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How I Spent My Summer Vacation

Posted [June 6, 2012](#) at 2:59 pm by [Dr. Judithanne Scourfield-McLauchlan](#)



"Road to the White House" Students with Dr. Scourfield-McLauchlan and Dean Heller

Faculty are “9-month” employees, and so they have no officially assigned duties (or paychecks) during the summer months. Some mistakenly assume this means that faculty take their summers “off.”

This could not be farther from the truth. I am as busy now (if not more so) than I am during the Fall and Spring semesters.

I thought I would take the opportunity in this first post to give you an idea of a few of the projects I am working on this summer, hence the blog post title “How I Spent My Summer Vacation.”

Fulbright Grant

I was awarded a returning Fulbright grant, and will be heading back to **Moldova** in July and August. I will be working on a research project about the impact of decisions of the European Court of Human Rights on legal and constitutional reform in Moldova.

I will also be making preparations for my Spring 2013 Alternative Spring Break Study Abroad Course. (I will be bringing students to Moldova in March 2013 for a comparative politics course on the history, government, and politics of Moldova.)

I am bringing my 7-year-old daughter with me, and I am working with her on her Kids Care project (for her 2nd grade Gifted Class). She is working on 2 **community service projects** in Moldova (one with Casa Gavroche in Chisinau and the other with a Peace Corps Volunteer in Telenesti). I will be updating my Moldova blog with more about our summer adventures.

Teaching Summer A, POS 2041 American National Government

I love this course. We cover all aspects of American government — campaigns & elections, the Supreme Court, civil rights and civil liberties, the Presidency, Congress. . . . The USFSP Political Science Department offers one (or more) semester-long courses about each of the topics in American Government. In the course of my 6-week Summer A session, we will cover it all!

Developing POS 2041 American National Government as an online course

While teaching American Government this summer, I am developing it as an online course for the Fall 2012 semester (and beyond). The truth is, I have resisted online teaching. I enjoy the interaction with my students in the classroom. I incorporate civic engagement opportunities and experiential learning opportunities in every course that I teach.

And I have worried about how to maintain this high level of engagement in an online course. The university put forward resources to help faculty to design high quality online courses, so I decided to apply for a course development grant. In April I participated in a 4-part course organized by the instructional design department at Poynter Library.

I am working with wonderful staff who are going to make sure that my online course is as engaging and rewarding as the courses that I teach face-to-face. I also have designed a Civics Project that I believe can be integrated into the online course, so that we don't lose the civic education aspect of this course that I so highly prized.

Read an article I drafted — “Learning Citizenship by Doing: Evaluating the Effects of a Required Political Campaign Internship in American Government” — about the impact of the campaign internship in my previous face-to-face American Government courses.

Now I will be studying civic engagement in the online classroom...

Bishop Center for Ethical Leadership and Civic Engagement (during Summer A)

I am the Founding Director of the USFSP Center for Civic Engagement (now the Bishop Center for Ethical Leadership and Civic Engagement) and have worked to expand the Citizen Scholar Program and to increase civic engagement across the curriculum. Our Citizen Scholar courses are those that get students out of the classroom and into the community, working on service projects that are supervised by faculty and closely related to the learning outcomes in the course. On our Bishop Center website you can find our Citizen Scholar Course Catalog to learn more about the wide array of Citizen Scholar courses that are offered at USFSP. I believe that this citizen scholar program — and the extent to which civic engagement is embedded into the curriculum here — truly sets us apart from other institutions.

Fellow of the Florida Joint Center for Citizenship

I have been selected to serve as a Fellow of the Florida Joint Center for Citizenship.

The Florida Joint Center for Citizenship is a joint effort among the Lou Frey Institute at the University of Central Florida, the Bob Graham Center at the University of Florida, and the University of South Florida. I participated in a 3-day workshop at the Lou Frey Institute in May to learn more about the Sandra Day O’Connor Civics Education Act and its implementation in Florida. I will be conducting teacher trainings (as the Content Expert) with new teachers of civics around the state. I am absolutely delighted to be a part of this vital effort to improve civics education in Florida.

Editing a book of materials from the Road to the White House class

Learn more about my *Road to the White House 2012* course. All students interned on a presidential primary campaign (and several have since been hired by their campaigns). All students blogged about their experiences.

Women’s rights in the Middle East

Finishing another project from the Spring 2012 semester: Preparing students’ papers about women’s rights in the Middle East to be published on the Women Lawyers Group of the Middle East website. (Each student in the class was paired with a mentor, a practicing attorney in one of 6 countries in the Middle East, and each student presented his/her research paper to the seminar. We skyped several times with our colleagues in Abu Dhabi during the course of the semester.) I will be updating the course blog as well.

Editor of *Political Scientist*

I am Editor of the *Political Scientist* (a publication of the Florida Political Science Association), and I am working on new template for the publication. I will be sending out a call for submissions for the Fall edition.

Supervising students' independent research projects

Summer A and Summer C sessions..

Blogging for USFSP!

Stay tuned to learn more about the above projects, and more.

About the blogger



Dr. Scourfield McLauchlan is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, where she teaches courses in American Government and Public Law. Her latest book, *Congressional Participation as Amicus Curiae before the U.S. Supreme Court*, explores how Members of Congress attempt to influence Supreme Court decision-making in specific cases. In addition to her scholarly activities, Professor McLauchlan has extensive experience in American government and politics. McLauchlan worked at the US Supreme Court, the US Senate Judiciary Committee, the US Department of Justice, and the White House. A veteran of several presidential campaigns, she has managed statewide operations across the US, from Portland, Maine to Portland, Oregon. During the 2010-11 academic year Dr. McLauchlan was a Fulbright Scholar in Moldova.