



Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies

Newsletter, Volume 4, May 15, 2025

Save the date for the Fall Distinguished Alumni Reception!



The Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies (GPI) will be holding its Fall Distinguished Alumni Reception on Thursday, September 18th in Buffalo Alumni Hall from 5:00pm to 7:00pm. Alumni and students are invited to attend.

Dr. Clay Arnold to retire as department chair in June



After serving as department chair for 20 years, Dr. Clay Arnold will retire from UCA in June 2025. Dr. Arnold earned his B.A. and M.A. degrees in political science from the University of South Carolina (1977 and 1981) and his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Arizona (1988). In his teaching and research, Dr. Arnold has specialized in contemporary social and political theory, water politics and institutions, environmental political thought, and U.S. politics and public policy. He previously taught political science as a visiting assistant professor at the University of Texas-Arlington from 1987 to 1989 and as a tenure-track and tenured professor at Emporia State University in Kansas from 1989 to 2005. While at Emporia State University, Dr. Arnold's manuscript, *Rethinking Moral Economy*, was published in the *American Political Science Review* in 2001. This article, which was reprinted in the edited book in 2010, has since been cited more than 290 times by scholars in their published articles and books.

Dr. Arnold has had an active research agenda while serving as department chair during the past 20 years, resulting in five publications in academic journals and books. His research has focused on political theory, the politics of water and moral economy, and executive power in the war on terrorism. His most recent manuscript, *Machiavelli's Deceptions*, was published in the journal *History of Political Thought* in 2023. Dr. Arnold's manuscript on *Machiavelli's Deceptions* was recognized with the Best Faculty Paper Award following the 2023 annual meeting of the Arkansas Political Science Association. Dr. Arnold will be replaced as department chair by Dr. Mark Mullenbach, who has taught international relations and comparative politics courses in the department since earning his Ph.D. in political science at the University of Arizona in 2001.

Department participates in UCA's Day of Giving

The Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies (GPI) raised more than \$3,000 during UCA's 11th annual Day of Giving on Thursday, March 13th. Several students, alumni, and faculty members generously donated to the department's Student Experiential Learning Fund (SELF), GPI Fund, and Sims McClintock (AMUN) Fund. This fall semester, the SELF will be open for the first time for applications from students in the department pursuing experiential learning activities outside of the classroom, including internships, research, conference presentations, study abroad, and service-learning. If you missed UCA's Day of Giving this past March, please consider making a contribution to the department's SELF, GPI, and/or AMUN funds, as well as the Mayor Tab Townsell Scholarship for Public Service. Contributions may be made to the department's funds and scholarships through the UCA Foundation at this secure [link](#).

Department seniors participate in UCA commencement ceremony



Seniors graduating with degrees from the Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies (GPI) participated in UCA's Spring 2025 commencement ceremony held at the Farris Center on Friday, May 2, 2025. Several of the seniors, who earned bachelor's degrees in Political Science, Public Administration, and International Studies, graduated with honors. Phoenix Vu, who served as President of the Student Government Association (SGA) in 2024-2025, gave an address on behalf of the student body. During the ceremony, Phoenix Vu was also presented a medallion from President Houston Davis for being selected as outstanding student in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS).

Department students and faculty participate in the 52nd annual meeting of the ArkPSA



Several students and faculty members of the Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies attended and participated in the 52nd Annual Meeting of the Arkansas Political Science Association (ArkPSA) at Arkansas Tech University in Russellville, Arkansas on March 7-8, 2025. Three faculty members served on the ArkPSA Executive Board in 2024-2025, including Dr. Heather Yates (President), Dr. Mary Beth Sullivan (Editor of the Midsouth Political Science Review), and Dr. Mark Elrod (At-Large Member).

On Friday, March 7th, Abbie Asher (political science and public administration) and Emily Temple (political science and public administration) presented research papers focusing on election administration and voter turnout in Arkansas. Julien Mrad (linguistics and international studies), and Daegon Schaal (political science and international studies) co-presented a research paper with Dr. Mark Mullenbach titled "Voting Behavior on UN General Assembly Resolutions concerning the Russian-Ukrainian War, 2022-2023: An Analysis of the Effects of U.S. Military Alliances and Security Partnerships." Dr. Hyo-Won Shin presented a research paper titled "Imagining Intergroup Contact Method of Improving Outgroup Relations in Ethnically Diverse Contexts." Dr. Heather Yates chaired a roundtable discussion on the Status of Women and Gender in Politics and the 2024 Presidential Election, which included the participation of Dr. Bailey Fairbanks. Dr. Yates co-presented a research paper titled "The 2024 Presidential Election in Arkansas: All Politics in National." Dr. Kisha Hardwick served as chair and discussant for the Public Policy/Public Administration panel. Dr. Clay Arnold participated in a roundtable discussion of Demarcating the (Un)livable. ***Continued on the next page***

During the Friday evening dinner, Dr. Mullenbach presented Dr. Arnold with the ArkPSA's Distinguished Scholar award for his 20 years of accomplishments in political science teaching, research service, and administration at UCA. In addition, Dr. George C. Edwards III, University Distinguished Professor of Political Science and Jordan Chair in Presidential Studies Emeritus at Texas A&M University, gave the keynote address on the topic, "Faulty Premises: The Flawed Foundations of the Electoral College." On Saturday, March 8th, Dr. Fairbanks participated in a roundtable discussion of Servicing Learning Activities in Arkansas. Dr. Yates participated in a roundtable discussion of the 2024 Elections in Arkansas and Beyond. Dr. Arnold was the discussant on a panel focusing on the book, *The Dissident Politics in Vaclav Havel's Plays*, written by Dr. Carol Strong of the University of Arkansas-Monticello. Dr. Yates was a participant on a panel focusing on the book, *The Rise of the GOP in Arkansas*, written by Dr. John Davis of the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville. Dr. Gizachew Tiruneh chaired a roundtable discussion of Geopolitics and International Security, which included Dr. Mark Elrod and other scholars. During the Saturday afternoon luncheon, State Senator Breanne Davis of Russellville was the keynote speaker. [Read More](#)



Jean-Francois Adoupo' book on presidential leadership in Africa is published



Jean-Francois Régis Adoupo's book, *The New President* ("Le Président Nouveau"), was recently published. The book explores the economic and political quagmires in which many African states find themselves, provides a diagnosis of the state of governance since the post-independence period, and provides a comparative case studies of transformational political leadership. The analysis focuses on traditional Africa between traditional and modern leadership, as well as countries in other regions whose systems were once beleaguered but have overcome the odds to emerge as financial hubs.

Jean-Francois graduated from UCA with a bachelor's degree in political science and international studies in 2017. He earned a master's degree in public and international affairs from the University of Montreal in 2021. Since graduating from UCA, Jean-Francois has worked as a reintegration project assistant for the International Office for Migration (IOM) in Cote d'Ivoire in 2018-2019; a consultant for the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) and the Carter Center (regional office in Cote d'Ivoire) in 2021-2022; and as a political and economic assistant at the South Korean Embassy in Cote d'Ivoire since September 2022. [Read More](#)

Graduating seniors accepted into graduate and other programs in Fall 2025

Several seniors in the department who graduated from UCA earlier this month have been accepted into graduate and other programs. Emily Temple, Abby Asher, Zayd Kelly, and Abby Bunch will be enrolled in the Master of Public Service Program (MPS) at the Clinton School of Public Service in Little Rock. Phoenix Vu will be attending Georgetown University's Master of Public Policy program in Washington DC. Blake Reano will be enrolled in the Ph.D. program in Political Science at Georgia State University in Atlanta. Blake was recently named by the American Political Science Association (APSA) as one of the APSA Diversity Fellowship Program (DFP) Fellows in 2025-2026. Cooper Horton will be enrolled in the joint MPS/JD program at the Clinton School of Public Service and the University of Arkansas-Little Rock, William H. Bowen School of Law. Ashlyn Billingsley will be enrolled in the JD program in the William H. Bowen School of Law at the University of Arkansas-Little Rock. Olivia Peck will be enrolled at the University of Arkansas School of Law. Finally, Serge Aggala will be going to Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri for basic training with the National Guard with plans to complete officer candidate school. [Read More](#)

GPI students present research at the CAHSS Research and Creative Activity Conference

Three senior students in the department presented research papers during the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS) Research and Creative Activity Conference held at UCA on April 18, 2025. Emily Temple presented the paper, "The Lost Voice of the Natural State: Exploring Low Voter Turnout in Arkansas". Abby Bunch presented the paper, "Nueva Educación: Hispanic Immigration & Its Effects on Public Education in Springdale, Arkansas". Finally, Blake Reano presented the paper, "Universities and the Nationalism Problem: Analyzing the Institutional Response at the University of Central Arkansas"

GPI students recognized during the CAHSS awards ceremony



Two seniors in the Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies - Phoenix Vu and Emily Temple - were recognized by the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS) during the college's annual awards ceremony held on Friday, April 18, 2025. Phoenix Vu (political science and public administration) was named the Outstanding Studies in the CAHSS for 2024-2025. Phoenix is from Fort Smith, Arkansas and plans to work as a public policy analyst for a think tank or federal government agency. Phoenix intends to focus on how social and urban policy, such as housing and welfare, can alleviate socioeconomic inequalities. Emily Temple (political science and public administration) was named as a finalist for the CAHSS outstanding student award. Emily is from Greenbrier, Arkansas and plans a professional career serving Arkansans. Emily is specifically interested in civil education and government reform. Emily would like to help Arkansans become more informed and involved with a fair political process to help them better advocate for their own interests.

Student Organization News

UCA students participate in Great Plains Model Arab League (GPMAL) conference



Seven UCA students participated in the Great Plains Model Arab League (GPMAL) Conference held at Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri on April 11-12, 2025. The students, who represented Algeria and Palestine, included Julien Mrad (Linguistics and International Studies), Emily Temple (Public Administration and Political Science), Dice Ferguson (General Studies-Linguistics & Sociology), Kyle Urban (Linguistics), Juan Zuniga (International Studies), Cooper Horton (International Studies and Linguistics), and Taylor Brewer (History). Dr. Mark Elrod and Dr. Mark Mullenbach of the Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies served as co-faculty advisors for the group. During the closing session on Saturday, Julien Mrad (Algeria) and Kyle Urban & Juan Zuniga (Palestine) were presented Outstanding Delegate awards for the Joint Defense Council. Emily Temple (Algeria) was presented the Honorable Mention award for the Environmental Affairs Council. The Algerian delegation (Julien Mrad, Emily Temple, and Dice Ferguson) was recognized as one of the two Outstanding Delegations during the conference. [Read More](#)

International Studies Club Spring Cultural Event



The International Studies Club hosted its annual Spring cultural event at the Ronnie Williams Student Center Ballroom on March 20th, 2025. The country of choice this year was Cote d'Ivoire. The Club showcased the country's cultural dances and souvenirs. The Club's Vice President, Daegon Schaal, gave a presentation of the political history of Cote d'Ivoire. The club also provided guest with Ivorian food and beverages. Dr. Gizachew Tiruneh, an Associate Professor in the Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies, serves as the faculty advisor for the International Studies Club.

Department holds 2025 Pi Sigma Alpha Induction Ceremony



The Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies held its annual induction ceremony for the Alpha Beta Theta Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honor Society, on Thursday, April 24, 2025. Dr. Clay Arnold, department chair, announced the 2024-2025 inductees, including Samuel Shelton and Abigail Wells. Richard Ware served as president of the chapter in 2024-2025. The department also honored its 2024-2025 Outstanding Students: Political Science – Abby Bunch and Blake Reano; Public Administration – Abbie Asher, Emily Temple, and Phoenix Vu; and International Studies – Cooper Horton, Joshua Nunley, and Daegon Schaal. Dr. Heather Yates served as Faculty Advisor for UCA's Pi Sigma Alpha chapter in 2024-2025. [Read More](#)

Faculty News

Dr. Clay Arnold presented the Distinguished Scholar Award by ArkPSA



On Friday, March 7, 2025, Dr. Clay Arnold was presented with the Distinguished Scholar award during the annual meeting of the Arkansas Political Science Association (ArkPSA) held at Arkansas Tech University in Russellville. This award is given annually to a political scientist in Arkansas who exhibits exemplary teaching, scholarship, and/or service in the areas of political science, public administration, or public policy. Dr. Arnold served as chair of the Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies (formerly Department of Political Science) for 20 years. Dr. Arnold pursued an active research agenda while serving as department chair, including five publications in academic journals and books during the past 20 years. His research focused on political theory, the politics of water and moral economy, and executive power in the war on terrorism. Dr. Arnold's most recent manuscript, Machiavelli's Deceptions, was published in the journal History of Political Thought in 2023.

Please 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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