

Political Science and International Relations

December 2021

SPRING 2022

Important Dates

Jan 1

Graduation Application
deadline

Jan 10 - 14

Registration Moratorium

Jan 17

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Jan 24

First Day of Classes

Jan 24 - 30

Add / Drop Period

Feb 21

President's Day - No Classes

March 11

Mid-Point of Spring 2022

March 14 - 18

Spring Brean - No Classes

April 15

Passover - No classes after
3pm

April 18

Fall Registration Begins

May 9

Last Day of Classes

May 13 - 19

Final Examinations

Reflecting on Fall 2021,

Congratulations to our December graduates, and to all of you for successfully finishing out the term. We started with some anxious enthusiasm to be back, mostly in person, after a year of navigating the world of online learning. As the semester wore on, it became apparent that many struggled to adapt to a full schedule of fully seated classes, and I think it's ok if you want to take a deep breath and appreciate all that you were able to accomplish this term, even if it was not all that you had planned or aspired to.

This end of year newsletter celebrates the accomplishments of some of our most outstanding graduates, the students who successfully completed the Global Engagement Program, the scholarly success of our faculty, and closes with news from some of our alums. Also included are some newsworthy announcements, and information about Spring term planning and scheduling.

On behalf of the Department of Political Science and International Relations, faculty and staff, wishing you all the best during your final exams, and during the long winter break.

Kathleen Dowley, Chair, PSIR

Many thanks to Political Science major, **Nyah Estevez**, for all her work on the re-design of this newsletter!



Congratulations to our Outstanding Fall Graduates!



Shahed Herzallah (Political Science)

Shahed Herzallah is ethnically Palestinian but was born in Jordan. At the age of 12, she immigrated to the United States and is now a citizen of the country. She attended school immediately and was able to learn English and now speaks it well. Shahed is fluent in speaking, writing, and reading Arabic and received the New York State Seal of Biliteracy in 2017 for outstanding achievement in language studies: Arabic. Shahed completed certification from the NY State Department of Health and Health Career Program to become a Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA). She completed her bachelor's in Political Science at SUNY New Paltz. During her time attending SUNY New Paltz, Shahed was extremely involved at the campus. She interned with the First-Year Internship Program, was a Public Relations Coordinator in the Executive Board of the Biology Club, was a Secretary in the Executive Board of the American Red Cross Club, and worked as a Peer Mentor in the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP). She volunteered her time at the UlsterCorps Service Summit, Chi Alpha Epsilon - XAE, and in the Boys & Girls Club. Shahed is a member of the Honors Program and worked on Honor Thesis Independent Study titled, "The Turkish Public Support for Erdogan". During her time as a college student, she has made it to the Dean's List for academic excellence. She is a member of the Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honor Society, and the Beta Omicron of Chi Alpha Epsilon (XAE), National Honor Society. She was chosen to be the 2021 Outstanding Graduate and won the 2021 best paper in the Political Science department in the 20th Annual Pi Sigma Alpha SUNY New Paltz. After graduation in December 2021, Shahed plans to start a new Bachelor's degree in Engineering.

Emma Ryan (IR)

Emma is honored to be an Outstanding Graduate of the Political Science and International Relations Department for December 2021. She will graduate with a double major in International Relations and Digital Media Production, and a minor in Astronomy. She is currently a part of the SUNY Global Engagement Program and is having the time of her life attending class in New York City (where she was born and raised) and working at her internship! She is sad to be leaving SUNY New Paltz where she has had such a wonderful time in her studies, working in Residence Life, and the 2019 Summer Orientation, but looks forward to all the adventures she and her fellow graduates are about to embark upon! Congratulations to the rest of the December 2021 graduates and best of luck!



Congratulations to our Outstanding Fall Graduates! *Continued*

Tal Schwerd (Political Science)

Tal Schwerd will be graduating this December with a BA in Political Science. This is quite a momentous milestone as she has never actually graduated from anything in her life. After moving from New York to Israel at age 12, she had very inconsistent schooling, leaving many gaps in her academic record. At 19 she moved back to New York on her own, got her GED, and attended Purchase College for a year, after being initially rejected from New Paltz, before transferring in. She is grateful for the many opportunities she has had to engage in meaningful political action during her time at New Paltz, such as her environmental advocacy and student organizing with NYPIRG. Tal has been outspoken about the challenges faced by those with ADHD and other neurodiverse people, as they navigate through college. She is especially grateful for those professors who demonstrated an understanding of what it truly means to be an educator through their patience, flexibility, and accommodation of her neurodiversity.



Christian Bach (IR)

Christian is graduating with a dual degree in International Relations and International Business (where he was also named outstanding graduate). He notes that these programs have prepared him well for the increasing globalization of the job market and world. After graduation, he plans to work at an international company in product management with the goal of moving abroad and working as an expat. Growing up in the Hudson Valley coming to New Paltz was an easy decision, why would you want to be anywhere else! My dual degrees in International Relations and International Business has given me a unique perspective and given me more tools and knowledge than I could have ever imagined. I underwent one of the greatest metamorphosis during my time here at New Paltz. When I went through orientation and was told about the NewPaltz wings I didn't quite believe or understand it. Now that my time at New Paltz is coming to an end I understand, New Paltz has given me wings and I am excited to see where they take me. I will miss New Paltz and will think on my time here fondly. It is an honor to be selected as an Outstanding Graduate of the Political Science and International Relations Department.



Nicholas Lederman represents New Paltz at West Point's Student Conference on US Affairs

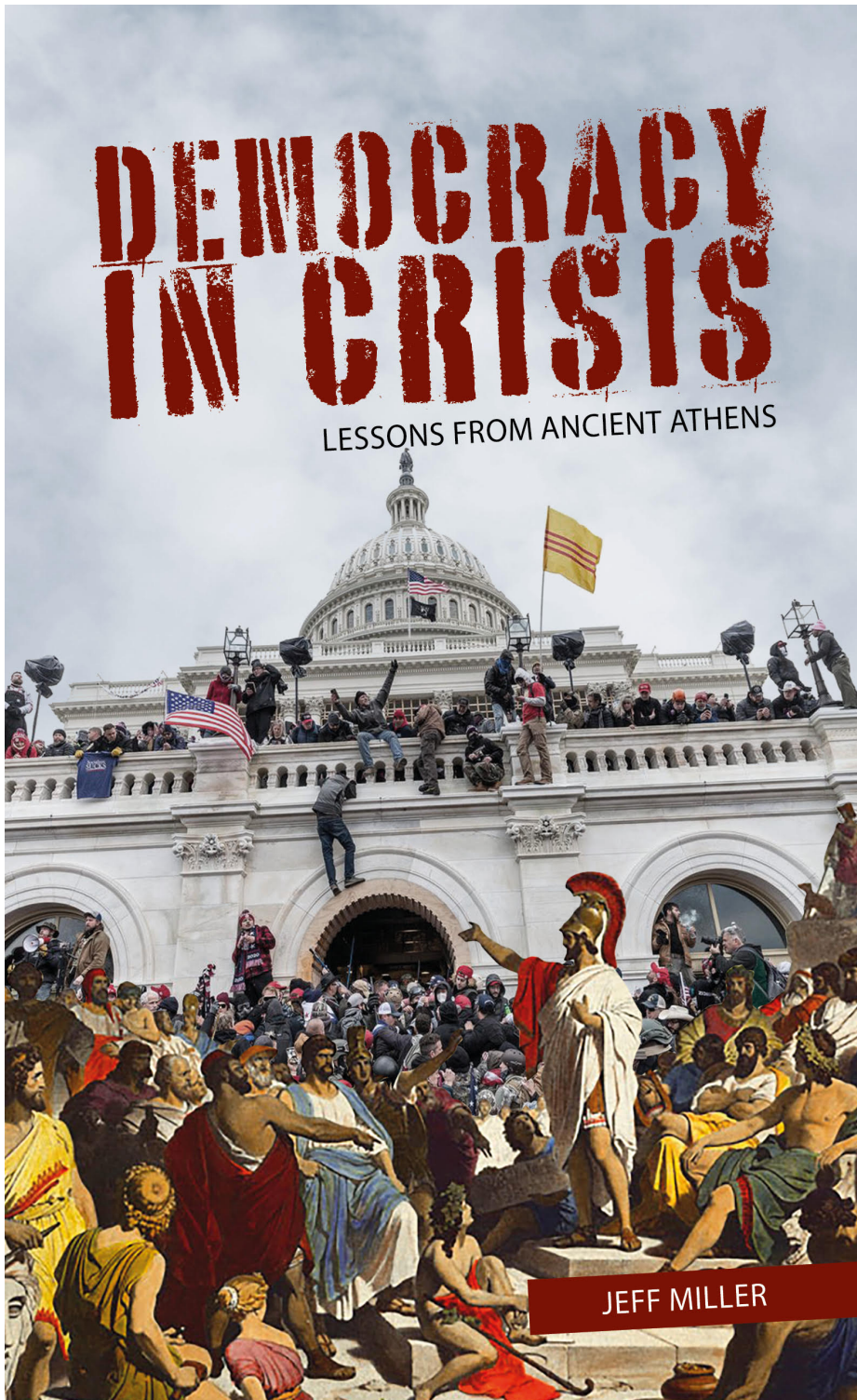


From November 3-6 I had the privilege of attending the 72nd Student Conference on US Affairs, or SCUSA. The opening night of the conference, a point was made about the gravity of importance concerning the individuals attending. It was mentioned at the opening remarks that it takes about 30 years for an individual to go from the beginning of their career to the top of it, such as the Secretary of State, or a director of an intelligence agency. In 30 years, many of those people will be those at the conference today. Such a remark at the beginning of the conference cemented the importance of SCUSA exactly as West Point sees it: to bring together those future leaders early and form career-long relationships. After spending those 4 days among the other delegates and West Point cadets, I would be surprised if it was not true. SCUSA brought me into contact with some incredibly intelligent students from across the country and had us work out solutions to pressing issues.

It is thanks to the generosity of our PSIR alumni donors that we are able to send a student every year to SCUSA!

The theme of this conference was Disruptive Technology and American Influence in the coming decade, with my table discussing “21st century vulnerabilities: Critical Infrastructure and Cybersecurity”. Over the 4 days we were able to develop our own solution which can be read on the SCUSA webpage, arguing for national and international cooperation to limit the effects of cyberattacks and malware. The relationships developed were more than academic though and we all became friends over the course of the conference, as we all respected each other’s input and breaks between sessions gave us time to get to know one another. I would be surprised if none of my peers at my table went on to become big names in the public or private sectors. The opportunity to attend SCUSA was an extremely valuable one to me, both for the experience of debating pressing issues for the United States and for the relationships forged among my fellow delegates which assures that SCUSA succeeds in its goal. I recommend SCUSA for anyone who gets the opportunity and it would not surprise me if I bump into some delegates again as I begin my career after graduation.

Spotlight on Faculty Research: Professor Jeff Miller's Forthcoming Book



The storming of the US Capitol building in January 2021 focused attention on the multiple threats facing contemporary liberal democracies. Beyond the immediate threat of Covid-19, the past two decades saw political polarization, a dramatic rise in inequality, global warming and other environmental threats, as well as the growth of dangerous cultural and political divisions. Western liberal democracies find themselves in the midst of what political theorists call a legitimization crisis: major portions of the population lack confidence in the ability of governments to address our most pressing problems. This distrust in government and traditional political parties opened the door to populist leaders and a rising tide of authoritarianism.

Liberal democracies face major structural and normative challenges in the near future that require us to look beyond the traditional set of solutions available. *Democracy in Crisis* points back to the world's first democratic government, Ancient Athens, to see what made that political arrangement durable

and resistant to both internal and external threats. The argument focuses on several distinctive Athenian institutions and practices, and considers how we might reimagine them in the modern world. The book addresses questions of civic ideology and procedures, with extended treatment of two distinctive Athenian institutions, ostracism and sortition.

Jeff Miller

Global Engagement Program Events



GEP Students meet with Elizabeth Allen, Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Global Affairs, US State Department. From Left to Right: (Back row) Juan Molina, Kelsey Drewniak, Naoki Masushima, Chris Wise, Brooklyn Darling, Sydney Ryan, Latanna Mills, Angie Gomez, (Middle row) Assistant Secretary of State Elizabeth Allen, Xuna Cruz (ITESM, Mexico City), Monisse Cueva (SUNY Potsdam), Emily Cox, Lily Yampolsky, Khadejah Taylor (SUNY Oswego), Professor Ilgu Ozler



Left to right: **Juan Molina, Emma Ryan, Brooklyn Darling, Xuna Cruz (ITESM, Mexico City), Naoki Matsushima, Angie Gomez, Chris Wise, Ambassador Yuri Gala Lopes, Deputy Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations, Professor Ilgu Ozler, Emily Cox, Sydney Ryan, Latanna Mills, Kelsey Drewniak, Dalia Torres Seara, Second Secretary Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations**

Where Are They Now?

Ahmed Shama, Class of 2009

Ahmed Shama (Class of 2009) is currently a State Department Foreign Service Officer serving as a Political Advisor at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, where he covers some of the world's most intractable conflicts, including Iraq, Libya, and Syria. He recently gave a briefing to students in our Global Engagement Program in NYC about his work on key resolutions, including codifying the U.S.-Taliban agreement; providing Iraq election monitors for its October elections; securing delivery of UN cross-border assistance to more than 10 million Syrians; and most recently, leading successful negotiations on a resolution demanding that the Taliban provide foreigners and Afghans safe passage to the Kabul airport.



Prior to joining the Department of State, and prior to enrolling at New Paltz, Ahmed enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps at the age of 17. He was eventually deployed to Ramadi, Iraq in 2006, the then self-proclaimed capital of Al-Qaida in Iraq (AQI). The Marine Corps selected him, along with eight other marines, to reside in a makeshift Iraqi police station. The police station housed members of the “Al-Anbar Awakening Council”—Sunni tribes that rejected AQI and began to cooperate with U.S. Forces that they had long opposed. There, he had two primary roles: to guard the police station against frequent AQI attacks; and to utilize his Arabic language skills while serving as a liaison between the police officers and marines during house raids and patrols. Ahmed's service in Iraq and, in particular, his time spent as a liaison, would later earn him a meritorious promotion to the rank of Sergeant and a nomination for a “Valor” award with a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (NAM).

Upon returning from Iraq in 2007, he subsequently enrolled at SUNY New Paltz and completed a bachelor's degree in international relations. At New Paltz, Ahmed traveled with his class to Turkey to participate in the SUNY Model EU winter study session, and also represented NP at the Harvard Model UN simulation in Boston. Ahmed credits his experience at New Paltz with providing him a realistic comprehension of world affairs. After completing his studies at New Paltz, Ahmed was named a recipient of the prestigious Department of State Charles Rangel Fellowship—a congressionally-funded program designed to increase minority representation in the State Department's Foreign Service ranks. He used the fellowship to fund his studies at Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, where he graduated with a master's degree in international security and diplomacy.

We're so very proud of Ahmed (Shama!) and all our Veteran alums, and thankful for their past and present service to the country and our program.

Tagging all vets who are alums of our program, write to me and tell me your story! Dowleyk@newpaltz.edu.

Internship Opportunities for Undergraduates at CIANA

The Center for the Integration and Advancement of New Americans in Astoria, Queens, is searching for Spring 2022 Interns in a variety of its divisions!



In order of priority, those are:

- 1) Legal Internship
- 2) Digital Communications Internship
- 3) Case Management Internship
- 4) Education Administrative Intern
- 5) Community Outreach Intern

For more information, please see their website:
<https://www.cianainc.org/join-our-team>

Or reach out directly to Grethal Calero, their Volunteer and Internship Coordinator, at grethel@cianainc.org.

Have a great break!

Don't forget to add us on Facebook for future updates:

<https://www.facebook.com/nppolisci>

