

FALL 2023

POLITICAL SCIENCE NEWSLETTER

Gustavus Adolphus College

Welcome, Dr. Piccolo!

By Claire Lind '24



Professor Samuel Piccolo is an Assistant Professor of Political Science and is the newest addition to the faculty of the Gustavus Political Science Department. Professor Piccolo grew up in a small town in Canada, very close to Western New York. He currently teaches classes on Native American Politics and Racial Politics.

Professor Piccolo reflects that he is particularly passionate about teaching Native American Politics because this topic is often neglected or thought of in a superficial way when we examine politics in America. Piccolo takes a fascinating approach to the study of politics through his belief that “humans are political beings”, meaning that almost every single aspect of our lives intersects with politics in one way or another.

Studying and teaching Political Theory allows Piccolo to help students develop the tools and skills to think critically about the political issues that they care most about.

For him, political theory isn't really about communicating content, instead "it's a way of looking at political problems and knowing how to ask the right questions of them." Piccolo states, "My favorite aspect about teaching is when teaching feels like a dialogue."

He notices that this classroom dialogue is especially possible at Gustavus with the smaller class sizes. With the dialogue-centered method of teaching, Piccolo remarks that students will sometimes give you answers that you don't expect, which shows how much you can learn from teaching!

When he is not at Gustavus, Professor Piccolo enjoys reading, listening to music, going for bike rides, camping, kayaking or canoeing, and playing sports.

Piccolo's message of advice for Gustavus students is to appreciate our years here and the luxuries we have that we might not recognize. Piccolo reflects that, "When you're young you tend to see parts of your life as holding pens for your life to come." Rather than rushing through college, Piccolo encourages students to live in the moment and says, "Don't let the fact that you have to do things for class take the joy from learning."

Please join us in welcoming Professor Samuel Piccolo to the Gustavus community and to the Political Science Department!

**JOIN US FOR THE
5TH BIENNIAL
RONALD S. AND KATHRYN K.
CHRISTENSON LECTURESHIP
IN POLITICS AND LAW
FEATURING**

**KEVIN WASHBURN
DEAN AND PROFESSOR OF LAW AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA.**

**THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2024
4:30 PM IN WALLEMBERG
AUDITORIUM**

<https://gustavus.edu/events/christenson/History>

**This event is free and
open to the public**



Alumni Notes

Kaija Hupila '05

Associate General Counsel at Veeva Systems

I'm in New York for business this week and found myself passing by the West Side YMCA this morning. It brought back such a rush of great memories of that month we [Professor Jill Locke's 2003 J-Term Course] spent gallivanting around the city. Every time I'm here, the first thing I think of as I'm getting oriented is the Day 1 training that [Professor Locke] gave us on how to find uptown and downtown and navigate around the grid. I know we did academic work on that trip, but I think the life skills we developed have been one of my most practical and long-lasting takeaways from college. Thank you so much for teaching me how to handle

myself in a city, how to cross the street aggressively, and how to avoid the mistake of getting on a train going in the wrong direction...Here's a shot of me on the top of my company's NY office, with the Empire State Building in the background. Hard to get more NY than that!

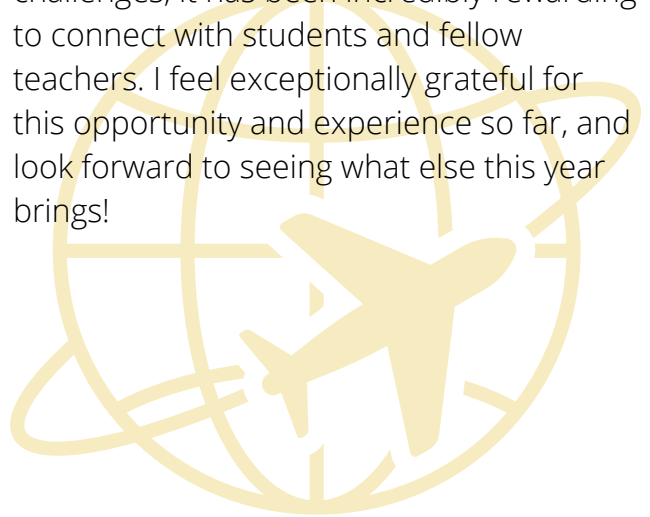


Maria Flores Marquez '22

Fulbright English Teaching Assistant



As a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Madrid, I've had the privilege to work at a secondary school, helping students develop their English and also preparing them for their regional Model UN Conference. While adjusting to a different culture has had its challenges, it has been incredibly rewarding to connect with students and fellow teachers. I feel exceptionally grateful for this opportunity and experience so far, and look forward to seeing what else this year brings!



Changes At Gustavus

Dr. Kate Knutson

As you may have already heard, there are some big changes to the academic program underway at Gustavus. In October, the faculty endorsed a set of proposals that will change everything from general education, to the college calendar, to how we count credits. The process of making these changes began in the spring of 2023, when Provost Brenda Kelly convened a faculty task force to recommend a framework for a re-envisioned academic program that was distinctive, student-centric, inclusive, welcoming, and rooted in our identity as a residential, liberal arts college. I served as a member and chair of this task force.

Throughout the spring semester, the Faculty Task Force reviewed hundreds of pages of data from internal and external sources, surveyed students and employees, and discussed and debated ideas. In May, the faculty voted to endorse a framework for redesigning the academic program that would restore us to the traditional liberal arts ideal of thirds (one third of classes for your major, one third for general education, one third for electives), eliminate January term from the academic calendar, and center on the creation of a signature experience to help students bridge the step from college to career.

Over the summer, the task force worked to develop the broad ideas endorsed by the faculty and in October, the Gustavus faculty endorsed a set of specific proposals to redesign the academic experience for students. Here is a brief summary of the changes that were approved:

- We will start counting courses using the credit hour system. Regular full credit classes will be worth 4 credits, half credit classes will be worth 2 credits, and so on.
- We're reducing the number of general education requirements and all 100- and 200-level courses that don't have a prerequisite will carry a general education designation.
- We're reducing the size of majors that don't have external accreditation requirements. The political science major won't change because we are already under the new cap.
- We're creating a Signature Experience requirement to help connect the things students are learning in the classroom with practical applications that will benefit them after they leave Gustavus. Students will have options to choose from including an internship, study away, collaborative research with a professor, or certain on-campus courses.

- We're changing the academic calendar. Fall semester will start after Labor day and finish in the week before Christmas but it will include a full week fall break. Spring semester will start in the second week of January and finish at the end of April. Commencement will happen right at the end of the spring semester and then we'll have several options for summer terms, including month-long terms in May and June. There is no J-term in this calendar because ending the spring semester at the end of May made it challenging for students to be competitive in finding internships, research experiences, or employment. This new schedule preserves opportunities for short term study away and adds in some opportunities for field trips and service trips over the expanded fall break.
- We're changing the schedule of when classes are offered so that most classes will meet either two or three times a week.
- We're changing some policies related to advising and adding in an Advising Day each semester to focus on academic and career advising.

Change is hard and there are things we will definitely miss. Personally, I will miss the opportunity for J-term travel. But we are also excited for the ways in which these changes--particularly the new Signature Experience program--will benefit future generations of Gustavus students.



SUPPORT

Political Science

@ Gustavus

- Write an article for this newsletter.
- Host a Gustie intern (send your internship posting to us and we'll share it with current students).
- Donate to the Christenson Lecture, Christenson Scholarship, or Political Science Department.



Student Spotlight

Ivan Scarpino Korb '24

Senior Ivan Scarpino Korb is majoring in Political Science and Economics with a Minor in Religious Diversity in Professional Life. Ivan decided to major in Political Science after taking Political and Legal thinking with Professor Jill Locke.

Over the summer Ivan interned for the U.S. House of Representatives for his Congresswoman, Yadira Caraveo. Caraveo represents Northern Colorado, including Ivan's hometown, Brighton, CO.

Ivan chose to apply to Representative Caraveo's office after deciding that he wanted to get more involved in his community and see first hand how a Congressional office works. The two month summer internship involved helping with research for full time staff members, including finding out about farmers, school districts, and non-profit organizations in Colorado.

Ivan also assisted with drafting letters to constituents, receiving phone calls from constituents, and helping organize constituent casework such as veterans and passport applications.

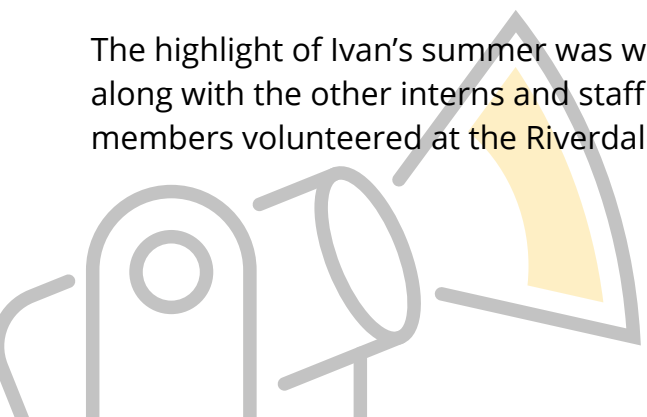
The highlight of Ivan's summer was when he along with the other interns and staff members volunteered at the Riverdale



Animal Shelter to help with laundry, prep meals, and make toys for the animals.

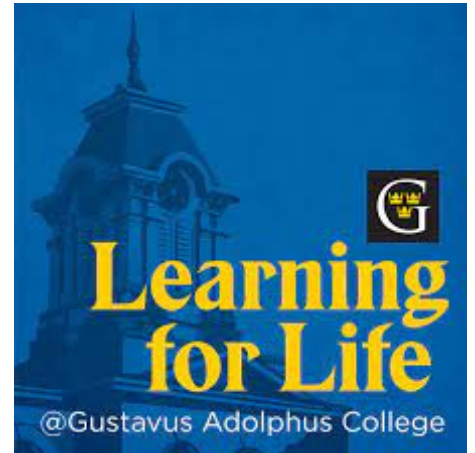
Ivan is thankful for his internship with Representative Caraveo and would be willing to intern for her again and potentially work full time for her. Ivan plans to go to Spain for J-Term in 2024 and his after graduation plans are still undecided however, he is thinking about applying to receive his Masters in international affairs.

Ivan is a member of the Gustavus Football team, a Collegiate Fellow, a member of the Organization for Latin American and Spanish Cultures (OLAS), and a volunteer with Big Partner Little Partner. This year he has served as one of two department assistants for Political Science.



Listen Up!

Have you heard about the Gustavus podcast **Learning for Life @ Gustavus**? Check out these episodes featuring political science faculty, students, and alumni.



Abby Joy Neptun '24

[Students Are Here to Do Things Bigger than Themselves](#)

Congratulations

Dr. Jill Locke was recently awarded a three-year appointment as the College's James McPherson Endowed Chair in American History

[Click here to read more](#)

BE SOCIAL WITH US!



Join Our Mailing List

This newsletter is distributed to Gustavus political science alumni for whom we have a current email address. If you'd like to be added to our distribution list, please [click here](#) to do so.

(Or visit:

<https://forms.gle/9YAUdBTSMQCS7CBP8>)

On Campus

We've had a lot of fun in the Political Science department this fall. From coffee and donut breaks, to pumpkin carving, to our new puzzle table, our students are making the most of their time on the Hill.



Meeting with law school admissions representatives at the annual Law Fair



Students take a break from Senior Seminar to work on the puzzle

