

Rachel Porter

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EDUCATION

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Ph.D. Candidate, Political Science

Expected: March 2022

M.A., Political Science

2018

Fields: American Politics and Political Methodology

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 | Computational Social Science
U.S. Congress | Women in Politics | Natural Language Processing | Big Data Analysis

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

[No Experience Required: Early Donations and Amateur Success in Primary Elections](#),
with Tyler Steelman (Conditionally Accepted at *Legislative Studies Quarterly*)

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

BOOK CHAPTERS

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

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

[Estimating the Ideological Extremity of Primary Electorates](#), (Under Review)

[Reevaluating Electoral Experience as a Predictor for Success in Congressional Elections](#), with Sarah A. Treul (Under Review)

IN PROGRESS

Fact or Friction?: Elite Communications to Constituents on America's Opioid Epidemic

- Presented at the APSA Political Communication Preconference (September 29th, 2021)

Follow the Activists?: Measuring Interest Group Coordination on Candidate Support in Congressional Elections, with Sarah A. Treul

- Presented at the APSA Frontiers in Money in Politics Preconference (September 28th, 2021)

Estimating Common Topics from Multiple Corpora using Keyword-Assisted Topic Models, with Kosuke Imai and Santiago Olivella

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

A Theory of Party Pivots in the U.S. Congress, *with John Aldrich, Suhyun Bae, Emily Cottle, and Patrick Ramjug*

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

INVITED TALKS

Washington University in St. Louis, October 2021
Fact or Friction?: Elite Communications to Constituents on America's Opioid Epidemic

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

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

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

FELLOWSHIPS & SCHOLARSHIPS

Dissertation Completion Fellowship , UNC Graduate School (\$20,490 <i>plus tuition</i>)	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 (<i>full undergraduate tuition</i>)	2012

GRANTS & AWARDS

Travel Grant, American Political Science Association	2021
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

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](#)

FA 2019, SP 2020, FA 2020, SSII 2021

[POLI 100: Introduction to American Politics](#)

Spring 2019

Teaching Assistant

POLI 130: Introduction to Comparative Politics

FA 2018

POLI 100: Introduction to American Politics

FA 2017, SP 2018

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

Short Course Instructor

[Collecting & Analyzing Text in R](#)

SP 2019, FA 2019, SP 2020, FA 2020, SP 2021

CONFERENCE & WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

American Political Science Association Annual Conference 2021

Political Communication; APSA Pre-Conference

Frontiers in Money and Politics; APSA Pre-Conference

Society for Political Methodology Annual Meeting (Extended Poster Session)

Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting

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 Session)

Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting

UNC-Chapel Hill Methods and Design Workshop

Society for Political Methodology Annual Meeting (Poster Session) 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 CVIOG Director

Congressional Intern, Office of Congressman Rob Woodall (2015)

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC

VOLUNTEER & SERVICE

Reviewer: Journal of Politics, Legislative Studies Quarterly, Electoral Studies
Graduate Student President, UNC Department of Political Science (2021-Present)
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

John Aldrich

Pfizer-Pratt University Distinguished
Professor of Political Science
Department of Political Science
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aldrich@duke.edu

Marc Hetherington

Raymond Dawson Distinguished
Bicentennial Professor of Political Science
Department of Political Science
University of North Carolina
marcj@email.unc.edu

Santiago Olivella

Associate Professor
Department of Political Science
University of North Carolina
olivella@unc.edu