

Academia

Dara L. Sosulski, '03: I had always harbored substantially wide-ranging academic interests, so when I arrived at Harvard, I was unsure about which concentration to choose—I had serious interests in political philosophy, biology, literature, and writing. Ultimately, I decided to pursue a degree in Government, because the concentration gave me the opportunity to study all of the aforementioned—some within the confines of my concentration requirements, and some within the generous time the government concentration allows for elective courses. I am now a Ph.D candidate in the department of Neurobiology and Behavior at Columbia University, doing my thesis research in the laboratory of Nobel Laureate Richard Axel, MD. My studies in government gave me a solid footing in the analytical reading and clear, direct writing skills critical for a successful career in science, and I will always be grateful to the government program for giving me the opportunity to sample many courses from other departments as well.

Alex Kuo, '01: After graduation I worked for one year as a Junior Fellow for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, DC. During my time in DC I decided to apply to doctoral programs in political science. I am currently working towards a PhD at Stanford University, researching and writing my dissertation. I enjoyed being a Government concentrator, and through classes and friendships I became exposed to a wide variety of possible career and job choices.

Ragan Buckley, '00: I am following a career path that's probably not very typical for a Government graduate – I'm working on my Ph.D. in biochemistry! However, I believe that my course work in the Government department is benefiting me as I pursue a career in the sciences. First, I feel that fulfilling the Government concentration requirements imparted me with a high level of oral and written communication skills. These are skills which will be important as I write grant proposals and papers for journals, and when I present my research at conferences. I might not have learned how to communicate as well, had I not had courses where discussion and papers were the primary means of determining a grade. Second, I believe the Government degree showed graduate admissions committees that I was well-rounded and able to excel at high-level courses in the social sciences as well as the physical and life sciences. I'm sure it also helped raise my score on the verbal section of the GRE! Third, I have chosen to do my graduate research on the origin of life and chemical evolution. I know this has been controversial in the courts as well as in the public mind, and I feel that I have a better ability to understand the interplay among science, the public, and government – in my field and in others – than someone who focused solely on science courses. Finally, while I am not yet actually in the workforce, I feel that my Government degree will be beneficial to me in the future. I plan to pursue a faculty career at a research university after I obtain my Ph.D., and I hope to be able to use the knowledge gained while pursuing my undergraduate government degree to obtain higher levels of funding for science in general, through work with local Senators and Representatives, state government, and federal agencies.

Aditi Baqchi '99: I graduated in 1999 after concentrating in Government and Philosophy. I seized as many opportunities as possible to study moral and political theory, as well as comparative political economy, and am now in a position to appreciate the quality of that education. I enjoyed many aspects of my time at Harvard, which was a formative period, but my academic experience in the government program in particular continues to inform my professional work. After obtaining a masters, attending law school, clerking, and practicing, I recently became a law professor. I continue to draw on what I learned as an undergraduate in my current work. Indeed, I think what I learned about politics informs my understanding of many phenomena and is important to my general world view. I feel enormously lucky to have had the opportunity to study with my professors at Harvard and am delighted to be assigning some of their writing in the classes that I now teach.

Jamie Markham '99: After graduation I served as an intelligence officer in the U.S. Air Force for 5 years, mostly as a political-military analyst of Russia and the Former Soviet Union. I left the military as a captain to go to law school at Duke, and I am now an assistant professor of public law and government at the University of North Carolina School of Government in Chapel Hill. I teach and write on criminal law and procedure, with a focus on sentencing and corrections.

Marriah Star, '98: Unlike other Government concentrators, my career path has been somewhat unconventional. The typical Government alumnus may spend a few years after college working, but the destination is law school, and then practice at a law firm, or teaching at a law school. I love legal thought, but I hate the legal lifestyle. I do not want to put in 80+ hours a week to become a partner at a law firm. Instead, I would much rather have control over my time. So I went into academia. I paid off my college loans in three years with the help of my wife and entered the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY) for a Ph.D. in political science. My Harvard training helped me as I was able to ace many courses and pass the qualifying exams with honors after only 3 semesters. I immediately started teaching as an Adjunct Lecturer in the CUNY system. My first couple courses were at Lehman College, but over the past 3 years, mainly because of fatherhood, I now teach four or five classes a semester at different CUNY and non-CUNY colleges. These include Hunter College, Brooklyn College, Queens College, Pace University, Borough of Manhattan Community College, LaGuardia Community College, and Hostos Community College. Lehman College has given me the opportunity to turn into a pundit as I now appear regularly on Bronxnet, channel 67, in New York, on a show called "Open". Finally, I use my multiple positions in CUNY to tap into the non-profit community and social entrepreneurship. This community provides guest speakers for Lehman College and CUNY. My mission as a teacher is to turn my students into skilled civic activists. I expect my Ph.D. by the end of 2008.

Daniel Nexon, '95: I'm now an Assistant Professor in the Department of Government and the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. After graduating from Harvard, I immediately embarked on the path to a PhD at Columbia University. I study a range of subjects, but I currently focus on historical patterns of religious politics and the dynamics of empires. I also do side work on popular culture and world politics. My current areas of interest bear only a passing resemblance to the subject matter of my Senior Thesis; yet researching and writing my thesis provided me with excellent preparation for graduate school. I have two pieces of advice for current undergraduates contemplating an academic career in Political Science. First, don't follow my example! Unless you are absolutely certain you want to be a professor, take at least a year or two off from school before pursuing a graduate degree. The first two years of graduate school are a lot like college, particularly a college at the level of Harvard, and you may find yourself a little disappointed... and even a bit burned out. Second, start bugging your professors as soon as possible. It is all too easy to float through Harvard without getting to know them, but they'll be your best resource for understanding what is involved in getting a doctorate. I still look up to the many brilliant scholars--most of them still at Harvard--who took me under their wing.

Richard Amesbury, '94: I am currently Associate Professor of Ethics at the Claremont School of Theology and Associate Professor of Religion at Claremont Graduate University in California. As a teacher and scholar I work at the intersection of ethics, political theory, and philosophy of religion. My publications include *Faith and Human Rights* (Fortress Press, 2008) and *Morality and Social Criticism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

After graduating from Harvard, I taught high school for two years on the island of Guam, where I grew up. An interest in religion prompted me to pursue graduate studies, and I ended up getting a Diploma in Theology from the University of Oxford and a PhD in Religion from Claremont Graduate University. I taught for a year at Harvey Mudd College before accepting my first tenure-track appointment at Valdosta State University in Georgia, where I spent the next four years. I have recently returned to Claremont to teach in the joint CST/CGU graduate program in religious studies.

My undergraduate education in government continues to be an invaluable asset which informs my thinking about a wide range of issues, including the relation between religion and human rights, the place of religion in liberal democracies, and the implications of religious plurality. Moreover, the academic skills I acquired as an undergraduate and continue to use every day – analysis of arguments, debate, writing – are among the tools I try to pass on to my own students. Even more valuable than knowledge and skills, however, are the intellectual virtues that my professors in the Government Department helped to cultivate – virtues such as curiosity, discipline, openness to criticism, humor, honesty, and imagination.

James Fowler, '92: As an undergraduate at Harvard I concentrated in Government and graduated in 1992. One thing that I really liked about the concentration was its flexibility -- I had very interdisciplinary interests, and it was easy to satisfy these in the Government department. Right after graduation, I joined the Peace Corps and lived in Ecuador for two years, building water systems and latrines in cholera-stricken areas of the rural Andes. During this time I observed that some communities were able to work together to help themselves when given a little support, while others were completely dysfunctional. I also observed this pattern when I traveled in several other counties in Latin America after Peace Corps. This experience sparked my interest in returning to graduate school to study development and political participation. I was not sure if I wanted to continue in the aid community or in academia, so I entered the MA program in International Relations at Yale in 1995. During my two years in New Haven I became even more interested in studying political participation, so I chose to apply to PhD programs in political science. I was also curious about whether my experiences from Latin America were generalizable, so in 1997 and 1998 I spent nine months traveling in Asia. Once again, I observed functional and dysfunctional communities and wondered what might be causing their success and failure. Upon returning, I entered the PhD program in Government at Harvard. During my five years there, my interest gradually became more abstract, and I shifted from the study of development in Latin America to the study of political participation more generally. In 2003 I graduated and started my first job at the University of California, Davis. I published several articles about political participation and cooperation, and I was granted tenure in two and a half years. This attracted the attention of several other departments, and in 2006 I moved to the University of California, San Diego, which is a top 10 department for political science. I recently have become even more interdisciplinary in my interests, publishing articles in *Nature*, and the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Thanks in large part to the early training I received as an undergraduate at Harvard, I've always thought of political science as a very big tent where ideas from many other disciplines can commingle and recombine to advance not just our understanding of politics, but our understanding of many other fields, as well.