



UNIVERSITY OF
CENTRAL
ARKANSAS

Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies

Newsletter, Volume 1, December 15, 2023

UCA Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies

The UCA Department of Political Science was officially renamed the Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies in Fall 2023! A reception was held in Buffalo Alumni Hall on September 12, 2023 to officially launch the department's new name, to present the 2023 Distinguished Alumnus Award, and to announce two new student-focused programs. Dr. Mark Mullenbach announced the establishment of the Student Experiential Learning Fund (SELF), which will provide small grants to departmental students who are participating in experiential learning activities outside of the classroom, including internships, service learning, academic conferences & seminars, and study abroad. In addition, Dr. Mary Beth Sullivan announced the establishment of an online academic journal for undergraduate research in political science, public administration, international studies, and related areas. Dr. Hyo-Won Shin, Assistant Professor, was introduced as the department's newest faculty member. Dr. Shin, who was hired to replace the retired Dr. John Passe Smith, specializes in comparative politics and Southeast Asian politics. [Read More](#)

Department hosts 50th annual meeting of the Arkansas Political Science Association at UCA



The Department of Political Science hosted the 50th annual meeting of the Arkansas Political Science Association (ArkPSA) at UCA on March 3-4, 2023. Dr. Heather Yates and Dr. Mary Beth Sullivan served as co-program chairs for the annual meeting. Faculty, graduate student, and undergraduate student paper panels and roundtable discussions were held in the College of Business building on Friday afternoon and Saturday morning. The annual meeting dinner was held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Conway on Friday evening. Dr. John Passe-Smith, a faculty member in the UCA Department of Political Science, and Dr. Andrew Dowdle, a faculty member in the Department of Political Science at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville), were presented the Association's Distinguished Scholar awards. Dr. Sara Wallace Goodman, Chancellor's Fellow and Dean's Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Irvine, gave the keynote speech during the dinner. The annual meeting luncheon was held in McCastlain Hall Ballroom at noon on Saturday. The featured speaker during the luncheon was Mr. **Ben Hovland**, a UCA alumnus and a member of the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) in Washington DC.

Department hosts Arkansas High School Model Arab League conference at UCA



The Department of Political Science and the UCA Model United Nations (MUN) student organization hosted the Arkansas High School Model Arab League (AHSMAL) Conference in the UCA Student Center on March 10-11, 2023. The conference was sponsored by the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations (NCUSAR) in Washington DC. The AHSMAL conference, originally known as the South Central States Model Arab League (SCSMAL) conference, was previously held at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville from 1996 to 2010 and the University of Arkansas-Little Rock from 2011 to 2020. More than 150 students from ten high schools, representing the 22 member-states and several observer states of the League of Arab States, participated in the conference. UCA graduate, **Sarah Fulmer**, served as Secretary-General for the Conference. UCA student, **Gabriel Mince**, served as Assistant Secretary-General, and UCA student, **Julien Mrad**, served as chair of the Council on Social Affairs. Dr. Mark Mullenbach and Dr. Mark Elrod of the Department of Political Science served as faculty advisors for the UCA MUN student organization. [Read More](#)

Department hosts International Affairs Summer Camp



The Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies hosted the 4th Arkansas and the World: International Affairs Summer Camp at the University of Central Arkansas on July 9-14, 2023. Previous summer camps were hosted by the department in 2017, 2018, and 2019. Forty-four Arkansas high school students participated in a unique, interactive learning experience designed to enhance their understanding of international relations, diplomacy, and international organizations. The students participated in educational workshops on international relations, the United Nations, and fundamentals of Model United Nations. The students also represented assigned countries in interactive simulations of the UN General Assembly, including several committee and plenary sessions held throughout the week. The students competed in two rounds of a Global Trivia Competition on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Guest speakers during the week-long summer camp included **Jennifer Smith**, Communication & Fundraising Coordinator, Heifer International; **Willis Arnold**, Volunteer Coordinator, Clinton Foundation; **Christian Olson**, former Deputy Commissioner and Chief Examiner, Arkansas Securities Department; **Natalie Larrison**, Director of Humanitarian Projects, Syrian Emergency Task Force (SETF); and **Mouaz Moustafa**, Executive Director, Syrian Emergency Task Force (SETF). [Read More](#)

Department hosts the 58th Arkansas Model United Nations conference at UCA



The Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies hosted the 58th Arkansas Model United Nations (AMUN) conference at the University of Central Arkansas on November 17-18, 2023. More than 500 delegates from 27 high schools in Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri, and Oklahoma participated in the conference. **Gabriel Mince** served as Secretary-General, and **Sarah Fulmer** served as Deputy Secretary-General of the conference. Several UCA students, as well as students from the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville, University of Texas-Dallas, and Oklahoma State University, served as committee chairs, co-chairs, and legal counsels. Dr. **Mark Elrod** served as AMUN Conference Coordinator, and Dr. **Mark Mullenbach** served as AMUN Faculty Advisor Liaison. [Read More](#)

Alumni News

Department presents 2023 Distinguished Alumnus Award



Dr. Clay Arnold presented the department's 2023 Distinguished Alumnus Award to Justice **Cody Hiland** of the Arkansas State Supreme Court. Justice Hiland, who graduated from UCA with a bachelor's degree in public administration in 1993, previously served as U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas from 2017 to 2020. In July 2023, Justice Cody Hiland was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Arkansas Supreme Court by Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders. He graciously accepted the award and spoke of the life-long drive that the values of public service has given his career. He remarked that "public service has a nice ring to it, doesn't it? And inherent in the idea of public service is the idea that we're helping other people. I don't know if there's a greater calling in life than serving our fellow man." [Read More](#)

Alumnus Mouaz Moustafa honored with a James W. Foley Freedom Award



Mouaz Moustafa, who graduated from UCA with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in International Studies in May 2008, was honored with a James W. Foley Freedom Award (humanitarian award) presented during a ceremony held at the National Press Club in Washington, DC on May 3, 2023. Since 2011, Mouaz has served as Executive Director of the Syrian Emergency Task Force (SETF), which is a non-governmental organization dedicated to advocating for and providing humanitarian assistance to innocent civilians impacted by the civil war in Syria. The SETF also seeks accountability for war crimes committed by the Syrian government. The James W. Foley Freedom Awards are sponsored by the James W. Foley Legacy Foundation. In August 2024, James W. Foley, a freelance video journalist, was killed in the Raqqa region of Syria by terrorists affiliated with the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Following his death, the foundation was established by James Foley's parents in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. [Read More](#)

Alumnus Itzel Velazquez selected as a 2023 Arkansas Money & Politics 100 Top Professional



Itzel Velazquez, who graduated from UCA with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in International Studies and Political Science in 2019, was selected as one of the 2023 Arkansas Money & Politics 100 Top Professionals. Itzel earned a master's degree in higher education administration at Loyola University in Chicago in 2021, and she is currently the Kiva Hub-Capital Access Manager for Forge Fund in Little Rock. In 2019, Itzel was one of 262 students across the U.S. who were named as the 2019-2020 Newman Civic Fellows by Campus Compact, a Boston-based nonprofit organization working to advance the public purposes of higher education. [Read More](#)

Alumnus Kenny Vo awarded scholarship for Georgetown University Cyberfellows Program



Kenny Vo, who graduated from UCA in May 2022 with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in International Studies and a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Cybersecurity, was recently awarded a prestigious graduate scholarship from the Georgetown University Cyberfellows Program. Starting in Fall 2023, Kenny will be pursuing a Master of Arts (MA) degree in the Security Studies Program (SSP) at Georgetown University in Washington DC. The SSP is one of eight master's degree programs in the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. [Read More](#)

Alumnus Emily Adams Shumate selected as finalist for the Arkansas Business Chief Financial Officer Award



Emily Adams Shumate, who graduated in December of 2013 from UCA with a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Public Administration, was honored in Little Rock on November 2, 2023. Emily was selected as a finalist for the Arkansas Business Chief Financial Officer of the Year Award in the Education and Public Sector category. Emily is the Chief Financial Officer for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

Student News

Department holds 2023 Pi Sigma Alpha Induction Ceremony



The Department of Political Science held its annual induction ceremony for the *Alpha Beta Theta* Chapter of *Pi Sigma Alpha*, the National Political Science Honor Society, on Thursday, April 20, 2023. Dr. Clay Arnold, Chair of the Department of Political Science, announced the 2022-2023 inductees, including Makenna Goss, Allison Hellard, Donavon Millington, Phoenix Vu, Noah Walker, and Richard Ware. **Jaycie Sturdivant** served as president of the chapter in 2022-2023, along with **Madeline Kittler** (Vice President), **Madalyn Dowell** (Secretary), and **Aaron Conrad** (Treasurer). Speakers during the induction ceremony included Dr. Kim Hoffman, Director of the Public Administration Program, Dr. Gizachew Tiruneh, Director of the International Studies Program, and Dr. Mary Beth Sullivan, Associate Professor of Political Science. The department also honored the 2022-2023 Outstanding Students: Political Science – Madalyn Dowell, Emma Davis, and Nicole Vincent; Public Administration – Aaron Conrad and Madeline Kittler; and International Studies – Allison Hellard and Coumba Soumare. Dr. Heather Yates served as Faculty Advisor for UCA's Pi Sigma Alpha chapter in 2022-2023. [Read More](#)

UCA students participate in Inside Washington Seminar in Washington DC



Dr. Bailey Fairbanks, Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science, led a group of ten UCA students to Washington, DC on January 3-11, 2023 to participate in the Inside Washington Seminar, sponsored by The Washington Center (TWC) for Internships & Academic Seminars. This week-long experiential learning activity included three components: (1) plenary sessions attended by all participants to hear from distinguished speakers and other public figures in Washington, DC; (2) educational briefings held at several locations throughout Washington DC, including U.S. government agencies, think tanks, foreign embassies, and media organizations; and (3) small group discussion sessions facilitated by college and university faculty. [Read More](#)

UCA students participate in the 63rd Midwest Model United Nations Conference in St. Louis



Eight UCA students participated as delegates to the 63rd annual Midwest Model United Nations (MMUN) conference in St. Louis, Missouri on February 22-25, 2023. Students from 26 colleges and universities throughout the U.S. participated in the conference, including delegations from the University of Central Arkansas, Arkansas State University-Jonesboro, John Brown University, Northwest Arkansas Community College, and Ouachita Baptist University. The UCA delegation, which represented the United States of America and the Czech Republic (Czechia), consisted of Allison Hellard, Kyle Urban, Gabriel Mince, Julien Mrad, Lauren Clark, Emily Temple, Aminatou Adeniji, and Kayla-Anne Rocher. Dr. Mark Elrod, a lecturer in the UCA Department of Political Science, was the faculty advisor for the UCA delegation to the MMUN conference. Dr. Elrod also serves as a faculty representative on the Board of Directors of the MMUN. The UCA delegation representing the United States and Czechia were recognized as Outstanding Delegation-Honorable Mentions for their overall performances during the conference. **Lauren Clark** (Czechia) won the Outstanding Delegate and Delegate's Choice awards in the First Committee (General Assembly). **Julien Mrad** (USA) won the Outstanding Delegate-Honorable Mention and Crisis awards in the Security Council.

[Read More](#)

UCA students commemorate 2023 Constitution Day



As part of UCA's commemoration of Constitution Day, some 33 students in U.S. Government & Politics courses taught by Dr. Mark Elrod recited the U.S. Constitution in Baridon Residential Hall on Wednesday evening, September 20, 2023. Dr. Elrod is a lecturer in the Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies. The U.S. Constitution was signed by 38 delegates representing the 13 original U.S. states in Philadelphia on September 17, 1787. The U.S. Constitution officially entered into force on June 21, 1788.

[Read More](#)

Hannah Walker crowned 2023 Homecoming Queen



Hannah Walker, a senior public administration major from Poyen was crowned Homecoming Queen at UCA on October 28, 2023. She was nominated by the Alpha Sigma Tau sorority. Hannah is very active on campus representing the senior class in the UCA Student Government Association (SGA) and currently serving as president of Alpha Sigma Tau. She is also a member of the Student Orientation Staff (SOS) and a fellow in the President's Leadership Program.

Abigail Wells named First-Runner Up in Miss UCA Pageant



Abigail Wells, public administration major, was named First-Runner up in the Miss UCA Pageant held November 12, 2023, on the UCA campus. Abigail also received the Producer's Award and a \$200 scholarship. The Producer's Award is given to the contestant with the most cooperation, kindness, and consideration backstage during rehearsals. In addition to her success in the Miss UCA pageant, Abigail is an advocate for individuals with disabilities. Abigail created a non-profit organization, Natural State Adaptive Sports, and a UCA Registered Student Organization, Bears Adapt. Both organizations strive to make Arkansas a more inclusive and adaptable environment for people with disabilities. Abigail Wells also received the 2023 Emerging Student Leader of the Year Award given by the UCA Office of Student Life for her work as an advocate for the disabled. [Read More](#)

Student Organization News

Public Administration Club members attend graduate course at UA-Little Rock



Members of the Public Administration Club attended a graduate course (Public Policy Analysis II) offered by the MPA (Master of Public Administration) program at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock on November 15, 2023. Phoenix Vu, Claire King, Sanjuana Torres Padron, Abbie Asher, and Jewel Meier participated in class discussions with graduate students in the MPA program. This opportunity allowed UCA public administration majors interested in pursuing a graduate degree to observe and participate in a graduate-level course. Dr. Joe Howard, faculty advisor, accompanied the students to the UALR campus.

International Studies Club hosts Fall Scholarly Series

The International Studies Club hosted two Fall Scholarly Series events. The first event was held on October 5, 2023. Dr. Gizachew Tiruneh, Associate Professor and Director of the International Studies Program at UCA, gave a presentation entitled, “A Young Main’s Story of Political Persecution.” The second event was held on November 9, 2023. Dr. K. Adele Okoli, Associate Professor of French at UCA, gave a presentation entitled, “Multilingual and Transnational Creole Studies.”

UCA Pre-Law Society Wins Award

The UCA-Office of Student Life recognized the UCA Pre-Law Society as a 2023 UCA Student Involvement Award Winner for outstanding effort and involvement outside of the classroom. The UCA Pre-Law Society won in the Innovative Event of the Year category for hosting a Virtual Law School Fair for students interested in pursuing a law degree. Dr. Bailey Fairbanks, Assistant Professor, is the faculty advisor for this student organization.

UCA students participate in 13th Arkansas Collegiate Model United Nations conference at ASU



Nineteen UCA students representing the UCA Model United Nations (MUN) student organization participated in the 13th Arkansas Collegiate Model United Nations (ACMUN) Conference at Arkansas State University-Jonesboro on Friday, November 3, 2023. The group, which included Julien Mrad, Jaycie Sturdivant, Dice Ferguson, Makenna Goss, Gabriel Mince, Ryan Webb, Laura Carrillo Rodriguez, Cooper Horton, Emily Temple, Lauren Clark, Abby Bunch, Mitchell Davis, Jaylan Harris, Aissata Diare, Lillie Webb, Allison Hellard, Jenna Taylor, Aminatou Adeniji, and Kyle Urban, represented the countries of Albania, Algeria, Brazil, Costa Rica, Czechia, Egypt, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Kazakhstan. The conference included simulations of the UN Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC), UN Human Rights Council (HRC), UN Security Council, and the Council of the Arab League. Dr. Mark Elrod and Dr. Mark Mullenbach, faculty members in the Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies, served as the faculty advisors for the UCA students. [Read More](#)

Faculty News

Dr. John Passe-Smith, who taught comparative politics courses at UCA for 30 years, retired in May 2023. During his three decades at UCA, Dr. Passe-Smith co-edited several editions of the book *Development and Underdevelopment: The Political Economy of Global Inequality*. Dr. Passe-Smith was presented the Distinguished Scholar award during the 50th annual meeting of the Arkansas Political Science Association held at UCA in March 2023. Dr. Passe-Smith and Mary Sue Passe-Smith retired to their home in Tucson, Arizona.

Dr. Hyo-Won Shin, who graduated with a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Illinois, was hired as Dr. Passe-Smith's replacement for Fall 2023. Dr. Shin specializes in comparative political behavior, Southeast Asian politics, and ethnic politics.

Dr. Joe Howard, **Dr. Kim Hoffman**, and **Dr. Kisha Hardwick** attended the Southeastern Conference for Public Administration (SECoPA) in Atlanta where they presented a paper entitled, "Public Service as a Profession: Encouraging Undergraduates to Pursue Public Service Careers" on September 28, 2023.

Dr. Heather Yates, Associate professor, received a book contract with Palgrave Publishing for her forthcoming book *The Politics of Emotions and Uncertainty in the 2020 Presidential Campaign*. This will be her 3rd solo-authored book on the subject of how emotions influence voters' and their choices. In addition, Dr. Yates received a research stipend in the summer of 2023 to support archival research at the Truman Presidential Library in Independence, Missouri, on a research project titled "Cloak & Dagger: Harry Truman and the influence of unchecked power networks inside the executive.

Dr. Clay Arnold published "Machiavelli's Deceptions" in the Summer 2023 issue of *History of Political Thought*. In it he reconstructs Machiavelli's concept of political deception as found in his most political works, *The Prince*, *Discourses on Livy*, and *Florentine Histories*. Contrary to popular opinion, Machiavelli's focus was far more on how not to become a victim of deception than a more adept practitioner of it.

Make a contribution!

The Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies encourages alumni and other prospective donors to consider [contributing](#) to one or more of the funds and scholarships listed below. These funds provide needed financial support for the department's students, programs, and activities. We appreciate your support!

[Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies \(GPI\) Fund](#) – The GPI Fund broadly supports the department's academic programs, faculty, and students. The GPI Fund covers expenses that are not able to be covered by the department's maintenance and operation (M&O) account, including classroom upgrades, computers, and other technology. The GPI also covers expenses related to periodic academic program evaluations, including stipends for external reviewers.

[Student Experiential Learning Fund \(SELF\)](#) – The SELF fund provides small grants to students in the Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies who are participating in experiential learning activities outside of the traditional classroom, including professional internships, service-learning, independent research, academic conferences & seminars, and study abroad. Students majoring in political science, public administration, and international studies at UCA are eligible to apply for a SELF grant to cover some of the costs associated with participating in an experiential learning activity.

[Simms McClintock \(AMUN\) Fund](#) – The AMUN Fund, which was established in honor of the founder of the Arkansas Model United Nations (AMUN) program, supports the ongoing AMUN program and the UCA students who participate in Model UN activities at UCA. Professor Simms McClintock, a former faculty member in the Department of Political Science, coordinated the AMUN program from 1966 to 1996, including organizing the annual AMUN Conference for thousands of high school students at UCA during this period. The AMUN Fund covers expenses associated with hosting the annual AMUN Conference and expenses associated with UCA student participation in collegiate Model UN conferences.

[Mayor Tab Townsell Scholarship for Public Service](#) – This scholarship, which was established in honor of former Conway Mayor Tab Townsell, provides scholarships for UCA students majoring in political science or public administration. Tab Townsell graduated with a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in political science from UCA in 1984 and a master's in business administration (MBA) degree from Texas Christian University in 1986. Tab Townsell served as mayor of Conway from 1999 to 2016.



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