

# DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

A COMMUNICATION OF THE PSIA DEPARTMENT OF UNG



## Greetings!

Hello PSIA Family, and welcome to our ELEVENTH issue!

A lot has happened with our [#PSIAfamily](#) since we last met last fall. Unfortunately, space constraints do not allow us to cover everything, but in the coming pages you will get a flavor of what our students, alumni and faculty are up to and have achieved. For more articles about our family, visit our [blog](#).

Before we get to the content of the newsletter, I want to extend a special "Thank You" to all who generously have given to our Dr. Barry B. Friedman scholarship fund. I also want to take a minute or so of your time on page 2 and share with you what your support means to our inaugural recipient, Victoria Landa.

Our second recipient of the Friedman scholarship was selected a few weeks ago -- a short introduction to Gainesville student Fatima Santillan is on page 5. Please consider making a gift to the [Friedman scholarship fund](#) so that we can achieve our goal of endowment status and thereby enable us (via you) to assist future PSIA students like Victoria and Fatima.

Two more of our family were inducted into the UNG Foundation's "20 Under 40" club in 2023. We highlight all four inductees on page 2 and also provide a more in-depth chat with one of this year's cohort and a member of our Advisory Board, Ben Jarrard, on page 4.

As usual, our students continue to bring honor to our department and to all who have gone before. This past December, one of our students, political science/pre-law major Carlee Blankenship received the distinct honor of being the first-ever student to speak at a UNG commencement ceremony. You can learn a bit more about Carlee on page 7.

As is the case every spring issue, we recognize our students with the top GPAs within their respective majors; our cadets recognized as Distinguished Military Graduates; our most recent students to join the alumni ranks; and other students of distinction starting on page 9.

As always, we hope you find this newsletter informative as well as entertaining, and hope to include YOUR activities and accomplishments in a future issue. Please get in touch with us by filling out our [alumni information form](#), or simply drop us an e-mail at [polsia-dah@ung.edu](mailto:polsia-dah@ung.edu). We look forward to hearing from you!

Dr. Craig Greathouse  
Department Head

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## Victoria Landa Says “THANK YOU!!”

We recently received the below letter from Class of '24 IA major Victoria Landa. As you recall, Victoria was the recipient of our inaugural award of the Dr. Barry D. Friedman scholarship last fall. Here is what she has to say in regards to how the scholarship “affects my ability to finish my degree and minors” as she nears the end of her undergraduate career:

I am so grateful to all the donors and people who made this scholarship possible. When financial burdens are lifted, it allows me to have a greater peace of mind which eliminates worry about how to pay for textbooks, school fees, or everyday needs. I have worked roughly 15-25 hours a week since I arrived at the University of North Georgia four years ago. I am glad I had the opportunity to gain the skill of maintaining a school and work-life balance, as time management and financial responsibility are necessary for success. This scholarship, however, has given me the financial boost I needed to finish strong and assist in my transition to my post-graduate phase of life. This scholarship has not only been a blessing in finances, but also a blessing in terms of encouragement. It is so good to

know I have a community of professors, alumni, and others who are there to support me. Throughout my time at UNG, the Political Science & International Affairs Department has pushed me to go further, from giving me challenging assignments to helping plan my future. Thank you so much for the encouragement and financial resources to finish my time at UNG well!

Throughout my time at UNG, the Department has pushed me to go further, from giving me challenging assignments to helping me plan my future.

Our second recipient of the Friedman scholarship was announced on April 9th – you can read about Fatima Santillan on page 5.

Please consider making a gift to the [Friedman scholarship fund](#) so that we can achieve our goal of endowment status and thereby enable us (via you) to assist future PSIA students like Victoria.

## ALUMNI NEWS

## Meet PSIA’s “20 under 40” honorees



Two members of our [#PSIAfamily](#) were recently added to the UNG Alumni Association’s roles as honorees in its “20 Under 40” program.

Ben Jarrard, PS ‘13 and Charlie Barrett, PS ‘19 join Josh Walker, PS ‘10 and Mark Pettitt, PS ‘17, who were honored in the program’s inaugural class last year.

The program was set up by the Association’s Young Alumni Board to honor members of the UNG family for their personal and professional accomplishments or their distinguished service to others.

Wendi Huguley, ‘90, Director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving, said about the honorees: “This year’s “20 Under 40” alumni are doctors, directors, entrepreneurs, officers, scientists, statesmen, educators, and innovators. They are lifelong learners who have become game changers. They strive to make the world a better place, and the UNG Alumni Association is very proud to claim them as our own.”

Congrats to:

Ben, who currently serves as Campaign Manager to former to Georgia state Senator Michael Duggan.

Charlie, who alongside his duties as chief of staff to Georgia Senate President Pro Tempore John F. Kennedy, owns and operates a small carpet cleaning business in Dahlonega, GA.

Josh, whose company, North Georgia Wine Tours, is rated the #1 wine tour company in Georgia and was voted Best of Georgia in 2021 by the Georgia Business Journal.

Mark, currently serving the UNG community in the role of Interim Director of State Government Relations in the Office of the President.



## Meet Chase Sanger '12

Currently a key member of the staff of US Representative Barry Loudermilk of Georgia's 11th District, Chase took some time out of his busy schedule recently to join us on our Dahlonega campus to share with you a little of his journey from high school student to congressional staffer.

Chase grew up in Cobb County, GA, and after graduating from Dominion Christian High School, Chase knew he wanted to join the military. So the University of North Georgia, with its unique Corp of Cadets program, seemed like the right fit for him.

During his time at UNG, Chase continued to feed his love for politics by majoring in political science and reaching towards his goal of joining the military by joining the Corp of Cadets and being a part of Charlie company.

Within the PSIA department, Chase said he was able to gain "a great foundation and understanding of issues." Looking back on his four years at UNG and in the PSIA department, Chase specifically recalled the impact of Dr. Cavalli's congressional course as well as Dr. Miner's and Dr. Harris' international politics courses.

Chase attributes his leadership skills, whether on active duty or working on a U.S. Congressman's staff were thanks to "getting to interact with different professors, advisors, and military science department staff [at UNG]"

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in political

science in 2012, Chase went on to get commissioned active duty with the Army in the chemical branch. Then after his time in the Army ended around four years later, Chase sought out a career in his passion: politics. After opening the "Global Programs Office" at Texas A&M School of Law, Chase began applying for jobs via USA Jobs, a site listing federal job openings.

When browsing USA Jobs, Chase stumbled upon the Wounded Warrior Fellowship Program in Congressman Loudermilk's Office. The fellowship peaked Chase's interest with it being in politics and because it was in his home Congressional district. Chase applied for the fellowship and was accepted. He spent two years in this fellowship and then when his program ended Congressman Loudermilk offered Chase a full-time job on his staff.

Chase describes his current role as community relations: "I'm [Congressman Loudermilk's] representative at the Chambers of Commerce and business associations. I liaise with county and city governments, and state-level elected officials."

When asked about advice he had for perspective and current students, Chase said that prospective students, when deciding on a major, need to "look at what your passions are and try to align those passions with a degree." To current students, Chase emphasizes the importance of being involved in one's academic career and not just going through the motions -- "really engage with your classes and professors."

To hear more about Chase's time with the PSIA department and with UNG's Boar's Head Brigade, as well as his time in the Army and role as Congressional staffer, check out our interview with him on the [PSIA's YouTube channel](#).

**"Be involved in your academic career  
... don't just go through the motions"**



## Meet Ben Jarrard '13

Currently a member of the PSIA Advisory Board, Ben recently received the impressive achievement of being named to the “20 Under 40” class of 2024 by the UNG Alumni Association’s Young Alumni Board.

Ben is the son of a military officer and therefore moved around a lot in his younger years until eventually graduating from Lumpkin County High School here in Dahlonega. He then moved a few miles up the road to pursue a degree in Political Science, with a Mandarin Chinese minor, at UNG. During his time in college, he played golf on the Division II team, was a cadet, did one year in SGA, and joined a fraternity.

After graduating from UNG in 2013, Ben was offered the opportunity to work on then Governor Nathan Deal’s reelection campaign after having previously interned with Gov Deal a year earlier. Following this, he returned to UNG to work in the newly-opened Government Relations office for five years. After serving as Chief of Staff for two years for another UNG Alum, State Senator Steve Gooch (MPA '98), Ben recently left to serve as Campaign Manager for former State Senator Mike Dugan.

Through the PSIA department and the cadet program, Ben was able to develop his leadership skills at UNG. He also learned how to be a good follower and have good discipline. Also, he feels that his research and writing skills, developed through his political science degree coursework, have helped him tremendously during his career. He also appreciates how the department taught him how to think like a political scientist.

Reflecting on his selection as one of the UNG Alumni Association’s 2023 “20 Under 40” cohort, Ben said:

It was a tremendous honor. You talk about impostor syndrome in the workplace. That’s certainly what I was feeling a little bit of. Going to the event and being surrounded by my fellow North Georgia graduates who had received awards and hearing their stories. I really just feel lucky to be in the room with them...I feel like a lot of my success was timing -- being in the right place and then taking advantage of being in the right place at the right time. I just feel very fortunate to be considered among that group of people. Makes me want to be a better person and work harder to really continue to prove myself that you deserve something like that, and so I’m grateful for it.

For current and future students, Ben has a simple piece of advice: “always be learning and always be open to learning.” In addition, he encourages students to make sure they are doing internships because “networking is critical.”

To hear more about Ben’s time with PSIA and what he is up to now check out our interview with him on our [YouTube channel](#).



## Second Friedman Scholarship Awarded



Fatima Santillan, a Gainesville campus-based junior Political Science major with a pre-law concentration, has been awarded the Dr. Barry Friedman Scholarship in Political Science & International Affairs for the 2024-2025 Academic Year. She follows in the footsteps of [Victoria Landa](#), our inaugural recipient.

The \$1,000 grant comes courtesy of our PSIA Department scholarship which seeks to make learning more affordable, reward students that study hard and succeed academically, and show our students that the PSIA department truly cares about them. The scholarship is named in honor of Professor Emeritus Dr. Barry Friedman, professor of political science from 1992-2021.

The Scholarship Selection Committee, headed by Associate Department Head Dr. Viman-Miller, selected Fatima after receiving various deserving and high-quality submissions.

When asked about the selection process and what made Fatima stand out, Dr. Viman-Miller said that “Fatima is a hard-working student with big dreams and a bright future ahead. We had a lot of deserving applicants, but Fatima’s submission stood out because of her academic credentials and the breadth of her involvement with the department. We want to congratulate her and let her know how proud we are of all her

achievements so far.”

Fatima hails from Gainesville, GA and is a graduate of Gainesville High School. When asked how she felt about being awarded the Dr. Barry D. Friedman Scholarship, Fatima said “When I first got the email I felt an incredible relief off of my shoulders because I come from a single income household and I’m a first generation student, so having an education is something that I value and something that I don’t take for granted.” She continued:

In my past education I had been told to limit myself and be more realistic with what I wanted to do. However, when I got to the University of North Georgia and started working with the Political Science & International Affairs Department, I had a completely different experience. My professors were so supportive from the moment I walked into the classroom, especially Dr. Chand, Dr. Trey Wilson, and Dr. Dwight Wilson. They emphasized that these limitations were placed on me my whole academic journey, but they are what gives me this unique perspective to offer, and they should be used as strengths not weaknesses. That’s why this scholarship means so much to me, because now I can keep funding my education and I can keep striving for my dream of being an immigration attorney and giving back to my community.



Fatima, flanked by Drs. Wilson and Viman-Miller



## Meet Victoria Landa '24 2023 Friedman Scholarship Awardee

Senior Victoria Landa was born and raised in Macon, Georgia where she attended Covenant Academy and graduated in 2020. Before joining the #PSIAfamily and starting her degree in International Affairs (IA) with a European Concentration, she fell in love with the subject matter. Favoring the subject of history during high school but having an interest in current events, she decided to pursue a bachelor's degree in International Affairs. Victoria decided to come to UNG for multiple reasons, the first being that she had heard about the University's strong Political Science department. She also chose UNG for its atmosphere -- having grown up near a military base and having family members in the military, Victoria liked the idea of being surrounded by the "culture, discipline, and patriotism" found on campus.

Since coming to UNG and joining the PSIA department, Victoria has pursued not only a degree in International Affairs but also two minors, one in Public Administration and Public Service, and another in Spanish.

While Victoria admitted her schedule has been super busy, she makes it clear that "It's not something that anybody couldn't handle if you really put your mind to it. A lot of my professors have challenged me over the years and my classes, which is something I was looking forward to school anyways."

Since Victoria pursued several academic paths

through her major and minors, Victoria has had a well-rounded experience at UNG and more specifically within the PSIA department. "I would say [my] major, [while] heavy on reading on research and everything, [it] is super, super helpful and applicable to real-world skills writing. Especially, I would say I've written a lot of essays in my time here, but I think that the support that my professors have given me along the way has made [the work and] my crazy academic schedule doable." Victoria continues:

My most recent addition to my academic career has been the Public Administration and Public Service minor. It was recently introduced to me by Dr. Armstrong Williams, Dr. Kelly and Dr. Viman-Miller. Pursuing a second minor wasn't really on my mind. I mean [the minor] didn't exist before this year, but I would have never thought to do something like that until taking Dr. Kelly's Public Administration class and then Dr. Gershtenson's Public Policy class, and I just felt like the relevance of these classes to our everyday lives as Americans and the knowledge that I gained from these classes is really important.

Victoria's latest achievement is being the first-ever recipient of the Department's Dr. Barry D. Friedman Scholarship. When asked about receiving this scholarship, Victoria said: "It was a tremendous honor to receive this. I was excited, especially after having met Dr. Barry and the faculty. It was just amazing to get to know them. So, needless to say, it was a huge honor."

Victoria has some advice for prospective students seeking a degree with PSIA. "Keep going! I know it's hard, but it's worth reaching out to all your professors and advisors. I found that it might be a little intimidating at first to go up to the professor and ask some questions, but I've learned over the years not to be intimidated because they're so willing to help you. So, I would say just be bold and determined."

## Carlee Blankenship '23 Commencement Speaker



Say “hello” to Carlee Blankenship. Recently graduated with her Political Science - Pre-Law degree, Carlee became the first-ever UNG student to speak at a UNG graduation. Just prior to this fantastic opportunity, we had the privilege of chatting with Carlee to find out a bit more of “what makes her tick.”

Carlee grew up in Dalton, GA where she enjoyed theatre at Northwest Whitfield. She saw the pre-law track here at UNG as a continuation of that as she had always loved public speaking and knew lawyers throughout her life.

Carlee’s first class was Legal Research and Moot court with Dr. Meachum, where she enjoyed learning about case briefs and case studies, and the work that went into them.

With regards to her future plans, Carlee plans to take a year off before applying to law school and work as an assistant paralegal in the Chattanooga area.

Carlee finds the connections she made at UNG and the knowledge she gained through her classes to be some of the most meaningful things she gained during her time here and trusts that they will help her in her future career.

Carlee advises future and current students that they will get out what they put into the PSIA programs, and to always keep track of opportunities that come through their email.

## Another Successful SRMUN

Our Model UN clubs and Model UN courses came together this past November to participate in the 2023 Southern Regional Model United Nations (SRMUN) conference in Atlanta, GA. While there was no theme for this year’s conference, students discussed topics ranging from the global debt crisis to protection of world heritage sites to the housing crisis and combating disinformation.

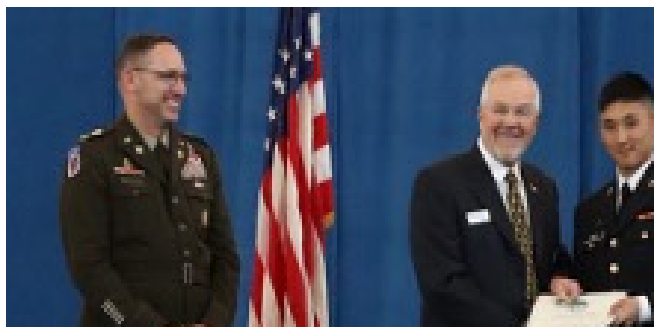
This year’s conference included over 471 delegates (77 delegations) from 32 universities. Twenty-eight PSIA students from across the Dahlonega and Gainesville campuses represented five countries: France, Vietnam, Croatia, India, and Singapore. In addition, we also had one of our students on SRMUN staff this year. Jessica Case (IA '25) served as the Assistant Director (AD) of the General Assembly Plenary Committee.

Since UNG was representing France, our UNG students had the unique opportunity to talk with the Consul General Anne-Laure Desjonquères from the Consulate General of France in Atlanta. The Consul General graciously took time out of her busy schedule to talk with our students in the French delegation about her career, French foreign policy, and negotiation skills.

Along with experiencing the rewards of the conference as a whole, the UNG team came home with the following awards:

1. Outstanding Position Paper: Singapore Delegation
2. Outstanding Position Paper: French Delegation
3. Outstanding Position Paper for the Group of 20 (G20): Orla Fennell (France)
4. Best Delegates for the General Assembly Plenary: Carlee Blankenship & Maddie Lindell (France); Zachary Furbush & Reece Tharpe (Vietnam)

## PSIA Cadet earns Scholarship from Veterans' Group



Cadet Hyunbean Park, IA '24, was selected as the 2023 UNG recipient of a scholarship from the Georgia Mountain Chapter (GMC) of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA).

"Receiving the scholarship from MOAA is a tremendous honor for me. It validates my dedication to learning, service to our nation and international engagement," Park said. "I'm humbled by this recognition, and I want to express my gratitude to

members of MOAA for their continuous selfless service by supporting the next generation of leaders."

Hyunbean hails from Suwanee, GA and is a graduate of North Gwinnett H.S. He is finishing up his degree in international affairs with a concentration in Europe and a minor in Russian. He was also recently named [Distinguished Military Student](#) in October for his outstanding qualities of leadership, aptitude for military service, and standing

in the upper third of the ROTC class.

Hyunbean shared his positive experiences with PSIA as it "...opened me to see the world. I was able to equip myself with global perspectives and cross-cultural awareness through my experiences in both studying and interning abroad. By applying these experiences to my military career, I will better enhance diplomatic relations and effectively navigate international challenges."

MOAA is a non-profit veterans' association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and ensuring the nation keeps its commitments to currently serving, retired

and former members of the uniformed services and their families. In addition to presenting an annual scholarship, GMC MOAA routinely supports the Boar's

Head Brigade by presenting a gift to every cadet who commissions into the US Military upon graduation.





## Pi Sigma Alpha Inductees

UNG's Xi Kappa chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the national political science honor society, inducted two new students into the Society during the Spring 2023 semester.

Tracy Guiselle Amya | Political Science/pre-law  
Dilcia Marili Garcia | Political Science



## Distinguished Military Graduates (DMG)

Mark Alexander | PS  
Maddox Rose | PS/pre-law  
Jack Rainbow | SSST/intel  
Daniel Traylor | SSST/intel  
Nicholas Haley | PS

Congratulations to these five cadets, who are among the 17 members of the Boar's Head Brigade that earned DMG status for the 2023-24 academic year.

## December Grads

*Congratulations to our  
December 2023 Graduates!*

### **Master of Arts in International Affairs**

Rosemarie Luna

### **Master of Public Administration**

Elisha Blackford

Amanda Jenkins

### **Political Science**

Caroline Beach | Political Science

Anthony Blanchette | Political Science

Gage Cazier | Political Science

Valentina Ceron Andraus | Political Science

Jessica Chalker | Political Science

Dalton Goins | Political Science

Spencer Kuhn | Political Science

Brendan LaPrade | Political Science

Grace Martin | Political Science

Yajaira Martin | Political Science

Justin Olsen | Political Science

Morgan Parker | Political Science

Aaliyah Tabor | Political Science

Carlee Blankenship | Pre-Law

Katherine Horne | Pre-Law

Katherine Kelly | Pre-Law

Taylor Mullikin | Pre-Law

Kalie Roop | Pre-Law

Ethan James | Pre-Law

Annabette Vellines | Pre-Law

Claire Cobb | American Studies

Jesse Kronen | American studies

Claire Cobb | Political Science Pathway

Patrick Ford | Political Science Pathway

Morgan Marley | Political Science Pathway

### **International Affairs**

Gabriella Bartlett | Europe

Orla Fennell | Europe

Sebastian Lipski | Europe

Morgan Markley | Europe

Caroline Ryan | Europe

Danielle Kent | Asia

### **Strategic & Security Studies**

Davis Anderson | Intelligence

Jack Rainbow | Intelligence

Trevor Galyon | Military Science

## Department Awards

*Congratulations to all for their  
exemplary academic achievements!*

### **David Potter Award [Highest GPA of International Affairs Graduate]**

Gabriella Bartlett

### **Michael Reese Award [Highest GPA of Political Science/ pre-law graduate]**

Rose Maddox

### **Frank M. Smith [Highest GPA of Political Science graduate]**

RockCooper

### **Highest GPA of Political Science graduate from the Gainesville campus**

Ceron Andraus Valentina

### **Highest GPA of MPA graduate:**

Elisha Blackford

Mia Burns

Amanda Jenkins

## Scholarships

### **Benjamin Gilman International Scholarship**

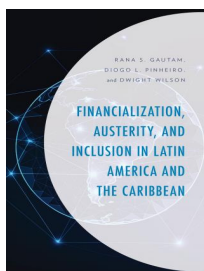
Mauricio Gonzalez | Political Science

### **Benjamin Gilman Alumni Changemaker**

Nataly Morales Villa | Political Science

### **Rangel Fellowship**

2nd Lt. Phillip Ly | Strategic & Security Studies



## Dr. Dwight Wilson

Associate Professor Dr. Dwight Wilson from our Gainesville campus, together with fellow UNG professors Drs. Rana Gautam and Diogo Pinheiro, have recently seen their book **Financialization, Austerity, and Inclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean** published by Lexington Press.

Given Dr. Wilson's expertise in Latin American studies, this book is poised to provide invaluable insights in an important field of study in an area geographically near to all of us. Through meticulous research and analysis, the trio delve into the complex dynamics of financialization, austerity measures, and inclusive development strategies, shedding light on their profound implications for the region's societies and economies.

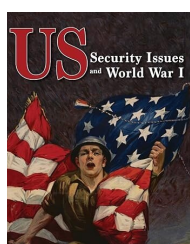


## Dr. Raluca Viman-Miller

Associate Professor & Associate Department head Dr. Raluca Viman-Miller, together with Cristina Matiuta from the University of Oradea, Romania, co-edited an anthology looking at various aspects of the on-going war in Ukraine.

Published by Romania's Presa Universitară Clujeană, *The War in Ukraine and its Impact on Global Politics and Security* covers a wide range of topics authored by both US and Romanian authors including PSIA's Drs. Craig Greathouse, Seyed Serri, Laurel Wei, Nathan Price and Jon Miner.

The conflict in Ukraine remains a critical issue, particularly concerning its implications for global politics and security. This book provides valuable insights into the complexities of the situation, making it essential reading for those seeking a deeper understanding of this pressing matter.



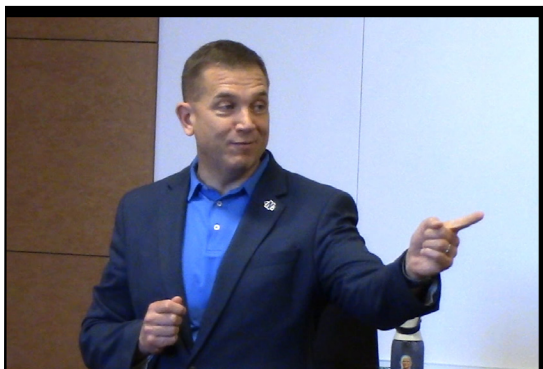
## Dr. Craig Greathouse

Department head Dr. Craig Greathouse and Dr. Austin Reade from UNG'S English Department edited a collection of articles looking at various US national security issues in the context of the lead-up to and conduct of World War I.

Published by UNG's University Press and featuring authors from a diverse range of academic disciplines, **US Security Issues and World War I** was designed not to follow the traditional emphasis on the foreign policy and

military aspects and events of the Great War, but rather to consider the broader impact of the war on national security issues within the United States and on US foreign policy.

As is usually the case with books compiled by one of our faculty members, several of the chapters in this anthology were authored by fellow PSIA members, including Drs. Raluca Viman-Miller, Seyed Serri and Jon Miner.



"We've got to be empathetic ... I would encourage you to interact with as many people who don't look like you as possible."

## UNG President Visits PSIA

UNG President Dr. Michael Shannon took time out his day on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024 to share some insights and advice with PSIA students and faculty members based on his experiences in academia, government and the military.

President Shannon opened his discussion by expressing how students have no idea where their journey will take them, which from his perspective and based on his diversity of experiences throughout his career should be exciting because "your journey will give you opportunities to explore things."

The president spent most of his time discussing several key ideas PSIA students should keep in mind as they move forward during their academic careers. First, and he was quite emphatic: "The nation needs you...we need good people of high character that want to take on the work of our social constructs, our community constructs. We need great people that are value centered, that think creatively and innovatively about the challenges ahead of us..."

Throughout his talk President Shannon expressed a basic worldview he believes students will find most beneficial once they venture into the world

after college: "I don't believe in challenges -- I believe in opportunities."

Going to a college far away from home allowed President Shannon to meet a variety of people. Along this same vein, President Shannon expressed how his experience overseas in the Army showed him a new perspective, as well as how important empathy is to have as you go through life. "We've got to be empathetic...I would encourage you to interact with as many people who don't look like you as possible. You will learn a lot and you will be able to operate inside of this experiment [called the United States]."

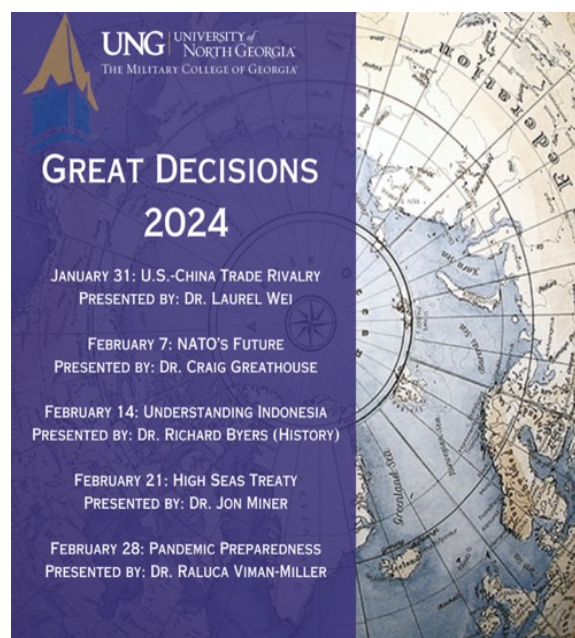
President Shannon emphasized the importance of getting through Political Science courses as they will provide students with the necessary tools to be successful to be successful in the world. "You have to do incredibly well in your courses".

To end his discussion President Shannon answered questions from the audience with one important point being how much opportunity students have here at UNG, not just in Dahlonega but at other campuses as well.

To view the entirety of [President Shannon's talk](#) with PSIA visit [our YouTube channel](#).

"I don't believe in challenges -- I believe in opportunities."





## *Great Decisions* Series Returns

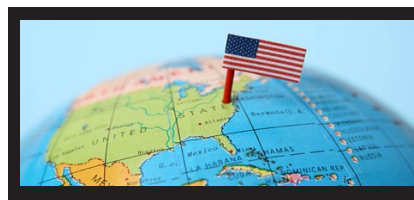
PSIA and the Forsyth County Public Library once again collaborated during the Spring 2024 semester in presenting the *Great Decisions* series, America's largest discussion on world affairs to the North Georgia community

This year's faculty members participating in the *Great Decisions* series (see photo above) presented information and led discussions on a range of fascinating and timely geopolitical topics. Topics were selected based on their current importance to international affairs including political, economic, and diplomatic issues.

UNG has provided presentations for the *Great Decisions* lecture series for over a decade, providing a public forum for the discussion of current foreign policy issues facing the United States.

The first *Great Decisions* group was organized in 1954 around informal presentation and conversation. Since then, the Foreign Policy Association has produced the *Great Decisions* series annually. The meetings are meant to be flexible educational experiences that are accessible through schools, libraries, community centers, and faith-based organizations across the nation.

Working together with the Forsyth County Public Library provides our faculty members and our department a great opportunity to connect with the citizens of northern Georgia. If you are interested in being on our mailing list when we announce the 2025 schedule, let us know at [polsia-dah@ung.edu](mailto:polsia-dah@ung.edu).



## FCPL 2024 -- *Understanding America*

Starting this spring and continuing through the 2024 elections, PSIA faculty members are again presenting and leading a series of community discussions on various current political science-related topics. The presentation series, *UNDERSTANDING AMERICA: Discussions on Democracy*, is sponsored by the Forsyth County Public Library (FCPL) Speaker Series.

As was [the case last year](#), this program is an excellent UNG/community event that not only showcases UNG faculty members, but also demonstrates the willingness of the PSIA faculty to support community efforts. It is hoped this speaker series will provide clarification and understanding of some of the most pressing aspects of the times we live in.

Throughout the summer and fall, as a lead-up to the November elections, PSIA faculty will address topics framed around democracy in America. Sessions are held every first Sunday of the month and consist of a 45-minute presentation and a 45-minute discussion session where the audience is both encouraged and welcomed to engage. While the target audience is primarily Forsyth County citizens, all UNG students are encouraged to attend. Here is an opportunity to create generational bridges on issues that affect all of us.

### Topics and speakers:

|           |                                                                                                                           |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| April     | Dr. Glen Smith<br><i>Political Polarization</i>                                                                           |
| May       | Dr. Carl Cavalli<br><i>Evolution of the Presidency</i>                                                                    |
| June      | Dr. Jaimie Kelley –<br><i>Public Policy Structures and Processes</i>                                                      |
| July      | Dr. Eric Wilk –<br><i>Federal Legal System Structures and Inputs</i>                                                      |
| August    | Dr. Glen Smith<br><i>Partisan Media</i>                                                                                   |
| September | Dr. Charles “Trey” Wilson<br><i>Federalism and its Impacts on the System</i>                                              |
| October   | Dr. Joe Gershtenson<br><i>The Reasons and Importance of the Electoral College</i>                                         |
| November  | Drs. Carl Cavalli, Joe Gershtenson, Nathan Price and Eric Wilk<br><i>Trends and Predictions Leading into Election Day</i> |

Department of Political Science & International Affairs

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