

**2017**  
**Department of Political Science Theses Presentations**  
**Thursday, May 4, 2017**  
**3:00pm**  
**Joukowsky Forum, Watson Institute**

**HAYLEY L. FLUG: *The Journey to Judgeship: Understanding Women's Paths to the Judiciary***

Since the 1970's, women's representation in the legal field has made significant strides. Women comprised a mere 8.6% of law school enrollments in 1970, and by 2000, women almost reached gender parity at 47% of enrollments. Yet, despite their gains in law school enrollments and private practice, women continue to only hold 27% of federal and state judgeships. Given these statistics, this thesis asks: why do women remain underrepresented in the judiciary? This thesis seeks to understand the paths to judgeship for women at the state level, and particularly, the types of barriers that inhibit gender parity on the bench. This thesis conducts a single case-study of New York State, and asks specifically, what are the variables affecting women's representation on the bench regionally in New York State? This study puts forth two hypotheses: 1) that political parties' implicit gender bias and significant influence over judicial selection processes negatively affect female judicial candidates; 2) that women's perceptions of self and of gender bias influence their paths to the judiciary. This thesis aims to answer these questions through its analysis of secondary literature, and its original data collection on historical archives of three former judges from the early to mid-1900's, and interviews with eleven New York State judges. This research's findings suggest that the political parties' implicit gender bias and power over judicial selection processes serve as exclusionary barriers to entry for women seeking judgeship. This study also found that female judges continue to face a "double bind," pressuring them to choose between motherhood and their profession. This study also found that women tend to avoid discussing gender bias in direct terms, and rather discuss gender discrimination through the lens of structural and institutional processes. The findings of this study have important implications for female representation on the bench, and the ways in which women's perceptions and political gatekeepers bear on the availability of judicial seats for women.

*Advisor: Susan Moffitt, Political Science and Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs*

*Reader: Sharon Krause, Political Science*

**CALEB E. HERSH: *Platforms for Justice: Nonpartisan Elections and Party Loyalty on the North Carolina Supreme Court, 1995-2013***

Differences in judicial selection methods within American states may contribute to differing patterns in state judges' decision-making. Of particular interest during a time of polarizing politics is whether partisan—as opposed to nonpartisan—judicial elections, correlate with more partisan decision-making. This thesis tested a novel method of measuring judicial partisanship that coded votes relevant to positions in judges' respective state party platforms as platform-consistent or inconsistent. I expanded on an existing natural experiment that probed partisanship on the North Carolina Supreme Court, testing 286 platform-relevant votes within 184 cases from 1995-2013 for differences in platform-consistency before and after the state's 2004 switch from partisan to nonpartisan elections. Results indicated no differences in platform-consistent voting between the partisan and nonpartisan eras, and relatively high correlation between yearly mean levels of platform-consistency and an existing judicial partisanship metric based on generalized axes of liberal-conservative ideological cleavage. Changing political cultures may have been more influential in determining the partisan behavior of the North Carolina Supreme Court than changes in judicial selection method. However, additional research is needed to explore the effects of selection method on judicial partisanship in more jurisdictions, and to further test the validity of platform-consistency as a metric of partisanship.

*Advisor: Richard Arenberg, Political Science*

*Reader: Wendy Schiller, Political Science and Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs*

**JEFFREY P. SALVADORE: *Cold Tea: Federal Transportation Policymaking from 1991 to 2015***

Since 1956, American federal surface transportation policy has favored highways and cars over all other modes. This road prevalence was challenged in 1991 with the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, which encouraged states and metropolitan areas to invest in alternative modes of transportation. Rather than be the start of a continued shift towards sustainable transportation policy, additional intermodal reform has stalled at the federal level. This thesis seeks to understand why change was possible in 1991 but has not occurred since. Using process tracing, the thesis examines major surface transportation bills passed in 1991, 1998, 2005, and 2015 to understand the potential for a policy entrepreneur to create change during each year's policymaking environment. The conditions studied include the structural factors of Congress, the agendas of key political actors, and the strength of interests groups pushing for policy change. The thesis concludes that reform was possible in 1991 due to the presence of a strong policy entrepreneur and all other factors being facilitative of reform. These conditions have not been repeated since, underscoring the challenges for future sustainable transportation policy change.

*Advisor: Wendy Schiller, Political Science and Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs*

*Reader: Roger Cobb, Political Science Emeritus*

**CHRISTINA M. WARNER: *Why Would States Not Invest in Food? Agriculture Investments under the 2003 Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security***

The 2003 Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security signifies renewed interest towards investing in agriculture. This commitment requires signatory states to invest at least 10% of their national budget in public agriculture expenditures (PAE). African Heads of States vary in the extent to which they comply to this regional development policy. What factors drive compliance to the 2003 Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security? I posit that compliance requires political will, which rests on the efforts of stakeholders at the local grassroots, national civil society and elite international level. In the context of the Maputo Declaration, these stakeholders are chiefs, farm unions and activist NGOs, respectively. Stakeholders compound one another, fostering synergies for compliance to the Maputo Declaration. I conduct a contrasting country case study comparison through historical process tracing. The country case studies include Ghana (high case), Tanzania (medium case) and Kenya (low case) as three examples of variation in compliance to the 10% fiscal target. The Maputo Declaration offers an exploration on the prevalent and puzzling gap between opportunity and implementation. Moreover, this thesis demonstrates how stakeholders influence national development policy and impact the lives of citizens.

*Advisor: Mark Blyth, Political Science and Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs*

*Reader: Michelle Jurkovich, Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs*