

# Department of Politics

The Department of Politics at Oberlin offers a broad range of courses covering topics sometimes described as “Political Science” or “Government” at other institutions. Students of politics explore many dimensions of political life, ranging from small groups to citizens' organizations to cities, countries, and the international system. The study of politics includes basic information about governments, public opinion, law, historical and current topics, and explores broad issues of power, conflict, peace, citizenship, representation, and justice.

A major in politics provides a focus for a liberal arts program in the social sciences. It helps people to understand and act in their worlds more effectively. It can lead directly to careers in government, politics, public or private non-profit agencies, journalism, and secondary school teaching, or prepare students for graduate studies in law, public policy, business administration, public administration, or political science.

We divide our curriculum into four main fields: American Politics; Comparative Politics (countries' internal politics); International Politics (relations among countries); and Political Theory (the historical and philosophical study of political ideas). All students majoring in Politics must take intermediate-level classes in at least three of the four main fields as well as a senior-level research seminar.

The faculty presents a variety of approaches to politics, combining conceptual and theoretical analyses with historical, policy, and practical orientations. We are politically diverse and encourage our students to bring their own perspectives and critical capacities to bear in class and in the world around them.

We encourage close intellectual engagement between faculty and students and take advising very seriously. Student majors develop their programs in consultation with their departmental advisor. We offer small courses at the introductory and advanced levels in the four fields and many of our larger courses include discussion sections led by faculty.

Our individual private reading courses enable advanced students to work with a particular faculty member on a topic of mutual special interest.

Each year we invite our most accomplished second-semester juniors into our honors program. In the senior year, Honors consists of a thesis, together with oral and written examinations in one of the department's four fields given by a scholar from another institution, as well as closely supervised individual readings.

Mudd Library contains an excellent and expanding collection of books, journals, government and international agency documents, and legal materials for students' use. It contains research materials in most major foreign languages as well. The department participates in the college's Social Science Data Laboratory which maintains a library of data sets for computer analysis and advises students on the use of both data and programs.

Although the main strengths of the Politics Department lie in the academic opportunities we offer, we also encourage students to become involved in internships or other forms of practical experience. The Oberlin Initiative in Electoral Politics, designed to encourage our students to consider careers in elective office, provides a special course each spring, paid internships in campaign-related offices in the summer, and a special follow-up course each fall. In addition, each Winter Term we sponsor and place students in Congressional offices in Washington, D.C. for internships. Students engage in a wide range of other internships during Winter Term and the summer, including positions with legislative offices, policy and advocacy organizations relating to all kinds of domestic and international issues, law firms, and media organizations. Others spend time away from Oberlin studying a wide range of subjects all over the world.

Over the years our department has been a national leader among liberal arts colleges in providing undergraduate training for those who go on to Ph.D.s and research and teaching careers in political science.

Many graduates attend master's programs in public policy, international affairs, and business and go on to related careers. Still others go to law school and become lawyers in the public or private sector. Careers in the non-profit sector, public service, and politics are leading career choices. Some of our graduates have become journalists, still others school teachers.

We strive to maintain the highest intellectual standards, stimulate political discussion from the abstract and theoretical to the immediately practical, and encourage students to incorporate critical political perspectives into their everyday lives and careers.

## **POLITICS DEPARTMENT FACULTY**

### **MARC BLECHER**

Professor of Politics and East Asian Studies, received his B.S. degree from Cornell and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. His specialty is Chinese politics, and he has published several books and dozens of articles on local politics, popular participation, and political economy in China. In addition to these subjects, he teaches courses on Asian politics and political economy, Marxist theory, and comparative politics.

### **STEPHEN CROWLEY**

Associate Professor of Politics, received his B.A. from Hamilton College and his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. He is a specialist on politics in Russia and Eastern Europe. He published a book on coal and steel workers during the transition from Soviet rule, co-edited a volume on labor and politics in post-Communist Eastern Europe, and has published articles and book chapters on Russian and Eastern European workers' political consciousness and movements. His teaching and research address broad questions of social movements and globalization.

### **PAUL DAWSON**

Professor of Politics, received his B.A. and Ph.D. from Michigan State University. His chief interest is in policy analysis, focusing on how leaders accumulate the "political capital" to be effective, and how students can learn to become such leaders. He has published a textbook on

American politics and policy. He teaches a First Year Seminar on political leadership and various courses on American government, especially public policy, electioneering, and the Presidency. In 2005, he received a Distinguished Teaching Award from Oberlin College.

### **HARRY HIRSCH**

Professor of Politics and Comparative American Politics, received his A.B. from the University of Michigan and his M.A. and Ph.D. from Princeton University. His specialties are constitutional law and jurisprudence, gender and sexuality, and modern political theory. He has published several books and numerous articles on constitutional theory and practice, gay rights and politics, and the First Amendment. He teaches courses on constitutional law, gay and gender politics, and American political thought.

### **CHRIS HOWELL**

Professor of Politics, and Chair of the Politics Department, received his B.A. from Cambridge University, U.K., and received his M.A. and Ph.D. from Yale University. He has published widely on industrial relations and labor politics in Western Europe, including a recent book on the state and industrial relations in Britain. He teaches courses on West European politics, the political economy of advanced capitalist societies, labor, gender, and the welfare state.

### **RONALD KAHN**

James Monroe Professor of Politics and Law, received his B.A. from Rutgers and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. He is a specialist on constitutional law, legal theory, and American political development. He has published several books and numerous articles on the Supreme Court, constitutional law and theory, and American political development. He teaches courses on constitutional law, the Supreme Court, and American political development. He also teaches in the Oberlin Initiative for Electoral Politics. He received a Distinguished Teaching Award from Oberlin College in 2001 and from the Law and Courts Division of the American Political Science Association in 2006.

### **SONIA KRUKS**

Robert S. Danforth Professor of Politics, received her B.A. from the University of Leeds, U.K., and received her Ph.D. in

Government from the London School of Economics. She has published books and articles on twentieth-century European political thought and contemporary feminist political theory, particularly focusing on Simone de Beauvoir. She teaches courses on political theory from ancient times to the present, feminist political thought, and theories of social power.

#### **KRISTINA MANI**

Assistant Professor of Politics, received her B.S. in Foreign Service from Georgetown University, and her M.A. and Ph.D. in Political Science from Columbia University. Her Ph.D. thesis, "Democratization and Defense: Rethinking Rivalry in South America," examines how democratization has affected relations among countries in the region that historically have been rivals. She teaches courses in the areas of international relations and Latin American politics. Her research and teaching interests include international security, democratization, and civil-military relations. She is an academic consultant for the International Center for Nonviolent Conflict in Washington, D.C.

#### **LAWRENCE MARKOWITZ**

Visiting Assistant Professor of Politics, received his B.A. from the State University of New York-Oneonta, M.A. from the American University, and Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is a specialist in comparative and post-Communist politics, with a particular focus on nationalism, social movements, and political violence. He teaches courses on international relations, Islam and politics, failed and central Asian states, and political violence.

#### **DAVID ORR**

Professor of Environmental Studies and Politics, received his B.A. from Westminster College and his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. He is a specialist on environmental policy, as well as being a leading public intellectual in the field of environmental politics. He is the author of numerous books and articles. His teaching and research focus on ways in which colleges and communities can learn about environmental protection through hands-on projects in their localities.

#### **MICHAEL PARKIN**

Assistant Professor of Politics, received his B.A. from the University of British Columbia, M.A. from the University of Toronto, and Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. He is a specialist on political psychology, elections, and voting, with a research focus on the role of the media in American politics. He teaches courses on political psychology, mass media, research methods, and American politics.

#### **EVE SANDBERG**

Associate Professor of Politics, received her B.A. from Boston University, M.A. from the University of Pennsylvania, and her Ph.D. from Yale University. She focuses on international relations, Third World political-economy, and African Studies. Her research centers on comparative democratization and political party systems. She teaches courses on U.S. foreign policy, international relations, the international political-economy of development, U.S. campaigns and elections, and African politics. She also teaches in the Oberlin Initiative for Electoral Politics. In 1999, she received a Distinguished Teaching Award from Oberlin.

#### **BEN SCHIFF**

Professor of Politics, received his B.A. from Michigan State University and his Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley. He focuses on international politics and international organizations. He has published books on the International Atomic Energy Agency, on the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, and on Afrikaners in South Africa at the end of apartheid. He teaches courses on various aspects of international relations including arms control, war, international organizations, and international humanitarian law.

#### **HARLAN WILSON**

Professor of Politics, received his B.A. from Willamette University and his Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley. He teaches political theory and his research focuses on the intersection of environmental politics and theory with postmodern thought. He teaches European political theory from ancient times to the present, American political theory, and environmental or "green" theory. In 2004, he received a Distinguished Teaching Award from Oberlin.

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