

Jessica Persano

Pre-Doctoral Research Fellow
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EDUCATION

Stanford University Graduate School of Business
Non-matriculated graduate student as a Predoctoral Research Fellow

Jul 2025 – Present

University of California, Los Angeles
B.A. in Political Science (Honors), B.A. in Geography/Environmental Studies

Sept 2021 – Jun 2025

- GPA: 4.0 / 4.0
- Honors Thesis: *The Determinants of Policy Representation: Evaluating the Role of Policy Type in the U.S. States*

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Election administration, political representation, public policy, data science

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Predoctoral Research Fellow

July 2025 - Present
Stanford, CA

Stanford Graduate School of Business

- Support Professor Andrew Hall on multiple projects involving large-scale quantitative datasets related to American politics and political economy.

Research Assistant

Oct 2022 – Present
Los Angeles, CA

UCLA Department of Political Science

- Assist Professor Daniel Thompson on projects analyzing local election administration using large-scale quantitative data.
- Contributed to a published study in *PNAS* on private election funding and partisan outcomes.

Undergraduate Researcher

Mar 2024 – Jun 2025
Los Angeles, CA

UCLA Department of Political Science

- Designed and completed an honors thesis under Professor Julia Payson examining how policy type and political salience shape democratic responsiveness in U.S. states.

Research Assistant

Jun 2023 – Jun 2025
Los Angeles, CA

UCLA Fielding School of Public Health

- Collaborated with a public health research team on a project examining accessibility of post-assault resources and institutional responses to sexual violence at UCLA.

Undergraduate Researcher

Jun 2023 – Jun 2025
Los Angeles, CA

UCLA Fielding School of Public Health

- Led an independent qualitative study under Professor Jennifer Wagman investigating barriers to post-assault care for UCLA students with disabilities.

Research Intern

Jun 2024 – Dec 2024
Washington, D.C.

Center for American Progress

- Conducted rapid-response research and supported policy development across a range of progressive issue areas for the CAP Research Team.

PROJECTS

Police Chief Performance and Turnover

Mar 2024 – Present

Working paper with Daniel Thompson

From Office to Opportunity: Evaluating the Role of Descriptive Representation on Candidate Emergence in U.S. Swing States

Mar 2025 – Jun 2025

Co-authored class final paper with Jolie Anderson and Xuanting Fan (UCLA PS170A)

The Determinants of Policy Representation: Evaluating the Role of Policy Type in the U.S. States Mar 2024 – Apr 2025

Solo-authored senior honors thesis ([GitHub Repository](#))

Survivors' Experiences with and Recommendations for Improving Responses to Sexual Violence at UCLA Jun 2023 – Jun 2025

Working paper with Jennifer Wagman, Georgia Lavery Van Parijs, and Julianne Lempert

Exploring Sexual Assault Experiences and Access to Resources Among UCLA Students with Disabilities Jun 2023 – Jun 2025

Working solo-authored independent research project

From Personnel to Policy: Project 2025 Is President Donald Trump's Agenda Jun 2024 – Aug 2024

Published [article](#) with Ryan Koronowski and Thomas Musgrave, Center for American Progress

PRESENTATIONS

Investing in Political Expertise: The Remarkable Scale of Corporate Policy Teams Nov 2025
Paper presented at Stanford GSB RF Program Weekly Workshop (Stanford, CA)

From Office to Opportunity: Evaluating the Role of Descriptive Representation on Candidate Emergence in U.S. Swing States Jun 2025
Poster presented at UCLA PS170A Poster Day (Los Angeles, CA)

The Determinants of Policy Representation: Evaluating the Role of Policy Type in the U.S. States May 2025
Paper presented at UCLA Undergraduate Research Week (Los Angeles, CA)

Exploring Sexual Assault Experiences and Access to Resources Among UCLA Students with Disabilities May 2024
Paper presented at UCLA Undergraduate Research Week (Los Angeles, CA)

PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Are Police Leaders Held Accountable for Performance? Nov 2025
Justice and Injustice Mini-Conference, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Cambridge, MA)

SELECTED COURSEWORK

Course Title	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

Stanford GSB Research Fellowship Jul 2025
Awarded by the Stanford Graduate School of Business to predoctoral fellows conducting full-time research under faculty mentorship

Blackman Family Award Jun 2025
Awarded by UCLA Department of Geography to the top 10 graduating seniors based on major GPA

Departmental Highest Honors	Jun 2025
Awarded by UCLA Political Science Department for completing a senior honors thesis with an A+ and GPA of at least 3.95	
Distinguished Undergraduate Scholar Award	Jun 2025
Awarded by UCLA Political Science Department to three students with the most outstanding honors theses	
Summa Cum Laude	Jun 2025
Conferred by the UCLA College of Letters and Science to students graduating in the top 5% of their class (GPA of 3.994 or higher)	
Keck Humanistic Inquiry Undergraduate Research Award	Sept 2024
Awarded by UCLA Undergraduate Research Center; \$10,000 to support faculty-mentored honors thesis in political science	
UCLA Political Science Departmental Honors Program	Apr 2024
Selected by UCLA Political Science Department as one of 12 students to complete a faculty-mentored senior honors thesis	
Undergraduate Research Scholars Program Scholarship	Sept 2023
Awarded by UCLA Undergraduate Research Center; \$6,000 to support yearlong independent research under faculty mentorship	
Dean's Honors List	2021 - 2025
Awarded by UCLA to students earning a GPA of 3.915+ with 12 graded units; received all eligible quarters	

LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

Peer Mentor	Mar 2025 – Present
<i>UCLA Political Science Undergraduate Council</i>	Los Angeles, CA
• Provide individualized academic and professional guidance to a first-year political science student, offering mentorship on course planning, research opportunities, and campus involvement.	
Co-Director	Sept 2024 – Jun 2025
<i>SWC Planned Parenthood Chapter at UCLA</i>	Los Angeles, CA
• Led a 50+ member reproductive justice organization by coordinating volunteer onboarding, facilitating biweekly meetings and educational programming, and managing leadership transitions in collaboration with Planned Parenthood Los Angeles.	
President	Mar 2024 – Jun 2025
<i>IGNITE at UCLA</i>	Los Angeles, CA
• Oversaw weekly meetings for 90+ members, led a UC-wide advocacy campaign for sexual assault forensic exam access, and coordinated statewide partnerships and media outreach to advance reproductive justice policy goals.	
Membership Director	Jun 2023 – Jun 2025
<i>Westside Young Democrats</i>	Los Angeles, CA
• Maintained membership records for 100+ members, managed communications and renewals via ActBlue and Google Sheets, and increased engagement through strategic email outreach and event coordination.	

SKILLS

- **Programming & Statistical Analysis:** R, Stata, Python, SQL
- **Data Tools & Platforms:** Redivis, Qualtrics, Git/GitHub, L^AT_EX
- **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; Se-

nior Fellow, Stanford Institute for Economy Policy Research; Professor of Political Science (by courtesy), Stanford University
E-mail: andyhall@stanford.edu
Scholar Profiles: [Personal Page](#) — [Google Scholar](#)

Professor Daniel Thompson

Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of California, Los Angeles
E-mail: dthompson@polisci.ucla.edu
Scholar Profiles: [Personal Page](#) — [Google Scholar](#)

Professor Julia Payson

Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of California, Los Angeles
E-mail: jpayson@ucla.edu
Scholar Profiles: [Personal Page](#) — [Google Scholar](#)

Professor Jennifer Wagman

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