

Communiqué

A Newsletter for Students of Political Science

Fall 2009

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My Study Abroad Experience

by: Lauren Gramza, '11

Standing on Copacabana Beach as the Olympic 2016 host city was announced and learning to understand a country through *futebol* and *samba*. Studying the crime and poverty in Brazil and being mugged in the same week. It doesn't exactly sound like your typical study abroad experience, but it has all been part of my time in Brazil nonetheless. The classes here are fascinating, the professors are inspiring, and the program itself has become one of the most rewarding experiences I have had during my time at Northwestern.

I am studying in Brazil through IPD (International Program Development) on a program focused on politics and economics. I am studying at the Fundação Getulio Vargas, one of the best universities in Brazil. The professors at the school are incredible, at the top of their fields, and I have never felt so welcome to approach my instructors. And my classmates (all of whom are fellow Northwestern students) add as much to the classroom as the professors. Everyone comes from a different background, be it Math, Political Science, or Biochemistry, so there

are always as many perspectives on the issues discussed.

As American students, we are still quite an anomaly here, but our professors have been very eager to help in every way possible. We all took a public policy class, and our professor volunteered to help us with our project about microcredit in the favelas. These favelas are poor shantytowns inhabited by a racially heterogeneous population of the economically disadvantaged. The professor even graciously brought in a friend who is a filmmaker so we could document the project.

I found that the education on this study abroad program truly occurred in places beyond the classroom and well as within them. In fact, participating in activities such as going to futebol games and learning to dance the samba, helped me understand Brazil and its people more than the lessons we learned in class. The university arranged numerous visits to Brazilian companies like Petrobras, Vale and BNDES, and also organized fun trips to places like São Paulo. I am grateful that the administrators at FGV realize how valuable it is for us to see many aspects

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Meet a Professor: Laurel Harbridge

by Stephanie Spies, Co-Editor

Although Laurel Harbridge is a new addition to the Political Science department this fall, she is not new to academia or to domestic politics. With a bachelor's degree in political science and economics from the University of Colorado and a PhD in political science from Stanford University, she brings a refreshing new outlook on domestic politics to Northwestern.

Discussing her specialty, the ramifications of party polarization in Congress, Harbridge notes the increasing relevance of this topic amidst the heated healthcare debates taking place in the United States. She believes that some version of healthcare reform legislation will inevitably pass, but it will be "extremely watered down" due to the partisanship surrounding the issue. She explains that the type of legislation, which highlights "longstanding differences" in opinion between political parties, such as government versus private owned insurance, and President Obama's personal investment in the bill, ensures polarized congressional debates. However, Harbridge sighs, this situation is "not necessarily symptomatic of a decline in bipartisanship", since the media has highlighted and exacerbated political infighting while distracting from substantive agreements.

The healthcare example exemplifies why studying Congress is so interesting, she explains. Discussions about domestic politics, currently driven by emotional attachments to one particular party or issue, represent "futile

exercises", making the academic study of congressional politics all the more relevant. She argues that quantitative research, irrespective of one's opinion on an issue, is a "step back" from the politics of a situation that can actually account for what happens and why it does.

Harbridge first became interested in such studies as a research assistant for a professor in college, where she coded data on all congressional bills passed since 1947 and discovered certain patterns of when bipartisan cooperation historically occurred. She then evaluated these issues in greater detail in graduate school, where she was able to "gain traction in answering questions in American politics, Congressional elections, and the interplay between electoral incentives and policy outcomes".

Despite her move to the Midwest, Harbridge has not left her research behind. She is now in the process of writing a book on bipartisanship in Congress and the development of party polarization over the past 30 years, as well as writing a paper on how Congressional members respond to changes in presidential approval ratings. These issues and more will be discussed in Harbridge's upcoming classes, including 300-level undergraduate courses and a graduate class in the spring.

Harbridge is teaching her first class, PS 325: Congress and the Legislative

Process, this winter, which will meet Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 to 10:50 AM.



Calendar

- **Winter Quarter Pre-Registration**
November 9-12
- **Winter Quarter Registration**
November 16-20
- **WCAS Reading Week**
November 30 - December 4
- **Fall Quarter Exam Week**
December 7-11
- **Winter Quarter Begins**
January 4

Model Student: Katie Grendon

by: John Lee, Co-Editor

After much thought, we, the editors, decided to feature a “model major” within the political science department in each edition of the *Communiqué*. The objective? By publishing this series, we hope to inspire future success stories and honor academic achievement, competent leadership, and a passion for service.



Katie Grendon, a proud member of the class of 2010, is a native of Illinois—her family current resides in Glendale, which is just 25 minutes away from NU. On campus, she plays instrumental roles in a variety of organizations. She is the former Chair of the Survivorship Committee and the Team Mentorship Committee (Relay for Life), the current Vice President of Membership for the Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity, and an active member of Delta Gamma sorority. She is also a recipient of the Undergraduate Leadership Program certificate.

But beyond all of these activities and accomplishments, we believe Katie is remarkable most in her passionate thirst for knowledge and unyielding commitment to furthering social justice. Last summer, in 2008, she interned for a judge in the probate division for disabled individuals living in Cook County. From this experience, Katie became interested in disability law, and she has begun conducting research over the influence of US veterans on disability rights. During her most recent summer,

Katie volunteered at the Center on Wrongful Convictions at the Northwestern University School of Law, where she developed an interest in studying the miscarriages of justice in the legal system. She is now taking a legal studies course titled Wrongful Convictions, which is taught by Rob Warden, the director of the Center on Wrongful Convictions.

Q. What is your greatest passion? What are your plans after graduating from Northwestern this spring?

A. My ambitions are still developing, and I hope that this dynamic growth never ends. What I do know, is that I am truly passionate about helping others. I know that I want to become an attorney and represent individuals who struggle to defend themselves. My ultimate dream is to make a long lasting, tangible difference in the lives of others, by using the legal system as a vehicle of change and hope.

Q. What advice do you have for the current freshman and other future political science majors?

A. My best advice is to keep an open mind. I came to Northwestern without ever considering a major in Political Science or the pursuit of a law degree. It was only after taking several political science and legal studies courses, that half way through my sophomore year, I realized that law was definitely the path for me. As with life in general, you will never know how great something or someone may be, if you remain ignorant. Try everything.

As for how to do well in school, I suggest that you listen to others and carefully consider their advice. However, ultimately, only you can figure out what works best for you; everyone is a little different. Some people can succeed without stressing and others require that extra bit of pressure to achieve their greatest potential. Just make sure that you keep a balanced lifestyle. Take courses that interest you, study hard, treasure your values, and never forget to prioritize your commitments. Always know what matters most.

Undergraduate Info Session: Research Grants, Fellowships and Internships

by John Lee, Co-Editor

On October 20th, the Northwestern Department of Political Science hosted an info session for its undergraduate students. Those in attendance learned a great deal about several key opportunities.

First, a representative from Chicago Field Studies spoke briefly about the advantages inherent in completing an internship specifically through CFS. This program provides students with the unique opportunity to intern up to 36 hours a week, while taking classes, and earning up to 4 credits that quarter. Sound intense? I thought so too. The program offers a large number of substantive internships in a diverse array of fields.

For those future investment bankers among us—yes, *even* in this economy—one could potentially score a gig with Merrill Lynch, Morgan Stanley, or Smith Barney, among other well-known brands. For the aspiring crusader of social justice, the American Red Cross or the Chicago Youth Center sound like viable options. Personally, given my interest in law and public policy, the thought of serving as an intern to the Illinois Attorney General, seemed particularly appealing. But that’s just me.

Next, Peter Civetta, of the Provost’s Office, spoke about Northwestern’s Undergraduate

Research Grants and Immersion Language Grants. Civetta encouraged attendees to seriously consider applying for a variety of grants including those that would be applied during the academic year, as well as those for use during the summer. After all, he noted, it is just “free money.” Students interested in furthering their skills in a foreign language stood to benefit from grants, aimed specifically at defraying their costs of “intensive language study”. 2009 Immersion Language Grant winners won funds to study in Egypt, China, France, Germany, and Spain.

Finally, Brad Zakarin, of the Office of Fellowships, came and presented his case. When we think of fellowships, we usually name the Rhodes, Marshall and Gates Cambridge, almost without effort. These are among the more well-known, most prestigious fellowships available to interested undergraduates across the country. Yet as Zakarin reminded us, we shouldn’t limit ourselves to only these options.

He explained that a variety of fellowships existed to interested sophomores and juniors, as well as seniors. Different fellowships served different purposes, and many provided funds to pursue graduate study, service projects, and research, among other worthwhile endeavors. And,

because the selection process for most of these awards are holistic, Zakarin urged students not to “exclude yourself unless you absolutely, and explicitly are ineligible.”

Major Requirements

15 courses total

Basic Courses

(3) of the following: 201, 220, 221, 230, 240, or 250

Major Courses

- (1) methods class: pick from 310, 311, or 315*
- (1) 395 research seminar
- (5) other 300-level classes

Related Courses

(5) classes in any of the following departments: anthropology, economics, history, philosophy, psychology, or sociology. At least 3 must be at the 300 level. No more than one can be at the 100 level.

*If student has methods training from other department, they may use 312 or 316 to satisfy methods requirement.

For a Minor

6 courses total

- (2) of the following: 201, 220, 221, 230, 240, or 250
- (4) additional political science courses, at least 3 at the 300 level.

DUG's World

Professor Rogers, Director of Undergraduate Studies

Another academic year has begun. I want to welcome and wish a happy fall to our undergraduate political science majors. At this point in the quarter, most of you are already deeply immersed in course work and planning for next quarter. I want to share a few announcements about the major, advising, and the newsletter that may prove helpful as you navigate the year ahead. First, I am delighted to introduce the new student editors for *Communiqué*, John Lee and Stephanie Spies. This is the first issue of the newsletter with them at the editorial helm. Both Stephanie and John are political science majors. John is a sophomore and Stephanie is a junior. The two bring a terrific combination of experience, enthusiasm, and vision to the newsletter. They have a number of wonderful new ideas for revitalizing *Communiqué*, including more input from our majors. You will see elements of their new vision reflected in this quarter's newsletter. The Department is excited about the talent and energy they are bringing to the copy and hope that you will enjoy their contributions.

We also have a new line-up of undergraduate advisers: Professors Victoria DeFrancesco Soto, Jason Seawright, Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, who also serves as our Honors Program Director, and me. As usual, you should feel free to drop-in to meet with us during our designated office hours. Advisers can help you with a range of issues and questions, including major declarations, petitions to graduate, study abroad plans, the honors program, undergraduate research and conference travel funding opportunities, and so on. Our office hours and locations are posted on the Department web site. Beyond the occasional meeting with an undergraduate adviser, our majors also will continue to have opportunities to meet and discuss research and current political events with our faculty outside of the classroom



Professor Reuel Rogers

through our ongoing student-faculty luncheons. We plan to schedule more of these events for the winter and spring quarter. Students should stay tuned to the newsletter and check our web site for upcoming luncheons.

Finally, a little shoptalk about the major is order, as the academic year is now in full swing. As many of you know, new requirements for the major took effect last year. Any students who have enrolled at the University since then are subject to the new requirements. If you matriculated before the 2008-09 academic year, however, you may still follow the old requirements and use them when you petition to graduate. If you opt to do so, please be sure to indicate that you are following an older catalog with a date prior the upcoming Thanksgiving break and have a great academic year!



Source: owf.northwestern.edu

POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

Winter Quarter Courses 2010

For the most up to date listing, check the Caesar online.

100 Freshman Seminars

20	The Politics of Economic Inequality	Page	TTh3:30-4:50	LIB4722
21	Why Are Some Countries Richer Than Others?	Mahoney	MW 2-3:20	WSC231

200 Levels

221	Urban Politics	Rogers	TTh 2-3:30	TCHLR2
230	Introduction to Law in the Political Arena	Skogan	MWF 10	TCH AUD
240	Introduction to International Relations	Loriaux	TTh 12:30-1:50	TCH AUD

300 Levels

302	Modern Political Thought	Christov	TTh 12:30-1:50	LVRAUD
312	Statistical Research Methods	Seawright	TTh 3:30-4:50	TCHL361
321	Community Political Processes	Skogan	MW 3:30-4:50	TCHL361
325	Congress and the Legislative Processes	Harbridge	TTh 9:30-10:50	ANNG21
330	The Politics of Local Justice	Iris	TTh11-12:20	ANNG15
344	US Foreign Policy	Caverley	TTh 9:30-10:50	ANNG15
354	Southeast Asian Politics	Winters	TTh 2-3:20	LVAUD
355	Chinese Politics	Shih	MW 2-3:20	TCHL211
370	The Fate of the State in a Globalizing World	Hanson	MW 2-3:20	UNV101

390 Special Topics

20	Aid, Governance and Development in Africa	Joseph	TTh 11-12:20	ANNG32
21	Topics in Modern Iran	Kinzer	F 9-11:50	PKS215
22	Middle East Politics	Pearlmen	MW11-12:20	ANNG21
23	American Intervention Abroad	Kinzer	WF 2-3:20	ANNG21
24	The Future of the University	Loriaux	TTh 3:30-4:50	KRG2415
25	Human Rights and US Foreign Policy	Williamson	M 5:30-8:20	PKS214

394 Professional Research Seminar

20	Contemporary Cuba	Marx & Vaisman	Th 5:30-8:20	KRG2430
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395 Political Research Seminars -- Please refer to the next page for seminar descriptions

PS 395 Research Seminars: Winter Quarter 2010

Research seminars are open to Political Science majors by application only. Applications can be found on the Political Science website at: www.polisci.northwestern.edu.

20 Ideology in American Politics **Chong** **W 2-4:50**

An examination of the values and beliefs underlying political ideology in American politics. What are the defining features and symbols of liberalism and conservatism? What separates the political center from the ideological extremes? This seminar analyzes politicians, parties, media, public opinion, and political movements representing the range of ideological camps on the left-right spectrum. We will identify what has been constant in liberalism and conservatism over time, but also how the positions of liberals and conservatives have evolved in response to historical events and experiences.

21 Political Party Systems **Seawright** **TTh 11-12:20**

What are political parties for — why do they play an important role in virtually every existing democracy? How do parties connect with society, or do they more often fail to connect? Do parties' internal organizations matter for the quality of representation, or for their survival over time? How do new parties form, and why do some succeed electorally while others fail? We will read and discuss work that address these and other related questions, with the aim of helping each student formulate and execute her own empirical research project focused on some issue connected with parties and party systems. Evaluation will be based on participation and a research paper.

22 Military, Society and Use of Force **Brooks** **T 2-4:50**

Since the end of the Cold War, the American public's familiarity with military affairs has waned, and fewer elected officials have served in the armed forces. Nevertheless society at-large must play a vital role in military policy discourse if sound policies are to be adopted. This course seeks to expose students to major issues in military affairs, to introduce relevant theoretical research and to encourage critical thinking about issues in world affairs more broadly. Among the major questions covered are: What is a military organization, and what are its roles, functions and motivations? What is and should be the military's role and purpose in conventional operations, in the "war" on terrorism and in humanitarian interventions? Is there a contradiction between creating a military that is "effective" versus one that is reflective of society at large? Specific topics include: the controversies associated with military intervention for humanitarian purposes; the "proper" relationship between civilian government and the military; racial integration and gays and lesbians in the military; and the growing "culture gap" between civilians and the military in the United States.

23 Global Politics and the Middle East **Hurd** **TTh 11-12:20**

This course is about the global politics and history of the Arab states, Israel, Iran and Turkey. As it is a class on world politics, the focus is on relations between Europe, the United States, and the Middle East and North Africa rather than upon domestic or regional politics. Topics include contemporary politics of the region, including the "war on terror," the history, politics and legacies of the 1953 coup in Iran and the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the international political economy of oil, relations between Turkey and the European Union, the conflict between Israel and Palestine, and the politics and history of secularism, colonialism, orientalism, and gender. We will also discuss the implications of modernization and globalization as they impact relations between the Middle East and other parts of the world. This course is recommended for students with a strong interest in the international politics of the Middle East who are interested in doing upper-level independent research. No prerequisite, although introductory polisci courses (CP, IR, and/or PT are strongly recommended). Evaluation method: Think piece, paper outline, final paper, class participation.

PS 395 Research Seminars Part II

24 Police Misconduct & Accountability Iris TTh 2-3:20

Among the ranks of governmental employees, police officers are unique. They may deprive us of our liberty, and are empowered to use force, including deadly force, if necessary, to carry out their duties. Actual or perceived misconduct by officers often has serious repercussions, far beyond those attributable to the actions of almost any other group of governmental employees. Objectives are to examine police operations and organization, and how they affect, and are affected by, police misconduct. What means are available to address police misconduct? How effective are they? What changes have evolved in terms of both the types and patterns of, and responses to, misconduct?

25 International Organization & National Policy Alter TTh 9:30-10:50

Policy International organizations are designed to facilitate cooperation between states, addressing problems and issues that affect all nations, the global commons and humanity in general. In many if not most cases, for the goals of international organizations to be achieved a change of domestic policy is necessary. This seminar examines the questions of if, when and how international organizations influence national policy.

26 Global Climate Change: Policy and Society Wolinsky T 2-4:50

The goal of this course is to examine global climate change both as a policy issue and as a phenomenon that has affected society and culture. We will compare climate change policy-making at the international, national, state, and local levels. We will examine several dimensions of climate change policies including reaction to scientific information, evaluation of costs versus benefits under uncertainty, leadership, and openness to adaptation. We will then look at how society has reacted to policy-making on climate change. We will compare trends in public attitudes on climate change and examine the relationship between public policy and civic action. We will finally look at how the issue of climate change has spread beyond politics and is finding new expressions in the arts, architecture, and other realms of culture.

27 Studying Public Opinion Druckman M 1-3:50

In this course, we will explore three aspects of public opinion. First, we will examine how one studies public opinion, focusing on survey and experimental methodologies. Second, we will investigate the psychological processes underlying opinion formation, paying particular attention to how mass communications (e.g., media) affect opinions. Third, we will look at how politicians respond to and use public opinion. Students will be engaged in at least two activities: a group project that involves the collection of experimental and/or survey data, and an individual paper that reviews the academic literature on some aspect of public opinion and offers suggestions for future study. Classes will involve presentations by the professor and students. Some background in statistics (e.g., one course) is recommend but not required.

My Study Abroad Experience (cont.)

many aspects of Brazil, and they have done everything in their power to make sure we get the best experience we can while here.

Rio is unique in that at any point in the city, you are never very far from a favela. Even our apartments are just a block or so from a small favela in Copacabana. One thing that is important to realize, though, is that most people who live in favelas are hard-working people who have just been denied many of the opportunities that we take for granted. The painful manifestations of abject poverty and inequality were everywhere. There is a homeless man who lives a block away on our street, in an alcove on the sidewalk. There is a family who lives on the corner one block further. We learned in class that Brazil has one of the highest inequality scores in the world, which is both fascinating (since Brazil is not a poor nation) and heartbreaking.

There is one enlightening thought that has stuck with me throughout my time in Rio, and I think about it every time I walk down the street from my apartment to the beach. Brazil is a democracy, but the government does not always act in line with its purported style of government. So, the people of Brazil have turned to another institution to offer true democracy: the beach. If one walks down any of the three most popular beaches in the city, you will see signs of opulence adjacent to the beach, mixed with signs of immense poverty in the near distance—a true paradox.

Favelas, Rio's 'slum' areas, hover over the most expensive real estate in the city, but these distinctions are blurred on the sand. It is a well-known fact that the rich and famous frequent certain areas of the beaches, but these areas are also open to the public. Everyone can go anywhere on the beaches in Rio, and class lines do not dictate position, attire, or behavior. Everyone is wearing the same thing by choice and everyone is there for the same purpose: to forget the ordeals of a grueling

week and to bask in the sun. There is an acute problem of inequality in Brazil, but on the beach, this problem finds its own temporary resolution. I think that now if only the Brazilian government would learn how to address the nation's problems of inequality and responsible democracy as well, Brazil will be in good shape to be a world leader in the future.

However, democracy is a learned skill, one that no nation has yet perfected. I hope that as more Northwestern students embark on their own study abroad journeys to Brazil, perhaps one day, they will be able to leave behind a meaningful impact on domestic Brazilian policy. Who knows where our microcredit project might lead in the future... you might be continuing it next year!

A photo of Rio de Janeiro:



Source: ioccg.org

Health Care Reform in America: a Case Study in Policy Formulation and Advocacy

by Jordan Fein, '11

Over 50 years ago, President Harry Truman, an advocate for a national health plan, proclaimed, "We should resolve now that the health of this Nation is a national concern; that financial barriers in the way of attaining health shall be removed; that the health of all its citizens deserves the help of all the Nation." Today, President Truman's words ring truer than ever before. We should keep his convictions, and those of his like-minded successors, carefully in our minds, as we watch and wait for a solution to this country's disgraceful health care woes.

The United States is currently the only wealthy, industrialized nation without universal health care; instead, our nation has opted for a mixed health care system combining governmental and private expenditures and institutions. In contrast to the English National Health Service (NHS), or the Canadian publicly funded health care system, the first half of the American model consists of for-profit hospitals and institutions run by private companies and non-profit entities, which are overseen by national, state and local governments. Second, our health care system also includes government-run programs like Medicare (for the elderly), Medicaid (for the indigent) and SCHIP (for children from low-income families).

The statistics are startling. In 2007 alone, the United States spent \$2.26 trillion on health care, or \$7,439 per person. However, despite these astronomical expenditures, nearly 47 million Americans, or 16% of the popu-

lation, did not have health insurance in 2005. This figure has risen by 9 million since 2000 and 2.2 million since 2005, indicating that the number of uninsured Americans is continuing to increase at a very high rate.

Moreover, this lack of coverage is not concentrated amongst those living in the conditions of extreme poverty; in fact, almost 40% of the uninsured live in households that earn \$50,000 or more per year. That is, this increase in the number of uninsured Americans has been focused in working adults, 1.3 million of whom lost employer-provided health insurance in 2006.

In addition, 29% of people with health insurance could be considered "underinsured" because their coverage is not sufficient enough to pay for all necessary medical costs. In total, almost half of the population experiences significant problems while attempting to pay for adequate health care. The fact of the matter is, the U.S. spends the most on health care of any developed nation but still fails to provide basic coverage to many.

President Obama has taken up health care reform as his major first-term domestic policy initiative, and there is little doubt that the Democrats' fate in the 2010-midterm elections, and possibly the President's ability to serve a second term, hinges on his ability to pass substantive health care reform. Republicans understand that their political fate is also intimately intertwined with that of health care reform, and are thus mobilizing to defeat this reform. Many legislators have commented upon the radical importance of this issue, and its long-term repercussions. Senator Jim DeMint (R-SC) asserted, if Republicans could "break" Obama on this issue, it "would be his Waterloo". Mike Enzi—one of the Gang of Six Senators on Max Baucus (D-MT)'s crucial Senate Finance Committee—said that "It's not where I get them to compromise, it's what I get them to leave out". Michelle Bachmann (R-MN6) proposed that Republicans slit their wrists and form a blood pact to



Source: www.barackobama.com/issues/healthcare/

Healthcare Reform (cont.)

oppose reform and other Republicans have indicated a similar unwillingness to compromise.

But the chief obstacle to health care reform has been the coalition of “Blue-Dog Democrats,” 52 conservative Democrats who are strongly opposed to a public option designed to keep private insurers honest and lower health care costs for all. This caucus has opposed a public option and other measures that would cover many Americans, harkening back to the efforts of Southern conservative “Dixiecrat” Democrats like Strom Thurmond, who in the 1960s worked to prevent the passage of civil rights legislation.

The Congressional Budget Office, which “scores” every health care reform proposal, has found that the bills with the strongest public option will do the most to reduce the deficit and cover all Americans. The CBO is a non-partisan entity that objectively predicts the cost of legislation over time. It has no hidden agenda, and instead dedicates itself to providing the truth to the American people about the impact of reform proposals.

According to the CBO, the Senate Finance Committee bill, which includes health insurance cooperatives instead of a public option, would cost \$829 billion over ten years and cover 94% of Americans. The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions bill, which includes a public option christened the “Community Health Insurance Option,” would cost \$611 billion over ten years and cover 97% of Americans. The House health care legislation, which also includes a public option, would cost 894 billion over ten years but reduce the deficit by \$104 billion in the same period of time, and would cover 96% of Americans. On the other hand, the Republican health care alternative would extend coverage to only 83% of Americans and reduce the deficit by only \$68 billion.

Ideally, health care reform should not be a partisan issue. It is not fair to the millions of Americans who have to choose between their health and homes, or between a necessary operation and putting food on their table. Playing politics with people’s lives must stop.

As political science students, we must understand the tactics the Republicans are employing to halt reform. Public opinion in America is notoriously malleable, and with allegations that the Democrats’ proposals would include

death panels, cripple Medicare, increase the deficit, cover undocumented immigrants and more, Republicans are doing all they can to make Americans afraid of reform. Historically, the most successful method of combating an opponent who manipulates the facts and repeats falsehoods has been a grassroots movement. Without grassroots support, legally sanctioned civil rights, federally guaranteed Medicare and Medicaid, and many more progressive steps forward in America’s history would have been impossible.

And with “Organizing for America”—a group dedicated to supporting the President’s policy proposals—unions and health care advocacy organizations, like “Health Care for America Now”, are focusing all their efforts on helping to pass much needed reform. Today, supporters of health care reform are mobilizing in unprecedented numbers.

However, the fate of reform is still unclear, and faces many hurdles, especially in the Senate where a filibuster could stop Democratic efforts to pass reform. Any political junkie should follow progress of these health care reform bills closely, for it truly represents history in the making. And if you feel like being part of history, join with Organizing for America or a similar organization, and do your part to bring the truth to the American people.



Source: <http://politicalhumor.about.com>

9/11: It Seems Like Yesterday, Or Does It?

by: Sourav Bhowmick, '12

This piece was written by the author on the eight year anniversary of 9/11.

The world changed forever on this day, eight years ago. For me, though, today's anniversary is different, because for the first time, 9/11 doesn't seem like yesterday; It seems like a while ago.

In many ways, it really was. When America came under attack that day, I was getting used to my first year of middle school, but now, I'm in the middle of college. I've often felt that *my* year of people, those born around 1990, were the last ones to really remember 9/11 as it happened. I think we're the threshold. We were exposed to the events as they unfolded while students just one year younger than us were trapped and sheltered in elementary school, deemed too young by parents and teachers to witness the horrors of that day.

I remember that day perfectly. I remember getting off the school bus, surprised to see my mom already home because she was let out of work early. I remember my sister getting a chain e-mail (remember those?) asking people to light candles on their windowsills in honor of that day's victims. I remember watching members of Congress sing, "God Bless America," and I even remember laughing at them in an effort to lighten the mood. But I especially remember talking to my neighbor the next day, an elementary school student, who said he and his classmates had virtually no idea what all the commotion was about.



Source: <http://heroworkshop.files.wordpress.com>

In a society where everything seems to be different after September 11, where every single policy and economic decision is influenced by the threat of terrorism, and where everyday life has been changed by those four syllables, it's obvious that the effects of 9/11 control everything. Our lives are defined by it.

But what about the lives of those students just one year younger than me—the ones that don't remember, and maybe even don't understand 9/11 the way I do? As I said, I remember that day pretty well, probably not as well as those older than me, but surprisingly, my memory of it is drastically better than those just one year younger than me. Are their lives as affected by 9/11 as the rest of us?

For those of us who lived through 9/11, we subconsciously divide our lives into two parts: birth to September 10, 2001 and "post 9/11." For many adults, the "post 9/11 world is only a fraction of their lives, but for those younger than me, the term "post 9/11 means nothing in terms of their perspective – the majority of their lives will be "post 9/11," and they won't know any kind of life other than that. In fact, most of what they know or perceive about 9/11 is constituted by what others have told them, not what they witnessed themselves.

When that age group is running our world, when those children a year younger than me are calling all the shots, what will 9/11 mean to them? Is that when "post 9/11 doesn't mean anything? What will be the defining moment of that generation that forces them to live "post (insert here)" lives?

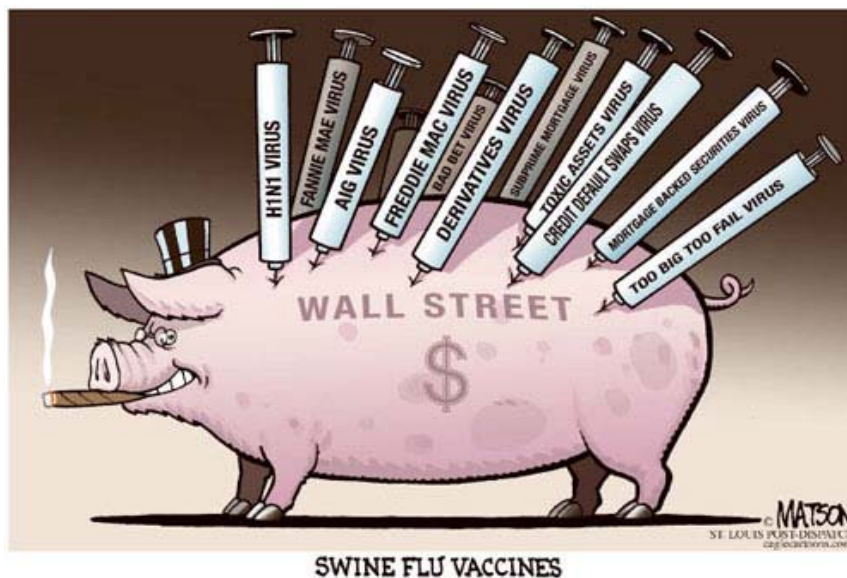
While everything we do today is influenced by those images of towers collapsing, stories of heroes dying, and memories of people suffering, tomorrow's world won't really care as much. And with every anniversary, more and more people won't really care as much. Sure, everything we do today is different because of Pearl Harbor, and everything people do tomorrow will be different because of 9/11, but at the end of the day, no one's really going to notice.

Because for the first time, 9/11 doesn't seem like yesterday; It seems like a while ago.

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