

# The Western



NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1, 2008

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**W**elcome to the first issue of our Association's newsletter.

Those of you who have attended the conference know that the Western has a distinctive 'feel' as a conference and as a group: it feels smaller and friendlier than the other big association conferences and has much more of a sense of community about it.

This newsletter is intended to help continue the kinds of discussions that are a common feature of our conference.

We anticipate that the newsletter will combine two main sections: a section of news (of the Association and of people and schools in our region) and a section of book reviews – and in particular reviews of both text books and of books in the areas of interest to, and by, our members. The book reviews, then, won't follow the standard breakdown of American, Comparative, Theory and IR but will instead follow thematic breakdowns.

You will see that it is very much a work in progress and so suggestions and comments are more than welcome, as are offers of content.

For suggestions please email Shaun Bowler [shaun.bowler@ucr.edu] in the Department of Political Science at UC Riverside or call him at 951. 827.5595



## NEWS FROM THE ASSOCIATION

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This coming year's conference will be held in the beautiful coastal city of Vancouver BC from March 18 to March 20, 2009.

This is the first WPSA conference to be held outside the US and is the first conference by a major US association to be held outside the US. APSA will follow us later in the year to Toronto.

In addition to the venue a couple of other – smaller - changes will also take place in conference format.

First, we will have a 'project' room available for teams of scholars with collaborative projects in mind or already underway. Conference attendees who might be planning a book project or a conference of their own need no longer look in vain for a quiet corner of a coffee bar or scramble for extra chairs. Simply ask Elsa Favila [favilaej@skymail.csus.edu] for a time slot in a quiet room we will have set aside for that purpose.

Second, and another first, we will also host an undergraduate research panel. The panel will be organized by Lori Weber [LWeber@csuchico.edu] section chair of the Teaching Research and Professionalization section. Those undergraduates who do attend will pay a special (lower) conference registration rate.

## CHANGES

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These coming months will see two changes in key positions in the Association as Betty Moulds and Gil St Clair retire.

Elizabeth (Betty) Moulds was Vice President and Chief of Staff at California State University, Sacramento.

For twenty years Betty taught in the Department of Government. From 1976 to 1982 she was the Director of the Sacramento Semester Program, a California wide internship program and in 1984 she became co-founder of California State University, Sacramento's Center for California Studies. During the early 1980s, she also served as Chair of the Department of Government. In 1985, Betty joined the University's central administration, serving as interim

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Academic Vice President, Dean of Faculty and Staff Affairs, and, last, as Vice President and Chief of Staff. She retired from the University as Professor Emeritus in 2003.

But, far more importantly so far as all of us are concerned Betty has been Executive Director of the Western Political Science Association, a position she has held since 1986. In addition to many tasks involved in helping run and organize the Association. Betty has played a key role in helping choose conference hotels and making sure that conference arrangements work smoothly.



Also stepping down is the Association’s long-time Treasurer – Gil St.Clair – seen here in a radio discussion programme on KUNM radio on the topic of ‘Civility in Public Discourse’.

Gil now teaches at Southwestern University after previously teaching at the University of New Mexico and the College of Santa Fe from 1986-2005. As one of his former students now in grad school – Xavier Medina – says “Prof. St.Clair was the only prof I ever knew at UNM who strongly encouraged his students to apply their poli sci learning to the real world. He coordinated the NM Legislative Internship Program, which introduced UNM

undergrads to the legislative process at the practical level. This is a thankless job--finding students proper assignments at the capitol and driving up to the capitol once a week during the legislative session to meet with students. It’s not a job that too many professors would volunteer to do but Gil was passionate about it.”

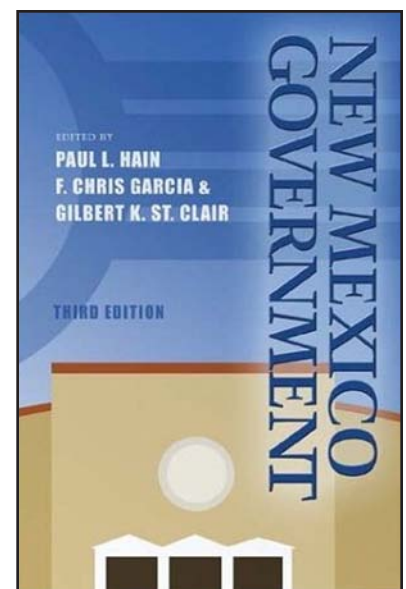
Along with Paul Hain and F Chris Garcia, Gil edited *New Mexico Government*.

[<http://www.amazon.com/New-Mexico-Government-Paul-Hain/dp/0826315089>]

Both these changes mark the end of an era for the Association. Betty and Gil have steered the Association through troubling times and helped maintain the Association as both a solvent ‘non-profit’ and a thriving intellectual community. A large part of what makes the current Association such a friendly and successful one is due to the hard work and dedication of Betty and Gil.

Their patience, their sense of humour and their approachability have all played a role in the success of WPSA during their terms of office.

Searches are underway for their successors – but as the candidates for those positions know – Betty and Gil will be tough acts to follow.



## MEET THE COUNCIL

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The Executive Council of WPSA are the committee of faculty who help manage the Association. They meet as a group both at WPSA and at APSA and help decide policies of the Association and the conference.

Council members come from across the Western region, here are a few of the members of the current Council.

### **Richard Clucas**

Home page: <http://web.pdx.edu/~hprc/>



Richard is Professor of Political Science at Portland State. Richard has long been involved in WPSA having previously been local organizer of a previous WPSA meeting in Portland. He is currently heavily involved with his Department's internship programme and researches and teaches on state and local politics.

Examples of his work are *Readings And Cases In State And Local Politics* [[http://www.amazon.com/Readings-Cases-State-Local-Politics/dp/061837132X/ref=sr\\_1\\_4?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1215802462&sr=1-4](http://www.amazon.com/Readings-Cases-State-Local-Politics/dp/061837132X/ref=sr_1_4?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1215802462&sr=1-4)] and – with Brent Steel and Mark Henkels – *Oregon Politics and Government: Progressives Versus Conservative Populists* [<http://www.powells.com/biblio/62-0803264364-2>].

### **Lisa Garcia Bedolla**



Lisa (email: [lgarciab@berkeley.edu](mailto:lgarciab@berkeley.edu)) has just moved from UCI to the School of Education at UC Berkeley (her undergraduate alma mater). She is interested in the political incorporation of Latinos and other racial/ethnic groups into the American political system. Her current projects include a historical study of group citizenship status in California during the 19th century, an evaluation of voter mobilization strategies by community-based organizations in southern California and the Central Valley, and a longitudinal study of the political socialization of immigrant youth in Orange County. Her work focuses on the intersection of race, class, and gender.

Her previous work can be seen in her book *Fluid Borders: Latino Power, Identity, and Politics in Los Angeles* [<http://www.ucpress.edu/books/pages/10209.php>]

**John Meyer**

Home page: <http://www.humboldt.edu/~jmm7001/>



John is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Government and Politics Humboldt State University in Arcata, CA.

His teaching and research interests are in political theory (both contemporary and historical) and environmental politics. His current research focuses upon the ways in which environmental concerns can become the basis for effective social criticism. This has led him in several directions, including a critical analysis of the liberal concept of property; reflection upon the possibilities -- and limitations -- of a democratic conception of sacrifice; and the tension between populist and paternalist appeals within environmental argument.

His previous work can be seen in his book *Political Nature: Environmentalism and the Interpretation of Western Thought* [<http://mitpress.mit.edu/catalog/item/default.asp?type=2&tid=8640>]

TEACHING

**Woman and Politics**

By Kimberly L. Nalder, CSU, Sacramento

So I was at a political science conference earlier this year, shooting the breeze with a male colleague, when the topic of Bill Maher’s show came up. I pointed out that though the comedian generally amuses me, he’s turned me off as of late with some tasteless sexist remarks. My friend accused me of being perhaps a bit over-sensitive. Being a clever faculty type, I turned to analogy. “If I were African-American, and I complained about a stand-up act in which the white comedian was casually and repeatedly racist, would I still seem “picky”? I asked. He half-joked, “but I’d be able to SEE the racism.” Exactly.

Political scientists who teach women and politics courses are all too familiar with this blindness. Sexism is hard to see, even, ironically enough, for our female students. This will doubtless come to the fore this year in discussions of the 2008 Democratic primary race and what Hillary Clinton did and did not accomplish. Today’s students love the internet like they love air, and they don’t seem to mind assigned readings/viewings found there. Therefore, here is a guide to some of the better online offerings that might stimulate classroom discussions around women and elections. Those of you who teach general American Government courses might also find some gems here. Women’s concerns: not just for women’s studies anymore!

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- A piece by Erica Jong on the invisibility of sexism and the need for Hillary Clinton to break the glass ceiling. Highlight: “The truth is, we want sexism to be passé. We don’t want to keep fighting it. It’s so uncool to fight it. We sound so shrill, so whining, so strident, so piercing, so shrewish, so female.” <http://www.alternet.org/election08/73626/?page=1>
- Judith Warner’s blog on the New York Times website tends to have witty and insightful posts about women and politics. One highlight from a July 17, 2008 post, “...McCain is a man blinded by ideology – in this case, by that rough-rider rugged individualism thing that he so admires and that is so inimical to real, functional gender equality.” The online commentary following her posts is lively and controversial enough to get most any undergrad worked up too – don’t skip it. <http://warner.blogs.nytimes.com/>
- OK, this one may not be related to this election cycle, but it is a memorable and thought-provoking classic. “If Men Could Menstruate” by Gloria Steinem, first published in Ms. Magazine in 1978. Highlight: “Men would brag about how long and how much.” It’s still full of zingers, even after 30 years. <http://www.haverford.edu/psych/ddavis/p109g/steinem.menstruate.html>
- NOW has a “Media Hall of Shame” with some nice examples of sexist media coverage, complete with video and other visuals. [http://www.now.org/issues/media/hall\\_of\\_shame/](http://www.now.org/issues/media/hall_of_shame/)
- Katie Couric did a quick piece decrying sexism in the coverage of Clinton. <http://youtube.com/watch?v=3N4M3TIsGMO>
- The Women’s Media Center has great clips from a June 2008 conference on gender bias in media. Highlights include clips featuring Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Patricia Williams, and Christiane Amanpour. <http://www.womensmediacenter.com/soundbites.html>

## BOOK REVIEW

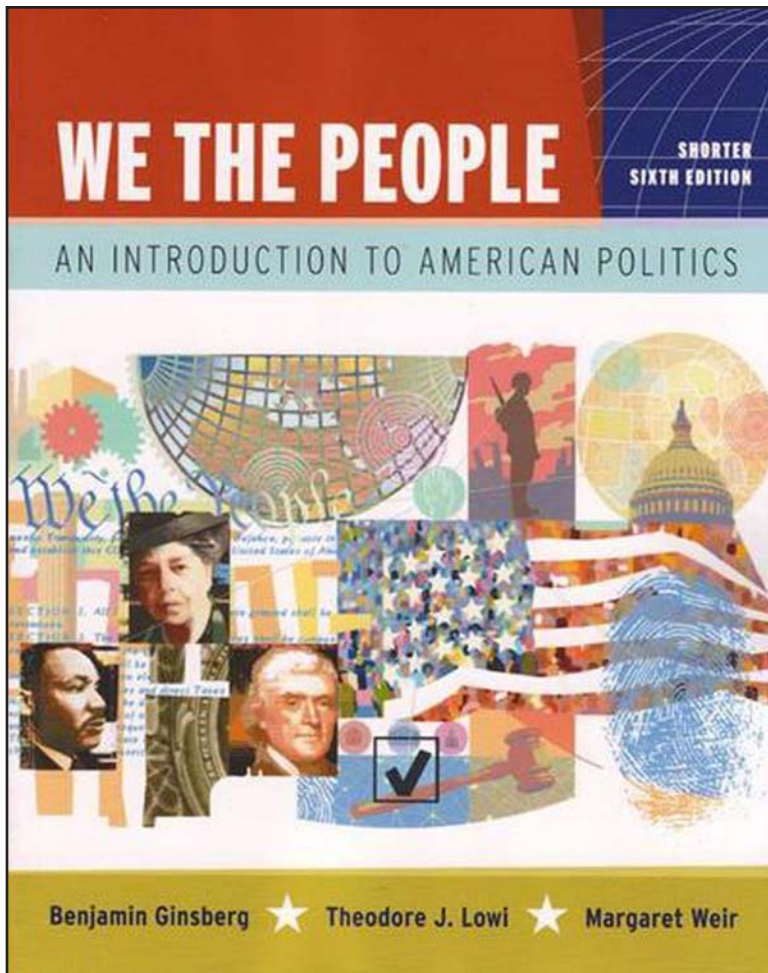
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 Chad Murphy, UC Riverside

*We the People: An Introduction to American Politics* offers the basic information for any Introduction to American Government course in an easy to understand, and engaging manner. In addition to the textbook, the authors provide a DVD full of video clips to assist the instructor in also engaging students who are more inclined to learn visually. The current edition includes recent developments such as the 2006 midterm elections and the war in Iraq, allowing students to understand that politics is not an abstract subject but that the information they learn in class applies to the real world.

Of course many books on the same subject have similar information. However, the authors have added several features that help this book stand out. One of the biggest advantages of this textbook over others is the “Get Involved” section at the end of every chapter. After learning about a major concept in American Government, the authors then give information on how students can get involved in politics. Through these sections, students are encouraged to voice their views to Congress,

campaign on campus, join an interest group, become a voter, or any number of other ways for citizen participation in government.

Additionally, every chapter ends with a link to an online simulation of one of the key concepts from the class. This allows students to interact with the textbook in a very unique way, and forces them to think about key issues critically. For example, in one simulation students are encouraged to take on the role of an activist, and are challenged to deal with issues such as what to do when the system is not producing the desired changes, what makes one social movement legitimate when compared to another, and the legitimacy of certain strategies. And to help both the instructor and student, every chapter concludes with an outline of important material and a short quiz to make sure students understand key facts from the chapter.



<http://www.wwnorton.com/college/titles/polisci/weir6/emedial.htm>

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