BYU Political Science students got a sneak peek into the workings of the U.S. Supreme Court from Adam Liptak, the Supreme Court correspondent for *The New York Times*. Liptak spent time with students discussing the role of media and the Supreme Court. He wondered why today’s court is filled with logicians and how we need Justices with real-life experiences, specifically when dealing with media. He said that Justice Kagan is great for the court because she synthesizes and analyzes what makes something appropriate and inappropriate for broadcast TV and radio. Liptak argued that broadcast television, internet, and cable should have the same first amendment protections from the court. Currently, this is not the case, as broadcast television is regulated while internet and cable are not. His lecture can be seen [here](#).
Before Mark DeMoss spoke at BYU’s weekly forum, the Political Science Department had the opportunity to host him, where he formally met with students to discuss promoting civility in political discourse and his involvement with the Mitt Romney campaign. Mark DeMoss has made a career of working with Christian groups and argues that “[j]ust because the First Amendment gives everyone the right to ‘demonize’ others with their speech doesn’t make it right.” For press on DeMoss’s speech:

Evangelical speaker: True Christians don’t demonize Mormons, Obama – Salt Lake Tribune

Evangelical calls for civility in politics at BYU forum – ksl.com

Christianity and incivility don’t mix, Forum speaker tells BYU audience – BYU News
CIA Historian Nicholas Dujmovic visited BYU and met with students to discuss a CIA career. He lectured at the Kennedy Center, which can be seen here. He also served on a panel discussing ethics and intelligence. The panel consisted of Dujmovic, Emeritus Professor Stan Taylor, Professor David Kirkham, and Professor Daniel Milton. The panel can be seen here. All of the panelists were clear to make the distinction that CIA actions come from the executive branch. Although unethical action that stems from intelligence can be justified with the explanation that “everyone is doing it,” the U.S. should take the moral high ground to preserve its reputation.
Dr. John A. Nagl visited BYU to participate in the Wheatley International Affairs Conference. While here, he also met with students at the Kennedy Center to discuss his work in counter-intelligence. Currently, Nagl is a Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security. Dr. Nagl is the author of *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* and was on the writing team that produced the U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual. Nagl discussed how future conflicts will be oriented to counterinsurgency and not like the successful Desert Storm. When dealing with a counterinsurgency, the priorities are to protect and gain the loyalty of the population. The goal of fighting a counterinsurgency is to change the relationship between the government and the people.
During the course of the semester, BYU European Studies hosted Dr. Aurelian Craiutu from Indiana University and Dr. Alan Levine from American University. These two professors interacted with faculty and students while considering the unique view that Europe has of the United States. Since the inception of the Americas, European writers and philosophers have praised and criticized the United States and both Dr. Craiutu and Dr. Levine lectured on these perceptions. Dr. Craiutu focused on French philosophers, specifically de Tocqueville, in his discussion, while Dr. Levine gave a wider European perspective, starting with the Native Americans and the colonization of America, and continuing on to the current wars in the Middle East.

Professor Craiutu’s lecture at the Kennedy Center can be found here.

Professor Levine’s lecture at the Kennedy Center can be found here.

Throughout the past fall and winter semesters, a number of BYU professors have volunteered their time and their homes to extracurricular evening lectures and discussions. Known as “Welch’s & Cheese” for the refreshments served afterwards, these events provided faculty and students opportunities to strengthen relationships and increase understanding outside of the classroom. In September, Dr. Findley and students met at Dr. Nielson’s home to speak on the lingering effects of the September 11th terrorist attacks, commemorating its 10-year anniversary. Later on in November, Dr. Preece shared her insights on election systems and how often they bias the outcome of elections. In January, Dr. Selway spoke on the implications of the current political environment in Burma. Finally, in March, Dr. Hancock opened his home to students to discuss the role of religion in the public square. In each case, the discussions were enlightening and allowed professors and students to interact in a unique way—and, of course, the grape juice was delicious! A special thanks to these professors for giving their time to these successful events!
Many Political Science students had the opportunity to participate in the Wheatley International Affairs Conference, WIAC, at Aspen Grove. Students got to hear from speaker Ralph Cossa, President of Pacific Forum CSIS, and Professor Cindy Jebb, Deputy Head of the Department of Social Science at the United States Military Academy. Students spent the first half of the semester studying their committee topics, which helped them to be significant contributors in different sessions of the conference. During the conference, students got to work with experts in different fields to produce a policy recommendation paper and group presentation. Students in attendance also benefited from lectures, as well as informal conversations with the prestigious guests of the conference. One student, Peter Carroll, commented that “it was meaningful to think about and discuss the pressing issue of food security, then come together formally and put our thoughts in a paper. The conference was also inspiring beyond the scope of my committee topic—the mentoring and instruction I experienced helped me recognize the possibilities available in a policy-related career in my future.”
Political junkies got to discuss partisanship and its effect on politics with political figures that represent both sides of the aisle. Professor Richard Davis hosted a panel that included former Utah Governor Olene Walker, Joe Cannon, Janette Hales Beckham, Karen Hale, Scott Howell, and Thomas Alexander. The panel began with Professor Alexander outlining the history of partisanship politics in Utah. Panelists then went on to speak about the caucus convention system in Utah and expressed their doubts of it changing. They also discussed today’s uncivil discourse. Joe Cannon rightly pointed out that uncivil discourse has always been around. Although people have always slung mud, many panelists felt that, today, partisans are unable to compromise and work with others. All panelists strongly supported the ideal that BYU students today have the power to overcome the current climate and become leaders who can transcend the current political climate.

You can watch the discussion [here](#). An interesting perspective on the discussion can be found [here](#).
The Wheatley Institute sponsored a symposium entitled, “Sustaining Moderate Islam.” The panel members included General John P. Abizaid; Khosrow Semnani, S. K. Hart Engineering; Asma Afsaruddin, Indiana University; and Douglas Johnston, President and Founder of the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy. The participants represented different perspectives on Islam and Moderation. Abizaid, a retired General from the U. S. Army, brought a geo-political reference to the discussion. Khosrow B. Semnani, a Utah business person, brought the perspective of an American and a Muslim. Asma Afsaruddin, an academic, brought her understanding of religious Islam and its doctrinal understanding of moderation. All panelists agreed that the U. S. needs to engage the Middle East more diplomatically if there is to be peace in the region. Abizaid argued that, if the military always intervenes when we deal with problems in the Middle East, then the U. S. will fail. The U. S. needs to work with coalitions that aim to strengthen institutions, lessen extremist tendencies, help resolve the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, and create opportunities for independence. Johnston thought the above steps need to include religious leaders. Current diplomatic processes tend to leave religion off the table. Religious leaders can deal with moral issues, take ownership of the situation, and use their influence at a grassroots level. Professor Afsaruddin deepened this discussion by introducing the Muslim doctrine of moderation. Doctrinally, Muslims believe that moderate behavior is a characteristic of moral people. She furthered this doctrine by emphasizing that moderation can lead to justice and equality.