

POLITICAL SCIENCE NEWSLETTER

Gustavus Adolphus College

The Politics of Archives: From Political Science to the Library

From the fifth floor of the Denver Public Library, I can look out over Civic Center Park to see both the Colorado State Capitol and the City and County Building. When I graduated from Gustavus in 1993, I saw myself working in one of those buildings, not in the Western History and Genealogy department located on that fifth floor in our Central Library. I considered being a lawyer, a lobbyist, harbored dreams of being Chief of Staff at the White House (think Josh Lyman, not Mark Meadows). I even spent a few years as an elected official.



Rachel Vagts '93 in the Gates Reading Room in the Western History and Genealogy department of the Denver Public Library.

This summer I had the experience of seeing my profession as an archivist and my love of all things political converge. I was at the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists catching up with long-time friends at the hotel bar when the man sitting next to us leaned over and asked why we were in town. We explained. He sat back and said, "Archivists? Like Mar A Lago archivists?"

As archivists, we provide the context to these significant moments in our society's life. Increasingly, we focus less on whose history is recorded, and more on whose isn't. Where are the "archival silences?" What does that tell us about who held the power when historical moments were happening? What boxes are missing and why? While it may not be science, it often is very political! In those moments, I find myself returning to lessons I learned from Ron Christenson, especially during the course he led in London during the fall semester of my senior year. As we looked back at critical moments in British history, we drew clear lines to their impact on the development of the U.S. Constitution. When it feels like everything in the world has become complicated and difficult, I think about Randy Bush's International Relations class and how history cycles itself every 80-100 years.

The story I repeat most often about my Gustavus Political Science class is from spring of my senior year when I took State and Local Politics from Chris Gilbert. After we read Amy Klobuchar's book (based on her senior thesis at Yale) about the building of the Metrodome, someone in the class asked if we could take a field trip. I have no idea what the arrangements were, but sure enough, a few weeks later we were at the Dome on a tour with Bill Lester, the Executive Director of the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission. The lesson I learned from this young poli sci professor was taking an idea, thinking outside the box, and making it happen. Regardless where my professional and life path has led, this is the one lesson I've used the most.



Rachel is the Manager of Special Collections and Digital Archives at the Denver Public Library. She graduated from Gustavus with degrees in History and Political Science and received a master's degree in Library and Information Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



In Case You Missed It...

Last year's Ronald S. and Kathryn K. Christenson Lecture in Politics and Law was given by Dr. Timothy Johnson '93, Morse Alumni Distinguished Professor of Political Science and Law at the University of Minnesota. The lecture is available online: <https://youtu.be/abaPkTHWgQw>

Listen Up!

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



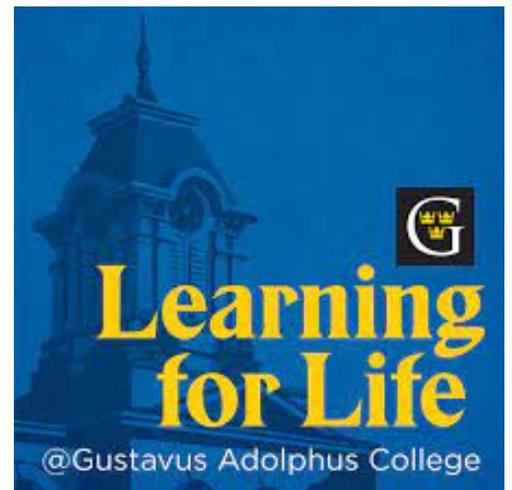
Judge **Tanya Bransford** '80
[Serving the Community and Justice](#)



Margaret Anderson Kelliher '90
[From "Farm Kid" to Public Servant](#)



Student Senate Co-Presidents **Regina Olono Vidales** '22 and **Ben Menke** '22
[Student Senate, Student Communities](#)



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Student Spotlight

Delaney Bluhm '23 answers questions posed by POL Academic Assistant, **David Eide** '23

What drew you to Gustavus and Political Science specifically?

My interest in political science came from the realization that there was a lot wrong with the world after the start of the Black Lives Matter protests which threw a lot of cognitive dissonance into my previously held beliefs. This continued to snowball, and I was encouraged to challenge my own conceptions by my social studies teachers in high school. I was really interested in studying out of state, but my main options were in-state schools in Indiana. I especially wanted to pursue a peace studies undergrad major and Gustavus was one of the few colleges offering that.

What made you want to study abroad in Rwanda and what did that entail?

I have been interested in the Rwandan genocide since high school and I wanted to learn more about it. My family has always valued travel so when I got the opportunity to study abroad, I jumped at the chance. The program was split between first meeting with various governmental officials, NGOs, and non-profits regarding the leadup to and healing from the genocide. The second part consisted of an independent study program where I produced a 30-page paper dealing with trauma healing of genocidal rape victims emphasizing the importance of community in healing.

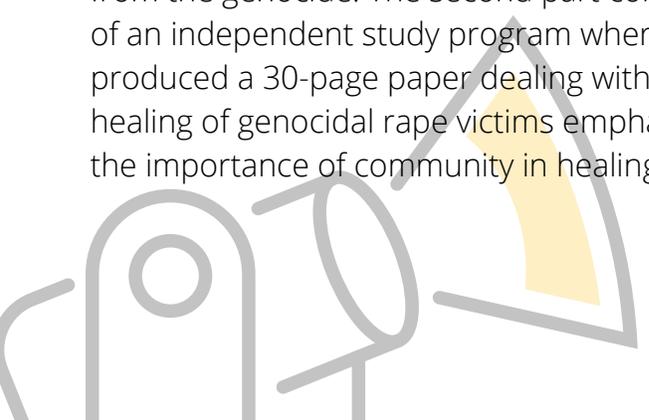


How did studying abroad in Rwanda broaden your understanding of Political Science?

I think going abroad kind of broadens your understanding of everything, you learn different cultures and languages which puts things into a different perspective. It also gave me some insight into what being a racial minority may feel like which I couldn't have experienced without studying abroad. It opened my eyes to the fact that different countries have very different political landscapes that may not fit the way we in the west perceive them.

What are your plans after graduation?

I'm planning to take a gap year to gain experience by working for a non-profit involved in international affairs since many peace studies programs recommend doing so.



High Achievers

Shae Archambault '22 was selected runner-up for the 2022 Best Undergraduate Class Paper award from Pi Sigma Alpha, the national political science honor society, for her senior thesis, "Looking Back to Reconcile Forward: An Analysis of 'Comfort Women' in Post-War Japanese and South Korean Collective Memory."

We've placed recent graduates in some great grad school programs. Here are a few examples of what Gustie political science graduates are up to:

- **Henry Adebisi '18**: JD candidate at University of Wisconsin
- **Alex Jensen '18**: PhD candidate in Political Science at the University of Colorado
- **Matt Vierzba '18**: MPP candidate at Northwestern University
- **Jacob Skold '18**: JD candidate at the University of Iowa
- **Monali Bhakta '20**: JD candidate at St. Thomas Law School
- **Nick Summers '21**: JD candidate at Vanderbilt University
- **Hailey Concepcion '21**: MA candidate in Food Anthropology at the University of London School of Oriental and African Studies
- **Sara Kasel '21**: MPP candidate at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs (UM)
- **Amanda Braun**: MPH candidate at Boston University School of Public Health
- **Ben Menke '22**: JD candidate at Yale Law School
- **Emily Seppelt '22**: MPP candidate at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs (UM)
- **Nathan Baring '22**: MA candidate in Arctic and Northern Studies at the University of Alaska
- **Freya Nelson '22**: JD candidate at Mitchell Hamline School of Law
- **Alexia VonRuden '22**: JD candidate at University of St. Thomas

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Happenings on Campus

Current political science students and faculty socialize over donuts and coffee this fall in Old Main



Lissie Artley '25 with Minnesota Judge **Tanya Bransford '80** following an on-campus discussion on diversity in the legal field, which Artley helped plan and facilitate.

Faculty Spotlight

Professor Jill Locke answers questions posed by POL Academic Assistant, **Sophia Artley '23**

You recently went on a sabbatical - during that time what did you focus on?

I was working on my book about the political activism of girls and young women and how they use their relationship to school and education as their platform. The working title is "School Girls: From Little Rock to the Climate Strike." This research also put me in touch with some faculty at the University of Oslo, and I spent the month of March there collaborating. While I was there I also traveled to University of Copenhagen and University College Cork to present my work. Right before I left for Oslo, I gave a related talk at the University of San Francisco. One of my favorite things about my sabbatical was the travel and meeting people in so many different disciplines and contexts who are engaging overlapping issues. It's like being back in college where you go from your French class to your Political Science class and then to your History class and see the connections and your head is just exploding. I loved that as a student and I still love it now.

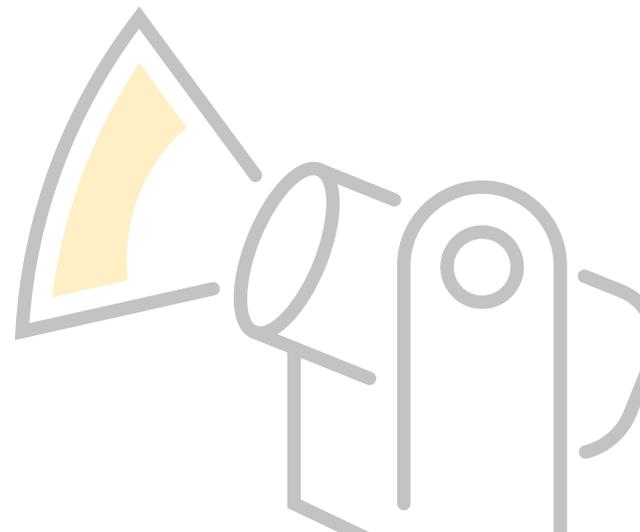
How has your sabbatical influenced your work?

At this particular moment, my plate is pretty full with my teaching, but even that is connected through the course readings that grow out of

my research. Teaching texts really changes my relationship to them. It's one thing to read something on your own; it's entirely different to present it and facilitate discussion. The sabbatical gave me the necessary time and space to read and write without interruption. Now that the book project is underway, it's much easier for me to work on it in smaller chunks with the time that I have.

Finally, how have you taken those experiences and applied them to the classroom in your teaching?

I am teaching a new class this fall, GWS 380: The Culture and Politics of Girl Power and it is all material drawn from my sabbatical research. And in the spring, I'll be teaching POL 399: Revolting Children, which is also about children and political action and organizing. I am really excited to work through these questions with Gustavus students!



Recruit a Gustie



Alan Parsons Meier '87
*Political Science major & proud
mentee of Dr. Ronald
Christenson*

Hello fellow Political Science majors! I write to you from the Gustavus Admission Office where I am entering my 33 year recruiting future Gusties.

The Gustavus community is looking for your help in recruiting the next generation of Political Science majors to Gustavus.

Here's how you can help both Gustavus & any high school students you know.

Refer a future Gustie:

<https://apply.gustavus.edu/register/?id=a6015874-f800-474f-ac2a-e81b757c7a07>

This allows us to contact the student about Gustavus & it offers the student an Alumni Referral Scholarship of \$1000 for each of their four years at Gustavus!

Applying for admission to Gustavus is free and non-binding:

<https://gustavus.edu/admission/apply/>

Gustavus is proud to have been one of the first upper Midwest colleges/universities to begin offering **Test Optional admission** more than 15 years ago. Learn more:

<https://gustavus.edu/admission/apply/test-optional.php>

<https://fairtest.org/test-optional-list/>