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1) Message from Section President

Sherri L. Wallace, University of Louisville

Dear Colleagues:

It is my pleasure to bring you greetings on behalf of the newly elected Political Science Education Section Executive Committee (Term: 09.01.2015 to 08.31.2017):

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We warmly welcome our new officers, Bobby Gentry and Terry Gilmour, as we gratefully acknowledge the years of dedicated service of our immediate past officers: Karen Kedrowski (Winthrop University), Quentin Kidd (Christopher Newport University), Fletcher McClellan (Elizabethtown College), Mary McHugh (Merrimack College) and Erin Richards (Cascadia Community College). I am extremely proud to serve as the president of this organized Section. I follow many estimable leaders. Thank you kindly for giving me this opportunity to serve you.

We remain indebted to **Maureen Feeley** (University of California, San Diego) for her genuine dedication in serving as the editor of our newsletter, *The Political Science Educator* (PSE), a valuable resource for the Section. She has agreed to continue in this capacity. We thank you!

At the business meeting, the Section received and the membership voted to approve the proposal to transfer sponsorship of the *Journal of Political Science Education* (JPSE) to APSA. We extend our deep appreciation to the **entire editorial team**, led by **Kerstin Hamann** (University of Florida), for the years of selfless dedication and tireless commitment to maintaining the high level of scholarship that made the journal visible and desired by APSA as a discipline-wide publication venue. THANKS AGAIN TO ALL!

In addition, we are sincerely grateful to the immediate past-president, **Renée Van Vechten** (University of Redlands), who kept members abreast and presented the evidence for making such a transformative decision. Her enthusiastic leadership—along with the wisdom and support of our members—has been vital to the success of this Section. In recognition of the central role a president can play in ensuring a smooth transition, it was proposed at the business meeting to change the Section *Bylaws* to expand the membership of the Executive Committee to include the past president as *ex officio*. This necessary adjustment will allow the Executive Committee, during transitions in leadership, to maintain continuity and retain institutional memory. The members present at the business meeting were receptive to this idea. Thus, the Executive Committee will ask for your comments via APSAConnect before formally approving it. Consequently, I have asked Renée to serve as the Executive Committee's JPSE transition liaison due to her integral involvement with this action.

The Section is growing as evidenced by the increase in the number of awards. This year, **three awards** were given for the Best APSA Conference Paper, "The Internship Supervisor and Experiential Learning" to co-recipients **Jeffrey K. Sosland** (American University) and **Diane J. Lowenthal** (American University); the Craig L. Brians Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research & Mentorship to **Tricia Mulligan** (Iona College); and the Lifetime Achievement Award to **John C. Berg** (Suffolk University), our well-deserving colleague and avid promoter/supporter of the PSE since its inception.

Moving forward, we encourage you to remember to register to attend the 2016 APSA Teaching and Learning Conference to be held in Portland, Oregon from February 12 – 14, 2016 [www.apsanet.org/tlc]. As you know, this conference grew out our Section efforts. We must continue to support it as we continue to seek out new initiatives that will increase membership and visibility both within APSA and among our sister associations/regional conferences. We have the unique opportunity to partner with the Western Political Science Association (WPSA) to sponsor a "Teaching and Learning Political Science" Conference-within-a-Conference at the WPSA annual meeting on Saturday, April 4, 2016 from 8:00 to 3:00 p.m. This initiative has been in the works and may become a model for other association meetings. **Renée Van Vechten** (University of Redlands) and **John Forren** (Miami University) will serve as the co-chairs/organizers. They will report to us at our next Section business meeting.

Finally, the Executive Committee will teleconference soon to designate a vicepresident to round out the Council, select members to serve on our various Section committees, and move ahead on business at hand. We (I) welcome your active comments and suggestions at any time.

Respectfully yours,

Sherri L. Wallace, President
Political Science Education Section

The Teacher-Scholar Column

2) Making Time for Research at a Teaching Institution

Elizabeth A. Bennion, Indiana University South Bend, ebennion@iusb.edu

I recently participated in a roundtable on the topic of balancing teaching and research. Here are some reflections on the topic that I hope will be helpful to those struggling to make time for their research while juggling a heavy teaching load.

(1) **Set aside time for your research.** Block off research time, whether that means an hour or two each day, two afternoons per week, or some other schedule that works for you. Schedule this time as you would any other meeting. Don't wait for inspiration to strike. Gather that data, review that literature, or get something down on paper during the allotted time. Do not let other responsibilities encroach on this time unless a true emergency arises. Consider putting a notice on your closed office door during your research time, letting people know that you are unavailable and letting them know when you will be available again.

(2) **Set goals and deadlines.** It's hard for many faculty members at teaching institutions to block off time for research because of the large volume of time required for teaching and service. It's easy to prioritize what's immediate and to put off any projects with flexible deadlines. To avoid falling into the trap of "putting off" your research forever, it's important to set self-imposed deadlines. Conference papers are a good way to create firm deadlines to complete and present your research. Ideally, you should have a publication venue in mind while writing your conference papers so that you can prepare all materials to the journal's specifications, saving time as you transition from conference paper to journal manuscript. If conferences are not in your budget, consider forming a faculty writing group and presenting your research to each other monthly, with a different person scheduled to present each month.

(3) **Bring your research into your classroom**. Enhance your teaching by providing examples from your own research. This will help students to understand how to support claims with evidence, how to develop a research project, and how to craft a hypothesis and test it using the scientific method. Students should understand how new knowledge is constructed and what makes the study of politics and government a social science. This approach to balancing teaching and research won't give you more time for research, but providing clear explanations of the research process strengthens both teaching and research.

(4) **Bring your classroom into your research.** If your institution recognizes the scholarship of teaching and learning as a form of scholarship, or your situation gives you flexibility to do research that counts toward teaching excellence, consider expanding your research agenda to include pedagogy research. This is an excellent way to use your research skills to improve your teaching while also publishing work that helps other teacher-scholars to improve their teaching and maximize student learning outcomes at many institutions.

(5) **Employ a research assistant**. Hiring a research assistant or supervising a for-credit independent study is an excellent mentoring

opportunity. Work-study makes this an affordable option for many faculty members, including those without graduate students. Do not underestimate the value of a hardworking undergraduate student. Students can be used to update spreadsheets for large-N and multi-site research projects, to conduct literature reviews, to code data or provide a second coder to assure inter-coder reliability. There are many mutually beneficial ways to work with a research assistant. If your RA is particularly useful, consider co-authoring the final manuscript.

(6) **Create a student research team.** Faculty can form their own research teams and run these teams as for-credit research seminars. This could be a topical seminar designed to tackle a large research project or an applied research project supporting the scholarship of engagement. Whether hosting a weekly news program, running a service-learning program, or conducting needs assessments for local organizations, a student research team can prove to be invaluable.

(7) **Identify faculty collaborators.** Don't under-estimate the value of co-authors and collaborators. Collaborators can bring different skill sets to the table and provide accountability for continued progress. Working with editors and co-authors provides an opportunity for regular feedback and encouragement. Use conferences to network with people who share your research interests. These are people who can become co-authors, co-editors, or collaborators on future research projects. It's always easier to stay on schedule when you have a co-author or editor asking about progress.

(8) **Avoid perfectionism.** Give yourself permission to prioritize different things at different times. Perhaps you had to focus on teaching and service this semester. That's okay. Figure out a way to re-double your scholarly efforts next semester or during "breaks" from teaching. Perhaps you had an unusually high number of personal demands on your time this semester. It's okay. Ideally, a faculty member's career is long. Don't expect to be the best teacher, best researcher, and most active public servant on campus at every stage of your career. There may be times when you have to prioritize teaching, research, or administration, at the expense of other areas.

(9) **Prioritize based on institutional requirements.** This advice above is fine for tenured professors, but tenure-track professors should beware. Know the standards by which you will be evaluated and be sure to meet them. If you are behind schedule with your research, you'll need to block off specific times for course prep and turn down extra service opportunities. Stick to the time allotted rather than allowing your course prep to fill the entirety of your workday.

(10) **Don't confuse prep time with teaching effectiveness.** Remember, the person who does the work does the learning. Consider ways to reduce your prep time while maximizing student time on task and learning. Sometimes the more material a professor prepares, the less time there is for active learning. Simply delivering content is not the same as teaching effectively. If you find yourself spending all of your time developing lectures, consider rethinking your teaching strategy. Your students will likely learn more, and you'll finally have time to finish that article you've been meaning to write.

Featured Essays

3) Can Building Rapport with Students Improve Online Retention?

Rebecca A. Glazier, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, raglazier@ualr.edu

Online education is increasingly part of the higher education picture in the United States. Yet, retention in online courses remains a serious concern. I have encountered this problem in my own online classes, where the percent of students earning Ds, Fs, or withdrawing from the course (a measure known as the DFW rate) is about 12% higher, compared to my in-person classes. Higher online attrition is concerning not only because it indicates we are not educating our students, but also because of potential lost revenue in both the short and long term. Increasingly, states are allocating higher education funding based on performance indicators such as course completion and time to degree.

What is causing higher online attrition rates and what can faculty do about it? There are a number of explanations in the literature, falling into three main categories: student characteristics, environmental factors, and course and instructor characteristics. Student characteristics include demographics as well as academic preparation indicators, like GPA and SAT scores. Not surprisingly, students who have higher GPAs are less likely to earn Ds and Fs or to withdraw. One reason online students do end up withdrawing is because of external life circumstances, like work pressures, family concerns, or financial aid complications. Short of preventing at-risk students from enrolling in online classes, there is not much faculty members can do about either student characteristics or environmental factors. On the other hand, faculty do have control over how they teach their online classes.

Online learning environments pose some inherent challenges to building relationships between faculty and students. Without in-person contact, students may find it easy to forget about and not prioritize online classes. How can faculty members bridge this gap and establish rapport with the students in their online classes? In my online classes, I use three main strategies: humanizing the instructor, providing detailed feedback on assignments, and making personal contact with the students. First, I try to build rapport by presenting myself as a friendly and accessible professor. I regularly use video, political music, humor, and satire.

Second, I attempt to build rapport with students by providing extensive feedback on assignments, including using Adobe Acrobat Pro to markup research papers in red electronic pen. I also engage with students on the discussion board regularly and call them by name in my responses to their posts. Finally, I try to build rapport with students through personal email contact, including email reminders for major assignments, and emails to check in around midterm time. These rapport-building efforts can be time consuming. Do they make a difference in online student retention?

I presented the results of an online rapport-building teaching experiment at the American Political Science Association annual conference in San Francisco in September. The results demonstrate that the DFW rate in online classes taught with rapport is a significant 13% lower than in online classes taught without rapport. Thus, teaching with rapport essentially eliminates the negative effect of teaching online, bringing the DFW rate back down to in-person levels. I also presented the results of multivariate models that utilize data collected from 590 students over 6 years. These results indicate that rapport is a significant predictor of reduced DFW rates and higher final course grades. Qualitative student evaluation data indicate that the students in the rapport condition feel like the instructor cares about them more. This perception translates into measurably better outcomes for students. Rapport-building thus provides a relatively low-cost method to improve online student retention and leads to significant improvements in student success, without additional budget requests, policy revisions, or any committee meetings at all. While the factors that contribute to online student success are complex, rapport-building is one method instructors can easily adopt right away to see a real impact in their online classrooms.

4) AFTERSHOCK: Designing an Educational Board Game

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After the earthquake that devastated the capital, aid was slow to reach the slums of District 3. Poor coordination resulted in duplication of effort in some areas, and shortages of essential aid supplies in others. The port and airport remained severely damaged, creating transportation bottlenecks. The latest reports suggested a cholera outbreak too. It was no surprise that social unrest was growing.

The vignette above is drawn from *AFTERSHOCK: A Humanitarian Crisis Game*. *AFTERSHOCK* was developed for classroom use to highlight the challenges of multilateral coordination in the context of a natural disasters or complex humanitarian emergencies. The game has spread well beyond its initial use at McGill University, and has been taken adopted for professional training of aid workers, peacekeeping personnel, and military officers. This article briefly describes the genesis of the project, the development and production of the game, and some thoughts about using it in the classroom.

The Origins of AFTERSHOCK

Many of ideas behind *AFTERSHOCK* originated at the 2012 Connections interdisciplinary wargaming conference.[1] At that meeting, a "game lab" challenged subject matter experts and national security professionals to brainstorm how they might model humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HADR) operations in an educational game. Among the key issues to emerge were the need to design a cooperative game with asymmetric player goals and capacities so as to generate some of the inherent challenges of inter-agency cooperation; the importance of issues such as needs assessment, aid logistics, prioritization, and material and human resource constraints; and the imperative of making the game quick to learn and highly engaging.

In subsequently developing these ideas into *AFTERSHOCK*, I chose to build the game around a combination of locational game boards (districts, transportation hubs, coordination meetings) and a card-driven game mechanic. Card-driven games have the advantage that game effects can be implemented directly from a card when drawn, rather than requiring players to master the full rules before play. They also allow a designer to include a variety of teachable moments on the cards themselves. In *AFTERSHOCK*, various "coordination cards," "at-risk cards", and "event cards" address everything from the risk of epidemic disease to adverse weather, malnutrition, local self-help, strategic planning, staff burn-out, corruption, squatters and internal displacement, and, of course, the risk of aftershocks too.

Although initial Connections game lab had focused exclusively on the 2010 Haiti earthquake, my game is set in a fictional country. This allowed me to include a wider variety of challenges than would be the case if it were tied to a particular time and place. Four sets of actors are represented in the game: the government of "Carana," the United Nations, a "Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Task Force" of foreign military contingents, and the NGO community. Each of these actors can be played individually or by small teams.

Once an initial design had been sketched out and a prototype produced (using little more than cardstock, a printer, and a pair of scissors), the game was ready for play testing.

[1] Connections Wargaming Conference, http://connections-wargaming.com

Fortunately, university students are enthusiastic gamers, and I was not short of volunteers. I integrated *AFTERSHOCK* into my own POLI 450/650 course on peace building, and posted a print-and-play beta version on the Passim website. Through Passim, the game was also used in the classroom by Professor Jeremy Wells at Texas State University - San Marcos, and by the staff of the *Centro Conjunto para Operaciones de Paz de Chile* (Chilean Joint Peace Operations Center).

From Playtest to Production

Given student enthusiasm for the game and interest from colleagues and humanitarian professionals outside McGill, I next decided to publish it in limited numbers. Thomas Fisher, a Montreal-based game design consultant helped (*pro bono*) in developing a professional-looking version of all of the game materials. UN agencies offered free use of their photo archives. We decided to produce the game via The Game Crafter, a company specializing in high quality print-on-demand production and sale of user-provided game designs. This eliminated any financial risk on our part: we simply uploaded the materials to The Game Crafter, and whoever wishes to purchase the boxed game (including all cards, playing mats, rules, briefings, and game pieces) can simply go to their online shop and order a copy.[2] All profits are donated to UN humanitarian agencies.

Since its publication, *AFTERSHOCK* has been adopted for HADR training by the Canadian Humanitarian and Disaster Response Training Program (CHDRTP), National Defense University, and units of the US Army Reserve. Student feedback has been very positive: 90% of McGill students and 87% of CHDRTP participants found the game enjoyable or very enjoyable; 97% of McGill and 96% of CHDRTP participants found it illustrated HADR themes well or very well; and 94% of McGill and 93% of CHDRTP participants believed it should be used in future courses on the topic.[3]

Thoughts on Classroom Use

AFTERSHOCK works best as a timed game lasting exactly two hours, with 4-12 participants per game (8 being ideal). Facilitated games are better than those where students play without assistance, since facilitation allows participants to focus on game play rather than rules mastery, and the facilitator can link game events to real-life events and challenges as play progresses. In large classes I have either run multiple simultaneous games using student facilitators to assist, or held an optional tournament among competing teams for bonus grades over several weeks, outside class hours. Experience suggests that players should only be given a short overview of the game, and then thrown straight into it: the initial confusion echoes that of a real crisis, there is less concern with memorizing rules, and almost everyone learns game play quickly. Perhaps most important of all—and as with all educational simulations and games—learning outcomes are enhanced if time is set aside for discussing and debriefing game outcomes.

Film Review

5) *Getting to the Point: Documentary Film Excerpt to Use in Your Classroom*

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Documentary films are a valuable instructional technique in the classroom. More visual learners can thrive off the differentiated methods of instruction. However, a full film may take up too much class time. Furthermore, shorter segments can sometimes do even better than whole films in shoring up a concept because a particular segment can focus just on the specific concept in reference.

[2] "AFTERSHOCK," The Game Crafter, https://www.thegamecrafter.com/games/aftershock

[3] "AFTERSHOCK" *PAXsims blog*, https://paxsims.wordpress.com/aftershock/

Below I outline three documentary films whose excerpts I felt engaged students and were rated highly in an optional student survey. All segments have been presented in my Introductory US Government & Politics course. To assist in understanding, students were given a handout that listed questions to be answered while watching.

(1) *A Class Apart,* from American Experience, produced by Carlos Sandoval and Peter Miller (PBS). *Films On Demand.*
Latino Civil Rights Movement
Equal Protection

The beginning of this film serves as an introduction to a history of discrimination against Latinos in America. It shows how there was racist segregation in Texas. Even more shocking, the film documents how returning Latino WWII veterans faced the same discrimination, including a funeral home's refusal to intern the body of a Latino-American killed in action. Another useful segment is a recapitulation of the first major Supreme Court case on Latino rights, *Hernandez v. Texas* because it helps to explain the impact of Equal Protection. The justices' questions show a large lack of knowledge about Mexican-Americans, but they also showed a willingness to learn by providing Hernandez' lawyer with additional time (a very rare action). The film concludes with the justices determining that Latinos are a separate group of people and that they deserve trials by 'their' peers. Students understood how this was related to equal protection since a fair jury is more likely to provide just decisions. As a result, one student focused his final project on the somewhat fairer Texas court system since *Hernandez*.

(2) *Constitution USA,* with Peter Sagal, Episode I: "A More Perfect Union", produced by Stephen Ives (PBS).
http://www.pbs.org/tpt/constitution-usa-peter-sagal/watch/a-more-perfect-union/
Federalism
Interstate Commerce

Sagal, best known for hosting the NPR news game show, *Wait, Wait Don't Tell Me*, provides excellent explanations of many components of the Constitution through entertaining examples. A real hit with the students was his interview of a cannabis dispensary owner in California. That gentleman's explanation of how he could be a legitimate businessman under state law and a potential felon federally, at the same time, led to more than a few 'aha' moments. Students began to recognize other cases of federalism. The segment following the interview discusses the limits of the Interstate Commerce Clause. Sagal headed up to meet a Montanan who was attempting to build a gun that would only include components built in his state in order to avoid federal regulation. This led to some great discussions about how far the clause has been used and when limits have been placed on it (i.e. *US v. Lopez*). Oh and did I mentioned that he wanted to give his Montana-made rifles to children? Therefore, it was also noted that Montana, even if it wanted to, was not free to add its own local restrictions due to *McDonald v. Chicago*. The series is four parts, and watching the whole series would have been too long. But these two segments at the beginning of this episode are well worth the class time.

(3) *Israel and the Arabs: Elusive Peace,* Episode I: "Clinton (1999-2000)", produced by Norma Percy (BBC/PBS). *Films On Demand.*
Foreign Policy
Middle East Politics

This documentary tells the story of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Territories in the late 1990s and 2000s. With interviews including almost all the key negotiators, the film puts a human face on foreign policy. Start this fly-on-the-wall film at around 11 minutes into the "Clinton (1999-2000)" episode. This is when the negotiations begin. At nearly 40 minutes this is my longest segment, but there are just so many great moments: politicians fighting to go first into a doorway, President Clinton telling a few little white lies to move forward negotiations, Secretary Albright physically stopping Arafat's car from leaving negotiations, and the French playing spoiler. This paralleled well into class discussions of recent negotiations such as the G5+1 negotiations with Iran and large trade deals (i.e. Trans-Pacific Partnership). I have played this segment in both my introductory course and in my Middle East Politics course and received positive responses in all the classes.

Bibliographies:

6) *Super Simulations: Trailblazing Ideas for Your Courses*

Elizabeth A. Bennion, ebennion@iusb.edu
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Simulations offer political science students an exciting active learning opportunity. However, it can be difficult to structure a simulation environment to meet specific educational goals. Fortunately, many teacher-scholars have created successful simulations and have shared their experiences, assessments, and advice in the *Journal of Political Science Education*. This bibliography, sorted by author last name and subfield, is designed to help *PSE* readers quickly find the models and advice that will work best in their own classes.

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<u>COMPARATIVE POLITICS:</u>

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As the above bibliography demonstrates, simulations can be used to teach a wide range of topics across diverse subfields. We hope this listing inspires you to learn more and to explore these models with your students.

Announcements

- ***Alison Millett McCartney*** was promoted to Full Professor and was awarded the "Outstanding Service-Learning Faculty Award" at Towson University. Congratulations, Alison!
- Craig L. Brians Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research & Mentorship; awarded by PSE Section; deadline: **Nov. 15, 2015.** For details see: http://www.apsanet.org/section29
- The annual ***APSA Teaching and Learning Conference will be held February 12 – 14, 2016 in Portland,* Oregon:** www.apsanet.org/tlc. We hope to see many of you there!

Archived issues of *The Political Science Educator* can be found here:
http://community.apsanet.org/TeachingCivicEngagement/additionalteachingresources/new-item

Please send any article submissions or announcements for future newsletters to Maureen Feeley at mfeeley@ucsd.edu. Submission deadlines are **October 1** for the **Summer/Fall newsletter**, and **April 1** for the **Winter/Spring newsletter**. Contributions may be as brief as 200 – 500 hundred words, but should not exceed approximately 1000 words, and should use APSA citation style. Please include "**PS Educator submission**" in the subject line of your email. Thank you!

Subscription is free to members of the APSA Section on Political Science Education
All address corrections should be sent directly to APSA.

Maureen Feeley, Newsletter Editor.