

Rachel Porter

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APPOINTMENTS

University of Notre Dame

Notre Dame du Lac Assistant Professor of Political Science 2024 –
Assistant Professor, Political Science 2022 –
Computational Social Science Fellow, Lucy Institute for Data & Society 2022 –

EDUCATION

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Ph.D., Political Science 2022
Fields: American Politics & Political Methodology
Dissertation: [Some Politics Are Still Local: Strategic Position Taking in Congress & Elections](#)

- Winner of the 2023 APSA E.E. Schattschneider Award

M.A., Political Science

The University of Georgia

B.A., Political Science & International Affairs 2016

- Phi Beta Kappa, Summa Cum Laude

BOOKS

Colin R. Case and **Rachel Porter**. *Scaling the Meaning of Text: A Word Embedding Approach*. Cambridge University Press, Elements in Quantitative and Computational Methods in Social Sciences. (Under Contract)

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Colin R. Case and **Rachel Porter**. ["Conceptualizing and Measuring Early Campaign Fundraising in Congressional Elections."](#) *Political Science Research & Methods*. Conditionally Accepted Pending Replication.

Rachel Porter and Sarah A. Treul. ["Evaluating \(in\)experience in congressional elections."](#) 2025. *The American Journal of Political Science*. 69(1): 284-298.

- Featured on Mischief of Faction-Vox [🔗](#), FiveThirtyEight [🔗](#), The Science of Politics podcast [🔗](#), and Politics in Question podcast [🔗](#)

Rachel Porter, Sarah A. Treul, and Maura McDonald. 2024. ["Changing the Dialogue: Descriptive Candidacies and Position Taking in Campaigns for the US House of Representatives."](#) *The Journal of Politics*, 86(2): 458-474.

Rachel Porter and Tyler Steelman. 2023. ["No Experience Required: Early Donations and Amateur Success in Congressional Primaries."](#) *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 48(2): 455-466.

- One of the top 10 most-cited papers published in LSQ for 2023-2024

Christina Ladam, Austin Bussing, Alexander C. Furnas, Josh McCrain, David R. Miller, and **Rachel Porter**. 2022. ["The Junior Americanist Workshop Series \(JAWS\)."](#) *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 55(3), 552-553.

Maura McDonald, **Rachel Porter** and Sarah A. Treul. 2020. "[Running as a Woman? Gender and the 2018 Congressional Election.](#)" *Political Research Quarterly*, 73(4): 967-987.

BOOK CHAPTERS

Jamie L. Carson, Jason M. Roberts, and **Rachel Porter**. 2020. "[The Nationalization of Congressional Elections](#)" in *New Directions in Congressional Politics*, Routledge.

Michael S. Lynch, 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.

SELECT WORKS IN PROGRESS

Under Review

Ben Francis*, **Rachel Porter**, and Bill Kakenmaster*. [Intra-Party Variation on Climate Change Positions in U.S. Elections](#)

Colin R. Case and **Rachel Porter**. [Measuring Policy Positioning in U.S. Elections.](#)

Rachel Porter, Jeffrey J. Harden, Emily Anderson*, Mackenzie Dobson*, Abigail Hemmen*, Géssica de Freitas*, and Emma Schroeder*. [The Consequences of Elite Action Against Elections.](#)

Projects in Preparation

Colin R. Case, Emily Cottle Ommundsen, and **Rachel Porter**. Congressional Campaign Strategy and Bipartisan Tendencies.

James Bisbee, Patrick Y. Wu, Maggie Macdonald, Megan Brown, and **Rachel Porter**. Small Dollars & Globalization: How Layoffs Translate to Costly Political Action.

Maggie Macdonald, **Rachel Porter**, and Megan Brown*. Do Small Donors Make a Big Difference in U.S. Elections?: Evidence from 50 Million Campaign Contributions.

Pamela Ban, Jaclyn Kaslovsky, and **Rachel Porter**. Social Class, Gender, and Participation in the U.S. Congress

Rachel Porter. Elite Framing of America's Opioid Epidemic in Congress & Elections

Rachel Porter and Sarah A. Treul. *The Amateur Advantage: Understanding the Rise of Political Inexperience in Congress & Elections* (Book manuscript)

* = Graduate Student Coauthor

GRANTS & AWARDS

Awards & Honors

- E.E. Schattschneider Award for best dissertation in American politics, APSA (2023)
- Earle Wallace Award for Graduate Student Teaching, UNC Political Science (2019)

External Funding

- Unite America Primary Elections Reform Grant. "Measuring Issue Polarization." Total Award: **\$21,745**. (2023-2024; Co-PI with Colin R. Case)

- Center for Effective Lawmaking Small Grant. "Bipartisan Messaging in Elections." Total Award: **\$1,000**. (2024; Co-PI with Colin R. Case and Emily Cottle Ommundsen)
- APSA Centennial Research Grant. "Junior Americanist Workshop Series CwC at MPSA." Total Award: **\$10,000**. (2022, Co-PI with Austin Bussing, Leah Christiani, Zander Furnas, Christina Ladam, Josh McCrain, and David Miller)
- Social Science Research Council Social Data Dissertation Fellowship. "Some Politics Are Still Local." Total Award: **\$15,000**. (2020)

Internal Funding

- Notre Dame ISLA International Travel Grant. **\$1,000** (2024)
- UNC Graduate School Dissertation Completion Fellowship. **\$20,500 plus tuition**. (2021)
- UNC Political Science Hughes Summer Research Award. **\$2000**, (2020)
- UNC Political Science Darlene Walker Summer Research Award. **\$3000** (2019)
- UNC Political Science, Thomas M. Uhlman Fellowship. **\$5000/year**. (2016-2021)
- UNC Political Science, Summer Research Fellowship. **\$3000/year**. (2016-2021)

TEACHING

University of Notre Dame

Instructor of Record

- POLS 30005: The United States Congress FA 2023; SP 2024; SP 2025
- POLS 40811: Quantitative Political Analysis SP 2023; SP 2024; SP 2025
- POLS 60040: American Political Institutions (Graduate Seminar) FA 2022, FA 2024

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 SP 2019

PRESENTATIONS

Invited Presentations

2025

University of Michigan, American Institutions Group Workshop (scheduled); University of Kentucky Martin School of Public Policy, Workshop Series (scheduled); University of North Carolina, American Politics Research Group (scheduled); University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy, Center for Effective Governance Conference (scheduled)

2024

University of California-San Diego, American Politics Workshop; University of California-Berkeley, Winter American Politics Research Meeting; Washington University in St. Louis, Stories that Win Symposium; Unite America, Research Symposium on Primary Elections (May); University of Virginia, Center for Effective Lawmaking Conference; Wesleyan University, Wesleyan Media Project Election Conference

2023

University of Chicago, American Politics Workshop; Women in Legislative Studies (WiLS) Seminar Series; Georgetown University, American Government Seminar Series

2022

University of Oklahoma, Carl Albert Center Legislative Studies Conference; Purdue University, Political Science Workshop

2021

University of Notre Dame, Rooney Workshop Series; Bowling Green State University, Speaker Series; Washington University in St. Louis, Political Science Speaker Series; University of Georgia, Emerging Issues in Political Science Speaker Series

Conference Presentations

- MPSA (2017, 2028, 2029, 2021, 2023, 2024, 2025)
- APSA (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024)
- State Politics & Policy Annual Conference (2024)
- CBS-Princeton Money in Politics Conference (2024)
- Visions in Methodology Conference (2024)
- Frontiers in Money and Politics APSA Pre-Conference (2021, 2023)
- PolMeth (2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2025)
- Women in Legislative Studies Conference (2023)
- Southern Political Science Association Annual Conference (2020)

PUBLIC WRITING

Porter, Rachel and Sarah Treul. 22 April, 2024. "[Evaluating \(in\)experience in congressional elections](#)." *American Journal of Political Science - Author Summaries*.

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*

VOLUNTEER & SERVICE

Program Committee, Society for Political Methodology Annual Conference 2025

Program Committee, MPSA Primary Elections Mini-Conference 2024, 2025
(organized with Sarah Anderson, Dan Butler, Colin Case, and Laurel Harbridge-Yong)

Program Committee, [Visions in Methodology \(VIM\) Conference](#) 2024

Co-Founder & Co-Organizer, [Junior Americanist Workshop Series](#) 2020-2024

Program Committee, MPSA JAWS Mini-Conference 2023
(organized with David Miller, Austin Bussing, Leah Christiani, Zander Furnas)

Referee: American Journal of Political Science; American Political Science Review; British Journal of Political Science; Electoral Studies; Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties; Political Research Quarterly; Journal of Politics; Journal of Women, Politics & Policy; Legislative Studies Quarterly; National Science Foundation; Policy Studies Journal; Political Behavior; Political Science Research & Methods; Politics & Gender; Research & Politics;

Social Science Quarterly

Discussant & Panelist: American Political Science Association Annual Meeting; Frontiers of Money & Politics Pre-Conference at APSA; Copenhagen Business School Money in Politics Conference; Junior Americanist Workshop Series; Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting; Society for Political Methodology Annual Meeting; Women in Legislative Studies Professional Development Seminar

Departmental Service at the University of Notre Dame

Co-Director, Representation and Politics in Legislatures Lab	AY 23/24, 24/25
Field Chair, Methods	AY 24/25
Member, Committee on Inclusive Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship	AY 23/24
Co-Chair, Undergraduate Thesis Awards Committee	SP 2024
Member, Graduate Policy Council	AY 22/23
Admission Committee Member, Lucy Institute Graduate Fellows Program	SP 2023

Student Advising at the University of Notre Dame

Dissertation Committee Member

- Abigail Hemmen
- Emma Schroeder

Methods Paper Committee Member

- Géssica de Freitas
- Adriana Pilar Ferreira Albanus

Senior Thesis Advisor

- Elizabeth Borowiak (AY 25/26)
- Thomas Musgrave (AY 24/25)
- Erik Johansen (AY 24/25)
- Julia Thomalla (Co-Chair, AY 22/23)

Departmental Service at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

Graduate Student President, Department of Political Science	AY 21/22
Program Coordinator, American Politics Working Group	AY 18/19; 19/20
American Field Representative, Department of Political Science	AY 18/19