



*The*  
**JUSTICE STUDIES**  
*Department*

**ALUMNI NEWSLETTER**

January 2015

# Alumni Spotlight



## Claire Doyle,

23, graduated from JMU in May of 2013 as a Justice Studies and Spanish double major with a minor in Legal Spanish. Claire grew up in Arlington, VA and chose JMU for its reputation as a friendly, thriving college community with excellent instruction by talented professors. Originally an International Affairs major with a concentration in International Relations, Claire changed to Justice Studies Track B (Global Justice and Policy) to better fit her interests and her forward-looking, hands-on approach to creating positive change in a global context.

During her time at JMU, Claire interned for former US Senator Jim Webb and served as co-president for the Justice Studies Student Organization (JSSO). She also volunteered to work with children at the Second Home Childcare Center's afterschool program in Harrisonburg. During her junior year, she studied abroad in Salamanca, Spain; partially as a result of her experiences, she decided to go back to Spain to work after graduation.



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Claire had always known that she wanted to help people, specifically children, in a hands-on environment where she could witness the immediate impact of her work. She currently works at a public bilingual elementary school in Madrid.

"I absolutely love it," she says. "The kids are at an age where learning isn't only about finishing predetermined content in a book, but also about grasping important lifelong lessons such as how to work well with others and independently." Claire also gives private English lessons to adults, providing for a unique teaching experience. Claire's long-term strategic goal is to create her own educational company. The company would draw on international experience with different countries' educational systems, and seek to blend the best elements of each system. "That's why I want to teach in as many countries as I can - so I can learn from them and discover what positive aspects of education we can pull from each," says Claire. For the present, Claire is completing an online TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) course. She's currently divided on where she might go next to teach. "I'm considering teaching somewhere in Asia, possibly South Korea, but I'm also looking at more opportunities that would allow me to live in Madrid for another year," she says. Wherever her teaching takes her, the Justice Studies Department wishes Claire continued success in bringing positive change to the lives of children abroad!



# Alumni Day 2014

The Justice Studies Department had its first annual Alumni Day last Spring semester on April 25th. The event was a great success and an excellent opportunity for Justice Studies alumni to return to campus and reconnect with their former instructors and fellow graduates. For current students, some key highlights of the event included opportunities for professional networking, advice for career development and advancement, and gaining insights into the day-to-day lives and experiences of alumni who are working in various justice related fields.

The event featured an hour-long lunch for Justice Studies faculty and alumni and graduating seniors in Taylor Hall at the start of the program. This provided a great opportunity to exchange news on ongoing developments in their professions and careers. Afterwards, a series of informal roundtable discussions were hosted by the alumni. Justice Studies majors could approach graduates of the program with questions about employment or professional opportunities after graduation, or for advice or suggestions related to civic engagement, volunteering, internships, or other methods of extracurricular involvement. This proved to be a superb resource for students who attended the event. The program concluded with a reception for alumni and professors.

Keep in touch with us via our linkedin page at [JMU JUSTICE STUDIES ALUMNI](#)

for more info about Alumni Activities contact:  
Peggy Plass or  
Daisy Breneman

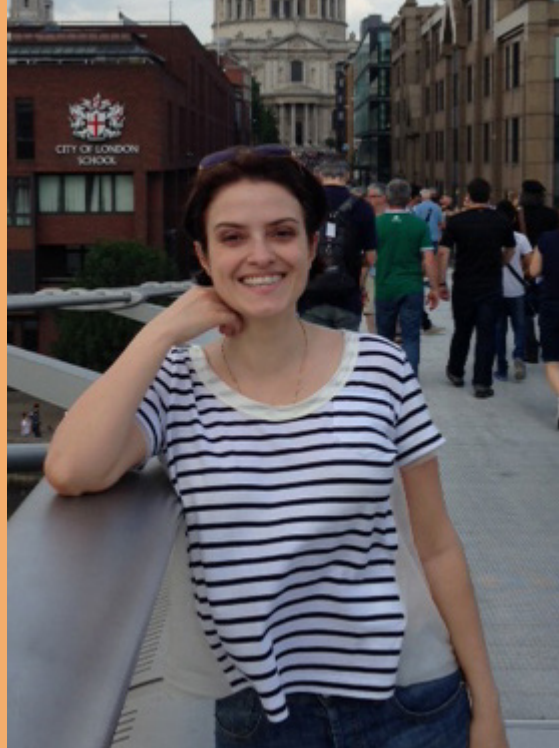




# NEW FACULTY PROFILES

## *Dr. Rita Poteyeva*

joined the JMU Studies Justice Studies Department as an Assistant Professor to teach courses primarily in the Track A (Crime and Criminology) field. Originally from Moscow, Russia, Dr. Poteyeva brings an international perspective to her work as a Justice Studies faculty member. As an undergraduate student, she attended law school in Moscow, and her legal studies there included some focus on commercial arbitration agreements between Russia and Sweden. She also performed legal clinic work in Russia. She took part in a foreign exchange program with the United States, and studied as a graduate student in Richmond, Kentucky at Eastern Kentucky University. After receiving a masters degree in Criminal Justice there, she went on to receive a doctorate in Criminology at the University of Delaware in Newark. Her dissertation for the school's Sociology and Criminal Justice Department included a focus on sentencing issues and disparities. In particular, Dr. Poteyeva was interested in sentencing for offenders who committed child homicide. She comments, "I wanted to see if the value of children in our society is reflected in our laws and criminal sentencing."



In the Justice Studies Department, Dr. Poteyeva teaches the Theories of Crime and Criminal Justice Track A foundation course and the Death Penalty and Sex Offenders Track A electives. She also teaches sections of the Justice Research Methods course. "Teaching keeps you young," she says. "I've always been interested in teaching, and a large part of the culture shock I experienced coming from Russia to the US included how differently students and instructors interact with each other here." An integral part of Dr. Poteyeva's graduate work included a teaching-oriented curriculum and pedagogical training. Among the things that Dr. Poteyeva enjoys most about teaching at JMU includes student participation in class discussions and debate. "I learn so much from the students when they discuss mutual or contrasting challenges, curiosities and ambitions. In addition to my instruction, their active engagement in the class helps them learn from each other as well." Dr. Poteyeva has ongoing research interests in violence in relationships and the use of the death penalty for female offenders. Justice Studies welcomes Dr. Poteyeva to the program and we wish her many happy years of future teaching and research in our department!

*"Teaching keeps you young."*



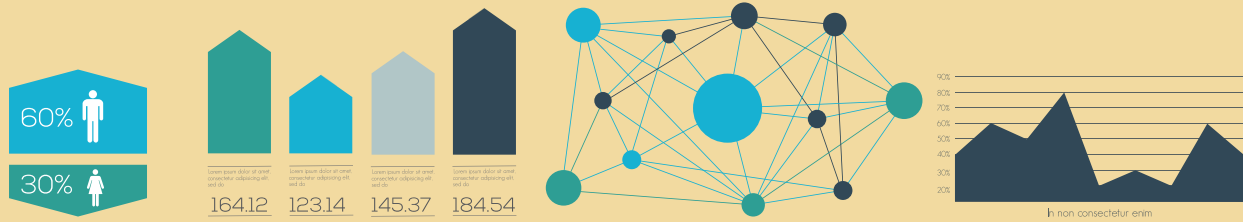
# Jesse McKee, Ph.D.



joined the Justice Studies Department at JMU in 2013. Originally from Tucson, Arizona, he attended Northern Arizona University and achieved a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Sociology there in 2006 and 2008. His thesis at NAU dealt with the topic of familicide, or homicides involving at least one spouse or child. When searching for graduate schools, the Ph.D. program in Criminology and Criminal Justice at Old Dominion University in Norfolk was his top choice. His dissertation considered quantitative studies of patriarchal ideology and university students. Originally hoping to earn his doctorate and go into law enforcement or police work, Dr. McKee's experiences teaching at ODU gave him a new professional aspiration to go into teaching full-time as a university professor. After earning his Ph.D. he joined the JMU faculty as an Assistant Professor of Justice Studies, and is now in his fourth semester of teaching.

Dr. McKee teaches Track A (Crime and Criminology) courses, including a section of the research methods course, theory, and a special topics course on domestic violence. His academic specialization and research interests include violence against women, patriarchal ideology, and criminological and sociological theory. He also has some background in studying media coverage of crimes of the state such as war crimes and genocide. His current scholarship includes a project on theoretical testing of low self-control. Among the things Dr. McKee enjoys most about teaching at JMU are the small classes and civic engagement by students. "The teaching environment at our department allows for enhanced and meaningful interaction with students that extends far beyond just lecturing and grading," says McKee. "Here I have an opportunity to share my knowledge and expertise with students, and that can spark their interest in similar or different areas of study, leading to a very fulfilling classroom experience." We welcome Dr. McKee to the department and look forward to many years of working with him!

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# IN OTHER NEWS...

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VOLUME TWO



## THE GANDHI CENTER

In January 2015, the Mahatma Gandhi Center for Global Nonviolence transitioned to the Justice Studies Department, under the leadership of the new director, Dr. Terry Beitzel.

One of the goals of the transition is to reconnect the center more closely with the academic life at JMU. Currently Dr. Beitzel is in the process of evaluating past projects and initiatives, and pursuing both continuing and new opportunities to advance the Center's mission: To promote justice and nonviolence through education, scholarship and engagement.

For more information on the work of the Gandhi Center, and ways that you can get involved, please see the website (which is currently in the process of being updated):

<http://www.jmu.edu/gandhicerter/>

## THE NELSON INSTITUTE...

under the direction of Dr. Peggy Plass, continues to provide a space where students are charged with finding solutions to contemporary policy problems. They offer a unique opportunity for students to engage in policy-oriented research that integrates classroom instruction, out-of-class group learning activities, and civic engagement and service learning opportunities. Projects and topics vary in nature, but have included needs assessment for after school programs, data management systems analysis for the Child Advocacy Center, client surveys for a non-profit center for individuals with disabilities, homelessness survey implementation and analysis, immigration policy, best practices in the delivery of healthcare services to immigrant and impoverished populations, and studying human trafficking and presenting the findings to law enforcement agencies.



## *The Justice Studies Student Organization*

As many alumni know, the JSSS is an organization that explores justice issues across all three tracks of the Justice Studies major. At the opening meeting in September, the group elected officers and set priorities for the year's activities. Members expressed interest in working on civic and community engagement projects, exploring careers in Justice Studies, and connecting with alumni. The JSSS looks forward to opportunities to work with alumni, and looks forward to seeing returning alumni on April 17 for the Second Annual Alumni Day.



Special thanks to Quasar Parfitt, the chair of the JSSS Newsletter Committee, for his work writing and reporting.

*The  
End*

