

CAPS GRADUATE DISSERTATION FELLOWS, 2014-15

Made possible by a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Center for American Political Studies offers **Dissertation Fellowships (Research OR Completion) on the Study of the American Republic**. Eligible applications must contain dissertation topics with a direct engagement with the history, principles, and politics of the American Republic. These fellowships are inclusive to students inside the field of political science as well as History, English and American Literature, Philosophy, American Civilization, Sociology, Economics, Anthropology, and others - whose presence would enrich the collective discussion of enduring political, historical, and philosophical themes of the American Republic.

Supported by a bequest from **Ambassador John L. Loeb, Jr.**, the Center for American Political Studies is also offering **Dissertation Fellowships (Research OR Completion)** that explore the causes and/or consequences of religious freedom, with particular emphasis on the cultural, economic, political and social causes and implications of religious freedom.

PROGRAM ON THE STUDY OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC DISSERTATION FELLOWS, 2014-15

John Harpham (Government, G-4)

"Slavery: The History of a Political Idea"

Alex Hertel-Fernandez (Government, G-5)

"Corporate Mobilization Across the American States, 1973-2013"

Benjamin Schmeer (Government, G-5)

"A Study of Political Expression and Its Consequences"

Beth Truesdale (Sociology, G-5)

"Finding the 'Sweet Spots' where Evidence Matters"

Ariel White (Government, G-5)

"Measuring the Political Spillovers from Punitive Policies"

THE AMBASSADOR JOHN L. LOEB, JR. INITIATIVE ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS DISSERTATION FELLOWS, 2014-15

Casey Bohlen (History, G-5)

"The Politics of Conscience: Religious Activism and Social Change in Postwar America"

Deirdre Debruyn Rubio (Religion, G-5)

"Interfaith Religion: The Politics of Representation in Interfaith Organizations in the United States and France"

Eva Payne (American Studies, G-5),

"Purifying the World: Americans and International Sexual Reform, 1865-1933"

Casey Bohlen (History, G-5), *Amb. John L. Loeb, Jr. Initiative on Religious Freedom and Its Implications*
“The Politics of Conscience: Religious Activism and Social Change in Postwar America”

My dissertation studies the history of religion and politics in post-World War II America. Research on Christian conservatism is currently booming, thanks to the powerful public influence of the contemporary religious right. By contrast, my project focuses on the modern religious left, shedding new light on the role of progressive clergy and religious youth in postwar American politics. I begin with the roots of 1960s religious activism in 1950s Cold War life, demonstrating how an era of apparent consensus inspired a decade of protest politics. I then analyze how religious activists contributed institutional resources, moral frameworks, and cultural legitimacy to 1960s grassroots politics, focusing on their involvement in the civil rights, anti-war, migrant labor, New Politics, and abortion reform movements. Finally, I explain why the religious left faded from view (and popular memory) so quickly in the 1970s, connecting the rise of the Christian right to the unintended consequences of the left's successes. In the process, I hope to provide a richer understanding of the relationship between religious values and social activism, the changing role of churches and synagogues in public life, and the intertwined development of religious ethics and political discourse.

Deirdre Debruyn Rubio (Religion, G-5), *Amb. John L. Loeb, Jr. Initiative on Religious Freedom and Its Implications*
“Interfaith Religion: The Politics of Representation in Interfaith Organizations in the United States and France”

Based on an ethnographic study of interfaith organizations in France and the United States, my dissertation examines how participants in interfaith organizations, particularly those who represent Islam, make sense of how to be a religious citizen in democratic, secular society. By focusing on the representation of Islam in interfaith organizations, I contribute to a larger set of questions central to understanding the dynamics of multi-religious societies. Namely, how does the ideal of accepting religious difference work in practice when some religious traditions are seen as “incompatible” with democracy or secularism? I propose that interfaith organizations are sites where these questions are debated, and potentially, are spaces where religious actors cultivate forms of religions, subjectivities and religious interaction that are commensurate with the demands of citizenship in multi-religious, secular democracies.

John Harpham (Government, G-4), *Program on the Study of the American Republic*
“Slavery: The History of a Political Idea”

My dissertation examines the political philosophy of slavery in America. It concentrates on the antebellum period, although its most basic claim is that slavery persists as a central political concept throughout much of Western history, and that during this time theories of slavery are marked more by continuity than rupture. The American proslavery argument represents, not the aberrant product of an anomalous culture, as many previous scholars have assumed, but an uneasy attempt to draw together several traditions in the philosophy of slavery, each of which has its roots in the ancient world. My dissertation identifies these traditions, and analyzes the way in which southern intellectuals, jurists, politicians, novelists, and clergymen fashioned from these traditions what we must hope will be the

world's last and most vigorous defense of slavery, in the decades before the Civil War. This is an historical project that is of more than purely historical interest. We speak a great deal in America about the dilemmas posed by race, but what we struggle with most of all is the legacy of slavery—not only of its practice, but of the idea that it was morally and politically right.

Alex Hertel-Fernandez (Government, G-5), *Program on the Study of the American Republic*
"Corporate Mobilization Across the American States, 1973-2013"

My thesis examines the rise of business groups in state politics since the 1970s, arguing that they constitute a new and important form of corporate political mobilization. Drawing on a rich array of archival materials, quantitative data, and interviews, this dissertation will answer the following research questions: Why did businesses decide to start mobilizing at the state level in the 1970s? How did they manage their coalition with conservative activists? What strategies did the businesses and conservative activists use in their state level mobilization? In what states and under what conditions were these groups most successful at changing legislation? Which businesses were most involved in the turn to the states? And how do these new state-based corporate lobbying groups compare with more traditional business associations in the United States, like the Chamber of Commerce or the Business Roundtable? My findings carry implications for our understanding of business influence in politics, how political coalitions form and are maintained over time, and how political associations shape the behavior of their members.

Eva Payne (American Studies, G-5), *Amb. John L. Loeb, Jr. Initiative on Religious Freedom and Its Implications*
"Purifying the World: Americans and International Sexual Reform, 1865-1933"

My dissertation examines how American reformers shaped the moral, religious, and legal frameworks that came to govern American and international policy about sexual issues such as the age of consent, trafficking, and prostitution. It tracks this movement from its beginning – with the work of American abolitionists and missionaries who turned their attention to state-regulated prostitution in the British Empire after the Civil War – to its denouement in the activities of interwar Americans who traveled the globe investigating the "traffic in women" for the League of Nations. From within the heart of the postbellum "pan-Protestant establishment" came a vocal campaign to set aside longstanding, religiously grounded taboos and bring sexuality into the bright light of public conversation. My research helps explain how, why, and when issues of sexual regulation became pivotal to American debates over religious freedom and how this development shaped the subsequent politics of sexuality.

Benjamin Schneer (Government, G-5), *Program on the Study of the American Republic*
"A Study of Political Expression and Its Consequences"

My dissertation asks: What determines how and when individuals engage in political expression? How do elites—in the media and in Congress—receive these political expressions? Effective transmission of policy preferences between citizens and lawmakers is fundamental to a well-functioning democracy. Previous research in political behavior has focused heavily on using public opinion surveys to determine what people think, while focusing less on precisely by what means people communicate their opinions and preferences to each other and to lawmakers. How opinions are communicated—including mode of expression, processes of editing and redaction, timing, etc.—has bearing on the extent of their political

influence. I develop several new data sources to reveal how people employ forms of political communication to respond to and to influence what is on the agenda in Congress and in the media. The first chapter uses data constructed from the full text of the Congressional Record to study petitioning; the second chapter uses all twitter posts since December 2012 to study the relationship between media and online political expressions; the third chapter employs a full text data set of editorial submissions to a newspaper to study how media elites filter political expression.

Beth Truesdale (Sociology, G-5), *Program on the Study of the American Republic*
"Finding the 'Sweet Spots' where Evidence Matters"

My project examines the relationship between science and child and family policy in the United States and Britain. I interview people in the policy and research communities – politicians, civil servants, think tank staff, advocates, researchers, and academics – to discover how and when evidence becomes part of the policy process. I also use public records such as speeches, policy papers, memos, and media reports to create a map of evidence and influence. My research focuses on the system characteristics that influence the uptake of data and scientific evidence; the pathways and processes by which usable knowledge makes its way into the policy arena; and the roles played by different types of evidence. This research will improve our knowledge of the relationship between evidence and policy. I hope it will also prove useful to both researchers and policy people who are working toward more effective and more equitable social policies.

Ariel White (Government, G-5), *Program on the Study of the American Republic*
"Measuring the Political Spillovers from Punitive Policies"

Incarceration and deportation are at near-record levels. My dissertation uses new data sources and natural experiments to measure the political consequences for those who are impacted, though not targeted, by punitive government policies. These include: neighbors/relatives of the incarcerated, neighborhoods with heavy police presence, and voting-eligible citizens whose undocumented neighbors face deportation risks. The spillover effects of punitive interactions could be many times larger than the direct individual effects. Understanding these spillover effects of government policies is crucial for democratic decision-making, and will also yield academic dividends as we better understand political participation.