



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON, D.C.

# This Week's Newsmakers

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Prepared by University Communications

## Top Stories

### Controversial Topics in the Midterm Elections



Jamin Raskin, professor of law, discussed the separation of church and state on [MSNBC's Countdown with Keith Olbermann](#) after Delaware Senatorial candidate Christine O'Donnell challenged her opponent's statement that the Constitution specifically defines the concept. Raskin also appeared on [CBS9 WUSA](#) to discuss laws that require local television stations to air a D.C. delegate candidate's graphic abortion campaign ad. (10/19)

### Supreme Court Justice Expert



The [Associated Press](#) highlighted **Stephen Wermiel**, professor of law, for his book, *Justice Brennan: Liberal Champion*, noting Wermiel was granted unprecedented access to Brennan. The article was republished by more than 145 news outlets including the *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, and [CBSNews.com](#). Wermiel also appeared on [CNN's The Situation Room](#) to discuss the apology Justice Clarence Thomas's wife demanded from Anita Hill, who accused Justice Thomas of sexual harassment.

## Additional Features

### Young Republicans Are Mobilized



[CNN's Sunday Morning](#) highlighted a forum by **American University's College Republicans** in a segment about how young Republicans are turning out in greater numbers this election year compared to young Democrats during the 2008 presidential election. Stephan Laudone, president of AU's College Republicans, said he knows "several friends who are splitting the ticket this year, whereas in 2008 it was all Democrats." (10/17)

### Gay Rights Advocates Wear Purple to Protest Anti-Gay Bullying



[USAToday.com's](#) video unit documented American University's Queers & Allies club's campus campaign in support of the national Wear Purple Day. **Kae Klepitskaya**, transgender advocacy director for AU Queers & Allies, said "Spirit day was formed as a response to a number of suicides of queer youth. There have been a shocking number in the past few months. In order to stand up for everyone we're wearing purple today to show support." (10/21)

### Monday's Poem: Note Blue




[The Chronicle of Higher Education's](#) Arts & Academe online column reviewed a poem by **Kyle Dargan**, professor of literature. The poem, *Note Blue or Poem for Eighties Babies*, is

described as "rich, nostalgic, forgiving and reveals another of Dargan's poetic gifts: a kinetic stereoscopy that allows, in any one poem, a provocative conflation of personal and public histories, of past and present situations." (10/17)

## Op-Eds & Editorials

### A Muslim Response to Juan Williams

 **washingtonpost.com** **Akbar Ahmed**, chair of Islamic studies, wrote an opinion piece for [washingtonpost.com's On Faith](#) about his disappointment in NPR analyst Juan Williams' comments about Muslims. Ahmed said, "It is especially disappointing because Williams is known for his work on the 1960s civil rights movement and is sensitive of the need to give dignity to minorities. So how can a member of the minority community then single out another minority community and label it as he did?" (10/21)

## Quotes

### Foreclosures Profit Some Equity Firms

#### **The New York Times**

"The concern is that you are pushing production down to [the] least-cost producer," said **Susan Carle**, professor of law, to the [New York Times](#) regarding foreclosure mills. The article cites a case in

Mississippi in which private equity law firm Great Hill Partners and foreclosure firm Prommis Solutions split legal fees for their mutual benefit. (10/20)

### Prominent Muslims Fear NPR Analyst's Firing May Fan Hostility

#### **Los Angeles Times**

"The greater American public remains unsure about Islam and very often hostile about Islam," said **Akbar Ahmed**, chair of Islamic studies, to the [Los Angeles Times](#) about hostility towards Muslims in

America. Ahmed said that although NPR fired Williams after anti-Muslim comments made, it will not greatly reduce discrimination. (10/22)

### Texting Trends & Human Contact



"One of the things we know is males and females don't necessarily feel the same way about talking versus texting," said **Naomi Baron** in an interview on [NPR's On Point](#) about human interaction through technology. Her research cites that phone calls are losing popularity to the convenience and efficiency of text messaging, which in turn is changing the way people communicate with each other on every level. (10/19)

### Wildlife Photography: Natural or Staged?



[WAMU's The Kojo Nnamdi Show](#) interviewed **Chris Palmer**, director of the Center for Environmental Filmmaking, regarding wildlife film and television. Palmer's interview is part of the promotion of his new book, *Shooting in the Wild*, which reveals the secrets behind wildlife documentaries. (10/21)

### Increases in Comcast's Political Campaign Giving

#### **Bloomberg**

"That's truly an extraordinary number," said **John Dunbar**, director of the Investigative Reporting Workshop's media and broadband project, to [Bloomberg](#) about Comcast's increase in political campaign contributions. Comcast increased its

political contributions to \$1.1 Million (compared to \$682,450 2 years ago) while seeking federal approval to buy NBC Universal. (10/19)

### A Productive Congress



**James Thurber**, director of the Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies, and **Candice Nelson**, director of the Campaign Management Institute, discussed the [111th Congress](#), and [election fundraising](#) respectively with **Capitol News Connection**. According to **Thurber**, this Congress is the most productive since the

eras of Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Franklin Roosevelt, but that may not be enough to guarantee victory. "This year there is more enthusiasm on the conservative side, so there is more money, [but] in two years a different political environment could favor progressive groups," **Nelson** said. (10/20)

## Parties Play Election Expectations Game



[The Examiner](#). The article looks closely at the likely results of important senatorial and congressional races on Election Day. (10/18)

"My suspicion is that a lot of the pressure on the White House to change the nature of the rhetoric probably comes from House and Senate candidates in close races," said **Danny Hayes**, professor of government, to the [Washington](#)

## Election Results Could Impact Foreign Policy



"Republican gains in November could solidify support for the Afghan war in the short term. But, they could also increase the potential for conflict in Congress if Democrats press for withdrawal of U.S. troops," said **Allan Lichtman**, professor of history, to [Voice of America](#). Lichtman discussed his predictions for the future of Congress if the Republican Party gains the majority. (10/18)

## No Toleration for Torture



"No one should be sent to a place that uses torture," said **Claudio Grossman**, dean of the Washington College of Law, to [CanadaEast.com](#) concerning the 1987 United Nations torture agreement. Many places in the world still use it and do not comply with the treaty, but Grossman said once nations start making exceptions to the agreement, "there is a slippery slope that cannot be maintained." (10/19)