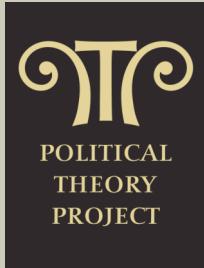


The Project Report



A Quarterly Report on *The Political Theory Project at Brown University*

From the Director

Friends,

Last fall, 120 promising young scholars from around the world applied for the PTP Postdoctoral Research Associates positions. In consultation with relevant departments, we rank ordered the top 25 candidates from an impressive pool and made offers to our top five candidates. We are delighted to report that all five immediately accepted our offers. Here is next year's roster:

Sahar Akhtar (PhD, Economics, 2001 George Mason University; PhD, Philosophy, Duke, 2007) uses economic tools to understand social altruism. She will teach a new freshman seminar in the Economics Department, "Political Theory and Economic Analysis" and a Philosophy class, "Human Rights and Cosmopolitanism."

Jason Brennan (PhD, Philosophy, University of Arizona, 2007) is currently completing work on a book entitled *A Brief History of Liberty*. He will teach a freshman seminar called "Freedom" and a new lecture class "Environmental Ethics."

Leigh Jenco (PhD, Political Science, University of Chicago, 2007) is a polymath: a specialist in classical Chinese political philosophy, she also contributes work to *Reason* magazine. She will teach "Methodologies of Political Theory" and "The Politics of Globalization."

Emily Nacol (PhD, Political Science, University of Chicago, 2007) does research on 18th century classical British liberalism. She will teach "Medieval and Renaissance Political Thought" and "Early Modern Orders."

Dennis Rasmussen (PhD, Political Science, Duke, 2005) specializes in the work of Adam Smith. His first book, *The Problems and Promise of Commercial*

Society, is being published by Harvard University Press this year. In the fall, he will teach a senior seminar, "Rousseau." In the spring, I am looking forward to co-teaching a new freshman seminar with him, "Political Theory of Capitalism".

In addition to the new postdoc courses, I will teach my annual offering, "Introduction to Political Thought" and a graduate seminar entitled "Market Liberalism: Origins, Principles, and Contemporary Applications." Our Assistant Director Adam Tebble will teach a new lecture class "Politics of Culture and Identity" and an advanced seminar, "The Thought of F.A. Hayek."

As the profiles above suggest, we have reason to be excited about the group of young scholars that the Project will bring to Brown next year. The new courses taught by these scholars will enrich the intellectual experiences of hundreds of Brown undergraduates. On behalf of all those students, we thank you for your support.

John Tomasi



Photo by Lauren Brennan

Thinking Uncomfortable Thoughts

In addition to hosting the Janus Forum Lecture Series, the Political Theory Project is pleased to be able to support other campus-wide initiatives that fit in with the Project's mission of bringing diverse viewpoints and voices to campus.

Last February, the Project co-sponsored a talk by Arabic American author and activist Nonie Darwish. Her book, *Now They Call Me Infidel: Why I Renounced Jihad for America, Israel, and the War on Terror*, speaks about support for Israel and reform in the Muslim world, especially in the area of women's rights. Darwish's talk, first scheduled for last fall, was cancelled when

she faced resistance in the Brown community. She was subsequently welcomed back with support from the President's office and additional funding from the Political Theory Project.

Professor John Tomasi moderated the Darwish event at the invitation of the students organizing the event. In his introduction, he offered advice clearly in keeping with the mantra of the Project, "First, I beseech you, do not allow Ms. Darwish to have the *last word* on these issues...But equally, I beseech you, don't deny Nonie Darwish the chance to speak her *first word*."



John Tomasi consults with Speaker Nonie Darwish before introducing her.

Spotlight on a Course

Adam Tebble began his association with the Political Theory Project as a Postdoctoral Associate in 2004, coming to Brown from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Last spring he began as the Project's first Assistant Director where he has both teaching and administrative responsibilities.

Tell us about your course. The course is entitled Modern Classical Liberalism and focuses on four recent Classical Liberal thinkers from the 20th Century onwards: Friedrich Hayek, Robert Nozick, Milton Friedman, and contemporary political philosopher, Chandran Kukathas. It is designed to give students knowledge of the Classical Liberal tradition that takes them beyond the historical greats such as Adam Smith and John Locke. The course demonstrates that this tradition not only has a distinguished pedigree, but that the market-based tradition is very much alive and well in contemporary scholarship and debates about public policy.

What major texts are students reading in this course? Students were assigned readings from *Law, Legislation and Liberty* by Hayek;

Capitalism of Freedom by Friedman; *Anarchy, State and Utopia* by Nozick; and *The Liberal Archipelago: A Theory of Diversity and Freedom* by Kukathas.

Was there any topic or text that generated a discussion that particularly surprised or pleased you? I think one of the most stimulating texts was a section of Friedman's book that deals with capitalism and discrimination. For me this discussion was particularly rewarding because it showed in a sophisticated way how "merely economic" issues speak directly to issues that are more often considered to be cultural in nature. One particularly interesting aspect of this was Friedman's argument that the very anonymity of the market – so often the target of the charge that it is unfeeling and callous – often insulates minority and vulnerable groups from discrimination.



What do you hope your students will take away from this course? I hope that they come to appreciate that arguing for and against individual liberty is a far more challenging enterprise than is often presumed, whether by supporters or opponents. Like any issue in political philosophy the issue of how much freedom individuals should enjoy has, is, and will doubtless continue to be as fraught with complexity as it is fascinating.





By the Numbers

The Political Theory Project is working closely with departments to enrich the intellectual experience of undergraduates. A quick look at the numbers reveals the Project's impact on the undergraduate curriculum. Next year, for example, the Political Science Department will offer 56 undergraduate courses – 19 in

Political Theory. Of those 19 Theory courses, 11 will be taught by Political Theory Project Scholars. Nine of these will be completely new courses that would not be offered to Brown students without the Project. Next year the Project will also be adding four new courses to the Philosophy Department and two to Economics.

Champagne Launchings

The Political Theory Project touches the lives of hundreds of Brown students in every graduating class. But each spring, there are a few graduating seniors whose lives have been *profoundly* impacted by the Political Theory Project. Sheila Dugan ('07) is one of these students. Next month, Sheila will launch her career as Marketing and Communications Manager at the Bill of Rights Institute in Arlington, VA. That organization's mission is to educate young people on the liberties and founding principles of our country.

The Project was instrumental in launching Sheila's career. "The classes I have taken with the PTP Postdoctoral Research Associates have been some of the most challenging and rewarding classes I

have taken at Brown," says Sheila. "Even more valuable are the opportunities I learned about by networking with individuals associated with the Political Theory Project."

Sheila landed her position at the Bill of Rights Institute through her participation in the Charles G. Koch Associates Program, sponsored by the Institute for Humane Studies. The Koch Program places promising young leaders in market-oriented organizations and institutions.

Sheila's education at Brown, supplemented by her interactions with the Political Theory Project, have put her in a position to advance the cause of liberty in America. We are delighted to toast Sheila's graduation from Brown. We look forward to following her career.



Sheila Dugan

The Bottom Line

The Political Theory Project is funded primarily by the generosity of individuals who share our commitment to academic rigor and intellectual pluralism. We are especially in need of gifts in the form of multi-year pledges of support. Such gifts greatly assist us in our curricular planning and provide the Project with long-term stability.

Over the last quarter alone, we raised \$141,000 towards our 2007-08 goal of \$750,000. (Contributions ranged in size from a one-time gift of \$500 to a multi-

year pledge of \$150,000.) We thank all these supporters who have recently stepped forward to help us. For a list of all the individuals who have made gifts to the Project, please visit our web site at www.politicaltheoryproject.net.

To reach our goal for 2007-08, we need to raise an additional \$144,000 by June 30th. If you have been considering making a gift to the Political Theory Project, of any size, we hope you will consider doing so now. Thank you for your interest in Brown.



Photo courtesy of Brown University

Political Theory Project

Brown University
Box 1844
Providence, RI
02912

PHONE
401-863-6092

FAX
401-863-6492

E-MAIL
PTP@brown.edu



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About the Political Theory Project

The mission of the Political Theory Project is to invigorate the study of the fundamental principles of human social life. Distinctively, the Project brings to this study a novel and powerful synthesis of humanistic and social scientific tools. We focus on questions about what actually works in the world. The Project creates at Brown a space where students of good faith, and diverse viewpoints, can come together to debate one

another other, freely and passionately, about the most pressing political problems of our day.

The Project sponsors a variety of activities: new courses for undergraduates, public lectures, an Open Seminar in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics for undergraduates, research opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students, support for faculty research, and a postdoctoral fellowship program.



Photo by Clark Quin

"While other types of communities devise covenants so as to avoid conflict, our covenant is rooted in quarrel, in opposition. We encourage ideas and opinions to collide in the service of learning.

We freely trespass boundaries, criticize each other's views, test every theory. No idea is beyond range or out of bounds...I believe that learning at its best is the antithesis of comfort."

*Ruth J. Simmons
President of Brown University*

VISIT US ONLINE: www.politicaltheoryproject.net

BROWN UNIVERSITY
The Political Theory Project
Box 1844
Providence, RI 02912