Department of Political Science

Fall Election Series—Democracy and the 2012 Election

On November 6, 2012, United States citizens selected their 45th president, 33 US Senators, the 113th US Congress, 11 new state governors, and thousands of state legislators. What did this election mean for American democracy? What did it mean for the international community? Who participated and who stayed home? What issues mattered most to voters? How will these issues balance individual, local, national, and international interests? What factors—media, money, candidates, campaigns—shaped election outcomes? How will those outcomes matter in the long run?

Last fall the Political Science Department coordinated a free public event series that offered the Muhlenberg community an opportunity to examine these critical issues of the 2012 election.

“Democracy & The 2012 Election” is the Fifth Election Series coordinated by the Muhlenberg College Department of Political Science since 1992. The program included a number of lectures and talks by nationally recognized scholars, pollsters and political commentators, including:

- “Fear and Loathing after Citizens United,” by Michael Franz, Bowdoin College
- “Gulliver’s Troubles: Reflections on American Power, Politics and Foreign Policy,” by Aaron David Miller, The Middle East Program of the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars
- “Looking Towards the 2012 Election,” by Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Thomas Edsall
- “There They Go Again: Expert Over-Claiming in a Sound-Bite World,” by Philip Tetlock, University of Pennsylvania
- “Reaching a Better Understanding of the 2012 Elections in the Nation and Pennsylvania,” by Terry Madonna, Center for Politics and Public Affairs at Franklin and Marshall College

In addition to the public lecture, the program included a production of 44 Plays for 44 Presidents, a raucous theatrical mosaic of the American presidency, originally conceived by the Chicago-based Neo-Futurists and reimagined by a team of Muhlenberg College theatre artists. Political cartoons by cartoonist Herb Block (“Herblock”) were placed on exhibit on campus and were the subject of an interdisciplinary faculty panel on alternative forms of political expression. Additional panels were held throughout the fall semester on the role of race and gender during the campaign and on the significance of the election results. Finally, no election series would have been complete without the Election Night Party with live news coverage of the election returns.

Co-sponsorship and support for the 2012 series was provided by The Forum Fund from the Faculty Committee on Lectures & Forums; the Center for Ethics; the Department of Media and Communication; the Department of Psychology; the Provost’s Office; Pi Sigma Alpha (the political science honor society); the Multicultural Center; the Dean of Students; Student Activities; Muhlenberg International Relations Council; Women’s Studies; and Africana Studies.

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Student Achievements

The following students presented at political science conferences this spring:

The Pennsylvania Political Science Association:

Kathleen Rogers ’14 presented a paper titled “The Future of Women in High-Level Political Offices: The Resources and Challenges of the Youngest Generations”.

Sarah Chabolla ’14 presented a paper titled “Political Rape Culture: An Analysis of How Rape Culture is Reflected in State-Level Legislation and Definitions of Consent”.

Gabriel Hurtado ’13 presented a paper titled “Minor League, Major Impact? Examining the Relationship Between Minor League Baseball and Civic Engagement”.

Rachel Marie Asaro ’14 presented a paper titled “The Command of Direct Non-Violent Action”.

Jacob Glass ’13 presented a paper titled “Effective Revolution: An Examination of Non-Violent Movements as a Means for Democratic Reform”.

Evan Lovas ’13 presented a paper titled “Neoliberal Plague: Exploring the Linkages Between Poverty, Inequality, Globalization and HIV/AIDS”.

Sydney Yonak ’13 presented a paper titled “The Failure of Long-Term Peace in Chechnya”.

The Midwest Political Science Association:

Garrett Gallinot ’13 presented a poster titled “The Relationship Between the Media and Political Participation Among Young Adults”.

Kathleen Rogers ’14 presented a poster titled “The Future of Women in High-Level Political Offices: The Resources and Challenges of the Youngest Generations.”

LVAIC Social Research Social Justice Conference:

Emily Hirsch ’14, Zachary Liebnick ’14, and Rebecca Romano ’14 presented a paper titled “Sustainability at Muhlenberg College”.

Moving beyond Muhlenberg: 2013 Graduates

Michael Arbittier will work for the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Ryan Boyington will be working as a Financial Professional for Karr-Barth Associates of Bala Cynward, PA, a division of AXA Equitable.

Joseph Celentano will pursue an MA in Political Science at Lehigh University.

Lindsey Doane will be working as the Marketing and Communications Manager for the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation in Fairfax, VA.

Garrett Gallinot will pursue an MA in Journalism at Columbia University.

Lauren Gilbert will be completing an MA in Law, Development & Globalization at the School of Oriental & African Studies in London, UK.

Jacob Glass will be attending the Harry S. Truman Foundation Summer Institute in Washington, DC working at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars in the Environmental Change & Security Program. He will work as a writer contributing to their online publication, the New Security Beat.

Gabriel Hurtado will pursue an MA in Political Science at Lehigh University.

Matthew Johnson will attend Temple Law School.

Ian Jones will be working as a Financial Analyst for Siemens Financial Services as of their two year Financial Leadership Development Program.

Evan Lovas will pursue a Masters degree at the School of Oriental & Asian Studies in London, UK.

Jordan Posner will attend University of Baltimore Law School.

Congratulations to Sarah Levitin ’14 and Evan Lovas ’13 on their election to Phi Beta Kappa!
Moving beyond Muhlenberg....

James Fasola will work for Representative Bradford of the 70th Legislative District in Montgomery County, PA.

Sam Kenney will attend Widener University School of Law.

Seth Markin has a position in Israel working in the Prime Minister’s office of Foreign Affairs.

Zachary Schwartz has been hired by a political campaign in New York City.

Zaraya Wade will attend CUNY School of Law.

Stephanie Wolbransky will attend Widener University School of Law.

Honors Theses:

Lindsey Doane defended her thesis titled: “The Effect of Gerrymandering on Political Polarization in the U.S. House of Representatives during the 2012-2013 Fiscal Cliff Crisis”.

Garrett Gallinot defended his thesis titled: The Relationship Between the Media and Political Participation Among Young Adults”.


Political Science students register voters before the 2012 Presidential Election
Michael Arbittier ‘13 received the Sigma Phi Epsilon Award.

Joseph Celentano ‘13 received the Dr. Victor L. Johnson Scholarship.

Lindsey Doane ‘13 received the Soujourner Truth Award. Lindsey also received the Reverend Dr. H.H. Bruning Gift Fund Prize.

Garrett Gallinot ‘13 was awarded the Dr. Charles S. Bednar Award in Political Science. Garrett also received the Dr. Harold L. Stenger Jr. Fellowship for Graduate Study in Literature.

Lauren Gilbert ‘13 was awarded the James W. and Barbara H. Herrick Award in International Studies.

Jacob Glass ‘13 received numerous awards:
- the Frederick E. Hanson Scholarship Award
- the Dr. Robert S. Ochner Award
- the Harry S. Truman Scholarship
- the Morris K. Udall Scholarship
- the President’s Award for outstanding Achievement and Promise for Post Graduate work by a Junior
- the National Collegiate Honors Council Student of the Year Award

Kathleen Rogers ’14 received the President’s Award.

Emma Taffett ’13 received the Greek Leader of the Year Award.

Stephanie Wolbransky ’13 received the Student Government Achievement Award.

Sydney Yonak ‘13 was awarded the Citizen Exchange Council Award in Russian Studies and the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program.
Dr. Chris Borick returned to the Department after his year-long Class of 1932 fellowship. In the Fall semester Dr. Borick was highly engaged in polling the 2012 elections in Pennsylvania as director of the Institute of Public Opinion. He was interviewed over 100 times during the election season by a variety of media sources from around the United States. In addition to his work on the election Dr. Borick continued to co-direct the National Surveys on Energy and the Environment (NSEE) which is now in its fifth year of operation. The NSEE which is produced jointly by Muhlenberg College and the University of Michigan conducts national surveys in the fall and spring of each year that examine public perceptions regarding climate change and energy use. Using results from the NSEE Dr. Borick presented papers at the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) annual conference and at the Southern Political Science Association annual meeting. He also co-authored an article entitled “Lessons from an Early Mover: Shale Gas Policy Development in Pennsylvania,” with Barry Rabe that was published in the Review of Policy Research. Dr. Borick served as the program chair for the 74th Annual Meeting of the Pennsylvania Political Science Association (PPSA) that was held in Harrisburg during April of 2013 and will serve as the PSSA president during the next year.

Dr. Michele Deegan presented a paper “Building Community While Complying with the Affordable Care Act: A Case Study of a Regional Community Health Assessment in the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania,” with Lanethea Mathews and Bonnie Coyle at the Annual Meeting of the Northeastern Political Science Association which was submitted to the Journal of Progress in Community Health Science Association. In addition, Dr. Deegan wrote “Lehigh the Journal of Progress in Community Health Science Association which was submitted to the Annual Meeting of the Northeastern Political Science Association (PPSA) that was held in Harrisburg during April of 2013 and will serve as the PSSA president during the next year.

Dr. Jack Gambino spent the fall semester on sabbatical working on a project dealing with George Orwell’s political thought. This study examines the trajectory of Orwell’s thought from his ambivalent embrace of revolution to the chastened liberalism that informs his late novels. Together with Dr. Hashim, Dr. Gambino will lead a group of sixteen students on a study trip to Bangladesh in May in order to examine that country’s response to climate change and its sustainable development strategies. The study trip will be the culmination of a semester-long course that is part of the Muhlenberg Integrated Learning Abroad (MILA) program. Dr. Gambino served as a discussant for two panels at the 2013 Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association: the first was entitled Political Theory and Herman Melville’s Imperial Fictions and the second, Democratic Radicalism. He will be serving on the College’s Faculty Center for Teaching in the fall.

Dr. Hashim presented his paper The Role of Identity and Identity Coalitions in Post-Soviet Russian Foreign Policy Making at the Annual Meeting of the Northeast Political Science Association, where he continues to serve as Section Chair for Comparative Politics. At the same conference, he served as Chair and Discussant of a panel titled “Authoritarianism and Authoritarian Tendencies.” He will be presenting a paper on competing identity coalitions’ influence on Russian foreign policy making at the 2013 Annual Conference of the American Political Science Association. He has also been invited to present at a roundtable on “Islamist Politics in South Asia” at the Annual Conference of the International Studies Association. Dr. Hashim served as an Associate Director of the Center for Ethics annual program on Markets & Values. In Fall 2012, he served as interim Director of Muhlenberg College's Faculty Center for Teaching. He is joining Dr. Gambino in leading a class trip to Bangladesh this summer.

Dr. Chris Herrick’s current research focuses upon China’s “Peaceful Rise” research examines the prospects that despite potential economic compatibilities perceptions and misperceptions will negatively affect China’s relations with the United States, India, Japan, Southeast Asia and Africa. He has also published a book on Issues in U.S. Foreign Policy. Together with Ms. Nancy Collings, the Mandarin Instructor at Muhlenberg, Dr. Herrick has designed a Muhlenberg Integrated Learning Abroad (MILA) course that addresses sustainable development in China and includes a two week travel experience in the Pearl River Delta region of China.

Dr. Lanethea Mathews published an article in the Journal of Political Science Education highlighting the exciting use of blogs in a legislative simulation from her US Congress class. The article, “Using Blackboard to Increase Student Learning and Assessment Outcomes in a Congressional Simulation,” featured the work of several political science students. Dr. Mathews enjoyed a productive sabbatical during the Spring 2013 semester. She completed several community based research projects dealing with community health and the well being of older adults in the Lehigh Valley through the Lehigh Valley Research Consortium.

Dr. Brian Mello completed final revisions on his book, Evaluating Social Movement Impacts: Comparative Lessons from the Labor Movement in Turkey, which will be published by Bloomsbury Press in August, 2013. Dr. Mello also served as contemporary political theory section chair for the 2013 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association. In addition, Dr. Mello was awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor of Political Science. This summer he has a grant from the Provost’s Office to revise and submit two articles on the Arab Spring for publication.

Dr. Alton Slane presented a paper titled, “Jail House Searches: Privacy Versus Security Concerns,” at the Annual Meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, March 23, 2013, Dallas, Texas. He also continues to serve the College as Faculty Parliamentarian.
Pi Sigma Alpha Welcomes New Members

Congratulations to the following students who have been inducted into the Eta Upsilon Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honor Society.

Class of 2013:
Joseph Celantano
Lauren Gilbert

Class of 2014:
Natalie Benjamin
Sarah Chabolla
Shelby Doll
Jeremy Fuchs
Ross Handler
Emily Hirsch

Evan Kasakove
Sarah Levitin
Samriti Madan
Kelli Meeker
Emily Paulus
Beth Rader
Kathleen Rogers
Rebecca Romano
Michael Schramm
Jake Schwartz
Dianna Shinn
The 2012-2013 academic year was a very busy and productive one for the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion (MCIPO). As in most presidential election years the MCIPO was highly engaged in polling the races in Pennsylvania from August to November. Throughout the fall MCIPO polls consistently showed President Obama holding a 3 to 6 point lead over Mitt Romney in the race to win Pennsylvania’s 20 electoral votes, with Obama’s final margin of victory of 5 points in the state close to the final polling estimates. This year marked the first time that three separate surveys were conducted in the same year, with one survey run in the spring of 2012 and two in the fall. The fall surveys were conducted right before and right after Superstorm Sandy struck the Northeast United States. The results of the survey which are published through the Brookings Institution indicate that acceptance of climate change among Americans is growing and that observations of weather are playing a significant role in shaping perceptions of global warming.

Finally the Institute continues to conduct research on the views of Pennsylvanians regarding an array of policy issues. This year’s topics included substantial work on public views regarding gay marriage and firearms. On the issue of gay marriage a record number of Pennsylvanians (53%) indicate that they support marriage between same sex couples. This marks a 17% increase over the 8 years that the MCIPO has tracked this issue and the results mirror national trends on this matter. In the wake of the Sandy Hook killings in December the Institute’s polling shows and overwhelming majority of Pennsylvanians support universal background checks for the purchase of firearms but are more divided on issues such as bans on assault weapons and high capacity magazines.
A Final Word from the Chair,

As the new Chair of the Political Science Department I have had the pleasure of getting to know more of our students and alumni over the last year. I’m happy to report that we had a very successful and busy year. For starters, Dr. Brian Mello received tenure! He is now an Associate Professor of Political Science. In addition to this excitement, our fall Election Series brought many interesting and provocative speakers to campus to discuss the 2012 election, presidential and congressional campaigns, the role of interest groups, and foreign policy, to name a few. Also, our student led panel focused around issues of race and gender and was attended by over 200 current students, faculty and staff. Faculty integrated the series into classes so that students were able to continue to debate and analyze critical issues raised by speakers and events.

Also this year, our students have been especially active researchers. Eleven students presented papers at local and national conferences including the Southern Political Science Association, Midwest Political Science Association and PA Political Science Association meetings. Students also engaged in faculty/student collaborative research through the Polling Institute and Lehigh Valley Research Consortium. Several recent grads will attend graduate programs in the fall to continue their studies in political science, law and related fields.

We’ve also updated our Political Science Department webpage to include better information about internship opportunities and current department information. Many students took advantage of internships including those with U.S. Senator Bob Casey, the City of Allentown, State Representative Michael Schlossberg, as well as local community organizations.

Thanks to Dr. Herrick’s hard work, Muhlenberg has joined the Humpty Dumpty Institute’s Higher Education Alliance, which provides schools with a comprehensive range of services and opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience working with the United Nations and in global affairs. Opportunities include hosting senior ranking UN officials, Ambassadors, policymakers and leading experts in world affairs as well as guest lecturers, and visits UN Headquarters in New York for intensive seminars and conferences.

We will continue to improve the website this summer and have added a Departmental Facebook link ~ so “friend” us! Other news of note is that Drs. Jack Gambino and Lanethea Mathews were on semester long sabbaticals, working hard on their respective research projects. Drs. Gambino and Hashim traveled with 16 students to Bangladesh at the end of May. For the second year we will be hosting a Consortium for Faculty Diversity Fellow, Dr. Richard Huizar. Dr. Huizar’s research focuses on privatization issues in Mexico. He will teach courses in Latin American Studies and Latin American Politics. He received his Ph.D. from UC Santa Barbara. We hope that you will take the time to welcome him to campus.

Finally, for those of you who are alums, we will be hosting a get together during Alumni Weekend this year. So, if you are visiting campus, be sure to stop by to see us and catch up. Have a great summer!

Michele Moser Deegan
Department Chair and
Associate Professor