Dr. James Rhoads Jr.

Dr. James Rhoads, professor of political science, published “The King of Pop: Attitudes Toward Michael Jackson in the Aftermath of His Untimely Death” with Dr. Dennis F. Kinsey of Syracuse University in the Journal of Human Subjectivity. Jackson and the extensive media coverage of him upon his death. Rhoads, along with Dr. Kristenne Robison, assistant professor of sociology, have an article due to be published in The International Journal of Q Methodology. A research project published in the journal, “Views of the Film, ‘Manic, ’ Among Students of Juvenile Delinquency” investigates the subjective structure of audience reaction to a film about institutionalized troubled youth among students who have been studying juvenile delinquency from sociological and psychological viewpoints.

At the annual meeting of the International Society for the Scientific Study of Subjectivity, held at Vrije University in Amsterdam, Rhoads presented “Science and the Single Case: The Study of ‘Phil’ , the Political Agitator. ” He also presented, with co-authors Bruce McKeown (Corrales, New Mexico) and Dan Thomas (Wartburg College), “Social Media in a Subjective-Science Mode: The ‘Facebook Likes’ Study Reconfigured with Self-Reference. ” Rhoads was also a member of the panel of experts who commented that he had co-authored with Robison on the film “Manic. ” He also presented with McKeown, Thomas, and Daniel Sundblad (Wartburg College), “Falling Hard for ‘Breaking Bad’: An Investigation of Audience Response to a Popular Television Series.”

Finally, Rhoads and Kinsey presented “ An Introduction to Q Methodology. ”

Meanwhile, our faculty remain active scholars attending conferences, publishing research, and continuing as leaders among their professional colleagues. Indeed, the successes of our students is based on the continued vitality of our faculty as scholars.

On the other hand, we have just learned of the passing of Dr. W. Thomas Nichols on March 12, 2014. Dr. Nichols was very familiar to most of you. He taught political science at Westminster from 1972 until 2009, chaired the department from 1972 to 1996, and was the Henderson Lecturer in 1997. He was a mentor of hundreds of students both inside and outside of the classroom, and to myself and Dr. Rhoads. We were lucky to have Tom back on campus three years ago for the 25th anniversary of the Henderson Lecture, and to have the opportunity to show him that we are keeping his legacy alive. He will be greatly missed.

As for me, I am waiting to see how long I will continue as chair, in the midst of the ongoing administrative changes. My own scholarly work has been ongoing and successful, advising program. Most importantly, though, I am proud of what my colleagues are accomplishing as teachers, scholars, and mentors, and to have the opportunity to lead what I believe is one of the strongest programs on campus. Thank you.

Letter from the Chair

Dr. Ed Cohen

This has been another exciting and unpredictable year in Department of Political Science! Our faculty continue their record of excellent teaching and mentoring. The Model UN Team had another successful trip to the American Model United Nations conference. Two of our seniors, with the guidance of Dr. Aleprete, are having an independent research project published in the Undergraduate Research Journal of Pi Sigma Alpha, the national political science honorary. Our students continue to have success in acceptance to law schools, and our alumni continue a record of accomplishment in law, business, and academia. (You can read in more depth about some of these accomplishments in this newsletter.) Meanwhile, our faculty remain active scholars attending conferences, publishing research, and continuing as leaders among their professional colleagues. Indeed, the successes of our students is based on the continued vitality of our faculty as scholars.

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As for me, I am waiting to see how long I will continue as chair, in the midst of the ongoing administrative changes. My own scholarly work has been ongoing and successful, and I am enjoying the chance to reinvigorate the pre-law advising program. Most importantly, though, I am proud of what my colleagues are accomplishing as teachers, scholars, and mentors, and to have the opportunity to lead what I believe is one of the strongest programs on campus. Thank you.
Dr. Michael Aleprete Jr.

Last November Westminster’s Model UN (MUN) organization represented Turkmenistan at the American Model United Nations (AMUN) conference in Chicago. This was the fifth year in a row that Westminster sent a delegation to compete at AMUN. This year 18 Westminster students participated as delegates. In addition, political science major Teresa Whetstone was selected by the AMUN to work as a conference staff. Whetstone helped run the Historical Security Council simulation. AMUN is one of the largest MUN conferences in North America, attracting around 1,500 students each year. Westminster’s MUN team has an increasingly visible presence at the conference and fields a very competitive delegation. Westminster will represent Pakistan at next year’s conference. The group is also planning on competing at the National Model United Nations in New York next spring.

Westminster hosted its 6th annual conference on April 14th for high school students. This conference has become one of the premier events for local high school MUN programs and more than 270 students are registered to attend this year’s conference. Whetstone, MUN president, will be serving in her second and final year as Secretary General. Five UN committees will be simulated at this year’s conference, including the Security Council, the Economic & Social Council, and the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Westminster MUN is supported by the Drinker Center for Experiential Learning, the Department of Political Science, the Student Government Association (SGA), and Global Solutions Education Fund-Pittsburgh.

Interested students from any major are welcome to participate in all MUN activities. For more information contact Model UN Faculty Adviser Dr. Michael Aleprete at alepreme@westminster.edu.

**Aleprete Research Notes**

Dr. Aleprete and a colleague from Wofford College, Dr. Rachel Vanderhill, edited a volume on how the authoritarian regimes among former Soviet states use their international relations to insulate them from the pressure to democratize their political systems. The volume, International Dimensions of Authoritarian Persistence: Lessons from Post-Soviet States was published by Lexington Press in 2013.

Dr. Aleprete won the College’s McCandless Award for academic year 2014-15. This award provides funding support for ongoing research projects. Dr. Aleprete will be using the award to build a data set that records the extent of transportation networks along international land borders. This is part of his ongoing work on the Strategic Development of Border Areas. Dr. Aleprete presented his latest paper on this topic last month at the recent International Studies Association meeting in Toronto. The McCandless award will allow him to use GIS software to develop more complete measures of these transportation networks. Dr. Aleprete will be looking for undergraduate research assistants to help with the

**Model UN Updates**

To answer this question, Shannon Smithy, associate professor of political science, has been studying the impact that crime has on support for democracy in Africa. In 2013, Smithy and Mary Malone, of the University of New Hampshire, published an article in the Journal of African Legal Studies, demonstrating that individuals in Central America and sub-Saharan Africa are much less likely to comply with the law when they do not trust the police, the courts and the government to keep crime in check.

At this spring’s Midwest Political Science Association meetings, Smithy extended that research, finding that experiences and perceptions of crime are associated with willingness to support multi-party democracy and to participate in political discussion in several African countries. In an even greater range of countries, individuals who have a positive view of judges, police and government efforts to address crime were significantly more likely to agree to pay their taxes. The table below shows the countries where attitudes toward crime and government ability to respond to crime have a significant impact on the willingness of people to pay taxes.

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Dr. Aleprete accepted an invitation to the 2014 National Model United Nations in New York, one of the largest MUN conferences in the world, and Westminster sent a delegation to compete at AMUN. This year 18 Westminster students participated as delegates. In addition, political science major Teresa Whetstone was selected by the AMUN to work as a conference staff. Whetstone helped run the Historical Security Council simulation. AMUN is one of the largest MUN conferences in North America, attracting around 1,500 students each year. Westminster’s MUN team has an increasingly visible presence at the conference and fields a very competitive delegation.

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