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Politeia

The Department of

POLITICAL SCIENCE

CALVIN COLLEGE

Department Welcomes New Faculty



The Political Science Department welcomes two new faculty members this year: Professors Kevin den Dulk and Mikael Pelz, both of whom look to be very promising additions to both the teaching

and scholarship of the department. Prof. Pelz is from Iowa originally and previously taught at a small liberal arts college in Arkansas. Why choose to come to Calvin? “Calvin has a good reputation in terms of schools that are actively seeking to understand how faith plays into scholarship,” says Prof. Pelz. Prior to coming to Calvin, he began to realize the challenges of teaching when faith is not part of the lesson plan. As he says, “It makes for an incomplete presentation of politics, of human nature, to not think of faith.” The Reformed worldview of Calvin fits in well with Professor Pelz’s understanding that human actions are often inspired by beliefs and that failure to examine those beliefs will inevitably prevent a full understanding of why we advocate certain policies or elect certain politicians. Professor Pelz is currently teaching both American Politics and Public Administration. His research into political behavior and partisan-

ship make him an excellent source of knowledge on both of these subjects. He continues to research both the role of campaigns in partisan realignments, or, in his words, “how campaigns inspire people to take another look at the other side,” and also public policy, specifically education policy such as No Child Left Behind. When not busy teaching classes and pursuing research topics, Professor Pelz is at home with his wife and two dogs. He enjoys sampling new foods with his wife and is always game for interesting films. He also enjoys winter sports and looks forward to the potential for “lots of snow,” a wish that Grand Rapids’ winter will be sure to grant.

Prof. den Dulk is happy to be back at Calvin after graduating with a major in Philosophy in 1992. He remembers his first course at Calvin was with Prof. Corwin Schmidt of the Political Science Department. Prof. den Dulk is in a unique position to analyze the changes that have happened at Calvin since he was a student here. He notes the new buildings, such as the DeVos Communication Center, but more importantly the increased diversity of backgrounds of students and faculty. Calvin has made strides towards becoming “truly international” and that has had quite an effect on all aspects of campus life. Besides noting the changes to Calvin, Prof. den Dulk says that, after spending the last twenty years at secular institutions, “it’s been refreshing to talk about Christianity in

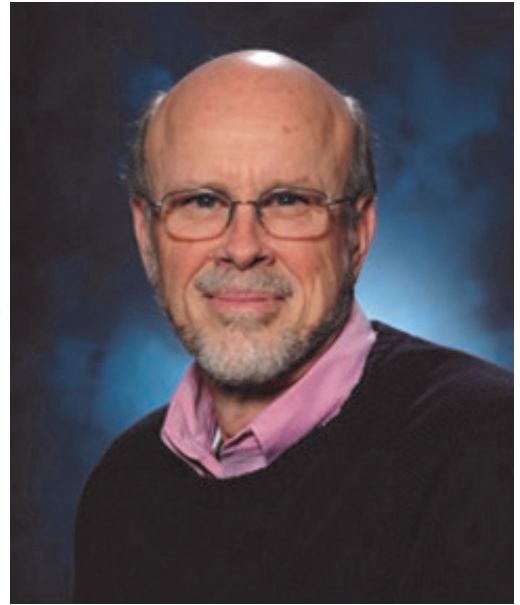
the classroom in full view.” He is currently filling the “Spoelhof Teacher-Scholar-in-Residence Chair” a position named after a much-loved former president of Calvin. Meant to bring in people in mid-career to

teach, but also to add to the mix of scholars, Prof. den Dulk says the position has given him a “good opportunity to get out of his usual environment.” Prof. den Dulk is teaching Persons in Political Community as well as Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective, a good fit because of his extensive research in that area. He has researched the roll that religion plays as a social network, and how that affects politics and civic engagement. This June, with the sponsorship of the Henry Institute and the Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity, he spent a few weeks in China, looking at how people use law to advance policy goals. When not teaching, he spends time with his wife and four children, loves getting back to his farm roots with a bit of gardening, and also enjoys traveling and fly-fishing. The Political Science Department welcomes its new faculty members and looks forward to the exciting contributions they are sure to make.



Prof. Stevenson Retires After 22 Years

The Political Science Department is facing a big change: after 22 years at Calvin, Prof. William Stevenson has left Calvin to pursue new opportunities. In January of 1989, though, there were few indications that Prof. Stevenson would become such an integral part of the department or that Calvin College would ever become such an integral part of Prof. Stevenson and his wife Rosemary's lives. It was, after all, in the distant and "arctic North" and they were very happy with the balmy North Carolina weather where they lived. Sometimes though, change is good, and God had an unexpected path for them. "Out of the blue, I got a flyer with the Political Science Department's job posting, and except for knowing nothing about Calvin, the job and the school looked like just the kind of situation I was seeking," says Prof. Stevenson. After an interview and a day's visit, accepting the job offer and following the "at-home" feeling he had experienced at Calvin made perfect sense. And for the next 22 years, Grand Rapids and Calvin College have been home for Prof. Stevenson. Why? As Prof. Stevenson explains, "Good humored and supportive colleagues, bright and dedicated students, an academic institution clearly serious about being authentically Christian, and a Grand Rapids community providing just the right atmosphere for raising children." Grand Rapids, snow and all, was a perfect fit for Prof. Stevenson and his family, so the loss of mild weather has been "well worth the trade off."



Prof. Stevenson has served as Department Chair several times, and has inspired countless students in the classroom, teaching classes ranging from the basics of Political Science 101 to the intriguing topic of the Ethics of Spying. However, after 22 years and the birth of their first grandchild, the Stevensons have decided that a change of pace is in order. In an unexpected move from "teacher/scholar to business owner" Prof. Stevenson now owns and manages two apartment houses and a self-storage business in downtown Grand Rapids. Like the impulse to come work at Calvin, this opportunity too arose "out of the blue" but "seemed like just the right transition." Boredom, needless to say, is not on the horizon, nor is a split from all things Calvin. "Both our children are graduates, I continue to read the Calvin-News, and we are faithful members of Calvin CRC," says Prof. Stevenson. Thank you, Professor Stevenson, for changing so many lives here, and we wish you all the best as your life continues to change.

Calvin Celebrates Constitution Day



As any Political Science professor or major could tell you, this is not a field of study designed to be restricted to the classroom. Thus, Calvin's celebration of Constitution Day

provided a valuable opportunity to incorporate theory into real world debate.

Since 2005, all educational institutions that receive federal funds have been required to present educational programs on or around September 17 to honor the anniversary of the signing of the Constitution.

This year Calvin chose to do so by setting up debates about current constitutional issues. Doing so both celebrates the anniversary and reminds students that the Constitution is not a memorial to the past, rather it remains relevant to our daily lives, whether or not we realize it.

The first day's debate was entitled "Should the Constitution Be Amended to Require a Balanced Budget" and featured Professor Koopman arguing in favor of a balanced budget amendment against senior Josh Keilman. The second day's debate was entitled "U.S. Involvement in Libya in Light of the War Powers Act."

Day Two started off with an overview of the history of the War Powers Resolution given by junior Tanner Remy. Junior Josh Potter then argued that the War Powers

Resolution itself was unconstitutional, but that President Obama's Libya policy was compliant with it. Senior James Randall took the opposite stance,

warning of the danger of "unchecking and unbalancing" and claiming that the War Powers Resolution was constitutional, but that President Obama's policy in Libya was



not compliant with it. The student debaters then took questions from the audience, and the debate ended up going over time.

At Calvin's Constitution Day, students and faculty who participated in and attended the debates celebrated both the memory of the historic signing of the Constitution and the continuing value of debate and democracy in our modern society.



Amanda Stek

Amanda Stek graduated from Calvin College in 2008 with a major in Political Science and minors in International Relations and English. After graduation, she worked as a Research Associate at Calvin College's Center for Social Research. At the Center, she solidified the skills, such as quantitative and qualitative analysis, which her Political Science major had taught her. In 2009, Stek moved to Indonesia with her husband. She worked for two years as a consultant for several organizations including World Vision and The Asia Foundation. In her work with the Asia Foundation, Stek assisted in researching and drafting policy briefs for the Indonesian government about the state of women's representation, security, and participation in Indonesia. Stek has recently moved back to the United States and is at-

tending Johns Hopkins University's School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington, DC. She is pursuing her MA in International Relations with concentrations in International Economics and Southeast Asian Studies. "I am very grateful for the level of academic rigor that Calvin College professors demand," says Stek. "Calvin prepared me well for my various jobs both in the United States and abroad and for graduate school at Johns Hopkins." Her education continues to assist her in her daily life: "I often use SPSS skills learned in Research Methods, knowledge of Dahl, Huntington, Mill, and others in international



affairs conversations, and writing and analysis skills in both work and academia." After completing her graduate degree, Stek hopes to pursue work in international development.

Becky Bouman-Buursma



After graduating from Calvin in 2010 with a major in International Relations and a minor in International Development, it seemed likely that world travel would be in Becky Bouman-Buursma's future. And indeed, she has used her education in all things international exceedingly well. Currently, Bouman-Buursma lives in Jakarta, Indonesia with her husband, working as a part-time intern with World Vision and teaching clas-

ses on Service Learning at the Universitas Pelita Harapan. At World Vision she has worked with the education team and is currently working with the Programs staff, helping to write reports. Bouman-Buursma teaches her University classes in English, although classes there are taught in both English and Bahasa Indonesia, the language widely spoken on the island of Java, where she lives. She has thoroughly enjoyed gaining insight about Indonesia from her students' perspectives and experiences. Bouman-Buursma believes Calvin "equipped her for the professional world with tools to think about the issues involved in International Relations and Development." She has enjoyed putting theory into practice in her daily life, saying, "It's been fascinating to go from in-depth class discussion to working world application." As for the future, Bouman-Buursma is currently applying to grad schools with the intention of getting a master's in either International Relations or Human Rights. She plans to return to the States for grad school, although she remains uncertain exactly when that return will take place.

Prof. Koopman: Faculty Fellow for the Enrollment Division

Prof. Douglas Koopman has been dividing his time between the Political Science Department and the Enrollment Division, due to his recent appointment as Faculty Fellow within that division. What does this mean exactly? Prof. Koopman is happy to explain: his role is to "help Enrollment do its job and offer a faculty perspective in places where it might be missed." Simply put, this position provides an important point of contact between faculty and the Enrollment Division, allowing both to become more aware of the needs and goals of the other. As Prof. Koopman points out, faculty members are busy people but nearly all of them are willing to

help with student recruitment. All that is needed is some guidance over where and how to be most effective in attracting students to Calvin. In this, the second year of the position's existence, Prof. Koopman has a concrete goal in mind. Every department must answer the simple, yet critical question: why would a prospective student major in your department here at Calvin rather than doing so elsewhere? By finding the answers to this question, Prof. Koopman hopes to allow faculty and the Enrollment Division to work together more effectively to present the college to prospective students and their families and, of course, to get more students to Calvin.



THE PAUL HENRY INSTITUTE



October 24, 2011: Dr. Kevin den Dulk presented "The Politics of Polarization: Implications for Democratic Theory and Practice" as the first lecture in the Henry Institute's series on *Current Trends in American Politics and Public Life*. Dr. den Dulk is the William Spoelhof Teacher-Scholar-in-Residence Chair at Calvin College where he is also a member of the Political Science Department. He is an Honors Faculty-in-Residence of the Frederik Meijer Honors College at Grand Valley State University, where he is an Associate Professor with the Department of Political Science.

October 26, 2011: "Who's Sanctioning Whom? The Continuing Evolution of the Federal Faith-Based Initiative" was the topic of the second lecture in the Henry Institute's series on *Current Trends in American Politics and Public Life*, given by Dr. Douglas Koopman. Dr. Koopman is a professor in Calvin College's Political Science Department, and served as the William Spoelhof Teacher-Scholar-in-Residence at Calvin from 2007-2008. He has previously worked as Director of the Leadership Program and Professor of Political Science at Hope College, the Interim Director of the Calvin Center for Social Research, and the Program Director of the Henry Institute. Prior to his academic appointments, Dr. Koopman worked in various staff positions on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.



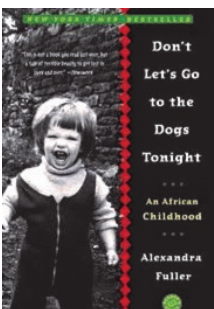
November 3, 2011: "Black Clergy Activists and Post-Movement Platforms" was the third lecture in the Henry Institute's series on *Current Trends in American Politics and Public Life* which was presented by Dr. R. Drew Smith. Dr. Smith is the James Weldon Johnson Visiting Scholar at Emory University, and is a Research Fellow for the Department of Philosophy and Systematic Theology at the University of South Africa. He is also the Director of Religion and Public Life Projects at the Leadership Center at Morehouse College.

November 9, 2011: Dr. Darren Walhof presented the final lecture in the *Current Trends in American Politics and Public Life* series, speaking on "Democratic Legitimacy, Religious Reasons, and the Debate over Marriage." Dr. Walhof is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at Grand Valley State University. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Minnesota, and his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Calvin College. Recently he served as a Visiting Research Professor at the Centre for Ethics at the University of Toronto.



October 31, 2011: Robert A. Evans, Executive Director of the Plowshares Institute presented "The Role of Youth in Emerging Democracies: Egypt, Korea, China and Papua." Dr. Evans is a theologian and ethicist who has been nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize due to his work in South Africa and Indonesia. The lecture was co-sponsored by the Henry Institute and the Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity.

Department Picks



Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight: An African Childhood by Alexandra Fuller

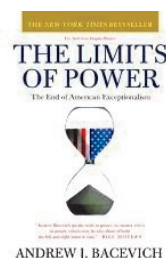
This memoir describes Fuller's experiences growing up in southern Africa (Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi) during the 1970s and 1980s. As white settlers, Alexandra's parents exhibit various attitudes (from respect to racism) about the new democratic governments in southern Africa and the independence struggle in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Despite their "privileged position" as whites, the family suffers hardship, loss, and disillusionment. The book provides powerful insights into colonial attitudes, many of which remain in southern Africa today. (As an aside, I bought the book in South Africa while on my Fulbright last spring. I was amazed at the ways that it resonated with many of my observations in Zambia.) But the book provides more than just insights into the expatriate experience. It is also a coming of age story, and the story of complicated family dynamics.

Dr. Amy Patterson

The Limits of Power by Andrew J. Bacevich

Andrew Bacevich provides an excellently written and non-partisan explanation of the three interrelated crises America currently faces: the crisis of profligacy, the political crisis, and the military crisis. He makes a brilliant and compelling case that America has gotten terribly lost in its quest for unlimited freedom. He then offers solutions based in part on his pragmatism as a former military officer and in part on the realism of Reinhold Niebuhr. Whether or not you agree with Bacevich, this is a valuable read.

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