Mellissa Meisels

✉ mellissa.b.meisels@vanderbilt.edu   🌐 www.mellissameisels.com

Appointments & Affiliations

YALE UNIVERSITY

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science	2025 –
Faculty Affiliate, Institution for Social and Policy Studies	
Postdoctoral Associate, Center for the Study of American Politics	2024 – 2025

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

Visiting Scholar, Democracy Center	March 2023

Education

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

Ph.D. Political Science	2019 – 2024

FIELDS: American Politics, Political Methodology
DISSERTATION: Essays on Congressional Campaign Agendas
COMMITTEE: Josh Clinton (chair), Larry Bartels, Alan Wiseman, Danielle Thomsen
Graduate Affiliate, Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions

M.A. Political Science	2019 – 2022

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

B.A. Political Science	2015 – 2018

Magna cum laude
ADVISOR: John Zaller

Peer–Reviewed Publications

Mellissa Meisels, Joshua D. Clinton, and Gregory A. Huber. 2024. "Giving to the Extreme? Experimental Evidence on Donor Response to Candidate and District Characteristics." *British Journal of Political Science*. FirstView.

Working Papers

Campaign Agendas and Issue Group Strategy in Congressional Primaries
PRESENTATIONS: APSA MIP Pre-Conference 2023, APSA 2023, JAWS Fall 2023, MPSA 2024

Positioning in Congressional Primary Campaigns
　　Presentations: MPSA 2023, PolMeth 2023
　　— 2023 Vanderbilt Political Science Outstanding Graduate Paper Award

Everything in Moderation? The Effect of Candidate Extremism on Individual and Corporate PAC Fundraising
　　Presentations: MPSA 2021, PolMeth 2022

Competition and Free-Riding in Electoral Campaigns with Outside Spending (*with Brenton Kenkel*)
　　Presentations: MPSA 2022, APSA MIP Pre-Conference 2022, APSA 2022, VFT 2023

Other Publications

Mellissa Meisels. 2024. "Political Donors Prefer Extreme Candidates, but the Competitiveness of the Election and their Opponent's Views Matter Too." *LSE United States Politics & Policy Blog.*

Awards, Grants, & Fellowships

Outstanding Doctoral Student Award, Vanderbilt University Graduate School	2024
Harold Stirling Vanderbilt Award, Vanderbilt University Graduate School	2022 – 2024
Russell G. Hamilton Scholar, Vanderbilt University Graduate School	2019 – 2024
Outstanding Graduate Research Paper Award, Vanderbilt Political Science	2023
Virginia Gray Graduate Student Research Award, APSA POP Section	2023
Conference Travel Grant, American Political Science Association	2023
J. Leiper Freeman Memorial Award, Vanderbilt Political Science	2021, 2023
NSF Travel and Participation Award, Society for Political Methodology	2022, 2023
Travel Grant, Vanderbilt University Graduate School	2022, 2023
University Graduate Fellowship, Vanderbilt University Graduate School	2019 – 2022
Research Assistant Funding, Vanderbilt ROCCA Lab	2022
Lew and Edie Wasserman Grant, UCLA Alumni Association	2016 – 2019
UCLA Alumni Scholarship, UCLA Alumni Association	2015 – 2019

Presentations

Invited Talks

Department of Government, University of Texas at Austin	2023
Department of Political Science, Syracuse University	2023
Department of Political Science, University of California, San Diego	2023
Department of Political Science, Yale University	2023
Department of Political Science, Stanford University	2023
Department of Government, American University	2023
Department of Political Science, University of Rochester	2023

Junior Americanist Workshop Series	2023
Virtual Formal Theory Workshop	2023
Vanderbilt Graduate Ideas Symposium	2023
Money in Politics Pre-Conference, American Political Science Association	2021 – 2023

Annual Meetings

Society for Political Methodology	2022 – 2023
American Political Science Association	2021 – 2023
Midwest Political Science Association	2021 – 2024

Teaching Assistance

PSCI 3893 — American Democracy and Dissent	2024
PSCI 3244 — The Legislative Process	2023
Guest Lecture: University of Rochester, PSCI 260 — Democratic Erosion	2023
PSCI 3260 — Introduction to American Law	2022
PSCI 2260 — Constitutional Law	2022
DSCI 1000 — Data Science: How Data Shape Our World	2021
PSCI 2300 — Introduction to Data Science for Politics	2021
PSCI 1150 — U.S. Elections	2020

Other Research Experience

Research Assistant

AAPOR Task Force on 2020 Pre-Election Polls	2020
Parties on the Ground by John Zaller et al.	2017 – 2018
Identity Crisis by John Sides, Michael Tesler, and Lynn Vavreck	2016

Fact Checker

The Engagement by Sasha Issenberg	2019

Service

Co-President, Vanderbilt Political Science Graduate Student Association	2021 – 2023
Panel Chair, Women in Legislative Studies Conference	2022
Reviewer: *Party Politics, Electoral Studies, Journal of Politics*	