

Spring 2022 Newsletter

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Greetings from the Department of Political Science in the College of Arts and Sciences at Stony Brook University. I hope you and your family have continued to stay safe and well. Things are returning to normal, and we are pleased to report that we have held numerous in-person events this semester that have been well attended. We launched a new speaker series on international relations for political science majors. Students also formed the Political Science Society, which has hosted various well-attended events.

It is gratifying to see that our political science majors and graduate students continue to excel and move forward with their careers. It is also a pleasure to work with our world-class faculty who continue to publish relevant and interesting research.

Amidst this good news, I am sorry to inform you that long-time faculty member and eminent Long Island planner, Lee Koppelman passed away recently. Professor Koppelman was a towering figure on Long Island who was responsible for local green space policies and so much more. He will be sorely missed.

I hope you enjoy reading about our latest developments, including the work of our highly productive faculty. Please consider following us on Twitter [@SBUPoliSci](https://twitter.com/SBUPoliSci) to keep up with Department developments as they happen.

We are very proud of our distinguished faculty and the successes of our undergraduate, master's, and PhD students. We continue to face tough times, however. The coming year will be a challenge on many fronts. The Department of Political Science depends on the support of our alumni and friends so we can offer scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students, recruit excellent new students, and maintain faculty and graduate student attendance at national and international research conferences. We are especially concerned about providing financial support to undergraduate and graduate students, many of whom will face new obstacles as they pursue their education in the coming years. I hope you'll consider investing in our students and faculty by making [a gift](#) today or speaking with Christopher Scarpati, Director of Development, at (631) 632-1202 or Christopher.Scarpati@stonybrook.edu.

Please stay in touch and send us updates about your accomplishments.

Be safe and well,

Leonie Huddy, PhD

Distinguished Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science



2021-2022 Department Scholarship Recipients

Last October, the Scholarship and Awards Committee reviewed the largest number of applicants in recent years, so the recipients truly exemplify the best in scholarship and potential. Congratulations to these outstanding undergraduate students for receiving our scholarships for the 2021-2022 academic year!



Erin Byers (Senior, Political Science and Psychology double major) and **Ryan Magill** (Senior, Political Science and Journalism double major) were selected as co-recipients of the **Patricia A. Gramer Memorial Scholarship**.

Originally the Michael W. Gramer Honors Thesis Scholarship, this scholarship was created to commend an undergraduate political science student who has demonstrated outstanding scholarship and is writing an senior honors research thesis in political science. It was renamed in memory of Patricia A. Gramer.



Alice Mo

Alice Mo (Senior, Philosophy major) was selected as the recipient of the **Alumni Pre-Law Scholarship**. This scholarship was established to support undergraduates who have an interest in becoming a lawyer. The scholarship is intended for students who have taken law-related courses or had previous work experience in the legal industry and show promise for a future career in law.

Bisma Bhatti (Junior, Political Science and Psychology double major) was selected as the recipient of the **Robert Clasen Scholarship**. This scholarship was established by Robert Clasen, a practicing attorney who graduated from Stony Brook University in 1980 with a BA in Political Science. Mr. Clasen generously established the fund in appreciation of the education he received at Stony Brook and to provide scholarship support for students that demonstrate potential and promise through their course work.



Fall 2021 International Relations Speaker Michael Pregent



On Wednesday, October 20, 2021 the Department hosted Michael Pregent (Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute) as a guest for our International Relations Speaker Series. His visit involved a series of guest class lectures in World Politics (POL 101) and America at War (POL 401) and an open campus talk titled "Middle East Policy and Careers in Intelligence."

Pregent's talk focused on the recent battle with ISIS, the Middle East realignment of Sunni states and Israel vs. Iran and Shi'a minorities

and militias and what it means for the future of terrorism. Also covered was the politicization of intelligence by several administrations including Bush, Trump and Biden and how intelligence works its way up the chain of command. During the Q&A, there was a lengthy discussion on the future of Afghanistan, intelligence failures and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Political Science International Relations Speaker Series is supported by the Vincent and Robert Galluci Fund. To learn how you can support events and speakers for our department, click [here](#).

Emily Carll Awarded SBU's First Ever Pickering Fellowship



This past December, **Emily Carll '20** was selected for the nationally competitive Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Program Fellowship and is SBU's first-ever Pickering Fellow. The financial award Emily receives will be used to pursue a Master's degree in international affairs. During her time at Stony Brook she double majored in Political Science and Asian and Asian-American Studies, and was a recipient of the prestigious Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) in Hindi. She is currently serving as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Serbia.

Carll recognized the community of mentors who supported her throughout her undergraduate career at Stony Brook, particularly Harsh Bhasin (Political Science), Anna Geisherik (European Languages) and Gregory Ruf (Asian and Asian-American Studies). Congratulations Emily on this great achievement! To read more about Emily and her achievement, click [here](#).



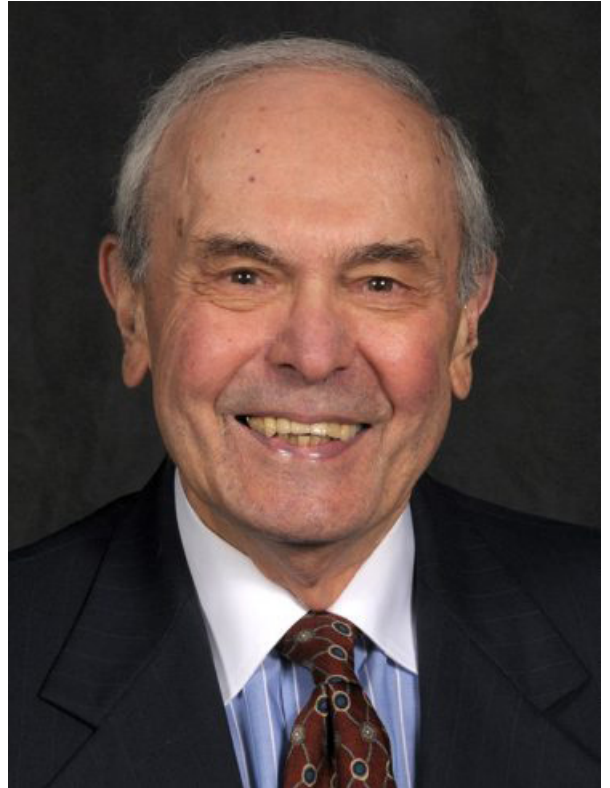
Remembering Lee Koppelman, Master Planner and Professor Emeritus, 1928-2022

We are most sad to report the death on March 21, 2022 of our devoted colleague Professor Lee Koppelman. One of the nation's most eminent urban planners and the chief planner of Long Island for over forty years, Lee was a leading member of the Stony Brook political science department for over five decades. Indeed, Lee continued teaching in our Public Policy program until late in 2021.

His [contributions to the planning of Long Island](#) have long been recognized: Director of the Suffolk County Planning Department from 1960 to 1988 and Executive Director of the Nassau-Suffolk County Regional Planning Board from 1965 to 2006. In these roles Lee promoted the environmental sustainability of Long Island through protection of its water supply, developing sanitary sewerage disposal and preventing destruction of the Long Island Pine Barrens. He was also instrumental in guiding Long Island's land use and development regulation, promoting more affordable housing and expanding its transit system.

Lee Koppelman essentially launched Stony Brook's [Masters in Public Policy](#) program and was instrumental in locating it the Department of Political Science. At Stony Brook he also ran a Center for Regional Studies that conducted research and advocacy for the planning and advancement of Long Island's economic, environmental and demographic vitality. As a professor of public policy, Lee was among the most highly regarded by the program's graduates, teaching courses in environmental policy, regional planning, the environment and transportation.

He trained generations of local leaders and policy analysts, ensuring his legacy. He will be sorely missed. The family asks that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to Hadassah or the [Doctors Connie and Lee Koppelman Endowed Fellowship Fund](#) in Political Science through the Stony Brook Foundation.



How Political Engagement in Politics Differs Between Groups in the United States

"The Other Divide: Polarization and Disengagement in American Politics"

By Yanna Krupnikov and John Barry Ryan



John Barry Ryan



Yanna Krupnikov

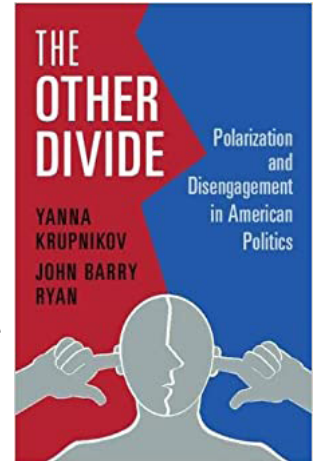
Looking beyond the partisan divide between Democrats and Republicans, Professor Yanna Krupnikov and Associate Professor John Barry Ryan explore a different divide within the American electorate in their latest book titled, "The Other Divide: Polarization and Disengagement in American Politics." Their book reveals that Americans are divided by their degree of involvement in politics, more so than by party polarization. While some constantly follow politics throughout the day and openly express their views, others rarely engage with it and lack interest in political discussions.

This group of highly expressive people who post about politics on social media is rather small, making up only about 15-20 percent of the electorate. However, their voices are typically "amplified by the media," in which they are seen as being representative of the entire country. The book delves further into the political differences between these groups and the impact that people's attention to politics has on different aspects of their lives. They provide a more accurate and representative image of the American electorate.

Professor Krupnikov primarily researches political communication in order to study the potential power of information. Professor Ryan focuses on political behavior and political opinion, specifically related to attention to politics and party polarization. The topic of their book applies these areas of research to real-world settings. "The way people talk about American politics in the news and social media goes against both standard political science research and the experience most people have in their lives," said Professor Ryan.

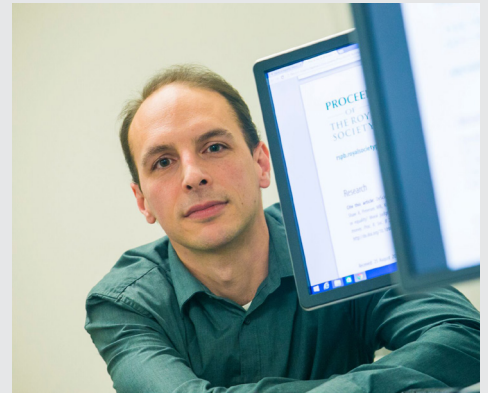
By conducting experiments and using three national surveys, they compiled data about how people feel about politics given certain situations. "You hear people talk about partisan politics being the most important thing to people...that they wake up thinking about politics, they go through the day checking political social media, and they go to bed thinking about it," said Professor Ryan. However, this is shown not to be the case in the current political landscape. "In my experience talking with people, politics is not at the forefront of people's minds," said Professor Ryan. The one exception is the group of those deeply involved in politics.

Both Professor Krupnikov and Professor Ryan have described their book more in-depth through recent interviews on The Niskanen Center's Science of Politics Podcast here and The FiveThirtyEight Politics Podcast here. To learn more about their book, be sure to visit: <https://www.otherdividebook.com>.



Getting the Message Across : Writing in Political Science

Associate Professor, Peter DeScioli



When reading scholarly articles in political science, many of us find them difficult to understand.

Associate Professor Peter DeScioli addresses this issue in his recent paper with co-author Steven Pinker titled, "Piled Modifiers, Buried Verbs, and Other Turgid Prose in the American Political Science Review."

They examine why writing in political science is often verbose and challenging to read. Using a recent issue of the American Political Science Review (APSR), they analyzed eighteen articles and collected examples of over a thousand sentences that suffered from obscure language. They describe common problems found within them and revise each one using simpler terms. Additionally, they explain the principles of style that can make these sentences more comprehensible to readers.

Many of the sentences in the APSR consisted of "heavy noun phrases" in conjunction with weak verbs. The bulky phrases often followed the forms of "noun noun noun" and "adjective adjective noun noun." Several contributors to these dense phrases were common habits in poor writing known as piled modifiers, needless words, nebulous nouns, missing prepositions, and buried verbs. For instance, writers frequently piled modifiers, clusters of multiple nouns and adjectives, before the head of a noun phrase.

One example is the phrase, "socially generated political information," where "information" is the head of the noun phrase. They show authors how to revise phrases like this one that make it difficult to interpret their real meanings.

Here is an example of an original and revised sentence from the APSR:

Original Sentence:

"Socially generated information affected participants' subjective evaluations of the president, even if it did not affect evaluations of the economy."

Revised Sentence:

"News learned from peers influenced participants' opinions of the president but not the economy."

Through their analysis, they illustrate that these problems can be easily fixed by reworking the sentences and using plain language to express the same concept. In their own words, "The main reason to write clearly is obvious: the point of writing is to convey ideas to readers so obscure writing wastes our efforts and diminishes our research." They emphasize that in order for readers to truly grasp research findings, the language in scholarly journals should be fluent and clear. Therefore, political scientists should be mindful of readers and present their research in a way that everyone can appreciate. If you would like to read more on this article, click [here](#).

Besides studying writing, Professor DeScioli conducts research in moral psychology, experimental economics, and political psychology. Particularly, he examines the evolutionary functions of moral judgment and how the human mind uses principles of strategy to solve problems in our social lives. Click [here](#) to find out more about his research.



Political Student Life on Campus



Adjunct Lecturer Jason Rose is the faculty advisor for the undergraduate club organizations featured below, which include the College Democrats, the College Republicans, The Political Science Society, and Pi Sigma Alpha, Eta Theta Chapter.

College Democrats/ College Republicans Debate Event



The College Democrats and the College Republicans hosted a debate on February 18, 2022, where five members from each club were placed on a panel. They discussed political issues such as minimum wage, universal health care, U.S foreign policy relations, and COVID-19 vaccine mandates. Students in the audience were able to learn more about the political ideologies and beliefs of both groups, with a focus on issues affecting society today. Some students also had the chance to ask panelists their own questions during the Q&A segment of the debate.

With many on-campus activities either canceled or delayed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, club organizations have been unable to host large events. However, with the recent statewide vaccine and mask mandates lifted, it is now possible to hold in-person events once more. "This has been a long event in the planning. It has taken two years with COVID, and we wanted to do it in-person," said Kenneth Rothwell, president of the College Republicans. As a result, this debate has been one of the largest collaborative events between the clubs in recent years.

The two organizations ultimately coordinated with each other in hopes of increasing engagement in politics among university students. "Our goal was to bring the clubs together...and to try to get more people involved in politics and in both of our clubs," said Paul Murdoch, president of the College Democrats. In a time where members of the Democratic and Republican parties disagree on many political issues, the clubs sought to create a productive dialogue in a civil manner about these pressing topics. With over 70 attendees, the debate event allowed students to learn more about the political standpoints from both major parties.



The Political Science Society - Inaugural Meeting



The Political Science Society kicked off their first general body meeting on March 3, 2022, with guest speaker **Emeritus Professor Frank Myers**, emeritus distinguished teaching professor from the Department of Political Science. His lecture centered on the American elections system and how it has evolved over time into its current structure. He argued that the use of the filibuster in Congress is standing in the way of democracy. Afterwards, students were able to meet with him and ask him questions directly.

This new group officially became a club organization under the Undergraduate Student Government as of late Fall 2021. The organization is a nonpartisan, research and policy-oriented club that is open to all Political Science majors/minors, as well as non-majors who are interested in political science. "We hope to bring together people who have this common interest, where we can talk about politics and have these discussions," said Aisha Khwaja, president of The Political Science Society. Through academic promotion and education, the club also seeks to build a foundation for students that will help them succeed in their future careers. "Working with these students, and seeing how utterly mature they are to all political arguments and all points of view demonstrates that the department is doing its job," said the club's advisor, Professor Jason Rose.

Similar to many other organizations, the Political Science Society is looking to host more on-campus events for students, especially after the past two years with the COVID-19 pandemic. "Part of this group's aim is to start getting back into shaking hands in-person and networking with people in a career field you may pursue," said Alec Waldman, Vice President of The Political Science Society. As the spring semester continues, the Political Science Society will be holding several general body meetings and guest speaker events.



Pi Sigma Alpha, Eta Theta Chapter at SBU

Pi Sigma Alpha, The National Political Science Honor Society, seeks to advance interest in political science among university students in the U.S. Founded in 1920, it is the only honor society for students in political science in higher education institutions. Today, the society has over 420 Chapters in colleges and universities across the country, which all acknowledge the scholastic achievement of students in the field. The Eta Theta Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha serves to do the same for students studying political science at Stony Brook University.

To be eligible to join the chapter, students are required to meet both the national and chapter criteria. These include being a declared political science major, being of either junior or senior standing, and having completed several upper-division courses.

They must also have at least a 3.3 overall GPA and a 3.5 major GPA, thus exemplifying academic excellence. "It recognizes students for being at the top of their class, which demonstrates to employers that they have marketable skills," said Professor Jason Rose.

As members, students are able to improve upon their leadership skills while being more involved within the department. They are given ample opportunities to work closely with faculty on their research projects. Students can also attend various events, meet guest speakers, and participate in trips held by the chapter. "One of the most important functions of Pi Sigma Alpha is that the students are networking...they are working together, bonding, and building lifelong relationships," said Professor Rose. The Eta Theta Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha remains committed to the spread of knowledge in political science and the facilitation of connections between students and faculty.

Are you an alumni that was inducted into Pi Sigma Alpha? We are interested in hearing about your experiences, and if you would be interested in reconnecting with the Stony Brook chapter. Contact us at polisci_alumni@stonybrook.edu to get in touch.



Supporting Student Research This Giving Day



On April 27th, Stony Brook will host its 4th annual Giving Day and we are launching a campaign to raise \$7,500 for our [Political Science Fund](#) for Excellence to support undergraduate and graduate student research projects. The challenges we face today require innovative, forward thinking solutions. We are proud to be setting the foundation for current students to learn the skills needed to engage with these big questions. Giving Day is officially on April 27th, but if you would like to support our campaign before then, you can [donate here](#).

A recent beneficiary of the Excellence Fund is PhD candidate **Shawn Kim** who studies political psychology and behavioral economics.

His specific area of research focuses on race, ethnicity, and identity, with a special emphasis on how group identities shape political behavior. Many PhD students, including Shawn, use the Center for Behavioral Political Economy Lab to perform their studies. "My current research examines the concept of pan ethnicity among Asians in the United States as well as various other groups," he said. His interest lies in analyzing how pan ethnicity becomes maintained and its implications on political behavior and partisanship.

Throughout his life, Shawn has enjoyed learning about history and human behavior, which later developed into a passion for political science. "I have always been interested in why we make the decisions we make and why we behave in certain ways in certain situations," he said. His present work in political communication and political psychology thus reflects this field of interest.

Undergraduate students within the department are given opportunities to participate in these experiments as research assistants under current PhD students. In these assistant positions, students help to ensure that experimental sessions run smoothly and that subjects are well-aware of the policies in place for the study. Shawn's research assistants often take part in mock trials of a session where they look over each part of a questionnaire, making changes to the wording of its instructions. "In terms of checking the quality of the session, they provide a fresh set of eyes and can identify issues that matter," said Kim. Funds raised during Giving Day make it possible for undergraduate and graduate students to engage in PhD research studies under real world conditions.



Political Science Alumni Council

The Department of Political Science is considering convening a department council to gather input from the wide range of groups that our department interacts with, including faculty, current students—and importantly—alumni. Our goal is to better prepare students for future careers through their learning and activities while still at Stony Brook, but also to maintain connections after receiving their degrees. Events, speakers, workshops—we are interested in hearing ideas from a variety of stakeholders that understand what it means to study political science, and more importantly, where it has taken you in life.

If you are a graduate from any of the political science programs at Stony Brook (undergraduate or graduate) and are looking to stay connected to the department, please contact us directly by emailing polsci_alumni@stonybrook.edu. We look forward to hearing from you!