



When A “Normal” Year Doesn’t Feel So Normal...

The 2021-2022 academic year was supposed to be fairly normal. We were back in the classroom all year. We lifted the mask mandate in March. We started having gatherings on campus again. Travel to academic conferences was back. But still, we all struggled. It’s difficult to put our finger on exactly why, but we at least know we are not alone. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* has been covering the struggles of college students and faculty frequently, with articles entitled, “Would a ‘Designated Advocate’ Help Students in Crisis?,” “Professors Are Being Asked to Accommodate

Students. That’s Not the Same Ask for Everyone,” “‘It’s Definitely a Crisis’: Why Women in College Sports are Struggling with Mental Health,” “‘It Feels Like I’m Pouring Energy Into a Void’,” and “A ‘Stunning’ Level of Student Disconnection,” and our Dean of Students assures us that things are just not back to what they were pre-pandemic...yet. We spent some time at a Spring department meeting learning how to be “warm demanders” and heard from the DOS about trauma-informed instruction and the resources we can refer students to on campus. (There are so many wonderful resources for students on our campus!) We take caring for our students AND our high standards seriously and will continue to soldier on with new tools in our toolkits, hopefully getting closer to fine as we approach the 2022-2023 academic year. (People still know the music of the Indigo Girls, right??) We hope you’ll engage with us as we do so!

Sara Benesh
Associate Professor and Chair

Brown Bag Series Continues To Bring In Impressive Alumni

In Fall 2021, the Department hosted a Careers in POL SCI Brown Bag featuring an interesting mix of alumni who headed in many different directions after majoring in POL SCI. We called it, “You Majored in POL SCI and You’re Doing What??” Our majors are EVERYWHERE! Thanks to Daniel Hoeft ’19 (Growth Marketing, The Daily Upside), Grace Fuhr ’10 (Events Director, Historic Milwaukee), and Maggie Lund ’08 (Director of Corporate Public Relations and Executive Communications, Kohl’s). Tressa DiPiazza ’20 (Recruiter) had planned to join us but had a conflict.

In Spring 2022, the Department focused on International Careers and brought in some POL SCI, ECON, and International Studies majors to talk with students. UWM has impressive alumni across disciplines! Our thanks to Nathan Derge ’18 (Special Agent, Department of State), Kevin Harris ’15 (Intelligence Analyst, Department of Defense), Jane Collier ’05 (Senior Sourcing Manager, Chewy), and Mitchell Boyd ’15 (Legal Compliance Manager, Harley-Davidson) for joining us!

Recordings of these programs can be found on our website: uwm.edu/political-science. One of the great things coming out of COVID – increased access to virtual programming!

Spotlight: Faculty Research

Reuter Wins NSF Grant to Study Russia

Ora John Reuter (Associate Professor) was recipient of a prestigious National Science Foundation research grant to fund his collaborative project “Voting in an Authoritarian Regime Under Stress: The 2021 Russian Election Study” (with Bryn Rosenfeld, Henry Hale, David Szakonyi, Timothy Colton, and Katerina Tertytchnaya). With the support of the NSF, Reuter and his colleagues commissioned face-to-face interviews with more than 3,700 Russian voters before and after the 2021 State Duma elections in Russia. The project is one of the largest and most sophisticated voter surveys ever conducted in Russia. Collected in fall and winter 2021-22, the surveys provide a unique window into the state of Russian public opinion on the eve of the current war. Some early insights from the data appeared in [February](#) and [April](#) 2022 articles at the *Washington Post*. Reuter will be using the data to study a range of topics in Russian public opinion, including political participation, polarization, and the determinants of support for Vladimir Putin.



Associate Professor Ora John Reuter

Benesh Wins UWM’s Advancing Research and Creativity Grant to Study Supreme Court Appearances

Sara C. Benesh (Associate Professor and Chair) is digging into research this summer with the support of the UWM ARC grant, which supports research projects that will result in scholarly, scientific and artistic outcomes. Perhaps you have noticed that the justices of the U.S. Supreme Court have been out giving speeches more frequently over the last few years than they used to. Indeed, the visibility and recognition of the justices is far higher than it once was (when, it has been said, unsuspecting tourists have accidentally asked justices to take their family’s photo in front of the Court, which the justices were happy to do). At a time when trust in institutions of government is at all-time low, it is important to understand what drives support. Professor



Justice Sonia Sotomayor speaks to the American Constitution Society convention

Benesh and her team, including Wendy Martinek at SUNY-Binghamton, and PhD students, Michael Catalino at Binghamton and Taraleigh Davis here at UWM, are collecting data on every Supreme Court public appearance between 2000 and the present in order to ascertain whether such appearances influence the public’s perception of the Supreme Court. In addition, the team is running a survey experiment this summer to determine whether appearances of different sorts by different actors influence the public’s views of the institutions of American government. In combination, the data collection and experimental findings will help us further understand the influence the justices might have over perceptions of their institution.

Spotlight: Faculty Research (cont.)

Dolan to Study Voting Behavior in Primary Contests

Professor Kathleen Dolan has spent her summer investigating how voters evaluate and choose women candidates in party primaries by conducting voter surveys in six primary contests in five states. Thirty-six governor and 38 U.S. Senate seats are up for re-election this far and in six of those races, well-qualified and financed women ran against one or two well-qualified and financed men, neither of whom were the incumbent. Dolan surveyed voters before each primary to see how voters evaluate candidates and for whom they plan to vote, enabling her to understand voter calculus about women candidates in a situation where voters cannot use party identity to make their vote choice. We look forward to hearing what she finds.



Republican Gubernatorial Candidate for Wisconsin, Rebecca Kleefisch

Spotlight: Undergraduate Program



PI SIGMA ALPHA, Chapter Epsilon Xi

New members and Honors graduates capped off another strong year for the UWM Epsilon Xi chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha! Shown here are Honors graduates at the Honors Commencement ((L to R) Laurence Byrne, Alec Waln, Camryn Arroyo, and Ali Jaeger with Chancellor Mone).

In the second photo, Pi Sigma Alpha new and returning members at their end-of-year banquet. (In the back row (L to R) are: Ellen Finnel (2022-23 Communications Director), Camryn Arroyo (Spring 2022 new member), Kim Carver (2022-23 Secretary), Aiden Burling (President Fall 2021), Laurence Bryne (Secretary 2022), and Alison Jaeger (President; Spring 2022; Vice President; Fall 2021). In the front row (L to R) are: Kylie Ott (2022-23 President), Jordann Meinhardt (Spring 2022 new member), and Xan Hadsell (2022-23 Treasurer).



This year, returning to on-campus operations after a two-year hiatus due to COVID, the group hosted regular trivia nights (for some fun socializing) and a great program open to the entire UWM community on applying to and surviving graduate and law school. They look forward to a more active 2022-2023 year. (Fingers crossed!)

PhD Placements



**digital
society
project**

Yunus Orhan: Post-Doc, North Dakota State

Yunus Orhan has just accepted a one-to-three year post-doc position at the Digital Society Project with Professor Dan Pemstein at North Dakota State University. The project seeks to answer questions surrounding the

internet and politics across the world providing publicly-available high-quality data used to answer important questions about disinformation, polarization, censorship, privacy, and campaigning in the online space. Yunus is excited to contribute to the program as its Research Project Manager and explore some of his research interests in comparative democratic backsliding with a focus on polarization and social networks. We wish him a very productive time in this prestigious position!

Amanda Heideman: Teaching Assistant Professor, Marquette University

Amanda Heideman is moving across the City to our friends in the Political Science Department at Marquette University where she will teach courses in American Politics and research methods at the graduate and undergraduate level as well as being affiliated with the Center for Data, Ethics, and Society. We value our connections with our neighbors to the West and are excited send them a great new colleague.



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ShinYoung Park: Visiting Assistant Professor, Kansas State University

While Shin Young works on completing her dissertation, she'll head to Kansas State to gain some additional teaching experience. We know she'll be mentored well by our other alumni currently on the faculty, Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies Bri Heidebreder and Assistant Professor Michael Tyburski. Go have a great experience, Shin Young!

Other Kudos:

Taraleigh Davis (ABD) has been awarded a Distinguished Dissertator Fellowship through the UWM Graduate School. The DDF is a highly-competitive award that recognizes and supports the most academically excellent dissertators at UWM. Only around 15 such awards are given annually, across campus. And the competition is FIERCE. Congratulations, Taraleigh! (And yes, she received a fellowship last year too! Destined for great things...)

Jingnan Liu (ABD) has published another paper, this one in the *Journal of Chinese Political Science*. Jingnan is on the academic job market for Fall 2022.

We Want to Hear From You!

We'd love to hear from you, alumni, on what you're doing with your Political Science degree! Please feel free to email Professor Benesh at sbenesh@uwm.edu and let us know what you're up to. We may even ask to profile you in next year's newsletter. And invite you to campus to participate in one of our new Careers in POL SCI Brown Bag events! Follow us on Facebook and Instagram too! (@UWMPolSci)



POL SCI @ UWM

Faculty in the News



As you might imagine, our faculty get called upon frequently to contribute their expertise to local and national media outlets. Did you catch these?

[Urban Milwaukee](#), "Questions Linger Over Post-Roe Landscape in Wisconsin," featuring commentary by Professor Sara Benesh.

[CBC Radio](#), "With the fall of Roe v. Wade, Wisconsin slips back to 173-year-old abortion ban," featuring commentary by Professor Sara Benesh offered to the Associated Press.

[TMJ4](#), "Wisconsin voters react to overturning of Roe v. Wade ahead of midterm elections," featuring commentary by Professor Kathy Dolan.

[WPR](#), "In far northern Wisconsin, several districts long held by Democrats are up for grabs," featuring commentary by Professor Kathy Dolan.

[Monkey Cage](#), [Washington Post](#), "How popular is Putin, really," coauthored by Professor John Reuter.

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#), "Executives are warned that China's economic politics could present major challenge to local manufacturers," featuring commentary by Professor Shale Horowitz.

[Fox6](#), "Political experts weigh in on top issues of Wisconsin spring 2022 general election," featuring Professor Paru Shah.

[U.S. News and World Report](#), "Biden Nears Supreme Court Pick," featuring commentary by Professor Sara Benesh.

[Inside Higher Ed](#), "A New Take on Gender and Productivity During COVID-19," featuring commentary by Professor Kathy Dolan.

[WUWM](#), "Republican bills that would make it more difficult to vote in Wisconsin set for approval by Legislature," featuring commentary by Professor Paru Shah.

[Tampa Bay Times](#), "Could proposed 15-week abortion ban hurt Florida GOP in 2022?," featuring commentary by Professor Kathy Dolan.

[Radio Milwaukee](#), "How the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade ruling could affect Wisconsin," featuring an interview with Professor Sara Benesh.

UWM POL SCI STUDENTS INDUCTED INTO PHI BETA KAPPA

The Department congratulates the following POL SCI students on their induction into Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and most prestigious undergraduate honors society. Some are graduating – congrats! – and others are back in the Fall. We look forward to continued great experiences with you in POL SCI @ UWM!

Stephanie Aguilar-Cachú

Tiara Fountain

Emily Kern

Emmy Pagel

Phi Beta Kappa recognizes academic excellence in the liberal arts and intellectual exploration. Eligibility is based on a record of breadth in coursework across the liberal arts and sciences, and a minimum 3.8 GPA for induction as a junior or 3.6 GPA for induction as a senior. Only about 10% of colleges and universities in the U.S. have a chapter; in the UW-System, only Milwaukee and Madison have earned a chapter. The Eta Chapter, here at UWM, was installed in February 1974.

DEPARTMENTAL SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

We are so grateful to have generous donors fund two important scholarships for our current students and one award for a UWM alumnus in law school at UW-Madison: the Michael C. LeMay Political Science Scholarship; the Wilder Crane Scholarship; and the Russell R. Bonfiglio Memorial Scholarship. In addition, we were able to award two Helen A. Berry Memorial Scholarships this year, which go to students completing a summer internship at the Washington Center in Washington, DC. (If you'd like to explore the possibility of adding a scholarship in your family's name, or would like to contribute to one of our existing scholarship funds, contact information is below!) This year, we congratulate five fantastic students, recognized for their excellence and supported through this generous scholarship money:

- Michael C. LeMay Scholarship (\$1,000) to Andrea Bishop
- Michael C. LeMay Scholarship (\$1,000) to Stephanie Aguilar-Cachú
- Wilder Crane Scholarship (\$1,000) to Allyn Lottouzee
- Russell R. Bonfiglio Memorial Scholarship (\$1,500) to Julien Blecking (UW Law)
- Helen A. Berry Memorial Scholarship (\$14,000 to Brady Immel and \$8,000 to Allyn Lottouzee)

Thank you, LeMay and Bonfiglio families, friends and family of Wilder Crane, and the Estate of Helen A. Berry for your support of UWM students and alumni! And congratulations to these worthy recipients!



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