

THE VIEW FROM OLD MILL

The Official Newsletter of the UVM Political Science Department

A Message from the Chair

Greetings once again from the fifth floor of the Old Mill building! We are delighted to share exciting news as we bring the academic year to a close. I want to start by thanking and recognizing our amazing alumni. As we have expanded our outreach to the alumni community, we have been delighted to hear about the success of many who graduated as political science majors. In this issue we highlight three of our alums, each of whom has gone on to an important career connected to health issues. We are also profoundly grateful to the alumni who have reached out to us with internship and job opportunities for our students. These are truly invaluable as our majors work to start their careers. And we hope to continue to build connections to our alumni. This summer we are inviting alumni to join our student-faculty summer book club, see details within.

Our students continue to thrive in our department. In this issue, we share news about our Pre-Law Program and the other opportunities for students interested in the study of law and justice-related issues. This includes support for internships, and we highlight the experiences of several of our students who completed law-related internships last summer with department support. We also recognize students who presented their research at a national conference in Washington, D.C., as well as the accomplishments and awards of our best graduating seniors.

There is much more to tell, and we share much of it within. Our faculty are publishing important work and sometimes collaborating with students in their research. We are bringing in renowned speakers who have shared their expertise with students and other members of the UVM community. And we remain very excited about what we are offering our students through courses and other opportunities. As always, please keep in touch with us!

Peter VonDoepp, Chair
pvondoepp@uvm.edu

CONTENTS

Faculty Feature
PAGE 02

Student Spotlight
PAGE 06

Department News
PAGE 13

Grads Do
Amazing Things!
PAGE 17

Stay Connected
PAGE 20



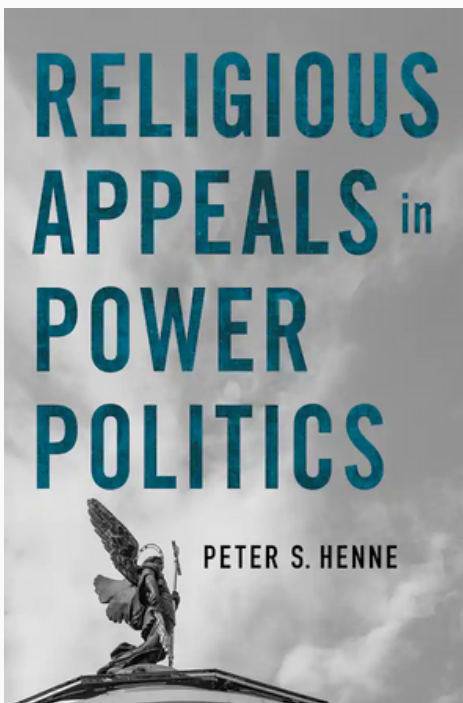


FACULTY FEATURE

Peter Henne Publishes Second Book

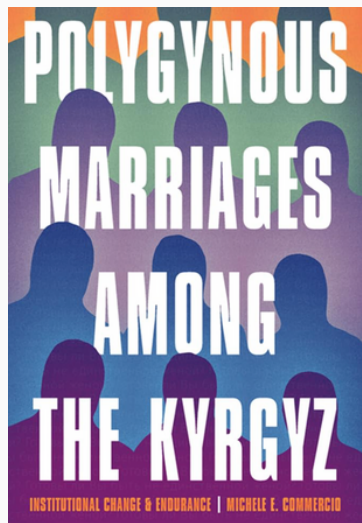
Professor Peter Henne has published a new book. *Religious Appeals in Power Politics* looks into an under-studied area of international relations: What happens when states try to use religion as a tool in interstate crises. In contrast to those who are skeptical of or champion religion's importance, Henne argues that appeals to religion in interstate crises are a potent tool that can easily slip out of a state's control. He demonstrates this with case studies of the 1960s Saudi-Egyptian rivalry, U.S. religious outreach during the Global War on Terrorism, and Russia's efforts to gain support among conservative actors in the West. The book can help move both mainstream security studies and the study of religion and international relations forward through its novel theory and approach.

Religious Appeals in Power Politics is available for purchase from [Cornell University Press](#), [Amazon](#), and other booksellers nationwide.





Michele Commercio's Latest Book



Professor Commercio's new book, *Polygynous Marriages Among the Kyrgyz: Institutional Change and Endurance*, asks why polygyny has become a normalized practice in post-Soviet independent Kyrgyzstan. Based on in-depth field work conducted over numerous research trips to Kyrgyzstan, Commercio explores how communist institutions gradually

limited the frequency of unconcealed polygynous marriages among the Kyrgyz, and how the breakdown of those institutions combined with enduring hegemonic constructions of gender—meaning prevailing relational constructions of masculinity and femininity—slowly contributed to the reemergence of unconcealed polygynous marriages among the Kyrgyz. She argues that polygyny has become normalized, or socially acceptable and widely dispersed, among the Kyrgyz because it is a rooted and recognizable practice legitimized by customary law and Islam that can enable men and women to meet societal expectations regarding acceptable gender norms and/or solve practical economic problems that arose in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse.

Polygynous Marriages Among the Kyrgyz: Institutional Change and Endurance is available for purchase from the [University of Pittsburgh Press](#), [Amazon](#), and other booksellers nationwide.

“Polygynous Marriages Among the Kyrgyz is a fascinating, carefully researched investigation of the normalization of polygyny in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan.”

ADRIENNE LYNN EDGAR





Honors Students Publish Article with Jack Gierzynski

A group of six Political Science honors students from the Spring 2022 political science Honors Seminar teamed up with Professor Gierzynski to produce a research project that was published in *Social Science Quarterly* in March of this year. The piece, titled “The ‘Euphoria’ Effect: A Popular HBO Show, Gen Z, and Drug Policy Beliefs,” explores the relationship between exposure to Euphoria and attitudes about those caught up in drug addiction and the policies to address the issue. The project began in the seminar and six of the students from the class—**Madeleine Blaber, Marjorie Brown, Sophie Feldman, Hannah Gottschalk, Peninah Hodin, and Emma Hoechner**—continued the work through the summer and fall with Professor Gierzynski, refining the design, crafting survey questions, going over the statistical results and writing the paper. The completed article can be accessed here:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.13351>.





Scenes from
Professor Jan
Feldman's
retirement
party on May 2



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Political Science Awards

Nearly 100 political science majors received their diplomas at the May 19 graduation ceremony. It has been our privilege to work with these students who came to us in the fall of 2020, persevered through the pandemic, and are now on their way to promising futures. Congratulations, please keep in touch with us, and best of luck with your next steps!

We also congratulate our graduating seniors who were awarded departmental prizes:

- Elliott A. Brown Award for the Outstanding Senior in Political Science: **Alex Naumann**
- Alan Wertheimer Award for Outstanding Senior Thesis: **Sarah Freedman**
- Warren and Mildred Austin Prize in International Relations: **Jacob Greenberg** and **Geoffrey Henderson**
- Frank M. Bryan Award in American Politics: **Olivia Eisenberg** and **Maddie Magilligan**
- Departmental Award in Comparative Politics: **Kate Betz**
- Departmental Award in Political Theory: **Cade Morris**



Pi Sigma Alpha Induction

On May 17th, seventeen of our majors were inducted into the Chi Nu Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the national political science honor society:

- **Chloe-Lucia Alexander**
- **Emmett A.G. Avery**
- **Helen Katherine Adams Betz**
- **Olivia Eisenberg**
- **Catherine M. Farmer**
- **Meaghan Feeney**
- **Sarah N. Freedman**
- **Jacob Greenberg**
- **John Geoffrey Henderson, Jr.**
- **Madelyn Magilligan**
- **Margot Elizabeth Mental**
- **Cade Morris**
- **Alexander Elliott Naumann**
- **Allison Woods Ouellette**
- **John Michael Pitblado**
- **Hannah Elizabeth Warn**
- **Sarah Wood**



Congratulations to our Phi Beta Kappa Inductees

We are very proud to announce that six of our majors and minors were elected to Phi Beta Kappa this year:

- **Catherine Farmer**
- **Makayla Hone**
- **Lydia Rooney**
- **Abra Levin**
- **Sophia Nolan**
- **Lillian Twohig**

As America's most prestigious honor society, Phi Beta Kappa has celebrated achievement in the liberal arts since 1776.





UVM Students Attend National Research Conference

On Presidents' Day weekend, four UVM students attended the 2024 Pi Sigma Alpha National Student Research Conference at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. This annual event brings together political science students from across the country to share their research. This year nearly 500 students attended. Our UVM students included two seniors completing their thesis projects as well as two others who conducted independent research.

We are so proud of our participants:

- **Kate Betz**, "Russian and Italian Authoritarianism Today and Yesterday: Comparing Leaders and Their Use of Misogyny"
- **Aidan Harty**, "Support for Black Reparations: The Impacts of Political and Racial Attitudes Between Group Identities"
- **Sarah Freedman**, "Two TVs, Two Americas: Entertainment TV's Role in Political Polarization in the 2016 Election"
- **Alex Naumann**, "Heroic or Havoc: Evaluating Success in Humanitarian Military Intervention"



**Celebrating the
Class of 2024!**





Internships

JoJo Kofman

JoJo Kofman, a UVM senior and political science major, has spent the past few summers volunteering for the Davis Vanguard, a nonprofit newsgroup that chronicles criminal justice affairs in local courts throughout California. JoJo began court watching in San Francisco, but has been able to continue her work in Burlington after the program expanded to Vermont. As an intern, JoJo saw a range of cases from “everyday injustices” such as overcharging and bail, to wrongful conviction. Now a seasoned expert, JoJo serves as the intern coordinator and mentors a group of 40 Court Watch interns who observe and report on criminal proceedings and systemic injustices within the courtroom. Interns' stories get published on the Vanguard website, and some of the articles get picked up by larger news outlets, such as *The New York Times*.

JoJo is currently hoping to pursue law school as she continues to learn more about the American legal system. Although the program is very demanding, JoJo appreciated the hands-on experiences and how she was able to, “shed light on everyday injustices in local courts that typically get unnoticed.”

The Vanguard is currently recruiting court watch interns for this semester and the upcoming summer. To apply, send a cover letter, resume, and writing sample to internship@davisvanguard.org. Check out their work at davisvanguard.org.



Betsey Scrimgeour

Betsey Scrimgeour, a political science minor, spent last summer working with the Vermont Department of Corrections as a public policy, legislation, and commutation intern. Betsy developed an interest in restorative justice on campus with the COSA club, Circle of Support and Accountability, a Burlington community-based organization that works with people transitioning out of incarceration. Working with COSA, Betsey would hear a lot about the DOC and wanted to better understand the system as a whole, which she had the opportunity to do during her internship.



As an intern, Betsey got a wide range of experiences: She was able to tour all six correctional facilities in the state, accompanying the DOC director and meeting with stakeholders like women's rights groups. She monitored media coverage, prepared briefings, and sat in on calls with journalists, gaining a crucial understanding of public perception. She also worked on a research project about substance recovery programming. Betsy enjoyed the data analysis part of the job and hopes to have the opportunity to do more in the future.

DEPARTMENT NEWS

UVM Welcomes Back Professor Gregory Gause for the Florence Davis Dean Lecture

The Department was thrilled to welcome Gregory Gause back to UVM for the Florence Davis Dean Lecture in April. Professor Gause was part of our faculty for nearly two decades and served as chairperson from 2010 to 2013. In 2014, he moved to Texas A & M's Bush School of Government and Public Service, where he served as Head of the International Affairs Department. A world-renowned expert on Middle East politics, Professor Gause delivered a lecture titled, "The Gaza War and the Greater Middle East Crisis," during which he focused on the broader regional dynamics that have shaped the current conflict. In addition, Professor Gause visited two classes. Always a dynamic speaker and popular with students, it was wonderful to have him back on campus!





Our Amazing Drucker Pre-Law Program

This is an exciting time for the pre-law program in the Department of Political Science at UVM! Our students benefit from having access to one of the strongest and largest public law faculty in any undergraduate-only department in the country. Our students are able to take classes with and conduct research under the supervision of Professors Ellen Andersen, Alec Ewald, Lisa Holmes, and Tom Sullivan. These faculty members teach an array of classes that have long been a part of our curriculum (including Civil Rights, Civil Liberties, and Law and Politics), as well as newer seminars, such as “Free Speech” and “Courts in Contemporary America.”

In addition to an unusually robust array of course offerings in the law area, the Department of Political Science formally hosts two important programs related to student interest in public law and law-related programs of study. The Law and Society program, first established in 2017, is designed to provide students with an interdisciplinary understanding of various aspects of the nature and functioning of legal institutions, including the criminal justice system in the United States. Professor Alec Ewald serves as the director of the program.

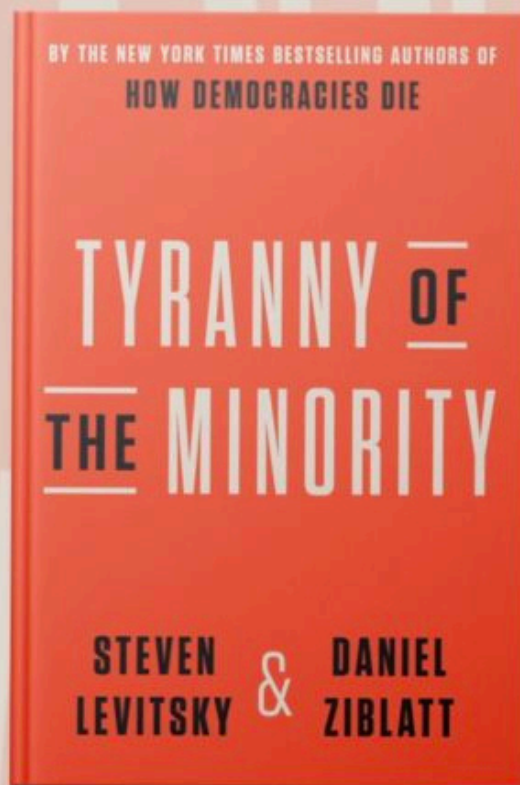
In addition, the Department of Political Science has long been a hub of pre-law activity at UVM. This year, the College of Arts and Sciences has formalized a pre-law program headed by Professor Lisa Holmes. Our efforts in the pre-law area have benefitted greatly from the support of **Richard A. Drucker**, who has provided generous support for our pre-law

efforts over the past decade. This year, the Richard A. Drucker Fund has helped to support a variety of pre-law activities, including financial support for students taking on law-related internships, pre-law panels and networking events, and student groups, including the interdisciplinary Women in Law club at UVM. Our students have benefitted tremendously from having the opportunity to hear from and talk with alumni who have gone on to law school. We extend thanks to our alumni and non-alumni participants at this year's pre-law panels: **Eric Tucker, Justin Jiron, Megan Noonan, Sara Puls, Josh Diamond, and Kathy Zhou.**

The Department is also involved in bringing law-related scholars to campus. This spring, we were thrilled to have University System of Maryland Regents Professor Mark Graber on campus to speak about his new book and to have a lively conversation with Tom Sullivan's presidential leadership class. In *Punish Treason, Reward Loyalty: The Forgotten Goals of Constitutional Reform after the Civil War*, Professor Graber seeks to restore to contemporary memory the motivations behind the 14th Amendment's purpose of preventing "rebel rule" in the wake of the Civil War.

Our pre-law program relies on the involvement of alumni who have gone on to work in legal fields. We are always interested in hearing from our alumni in law-related fields. Please do not hesitate to reach out to Professor Lisa Holmes (Lisa.M.Holmes@uvm.edu), Director of the Drucker Pre-Law Program, to connect with us.

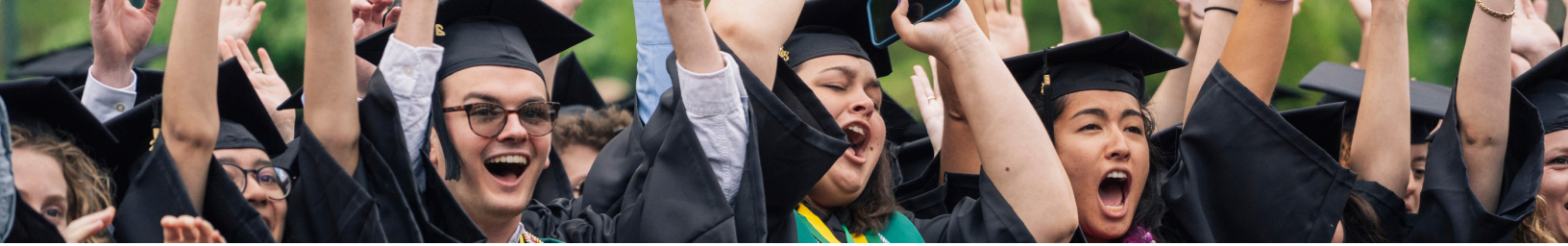




Our Summer Book Club—Alumni Welcome!

For the second summer in a row, the Political Science Department has organized a book club that will bring together faculty, students, and alumni. This year, we will be reading a new book by Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, *Tyranny of the Minority*, an important text exploring the current threats to America's democracy. Small groups will meet over pizza at the start of the fall semester to discuss the book, and on October 1st Daniel Ziblatt will deliver our annual Rosen Lecture. Over fifty students have signed up to participate and were given copies thanks to the generosity of the Rosen Lecture Fund.

Any alum of the department who would like to join the book club can request a book and we will send you a copy. There is a suggested donation of \$50 to the Political Science Department Fund for anyone who is able. We plan to use donations to increase paid internship opportunities for our majors. Here's the link: [UVM Foundation & Alumni Association - College of Arts and Sciences - College of Arts and Sciences \(imodules.com\)](https://www.imodules.com/college-of-arts-and-sciences/foundation-and-alumni-association).



GRADS DO AMAZING THINGS!

Joy (Sylvester) Kolonoski (Class of 2008)

I serve as a Program Manager with the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Institute at Harvard Medical School's Department of Population Medicine. I oversee operations of the analytics group within the Sentinel System, a program of the Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that monitors the safety of marketed pharmaceuticals using national health insurance data.

I entered the University of Vermont in 2003, majoring in Molecular Genetics, but after a year of international travel where I observed the impact of poor governance, I transferred to the UVM Political Science program.

Following graduation, I worked at the Committee on Temporary Shelter in Burlington for two years. It was during this time that I became aware of the field of public health. Combining my passion for political systems, policy, and science. It was a perfect fit for me. I pursued my Masters of Public Health at the Boston University School of Public Health with a dual concentration in Epidemiology and Global Health. I then worked as a consultant for Ministries of Health throughout Africa, helping to digitize and automate infectious disease surveillance systems. In 2017, I focused my efforts closer to home and joined the Department of Population Medicine.



My education in political science at UVM has served as the foundation for my career. The study of political science provided insight into the human systems of governance that exist not just in government, but in all organizations. It has been paramount to my achievement as a leader in the scientific arena where navigating people and systems is a necessary component of success. My political science textbooks remain on my bookshelf to this day.

Michael Banyas (Class of 2003)



I am a Senior Officer in the U.S. Public Health Service and a Health Specialist in the National Institute of Minority Health Disparities (NIMHD). The mission of NIMHD is to lead the nation's scientific research to improve minority health and reduce health disparities. In this role, I am the Program Director for NIMHD's SBIR/STTR program and oversee more than 100 awardees with an award budget of nearly \$17.5 million. I specialize in underserved health care and public health systems with a focus on implementation science. Previously, I served as Public Health Analyst in NIH's All of Us Research Program, where I led the Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) Pilot Project and co-led the Tribal Engagement Strategy, as well as operational process improvement.

Additionally, I served as a Project Officer in the Health Resources Services Administration for FQHCs and as the Communications Lead for the Office of Health IT and Quality. I also worked as a Fellow on the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee's Health Policy subcommittee and in three academic medical centers. After graduating from UVM, I received a Masters in Public Administration in Health Management and Policy from New York University's Wagner School of Public Service, did graduate work in health informatics at Columbia University, and earned a Masters of Arts at the U.S. Naval War College.

As a UVM political science student, I was able to grow my interests and career experiences in how politics and policy affect each other, utilizing political theory for philosophically analyzing problems, and exploring political and historical areas, ranging from African security issues to Vermont town hall politics. My UVM political science and liberal arts education were invaluable in helping me develop critical thinking for policy formation and analysis, augmenting my ability to connect theory and policy to present and future political situations, and to understand how to align interests with objectives. These skills sets have been invaluable in furthering my work in a variety of health policy and political settings at state and federal levels.

Ally Perleoni (Class of 2011)



I remember sitting in class in Old Mill 523 discussing the passage of the Affordable Care Act, and in the moment I had no idea that just seven years later I'd be in countless meetings with members of Congress fighting to keep it from being repealed. There are so many moments I can point back to in my four years at UVM—whether it was learning how the Supremacy Clause worked from Professor Holmes, or digging deep on policy and how to present information to legislators in VLRS with Professor Gierzynski—that have led me to where I am today. Indeed, there are very few days that go by where I don't rely on the incredible education that I received in the UVM Department of Political Science. Just the other day I whipped out my near encyclopedic knowledge of U.S. elections to remind someone that the last person who served as Speaker of the House to be elected President was James K. Polk in 1844.

Since graduating, I've earned an M.A. in Political Science from American University and started a career in government relations and advocacy. I spent five years at the American Academy of Pediatrics, working on behalf of infants, children, and adolescents before transitioning to the Association of American Medical Colleges, where I am currently a director of government relations. I spend most of my days interacting with members of Congress and their staff, advocating on policies that directly impact our nation's teaching hospitals and medical schools. I've spent the last ten years on the front lines of defining policy battles, like saving the Affordable Care Act from repeal in 2017, and smaller but deeply impactful ones, like ensuring universal hearing screenings for newborns. Recently I was named to Modern Healthcare's 40 Under 40, and I just won an Excellence in Advocacy Award for my work to expand federal support for graduate medical education, which had been frozen for nearly 25 years.

I owe an immeasurable amount of my success to UVM's Department of Political Science—everything from my professional success to even meeting my husband!

STAY CONNECTED

We would love to reconnect with our amazing alumni community. If you are interested in being part of the UVM Political Science alumni network, please complete this form via this link:

[I WANT TO BE INVOLVED](#)



Are you interested in supporting the UVM Political Science Department with a donation? Your gift can support student internship and research experiences, enhance faculty research, help to bring in high-quality speakers, and more.

[GIVE TO UVM
POLITICAL SCIENCE](#)



Can you support our amazing students in the UVM Political Science Club? Your donation can help buy refreshments for meetings, support educational trips for the club, and much more!

[SUPPORT THE UVM
POLITICAL SCIENCE CLUB](#)



Please consider joining UVM Connect, our UVM career and networking community. Similar to LinkedIn—but specifically for UVM alums, students, staff and faculty. It's free and easy to join!

[JOIN UVM CONNECT](#)



Follow us on social media