

Simal Gerot

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Political Science, University of Iowa, Expected May 2026
Fields: American Politics, Comparative Politics, Political Communication (minor)
Dissertation: The Power of Routine: How News Consumption Habits Shape Political Attitudes and Well-Being in the U.S.
Committee: Julianna Pacheco (Chair), Caroline Tolbert, Rene Rocha, Melissa Tully, Rachel Young
M.A., Political Science, University of Iowa, 2022
M.A., Political Science and International Relations, Koç University, 2020
Thesis: Voters' Media Consumption and Economic Evaluations in Turkey
B.A., Political Science and Public Administration, Bilkent University, 2018
Summa Cum Laude, Salutatorian
Minor in Psychology, 2013–2015

RESEARCH INTERESTS

American Politics: Political behavior, public opinion, affective polarization, political sophistication, partisanship and identity
Political Communication: Habitual news consumption, misinformation, media effects on political attitudes and well-being

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Binici, Simal, Choi, J., Mitchell, S.M. and Pizzi, E. (2025), A Text Analysis of News Media Framing of Government Response to the 2023 Türkiye–Syria Earthquake. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5973.70023>

MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW

Gerot, Simal. “How We Watch and What We Align With: A Dual Measure of Political News Habits”

Gerot, Simal, Caroline Tolbert, and Melissa Tully. “Filtering the Influence of Social Media: Increased (Decreased) Political Knowledge for Social Groups in the U.S.”

Gerot, Simal and Caroline Tolbert. “Evaluating the Online Processing Model Using the Washington Post’s Fact-Checking Database of Trump’s Misleading Claims.”

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Gerot, Simal. “Habitual News Consumption and Media Diet Diversity: Rethinking the Knowledge Gap.”

Gerot, Simal. “News, on Repeat: Examining the Relationship Between Habitual Media Use and Affective Polarization.”

Gerot, Simal. “The Informed and the Misinformed: Habitual Media Use and its Role in Political Knowledge and Belief in Misinformation.”

Gerot, Simal. “Keeping Up with News: The Impact of News Valence and Media Habits on Mental Health.”

Gerot, Simal and Julianna Pacheco. “Battling the Pandemic: Governors as Heads of State and COVID-19 Rhetoric – A Text Analysis Approach.”

Gerot, Simal. “American Society Revisited: A Bayesian Belief Network Approach to Egalitarianism, Moral Traditionalism, and Ideology in a Hyperpolarized Era”

Gerot, Simal. “A New Menu of Choice? Social Media as a Regime-Serving Apparatus in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes.”

AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, Council on Teaching, University of Iowa, 2025

CLAS Dissertation Writing Fellowship, University of Iowa, 2025

Post-Comprehensive Research Fellowship, Graduate College, University of Iowa, 2025

Lowenberg and Mans Scholarship, University of Iowa, 2024

Summer Research Fellowship, University of Iowa, 2023

Undergraduate Thesis Award, Second Place, Bilkent University, 2018

Summa Cum Laude, Salutatorian, Bilkent University, 2018

Summer Research Fellowship, Koç University, 2019

GRANTS

Departmental Research Grant, University of Iowa, 2025 (\$1,000)

Departmental Conference Travel Grants, University of Iowa, 2020–2025

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“The Emotional Toll of Political News Habits: Mental Well-Being during Crises” American Political Science Association, Vancouver, August 2025 (scheduled).

“News, on Repeat: Examining the Relationship Between Habitual Media Use and Affective Polarization” 82nd Annual Midwest Political Science Conference, Chicago, April 2025.

“Is Media Consumption Habitual? Evidence Using the Self-Reported Habitual Index” Midwest Political Science Conference, Chicago, April 2024.

“A Text Analysis of News Media Framing of Government Response to the 2023 Türkiye-Syria Earthquake” Midwest Political Science Conference, Chicago, April 2024 (with Jeongho Choi).

“American Society Revisited: A Bayesian Belief Network Approach to Egalitarianism, Moral Traditionalism, and Ideology in a Hyperpolarized Era” Midwest Political Science Conference, Chicago, April 2024.

“Battling the Pandemic: Governors as Heads of State and COVID-19 Rhetoric – A Text Analysis Approach” Midwest Political Science Conference, Chicago, April 2023 (with Julianna Pacheco).

“Social Media as a Political Tool in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes: Executive Constraints and Use of Coercive Tactics, Broadening Our Approach: Workshop on Comparative Political Communication” Duke University, April 2022.

“Social Media as a Political Tool in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes: Executive Constraints and Use of Coercive Tactics” Midwest Political Science Conference, Chicago, April 2022.

“Media Reporting of the Economy and Voters’ Economic Evaluations in Turkey” Approaches to Contemporary Voting Behavior in Turkey, Istanbul, March 2020.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant, Prof. Caroline Tolbert, University of Iowa, Fall 2022 – Summer 2023.

Senior Project Coordinator and Research Assistant, Assoc. Prof. Selim Erdem Aytaç, Koç University & The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK), 2020.

Research Assistant, Assoc. Prof. Bryce Dietrich, University of Iowa, March – October 2021.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor

Introduction to Social Media and Politics, University of Iowa, Summer 2023 (asynchronous).

Teaching Assistant

Introduction to Comparative Politics, University of Iowa, Fall 2021, Spring 2022, Fall 2023, Fall 2024.

Introduction to American Foreign Policy, University of Iowa, Spring 2024.

Introduction to Social Media and Politics, University of Iowa, Fall 2021, Fall 2022, Summer 2022, Summer 2023.

Race and Ethnic Politics in the U.S., University of Iowa, Spring 2022.

Religion and Politics, University of Iowa, Spring 2021.

American Public Policy, University of Iowa, Fall 2021, Fall 2020.

Guest Lecturer

Advanced Methods: Machine Learning and Text Analysis (Graduate), University of Iowa, October 2022.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Legislative Intern, Grand National Assembly of Turkey, Ankara, Turkey, July – August 2017.

Research Intern, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara, Turkey, January – February 2017.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

[Featured Research Profile](#), CLAS Research Resource Newsletter, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Iowa, April 2025.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS & SERVICE

Manuscript Reviewer, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *Political Behavior*

Conference Assistant, Approaches to Contemporary Voting Behavior in Turkey, March 2020

Member, American Political Science Association (Political Communication and Political Psychology Sections)

Member, Midwest Political Science Association

REFERENCES

Julianna Pacheco, PhD
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Department of Political Science, The University of Iowa
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Associate Professor, Director of Undergraduate Studies
School of Journalism and Mass Communication, The University of Iowa
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