

GEOGRAPHY AND POLITICS

A publication of the Department of Political Science and Geography

HIGHLIGHTS

- ▼ A Welcome to our **NEW FACULTY!**
- ▼ Thank you to our **retiring FACULTY!**
- ▼ **Alumni Panel Discussion**
- ▼ **Recent Graduate Interview**
- ▼ **Modernizing Democracy and Voting**
- ▼ **Why should Monarchs vote?**
- ▼ **Alumni Profiles**
- ▼ **How Elite Polarization Shapes Mass Behavior**



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WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the second issue of the Department of Political Science and Geography Newsletter. I am glad that we can send this newsletter out to you despite the extraordinarily challenging times that we are all experiencing.

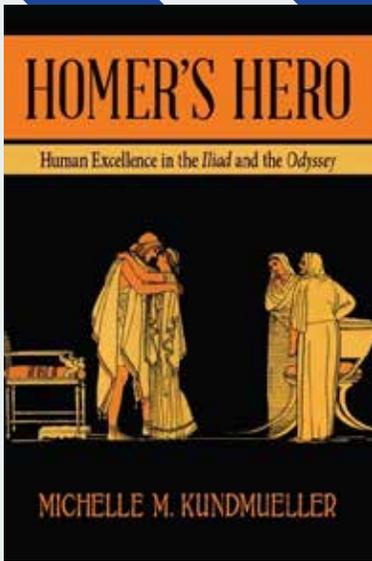
Last semester, ODU transitioned to all online instruction as a result of Covid-19 pandemic control measures. And the in-person graduation ceremony to recognize our newest graduates was been postponed. During the Fall 2020 semester, some classes were held face-to-face on campus, while other classes were held online, and students and faculty alike had to adjust to doing much more of the day-to-day work of the campus using remote networking tools.

And yet despite the challenges, there is much to remember, celebrate, and look forward to. I am grateful that students, faculty, and staff have effectively collaborated to make this a successful transition to online teaching, and I look forward to the time, hopefully in the not-to-distant future when more students and faculty can once again meet on campus.

Dr. Jesse Richman
Associate Professor of Political Science
Editor: Geography and Politics Newsletter



**AUTUMN 2020
NEWSLETTER**



DR. MICHELLE KUNDMUELLER PUBLISHES NEW BOOK ABOUT HOMER

In her new book, "Homer's Hero: Human Excellence in the Iliad and the Odyssey", ODU Political Science Professor Dr. Michelle Kundmueller shows how Homer elevated private life as the locus of true friendship, human excellence, justice and political honor.

[Learn more at SUNY Press](#)



WHAT'S UP WITH THE PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES? A PANEL DISCUSSION

The Department of Political Science and Geography hosted a panel discussion on the Presidential Primaries on Tuesday 3 March, the day of the Virginia Presidential Primary, featuring ODU professors Michelle Kundmueller, Benjamin Melusky, Jesse Richman and Joshua Zingher, with moderation by Department Chair Jonathan Leib. The event room was standing-room only, and was an insightful discussion

of the events and possibilities in the primary season. That evening professors Richman (Chanel 3) and Melusky (Chanel 10) both spent hours at local television stations providing commentary and discussion concerning what ended up being the decisive night that reshaped and determined the outcome of the Democratic primaries.

DEMOCRAT LOGAN KAPIL: STOP YELLING AND START LISTENING

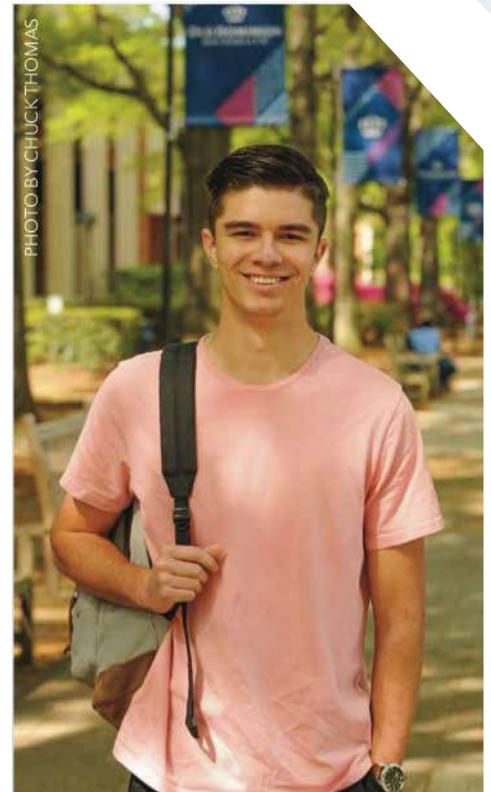
Some teenagers get more strident in their political views when they get to college. Logan Kapil toned it down.

"HE'S NO FAN OF PRESIDENT TRUMP, BUT 'THERE ARE PEOPLE ON BOTH ENDS OF THE POLITICAL SPECTURM' WHO CROSS THE CIVILITY LINE."

In high school outside of Richmond, he'd sometimes fall into personal attacks against his conservative opponents. But as Kapil explored other viewpoints at Old Dominion University and heard the angry rhetoric from Washington, he moderated his approach.

Full article available here:

<https://www.odu.edu/content/dam/odu/col-dept/pol-geo/Docs/pol-sci-grad-logan-kapil-monarch-mag-feature.pdf>



AARON KARP'S GLOBAL FIREARM OWNERSHIP STUDY GAINS INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION

Betsy Hnath

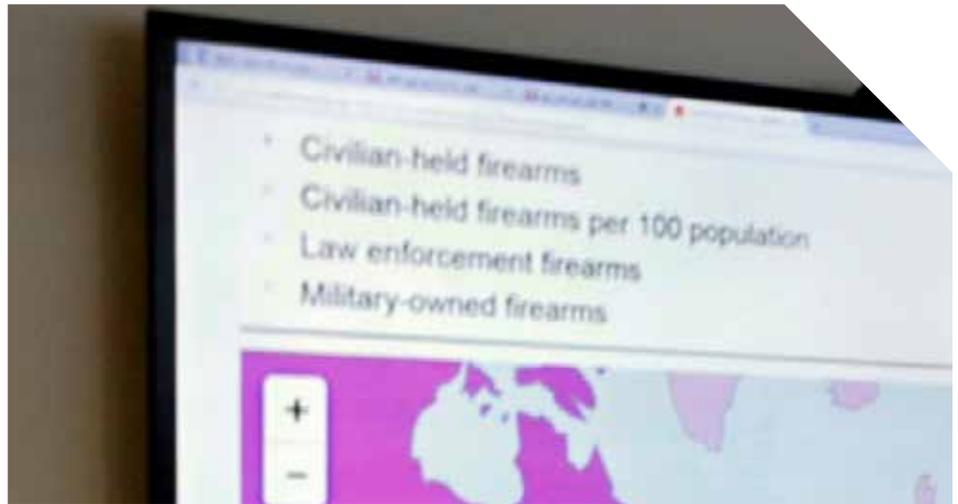
Americans make up 4 percent of the world's population but owned about 46 percent of the estimated 857 million weapons in civilian hands at the end of 2017, according to research by Old Dominion University's Aaron Karp. His study is getting international attention.

Karp, a lecturer in political science, authored The Small Arms Survey, an independent global research project based in Geneva, Switzerland, for which he also serves as a senior consultant.

Karp recently presented his findings -- which included estimates of the numbers of guns owned by the military, law enforcement and civilians -- at the United Nations in New York. It was the first time the data had been updated in a decade.

His research also found there were more than 1 billion firearms in the world. Civilians owned 85 percent, while the rest were held by militaries or law enforcement agencies.

The number of guns owned by civilians globally rose to 857 million in 2017 from 650 million in 2006, the survey said. There were 120 guns for every 100 U.S. residents in 2017. The country with the next-highest ratio was Yemen, with nearly 53 firearms per 100 people.



"The biggest force pushing up gun ownership around the world is civilian ownership in the United States," Karp said. "Ordinary American people buy approximately 14 million new and imported guns every year."

"Why are they buying them? That's another debate. Above all, probably because they can. The American market is extraordinarily permissive," he told a news conference at the United Nations.

The survey said civilian firearms registration data was available for 133 countries and territories, but only 28 countries released information on guns owned by the military and law enforcement agencies.

The Small Arms Survey is intended to provide governments with a clearer picture of gun ownership.

Though Karp said every figure published in the survey of 230 countries and territories comes with a level of estimation, new tools help increase the degree of accuracy.

"The difficulty with registration data is that it's not comprehensive," he said. "There are a whole lot of guns out there that people haven't declared, and figuring that out is difficult. Fortunately, a new resource has become available in the last few years covering a lot of countries, and that's public surveys. They formed the basis for more comprehensive estimations."

POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJOR WINS ODU HONORS COLLEGE UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH & CREATIVITY FELLOWSHIP

Political Science major Jeff Davis won an [ODU Honors College Undergraduate Research & Creativity Fellowship](#) for summer 2019. Jeff's summer research, with his advisor, ODU Senior Lecturer Aaron Karp, focused on trends in homicide and firearms in China and India, examining how ordinary people are affected by the proliferation of firearms, and how assessments of firearms trends can provide policy makers with the information to address the forces fueling conflict and crime in otherwise stable regions.



PLEASE CONSIDER SIGNING UP FOR THE ALUMNI MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The Department of Political Science and Geography Alumni Relations Committee offers an alumni mentor program with an aim to foster meaningful relationships between alumni and current students. The connections made in this program help prepare our students for career success in the future. The mentoring areas can include, but are not limited to, job search, career guidance and recommended course work. Interested students need to fill out the Online Enrollment for Protégés form. Please visit the Department Alumni Relations webpage (<https://www.odu.edu/pols-geog/alumni>) for more details.

A WELCOME TO OUR NEW FACULTY!

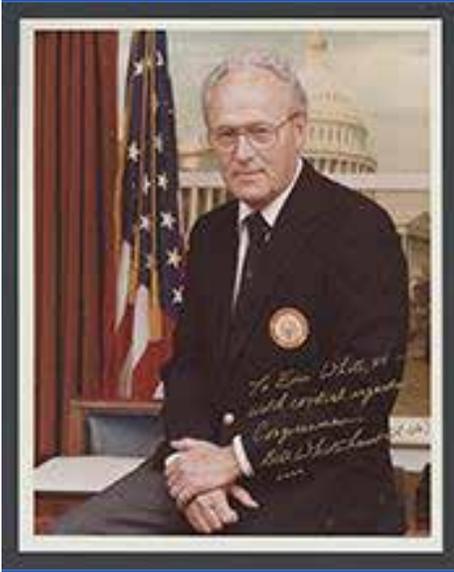
Dr. Michelle Kundmueller is a tenure-track assistant professor of political science and Pre-Law Advisor. Dr. Kundmueller earned a Ph.D. in political science and a J.D. from the University of Notre Dame. Michelle's research interests are in constitutional law and political thought. Prior to coming to ODU, Dr. Kundmueller was a practicing attorney for five years, and for the past four years has been an assistant professor and pre-law advisor in the Department of Leadership and American Studies at Christopher Newport University.



Dr. Jennifer Whytlaw is a tenure-track assistant professor of Geography and GIS. Dr. Whytlaw earned an M.S. in Geographic and Cartographic Sciences from George Mason University, and a Ph.D. in Geography from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Jennifer's research specialties focus on the development and use of GIS tools and applications as components to the study of environmental health, resilience, and natural hazards. Before coming to ODU, Dr. Whytlaw was a Senior Research Specialist in the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers.



THANK YOU TO OUR RETIRING FACULTY!



GOODBYE BILL WHITEHURST!

G. William Whitehurst used to tell me in the hall that he hoped to pass into the next world just after teaching an excellent lecture. Eventually, in his mid 90s, he decided to retire instead. Dr. Whitehurst was one of the longest serving faculty members at ODU, first hired in 1962. He spent a nearly two decades in the U.S. House of Representatives, and then returned to campus to teach as the Kaufman Lecturer in Public Affairs. Students joked about “majoring in Dr. Bill” and flocked to his classes, including a popular political science course on lobbies and interest groups, and a course on 20th Century dictatorships. We wish him a long and fruitful retirement.

THANK YOU GLEN SUSSMAN!

Glen Sussman began teaching at ODU in 1992 and rose to the rank of Professor, and was designated a University Professor in 2001. He retired in 2019 after almost three decades of service. Glen served two terms as Political Science and Geography Department chair, and taught courses on American politics, public policy, environmental politics, political participation, the presidency, climate change, and more. He published six books and more than 100 journal articles, book chapters, professional papers and research essays. He won many awards and honors including the Burgess Faculty Research and Creativity Award, The Arthur Schlesinger Jr. Fellowship, the Pi Sigma Alpha Outstanding Teaching in Political Science award, and the Robert L. Stern Award for excellence in teaching. When he taught grad students he worked to make sure that each student got a publication out of their seminar papers. Glen’s fondest memories of his time at ODU include ... “Seeing the campus develop and the university expand, and seeing football come to ODU.” If he could give one word of advice to current and former students it would be to “Do what you like. Always do what’s in your heart.” He tried to always make sure students didn’t know what political party he belonged to because he wanted them to “learn how to think not what to think.”



ALUMNI PANEL DISCUSSION



Virtual

Alumni Panel

An inside look at the real world!

Zoom Link: <https://odu.zoom.us/j/92914459307>

Tuesday, November 10, 2020, 12:30-2:00 p.m.

Presented by
Alumni Relations Committee of
Department of Political Science and Geography &
Barry M. Kornblau Alumni Center
Old Dominion University

Guest are encouraged to RSVP to hxliu@odu.edu

Stay
Connected

POLITICAL SCIENCE AND GEOGRAPHY ALUMNI PANEL

Ronald Holloway

Ronald is a Veteran, community advocate, creative writer, speaker, and the co-owner of Woofbowl®. He graduated from ODU in 2012 with a BS in Political Science. Ronald has spoken to a variety of audiences ranging from small groups and large conferences to speaking on topics for the Obama Campaign. Ron had incredible reviews on all of his books. His fifth and latest book is titled, Leadership: A Long Story Short, which is a humorous approach on embracing the fundamentals of leadership.

Allan Lambert

Received his BS in Geography from ODU in 1996. An internship with the Emergency Management Department with the City of Newport News led to a job in their Public Works GIS office. Allan took a GIS Specialist position with the City of Hampton in 2000. He has been the GIS Manager there since 2004. Likes: ArcGIS Online and Users that train themselves. Dislikes: Poor symbology choices, North arrows that point down and people who don't use coasters.

Kristan M. Pettiford

She received her BS in Political Science from ODU in 2007. She is an associate attorney at National Litigation Law Group. A graduate of Old Dominion University, Kristan obtained her Juris Doctor from the University of Akron School of Law. After obtaining her license, Kristan worked at Thomas, Adams, & Associates, P.C., involving herself with civil litigation, traffic, criminal affairs, divorce and estate planning. She also worked in a similar capacity for the Liberty Law Clinic. Prior to her arrival at NLLG, Kristan practiced with Scott & Associates, P.C. as the lead attorney of Virginia where she worked primarily in collections. During her years as a lawyer, Kristan has developed exceptional skills in civil litigation, negotiation, legal writing, and management. At NLLG, Kristan strives to ensure her clients are satisfied through meaningful negotiations and building strong relationships with members of opposing counsel. She feels that the law firm's strong community helps encourage growth and compels each individual to perform exceptionally.

Sergio Rodriguez

He graduated from ODU in 2014 with a BS in Geography, and a graduate certificate in Geospatial-Intelligence from George Mason University in 2019. While at ODU Sergio conducted undergraduate research in LiDAR derived digital elevation model (DEM). After school he worked as a contractor for the City of Virginia Beach and as a Planning Technician and later a GIS Analyst for Prince William County. Currently he is for the National Geospatial Program at the USGS, working with the National Map and the Board on Geographic Names.



RECENT GRADUATE PROFILE: INTERVIEW WITH TROI DIXON

Political Science BS,
May 2020



Q: *What were some of your favorite experiences as an undergraduate at ODU?*

A: Going to conferences with the Model United Nations team gave me the opportunity to find my voice on national stages and encouraged me to analyze information and consider different perspectives. Being a Preview Counselor emboldened me to become a leader within the ODU Community. I gained valuable knowledge about the school and myself. I really enjoyed working with new students! Of course, working with Housing and Residence Life allowed me to individually connect with a wide array of students and faculty. Engaging with people at their “home” gives you an inside look at what’s going on in their lives. The activities that weren’t necessarily designed as deep learning such as going to football games, dinner in the dining halls, and various ODU student events allowed me to engage and experience in ways that definitely influenced my personal development as a young adult.

Q: *What was being part of the Model United Nations Club like?*

A: This organization was a second home to me. It was both healthy competition

and a familial space. Every member of the club pushed me to always stay on my toes and to present my best. One of my proudest moments in the organization is when my fellow officers gave me the space to express my ideas and advocate for members of the society who were not being heard. My biggest accomplishment was jumpstarting the Food Program and emphasizing the study program. These programs addressed societal needs and gave me the confidence to speak in a space where shyness became my biggest obstacle, I am grateful I overcame it.

Q: *What are you doing now? How did your time at ODU help prepare you for it?*

A: I am a Field Organizer for the North Carolina Democratic Party. My experience in Model United Nations played a vital role towards helping me prepare for this job. It gave me the voice I did not know I had to advocate for myself and others. This organization helped develop my strong work ethic, networking and public speaking skills, all of those are critical to be successful in my job. The biggest skill I gained from Model United Nations that is applicable to my job is learning to respect and value others’ opinions. I have to engage daily with individuals who do not share the Democratic Party’s values. My job is dependent on me finding a way to consider and value their views while helping them find a space to consider and value my views. I sincerely hope this world gets back to this basic principle!

Q: *What advice do you have for current students at ODU?*

A: Grow through what you go through. College is the period of time where you are finding yourself and there are going to be moments that will test your identity and self worth. I learned so much more about myself in those moments than the happiest moments of my college experience. In life you will learn from your biggest failures, upsets, disappointments, and setbacks. As my mom says, you can feel disappointment but you should not ever feel defeated. Grow so that the next time you will have the strength and preparation to better address these obstacles and overcome them.

CONSTITUTION DAY SPEAKER DISCUSSES MODERNIZING DEMOCRACY AND VOTING

Modified from story by Joe
Garvey by Jesse Richman



Jamelle Bouie, a columnist for The
New York Times' Opinion section and a

political analyst for CBS News, discussed "Modernizing American Democracy" was the featured speaker for Old Dominion University's Constitution Day commemoration took place on September 17, 2020 with a lecture from Virginia Beach native Jamelle Bouie. A full recording of the discussion with Bouie is available on [YouTube](#).

David Uberti, writing in the Columbia Journalism Review, describes Bouie as "one of the defining commentators on politics and race in the Trump era." When the Times added Bouie to its lineup of columnists in January 2019, it noted that he has "consistently driven understanding of politics deeper by bringing not only a reporter's eye but also a historian's perspective and sense of proportion to bear on the news."

Before joining the Times, Bouie, a Virginia Beach native who graduated from Kellam High School, was the chief political correspondent for Slate magazine. He also worked at The Daily Beast as a staff writer and held fellowships at The American Prospect and The Nation magazines.

Bouie used he speech to argue that a key flaw in the Constitution involved its handling of political parties. While the framers were concerned about

party polarization and the risk that rival factions could destroy their republic, the electoral system adopted (the only model available at the time) facilitated the creation of two rival parties rather than a more diverse system.

The risk in such a system is that polarization and conflict between the parties can create escalatory spirals in which each party begins to see the other as an existential threat. This produced the Civil War, Bouie argued, and another partisan escalation spiral seems to be in place again in recent decades.

The solution, Bouie suggested, should follow from Madison's Federalist 10 insight that a key way to tame the "mischief of faction" is to have more of them. By reforming the electoral system to encourage multiple parties through some form of proportional representation, the parties could be divided, and hopefully the partisan escalatory spiral broken.

ODU observes Constitution Day and Citizenship Day annually on Sept. 17 to commemorate the signing of the Constitution in 1787 and to "recognize all who, by coming of age or by naturalization, have become citizens."



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WHY SHOULD MONARCHS VOTE? WHAT MAKES VOTING IMPORTANT?

The 2020 presidential election is already setting records. With just shy of two months to go, presidential campaigns and associated groups had already eclipsed the record fundraising of 2016 by hundreds of millions of dollars. It is also an unusual presidential campaign, one taking place during a pandemic that forced the presidential conventions online, while creating novel challenges for poll workers. Despite these challenges, voter interest also appears to be high: registrars are seeing unprecedented increases in absentee ballot applications, the number of people registered to vote in Virginia in August exceeded previous election-day highs by hundreds of thousands, and Google search frequency nation-wide for voter registration information was higher in August 2020 than in any August since 2004.

The election also takes place at a moment of significant divergence between the campaigns in terms of style, policy, and approach. This is an election in which both sides argue that the election is of more than usual significance, and the consequences of the choice more than usually intense.

We decided to ask some of our alumni and students for their thoughts about voting, and voting this year. Why should Monarchs vote? What makes voting important?



"Having voluntarily retired from thirty years in a career that depended on the results of elections, I never questioned the importance of voting, but I did not realize just how profoundly important it was until after retirement.

In 2014, I was a member of the Virginia delegation to the 70th commemoration of D-Day... Without the sacrifices of our servicemen and women during World War II, our nation, our government and our lives would be thoroughly different today. Their fundamental gift to us is our ballot. If we fail to vote, we render their sacrifice meaningless.

In 2019, my wife and I visited her ancestral home, Cuba. Everyone we met was kind, generous, and hard-working, but there was a persistent sense of helplessness and hopelessness within each of them. Government was not "we" but "them" and it completely controlled every aspect of their lives. They knew the price for expressing their opinions, even to family and friends, was long imprisonment or even death. These wonderful...people have no concept of freedom of speech or of meaningful elections of government leaders.

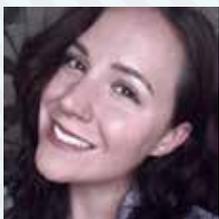
In 2020, we have experienced things that we never imagined. Our lesson from this year is to assume nothing and take nothing for granted. Please use the gift of the ballot that our nation's heroes sacrificed to give us and exercise the right to choose our leaders that hundreds of millions of oppressed people throughout the world would give their all to have."

Bernie Henderson '72
Member, Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Council



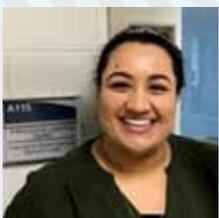
"I have voted in about 98% of the election cycles, whether it was national, state, or local. Maybe my vote did not make a difference, but ... we need to feel that our vote counts. In the long run, it is the th[e] act [of voting...] that really holds to our values of what democracy is. All the government, all the leaders, [they] mean nothing unless we the citizens can express our opinion. We may [not] always agree with each other but that single act is our most powerful power we have. Do not sit home or forget to fill [out] a mail-in ballot. I am sure not everyone agrees with me, but I have the right and duty to express myself. "

James Harrison '70
Retired



"I vote because we have a right to choose whether or not our voice is heard, and there are many who don't have that same option. I believe that we are all more powerful when we are actively engaged."

Jessica Scheck '13
Paralegal, The Olsinki Law Firm, PLLC



"I vote to honor the legacy of those before me who couldn't. I vote to help create a country that they could only dream about. I vote to plant seeds that will grow into a country that I can only dream about. I vote because my life, and those before and after me, matter."

Jessica Watson '12, '21 MSEd
International Student Advisor/PDSO, Tidewater Community College



“Voting is essential for representation. If you want your local, state, and federal governments to reflect your priorities, then express yourself by voting.”

J. Scott Wilson '99
ACH Payment Specialist



“Voting is foundational to holding politicians accountable for their actions in office. When our country’s leaders are subject to the political process, they are forced to either meet the demands of the public or face the real possibility of being voted out in the next election cycle. With every vote cast, we have the ability to hold our government accountable for its actions domestically and abroad, and to usher in positive change by electing individuals championing beneficial legislation on a multitude of issues.

Also, voting tends to encourage individuals to educate themselves. Even those who consider themselves generally uninformed are prompted to conduct research that will aid them in developing opinions regarding policy and political issues when election season rolls around. While we all may arrive at differing conclusions as to the “correct” way to vote, in the process we’ve become collectively less ignorant; as we increase our own knowledge base individually, we develop a greater ability to advocate for ourselves and those around us.”

Krista Andrews '14
Quality Assurance Specialist, National General Insurance



“I cannot think of an individual group, social structure or institution that has not been deeply impacted by the political, economic, natural, and health crises that we are all facing daily. Although these impacts are undoubtedly experience in specify ways across various spectrums, it is our collective experience of trauma and uncertainty that reminds me just how important it is to vote in every local, state, and national election. This election is critical- and so is every election wherein I can cast a ballot. I vote because I will never take for granted that my voice is herd without it. I vote like my life depends on it, because I believe it does.”

Laura Soulsby '07 MA, '20 PhD
Deputy Title IX Coordinator, Randolph-Macon College



“The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the ratification of the 15th Amendment. The 15th Amendment states that the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. Historically, we know that this right was systematically denied to women, Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) for decade ... When so many are denied the right to vote the words of Fannie Lou Hamer ring true, “with the people, for the people, by the people. I crack up when I hear it; I say, with the handful, for the handful, by the handful, cause that’s what really happens.”

It would take nearly a century for the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to outlaw discriminatory voter suppression tactics that disproportionately impacted BIPOC. As a Black woman, I am keenly aware of the intersectional fight and blood that was spilled for me to have the right to vote. With [such tactics as] gerrymandering, closed and inaccessible polling stations, [and] ID laws ..., the struggle continues today ... Voting is a way of participating in democracy by have a say in your own governance, selecting political leaders and weighing in on decisions impacting your community. I believe that power of voting lies not only in the act, but in the fierce protection of voting rights for all. Our country has a long and troubling history with upholding the 15th Amendment. We must ensure that the right to vote is protected so that governance at all levels (local, state, and federal) truly rests in the hands of all people not a handful. For me, that is why voting is so important.”

Tiffany Mitchell Patterson '06
Assistant Professor of Secondary Social Studies at West Virginia University

ALUMNI PROFILES

Want to have your profile included in next year's issue? E-mail jrichman@odu.edu to update us about what you have been doing!

Tiffany Mitchell Patterson

After graduating from the program in 2006 Tiffany Mitchell Patterson became the Thomas M. Menino Fellow at the National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education and Families in Washington, D.C. She then transitioned into education and teaching social studies including ancient world history, U.S. history, civics and economics. She is currently the assistant professor of secondary social studies at West Virginia University with an emphasis on teaching democracy and activism, ethnic studies and education policy. Her research interests include critical civic education, teacher and youth activism, teaching Black history and untold stories in secondary social studies. Advocacy, activism, intersectionality, justice oriented and anti-racist/bias education lie at the core of her research and teacher practice. Education is her revolution.

Terry Carter

Terry Carter (B.S. Political Science 1974, MA Humanities 1978) retired in 2018 after 21 years as senior writer for the American Bar Association Journal. Earlier in his career Terry worked at The Virginian-Pilot & The Ledger Star; then in Washington D.C. for The National Law Journal; followed by the Los Angeles Daily Journal. Terry is currently working on a book concerning politics and law in the Trump Administration.

Bernie Henderson

Bernie Henderson (Political Science '72) writes that "I am extremely proud to be a product of the ODU Department of Political Science and Geography. I value my years at ODU and apply lessons learned there constantly." Bernie has spent his years since leaving ODU building a distinguished record of public service. He was appointed by Governor Robb as Director of the Virginia Department of Commerce and then by Governor Baliles and Governor Wilder as Director of the Department of Health Professions. After a period of time in the private sector managing corporate operations and acquisitions, Bernie returned to Virginia government in early 2002 when he accepted Governor Mark Warner's appointment as Chief Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth, a position he continued to hold under Governor Tim Kaine. Upon retirement from government he returned to the private sector and is currently President Emeritus of Nelsen Funeral Home and Woody Funeral Home. Bernie is currently a gubernatorial appointee on the Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Council and has served on several other boards.

James Harrison

James Harrison (Political Science '70) fondly recalls classes with the "famous Dr. Ramsey and Dr. Meade" during his time at ODU. He has been active in politics ever since and writes that "I would never trade for the ride I had." He served with local Republican committee organizations in Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Maryland, with the Transition Team Headquarters for Bush/Quayle in 1989 and as a board member and president with the Log Cabin Federation. He worked on many political campaigns including several presidential campaigns and ran as a candidate for state legislative seats.

PANEL DISCUSSION: THE 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

WHEN

Thursday October 29
12:20 to 1:20

WHERE

Zoom: <https://odu.zoom.us/j/93809494563?pwd=RVkyZkx2eFVzNhN2hMaGlGeFNnQT09>

TOPICS INCLUDE

- Predictions, polls, and early voting
- Electoral College
- Race and politics
- Congress and the state legislatures
- The consequences for the courts
- Foreign policy and environmental policy implications
- Your questions explored and answered by ODU's experts.

NOVEMBER 3 IS ELECTION DAY

PANELISTS

Michael Clemons
Nicole Hutton
Regina Karp
Michelle Kundmueller
Benjamin Melusky
Jesse Richman
Joshua Zingher

MODERATOR

Jonathan Leib

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Department of Political Science
and Geography
Pi Sigma Alpha



PROFESSOR TOM ALLEN'S BLUE LINE PROJECT

You've seen the maps, watched the movies, heard the news, and maybe even wound your way around Norfolk during sunny day flooding, a nor'easter, or a tropical downpour. What has become widely recognized as "nuisance flooding," however, has the potential to become chronic, even debilitating with future sea level rise. The scientific evidence has accumulated, taken from many forms of observations, satellites, data buoys, GPS, and even high water marks evident on the streets, buildings and lawns around us. Future projections of sea level rise will bring increasing, historically unprecedented frequency and severity of tidal flooding to Hampton Roads even without a hurricane or nor'easter. We need to be cognizant of such shifting baselines and inherently dynamic aspects of our coastal environment.

To advance our understanding and awareness of the linkage between tidal flooding and sea level rise, the Blue Line Project seeks to bring the satellite data, GPS, and computer models "down to Earth" in our local environment. Organized by ODU faculty, staff, and students with the help of City of Norfolk and NOAA, the project brings the future to the present with on-the-ground reality using blue eco-friendly water-based paint, chalk lines, and flags to show the projected future high tides in 2050, 2080, and 2100.

Coinciding with the annual King Tide ("Catch the King"), volunteer event, Blue Lines promises to inform your perception of the future and sea level rise and prompt community conversation around resilience and adaptation to climate change.

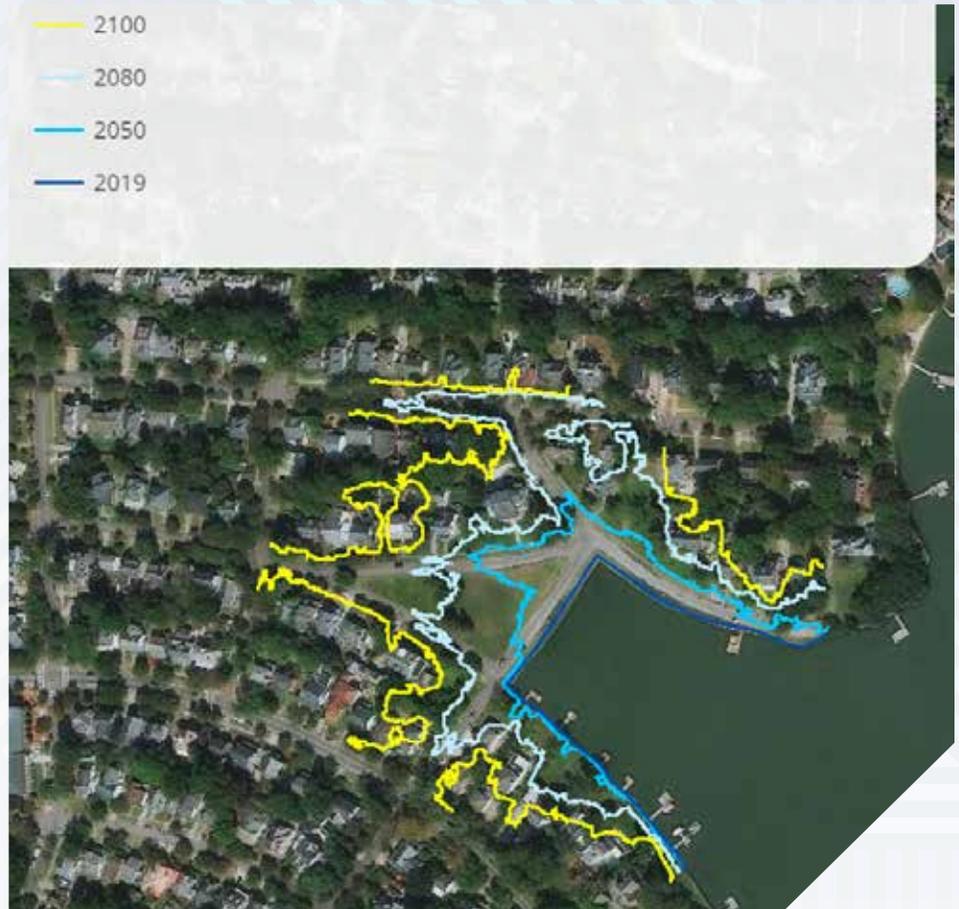
ODU's Blue Line Project integrated a university course, Geography 422W/522 Coastal Geography for fall semester 2019. Six undergraduates and one graduate student volunteered to tackle the project and increase and apply knowledge of coastal geomorphology, sea level rise, estuaries and coastal management. In addition, ODU graphic design student Marc Scacchi provided a service in designing the project logo. Student engagement was a critical factor to implementation and learning along the way.

To learn more about the project, check out this local media coverage:

<https://youtu.be/-m8dr5A76Ds> <https://sites.wp.odu.edu/blueline/>

DRS. TOM ALLEN AND JENNIFER WHYTLAW LAUNCH WIND SITING GRANT

Geography Professor Tom Allen is principal investigator for a grant from the Department of Defense's Office of the Secretary of Veterans and Defense to help create a wind energy siting solution to mitigate the effects of location decision on military training, readiness and research. Read more at: <https://www.pilotonline.com/inside-business/vp-ib-odu-offshore-wind-grant-0831-20200828-7cdf55ulobcntm65uv7xte2v4i-story.html>



“POLITICAL CHOICE IN A POLARIZED AMERICA: HOW ELITE POLARIZATION SHAPES MASS BEHAVIOR”

**By Joshua N. Zingher,
Associate Professor of
Political Science**

What motivates citizens to support one party over the other? Do they carefully weigh all of the relevant issues and assess which party or candidate best matches their own positions? Or do people look at politics as something more akin to a team sport—the specifics do not matter as long as you know what side your team is on? These are the questions consume scholars of political behavior. Understanding how and why Americans vote the way they do is central to understanding the political process.

Answering these questions require us to think about how much does the average American know about politics? How are their attitudes structured? Are they structured at all? Many scholars of public opinion paint a fairly grim picture. The consensus is that the majority of Americans only pay passing attention to politics, at best. Many Americans struggle to answer even the most basic factual political questions. Large majorities of citizens cannot name a member of the Supreme Court, or know which party controls the House of Representatives.

The electorate’s apparent lack of competence presents a direct challenge to normative theories of democracy. How are citizens supposed to exert control over the government if they have no idea of what is going on and even if they did, lacked the tools to effectively process the information?

What I claim in *Political Choice in a Polarized America* is that these fears are overblown. Not only do individuals have core beliefs about what the government should or should not do (what I call policy orientations), but also the predictive power of these attitudes has increased in recent decades. Individuals have become more likely to support the party that best matches their policy attitudes, by both identifying as a member of that party and actually voting for that party in elections. Most voters are not ideologues, but they do have favorable and unfavorable orientations towards specific types of government

action and employ these orientations when they make political choices.

My thesis rests on the idea that voters generally try to support the party or candidate that best matches their orientations. However, voters’ ability to successfully do so varies as a function of the signals sent by elites. Voters have an easier time connecting their own orientations with the party offerings when the parties are polarized, i.e. they are presenting a clear set of alternatives. This perspective helps to clarify decades of mixed findings about the prevalence (or lack) of policy voting.

I show that voters have sorted into the ‘correct’ partisan camp as result of increasing polarization among elites—those with liberal orientations support Democrats and the opposite is true for those with conservative orientations. This is true even among citizens with low levels of sophistication. Voters now consistently cast ballots for the candidate that best matches their own policy orientations. They are also more likely to express hostility towards members of the other party and align their symbolic ideology (identifying as a liberal or conservative) with their policy orientations as a result of this same process. These are all consequences of growing elite polarization.

Wrapped up in my core claim is several others surrounding the nature of the relationship between policy orientations and other political attitudes—partisanship in particular. I argue and then demonstrate that policy orientations are not just a byproduct of partisanship, as is often argued. Instead, policy orientations should be viewed as a distinct and equally meaningful disposition. I show that policy orientations are stable over time—both within individuals and groups. I use several analyses of panel data to show that policy orientations both shape partisanship and are shaped by partisanship. The strength of this relationship is conditioned by elite polarization—policy orientations have become stronger predictors of partisanship as elite have grown more polarized (opposed to vice-versa).

Overall, the arguments and evidence in this book help to shed new light on some enduring and important questions in the study of American public opinion and behavior.

**“WHAT I CLAIM IN
POLITICAL CHOICE IN A
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HOW WE SETTLE PROBLEMS IN THE UNITED STATES

By Jesse Richman, Associate Professor of Political Science, Old Dominion University.

An earlier version of this essay appeared in the Virginian Pilot in November 2018.

Recent events continue to make heartrendingly clear that some people haven't the foggiest idea of the most basic principles on which our experiment in self-government rests. Their vicious actions of hate demonstrate that they do not understand how we settle problems around here.

These are passionate times we live in. And that passion has at times inspired the worst to do their worst. Some people confuse harassment and shout-downs for debate. Others "go in" for vicious violence, shooting innocent worshipers, concert and club goers, or members of Congress. Or they deliver bombs to the doorsteps of former presidents and the politically active. They demonstrate that they have forgotten the fundamentals of what it means to be an American.

Lest we let their hate breed more of the same evil, perhaps we all need to take a deep breath and remember these principles.

Disagreement is fundamental to democracy. It is inevitable that with more than 300 million of us, we won't always see problems or their solutions the same way. We will disagree. Sometimes fundamentally. Sometimes passionately. But we do not let disagreement become hate.

Fundamental to democracy is the way we resolve these disagreements. We talk about them. If you think I am wrong, you are welcome to work to persuade others that I am wrong. You might even persuade me, for which I will thank you. We debate. We deliberate.

On the Old Dominion University campus, a recent student initiative highlights the right course. For more than a year the student Democratic and Republican organizations came together for debates on important political issues ranging from immigration to taxes to election law to education. The disagreements were sometimes intense, but I was also impressed by the ways civility and understanding would break out. The audience and the debaters themselves learned from both sides. In the process, all participants developed a richer and more nuanced understanding of

important issues.

In democracy the critical next step after debate involves us all — or, at least, all those who care enough to participate. We move to select actions together.

We have rules and institutions. We pass laws and alter them. We settle these disagreements through elections, representatives, votes and majority or super-majority rule. And we stick with that system, or alter it through processes we have agreed upon. If I think a law is wrong, I can lobby my fellow citizens, state legislators or members of Congress to change it. I can vote based upon my views. If I think a government action is unconstitutional, I can join with others to bring a lawsuit in court to challenge it.

This democracy is a messy process. It means that, nearly all of the time, nearly all of us must tolerate at least a few government policies contrary to what we think best. It means we must play the loyal opposition. Seek to persuade our fellow citizens. Work to elect better representatives. But it works. Together we resolve disagreements, or at least we muddle through.

The founders of our republic and the framers of the theories on which they drew understood this. When Thomas Jefferson described his election victory in 1800 as a "revolution" he was speaking to the fundamental transformation wrought by democracy. Instead of settling disagreements by force, we trust ourselves and our fellow citizens enough to settle them peacefully. By persuasion. By vote. Periodic electoral revolutions without violence replaced rebellion and war.

As Evelyn Beatrice Hall wrote, summing up the views of the great French philosopher Voltaire, "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." Even those with whom we disagree must have their right to speak and advocate. The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees their right not only to speak but also to publish, petition for redress of grievances, and to "peaceably assemble."

But the "peaceably" is critical in the phrasing I just quoted. It delineates an essential boundary. We must all stand against those who in their hate seek to solve our disagreements through bullying, violence or mayhem. Such actions are fundamentally contrary to the principles of our founding documents. They abrogate society in favor of anarchy. Civilization for despotism. Democracy for rule by the mob. Those who confuse speech and physical violence deserve the long jail

sentences their hate-filled actions must bring them.

As ODU President John Broderick wrote in a message to the campus community after the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting in 2018, "we cannot continue to be spectators while fellow human beings are threatened for their religious beliefs, place of birth, color of skin, sexual orientation or gender identity."

In the turbulent times ahead, let us not forget that even when we think they are wrong, our fellow Americans deserve our respect, our attention and our reasoned rebuttal. Let us turn with hope to reassert our commitment to the principles of freedom and mutual respect on which our self-government rests.

WE ARE PROUD OF OUR ALUMS

Dr. Jonathan Leib, the Chair of Department of Political Science and Geography initiated an Alumni Relations Committee in Spring 2018. There are currently two committee members, Dr. Hua Liu (chair, representing geography), and Dr. Jesse Richman (representing political science). The basic scope of the committee is to engage our alumni and strengthen their connections with the home department.

We initiated this newsletter to begin improving communications between the department and its alumni. The editor is Jesse Richman. Do you have a story to share? An accomplishment? A success? An adventure? Please let us know by e-mailing the editor. My e-mail is jrichman@odu.edu

The Alumni Relations committee plans to organize an alumni panel discussion in Spring 2021. The goal is to increase the connection between alumni and students & faculty in the department. The discussion topics can include careers in political science and geography, & how to apply for jobs in the fields. Please contact Dr. Hua Liu (hxliu@odu.edu) if you are interested in participating in such discussion and/or have any suggestions on the topics.



EVENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Political Science and Geography Alumni Panel

On November 10, 2020 from 12:30pm – 2:00pm the Department of Political Science and Geography will host an alumni panel on Zoom (<https://odu.zoom.us/j/92914459307>) featuring four graduates from the department. Please RSVP to hxliu@odu.edu

Panel discussion: The 2020 Presidential Election

Jonathan Leib will be moderating this discussion on thursday October 29 from 12:20pm to 1:20pm. It will be held on Zoom (<https://odu.zoom.us/j/93809494563?pwd=RVkyZkx2eFVlVzNhN2hMaGIGeFNnQT09>)

Please Consider Signing Up for the Alumni Mentorship Program

The mentoring areas can include, but are not limited to, job search, career guidance and recommended course work. Please visit the Department Alumni Relations webpage (<https://www.odu.edu/pols-geog/alumni>) for more details.

PLEASE SUPPORT ODU

Private donations are essential to maintaining the quality education and cutting-edge research that are the cornerstones of Old Dominion University. Your money helps open the doors to new opportunities for ODU students and provides them with the tools they need to not only be successful but excel at whatever they undertake. Monetary donations also help keep tuition lower and make the university's offerings more competitive. Explore the various options for making donations to the university... The brick you lay today will support an ODU student's dream tomorrow. For more information go to <https://www.odu.edu/about/support-odu/how-to-give>

CONSIDER ODU FOR GRADUATE STUDIES!

ODU's Graduate Program in International Studies (GPIS) is proud of its dynamic and diverse student body. Our students come from diverse backgrounds. Many already have an M.A. (if entering a Doctoral program) or a B.A. (if entering an M.A. program), but students' educational backgrounds are rich and varied. GPIS students have held previous degrees in the fields of Economics; History; Political Science; Linguistics; Geography; Sociology; Business Management; Foreign Languages; Communications; Literature; Creative Writing; and many more! GPIS students also come to ODU from within the U.S. as well as from all over the world. Many of our current students and alumni are doing exciting things in the Academic, Private, Government and Non-Profit sectors to name a few. No matter from where or what background you come to GPIS, you can be assured that you will leave with a world-class education and opportunities to work in many different fields.

Another graduate option on campus is the Master of Arts in Humanities. Geography majors may be particularly interested in the available concentration in Cultural and Human Geography. And stay tuned as we are hopeful that the department will soon begin offering a Masters program in Geography and GIS.

Finally, the School of Public Service offers Master of Public Administration (MPA), and a Ph.D. in Public Administration and Policy (PAAP). The MPA program is accredited by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA), the national certifying organization for public administration programs.



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and Geography