

Political Science at UCSB

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA

SPRING 2002

Students Experience the Real World of Congress in SimCong

PS 155, “Congress,” also known as “SimCong,” —the course designed to teach how the congressional system works remains a popular offering of the Political Science department. Created by Professors Roger Davidson and Dean Mann to be a “total immersion in the legislative process,” the class now taught by Professor Eric Smith continues in that format.

According to Professor Smith, “SimCong is a heavy load.” The core of the course is a simulation of the entire legislative process in which students assume the real-life roles of House members, the President and his key advisors, lobbyists, and journalists. This simulation requires attendance at full sessions of the House and frequent committee meetings in addition to the normal class work

From the Chair *Lorraine M. McDonnell*

At a time when the news media and academic researchers are expressing concerns about low levels of political participation among the “younger generation,” we thought it a good idea to introduce you to some of our majors who belie that image. Although not all political science majors have such a strong sense of public service as the four students whose internships you will read about, many are applying their classroom learning by serving their communities and pressing for social change. Like we “boomers” who were students more than a quarter century ago (!), this generation is recognizing that political participation means more than just voting and that patriotism can be expressed in many different ways.



Public service and dedication to an ideal beyond self-interest can take varied forms, and Emeritus Professor Haru Fukui is exemplifying that in his post-retirement career as director of the Hiroshima Peace Institute. Those of you who remember Professor Fukui’s courses on comparative politics will be pleased to see that his talents are being put to good use in an important new endeavor.

On the academic front, I can report that demand for political science classes continues to run high; competition is stiff for places in the UCDC program that has just moved into a new building near Dupont Circle; and the department’s honors program continues to flourish. This year I have had the privilege of working with honors students whose thesis topics range from an experimental study of how people read news on-line as compared with print media, to an elegant analysis of how nations deal with traumatic historical memories through their public architecture. Finally, I would like to express the gratitude of all my colleagues to those of you who are including the Political Science Department in your contributions to UCSB. Your generosity makes you partners in providing a vibrant learning experience for our students.



SHIREEN BUCKMAN, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE 2001

of lectures, exams, papers, and readings. Students must also quickly master the SimCong manual, which details the rules of the course, parliamentary and Congressional procedure, and requirements of their various roles, and at the same time absorb background information on their character and the district or interests that person represents to begin effective role-playing as soon as possible.

The goal of all participants is to try to introduce and pass legislation or, in the case of lobbyists, journalists, and the executive branch, influence others to introduce and pass it. Such legislation must be realistic, in character, and, in accordance with the SimCong “Rule of History,” not a simple recreation of a recently-passed bill. Though bills introduced in SimCong may deal with current issues and should reflect a character’s historic position, they must be original work to make the students think through the problem. Student grades for the participant component of the class are based on how active they are and the quality of their output—how well it is researched, argued, and in character. Journalists, lobbyists, and presidential advisors must also attend meetings of the full session and may be called upon to testify about pending legislation; in addition, journalists serve a dual role as reporters and political columnists in putting out the weekly SimCong newspaper. Student advisors assigned to each group attend all meetings and correct or arbitrate matters of procedure, as well as advise the groups on appropriate legislative strategies. Yet in spite of the heavy load, the course is still received enthusiastically by the student participants, including former students who elect to return as course advisors.

One of these is Orly Zelta, who took the class in Spring 2000, playing the role of a conservative Republican congressman from Georgia and serving as Chair of the Law & Judiciary Committee. First among her reasons for returning: “It was fun!” She says she



JOEL HOPMAN, CHAIR OF THE RULES COMMITTEE 2001

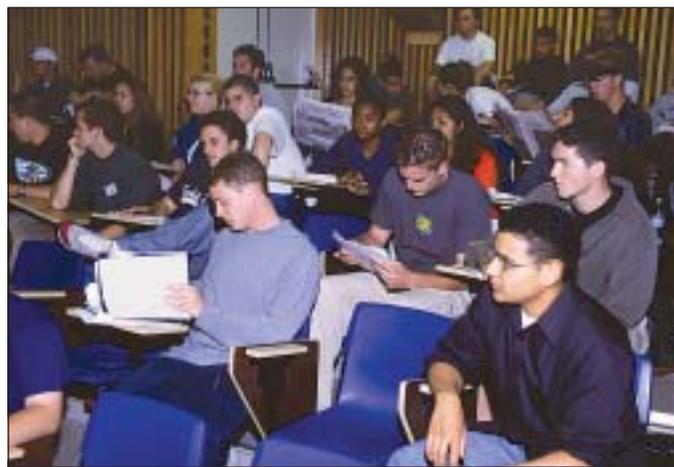
enjoys controversy and learned early on the need to “look at legislation from the other perspective” in order to get it passed. She thinks “every political science major should take this course” and recommends it to her non-major friends as well. “The procedure seems hard at first but you end up knowing it by heart because you have to *do* it.” She says in this class, “you *experience* theory.”

Chris Hubbard took SimCong in Spring of 2001, playing a senior Democrat from Michigan. He also found the class fun because “it was much more participatory” than other classes he’d taken, with students working together “well beyond the norm.” Chris returned as an advisor this year with a desire to mentor other students, some of whom he’d recommended take the class. As the result of taking SimCong, he says he has discovered he is a “political animal” and has acquired a good case of Potomac Fever, so is planning to attend law school after graduation, hopefully in Washington DC, and eventually work as a lobbyist or professional political fund-raiser.

Sarah Thibodeaux took SimCong in 2000 and has returned as an advisor for two years. “I couldn’t get enough of that class,” she says, and became an advisor because she wanted to see how it worked from the inside. Sarah has been politically active since she worked on her first Congressional campaign at age 17, so the class was “right up my alley.” Last year Sarah advised both the Republican Presidential advisors and the Democratic caucus, which she did not find contradictory because “the advisor’s role is to help their groups understand how to make the process work for them.” Sarah hopes to work for the California legislature next year, perhaps in a position to assist an individual State Senator or Legislator with policy analysis. She feels her course experience will be valuable in this position because it has taught her to analyze policy from more than one perspective.

Two alumni provide some real-life examples of how the SimCong simulation has influenced and aided their current careers. Roger Chiang (’94) took the course just before he graduated, playing the role of President Bill Clinton, which he relished. “It was great to be President—I got to drive the agenda for the whole party!” After graduation, his experience landed him a job with the Clinton 1996 Presidential campaign. From there, he has moved on to the position of Asian Pacific Islander Outreach Director for the Democratic National Committee, but he admits to a great feeling of déjà vu as he listened to Clinton’s last state of the union address while memories of his own address during SimCong returned. Roger credits the course with teaching him both process politics and personality politics, and notes that the latter—who the players are and what their priorities or agendas are—is “very crucial to what you do in Washington, DC.”

Tina Dove (’94) took the class in 1993. While in SimCong, she took an active role in securing leadership roles for women in the party. She returned as an advisor the following year because “it was the most noteworthy class I took the entire time I was at UCSB—I enjoyed it and wanted to help out.” She joined Senator Diane Feinstein’s staff in 1996 while attending graduate school at



FULL SESSION OF THE HOUSE

George Washington University. She found her SimCong experience extremely helpful in that capacity because it had taught her how the system worked. But now as a teacher of high school government classes, Tina has put her SimCong experience to perhaps even more relevant use by passing it on to her students. “When we get to learning about how a bill becomes a law, I always include a two-day mock Congress, modeled on Professor Smith’s class.”

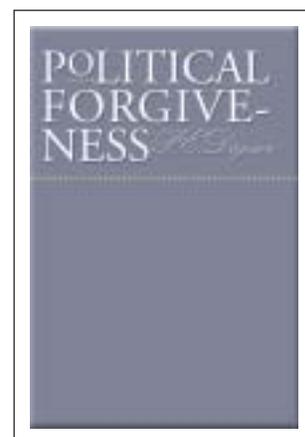
As these stories demonstrate, SimCong’s influence may extend far beyond the classroom in influencing career interests and choices. Certainly for these participants, it was a highlight of their college experience and one they feel was firmly grounded in reality.

Political Forgiveness: A Timely Topic Explored in Peter Digeser’s New Book

“Despite the ease with which we bestow or withhold forgiveness, we rarely attend to the concept itself.” In his recent book, *Political Forgiveness* (Cornell University Press, 2001), Professor Peter Digeser discusses in depth “forgiveness” as a concept and as a political act that can enable a process of reconciliation and restoration in civil life.

As Professor Digeser explains, the concept of forgiveness is closely linked with justice. Justice demands rectification or repayment for past wrongs suffered by groups or individuals. In a perfectly just society, there would be no need for political forgiveness, for injustice would be an aberration. However, in the real world, there are no perfectly just societies or institutions. No set of civil rules can accommodate justice for every situation, making it impossible to rectify injustice in every case. In these instances, political forgiveness may provide a means to resolve past injustices and move on.

Many political theorists have been suspicious of the concept of forgiveness. Nietzsche, for example, believes that forgiveness breeds resentment on the part of the forgiven because the forgiver





assumes a “mantle of moral superiority” by forgiving them. Hannah Arendt believes that forgiveness requires an internal change of heart and thus is of such a private character that it is not admissible in the public realm. Professor Digeser, on the other hand, argues that political forgiveness is indeed appropriate in the public realm and is a better solution for injustices that can’t be rectified than “forgetting” (which denies the continued existence of the injustice) or continuing to advocate for justice where it can’t possibly be given. He points to actions such as governmental pardons, forgiveness of debt, and truth commissions as current examples of political forgiveness.

Unlike personal forgiveness, political forgiveness does not require an internal change of heart on the part of either the forgiver or the forgiven. Instead, it requires (a) understanding and agreement by both parties about what happened, (b) public acknowledgment of the act of forgiveness, and (c) that the forgiver has the appropriate authority to grant forgiveness. In the various chapters of his book, Professor Digeser elaborates on the last point, noting that the relationship between the forgiver and the forgiven can be of four types: (1) many to one—the group forgives an individual, as in a pardon; (2) one to many—an individual forgives a group, which requires that the group assume moral responsibility for its actions; (3) one to one—between individuals; and (4) many to many—one group forgives another. This situation is rare, as it can be very difficult to determine who in the group has the authority to grant forgiveness on behalf of the whole group.

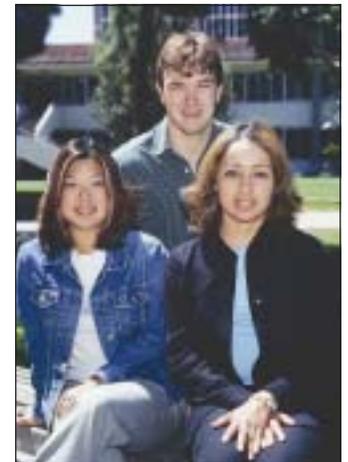
Professor Digeser admits that blame and forgiveness are not easy concepts to apply to the injustices of the civil realm. For example, are successor regimes to be held accountable for the atrocities of previous regimes that have no connection to the current one? There are no quick solutions to some of these very real situations. In some cases, it may be impossible to meet the conditions for political forgiveness: the parties may disagree over who did what to whom, or the appropriate authority to forgive may be lacking. Nevertheless, where these conditions can be met, political forgiveness provides an opportunity to restore a civil relationship even when past injustices cannot be rectified. By being forgiven, the past wrong no longer becomes a basis for future claims. He concludes that political forgiveness is therefore of great value in public life because it gives “nearly just” regimes a way to deal with forms of injustice that can’t be eradicated within the system.

Peter Digeser received his Ph.D. in Political Science from Johns Hopkins University in 1988. He was attracted to the subfield of political theory because “political philosophy raises the most difficult and enduring questions of politics,” and he enjoys pondering and discussing them. He points out that since the time of Socrates, the great political thinkers have seldom agreed; however, as he demonstrates in *Political Forgiveness*, the process of analyzing

these complex issues can assist our understanding of how political institutions can better deal with the problems of public life.

Students Gain Experience and Provide Service in Local Government Internships

Internships serve a variety of purposes for Political Science majors. For students who have selected the Public Service Emphasis, a one-quarter, full-time internship is required, but many other students participate in a variety of volunteer internships, from full- to part-time. Although students who elect to take on an internship usually do so for the work experience and “resume credit,” internships provide special learning opportunities for them and valuable service to communi-



INTERNS (L. TO RIGHT) AMBER CURL, DANIEL CONWAY, REYNA MERAZ

ties as well. While the majority of our students obtain and serve their internships through the UCDC program (see Spring 2000 newsletter), according to Stephen Wiener, Undergraduate Adviser in the Political Science Department, “there are some great local internships available as well, not just in Santa Barbara, but also in other communities.”

Amber Curl is a graduating senior who fulfilled her internship requirement for the Public Service emphasis by working for the Alameda County Board of Supervisors. “I picked that one because I’m really interested in local government and Alameda County has a large constituency with diverse issues.” Her duties were to attend Board and agency meetings, research constituent problems, and work on some special task forces, including foster care placement and a new food stamp management program. Alameda County had just undergone redistricting, so she answered many phone calls explaining how and why district voting boundaries had changed. Amber’s experience reinforced the practical value of internships: “They can help clarify what you do or do not want to do with your future.” In her case, she plans to attend graduate school in public policy, and though she would work in a government agency, she found out during the internship, “I would definitely never be an elected official.”



Reyna Meraz, a graduating senior and recipient of the Larry Adams Internship in Local Government Award (see Spring 2000 newsletter), is currently serving a part-time internship in the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's office, "because it offers hands-on experience and a chance to see how everything works from the inside." Under the direct supervision of a Deputy District Attorney, she takes photographs and gathers evidence, prepares People's exhibits, serves subpoenas, and performs record searches to locate any prior criminal history. On court days, she sets up evidence for her DA and is able to listen to the cases. As she is currently taking PS 165 "Criminal Justice" taught by Judge Joseph Lodge, she can relate her intern experience directly to her classroom work and has found that the internship has increased her interest in the criminal justice system. After graduation, she plans to continue in government service, either in the diplomatic corps or in a Federal law enforcement agency, with law school as another possibility.

Helen Mora's internship illustrates the important role internships can play in community programs. She fulfilled her Public Service emphasis requirement by working as an intern for the Truancy Project, a Santa Barbara multi-agency effort that seeks to address the problems of high school truancy by direct intervention and follow-up with habitual offenders. According to Greg Bollar, a Deputy District Attorney who supervised Helen in her internship, there are several good reasons why interns can be effective in this program.



INTERN HELEN MORA

Because they are close in age to the truants, interns can hopefully make a meaningful connection with them. College student interns are also good role models for students having educational problems because they are evidence of the results of academic success. Helen's duties were to meet with students with 30 or more truancy violations who were going through their first Truancy Team review, encourage them to get back on track, explain what would happen if they didn't, and follow up with the schools and parents to see how the students were doing. Helen feels that by being bilingual and from a poor family herself ("my sister and I are the first generation of our family to attend college"), she was in a good position to establish rapport with truants from similar backgrounds. Mr. Bollar concurs: "She was a pleasure to work with—her ability to relate to students was very effective." For Helen, the entire quarter was a "challenging, self-starting, hands on" experience for her and helped solidify some of her career plans, which include law school—"perhaps child protection and adoptive work or corporate law but definitely not criminal law or divorce work."

Daniel Conway is a double major in Political Science and History who is holding down a part-time internship at the Santa Barbara County jail as an "Own Recognizance (OR) Investigator." In that capacity, he interviews new arrestees and verifies the information obtained from them to see if they meet criteria to be released on their own recognizance. He has no role in the decision-making process, which he says is "pretty cut and dried—either they meet the criteria or they don't." His report goes to his supervisor and if need be, to the judge for the official decision, but interns are usually the only ones who will actually talk with the arrestee and try to corroborate facts. According to Kevin Clark from the Court Services Unit, interns have performed this vital function for the unit for 25 years. In return for the assistance they give the unit, "interns are challenged by the reality of crime, victims, and the court system. They see how the court system works and learn to form opinions without bias."

Daniel found the service aspects of his internship so rewarding that he turned down his acceptance to the UCDC program in order to stay on. "I didn't know what kind of internship I'd get there—I might just end up pushing paper—and I'm *doing* something hands-on here." Though working at the jail required some adjustment ("It's noisy, smells bad in places, and my first day, every inmate was checking me out"), "I wanted an evolving career [and in this internship] every case is individual." Daniel feels the internship has turned him toward a law-related career, "not litigation" but perhaps in a position where he can make the government or the courts "more accessible."

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Professor Emeritus Fukui Assumes Presidency of Hiroshima Peace Institute



PROFESSOR EMERITUS
HARUHIRO FUKUI

Many faculty members at major universities look upon emeritus status as an opportunity to travel, write, and enjoy a more leisurely pace of life. However, since achieving that status in 1994, UCSB Professor Haruhiro Fukui has served as a visiting faculty member at several Japanese universities and has continued his scholarly work at a pace that exceeds that of most “pre-retirement” faculty. His most ambitious undertaking has been his acceptance of

the presidency of Hiroshima Peace Institute in the spring of 2001, a position he will hold until 2004. In that capacity, Professor Fukui will be shaping the institute during its formative years.

The Hiroshima Peace Institute (HPI) was established in 1998 as a research unit of Hiroshima City University, to be, according to its website, “an international peace institute committed to help resolve all problems facing the international community by peaceful means.” To meet that objective, HPI conducts a variety of peace-related research activities. Specific information about the research objectives can be found on HPI’s website, <http://serv.peace.Hiroshima-cu.ac.jp/English>.

Professor Fukui states that he had not thought of himself as a “peace research scholar” before he was asked in late 1999 to help build the new Peace Institute, a request that came as a complete surprise. “I had always thought of myself simply as a political scientist working in the subfields of comparative politics and international relations (CP/IR), mainly in the context of modern Asia.” But as the meetings with delegations from the city and the University continued over the next several months, Professor Fukui did considerable “hard thinking about my profession and professional obligations and realized, to my surprise, that much, if not all of what I had been studying over the years as a CP/IR scholar was actually about peace, or rather conflict and war.” In this process of soul-searching, “I came to believe that for the CP/IR specialist, the question of why conflict and war are so common and peace so hard to achieve and consolidate should be a central one, perhaps *the* central question.”

“I believe that peace is the most important, most fundamental condition not only of man’s well-being but of her survival. It seems obvious to me that none of the serious and complex problems of global scale that man faces today—e.g., the pollution and destruction of the environment, widespread poverty and violations of human rights in many parts of the world, population explosion, AIDS, etc.—can possibly be solved in a state of war, whether between states or within a state. On the contrary, war only, and often drastically, compounds and aggravates all these problems. To the best of my knowledge, no war has ever benefited most of the people involved; in fact, every war has hurt the majority of them to varying degrees, often fatally, especially the majority of women and children. In other words, war has never paid for most people.”

In his belief that social scientists, through their training and analysis, could “identify causes and effects of war and peace and explain how and why one leads to the other,” Professor Fukui realized that the new Hiroshima Peace Institute presented a unique opportunity to bring together a group of world-class peace research scholars to work on these problems. So in accepting the appointment, Professor Fukui persuaded the institute’s administration to allow him to depart from the traditional hiring practices of Japanese Universities. These institutions typically hire only their own graduates, a practice Fukui describes as “pure and simple nepotism,” which undermines academic quality and creativity by putting personal connections ahead of scholarship. In addition, most Japanese universities do not require the doctorate for a faculty appointment. As Professor Fukui notes, faculties in Japanese universities—particularly in the social sciences and the humanities where both practices are widespread—are considerably weaker than their counterparts in American universities.

Over the next several years, Professor Fukui will be expanding the staff through a series of international searches. “For the first time for any Japanese university or research institute, we are advertising all the positions internationally and, for the first time for any Japanese public organization, will appoint both tenured and tenurable staff strictly on the basis of academic criteria, regardless of race, nationality, gender, ideology, etc.” The first search, conducted in 2001 with the assistance of an international screening committee, yielded 96 applicants from 14 countries, from which 4 offers were extended. A second search, now in progress, has yielded 109 applications from 23 countries. He is firmly committed to this process, since as he told the city fathers and University officials when they were recruiting him, “it is the only way I know to build a world class research institute.”

As he stated in a letter to a UCSB colleague, “I agreed to run the outfit for a few years in order as much to bust, or at least begin to bust, the hiring practices that prevail in, and are killing, most large Japanese organizations, especially academia, as to contribute to the promotion of peace research in this part of the world. To put it bluntly, I wanted to make history, once in my lifetime, which is quickly running out!” His colleagues and friends wish him the greatest success.



PEACE PYRAMID, UCSB

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