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Hello, everyone, and welcome back to campus!

This newsletter edition highlights major events from the Spring 2026 semester, celebrates recent prize recipients, our graduating students, and honors our retiring colleagues while welcoming new faculty. Read on to discover the accomplishments and activities of our vibrant community.



Department Head:
Professor Seo-Hyun Park

Assistant Department Head:
Professor Michael Feola

Department Assistant:
Ms. Laura Siegfried

Congratulations, Class of 2026!

During Senior Week, we celebrated the graduating seniors with a reception in the Kirby Hall of Civil Rights Lobby.



Welcome, new faculty!

Assistant Professor **Shagun Gupta**, an expert on South Asian politics, joins us after earning her Ph.D. at American University. This fall, she will be teaching GOVT 221: South Asian Politics and IA 200: Globalization and Its Discontents.

Assistant Professor **Maryam Nahhal** recently earned her Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University. Her expertise is in public law and American Politics. Her course offerings include GOVT 207: Race and Ethnicity in U.S. Politics and GOVT 213: Law and Society.

Visiting Assistant Professor **Erin Tatz** received her Ph.D. at Boston University. She will offer courses in American Politics and Political Theory, including Govt 218: Politics of Public Policy and Govt 104: Intro to Political Theory.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT UPCOMING EVENTS

Celebrating our Emeritus Professors

Helena Silverstein is the Thomas Roy and Lura Forrest Jones Emeritus Professor of Government and Law and an expert in law and society, law and social movements, and constitutional law. She received her Ph.D. and M.A. in Political Science at the University of Washington, and her B.A. in Political Science and Economics at the University of Pennsylvania.

Professor Silverstein joined the Lafayette faculty in 1992 as a specialist in legal and political studies. Throughout her career, she excelled at engaging students in their learning. She has been an effective advisor, resource, and mentor to countless students. She modeled a deep commitment to social justice and equity and inspired students to believe in the power of ideas to drive change.

Professor Silverstein is the author of four books, including a textbook on the Supreme Court. A prolific scholar, she has also published several articles, book reviews, and essays at prestigious journals and is a sought-after speaker for invited talks and conference presentations.



Professor Silverstein has been a significant and respected leader in the Department, College, and the profession. As the Head of the Department of Government and Law for 18 years, she recruited and mentored dozens of faculty. In addition, Professor Silverstein served on key College-wide committees, such as the Institutional Review Board, Faculty Compensation Committee, Governance Committee, Strategic Plan Steering Committee, and the Promotion, Tenure, and Review Committee.

The leadership that Professor Silverstein exhibited in the academic profession has been nothing short of remarkable. Reflecting her wide impact and reputation in her scholarly fields, she served as the Program Director of the Law and Social Sciences Program for the National Science Foundation for two years (2014-2016) where she managed and administered a \$5.5 million grant program. She has been a regular proposal reviewer for NSF, an article and manuscript reviewer, an external reviewer for tenure and promotion cases, and a curriculum reviewer for the AP College Board's US Government Curriculum. She holds distinguished positions in her field such as the Faculty Mentor for the Law and Society Association, and was on the Nominations Committee for the American Political Science Association.

Hannah W. Stewart-Gambino, Emeritus Professor of Government and Law & International Affairs,

earned her B.A. from Converse College, followed by her M.A. and Ph.D. from Duke University. She served as the Dean of the College (2007-2013) and was instrumental in advancing initiatives aimed at global education, the effective use of technology and data, as well as the adoption of strategic planning tools and methodologies.

Professor Stewart-Gambino developed and regularly taught courses on Gender and Development, US-Latin American Relations, as well as her FYS course on Feeding the World. She also regularly led study abroad programs.

Professor Stewart-Gambino has been an active leader on campus, serving on the International Affairs Advisory Committee, the Center for Community Engagement Advisory Committee, Promotion, Tenure, and Review Committee, Faculty Academic Policy Committee, and played an important role as the Director of the Lehigh Valley Research Consortium. She has served as Vice Chair of the Board for the Society of College and University Planners, as a Strategic Planning Consultate for the National Endowment for the Humanities as well as Monmouth University.



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Student Conference Presentations

Government and Law faculty continue to encourage and advise students interested in presenting their research at professional conferences.

- **Camryn Roth** ('27) presented her research at 2026 NCUR.

- **Kathleen Kehner** ('26) presented her research at the Undergraduate Research Conference on the European Union in April 2026.

Presenting their work at the 2026 Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference were:

- **Isabella Tang** ('26)
- **Savannah Nevin** ('26)
- **Kate SantaMaria** ('27)



Department Events

Professor **John Kincaid** moderated a forum on February 1, 2026 in Colton Chapel. Seven prospective candidates for the Democratic Party's primary election for the 7th Congressional District engaged in a rigorous debate in front of an audience of nearly 400 people.



Daniel L. Golden '34 Lecture Series:

This past spring, the Department of Government and Law partnered with a student-run organization, Combating Human Trafficking Initiative, and welcomed **Mark P. Lagon**, who delivered a talk on global responses to human trafficking.



In collaboration with the Meyner Center, the Department launched a new **Careers in Public Service** Q&A panel and networking event with **Representatives from State and Federal Government**. Featured speakers included: **Rep. Robert Freeman**; **Nathan Gerace**, NE Regional Director, Office of U.S. Senator McCormick; **Christian Muniz**, Delta Development Group; and **Rep. Milou Mackenzie**.



Honors Thesis

This year, seven students earned honors in Government and Law.

- Danielle Archibold
- Jillian Berger
- Alexander Brown
- Christopher Byrnes
- Morgan Levan Dunn
- Elizabeth Miller
- Isabella Tang

The Government and Law Department is excited to announce a newly-created **Award for Outstanding Honors Thesis Prospectus**, celebrating excellence in honors-level undergraduate research. This year's inaugural top honor goes to **Kate SantaMaria** for her exceptional research design and academic promise. **Fiona O'Connor** also received well-deserved recognition, earning an Honorable Mention for her impressive and thoroughly developed prospectus.

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Pi Sigma Alpha

On April 15, 2026, 22 students were inducted into **Pi Sigma Alpha**, the Political Science National Honors Society.



Let's Connect!

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## We'd love to hear from you!

If you have information about future events that you would like included in the next newsletter, please reach out to Professor Seo-Hyun Park at [parksh@lafayette.edu](mailto:parksh@lafayette.edu).

## Chase Prize

The **Eugene P. Chase Government Prize**, given annually to the student who has, in the judgment of the Department of Government and Law, submitted the best written exposition in the field of political science, was awarded to **Cameron McKnight** ('26) for his paper "The Impact of Brexit on Scottish Nationalism," which was written and submitted for a capstone seminar taught by Professor Seo-Hyun Park.



## Novak Prize

The **Minerva and Emil V. Novak Prize in Government and Law**, which rewards excellence in academic work and citizenship in the campus community, was

awarded to two members of the class of 2026: **Jillian Berger** ('26) and **Isabella Tang** ('26).

## Tully Prize

The **Paul Tully Memorial Prize**, an annual award presented to the student (or students) "who best exemplifies the progressive principles of social and political service," was awarded to **Jillian Berger** ('26) and **Isabella Tang** ('26).

## Internships

Six students completed internships under the supervision of the Department's Internship Supervisor, Professor Andrew Clarke.

- **Jack Simonetta** ('27): Northampton County District Attorney Office
- **Chris Yoon** ('27): National Assembly of the Republic of Korea
- **Helen Gerber** ('27): Northampton County Courthouse
- **Lillian Hercik** ('27): Northampton County Courthouse
- **Camsey Noonan** ('26): Lehigh County Office of the Public Defender
- **Grace Needles** ('26): Sustainability Office

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