



The Squire's Scuttlebutt

MGA's Political Science Newsletter



Dispatch from the Department Chair

Dr. Christopher Lawrence

Welcome to our first Department of Political Science newsletter! We've started this newsletter to keep current students, alumni, staff, faculty, and other stakeholders aware of what's going on in our department, in the hopes of strengthening the community around us in the coming months and years.

The first three years of our department's history saw a great deal of growth—our first class of bachelor's degree students graduated in the spring of 2020, and our student enrollment and number of graduates have been increasing each year. We established new programs, including minors in African Diaspora Studies, Global Studies, and Pre-Law. We also saw numerous challenges, most notably the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on instruction at MGA.

We also lost two longtime



Dr. Lawrence, Dr. Hall, Dr. Matyók, and Dr. Watson participate in the department's panel on Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

colleagues in 2020: our former administrative assistant, Michelle Klingaman, unexpectedly passed away in April 2020, and part-time faculty member Al Jones passed on in October 2020. The following year saw the departure from MGA of two tenured faculty members: Dr. Dan Guerrant, professor of political science, retired in May 2021, while Dr. Brooke Miller, professor of political science, left us in December 2021. Meanwhile, we

were joined by a new tenure-track colleague in August 2021: Dr. Annie Watson, assistant professor of political science, who had previously taught as a visiting assistant professor at the University of Florida and earned her doctorate from the University of Georgia.

This academic year sees a major change in the department's programming: we have taken over

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Updates

Catch up with our faculty and students (current and former).

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Events & Clubs

Interested in engaging with the department? Check out our clubs and upcoming events.

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Reports

Dive into more detailed reports on recent faculty engagement.

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Election 2022

Are you ready to vote? Make sure you have all of the important dates and resources at hand.

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From the Dean

To close out our first issue, we have a special message from Dean David Biek.

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administrative responsibility for the Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies (BSIS or BS IDS) degree program, which has substantially increased the number of majors for whom our department is responsible. Since our department was already home to several interdisciplinary minors and certificate programs, the BS IDS program was a natural fit for us. In the coming years, we expect to more deeply integrate the program into

our department through both advising practices and curriculum changes.

As you'll see from the updates from colleagues below, our faculty have continued to do amazing work in the classroom, on campus, in our communities, and in their scholarly endeavors. Our growing band of students and alumni are also making an increasingly large contribution to MGA and society at large. We look

forward to continuing those positive trends in the years to come.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Watson for graciously volunteering to take the lead role in compiling, editing, and managing the departmental newsletter; without her work, this project would not have gotten off the ground and into your (virtual) hands to read.



The Political Science department table was all set up and ready to go at MGA's Fall 2021 Open House!

Feathers in Faculty Caps

This year, **Mrs. Grace Adams-Square** (assistant professor of political science) concluded her two-year commitment with MGA's Chancellor's Learning Scholars (an instructional development program with 8 to 10 faculty participants from across the campus); facilitated an online book discussion on *Making Sense of Race in Education* by Jessica A. Heybach and Sheron Fraser-Burge; edited and formatted an OES public administration

textbook; and volunteered at MGA's Late-Night Breakfast.

In her new class, *Perspectives on Diversity*, students were able to have a virtual meeting to discuss freedom of religion in the first amendment with the author of the course textbook (*Eavesdropping on the Most Segregated Hour*), Dr. Andrew Manis. And her American Government students partnered with political science students in Toronto, Canada to learn about and discuss civil rights and civil liberties (fall 2021) and elections in Ontario and Georgia (spring 2022).



Dr. Matthew Caverly (lecturer of political science) published two article reviews in *Academia Letters*—“[Tacit Knowledge as the Spirit of Science](#)” in July 2021 and “The Last Cavalry Charge” in February 2022. He participated in virtual panels on President Biden's first 90 days in office (April 2021) and on immigration policy (October 2021) hosted by the department of political science and continued his faculty sponsorship of the MGA Tabletop Gaming Club.

In his military life with the Georgia State Defense Force (GSDF), Dr. Caverly completed five schools: Basic Instructor Course, Phase 1; Advanced Leader Course; Lean Leader Course; Joint Operations Center Training Course; and the Malcom Baldrige Leadership Course. He was also promoted to Sergeant First Class/Enlisted Grade-7.



This was professor of political science **Dr. Jim Decker's** thirtieth year of teaching at MGA! In March

2022, he presented “Accessing Current Political Events: Utilizing the Internet in Comparative Politics Courses” at the MGA School of Arts and Letters Virtual Interdisciplinary Faculty Conference, *Adapting to a New Normal*. With MGA communications professor Rebecca L. Edwards, he completed a research paper entitled “New Teaching Strategies in Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: Infusing New Media into American Government Courses.” He also began work on creating a new course for the political science department—LGBTQ Politics—which he will teach for the first time in the spring semester of 2023.



Dr. John Hall (associate professor of political science) published a piece connecting student learning outcomes and the frequency of exams in the Georgia Political Science Association’s *Teaching and Learning Consortium* (Volume 3) and a chapter on the origins and actors of public policy in the open-access textbook *Public Policy: Origins, Practice, and Analysis*. Currently, he is working on research exploring the effect of news summaries on student learning outcomes in undergraduate American Government classes. This research will be presented at both the Georgia Political Science Association’s annual conference (fall 2022) and the Southern Political Science Association’s annual conference (spring 2022).

Dr. Hall also gave two interviews this year on a local news outlet (41 NBC News) on the Supreme Court’s opinions—*Dobbs v. Jackson* in June

2022 and *Vega v. Tekoh* and *Kennedy v. Bremerton* in July 2022—and was a panelist in numerous virtual policy discussions hosted at MGA.



Dr. Christopher N. Lawrence, associate professor of political science, is entering his eleventh year at MGA and fourth year as chair of the department. He recently contributed a chapter to the edited volume *Teaching Undergraduate Political Methodology* and presented research on strategies to gerrymander-proof legislative elections at the 2022 Southern Political Science Association conference in San Antonio, Texas. Dr. Lawrence is currently in charge of organizing the Information Technology and Politics section for the 2023 SPSA conference in St. Pete Beach, Florida. He also continues to serve as co-editor of *Papers & Publications*, an interdisciplinary undergraduate research journal housed at the University of North Georgia, and on the editorial board of the *Journal of Political Science Education*, as well

as being MGA’s representative to the USG European Union Studies Program consortium and faculty champion for the Affordable Learning Georgia project.



Dr. Julie Lester, professor of political science, continued her participation in the Kettering Foundation’s Public Service with Democratic Practices learning exchange. As part of this international group of scholars, she presented research at the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA) annual meeting. She also participated in the Deliberative Democracy Exchange (DDex) by the Kettering Foundation in Dayton, Ohio, in July 2022, meeting with scholars and practitioners to discuss a variety of issues related to democracy.

At the June 2022 Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement meeting in Minnesota, Lester was introduced as an American Democracy Project (ADP) Civic Fellow, recognizing her work in reimagining the Stewardship



Dr. Hall gives an interview on 41 NBC News about the Supreme Court’s opinion in Vega v. Tekoh in July 2022. (Image Credit: 41 NBC News/MGA)



Dr. Watson presents “The Shackles of Gender Inequality” at Christopher Newport University’s Reiff Center for Human Rights and Conflict in February 2022. (Image Credit: Reiff Center)

of Public Lands Initiative. This initiative has been meeting virtually and a field seminar is planned in Glacier National Park. Additionally, she and a former MGA colleague participated in the World 101 Global Civic Literacy 2021-2022 cohort and contributed to a [tool kit](#) available for ADP campuses to enhance global education.



Dr. Thomas Matyók, senior lecturer in conflict analysis and resolution, continued to serve as the Executive Director of the Joint Civil-Military Interaction Network (JCMI). In 2022, his work on conflict and security was published in the [Small Wars Journal](#), [Security: Theory and Practice](#) and the [Routledge Handbook of Peacebuilding and Ethnic Conflict](#) and by the [George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies](#).

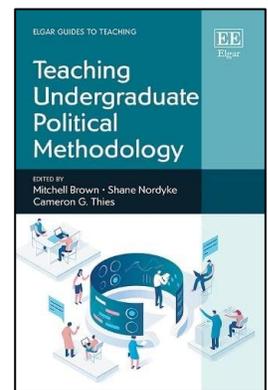
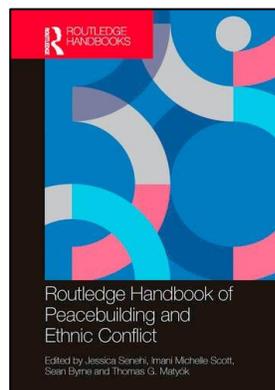


Dr. Annie Watson (assistant professor of political science) joined

the department in fall 2021. Over the year, she gave invited talks at the University of Florida’s Women’s Summit, William & Mary’s International Justice Lab and Government Colloquium, and Christopher Newport University’s Reiff Center for Human Rights and Conflict and participated in panels on the Supreme Court and the invasion of Ukraine hosted by the department of political science.

Through her work as a Research

Fellow with the Human Rights Measurement Initiative (HRMI), she participated in a panel on human rights data for the Hertie School in Berlin, presented a new measure of children’s rights at the Midwest Political Science Association’s annual conference, and presented new data on groups at risk for rights violations for HRMI’s economic and social rights data launch. Her article describing an original classroom simulation was published in [PS: Political Science & Politics](#).



These are the three volumes that our professors (Dr. Matyók, Dr. Hall, and Dr. Lawrence) edited and/or published work in this year. (Image Credits: Routledge, UNG Press, and Edward Elgar Publishing)

Affairs to Anticipate

Fall 2022

This semester, the Political Science Department will host four virtual panels where members of our faculty will answer questions about upcoming and ongoing events. Information about how to view each panel will be sent in advance.

- **Wednesday, September 21st (5:00 - 6:00 pm)**
Order in the Court (The Supreme Court and U.S. Politics)
- **Wednesday, October 5th (5:00 - 6:00 pm)**
Election 2022 (What's at Stake and What to Watch For)
- **Monday, October 17th (5:00 - 6:00 pm)**
Nine Months Later (the Invasion of Ukraine and the European Energy Crisis)
- **Monday, November 14th (5:00 - 6:00 pm)**
Election 2022 (The Postmortem)

Clubs to Consider

Fall 2022

- **Political Science Student Organization**
For more information, current students can reach out to Dr. Lawrence at christopher.lawrence@mga.edu.
- **Alpha Mu Zeta (chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha)**
[Pi Sigma Alpha](#) is the national political science honorary society. For membership requirements, consult our [website](#). For more information, reach out to Dr. Lawrence at christopher.lawrence@mga.edu.
- **MGA Tabletop Gaming Club (Cochran)**
This club introduces students to the world of collaborative storytelling through the dynamics of face-to-face games. Current students can reach out to Dr. Caverly at matthew.caverly@mga.edu for more information.

The Scoop on Our Students and Alumni

Morgan Scott Albritton graduated in 2020 with a BS in Political Science and a Criminal Justice minor. He is currently finishing his Master of Public Administration degree at the University of North Georgia and is in the process of applying to law school.



Noah Copeland joined the Political Science honors society (Phi Sigma Alpha), completed a number of honors projects for his political science classes, and is now preparing

for his graduation with his bachelor's degree this spring.



Claudia E. Meier (class of 1993) received a BA in Political Science from Mercer University in 1995, then went on to receive her JD from Mercer Law School in 1998. She was in private practice her first year out of law school, taking pro bono and reduced fee cases referred by Georgia Legal Services. She also accepted appointed cases from Houston County Superior Court and the Federal Magistrate Court in the Middle District of Georgia. In 1999, she began working as an

Assistant Public Defender with the Houston County Public Defenders Office. In 2016, she was appointed to the position of Chief Public Defender for that office. She retired from the county in May 2022.



Eli Stinehelfer was able to take part in the Student Fees Board during the 2021-2022 academic year and began his first work of original research during the spring semester. He has been privileged to submit his research for presentation at the Georgia Political Science Association's annual conference in November 2022.



Six buttons with the 2022 National Women's History Month theme: "Women Providing Healing, Promoting Hope." (Image Credit: Grace Adams-Square)

Critical Reflection

Mrs. Grace Adams-Square

I served as a Chancellor's Learning Scholar for two years, with a particular focus on inclusion and diversity. During this time, I engaged in a critical reflection on the American Government class curriculum. This reflection supports making changes to the curriculum in the future.

In Spring 2022, I focused on units

on civil rights and the judiciary. For the unit on civil rights, I asked students to find songs that represent social movements. They could select any civil rights era. (For example, the song "Strange Fruit" described an era of social unrest.)

For the unit on the judiciary, we focused on experiences of Asian Americans (including Asian Americans in Georgia) during the pandemic. I assigned each student an Asian-American court case argued before the Supreme Court. Students diagrammed and analyzed their assigned cases.

These changes met my expectations. I believe that through these discussions and activities, students gained an appreciation of, sensitivity toward, and empathy with the lived experiences of marginalized persons.

My students learned that many of

the barriers that once prevented Asian Americans from freely choosing educational opportunities and careers have been eliminated. They also learned that while there are cases where the courts will rule to support someone's 14th Amendment due process rights and rights to equal protection, there are other instances where courts will rule in favor of the state and against someone who has been oppressed.

Overall, my students learned that civil rights, social movements, and civic engagement are ongoing concerns in a society that wrestles with 14th amendment and 1st amendment rights.



Roberts Library (Image Credit: Grace Adams-Square)

Cochran Campus Coffee Chit Chat

Mrs. Grace Adams-Square

On September 8, 2022, members of the Cochran campus Political Science Department met to discuss—what else?—politics. In attendance were Mrs. Grace Adams-Square, Dr. Matthew Caverly, and Dr. Annie Watson.

The topics were wide-ranging. We tackled the validity of surveys, particularly the polls that had predicted that Hillary Clinton would win the 2016 presidential election and that Liz Cheney would lose her bid for re-election as a US Representative for Wyoming in the Republican primary in 2022. We considered whether or not Cheney might run for the presidential office in 2024—and, more importantly, whether she would be perceived as being “electable” and could win—as part of a larger discussion on whether or not America is ready for

a female president. From there, we discussed the actions and merits of current and former US politicians—President Donald Trump; Senators Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, and Lindsey Graham; President Richard Nixon; President Ronald Reagan and Mrs. Nancy Reagan; President Bill Clinton; Vice President Al Gore; President Georgia W. Bush; President Barack Obama; and President Joe Biden.

Moving from the national level, we discussed state politics and the upcoming mid-term elections in Georgia. We addressed issues such as the perceived “likability” of Stacey Abrams and the position of her campaign now (compared to in 2018), the job performance of incumbent Governor Brian Kemp the likelihood of the two candidates engaging in a debate before the election, and potential voters for each party. We also considered the Georgia Senate race of Walker and Warnock.

It wouldn't be a Georgia conversation if the world “dawgs” didn't come up. For us northerners who are transplants to Georgia, it takes time to get used to that spelling. (Fun fact: The University of Georgia has students who volunteer for the Guide Dog Foundation [GDF] who are known as “Dawgs Raising Dogs.”)

Well, that's a wrap! We must come together in November for a post-election chit chat. All are welcome to join us in Cochran.

Election 2022

On the Ballot

- **Georgia Governor**
Brian Kemp (Republican Incumbent)
Stacey Abrams (Democrat Challenger)

- **Georgia Senate**
Raphael Warnock (Democrat Incumbent)
Herschel Walker (Republican Challenger)

Key Dates

- **October 11th**: Last day to register to vote

- **October 22nd and 29th**: Saturday early voting

- **November 8th**: Election Day

Election Resources

- How do I register to vote?
<https://www.usa.gov/register-to-vote>

- Where can I find information on early voting, absentee voting, polling places, and ID requirements?
<https://www.usa.gov/how-to-vote>

- Where can I find more information about the people and issues on the ballot this year?
https://ballotpedia.org/Georgia_elections,_2022

- Where can I see sample ballots for each state?
https://ballotpedia.org/Sample_Ballot_Lookup

A Message from the Dean

Dr. David Biek

The School of Education & Behavioral Sciences seeks to be the regional leader in preparing informed, caring, and professional graduates who will transform our social world. If we do indeed hope to make a lasting positive impact on our region, all of these elements are needed.

One can spend a lifetime acquiring and working with information and ideas, but that alone is not enough. Likewise, the possession of a caring disposition, no matter how passionately felt, is not enough. Rather, what's needed is an understanding of systems, institutions, authority, and the power dynamics among them that will allow us to put our expert knowledge, informed by care and concern, to maximum use and effect. This is why I was so thrilled to have the Department of Political Science join our School in 2019.

From my vantage point, our Department of Political Science is in a position to thrive. We have wonderful academic programming, including a 21st-Century political science baccalaureate and a selection of valuable and timely minors—Sustainability Studies, African and African Diaspora Studies, European Union Studies, and Pre-Law.

That is combined with top-notch faculty who are engaged with their discipline at-large, our community



Walker Hall (Image Credit: Annie Watson)

stakeholders, and our students in the classroom. The team is led by Dr. Christopher Lawrence, who is thoughtful and creative in his approach to managing such a dynamic enterprise.

I am hopeful about the department's

future and eager to see its current trajectory play out as we lean in to the work of transforming our social world.



From the Editor

Many thanks to all who contributed to the newsletter! If you would like to be included in future issues of the newsletter, email your submission to annie.watson@mga.edu.

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