

Questions in Politics

The Journal of the Georgia Political Science Association
Volume IV

Preface

Questions in Politics (*QiP*), the scholarly journal of the Georgia Political Science Association (GPSA), welcomes our readers to Volume IV. The articles published here began as papers presented at the 2016 Annual Meeting of the GPSA. The authors then submitted the manuscripts to the journal, where they were anonymously and thoroughly reviewed. After further review and editing, out of eleven manuscripts submitted, five are published here.

We are pleased to announce that the first article in Volume IV, “To Defer or Not Defer: The Dilemma of Federal Courts of Appeal Determining the Reach of US Law” by Dr. Maureen Stobb of Georgia Southern University, is the McBrayer Award winner for 2016. The McBrayer is given annually to the best paper presented at the Annual Meeting. The winning author or authors have traditionally received a certificate and a cash award. To further recognize this achievement, the McBrayer winner is the first article in this volume.

All five of the articles in Volume IV do have one theme in common: The importance of the judiciary. Although four articles are in the field of American politics and one is in the area of international relations, all directly or indirectly acknowledge the key role played by the courts in interpreting law and applying it to individual cases. In *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville writes, “There is almost no political question in the United States that is not resolved sooner or later into a judicial question” (Tocqueville 2000, 257). The articles by Stobb and by Rutkowski et al. are explicitly about the federal courts. Taulbee’s argument about citizenship turns on key rulings by the US Supreme Court, while Rodgers analyzes policies that will be interpreted by state and federal courts. The horrible questions raised by the Rwandan genocide end up in court, as Tures examines in his analysis of the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights. Courts are essential political institutions and make rulings with political consequences. To twist Hamilton’s phrase from *Federalist* number 78, the judiciary contributes more to the political process than “merely judgement.” Political science should, as the authors of the articles demonstrate, continue to recognize courts as political institutions with all the complexities and contradictions that also afflict legislatures and executives.

The home for *QiP* remains the web. Go to gpsa-online.org and click on “*Questions in Politics*.” For the foreseeable future, a few copies of each volume will continue to be published. Copies of Volumes I through III remain available. Contact either of us to purchase a copy.

Finally, we continue to thank our anonymous reviewers, as well as the Editor, James “Larry” Taulbee, and the Managing Editor, Matthew E. Van Atta, for their efforts to continuously improve this journal.

Thomas E. Rotnem and Adam P. Stone