CenterPAGE

A Look at the Centennial Center for Political Science & Public Affairs

Center Space Available for Spring 2007!

The Centennial Center for Political Science and Public Affairs is quickly becoming an invaluable resource to political and social scientists. Since its opening in September 2003, the Center has hosted more than 60 scholars. The Center, housed in the APSA headquarters near Dupont Circle, provides a great base of operations for scholars researching in the DC metro area. The Center offers Visiting Scholars furnished work space, telephone, fax, computers, Internet access, conference space, a reference library, and access to George Washington University's Gelman Library.

Visiting Scholar stays range from a few days to 12 months. Space is limited to APSA members and is available for faculty members, post-doctoral fellows, and advanced graduate students from the U.S. and abroad. Scholars are expected to cover their own expenses and a modest facilities fee for the use of the Center.

Prospective visiting scholars may apply at any time. Positions are awarded on a space-available basis. Full details on the Center and the Visiting Scholars Program, including an application form, can be found online at www.apsanet.org/centennialcenter. You may also contact Brian Daniels at APSA: 202-483-2512; bdaniels@apsanet.org.

Research Funding Available

The APSA sponsors a number of funds to help finance research. Many of these funds can support your stay at the Centennial Center or elsewhere.

Rita Mae Kelly Fund
Supports research on the intersection of gender, race, ethnicity, and political power.

Warren E. Miller Fellowship for Electoral Politics
Provides supplemental support for research residencies in national and comparative electoral politics at the Centennial Center.

The Presidency Research Fund
Provides supplemental support for examination of the presidency for both resident and non-resident scholars.

Special Fund for the Study of Women and Politics
Provides supplemental support for the study of women and politics.

Ed Artinian Endowment for Advancing Publishing
Provides supplemental support to assist young scholars in publishing their research.

Fund for Latino Scholarship
Provides support to individuals or programs that promote the recruitment, retention, and promotion of Latino and Latina political scientists.

James Bryce Fund for International Political Science
Provides supplemental support for research residencies, collaborative research workshops, and teaching and curriculum development programs for emerging political science communities.

*In*Profile
Isis Leslie

Isis Leslie completed her Ph.D. in 2005 at Rutgers University. She is currently working on a manuscript, *The Vicissitudes of American Romanticism,* a study of the emergence of romantic conceptions of the self in the 19th Century and their persistence in contemporary American political culture. Her research examines the role of the romantic idea of the autonomy of the will from environmental influences on prevalent 19th-Century social movements, including narratives of racial uplift and self-making. In her analysis, romantic conceptions of selfhood and volition continue to dominate American political culture and problematically inform contemporary debates around welfare policy and capital punishment.


Isis Leslie

Polling data reveal that despite comparable rates of social mobility in all highly industrialized nations, Americans attribute more responsibility to the individual in determining personal destiny than members of any other highly industrialized nation. While members of other highly industrialized nations tend to be highly cognizant of the impact of environmental circumstances on individual well-being and success, Americans tend to believe that factors internal to the individual, such as attitudes and perseverance, are more predictive of social, economic, and spiritual success than external factors, such as the social position of one's parents, the state of the economy, access to education, etc. Consistent with romantic theory as it emerged out of post-Kantian German idealism, Americans generally attribute personal success above all to the resoluteness of the individual will.

Leslie incorporates cultural studies approaches and argues that romantic notions of selfhood are expressed in consumer culture as well as in the current proliferation of self-help literature. She reads self-help culture as a continuation of 19th-Century narratives of self-making. In her analysis, the individual autonomy American romantic culture presupposes eventuates in psychological isolation, which individuals seek to ameliorate, in the context of late-capitalism, through consumption.

While a visiting scholar at the Centennial Center, Leslie is examining how romantic narratives of selfhood were appropriated in the works of Frederick Douglass in a manner that retained a romantic emphasis of the autonomy of the will while also incorporating a communal and global sensibility that was lost in mainstream American romanticism. Leslie argues that Douglass provides one lens through which to envision retaining the liberatory aspects of the American romantic tradition, while providing a corrective to the socially and politically isolative tendencies of that tradition.

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