



OWU Department of Politics &
Government Alumni Newsletter
Spring 2025

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

Faculty & Staff, Spring 2025

Faculty

Dr. Ashley Biser
Dr. Brianna N. Mack
Dr. James C. Franklin
Dr. Ji Young Choi
Dr. Michael V. Esler
Dr. Franchesca V. Nestor (Chair)
Dr. William C. Louthan (Emeritus)

Administrative Staff

Deborah Lovell

Newsletter Editors & Writers

Jenna Ashbrook, Kaylen Brandt, & Timothy Page



George Meader Bequest:

The department gratefully acknowledges that this newsletter is made possible through the financial support received from a bequest by a former Ohio Wesleyan student, George Meader, who attended from 1923-1925. Meader was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from a southeastern Michigan district from 1951-1965. He received his law degree from the University of Michigan in 1931. Prior to serving in Congress, he had a private law practice in Ann Arbor, served as a county prosecutor, and as counsel to the U.S. Senate special committee investigating the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. He served as counsel to congressional committees and resumed the private practice of law after leaving the Congress.

Faculty Updates

Ashley Biser was the co-director of the Sagan National Colloquium. Dr. Biser was awarded Ohio Wesleyan's Special Scholarly Leave for Fall 2025.

Ji Young Choi's book has published. Look for: *The Politics of South Korea: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Lynne Rienner Publishers). This book is a thematic introduction of South Korea's politics, economy, pop culture, and foreign relations from int'l and comparative perspectives. It also covers the political and economic history of North Korea as well as inter-Korean relations including a nuclear issue. He and OWU students visited Brussels in March of 2025.

Michael Esler took a group of Moot Court members to Capital University in the Fall 2024. The students participated in the competition and got to participate in trying a court case. Dr. Esler also had two attorneys come share their experiences and answer questions during lunch hour in the Fall 2024. Dr. Esler is also retiring this year after 34 years at OWU! (see Faculty Spotlight)

James Franklin is currently the Director of the International Studies Program. Dr. Franklin is participating in Ohio Wesleyan's Summer Scholar Research (SSRP), which was recently expanded to non-natural sciences faculty. He will be working along side OWU students on his research.

William Louthan is creating a new edition of his previously published book, *The United States Supreme Court: Lawmaking in the Third Branch of Government*, which is set to be released some time in 2026.

Brianna "Nicky" Mack received her tenure this academic year and was co-director of the Sagan National Colloquium.

Franchesca Nestor is currently the Politics & Government Department Chair. Dr. Nestor is participating in Ohio Wesleyan's Summer Scholar Research (SSRP), which was recently expanded to non-natural sciences faculty. She will be working along side OWU students on her research.



Pictured from left to right (back row): Ji Young Choi, Michael Esler, James Franklin, William Louthan
left to right (front row): Nicky Mack, Ashley Biser, Franchesca Nestor



Visit the Faculty & Staff page by scanning the QR or clicking on link below for more information.

<https://www.owu.edu/academics/departments-programs/department-of-politics-government/faculty-staff/>

J.K. Eddy Memorial Lecture on World Politics



Gaza and America's Role in the Middle East

November 13, 2024

Dr. Lynch examined the political details and history that contributed to the war in Gaza following the October 7 attack by Hamas. He discussed how the decisions and treaties put in place over decades have contributed to the situation of today. The lecture was thought provoking and lead to a question and answer with audience participation and discussion. OWU was honored to have Wayne Lafferty, a family member of the Eddy family, attend the dinner and lecture.

Dr. Marc Lynch, an expert in Middle Eastern politics and international relations. Dr. Lynch earned his B.A. in Political Science from Duke University and went on to receive his M.A. and Ph.D. in Government from Cornell University. He teaches at George Washington University, where he also directs the Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS). Currently, Lynch is a visiting professor at The Ohio State University. Dr. Lynch is a contributing editor for The Washington Post's Monkey Cage, editor of the Columbia University Press series Columbia Studies on Middle East Politics, and a nonresident senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. A renowned scholar of Arab media, public opinion, Islamist movements, and public diplomacy, Dr. Lynch frequently contributes to Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, and Good Authority.

Lynch presented the lecture in Benes Rooms A & B on November 13, 2024. The event was sponsored by the OWU International Studies Program, Department of Politics and Government, and the Sagan National Colloquium.



To learn more about the history of the J.K. Eddy Memorial Lecture on World Politics.

Scan or visit:

<https://www.owu.edu/academics/departments-programs/international-studies-program/lectures/eddy-lecture-series/>

DEMOCRACY MATTERS

SAGAN NATIONAL COLLOQUIUM

Find out more about SNC events!
owu.edu/snc



As part of its ongoing commitment to civic education, Ohio Wesleyan University presents Democracy Matters: a colloquium that investigates the challenges to American democracy and highlights the dedicated public servants trying to protect the American experiment. Democracy Matters encourages students to participate in the election while providing them with the context and skills necessary to make informed decisions about their future.



Benjamin F. Marsh Lecture On Public Affairs

Refusing Death: Immigrant Women of Color on Environmental Racism and Classism

The Department of Politics and Government was honored to host Dr. Nadia Kim, Professor of Sociology at Loyola Marymount University, for a powerful lecture titled "Refusing Death: Immigrant Women of Color on Environmental Racism and Classism." Drawing from her extensive research, Dr. Kim examined how systemic inequalities disproportionately burden immigrant women of color with environmental hazards, such as pollution and toxic waste, in their neighborhoods.

Dr. Kim's lecture centered on the concept of "refusing death"—a framework that highlights how marginalized communities resist systemic violence and fight for survival and justice. She emphasized the intersections of race, gender, and class, showing how these factors compound vulnerabilities while also fueling resilience and activism. Through compelling examples, she illustrated how immigrant women of color organize and advocate for healthier environments for their families and communities.

The event concluded with an engaging Q&A session, where students and faculty discussed the role of policy, grassroots organizing, and academic research in addressing environmental injustices. Dr. Kim's talk left a lasting impression, challenging us to reflect on structural inequities and our collective responsibility to advocate for change.

We extend our gratitude to Dr. Nadia Kim for sharing her groundbreaking work and inspiring us to think critically about environmental justice. Stay tuned for more events from the Department of Politics and Government as we continue to explore pressing issues shaping our world and public affairs.

Following the lecture on February 20th, Dr. Nadia Kim and two of OWU's professors, Laurie Anderson, Ph.D. Biological Sciences and Ashley Toenjes, Ph.D. Environmental and Sustainability Sciences discussed the Intersections of Environmental & Racial Justice. The panel answered questions from the audience members leading to a discussion about the environmental issues that also intersect with racial injustices.

To learn more about the history of the B. F. Marsh Lecture on Public Affairs. Scan or visit: [Benjamin Marsh Lectures](https://www.owu.edu/academics/departments-programs/department-of-politics-government/benjamin-marsh-lectures/)
<https://www.owu.edu/academics/departments-programs/department-of-politics-government/benjamin-marsh-lectures/>



TRAVEL LEARNING



Professor Choi and a group of students recently traveled to Belgium and Luxembourg as part of a Theory to Practice grant, with the goal of gaining firsthand insight into the workings of the European Union. The educational experience included visits to key institutions such as the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, and the Brussels School of Governance. The group also had the unique opportunity to visit the Embassy of Paraguay, where they met with Ambassador Enrique Maciel to discuss what it is like to be an Ambassador. In Luxembourg, students toured the Central Bank to learn more about European financial systems. Beyond academics, the group explored the rich history and culture of the region with visits to the beautiful cities of Ghent and Bruges. This immersive experience brought classroom learning to life through real-world engagement and cultural discovery.

International Studies

An international studies major at Ohio Wesleyan University (OWU) offers a comprehensive curriculum that covers global issues, international economics, and international politics. Students are encouraged to study at least one foreign language and spend at least one semester studying or interning abroad. The program also provides an integrative senior seminar to tie everything together. Graduates of the program can pursue various career paths, including graduate programs in international affairs, international business, and area studies. Additionally, the major provides students with solid liberal arts skills useful in most professions, as well as specialized language and knowledge desirable for a career in international fields. The diverse and interdisciplinary nature of the major equips students with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in an increasingly globalized world. If you are interested in this program, please contact Dr. James Franklin (jcfranklin@owu.edu).

East Asian Studies

The East Asian Studies program aims to give you a broad perspective of East Asia (particularly Japan, Korea, and China). To achieve this goal, the program adopts an interdisciplinary approach including studies in politics & government, economics, history, religion, sociology & anthropology, and foreign languages. You benefit from the variety of perspectives and expertise that faculty from different departments bring to their classrooms. You may choose to focus on one particular East Asian country. As a major, study abroad will be required, so you will be able to apply your studies in a culturally immersive experience. In addition to study abroad, Theory-to-Practice grants and Travel-Learning courses are great opportunities for research, travel, or internships in an East Asian country. Students have gone to Japan, South Korea, China, and Taiwan. If you are interested in this program, contact Prof. Ji Young Choi (jychoi@owu.edu).

Take the First Step in Pre-Law at OWU

Are you interested in pursuing a career in law? If so, the OWU Political Science Department's Pre-Law Studies major is the perfect fit for you! The Pre-Law Studies major is designed to prepare students for the rigors of law school and success in the legal profession. The major offers a rigorous and interdisciplinary curriculum that combines courses in political science, English, history, philosophy, and economics. Students who are interested in declaring the Pre-Law Studies major should contact Dr. Esler or Dr. Louthan for more information.

Moot Court

This year's Moot Court case tackled a pressing constitutional question at the intersection of technology and individual rights, focused solely on the First and Fifth Amendments. *William DeNolf v. Olympus* challenges whether using Face ID to unlock a suspect's smartphone violates the Fifth Amendment's protection against self-incrimination. DeNolf, convicted of involuntary manslaughter following the suicide of Bobbi Bronner, argues that the police's use of facial recognition technology to access his phone without consent was unconstitutional. His defense contends that under the act of production doctrine, Face ID constitutes testimonial evidence, and the state fails to meet the foregone conclusion standard. Additionally, DeNolf raises a First Amendment claim, arguing that his private messages should be protected as free speech. While the Supreme Court has yet to rule on a case with these exact facts, lower courts have grappled with similar issues, making this year's competition a compelling exploration of digital privacy and constitutional rights. This year's Moot Court team consisted of 11 participants 2 of which scored high enough to move on to the second round! We thank Professor Mike Esler for coaching this team!

Lunch & Learns

In September, the PG Department had their first lunch and learn of the fall semester. The topic was on Election 2024: Voting How Tos and there were 14 people in attendance. There was also a Sagan co-sponsored lunch and learn on September 30th discussing the Election and the Environment. On October 25th, the students and faculty discussed upcoming spring courses with the faculty and on November 1st, Sagan co-sponsored Say What? Q&A about the election. During the spring semester, the department offered a luncheon to talk about upcoming course offerings for 2025-2026 Academic year, celebrated Dr. Mack's tenure announcement, and honored Dr. Elster with a luncheon for his upcoming retirement. It's been a great year of lunches!

Model UN

OWU Model UN club meets every other week to discuss international issues and practice a Model UN conference. In April, students attended the Model UN conference at William & Mary College in Williamsburg, Virginia. Please contact advisor Prof. Ji Young Choi (jychoi@owu.edu) for more info on OWU Model UN club.

Wesleyan in Washington



The Arneson Institute at Ohio Wesleyan University hosts and manages the "Wesleyan in Washington" program, which offers internship study opportunities for Ohio Wesleyan University students. The institute coordinates faculty oversight of appropriate internship credit and matches students with important and substantive internships and educational experiences not restricted to any one discipline. Additionally, it provides students with a wider range of connections for internship opportunities.

CONGRATUALATIONS, DR. BRIANNA N. MACK

Tenured

Dr. Mack received her Master's and Doctorate (Ph.D.) degree from The Ohio State University, with her Masters in Political Science with a minor in Political Psychology and Doctorate in Political Science. Dr. Mack served as a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow and a Ralph Bunche Summer Institute scholar during her time as an undergraduate! A lover of pop culture, animation, and video games, Dr. Mack enjoys watching cartoons and anime, reading historical fiction and fantasy books, going to concerts, and exploring the Midwest with her family and friends.



AWARDS & PI SIGMA ALPHA

At the 2024-2025 End of the Year Awards ceremony, the Department of Politics and Government presented two annual departmental awards, the **Earl E. Warner Award for Academic Excellence** and the **James J. Hearn Award for Community Service**. The winners of the James J. Hearn Award for Community Service Award were **Giorgi Bediashvili** and **Timothy Page** and the Earl E. Warner Award for Academic Excellence was awarded to **Michael M. Ostertag**. The Department also inducted 11 new members into the Upsilon Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha. Congratulations to **Jenna Ashbrook, Kaylen Brandt, Courtney Brown, Gabriela Gonzalez Duarte, Mary James, Leyna Kirsh, Eleanor Luttmann, Michael Ostertag, Camille Payne, Vincent Sack II, and Hayley Sanders**. Congratulations!



Pictured from left to right: Courtney B., Eleanor L., Camille P., Vincent S., Kaylen B., Jenna A., Dr. Louthan, Leyna K., Hayley S., Giorgi B.

Scan here for
more
information
about
departmental
awards.



Pi Sigma Alpha is the national political science honorary. The Upsilon Chapter at OWU was established in 1934 by none other than Ben Arneson himself. Membership is highly prestigious. Graduate schools, law schools, and prospective employers are very pleased to find membership in Pi Sigma Alpha on an applicant's resume and the society offers competitive scholarships for graduate study!



Senior Spotlight: Timothy Page '25

If there's one thing I've learned during my time at Ohio Wesleyan, it's that growth often comes from crossing boundaries—geographic, cultural, and intellectual. My senior year began thousands of miles from home, in the heart of Central Europe, where I spent a semester studying at Anglo-American University in Prague, Czech Republic. I arrived eager to understand how different societies construct identity, especially in the face of rising interethnic relationships and shifting political landscapes.

Prague became a living classroom. Traveling across borders exposed me to new ways of thinking about migration, nationalism, and the complexities of belonging. These lessons tied directly into my academic work and informed my research interests in racial identity, political behavior, and community engagement. Even while abroad, I stayed deeply engaged in U.S. politics through a fellowship with Ballotpedia. I conducted in-depth research and data verification for nearly 100 local political candidates, analyzing campaign platforms, public records, and news sources. The goal? To create clear, accurate, and unbiased profiles for voters. It was a powerful experience—one that grounded me in the importance of transparency and civic education.

Back in Ohio, I continued my public-facing work through a Communications Internship with Save Ohio Parks, a nonprofit organization working to protect public lands from oil and gas extraction.

Here, I witnessed how policy, advocacy, and public communication intersect to shape real-world change. But perhaps the most personally transformative experience came through Leaders Across Borders, OWU's international cross-cultural leadership program. Selected through a competitive process, I participated in a multi-month initiative that culminated in a weeklong workshop at Corrymeela, a peace and reconciliation center in Northern Ireland. There, I joined students from across the globe to explore how we can build bridges across differences—of race, nationality, faith, and social class. This May, I'll return to the program as an Alumni Student Leader and Facilitator, helping the next cohort of students develop the skills to lead with empathy and courage.

Looking back on my senior year—and my time at Ohio Wesleyan as a whole—there were moments of doubt, challenge, and exhaustion. But I wouldn't change a thing. Each experience helped shape me into a more thoughtful scholar, a more grounded leader, and a more curious global citizen. To anyone reading this: **say yes**. Say yes to the internship, the study abroad application, the late-night brainstorm, the conversation that pushes your thinking. You never know what's on the other side of that yes—but I can promise, it's worth it.

MIKE ESLER

Michael Esler is a Professor in the Department of Politics and Government at Ohio Wesleyan University, specializing in the judicial process and policy making. Esler serves as Advisor of the Pre-Law Studies program, Co-Advisor for the Pre-Law Club, Coach of the Moot Court Team, and Coordinator of Judicial Affairs at the University. Esler began his teaching career at Ohio Wesleyan (1985-89), followed by six years at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. He returned to the Ohio Wesleyan campus in 1995. Esler received his B.S. and his M.A. at Arizona State University, and received his Ph.D. at The Ohio State University.



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Professor Esler has been the backbone of the pre-law department. Teaching many helpful classes like Civil Rights and Liberties, Law and Courts, and Moot Court. All of these classes are extremely helpful for any student hoping to attend law school, as it gives you a leg up with knowledge on writing case briefs and formulating arguments. Dr. Esler has inspired many students with his enthusiasm for law and incredible wisdom. We all will miss him dearly but wish him the best luck on his retirement.

“Humans have created many great things. The Rule of Law is one of them. As well as the arts, music, sciences, domestication of animals, martinis, and Jose Ramirez.”

-Dr. Esler





ALUMNI UPDATES

1964

John P. Entelis
Professor of Political Science at
Fordham University
River Edge, NJ

2006

Jeff Van Schaick
SVP External Relations at
Jaguar Transport Holdings
Aurora, CO

1976

Anne Kleindienst
Retired
Phoenix, AZ

2006

Britt Born
Hamilton County Juvenile
Court
Cincinnati, OH

1977

Paul Eddy
Retired
Essex, CT

2011

Allison (Boyd) Stevens
KY Legislative Research
Commission, Office of
Education Accountability

1994

Pamela (Conover) Quagliero
Temple University, Assistant
Director, Operations,
Undergraduate Admiss.
Richboro, PA

2018

Jake Chernoff
Jewish United Fund/Jewish
Federation of Chicago
Chicago, IL

2002

Dana Roxana Bucin
Murtha Cullina LLP
Portland, CT

2018

Matthew Pheneger, JD
Assistant Prosecutor
Lima, Ohio

Thank you for up for filling out and updating your information either on the paper copy and sending it to the Politics & Government Department or by updating your information in the google form. This information was updated from submissions from 2022 to April 2024.

LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

We need your help! Please fill out the following [information sheet](#) to help the Politics and Government Department keep track of its alums. Any information you could provide is valuable and allows us to continue to update you on department and other alumni news. You may also send your resume as a supplement to this form. Thank you!

Please circle the following concerning your information:

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Class: _____

Street Address: _____

Email: _____

Postgraduate Degree(s): _____

Institution: _____

Present Employer: _____

Position: _____

How did your course work, internships, and other experiential learning experiences as an undergraduate at Ohio Wesleyan help to shape your subsequent postgraduate education choices, career development and participation in civic and political affairs? Please be specific.

Please mail to:
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