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P I A A K A



We were able to catch up recently with Army 1st Lieutenant Dylan Martin, of Gainesville, GA. Dylan graduated from UNG in 2018 with a Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs, with a Middle East concentration. Dylan then commissioned into the Army that same year, and is currently living in Fort Bragg, NC as a member of the 82nd Airborne Division. Dylan spent a couple of months during the summer of 2021 at a unique duty location with the U.S. Army and told us about his experience.

“On August 17th, 2021, my unit was activated and we were directed to the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, where we proceeded with the evacuation,” Dylan said. “It ended up being 130,000 American citizens, Afghan military and international refugees.”

Dylan described the feeling of that task as being an “absolutely wild experience... I was very blessed to have been able to participate in that moment in history,” said Dylan. “In that particular deployment, what struck me was the humanity of everyone involved, everyone coming together in order to achieve our goal.”

We asked Dylan if his time at UNG and in the International Affairs program had an impact on or contributed to his days in Kabul.

“The two most important things from my time in the IA program that helped me was the study abroad and international internship,” Dylan said. Dylan studied abroad in Fez, Morocco, and was immersed in the Arabic culture and language.

He also had an internship in Atlanta with the Arabic Language Institute Foundation (ALIF) where he primarily assisted with the relocation of Syrian refugees to the U.S. while simultaneously protecting their culture.

“Those two experiences placed a high value on a culture other than my own,” described Dylan. “It’s something that was incredibly instrumental in my ability to place an incredibly high value on the people that were evacuating.”

A B N G A

Army 1st Lieutenant Aaron Brock received the UNG Alumni Association's (UNGAA) award.

Ay1

M B C C



Brianna Clay is a people person, often framing her reflections of past experiences in terms of the friends she made and the people she met. Brianna graduated magna cum laude from UNG in May 2020 with a Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs. Since then, she has worked as a Teaching Assistant at Georgia Tech and then at the [Taipei Economic and Cultural Office \(TECO\)](#) in Atlanta as a Media Liaison, while simultaneously pursuing a Master of Science in International Affairs at Georgia Tech, graduating in May 2022.

Brianna came to UNG in 2018 after receiving an Associate of Arts in Political Science from East Georgia State College. During the summer of 2018, right before starting at UNG, Brianna earned a spot at the [Alexander Hamilton Institute's Washington Program on National Security](#) in Washington, D.C. The program presented her with the opportunity to make lasting friendships in the international relations community.

One of her most impactful experiences while at UNG was her internship with the [International Rescue Committee](#). Brianna worked in the education section teaching English, job skills, computer

literacy, and civics to people from all over the world. She states, “Honestly, just thinking about them often makes me emotional. Even now, I’ll think about a particular student and wonder what they’re doing now.” This internship helped Brianna have a better understanding of what she wants to do with her life. “It sounds so simple, but I just want to help people--give them something to smile about. What I like so much about International Affairs is that it gives me a perspective of so many different types of people and cultures, so I can understand how to best help others.”

Having just received her master’s degree, Brianna plans to continue working as a Media Liaison at the [Taipei Economic and Cultural Office \(TECO\)](#) in Atlanta. This foundation works to build both economic and cultural ties between Taiwan and the Southeastern region of the United States. When asked what she likes about this job, she exclaimed, “Everything!” She gets to make fun posts on their social media, as well as write speeches and letters for her coworkers. She enjoys engaging her creative side and loves the “positive and encouraging” environment.

Asked about her long-term dream job, Brianna chooses not to confine herself to one strict goal. “I’ve considered a lot, from being a security analyst to an aid worker. If possible, I’d like to do something that combines the two, though I’m not sure what that will be. So far, I’ve tended to just go with what feels right, and it’s worked so far.”

Share Your Story: Alumni Stories

Reagan Griggs Pritchett, '15
 Reagan Griggs Pritchett, UNG Political Science/ pre-Law Class of 2015, has been keeping busy since graduation. Most notably, she ran for Chief Magistrate of Gilmer County in 2020. She and four other individuals were competing for the spot. Reagan and another candidate made it to the runoff, but ultimately, Reagan lost by a small margin. She reflects on her personal difficulties and that of the nation as a whole during that time. “It was almost impossible to run for office during a global pandemic, but I utilized things like social media in order to try to reach my intended audience. Regardless of the outcome, I am proud of what I accomplished. Not many 28-year-olds can say they have run for political office, I guess.”

Congratulations

to the following graduates!

Master of Public Administration

A RECORD NUMBER!!

Stephanie Benton

Brian Darden

Tyler Dominy

Jacob Dooley

Kristen Feathers

Henry Haynes

Ashley Kessler

Tessa Kimbrough

Ambrya Myers

Derek Powers

Shiannah Scott

Amber Skidgel

Samantha Starkey

Michael Stone

Joseph Stull

Gabriella Walden

Rachael Williams

Secrett Wingard

Master of Arts in International Affairs

Dwight Wilson Wins Presidential Incentive Award

We are excited to announce that Professor Dwight Wilson has landed a coveted *Presidential Incentive Award* from UNG President Bonita Jacobs. Dr. Wilson is one of 15 UNG faculty and staff members granted this award this past spring in order to pursue new and innovative ideas in the upcoming academic year. Recipients are granted a full semester leave from teaching and service, as well as funding support of up to \$12,000 each.

Dr. Wilson states the award will support a book project collaboration on the topic of “Financialization in Latin America” he is working on with two colleagues from UNG’s Department of Sociology & Human Services. Dr. Wilson explains, “We’re examining how the growth of the size and power of finance has affected social policy and inequality in Latin American and the Caribbean. Nonfinancial industries and governments have come to rely more and more heavily on domestic and international financial markets since the 1980s, but the outcomes of such a shift are poorly understood.” This research is unique in that little literature exists on the effect of financialization in emerging markets like Latin America and the Caribbean. In his view, the award “will be immensely valuable in that it will provide funds and time for research, writing, and presentation at conferences that will allow us to finish a manuscript in the fall.”

Department Head Dr. Dlynn Armstrong-Williams offers her support by saying, “I am so excited for Dr. Wilson to receive this award. With this financial assistance, Dr. Wilson will be able to complete his book project and bring to light a very important issue in Latin American studies.”

Meet Dr. Joe Gershtenson

A hearty “Welcome” to Dr. Joe Gershtenson! He is joining us just in time for the Fall 2022 semester. He previously taught at East Carolina University, Eastern Kentucky University, and, most recently, St. Mary’s University in Texas.



Dr. Gershtenson completed his Ph.D. in Government at the University of Texas at Austin. He completed his undergraduate degree in Foreign Service at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. and his Master’s in International Affairs at the University of California, San Diego. His primary research interests are in the areas of public opinion and political behavior.

Joe will be based primarily on the Dahlenega campus where he will be teaching Introduction to Political Science and Political Science Research Methods. He will also become an integral member of our online MPA program.

At previous institutions Dr. Gershtenson taught a wide range of undergraduate courses, including: Introduction to American Government, Introduction to Political Science, Political Parties and Interest Groups, Public Opinion and Political Participation, Congress, The Presidency, and The Politics of Soccer. He also taught several graduate courses: Research Methods, Public Administration and Policy, Policy Formulation and Implementation, and Public Policy Evaluation Education.

In his time away from school, Dr. Gershtenson likes to be active outside, running, hiking, and playing soccer. He also enjoys spending time with his family and pets. You can “meet” Joe at [PS -- Meet Joe Gershtenson, Ph.D.](#)

Dr. Nicole E. Pene

GREAT DECISIONS: FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES

As has become a spring semester tradition, several PSIA faculty members participated in the 2022 Great Decisions lecture series (presented by the Foreign Policy Association) sponsored by the Forsyth County Public Library and UNG's College of Arts and Letters. This series runs alongside our "normal" series geared to UNG students (details on our [blog](#)) and is presented to provide a public forum for the discussion of current foreign policy issues facing the United States.



Dr. Jonathan Miner presented "Outer Space." He explained, "The launch of Sputnik I in October 1957 marked the beginning of the space era and of the space race between the United States and the Soviet Union. In the 21st century, there are many more participants in space, including countries such as India and China, and commercial companies such as SpaceX. How will the United States fare in a crowded outer space?"




Dr. Dlynn Armstrong-Williams presented "Industrial Policy." She explained, "The current discussion of industrial policy in the United States is not simply about whether or not to support specific companies or industries, but about trust or mistrust of the government and its ability to manage the economy and deal with a rising China. The upheaval in supply chains during the pandemic exposed weaknesses in the international economy. What policies can the United States implement to deal with trade and the economy?"



Dr. Christian Harris presented "Drug Policy in Latin America." He explained, "The issue of migration to the US from Latin America has overshadowed the war on drugs, which has been underway for decades with little signs of progress. What are the roots and the bureaucratic logic behind today's dominant drug policies in Latin America? Is it time to reconsider punitive drug control policies that disrupt supply chains and punish drug possession?"



Dr. Nathan Price presented "Biden's Agenda." He explained, "The new administration in Washington promised to reverse many of the policies of the past administration, especially in



Three of our faculty members brought their expertise to a joint panel held by PSIA and UNG's Department of History, Anthropology, and Philosophy (HAP) on Wednesday, March 2. Drs. Craig Greathouse, Jon Miner, and Raluca Viman-Miller from PSIA joined Dr. John Romero from the History, Anthropology, and Philosophy department (HAP) to discuss the on-going events in Ukraine. Organized within the first few days of the start of the conflict, PSIA/HAP members were timely in setting up the opportunity for students to learn from the expert panel in a direct Q&A fashion. The event was well-attended both in-person and virtually via Zoom.

Understanding the difficulty of processing the flood of information from media sources, panel members answered pressing questions from students and provide needed context to help attendees better understand the “why, what, and next steps” related to the crisis. Current geopolitics have been significantly influenced by the Soviet Union-era relationship between Russia and Ukraine, and the panelists brought their respective area knowledge to provide a variety of perspectives as participants discussed the contemporary and historical discourses surrounding the conflict.

Dr. Greathouse brought his expertise on security and defense policy and European politics to the panel. He offered perspectives on possible expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union, as well as what it would mean if actors involved in the conflict decided to increase their use of force.

International Student Government

We are excited to share with all of our stakeholders a new communications platform we are utilizing