The end of the fall semester invariably coincides with the season of Advent. This is a season of hope and longing, a season of waiting for the coming joy of Christmas. On a superficial level, students and faculty eagerly await the end of exams and the beginning of Christmas break. On a deeper level, however, we long for restoration of Shalom, for the coming Sun of Righteousness. Together, we hope for peace on earth that rests upon something firmer than the balance of power or the balance of terror. We hope for justice for the nations that rests on something firmer than arbitral and criminal tribunals. We hope for environmental stewardship that rests on something firmer than non-binding declarations by global leaders.

In the midst of such longing, we also experience joy in discovering our callings, developing our gifts, and engaging the world through political participation, discussion, and debate. Students’ expressions of such joy have been quite remarkable this year, across a range of courses and activities. Here is just a small sampling of student activities in our courses this fall:

- Students in POLS 110: Persons in Political Community debated contemporary issues including affirmative action, Christianity and patriotism, rule of law and law enforcement, political correctness and free speech, poverty and the role of the state, sexuality and politics, and faith and politics.

- Students in POLS 207: International Cooperation and Conflict considered the role of international institutions in facilitating economic growth and reducing in poverty and inequality, the plausibility and desirability of global nuclear disarmament, and possible responses to state failure, ethnic conflict, and transnational terrorism.

- Students in POLS 214: Governments and Globalization examined immigration policy in the Americas (including the relationship between democracy and racism), nonviolent civil resistance campaigns in Asia and the Middle East, and climate change policy in industrialized countries.

- Students in POLS 228: Global Politics of Human Rights debated the universal nature of human rights, considering challenges and critiques from Islam, colonialism, sexism, and Asian values.

- Students in POLS 310: American Constitutional Foundations proposed possible amendments to the United States Constitution, including changing the First Amendment to allow for campaign finance reform or to protect the religious liberty and conscience rights of business owners, changing the Second Amendment to allow for more gun control, changing the Eighth Amendment to prohibit the death penalty, and repealing the Seventeenth Amendment to make the US Senate more representative.

- Students in POLS 399: Research Seminar in Political Science conducted independent research projects on topics including the “resource curse” in Sub-Saharan Africa, counter-terrorism treaties in South Asia, evangelical political behavior in the United States, and factors affecting voter turnout.

-- continued on page 4 --
MEET OUR MAJORS: ANDREW OPPONG

“The political science faculty know your strengths and weaknesses – and while they may continually challenge you, they are always quick to remind you that your identity is not found in your grades, but in God.”

What was your interaction with professors like in this department?

I loved and cherished every single interaction I had with professors from our department. What I love most is how they see you as a real person – not as an ID number or just another face in class. They know your strengths and weaknesses, and while they may push you to the edge of your abilities, they are always quick to remind you that your identity is not in your grades, but in God. I have had such genuine and authentic interactions with my professors, and I would not trade that for anything.

What’s one thing you would want to tell someone starting their journey at Calvin?

Here at Calvin, the opportunities and possibilities are endless. Immerse yourself in whatever you do and you will see great results. Take classes that make you want to wake up in the morning – and take classes that challenge some of your beliefs. Above all, as our chaplain likes to say, “if you do not have a minor, minor in your professors.” In other words, build great connections with your professors.

How has your faith grown at Calvin?

I have come to see my faith as my own since coming to Calvin. I remember taking my first philosophy class and having everything come into full circle on how I had depended on my parents’ faith and not crafted an identity of my own in Christ. I knew about Jesus, knew about the Bible and even had knowledge in some doctrinal beliefs. However, I had not come to know Jesus for myself. Jesus always sounded so far removed from me until my philosophy class challenged me to take responsibility for my faith and secure my own identity in Christ. Suffice it to say, I have greatly grown in my faith since coming here.
Department Welcomes New Faculty Member

The Fall 2018 semester has been greeted with the addition of Dr. Karie Riddle to the department. Professor Riddle has joined Political Science as an Assistant Professor teaching classes relating to International Relations and International Development Studies.

Professor Riddle received degrees in Political Science and English from Harding University in Searcy, AR. She went on to earn a Masters in Public Policy at the University of Maryland focusing on international development processes in South Asia and working as a human rights advocate in Nepal.

She continued to the University of Notre Dame where she earned a PhD in Peace Studies and Political Science in 2017. Her dissertation consisted of field work in India in close conversation with theories of feminism, peacebuilding and human development.

Professor Riddle has a deep love for South Asia and enjoys cooking elaborate Indian and Nepali feasts. She enjoys playing hymns and folk music on the mandolin, fiddle, and piano. She and her husband Jonathan, divide their time between Eastown in Grand Rapids and Wheaton, IL, where Jonathan teaches History at Wheaton College.

What part of Calvin’s mission resonates with you, and why?

The part of Calvin’s mission which resonates most with me is “live wholeheartedly as Christ’s agents of renewal in the world.” This inspires a kind of hope in my heart – a hope rooted in the idea that we need to renew the world. Part of that is caring for the world and caring for matters of justice. It presents an optimistic view of the world which I like to hold on to.

Did you receive any scholarships or financial aid at Calvin?

The generosity of the scholarships and financial aid office here at Calvin made it possible for me to complete my degree. A big factor in deciding to come here hinged on this generosity.”

To find and read about more Calvin College Political Science Alumni, visit: https://calvin.edu/academics/departments-programs/political-science/meet-our-majors/
This semester has seen the emergence of two new student organizations related to the world of politics. The Political Action and Dialogue Club, as well as an American Enterprise Institute Executive Council for Calvin College were both started in the 2018-2019 school year.

The Political Action and Dialogue Club (PADC) was created to offer a space for discussion on campus through providing conversation topics and acting as a mediating force between conflicting opinions and ideas. PDAC has hosted on-campus events like a conversation with President Michael LeRoy, and has plans to bring in off-campus speakers in addition to bringing students out into the city to meet representatives.

The American Enterprise Institute Executive Council is intended to promote substantive conversations about public policy on campus through events and activities during the year, including reading groups, meetings with government officials and business professionals, or debate viewing. Executive Councils also attend gatherings for public policy discussion and leadership at the AEI headquarters in Washington, DC, and elsewhere throughout the country, in addition to connecting with former students and alumni of AEI’s Academic Programs.

If you wish to get involved in either of these groups, or would just like more information, reach out to Andy Stanford and Zach Nowak of the AEI Executive Council or Inyoung Park and Ben Gritter of PADC.

As these activities were ongoing, faculty and staff reported hearing excited sounds of vigorous policy debate emanating from our classrooms. Staff remarked on the energetic conversations emanating from student research presentations in the lobby of our building. Students emailed me to remark on their “pleasure” in participating in these “delightful conversations” and their excitement in discovering that “the world of political science is [so] expansive!” And as their final examinations came to a close, I observed students huddled together in the hallways remarking on the exciting learning experiences they had together.

These students rejoice their calling to be agents of redemption and renewal in a broken world, and it is a joy to participate in this calling with them.

Joel H. Westra
FALL 2018 CAREER BREAKFAST EVENTS

SARAH YORE-VAN OOSTERHOUT
Sarah graduated from Calvin in 2008 and studied law at Michigan State University after several years of teaching special education in Florida. After law school, she and her family lived in Mexico; when they returned to the U.S., she continued her interest in immigration and public interest law, working first with the Diocese of Grand Rapids in their Immigration Legal Services area. For a brief time, she headed a satellite law office for Waller Law Office, P.C., in Holland, Michigan, working on immigration legal services. To better meet the needs of area residents, she founded and now leads Lighthouse Immigrant Advocates.

RYAN STRYUK
Ryan graduated from Calvin in 2014 with majors in political science and mathematics. He is currently a producer with CNN where he works with Jake Tapper for the Sunday morning show, as well as working with polling and data and occasionally writing stores for the CNN website. He previously worked at ABC News in Washington D.C. and in New York City, as well as for the Associated Press in Boise, Idaho. In the spring before he graduated from Calvin, Ryan interned with ABC as part of the Semester in Washington D.C. Program.

RACHEL BOUMAN
Rachel is the Director for Human Resources Services at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. She talked with students about navigating a changing career path and the many places she has landed on the road since Calvin graduation and law school, including a large law firm; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; the Congressional Research Service, and now as the head of HR at the Library of Congress.

Stay Connected With the Calvin College Political Science Department:

@CalvinPoliSci
https://www.facebook.com/groups/555242361185173/?ref=br_rs
https://calvin.edu/academics/departments-programs/political-science/