



# SCHOOL OF POLITICS, SECURITY, AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA



**ANNUAL REPORT  
2020-2021**

# School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs (SPSIA)

Annual Report 2020 - 2021

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## A Message From the Director

It is my distinct pleasure to introduce our School's very first annual report. Our school is a vibrant part of one of the largest research-intensive universities in the nation with a well-earned reputation for providing social mobility to students with diverse backgrounds.

In the subsequent pages, you will have a glimpse of many different accomplishments of members of our School.

- First and foremost, I would like to extend my personal gratitude to Dr. Kerstin Hamann for her decade-long leadership. Thanks to her distinguished and dedicated service, Department of Political Science has transformed into School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs in 2019. We continue to do impactful research, help our students establish thriving careers, and inform public debates about salient issues in the United States and globally - just at a greater scale than ever!
- Our faculty members produce cutting-edge research on a diverse range of subjects from American elections to coups in Sub-Saharan Africa; from politics of ethnicity to food security; from covert operations to role of leadership skills in foreign decision making. Meanwhile, an increasing number of our faculty is honored with awards by leading professional associations and civic organizations in Florida.
- Our undergraduate students obtain recognition for their activities including highly prestigious fellowships and scholarships.
- Our graduate students conduct research on topics central to international peace and security, publish their findings in impactful journals, and earn highly competitive fellowships, awards and positions.
- Our School is home to five units that promote research and learning about different realms of human affairs. The India Center and Kurdish Political Studies Program focus on regions of the world with rich histories and dense linkages to the United States. The Lou Frey Institute plays a remarkable role in civic education and learning in Florida and beyond. The Intelligence Community Center for Academic Excellence prepares our students for successful careers in national security. The Center for Global Economic and Environmental Opportunity espouses global partnerships about environment and sustainability.
- Our alumni carry the torch and represent us proudly while pursuing different vocations. One of them won a Pulitzer Prize for international reporting, another alumnus counsel Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, a third one is a postdoctoral fellow studying nuclear security issues at MIT, a fourth one has been serving as a U.S. diplomat in hotspot destinations including Beijing and Istanbul.
- Most of the events we have organized since March 2020 have been virtual. With fall 2021, our on-campus events have returned. One of the highlights has been the first ever Latin American/Latinx Film Festival that reinforces UCF's identity as a Hispanic Serving Institution.
- Our staff members often go beyond the call of duty and ensure that our School operates seamlessly during an unprecedented pandemic and Hurricanes (thankfully we were spared this year!). Anjella, Nick, Kyrie, LaNique, and Gary, I very much appreciate your service!
- Last but not least, I would like to thank Marygrace Slebodnik, Nicholas Schenk, Judy Froehlich, and Joshua Sweet for producing this newsletter in a very short time frame.

If you have any suggestions and ideas that could be pertinent to our School, I very much would like to meet you in person on our gorgeous campus in Orlando or virtually. Please just drop me a note.

**Güneş Murat Tezcür, Ph.D.**  
Director of SPSIA



# Thank You KERSTIN

Our sincerest thanks to Dr. Kerstin Hamann, who has led the School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs for the past 10 years. During her tenure and leadership as chair/director, the unit has gone through significant growth and change, including the redesignation of the once Department of Political Science as the School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs. To support the growth of the school and its programs, Dr. Hamann created an additional staff position and reorganized the department's administrative structure, including the establishment of an undergraduate advising office with staff and peer advising. Dr. Hamann strengthened the faculty, including hiring the first endowed chair in the College of Sciences and encouraged the growth of external funding through the establishment of an internal small grant funding program for assistant and associate professors.

Under Dr. Hamann's leadership, a new Ph.D. program in Security Studies was implemented. The program, launched in 2013, currently enrolls 26 students and to date has graduated 21 doctoral candidates, many of whom have gone on to prestigious positions in academia, think tanks, industry, politics and high-ranking military positions. Several new tracks, minors and graduate and undergraduate certificates, including a new undergraduate certificate in the Politics of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Identity, have been added to the curriculum and both of our majors have been adapted to include a fully online version. Students can now participate in major-specific study abroad programs in nine different countries.

During her tenure as director and chair, Dr. Hamann has also served as the interim director of the India Center. In both her roles, she engaged in significant fundraising efforts, including securing funds for a public affairs manager for the India Center. She has also further developed alumni engagement for the school and the alumni spotlight program. As a faculty member, Dr. Hamann has served as vice president of the American Political Science Association and received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the APSA Political Science Education Section during her time as director/chair.



# New Academic Programs Added in Academic Year 2021-2022

## Political Science BA - Intelligence & National Security Track

A unique new track option, the Intelligence and National Security track offers students an opportunity to specialize and prepare for careers in the American intelligence community (IC) and national security related fields. This track was developed in collaboration with the UCF Intelligence Community Center for Academic Excellence (ICCAE), a center established with funding from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI). The specialized intelligence courses are supported by out of the classroom programming provided by the ICCAE geared at educating, promoting, and preparing a diverse student body to enter the professional ranks of intelligence and national security fields. Exclusive professional development and funding opportunities are available to students engaged and committed to pursuing a career in the IC.

### Graduate Certificates

- Network Analysis and Applications
- Survey Research

### Undergraduate Certificates

- Kurdish Studies
- Politics of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Identity



## Faculty Highlights

- In Spring 2021, **Annabelle Conroy**, a SPSIA Lecturer, received the AIM High Impact Individual Award for her contributions to reduce the cost of course materials for her students. Conroy has taught 484 students in 26 course sections using open educational resources.
- Professor **Terri Susan Fine** has been named this year's recipient of the Agnes Crabtree International Relations Award by the Florida Council for the Social Studies. Through her teaching, research and community activities, Dr. Fine has furthered the cause of international relations. Most recently, her work on the Holocaust-civic education project for Florida's K-12 students highlights her contributions to this area of the social studies.
- Associate Professor & Assistant School Director **Aubrey Jewett** has been honored with the FPSA Manning Dauer Award. The award is given out every three years for "a sustained exemplary record of research, teaching, mentoring and service related to Florida politics and policy and supportive involvement with the Florida Political Science Association." Recipients of this award are recognized experts on Sunshine State politics and have impact and recognition beyond the discipline of political science reaching out to their local community, the state, nation and/or internationally.
- UCF Pegasus Professor **Naim Kapucu**, who has a joint faculty appointment at SPSIA, has been selected to join the National Academy of Public Administration's (NAPA) 2021 Class of Academy Fellows. He was one of 39 leaders selected for the honor for their expertise in the field of public administration.
- Associate Professor **Jonathan Knuckey** was selected as the winner of the Southwest Political Science Association's Pi Sigma Alpha Award for best conference paper titled "Authoritarianism and Support for Trump in the 2016 Presidential Election" co-authored with UCF undergraduate student **Komysha Hassan '18**, Political Science & Writing and Rhetoric (double major).

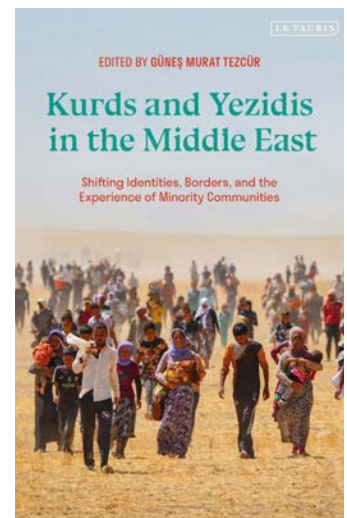
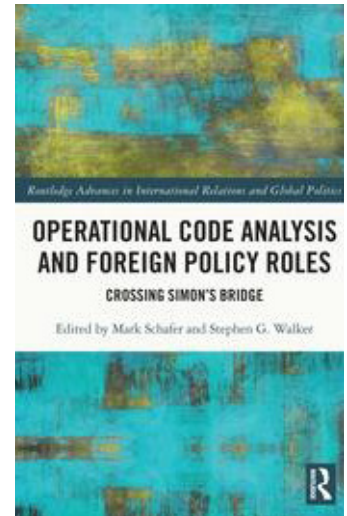


- In July 2020, Associate Professor **Eric Merriam** was appointed as an appellate military judge for the Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals. The Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals has jurisdiction over appeals from Air Force courts-martial worldwide.
- Professor **Mark Schafer** was named the 2021 Distinguished Scholar of the Year by the Foreign Policy Analysis section of the International Studies Association. This is a lifetime achievement celebrating Professor Schafer's outstanding scholarship in foreign policy analysis.
- Assistant Professor **Kenicia Wright** and SPSIA Director **Güneş Murat Tezcür** are co-investigators in a new study funded by the National Science Foundation's Build and Broaden 2.0 Grant. Their grant will focus on the political behavior and policy preferences of the Latinx community, and with UCF being one of the largest Hispanic Serving Higher Education Institutions in the country, it is ideally placed.

# Faculty Publications

SPSIA faculty continue to publish impactful scholarly research on a diverse range of subjects ranging from civil wars to environmental challenges, from voting behavior in the United States to coups in Africa. Here is a selection of recent publications by SPSIA faculty:

- **Ash, K.,** & Obradovich, N. (2020). "Climatic stress, internal migration, and Syrian civil war onset." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 64(1), 3-31.
- Bennett, A., Basurto, X., Viridin, J., Lin, X., Betances, S. J., Smith, M. D., ... **Jacques, P.,** ... & Zoubek, S. (2021). Recognize fish as food in policy discourse and development funding. *Ambio*, 50(5), 981-989.
- **Boutton, A., & Dolan, T. M.** (2021). "Enemies in the shadows: On the origins and survival of clandestine clients" *International Studies Quarterly*, 65(1), 146-159.
- Ecevit, Y.A., & **Kinsey, B. S.** (2021). Minority candidates on party lists: evidence from Belgium. *Acta Politica*, 1-36.
- Freeman, J., **Baggio, J.A.,** & Coyle, T.R. (2020). "Social and general intelligence improves collective action in a common pool resource system." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 117(14), 7712-7718.
- Gurney, G. G., Darling, E. S., Ahmadi, G. N., Agostini, V. N., Ban, N. C., Blythe, J., Claudet, J., **Epstein, G.,** ... & Jupiter, S. D. (2021). Biodiversity needs every tool in the box: Use OECMs. *Nature*, 595, 646-649.
- **Hamann, K.,** Glazier, R. A., **Wilson, B. M., & Pollock, P. H.** (2021). Online teaching, student success, and retention in political science courses. *European Political Science*, 20(3), 427-439.
- **Knuckey, J., & Kim, M.** (2020). The politics of white racial identity and vote choice in the 2018 Midterm Elections. *Social Science Quarterly*, 101(4), 1584-1599.
- Maggio, L. A., **Larsen, K.,** Thomas, A., Costello, J. A., & Artino Jr, A. R. (2021). "Scoping reviews in medical education: A scoping review." *Medical Education*, 55(6), 689-700.
- **Merriam, E.,** & McKechnie, D. B. (2020). *National Security Law*. West Academic.
- **Mousseau, D.** (2021). "Does foreign development aid trigger ethnic war in developing states?" *Armed Forces & Society*, 47(4), 750-769 (recipient of the Charles Moskos Prize awarded to the best article published by an emerging scholar in *Armed Forces & Society* in a calendar year).
- **Schafer, M.,** & Walker, S. G. (Eds.). (2021). *Operational code analysis and foreign policy roles: Crossing Simon's Bridge*. New York: Routledge.
- Schiel, R., **Powell, J.,** & Faulkner, C. (2021). Mutiny in Africa, 1950-2018. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 38(4), 481-499.
- Siroky, D., Popovic, M., & **Mirilovic, N.** (2021). "Unilateral secession, international recognition, and great power contestation." *Journal of Peace Research*, 58(5), 1049-1067.
- **Tezcür, G. M.** (Ed.). 2021. *Kurds and Yezidis in the Middle East: Shifting identities, borders, and the experience of minority communities*. London: I. B. Tauris.
- **Turcu, A.,** & Urbatsch, R. (2020). "European ruling parties' electoral strategies and overseas enfranchisement policies." *European Journal of Political Research*, 59(2): 269-289.
- **Vasquez III, J. P.** (2020). Patriot games, war games, and political football: A constructivist analysis of militarization in an American sport. *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 5(2), 299-318.
- **Wright, K.,** & Zhu, L. (2021). "When social capital becomes political capital: Understanding the social contexts of minority candidates' electoral success in the American states." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics*, 6(2), 373-401.





## Centers, Institutes & Programs

### The India Center

The vision of the India Center is to establish itself as the nation's preeminent location for the study of India's role in the world today: a national leader in the formation of U.S. - India partnerships, scholarship and research focused in India, India-centered educational programs, and outreach to the Indian community in Florida and nationally.

### Virtual Conference

In 2020, the India Center hosted a conference on The Politics of Security in India. The conference took place virtually as a series of three panels that featured international experts from academia and think tanks to discuss international, domestic and human security issues in India.

"I am grateful that we were able to bring together such an outstanding set of international experts to our conference despite the limitations posed by the Coronavirus pandemic. The presentations and ensuing discussions were insightful and stimulating and provided new perspectives on the concept of security and its application in the Indian context," said **Kerstin Hamann, Ph.D.**, Interim Director of the India Center and Pegasus Professor.

### New Director of Public Affairs

The India Center has witnessed exciting changes just this past month, and is delighted to introduce **Leila Chacko**, the India Center's Director of Public Affairs. Leila is the India Center's first full-time staff member and you can find her in the India Center's new office (Chemistry 117). An Orlando native and licensed attorney, Leila brings knowledge and experience to the India Center as she supports the India Center's mission to broaden the awareness and understanding of contemporary India.

### Lou Frey Institute of Politics and Government

The work of the Lou Frey Institute, in collaboration with colleagues in Illinois, over the past three years in developing and launching the successful Guardians of Democracy online program was recently recognized in a report from the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE).

Civics360.org, the Lou Frey Institute's nationally recognized and used online civic education support tool, has continued to see a growth in numbers, currently exceeding 31,000 users a month.

### New Program Content

In 2020, the Lou Frey Institute launched a new series, Civics in Real Life, that has seen usage across the nation. This series provides one page, non-partisan, link-rich overviews of current events that connect to civic concepts and allow teachers to engage in discussions in a safe and engaging manner.





## The Center for Global Economic and Environmental Opportunity

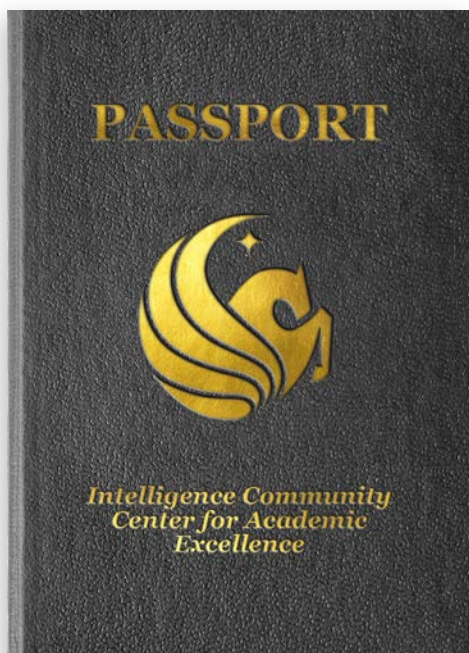
The Center for Global Economic and Environmental Opportunity is committed to serving UCF and the global community by advancing UCF's role and reputation on global economic and environmental issues.

### New Sustainability Partnership

In early 2021, UCF joined five other regional higher education institutions in launching the Central Florida Higher Education Partnership for Sustainable Development. The partnership will be an informal action-oriented collaboration committed to combining the knowledge, skills, resources, and imagination of the participating institutions of higher education to help achieve sustainable development throughout Central Florida and beyond.

The new partnership will use as guidelines the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. These goals include ending poverty and hunger, promoting good health and well-being and quality education, producing affordable and clean energy, spurring innovation, reducing inequalities, ensuring decent work and economic growth, encouraging responsible production and consumption, addressing climate change, and more.

UCF President **Andrew Cartwright** said, "UCF is committed to partnerships of all kinds, and UCF is also committed to sustainability in all of its dimensions. This is one important way our university can serve our regional community and beyond in a cooperative and creative undertaking with other institutions that share these commitments."



## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



### The Central Florida Intelligence Community Center for Academic Excellence

The Central Florida Intelligence Community Center for Academic Excellence (ICCAE) hosted at SPSIA has been very active despite the pandemic. During the 2020-21 academic year, we hosted seven events—mostly through Zoom—bringing intelligence community professionals and scholars to our students.

#### Student Scholars

In Spring 2021, ICCAE recognized their first group of ICCAE scholars. Students earned this recognition using criteria from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) by participating in their curricular and extracurricular programs. Seven consortium students attended the ODNI's Summer Seminar, a chance to hear directly from Intelligence Community leaders, participate in an extended simulation, and develop other IC-related skills. The ICCAE also supported several students doing internships and research during the 2020-21 school year.

#### New Track and Activities

Early fall 2021, the ICCAE inaugurated a new intelligence and national security (INS) track within the political science major. Students in the INS major track will take four courses in intelligence alongside other political science courses which will help prepare students wanting to pursue careers in both the private and public sector.

Additionally, ICCAE started a 'Reading Intelligence' book club and have begun hosting in-person events again.



SPSIA Junior Mohammed Al Awwad

### **Kurdish Political Studies Program**

The UCF Kurdish Political Studies Program is the first and only academic program in the U.S. focusing on Kurdish issues. UCF faculty and students have been very active this past year.

#### ***Student Wins Highly Competitive Internship***

**Mohammed Al Awwad**, a Junior at the School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs majoring in Political Science, was selected for a highly competitive internship with the U.S. State Department in fall 2020. He served as Human Rights Research Intern at the United States Consulate of Erbil, Iraq, as part of the Virtual Student Federal Service that allows students to take internships in a remote mode.

“As a human rights research intern, I conducted several pieces of research about local communities in the Kurdistan area of Iraq and whether they were subject to human rights violations and persecutions. This experience proved to be very helpful as I learned about how policymaking works and it allowed me to understand how the federal service and diplomacy work and inform policymaking.”

#### ***Students Participate in Model UN Conference***

UCF played a key role in organizing the first Model United Nations (MUN) conference in Iraq. The conference is part of the partnership between UCF’s Kurdish Political Studies Program and Soran University of Iraqi Kurdistan. Supported by a grant from the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), it will bring together 100 students from across Iraq in April 2022. For several days, the students will assume the role of country delegates and take part in the parliamentary proceedings, and debate issues of international importance while practicing policy research, negotiation and the drafting of resolutions.

Kurdish students have a unique perspective on international topics, but there are very few opportunities to engage them in such discussions. This conference will help bring the student community together and show them that world affairs concern everyone and they have just as much say in them as everyone else.

#### ***New Kurdish Language Course Offered***

UCF is now one of only two universities in the nation to regularly offer Kurdish language courses. Thanks to a collaboration between the UCF Department of Modern Languages and Literatures and the School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs initiated by Assistant Professor **Haidar Khezri**, students have a unique opportunity to pursue a high-demand language not offered to many.

“Our new course on Sorani dialect of Kurdish offered by Dr. Haidar Khezri significantly contributes to our ability to meet with the increasing demand and curiosity among our students about Kurdish society and people,” says **Güneş Murat Tezcür**, Professor and Jalal Talabani Chair of Kurdish Political Studies. “It also enables us to broaden the scope of our activities and incorporate a humanities perspective.”



**Dr. Haidar Khezri is with SPSIA Alumni Jenna Dovydaitis and Maggie Morgan**

# Event Highlights

## Latin American/Latinx Film Festival 2021

UCF was designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution in 2019 after exceeding a 25 percent enrollment of Hispanic undergraduate students. Consistent with this designation, SPSIA has intensified its efforts to augment interest and knowledge about the Hispanic experiences. The first Latin American/ Latinx Film Festival at UCF launched over September and October 2021 with the intention of shedding light on salient issues facing the Latin American and Latino communities such as gender inequality, racism, colonialism and discrimination against LGBTQ communities.

The six films, shown both on campus and via streaming, explored salient themes including The festival was created by Lecturers **Annabelle Conroy**, **Esmeralda Duarte** and **Jason Gregory**.

“UCF has never had a film festival of this kind and this will be a really good way of showcasing the different perspectives and topics of the Latinx community,” Dr. Conroy said.

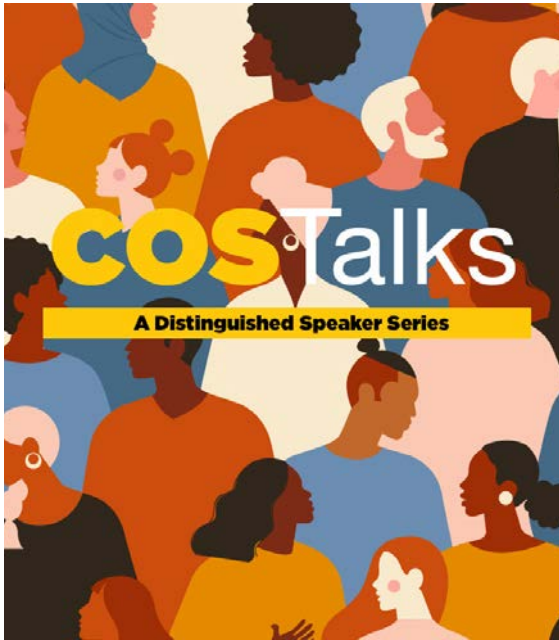


## PRIDE LGBTQ+ Panel

SPSIA and Pride Faculty and Staff Association (PFSA) co-sponsored a panel discussion on LGBTQ+ Rights in America in 2021. The event was moderated by **Martin Dupuis**, Senior Associate Dean, Burnett Honors College and Associate Professor, School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs. Panelists were **Patricia Farless**, Senior Lecturer, Department of History (historic overview of LGBTQ+ Rights in America); **Martha Brenckle**, Professor, Writing and Rhetoric; **Alexis Rodriguez**, student, Department of History (Central Florida LGBTQ+ history); and **Matt Ricke**, Title IX Coordinator and OIE Assistant Director (Title IX and LGBTQ+ Rights in Florida).

## SPSIA Success Series

SPSIA hosted their Success Series virtually over the span of the Fall 2020 – Fall 2021 semesters. With over a dozen different workshops, this series provided students with access to learn more about the resources, opportunities and programs offered at the school. Workshop topics ranged from how to succeed in a remote learning environment, to applying and looking for internships, to honors research.



## COS Talk – Fifty Shades of Deservingness

In Spring 2021, the College of Sciences announced a Distinguished Speaker Series, entitled COSTalks, to celebrate the diversity of contributors to outstanding scholarship in the natural and social sciences. The intention of the series is to promote diversity and inclusion among our faculty and students by bringing highly successful academicians from historically underrepresented backgrounds to UCF.

SPSIA hosted Candis Watts Smith, Associate Professor of Political Science at Duke University in November 2021. Smith held a talk that shared how certain groups are considered more deserving than others, in terms of gun regulations and rights, immigration and welfare, and how those perceptions influence public attitudes toward policies.

## Against the Odds: A Discussion on the Future of the Democratic Movement in Belarus

In October 2021, SPSIA hosted a virtual event dedicated to Belarus – a country that witnessed unprecedented democratic mobilization during last year’s presidential elections. Led by the former presidential candidate Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the movement is advocating for international sanctions on the regime of Aliaksandr Lukashenka, release of the political prisoners, and free and fair elections.

To discuss these developments, SPSIA doctorate student **Miroslav Shapovalov** invited Valery Kavaleusky, a senior representative of the opposition cabinet, for a conversation with Dr. David Marples, a well-published Canadian historian who specializes on the political history of Belarus. Moderated by **Dr. Konstantin Ash**, the guests exchanged opinions on the reasons behind the popular mobilization, Western pressure on Lukashenka and the possibilities for a peaceful democratic transition.



**TO VIEW MORE OF OUR VIRTUAL EVENTS VISIT:**  
[youtube.com/user/politicalscienceUCF](https://www.youtube.com/user/politicalscienceUCF)

# Student Highlights

**Olatayo “Tayo” Bakare ‘21** won the Judges Choice Award at the Spring 2021 Virtual Research Intensive (RI) Poster Showcase at UCF. He was also one of eight undergraduates selected nationally as a fellow for the 2021 Society for Political Methodology Expansions Initiative. This initiative covers his participation in the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) Summer Program.

**Alyson Johnson ‘19** earned the 2021 Florida Political Science Association’s Best Undergraduate Paper Award for “Explaining Income Inequality in Florida, 2000-2016.” Her mentor was **Dr. Aubrey Jewett**.



**Nina Neto ‘21** was awarded the Fulbright scholarship to assist with the U.S. Student Program in Brazil. She has a strong desire to pursue a field-relevant experience that allows her to use her existing English as a Second Language teaching skills while also giving her the opportunity to conduct original research. During Nina’s application stage, her Honors Undergraduate Thesis (HUT) experience, chaired by **Dr. Michael Mousseau**, proved to be invaluable. The HUT program provided a wonderful opportunity to challenge her writing and research skills. The program also helped her to focus on selecting her host country and set the stage for her research side project in Brazil. Nina hopes that the Fulbright experience will give her a new cultural insight that she can apply to future academic and professional pursuits. Due to the pandemic, Nina will conduct her trip to Brazil in Spring 2022.

**Abigail Reynolds** traveled to Tanzania in Fall 2021 to study Swahili through a Boren Scholarship. Swahili is a language that is critical to U.S. interest and to the political science major’s future career in international relations. As an initiative of the National Security Education Program, Boren scholarships provide opportunities for undergraduate students to study less commonly taught languages in regions critical to U.S. interests.



## ORDER OF PEGASUS

Order of Pegasus is the highest student honor at UCF, recognizing outstanding graduating seniors and graduate students who have demonstrated exemplary academic achievement, university involvement, leadership and community service. A number of SPSIA students won this award in the last two years:

### 2020 WINNERS:

**Giorgi Beruashvili '20 '21MA**, International and Global Studies  
**Jenna Dovydaitis '20** Biology and Political Science (double major)  
**Madeline Mills '20**, Political Science

### 2021 WINNERS:

**Stephanie Blanco '21**, Political Science  
**Jasmine Masri '21**, Political Science



**Jenna Dovydaitis '20** also received Honors in the Major Undergraduate Thesis Award for her thesis paper titled “The Lasting Legacy of Chemical Weapons in Iraqi Kurdistan.” Her mentor was **Dr. Güneş Murat Tezcür**.

**Raquel Lozano '21** was elected as a representative for District 3 on the Orange County Soil and Water Conservation District. She began her role January 5, 2021.



Jenna Dovydaitis '20

## Graduate Student Highlights

### MA Students

**Kathleen Sullivan '19MA** was awarded Outstanding MA Thesis for “Commitment and Credibility in Foreign Direct Investment” in 2020. She is recently appointed as a foreign affairs officer for the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation in DC. She works with the Missile Technology Control Regime and US export control policy.

**Craig Wilding's** paper “Florida Campaign Money: Are Constituents being Represented?” won the 2021 Best Graduate Paper Award from the Florida Political Science Association (FPSA). His research tracked where Florida State House candidates received their campaign money from in 2020 and highlights the large amounts of money coming from interest groups that goes to incumbent candidates giving them an advantage.

## Ph.D Students

**Tutku Ayhan '21PhD** was selected as the winner of the College Excellence in Graduate Teaching Award. She is now a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention at Binghamton University. Tutku defended her dissertation titled “Trauma, Resilience, and Transformation: Post-Genocide Experiences of Yazidi Women” in summer 2021.



Tutku Ayhan '21PhD

**Sara Belligoni**, after publishing ‘Italy—Once Overwhelmed by COVID-19—Turns to a Health Pass and Stricter Measures to Contain Virus’ was invited by the Editorial Board of *The Conversation US* to contribute to a special issue “GlobalCOVID” with an article titled “Italy - Once Overwhelmed by COVID-19—Turns to a Health Pass and Stricter Measures to Contain Virus.” Sara’s co-authored paper ‘Florida as a COVID-19 Epicenter: Exploring the Role of Institutions in the State’s Response’ is forthcoming in the *International Journal of Public Administration*.



Devyn Escalanti '18 '20MA

**Devyn Escalanti '18 '20MA** recently was awarded a diversity fellowship from the American Political Science Association. The fellowship was first launched in 1969 to increase the number of underrepresented groups in political science. Her dissertation focuses on the intersection of public health and security in developing African countries. Some of the questions she will highlight

include how human disease impacts social and political outcomes and accompanying violence. She plans to quantify intangible data like attitudes and behavior using advanced GIS data, mapping, and survey techniques.

**Salah Ben Hammou** published a co-authored paper with **Dr. Jonathan Powell** & UCF alum **Dr. Rebecca Schiel '18PhD** in the *Journal of Global Security Studies* titled “Oil Wealth, Risk Acceptance, and the Seizure of Power.” This article shows that although oil wealth should be associated with greater coup attempts, these attempts are more likely to fail. Salah also published a commentary on the military coup in Sudan in October 2021 on the Monkey Cage blog of *The Washington Post*.

**Jennifer Joel** has been awarded a three year Global Population and Development (GD&P) fellowship at the Hewlett Foundation starting June 2021. Jennifer will support agenda setting for their new push to increase funding for EIPM and WEE research in West and East Africa including working with African-based research teams to design studies to measure women’s economic empowerment.

**Erica Ricci** went to different Italian archives this past summer 2021 and enjoyed her first-hand fieldwork experience. Her research focuses on political violence and investigates the kind of violence carried out by ordinary people who face unstable socio-political conditions.



Tad Schnauffer

**Tad Schnauffer** participated in the multi-week Tradewinds Exercise in Guyana on the northeast coast of South America in summer 2021. On the ground, Schnauffer worked with allied and partner forces to build their operational capacity, while fostering partnerships with military members from over a dozen nations. While serving in Guyana, Schnauffer continued to work on his dissertation, carrying printed copies of draft sections with him when he operated in areas of limited connectivity.

# Alumni Highlights

The School of Politics, Security and International Affairs has graduated over 6,000 alumni. Many of our graduates have gone on to successful careers serving the public in positions with local, state and national government; working in the private sector; and pursuing careers in the legal field or with non-profit organizations. Here are a just a few of these alumni spotlights.

## 30 Under 30 Award Recipients

Our young alumni continue to do extraordinary things in their professional and civic communities. Here are a few of the winners of this prestigious award from the past two years.

**Brandon Fair '13** started his career in Columbus, Ohio at JP Morgan Asset Management helping clients save for college through his work on their 529 team. Through his hard work and passion for helping others, Fair earned a promotion to an associate level client advisor position where he partners with financial advisors to deliver JPMorgan's thought leadership and investment solutions to 401(k) fiduciaries.

**Kristina Merritt '12** faced the challenge of navigating higher education as a first-generation college student. She graduated with flying colors, earning dual degrees in psychology and political science in less than four years at UCF, and going on to graduate from Stetson University College of Law. Merritt is now the Manager of Legal Services at Checkers & Rally's Restaurants, where she tackles a variety of projects from insurance issues to corporate governance.

**Nicholas Grandchamps '15** became the public servant that he is today at UCF. Nicholas has since worked as a policy advisor in the U.S. House of Representatives, executed critical public diplomacy programs at the U.S. Embassies in Beijing and The Hague, and has mastered speaking Chinese-Mandarin and Turkish during his first three and a half years of service as a U.S. Foreign Service Officer. Nicholas was a diplomat in Beijing, China, during the most pivotal time in U.S.-China relations. At the onset of COVID-19, Nicholas and other essential personnel helped evacuate American citizens from Wuhan, and he filled the role of multiple officers who were displaced from their usual work.



Nicholas Grandchamps '15

**Bradley Gullett '13** is the Governance Manager at Raymond James Financial in the Anti-Money Laundering department, where he has the opportunity to leverage both his foreign policy and finance/business interests. He is responsible for digesting federal law and regulation and overseeing policies, procedures, workflows, training and general project management. He holds the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority Series 7 and 66 licenses and is a Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialist.

**Kelly Quintero '13** - Kelly Quintero is a dedicated and focused impact player at Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida in her role as the Director of Advocacy and Government Relations. She strives for excellence in all she does and is recognized by her peers across the country within the Feeding America national network as a leader in her line of work. Her dedication has resulted in Second Harvest being inducted into the Feeding America National Advocacy Hall of Fame. She has twice served on the selection committee for the Hispanic Heritage Scholarship Fund as a past recipient and has had a hand in helping UCF students win a scholarship based on their essays.

**Cynthia Ramkellawan '11** - Cynthia graduated from the University of Central Florida in 2011 with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a minor in Business Administration. Through drive and ambition, Cynthia has become the youngest graduate of the Florida A&M College of Law at 21 years old. She has returned to the college as a Law Professor in the Academic Success and Bar Preparation department and is committed to help law students further their education and achievements. Cynthia also volunteers time through the Legal Aid Society of the Orange County Bar Association, Inc. as a Guardian ad Litem. This alliance allows Cynthia to forge a permanent bond with the children and families of Orange County. Her hope is to provide a beacon of light to those children and families in need of support.



International reporting by **Michael Schwirtz '03** recently earned him one of journalism's top awards, the 2020 Pulitzer Prize winner for international reporting, one of the honor's 15 journalism categories. Along the course of his journalism career, Schwirtz was nominated two other times for a Pulitzer.



**Michael Schwirtz '03**

U.S. Army Colonel **Joseph Funderburke, '19PhD**, has stepped into a new advisory role as Special Assistant to the Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Mark A. Milley — the highest-ranking military officer in the Department of Defense and principal military advisor to the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense.



**Joseph Funderburke, '19PhD**

“Pursuing my degree at the University of Central Florida ended up being the best decision. The education at this institution provided me with the intellectual and critical thinking skills needed to successfully do my job today in weekly meetings with people like the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman himself,” said Funderburke.

**Doreen Horschig '21PhD** was awarded the Roger L. Hale Fellowship in early spring 2021. This highly competitive one-year fellowship provides an exemplary individual with an outstanding opportunity to develop professional skills by working at a leading peace and security institution. She was also accepted into the Nuclear Scholars Initiative by the Center for Strategic and International Studies' Project on Nuclear Issues. Doreen is currently a Stanton Foundation Nuclear Security Fellow at MIT studying public opinion towards nuclear weapons.



**Doreen Horschig '21PhD**

“Getting the fellowship is not just a validation for me and my research work, but also for the doctoral Security Studies program and my dissertation advisor **Dr. Güneş Murat Tezcür.**”

### **Alumni Pursuing Their Ph.D.**

**Taraleigh Davis '17, '19MA** - currently a doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 2019 - received a Distinguished Graduate Student Fellowship from the University.

**Angie Torres '19** has entered Ph.D. candidacy in the Department of Government at Cornell University. She studies the effects of gender-based violence on women's political participation in Central America.

## Fast Facts

### Graduate degrees

Ph.D. Security Studies  
M.A. Political Science

### Graduate certificates

Intelligence & National Security  
Network Analysis and Applications  
Survey Research

### Bachelor's degrees

B.A. Political Science  
B.A. International & Global Studies

### Minors

Diplomacy  
European Studies  
Global Peace & Security Studies  
Intelligence & National Security  
International & Global Studies  
Political Science  
Political Science - Pre-law  
Terrorism Studies

### Certificates

Civics Teaching  
Diplomacy  
Intelligence & National Security  
Kurdish Studies  
Politics of Race, Ethnicity,  
Gender, and Identity

## Security Studies Doctoral Degrees Awarded in 2021

**Tutku Ayhan**  
*Trauma, Resilience, and Transformation: Post-Genocide Experiences of Yazidi Women*

**Daniel Banini**  
*Security Dynamics in West Africa: The Interplay of Ecology, State Legitimacy, and Corruption on State Stability*

**Doreen Horschig**  
*An Illusional Nuclear Taboo: Mechanisms of Domestic Attitudinal Patterns for Extreme Methods of War*

**Logan Kerschner**  
*Small Intrusions, Powerful Payoffs*

**Zlatin Mitkov**  
*Group Level Cues and The Use of Force in Domestic and Foreign Policy Contexts*

**Miroslav Shapovalov**  
*Between Fighting and Serving: How Existential Motivations Shaped Conflict Participation in Donbass War in Ukraine*

**T. J. Spolizino**  
*Military Political Influence: How Military Leaders Interact with the Public Political Space*

## Total students

Undergraduate Students (Fall 2021)



Graduate Students (Fall 2021)



## Number of Degrees Awarded

2020-2021



"As life is action and passion,  
man that he share the passion  
time, at the peril of being judged  
above himself."  
GRATEFULLY DEDICATED  
ALUMNI WHO LEAVE HIS  
TO HONOR UCF BY  
POSITIVE DIFFERENCE IN  
FROM THE RICHARD J. W.  
FAMILY TRUST  
UCF  
ALUMNI



## Faculty and Staff

### Professors

Terri Fine  
Roger Handberg  
Kerstin Hamann (Pegasus Professor)  
Peter Jacques  
Michael Mousseau  
Mark Schafer  
Güneş Murat Tezcür (Jalal Talabani Endowed Chair)  
Bruce Wilson

### Associate Professors

Jacopo Baggio  
Andrew Boutton  
Thomas Dolan  
Aubrey Jewett  
Myunghee Kim  
Barbara Kinsey  
Jonathan Knuckey  
Eric Merriam  
Drew Lanier  
Nikola Mirilovic  
Jonathan Powell  
Houman Sadri

### Lecturers

Robert Bledsoe  
Annabelle Conroy  
Barry Edwards (Associate Lec.)  
John Hanley  
Nathan Ilderton  
Danel Marien (Associate Lec.)  
Anca Turcu (Associate Lec.)  
Paul Vasquez (Associate Lec.)

### Affiliates

James Bacchus, Distinguished University Professor of Global Affairs  
Martin Dupuis, Senior Associate Dean, Honors College  
Naim Kapucu, Pegasus Professor  
Stephen Masyada, Director of the Lou Frey Institute

### Postdoctoral Scholars

Graham Epstein  
Joshua Lambert

### Professional and Support Staff

Leila Chacko  
LaNique Chesterfield  
Kimberly Garton  
Kyrie Ottaviani  
Shena Parks  
Nicholas Schenk  
Gary Smith  
Kevin Sopko  
Christopher Spinale  
Laura Stephenson  
Anjella Warnshuis

### Assistant Professors

Konstantin Ash  
Kelsey Larsen  
Demet Mousseau  
Kenicia Wright

### Part-Time Faculty

Terry Breese  
Joseph Durso  
Bruce Farcau  
Lynnee Gleiber  
Paul Labeledz  
Alvin Quackenbush  
Ted Reynolds  
Richard Tyre  
Brian Yeitz

