

SPRING 2023

POLITICAL SCIENCE NEWSLETTER

Gustavus Adolphus College

Peacebuilding in Colombia

An Interview with Dr. Mimi Gerstbauer

By David Eide '23



I work with Peace and Hope International, a Latin American peacebuilding organization. I wanted to take students on a Latin American J-Term, so I worked with Peace and Hope International as they've hosted groups in the past. Given the focus on peacebuilding, we decided on Colombia. While there were potential security risks when we were planning the J-Term, the recent peace deal seemed more likely to appeal to students and so we marched ahead. To me, Colombia seemed like the most exciting option, and it was an option that I knew a lot about.

I think our J-Term in Colombia confirmed something I've been thinking about for a while.

The goal was to look at community peacebuilding in Colombia and what struck me was the importance of community peacebuilding and giving dignity to victims. I've dealt with that

subject during my senior seminar, the politics of reconciliation, and the readings for that course impart the importance of caring for victims. As outsiders, we listened to stories of people who'd been affected by violence and lost everything and I think all of us shed a tear at least once listening to them. It made me think about what it means to restore dignity to victims and how we bring about peacebuilding and forgiveness. We often wondered what we as outsiders from a small college had to offer but the fact that we came and listened to the stories of people who suffered so much gave a great deal of dignity to victims.

Thank You!

Sophia Artley '23 and **David Eide '23** were selected by political science faculty to serve as Department Assistants for 2022-23 academic year, an award that also comes with the responsibility of helping to facilitate department initiatives, like social gatherings and this newsletter.



Exploring the World



Kenzie Alders '24

**Political Science and Accounting Major
J-Term in Colombia**

Except for a previous J-Term course that I had taken, I had never had a political science class that did not have at least somewhat of an emphasis on the United States. With that being said, I think Colombia opened my eyes to what is out there. I think my perspective on political science has changed because I have more of a drive to find different perspectives, the beauty of politics is that there is no correct answer. Further, it is important to remember that your methods of thinking are not necessarily correct, so one has to be an active listener when searching for more.

Marcjanna (Marcy) Taylor '24

**Political Science Major
Year in Germany**

In my first semester in Heidelberg we took an excursion to Berlin and visited the Humboldt Forum in the newly reconstructed Berlin Palace, which was controversial because of the cost and because it had promised to tell the stories of the people that Germany had previously colonized. It was ironic that a museum about colonization was located in a former castle, but also the forum only briefly focused on German colonization.

During our excursion we had a tour through the Bundestag, Germany's federal parliament. The tour was entirely in German, so I had to pay close attention to what the tour guide had said. We were also able to go onto the roof of the Bundestag and see a wonderful view of Berlin. My time in Heidelberg has fulfilling and I hope other Gusties will take the opportunity to study abroad.



David Eide '23

Political Science and Biology Major

David has a personal goal to visit all 50 U.S. State capitals. He used spring break to tackle three in the Midwest: Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska.



Winners of the 2023 Political Science Writing Award

David Eide '23 for, "Language Politics in Post-Communist Eastern Europe: A Comparative Examination of Latvia, Belarus, and Montenegro," a senior thesis written for Comparative Politics. David is a senior majoring in political science with honors and biology.

Ben Forsberg '23 for, "Ranked Choice Voting for American Democracy," written for Analyzing Politics. Ben is a senior majoring in economics with a minor in political science.

Pi Sigma Alpha

The National Political Science Honor Society

This spring, we will induct 14
new members:

Claire Lind '24

Benjamin Forsberg '23

Kaiani Roberts Engman '24

Caroline Southworth '24

Dominic Flentje '23

Hailey Vader '24

Kelsey Walock '23

Kiana Pitsch '24

Marcjanna Taylor '24

Caitlyn Storley '23

Chloe Keller '24

Warsan Cumar '23

Alayna Suchy '24

Andrea Cruz Bracamontes '24

High Achievers

On Campus Awards

Andrea Cruz Bracamontes '24 is the winner of the Ronald and Rolf Christenson Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded to a junior political science major judged exemplary in the excellence, depth, and imagination of their academic performance in political science and who has a demonstrated interest in public service.

Birgen Nelson '23 and **Wyatt Quiring '23** won the 2022-23 Patricia Lindell Paper Award from the Folke Bernadotte Memorial Library for their paper, *Minnesota Nice: The Impacts of Voter Reform in the United States Midwest*. The paper was written for POL 300: Empirical Political Analysis and used multiple regression models to investigate the impact of various voting reforms on voter turnout in the Midwest in 2016, 2018 and 2020. **Emily Seppelt '22** was a finalist for the award.

Alaynna Suchy '24 is the winner of the Fricker Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded to a junior political science or history major who demonstrates evidence of serious concern for the welfare of other people.

National Awards

Kelsey Walock '23 was selected for the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Program for Bulgaria.

Maria Flores Marquez '22 was selected for the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Program for Spain.

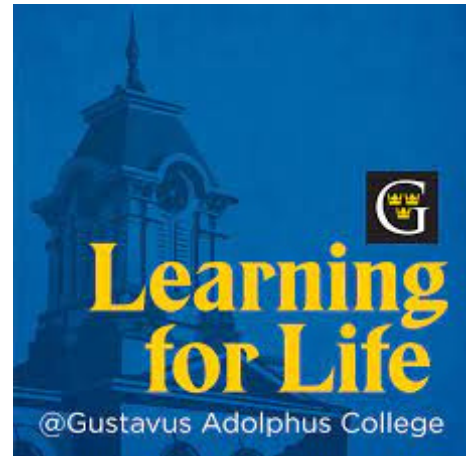
Sydney Stumme-Berg '22 was a finalist for the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Program for Greece).


Andrea Cruz Bracamontes '24 was selected for the Public Policy and International Affairs Junior Summer Institute Fellowship Program this summer at the University of Michigan. The JSI aims to increase diversity among public sector professionals through mentoring, grad school prep and Master's degree funding for public policy or international affairs.


Caroline Southworth '24 is a semifinalist for the State Department's Critical language Scholarship in Russian. Caroline earned the CLS last summer too.


Listen Up!

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



-  **Tessa Yeager '24 and Ashley Ley '23**
[Unseen Passages: Refugees and the Collective Fight for Vitality](#)

-  **Eric O'Denius '94**
[Apply the Facts to Law](#)

-  **Jenesis Tompkins '23 and Zachary Gbor '23**
[Meet the Leaders of Gustavus's Pan African Student Organization](#)

Congratulations!

Dr. Lori Carsen Kelly '83 was promoted to Senior Continuing Faculty status at Gustavus. Lori has taught at Gustavus since 1992, teaching a variety of courses including Law & Society, Resistance & Liberation, and Political & Legal Thinking.

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/9YAUdBTSQMCS7CBP8>)

CELEBRATING SENIORS

Memories from The class of 2023!

My favorite memory has to be the collective experiences I had in my Women and Gender in Politics class. It was one of my only in person classes for the first time in a year after the pandemic, and as a group of young women we were challenged to think critically and share our experiences. This was my favorite time/experience because of how empowering it was to be in the class, which happened to be only women, as we shared, talked, and celebrated each other and empowering women in politics. ~ Sophia Artley

One memory I will never forget is doing the Bus exercise with Lori Carsen Kelly. We had a list of different people that got worse and worse as the list went on, and we would debate whether to kick this person off the bus or not. It got so ridiculous I will never forget it. ~ Matthew Shaw

My favorite memory from Political Science was the tour of the Minnesota State Capitol we took during the Minnesota Politics and Government J-Term, it sparked my interest in state capitals and government which has continued to this day. ~ David Eide

I got to give a presentation on Brexit in my International Relations class in the fall of 2019. I felt so in my element, and by the end of the presentation I knew I wanted to be a political science major. ~ Hunter Thompson

One of my favorite memories in the Political Science department is that time when I first declared my major and took my first course of this major. It was a rough beginning for me since everything was really difficult to comprehend and there were a lot to learn, things that I have never heard or experienced before, However, the professor helped me through all the assignments and exams and I will always be grateful for it. ~ Anh Vu

Professor Letich took our entire Comparative Politics Senior Seminar outside at the beginning of our class to see the changing leaf colors and play in the already fallen leaves to alleviate some stress as we started writing our Senior Thesis.~ Delaney Bluhm

My favorite memory is the mock congress we did in US Congress. We pretended to be representatives from all over the country and everyone was very spirited. If I remember correctly, we even got some bills passed. ~ Emily Davison

CONGRATS

Sophia Artley

Delaney Bluhm

Warsan Cumar

Emily Davison

Noah Dyer

David Eide

Dominic Flentje

Estae Green

Patrick Harrison

Eric Johnson

Mariah Kranz

Birgen Nelson

Lauren Ruth

Kelsey Schoeberl

Matthew Shaw

Emma Thompson

Hunter Thompson

Nisorakhon Usmonova

Anh Vu

Kelsey Walock

Juliet White

