

## Notes from the Chair

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Let me begin this Winter newsletter with an apology and some thanks. I am sorry that this is so late—particularly to the authors of our two fine articles who have been waiting very patiently since the fall. Kenneth Foster has contributed a thoughtful essay detailing his own growing engagement with the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and how this discovery has transformed both his teaching and his career. His call to the discipline to rethink our own valuing of this research is one that most of us embrace. Kevin Jefferies, in his article “Political Comprehension” urges us to rethink how we have been trying to pursue students’ civic engagement through classroom strategies. His application of E. D. Hirsch’s *The Knowledge Deficit* to our current understanding of the limitations of citizenship education is thoughtful and worth considering.

I would like to continue this column by thanking the many individuals who have volunteered their time and energy working with the section. Colleagues have served as: APSA program chairs (Scott Erb for 2007 and Carolyn Shaw for 2008 in Boston); our web page manager (Johnny Goldfinger); the *Journal of Political Science Education* editors (John Ishiyama and Marijke Breuning, and their editorial team); the 2007 section award committee for the Best Presentation (Kerstin Hamann, Bruce M. Wilson, and Phillip H. Pollock of University of Central Florida and David M. Rankin of SUNY-Fredonia); and the award committee for “McGraw-Hill Award for Scholarship and Teaching on Civic Engagement in Political Science.” Quentin Kidd served as chair of a committee that consisted of: Rick Battistoni (Providence College), Bruce Caswell (Rowan University), Brigid Harrison (Montclair State University), Chip Hauss, (“Search for Common Ground”), Alison Millett McCartney (Towson University), J. Cherie Strachan (Central Michigan University), and Mark Georgiev of McGraw Hill.

I would also like to thank those who served as members of our Board for 2006-2007: Vice Chair, Kerstin Hamann (University of Central Florida), Secretary/ Treasurer, Johnny Goldfinger (Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis), Elizabeth Williams (Santa Fe Community College), Quentin Kidd (Christopher Newport University), Elizabeth Bennion (Indiana University, South Bend), Jeff Bernstein (Eastern University Michigan), and Andrew Oros (Washington College). Our newly elected board is shown at right. I would especially like to thank Dave Deardorff of WordSmith Publishing Services for producing each issue of this newsletter.

I want to thank all of you for your incredible engagement within

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the section. I have contacted many of you for help, and I have to say I have always been met with graciousness and much appreciated assistance. When I put out a call for people who were interested in serving as members of our Board, at least fifteen people responded in some way. So, thank you to the membership. Please consider contributing to the newsletter—your essays, experiences, recommendations, and resource suggestions make this newsletter useful. **PSE**

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## Getting Involved in Research on Teaching and Learning at a Large Research University: A Case Study

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When I took up an assistant professor position in 2003 at the University of British Columbia (UBC—I left this past summer, as discussed below), I had received little training in pedagogy and was focused completely on doing research in my disciplinary specialty (Chinese politics). Yet during the 2006-2007 academic year, I found myself working with two professors from UBC's College of Education to design and carry out a research project on how the use of informal reflective essay assignments affects student learning. How did this happen? In this essay, I provide a very brief and informal case study of how one novice professor at a large research university got involved in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL). My hope is that the story will illuminate the issues involved and shed some light on what departments and institutions can do to promote research by disciplinary professors on teaching and learning.

### Stumbling onto the SOTL Road

How did I end up doing research on the use of reflective writing assignments when just a couple of years ago I barely knew about reflective writing? How did my experience in the classroom lead me into a pedagogical area completely new to me? During my time at UBC, my flagship course was *Chinese Politics and Development*. As with many who study a particular country, my encounter with China has deeply affected me. I think this is why, when I endeavored to teach Chinese politics, I was particularly concerned that students somehow personally engage with the material. Yet since these classes had 70-90 students and no discussion sections, it seemed impossible for there to be the types of conversations generally essential for spurring personal engagement. So, as is common practice in similar courses, I decided to rely on having students read a series of first-person accounts by Chinese of their lives during various political periods. In an attempt to get them to really think about these readings, I required that students write two informal personal "reaction essays" after reading two sets of accounts. Students were told that everyone who did the assignment would receive an A or A-.

To my surprise—although I didn't really know what to expect—many students wrote heartfelt and deep essays. Even more surprising, a number of students made a special effort to tell me that these essays were the best part of the course, and some said that they were the most meaningful writing assignments they had done in a political science course. As I taught the course three times over 18 months, this happened each time. Amidst the stressful busyness of working under a ticking tenure clock and a focus on research activities, I took note of this, but initially did not think much about it. Gradually, however, I became intrigued. I soon realized that what I was really targeting was having students engage *emotionally* with these human stories and recognize and write about their affective reactions to the

stories. Students seemed to be doing precisely this, and it seemed to make a significant impact on them. Upon further reflection, I also realized that what I was doing was trying to supplement the dominant (in most of political science) objective-analytical mode of teaching and learning with something else. This "something else" was new to me, and I had not witnessed in any political science classes that I myself had taken.

So I wondered: what exactly am I doing, and what effect is it really having on my students? By experimenting with a new kind of assignment (new for me, that is) and taking just a little time to take note of and reflect on students' responses to it, I had started to stumble down the road of pedagogical reflection and research.

### Starting Conversations and Finding the Question

Given the pressures on me to focus on disciplinary research, this probably would have gone nowhere if it had not been for several people at UBC with whom I was able to discuss my questions. My department had no institutionalized venue for the discussion of pedagogical issues. Although many of my colleagues valued good teaching and were good teachers (the department is well-respected within UBC for the high quality teaching that it offers), it still did not seem wise for a junior member to express much interest in pedagogical questions. However, I was fortunate to be good friends with Tim Cheek, a professor of Chinese history at UBC who, although a distinguished researcher, had a deep commitment to teaching (and who had taught for years at a liberal arts college). My conversations with him, and his encouragement, led me to organize with him a roundtable on "Teaching about Contemporary China" at the Canadian Asian Studies Association annual meeting. My presentation was entitled "Engaging Students both Intellectually *and* Emotionally." As a tenure-seeking assistant professor in a research-focused department, I was somewhat concerned that this would be perceived as a distraction from "the main task" (furthering my disciplinary research agenda), but the support of a senior professor and friend outside of the department helped me to keep moving forward in thinking about the pedagogical issues that intrigued me.

Around this time, I received a newsletter from UBC's Centre for Teaching and Academic Growth (TAG, a unit focused on enhancing teaching skills of faculty and graduate students). The newsletter reported that a new group called "Teaching and Learning for the Heart and Mind" was forming. Reading this phrase was an "ah-ha!" moment for me. This sounded like what I was trying to do. With excitement, I got in touch with the organizer (and assistant director of TAG), Alice Cassidy. My discussion with her was enlightening, and I became aware of a whole new world of activity at UBC, a world focused on questions of teaching and

learning. Some months later, Alice organized a workshop at TAG entitled “Student Journaling: Adding Motivation and Reflection Activities to your Course.” I was asked to introduce what I had done and also to ask several students to share their thoughts on the reaction essays (which, I now realized, might be called reflective essays) that I had assigned. Out of all of this, a research question emerged: what is the impact of reflective learning activities on the student learning experience in large political science classes?

**Meeting the Great Facilitator: Institutional Support for SOTL**  
It’s probably fair to say that without TAG and someone like Alice Cassidy, I never would have ventured much beyond my initial curiosity about the place of emotion and reflection in the political science classroom. Yet moving from a deeper interest in pedagogical issues to actual involvement in research takes much more than talking with knowledgeable and supportive people. Fortunately for me, people associated with TAG were also running an Institute for the Study of Teaching and Learning. And in early 2006, I received, along with all other UBC faculty members, an invitation to submit proposals for support under the two-year-old Research Collaboration Program that it runs in partnership with the Faculty of Education. This program is “for faculty at UBC who are implementing innovative strategies in their teaching and would like to assess the effects of these strategies,” but who “do not have the time, resources, and/or specific expertise to conduct this research.” The program involves creating a research team made up of the initiating faculty member, one or more members of the Faculty of Education, and a graduate research assistant (usually also from education).

This sounded like a brilliant idea and seemed to be tailor-made for someone in my position. I lacked knowledge about pedagogical issues and research practices in the field of education. What better opportunity than to work with people whose career is devoted to research on teaching and learning? I lacked time, since I was continuing with my disciplinary research agenda. What more could I ask for than to be given a fully-funded RA with expertise in education-related research?

I put in a proposal, and it was selected for inclusion in the program. The proposal was circulated among Faculty of Education professors, which resulted in two people expressing strong interest in the project. TAG put out an advertisement for an RA, I interviewed several candidates and found someone who provided exactly the skills and temperament needed. Thus I found myself intimately involved in research on teaching and learning.

The importance of the institutional support provided by the Research Collaboration Program cannot be overstated. If there is one lesson that I would especially highlight from my story, it is that any department or institution interested in promoting scholarship on teaching and learning by faculty members outside of schools of education should seriously consider developing a program along the lines of UBC’s.

## Confronting the Tough Dilemma

Yet, this is not enough. UBC has several thousand faculty members. *Fifteen* applied to the Research Collaboration Program. While there may be many reasons why so few show any interest in pedagogical research, I can only speak from my personal experience. My experience is that I only felt able to apply because I had already decided that I did not care if it hurt my chances for attaining tenure in my department. Although I had been making good progress towards tenure, I had decided that I wanted to pursue a career that offered more of a balance between teaching and research instead of the heavily research-focused careers offered at places such as UBC. I remember very clearly thinking, as I prepared to put in the proposal, that I could only do this if I was really prepared to leave UBC and look for a position in a department that would look more positively on pedagogical research by a political scientist.

The dilemma is undoubtedly familiar to readers of this newsletter. A person in a tenure-track position in political science at a research-oriented university has to focus intently on research in their specialty area. The pressure on departments seeking to maintain or achieve national prominence is to focus single-mindedly on the production of political science research, and tenure standards reflect this pressure. For tenure-seeking professors, there never seems to be enough time available to generate sufficient new data, to produce enough publications, and to establish a strong-enough reputation. It takes an extraordinary individual to be able to carve out any time for research on teaching and learning without making sacrifices in their core research agenda. Thus those who find themselves with an interest in pedagogical research face a dilemma: do I jeopardize my tenure prospects, or do I ignore a research question that has sparked my curiosity, is undoubtedly important in some way, and is related to my job as a professor who regularly teaches classes? Of course, the basic dilemma also presents itself when deciding how much time to spend on other, more routine sorts of teaching-related activities.

Is there room in political science departments at large research-focused universities for an assistant professor who wants to pursue a high-quality research agenda in their area of specialization while also engaging in pedagogical research (that will invariably slow the progress of their core research agenda)? Should there be room? If yes, then what does it take to make room? Although I am now happily ensconced in a new position at a liberal arts college that embraces a teaching-research balance appropriate for me, these questions continue to stand out to me as meriting careful and sustained discussion by concerned political scientists.

## Discovering the Rewards of SOTL

During the 2007 Spring semester, my colleagues from the Faculty of Education and I carried out an exploratory study of how the use of personal reflective essays affected the learning experience of students in a class I taught on “Organized Groups and the State” (we failed to get organized in time to use the Chinese Poli-

tics class, taught in the Fall). Mainly through the efforts of the RA, we carried out a survey of the students and conducted focus groups. While we are only just starting to sort through the data, I already know I have learned a great deal—for example, about how to use focus groups in research and about the interplay of emotion and reason. And we are looking forward to writing up the results of our research for publication in both political science and education-related journals.

Yet the best part of the research was seeing students' positive response to it. A common refrain heard from students was that they were glad to be given a chance (in focus groups) to talk about their views of education and how they felt about different kinds of writing assignments. And they saw the value of the research. As one student told the RA, "it's good that someone cares enough to do this type of research."

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## Call for Articles

For upcoming issues of *The Political Science Educator* we are currently seeking the following features:

- Debates between members on pertinent topics
- "Lessons Learned"—a continuing column on how the teaching of participants in the Teaching and Learning Conferences has evolved as a result of the TLC
- Feature articles that are "think pieces" about teaching and the discipline, discussions of teaching experiences and approaches, or preliminary research under development
- "Teaching tips" and suggestions—including approaches and experiments that have been less successful
- "The New Professor"—essays designed to help graduate students and new faculty who are navigating the job market and early years of careers at undergraduate institutions
- "Research and Resources: The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning"—a column including literature reviews on specific topics, research notes, examination of new research threads
- "Technology and the Professor"—a column examining options available for the classroom and classroom management, including useful resources available on the web

Items for the "Notables" and "Announcements" sections.

The deadline for the May issue is April 15. If you are interested in submitting an article, essay, or announcement (or a suggestion for other items to be included in the newsletter), please contact:

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## Call for Nominations: Rowman and Littlefield Award for Innovative Teaching in Political Science

Rowman & Littlefield Publishers proudly announces the twelfth year of the Rowman & Littlefield Award for Innovative Teaching in Political Science. The award, which carries a \$500 cash stipend, will be presented at the 2008 Honors Reception at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting in Boston.

The Innovative Teaching Award recognizes political scientists who have developed effective new approaches to teaching in the discipline. The award seeks to honor a wide range of new directions in teaching, not a particular new direction. Thus, in one year a professor might be chosen because of an innovative course syllabus; in another year a multimedia approach to reaching students might be chosen; in yet another the creator of a simulation or an educational data set might be recognized; and in yet another, the author of a text or monograph that changes the way in which a subject is taught might be tapped. The only limits on what will be recognized are the imagination and creativity of those teaching political science.

The recipients of the award will be chosen by a five-person committee, chaired by L. Sandy Maisel, the William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor of Government and Director of the Goldfarb Center for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement at Colby College. Additional Committee Members will include the APSA Educational, Professional and Minority Initiatives and three members of the association selected by APSA President Pinderhughes.

**Nominations for the twelfth annual award, together with supporting documentation (including five copies), should be sent to L. Sandy Maisel, Department of Government, Colby College, Waterville, ME 04901. The nomination deadline is April 1, 2008.**

## Political Comprehension

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We have been told that the Political Science profession has rediscovered and recommitted itself to civic education (Galston 2001, Macedo et al. 2005). This is a timely development. As is well documented, our students—and the general population—know and care little about government and politics (Delli Carpini and Keefer 1996); this has obvious consequences. It undermines our ability to govern ourselves. Our country’s founders acknowledged the importance of an educated citizenry for the preservation of the republic, yet this goal has remained elusive.

An educated citizenry may continue to be elusive, however, considering that there seems to be no consensus on whether civic education can realistically be part of the college political science curriculum (Leonard 1999) or whether schools have any real impact on the socialization of students (Erikson, Luttbeg and Tedin 1991, Niemi and Junn 1998). This implies that some members of the profession believe our civic education efforts are doomed.

I have come to believe that the profession would be well served if we would see our students’ inabilities within the greater context of the current educational environment. As we know, students are not only ignorant of Government, but of English, Math, and Science. Deficiencies in these and other areas compound the problems we face and make solutions more difficult. By only looking within the discipline, our analysis of the problem cannot take advantage of ideas and thoughts from sources outside political science.

### Clarifying the Problem

I’m sure to shock no one by stating that the majority of my students are not prepared to do the level of work I am expected to demand of them. My departmentally mandated objectives include requirements that I engage students in critical thinking. But critical thinking requires that students have background knowledge of political and governmental facts and terminology. This gives them something to be critical about. With few exceptions, my students lack both.

I begin each semester with a vocabulary quiz designed to determine how many basic terms students can define. The results are rarely uplifting. In a recent class of twenty-three students I asked for definitions of the following terms. The number next to each term refers to the number of students who even attempted to answer the question.

|                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Government: 18        | Politics: 18             |
| Constitution: 17      | Democracy: 13            |
| Tyranny: 12           | Suffrage: 11             |
| Confederacy: 9        | Ideology: 9              |
| Affirmative Action: 9 | Federalism: 8            |
| Pluralism: 7          | <i>Habeas Corpus</i> : 6 |

Republic: 6

The answers themselves were a mixed bag. I’ll highlight the six answers I received for *Habeas Corpus*:

- “You have the right to know what’s going on”
- “The right of any man or individual”
- “The right of every individual to privacy and trial. (Lincoln sustained it during the civil war actually).”
- “bring before the body”
- “the right to bear arms.”
- “a document of some kind”

Only one nailed it. A couple seemed to have a hint of what it meant. The other twenty students presumably had no clue. In the ensuing discussion, many seemed surprised to learn that the government cannot hold people indefinitely without cause. All of these students had taken high school government classes, so they should have known better.

This example should help clarify the risks to civil society when students are ignorant about basic governing principles. Recall that a recent Attorney General stated to the members of the Senate Judiciary Committee that the Constitution did not guarantee citizens the right of habeas corpus. Mine does, but my students would have no cause to dispute him. We may have cause to wonder whether freedom from arbitrary arrest is truly secure.

Students, of course, do not see themselves as ignorant. They believe they understand politics and can use words intelligently, but generally they repeat simplistic platitudes from the media. Instead of developing critical thinking skills I spend my time clarifying basic factual errors and defining terms. How did we get here?

### The Knowledge Deficit

In the mid 1980’s E.D. Hirsch caused a stir with *Cultural Literacy* where he bemoaned the fact that Americans lack a shared understanding of American culture: “This shared information is the foundation of our public discourse. It allows us to comprehend our daily newspapers and news reports, to understand our peers and leaders, and even to share our joke” (Hirsch, 2002). He attempted to remedy the problem by providing a list of items he thought Americans needed to know. In his recent work, *The Knowledge Deficit*, he ties this observation into an analysis of K-12 education and makes two points we ought to take seriously.

The first concerns reading comprehension. He points out that the reading scores of American students do not begin to decline in comparison with those of the students of other nations until the eighth grade. In the fourth grade, when reading tests measure

decoding words on a page, American students are on par with those of other developed nations. But beginning in the eighth grade, reading tests measure comprehension, which is when American students begin to fall behind. Hirsch asks why schools do not teach reading comprehension well, and makes a second point. He begins with a provocative statement, one that ought to be a point of departure for future research: “Our country was created in the Enlightenment, but reared in the Romantic Era.” The founders of the United States, as we know, were versed in principles established during the Enlightenment. The founders saw education as grounded in ideas contained in the Classics. Knowledge was not a natural pursuit, but the product of diligent study. The Enlightenment respected the intellect and the “systematic acquisition of broad knowledge” (Hirsch’s phrase) that not only gave ideas depth but also facilitated conversation with contemporaries, those who had also undergone a “systematic acquisition of broad knowledge.”

The Romantic Era, however, soon replaced the Enlightenment. The Transcendentalists, notably Emerson and Thoreau, saw knowledge as something that developed naturally if students were exposed to environments that allowed access to raw information and allowed them to go forward on their own. Central to this organic conception of education was the idea that the facts and concepts that were central to the Enlightenment were useless, if not harmful. Hirsch claims that this anti-intellectual tradition slowly permeated schools and Colleges of Education, now dominates the K-12 system, and is causally related to the decline in reading comprehension scores in American students. Schools now discount facts and background knowledge. Reading is regarded as a transferable skill that does not require context. Hirsch claims that students’ ability to comprehend words suffer because they lack any understanding of what they read about. As applied to Government students, it means that they lack the proper context for many of the terms that we use in the classroom and textbooks, words like “tyranny,” “democracy,” “republic,” “freedom,” and “equality”—and “*habeas corpus*.”

If Hirsch’s analysis is indeed correct, this shift in educational theory makes a mockery of the founder’s admonitions that the future of the republic be based on an educated citizenry. The public may hardly be considered educated according to their standards. This may help explain why studies find that education has little effect on civic attitudes. The education is ineffective, why should it have an impact? It is crucial to point out that Hirsch does not lay blame on teachers, but on the theories of education that they are made to apply in the classroom.

This fit an epiphany I experienced some time ago. For several years I have asked my students to compare some of the Federalist and Anti-Federalists Papers so they could understand the nature of the arguments, and the high level of argumentation, during the founding era. Gradually I developed commentary on the various pseudonyms used by the writers. While discussing those written by Brutus, we discussed the historical Brutus and the fact that he

was one of Julius Caesar’s assassins. I had a moment of clarity when I realized that Brutus helped kill the man responsible for turning the Roman Republic into an empire, which is precisely what the Anti-Federalists feared the Federalists were doing to the American Republic. Brutus, the author, placed himself in historical context. He wanted to “kill” the Caesar that would destroy the American Republic. I found it significant that he did not have to state why he chose the name Brutus. The author assumed that readers had the background knowledge necessary to understand his implicit point.

This, I believe, is Hirsch’s message. Shared background knowledge allows for an efficient trade in ideas. If we do not share knowledge, we cannot communicate with each other. What is more, if we do not share a common language with the founders, our ability to build from their base suffers.

### **Reducing the Deficit**

If Hirsch’s claim is true, and the first order of business ought to be to determine whether his claims are in fact true, I propose long and short-term strategies for dealing with this deficiency.

In the long term, we must take a hard look at how Government and Social Studies are taught in K-12 and what exactly is being taught. Higher Education has every right to demand that the students delivered to us are prepared for the work we must demand of them. Ideally our curricula ought to be integrated so that we can be assured that we can focus our efforts on critical thinking and other endeavors that enhance our student’s ability to reason effectively.

In the short term we have to take our students as delivered, identify and compensate for their deficiencies and suggest how they may be able to think critically about the subject matter. I am in the process of developing and evaluating short-term strategies to address this deficiency. Here is a sample of what I do:

1—I actively use pretests as a way to gauge what my students know and do not know, and adjust course content accordingly. Tests are also administered periodically to assess vocabulary skills. I repeat when necessary.

2—I allow students who demonstrate high levels of knowledge to work independently. I also encourage them to tutor other students. This allows me to effectively address the problems associated with discrepancies in student ability in the classroom.

3—I narrowed the range of topics I cover to those I judge basic to citizenship, and cover those in depth.

4—I use primary material as text, preferably related directly to the Constitution, the debate surrounding its ratification, and Supreme Court decisions which debate its continued meaning.

My goal is to encourage my students to understand the ongoing

nature of the debates about self-government and how it applies to the current political environment. I cannot attest to the effectiveness of any of these strategies. Assessment techniques are just now being developed to determine whether these techniques are working, and I am open to discussing these and other strategies with interested parties.

### Conclusion

It is commonplace to place blame for social ills on K-12. I don't wish to carelessly add to the pile, but if their deficiencies directly and negatively affects our ability to do our job in higher education then we have cause to complain. Hirsch's allegations have the advantage of being specific. Students are not being taught basic facts about Government and Politics, simple enough. If they are, then they are not retaining it or learning it in a manner that allows us to build from a solid foundation.

It is encouraging that the Political Science Education Section of the APSA is opened up to membership from high school teachers. This provides the best way to address the deficiency, and of course for high school teachers to challenge Hirsch's allegations and my interpretation of them. We ought to prioritize a seamless transition of students from the K-12 to higher education, which involves a dialogue about what facts and concepts are most important to citizenship.

Though Political Science has worked to develop these ideas, there has been little success in transferring them to the classroom. The proof is in the low levels of political knowledge that exist in the American public. We can, and must, do better.

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*Kevin Jefferies chairs the Government and Economics Department at Alvin Community College where he has worked since 1999. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Houston in 2003. PSE*

## Call for Nominations: McGraw-Hill Award for Scholarship and Teaching on Civic Engagement in Political Science

McGraw-Hill is proud to announce the third annual Award for Scholarship and Teaching on Civic Engagement in Political Science. The award recognizes political scientists who advance civic engagement through the study of engagement and participation. The award seeks to honor a wide range of unique and new approaches to the scholarship and teaching of civic engagement, but in particular scholars who raise political awareness, involvement, and participation of undergraduate students. Nominations can be made by anyone, although self-nominations will not be accepted. Award winners will be chosen by a committee appointed by the Chair of the Political Science Education section of the American Political Science Association on behalf of McGraw-Hill. The award carries a small cash stipend and the winner will be announced at the annual Awards Reception at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting.

Send nominations with supporting documentation to:

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**All nominations will be forwarded to the selection committee. Nomination deadline is May 31, 2008.**

## Landmarks of American Democracy: From Freedom Summer to the Memphis Sanitation Workers' Strike

June 15 - 21, 2008 (Group 1); June 22 - 28, 2008 (Group 2)

This one-week workshop, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Fannie Lou Hamer National Institute on Citizenship and Democracy at Jackson State University, will be offered for community college faculty on the dates noted above. The workshop features extensive readings on the southern civil rights movement in the 1960s. Guest speakers, Hamer Institute faculty, and oral history panelists will guide participants in exploring the people, places, and events that helped bring about civil rights reform. The workshop also includes field trips to landmarks in Jackson, Mississippi; the Mississippi Delta communities of Greenwood, Ruleville, and Clarksdale; and numerous historical sites including the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee.

Please visit our web site for information about the program, the application process, and the planned syllabus for the week. Click on the "Programs" link at the following URL: <http://www.jsums.edu/~hamer.institute>

If you are not a community college faculty member, please send this information on to community college colleagues who might be interested. Adjunct faculty at community colleges are also eligible to participate.

**Editor's Note:** *As one of the founding faculty of the Hamer Institute and a presenter of this workshop, I can highly recommend it. The workshop will be hosted at my home institution, Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi, and at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee. I know schedules for the summer are filling up fast—I hope those of you eligible for this program will consider making the workshop a part of your summer plans. The deadline for application is March 17, 2008. Please feel free to contact me if I can provide more information about this program. [michelle.d.deardorff@jsums.edu](mailto:michelle.d.deardorff@jsums.edu)*

## Summer Institute in Political Psychology

July 13-August 1, 2008

Stanford University is pleased to announce that it is hosting the 2008 Summer Institute in Political Psychology (SIPP). Directed by Stanford Professor Jon Krosnick, SIPP is a three-week intensive training program introducing graduate students and professionals to the world of political psychology scholarship. On-line applications are now being accepted on a first-come, first-accepted basis.

### The History of SIPP

Political psychology is a thriving forum for interdisciplinary exchange and collaboration in political science, psychology, sociology, and other social science fields. The practitioners are spread across the world, and the emerging range of scholarship is broad and varied. The Summer Institute in Political Psychology was created at Ohio State University in 1991 and was offered there each year until 2003. Stanford University has hosted SIPP since 2005, with support from the National Science Foundation. Hundreds of participants have attended SIPP during these years.

### SIPP 2008

The SIPP curriculum is designed to accomplish one preeminent goal: to produce skilled, creative, and effective scholarly researchers who would do more and better work in political psychology as the result of their attendance at SIPP. To achieve this goal, SIPP: 1) provides broad exposure to theories, empirical findings, and research traditions; 2) illustrates successful cross-disciplinary research and integration; 3) enhances methodological pluralism; and 4) strengthens institutional networks.

The schedule of activities mixes lectures with opportunities for students to talk with faculty and with each other in structured and less formal atmospheres. Some of the topics covered in past SIPPs have included race relations, conflict and dispute resolution, voting and elections, international conflict, decision-making by political elites, moral disengagement and violence, social networks, activism and social protest, political socialization, and justice.

For more information, please visit the SIPP web site: <<http://www.stanford.edu/group/sipp>>[www.stanford.edu/group/sipp](http://www.stanford.edu/group/sipp)>