

# Rachel Porter

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Department of Political Science  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
303 Hamilton Hall  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514

✉ [rachsur@live.unc.edu](mailto:rachsur@live.unc.edu)  
🌐 [rachelporter.org](http://rachelporter.org)  
🔗 [porter-rachel](https://github.com/porter-rachel)

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

American political institutions, primary elections, Congress, political communication, elite behavior, computational social science, text-as-data, small area estimation

## EDUCATION

### The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Ph.D. Candidate, Political Science Expected: 2021

Concentrations: American Politics and Political Methodology

Committee: Sarah A. Treul (chair), Marc Hetherington, John Aldrich (Duke University), Jason M. Roberts, and Santiago Olivella

M.A., Political Science 2018

### University of Georgia

B.A., Political Science 2016

Phi Beta Kappa, Summa Cum Laude, Departmental Honors

## PUBLICATIONS

McDonald, Maura, **Rachel Porter** and Sarah Treul. 2020. "[Running as a Woman? Gender and the 2018 Congressional Election](#)." *Political Research Quarterly*. Online First.

Carson, Jamie L., Jason M. Roberts, and **Rachel Porter**. 2020. "The Nationalization of Congressional Elections" in *New Directions in Congressional Politics*, 2nd Ed.: Routledge.

Lynch, Michael S., Anthony J. Madonna, and **Rachel Surminsky**. 2016. "Irregular Order: Examining the Changing Congressional Amending Process" in *Party and Procedure in the United States Congress*, 2nd Ed.: Rowland & Little.

## WORKING PAPERS

[Reevaluating Experience in Congressional Primary Elections](#),  
with Sarah A. Treul (**Under Review**)

[Estimating the Ideology of Primary Electorates](#), (**Under Review**)

[Descriptive Candidacies & Position-Taking in Campaigns for the U.S. House of Representatives](#), with Sarah A. Treul and Maura McDonald (**Under Review**)

[No Experience Required: Early Donations and Amateur Success in Primary Elections](#),  
with Tyler Steelman

## IN PROGRESS

Estimating Common Topics from Multiple Corpora using Keyword-Assisted Topic Models, with Kosuke Imai and Santiago Olivella (software and manuscript under development)

Setting the Narrative: Campaign Styles in Congressional Elections, with Sarah A. Treul (book manuscript under development, expected completion Summer 2021)

Partisan Rhetoric and Party Consistency: A Modern Look at Local Issues (manuscript under development; analysis from dissertation project)

Party Support and Candidate Communication in Elections for the U.S. House of Representatives *with Hans J.G. Hassell* (data collection underway)

Measuring Partisan-Consistency in Congressional Elections (data analysis underway)

## OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Treul, Sarah and Rachel Porter. 20 April, 2018. "[Inexperienced candidates are becoming more common, but only in one party.](#)" *Mischiefs of Faction* - Vox

Surminsky, Rachel and Michael S. Lynch. 20 November, 2014. "[When Congress sues the president, it's likely to fail.](#)" *The Monkey Cage* - Washington Post

## FELLOWSHIPS & SCHOLARSHIPS

Thomas M. Uhlman Fellowship, UNC Political Science (\$5000/year) 2016

Summer Research Fellowship, UNC Political Science, (\$3000/year)

Zell Miller Scholarship, State of Georgia (*full undergraduate tuition*) 2012

## GRANTS & AWARDS

Darlene Walker Summer Research Award, UNC Political Science (\$3000) 2020

Prestage-Cook Travel Award, Southern Political Science Association

Earle Wallace Award for Graduate Student Teaching, UNC Political Science 2019

Hughes Summer Research Award, UNC Political Science (\$2000)

Travel Grant, Society for Political Methodology

Thomas M. Uhlman Summer Research Award, UNC Political Science (\$3000) 2018

Travel Grant, Society for Political Methodology

Travel Grant, UNC-Chapel Hill Graduate School 2017

## TEACHING

### University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

#### *Instructor of Record*

POLI 281: Data in Politics I

Fall 2019, Spring 2020, Fall 2020

POLI 100: Introduction to American Politics

Spring 2019

#### *Teaching Assistant*

POLI 130: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Fall 2018

POLI 100: Introduction to American Politics

Fall 2017, Spring 2018

### Odum Institute for Research in Social Science, UNC - Chapel Hill

#### *Short Course Instructor*

Collecting & Analyzing Text in R

Spring 2019, Fall 2019, Spring 2020, Fall 2020

## MAJOR DATA COLLECTIONS

[Chapel Hill American Primaries Project](#) — Website Text Collection (2018-2020)

- Comprehensive text on biographies and platforms from campaign websites
- Platform policy positions hand-coded for major-topic area (N = ~29,000)

[Congressional Candidate Professional & Political Data Collection](#) (1980-2020)

- Past political/occupational experience for primary election candidates (N = 26,273)
- Candidate experience hand-coded from newspapers, websites, and archive records

**INVITED TALKS**

*Some Politics Are Still Local: Strategic Position Taking in Modern Campaigns for Congress*  
The University of Georgia, September 2020

*The Primary Decision: Emergence and Success in Congressional Elections*  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, February 2018

**CONFERENCE & WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS**

American Political Science Association Annual Conference 2020  
Society for Political Methodology Annual Meeting (Extended Poster Session)  
Southern Political Science Association Annual Conference

American Political Science Association Annual Conference 2019  
Society for Political Methodology Annual Meeting (Poster)  
Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting  
UNC-Chapel Hill Methods and Design Workshop

Society for Political Methodology Annual Meeting (Poster) 2018  
Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting  
UNC-Chapel Hill Methods and Design Workshop

Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting 2017

**METHODS TRAINING**

Classic Regression Models · Generalized Linear Models · Multilevel Modeling · Measurement Models · Text Mining & Analysis · Machine Learning · Game Theory I · Behavioral Economics & Experiments

**TECHNICAL SKILLS**

Programming: R, Stata, Python, HTML (basic)  
Applications: Qualtrics, L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X

**SERVICE**

Reviewer, Journal of Politics  
Coordinator, American Politics Research Group, UNC Political Science 2018 - 2020  
Field Representative, American Politics, UNC Political Science 2018 - 2019

**OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE**

[The Carl Vinson Institute of Government](#), Athens, GA  
*Public Policy Fellow, August 2015 - December 2015*

[Office of Congressman Rob Woodall \(GA-7\)](#), Washington, D.C.  
*Congressional Intern, May 2015 - August 2015*

**REFERENCES**

**Sarah A. Treul**  
Bowman & Gordon Gray Distinguished  
Term Professor  
Department of Political Science  
University of North Carolina  
[streul@email.unc.edu](mailto:streul@email.unc.edu)

**John Aldrich**  
Pfizer-Pratt University Distinguished  
Professor of Political Science  
Department of Political Science  
Duke University  
[aldrich@duke.edu](mailto:aldrich@duke.edu)

**Marc Hetherington**  
Raymond Dawson Distinguished  
Bicentennial Professor of Political Science  
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University of North Carolina  
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**Santiago Olivella**  
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