

THE APT NEWSLETTER

No. 14, May 2008

Meet Us in Middletown, 9-12 October!

The Association is pleased to announce the receipt of a record number of submissions for the sixth APT Conference, which will be held at Wesleyan University, 9-12 October 2008. Our host will be J. Donald Moon, Dean of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Sciences, Professor of Government, and Ezra and Cecile Zilkha Professor in the College of Social Studies. The Program Committee has completed work on a preliminary program and is in the process of notifying applicants about the status of their submissions.

We are excited to be heading to the East Coast for the first time and hope many of you will be able to make the trip. Wesleyan is a liberal arts college, with graduate programs in several natural sciences and in music. Located in Middletown, Connecticut, Wesleyan is about 30 miles away from the Hartford-Springfield airport (Bradley International Airport, BDL), which is currently served by all of the major U.S. airlines, as well as Air Canada Jazz, Frontier, Midwest Connect, and Southwest. AMTRAK serves Meriden, Connecticut, about seven miles from campus. US Air, in addition, has several scheduled flights per day from Philadelphia to the New Haven airport (Tweed New Haven Regional Airport, HVN), also about 30 miles away. Metro-North, the commuter train system for the greater New York City – southwestern Connecticut region, also serves New Haven, with frequent trains running from Grand Central Station in Manhattan.

The main conference hotel will be the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Cromwell, Connecticut, about five miles from campus. We have reserved a block of rooms there at a conference rate of \$109 per night, plus 12% tax, single or double occupancy. Smokers please note: the Crowne Plaza is a smoke-free hotel. We will arrange for regular shuttle service between the hotel and the meeting rooms on the Wesleyan campus. Plenary sessions, meals, and receptions will be held in the Usdan University Center, with most panels scheduled in classrooms or meeting rooms in or near the Usdan Center. See:

<http://www.wesleyan.edu/usdan/>

The weather in early October is usually splendid, with warm, dry days and cool evenings; there should already be a little color in the fall foliage, and much more if you want to drive north on Sunday after the conference is over. Middletown was an important river port until the railroads put river ports out of business in the middle of the 19th century. The campus includes mansions along High Street once owned by merchants engaged in the clipper trade with China, as well as many other interesting old buildings. The University was founded in 1831, and some of the older buildings are constructed with the same brownstone you can see in Manhattan, in the Upper West Side and in Harlem. So there will be lots of lovely walks you can take during breaks between sessions (assuming normal weather). Middletown has a variety of attractions and restaurants close to campus. For more information, go to:

<http://www.wesleyan.edu/about/middletown.html>

Program Committee for the Wesleyan Conference

With the successful conclusion of our October meeting at The University of Western Ontario, Lisa Ellis of Texas A&M University stepped down as chair of the Program Committee, although she has remained a member of the Committee for the Wesleyan conference. Executive Co-Directors Dennis McEnnerney and Liz Markovits then appointed two new co-chairs: Clarissa Rile Hayward

(Political Science) of Washington University in St. Louis and Mark Rigstad (Philosophy) of Oakland University. Thanks to the many volunteers, the rest of the Committee was rapidly appointed, as well:

Harvey Brown, Lecturer, Political Science, The University of Western Ontario
 Elisabeth Ellis, Associate Professor, Political Science, Texas A&M University
 Dustin E. Howes, Assistant Professor, Political Science, St. Mary's College of Maryland
 Leigh K. Jenco, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Political Theory Project, Brown University
 Bettina Koch, Assistant Professor, Political Science, Virginia Tech University
 Mika LaVaque-Manty, Associate Professor, Political Science, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
 Maurice Meilleur, Academic Advisor, Political Science, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
 Alexander Moon, Assistant Professor, Politics, Ithaca College
 Jeanne M. Morefield, Associate Professor, Politics, Whitman College
 Christopher C. Robinson, Assistant Professor, Political Science, Clarkson University
 Alisa J. Rosenthal, Assistant Professor, Political Science, Gustavus Adolphus College
 Erin Taylor, Assistant Professor, Political Science, Western Illinois University
 Elizabeth Markovits (*ex officio*), Assistant Professor, Political Science, Saint Louis University

Chairs and Discussants Committee

In light of past years' success, we have also appointed a separate Chairs and Discussants Committee to fill these important slots on the program:

Chair, Elizabeth Markovits, Assistant Professor, Political Science, St. Louis University
 Ben Berger, Assistant Professor, Political Science, Swarthmore College
 Jonathan Havercroft, Assistant Professor, Political Science, University of Oklahoma
 Sara Jordan, Assistant Professor, Politics & Public Administration, University of Hong Kong
 Peggy Kohn, Assistant Professor, Political Science, University of Toronto
 Randy LeBlanc, Associate Professor, Political Science, University of Texas-Tyler
 Howard Lubert, Associate Professor, Political Science, James Madison University
 Hollie Mann, Graduate Student, University of North Carolina

To volunteer to serve as a chair or discussant, please write to Liz Markovits at:

<mailto:ekmarkovits@gmail.com>

A Great 2007 APT Meeting at The University of Western Ontario

The University of Western Ontario was the site for our 2007 meeting. Thanks to our host, Harvey Brown of the Political Science Department, participants enjoyed several days of excellent facilities and great food. For the second year in a row, the conference began on Thursday night, with the first of four conference plenary sessions, on U.S.–Canadian relations. Another plenary session began the first full day of meetings, a breakfast discussion devoted to “Technology and Teaching Political Theory.” Members attended 25 panels on a wide variety of topics, a third plenary session on minority rights in the modern liberal democratic state, and a final plenary session devoted to journal publishing, with editors James Johnson (*Perspectives on Politics*) and Catherine Zuckert (*Review of Politics*). For the extra hearty, Program Committee member Mika LaVaque-Manty organized an early Saturday morning “Theoretical Run” through London, although some of us took the “theoretical” part more seriously than others and walked instead. In either case, it was a great addition to the program and one we hope to continue in the coming years.

Following the conference, attendees were asked to complete an on-line survey, giving their evaluations of the event and asking for their suggestions about future meetings. Full transcripts of the comments received were given to the officers of the Association and to the new Program Committee Co-Chairs, to aid in planning future conferences. In addition, an edited version of the survey appears on the APT website, under “APT Conferences.” In the next issue of *The APT*

Newsletter, we hope to invite past officers of the Association to join us in reviewing the comments the Association has received, some of which raise issues that the Association might do well to reflect on more systematically.

Pedagogy Session – Technology and Teaching in Political Theory

Bill Simmons (Arizona State University) expanded upon last year's presentation on Problem-Based Learning (PBL) by describing how he incorporates wikis into PBL assignments during a Friday morning plenary session on "Technology and Teaching in Political Theory." He provided an 18-page packet (posted in the APT conference archive and on his website, listed below) that includes an overview of PBL, miscellaneous hints, frequently asked questions, sample assignments, and student work. He argued that wikis are the best technological complement to PBL so far. While they have minimal structure, they are content based and very intentional, unlike other Web 2.0 tools. Also, wikis address several specific pedagogical objectives: i.e., group norms are negotiated over time and remain in flux, thereby improving group skills; they appeal to numerous learning styles; and editors (including the Instructor) get involved earlier in the writing process than in other group writing assignments. He likened the teaching of PBL with wikis to a limited, democratic state of exception with some policing by the instructor and group members. His packet includes links to several wikis from recent classes including a human rights timeline, a mock impeachment of a future U.S. President, and an assignment on *l'affaire du foulard* (the headscarf affair) in France and Turkey. For Bill's website see:

<http://www.west.asu.edu/wpsimmons>

Lisa Ellis (Texas A&M University) gave a presentation on the use of podcasting in political theory classes. Podcasting records your lectures, with or without supporting visual material. The recordings are then available over the web, on iTunes, via direct subscription, or distributed some other way to listeners; students can then listen on iPods, other audio players or on most computers after class. She noted that podcasting is a limited tool with a several pedagogical uses: 1) podcasting helps you reach students with different learning styles in a lecture course; 2) it helps students keep up with material delivered by standard lecture; and 3) it *can* expand your audience beyond those present in lecture. She explained how the technology helped in her introductory course. She then addressed a number of common concerns, such as impacts on attendance, whether using this technology requires students to have certain devices, recording equipment, and sound technology.

Mika LaVaque-Manty (University of Michigan) discussed the use of interactive technology in teaching political theory. Frustrated, on the one hand, with the lack interactivity in large introductory lecture courses (with 150-350 students at Michigan) and, on the other hand, with the crudeness of the increasingly popular "clicker" feedback system, he had begun an experiment using a richer technological tool, LectureTools. LectureTools (developed at the University of Michigan by Professor Perry Samson, Atmospheric, Oceanographic, and Space Sciences) is a web-based interface that allows students to take notes, view presentation slides, listen to podcasts, and, most importantly, provide real-time textual feedback to the instructor. Because political theory is text- and argument-based, LaVaque-Manty used the textual feedback feature to engage students in a course where interactive lecturing is difficult and generally doesn't engage the majority of the students. Halfway through the experiment by the time of APT, he had found that the tool had increased students' engagement both through the computer interface and in the old- fashioned way, by their verbal participation. LectureTools does raise the questions of access because it requires a laptop computer, but LaVaque-Manty solved this problem by creating groups, where not everyone would have to have a computer. He was moderately satisfied with the results and plans to experiment with LectureTools or similar tool in the future. See:

<http://lecturetools.org/>

Business Meeting and Election Results

The annual APT Business Meeting was held at the close of the 2007 conference at the University of Western Ontario. The meeting discussed a number of topics, including assessment of the 2007 conference and the work of the program committees, the election of officers, planning for future conferences, the need for additional officers (membership secretary and webmaster), relations with other associations, and the status of graduate programs in political theory.

Because Secretary-Treasurer Johnny Goldfinger was unable to attend the conference, outgoing Governance Committee member Ed Wingenbach took minutes.

The election of new officers was probably the most significant part of the meeting. Co-founder Emily Hauptmann stepped down as Executive Co-Director after seven years of service, as did both Ed Wingenbach, who served an initial two-year term as Member of the Governance Committee, and Gregory Streich, who served one year on the Governance Committee as representative of the previous year's Program Committee.

Going into the meeting, Elizabeth ("Liz") Markovits was the sole candidate for Executive Co-Director, while F. S. J. Ledgister, Amy McCready, Mark Rigstad, and Abdul Wahab Suri all stood for election to the Governance Committee. As the APT Constitution requires contested elections, following a motion from the floor and a second, Mark Rigstad agreed to stand as a candidate for Executive Co-Director and then, if not elected, stand again as a candidate for the Governance Committee.

When the votes were counted, Liz Markovits was elected Executive Co-Chair and Amy McCready was elected Governance Committee Member. Both will hold office for terms of three years (2007-2010), with the possibility of re-election to one more three-year term. After the conference, in addition, John R. ("Randy") LeBlanc was elected by the 2007 Program Committee as representative to the Governance Committee for a one-year term (2007-2008).

Future conference locations were also announced: Wesleyan in 2008 and Texas A&M in 2009 were confirmed, while discussions continue concerning the possibility of Notre Dame hosting in 2010 and perhaps Columbia at some later date.

Minutes of the Business Meeting may be found on the APT website, under "APT Conferences."

Thanks to Emily Hauptmann

The Association would like to offer public thanks to all of the retiring officers, but most especially to Emily Hauptmann, who played a central role in the founding and development of the Association. Beginning with initial discussions with Dennis McEnnerney in 1999, Emily brought together in 2000 a diverse group of political theorists who shared a desire to found a new kind of political theory / political philosophy association. That group eventually developed into the Founding Committee, which drafted *The APT Manifesto* and began the initial membership drive. Subsequently, Emily served as Interim Executive Co-Director (2000-2005), first elected Co-Director (2005-2007), Co-Chair of the Inaugural APT Conference at Calvin College (2003), and Chair of the Chairs and Discussants Committee at the Indiana (2006) and Western Ontario (2007) conferences. She also was co-author of the first 13 issues of *The APT Newsletter* (2002-2007). It's safe to say that APT could not have developed into a successful association without Emily's leadership.

Call for Nominations and Amendments

Simona Goi, Chair of the Governance Committee has issued the following Call for Nominations and Amendments:

The Association for Political Theory (APT) invites nominations, including self-nominations, for officer positions, and recommendations for amendments to its Constitution, to be voted on at its annual Association-wide election.

BACKGROUND

The APT Constitution, which was ratified at the 2004 conference business meeting in Colorado Springs, calls upon the APT Governance Committee, over a three-year cycle, to nominate up to twelve candidates for six officer positions: three executive officers (two Executive Co-Directors and a Secretary-Treasurer) and three Governance Committee members. The Constitution directs the Governance Committee to ask the membership for nominations. From that pool of nominees, the Committee then will propose a slate of candidates to the membership at large. Candidates not included in that proposed slate may petition to be added to the slate, either by written petition up to one month before the business meeting or by nomination from the floor at the meeting itself.

The election will be held at that next business meeting, and all members of APT attending will be eligible to vote. The exact date of the business meeting has not been set, but it will likely occur at the end of the 2008 conference at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, 9-12 October 2008.

The Constitution, in which election procedures are outlined, may be found by visiting the APT website and clicking on "About APT." The APT website may be found at:

<http://apt.coloradocollege.edu>

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Governance Committee seeks nominations and/or volunteers for the following officer positions:

Governance Committee:

1 officer for a three-year term

Secretary-Treasurer:

1 officer for a three-year term

Executive Co-Director:

1 officer for a three-year term

Brief descriptions of each position, as well as more details about the nominating procedure, will be posted on the APT website and sent in an e-mail message to the entire membership shortly.

The deadline for submitting nominations to the Governance Committee is 8 June 2008. Specifying which position your nomination is for will help the current officers arrive at a slate of candidates by 12 June 2008, the target date for proposing a slate to the general membership.

AMENDMENTS

The APT Constitution also allows any member of the Association at any time to submit recommendations for amendments to the Constitution to the Governance Committee Chair, who may or may not submit the matter to the whole Committee for consideration. In the case of a recommendation not being forwarded to or endorsed by the Governance Committee, the Constitution also allows for recommendations for amendments to be submitted by petition of 10% or more of the general membership to the Committee as a whole, via the Executive Co-Directors.

In order to be considered at this year's business meeting, recommendations should be submitted to the Governance Committee Chair, or petitions should be submitted to one of the Executive Directors, no later than 8 June 2008.

Details on amendment submission procedures will be posted on the APT website and sent in an e-mail message to the entire membership shortly.

The Governance Committee and Executive Co-Directors look forward to hearing from you, and hope that you will join us in helping to strengthen the Association for Political Theory and advance the study of political thought in North America.

Sincerely yours,

Simona Goi, Chair of the Governance Committee
Calvin College

Thanks to Everyone Who Made it Happen

The Association would like to thank all those who put enormous effort into making our 2007 meeting a great success. Our host, Harvey Brown, and the rest of the faculty and staff of the University of Western Ontario and the Spencer Conference, deserve special thanks for making us feel welcome and comfortable.

Much thanks are also due to the officers and members of the Association who put together the program, especially Secretary-Treasurer Johnny Goldfinger, who collected and organized registration materials and fees from all conferees; Maurice Meilleur, who designed our great poster and program, and Program Committee Chair, Lisa Ellis, as well as all the other members of the Program Committee:

Craig Borowiak, Assistant Professor, Political Science, Haverford College
 Craig Hanks, Associate Professor, Philosophy, Texas State University—San Marcos
 Clarissa Rile Hayward, Associate Professor, Political Science, Ohio State University
 Alexandra Hoerl, Graduate Student, Political Science, Rutgers University
 Dustin Howes, Associate Professor, St. Mary's College of Maryland
 Mika LaVaque-Manty, Assistant Professor, Political Science, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
 Randy LeBlanc, Assistant Professor, Political Science, University of Texas at Tyler
 Howard L. Lubert, Associate Professor, Political Science, James Madison University
 Elizabeth Markovits, Assistant Professor, Political Science, St. Louis University
 Robert Martin, Associate Professor, Government, Hamilton College
 Maurice Meilleur, Academic Advisor, Political Science, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
 Martín Plot, Faculty, Critical Studies, California Institute of the Arts
 Alisa J. Rosenthal, Assistant Professor, Political Science, Gustavus Aldophus College

William Simmons, Assistant Professor, Political Science, Arizona State University
 Dennis McEnerney (*ec officio*), Visiting Assistant Professor, Philosophy, The Colorado College

We also want to extend our deep appreciation for all the work done by Emily Hauptmann, as Chair of the Chairs and Discussants Committee. As always, we owe a great debt to Emily's work on behalf of the organization. We would also like to thank her committee:

Ann C. Davies, Associate Professor, Political Science, Beloit College
 Cary J. Nederman, Professor, Political Science, Texas A&M University
 Amit Ron, Centre for Ethics, University of Toronto
 Alisa Rosenthal, Political Science, Gustavus Adolphus College
 Andrew Sabl, Government, Harvard University
 Dan Sabia, Associate Professor, Political Science, University of South Carolina

New Website

As members likely know, the Association's website moved in late December from its longtime home on the SUNY Oneonta server. The SUNY College at Oneonta had graciously hosted the website, which its software support staff designed now over seven years ago. After Dennis McEnerney left SUNY Oneonta in 2004, the College agreed to continue to support the website for a number of years. However, in the intervening years, the website had become dated, and while SUNY was happy to support its continued maintenance, staff and funds were not available for significant upgrades to the site.

This fall, the Dean's Office at Colorado College agreed to provide support for moving the site to the Colorado College server. As members have probably seen, the site remains almost an exact copy of the former SUNY Oneonta website. However, now that the move has been made, funding and technology are available for upgrading and updating the website. The first upgrades will begin this summer, as the site will gain a new look and be based on newer software technology. Over time, we hope develop and enrich the website, making it more intuitive and functional.

Challenges Ahead

Now entering its ninth year, APT continues to grow rapidly, with a membership of over 800 members as of May 2008! With the growth and maturation of the Association, new challenges are arising.

For example, the Association may need to begin thinking about its long-term financial stability. In its first nine years, APT has managed to grow without any systematic fundraising and without membership fees. Conference fees have paid for all of the Association's expenses, with a small surplus accruing from year to year, thanks to a combination of careful budgeting and generous support from hosts. However, in 2007, budget estimates turned out to be well off the mark: instead of running only slightly over budget, the London conference turned out to run a significant deficit, requiring the Association to dig into its reserves. As a result, instead of having reserves of around \$9-12,000, the Association has only about \$4,000 in its account. Conference budgeting is always somewhat unpredictable; so one challenge the Association faces is finding ways to build its reserves for those unexpected expenses.

Another challenge facing the Association concerns the conference: APT now regularly rejects over 50% of the applicants to the conference, many of whom present strong proposals. The limited size of the conference, which is partly a function of relying on host institutions and partly a conscious choice of the Association, may unduly restrict the ability of members to participate. A question we may need to ask ourselves is how much do we want to grow and how?

The Association also, from its inception, aimed to help members both professionally, by providing access to reviewers and critics in the field, and pedagogically, by providing resources to help faculty members teach political theory and political philosophy effectively. The latter aim has been partly achieved through the staging of pedagogy sessions at the conferences, such as the one discussed above from the London conference. But more support could be given, not only pedagogically but also professionally to the membership. The challenge is to find effective ways to do so.

It is our hope that over the course of the next year or two, we will be able to find ways to reflect on the growth and relative success of the Association, while looking forward and thinking about ways to sustain and build on our early work. Meanwhile, over the summer, we plan three initiatives: beginning a Philosophy membership drive, developing a new Membership Director officer position, and putting together a Website Design Committee. Look for more announcements and discussion of these kinds of issues in future editions of *The APT Newsletter*, and feel free to forward suggestions to the Executive Co-Directors or to other members of the Governance Committee.

-Dennis McEnnerney and Liz Markovits, Executive Co-Directors