

Jessica Persano

Pre-Doctoral Research Fellow
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Education

Stanford University Graduate School of Business	Jul 2025 – Present
Non-matriculated graduate student as a Predoctoral Research Fellow	
University of California, Los Angeles	Sept 2021 – Jun 2025
B.A. in Political Science (Honors), B.A. in Geography/Environmental Studies	
– GPA: 4.0 / 4.0	
– Honors Thesis: <i>The Determinants of Policy Representation: Evaluating the Role of Policy Type in the U.S. States</i>	

Research Interests

Election administration, political representation, public policy, data science

Research Experience

Predoctoral Research Fellow, Stanford Graduate School of Business	Jul 2025 – Present
– PI: <i>Andrew B. Hall</i>	
– Assist on multiple projects involving large-scale quantitative datasets related to American politics, political economy, and AI usage in academia.	
Research Assistant, UCLA Department of Political Science	Oct 2022 – Present
– PI: <i>Daniel M. Thompson</i>	
– Assist on projects analyzing local election administration using large-scale quantitative data.	
– Contributed to a published study in <i>PNAS</i> on private election funding and partisan outcomes.	
Independent Undergraduate Researcher, UCLA Department of Political Science	Mar 2024 – Jun 2025
– Advisor: <i>Julia Payson</i>	
– Designed and completed an honors thesis examining how policy type and political salience shape democratic responsiveness in U.S. states.	
Research Assistant, UCLA Fielding School of Public Health	Jun 2023 – Jun 2025
– PI: <i>Jennifer Wagman</i>	
– Led an independent qualitative study under investigating barriers to post-assault care for UCLA students with disabilities.	
– Collaborated with a public health research team on a project examining accessibility of post-assault resources and institutional responses to sexual violence at UCLA.	
Research Intern, Center for American Progress	Jun 2024 – Dec 2024
– Supervisor: <i>Will Ragland</i>	
– Conducted rapid-response research and supported policy development across a range of progressive issue areas for the CAP Research Team.	

Research Output

Completed Papers

2. "From Office to Opportunity: Evaluating the Role of Descriptive Representation on Candidate Emergence in U.S. Swing States." [\[GitHub\]](#)
 - *UCLA PS170A final paper; joint with Jolie Anderson, Xuanting Fan. June 2025.*
1. "The Determinants of Policy Representation: Evaluating the Role of Policy Type in the U.S. States." [\[GitHub\]](#)
 - *Solo-authored senior honors thesis, UCLA Political Science Department. April 2025.*

Working Papers

2. "Do Claude Code and Codex P-Hack? Sycophancy and Statistical Analysis in Large Language Models." [\[GitHub\]](#)
 - *Joint with Samuel G.Z. Asher, Janet Malzahn, Elliot Paschal, Andrew C.W. Myers, Andrew B. Hall. February 2026.*
1. "Police Chief Performance and Turnover."
 - *Joint with Daniel M. Thompson. November 2025.*

Works in Progress

2. "Sexual Assault Experiences and Access to Resources Among UCLA Students with Disabilities."
 - *Solo-authored independent research project.*
1. "Survivors' Experiences and Recommendations for Improving Responses to Sexual Violence at UCLA."
 - *Joint with Jennifer Wagman, Taylor Thomas, Natalie Saham, Wafa Khan, Georgia Lavery Van Parijs, Julianne Lempert.*

Non-Academic Works

1. "From Personnel to Policy: Project 2025 Is President Donald Trump's Agenda." [\[Article\]](#)
 - *Joint with Ryan Koronowski and Thomas Musgrave, Center for American Progress. August 2024.*

Presentations

Professional Conference Presentations

1. "Are Police Leaders Held Accountable for Performance?"
 - *Justice and Injustice Mini-Conference, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. November 2025.*

Seminars & Workshops

4. "Investing in Political Expertise: The Remarkable Scale of Corporate Policy Teams."
 - *Stanford GSB RF Program Weekly Workshop. November 2025.*
3. "From Office to Opportunity: Evaluating the Role of Descriptive Representation on Candidate Emergence in U.S. Swing States."
 - *UCLA PS170A Poster Day. June 2025.*
2. "The Determinants of Policy Representation: Evaluating the Role of Policy Type in the U.S. States."
 - *UCLA Undergraduate Research Week. May 2025.*
1. "Sexual Assault Experiences and Access to Resources Among UCLA Students with Disabilities."
 - *UCLA Undergraduate Research Week. May 2024.*

Selected Coursework

Course	University	Level	Grade
American Electorate in the Trump Era	Stanford	Graduate	TBD
Introduction to Probability Theory	Stanford	Undergraduate	TBD
Political Parties and Interest Groups	UCLA	Undergraduate	A
National Institutions: Congress	UCLA	Undergraduate	A+
Electoral Politics: Public Opinion & Voting Behavior	UCLA	Undergraduate	A
National Institutions: The Presidency	UCLA	Undergraduate	A+
Honors Research in Political Science	UCLA	Undergraduate	A+
Research Design Seminar for Honors Thesis	UCLA	Undergraduate	A+
Studies in Statistical Analysis of Political Data	UCLA	Undergraduate	A
Intermediate Geographic Information Systems	UCLA	Undergraduate	A
Introduction to Remote Sensing	UCLA	Undergraduate	A

Awards and Fellowships

Stanford GSB Research Fellowship, <i>Stanford Graduate School of Business</i>	Jul 2025
Departmental Highest Honors, <i>UCLA Department of Political Science</i>	Jun 2025
Distinguished Undergraduate Scholar Award, <i>UCLA Department of Political Science</i>	Jun 2025
Blackman Family Award, <i>UCLA Department of Geography</i>	Jun 2025
Summa Cum Laude, <i>UCLA College of Letters and Science</i>	Jun 2025
Keck Humanistic Inquiry Research Award (\$10,000), <i>UCLA Undergraduate Research Center</i>	Sept 2024
Departmental Honors Program, <i>UCLA Department of Political Science</i>	Apr 2024
Undergraduate Research Scholars Program (\$6,000), <i>UCLA Undergraduate Research Center</i>	Sept 2023
Dean's Honors List (all eligible quarters), <i>UCLA College of Letters and Science</i>	2021 – 2025

Leadership and Service

Peer Mentor, <i>UCLA Political Science Undergraduate Council</i>	Mar 2025 – Present
Co-Director, <i>SWC Planned Parenthood Chapter at UCLA</i>	Sept 2024 – Jun 2025
President, <i>IGNITE at UCLA</i>	Mar 2024 – Jun 2025
Membership Director, <i>Westside Young Democrats</i>	Jun 2023 – Jun 2025

Skills

Programming & Statistical Analysis: R, Stata, Python, SQL	
Data Tools & Platforms: Redivis, Qualtrics, Git/GitHub, L ^A T _E X	
Geospatial Analysis: QGIS, ArcGIS Pro, ENVI	
Research & Communication: Quantitative and qualitative research, regression analysis, survey data analysis, literature reviews, academic writing, policy research, public speaking, project management, IRB applications	

Professional References

Professor Andrew Hall

Davies Family Professor of Political Economy, Stanford Graduate School of Business; Senior Fellow, Hoover Institution

andyhall@stanford.edu | [Personal Page](#) | [Google Scholar](#)

Professor Daniel Thompson

Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of California, Los Angeles

dthompson@polisci.ucla.edu | [Personal Page](#) | [Google Scholar](#)

Professor Julia Payson

Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of California, Los Angeles
jpayson@ucla.edu | [Personal Page](#) | [Google Scholar](#)

Professor Jennifer Wagman

Associate Professor of Community Health Sciences, University of California, Los Angeles Fielding School of Public Health
jennwagman@ucla.edu | [Lab Website](#) | [Google Scholar](#)

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