctoral research fellowship at the Weidenbaum Center on the Economy, Government, and Public Policy at Washington University in St. Louis.

His research focuses on American elections and voting behavior, polarization, public opinion, and local political economy. He also researches in the areas of political psychology, politics and religion, and racial and ethnic politics, and has published in the *American Political Science Review*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *American Politics Research*, and *Politics, Groups, and Identities*. His book project focuses on the political consequences of traumatic events in an era of mass polarization.

Marsh is also involved in a large collaborative effort called the Strengthening Democracy Challenge, which tests interventions to decrease levels of partisan animosity, strengthen commitments to democratic ideals, and reduce support for partisan violence.

Marsh enjoys teaching courses on political attitudes and behaviors, identity politics, campaigns and elections, and political psychology.

Jordan Carr Peterson joined the department as an assistant professor in fall 2023 after previous positions at Texas Christian University, North Carolina State University, and the Jacksonville University Public Policy Institute. He completed his PhD in political science at the University of Southern California, and his JD at the University of Florida Levin College of Law.

Peterson's research examines the operation of public authority in lawmaking institutions, and in particular focuses on the scope and nature of legislative, regulatory, and judicial institutions to structure organizational practices and individual conduct in the American state. Additionally, his work considers policy-making at the complex intersection of business and politics, including economic conflicts of interest in American public life.

His scholarship has been published in journals including the *Journal of Politics*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *American Politics Research*, the *Journal of Legal Studies*, the *Journal of Law & Courts*, *State Politics & Policy Quarterly*, the *Journal of Historical Political Economy*, and *Law & Policy*.

Peterson has been commended with awards recognizing the *Best Article Published in Political Research Quarterly* in 2020 and the *Cynthia Weber Best Paper Award* by the APSA Sexuality & Politics section in 2022. He teaches courses on public law at UT, including administrative law, regulatory policy, criminal law, criminal procedure, and government powers.



Uzonyi Lectures on Political Science during Italy Visit

Associate Professor **Gary Uzonyi** represented UT in October 2023 when he participated in a faculty exchange program with the University of Genoa, Italy. While at Genoa, he lectured on civil war, genocide, and peacekeeping as a response to these forms of political violence. He interacted with faculty, establishing strong connections for collaboration and exchange in the future.

Pierce Earns New Research Grant

Assistant Professor **Stephanie Casey Pierce** received a \$20,000 grant from UT's Community University Research Collaboration Initiative to support a local effort to expand access to legal counsel for tenants at risk of eviction in Knox County. This work is in partnership with the College of Law, the Department of Geography, and community partner Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment (SOCM). The grant also supports two student fellows, including political science undergraduate Abby Zehnpfennig.



Peterson Wins Research Award

Assistant Professor **Jordan Carr Peterson** received the American Political Science Association Sexuality and Politics section's Cynthia Weber Award for the Best Conference Paper presented at the 2022 conference for his article "Implementing Equality: The Sources of State (Non)Compliance with Judicial Revisions to Public Policy on Gay Rights." The article contrasts state-level responses to two instances of Supreme Court litigation and analyzes disparate levels of adherence to these.



Generous Gifts

Two families have made generous financial contributions to the department in the past two years.

In 2021, **James and Helen Fry** established the Fry Family Public Policy Scholarship Endowment to honor the achievements of Diane and Jim Fry, who led creative efforts to promote effective public/private partnerships within the state of Tennessee for over three decades.

The scholarship is available to graduate students who have an interest in public policy at the state and federal level and is intended to support students that share a passion to improve the role of government in creating economic opportunities for Tennesseans.

In 2022, the Louay Bahry and Phebe Marr Middle Eastern Democracy Studies Endowment was established by **Louay Bahry and Phebe Marr**.

This scholarship is to reward the best undergraduate or graduate student essay on democracy in the Middle East. Bahry and Marr previously served on the faculties in the UT Departments of Political Science and History, respectively, and they wish to recognize their time at Rocky Top and the hard work done by students on our campus.

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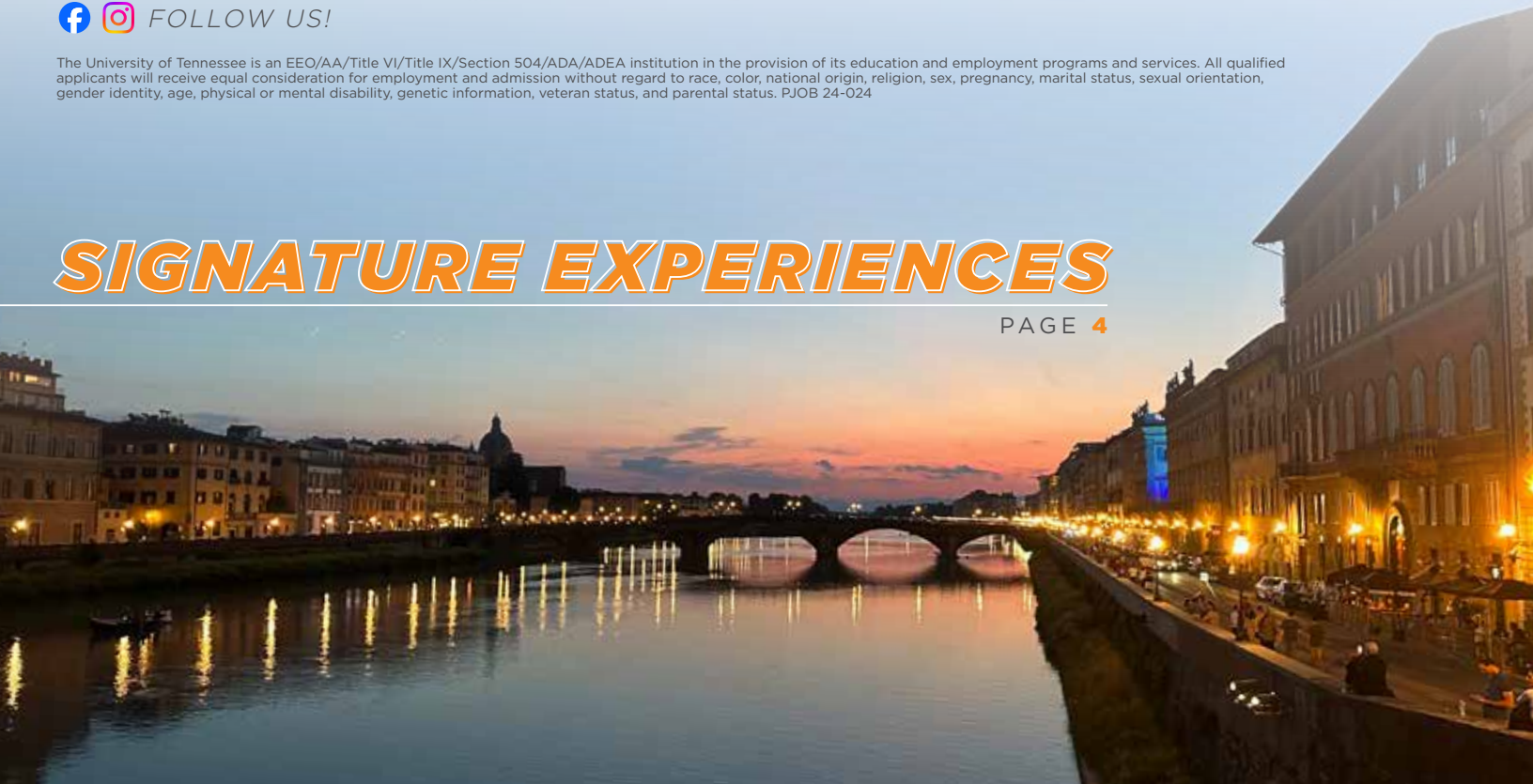
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PAGE 4



SPRING 2024

 POLITICAL SCIENCE

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