NEWSLETTER

Fall 2026

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY



A Letter from department chair, Dr. Philip Rocco:

Greetings!

Few experiences are more intellectually exhilarating for me than the beginning of the fall semester at Marquette. An empty campus suddenly teems with students. Once-silent hallways now echo with conversations. When I enter a classroom to teach the first session of a course, there is a sense of unlimited possibility. Even for courses I've taught dozens of times, each semester holds the promise of beginning again, of seeing the same subject matter in a new light, of discovering something altogether new.

Teaching in a political science department during a moment of extreme institutional turbulence, both at home and abroad, adds urgency to this process of discovery. As Pope Leo XIV put it in his encyclical Magnifica Humanitas, "each generation inherits the task of shaping its own era, of guiding history to become a place where the dignity of every person is safeguarded, justice is promoted and fraternity is made possible. Yet every era also runs the risk of creating an inhumane and more unjust world." It is our responsibility, and our privilege, to help our students grapple with the gravity of these tasks as they develop their ability to think, deliberate, evaluate, and imagine a more just and dignified world. Since the world both we and our students confront allows no easy, formulaic answers, the political science classroom is evermore a space for developing the capacity to make sound judgments and engage in debate and dialogue.

As you'll see in this installment of the annual Marquette Political Science Department newsletter, our faculty and students are building the kind of intellectual community that can make the world a better place. Our faculty are doing significant research on the strategies of pro-democracy movements in Southeast Asia, on how to strengthen civil-military relations, and on how to broaden access to essential human needs. Both in and out of the classroom, our students are honing their capacity for reasoned dialogue and decision-making.

Thanks to generous alumni donations over the last year, we have also begun work on a lounge and study space for our students, where serendipitous conversations and discoveries will soon unfold. Marquette alums have also generously shared their stories with us. As you'll see, Marquette graduates are taking on important roles in both the public and private sector at all levels of government .

With your help, I hope we can create even more student research opportunities, internships, and community-based partnerships like the ones you'll read about here.

I hope that you find this newsletter informative, and we certainly welcome any feedback and updates.

Thank you for being part of our story. We would love to hear from you!

KLINGLER
College of Arts & Sciences
MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY

FACULTY AWARDS

Dr. Lowell Barrington

Dr. Lowell Barrington recieved Marquette's 2026 **Teaching Excelence Award** in May. Marquette's Teaching Excellence Awards are the highest honor bestowed upon university faculty members. Recipients are nominated by colleagues and students for demonstrating excellence as teacher-scholars. These awards are supported by grants from the Robert and Mary Gettel Fund, the Stearns Foundation, and Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence G. Haggerty. Each award criterion reads, in part, "In recognition of demonstrated ability to inspire students to see the ideals of the university and to cause them to grow in knowledge and scholarship for the glory of God and the good of others."

Dr. Mark Berlin

Dr. Mark Berlin was awarded the **Way Klingler Fellowship** at the 2026 Marquette Distinguished Scholars Recption in April. Berlin is currently completing a book-length study of the Chicago Police Torture Scandal, a decades-long pattern of abuse in which well over 100 Black men were tortured by Chicago police detectives to extract confessions. Many were wrongfully convicted, and some spent years on death row. The pattern of abuse originated in the early 1970s, but it wasn't until the early 1990s that courts, elected officials and the media in Chicago acted to stop it. In "Torture City: Forced Confessions and Reparations in America's Wrongful Conviction Capital," Berlin analyzes why those institutions failed for so long and what ultimately changed to allow survivors and their advocates to secure unprecedented forms of justice, including a historic reparations ordinance. Supported by the Way Klingler Fellowship, Berlin will devote sustained time to completing the manuscript.

Dr. Julia Azari

Dr. Julia Azari won the **Lawrence G. Haggerty Faculty Award for Excellence in Research** in April. Dr. Julia Azari is a nationally recognized scholar of the American presidency whose work examines how political institutions evolve during periods of conflict, polarization and social change. Her research focuses on how presidents exercise power, communicate authority and respond to moments of instability in American democracy. Over the past decade, Azari has become one of the field's leading voices in American political development, a subfield that studies how political systems, norms and institutions change over time.

Dr. Mai Truong

Dr. Mai Truong received the 2026 **Way Klingler Early Career Award**. Truong's current book project, "The Politics of Blame Attribution: Coalition Formation Between Policy and Pro-Democracy Movements in Southeast Asia," investigates why policy-based movements, such as those focused on land rights, labor conditions or environmental protection, sometimes join forces with pro-democracy activists, and why they often remain fragmented. Focusing on Malaysia and Vietnam, she shows that coalition-building depends in large part on where policy-based activists assign responsibility for policy failures. When grievances are attributed to national governance as opposed to local governance, policy-based movements are more likely to see democratic reform advocated by pro-democracy movements as necessary and to pursue alliances across issue areas. Supported by years of extensive fieldwork in Vietnam and Malaysia, Truong's book combines in-depth interviews with activists and civil society leaders, original survey experiments and cross-national data on opposition coalitions across southeast Asia. The Way Klingler Early Career Award will provide a full semester of dedicated writing time, allowing Truong to prepare the manuscript for submission to a university press.

On saving the census:

"The lesson of the last decade is that Washington alone will not save the census. State and local officials should file comments and join lawsuits. But they must also fund outreach, stand up complete count committees, and start now. Litigation may stop this rule. Only states and cities, working with the organizations their residents trust, can make sure the count survives it."

- Philip Rocco in The New Republic, September 22, 2026

On State Attorneys General as political players:

"These offices are nationalized now. There's just no way around it. The political incentive is not there to be more state-focused. Saying 'I care deeply about the state and its residents' works for the middle, but that's not who turns out."

-Paul Nolette in The Texas Tribune, October 8, 2026

On Trump's slide in the polls:

"What we're kind of seeing is Trump getting into this spiral of being unpopular, being in denial of it, and then doing things that are even more unpopular. And I don't really know where this spiral ends, or where this takes us, or what it looks like after the midterms."

-Julia Azari in The New Republic, Febuary 24, 2026

On quelling threats to public health institutions around the world:

"..a long-term view toward building or strengthening these relationships (between communities and the public health system) may help the public embrace the idea that public health institutions are worth defending."

-Jessica Rich in The Conversation, April 8, 2026

On the Insurrection Act and why it is rarely invoked:

"People from both sides of the political aisle have just kind of accepted as the correct or proper thing to do, and in America, we tend to think that too much power in the hands of one person is not a good thing,

-Pat Sobkowski in TMJ4, January 15, 2026

On the re-emergence of "Pothole Politics":

"It was not manifestos or ideological pamphlets that would win hearts and minds. It was about proving to people that the government could do things that had a sort of broadly shared benefit"

-Philip Rocco in Vox, August 27, 2026

On how the constitutional fragmentation of political power is at risk:

"efforts to consolidate power and concentrate it upward, rather than spread it out among equal and independent parts of government, and ultimately, among the people, amount to an effort to undermine a foundational American value"

-Julia Azari in the Milwaukee Magazine, July 1, 2026

On the issue of housing affordability and zoning exclusion:

"if we want more affordable housing, the first step among many others is to permit it in the first place. The longer we wait to do this, the more those living in poor neighborhoods will pay for our delay."

- Matthew Mleczko in Governing, April 2, 2026

MU Political Science faculty have been quoted or cited in the following media outlets over the past year:

620 WTMJ, The Nation, Boston Globe, Financial Times, WPR, Kansas City Star, PBS Wisconsin, Christian Science Monitor, WUWM, CBC News, The National Review, WPR, ABC News, 620WTMJ, New York Times, C-SPAN, Spectrum News 1, The New Republic, Bloomberg, Daily Journal, VOX, Journal Sentinel, Stateline, The Dispatch, The Independent, CBS 58, Common Dreams, CNN, The Nation, Baltimore Sun, TMJ4, Prism, Arizona Capital Times, Governing, Wisconsin Watch, The Texas Tribune

NEW STUDENT LOUNGE AND STUDY ROOM

Made possible by your generous donations!

Fall 2026



Thanks to many generous donations, Marquette's Political Science Department will soon be opening a new study room and student lounge! Located within the Department, this new study room will serve as a welcoming space for Political Science students to meet, study, research, and collaborate.

Help us to fund more projects like this one, your support is greatly appreciated and will help further enrich Political Science students' academic and community building opportunities!

MARQUETTE CIVIC DIALOGUES PROGRAM

Bridging Divides Through Meaningful Dialogue

Fall 2026

In a time of deep division, where social feeds and headlines often fuel polarization, conversations that foster understanding have never been more important. Marquette University's Civic Dialogues Program is leading the way, empowering students to engage in open, respectful and solution-driven discussions on today's most pressing issues. Real change begins with listening – not to react, but to understand. Our program creates space for students to engage across differences, broaden perspectives and uncover shared solutions to complex societal challenges. By fostering these skills, we're shaping a new generation of leaders who can bridge divides, build trust and inspire action in their communities.







How We Make a Difference

Guided Conversations
We provide structured, respectful discussions on difficult topics, equipping students with critical thinking, active listening and conflict resolution skills.

Broadening Perspectives
We ensure diverse voices are represented and valued, fostering empathy, trust and deeper understanding among students with different lived experiences and backgrounds.

Collective Action
We move beyond discussion, empowering students to turn dialogue into action, shaping policy and driving positive change in their communities.



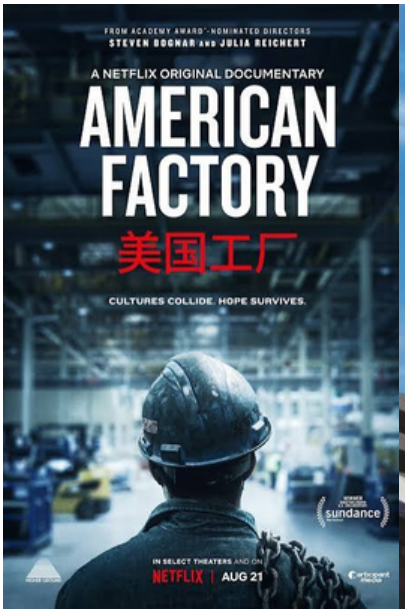


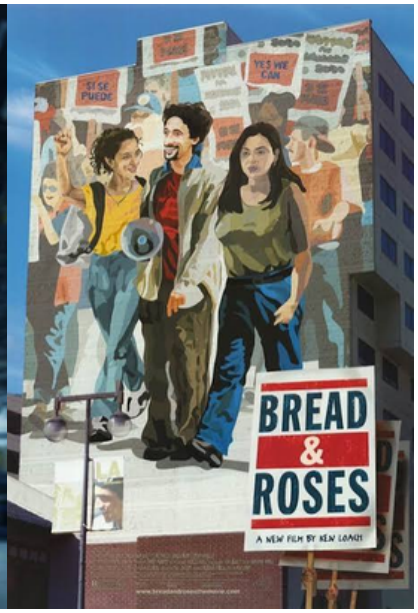
Civic Dialogues Director: Dr. Julia Azari (Professor, Department of Political Science)

MARQUETTE POLITICS & FILM PROGRAM

Understanding Politics Through Cinema

Fall 2026

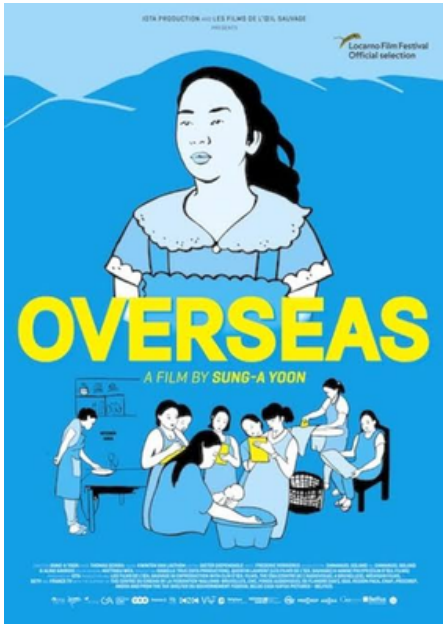


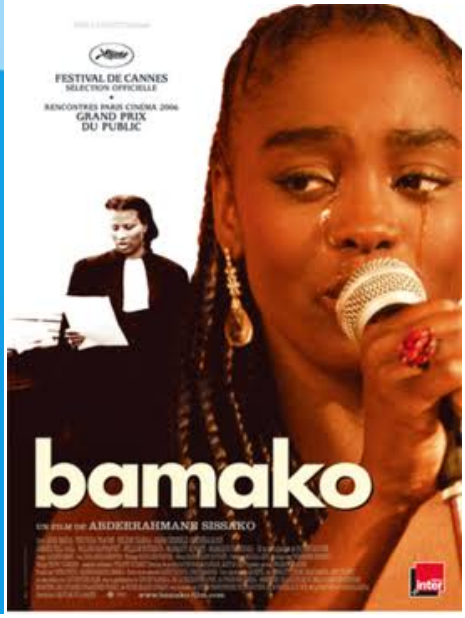


Politics & Film is a film screening series developed by Dr. Brigden and Dr. Kovacikova. Each semester, the series highlights six films – three fictional films and three documentaries – that help students explore a common theme in modern international politics.

This semester, the screenings focused on the global economy, looking at how international markets affect domestic political outcomes. The selected films touched on issues like global supply chains, economic migration, and financial crises, among others.

Next semester, the series will shift its focus to science fiction and how films in this genre use allegory to explore difficult political problems of our time.





Politcs & Film Directors: Dr. Lucia Kovacikova and Dr. Noelle Brigden

LES ASPIN CENTER FOR GOVERNMENT

Providing academic and internship programming focused on the public policy making process

Fall 2026

In the 2026-2027 academic year the Les Aspin Center for Government is continuing its mission to provide a unique opportunity for learning and growth to Marquette students. Current Les Aspin scholars have been focusing on themes of communication, media, and journalism during their time in Washington D.C. Future semesters promise guidance to students in expanding their interests and career goals through internship experience as they continue to develop as leaders, students, and people dedicated to public service.



A Note from Dr. Paul Nolette & Mr. Sam Harshner

The Aspin Center also continued to build on this strength by extending its reach in the broader University. The program has implemented a "theme" system that centers studies in each semester on a specific area of public policy. Upcoming themes include Health, Wellness and Sustainability (Spring 2027), Law and Social Change (Fall 2027), and Sports and Public Policy (Spring 2028).

These themes are designed to make the Aspin Program attractive to students throughout the University, by designing a curriculum that will allow for a robust discussion of aspects of policy directly related to their chosen career paths.The Kleczka Program is now being headed by new Aspin Center Associate Director, Sam Harshner. Sam's unique background includes a decade teaching History and Political Science at Marquette as well as fifteen years of experience in state and federal government.

Among the exciting changes at Kleczka are the development of a wider range of partnering organizations throughout the Milwaukee metro area, and the creation of a new Kleczka "consulting" program that will allow students to contract directly with local governments on short term policy projects. We look forward to another year of growth as the nation celebrates its semi-quincentennial anniversary.

Director of the Les Aspin Center for Government; Paul Nolette, JD, Ph D
Associate Director; Sam Harshner, MA, MPA

DEPARTMENT NEWS

The Department Welcomes Dr. Sarah Rozenblum!

Fall 2026



Dr. Sarah D. Rozenblum is a tenure-track Assistant Professor of Political Science at Marquette University. She holds a dual Ph.D. in Political Science and Public Health from the University of Michigan and was previously a postdoctoral associate at Cornell University's Jeb E. Brooks School of Public Policy. Her research lies at the intersection of U.S. and comparative health policy, political institutions, and public health governance, with a particular focus on how expertise, science, and bureaucratic authority shape policy design and implementation.

Her current work examines U.S. state responses to the federal politicization of expertise during the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccine governance and advisory politics in France, the equity implications of social policy design in the U.S.–especially the Child Tax Credit–and the governance of mosquito surveillance and control in New York State.

She regularly consults for the World Health Organization through the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. Originally from Paris, France, she earned her BA and Master's degrees from Sciences Po Paris, a background that informs the strong comparative perspective she brings to both her research and teaching.

Aidan Marick (BA '21, MA '22)

After graduating with both an MA and BA from Marquette's Accelerated Degree Program in Political Science, Aidan moved to Washington, D.C., where he has worked in several areas of policy making and advocacy. Most recently, Aidan works for the National Electrical Manufacturers Association, where he focuses on energy, grid, and industrial policy to strengthen America's electrical infrastructure and increase domestic production of critical electrical components and products that keep the lights on. Prior to this role, Aidan worked for the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, where he helped conduct congressional investigations focused on consumer protection, transportation safety, and Department of Homeland Security oversight. Aidan's passion for working on national issues in D.C. stems in large part from Marquette's curriculum and its emphasis on cura personalis. For Aidan, Marquette's presence in Washington through the Les Aspin Center, paired with its engaged professors and Political Science curriculum in Milwaukee, creates a unique pathway for students interested in public service and policy.



Xavier Copeland (BA '24)



Xavier is serving as an Intelligence Professional in the Air National Guard, and is now a Senior Business Analyst and Service Liaison with DecisionPoint Corporation, supporting the Defense Casualty Information Processing System (DCIPS) modernization effort. He has essentially become one of the primary faces and points of contact for the initiative, working closely with government stakeholders, technical teams, and senior leadership. His role involves strategic communications, business analysis, and coordinating with representatives across the defense enterprise, including MC&FP, senior Pentagon officials, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, White House staff, and leadership from the various military branches. It has been an incredible opportunity to apply what he studied at Marquette to real-world government operations and national security initiatives. Academically, Xavier completed his Master of Public Administration in February 2026, and is now wrapping up his first term as a Doctoral Student in Strategic Intelligence at American Military University! Between his military service, civilian career, doctoral studies, and raising three little ones, his life has definitely been busy, but incredibly rewarding. Looking back, Xavier says Marquette's Political Science Department gave him a strong foundation in government, policy analysis, international affairs, and critical thinking. Those skills have translated directly into the work he is doing today, especially when navigating complex government initiatives and engaging with senior-level decisionmakers. The mentorship and relationships he developed with faculty have also been just as valuable!

Claire Stanley (BA '22)

Currently, Claire is a MPP-MSW student at the University of Michigan's Ford School of Public Policy and School of Social Work. Her studies focus on community organizing, social welfare policy, and building resilient community networks. Her research at the UM's Poverty Solutions Lab has analyzed and evaluated the effects of Community Violence Intervention (CVI) in Detroit and guaranteed income in Ann Arbor. As a student at Marquette, her interdisciplinary approach to political science, economics, and urban affairs, which was supported by incredible faculty from the College of Arts & Sciences, transformed how she thinks about and reflects on the people, policies, and institutions influencing the social problems faced by our society. Marquette's emphasis on civic engagement, from the Kleczka Program in Milwaukee to the Les Aspin Center on Capitol Hill, illustrated the power of human relationships and inspires her to design person-centered policies that promote human thriving. Claire's time as a Marquette student, including her education and involvement in service organizations, inspires her to be a servant leader whose work is rooted in social justice.



Luis Navarrete (BA '22)



Since graduating from Marquette in 2022, Luis has continued to work in the public and nonprofit sectors. He began his career as an office assistant in the Milwaukee Mayor's Office, supporting mayoral staff. Luis then went on to pursue a Master of Public Affairs and a Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning from the La Follette School of Public Affairs and the Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. While in Madison, Luis contributed to award-winning research projects as a Policy Researcher for the Wisconsin Policy Forum and Downtown Madison, Inc. After graduating from UW, Luis joined the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development as an Economic Analyst, where he supports the growth and development of Minnesota's economy. Marquette University, along with the Burke Scholars Program, inspired him to 'be the difference' he wants to see in the world and to contribute to positive change. The Political Science Department's curriculum provided Luis with the skills to understand our country's political processes. It also taught him about the critical role data plays in democracy and how the political economy both shapes and is shaped by calculative practices. He has been very grateful for his Marquette education!

Attention Political Science & International Affairs Alumni!

Let us know what you are up to!

We love to hear from our graduates. Please help us keep track of all the great things Marquette alumni are doing. Send an email to **poliscialumni@marquette.edu** to tell us about where you work, where you have gone on to further studies, or any other achievements!

Political Science and International Affairs Awards:

Virgil C. Blum, S.J. Award: **Camryn Rajala**

- Awarded to the senior who has displayed the most outstanding academic achievement in Political Science.

James M. Rhodes Political Science Student Citizen Award: **Jasleen Kaur**

- Awarded to the graduating senior in the Department of Political Science who best embodies the commitment both to academic excellence and to service to Marquette University and the broader community.

International Scholar of the Year Award: **Quinn Meyer**

- Awarded to the most outstanding graduating senior in the International Affairs major, based on GPA, service to international studies, and overseas experience.

In the last three years, our B.A. graduates have gone on to work for the following employers:

- Adam Schiff for Senate
- Advocate Aurora Health
- American Family Insurance
- Anderegg and Associates
- Apex Systems
- Arab and Muslim Women's Research and Resource Institute
- Ashoka
- Baird
- Becker, Hickey & Poster, S.C.
- BizStarts
- BL Downey Company LLC
- British Airways Global
- Bublr Bikes
- Case Western Reserve University
- Catholic Charities of Oregon
- City of Chicago
- City of Milwaukee
- Cornerstone Government Affairs
- Deloitte
- Democratic Party of Wisconsin
- Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP
- Mudd Law
- Murrar, Oulahan, Rivas & Hochstatter, LLC
- Office of the Mayor of Milwaukee
- Ozaukee County
- Political Solutions
- JusticePoint
- Kohn Law Firm
- Lake County
- Lauren Underwood for Congress
- Lisa Murkowski for US Senate
- Michael Best & Friedrich LLP
- Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
- Milwaukee District Attorney
- Milwaukee Jewish Day School
- Milwaukee Public Schools
- United States Department of Justice
- United States House of Representatives
- United States Senate
- University of Wisconsin
- ViacomCBS
- Village of Hales Corners
- Virtru
- Voces de la Frontera
- Wilson Elser
- Wintrust
- Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty
- Wisconsin Republican Party
- Wisconsin State Public Defender
- WYSM TV
- YCharts Inc.
- Racine County Sherriff's Office
- Rally Digital
- Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren S.C.
- Republican National Committee
- Ryan Immigration Law
- Scarfe Consulting
- School District of Brown Deer
- Sean Casten for Congress
- Sheboygan Press
- Stone Creek Coffee
- Straub Immigration LLC
- The Heritage Foundation
- U.S. House of Representatives
- United States Attorneys' Offices
- Direct Supply
- Enfusion
- Enterprise Holdings
- Epic
- Falk Legal Group
- First Division Museum at Cantigny
- Greenberg Traurig
- Hupy and Abraham, S.C.
- International Institute of Wisconsin
- Ivanovic Law Offices

Newsletter Managing Editors: Morgan Lavelle and Nora Millies