

# POLITICAL SCIENCE

SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY / AUGUST 2012 / ISSUE 7

## What is Political Science?

-Specialists in **comparative politics** analyze power dynamics in communities, states, and regions throughout the world.

-Specialists in **international relations** focus on the power relationships between countries and between citizens and organizations of different countries.

-Specialists in **American politics** look at the exercise of power domestically, through American institutions and processes ranging from the state to social movements.

-**Political theorists** address fundamental normative and explanatory assumptions, such as the nature and purpose of the state; who should have power and why; and what would constitute a good society.

---

### Newsletter

Editor: Erika Brown

Faculty Editor: Ruth Groff

## 12th Annual Sam and Marilyn Fox Atlas Program

Dr. Michelle Lorenzini (below) has been organizing Atlas since 2002. We talked with her this summer about the program.

### *What is Atlas?*

Atlas is a week-long program designed to bring together members of the university community to focus on the global challenges that confront us in the 21st century. The main goal is to raise awareness of these issues in an effort not only to promote discussion, but also to inspire and inform action.



### *Tell us more about Atlas 2012!*

This year's theme was "Empowering Humanity Through Education and Service." The Keynote Speaker was Sheryl WuDunn. With her husband Nicholas Kristof, she is co-author of *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* — a passionate call-to-arms against the oppression of women around the globe. Through inspiring stories of extraordinary women, Kristof and WuDunn show that the most effective way to fight global poverty is to educate and empower women and girls.

We organized 125 events, which drew in more than 6,000 participants. Panels and talks focused on the role of education in alleviating poverty and as a tool for self-empowerment. This year, the Atlas Program also served as the culminating event of Saint Louis University's Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge. Key events therefore also focused on developing interfaith relations through service and interfaith dialogue.

Cont., p. 2

## Join us on Homecoming Weekend!

Saturday, September 29th, noon-1pm - Busch Student Center 253 A & D

\*Presidential Elections 2012\*

Join Dr. Kenneth Warren & other faculty for insight into the US Presidential Campaign.

# Atlas—2012

## FACULTY SESSIONS

***New Forms of Citizen Leadership:  
Community Organizations***

Dr. Wynne Moskop and Dr. Robert Strikwerda

***Why are some Countries More Democratic  
than Others?***

Dr. Ellen Carnaghan

***Victims and Aggressors: Reflections on Reconciliation  
and Peace-Building Efforts in Africa***

Dr. Emmanuel Uwalaka (with Dr. George Ndege and Dr. Joya Uraizee)

***Understanding Elections in Russia***

Dr. Ellen Carnaghan

***Political Crises and Instability: Ecuador Since 1996***

Dr. JD Bowen

***Women's and Minorities' Underrepresentation in U.S.  
Electoral Politics***

Dr. Jason Windett and Dr. Nadia Brown

***Civic Engagement Among Asian Americans***

Dr. Kenneth Warren

***After Graduation: Opportunities and Advice for Students  
in International Career Paths***

Dr. Jean-Robert Leguey-Feilleux

***The U.S. Military as a Service Organization:  
The Tsunami in Indonesia and Earthquake in Haiti***

Dr. Timothy Lomperis

***Gay Rights in a Global Perspective: A Discussion***

Dr. Matthew Hall, Dr. JD Bowen (with Dr. Jeff Redding and Dr. Simone Bregni)

***The Politics of Sustainable Development  
in Latin America***

Dr. JD Bowen (with Dr. Candice Martinez)

*Cont. from p. 1*

***Why are you involved with Atlas?***

I firmly believe that it is our duty as educators to provide students with the knowledge and skills they need in order to be responsible citizens in an increasingly global community. I see the Atlas Program as an important co-curricular event that not only supplements and enhances classroom knowledge, but also motivates and empowers students to actively work to address global injustices.

***Has the program changed over 12 years?***

Yes. For one thing, its mission has expanded. It was originally conceived as a means of highlighting the international dimensions of our curriculum. However it soon became a vehicle to educate our own university community about contemporary global issues. But when students were presented only with information about global injustice, they lacked the tools and knowledge needed to help effect change. The emphasis now is on teaching our students what they can do to respond effectively.

Also, in its initial stage, there was virtually no student participation in the planning or organization of events. Students quickly seized upon the Atlas Program as a means for them to express their passions for knowledge and advocacy, and to share their own cultural heritages with their fellow students. They developed a stake in the success of the program, and wanted other students to get involved. Increased student participation in the planning process and the organization of events is the primary reason the program has been so successful and has grown so significantly.

# "Empowering Humanity Through Education and Service"

## *What's your favorite part?*

My favorite thing about the Atlas Program is working with my student interns and the students on the planning committee. It is a pleasure to see them further develop their leadership and administrative skills, but what's even better is to witness the passion that is ignited in them to go out in the world and work for global justice.

One of the most important things I've learned from students is that the knowledge that they gain in the classroom is only the first step. The comment I most often hear from students is that Atlas forces them to look outside of their college bubble. Once they do, they can no longer turn a blind eye to injustice. They not only want to make a difference, they feel they have a responsibility to do so.

## THE ATLAS PROGRAM: 5 GOALS

**Educate** our students about global injustice

**Inspire and inform student activism** in response to global injustice

**Build a community of scholars** at SLU whose teaching and research focuses on global challenges

**Foster faculty and student cooperation** in the area of international research and service

**Promote** cross-cultural understanding and an appreciation of diversity



# Gender Politics Conference

## First Annual — 2012

The first annual Gender Politics Conference at SLU, co-organized by Dr. Nadia Brown and Dr. Jason Windett, was held on May 4th. It was a huge success. Missouri Secretary of State Robin Carnahan gave the keynote address, and the event was attended by over 125 people. A highlight of the day was a panel of black women elected officials, which was co-sponsored by the African American Studies Program and the Women's Studies Program.



*Dr. Nadia Brown , MO Secretary of State Robin Carnahan, Dr. Ellen Carnaghan (Dept. Chair), Dr. Jason Windett*



*Dr. Robert Strickwerda, Chad Williams (MA student), SpearIt (Professor of Law) , members of the "Masculinity and Politics" panel*

as "critics." The day also included a celebration of 30 years of Women's Studies at SLU. The organizers, the Political Science Department and everyone involved was delighted with the conference, which brought together faculty from multiple disciplines, public officials, members of the community and students. As Dr. Nadia Brown noted, the interdisciplinary focus on the experiences of African-American women in politics was an invaluable aspect of the conference — which will become an annual event.

In addition to the panels and the keynote address, the program included an "Author Meets Critics" session with Dr. Diana Carlin, Associate VP of Graduate Education and Professor of Communications, author of *Gender and the American Presidency: Nine Presidential Women and the Barriers They Faced*. Dr. Jamel Bell (Communications) and Dr. Jason Windett served



*Former State Sen. Rita Heard Days, State Rep. Tishaura Jones, Comptroller of the City of St. Louis Darlene Green, State Rep. Jamilah Nasheed*



Establishing an annual Gender Politics conference makes sense for several reasons. For one thing, says Dr. Windett, “It’s important to explore issues of inequality in politics. Gender and racial politics in the United States is often times overlooked as a major area of academic inquiry.” The Political Science Department is beginning a new track M.A. track in Gender Politics; an annual conference will be an excellent event to attract potential students to our program. It is also an excellent opportunity to showcase the interdisciplinary strength of SLU faculty in this area. Finally, by forging



## **PANEL SESSIONS**

- **Gender in Domestic Policy**
- **Queen Elizabeth I: The Burdens of Becoming a King**
- **Gender and Religion**
- **Gender in International and Comparative Politics**
- **Women's Paths to Politics**
- **Masculinity and Politics**

connections with local politicians and community members who are committed to social justice, we give students a model for how to use their academic training to be men and women for others.

### **For more information**

African-American Studies Program  
<http://www.slu.edu/x16271.xml>

Women’s Studies Program  
<http://www.slu.edu/x17296.xml>

Dr. Nadia Brown - [nbrown30@slu.edu](mailto:nbrown30@slu.edu)

Dr. Jason Windett - [jwindett@slu.edu](mailto:jwindett@slu.edu)

Dr. Wynne Moskop - [moskopww@slu.edu](mailto:moskopww@slu.edu)

Professor Amber Knight - [aknight8@slu.edu](mailto:aknight8@slu.edu)

# Thoughts from a ... *Comparativist*

by Dr. Ellen Carnaghan

On May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Vladimir Putin again became president of Russia. Unlike the previous times that he took the oath of office – in 2000 and in 2004 – this time he did so in the face of visible popular opposition. Indeed a large demonstration in Moscow the previous day had turned violent, as protesters tried to break through a column of riot police. At least 400 protesters were taken into custody. What is the meaning of these events? Will autocracy harden in Putin's new presidency, or do popular protests signal the start of meaningful change?

In many respects, Putin is in a strong position to maintain his grip on power. Since he spent the past four years as Russia's Prime Minister, while Dmitry Medvedev held down the presidency, the Russian constitution permits him another two full terms, or twelve years, in the presidency. Putin's first two terms saw a slow but steady snuffing of any democratic glimmers left over from the chaotic period surrounding the collapse of the Soviet Union. Under Putin, the media – especially television – came increasingly under government control; formerly elected governors were appointed by, and therefore loyal to, Putin; elections became steadily less competitive as the regime developed elaborate mechanisms through which to manage outcomes; people bold enough to try to take a stand against Putin found themselves in exile, jail, or in the case of a number of unlucky journalists, dead. Despite these actions, Putin has maintained high levels of popular support due in part to the fact that he presided over a rapidly expanding economy. Even the impact of global economic crisis was moderated somewhat in Russia by the large stabilization fund built up during years of prosperity.

Until recently, these conditions inhibited the rise of meaningful opposition to Putin. The state-controlled press presented opposition groups as violent extremists, and local government officials loyal to Putin prevented groups from organizing public events, often on the excuse that protests would disrupt traffic. Even if

opposition parties managed to gain popular support, official election returns invariably showed Putin's United Russia party winning by a large margin. Ordinary Russians have not shown much interest in politics. As one Russian political scientist commented to me, Russian citizens have been happy enough to go shopping instead of engaging with the political system.

Nonetheless, popular opposition exploded in response to accusations of fraud in the December 2011 Duma elections and the March 2012 presidential elections. Some of the protests in December and January were the largest that had occurred in Moscow since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Where protests during the 2008 presidential campaign were small, grim affairs during which relatively small numbers of protesters eyed the lines of riot police arrayed around them, recent protests captured the spirit of the carnival, in which power positions are reversed and anything becomes possible. While the chief demands of the protesters – new, fair elections – were not met, Mr. Putin and the world took notice.

Putin's power rests in part on a shared consensus among political and economic elites that they are better off with him in power than without. That consensus is fed by many things, among them perceptions of Putin's popular support. Massive popular protest, then, has the potential to break the elite consensus that keeps Putin in power. What remains to be seen is whether protest organizers can keep the pressure up, or whether ordinary Russians will break ranks and go shopping once again. The organizers themselves have not shown a great deal of faith in the Russian population. Boris Nemtsov, a well-known liberal politician, was caught in December referring to fellow demonstrators as "hamsters" and "penguins." The protest song that won a contest organized by Aleksei Navalny, the anti-corruption blogger behind many recent protests, had the catchy refrain, "Our madhouse voted for Putin. Our madhouse is happy with him."