

# Rachel Porter

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## EDUCATION

### The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Ph.D. Candidate, Political Science

Expected: 2021

*Fields: American Politics and Political Methodology*

*Dissertation Fellowship: Social Science Research Council*

M.A., Political Science

2018

### The University of Georgia

B.A., Political Science & International Affairs

2016

*Distinctions: Phi Beta Kappa, Summa Cum Laude*

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

American Political Institutions | Campaigns & Elections | Congress | Women in Politics  
Natural Language Processing | Computational Social Science | Small Area Estimation

## 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*, 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*, Rowland & Little.

## WORKING PAPERS

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

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

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

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

## 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)

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

## OTHER PUBLICATIONS

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

**DATA SCIENCE & TECH STACK**

**Languages:** R (expert), Stata (expert), Python (proficient)

**Programs:** Qualtrics (survey & experimental design), Latex, Adobe Creative Suite

**Machine Learning:** caret, Tensorflow / Keras, ML models for topic discovery

**High Performance Computing:** AWS, Linux-based computing systems

**Statistical Modeling:** classic regression models, generalized linear models, multilevel modeling, measurement models for sampling bias correction

**TEACHING****University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**

*Instructor of Record*

POLI 281: Data in Politics I Fall 2019, Spring 2020, Fall 2020, Summer 2021

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, Spring 2021

**FELLOWSHIPS & SCHOLARSHIPS**

Dissertation Completion Fellowship, UNC Graduate School (\$20,490 *plus tuition*) 2021

Social Data Dissertation Fellowship, Social Science Research Council (\$14,250) 2020

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

**INVITED TALKS**

*Changing the Dialogue: Descriptive Candidacies & Position-Taking in U.S. House Campaigns*  
The University of Notre Dame, February 2021

*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**

Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting 2021

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

## RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

**Co-PI & Research Assistant Supervisor** (2018-Present)  
Chapel Hill American Primaries Project

Collected novel data set of policy platforms and biographies from congressional candidate campaign websites (N ~ 4,000); developed web-scraper capable of identifying and extracting text of interest; recruited and managed interdisciplinary team of fifteen RAs

**Public Policy Fellow** (2015-2016)

The Carl Vinson Institute of Government, Athens, GA

Conducted a comprehensive assessment of "Georgia Leadership Legislative Institute" training program for newly elected/appointed state officials; presented findings to key stakeholders including CVOIG Director

**Congressional Intern, Office of Congressman Rob Woodall** (2015)

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC

## VOLUNTEER & SERVICE

**Reviewer:** Journal of Politics, Electoral Studies

**Co-Founder & Co-Organizer,** [Junior Americanist Workshop Series](#) (2020-Present)

**Program Coordinator,** [American Politics Working Group](#) (2017-2019)

**Field Representative,** UNC Department of Political Science (2018-2019)

**Executive Advisor,** [SWAB — 501\(c\)\(3\) Non-Profit](#) (2012-2017)

## 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)

**Marc Hetherington**

Raymond Dawson Distinguished  
Bicentennial Professor of Political Science  
Department of Political Science  
University of North Carolina  
[marcj@email.unc.edu](mailto:marcj@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)

**Santiago Olivella**

Associate Professor  
Department of Political Science  
University of North Carolina  
[olivella@unc.edu](mailto:olivella@unc.edu)