

Political Science Webinars Provide Opportunity for Scholarly Exchange During Pandemic

AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION STAFF



Karima Scott / Canva

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States last spring, political science conferences, workshops, and classrooms were forced to pivot from in-person to virtual meetings. More than a year later, many events continue to take place online as the nation works to distribute vaccines widely and curb COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths. In spring 2021, APSA supported or hosted a number of exciting and topical political science webinars.

On January 26, 2021, APSA Educate contributors hosted a webinar titled "Strategies for Success in the Online Political Science Classroom." A week later, political scientists gathered online for another webinar titled "Strategies for Teaching the Insurrection and Impeachment"—a timely response to the Capitol insurrection that took place just one month earlier. On the following pages, Bennett Grubbs (American Political Science Association), Emily Farris, and Miranda Sullivan (both Texas Christian University) offer detailed summaries of these two popular webinars.

In addition to these two webinars, several other virtual events took place this spring. On February 16th, Jamila Michener (Cornell University) moderated a conversation on "Reckoning with the Roots and Aftermath of Insurrection" with participants Deborah Avant (University of Denver), Juliet Hooker (Brown University), Nathan Kalmoe (Louisiana State University), and Brendan Nyhan (Dartmouth College). The event brought together experts from across the discipline for a conversation on the insurrection framed by panelists' expertise in political violence and psychology, public policy and democratic citizenship, democratic norms and backsliding, the politics of race, grievance, and democratic citizenship, and civil-military relations.

Two days later, political science department chairs gathered for an event titled "Department Leadership During a Crisis." Loleen Berdahl (University of Saskatchewan) led a roundtable

discussion with four political science leaders from a range of institutions: Thad Kousser (University of California, San Diego), Smita Rahman (DePauw University), Cammy Shay (Houston Community College), and Robin Turner (Butler University). The events of 2020 and 2021 presented challenges for academic leaders at all levels. Department chairs face particular pressures as the key point of contact for faculty, staff, and students. Panelists asked: how can and should department leaders respond during times of political, social, and/or public health crisis?

Many of APSA's international members in the MENA region took part in a series of Arab Political Science Network (APSN) webinars this spring. On February 4, Lama Mourad (Carleton University) moderated a conversation with Youssef Chouhoud (Christopher Newport University) and Claudia Youakim (American University of Beirut) on "Researching Arab Americans: Public Opinion, Identity, and Methods." They asked: who are 'Arab Americans'?; how do we begin to understand their opinions, identities, and voting behavior?; and in what ways are these questions and categories shaped by the data we have, and the methods we use?

On March 30, scholars from Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon, and the United Kingdom held a webinar in Arabic titled "The Politics of Teaching International Relations in the Arab World." Panelists asked: how do we teach international relations (IR) in the Arab world and can we say that it follows a Western/American model? Are there unique circumstances, contexts, or approaches that define and shape our study of political science and its sub-disciplines in the region?

As we look ahead to a hybrid annual meeting in Seattle this fall, APSA wishes to thank our members for their continued support during an unprecedented year. Collaborating with members on virtual events allowed APSA to continue its mission of promoting lively, diverse scholarship that deepens our collective understanding of government and politics around the world. ■