



UCF

# SCHOOL OF POLITICS, SECURITY, AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS ANNUAL REPORT

2022



# SCHOOL OF POLITICS, SECURITY & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (SPSIA)

## ANNUAL REPORT 2022

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

2022 has been a year of significant transformations at our school. As UCF moved to a new budget model and software environment in July, there has been a major restructuring of how our school and other units operate. We said farewell to Anjella, Gary, LaNique, and Nick; we welcomed Kariss and Kevin as our new staff members. While it was refreshing to finally leave the worst of COVID-19 behind us, experiencing two hurricanes in fall 2022 continued to remind us of our fragility as well as our collective resilience.

You will have an overview of many different activities in the subsequent pages:

- Kevin Aslett joined our school as an Assistant Professor in fall 2022. Kevin received his Ph.D. from the University of Washington and spent three years at New York University as a postdoctoral scholar. He is part of UCF's Cybersecurity and Privacy Research Cluster and studies how technological developments generate unique challenges to liberal democracy. Professor Mark Schafer decided to retire by the end of fall 2022 after an illustrious scholarly career. We extend Mark our best wishes as he opens a new page in his life. Meanwhile, Pegasus Professor Kerstin Hamann started a new position as an Associate Dean at the College of Sciences in summer 2022. Congratulations Kerstin!

- Our faculty has been regularly consulted by a wide range of media sources throughout the year. Associate Professors Aubrey Jewett and Jonathan Powell have become sought-after experts in the fields of Florida politics and coups, respectively.

- Our doctoral students continue to achieve impressive feats. Our recent graduates secured positions at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the University of Groningen, the Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals, Rutgers University, the University of South Florida, and the United States Naval War College. Our current students continue to publish their research in impactful journals and receive external funding, including an American Political Science Association Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant.

- Several of our undergraduate students received highly competitive awards including a Rangel Graduate Fellowship, a Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship, and two Boren Scholarships.

- The first ever SPSIA faculty led study abroad trip took place this summer. Drs. Thomas Dolan and Andrew Boutton led a group of UCF students to London and Paris. The course is titled "Intelligence and Security in Western Europe" and will also take place in summer 2023.

- Anjella Warnshuis, who served our school as an administrative coordinator until last July, received the College of Science Excellence in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award in 2022. Nick Schenk, who served our School as the head of our undergraduate advising office until last June, was selected as the recipient of the Excellence in Advising Award of the Florida Academic Advising Association in 2022. Congratulations to both Anjella and Nick!

- We organized a major conference on American foreign policy and national security that brought illustrious speakers to our campus in April 2022. For a second year in row, Dr. Annabelle Conroy hosted the Latin American/Latinx Film Festival that featured seven films and a student video competition in September and October 2022.

- Our affiliated institutes, centers, and programs continue to host a rich variety of activities. Lou Frey Institute has been at the forefront of attempts to promote civic education in the state of Florida. The Intelligence Community Center for Academic Excellence remains an invaluable resource for students seeking a career in the burgeoning field of national security. The Kurdish Political Studies Program and the India Center provide much needed informed perspectives about people and regions with deep connections with the United States. Finally, the Center of Global Economic and Environmental Opportunity plays a prominent role in UCF's efforts to shape public debates on global trade and environmental issues.

“ I hope you will enjoy reading our report. If you have any feedback or ideas you would like to share, please drop me a note. I very much would like to meet you in person or virtually. ”

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

# WELCOME TO SPSIA

# Kevin!



We would like to welcome our newest member of the School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs, Dr. Kevin Aslett. He received his Ph.D. from the Political Science Department at the University of Washington and is joining us from the Center for Social Media and Politics at New York University (NYU), where he served as a post-doctoral associate for three years. Dr. Aslett predominately studies how technological change affects nascent threats to democracy. Although the rise of the internet and social media has removed transaction costs to the flow of ideas and provided remarkable benefits it has also elevated the exposure to online misinformation, a threat to the strength of democracies across the globe. Kevin is working to answer important questions surrounding the rise of misinformation, such as: who is exposed? Who believes it? Why do they believe misinformation? And what interventions can mitigate misinformation?

Recently, he has researched the effect of encouraging individuals to “do their own research” on belief in misinformation and how exposure to misinformation in different contexts affects belief in it. His research published in Science Advances found that a popular intervention, news

credibility labels, does not improve the average American’s news diet, but may improve the news diets of those who heavily consume low-quality online news sites that produce misinformation. Other work of his has appeared in other peer-reviewed journals, such as Policy Studies Journal, and in popular outlets, such as the Washington Post. Since joining UCF, Dr. Aslett has already published research in Europe-Asia Studies detailing how the distribution of European Union Structural Funds was co-opted by the ruling Fidesz political party and used to maintain their hold on power.

Dr. Aslett is excited to work with undergraduate and graduate students at UCF. This academic year he will be teaching POS 3037: Scope and Methods, and a new special topics graduate course titled: “Politics of Online Security”. In the graduate course, he will investigate trust and safety issues online and contemporary solutions to online harms. Outside of teaching and research, Dr. Aslett is already enjoying everything the Orlando area has to offer. In a few months he has already become a die-hard Orlando City FC fan and a regular at the Baldwin Park Dog Park with his dog, Della.

# OUR NEW STAFF: KEVIN, KARISS & VERONICA

Dr. Kevin Jardaneh joined SPSIA as Head of Undergraduate Advising in July 2022. He may be new, but Kevin is no stranger to UCF or SPSIA’s undergraduate programs. In 1998, Kevin graduated from UCF with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science (International Relations track) with Honors in the Major. As an undergraduate, Kevin spent a summer in Jordan and Israel conducting research for his Honors Undergraduate Thesis that won a Founder’s Day Award for Outstanding Thesis.

Kevin would go on to earn an MA in Interdisciplinary Studies, a Cognitive Science Graduate Certificate, and finally a Ph.D. in Texts and Technology in 2016. In 2016, Kevin became Assistant Director of UCF’s Office of Undergraduate Research, and then in 2018 Kevin accepted a faculty position at Eastern Oregon University (EOU) where he would head EOU’s Interdisciplinary Studies program.

Now, both Kevin and his spouse are very excited to be reestablished in Florida and back at UCF full-time. Kevin has many hobbies and interests, but chief among them are reading, growing food-bearing trees and plants, outdoor recreational activities, walking, and staying abreast of world affairs. Kevin’s two sons also keep him on his toes.

Kariss Grissom is a long-time resident of Orlando and a recent graduate of Florida State University with a Bachelor’s degree in Editing, Writing, & Media and a minor in communications. While attending FSU, Kariss worked at FSU’s Reading-Writing

Center as a consultant and administrative assistant. After graduating from college, Kariss moved back to Orlando and started work as an administrative assistant for the SPSIA this fall. In her spare time, Kariss enjoys reading, creating art, and working with her hands.

Veronica Nieto was born and raised here in Orlando, Florida. Veronica attended Valencia College on an honors scholarship through the Seneff Honors Program and graduated with an honors distinction in 2020. Transferring to UCF, Veronica then majored in Political Science with her focus being the American Politics Track and minoring in Strategic Communications. During this time she interned for a financial literacy startup as a public relations intern. She then graduated with her Bachelor’s degree in the Spring of 2022, and started working on her MA with the SPSIA and working throughout the semester as an assistant in the front office.



KEVIN JARDANEH, VERONICA NIETO & KARISS GRISSOM

# FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

• Professor **Roger Handberg** was honored for 50 years of service at UCF Founders' Day annual celebration. Dr. Handberg, who served as the Chair of Department of Political Science from 2003 to 2011, has been with UCF since 1972.

• Professor **Mark Schafer** is retiring after serving at UCF for 11 years. Professor Schafer has a very accomplished career after receiving his PhD at Arizona State University in 1994. He founded the UCF Intelligence Community center of Academic Excellence with a multiyear grant from Defense Intelligence Agency in 2014. He was named the Distinguished Scholar of Year by the Foreign Policy Analysis Section of the International Studies Association in 2021.

• Lecturer **Annabelle Conroy** has received the inaugural SPSIA Outstanding Teaching/Service Award in 2022. Dr. Conroy has been the lead organizer of the highly successful Latinx Film Festival and a founding member of the College's Diversity, Inclusion & Equity team.

• Associate Professor **Jonathan Powell** has received the inaugural SPSIA Outstanding Research Award in 2022. Dr. Powell's research on coups that has received remarkable media coverage as well as widespread scholarly interest throughout the year. He was also invited to provide an expert interview by a special committee of the U.S. Congress.

• Over the past eighteen months Associate Professor **Aubrey Jewett** has conducted more than 500 interviews with local, state, national, and international media. The most frequent topics of news stories over the past year include Governor DeSantis, former President Donald Trump, President Joe Biden, congressional and state legislative actions, national and Florida elections, and local politics and policy throughout the Sunshine State. Dr. Jewett's comments appeared in numerous high profile national media outlets including the Associated Press, Bloomberg, BuzzFeed, CBS, *Christian Science Monitor*, CNN, Fox, HBO, *Los Angeles Times*, Mother Jones, NBC, Politico, Slate, *The Atlantic*, U.S. News and World Report, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, and the *Washington Times*. International media interviews included Agence France-Presse, Al Jazeera, Canadian Broadcasting, Challenges (France's largest Business Magazine), China Radio International, Clarin (Argentina's #1 newspaper), Glavcom (Ukraine), Le Devoir (Quebec newspaper), Reuters, Swiss National Public Radio, *The Economist*, *The Financial Times* (London), *The Times of London*, The Guardian (UK), and Weekendavisen (Denmark).

• Professor **Peter Jacques** did a residency as guest Professor at Mälardalen University in Sweden during October 2022. He gave lectures on environmental politics and sustainability. He also gave a talk about his forthcoming book, *A Green International Relations Theory*, at the University of Copenhagen.

• Pegasus Professor and Joint SPSIA faculty **Naim Kapucu** has completed the Fulbright Distinguished Chair program on Democratic Resilience was jointly hosted by Flinders University and Carnegie Mellon University in Australia from May to October 2022. His project was on urban resilience policies, frameworks, and practice in the US and Australian federal systems. He also had chances to present at other universities around the country and met with senior officials from the newly created National emergency Management Agency (NEMA).



Dr. Handberg (on the right) receiving his award from Provost Johnson in April 2022



Jonathan Powell quoted in a *New York Times* on coups in Africa on February 1, 2022

# FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

SPSIA faculty publish impactful scholarly research on a diverse variety of subjects ranging from political violence to environmental issues, from misinformation in social media to global political economy. Here is a selection of scholarly articles and books published by SPSIA faculty in 2022:

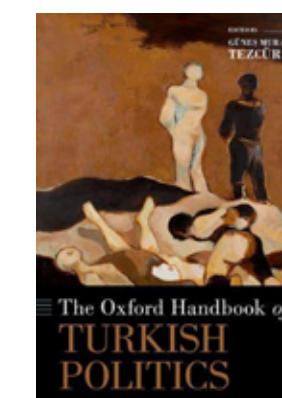
• **Ash, K.** (2022). State weakness and support for ethnic violence in Southern Kyrgyzstan *Journal of Peace Research*.

• **Aslett, K.**, Guess, A., Nagler, J., Bonneau, R., & Tucker, J. (2022). New credibility labels have limited average effects on news diet quality and fail to reduce misperceptions. *Science Advances*, 8(18).

• **Bacchus, J.** (2022). *Trade Links: New Rules for a New World*. Cambridge University Press.

• **Baggio, J. A.**, Freeman, J., Coyle, T. R., & Anderies, J. M. (2022). Harnessing the benefits of diversity to address socio-environmental governance challenges. *PLoS One*, 17(8).

• **Dolan, T. M.** (2022). Ultimatums, bargaining, and the duty to preserve alternatives to war. *European Journal of International Relations*, 28(2), 495-510.



• Johnston, A., **Hamann, K.**, & Field, B. N. (2022). A strike against the left: General strikes and public opinion of incumbent governments in Spain. *Political Studies*, 70(3), 837-864.

• **Kim, M.**, & Cao, X. (2021). Linking global leadership to domestic legitimacy: Comparative analysis of perceptions of Xi and Obama. *Social Science Quarterly*, 102(4), 1638-1653.

• **Knuckey, J.**, & Hassan, K. (2022). Authoritarianism and support for Trump in the 2016 presidential election. *The Social Science Journal*, 59(1), 47-60.

• **Mousseau, D. Y.**, & **Mousseau, M.** (2022). The economic origins of democratic civil liberties: A cross-country analysis. *Journal of Human Rights*, 1-19.

• **Powell, J. M.**, Ben Hammou, S., Smith, A. E., Borba, L., Kinney, D. H., Chacha, M., & De Bruin, E. (2022). A coup at the Capitol? Conceptualizing coups and other antidemocratic actions. *International Studies Review*, 24(1).

• **Schafer, M.**, & Lambert, J. E. (2022). Psychological characteristics of leaders (PsyCL): A new data set. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 18(2).

• Stanley, E. A., & **Larsen, K. L.** (2022). Stressed out: The missing influence of stress arousal in emotion's role in political decision-making. *Political Psychology*, 43(4), 793-808.

• **Tezcür, G.M.** (ed.). (2022). *The Oxford Handbook of Turkish Politics*. Oxford University Press.

• **Turcu, A.**, & Urbatsch, R. (2022). Is populism popular abroad? Evidence from diasporas around the globe. *Party Politics*.

• **Vasquez, P.**, & Napier III, W. W. (2022). "Band of brothers or band of others?: Rhetoric, veterans, and civil rights fights in Germany and the United States." *Armed Forces & Society*.

• Villarreal, E., & **Wilson, B. M.** (Eds.). (2022). *El agua como derecho humano: Reconocimientos y disputas en Costa Rica*. San José, Costa Rica: PEN- CONARE.



# CENTERS, INSTITUTES AND PROGRAMS

## THE INDIA CENTER



Kal Penn

### The India Center Hosts 'An Evening with Kal Penn'

In September the India Center at UCF welcomed Kal Penn for a reading of his book, *You Can't Be Serious* and a moderated discussion with questions submitted by the audience. Penn shared the challenges he faced as he started his acting career, including battling racism and racial stereotypes. Penn also touched on his time as an associate director of the White House Office of Public Engagement under the Obama administration, where he worked as a liaison for Asian Americans, young Americans and the arts community. "The India Center is honored to have Kal Penn share his experiences with the UCF community and also the Orlando community during this event," said Associate Dean **Kerstin Hamann**. "He has a unique talent to use humor when discussing serious issues without trivializing the issues themselves." The India Center organized the event to work towards its mission of promoting the understanding of contemporary India and building ties between the United States and India.

### 'Son of a Sweeper' Documentary Screening and Discussion

The India Center at UCF hosted Vimal Kumar, Ph.D., for an in-person screening and discussion of the documentary film *Son of a Sweeper*. The film, made by Professor **Lisa Mills, Ph.D.**, an India Center affiliate faculty member, highlights the work of Kumar, founder of the nongovernmental organization Movement for Scavenger Community (MSC). Mills, along with two Nicholson School of Communication and Media graduate students, shot the film in India, where they documented the daily lives of sweeper communities and met Kumar. The film was recognized as Best Short Documentary at the Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival in 2020. Following the film screening, Mills led an audience Q&A with Kumar, who was visiting from India. He discussed how he remains hopeful and continues his work even when faced with challenges.



## THE LOU FREY CENTER

### The UCF Lou Frey Institute & Polk State College Announced College Public Service Career Pathway Development Partnership

On July 18, 2022, Governor Ron DeSantis awarded Polk State College, Broward College, and Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ) with \$6.5 million to launch the **Career Pathways for Public Service Initiative**, which will develop a national model for preparing students for public service and careers in local or state government. The selected institutions collaborate with the UCF Lou Frey Institute, which serves as the lead curriculum developer for the new statewide "**Civics Career Academies**."

The Career Pathways for Public Service Initiative aligns with the Lou Frey Institute's development of a civic assessment currently being administered by institutions across Florida," said LFI Director, **Stephen Masyada**. The collaboration between LFI and Polk State has established a four-course sequence focusing on various aspects of public service. These four courses, one of which incorporates a career technical education certification (CTE), provide high school students the skills and knowledge to become prepared to serve in the public and non-profit sectors.

The first step to developing this program, the curriculum framework, incorporates the Florida standards and benchmarks, to develop the four unique courses--public service leadership, public service communication, experiential learning in public service and public service research. The CTE will focus on project management and will be completed while students engage in experiential learning, which may include job shadowing public officials and non-profit leaders, internships and service learning.



### The Florida Joint Center for Citizenship Will Present at the National Council for the Social Studies in December

The Florida Joint Center for Citizenship (FJCC) is a partnership between the Lou Frey Institute of Politics and Government at the University of Central Florida and the Bob Graham Center for Public Service at the University of Florida. FJCC is housed in The Lou Frey Institute, which promotes the development of enlightened, responsible, and actively engaged citizens.

This winter, staff from FJCC presents a session on Civics in Real Life at the National Council for the Social Studies annual conference held in Philadelphia. The NCSS Annual Conference is the largest gathering of K-12 social studies classroom teachers, college and university faculty members, curriculum designers and specialists, district and state social studies supervisors, international educators, and social studies discipline leaders.

### Dr. Terri Susan Fine Featured in Spectrum News 13 Discussing "Ghost Candidates"

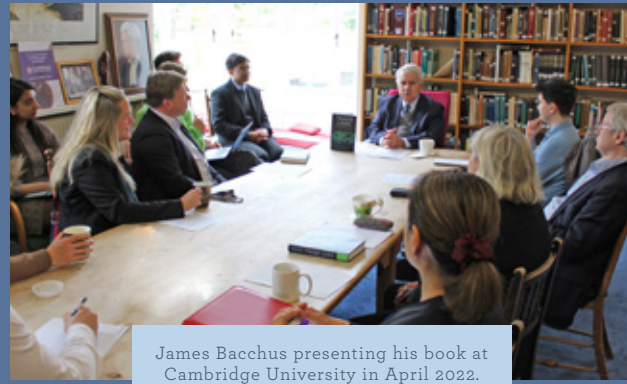
**Dr. Terri Susan Fine**, LFI associate director and professor at SPSIA was interviewed by Spectrum News 13 about so-called "ghost candidates" in August 2022. A ghost candidate is someone who files to run for public office who has no intention of campaigning and no expectation of winning. The strongest motivation for someone to run as a ghost candidate is to prevent voters from selecting a favored candidate's strongest challenger. Sound confusing? It is.

Imagine Candidate A has a well-respected and well-funded opponent, whom we will call Candidate B. One way to prevent voters from voting for Candidate B but who do not support Candidate A is to encourage those voters to vote for someone else. Who is that someone else? A ghost candidate — a Candidate A supporter who files for office, pays the election filing fee, and does not campaign, such as with mailers, television commercials and attending fundraising events. Voters who vote for this ghost candidate then end up not voting for Candidate B, which improves Candidate A's chances of winning the election.

## THE CENTER FOR GLOBAL ECONOMIC & ENVIRONMENTAL OPPORTUNITY

In 2022, the UCF Center for Global Economic and Environmental Opportunity (GEEO) has worked locally, regionally, nationally, and worldwide in furtherance of sustainable development. Locally and regionally, GEEO has been engaged as part of the eight-county East Central Florida Regional Resilience Collaborative in advancing the social, economic, and environmental goals of sustainable development. Nationally, GEEO has been engaged with the US chapter of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network in doing the same. Internationally, GEEO has been collaborating with arms of the United Nations and with sustainability institutes in the United Kingdom, the European Union, and elsewhere to help achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The GEEO director, **James Bacchus**, Distinguished University Professor of Global Affairs, has been at the forefront in these partnerships. Earlier this year, Cambridge University Press published the latest book by Professor Bacchus, *Trade Links: New Rules for a New World*, which was recognized as one of the “Best Books of the Summer” by the Financial Times of London and was the featured

book at the annual global Public Forum of the World Trade Organization. In addition, among other recent accolades, Professor Bacchus has recently been named a Distinguished Global Fellow of the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy in Athens, Greece, and a Visiting Fellow at the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom, where he will spend part of the summer of 2023.



James Bacchus presenting his book at Cambridge University in April 2022.

## THE CENTRAL FLORIDA INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY CENTER FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE



In June 2022 Professors **Andrew Boutton** and **Thomas Dolan** lead a study abroad course called “Intelligence and Security in Western Europe.” They traveled with 19 students to London and Paris. During the trip, students visited important intelligence/security historical sites, including Bletchley Park (the site of major Allied codebreaking successes against the Enigma system), the Churchill War Rooms, the Palace of Westminster, and Omaha Beach. Students also visited the Imperial War Museum, the UK Military Intelligence Museum, the Peace Museum in Caen, the Musée de l’Armée in Paris, and the Musée de la Ordre de la Libération. Special lectures were given by a staff member of the US National Intelligence University’s European Academic Center, Professor Rory Cormac of the University of Nottingham who specializes in UK intelligence, Mark Galleoti, who studies Russia, and Hugo Meijer of Science-Po, a leading scholar of European security. They also visited with US Embassy staff at the George Marshall Center in the Hotel de Talleyrand. The group also had some great cultural experiences, visiting the British Museum, watching the musical “Six” in the West End, eating at British Pubs and some great French restaurants. The course will run again during Summer 2023!

## KURDISH POLITICAL STUDIES PROGRAM

*The UCF Kurdish Political Studies Program (KPSP) 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 Selected for Highly Respected Fellowship

**Hannah Barnes**, an undergraduate student at the SPSIA pursuing an online B.A. in Political Science – International Relations & Comparative Politics, was selected for a competitive fellowship, the 2022-2023 Boren Award, to pursue her studies of the Kurdish language. She is also pursuing certificates in Kurdish Studies, Interfaith Dialogue and Intelligence & National Security. Hannah is also the Dr. Najmaldin Karim Fellow conducting research on gender issues in Iraqi Kurdistan and Turkey in fall 2022. She spent her spring 2022 semester studying Arabic and political science at the American University in Cairo.



Hannah Barnes in Erbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, March 2022.

### UCF Participation to the First Model UN Conference in Iraqi Kurdistan

In close partnership with the Kurdish Political Studies Program at UCF, Soran University in Iraqi Kurdistan hosted the first Model United Nations Conference in Iraq from March 31 to April 2, 2022. UCF was represented by a delegation composed of **Dr. Güneş Murat Tezcür**, Director of SPSIA and Jalal Talabani Chair of Kurdish

Political Studies, **Dr. Tyler Fisher**, Associate Professor at Department of Modern Languages and Literature and **Dr. Nikola Mirilovic**, Associate Professor at SPSIA. This conference was the culmination of a multiyear partnership between KPSP and Soran that has been funded by the U.S. Department of State and the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX).

The main purpose of the conference was to teach selected Kurdish and Iraqi students how to address critical community issues through diplomacy and negotiations. The conference was also a perfect occasion to cultivate long-lasting networks among students with different backgrounds as well as developing U.S.-Kurdish and Iraqi academic links. The conference has had a lasting impact on student participants and paved the way for similar future events in Iraqi Kurdistan and Iraq. It has been a milestone for future generations of Kurdish and Iraqi leaders who will benefit from the academic, professional and cultural opportunities offered by the Model United Nations.

### Visiting Scholar from Denmark Develops Kurdish Research

**Mustafa Kemal Topal**, an Assistant Professor at the Department of People and Technology at the Roskilde University in Denmark, visited KPSP during Fall 2022. He was awarded the prestigious Independent Research Fund Denmark Internationalization Fellowship grant for a two-year project titled “Kurdish Women’s Democratic Experiment in Post-Conflict Northern Syria” to be carried out at here at UCF.

“I am interested in investigating what ideals for gender do Kurdish women hold in the experimental process of creating a democratic form of government in Rojava? How women themselves formulate and embody ideals and thoughts in their organizational efforts to improve their conditions in post-conflict areas and periods. How women overcome the challenges they experience, how they build their political agendas over time and how they implement their values and norms while establishing democracy.”



Mustafa Kemal Topal in Rojava, Kurdish part of Syria, in October 2022.

# EVENTS HIGHLIGHTS

## LATIN AMERICAN / LATINX FILM FESTIVAL

SPSIA is proud to support the second Latin American/Latinx Film Festival in honor of LatinX Heritage Month and UCF's status as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). This film series, which were shown in September and October 2022, showcased the arts, language, and diverse issues that are important in a region of the world that is so significant to many of our students, faculty, and staff, as well as the community of which UCF is a part. This film festival was possible due to the generosity of PRAGDA's Spanish Film Club grant, and the support of the School of Politics, Security and International Affairs, Modern Languages and Literatures/ Latin American Studies, UCF Global, and Florida Prison Education Project.



## AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY & INTELLIGENCE CONFERENCE

In April 2022, the School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs held the American Foreign Policy and Intelligence Conference. The conference, which featured three panels and a keynote address, was attended by 10 scholars and experts who provided unique perspectives about American foreign policy and intelligence in the wake of the withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021 and the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Dr. Monica Duffy Toft, Professor and Director of the Center for Strategic Studies at Tufts University, delivered the keynote speech on the U.S. military interventions abroad. Dr. Toft has argued that heavy U.S. military deployments overseas lack public support and are not aligned with national interests and diminish American influence globally. She has called for the greater role of diplomacy and intelligence in American foreign policy making.

The conference was co-sponsored by the Intelligence Community Center for Academic Excellence, the Kurdish Political Studies Program and the College of Graduate Studies.

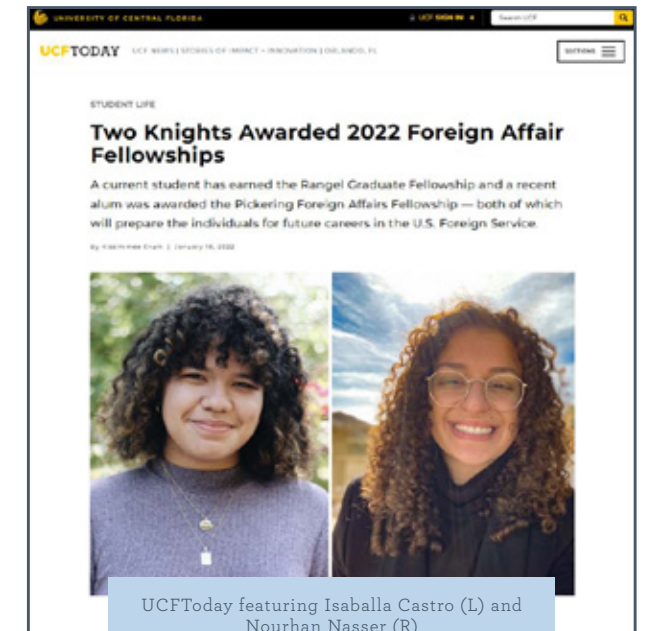


# UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

- **Isabella Castro '22** won a Charles B. Rangel Graduate Fellowship and a McNair Fellowship. She is also funded by the Fulbright Award to work in Brazil. Isabella is writing her Honors Undergraduate Thesis under the mentorship of **Dr. Bruce Wilson**. Once she completes her Fulbright in Belgium, Isabella will attend Georgetown University. Isabella is a first-generation college student majored in International and Global Studies.

- **Nourhan Nasser '21** received the prestigious and highly competitive Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship. This fellowship will enable her to pursue in careers in the U.S. foreign service. Nourhan, who was born in Lebanon and graduated from UCF with a BA in Political Science in 2021. Her faculty mentor was **Dr. Kelsey Larsen**.

- **Daniah Jarrah**, majoring in International and Global Studies has received a Boren scholarship to study Arabic in Jordan (advisors: **Drs. Güneş Murat Tezcür** and **Robert Bledsoe**). She is also writing an Honors Undergraduate Thesis (HUT) on civil society activism in Lebanon under the supervision of **Dr. Tezcür**. For research purposes, Daniah traveled to Lebanon in summer 2022.



UCFToday featuring Isabella Castro (L) and Nourhan Nasser (R)

- **Abigail Reynolds '21**, listed here for Order of Pegasus, is currently a Boren Scholar studying Swahili in Kenya. She has also recently received a State Department Critical Language Scholarship that will allow her to continue her language studies over the coming summer. She begins graduate work in the African Studies program at Yale in the Fall 2022.

- **Aicha Camara '22** mentored by **Dr. Myunghee Kim**, was awarded the UCF Distinguished Undergraduate Researcher Award (DURA) for the month of October 2022. Aicha's thesis analyzes the Post-World War II intergenerational shift in Japanese attitudes toward Japanese women and the LGBT, multiethnic, and indigenous communities.

- **Rose Mahdavi '20** published "State Adoption of Cryptocurrency: a Case Study Analysis of Iran, Russia, and Venezuela", a research article based on her Honors Thesis, in Volume 19, issue 1 of the *American Journal of Undergraduate Research*. Rose wrote her Honors Thesis on the topic under the supervision of **Dr. Anca Turcu**. Rose is currently a student at the University of Miami School of Law.



Daniah, second on the left, is with a group of international students at Petra, Jordan

- **Mohamedameen Osman** (mentored by Drs. Anca Turcu and Barbara Kinsey) won the Judges' Choice distinction at the 2022 Student Scholar Symposium in the Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities category. Mohamedameen wrote a thesis titled *Antiziganism and the Rise in Electoral Success for Right Wing Authoritarianism in Central and Eastern Europe*. Raised in multicultural environments, Osman traveled widely and is the President of the UCF's Club on Security.

- **Hannah Anton '21** won the Bledsoe Young Award given annually to a student who demonstrates outstanding writing and the generation of new ideas and theories. Hannah is currently a staff assistant at the U.S. House of Representatives.

- **Kinsey Farmer** won the Dwight C. Kiel Scholarship Award given annually to a student majoring in political science.

- **Jasmine Masri '21**, won the Outstanding Honors Undergraduate Thesis Award in the category of Social Sciences, Business, and Education in 2022. She wrote a thesis titled "Domestic Migrant Workers in Lebanon: Between Precarity and Resiliency" (thesis chair and nominator: **Dr. Güneş Murat Tezcür**). Jasmine is currently a student at George Washington Law School.



### 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. Two SPSIA students won this award in 2022:

**Abigail Reynolds '21**, Political Science (nominated by **Dr. Jonathan Powell**)

**Austin Wilson '22**, Political Science / Criminal Justice

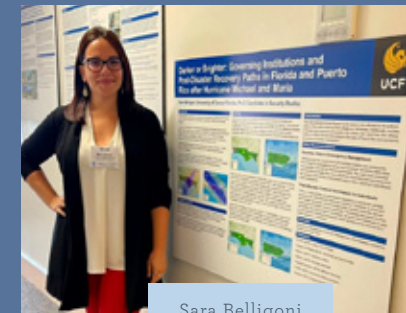
# GRADUATE STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

## MA STUDENTS

- **Gabriella Cuber '22MA** was awarded the Outstanding MA Thesis for her dissertation, "Understanding variation in sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peacekeeping operations: The role of military, police, and civilian peacekeepers". Gabriella utilized over 1,000 online UN allegation reports to identify the specific type of culprit within the peacekeeping mission, allowing Gabriella to more directly test the relationship between peacekeeping and sexual exploitation. Other than providing a strong academic investigation of an important issue, Cuber's thesis, chaired by **Dr. Jonathan Powell**, offers conclusions of direct policy relevance for peacekeeping.

- **Craig Wilding '21MA** was awarded the Pollock-Ellsworth Award for Best Research Methods for his dissertation, "Mail ballot signature rejections: Household members signing each other's ballots", which sought to explain mail ballot rejection in the 2020 Florida general election. Craig created a variety of programs using the programming language Python to extract data and match 6 million votes by mail ballot requests with 15 million voter registration records. Wilding's thesis was chaired by **Dr. Aubrey Jewett**.

## PH.D. STUDENTS



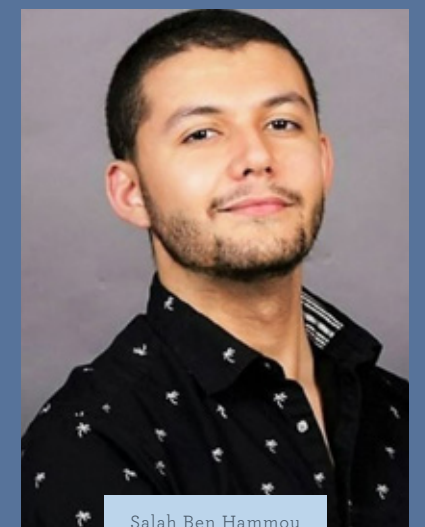
Sara Belligoni

- **Sara Belligoni** was awarded the Best Paper Award at the 2022 Florida Political Science Association Annual Conference in Daytona Beach, FL, and served as a Chair and Discussant for the Panel "International Organizations & Cooperation" at the 2022 Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting in Chicago, IL. Additionally, Sara is a member of UCF's SPSIA's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and the UCF Ad Hoc Student Academic Appeals Committee. She has also been invited by the Universidad San Francisco de Quito to give a talk about "The Security Apparatus in Italy". In January 2023, Sara will be starting a new position as a Postdoctoral Research Associate with the Department of Human Ecology at Rutgers University.

- **Salah Ben Hammou** was awarded the American Political Science Association's Diversity and Inclusion Fellowship and recently accepted a position as the new co-Chair of APSA's Status of Graduate Students in the Discipline Committee. Salah was also an invited participant in New America's roundtable session, "The Military & Democracy: The US in a Comparative Perspective", in Washington DC, where he gave comments on the importance of healthy civil-military relations for democracy, drawing on insights from his research.

- **Jennifer Hudson** was awarded a dissertation completion fellowship for spring 2022. Jennifer successfully defended her dissertation titled "The Direct and Indirect Effects of Strategic Civilian Displacement on Territorial Control in Conventional Civil War" in fall 2022.

- **Jennifer Joel** traveled to France, where she discussed "Tax Systems, Inclusion and Inequality in Developing Countries" as a panelist at the Global Development Conference in Paris, France, and presented her paper on "Climate Change, Conflict and Women's Economic Well-Being in the Lake Chad region" at the Annual Conference of Africa Borderlands Research Network (ABORNE) in September 2022.



Salah Ben Hammou



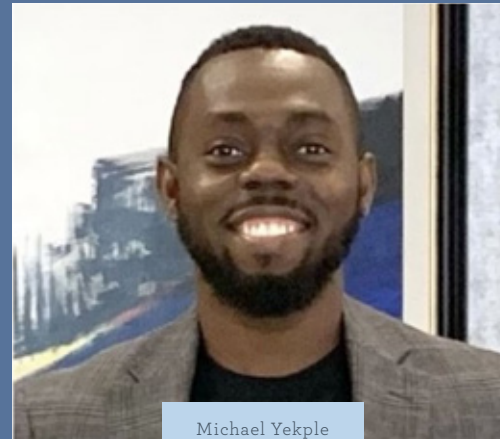
## PH.D. STUDENTS

• **Maren Mainx** and **Rafael Hurtado Valdivieso**, along with **Dr. Bruce Wilson**, traveled to Norway to participate in the 2022 Bergen Exchange, where Maren presented in the “Rethinking Law & Democracy Education: Student-Led Learning” Roundtable, and Rafael presented in the “New Paths in Climate Litigation” Roundtable. Both Maren and Rafael also participated in the University of Bergen’s PhD course: “Effects of Lawfare – Courts and law as battlegrounds for social change.”

• **Erika Ricci** participated in the ISA Conference as a discussant and panelist on Terrorism and Extremism, the MPSA Annual Conference as a panelist on Political Violence, Terrorism & Resistance, and attended the Clement Center for National Security Conference. At UCF, Erika serves as a Ph.D. Liaison Student and Ph.D. Student’s Mentor. She also traveled to Italy in summer 2022 to continue her research regarding the criminal trials of the Red Brigades and other violent organizations active in Italy in the 1970s. While completing her archival research in Rome, Turin, and Trento, Erika conducted face-to-face interviews with relevant sources, including potential former members of the Red Brigades. Erika also received the highly competitive American Political Science Association Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant in 2022.

• **Tad Schnauffer**, who successfully defended his PhD in fall 2022, will be an Analyst Planner for the Global and National Security Institute housed at the University of South Florida.

• **Michael Yekple**, originally from Ghana, holds a BA in Sociology and Geography from the University of Cape Coast, and an MA in international Affairs from the University of Ghana. He conducts research on topics in security studies, international relations, and comparative politics, with a regional focus on Sub-Saharan Africa. Michael is currently serving our students as one of our undergraduate advisors.



Michael Yekple

Maren Mainx, second from the left, attending Bergen Exchanges in Norway in August 2022



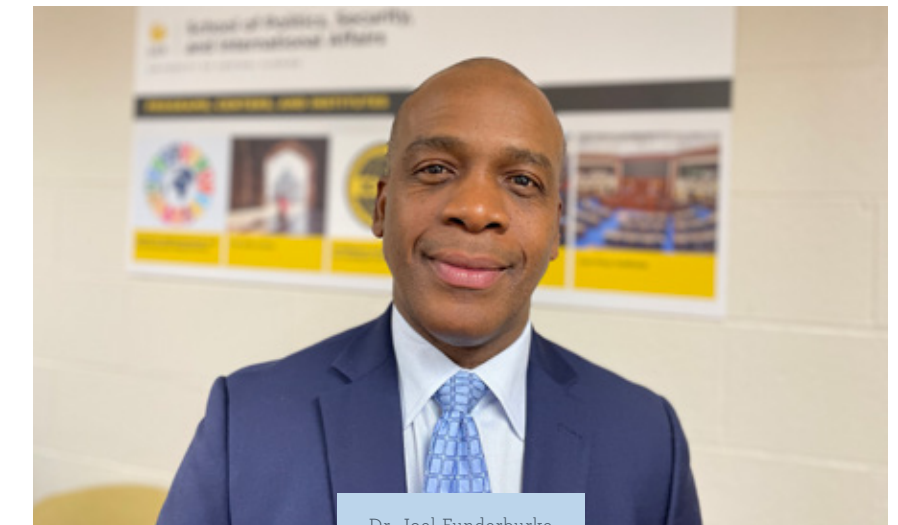
## ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

• **Marcos Degaut ‘16 PhD** serves as the Secretary for Defense Products at Ministry of Defense in Brazil.

• **Doreen Horschig ‘21 PhD** is a research fellow at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

• **Christopher Faulkner ‘19 PhD** has started a new position as a tenure-track Assistant Professor at the United States Naval War College in August 2022.

• **Joel Funderburke ‘19 PhD** is currently the Director of Strategic Planning for the US National Security Council. In this capacity, Joe was in charge of the process for the 2022 US National Security Strategy, which was recently released. The US National Security Strategy is a major quadrennial statement of US strategy required by statute and sets forward principles that are further elaborated in the National Defense Strategy, National Military Strategy, National Intelligence Strategy, Executive Branch defense spending priorities, and other policies.



Dr. Joel Funderburke

• **Tutku Ayhan ‘21 PhD** received an Honorable Mention for Best Dissertation from the Women, Gender, and Politics Research Section of the American Political Science Association. Her dissertation is titled “Trauma, Resilience, and Empowerment: Post-Genocide Experiences of Yazidi Women.” Tutku is currently a Fellow at Institut Barcelona D’Estudis Internacionals in Spain.

• **Davide Dell’isola ‘22 PhD**, becomes a lecturer of International Relations at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands.

• **Alan Rosa ‘96** became the Global Head of Security, Information Technology and Privacy at and Vice President of Information Security Twitter in January 2022.

• **Tyler Williams ‘20** is currently a MPA student at the University of South Florida. He has joined a research team examining the Hillsborough County Historic Preservation Challenge Grant Program.

# FAST FACTS

## GRADUATE DEGREES

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

## 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 2022

### Sara Belligoni

*Coordinating the Chaos: How Institutions Influence Multi-Actor Coordination in Emergency Management*

### Davide Dell'Isola

*Discrimination, terrorist violence and secularist policies: Challenges for the integration of Muslims in Western Europe*

### Jennifer Hudson

*The Direct and Indirect Effects of Strategic Civilian Displacement on Territorial Control in Conventional Civil War*

### Alex Norat

*Decentralization and Violence*

### Jennifer Obado Joel

*Progress in Chaos: Cash Transfers and Women Economic Empowerment amidst Climate Change and Violent Conflicts in West Africa*

### Tad Schnauffer

*Struggling for Security: NATO's Burden-Sharing Challenges*

# FACULTY AND STAFF

## PROFESSORS

Terri Fine  
Roger Handberg  
Kerstin Hamann (Pegasus Professor & Associate Dean, College of Sciences)  
Peter Jacques  
Michael Mousseau  
Mark Schafer  
Güneş Murat Tezcür (Jalal Talabani Endowed Chair)  
Bruce Wilson

## LECTURERS

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

## PROFESSIONAL AND SUPPORT STAFF

Jessica Alves  
Leila Chacko  
LaNique Chesterfield (until July 2022)  
Kimberly Garton  
Kariss Grissom  
Kevin Jardaneh  
Gabrielle Martinez  
Veronica Nieto (until December 2022)  
Kyrie Ottaviani  
Shena Parks  
Nicholas Schenk (until July 2022)  
Gary Smith (until July 2022)  
Kevin Sopko  
Christopher Spinale  
Laura Stephenson  
Anjella Warnshuis (until July 2022)  
Puck Winchester

## AFFILIATES

James Bacchus, Distinguished University Professor of Global Affairs  
Naim Kapucu, Pegasus Professor  
Stephen Masyada, Director of the Lou Frey Institute

## ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS

Jacobo Baggio  
Andrew Boutton  
Thomas Dolan  
Martin Dupuis (Senior Associate Dean, Honors College)  
Aubrey Jewett  
Myunghee Kim  
Barbara Kinsey  
Jonathan Knuckey  
Drew Lanier  
Eric Merriam  
Nikola Mirilovic  
Jonathan Powell  
Houman Sadri

## ASSISTANT PROFESSORS

Kevin Aslett  
Konstantin Ash  
Kelsey Larson  
Demet Mousseau

## PART-TIME FACULTY

Steven Balkaran  
Terry Breese  
Bruce Farcau  
Lynne Gleiber  
Paul Labedz  
Justin Miller  
Alvin Quackenbush  
Ted Reynolds  
Miroslav Shapovalov  
Mariam Irene Tazi-Preve  
Richard Tyre  
Brian Yeitz

## TOTAL STUDENTS

### UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS FALL 2022

1,150 **B.A. Political Science**  
190 **B.A. International & Global Studies**

### GRADUATE STUDENTS FALL 2022

36 **M.A. Political Science**  
32 **Ph.D. Security Studies**

## DEGREES AWARDED

### 2021-2022

411 **Bachelors**  
7 **Masters**  
6 **Doctoral**





**School of Politics, Security,  
and International Affairs**

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA