From the Chair’s Desk: Welcome!

Dear Students,

Welcome to all our new majors and to those of you who are returning for yet another year on Hawk Hill. The Political Science Department believes this will be an exciting one, not only because of the incredible political events swirling around us (revolutions and revolts in the Middle East and S&P’s downgrading of the US credit rating on the basis of our “governance issues” to name just two) but also because of the events we at SJU already have planned. In addition, those of you who are returning will notice several changes: we’re on the 2nd floor of B/L, your old hangout – if you were someone who used to come to the Department for conversation with friends and faculty – has moved to B/L 210, and Dr. Scola is on leave for the year. Also, we have a new Administrative Assistant (Mrs. Terry Fasy) whom we share with the Computer Science Department. Mrs. Fasy is located in B/L 211, answers the old phone number (x1917), and will become a familiar face to you. Go in and introduce yourself to her some time so she can see that Political Science students are as friendly and well-mannered as CSC majors.

Welcome Back!
Upcoming Events

Faculty Feature: Dr. Susan Liebell

What are they up to? What to do with your degree in P.S.

To celebrate the start of the new year, we had our annual Welcome & Welcome Back party on Friday 9/9 from 4-5:30. We raffled off an SJU hat and water bottle, ate some delicious pizza and chocolate cake, played waffle ball, and had a chance to chat. About 30 students and 3 faculty attended, the weather cooperated, and we all had some fun.

As I mentioned, we have many great events already planned for the year. The current schedule is listed in this newsletter, and we’ll also be keeping an up-to-date posting on the new whiteboard in room 211. Just so you know some highlights – there’s a lecture to discuss the environmental hazards of nuclear power on 9/20, a commemoration of the debate over the US Constitution (complete with actors and costumes) as part of the Constitution Day celebration, and law and grad school information sessions. Also please notice the new bulletin boards in the hallway which will soon have internship and job information. Let us know what other kinds of things you’d like to see us do. Become a Facebook fan of the Department!

On behalf of Political Science at SJU, I wish you a happy and academically successful year for 2011-2012. Remember: the best way to ensure both is to work hard, go to class, be prepared, be actively engaged in your classes and the community, and develop relationships with your peers and faculty. We faculty also benefit as we get to know you better; so come in for a conversation during office hours some time.

Best,
Dr. B
Worried about life after college?  
Check out what these SJU grads did with their Political Science degrees!

Alyssa Ryan ’11 B.A. Political Science

Alyssa is currently a Lifesharing and Public Awareness Coordinator for the city of Philadelphia’s Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disability Services (DBHIDS). Her main role in the office is to help with strategic planning and quality management of the Lifesharing Program – PA’s number one residential program for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Most recently, Alyssa helped co-produce and co-write the narration for a short film on the experiences of people in the program and how they live in the community. Two more films are planned and the video series will be available online. Alyssa says, “Working for DBHIDS has strengthened my creativity and desire for social change….”

JoAnn Lopez ’11 B.A. Political Science & International Relations

A constant presence at Wolfington and a woman devoted to service at SJU, JoAnn has moved to Texas to work for the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. A graduate with a double major in Political Science and International Relations, JoAnn is the Social Responsibility Coordinator with Pro Bono Asylum Services at YMCA International. She works primarily with foreign nationals (both documented and undocumented) who fear persecution at home and who are seeking refuge in the US. In her job, she interviews refugees to help determine the potential that they might gain asylum, aids them in filling out the application, and prepares the necessary documentation for those deemed eligible. JoAnn says this position has helped her realize that “the smallest thing matters the most.”

Kelley Powell ’11 B.A. Political Science

A native Marylander who has active in party politics during her college career, Kelley has secured a job as an assistant to the Chief of Staff for U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski (D, MD). Working in Washington, DC, Kelley is using and developing her skills in campaign management, advocacy, and organization for the Senator. She is grateful for all the experience she has had performing research and writing papers because she has found that her ability to find and communicate information has been extremely valuable in her position as a Senate staffer.

“I feel really lucky and honored I get to work for [Senator Mikulski].”

Next edition will feature some of our male graduates!
Faculty Feature: Dr. Susan Liebell
What our newly tenured professor has to offer

Dr. Susan P. Liebell joined the SJU faculty in the fall of 2003, and the Department felt lucky to have her. The Department had never had a political theorist nor had it had more than five members before. Plus, Dr. Liebell's credentials were stellar. Valedictorian of her university graduating class and a star at the premier political theory Ph.D. program in the country (University of Chicago), Dr. Liebell also had experience working in the NY Governor's office, an outstanding teaching record from multiple colleges and universities, and an exciting research agenda on the nature of liberalism and its relevance to contemporary debates about the environment.

Dr. Liebell lived up to and surpassed expectations. She developed a compelling and challenging array of classes in political thought and American politics and became an engaged member of the SJU community working with faculty, staff, and students to enhance the quality of the academic experience at SJU. She particularly distinguished herself with her efforts on the Academic Honesty Board and College Council Executive Committee (during the curriculum revision discussions) and her countless hours mentoring Departmental Honors thesis students. In fact, Dr. Liebell has been a committed teacher and valued mentor to scores of students. The University has recognized her outstanding contributions by bestowing on her two Faculty Merit Awards, one for excellence in teaching and the other for excellence in advising.

Dr. Liebell is a recognized expert on John Locke. While she maintains her scholarly interest in the intersection of liberalism and environmentalism and has published in that area, her more recent research has focused more broadly on science and science education and their importance – perhaps surprisingly – to democracy. Dr. Liebell has developed, presented, and published a number of articles that examine the role that the scientific method has in promoting deliberation and critical evaluation, two characteristics to successful democracies.

In the last few years, Dr. Liebell has also turned her energies toward growing the Department’s Philadelphia internship program. Having overseen the interns in the Governor’s office many years ago, Dr. Liebell knows what employers are looking for in interns and understands what interns need to do to get ahead. She also recognizes that in this economy, combining a challenging academic program with experiences such as internships and study abroad gives students the competitive edge they need to succeed in their career searches and on the job, once they land one.

This past spring, Dr. Liebell was granted tenure at the University. She is currently working on a book entitled Intelligent Design, Evolution, and Political Identity: Activating Liberal Rights that examines the debate about teaching evolution in American schools and focuses on the arguments that evolution’s opponents – the advocates of intelligent design – make. While many scholars have argued against intelligent design, none have taken Liebell’s view – rooted in both classical and contemporary liberalism – that teaching students the scientific method (asserting a truth and then evaluating that contention based on carefully gathered facts) is crucial for preparing future citizens for democracy.

So, if you’re interested in political theory, contemporary American political debates, internships, New York politics (and sports!) or any number of issues (she is an avid reader and music fan), drop by Dr. Liebell’s office. She’ll be ready for a great conversation!
Upcoming Events!

Be sure to check the SJU Political Science Facebook page for upcoming events and interesting stories about students and faculty members!!

Save the Date!

September 2011

11:30-12:45 p.m. in Barbelin 265  
Friday, 9/23: “Graduate School Information Session” with Dr. Fukuoka & Dr. Baglione  
4:30-5:30 p.m. in the Greaton Room, Barbelin/Lonergan Hall 116

November 2011

Thursday, 11/10: “Reflections on the Fall of the USSR: 20 Years On” Panel Discussion of SJU Russia Experts  
11:30-12:45 p.m. in the Greaton Room, Barbelin/Lonergan Hall 116  
Thursday 11/17: Dr. Mary Frances Malone (SJU IR '95), Assistant Professor of Political Science UNH.  "Does Dirty Harry Have the Answer? Citizen Reactions to Crime and Justice in Central America"  
11:30-12:45 p.m. in the Greaton Room, Barbelin/Lonergan Hall 116