

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 ARTICLES

* = GRADUATE
STUDENT
COAUTHOR

[1] Colin R. Case and Rachel Porter. 2025. [Conceptualizing and measuring early campaign fundraising in U.S. elections](#). Published Online at **Political Science Research & Methods**.

[2] Rachel Porter, Jeffrey J. Harden, Emily Anderson*, Mackenzie R. Dobson*, Abigail Hemmen*, Géssica de Freitas*, and Emma Schroeder*. 2025. [The Consequences of Elite Action Against Elections](#). **The British Journal of Political Science**.

- Collaborative project with the [Representation and Politics in Legislatures Lab](#)

[3] Rachel Porter, Jeffrey J. Harden, and Mackenzie R. Dobson*. 2025. [Electing amateur politicians reduces cross-party collaboration](#). **Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences**.

- Collaborative project with the [Representation and Politics in Legislatures Lab](#)

[4] Rachel Porter, Colin R. Case, and Sarah A. Treul. 2025. [CampaignView, a database of policy platforms and biographical narratives](#). **Nature: Scientific Data**.

[5] Rachel Porter and Sarah A. Treul. 2025. [Evaluating \(in\)experience in congressional elections](#). **The American Journal of Political Science**.

- Coverage from [Brookings](#), [Vox](#), [FiveThirtyEight](#), [ABC News](#), [The Science of Politics](#), [Politics in Question](#)

[6] 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**.

[7] Rachel Porter and Tyler Steelman. 2023. [No Experience Required: Early Donations and Amateur Success in Congressional Primaries](#). **Legislative Studies Quarterly**.

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

[8] Christina Ladam, Austin Bussing, Alexander Furnas, Josh McCrain, David Miller, and Rachel Porter. 2022. [Junior Americanist Workshop Series](#). **PS: Political Science & Politics**.

[9] Maura McDonald, Rachel Porter, and Sarah A. Treul. 2020. [Running as a Woman? Gender and the 2018 Congressional Election](#). **Political Research Quarterly**.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

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

Colin R. Case and Rachel Porter. [Strategic Heterogeneity in Issue Positioning: Evidence from Congressional Campaigns](#). (R&R at **The American Journal of Political Science**)

Colin R. Case, Emily C. Ommundsen, and Rachel Porter. [Bipartisan Campaign Messages are Credible Policymaking Signals](#). (Under Review)

Rachel Porter, William Kakenmaster*, and Ben Francis*. [When Climate Hits Home: Local Risk, Pro-Environment Promises, and Legislative Action](#). (Under Review)

Rachel Porter. *Beyond the Party Brand: How Local Representation Persists in Nationalized Politics*. (Book manuscript)

Rachel Porter, Maggie Macdonald, and Megan Brown*. [Small Donor Matching Programs Do Not Amplify Average Americans' Voices](#).

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

OPEN DATA

CampaignView: U.S. House Campaign Website Archive (2018-2022)
<https://campaignview.org>

Early Fundraising in U.S. Congressional Elections (2008-2020)
<https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/FVLHCX>

U.S. House Candidate Biographical Data & Primary Election Outcomes (1980-2024)
<https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/CYFIDH>

BOOK CHAPTERS

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

[2] 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.

PUBLIC WRITING

Rachel Porter and Jeffrey J. Harden. 3 November, 2025. ["Amateur hour in Congress: How political newcomers fuel gridlock and government shutdowns."](#) *The Conversation*.

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

Sarah Treul and Rachel Porter. 20 April, 2018. ["Inexperienced candidates are becoming more common, but only in one party."](#) *Mischiefs of Faction - Vox*

Rachel Surminsky and Michael S. Lynch. 20 November, 2014. ["When Congress sues the president, it's likely to fail."](#) *The Monkey Cage - Washington Post*

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 |
| Phi Beta Kappa Honors Society, University of Georgia | 2016 |

External Funding

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| Unite America Elections Reform Grant. Expanding CampaignView for 2026. Total Award: \$36,407 | 2025 |
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| Center for Effective Lawmaking Small Grant. Bipartisan Messaging in Elections. <i>Co-PI with Colin R. Case and Emily Cottle Ommundsen</i> Total Award: \$1,000 | 2024 |
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| Unite America Elections Reform Grant. Measuring Issue Polarization. <i>Co-PI with Colin R. Case</i> Total Award: \$21,745 | 2024 |
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| APSA Centennial Research Grant. JAWS CwC at MPSA. <i>Co-PI with Austin Bussing, Leah Christiani, Zander Furnas, Christina Ladam, Josh McCrain, and David Miller</i> Total Award: \$10,000 | 2022 |
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| Social Science Research Council Social Data Dissertation Fellowship. Total Award: \$15,000 | 2020 |
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Internal Funding

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| Notre Dame Democracy Initiative Grant \$25,000 <i>Co-PI with James M. Curry and Jeffrey J. Harden</i> | 2025 |
| Notre Dame Franco Institute Small Grant. \$3,000 | 2025 |
| Notre Dame ISLA International Travel Grant. \$1,000 | 2024 |
| UNC Graduate School Dissertation Completion Fellowship. \$20,500 | 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

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| 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

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| 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

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|---|------------------|
| University of Toronto, Toronto Data Workshop | (scheduled) 2026 |
| USC Schwarzenegger Institute, Pathways to Primary Reform | (scheduled) 2026 |
| Michigan State University, MARGIE Conference | (scheduled) 2026 |
| University of Wisconsin-Madison, American Politics Workshop | (scheduled) 2026 |
| Georgetown McCourt School of Public Policy, Seminar Series | 2025 |
| Indiana University - Bloomington, Center for American Politics Conference | 2025 |
| UChicago Harris School of Public Policy, Effective Governance Conference | 2025 |
| University of Michigan, American Institutions Group Workshop | 2025 |
| University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, American Politics Research Group | 2025 |
| University of Kentucky Martin School of Public Policy, Workshop Series | 2025 |
| University of Mississippi, Barbour Study of American Politics Conference | 2025 |
| Wesleyan University, Wesleyan Media Project Election Conference | 2024 |
| University of Virginia, Center for Effective Lawmaking Conference | 2024 |
| UC San Diego, American Politics Workshop | 2024 |
| UC Berkeley, Winter American Politics Research Meeting | 2024 |
| Washington University in St. Louis, Stories that Win Symposium | 2024 |
| Georgetown University, American Government Seminar Series | 2023 |
| Women in Legislative Studies (WiLS) Seminar Series | 2023 |
| University of Chicago, American Politics Workshop | 2023 |
| Purdue University, Political Science Workshop | 2022 |
| University of Oklahoma, Carl Albert Center Conference | 2022 |
| University of Notre Dame, Rooney Workshop Series | 2021 |
| Bowling Green State University, Speaker Series | 2020 |
| Washington University in St. Louis, Political Science Speaker Series | 2020 |
| University of Georgia, Emerging Issues in Political Science Speaker Series | 2020 |

Annual Conference Presentations

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| PolMeth | (poster) 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023; (presentation) 2025 |
| MPSA | 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026 |
| Women in Legislative Studies Conference | 2023, 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 |
| Southern Political Science Association Annual Conference | 2020 |

VOLUNTEER & SERVICE

Discipline Service

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| Co-Organizer, Notre Dame Chambers of Democracy Conference (with James M. Curry and Jeffrey J. Harden) | 2026 |
| Co-Organizer, MPSA Primary Elections Mini-Conference (with Sarah Anderson, Dan Butler, Colin Case, and Laurel Harbridge-Yong) | 2024, 2025, 2026 |
| Program Committee, PolMeth Annual Conference (organized by Emory University) | 2025 |

Program Committee, Visions in Methodology (VIM) Conference 2024
(organized by Washington University in St. Louis)

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

Co-Organizer, MPSA JAWS Mini-Conference 2023
(with Austin Bussing, Leah Christiani, Zander Furnas, David Miller, Josh McCrain)

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*; *JAMA Health Forum*; *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*; *Legislative Studies Quarterly*; *National Science Foundation*; *Policy Studies Journal*; *Perspectives on Politics*; *Political Behavior*; *Political Science Research & Methods*; *Politics & Gender*; *Research & Politics*; *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*; *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

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| Co-Director, Representation and Politics in Legislatures Lab | 2023-Present |
| Field Chair, Methods | 2024-2025 |
| Member, Committee on Inclusive Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship | 2023-2024 |
| Co-Chair, Undergraduate Thesis Awards Committee | 2024 |
| Admission Committee Member, Lucy Institute Graduate Fellows Program | 2023 |
| Member, Graduate Policy Council | 2022-2023 |

Departmental Service at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

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| Graduate Student President, Department of Political Science | 2021-2022 |
| Program Coordinator, American Politics Working Group | 2018-2020 |
| American Field Representative, Department of Political Science | 2018-2019 |

Undergraduate and Doctoral Student Advising

Dissertation Committee Member

Abigail Hemmen (Notre Dame; In progress)
Emma Schroeder (Notre Dame; In progress)
Haley Cohen (Columbia University; Defended May 2025)

Methods Paper Committee Member

Géssica de Freitas (In progress)
Adriana Pilar Ferreira Albanus (In progress)

Undergraduate Mentoring

Senior Thesis Advisor, Thomas Musgrave (Defended 2025)
Senior Thesis Advisor, Erik Johansen (Defended 2025)
Senior Thesis Co-Advisor, Julia Thomalla (Defended 2024, Best Thesis Award Winner)