

## Department of Government

Celebrating Political Science at The University of Texas at Austin



[Home](#)
[Alumni](#)
[PhD Alumni](#)
[Faculty](#)
[Graduate](#)
[Undergraduate](#)
[Staff](#)
[Earmarks](#)
[Events](#)
[Contact Us](#)

MONTHLY ARCHIVES: FEBRUARY 2013

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Select Month ▾

### Alumni on the Web

Posted on [28 February 2013](#)

Keep up with some of our PhD alumni's online activities:

Anna Law has started a new blog covering the politics of immigration and constitutional law: [www.unlawfulentries.com](http://www.unlawfulentries.com)

Danny Hayes is contributing to the *Washington Post's* Wonkblog: [www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/tag/poli-sci-perspective/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/tag/poli-sci-perspective/)

And, not least, do not forget about Jeff Ladewig's Dimpled Chad: [www.dimpledchad.info/](http://www.dimpledchad.info/)

Posted in [PhD Alumni News](#)

### Brown Publishes Textbook's 15th Edition

Posted on [22 February 2013](#)

Lyle C. Brown (Ph.D. 1964), professor emeritus, Baylor University, is coauthor of the 15th edition of *Practicing Texas Politics* (Wadsworth, 2013).

Posted in [PhD Alumni Publications](#)

### Contreras Wins Bolin Fellowship

Posted on [12 February 2013](#)

[Danilo Antonio Contreras](#) has been awarded the prestigious [Gaius Charles Bolin Dissertation Fellowship](#) from Williams College. Bolin Fellowships are two-year residencies at Williams, with up to three scholars or artists are appointed each year; Contreras will be a Bolin Fellow in the department of political science at Williams from August 2013- May 2015.

Danilo's dissertation, *"Nation Before Pigmentation: Race and Electoral Politics in The Dominican Republic,"* examines the effect of racial identity on electoral politics in the Dominican Republic. He challenges the assumption inherent in broader approaches on race and ethnic politics that high levels of racial stratification create strong racial group identities and that these identities dictate electoral preferences. He argues that stratification may actually undermine the activation of racial cleavages in elections by discouraging identification with marginalized racial groups. This is particularly true in regions like Latin America, where high levels of *mestizaje* (race mixing) and historical nation-building efforts have helped to prevent the formation of strong racial identities.

Danilo tests his argument through the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data collected over a period of eight months of field research in the Dominican Republic. The qualitative data stem from focus group research, semi-formal interviews, archival and media analysis. The quantitative data were derived from an original field experiment and survey conducted in the capital city, Santo Domingo. His findings lend support for his explanation for why ethnic voters do not always activate ethnicity in elections. In essence, where voters can identify with a menu of less marginalized ethnic categories and where stratification provides the incentives to do so, they select the exit option (by not activating ethnicity in elections) rather than voice grievances (by voting for fellow coethnics or making ethnic demands). In addition, his findings suggest that nationalism or a strong national identity may help to redirect racial cleavages in electoral behavior. In short, nation may come before pigmentation at the ballot box.

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### Mine Tafolar Receives Project Grant

Posted on [8 February 2013](#)

Mine Tafolar has received a project grant from Bogazici University in Turkey. Tafolar's dissertation investigates social assistance schemes, clientelism, and the empowerment of recipients, and this grant will analyze the potential role of particular public policy programs in shaping the political perceptions and behavior of citizens.

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### Seth McKee Returns to Texas

Posted on [8 February 2013](#)

Seth McKee, PhD 2005, has accepted a position as associate professor at Texas Tech University. He begins in Fall 2013.

Posted in [PhD Alumni News](#)

### Frank Thames: Contagious Representation

Posted on [5 February 2013](#)

[Frank Thames](#), Ph.D. 2000 and associate professor, Texas Tech University, has published a new book, *Contagious Representation: Women's Political Representation in Democracies around the World* (with Margaret S. Williams).

Posted in [PhD Alumni Publications](#)