



# POLITICALLY SPEAKING

OWU Department of Politics & Government  
Newsletter / Spring 2025

## Faculty & Staff, Spring 2025

### Faculty

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

### Administrative Staff

Deborah Lovell

### Newsletter Editors & Writers

Jenna Ashbrook, Kaylen Brandt, &  
Timothy Page



Politics and government are all around us, shaping our daily lives in countless ways, from the roads we drive on to conflicts around the globe. If you want to understand the world around you and make a difference in it, then a major or minor in Politics & Government at Ohio Wesleyan University is right for you. We offer a wide range of courses on topics in American politics, comparative politics, international relations, public policy, and political theory. We also offer several unique opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience, such as the Wesleyan in Washington Program as well as internships with local and state government agencies, campaigns, and NGOs. A degree in Politics & Government will prepare you for a variety of successful careers in government, law, business, education, and the nonprofit sector.

# 2025-2026 COURSE OFFERINGS

## Fall 2025

### **PG 111 1 Power & American Politics**

F. Nestor/MWF/3:10-4PM

### **PG 111 2 Power & American Politics**

B. Mack/MWF/2:10-3PM

### **PG 112 Global Issues**

J. Choi/MWF/2:10-3PM

### **PG 113 Democracy, Dictatorship, & Political Change**

J. Franklin/MWF/1:10-2PM

### **PG 279 Conduct of Political Inq.**

B. Mack/MWF/11-11:50AM

### **PG 281 Food Politics & Policy in America**

F. Nestor/MWF/10-10:50AM

### **PG 300 37 Public Opinion**

B. Mack/TR/1:10-2:30PM

### **PG 344 Democratization of the Developing World**

J. Franklin/MWF/2:10-3PM

### **PG 350 Law & Courts**

STAFF/TR/2:40-4PM

### **PG 351 Amer. Con. Law**

W. Louthan/TR/10-11:50AM

### **PG 364 Int'l Political Economy**

J. Choi/MWF/11-11:50AM

### **PG 366 US-China Relations**

J. Choi/W/6:30-9PM

### **PG 371 Political Theory**

STAFF/TR/2:40-4:00PM

## Spring 2026

### **PG 111 Power & American Politics**

B. Mack/MWF/10-10:50AM

### **PG 113 Dem, Dictatorships, & Pol. Change**

J. Franklin/TR/1:10PM-2:30PM

### **PG 261 Amer. Politics & Mass Media**

B. Mack/MWF/11-11:50AM

### **PG 279 Conduct of Political Inquiry**

F. Nestor/TR/2:40PM-4PM

### **PG 280 Environmental Pol & Policy**

F. Nestor/TR/1:10PM-2:30PM

### **PG 300 39 African American Politics**

B. Mack/TR/1:10PM 2:30PM

### **PG 348 Latin American Politics**

J. Franklin/TR/10-11:50AM

### **PG 349 East Asian Politics**

J. Choi/MWF/2:10-3:00PM

### **PG 360 International Politics**

J. Choi/MWF/11-11:50AM

### **PG 361 American Foreign Policy**

J. Franklin/TR/2:40-4PM

### **PG 372 Political Theory**

A. Biser/MW/2:10-4:00PM

### **PG 499 B Senior Seminar - Int'l. Relations**

J. Choi/WED/6:30PM-9:00PM

### **PG 499 D Senior Seminar: Amer. Politics**

F. Nestor/TR/10-11:50AM



PG MAJOR COURSE CATALOG



EAST ASIAN STUDIES COURSE CATALOG



INTERNATIONAL STUDIES MAJOR COURSE CATALOG



PRE-LAW MAJOR COURSE CATALOG







## Monthly PG Luncheons

This spring has been full of the monthly lunch and learns. We talked about fall courses and looking at your schedule for the whole academic year. We celebrated Dr. Mack receiving the news of tenure. The department also honored Dr. Esler and his 34 years at OWU with a student luncheon, "Parting Words of Wisdom" by Dr. Esler.



## Benjamin F. Marsh Lecture On Public Affairs



The Department of Politics and Government was honored to host Dr. Nadia Kim, Professor of Sociology at Texas A & M 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.

Following the lecture on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 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.

We extend our gratitude to Dr. Nadia Kim for sharing her groundbreaking work and inspiring us to think critically about environmental justice.

# 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 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 Luttman, Michael Ostertag, Camilee 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!



# 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.

ON AND OFF CAMPUS OPPORTUNITIES...

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## 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](mailto: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 ([jiychoi@owu.edu](mailto:jiychoi@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 Dr. Esler for coaching this team!

## Model UN

OWU Model UN club meets every other week to discuss international issues and practice a Model UN conference. In April, students will be attending the Model UN conference at William & Mary College in Williamsburg, Virginia. Please contact the president of the club, Anna Haines ([arhaines@owu.edu](mailto:arhaines@owu.edu)) or an advisor Prof. Ji Young Choi ([jychoi@owu.edu](mailto:jychoi@owu.edu)) for more info on OWU Model UN club.

### Arneson Institute



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

ON AND OFF CAMPUS OPPORTUNITIES...





## 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

