

# Communiqué

A Newsletter for Students of Political Science

Spring 2010

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## Thoughts on the 2010 Midterm Elections

By Dr. Laurel Harbridge

Does the Democrats' victory on health care insulate them from electoral losses in this year's midterm election? Though the passage of the historic health care overhaul is surely more beneficial to Democrats than if gridlock had persisted and the reform had died, it is unclear whether the passage of this reform is sufficient to counter other factors that tend to favor Republicans in this year's election.

First, one of the most robust patterns in political science is midterm loss for the president's party. With the exceptions of 1998 and 2002, the president's party lost seats in every congressional midterm election between 1938 and 2006. The bad news for the Democrats is that this is likely to continue in 2010. The good news for the Democrats is that they currently have large seat shares in both chambers; even with losses they may be able to maintain majority control of both chambers.

Second, both parties are facing a number of retirements. Very few incumbents who run for reelection lose their seats. Thus, it's in the open seats (where no incumbent is running) that most

electoral change occurs. As of April 9, 2010, 25 Democrats (18 House, 7 Senate) and 27 Republicans (21 House, 6 Senate) are not running for reelection. To see which party is likely to take (or retain) control of each seat, we can look at the presidential vote in the district in 2008, which is a proxy for a general measure of the liberal-conservative leaning of the district. Using this measure, it looks like roughly 4 Senate seats are in states that voted at relatively high percentages for the Democratic presidential candidate, 2 seats are in states that voted highly Republican, and 6 seats are a toss-up (with both party's candidates getting less than 55% of the vote). A slightly different picture emerges in the House. There, 11 districts voted overwhelmingly Democratic, 16 voted overwhelmingly Republican, and 12 are toss-ups. Just looking at the number of open districts does not clearly show an advantage for one party or another. However, given that the electoral swing this year is likely to favor Republican candidates, open seats

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# Meet a Professor: Georgia Kernell

By Stephanie Spies '11

Georgia Kernell is a newcomer to the Midwest. She attended UC Berkeley in California before earning her PhD at Columbia and completing her postdoctoral research at the University of Pennsylvania.

Discussing her specialty, comparative political parties and elections, Kernell emphasizes the current relevance of this topic in light of the general election in the United Kingdom on May 6. This election in particular, she explains, “may prove to have many close races among multiple parties at the district level,” although plurality elections generally only offer two “viable” parties in a single district. If neither the Labour Party nor the Conservatives can gain a majority, the Liberal Democrats, the third largest political party in the United Kingdom, “will hold significant leverage” in the new government. Kernell believes that this “real prospect” of Liberal Demo-

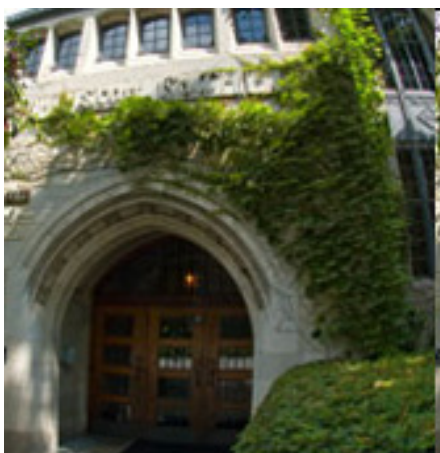
crats gaining power in the government “should increase the number of people who vote for” that party, not only due to political preference but also because it “strategically makes more sense” in this particular election, as compared to “typical British elections.”

This example illustrates the types of cases Kernell studies in the field of comparative electoral politics. She first became interested in this area of political science as a junior at UC Berkeley, when she took “a fantastic class on political parties” in which the professor made the students “stand up on [their] chairs and shout ‘I love math!’” Although she has yet to make her students do this, Kernell says, she is “tempted.”

In addition to electoral politics, she also studies statistics for social science, political behavior (e.g. voting and campaigning), and comparative democratic institutions. Kernell is writing a book manuscript “about how political parties are organized internally (e.g. how they select candidates and write party platforms), and the effects of these rules on political behavior.”

Because this research is quite time consuming, she hopes to complete a majority of her research in the spring and summer, returning to teach in the fall. Professor Kernell

will be teaching a freshman seminar on political parties and elections in the fall and an MMSS class in the spring, in addition to two statistics classes at the graduate level. We are certainly glad to have you here at Northwestern, Professor Kernell!



Source: [polisci.northwestern.edu](http://polisci.northwestern.edu)

## Academic Calendar

- **Fall Quarter Pre-Registration**  
May 10 - 14
- **Fall Quarter Registration**  
May 17 - 21
- **WCAS Reading Week**  
June 1 - 4
- **Spring Quarter Exam Week**  
June 7 - 11
- **Fall Quarter Begins**  
September 21

## Meet an Alum Pt. 1: Rajni Chandrasekhar

By John Lee '12

Rajni Chandrasekhar is a political science and international studies double major who graduated from Northwestern in 2009. She was last year's winner of the McGovern Award for Academic Excellence and Leadership in Political Science. Her favorite class in the department was South East Asian Politics, taught by Dr. Jeffery Winters.

*Q. What are you doing now?*

I am currently pursuing a master's degree in development management at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). The curriculum focuses specifically on organizational management, but I am also taking additional classes in Indian development, poverty, child rights, and youth issues. The program is a year long, finishing in September of this year.



Source: [thelondondailynews.com](http://thelondondailynews.com)

*Q. What are your plans for the future?*

I am thinking about moving back to the US. Though I am still hammering my plans, tentatively speaking, I'd like to work with a non-profit, international non-governmental organization (NGO). One day, I can see myself working for either the World Bank or the Foundation Strategy Group (the latter is a non-profit consulting firm seeking to advance social progress).

*Q. Do you have any advice for current students?*

There are definitely certain things I wished I had known back then. First, one of the most important things you can accomplish as an undergrad is to find your passion, calling, and dream. Personally, I discovered my passion while volunteering in India and doing internships during my summers. Once you find your calling, the next step is to seek out the relevant resources on campus; if you are interested in an area where NU doesn't offer the necessary resources, then advocate for it. One particularly awesome resource I recommend is the Global Engagement Summer Institute (GESI).

Second, I strongly recommend taking advantage of the funding and grant opportunities offered by NU. That was a

major source of help for me—it allowed me to do internships that I otherwise wouldn't have been able to pursue. I remember applying for many fellowships as well. They are all very good opportunities students should take advantage of. Even if you are a freshman, as long as you are interested in procuring funding to further some academic interest, you should visit the Office of Fellowships. Tell them what you are passionate about, so that they can advocate on your behalf.

Finally, try to find a balance in your college education. Some people are very liberal artsy—they take classes in every discipline and from every department. Others are very focused in only one academic subject. I suggest trying to find a median between the two extremes; students should strive to be more well rounded. Attempt to get deeply invested in a couple of different disciplines. One last thing: since you do attend Northwestern, after all, go into Chicago more! Take advantage of it. College won't last forever.

# Meet an Alum Pt. 2: Miriam Lieberman

By John Lee '12

Miriam Lieberman graduated from Northwestern in 2004 with a B.A. in Political Science. She was the 2004 winner of the Barry Farrell and McGovern awards. Her favorite class in the department was Constitutional Law, taught by Dr. Stephan Daniels.

*Q. What do you remember liking most about your experience as an undergrad at Northwestern?*

First and foremost, I loved the people. Period. Second, I loved Northwestern's warm, vibrant community—full of people with different interests, talents, and from different cultures than my own. The student body was and is so diverse! I also really appreciated the school's very accomplished and brilliant faculty; they put forth the time and effort to cultivate student potential. I remember having been taught by professors who sincerely cared about their students.



Source: stanford.edu

*Q. What have you done since graduating?*

After graduating from Northwestern in 2004, I enrolled at Stanford Law School. I graduated in 2007, and came back to Chicago to work at the private law firm Kirkland and Ellis LLP. I have been working there as a litigator since.

*Q. How do you know if law school is right for you?*

I don't think there is a magic formula that can help you determine whether it will be right for you or not. The decision to pursue a law degree is no different than the one to pursue graduate school in another area or any career, for that matter. You have to research the option and find out whatever you can; then, decide whether it is a fit for you.

*Q. Do you have any advice for current students?*

First, try to differentiate yourself—be unique. Find something you just absolutely love, and then pursue it. Second, take advantage of the things that are already there, whether it means taking the classes that interest you, or joining extracurriculars you feel passionate about. Also, if you are interested, like I was, in undergraduate research, pursue those research grants. They can be immensely helpful, and I personally worked to make use of such resources while I was a student at Northwestern.

Third, remember that the world doesn't always have to

revolve around you. Facilitate those important connections and relationships. Help others succeed. Be kind and look out for other people. Reach out and make new friends. Finally, be happy. I really mean it. While it sounds a bit trite, it's so true: naturally, we are drawn to happy people. But don't just be happy to attract others, do it for yourself as well—happiness is good for you too!

## Major Requirements

16 courses total

### Major Courses

- (3) of the following: 201, 220, 221, 230, 240, or 250
- (1) methods class: pick from 310, 311, 312, 315, and 316)
- (1) 395 research seminar
- (6) other 300-level classes

### Related Courses

(5) classes in any of the following departments: Asian studies, African-American studies, anthropology, economics, gender studies, global health, history, Latin American and Caribbean studies, international studies, legal studies, philosophy, psychology and sociology. At least 3 must be at the 300 level. No more than one can be at the 100 level.

## 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

Happy Spring to our political science majors! I am sure many of you by now are busy making plans for the summer months. Students who are still trying to decide on their summer plans should consider participating in an internship. Most companies issue their calls for student interns to help with summer projects in the fall and early winter. But there are still many organizations searching for students to help with worthy causes. To be sure, many of the internships associated with such causes are unpaid. The prospect of taking an unpaid internship may seem unattractive to some students in these hard economic times. But you need not rule out such internships for strictly financial reasons.

## Summer Experiential Learning Funding Opportunities

The Political Science Department offers modest Farrell summer experiential learning grants to support unpaid internships that have a direct or indirect connection to politics. Although the Political Science Department does not offer academic credit for internships, we encourage students to participate in these summer opportunities whenever they can. They are a valuable supplement to university education. We are especially supportive of internships that enable students to learn more about the politics. Some of the most interesting summer internships that include a political focus often are offered by organizations that are unable to pay students. We report on students' summer internship experiences in the newsletter every year.

Resources for the grants offered by the Department are due to the largesse of the Barry Farrell estate. Farrell was a professor of political science and a dynamic presence at Northwestern University from the 1950s through the 1980s. The Farrell fund supports a range of opportunities for political science undergraduates, including the summer experiential learning grants. The summer internship awards typically range from \$500

to \$1,500 and take financial need into account. Seniors are not eligible to apply.

## Summer Research Opportunities

Students also might consider spending some part of their summer on a research project. Many political science professors devote their summer months to research. Sometimes undergraduates assist with these projects. But increasing numbers of Northwestern undergraduates are using the summer to pursue their own research interests often in consultation with faculty. Top students admitted to the department's honors program often try to get an early start on their projects during the summer prior to their senior year. But other students develop summer research projects of their own simply to supplement their coursework. Weinberg College and the Department encourage support such efforts through a number of funding opportunities.

## Registration and Petitioning to Graduate

Finally, I realize that our majors are using this early part of spring to not only to line up summer projects but also to plan for the next academic year. Pre-registration for Fall Quarter 2010 begins on May 10. Regular registration starts on May 17. Some of you are already committed to participating in study abroad programs. Please see the Department web site for details on petitioning for major credit for study abroad courses.



*Professor Reuel Rogers*

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# POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

## Fall Quarter Schedule 2010-2011

*Please Note: Courses subject to change. For the most up to date listing, check courses on Caesar.*

### Freshman Seminar

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| Campaign 2010   | Druckman    |
| Human Rights in International Politics                                  | Alter       |
| 'No Place' as a Good Place: Utopias in the History of Political Thought | Christov    |
| Comparative Political Parties   | Kernell     |
| The Press and Presidential Politics                                     | Steuplnagel |

### 200 Levels

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| 201 Introduction to Political Theory           | Christov |
| 230 Introduction to Law in the Political Arena | Iris     |
| 240 Intro to International Relations           | Spruyt   |
| 250 Introduction to Comparative Politics       | Roberts  |

### 300 Levels

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| 311 Logics of Political Inquiry          | Martin   |
| 323 Public Opinion & Voting Behavior     | Chong    |
| 324 Political Parties and Elections      | Page     |
| 331 Politics of the Supreme Court        | Daniels  |
| 344 US Foreign Policy                    | Caverley |
| 349 International Environmental Politics | Wolinsky |

### 390 Special Topics

|                         |        |
|-------------------------|--------|
| 20 The Rise of Asia     | Bouton |
| 21 Conflict & Civil War | Reno   |

### 394 Professional Linkage Seminar

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| 20 US Foreign Policy: Kennedy to Obama           | Rielly |
| 21 Reforming Politics and Securing Our Democracy | Gordon |

### 395 Research Seminar

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 20 Political Parties and Political Competition | Martin    |
| 21 Political Theory and Tragedy: Antigone      | Honig     |
| 22 Designing a Constitution                    | Roberts   |
| 23 Latinos and Politics                        | Dominguez |

## “Thoughts on the 2010 Midterm Elections”

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may be expected to work to the Republicans' favor in this case.

Third, the economy may help or hurt the Democrats depending on how it fares over the next few months. Political scientists have long recognized that voters develop retrospective evaluations of government and reward or punish individuals or parties depending on whether conditions (and particularly economic conditions) have gotten better or worse. However, research by political scientists Achen and Bartels has found that voters are highly myopic in their evaluations, basing their vote only on economic conditions in the last quarter before the election. Following from this line of reasoning, Democrats will benefit electorally if economic conditions improve over the summer but suffer if economic recovery falters or stagnates.

Lastly, independent voters are likely to move back toward the Republicans in 2010 (in terms of voting patterns), after having moved toward Democrats between 2004 and 2008. One reason for this move is concern over the size of the deficit. A recent Gallup poll found that independents are more concerned with the size of the deficit than either Democratic or Republican identifiers. Recent polls indicate that only 32% of the public approve of Obama's handling of the deficit. Although he is not up for reelection, this sentiment is likely to be transferred to Democratic congressmen.

So what does this mean for the midterm election? It's a near certainty that the Democrats will lose seats but the real question is whether the loss will cost them their majority status or cripple their legislative agenda, even if they maintain a majority. Recent research combining poll results with models of past elections suggests that there is a good chance that the Democrats will lose 50 seats in the House (with a current margin of 257 to 178), which would cost them the majority. Even if they maintain a (razor thin) majority, the prospects for a successful ambitious legislative agenda are small.

## DUG's World

...continued from page 5

As you plan your courses for next year, be sure to check that you are making good progress to completing the major, especially if you will be studying abroad. Juniors are encouraged to petition to graduate by the end of this year. Graduation petition forms are available at the University Registrar's web site: <http://www.registrar.northwestern.edu/graduation/>. You also can find helpful information about the petition process at the Office of Undergraduate Studies and Advising: <http://www.wcas.northwestern.edu/advising/graduation/petitioning.html>. Please feel free to meet with an undergraduate adviser in our Department during his or her office hours to review and sign your petition.

## Commencement Reception

Of course, political science majors who are in their senior year are busy this spring with a different kind of planning—not for the next academic year, but rather for their lives after Northwestern. I wish you all the very best in whatever pursuits you plan and hope that your undergraduate education, including in political science, will serve you well. We want to help you celebrate your achievement and mark the transition to the next phase of your lives with the Department's final event of the spring quarter—our annual Commencement Reception.

The reception will be held on June 19 in Allison Hall immediately following the Commencement ceremony. Graduating seniors and their families will receive invitations to this wonderful event in the coming weeks. The department will present numerous awards and certificates to recognize senior accomplishments—including the Kenneth F. Janda Prize for Best Honor's Thesis and the William M. McGovern Award for Excellence in Scholarship, Leadership, and University Citizenship. We also award certificates for successful completion of the honors program and advanced foreign language study. Please visit the department web site for more information about these awards. Of course, there also will be plenty of good food and drink. Please come celebrate with family, friends, and faculty.

# Terrorists have rights, too.

By Sourav Bhowmick '12

What makes America great, distinguishing it from other nations past and present, is that anyone stepping foot on our soil is protected by the law of the land; the U.S. Constitution protects anyone in our country, citizens or not, with rights. But in a seemingly visceral response, we tend to extinguish the torch of American liberty when it comes to terrorists and their Constitutional guarantees. It may sound unpopular, but rights also apply to terrorists.

By not immediately mirandizing Faisal Shahzad, the would-be Times Square bomber, authorities imply that the Constitutional protection of the Fifth Amendment doesn't apply to a terrorist suspect. But the problem is that a *suspect* can be anyone who fits the casting call for a terrorist, including myself, and is in the wrong place at the wrong time. When under the condition of duress, the command of interrogation, and the effective denial of the right to remain silent, any suspect can be

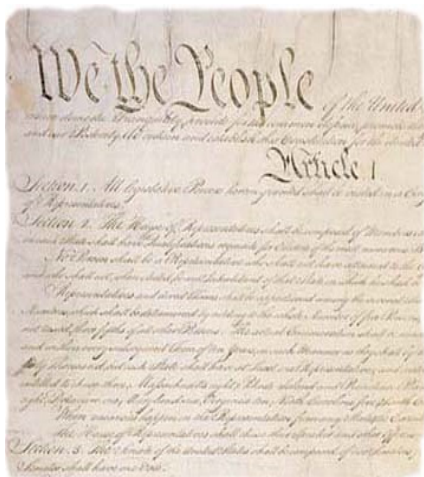
wrongfully incriminated. In doing so, we abandon the presumption of innocence, the principle of due process, and the very foundation of our legal system.

So why can authorities ostensibly deny terrorists their equal protection? In the 1984 case of *New York v. Quarles*, the Supreme Court ruled that a "public safety" exception can be made during which authorities do not have to inform suspects of their rights. Essentially, if the situation poses a danger to the public, police officers can throw away the Constitution. But this raises a question: what kind of crime that warrants arrest *doesn't* compromise the safety of the public? Does this mean that someone wrongly accused of drunk-driving could have their rights taken away in the interest of public safety? If not, then where do we draw the line? Until the public safety exception is clearly defined, it should not be used as a means to justify unjust actions.

Faisal Shahzad, because he is an American citizen, most likely already knew his fifth amendment rights and so mirandizing him would not necessarily have given him information he did not know. Most people can agree that what he is accused of doing was a danger to public safety. Authorities had more than enough reason to believe he was more than a mere suspect. But there's a bigger picture here. The

second we imply that it is acceptable, for whatever reason, to deny any individual on American land the rights to which they are entitled, we start tearing at the fabric that makes our country exceptional.

Wars have been waged, empires have fallen, and untold soldiers have died in defense of a document and the mantra of democracy, so why disregard the very Constitution we have worked so hard to protect? It has been said that after the Constitutional Convention of 1787, Benjamin Franklin was asked exactly what kind of government had been drafted, to which the statesman responded, "A republic, if you can keep it." For over two centuries, we've indeed kept it, but if we allow ourselves to tear at the Constitution, then those two centuries will have been for naught.



Source: [brooklyn.cuny.edu](http://brooklyn.cuny.edu)

# Those Who Hate Illegal Immigration Care the Most

By Jason Rickard '11

If anything, SB1070 proves that those most opposed to illegal immigration in the United States are also the most concerned. The recently passed Arizona bill, put quite simply, is ridiculous. Filled with vague language of “reasonability” and “practicability” the new law allows Arizona state officials, particularly police officers, to verify the immigration status of anyone they find suspicious. Immigrants will be forced to carry their documents with them at all times. Much worse, however, are incidents in which people legally in Arizona do not have their papers or where citizens do not have their identification with them but their status in the US seems suspicious to police officers. Extremely high standards of subjective police officer suspicion aside, it seems likely that people legally in the US will be treated illegally. To put it bluntly, the law will likely lead to harassment of Hispanic Americans, so why is the federal government not doing anything about it?

President Obama is discussing the potential for legal action against Arizona and an outline for a new immigration bill exists in Congress but neither avenue will lead to change. The new bill outline, penned by Senate Majority Leader Reid (D-NV), is very similar to the immigration bill of 2007. At its core the proposal would strengthen border security and in 8 years allow illegal aliens already present in the US to pursue a path to citizenship. Nearly everyone, including Obama, indicates that the bill has no chance of passing or even getting meaningful discussion anytime soon. Congress has a lot on its plate and opposition to liberal immigration reform has only become stronger but neither of these issues is the real problem.

The majority of the nation is in shock over Arizona’s bill but is not interested in immigration reform. The shock is certainly justifiable, but something needed to be done and Arizona did something. Lack of reform on the federal level forces states to take action and sometimes that action is shortsighted and abusive. If the Arizona law is to be stopped, immigration reform

in D.C. needs to get started. The 2007 bill was defeated and Congress is hesitant to take similar action again. However, those who oppose liberal immigration reform are not in the majority but they are certainly the most vocal and involved and this Arizona bill only confirms that.

More concrete support for this conclusion comes in the form of a recent Gallup poll. Forty-five percent of those who may be in favor of SB1070-like legislation on the federal level want Congress to address immigration now. Sadly, only twenty-four percent of those who would like to see less abusive immigration reform want Congress to take action. If we really are disgusted with laws like Arizona’s then we should make the issue a national priority and not just stand around looking shocked.



Source: [u.arizona.edu](http://u.arizona.edu)