

GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS



Ph.D. Student Samantha Chapa Wins APSA Minority Fellow Award

The Minority Fellows Program awards competitively to new Ph.D. students from underrepresented groups. Its aim is to increase the number of graduate students from these groups pursuing a degree in political science. Samantha Chapa won this distinguished fellowship award for Spring 2020-21.

Chapa intends to use this funding to research the intersection between human rights and immigration policy. She is currently studying how nationalist waves across the globe affect immigrants' rights, political participation, and national immigration policy. She is also examining biases and discrepancies in immigration court outcomes across the United States. She argues that immigration court outcomes,

due to their discretionary nature, vary widely, and often unfairly, depending on the political characteristics of each jurisdiction. While Samantha has yet to formulate specific hypotheses for testing, she hopes to delve more deeply into her topics of interest during her second year of study. She is a rising second-year Ph.D. student, having received her B.A. from Rice University in English and History in 2016.

Haimo Li Wins CLASS Dissertation Completion Fellowship

The College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences at UH offers the Dissertation Completion Fellowship to support doctoral students with financial support in their final year. This fellowship is quite competitive, and was only awarded to a handful of students in CLASS. This year our own Haimo Li won the award for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021

Li's dissertation engages the late Thomas Jefferson's (1809-1826) political writings. Combing this treasure trove, he found a collection of ideas that are, somewhat counterintuitively, not so different from Edmund Burke's post French Revolution writings (1790-1797), even though it is very well known that Jefferson harshly criticized Burke's *Reflections on the*



Revolution in France in 1791. Li has several articles from the dissertation project that have been presented at several professional annual conferences, and one of them obtained a revise and resubmit status at *History of European Ideas* (A&HCI journal).

GRADUATE STUDENT GRANTS AND AWARDS

Naomi Nubin was chosen as a 2020 Tom Carsey Scholar for the State Politics and Policy section of APSA, was offered a summer position at the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research as a teaching assistant, and was offered a tuition fellowship to attend it from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Myriam Shiran was awarded a Scholarship for Political Science Research to participate in the 2020 ICPSR Summer Program in Quantitative Methods of Social Research. She also won the Outstanding TA of the Year for 2019-2020.

Brian Sullivan was awarded the Dissertation Improvement Grant from the Political Science Department at the University of Houston.

Hui Zhou was awarded an Asian Alumni Scholarship by the University of Houston Alumni Association.



JEFFREY CHURCH
Professor and Chair,
Dept. of Political Science

NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

It has been a difficult several months for all of us. Our lives have been thoroughly upended by the pandemic, and the injustice suffered by George Floyd continues to haunt our lives here in the United States and beyond. At the same time, I have been so impressed and inspired by the resilience of my colleagues and our students. Despite the many obstacles facing them, our graduate

students are preparing for their exams, writing their dissertations, even teaching online classes this summer. Our undergraduates, faced with such adversity, are finding new ways to engage in public service and new frontiers for research. Our faculty have found ways through it all to shift our classes online, to mentor students virtually, and to learn how to use Zoom very, very well.

With the Fall semester almost upon us, a semester promising more uncertainty, I encourage you all to make an extra effort to stay in touch with the community we have built here at the University of Houston. And please do stay in touch with me! I find comfort in the many stories you send me, and I am delighted to pass them along in these pages.

In social distanced solidarity with you, Jeffrey Church

GRADUATE STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Ozer, Adam. 2020. "Well, You're the Expert: How Signals of Source Expertise Help Mitigate Partisan Bias." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*.

Zhou, Hui, Junqiang Liu, Jiang He, and Jianxin Cheng. Forthcoming. "Conditional Justice: Evaluating the Judicial Centralization Reform in China." *Journal of Contemporary China*.

Remembering Amalia Mena-Mora



I am sad to inform you of the passing of Amalia Mena-Mora. Amalia was one of our star graduate students, receiving her PhD from our department in 2013 with her dissertation entitled "Judicial Independence of State Administrative Courts in Mexico." Her undergraduate degree was from the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE). She also was in the first group of graduate students to receive the prestigious CLASS dissertation completion fellowship which she won in 2012. She leaves behind many dear family members and friends.

Several Political Science Majors Join the Mellon Research Scholars Program

Three political science majors were accepted as Mellon scholars in 2020. The program is dedicated to providing support for students from underrepresented groups who aim to pursue careers in the humanities. Each student receives \$5,000, conducts a summer research project, and participating in academic and mentorship programming for their last year and a half at UH. The three recipients of this competitive award are listed below.



Daniela Contreras is researching the extent of religion's influence on American voting patterns and partisan identity. Particularly, she is focusing on racial demographics within each religion, and examining how race and religion intersect with regard to voting behavior. She plans to attend law school in fall, pursuing a Juris Doctor degree. She is a member of Phi Kappa Phi and Pi Sigma Alpha, and previously worked as a senate intern.

Paulina Ezquerra's research focuses on one of the leading consequentialist accounts for the distinction between moral and intellectual virtues. This account, spearheaded by Julia Driver, posits that what distinguishes the moral virtues from the intellectual ones is not, as Aristotle famously argued, that the former are cultivated through habit while the latter are a product of teaching and instruction; rather she argues that virtues are valuable character traits that produce good consequences, where the intellectual virtues produce goods for the self and the moral virtues produce goods for others. Ezquerra argues that it seems as though there are virtues that do not derive their value from benefiting oneself or others – or that we would not desire to classify as valuable for those reasons.

After graduating from the University of Houston, Ezquerra plans to pursue a Ph.D. in either philosophy or political science, with a focus on political theory.



Karla Grado's research focuses on Latinx political consciousness and political advertising directed toward them. In particular, she is interested in the causes behind the apparent discrepancies between issues Latinx voters prioritize (healthcare and education), and the messages that political elites target them with (which mainly focused on family and immigration). She is working with Dr. Jason Casellas in her work, and hopes to extend her project into an undergraduate honors thesis. After finishing her degree, she plans to obtain a Ph.D. in political science, with a major in American politics.

Mike Floyd is UH's Second Truman Scholar



PHOTO CREDIT:
Kathryn Lemitan at The Cougar

This year political science senior Mike Floyd was named a Truman Scholar. He is only the second student from the University of Houston to receive this award, and the first in 36 years. Floyd joins 61 other scholars selected from among nearly 800 applicants.

Floyd credits his recent success, in part, on support and mentorship he received at UH. "Without my education from the Political Science Department and the Honors College, I know that I wouldn't have the privilege of being named a Truman Scholar," he said. "With incredible faculty and extraordinary opportunities, the Political Science Department and the Honors College offer a world-class education that cultivates critical thinking and creates a joy of learning. I'm proud to be a student at UH, and I'm grateful for all the professors and staff who have taught me over the years.

The Truman Scholar fellowship is considered among the most prestigious in the country. Its aim is to support, and invest in, young people who devote themselves to public service. As a recipient, Floyd will be given \$30,000 toward graduate school, have the opportunity to participate in professionalization and leadership training, and to network with political elites.

The recent award of this fellowship is only the most recent of many accomplishments by Mike Floyd. According to *The Cougar*, he is the youngest ever state party official for the Texas Democratic Party, having been elected as treasurer in 2018. In 2017 he was elected to the board of trustees for the Pearland Independent School District.

"Mike Floyd modeled what every professor wants in a student," said Dr. Jeremy Bailey, who provided advice on an independent study Floyd conducted on Thomas Jefferson. "I knew Mike as a quietly powerful thinker and as an engaged member of the *Phronesis* minor's intellectual community. I had no idea that Mike was doing what he was doing outside of that. He doesn't wear his accomplishment on his sleeve."

As a stipulation for the benefits of his fellowship, Floyd will have to spend at minimum three of the seven years following graduate school in public service.

FACULTY NEWS



Jason Casellas to be Visiting Chair at Oxford

Associate Professor Jason Casellas was recently offered a position at Oxford

University as the John G. Winant Visiting Professorship for American Government for the academic year 2023-24. He joins a distinguished group of scholars of American politics to hold the position.

The position was established by Rivington and Joan Winant to honor Rivington's father, John G. Winant, who served as the first head of the Social Security Board under President Franklin D. Roosevelt. He was also ambassador to the court of St. James's from 1941 to 1946, facilitating the alliance between the United States and Great Britain during the second world war. The current holder of Casellas's Winant Visiting Professorship is Dr. Margaret Weir, Wilson Professor of International and Public Affairs and Political Science at Brown University. Casellas intends to utilize his expertise in Latino politics, state politics, public policy, legislative politics, and immigration policy, and will no doubt excel at this esteemed position.



Chatagnier Wins Fulbright Fellowship

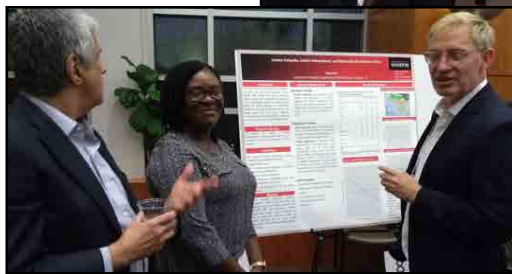
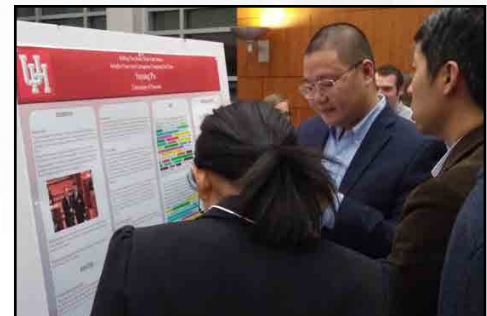
Tyson Chatagnier was recently awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to Italy. He plans to teach at the University of Bologna on the use of big data in the social sciences. His instruction will focus primarily on theory, but also involve practical application. Chatagnier also intends to give research talks at other universities around Italy while teaching there.



With the opportunity provided by the Fulbright Scholarship Chatagnier hopes to contribute to the growing study and application of quantitative approaches to political science in Italy, and develop long-lasting, transatlantic working relationships.

DEPARTMENT EVENTS

The Comparative Politics Circle • January 31, 2020



Several UH Faculty and Grad Students took part in this event hosted at Rice University. UH hosted a poster session the evening of Jan. 31, where the photos above were taken.



Political Science Celebrates its 200th Ph.D. With a Dissertation Competition

This Spring the Department of Political celebrated its 200th Ph.D. recipient with a competition between several ABD graduate students over who had the best elevator pitch for their dissertation. Adam Ozer won this friendly contest with his 3 minute talk on his dissertation, *Is That Source Credible? A Model of Source Credibility in Politics*.



DEPARTMENT EVENTS (continued)

Annual Texas International Relations Conference Hosted by UH Scholars



Each year, the Texas Triangle Conference brings International Relations scholars together from universities from across the Lone Star State to present their research. The 2020 conference was hosted by Patrick Shea, Niki Marinov, and Tyson Chatagnier from the Department of Political Science and Pablo Pinto from the Hobby School of Public Affairs. Fifteen scholars presented their work over the weekend, including UH graduate student, Ulkar Imamverdiyeva, and UH post-doctoral fellow, Sebastián Vallejo Vera.

Super Tuesday Analysis



Elizabeth Simas
UH Political Science



Jason Casellas
UH Political Science

Our panelists discussed the results and significance of the Super Tuesday primaries.

March 5, 2020 from 2:30 – 3:30 SEC 102

Nearly 75 undergraduate students attended this lively discussion

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