

**Interpretive Methodologies and Methods (IMM) Related Group
Virtual Business Meeting 2022
Saturday, September 17
12:00-1:00 pm, Eastern Daylight Time**

Attendance: 18

Nick Smith
Michelle Weitzel
Fred Schaffer
Partha Chatterjee
Farah Godrej
Nick Cheesman
Kevin Funk
Anastasia Shesterinina
Rina Williams
Thea Riofrancos
Basileus Zeno
Biko Koenig
Cecilia Lynch
Mona El-Ghobashy
Erica Simmons
Robert Nichols
Ellie Knott
Anna Meiers

1. Reports

From the 2022 program chair: Farah Godrej

The IMM Related Group was allocated three panels by APSA. There is a formula for how APSA determines these allocations: there are two crucial factors—first, the number of members in related group, and second, attendance at panels during the previous year’s conference. These factors are prominently weighted in the formula. APSA sets a maximum of four papers per panel—this constrains the shape the programming. It is extremely difficult to reconstruct the total number of submissions, but I have a reasonable level of confidence in these numbers: total number of individual papers submitted was 21, total panel submissions: 1. I had to reject many extremely worth and interesting proposals, either for coherence or just lack of space.

The main take-away is that allocations are extremely limited. This is why we exhort everyone, every year, to attend as many IMM panels as possible. And please sign up as a group member (for free) as part of your APSA membership.

Panel attendance

- “New Interventions in Interpretive Research”: 4 panel participants and 3 audience members.
- “Affect, Vulnerability, and Embodiment: Thinking Interpretively”: 4 panelists, 1 chair, 15 audience members.
- “Interpretive Approaches to Repression, Resistance, Rebellion”: 4 panelists, 1 chair, 11 audience members.

Member comments:

Cecelia Lynch: we need more hybrid options.

Fred’s response: This is an APSA decision; please reach out to APSA.

From the 2022 Methods Café organizers: Biko Koenig and Robin Turner

Biko and Robin: our first in-person café since Covid, big success in large part due to support of Be Stone, and its their last year serving in that capacity. looking for future graduate support. Turnout: at least 65 people came through. Biko: Underlines thanks to Be for tremendous job in last few years. Stunning return after the dark Covid years. Some tables where there was nowhere to sit. Struggled to get sponsor during Covid years, passed the hat to collect money for a stipend for Be. Please reach out with suggestions for future table topics.

Short Course: Michelle Weitzel

Many thanks to Rina Williams and Crystal Whetstone for their amazing organization; everything went smoothly. Twenty-five people enrolled in the course; 13 people were in attendance. There was a very good atmosphere, the day was well organized; the panelists received many compliments on their talks. I believe the course stayed true to the IMM ethos of inclusivity, openness, and support. We invited everyone to continue the conversation over drinks at Poincaré and more than 10 of the participants showed up.

Rina: The IMM has been running a short course since 2007, which was the first year APSA did short courses. So we are thrilled to have been here from the start.

Member comments:

Erica: Is there anything we can do to allow people to enroll in short course without making them sign up for APSA—those who can't afford the APSA fees?

Farah: We are not checking badges; anyone can come if they reach out.

2. Award presentations

- **2022 Charles Taylor Book Award** (presented by Robert Nichols)
 - The award goes to two co-winners: Mona El-Ghobashy, New York University, for *Bread and Freedom: Egypt's Revolutionary Situation* (Stanford University Press); and Anastasia Shesterinina, University of Sheffield, for *Mobilizing in Uncertainty: Collective Identities and War in Abkhazia* (Cornell University Press)

Robert Nichols, from the University of Minnesota, delivered the awards and read the citations.

- Award Committee: Diana Kim, chair (Georgetown University); Jinee Lokaneeta (Drew University); and Robert Nichols (University of Minnesota)

- **2022 Grain of Sand Award** for lifetime contributions to interpretive thought and methods (presented by Nick Cheesman and Rina Williams)
 - The award goes to Partha Chatterjee, Columbia University
 - Award Committee: The IMM Executive Committee

Rina Williams (University of Cincinnati) delivered the award and read the citation.

3. Announcements

- **Hayward Alker Award update: Michelle Weitzel**

The IMM did not present a Hayward Alker Award for the 2021-2022 academic year. The committee received only one submission and decided that as such it was not competitive. To my knowledge this is the first time that this has happened, but it states in our call that the award is given at the discretion of the committee. Raises questions about how we can solicit greater submissions—something we can think about in future EC meetings. Osman Balkan, Yuna Blajer and Jessica Sodirgo are going to serve a second time

Please consider submitting if you are a graduate student; if you mentor students, please encourage them to submit.

Spotlight Scholar: Nick Smith

The Spotlight Scholar initiative was started by Timothy Pachirat to support and highlight the work of junior scholars. Ethan Tupelo is our current spotlight scholar. His research deals with recycling and environmentalism; please check out and publicize his work. Please encourage students to nominate and tell them that self-nominations are welcome. We want to get junior colleagues recognized.

- [New Books Podcast: Nick Cheesman](#)

We have recorded up to 12 episodes now; our next guest on the podcast will be Mona El Gohashy, which is tremendous. The total number of downloads at the start of September was 129,245. These numbers are tracking upwards as podcast series gets better known. Every new podcast gets bump initially but some continue to be downloaded a long time. Natasha Behl's episode was the most downloaded. In terms of content, we are moving now between texts that address methods explicitly and texts that model the use of interpretive methods. We generally do not invite the authors of edited volumes onto the podcast, but we made an exception for Nick Rush Smith and Erica Simmons because of the critical importance of their comparative examination. Please continue to spread the word of the podcast and reach out to Nick if you're interested in getting involved.

Fred, as Chair:

- The IMM needs to maintain, year over year, at least a 35-person dues-paying APSA membership to keep its status as a related group. If you are a current APSA member, please join IMM (at no extra cost) [here](#). By joining you will be able to post and see messages in the IMM forum

We are now at between 120-130 members. There has been some talk within the Executive Committee about about transitioning from a related group to a section. In order to contemplate that we need a steady membership of over 200; we can't have a serious conversation until then.

- The IMM program chair for the 2023 APSA meeting will be Thea Riofrancos. Thanks Thea; we are excited to see what you put together.
- Executive Committee rotations: Farewell to Fred Schaffer and Rina Williams. Welcome to Nadia Brown, Aarie Glas, and Jillian Schwedler. The new IMM chair is Lisa Wedeen and the chair-elect is Susan Thomson.

Rina took the lead in writing new bylaws—a much larger task than any of us anticipated. We have a solid foundation for institutionalizing IMM. We welcome three new executive committee members: Aarie Glas, Jillian Schwedler, and Nadia Brown. I am stepping down as chair as of the end of this meeting. The new co-chairs Lisa Wedeen and Susan Thompson will take office. I am really excited for their tenure. The IMM is in great hands, and I really look forward to seeing how it grows and where it goes. Great things in the future.

Other member announcements and/or questions:

Nick Smith: Nick is on the editorial board of the *Journal of Comparative Politics*—notes that it is open to interpretive work. If you have work to submit, please submit it.

Biko: Franklin and Marshall College has two tenure track searches going on. Biko is on public health hiring committee; please reach out to him with questions.

Farah: Farah is on the political theory editorial board at *Journal of Politics*. The journal is looking for ways to diversity/broaden its range; she strongly recommends considering the JoP for article submissions.

Rina: The University of Cincinnati hiring in the MPA program, open to methodological eclecticism.

Cecilia: The Political Science department at UC Irvine is holding a search for Comparative Politics professor with a specialization in Africa.

Aarie: huge thanks to Fred; great working with your Fred and appreciate all your efforts leaving the group. Aarie's book just out with Oxford University Press.

Michelle, Rina, others, chime in with thanks for Fred.

Nick Cheesman, Nick Rush Smith, and Michelle Weitzel invite anyone to join them for informal IMM drinks this evening at 18:00. (Attendance was approximately 15 people.)

Additional Information

Calls for IMM awards and recognitions

- [IMM Spotlight Scholars](#) (our Spotlight Scholar webpage highlights outstanding early-career scholars whose work showcases or advances interpretive approaches to the study of politics. To nominate an early-career scholar for the Spotlight Scholar webpage, please use the following [form](#). Self-nominations are also welcome).
- 2023 Hayward Alker Award committee: Osman Balkan, chair (Swarthmore College), Yuna Blajer de la Garza (Loyola University), and Jessica Soedirgo (University of Amsterdam). The call for nominations is [here](#).
- 2023 Charles Taylor Award committee: Anastasia Shesterinina, chair (University of Sheffield), Mona El-Ghobashy (New York University), Ido Oren (University of Florida). The call for nominations is [here](#).
- 2023 Lee Ann Fujii Award committee: Natasha Behl, co-chair (Arizona State University), Susan Thomson, co-chair (Colgate University), and Helen Kinsella (University of Minnesota, Twin Cities). The call for nominations is [here](#).

Stay connected

- [IMM Website](#) (for award info, course syllabi APSA events, Methods Clinics videos, the New Books Podcast, featured spotlight scholars, IMM bylaws, and more)
- [Interpretation & Methods listserv](#) (a venue for questions/discussion, information about workshops, conferences, publications, and the like)
- [IMM Facebook group](#) (open to anyone with an interest in interpretivism)
- Follow us on [Twitter](#)