



Brown University  
Department of Political Science  
Senior Thesis Presentations

May 4, 2016

Morning Session: 9:00-12:00

Afternoon Session 3:00-6:00

Joukowsky Forum

Watson Institute

***ÁINE C. DOYLE: Warming to Global Warming: Bold Nebraska, Keystone XL, and the Importance of Issue Frames for Climate Change Mobilization***

This thesis hypothesizes that individuals are more likely to be politically engaged by framings of climate change that are resonant with their values and experiences than by those which are not. To test this hypothesis, this thesis investigates the case of Nebraskan opposition to the proposed Keystone XL pipeline, conducting content analysis on over 1500 primary sources to do so. The findings of this investigation suggest that much of the Nebraskan opposition to Keystone XL was caused by efforts by a local actor to re-frame the issue in a manner that resonated with Nebraskans, supporting the thesis' hypothesis.

*Advisor: Jordan Branch, Political Science*

*Reader: Matthew Hodgetts, PhD Candidate*

**JANA C. FOXE: *A Shock to the System: An Analysis of the Impact of Austerity Measures on Party System Stability in Europe***

This thesis examines the impact of externally-imposed austerity measures on party system stability in three European countries: Portugal, Ireland and Greece. I employ quantitative indicators of party system stability to design a Stability Index, and use process tracing to establish causation. I find that stability scores have decreased since implementing austerity policies. Further, I find that the external implementation of austerity does decrease voter turnout and increase electoral volatility, though anti-establishment sentiment and the polarization of the party system are affected by either internal or external austerity. I note that my findings symbolize declining democratic legitimacy in the European Union.

*Advisor: Mark Blyth, Political Science*  
*Reader: Robert Blair, Political Science*

**FLORENE FRENOT: *Traditional Media, Social Media, and Presidential Campaigns: Evaluating the Agenda-Setting Influence of Mass Media in Politics***

This thesis raised two questions. The first question, does traditional media's presidential debates impact campaign speeches of candidates and if the increase use of social media in the 2012 election lessens television networks influence on the campaign. The second question is whether individual's use of social media impacts the campaign agenda of candidates. If so, could social media broadly impact political agenda setting, government action, and democracy in the U.S.? The results show that traditional media impacts candidates' campaign speeches and it does not lessen in 2012. Additionally, social media in conjunction with traditional media affect candidates' campaign speeches.

*Advisor: Richard Arenberg, Political Science*  
*Reader: Wendy Schiller, Political Science*

**JASON S. GINSBERG: *Law and War: Armed Non-State Actors and their Engagement with the Norms of International Humanitarian Law***

One hundred and fifty years ago, the international community convened to initiate a project in international humanitarian law and regulate the brutal excesses of battle. Over the past century, however, the nature of warfare has changed. Rather than fought between states, conflict today is increasingly fought beneath them; civil wars and terror attacks have become emblematic of modern conflict. With this changing dynamic, this thesis examines how armed actors interact with the law originally crafted for states. Analyzing primary documents, I compare the behavior of Hamas and the FARC-EP to better understand what motivates engagement with the laws of war.

*Advisor: Nina Tannenwald, Political Science*  
*Reader: Nicholas Miller, Political Science*

**BONNIE HENRY: “We cannot change the past, but we can...build a future without fear”: *The Relationship Between Elite Political Rhetoric and Public Opinion in the Case of U.S. Humanitarian Intervention***

Since the adoption of the U.N. Genocide Convention in 1948, the United States has struggled to live up to its expressed commitment to preventing and combatting genocide. Key to facilitating this failure is the rhetoric of political elites. A steady normative development regarding humanitarian intervention has been accompanied by an inconsistent development of political will or operational capacities. This thesis attempts to explicate the relationship between national interests, elite rhetorical framings, and U.S. public opinion. U.S. political elites have the power to influence public opinion in favor of or against humanitarian intervention—but they do not act in a vacuum.

*Advisor: Richard Arenberg, Political Science*  
*Reader: Elena Shih, American Studies*

**MIRIAM E. HINTHORN: *Power to the Personalist: Identifying Conditions for Takeover by the Most Dangerous Type of Dictator***

Political scientists agree that “personalist” dictators make riskier or more aggressive policy choices in than other types of dictators. But what makes some countries more vulnerable to takeover by this sort of a leader than others? In this thesis, using bivariate and multivariate analysis, I identify possible explanations for personalist dictatorship in over 150 countries between 1946 and 2010. I find that low national income and irregular power transitions are statistically correlated with personalism. More surprisingly, I find that within my dataset, young democratic countries have a higher probability of transitioning from non-personalist to personalist governance than their autocratic counterparts.

*Advisor: Jeff Colgan, Political Science*

*Reader: Rebecca Weitz-Shapiro, Political Science*

**ERIN I. IYIGUN: *United or Divided: An Analysis of Political and Religious Authority in Islamic Advice Literature***

The relationship between religious authority and political authority has evolved in interesting and unique ways in Islamic societies. This thesis employs both close textual analysis and computational text analysis of Islamic advice literature in an attempt to investigate and illuminate that relationship. I find that the prevalence of this topic as well as the prevalence of the two opposed viewpoints within the topic vary over time, perhaps in tandem with broader historical events. I also find that the two opposed viewpoints within the topic of authority are substitutes for one another.

*Advisor: Alex Gourevitch, Political Science*

*Reader: Andrew Foster, Economics*

**STELLA S. KIM: *Ideology and Hegemony in Communist States: A Comparative Study of Adaptive and Inflexible Regime Resilience***

Why did communism survive in Cuba, Laos, North Korea, and Vietnam even after the loss of the Soviet Union as their principal economic benefactor? This thesis comparatively examines the phenomenon of regime resilience. I argue that, in these four cases, strong indigenous strands of political ideology allowed the communist regimes to remain in power. In Laos and Vietnam, resilience has taken on an adaptive character, whereas in Cuba and North Korea, it has taken on an inflexible one. My findings suggest that political reform or transition is unlikely to occur in regimes of either kind of resilience.

*Advisor: Alex Gourevitch, Political Science*

*Reader: James McClain, History*

**ALEXANDER G. LLOYD GEORGE: *The Tell-Take Heart: Worrying Conclusions About Uncertain Democracies in Central-Eastern Europe***

Many recent analyses of democracy have focused on the global “democratic recession,” with a special emphasis on alternatives to liberal democracy in the Western model. One of the principal battlegrounds for this tension is post-communist Central-Eastern Europe. This thesis examines the democratic trajectories of Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia, and finds that the Czech Republic is the most successful democratizer, while Slovakia has maintained a lower level of democracy, and Hungary has experienced substantial backsliding in recent years. I assess a number of causal hypotheses for this development, and find that the end of European Union accession conditionality and the deleterious effects of the financial crisis are among the strongest explanations.

*Advisor: Linda Cook, Political Science*

*Readers: Rebecca Weitz-Shapiro, Political Science*

**ANNA PIEROBON: *Governing the Crisis: How Divided Governance in the European Union is Worsening the 2010s Refugee Crisis: The Italian Case***

This thesis seeks to understand the reasons why the European Union has been unable to respond effectively to the current refugee crisis. By following the history of the creation of governance structures around asylum provision in both the EU and Italy in combination with what is happening in Europe today, through process tracing methods this thesis highlights the harmful effects of divided governance over the provision of international protection within Europe as the key reason why the EU and its member states have been unable to effectively provide asylum to individuals in need. This thesis concludes by recognizing that the European refugee crisis cannot be solved only through refugee specific policies and initiatives, but that the EU and its member states must make further and deeper changes to their governance mechanism more generally in a way that strengthens the principles of political unification set by the Lisbon Treaty.

*Advisor: Nina Tannenwald, Political Science*

*Reader: Nicola Perugini, Post-Doctoral Fellow, Italian and Middle-East Studies*

**LEAH L. PIERSON: *Socioeconomic Inequality and the Right to Health***

The right to health has often been interpreted as a right to healthcare. In my thesis, I derive a broader right to health from the works of Thomas Hobbes and John Rawls, and argue that this right compels states to uphold social and economic circumstances compatible with health. I then examine how high levels of subnational socioeconomic inequality undermine health, and conclude that extreme inequality is consequently at odds with the right to health. Finally, I argue that the human right to health should supplement analogous constitutional rights, and show that global inequality similarly prevents the realization of this right.

*Advisor: John Tomasi, Political Science*

*Reader: Katherine Mason, Anthropology*

*Reader: Susan Moffitt, Political Science*

*Independent Concentration in Human Rights*

**TORI SASAKI: *Prosecuting Rape: The International Spread of the Sexual Violence Prosecution Norm***

This thesis aims to analyze the spread of the prosecution of sexual violence in conflict in international tribunals and courts and the role of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in this process. I explain how the Tribunal has been instrumental in transforming rape and other sexual violence into internationally recognized crimes for which prosecution is a necessary recourse, and how this change has manifested itself at subsequent international courts and tribunals. I focus on how legal officials spread the norm in an expanded form of jurisprudential dialogue, and how states and others have tapped into this dialogue.

*Advisor: Nina Tannenwald, Political Science*

*Reader: Sanne Verschuren, Political Science PhD Candidate*

**LYALL A. STUART: *National Fences or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Sovereignty***

This paper examines the question of whether political demarcations between political communities are legitimate manifestations of political difference. My goal is to respond to cosmopolitan conceptions of global politics and argue that these understandings of the globe ignore meaningful distinctions between communities and ultimately are damaging to the political autonomy of global persons. I attempt to reconcile my defense of sovereign legitimacy and political demarcations with the tenets of liberal democratic theories and argue that a commitment to liberal democratic values ought entail a respect for sovereignty. I look at two strands of cosmopolitan thought: attempts to ground cosmopolitanism in democratic theory, and attempts to justify cosmopolitanism through appeals to external values such as moral equality or global justice. I argue with reference to Carl Schmitt's theories that political identities are meaningful, and that ensuring the political self-determination of minority political identities requires sovereign authority and the capacity for them to demarcate their own political spaces.

*Advisor: John Tomasi, Political Science*

*Reader: Andre Willis, Religious Studies*

**LAUREN R. SUKIN: *The Origins of Strategy: Examining the Development of US Nuclear Strategy, 1992-2016***

What drives U.S. decision-making on nuclear strategy? This thesis examines the effects of four hypotheses about foreign policy creation across three case studies, each of which assesses post-Cold War nuclear strategy changes. Evidence from the Obama, Bush Jr. and Clinton administrations reveals that bureaucratic politics underlie nuclear strategy developments. That is, nuclear policy results from negotiations between the military and civilian political bureaucracies; changes only occur when civilian political leaders engage in sustained campaigns to override military preferences. This lesson has significant implications for understanding the nuclear strategy changes that will come next, and how they will be put in place.

*Advisor: Nicholas Miller, Political Science*

*Reader: Nina Tannenwald, Political Science*

**JESSE A. WEIL: *Theater of the Oppressed: Political Theater in the Islamic Republic of Iran***

In Iran, theater is particularly powerful given both its longstanding cultural importance and the current sociopolitical climate. Despite the regime's best efforts to use theater to promote its agenda, Iranian theater remains characteristically dissident. The government has bureaucratized contemporary theater production in order to censor material. However, theater artists use a variety of tactics to circumvent moral parameters and restrictions on political opposition in order to covertly broadcast discontent. Folk theater is performed outside of the government's grasp and can thus be more outwardly critical. Such forms have also popularized potent political symbols that have been co-opted by opposition movements.

*Advisor: Alex Gourevitch, Political Science*

*Reader: Stephen Kinzer, Watson Institute of International & Public Affairs*