

## **OCTOBER 2010 POLITICAL SCIENCE NEWSLETTER PENN STATE ERIE, THE BEHREND COLLEGE**

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### **1. PL SC 177 AND SPRING BREAK TRIP TO WASHINGTON DC**

The political science program will be sponsoring a student trip to Washington DC over Spring Break 2011 (March 5-13). The trip is a required portion of the course POLSC 177 (GS). The class is taught by Dr. Robert Speel, associate professor of political science at Penn State Behrend.

The exact itinerary will not be determined until February next year, but on past such trips, the group has met with our members of Congress, with officials at the International Monetary Fund, the Organization of American States, and the embassies of Australia, Romania, Botswana, India, Ireland, Canada, Jamaica, Estonia and Indonesia. We have toured the White House, the West Wing of the White House, the Pentagon, the State Department, the Department of Justice, the US Capitol, the Library of Congress, the National Archives, and the C-SPAN studios. We have participated in seminars held in the Supreme Court chambers, Ford's Theatre, and the Federal Reserve Board room (where they make decisions about interest rates). Among the highlights of the trip will be meetings or tours with Penn State Behrend alumni who work on Capitol Hill or for federal government agencies.

We have also met in past years with leaders from the Democratic National Committee, Greenpeace International, the National Beer Wholesalers Association, and the Cato Institute libertarian think tank. We always visit Arlington National Cemetery and all the most famous monuments and memorials. Free time is provided to visit museums such as the Newseum, the International Spy Museum, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, the National Museum of the American Indian, and the various Smithsonian Museums, as well as the National Zoo. Students have also attended major sports and entertainment events in Washington DC during the evening. Students should

be aware that most of the places we visit during the week are only available to student groups in Washington and not to individual tourists. Some of the places we visit may provide the only opportunity some will have in their lives to tour certain government buildings or meet with certain officials in Washington.

The trip is associated with the political science course POLSC 177 (GS), and students will be required to sign up for either a three credit or one credit version of the course in order to take the trip. The three credit version of the course will involve weekly class meetings before and after the trip, to be held on Tuesdays or Thursdays at 4:00 PM. The class meetings will last about an hour. We will meet twice a week for part of February and then end early in April. Most of the time in Washington is also considered class time. In addition, the three credit version of the class will involve assigned readings, quizzes, some research, and short papers appropriate for a three credit course. Students who wish to take a three credit version of the course but cannot attend the TR 4:00 PM class period should talk to Dr. Speel.

The one credit version of the course will include participation in the trip and a 10-page paper to be written after the trip. It is intended for students who would like to participate in the trip to Washington, but who don't necessarily need a three credit political science course.

The three credits or one credit can be used for both the political science major and minor in the subfields of American government or international politics. The course can also be used to fulfill the "Crime and Public Policy" area requirement for the Crime, Psychology, and Public Policy certificate. And students in all majors can use the course to fulfill GS general education requirements. Some majors will allow the course to fulfill other specific requirements. The course and trip are open to students in all majors. There is no prerequisite.

In Washington our group will stay at the Virginian Suites hotel ([www.virginiansuites.com](http://www.virginiansuites.com)). The hotel is located in Arlington, VA, just across the Potomac River from Washington, and is a brief walk from a Washington Metro (subway) stop. Each room in the hotel contains two queen-sized beds, a pull out sofa bed, a full kitchen, television, furniture, private bathroom, and closet space. A chartered bus will transport students between campus and Washington.

Dr. Dawn Blasko, associate professor of psychology, will be joining us on the

trip.

The cost for the trip, per student, for 8 nights stay in the hotel and the bus transportation to Washington, will be approximately \$500 for students who stay 3 to room (by utilizing the sofa-bed). The exact cost will depend on how many students sign up for the trip by the December 2 deadline. Students will also be responsible for their own food and incidental expenses while in Washington, including subway tickets. Students will be able to eat meals cheaply in their rooms if they prefer by using the kitchens present in each room. We will generally go to lunch at area food courts. Students should plan on bringing or having available approximately \$100-\$200 in personal spending money. ATM bank machines are available at the hotel and throughout Washington. Penn State students registered full-time in Spring 2011 will incur no additional tuition costs for the course or trip.

Brochures with a full explanation of the trip are available from any political science professor and in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences office (170 Kochel). To register for the trip and course, students must submit a non-refundable deposit in the form of cash, check, money order, or credit card in the amount of \$150 to Penn State University, along with a completed course registration form, course fee form, and background information form, to Jackie May in the School of H&SS Office, 170 Kochel, by December 2, 2010. The forms are available from Dr. Speel or the H&SS School Office.

The \$150 will serve as a non-refundable deposit to reserve a space on the trip. The remaining cost of the trip will be due to Jackie May by January 27, 2011. We may need to cap enrollment in all sections of the course at 25, in which case the students who hand their deposits in the earliest will get priority, so hand in deposits early if you are sure you would like to go.

For more information about the trip and course, pick up a copy of the brochure, or email Dr. Speel ([rws15@psu.edu](mailto:rws15@psu.edu)) with any questions.

## **2. COURSE IN THE SPOTLIGHT: ORGANIZED CRIME, LAW, AND POLITICS (PL SC 197B)**

Donald Wagner, an Erie attorney and Penn State Behrend honors alumnus, will be teaching this class.

The class will focus on several topic areas: 1) the history of organized crime in the United States; 2) the successful and unsuccessful efforts of law

enforcement to combat organized crime over the past eighty years; 3) how organized crime has influenced American politics and government officials worldwide; 4) how the most serious threat today is from organized crime syndicates overseas, profiting in everything from drugs to sex slavery rings; and 5) the relationships that have emerged between some organized crime groups and terrorist organizations, and how our law enforcement and intelligence communities must re-focus their efforts to deal with these new threats.

Organized crime continues to affect American politics and law, and has increasingly become an international problem. Unfortunately, much of the public's knowledge about organized crime and appreciation for the threat it poses have been clouded by a romantic image surrounding particular crime groups. Recent successful prosecutions of high profile mob leaders have left an impression that organized crime is dead. The truth, however, is that organized crime is in many ways stronger today than it ever has been. The new threat is from non-traditional groups, many of whom have their bases of operations overseas. This new threat requires American law enforcement officials and law makers to re-examine their policies and develop new strategies in the dangerous years ahead.

This course can be used to fulfill either the American government or government in theory and practice subfield requirements for political science majors.

### **3. POLITICAL SCIENCE EVENTS IN OCTOBER**

#### **Sabrina Petra Ramet, “Italian Fascism and German Nazism compared with Special Attention to Cultural Policy”**

Penn State Erie, The Behrend College  
Monday, October 11, 2010  
7:00 p.m. in 117 Reed Union Building

Sabrina Petra Ramet is a Professor of Political Science at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim, Norway, a Senior Associate of the Centre for the Study of Civil War, PRIO, and a Research Associate of the Science and Research Centre of the Republic of Slovenia, in Koper. She was elected in 2002 to membership in the Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences and Letters and in 2009 to membership in the

Norwegian Academy of Science. Co-sponsored by the Political Science Society and the History Club.

### **Senate Candidate Forum**

On Thursday, October 14, 7 PM, Reed 117, US Senate Candidates Pat Toomey and Joe Sestak of Pennsylvania, or representatives from their campaigns, will be at a forum to discuss issues and answer student questions. Co-sponsored by the Political Science Society, College Democrats, College Republicans, and the COMM 471 class on Public Relations.

### **Joseph Conti, "Jury Selection"**

On, Wednesday, October 27, at 7:30 PM, in Kochel 059, the Crime, Psychology, and Public Policy Certificate Program is sponsoring a talk on "Jury Selection," with Joseph Conti, former Erie County District Attorney and Penn State alumnus. Attorney Conti is familiar with the jury selection process from both the prosecution and defense perspective. He will discuss what types of jurors attorneys look for when preparing for trials. Free food and refreshments will be available.

## **4. STUDENT GROUP NEWS**

The Political Science Society meets every Monday at 6 PM in Reed 150. The group is sponsoring two campus events in October and just completed a successful voter registration drive. For more details, contact President Adam Fracassi at [als5589@psu.edu](mailto:als5589@psu.edu).

College Democrats meets every Wednesday at 5 PM (Reed 113 on October 13) and has been working on the Dahlkemper for Congress campaign. For more details, contact President Samantha Wilcox at [skw5062@psu.edu](mailto:skw5062@psu.edu).

College Republicans will meet on Wednesday, October 13, at 7 PM, in Reed 150. They have also been working on the Kelly for Congress campaign. For more details contact President Sal Messina at [sum209@psu.edu](mailto:sum209@psu.edu).

## **5. FACULTY IN THE NEWS**

Dr. Christopher Cook will be presenting a paper titled, "The American Media's Anti-Kabila Bias: Media Indexing, Government Policy and the Second Congo War," at the November meeting of the Northeastern Political Science Association in Boston.

Dr. Robert Roecklein will be presenting a paper titled, "The Political Cause of Parmenides' Repudiation of Coming-into-Being," at the November meeting of the Northeastern Political Science Association in Boston.

Dr. Robert Speel has been interviewed for four articles in the Erie Times-News over the past few weeks about this year's elections - the articles were about Mike Kelly's campaign for US House of Representatives, Kathy Dahlkemper's campaign for US House of Representatives, voter turnout among young adults, and the first year in office of Erie County Councilman Ebert Beeman. Dr. Speel also spoke about this year's elections to the Erie Women's Club on September 29. At that event, Erie City Councilman Pat Cappabianca presented Dr. Speel with an Erie City Council resolution passed in recognition of his achievements.