



AU Newsmakers

Sept 28 – Oct 4, 2012

Prepared by University Communications

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Top Story

Obesity May Impair Brain and Fuel Overeating

DAILY NEWS

The [New York Daily News online](#) highlighted new research by **Terry Davidson**, director of the Center for Behavioral Neuroscience, that found diets high in saturated fat and refined sugars—the same diets that lead to

obesity—may impair the part of the brain responsible for memory and learning and thereby fuel overeating of those same foods. "What I think is happening is a vicious cycle of obesity and cognitive decline. The idea is, you eat the high fat/high calorie diet and it causes you to overeat because this inhibitory system is progressively getting fouled up," Davidson said. More than **60** additional outlets cited the research, including [PsychCentral.com](#), [ScienceDaily.com](#), [RedOrbit.com](#), and [DCist.com](#). (10/1, 10/2)

AU Political Wonks Weigh-in on First Presidential Debate



In interviews with [Reuters](#), [Christian Science Monitor](#), and [Huffington Post Live](#), communications professor **Dotty Lynch** discussed the style and substance the candidates brought to the debate podium. "On style, Mitt Romney came out the very aggressive

debater and had a lot of punch in his remarks. On substance, both of them made some points, but I think Romney may have done himself some good," said Lynch. Communications professor **Scott Talan** spoke to the [Associated Press](#) about the feeling, influence, and involvement social media gives the public during the presidential campaigns. More than **250** outlets, including the online editions of *Houston Chronicle*, *San Jose Mercury News*, and *Miami Herald*, republished this article. History professor **Allan Lichtman** talked with [WUSA-CBS9-online](#) about the insignificance of the debates or other predictors for the 2012 election.

Additional Features

CampaignU: Inside the War Room and the Newsroom



Each week in School of Communication professor **Leonard Steinhorn's** *Campaign 2012: Inside the War Room and the Newsroom* class, [WTTG-FOX5](#) brings a camera into the classroom as part of the station's election coverage. Each Thursday, the class is live-streamed on the station's website from 9:15–11:45 a.m. Additionally, the station's *Morning News* show airs a segment each week about the class. This week focused on the media's critique and reactions on the National conventions and Presidential debates. The class will be televised each week throughout the election season. Tune in next week to see AU's most politically active students engage in discussions on the pressing issues of the day. (10/4)

Attorneys Discuss Supreme Court Arguments on Human Rights Case



C-SPAN covered a **Washington College of Law** panel focusing on the *Kiobel v. Royal Dutch Petroleum* case before the Supreme Court. Law professor **Stephen Vladek** moderated the hour-long discussion where panelists analyzed the previous day's arguments and provided insight about the Court's impending decision. (10/2)

Expertise

Is Your Political Donation Deductible?

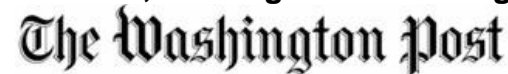
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL. Don Williamson, professor of accounting and taxation, spoke to the [Wall Street Journal](#) about the misconceptions many taxpayers have about deductions. "I wind up tossing out a lot of deductions people think they're entitled to," said Williamson. (9/28)

Supreme Court to Delve into More Divisive Issues



Law professor **Stephen Wermiel** talked to [USA Today](#) about the Fisher v. University of Texas Supreme Court case that questions racial preferences in college admissions. Wermiel "predicts a narrow decision against the university's affirmative-actions program, but without consequence." More than **65** outlets republished this article. (9/30)

In Assisi, Seeking Love and Forgiveness in the Shadow of St. Francis



Mohammed Abu-Nimer, director of the Peacebuilding and Development Institute, spoke to the [Washington Post](#) about the late September "Global Gathering" of religious and humanitarian

leaders in Assisi, Italy, the birthplace of St. Francis. The summit's aim was to heal hatred and promote forgiveness through the approach St. Francis championed. But participants questioned whether the approach can succeed. "Is it realistic to talk about forgiveness and love in the context of Israel and Palestine?" asked Abu-Nimer. This story also appeared in [Huffington Post](#). (10/1)

Future of Voter ID in Other States Is Unclear



With the [Philadelphia Inquirer](#), **Robert Pastor**, co-director of the Center for Democracy and Election Management, discussed the need for a national voter

ID program. "Only a national ID program would inhibit voting fraud. When laws are passed state by state, voters with homes in more than one place can cast ballots twice—locally and by absentee ballot. I don't think that each state alone can implement effective voter identification," said Pastor. (10/3)

How the Electoral College Works



James Thurber, director of the Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies, appeared on [WAMU's Diane Rehm Show](#), distributed by National Public Radio, to discuss what Mitt Romney needs to accomplish to win the Electoral College. "It is unlikely that the eight to 10 percentage points of

Americans who've not made up their mind yet are going to all swing one way or the other. I'm comfortable in saying that it looks difficult for Mr. Romney now in the Electoral College," said Thurber. (10/2)

The Importance of the Senate Race



In an interview for [CNN Radio's Newsday](#), **Patrick Griffin**, director of the Public Affairs and Advocacy Institute, discussed the importance of the Senate races and how control of the next Congress may affect the President's agenda. "A lot's at stake in terms of how the President's agenda, whoever it might be, will be pursued," said Griffin. (10/1)

Presidential Campaigns Have Been Characterized by Lying



With [WUSA-CBS' 9 News Now](#), communications professor **Robert Lehrman** discussed the disingenuous statements from both campaigns in the presidential election. "For both of them it's not enough to say the other guy's bad. You have to say here are some concrete details about what will be different in the next four years than we've had for the last four years.," said Lehrman. (10/3)

American Woman! Vote for Me!



Jennifer Lawless, director of the Women and Politics Institute, spoke to [Euronews](#), France's multi-lingual news channel, about females voting in the presidential election. "The average woman is still making about 77 or 78 cents for every man's dollar. So when we think about women's economic status and we compare that to men's economic status, it's not that surprising that women are more likely to support the Democrats and men are more likely to support the Republicans," said Lawless. (10/1)