



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON, DC

AU Newsmakers

February 17 – February 24, 2012

Prepared by University Communications

For prior weeks, go to <http://www.american.edu/media/inthedia.cfm>

Top Story

Quran Burning in Afghanistan Ignites Fury



On [CNN's Situation Room](#) and [ABC's World News Tonight with Diane Sawyer](#), Akbar Ahmed, chair of Islamic studies, discussed the significance and proper handling of the Quran after the burning of the Quran at an American base in Afghanistan. "For Muslims, the Quran is the word of God. When Muslims see it desecrated, they see this as an attack on Islam and they get angry and upset," explained Ahmed. (2/21)

Additional Features

Graduate Degrees, Certificates and Enrichment Programs

The Washington Post

The *Washington Post Sunday Magazine's* quarterly *Education Review* highlighted American University three times. In an [article about graduate education](#), Jonathan

Tubman, vice provost for graduate studies talked about how universities have a stake in marketplace outcomes. "There is incredible pressure to help students succeed," he says. An article about [enrichment classes](#) highlighted AU's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, and an [online supplemental article](#) on certificate programs again quoted Tubman. (2/19)

Jewish LGBT students celebrate identity

WASHINGTON JEWISH WEEK

A [Washington Jewish Week](#) article highlighted the National Union of Jewish LGBT Students conference hosted this year at American University. "After coming to AU and going to my first NUJLS conference last year, I really wanted to make it bigger. There's nothing else like this for students, and it really is a testament to the ongoing inclusivity within the Jewish community," said AU junior Jonathan Lipton, the conference's organizer. (2/22)

American University Musical Deals with Gay Bullying



Carl Menninger, director of theatre and musical theatre, and Matthew Ingraham, a sophomore musical theatre major, appeared on [WTTG FOX5](#) to discuss the community outreach they are doing for the department's production, BARE...A Pop Opera, to bring awareness to the impact of gay bullying. "With this show, we have a platform. We have an avenue in which to bring awareness to this issue." said Menninger. (2/23)

Expertise

Climate Scientist Admits Duping Skeptic Group to Obtain Documents

The Washington Post

Matt Nisbet, professor of communication, discussed with the [Washington Post](#) how politics and climate change are intersecting after a scientist admitted to falsifying his identity

to obtain documents. "Climate change is trapped in this larger polarization process that's happening in U.S. politics, and scientists are part of that. What you're seeing happening is some scientist activists and some climate leaders are actively mobilizing the scientific community, not just in the context of climate change, but in the context of the election," said Nisbet. (2/21)

Few in Ariz. Donating to Super PACs



In response to why Arizona had only a few super PAC contributors, **Candice Nelson**, professor of government, explained to [USA Today](#) that the majority of super PAC contributions come from states where presidential candidates have personal and political connections. "If [Arizona Senator John] McCain was running, my guess is there would be a super PAC for him and there would be Arizona donors," said Nelson. (2/17)

First Lady Michelle Obama Surprises White House Tourists



Anita McBride, executive in residence in the School of Public Affairs, spoke to [CBS This Morning](#) about First Lady Michelle Obama's surprise visit with White House tourists. "The best role for a first lady during an election year is, do no harm and spread as much good will as you possibly can. And, of course, get out on the campaign trail and raise a lot of money," said McBride. (2/17)

Rising Gas Prices: Should the White House Worry?



[CBS Radio](#) talked to **Leonard Steinhorn**, professor of communication, about why rising gas prices may be a political liability for the White House. "They [gas prices] are a tangible sign of pain for

the American people. The White House should be worried about anything that might slow down the economic recovery," said Steinhorn.

Six Reasons We're Feeling Debate Fatigue



"The American people are not especially interested in politics. Just over 50 percent of adult citizens vote in presidential elections and less than 50 percent in midterm elections. So debate fatigue is to be expected," said **Allan Lichtman**, distinguished professor of history, to [NPR.org](#) about the lack of

interest in debates this campaign season. (2/22)

2012: The Year of 'Birth Control Moms'?



Jennifer Lawless, director of the Women & Politics Institute, spoke to [Politico](#) about the elevation of contraception as a prominent political issue and the potential for a backlash on Republicans. "If women feel they are

being targeted again, that women's health is on the line—that's not an argument you want to make in an election year," said Lawless. (2/22)

Just in the Nick of Time



Speaking to [The Hill](#), **James Thurber**, director of the Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies, disagreed with the characterization of Congress as a group of procrastinators. "It's

deadlock. It's gridlock, but I would not describe it as procrastination," countered Thurber. (2/22)

Deepwater Case May Hold Many Twists for BP

FINANCIAL TIMES

For the [Financial Times](#) **Dan Jacobs**, director of the sustainability management program, analyzed BP and its co-defendants' willingness to cut settlements as the civil case begins. "As a Justice Department attorney, this is the kind of case you dream of trying for any number of reasons—not the least of which is that the defendants are shooting at each other," said Jacobs. (2/21) **subscription required*

The rise and popularity of lists on the Web



Amy Eisman, director of writing programs in the School of Communication, talked to [WJLA-ABC7](#) about the popularity of lists. "The web encourages busy people to prioritize and that's why easy-to-digest lists have exploded online. If it's big, thick paragraphs of text, your eye skips it and you say, ah, that looks like homework. If it's a list with either numbers or bullets, it's really easy to absorb," said Eisman. (2/20)

Putin and Russia's Military Power : A View from America



For [Voice of America](#) **Anton Fedyashin**, associate director of the Initiative for Russian Culture, analyzed a recent article by Russia's Vladimir Putin. "Of the six recent articles by Putin, this is the most professional and detailed. It seems that this article tries to justify everything that was done over the past four years and will be done by the Ministry of Defense," said Fedyashin. (2/21) **Original in Russian; use Google Translator.*