

SPOTLIGHTS

Tezcür Becomes First Chair

Kurdish Political Studies at the University of Central Florida (UCF) has a new leader—Güneş Murat Tezcür, the inaugural holder of the Jalal Talabany Kurdish Political Studies Endowed Chair.

The chair is the first of its kind in the United States. It was initiated by a donation led by Najmaldin Karim, a neurosurgeon, who currently serves as Governor of Kirkuk Governorate, Kurdistan Regional Government, Iraq. Karim is also the president of the Washington Kurdish Institute, a nonprofit center dedicated to research and education for Kurdish people worldwide.

Tezcür studies political violence, identity, and movements. His articles have appeared or are forthcoming in various scholarly journals, such as the *American Political Science Review*, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, *International Studies Perspectives*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Law and Society Review*, *Nationalities Papers*, *Party Politics*, *Politics & Gender*, and *Political Research Quarterly*. He is also the author of

Muslim Reformers in Iran and Turkey: The Paradox of Moderation (University of Texas Press, 2010). Tezcür's research has been supported by grants from the National Science Foundation, the United States Institute of Peace and the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation. In addition to English, he conducts his research in Kurdish, Persian, and Turkish. He also serves on the editorial board of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*.

In contemplating the role of the Chair, Tezcür said, "I am honored to have been appointed. Kurdish aspirations for greater rights and power have the potential to remake the Middle East—with global implications. I am very much



looking forward to this unique opportunity to advance public interest in and scholarly studies of Kurdish politics in the United States and beyond."

The chair is designed to help UCF expand its offerings related to Kurdish issues. Specifically, the mission of the chair includes teaching, research, and scholarly pursuits centering on Kurdish political studies, and further developing recognized excellence in that field. It will also facilitate fellowships, distinguished visitors, public forums, courses, workshops and other offerings that objectively present and discuss policies and conditions affecting the security, peace and democratic governance of the Kurdish people, including episodes of mass violence such as the Anfal genocide.

Kerstin Hamann, who heads the political science department and cochairs the affiliated Kurdish political studies program, said, "We are very excited to house the Jalal Talabany Kurdish Political Studies Endowed Chair. The chair establishes the department as a national and international center for the analysis of Kurdish politics. The chair also makes a significant contribution to our PhD program in security studies, given the substantial role Kurdish issues have in Middle Eastern and international politics. We are pleased, as well, to welcome Tezcür, an outstanding scholar of Kurdish political issues who has published widely in the top political science journals."

"The chair—the first in the College of Sciences—is a welcome addition," said dean Michael Johnson. He added, "It complements the growing international focus of the department of political science, the college, and the university, and will encourage the scholarly examination of a crucially significant subject that has received insufficient attention." ■

Richardson New Vice Chancellor

Louise Richardson has become the first woman to hold the post of vice chancellor of Oxford University, the oldest university in the English-speaking world. Richardson will assume her new post in January. As vice chancellor and the senior officer for Oxford, she will provide strategic direction and leadership to the collegiate university, and will position and represent Oxford internationally, nationally, and regionally.



Richardson held academic positions at Harvard for many years and received several honors for the quality of her teaching, including the Joseph R. Levenson Memorial Teaching Prize, bestowed by Harvard's undergraduates in recognition of exceptional teaching. Since 2009, she has been principal at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, where her leadership was marked by a strong focus on academic mission, student experience, and development of the university's infrastructure, Oxford University officials noted.

Born in the Republic of Ireland, Richardson holds a BA in history from Trinity College, Dublin; an MA in political science from University of California, Los Angeles, and an MA and PhD in government from Harvard University. She grew up in Tramore, County Waterford, Ireland and came to UCLA after undergraduate work at Trinity College.

"Trinity had a program that funded two students, one in the arts and one in the sciences, to go to the University of California for a year," she says. "At UCLA, I studied international relations, as I was trying to get as far away from Irish nationalism as I could. I got a strong disciplinary and theoretical foundation, which was invaluable." ►

At UCLA, she studied with Stephen Krasner, now at Stanford University, and Robert Jervis, now at Columbia. “They were to become two of the most influential academics in the field,” Richardson says.

Jervis remembers Richardson as “a particularly winning person, open, warm—and someone who brought out the best in her classmates.”

Richardson also studied comparative politics with UCLA political science professor Ronald Rogowski, who remembers her as “an excellent student, unafraid to raise questions or to state her own views.”

At UCLA, she decided to study international relations here after her experience at Trinity, where she got her first inkling that some people thought differently about “the troubles” in Ireland than did the people she grew up with in County Waterford. Widely recognized as an expert on terrorism, she is the author of *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat* (2006).

Her upbringing greatly informed her future studies. As she recalled in a 2007 interview at University of California, Berkeley, she began to view the popular image of terrorists as “oversimplified” and became fascinated with what motivates terrorists and terrorism.

“It’s what’s driven my professional life, trying to understand how groups can persuade people—who, in other parts of their life, are upstanding teachers, students, mothers, fathers, daughters—to commit atrocities for a group that has no chance of success,” Richardson said in the *WSJ Magazine* interview.

The original story appears in UCLA Magazine’s fall 2015 issue. ■

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SUNY New Paltz Research Center Named after Benjamin

SUNY New Paltz President Donald P. Christian is pleased to announce the renaming of the Center for Research, Regional Engagement and Outreach (CRREO) to The Benjamin Center for Public Policy Initiatives at SUNY New Paltz, in honor of Gerald Benjamin, current director and associate vice president for regional engagement at the College.

“Dr. Gerald Benjamin is the foremost scholar and expert on local and state government in New York and is held in high esteem by his faculty and administrative colleagues, state and local government officials, other scholars, and thousands of students who have taken his courses. He has contributed greatly to the campus community, the region and the state during his nearly 50-year career at SUNY New Paltz,” said Christian. “In recognition of his numerous accomplishments and in anticipation of the work that lies ahead for the Center, we are proud to rename CRREO in his honor.”



Gerald Benjamin, photo courtesy of SUNY New Paltz

Originally founded in 2007 by Benjamin and then-President Steven Poskanzer, CRREO has conducted and published impactful applied research, and assisted with the use of research findings to foster discussion of important issues and create well-informed paths to improve government and governance for counties, cities, towns, villages, school districts, and other organizations throughout the region. The Benjamin Center will continue to work with and for these and other entities, in such areas as charter revision, community benchmarking, community convening, data collection and analysis, education policy, economic impact studies, mapping and GIS, research, evaluation and survey design, property tax studies, redistricting, and shared services and efficiency studies.

“It is an extraordinary honor for me to be recognized in this way at the college that I love, and have had the great good fortune to serve for almost 50 years,” Benjamin said. “I look forward to continuing to contribute, with my colleagues at the Center, to creating and sustaining excellence at New Paltz for our students, our region, and the State of New York.”

Benjamin, who joined the New Paltz faculty as an assistant professor of political science in 1968, achieved the University’s highest rank in 2002 when he was appointed distinguished professor by the SUNY Board of Trustees. During his tenure, he has served as chair of the department of political science, presiding officer of the faculty and dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (1996–2008).

Gerald Benjamin has taught a great range of American government courses while on the New Paltz faculty. His current offerings include courses on local government and state government. Formerly director of the Center for the New York State and Local Government Studies at SUNY’s Rockefeller Institute of Government in Albany (1993–1995), Benjamin served as Research Director of the Temporary State Commission on Constitutional Revision appointed by Governor Mario Cuomo. Earlier, he was Principal Research Advisor to a New York City Charter Revision Commission that achieved the most extensive structural changes in that city’s government in recent history. From 2004 to 2006, by unanimous bipartisan action of the Ulster County Legislature, Benjamin was appointed to chair the Ulster County Charter Commission. The work of this commission resulted in approval at the polls of the county’s first charter. In 2007, Benjamin was appointed by then governor Eliot Spitzer to the State Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness that in 2008 proposed wide-reaching reforms in local government in New York State.

From 1981 to 1993 Benjamin served as an elected member of the Ulster County Legislature. He served in legislative leadership as both Majority Leader (1985–1991) and Chairman (1991–1993). During this time, Ulster County had no elected executive; the legislative chairman was therefore the County’s Chief Elected Officer. ■

Hartley Appointed Dean

Roger Hartley is the third dean of the University of Baltimore's College of Public Affairs. He comes to UB from Western Carolina University in North Carolina.

Beginning in 2010, Hartley served as the primary administrator and policy leader for the MPA in the department of political science and public affairs at Western Carolina. While there, he managed student recruitment and aided in curriculum scheduling, the cultivation of alumni support, program marketing, accreditation, and more. He also taught in the master's program and on the undergraduate side.



In 2012, Hartley received the graduate school's "Graddy" award for best program director. He led the program to its first-ever seven-year accreditation by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration, which included a 2014 letter of commendation as part of the agency's site visitation. He led efforts that increased the size of the program's student body, their grades and test scores, and also strengthened its fundraising capacity.

An MPA Advisory Board, consisting of alumni and external constituents, was established by Hartley during his tenure.

Prior to that, Hartley served as interim director of the School of Public Administration and Policy and associate dean of the Eller College of Management at the University of Arizona from 2008 to 2009. He also codirected the Law, Criminal Justice, and Security Program, an interdisciplinary program between Arizona's Rogers College of Law and the School of Public Administration and Policy; directed that institution's Rombach Institute in the School of Government and Public Policy from 2009 to 2010; and served as a professor in various positions at the University of Arizona beginning in 2003.

Hartley's teaching and research positions prior to Western Carolina University and the University of Arizona include an assistant professorship at Roanoke College's department of public affairs, adjunct professor in the CUNY-John Jay College of Criminal Justice, adjunct professor in the CUNY-Baruch College department of political science, and a number of others.

Hartley earned a doctorate in political science from the University of Georgia at Athens in 1999, an MA in political science at the same institution in 1993, and a BS in public affairs from Indiana University in 1991.

Among his many awards and accolades, Hartley received the 2014 "First Year Advocate" award from Western Carolina University, in recognition of his faculty work toward the success of new students.

Hartley has published dozens of articles, reports, conference papers, and review articles throughout his career on law and court systems, including the 2002 book *Alternative Dispute Resolution in Civil Justice Systems*. He recently finished a three-year term as a member of the Executive Council of the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration. ■

Jeremy Bailey, Ross M. Lence Distinguished Teaching Chair and associate professor of political science, University of Houston, gave a Constitution Day presentation "What Makes the Constitution the Authority" at Louisiana Tech University, October 2015.

Patrick T. Brandt, professor of political science, principle investigator; **Jennifer Holmes**, professor and program head of political science, public policy and political economy; and **Vito D'Orazio**, assistant professor of political science, University of Texas, Dallas received an interdisciplinary grant from the National Science Foundation to create a research tool that uses big data to provide updated information on civil protests and unrest, and international conflicts.

Aaron Herold, visiting assistant professor of political science, gave the free public talk "Religion in Constitutional Law and the Public Square" at College of the Holy Cross in September 2015.

Colleen Sheehan, professor of political science and director of The Matthew J. Ryan Center at Villanova University; **Greg Weiner**, assistant professor of political science at Assumption College; and **Jeremy Bailey**, associate professor of political science at the University of Houston—all scholars of James Madison—participated in a panel "Madison Scholars for Constitution Day" organized by College of the Holy Cross and Assumption College, in September, 2015.

Richard L. Hasen, professor, law and political science, University of California, Irvine, presented a public address on campaign finance and election law issues at a Chico State University event celebrating Constitution Day, September 2015.

Jennifer Holmes, professor and program head of political science, public policy and political economy, University of Texas, Dallas, is co-principle investigator of a study funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation to study Colombia's response to five decades of attacks on its electrical grids, pipelines, power transmission lines, bridges, and other infrastructure due to conflict.

Scott Huffman, professor of political science, Winthrop University, participated in panel of experts at University of

PS Update

PROMOTIONS

David Fleming, associate professor of political science, Furman University

Barbara Patrick, associate professor with tenure, political science, Eastern Michigan University

Melynda J. Price, Robert E. Harding, Jr. Professor of Law, College of Law, University of Kentucky

Nitya Singh, associate professor with tenure, political science, Eastern Michigan University

Greg Vonnahme, associate professor with tenure, department of political science, University of Missouri, Kansas City

ACTIVITIES

Alan Abramowitz, Alben W. Barkley Professor of Political Science, Emory University, participated in an interdisciplinary panel evaluating Pope Francis's speech to Congress in September 2015.