

# 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

### The University of Georgia

B.A., Political Science & International Affairs 2016  
• Phi Beta Kappa, Summa Cum Laude

## PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

1. **Porter, Rachel** and Sarah A. Treul. "Evaluating (in)experience in congressional elections." Online Ahead of Print at *The American Journal of Political Science*.
  - Featured on Mischief of Faction-Vox [🔗](#), FiveThirtyEight [🔗](#), The Science of Politics podcast [🔗](#), and Politics in Question podcast [🔗](#)
2. **Porter, Rachel**, 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.
3. **Porter, Rachel** 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
4. Ladam, Christina, 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.
5. McDonald, Maura, **Rachel Porter** and Sarah A. Treul. 2020. "Running as a Woman? Gender and the 2018 Congressional Election." *Political Research Quarterly*, 73(4): 967-987.

## BOOKS

1. Case, Colin R. 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)
2. **Porter, Rachel** and Sarah A. Treul. *The Amateur Advantage: Understanding the Rise of Political Inexperience in Congress & Elections* (Manuscript in progress)
3. **Porter, Rachel**. *Some Politics Are Still Local: Representation in the Era of Nationalized Politics* (Data extension in progress)
  - 2023 APSA E.E. Schattschneider Award for the best dissertation in American government [🔗](#)

## BOOK CHAPTERS

1. Carson, Jamie L., Jason M. Roberts, and **Rachel Porter**. 2020. "The Nationalization of Congressional Elections" in *New Directions in Congressional Politics*, Routledge.
2. 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.

## SELECT WORKS IN PROGRESS

### Under Review

Conceptualizing and Measuring Early Campaign Fundraising in Congressional Elections (with Colin R. Case) Revise & Resubmit at *Political Science Research & Methods* [↗](#)

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

### Working Papers

Do Small Donors Make a Big Difference in U.S. Elections?: Evidence from 50 Million Campaign Contributions (with Maggie Macdonald and Megan Brown\*)

Intra-Party Variation on Climate Change Positions in U.S. Elections (with Ben Francis\* and Bill Kakenmaster\*)

Measuring Policy Positioning in U.S. Elections (with Colin R. Case) [↗](#)

Policy Fact or Partisan Friction?: Elite Framing of America's Opioid Epidemic

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

\* = 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
- POLS 40811: Quantitative Political Analysis SP 2023; SP 2024
- 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

#### *Teaching Assistant*

- POLI 130: Introduction to Comparative Politics FA 2018
- POLI 100: Introduction to American Politics FA 2017, SP 2018

## PRESENTATIONS

### Invited Presentations

- University of Kentucky, Public Policy Workshop Series (2025, scheduled)
- University of North Carolina, American Politics Research Group (2025, scheduled)
- University of California-San Diego, American Politics Workshop (2024)
- University of California-Berkeley, Winter American Politics Research Meeting (2024)
- University of Virginia, Center for Effective Lawmaking Conference (2024)
- University of Chicago, American Politics Workshop (2023)
- Georgetown University, American Government Seminar Series (2023)
- University of Oklahoma, Carl Albert Center Legislative Studies Conference (2022)
- Purdue University, Political Science Workshop (2022)
- Washington University in St. Louis, Political Science Speaker Series (2021)
- University of Notre Dame, Rooney Workshop Series (2021)
- Bowling Green State University, Speaker Series (2021)
- University of Georgia, Emerging Issues in Political Science Speaker Series (2020)

### Conference Presentations

- APSA (2024, 2023, 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019)
- MPSA (2024, 2023, 2021, 2019, 2018, 2017)
- State Politics & Policy Annual Conference (2024)

- CBS-Princeton Money in Politics Conference (2024)
- Visions in Methodology Conference (2024)
- Stories that Win Symposium at WashU (2024)
- Unite America Research Symposium on Primary Elections (2024)
- Frontiers in Money and Politics APSA Pre-Conference (2023, 2021)
- PolMeth, poster (2023, 2022, 2021, 2019, 2018)
- Women in Legislative Studies (WiLS) Seminar Series (2023)
- 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

**Co-Founder & Co-Organizer**, Junior Americanist Workshop Series 2020-2024

**Program Committee**, Visions in Methodology (VIM) Conference 2024

**Program Chair**, MPSA Primary Elections Conference within a Conference 2025, 2024  
(organized with Sarah Anderson, Dan Butler, Colin Case, and Laurel Harbridge-Yong)

**Program Committee**, MPSA JAWS Conference within a Conference 2023  
(organized with David Miller, Austin Bussing, Leah Christiani, Zander Furnas, and Christina Ladam)

**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

#### Senior Thesis Advisor

- Thomas Musgrave (2024)
- Erik Johansen (2024)
- Julia Thomalla (Co-Chair, 2023)

### **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