



# The Modest Scholar

The Official Newsletter of the Association of Graduate Students of Politics at UIC

## A Modest Editorial

So, another semester, another issue of the Modest Scholar. This issue is packed with fabulous photographs, reviews, announcements and editorials, so peruse at your pleasure.

Spring semester always has a few highlights, including the always large UIC contingent who head downtown for the MPSA meeting at the Palmer House Hilton, check out page three for a partial list of student presenters.

Additionally, springtime means new AGSP elections, scheduled for Monday, April 26th. As a body, AGSP will need a new president, secretary-treasurer, faculty liaison, GSC rep., and (sadly) a new editor for the Modest Scholar.

## Introducing: Marilyn Getzov

Dear Graduate Students,

As I am sure you are all aware, I have replaced James Nell in the graduate office as Political Science Graduate Advisor. James was a victim of the LAS mandated fiscal year 2011 social science departments downsizing. He was able to win a new job as Graduate Advisor in the Department of Physics at UIC. We are all happy for him, but will miss his many contributions to Political Science.

I am also a victim of the down-

Anyone can nominate themselves, but feel free to nominate those who you feel would be good at the job. Send nominations to Amy and Vanessa, our current presidents.

Many of our recent graduates (that is, graduates from graduate school) have gone on to excellent jobs, including Dan Bliss at IIT, and Anika Hinze at Fordham University. Appointments like these increase our prospects for great academic jobs in the future. I know these new PhDs got where they are now through a combination of hard work over many years, teaching experience, conference presentations, and publications. If we all work

hard we can be as successful as they have been. Writing book reviews and review articles are a good way to get a publication in graduate school. The Modest Scholar has provided a place for students to get their feet-wet by trying out a short review format, Marcie Reynolds and myself among them this issue. More of you grads should take the Editor up on the offer to publish a review, even if it is only to practice for a more polished work at a later point. Best of luck to you all this semester, and thanks for a year lauding your deeds for all to read.

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Best of luck to you all this semester, and thanks for a year lauding your deeds for all to read.

-The Editor

tion and more rigid about protocol. Please don't hesitate to "advise" me if there is something you think I am not doing or doing in a less efficient way. Keep in mind, however, that although I have double the tasks, I have only 8 hours a day in which to do them. I ask for your forbearance!

Here's to a great set of graduate students moving through the program tunnel smoothly and happily and getting great jobs at the end!!

-Marilyn Getzov

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TMS graciously accepts all comments, critiques, and suggestions. Please contact TMS via email at the.modest.scholar@gmail.com

If you would like to submit news to future issues of TMS, we ask that you complete the appropriate application, available in several ways:

You may complete the form by retrieving one from the newsletter mail slot located in 1129 BSB. Alternatively, (2) you may email the editor for a form to be sent to you electronically.

All current and past issues of TMS are available through the AGSP website: [http://www2.uic.edu/stud\\_orgs/gov/agsp/](http://www2.uic.edu/stud_orgs/gov/agsp/)

Editor: Clifford D. Deaton

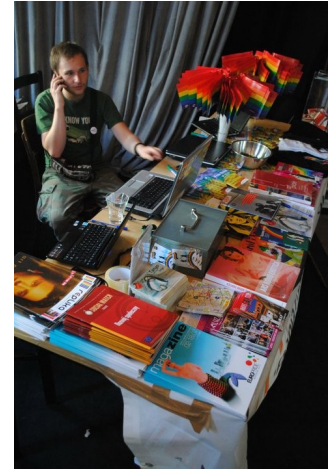
## Research in Brief

Anahit Gomitsan's Paper for MPSA is titled "Achieving Statehood: Kosovo and Nagorno-Karabakh." This paper examines issues of statehood and governance of de facto states, comparing Nagorno-Karabakh and Kosovo to analyze the impact of international organizations and participation of citizens on statehood.

Nawojka Lesinski recently returned to Chicago after spending 5.5 months conducting dissertation fieldwork in Warsaw, Poland. She has completed the first phase of research, and will be departing again soon to Buenos Aires, Argentina, where she will undertake the second, and last phase of fieldwork. She has been exploring the global/local connections and political implications for LGBTQ activism in the aforementioned cities.



## Gallery of Research Abroad: Photos from Pride in Poland, by Naowjka Lesinsky



### Career Services Workshops

#### **Create-A-Resume \*\*\***

Thursday, February 3 3:30pm - 5pm SCE, 329 Cardinal Room

#### **Resume & Cover Letter Tips**

Thursday, March 3 2pm - 3pm SSB Room A

#### **How to Work a Job Fair**

Tuesday, March 8 3pm - 4pm SSB Room A

#### **Networking: College-Cyberspace-Careers**

Wednesday, March 9 2pm - 3pm SSB Room BC

#### **Interview Essentials**

Thursday, March 10 3pm - 4pm SSB Room A

#### **Salary Negotiations & More**

Wednesday, March 30 4pm - 5:30pm SSB Room A

#### **Your Off Campus Job Search\*\***

Tuesday, April 5 2pm - 3pm SSB Room A

#### **Social Networking Sites & Your Career**

Thursday, April 7 2pm - 4pm SSB Room A

(Only the variables "Create-a-Resume" and "Off-Campus Job Search" are statistically significant)



Gibson, James L., and Gregory A. Caldeira, *Citizens, Courts, and Confirmations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.

*Citizens, Courts, and Confirmations* offers a unique contribution to the study of public opinion, positivity bias, and the institutional legitimacy of the U. S. Supreme Court. Public opinion of the Supreme Court, though generally supportive of institutional legitimacy, is not immutable. Judicial scholars Gibson and Caldeira explain the trend toward institutional support as a form of “positivity bias.” Positivity bias is “anything that causes people to pay attention to courts . . . reinforcing institutional legitimacy through exposure to the legitimizing symbols associated with law and courts” (3). Perceptual frames, informed by socialization and historical experience, transform exposure to the Court into a generally high level of support. Additionally, judicial positivity bias is reinforced by the distinction between the Court and other more politicized institutions. Therefore, supportive public opinion toward the Court is largely determined by internalized frames and the perception of the Court’s unique role in government. *Citizens, Courts, and Confirmations* argues that frames are essential to the public support that informs positivity bias and upholds the legitimacy of the Supreme Court.

Gibson and Caldeira build upon their substantial body of judicial research to explore the influence of a contentious confirmation process on public support. This book is the result of a fortuitous opportunity to explore the impact of attitudes and politics on public opinion before, during, and after Samuel Alito’s nomination to the Supreme Court. An initial survey conducted in 2005 prior to his nomination provides the baseline for the first round in a time-series panel study. The confirmation process is the setting for the second panel survey. The final panel survey reflects attitudes a few months after Alito joined the Supreme Court. By using a longitudinal research design, this study’s findings afford a singular opportunity to examine the effects of an increasingly politicized confirmation process on public support for the Court.

Perhaps most significantly, Gibson and Caldeira’s findings suggest the impermanence of frames by which the public evaluates the judiciary. If

public opinion perceives judicial decision-making and nominations through a ‘judiciousness frame’ (i.e. the institution and judges are knowledgeable and non-political) then the positivity bias remains. However, once the frame becomes politicized (in this study by advertisements for and against Alito’s confirmation), public support diminishes. Interestingly, the data indicate that exposure to both positive and negative political ads during the confirmation process resulted in a decline of loyalty toward the institution of the Court among all levels of pre-existing support. The long term significance of political ads during confirmation hearings may result in a deleterious “spiraling process” (126) of diminished institutional support for the Court, as traditional frames are replaced by attending to a more politicized perspective.

Gibson and Caldeira utilize and improve upon time-tested survey instruments, as well as quantitative and qualitative analysis, to gauge institutional support for the Supreme Court and the effects of positivity bias. However, their methodology includes a few limitations of variable measurement and generalizability. Over the course of the three panel surveys the decreasing number of participants from 1,001 to 259 may lead to self-selection bias and the comparability of these three stages of data. The authors’ non-random selection of participants who viewed political advertisements and the open-ended nature of reactions to the advertisements could also suffer from self-selection bias as well as generalizability challenges. These limitations are minimized by the authors’ strong research design and careful analysis of changing public attitudes toward the Court.

*Citizens, Courts, and Confirmations* adds a new dimension to judicial studies on public support, positivity bias, and institutional legitimacy. Although the Gallup public opinion polls indicate a return to pre-Alito approval ratings for the Supreme Court, this important work lays the foundation for further research into the processes involved in the public’s selection of political frames and the stability of institutional support. Ultimately, Gibson and Caldeira offer new insights into a source of power supporting the “least powerful branch” and is therefore highly recommended.

By **Marcie Reynolds**

## UIC POLS Teaching and Conferences

**Magdalyn Guzzo** is teaching Social Sciences 101 and 102 at Harold DePaul and UIC this spring.

**John French** is teaching at both Washington College this semester.

**Anika Hinze** was recently awarded a tenure track position in Political Science at Fordham University.

**Maya Evans** and **Wael Haboub** are chairing panels at IPSA Conference in February.

**Vannessa Guridy** is presenting a paper at the Midwest Sociological Association meeting in St. Louis.

## Research Progress and Intellectual Musings

**Jason Stodolka** and **Vannessa Guridy** took their preliminary examinations in Comparative Politics, Urban Politics, and American Politics subfields.

**Clifford Deaton** passed his dissertation proposal defense this past December.

**Vannessa Guridy**, **Cori Smith**, **Amy Schoenecker** have completed work on their Masters Thesis here at UIC.

This year, seven UIC graduate students received their PhDs after successfully defending their dissertation: **Deron Schreck**, **Jennifer Rexroat** (May), **Tom Kelly** (June), **John French** (June), **Annika Hinze** (August), **Elisabeth Muhlenberg** (December), **Dan Bliss** (December).

### IPSA 2011 Presenters:

**Patrick O’Brien**  
**Ryan Manness**  
**Maya Evans**  
**Betul Demykira**  
**Khalid Mahdi**  
**David Sterret**  
**John VanBenthuyzen**

### MPSA 2011 Presenters:

**Cori Smith**  
**Clifford Deaton**  
**Amy Schoenecker**  
**Anahit Gomtsian**  
**Magdalyn Guzzo**  
**Vannessa Guridy**  
**Khalid Mahdi**

# Reflections On An Egyptian Uprising

On January twenty-eighth—just four days after the initial uprising in Egypt—nearly a thousand people gathered outside the Egyptian embassy in Chicago to show their support for the bursting democratic movement. Even though the uprising is halfway around the world, the political electricity that the Egyptians have generated is felt as if their rebellion was next door. There is a collective sense among the demonstrators—as there is in Egypt itself—that now, everything is different.

The crowd in Chicago, like that in Egypt, is made of an eclectic agglomeration of Islamists, democrats, socialists, international solidarity activists, and youth in revolt. Despite their different entry points, the groups have coalesced on a handful of common demands: an end to political repression, free and fair elections, and the immediate ousting of President Hosni Mubarak. None of which are negotiable. The support from Chicago is more than lively, it's determined. It has been said: "If Egypt goes so too the region." But, the degree of excitement that the opposition has stirred in many makes it seem like "If Egypt goes so too the world!"

Though the connections between the Mubarak regime and the United States has been lost on much of the mainstream media, the coziness of the relationship is considered common knowledge by the demonstrators. Few speeches leave out a mention of President Obama. Criticisms range from acting too little too late, to playing a decisive role in ensuring that Mubarak reigns supreme. Indeed, ever since Anwar Sadat decided to move Egyptian alliances away from the Soviet Union and towards the

United States, Egypt has been a favorite entrance for the United States to the region. Without an Egypt comfortable with US hegemony the siege on Gaza would not be possible; nor would the Suez canal—a major transition point for the world economy—be secure for Western interests. And, most importantly, nor would it be possible to continue the tradition of authoritarian rule throughout the region. Egypt has always been the heart of the Arabic world. A democratic revolution there is sure to inspire it elsewhere. That would be a disaster for the United States, who have relied on strongman governments in the region to either ensure its interests or play the expected role of bogeyman—justifying war and intervention.

It is impossible to know what will happen at the end of the Tahrir Square uprisings. But, so far, the protesters in Egypt are refusing to give up—and their supporters in Chicago have not forgotten them. Before leaving the embassy, the demonstrators vowed to be back next week: either to celebrate Mubarak's fall, or to lend more support to those pushing for his departure. Either way, the people of the Middle East and those in solidarity with them have mustered within themselves something that many did not think they had: a sense of hope. Hope that the region—through democracy no less—can escape its tragic cycles of religious sectarianism, economic misery, and foreign domination.

by **Marco Rosaire Rossi**

## Research Gallery: Democracy in Kosovo Photos by Anika Biska



## Schedule of Events

### February

- 8: AGSP meeting, 1:30pm (1115 BSB),  
MPSA workshop(1115 BSB after the meeting)
- 16: Field Notes Brownbag 1:30pm-3pm (1115 BSB)
- 19: IPSA Conference at Oakton Community College
- 23: Field Notes Brownbag 1:30-3:00 (BSB 1151)

### March

69TH ANNUAL MPSA CONFERENCE  
March 31 - April 3, 2011  
Chicago Palmer House Hilton, USA

## Realignment Meeting: February 8th

Its that time again! Time to sit down, hold hands, talk about what we love, we hate, our fears, our hopes...

We realize that having an orientation and q & a for incoming students in August is good and all, but most don't know what questions to ask until the first year is well under way. Thus, part of our meeting will serve to answer any lingering questions people may have about the program/department. Come to Realignment! Realignment is a second orientation & MA/MPSA/Conference paper swap (only a discussion-date to swap will be determined at the meeting).

In addition, we would like to sched-

ule some paper swapping for those working on their MA or a paper for MPSA (or any other upcoming conference). If you cannot make the meeting but are interested in swapping a paper for some good old peer editing, please contact Amy or Vanessa by Tuesday at noon with either the title of your paper or a short abstract of the paper.

Any questions feel free to email **Amy** (aschoe3@uic.edu) or **Vanessa** (vguridy@gmail.com).

**When:** Tuesday, Feb 8th, 2011.  
1:30-2:30 pm  
**Where:** BSB 1115

## Political Science Brownbag and Research Abroad Series

The political science department will be hosting a number of brownbag talks this semester, focusing on our graduate students and their research. Both **Anika Bishka** and **Nawojka Lesinsky** have gotten back from their time abroad, and are eager to share their investigations with the rest of the department.

Please come by BSB 1115 on February 16th, from 1-3pm, and February 23rd at 1:30-300 pm for interesting talks on Poland and Kosovo.

For more information, or to schedule your own brown bag to share your research, contact Sultan Tepe at [sultan@ui.edu](mailto:sultan@ui.edu)

### April

- 14: Spring?
- 26: AGSP Elections, 12.00-1.00pm (1115 BSB)

### May

- TBA: End of Semester Soiree?



## Graduate Funding Seminars

Registration will open one week prior to the seminar at <http://grad.uic.edu/cms/?pid=1000703>

**Monday, February 14**  
10:00 a.m. - noon  
Student Center East, Room 408

**Wednesday, February 16**  
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.  
Student Center East, Room 408

**Tuesday, March 29**  
12:30 - 2:00 p.m.  
Student Center East, Room 408

**Thursday, March 31**  
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.  
Student Center East, Room 408

## Last Words: A Review of *The Enigma of Capital* by David Harvey.

David Harvey's *The Enigma of Capital* tells a story that should resonate with anyone who has lived through the last few years of economic disaster. For myself, I recall spending an evening on my back porch with a few friends, during the fall of 2008. We drank beer, and talked of the nationalization of AIG, Fannie Mae and Freddy Mac, of the impending financial bailout of Wall Street, and raged at the indignity and avarice at work in the world. Rage was perhaps the most common emotion felt in those days, topped only by ambivalence and apathy. We raged at the lack of regulation, and at Regan era policies that led ultimately to the spectacular collapse of the economy on that day, on the porch.

But Harvey tells our story in a slightly different way. The story is not one of under-regulation, nor one of naughty bankers who sold the world a lemon. Rather it is a story of capital itself, of the way capitalism has worked in the past, and how it continues to work today. Anyone familiar with Harvey's other work, particularly *The Condition of Postmodernity* or *Crises of Capital*, knows that capitalism today operates under virtually the same principles as capitalism during the time of Karl Marx. What has changed is the magnitude.

Above all, capital is all about flow. In its ever expanding need for new markets, capital moves from one place to another, breaking down barriers it meets in the quest for a minimum 3 per-cent compound growth. It is said that nature abhors a vacuum; it could be likewise said that capitalism abhors a barrier. For Harvey, barriers to capital include lack of cheap labor, inadequate resources, lack of startup capital, inefficiencies in the labor process, inefficiencies in technology or organization, and lack of demand. "Blockage at any one of these points will disrupt the continuity of capital flow, and if prolonged, eventually produce a crisis of devaluation" (Harvey 47).

A crisis of devaluation, where money invested into the market turns out to have been used in a perpetual shell game, and when we finally look for the value underneath the cup there is nothing but void. Harvey's book follows capital with historical and logical argumentation as it circulates through the system, from flow to barrier, to crisis and back to flow. Harvey argues, rightly to my mind, that this movement of capital purposely creates uneven geographical development, places of high concentrations of capital like the United States and Europe before the crash, and places of low capital concentrations like the under-developed Global South. Moreover that this uneven geographical development "is not a mere sidebar to how capitalism works, but fundamental to its reproduction. It generates many localized openings within which vulnerabilities become apparent and oppositional forces can rally. This makes it a fecund source for capitalist renewal" (Harvey 213).

What is most chilling though is the knowledge that crises like ours have happened before, and will by the laws of capital happen again. The crisis is not un-natural, for crisis is an inevitable outcome of our modern economic system. Moreover, according to the rhetoric of capital, crises creates opportunity—for crisis is just the initiation of a cycle of creative destruction glorified by Joseph Shumpeter and others. There is no apology for the thousands of families forced out of their homes, for state finances pushed to the brink of bankruptcy, because these disasters provide opportunity for someone (else) to capitalize once more upon the tragedy of the masses. Nowadays, the stock market is booming again but this creation of wealth has little to do with real people, people still looking for jobs, or who are under-water with their mortgage payments.

In the final chapter, Harvey poses a central question: Can capitalism survive the present trauma? He answers a resounding 'yes', because he recognizes the awesome power of capitalism to perform creative destruction by overcoming geopolitical and environmental difficulties. But he

also asks the more fundamental question of exactly where the recapitalization will take place—if we are to return to a world of 3 per-cent compound growth, then global capitalism would need to find "investment opportunities for \$1.6 trillion dollars in 2010, rising closer to \$3 trillion by 2030. . .Where will all this investment go now?" (Harvey 216-217).

For academic departments, households, and states pushed by the unseen hand into austerity, we hold onto the knowledge that times will get better and the economy will rebound. Yet, armed as Harvey is with knowledge of the workings of capital, we should see that such a recovery is just an illusion. A return to 3 per-cent compound growth can only mean the return of inevitable crisis. Of course, the next crisis will probably not be in the housing markets, but it will be just as global and at least as devastating. Capital expands, breaking down geographic barriers like national borders and overcoming the friction of distance, making the entire system more susceptible to impending crisis.

And this is, for me, the greatest source of ambivalence. I have a comfortable home, an income however small, and I find it difficult to comprehend a world without the never ending cycle of capital accumulation. Yet I yearn for a system that is more humane, one that does not describe human communities and individual human lives as potential "new markets." One of the central problems of such utopian thinking comes when we attempt to envision a future, because we cannot do so without using the language and concepts of the past. In *Enigma of Capital*, Harvey provokes us to the utopian brink, arguing that a challenge must be made to capital and to the cycle of crisis, but he does not attempt to lead us to some promised land. Instead he suggests, "Anyone concerned with the contemporary situation should be a part of an anti-capitalist organization" (Harvey, APSA Conference 2010).

-Clifford Deaton

