



DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF ARTS AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES

FROM THE CHAIR



SOMETIMES WHEN NON-ACADEMIC FRIENDS ASK WHAT my job as department chair is like, I use a home-renovation metaphor: you're always looking forward to undertaking big structural improvements, but day to day things are always getting stuck or falling apart, and you're always so busy with small fixes that there's never much time to think about the big ones. Even when you do have time and energy to tackle some of those big fixes, you can't just start knocking down walls and rebuilding, because you have to live in the house while the work is going on. On top of that, of course, the paymasters won't pay for improvements—or even for routine maintenance, even where that would save lots of money in the long run.

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Those are the usual complaints. 2025-26 has been much tougher than usual, because on top of all that, this year the university administration and provincial government are not just refusing to pay for upkeep of the house, but also jackhammering the foundations and setting fires all over the place. Their decision to lock out faculty members just before the start of the academic year has undermined trust and confidence in the university's "leadership," and the subsequent waves of budget cuts and new administrative burdens has made it much harder to do the things that are supposed to matter most: teaching, research, and collegial governance. It's the kind of discouraging work environment that would drive most people to withdraw and just do the minimum, but department colleagues have remained committed to protecting and improving the programs, and to supporting our students. We're grateful to the students for supporting us during the lock-out, and for working with us to get things back on track after it ended.

Stay Connected

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For information on events within the Faculty or to plan a reunion, visit dal.ca/fass or email fassalum@dal.ca

The other big shock this year was our forced move from the Henry Hicks building to the Marion McCain building. The Hicks building was a bit rough, with asbestos in the walls, leaky windows, and problematic plumbing; but our department had been there since the 1950s, and it was our building, so it was hard to pack up and move. Harder still because the "request" to relocate came right after the lock-out, and the actual move took place between New Year's and the start of the winter term. Sad to say goodbye to the Hicks building, but we are enjoying being closer to colleagues from other FASS departments.

Despite all of this, POLI faculty have been enormously productive over the last year, and you can get a sense of all that they have accomplished in the faculty updates below. Among the highlights: Kiran Banerjee's research chair was renewed, Rachael Johnstone and Scott Pruyers have each submitted new book projects for review, Heather Tasker secured a new research grant, and David Black and Marion Laurence hosted a very successful workshop.

Our students have also had a successful year, despite the chaos following the lock-out and ongoing concerns about the university's future: Recent graduates have moved on to grad school, law school, and dozens of other great opportunities. The undergraduate student society held a very well-attended gala event and successfully launched another issue of The Podium. Again, you can find more details about these accomplishments, and many more, in the pages below.

Once again, I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to the department's admin staff, Tracy Powell and Mary Okwese. Their dedication and hard work have made my time as chair much easier than it might have been, and I continue to rely on their dedication and support.

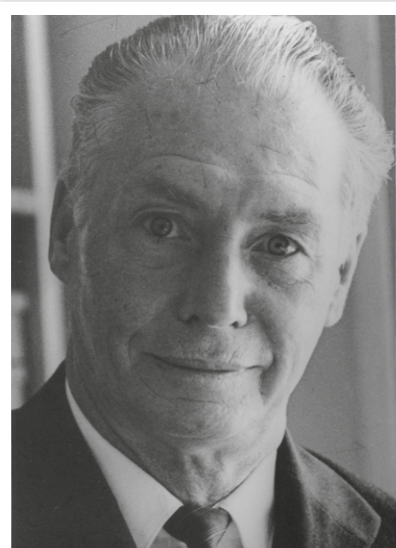
Last but not least, I want to offer thanks to our alumni and donors, whose support is so important to the life of this department. Especially in this time when provincial funding is so tight, your continuing support is indispensable to the success of this program, and it is sincerely appreciated by the whole departmental community.

REMEMBERING JAMES H. AITCHISON

Dr. Brian Bow

WE WERE VERY PLEASED TO HEAR IN THE FALL FROM SAVANNAH SAPIEN-HILL. She and her husband Matt are both Dal alumni, and Savannah's great-grandfather was James H. Aitchison, a former chair of the Political Science department.

After his military service in World War Two, Prof. Aitchison earned a PhD from University of Toronto and taught for Dalhousie from 1949 until 1973. After his retirement, he served as an emeritus professor for another 10 years, and stayed



◀ James H. Aitchison
Source: In the publication *The Lives of Dalhousie University, Vol. 2*, by Peter B. Waite (page 164). Available at the Dalhousie Archives.

connected to the department for many years after that.

Prof. Aitchison was a Canadian Politics specialist, who published a number of books and articles on various aspects of national and local politics. He was also a leader on campus and in the community, serving as the very first president of the Dalhousie Faculty Association, president of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, and chair of the governing council for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Prof. Aitchison was also very active in Nova Scotia politics, serving as president and party leader for the provincial New Democratic Party through most of the 1960s. In recognition of his many accomplishments, his colleagues created a new prize in his honour, for the best Honours

thesis in any given academic year. The Aitchison prize for 2025-26 was awarded to Hannah Schneider, and you can read more about Hannah and her Honours project in another part of this newsletter.

As our department was forced to move out of the Henry Hicks building this year, and there was some old furniture there which was left behind and not likely to find a new home on campus, we were able to secure for Savannah one of the wooden chairs that were in almost every office and classroom back in the 1950s: a memento to celebrate the life and accomplishments of someone who was a very big part of this department, for many years.



▲ James H. Aitchison, taken at a protest organized by Dalhousie students to coincide with major marches in NY and across the continent on April 15, 1967, called Spring Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam. Grand Parade, Halifax – taken prior to the march. Available at the Dalhousie Archives | Photo credit: Stephen Archibald, Dalhousie University Student in the 1960s

OUR FACULTY

CELEBRATING DR. LOUISE CARBERT ON HER RETIREMENT

The Political Science department says farewell this year to Louise Carbert, who is retiring as of June 2026. Prof. Carbert brought an important multi-subdisciplinary perspective to the department, bridging political theory, political behaviour, and Canadian politics. Much of her research was concerned with women's political participation, with particular attention to rural communities. She was active in engaging with government and civil society in these areas, including contributions to the federal Election Boundaries Commission, Equal Voice Nova Scotia, Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, and Vote Compass Nova Scotia. Prof. Carbert taught a wide variety of courses for the department, and created a number of new courses, including "Woman as Citizen" and "Political Behaviour: Reason, Passion, and Biology." She supervised many Honours theses over the years, and was very supportive of the students she mentored, staying in touch with some long after they had graduated. Prof. Carbert was also a reliable colleague who stepped up when called upon to serve, as in her time as POLI's graduate coordinator (2005-10) and, more recently, as the coordinator for the Law Justice and Society program. She will be missed here, and we wish her well in retirement.



DR. PETER ARTHUR continued to Chair the Political Science department's EDIA committee during the 2025/26 academic year.

The committee focused on incorporating EDIA issues into the various aspects of the department's activities as colleagues, educators, and mentors. He also served in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) Professional Development Committee (PDC). Along with this, together with Vanessa Tang, Korbla P. Puplampu and Kobena Hanson, Dr. Arthur coedited a book, *Green Development and Finance in a Globalized Africa*, which was published in March 2026 by Palgrave MacMillan. Additionally, he completed a paper, "Digitalization and Industrialization Africa: Rationale and Influential Forces," which is under peer review with the journal, *Insight on Africa*. He is currently working on a paper "Natural resource extraction and its implications for environmental health and wellbeing in Africa." The paper would be published in a book, *Environmental Health and Agenda 2030 in Africa: Critical Perspectives*, which is being edited by Korbal Puplampu, Louis Awanyo, and Fredrick Armah. Aside from his own research work, he supervised the thesis of a master's student, in the International Development Studies, as well as an undergraduate thesis in the College of Sustainability. Both students successfully completed their theses and would be graduating from Dalhousie University in the Spring of 2026. Finally, Dr. Arthur served as an external examiner for a number of graduate theses at the University of Ghana, Legon, as well as at York University, Toronto.



DR. KIRAN BANERJEE – My academic year began in the midst of a research leave that had me visiting the University of Toronto as a

Faculty Fellow at the Centre for Ethics. In addition to presenting ongoing research during this fellowship, I also produced and published several scholarly articles, including in a special issue of *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* that I also co-edited, provided media interviews, as well as conducted field research on refugee policy overseas. My research leave was interrupted by the decision of the University Administration at Dalhousie University to lock out all faculty members, in an attempt to impose the Dalhousie Faculty Association to accept an unfair contract on the faculty. This was an action unprecedented in Dalhousie's history and indeed for any U15 University in Canada. The Board of Governors decision to force the faculty at Dalhousie into a drawn-out labor action significantly disrupted not only the research activities of the University, but also greatly impacted students, delaying the term by several weeks and causing students to lose a significant time in the classroom. However, students rallied in support of their teachers, and the faculty came together to press the Administration for a fair resolution, bringing together the Dalhousie community in a way that left me very proud to be part of Dalhousie University. With the resolution of the lock-out I was delighted to receive news of the renewal of the Canada Research Chair I hold, as well as learn that I had been invited to take up the Sallows Chair in Human Rights in the College of Law at the University of Saskatchewan for the next academic year. With the resumption of teaching at Dalhousie, I was glad to be teaching

Continued on next page

OUR FACULTY *cont'd*

the second-year undergraduate course *Revolution and Rationality: Foundations of Political Thought*, where I had an incredibly engaged and thoughtful cohort of students to work through a series of challenging and important texts; I was also glad to contribute to a variety of service roles at the University as well as advance research on projects that are part of the Canada First Research Excellence Fund grant, the largest in Dalhousie history, on which I also serve on the Research Advisory Committee. As this academic year comes to a close, I would like to express my thanks to the staff and colleagues in the Department of Political Science, as well as the students in my classes.

DR. DAVID BLACK



Dr. David Black spent the fall semester enjoying his final half-sabbatical, including research trips to South Korea and South Africa. His travel to Korea supported current work on middle powers in an era of world order ferment, and included two talks at Yonsei University in Seoul and one at National Jeonbuk University in Jeonju. Travel to South Africa was principally for his work with the South African country team of the Engendering Disability-Inclusive Development (EDID) project but also coincided with the G20 Summit in Johannesburg – the first ever in Africa and the first ever with the United States boycotting! He continues to research and write on disability and development, the changing role of middle powers in a time of international uncertainty, Canadian involvement in Africa, and sport in international relations; and to enjoy meeting new generations of students!



DR. BRIAN BOW

had a long and tiring year as department chair. He's also been working on a new paper on Trumpism and American

ideas about global leadership, and early set-up work for a larger research and training project on cyber policy.



DR. ROBERT FINBOW'S

year faced disruption from the lockout and forced relocation of the department – displacing him from

a building he arrived at 50 years ago as an undergraduate. Alongside his courses, he spent much time sorting and disposing of years of research and teaching materials. He also was caregiver through family surgeries. He acted as director of JMEUCE during Ruben's sabbatical in winter term. When time permitted, he revised his work on populist obstacles to CETA ratification in Europe for publication in CJERS. He researched PM Carney's transatlantic outreach on economic and security collaboration and presented this to the Trade and Investment Review Project. His chapter on "Halifax" in *City Politics in Canada*, 2nd ed. was published by the U of T Press. He contributed an item on "CETA" in the *Elgar Encyclopedia of International Economic Law*. He also welcomed Dr. Noah Fry on a Killam postdoctoral fellowship. Noah is studying Buy Canadian policies in the context of trade agreements like CETA.



DR. KRISTIN GOOD

continues her work as pillar lead of the multilevel governance pillar of the Canadian Municipal Barometer (CMB)

project, which is funded by a seven-year SSHRC Partnership Grant. She has been collaborating with CMB team member, Dr. Chadwick Cowie (U of T), on several projects related to municipal-Indigenous relations. Dr. Good is also continuing work funded by a SSHRC Insight Grant (2022) called "The Local Democracy Project" and is currently working on a book on the Halifax Regional Municipality election (2024) with Dr. Zachary Taylor (Principal Investigator).



DR. RACHAEL JOHNSTONE

This fall marked my first semester as an associate professor (!) and a period of progress in both research

and student engagement.

I submitted my SSHRC-funded book manuscript on family-friendly parliaments in Canada, *Baby Steps? Towards Family Friendly Parliaments*, for peer review. This book expands on my recent article in the *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, which was kindly singled out in Jonathan Malloy's 2025 Canadian Political Science Association's (CPSA) Presidential Address as a "mind-opening" contribution to debates on the future of Canadian institutionalism. I'm excited to be so close to making this project, and the moving contributions of my interviewees – representatives who either gave birth or had young children while in office – public.

This year also marked my second as Stanfield Fellow for the annual Stanfield Conversations. In this role, I am charged with facilitating a Master Class, an advanced seminar that brings graduate students in direct conversation with our invited speakers. Through a partnership

with the Trudeau Foundation, we were able to expand the event to include students from across Canada, including Trudeau scholars. This was also the inaugural year of a two-day graduate symposium on democracy, affording students the opportunity to present both polished and developing research, for which the Master Class now serves as the final session.



It has been another busy and rewarding year for **DR. MARION LAURENCE** on both the teaching front and the research front.

She taught a variety of courses on international relations, security studies, foreign policy, and qualitative research methods. In January 2026, she also took on the role of Acting Director of the Centre for the Study of Security and Development, which has provided exciting opportunities to connect with students and colleagues from within the department and across the university. In this capacity, she helped organize a series of events, including a roundtable discussion at the law school with Alex Neve, the former Secretary General of Amnesty International; a panel on US intervention in Venezuela; and the 2026 Glyn Berry Roundtable, which centred on the Prime Minister Mark Carney's high-profile remarks at the World Economic Forum in Davos earlier this year.

On the research front, her co-authored book, *Norms, Practices, and Social Change in Global Politics*, was published by Cambridge University Press in May 2025. She also completed a solo-authored piece on methodological pluralism in peacekeeping research that will be published in *International Peacekeeping*, as well as two book chapters that build on previous work about the evolving role of norms and ideas in international organizations.

In addition, she and the CSSD team have just finished hosting a research workshop at Dalhousie about future of Security

Force Assistance (SFA), the practice of providing training and professional development to security forces in conflict-affected states. The workshop brought together a distinguished group of international experts and experienced practitioners for two days of discussion about dilemmas and opportunities related to SFA, especially in the context of heightened strategic competition. This project is supported by a Targeted Engagement Grant from the Department of National Defence's Mobilizing Insights in National Defence and Security (MINDS) program, and it will yield both scholarly publications and policy-oriented outputs for DND and the Canadian Armed Forces.



DR. SCOTT PRUYERS spent the 2025-2026 year on his first sabbatical. While on leave he made considerable progress on two

major projects. First, he completed and submitted a draft of his book, *From Ambition to Nomination: The Political Pipeline in Canada*, to UBC Press for review. Second, along with co-authors, he completed a project for the Cambridge Elements in Political Psychology series on the role of antagonistic personality (narcissism, Machiavellianism, etc.) traits in understanding fundamental political behaviours participation and turnout, as well as normatively troubling attitudes such as support for political violence. Dr. Pruyers is looking forward to the fall where he will be serving as the Department's Graduate Coordinator.



DR. HEATHER TASKER had a challenging and fulfilling year. A 2025/2026 high point was working with students in the Political Science

graduate program and the Law, Justice & Society honours cohort. It was so

rewarding to see interesting projects take shape and to support talented students along their research journeys. Dr. Tasker's research agenda has continued to develop with the launch of the SSHRC-funded RESPONDER partnership and through ongoing collaborations with academic and civil society colleagues researching conflict-related gendered violence and transitional justice. This summer, Dr. Tasker is looking forward to prepping two new courses, working on her book (finally!), and spending lots of time outdoors.

DR. RUBEN ZAIOTTI



Professor Zaiotti studying science on the set of the *Big Bang Theory* show, Warner Bros. Studios, Los Angeles

The 2025–2026 academic year has been a lively mix of teaching, big research projects, and an eventful half-sabbatical spent on the US West Coast. Before going south (geographically, not figuratively...), I kept up my commitment to co-teaching the introductory course to the social sciences offered by FASS. In it, I continued to experiment with new teaching tools and more interactive strategies to keep first year students engaged—and, ideally, happy—while they find their footing in the university.

A big part of my time also went into preparing two major European Union-funded grant proposals: one for a Chair in Border Control and another for the Dal-based European Union Centre of Excellence. Both were

Continued on next page

major undertakings, involving lots of coordination, writing, and refining. I'll find out the results this summer, so fingers crossed! From January to May, I stepped away for a sabbatical and served as the Fulbright Canada Research Chair at the Centre for Public Diplomacy at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. It was an energizing stretch of time—I connected with local scholars, expanded my network, and shared my ongoing work on digital diplomacy with new audiences. All in all, it's been a busy year with lots of movement, new ideas, and great people I interacted with along the way.



POLI faculty, staff, and students gathered to celebrate the end of the fall term together before moving to the Marion McCain building

KILLAM POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

Dr. Noah Fry

I JOINED THE DEPARTMENT AS A KILLAM Postdoctoral Fellow in September. In that time, I've gotten to meet the department's wonderful scholars, students and staff, attend events hosted by Jean Monnet Centre, and present my own work. With a background in Canadian and North American trade policy, my research investigates Canadian industrial (and inclusive) responses to a declining RBIO. My current project examines social procurement strategies – like Buy Canadian – against international trade obligations. This year, I've started writing a monograph on that very subject for Fernwood Press. Since September, I've had work published in journals like *Studies in Political Economy*, *Public Policy and Administration*, *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, and *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*. I have also been active in providing media commentary and policy advice on Buy Canadian, including for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.



THE 2025 STANFIELD CONVERSATIONS: CHALLENGES TO THE RULE OF LAW AND FUTURE OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

Dr. Rachael Johnstone

THIS YEAR'S STANFIELD CONVERSATION focused on challenges to the rule of law and the future of liberal democracy. Moderated by CBC Ideas producer and Dal Political Science alum Mary Lynk, the 2025 event featured the reflections of Asha Rangappa, Senior Lecturer at Yale's Jackson School of Global Affairs and former FBI Special Agent and Wayne MacKay, Professor Emeritus of Law, Schulich School of Law. Together, they discussed the vital role the rule of law continues to play in sustaining democracy.

The fifth annual Conversation took place before a live audience at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium, with many more joining virtually on livestream. Through our ongoing partnership with the CBC, the event reached a national radio audience, with much of the Conversation broadcast on CBC Ideas. The Stanfield Conversation on Democracy is now a fixture on the Dalhousie calendar, with a steadily growing national profile.

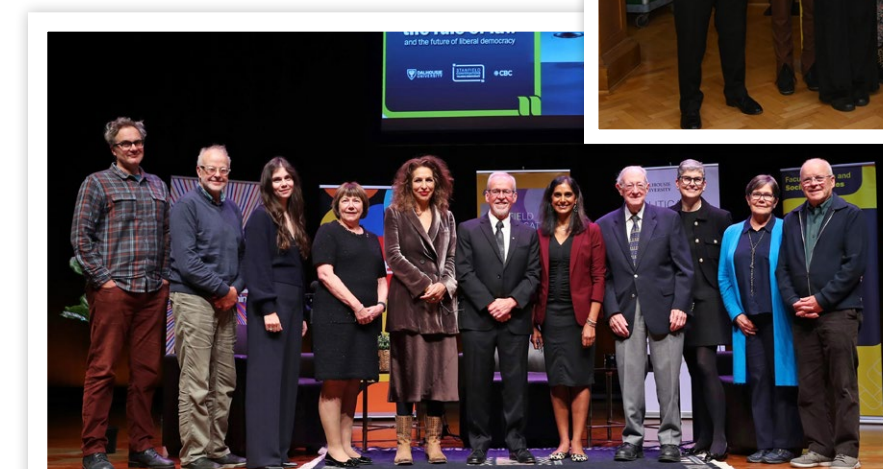
2025 also marked the second year of a three-year partnership with the Trudeau Foundation, aimed at expanding the reach of our Master Class, an advanced seminar in which graduate students engage directly with our speakers. Previously, this event was limited to Dalhousie graduate students, but now includes students from across Canada, including Trudeau Scholars. This year, we were able to offer more opportunities for graduate students with the addition of a two-day graduate symposium on democracy, culminating in the Master Class.



Graduate Student Master Class
Wayne MacKay, Brian Bow, Rachael Johnstone, Asha Rangappa



Graduate Student Master Class
Graduate Students, Wayne MacKay and Asha Rangappa



Stanfield Conversations Event

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Marion Laurence, Acting Director

WITH THE CENTRE'S REGULAR

director, Dr. Leah Sarson, on leave, it has been a pleasure to step in as Acting Director of CSSD. The role has already provided many welcome opportunities to connect with students and colleagues from within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and across the university, as well as partner organizations in the community. Despite the disrupted start to the fall semester, the Centre has succeeded in organizing a range of lively and well-attended events, many of which grappled directly with the dramatic changes currently taking place in international politics, and in the fields of global security and development.

In January, CSSD co-hosted an event titled, [Universal: Renewing Human Rights in a Fractured World](#), with partners from the Schulich School of Law, the Department of International Development Studies, and the Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace, and Security. Moderated by CBC's Jeff Douglas, the roundtable included opening remarks from Alex Neve O.C., former Secretary-General of Amnesty International Canada, based on his CBC Massey Lectures. It then featured a panel discussion with Kristan Belanger (Schulich School of Law), Tareq Hadhad (Peace by Chocolate) and Tanha Tanjila (Department of International Development Studies) and POLI's very own Dr. Heather Tasker.

In mid-March, the Centre organized an interdisciplinary panel titled, [The Donroe Doctrine: Do US Actions in Venezuela Signal a New Precedent in Hemispheric Intervention?](#) The panel brought together Dr. Talan Iscan from the Department of Economics, Dr. Isaac Saney from Black and African Diaspora Studies, and Dr. Marion Laurence from the Department of Political Science. Together, they unpacked the social, political, and economic implications of the US government's clandestine military operation in January 2026 to arrest and remove Venezuelan President Nicolás

Maduro. The panel was spearheaded and very ably chaired by Thomas MacEachen, a practicum student completing a placement with CSSD as part of POLI 4390, and by Thomas McGowan, a reservist who has been supporting CSSD's work.



CSSD Glyn Berry Event

In April, the Centre hosted the annual [Glyn Berry Roundtable](#), in partnership with the Canadian International Council (Halifax Branch) and the MacEachen Institute for Public Policy and Governance at Dalhousie. Titled [Life After Davos: Canada's Role in a 'Post-Rupture' World Order](#), the roundtable featured insightful contributions from Dr. Leigh Spanner of Saint Mary's University, Dr. Jamie Levin, and Dr. Asa McKercher, both from St. Francis Xavier University. The roundtable was well-attended by students and community members alike. The speakers critically examined what many are now calling the "Carney Doctrine," and rich discussion ensued about how Canada can (or should) reimagine its foreign policy in response to profound challenges to global order.

This was followed few weeks later by, [Conversations with the Diplomatic Corps](#), an event co-hosted with the Department of Political Science and Canadian International Council (Halifax Branch). With a delegation of 50 Heads of Mission accredited to Canada visiting Halifax from around the world, the event offered a unique networking opportunity and a chance to learn from a moderated panel with Heads of Mission from Costa Rica,

South Africa and Malaysia.

Last, but certainly not least, the CSSD team just wrapped up a two-day workshop on security force assistance (SFA), the practice of providing training and professional development to security forces in conflict-affected states. The workshop was held on campus from May 6-8th and it brought together a distinguished group of international experts and experienced practitioners for two days of discussion about dilemmas and opportunities related to SFA, especially in the context of heightened strategic competition. This project is supported by a Targeted Engagement Grant from the Department of National Defence's Mobilizing Insights in National Defence and Security (MINDS) program. Over the summer months, the CSSD team will be turning their attention towards producing workshop outputs, including scholarly publications and policy-oriented outputs for DND and the Canadian Armed Forces.



CSSD SFA Workshop

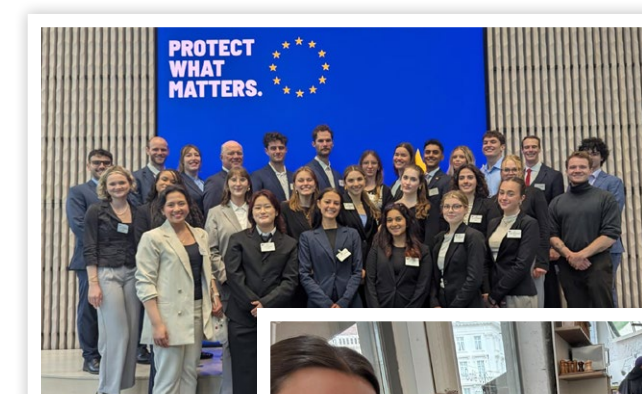
Finally, special thanks are due to Administrative Secretary Mary Okwesie, graduate research assistant Cora Fletcher, and the Department of Political Science for their support in making it all possible. Stay tuned for updates on more exciting events being planned for the fall!

JEAN MONNET EUROPEAN UNION CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE: ACTIVITIES 2025-2026

Madeleine Coffen-Smout, Centre Coordinator

OVER THE LAST YEAR, THE JMEUCE

continued to be a focal point for academic, networking and outreach activities relating to the EU, while also navigating the DFA lockout, the Centre's relocation – ironically back to its former home at 1376 LeMarchant Street – and the Director's sabbatical (ably covered by Deputy Director, Bob Finbow). Highlights included a documentary screening (rough-cut) on [Welcoming Ukrainian Refugees in Europe: The Case of Romania](#), followed by a discussion with filmmakers Raluca Bejan and Ioan Cocan. The Speaker Series featured guest lecturers from Europe, with Mikhail Polianskii from the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt presenting on [Invisible Invasion? Europe's Counterstrategies Against Russia's Hybrid Playbook](#), while a collaboration with Dalhousie's Department of Economics brought Nicolas Schutz of the University of Mannheim to lecture on [Dual Pricing in a Model of Sales](#), with reference to the European Commission.



Student-focused activities included provision of support for research and mobility. This year's winner of the EU Essay Competition was Emma Fay – congratulations! – and a bumper crop of five Political Science students are participating in the EU Study Tour: Joao Verreschi, Savannah Harding, Victoria Strom, Breanna Gordon and Isabella Gualtieri, the last two of whom are also staying on for the optional Internship Programme with positions at the DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture and DG Environment respectively.

HONOURS PROGRAM

Dr. Anders Hayden, Honours Coordinator

This year's cohort of Honours students included eight talented and hard-working students. They faced the additional challenge this year of starting their projects late due to the lockout, but they all managed

to produce high-quality work despite the condensed timeline. The James H. Aitchison Award for the best overall thesis was awarded to Hannah Schneider, while Mira Posluns won the Eric Dennis Gold Med-

al for the Honours student with the highest GPA over the four-year degree program. Thanks to all those who served as supervisors and second readers, and to Tracy Powell for her administrative support.

THE 2025-26 HONOURS COHORT AND THEIR THESIS PROJECTS

MADELEINE DIGBY, "*Did They Stop Saying the F-word? Feminist Foreign Policies in a Changing World*" (supervisor Brian Bow, second reader Marion Laurence)

AVA HARPER, "*Examining a Paradox: Understanding Alberta's Political Identity*" (supervisor Katherine Fierlbeck, second reader Louise Carbert)

ERIN KELLEY, "*Adapt or Succumb: Drones and the Limits of Power in Asymmetric Warfare*" (supervisor Ruben Zaiotti, second reader David Black)

MIRA POSLUNS, "*Can We Get Moving?: Examining Inhibiting and Enabling Factors of Accessible Transportation in Southern Ontario and Nova Scotia*" (supervisor David Black, second reader Kristin Good)

HANNAH SCHNEIDER, "*Whose Foreign Policy Stories are Canadian News Organizations Telling? Examining U.S. Newswire Dependence, Foreign Policy Divergence, and Coverage of International Military Deployments*" (supervisor Marion Laurence, second reader Ruben Zaiotti)



POLI Honours cohort at the DUPSS Annual Gala

SAMANTHA SHERMAN, "*The U.S. Government-Supported AI Boom Under Trump: A Question of National Interest, Corruption or Technofascism*" (supervisor Brian Bow, second reader David Black)

ISABELLA STEFEK, "*Policy Promises vs. Workplace Realities: Examining Canada's Federal Workplace Equality Laws and Gender-Based Discrimination*"

(supervisor Rachael Johnstone, second reader Heather Tasker)

ELLA YOUNG, "*Not All the Same: A Comparative Health Policy Analysis Between Canada's Three Territories*" (supervisor Katherine Fierlbeck, second reader Robert Huish from International Development Studies)

JAMES H. AITCHISON AWARD FOR BEST HONOURS THESIS

Hannah Schneider, BA: Honours in Political Science with a Minor in Journalism Studies (2026)

I AM GRATEFUL TO BE THIS YEAR'S JAMES H. AITCHISON AWARD RECIPIENT.

Completing and defending my thesis, alongside my peers in this year's honours cohort, was a challenging, eye-opening, and rewarding process, and I am honored to be recognized among such talented and supportive classmates. This experience was positively shaped by my supervisor, Dr. Marion Laurence, to whom I owe many thanks for her patient support, continuous insight, and frequent encouragement to think critically about my research design. I would also like to thank Dr. Anders Hayden for his feedback and efforts as our honours coordinator, and Dr. Ruben Zaiotti for serving as my second reader while on sabbatical. I am also deeply grateful to my friends and family, particularly my parents, for their constant support.

I chose to study political science at Dalhousie out of a natural curiosity to understand the world around me and a desire to make politics and public policy more accessible. While dense policy documents and government bureaucracy often shape political life, these structures directly impact people's everyday lives and the communities we live in. This curiosity was further shaped by my early undergraduate coursework, and it was after Dr. Brian Bow's first-year International Relations course that I was set on studying the discipline.

During my undergraduate degree, I developed a strong interest in international politics and foreign policy, an area that has taken on renewed significance amid changes in the international system. In particular, my more specific interests were shaped by some of my favorite Dalhousie POLI courses, including Canadian Foreign Policy, Contemporary Security Studies, and Foreign Policy in Theory and Practice.



These interests, alongside a passion for journalism, informed my thesis topic, which explores how Canadian newsrooms' declining capacity for international reporting and growing reliance on international newswire services may shape public understanding and awareness of Canadian foreign policy. The project is grounded in the idea that strong democratic engagement depends on accessible and informed political communication.

This fall, I am moving to Vancouver to continue my studies in the MA Political Science program at the University of British Columbia. This spring, I returned to my hometown of Hamilton, Ont., where I am

currently working as a journalist at The Hamilton Spectator through its summer internship program. These opportunities would not have been possible without the education and support I received from the faculty and staff in Dalhousie's political science department, as well as my classmates and friends, who made the last four years in Halifax my most memorable yet.

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM NEWS



2025-26 UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AWARD/PRIZE WINNERS

MIRA POSLUNS, BA: Honours in Political Science (Kings), has been awarded the Eric Dennis Gold Medal. Founded by Senator William Dennis and Mrs. Dennis, this medal is awarded upon graduation to the student who stands first among those taking First Class Honours in Government and Political Science. This is the University Medal in Political Science.

MARIASHA MENDEL, BA: Major in Political Science and Philosophy with a Minor in International Dev Studies, has been awarded the Commonwealth Political Science Prize. This prize is awarded annually to the student who receives the highest grade in Political Science POLI 2410 and POLI 2420. The Commonwealth Prize was established by John Beveridge, who graduated from Dalhousie University in 1971.

ELLA COZENS, BSC: Medical Sciences & Undergraduate Certificate: Medical Humanities, has been awarded The H.B. McCulloch Memorial Prize. This prize is awarded annually to the student who, among all the first- and second-year students registered in introductory classes in Political Science, is judged to have written the best essay in the second term.

HANNAH SCHNEIDER, BA: Honours in Political Science with a Minor in Journalism Studies, has been awarded The James H. Aitchison Award. In 1979, Colleagues of Dr. J.H. Aitchison established a fund from which an annual prize would be awarded in recognition of the best undergraduate Honours essay. The fund was established to honour Professor Aitchison, who was instrumental in founding the department.

JEOPARDY CLASS CUP

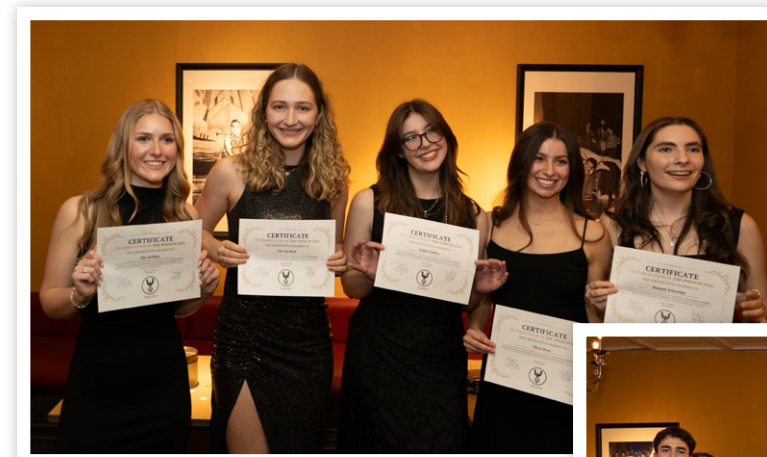
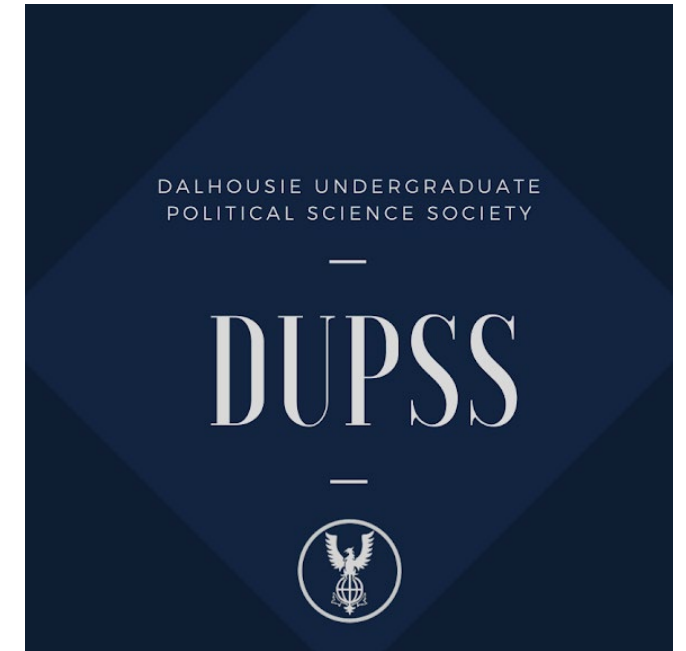
The fall term of POLI 1060 wrapped up with the inaugural POLI 1060 Jeopardy Class Cup. The class was divided into three teams, each led by a nominated captain: Rose Kennedy, Laura MacFarland, and Ruben Segal. After several gruelling and intense sessions, Team Ruben Segal came out on top! Ruben Segal is shown accepting the trophy from Darryl Eisan (Instructor) on behalf of his teammates.



THE DALHOUSIE UNDERGRADUATE POLITICAL SCIENCE SOCIETY

Isabella Stefek, President

THE 2024/2025 SCHOOL YEAR PROVED TO BE AN EXCITING one for the Dalhousie Undergraduate Political Science Society (DUPSS). Last spring at the AGM, we bid farewell to several valued members who graduated and moved on to different endeavours, including law school and master's programs abroad. However, the Fall AGM was a great success, with our general council growing to over forty members! The society was active beyond our bi-weekly meetings: we hosted trivia at the Grawood, held weekly study sessions in the lounge, and organized headshot fundraisers during both semesters, donating 100% of our proceeds to the Elizabeth Fry Society during the Winter session. Our initiatives, the Dalhousie Political Networking Initiative (DPNI) and the Alumni Networking Initiative, also flourished. This year marked significant growth for the society: our gala was nearly triple the size it was last year, with 90 attendees at the Atlantica Hotel. The students published in our undergraduate journal, The Podium, were celebrated at the gala. On behalf of DUPSS, I want to extend a huge thank you to the department for their unwavering support. Student societies bring so much life to campus, and I am forever grateful for having joined the society three years ago. I am confident that DUPSS will continue to maintain an important presence on campus and provide a vital space for engaged students to forge new friendships and collaborate to create opportunities for political science students. All the best to the incoming council!



DALHOUSIE WOMEN IN POLITICS (WIP) STUDENT SOCIETY

Marley Price, President

WOMEN IN POLITICS HAD A YEAR OF TREMENDOUS GROWTH, CONNECTION AND IMPACT.

We kicked off the 2025–26 academic year by raising nearly \$6,000 at our WiP & Sip Fall Social, with all proceeds going towards the continuation of the Women in Politics Scholarship and Society.

Among many other events, we hosted two community roundtables: one on the politics of birth control (in partnership with the Dalhousie Women's Health Society) and another on navigating friendships and relationships with men through a feminist lens.

In partnership with the MacEachen Institute for Public Policy (MIPP), we held the MIPP x WIP Women in Public Policy Panel, featuring Heather MacDougall, Ronnie Noonan-Birch, Lisa Roberts and MLAs Lisa Lachance and Suzy Hansen, moderated by Trina Roache, MA.

To close the semester, WIP members were recognized at Province House during member statements for International Women's Day by Iain Rankin, MLA, receiving a standing ovation for our contributions to advancing women's leadership in politics.

Congratulations to Sophia Tallboy (President), Kyra Kirkpatrick (Vice President), and the incoming 2026–27 executive team! If you're interested in advancing gender parity in politics across Dalhousie, Nova Scotia and Canada, [please fill out this form](#) to join us as a general member for 2026–27.

We are incredibly excited for next year and hope to see you again soon!



WOMEN IN POLITICS SCHOLARSHIP

THE WOMEN IN POLITICS SCHOLARSHIP was established in September 2020 through the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, by Sarah Dobson, a Dalhousie Political Science and Law graduate, and Grace Evans, then a current Political Science student. The Women in Politics Scholarship supports the next generation of women-identifying students in the field by encouraging and inspiring their career aspirations. This award is given annually to two students who have identified as female or gender diverse, have declared a Political Science major, and have completed the second or third year of study. Students must describe their record of community involvement in advancing the presence and leadership of women in politics; this may include (but not limited to) leadership, community or student society engagement, education, sports, work experience, or volunteering. We are pleased to announce that the 2026 recipients of this scholarship are:

SOPHIA TALLBOY, BA: Major in Political Science with a Minor in International Dev Studies

AMASHI WASALA, BA: Major in Political Science



GRADUATE PROGRAM NEWS

Dr. Kristin Good, Graduate Coordinator

THIS YEAR'S COHORT OF GRADUATE STUDENTS participated in a number of departmental events and even international conferences. One milestone was the three-minute thesis (3MT) competition held at the end of term. Two students were declared winners this year for their first-rate, highly engaging presentations: Alexia Koutoulas (MA) for her work entitled "Beyond the Youth Bulge: A Decolonial Analysis of Youth Political Agency in Somalia" and Stella Oliver (PhD) for her early PhD dissertation work entitled "Getting People to Care: Sustaining Equitable Environmental Co-governance in Settler Colonial States."

Three successful defences were held: Jekobe Craig, MA ["What They Do in the Shadows: Understanding How and Why States Engage in Proxy Wars.]; Cora Fletcher, MA ["Deployed to the Sidelines: Analyzing Opportunities and Constraints on Women's Meaningful Participation in MONUSCO,"] and Xinyu Gong, PhD ["Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: Navigating China's Approach in the South China Sea from 2009 to 2024"]. Cora Fletcher was awarded the Governor General's Gold Medal Award in Humanities and Social Sciences for 2026 (selected by an FGS Prize panel as the most outstanding master's graduate in FASS).

We look forward to welcoming our incoming cohort of graduate students in September which includes five MA students: Avery Beattie; Nikolas Kymlicka; Drew Patterson; Josh Sobrecaray; and Frank Yeboah. We will also welcome two "new" PhD students - Joao Verreschi (who is transferring from the MA program) and Cora Fletcher (mentioned above).



Alexia Koutoulas presenting at the POLI three-minute thesis (3MT) competition



Cora Fletcher receiving the Governor General's Gold Medal Award from Dr. Jen Andrews, FASS Dean

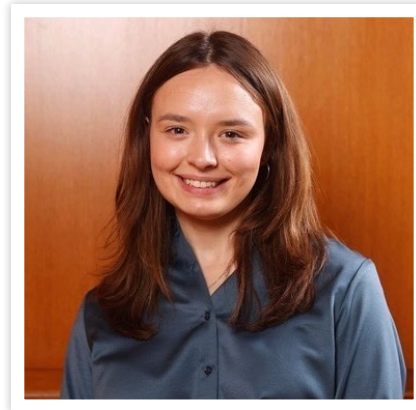
Xinyu Gong receiving his PhD degree at the spring convocation

THE DORIS BOYLE GRADUATE PRIZE WINNER

JOAO VERRESCHI has been awarded the **Doris Boyle Prize for Best Graduate Essay**. The prize is awarded for the best essay written by a graduate student in International Relations. Doris Boyle served for many years as Administrative Secretary of the Centre for the Study of Security and Development (formerly Centre for Foreign Policy Studies), from its creation in 1971 until her retirement. The prize was created by faculty and research staff of the Centre to honour her contributions to the activities of the Centre.

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S GOLD MEDAL IN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Cora Fletcher, MA (Spring 2026) and PhD Candidate (Sept-2026)



I AM TRULY HONOURED, GRATEFUL, AND PROUD to be this year's recipient of the Governor General's Gold Medal in Humanities and Social Sciences. Reflecting on my academic journey to this point, I never would have imagined receiving such a remarkable honour, and this award feels like the culmination of an incredible year of hard work, challenges, and opportunities. The whole experience still feels surreal.

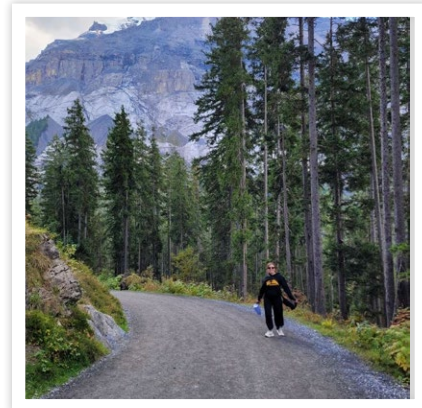
The 2025–2026 academic year was truly unlike any other and filled with new experiences. This year, I attended and presented at my first academic conference, experienced my first academic workshop, delivered my first guest lecture, and successfully defended my MA thesis.

The fall term was particularly busy and rewarding. In September, I had the opportunity to travel to Geneva for a three-day workshop with the RESPONDER Network, a major collaborative research initiative examining humanitarian responder-perpetrated sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in conflict-affected settings. In October, I presented my MA research at the Women, Peace and Security Conference 2025: From Policy to Practice, in Ottawa. Attending the conference was an incredible experience, and I am deeply grateful to the CSSD, the Dallaire Institute, and the Department of Political Science for supporting my participation through a

travel grant. Their support made it possible for me to share my research and engage in important debates surrounding the WPS Agenda and its future.

At the centre of this year's accomplishments was completing my MA research, which developed an assessment framework to measure opportunities for women's meaningful participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations. This research allowed me to combine my interests in gender and security while contributing to conversations about equality and the effectiveness of international peacekeeping. Seeing this work recognized externally through the Governor General's Gold Medal was an incredibly rewarding and humbling experience.

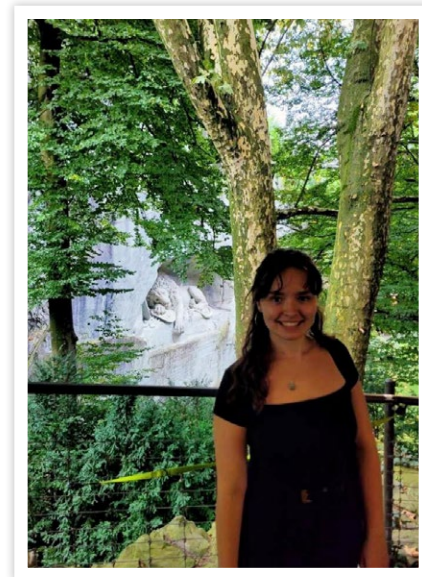
None of this would have been possible without the support of my network of expectational people. While it would be impossible to thank everyone individually, I am especially grateful to the members of my MA committee — Dr. David Black, Dr. Heather Tasker, and Dr. Marion Laurence for their guidance and mentorship — as well as Dr. Kristen Good, my friends, and my family for their unwavering encouragement and support.



As remarkable as this year has been, I am even more excited for what comes next. This summer, I will present my MA research at the 2026 Annual Confer-

ence of the Academic Council of the United Nations System in Lisbon, Portugal, while continuing my work as a research assistant on several projects. In September, I will begin my PhD under the supervision of Dr. Heather Tasker. My doctoral research will explore responder-perpetrated SEA in South Sudan and its impact on the legitimacy and effectiveness of international peacebuilding efforts.

Overall, this year has been incredibly meaningful, and I am deeply grateful for all the opportunities, mentorship, and recognition I received along the way. I look forward to the challenges and opportunities ahead and am excited to continue pursuing research that I care deeply about.



GLYN BERRY SCHOLAR

Christian Akubueze, PhD Candidate

OH, HOW TIME FLIES! It has been almost a year since I wrote my debut newsletter, and I am back again. A lot has happened since the last one, and these experiences have been very rewarding. My first year in the program was unexpectedly delayed due to the labour action, but once we finally got started, it was a wild ride – both challenging and rewarding – as we worked to make up for lost time.

My first year in the PhD program has been marked by numerous successes. I have successfully fulfilled my course requirements. In addition, I completed three TA positions: one in the Fall semester with Dr. Rachael Johnstone, and two in the Winter semester with Dr. Kiran Banerjee and Dr. Rachael Johnstone. Balancing these responsibilities alongside my coursework has been an extraordinarily rewarding experience, as it has allowed me to demonstrate my ability to maintain strong academic performance while fulfilling demanding roles. This was made possible in large part by the instructors,

whose patience and support enabled me to carry out my TA duties effectively.

Another highlight of this academic year was presenting my working PhD dissertation at the Stanfield Student Symposium on Democracy, as well as delivering a 3MT presentation in my Research Methods class. Both experiences were highly rewarding, as I received meaningful feedback from faculty members and colleagues at this early stage of my PhD dissertation.

I am very excited as I head into the 2026/2027 academic year. Having received a confirmation of the renewal of the Glyn Berry Scholarship, I am filled with deep honour and gratitude to the Berry family for sustaining this esteemed award and upholding Dr. Berry's legacy. The Glyn R. Berry Memorial Scholarship holds great significance, and I am truly honoured to have my name associated with it. I would also like to thank the Berry family for their kind and encouraging letter – it is deeply appreciated.



I look forward to what the 2026/27 academic year brings, especially with my major and minor comprehensive exams coming up this Fall. This summer provides an important opportunity to prepare thoroughly and approach these exams in the best possible condition.

AMERICAN GRADUATE SCHOOL CONFERENCE

Alexia Koutoulas, MA Candidate and Pyper Lane, MA Candidate

ON APRIL 17, 2026, MA STUDENTS ALEXIA KOUTOULAS AND PYPER LANE presented their thesis research at the American Graduate School's (AGS) annual graduate student conference in Paris, France. They would like to thank the Dalhousie Department of Political Science, the Centre for the Study of Security and Development, and the Dallaire Institute for their generous support, making their attendance at this conference possible. Alexia presented her work entitled Youth as Changemakers: A Somali Case Study. Her research explores the relationship between colonial and nation-

al interests from during the pre-and-post independence era in Africa, with a particular focus on youth development. Pyper presented her work entitled Competing Approaches to the Protection of Civilians: An Analysis of MONUSCO and its Force Intervention Brigade. Her research explores militarization in the context of United Nations approaches to the protection of civilians during peacekeeping operations. Both presentations provoked engaging and meaningful discussions during the Q&A, making the conference an insightful and productive experience.



KEENS-MORDEN SCHOLARSHIP

Alexia Koutoulas, MA Candidate

I AM EXTREMELY GRATEFUL THAT I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO receive the Keens-Morden Scholarship upon entering the MA program this year. Thanks to the late Reid and Margaret (Keens) Morden and their generosity, I was able to pursue my degree without financial worry.

Amidst a precarious start to the school year with the faculty lock-out and having to condense four months of course work into three, semester one was stressful, albeit exciting. Although, the stressful aspect was largely subdued thanks to Dr. Kristin Good. She has my deepest thanks and admiration for believing in me and ensuring that I put my best work forward – I could not have imagined a better year without her support. A similar thank you goes out to our small, but mighty, cohort. I am extremely lucky to have been a part of such a friendly, and intelligent group of students. It is something I will look fondly on for many years to come.

Luckily, I have been able to work under the supervision of Dr. Peter Arthur for my thesis. As one of the most insightful academics on African Politics that I've ever met, his guidance, kindness, and expertise has ensured the fluid progression of my work. I hope every student in Political Science has the opportunity to take a course with him. A special thanks goes out to my committee members, Dr. David Black and Dr. Marion Laurence, for their guidance as well.

In early June 2026, I will be presenting at the Canadian Political Science Association (CPSA) conference held in Ottawa, Ontario. I will be able to present my working thesis on a panel with Pyper Lane and Cora Fletcher entitled Participation, Agency, and Democracy in Conflict-Affected Contexts: Critical Perspectives. This would not have been possible without the support of the Political Science Department, with a particular thank you to Dr. Marion Laurence and Dr. Heather Tasker for reviewing the submissions and moderating the panel.



POLITICAL SCIENCE TRAVEL FUND

For our graduate and honours students, field research (whether in Canada or internationally) and the opportunity to present their ideas at conferences and workshops are vital forms of educational and professional development. Yet supporting these invaluable opportunities for research and conference travel has always been a challenge for the department and our students, since there are few sources of financial assistance within or beyond the university. Thanks

to generous alumni contributions, we initiated a fund to support graduate and honours students' travel. This allows our students to undertake vital interviews, archival, and participant observation research, and to share their ideas with audiences of peers and senior scholars. If you wish to contribute to this fund, please visit alumni.dal.ca/giving.



MARGARET MEAGHER FELLOWSHIP

Joao Verreschi, MA Candidate (currently), PhD Candidate (Sept-2026)

I AM EXTREMELY GRATEFUL TO BE THE recipient of the Margaret Meagher Fellowship for the 2025/2026 academic year. This generous award from the Meagher family enabled me to pursue my master's degree at Dalhousie and remain in Canada. I will always be deeply thankful for their support. Beyond financial assistance, receiving an award connected to Margaret Meagher's legacy is one of the biggest honours of my life. As the first Canadian woman appointed as an ambassador and someone who represented Canada during an important moment in Middle Eastern diplomacy, her career reflects public service, leadership, and dedication to peace and democracy, qualities we deeply miss today. It will forever mean a great deal to me to be associated, even in a small way, with such an important figure in Canadian history.

Coming to Dalhousie for my master's degree has been an unforgettable experience. Our cohort had a very difficult and uncertain start to the academic year because of the faculty lockout in the fall, and at the time, it felt impossible to know how the year would unfold. Looking back now, though, I think those challenges brought our cohort much closer together, form-

ing a "little family." There was a real sense that everyone, including the faculty, was trying to support one another and make the best out of a complicated and deeply unfair situation. I am especially grateful to Dr. Good for her constant understanding, patience, and support throughout that period. Her dedication and care for our cohort made an enormous difference during a very stressful semester.

One of the greatest privileges of this year has been the opportunity to work with Dr. Zaiotti as my supervisor, who has guided and supported me, and to serve as a research assistant for Dr. Johnstone, who has opened my eyes to a very important field of research I knew very little about. Both experiences have shaped me tremendously as a student and researcher. I have learned so much from their mentorship, generosity, and confidence in my work, and I feel incredibly lucky to have had the opportunity to be alongside such thoughtful and supportive professors.

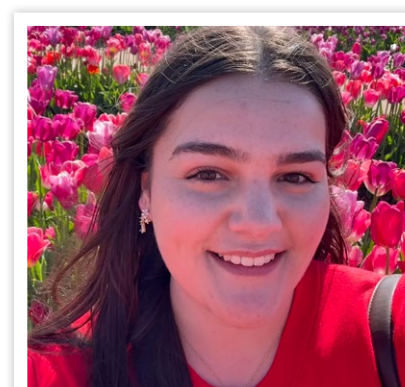
The biggest highlight of my year, however, was being given the opportunity to fast-track from the MA program into the PhD program, as well as being offered the Killam Predoctoral Scholarship. When I first arrived at Dalhousie, I could not have



imagined that my first year would unfold this way. I'm deeply grateful to the faculty in our department for believing in me and encouraging me to continue my academic journey. I also want to thank the Meagher family once again, because none of these opportunities would have been possible without their generosity and support.

POLI'S FIRST GALLACHER FAMILY GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Pyper Lane, MA Candidate



IT HAS BEEN A SURREAL EXPERIENCE wrapping up my MA coursework and moving into the summer term to complete my thesis. This year has been filled with exciting opportunities such as presenting my work at the American Graduate School's annual conference in Paris, sitting in on the CSSD's Security Force Assistance workshop, as well as preparing to present my research at the upcoming Canadian Political Science Association conference in Ottawa. I have been fortunate to re-

ceive incredible support from the Department of Political Science, my supervisor, Dr. Heather Tasker, as well as the close friends I have made within this year's cohort. Additionally, I am so grateful for the Gallacher Family Graduate Scholarship which has supported my studies at Dalhousie and has made my participation in all these opportunities possible. I look forward to focusing intently on my research this summer and completing my thesis for defence this coming August.

DALHOUSIE GRADUATE SOCIETY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Patricia Porto de Barros Ayaz, PhD Candidate and Alexia Koutoulas, MA Candidate

THIS YEAR, THE DALHOUSIE GRADUATE SOCIETY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE (DGSPS) welcomed a large cohort of PhD and master's students and hosted gatherings at local restaurants, as well as a weekly social hour at McCain, where returning students shared their experiences and answered questions from incoming students. We also had the opportunity to get to know each other better and celebrate the end of the term and everyone's achievements.

A huge shout-out to Dr. Xinyu Gong for successfully defending his dissertation, and to Cora Fletcher for defending her thesis. We would also like to congratulate the new cohort of students arriving for the next academic year and say that

we are eager to welcome you! We are also excited to have Joao Verreschi fast-tracked into the PhD program and to welcome Cora back to our department after her graduation.

Several students also presented their papers at conferences: Patricia Barros at the EU-Values Conference in Istanbul/2025; Cora Fletcher, Pyper Lane, and Alexia Koutoulas at the Canadian Political Science Association Conference in Ottawa/2026; Alexia, and Pyper at the American Graduate School Conference in Paris/2026. Patricia has also been accepted into the competitive High-Performance tier of the Student Leadership Academy (SLA), while Jeff Stirling received a distinguished certificate from

the SLA after completing at least 10 workshops from the Foundations of Leadership tier.

As we look ahead to the next academic year, we are grateful for the sense of community, collaboration, and mutual support that continues to shape the DGSPS. We look forward to creating more opportunities for students to connect, share their work, and support one another throughout their academic journeys. Wishing everyone a restful summer and continued success in their future endeavors!



REFLECTIONS FROM TWO OF OUR PHD STUDENTS

Patricia Porto de Barros Ayaz, PhD Candidate

"I'M STILL PROCESSING HOW SPECIAL this year has been! For the third year in a row, I've received an Impact Award. After being recognized as the Outstanding International Student of the Year and receiving Dalhousie's highest honour in student life, the Board of Governors Award, I was recently named International Student of the Year. This award recognized leadership, participation in the International Centre community, and being a supportive and well-known presence among international students.

Speaking of leadership, I also became the first student at Dalhousie to complete all three tiers of the Student Leadership Academy (SLA). This year, I was selected for the SLA High-Performance tier, becoming part of its first cohort to receive the McCall MacBain scholar-

ship, in addition to having the opportunity to receive training from senior university leaders and to have Dalhousie's president, Kim Brooks, as my mentor throughout the process.

Being part of the SLA has been a unique experience. It also allowed me to develop a capstone project closely connected to my passion for welcoming others and helping them develop a sense of belonging. In the past terms, I also had the opportunity to work on different research projects and expand my research experience and skills, another passion of mine. Finally, thanks to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and our department, I also had the chance to travel to Türkiye to present a paper at the EU-Values Conference. I'm now excited for the opportunities and experiences still ahead."



Tobias Schminke, PhD Candidate

DURING THE 2025/2026 ACADEMIC year, I had the pleasure of teaching POLI 3224 (Canadian Political Parties, Fall Term). One highlight was a student-moderated career panel featuring the Honourable Darrell Dexter (former Premier of Nova Scotia), Kelly Bennett (Vice President, Abacus Data), and Sheumais MacLeod (Director of Research, NS PC Caucus). Additionally, I finalized the curation of a party financing database (relevant to my dissertation) covering 200+ countries, for which I organized an independent review funded by the Trudeau Foundation. Finally, it was fulfilling to manage Europe Elects' election data dashboard for the Hungarian parliamentary election in April, which attracted a record 8 million website requests within 24 hours.



ALUMNI VIGNETTES

Amy Baker, BA Honours (1994), Political Science (Dal)



I always assumed my reach would exceed my grasp... so much so that each time I actually caught something I was more surprised than anyone else. When I studied political science at Dalhousie, it was purely out of interest. I was fortunate to

learn from excellent professors (including David Black, James Eayrs and Frank Harvey) who brought to life the moment we were living - a geopolitical hinge after years of Cold War certainties. I went on to study law, and then, not convinced that it was for me, took off to Greece to teach English. Sometime during that year, a career in service to those in need became my goal, and I went back to school - this time to Queen's University - for an MPA. That move led me to a career in the federal government and an extraordinary professional journey. The flexibility the government offered meant that early on, I could temporarily relocate to Senegal, where I discovered my passion for international development and the fundamental importance of gender equality. Over the fifteen years that followed, there were incredible opportunities, from working for Queen Rania in Jordan during the Arab Spring, to running Canada's largest devel-

opment program in Ethiopia, to representing Canada on multilateral boards and at the UN. The lesson from that time: don't worry about taking the right path, take the one that speaks to you. Stepping into the role of Deputy Ambassador in France gave me real pause as it felt like a move away from work that I found deeply meaningful, but it brought me into the centre of global issues in a way I did not fully anticipate and taught me so much. And now, here I sit in Oslo, where the path I have walked since those early days at Dalhousie starts making sense differently. To serve my country as Ambassador to Norway, at another hinge moment, feels both humbling and profoundly meaningful. It gives me a deep sense of purpose to stand together with a trusted partner for democratic values and the quiet, persistent work of peace and stability. I remain deeply grateful to Dalhousie University for setting me on that path.

Julie Breau, MA (2007), Political Science (Dal)



In a few months, it will be 20 years since I first walked the halls of Henry Hicks, starting my M.A. in Political Science (2006-2007).

As cliché as it sounds, it does seem like yesterday that I spending time in the Poli Sci lounge, meeting up in the basement of the original Grad House (RIP), and spending all the rest of the time between Killam and my 200 square foot studio apartment across from the legendary One World Café, where I'd sit to read course articles or mark exams while the neighbourhood cat would roam around.

Since then, I've been the one roaming. I got to see lots at the start of my career. I started at the now defunct Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, then at a leadership non-profit, then at the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, and finally what was then called the Child Soldiers Initiative. I got to travel, and work on global issues that I cared about, all from our little corner of the world. I learned how organizations grow, learn and improve.

In 2013, my husband and I moved to Ottawa. Since 2014, I have worked at CHEO (the region's Children's Hospital) where I get to indirectly do my small part to improve the care of children. On CHEO's quality improvement team, I get to coach my colleagues to problem-solve and to think analytically about problems and patterns that come up in our healthcare system.

I think about my time at Dal a lot. Truly, every major sporting event has me wishing I could re-enroll in Dr Black's Sports & Politics class. More importantly, to this day, my closest friends are people who walked those Henry Hicks halls with me. Twenty years on, we're still cheering each other on, debating each other, and trying to understand the world together. It's just that now we're doing it with a bunch of kids running around.

From Political Science To "I Do"

Emily Mason, MA (2021), Political Science (Dal)

Dong Ngo, Bachelor of Management (2020), Major in Public Sector Management, with a Minor in Political Science (Dal)

You never know what to expect when going into a new class. What will the syllabus be like? Will you know anyone in the class? Little did we know that when we walked into the first day of our Canadian Political Seminar class on September 6th, 2019, we would meet our soulmate.

From the moment Emily said she liked studying electoral maps to us debating Canada's national identity and discussing Paul Martin's tenure as Prime Minister, we knew our semester was going to be memorable in more ways than one.

Our story is defined by so many places and memories around Studley Campus. We met in Room 2107 of the Mona Campbell Building, where we spent every Friday morning together in POLI 4207 discussing the political issues of the day before heading to the poli lounge in the Henry Hicks Building for lunch to debrief on everything we had just discussed.

We spent long evenings studying on the upper floors of the Killam Library or in our favourite spot on the third floor of the Rebecca Cohn, where we could sometimes hear musicians practicing while we tried to finish our assignments.



Although COVID brought our academic year to an unexpected end, the connection we formed only grew stronger in the years that followed. We completed our master's programs, moved to Ottawa to begin our careers as federal public servants, and continued our quest to visit every provincial and territorial legislature while exploring new Canadian cities along the way.

When it came time to begin the next chapter of our story, it only felt right to return

to the place where it all began. On July 21, 2024, we returned to the classroom where we first met, and I asked Emily the most important question either of us had ever asked there: "Will you marry me?"

Her answer was the same as when I asked her out in the Killam for our first date to watch a Rick Mercer show, yes!



DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

If you wish to share your alumni story in our next issue of the Political Science Annual Newsletter, please reach out to psadmin@dal.ca



DALHOUSIE POLITICAL SCIENCE (WITH THE CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT) offers an excellent undergraduate program (with Honours option) and graduate programs (MA and PhD) in a collegial, small department. Our professors are known internationally for their outstanding research. We offer a congenial social environment, enhanced by the entertainment and environmental amenities of the City of Halifax. We offer courses and degree programs in four subfields:

- Canadian Government and Politics
- International Relations and Foreign Policy
- Comparative Politics
- Political Theory

FINANCIAL AID: Full-time MA and PhD Students are eligible for prestigious prizes, awards, and scholarships. These include the Gallacher Family Scholarship, Glyn R. Berry Memorial Scholarship in International Policy Studies, Keens-Morden Scholarship, Killam Memorial Scholarship, Margaret Meagher Fellowship in Political Science, and other Graduate Scholarships and Teaching Assistantships. For additional information on these scholarships, please visit [here](#).

POLI NEWS is published annually by Dalhousie's Department of Political Science in cooperation with FASS Alumni Relations.

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