

## Spring 2024 Newsletter

Dear alumni and friends,

Happy belated spring from the Department of Political Science! It has been a tremendously busy spring semester, and we've been pleased to welcome esteemed researchers and speakers to our Department and into our classes.

I am happy to share updates concerning several of our students who participated in the NYS Assembly Internship program; recent publications by our research faculty; and numerous awards and achievements by our current students and alumni. We are extremely proud of our faculty and the successes of our undergraduate, master's, and PhD students, both during their time at SBU and once they graduate and embark on their careers.

We have successfully navigated the extreme challenges of the past several years as an academic department and now turn our attention to long-term planning to ensure we maintain the high standards in teaching and research for which we are renowned.

As always, we are grateful for contributions from our alumni and friends. These help to provide financial support to our students; recruit excellent faculty; and support cutting-edge research in multiple areas of political science. I hope you'll consider investing in our students and faculty by making a gift today or speaking with Mike D'Ambrosio, Senior Director of Development, at (631) 632-4061 or [michael.dambrosio@stonybrook.edu](mailto:michael.dambrosio@stonybrook.edu)



Please stay in touch and send us updates about your accomplishments. If you enjoy reading about these developments please consider following us on [LinkedIn](#) and X at [SBUPoliSci](#) to keep up as they happen.

Best wishes,

Leonie Huddy, PhD  
Distinguished Professor and Chair  
Department of Political Science



## Department Happenings

In November, the SBU Model United Nations team traveled to Washington, D.C. to participate in the annual National Model United Nations conference. The team received the Distinguished Delegate Award!



In February, as part of our International Relations Speaker Series, 130 students had the privilege to hear Her Excellency **Vanessa Frazier**, Ambassador of Malta speak on "Conflict and Reform: Rising Challenges Facing the Future of the UN Security Council."



In December, first year political science major **Mohamed Adam** won \$100k in the [Dr Pepper Tuition Toss](#). Adam plans to use the money to attend law school.



Also in February, PhD candidate **Asha Venugopalan** was announced as a winner of the 2023 Carri Chapman Catt Prize for Research on Women and Politics, presented by the Catt Center at Iowa State University. Her paper '*Joan of America: How Republican Women Convey their Partisan Credibility*' was recognized.



# The New York State Assembly Internship Empowers Future Government Leaders by Providing Lasting Opportunities

The New York State Assembly provides internships for undergraduate students through the Assembly Session Intern Program. The program offers full-time, semester-long internships through hands-on experience in state government. Interns receive stipends to help with relocation costs and become involved in a mandatory week-long orientation program while completing an academic course taught by Internship Professors-in-Residence. Three of our majors applied for and were accepted into the program for this spring semester. The program provides rigorous and valuable educational experiences at all governmental levels, allowing students like **Malveena Hussain, Nigel Hector,** and **David Hassid** to learn more about the legislative process.



From left: Malveena Hussain, David Hassid



From left: Nigel Hector, David Hassid, Malveena Hussain



## Malveena Hussain Explores State-Level Politics as a New York State Assembly Intern

Malveena Hussain is one of three SBU undergrad political science students interning at the New York State Assembly this spring semester.

Hussain interned at the State Assembly due to her continued interest in government work and what she learned in her courses in the Department. Through the assistance of Professor Jason Rose, Hussain applied for the internship. What intrigued her specifically about this opportunity is that she believes some of the most important decisions that affect our everyday lives are made at the state level.

“I felt as though interning at the Assembly would allow me to gain hands-on experience in the legislative process as well as help me understand how important policies are formulated and enacted,” Hussain said.

In the fall of 2023, Hussain worked as a research assistant (RA) for a study on immigration laws. Joining the State Assembly as an intern has allowed her to build on the knowledge gained during that research. For her, the best part has been connecting with people who share similar interests.

One notable aspect of Hussain’s internship experience that has proven highly valuable is engaging in meetings with diverse organizations and constituents. These interactions have provided an opportunity to observe the tangible effects of legislative decisions on individuals and communities. Meeting directly with constituents and hearing their stories has been particularly impactful. Whether discussing housing challenges, sentencing reform, or healthcare accessibility, listening to these personal narratives have offered a profound perspective, highlighting the significant impact of legislative decisions on the lives of many people and communities.

Entering the internship with uncertainty, Hussain shared that her perspective shifted when she saw how collaboration played a vital role when completing tasks. She explained that she was surprised to see Assembly members, though having different beliefs, maintaining an amicable relationship despite the divided state of the US.

Looking ahead, Hussain aims to use the skills and hands-on experience gained from the internship to better understand the legislative process through academic studies. Her plan is to connect real-world experiences with what is taught in the classroom.

“Being able to ‘connect the dots’ between my experiences and the theoretical aspect that I’ll learn in the classroom will deepen my learning and help me gain a firm understanding of the entire process,” she said.

Additionally, Hussain hopes that the research and analytical work done during the internship will pave the way for a future career in policy analysis, which is her desired field of work.

Hussain shared that this internship enabled her personal and professional growth, saying it allowed her to engage in critical thinking, interact with diverse groups, and apply classroom knowledge to real-world situations.

“I feel as though it’s helping me develop into the kind of person I’ve always wanted to be,” Hussain said. “Since I would like to pursue a full-time position after I graduate that’s very similar to what I’m doing right now, I feel this internship is giving me an inside look into what to expect. It’s confirmed my desire to continue pursuing a career in this field!”

## Nigel Hector's Internship Experience in the Assembly Creates Valuable, Life-Long Connections

Nigel Hector, an undergraduate student double majoring in political science and history with a concentration in U.S. History, law, government, and public policy, is currently an intern at the New York State Assembly.

In 2023, Hector learned about an opportunity to enroll in the New York State Assembly through a mentor who works with the New York State Commission for the Blind and previously completed the same internship. During the application process, Hector received a recommendation letter and assistance from Professor Jason Rose, the liaison officer in the Department, who helped him curate his personal statement.

On the law track, Hector says there's a high possibility that he may seek out a governmental position and employ the skills learned from this internship. However, he said that he perceives legislature in a new light now that he works in the Assembly, explaining that the textbook version of how government is run on the federal and state levels are vastly different than what he had originally imagined.

"Having the opportunity to be in that government space in that environment, it paints a different picture," he said. "For example, I never knew that every Tuesday there would be lobbyists coming from all parts of New York to voice their grievances, concerns, and issues about certain bills that are probably passed or that they want rejected."

Through this internship, Hector takes meetings alongside his legislative director and interacts with different organizations. An organization called "Communities Not Cages" advocates for the earned time to reduce sentences for incarcerated individuals reevaluating sentences and providing education and vocational programs for how to reintegrate them into society.

Additionally, Hector attended a meeting with the Jack Reed Foundation, where parents spoke about their deceased son who faced bullying in a private institution. The foundation advocates for legislation to prevent such tragedies from reoccurring in the future. Hector shared that advocating for those in need and where it is necessary has impacted him greatly.

"This internship has helped me to really appreciate life more. I feel like I'm in a position to assist with creating a better path for the constituents in my district," he said.

Hector encourages more students to apply for the internship in the future, saying that he has connected with various individuals, and heard personal stories that have been influential. It has also assisted in his networking endeavors, creating valuable connections that Hector assures will last a lifetime.

"Whatever department you come from, I encourage more applicants to look into this internship and apply because it's a very good place to be," Hector said. "This internship prepares you for life and the career path ahead. It's just a wonderful thing to have and the skills you gain from it — it's invaluable — the people you will be able to meet through this internship, you know, lifetime connections, so I encourage more applicants."

## Senior Researcher Kuhn's Newest Article Delves Into the Impact of Shared Backgrounds for Asylum Seekers



Senior Researcher Eroll Kuhn recently co-authored a scholarly article with New York University Professor of Politics Rahsaan Maxwell, titled "Asylum seekers feel more welcome in countries with more foreign-born residents," published by Routledge/Taylor &

Francis Group. The study, which began in January 2019, focuses on how asylum seekers, people who seek refuge in a new country, experience a greater sense of welcome when they live in areas with more residents who were born in other countries.

Professors Kuhn and Maxwell focused on Germany due to the country experiencing an increase in humanitarian migration; they went to Germany for the first time in the summer of 2019. The annual surveys which involved thousands of refugees were conducted to understand refugees' experiences in Germany, including their living conditions and employment status. The researchers found that asylum seekers who shared a similar background with foreign-born residents felt more welcome in the host country.

"A goal of the study is to understand where you go, how that shapes how welcome you feel. And despite the fact that the policy is kind of cruel, the fact that it's random or kind of quasi random has certain kinds of desirable research properties," Kuhn said.

Kuhn emphasized that studying asylum seekers is driven by the interest in policy outcomes within the German context. The use of survey data in Germany is based on specific assumptions over a certain period, improving the ability to make an inference about the role of context.

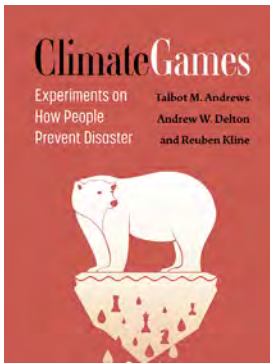
The study emphasizes the importance of understanding this emotional connection, referred to as psychological integration, as it directly affects the overall well-being and success of asylum seekers in their new communities. The researchers suggest that policies aimed at supporting the integration of asylum seekers should consider the presence of existing foreign-born communities in specific areas.

The study utilizes the German Socio-Economic Panel, a dataset housed in the German Institute of Economic Research in Berlin, specifically focusing on survey data related to refugees. This approach enhanced Professors Kuhn and Maxwell's ability to use the conducted research for their article about asylum seeker integration.

"But a lot of people are using this experiment and over time, the hope is that we build up an understanding of how these policies, which allocate asylum seekers over space [and] over regions of the country, shape integration outcomes," Kuhn said. "This is just one part of it, so [I hope it can] just build [on this] body of knowledge"

Kuhn and Maxwell's article is available for open access [here](#).

# Climate Games: A Decade of Research and Collaboration by Professors Kline, Delton, and Andrews



Associate Professors Reuben Kline and Andrew Delton, along with former Stony Brook PhD student Talbot Andrews, have co-authored a book, *Climate Games: Experiments on the Strategy of Disaster*, published with the University of Michigan Press. Professor Kline spent roughly a decade working on the book, where he gathered data and conducted research,

working with Professors Delton and Andrews, now an assistant professor of political science at the University of Connecticut. The book argues that humanity can work together to mitigate the effects of climate change, proving that we can work together to prevent disasters like climate change.

Andrews became involved in this project during her first week of graduate school at Stony Brook and collaborated with her professors on a paper that became the foundation for their book.



Talbot Andrews

“As a PhD student, I can’t say enough how lucky I am to have mentors and advisors like I had at Stony Brook,” Andrews said. “I’m so happy that I got to do this.”

These experiments show that individuals can allocate their current resources to prevent future losses, showcasing their ability to make informed decisions. The study mainly involved groups of four to six people in the Center for Behavioral Political Economy laboratory; groups consisted of undergraduate students from the University. Additionally, they conducted online samples through Amazon’s Mechanical Turk, a crowdsourcing marketplace, though Professor Kline raised concerns about bot interference.

“We’re steadily making progress, but there’s somewhat of a disconnect between how much progress we see in the real world and how much cooperation we see in these experiments,” Kline said. “People cooperate in experiments, but the real world is messier. We need to communicate problems and solutions more directly to change attitudes and influence actions, even if the real world is more complex.”



Reuben Kline

The book navigates climate change issues, addressing their societal implications. The negative effects of climate change should impact developing nations; however, these disaster experiments explore how actual people deal with the unique challenges of climate change to show humans that they can prevent climate change.



Andrew Delton

“The book is written so that anyone can follow it,” Delton said. “I think people would have no problem understanding if they want to learn how people think about climate change, how people cooperate in groups, and underneath everything are these issues of whether people make good rational decisions when it comes to things that affect themselves and other people at the same time.”

The book is available to purchase through the University of Michigan Press. *Climate Games: Experiments on the Strategy of Disaster* will also be an open-access download, so “it’s accessible to anyone if you can’t afford a physical copy,” Delton said.

Climate Games is available to read [here](#).

## Family Honors Ambassador Bhasin with Scholarship In His Name



The family and friends of Ambassador Harsh Bhasin have created an endowed scholarship in his name at SBU to honor his legacy and help students looking to pursue a career in diplomacy or foreign service.

Ambassador Bhasin spent over 30 years in the Indian Foreign Service, serving as a career diplomat in eight countries. After his retirement, he found a new home at SBU, where he taught for almost 20 years. In addition to his work as a faculty member in the political science department, he served as chair of the Department of Asian and Asian American Studies and supported the establishment of the Center for India Studies. Bhasin also led student groups on study abroad programs in China, sharing his knowledge and expertise in international relations with several generations of students.

“The Bhasin scholarship is a fitting tribute to Ambassador Bhasin, who was a dedicated and popular instructor at SBU,” said Leonie Huddy, Distinguished Professor and chair of the Department of Political Science. “His courses on international relations and the modern politics of China and India were always in high demand. I received many glowing letters from alumni who were grateful to Ambassador Bhasin for his rigor, guidance and career assistance. He inspired many students to work in diplomacy and foreign service and to help make the world a better place. I can’t think of a better way to honor his legacy than with a scholarship for future generations of Seawolves to follow in his footsteps. We are deeply grateful to the Bhasin family for their support.”

Many remember Bhasin for his insightful courses on contemporary India and China, as well as his mentorship as they explored careers in foreign service. He taught thousands of students about the power of diplomacy in conflict resolution, the wonders of South and East Asia and the complexities of the geopolitics of India, China and the United States. In 2022, he was honored with the College of Arts and Sciences Godfrey Excellence in

Teaching Award in the area of social sciences. The award is student-nominated for professors who have had an impact on them both inside and outside of the classroom.

“As a professional diplomat, Ambassador Bhasin understood people and the importance of empowering individuals to be their best selves,” said Emily Carll ’20, a former student. “His students saw him as more than a professor. He was a cheerleader, believed in them when they didn’t believe in themselves; a coach, challenging them to push their limits; and a friend, celebrating their accomplishments with chocolates or listening over a cup of chai.”

Ambassador Bhasin’s wife, Kumkum, who arranged many of those cups of chai, class events and Zoom parties during the pandemic, said, “This scholarship will allow students to forever feel Harsh’s passion for international relations and his love for his students. Our family is so grateful to all the generous donors who have helped us make this possible.”

The Harsh Bhasin Political Science Endowed Scholarship will support undergraduate students in the Department of Political Science interested in international relations. Ambassador Bhasin was a man who dedicated his life to his love of diplomacy and international relations, so it seems only fitting that his legacy will live on in helping students who aspire to work in those fields.

“Through this scholarship, I know Ambassador Bhasin will continue to be there for students, opening doors for them to change the world,” said Carll.

*The scholarship will be available to undergraduate students majoring in political science with an interest in international relations.*

Story Credit: Christine McGrath, [Stony Brook Matters](#)



## Mariam Malik Navigates the Path to Diplomacy with 2024 Charles B. Rangel Fellowship



Alum Mariam Malik holds a BA in Political Science and Government. Malik aspires to become a Foreign Service Officer (FSO), and has been selected as a 2024 Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Fellow. Under the guidance of two esteemed political science faculty—the late Ambassador Harsh Bhasin and Jason Rose—

Malik took various undergrad classes in political science, including United States foreign policy, United Nations issues, and politics of Africa. She also conducted individualized research on human rights and child marriage in South Asia and the Middle East.

“I am deeply indebted to the love and guidance I was lucky enough to receive from the late Ambassador Harsh Bhasin,” said Malik. “Thank you for making me realize that I belong in this field and pushing me to see what I am capable of achieving.”

After the Diplomat-in-resident for the New York-New Jersey area visited Stony Brook and discussed the path to becoming an FSO, it sparked Malik’s interest in this particular area. She learned about the exam, background requirements, and the interview process and applied to become a 2024 Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Fellow. After a few unsuccessful application processes (two years ago and in the fall ‘22), Malik was accepted for the third time in the fall ‘23.

The Charles B. Rangel Fellowship assists underrepresented voices in the US, specifically within the Department of State. Its mission is to mentor and nurture the next generation of leaders who will shape the future of US foreign policy.

“As a Foreign Service Officer, I hope to defend human rights; the rights of children abroad, the rights of Americans and bring more awareness to international human rights,” Malik said. “I really hope to focus on human rights abuses in the Middle East and South Asia. I think my perspective from being an FSO will benefit me.”

Malik emphasized that her time as an undergrad played a crucial role in cultivating a supportive community for political science. During this time, she realized a lack of space for students and community members at the University to engage in political discussion and learn more about politics. This motivated her to establish a platform for political discourse and learning.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Malik collaborated with Professor Rose to revive the National Honor Society, which included tasks, such as revising the organization’s constitution, garnering support, and adapting to the virtual environment.

“Professor Rose taught me to question everything, especially in politics and government; never choose a particular side, but always analyze and learn from both sides and think about why things are the way they are,” Malik said.

As she looks ahead into the future, Malik encourages students to take advantage of the opportunity to learn about likes and dislikes within the realm of political science. She discovered and then cultivated her passion for blending human rights abuses with diplomacy from the department.

“Take advantage of being in college and having the opportunity to take classes to see where your interests lie and what you’re passionate about,” Malik said. “Always ask questions, question ideas, and question norms. Educate yourself, whether it’s an individual study or research, reading articles, or listening to podcasts. Take advantage of the resources that you have at Stony Brook.”

Malik eagerly anticipates the beginning of her journey later this May as the 2024 Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Fellow, interning at Capitol Hill. After the past five years of working in various spaces of the federal government, she looks forward to discovering her placement for the upcoming summer internship, graduate school, and beginning her career as a United States Foreign Service Officer.

## Admitted Seawolves Day and More

Current political science majors spoke with admitted students on March 23 and April 6, 2024, at Admitted Seawolves Day to convince them to come to the best public university in the state!



SBU students hard at work at the annual National Model United Nations conference in Washington D.C. in November '23.



The Political Science Society invited Lauren Kosseff, an immigration attorney, to speak to the club on February 7, 2024.



## Alumni Corner

*Where has your degree taken you? Let us know! Send us your achievements and updates to [polsci\\_alumni@stonybrook.edu](mailto:polsci_alumni@stonybrook.edu).*



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