

Ryan J. Williams

CONTACT INFORMATION

School of Criminology, Society, and Politics
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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

University of New England, Assistant Professor, August 2024 - Present
Bates College, Visiting Assistant Professor, August 2023 - July 2024
University of South Alabama, Assistant Professor & Pre-Law Advisor, August 2020 - July 2023
Francis Marion University, Assistant Professor, August 2019 - May 2020

EDUCATION

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA
Ph.D., Political Science, December 2019

- Dissertation Topic: “The Consequences of Specialization: Decision Making in U.S. Federal Specialized Courts”
- Committee: Kevin T. McGuire (Chair), Isaac Unah, Jason M. Roberts, Brett Curry, Virginia H. Gray

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA
M.A., Political Science, August, 2015

The University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, USA
A.B., Political Science, May, 2013
A.B.J., Digital and Broadcast Journalism, May, 2013

RESEARCH INTERESTS

My research focuses on American criminal justice and policy, judicial politics, and the scholarship of teaching and learning. Through a variety of methodological approaches and in collaboration with scholars from political science, criminal justice, and public policy, I explore the impact of race and gender on public opinion of U.S. courts and their decision making; administrative law in federal specialized courts; and media framing of criminal justice policy. I am currently working on several projects focusing on public opinion, race, and rehabilitative public policy programs in problem-solving courts like drug courts. I also research effective strategies for teaching criminal justice, political science, and policy concepts, specifically the use of classroom simulations.

BOOKS

The U.S. Criminal Justice System: A Reference Handbook. 2024. (with Sarah Koon-Magnin). Bloomsbury Academic.

- Named to the 2025 Outstanding References Sources List by the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA), a division of the American Library Association (ALA)

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

1. “Order in the Court: Teaching US Criminal Trials and Procedure Through a Mock Trial.” 2025. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 1-23.
2. “Are You Talking to Me? How Ideological and Gender Characteristics Moderate the Effect of Legitimizing Rhetoric on Perceptions of SCOTUS Legitimacy.” 2024. *Law & Social Inquiry*, 49(4), 1939-1963. (with Leah Christiani).

3. "To Render Prompt Justice: The Origins and Construction of the U.S. Court of Claims." 2022. *Studies in American Political Development* 36(2): 120-37 (with Michael Dichio and Logan Strother).
4. "Institutions and Arguments. Simulating the U.S. Policymaking Process." 2022. *PS: Political Science & Politics*. 55(1): 176-181 (with Lucy Britt).
5. "Teaching Judicial Politics through a Supreme Court Simulation." 2019. *Journal of Political Science Education*. 15(1): 17-36 (with Anthony J. Chergosky).
6. "The Legacy of President Obama in the U.S. Supreme Court." 2019. In *Looking Back on President Barack Obama's Legacy: Hope and Change* (pp. 149-189). Wilbur C. Rich, Ed. Palgrave Macmillan. (with Isaac Unah).
7. "Keeping Up Appearances: Non-policy Court Responses to Public Opinion." 2018. *Justice System Journal*. 39(1): 54-74 (with Jacob F.H. Smith).
 - Research findings covered in Andrew Hamm, "Why justices attend the State of the Union: Two political scientists focus on positivity bias," SCOTUSblog Dec. 8, 2017, <http://www.scotusblog.com/2017/12/justices-attend-state-union-two-political-scientists-focus-positivity-bias>
8. "What is so Special about Specialized Courts in the United States?" 2017. In *Handbook of Judicial Behavior* (pp. 280-300). Robert M. Howard & Kirk Randazzo, Eds. Routledge Inc. (with Isaac Unah).

NON-PEER-
REVIEWED
PUBLICATIONS

1. "Simulating Opinion Assignment in the U.S. Supreme Court." 2026. In *Beating the Clock: The Power of Short Games and Active Learning in the Political Science Classroom*. Ryan Gibb, Mark Harvey, James D. Fielder, and Derek Glasgow, Eds. Forthcoming with Taylor & Francis.
2. "Echoes of the Feminine Mystique: Female Judges and Intergenerational Change in the United States Courts of Appeals." 2023. *The Journal of Law & Politics*. 38(1): 43-100 (with Isaac Unah and Stephanie Zaino).
3. "Police Interrogations and the Miranda Warnings." 2023. In *The U.S. Constitution in 5 Minutes*. David Klein and Joseph Smith, Eds. Equinox Publishing.
4. "Pick a Justice: Simulating Judicial Selection on the U.S. Supreme Court." 2022. In *Simulations in the Political Science Classroom: Games without Frontiers* (pp. 166-184). Ryan Gibb, Mark Harvey, and James D. Fielder, Eds. Routledge Inc.

PUBLIC WRITING
AND PRESS

1. "Maine must speed up transition to public defender system." *Bangor Daily News* (2025, March 17). <https://www.bangordailynews.com/2025/03/17/opinion/opinion-contributor/maine-must-speed-up-transition-to-public-defender-system-joam40zk0w/>
2. WMTW 8 News (ABC 8 Maine's Total Coverage) television interview about U.S. and Maine crime statistics, December 17, 2024.
3. *Portland Press Herald* interview about judicial conduct and the Maine Supreme Court, October 31, 2024. <https://www.pressherald.com/2024/10/31/maine-high-court-justice-could-be-first-in-state-to-be-sanctioned/>

PAPERS IN
PREPARATION

Offender Race and Public Support for Rehabilitation in Drug Courts.

What's So Special about Specialized Court Nominees? Patterns of Appointment to and Senators' Votes for Specialized Judges.

Does True Crime Media Impact Student Enrollment in Criminology Programs and Interest in Criminal Justice Careers?

Victim Framing: Media Narratives and the Crime Victims' Rights Act (with Holly Peterson and Sarah Koon-Magnin). Revise and resubmit.

Is the Roberts Court Actually the Least Activist in U.S. History? (with Michael Dichio).

SELECTED
CONFERENCE
PRESENTATIONS

2026. Does True Crime Media Impact Student Enrollment in Criminology Programs and Interest in Criminal Justice Careers? Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, Philadelphia, PA, March, 2026.

2025. Adding Role-Play to Your Class and Assessing its Impact: An Example from Criminal Justice. Presented at the 9th Annual Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning Spring Symposium, Biddeford, ME.

2024. Offender Race and Support for Problem-Solving Courts for Violent Offenders. Prepared for the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association. Philadelphia, PA, September, 2024.

2024. The U.S. Court of Claims Beginnings: How Administrative and Institutional Developments Affect Judicial Independence and Decision-Making. Prepared for the University of Utah Judicial Independence Research Workshop. June 5, 2024. (with Logan Strother, Kayla Garganus, and Michael Dichio)

2022. Offender Race and Public Support for Rehabilitation in Problem-Solving Courts. Prepared for the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Montreal, Canada, September 2022.

2022. Is the Roberts Court Actually the Least Activist in U.S. History? (with Michael Dichio). Prepared for Policy History Conference, Tempe, Arizona, June 2022.

2022. Adventures in Teaching: Searching for Student Engagement/Student Buy-In (with LoRen Burroughs and Christina Johnson). Prepared for Conference on Teaching and Learning, Mobile, Alabama, May 2022.

2022. Are You Talking to Me? How Ideological and Gender Characteristics Moderate the Effect of Legitimizing Rhetoric on Perceptions of SCOTUS Legitimacy (with Leah Christiani). Prepared for the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, Illinois, April 2022.

2022. Victim Framing: Media Narratives and the Crime Victims' Rights Act (with Holly Peterson and Sarah Koon-Magnin). Prepared for the Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, San Antonio, Texas, January 2022.

2020. Reasons and Power: An Holistic U.S. Political Institutions Simulation (With Lucy C. Britt). Prepared for the Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, Puerto Rico, January 2020.

2019. Repeat Players and Attorney Advantages in Specialized Courts. Prepared for the Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, Austin, Texas, January 17-19, 2019.

2018. Where are You Going, Where Have You Been? Patterns of Appointments to Specialized Courts. Prepared for the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, Illinois, April, 2018.

2017. Supreme Court Headline News: How Television Media Affects Court Public Opinion (With Anthony J. Chergosky, John L. Lovett, and Kelsey M. Shoub). Prepared for the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, California, August 31-September 3, 2017.

2017. In Search of Expertise in Specialized Courts: Ideology and Expertise in the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. Prepared for the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, California, August 31-September 3, 2017.

INVITED TALKS

“The U.S. Supreme Court and the Imperial Presidency.” Keynote address at the University of New England Constitution Day. September 17, 2025.

“Trump v. United States: Implications for the Unitary Executive,” University of New England Associate Teaching Professors Kenneth Courtney and John Waterman’s course (“The Presidency in Peril”), November 26, 2024.

Invited speaker at the Alabama State Bar Minority Pre-Law Conference. April 13, 2023.

Invited speaker at the Alabama State Bar Minority Pre-Law Conference. April 13, 2022.

“Victim Framing: Media Narratives and the Crime Victims’ Rights Act.” Invited presentation at the University of Southern Mississippi. March 23, 2022.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Courses as Instructor

- Crime, Media, and Politics - University of New England (Fall 2026 - Scheduled)
- Practice of Social Science Research - University of New England (Spring 2026 - Scheduled)
- Juvenile Justice - University of New England (Spring 2025)
- The Criminal Justice System - University of New England (Fall 2024, Spring 2025, Fall 2025, Spring 2026)
- Deviance and Crime - University of New England (Fall 2024, Fall 2025)
- How to Get Away with Murder: Exploring Criminal Law/Justice Through TV and Film. - Bates College (Spring 2024)
- The Politics of U.S. Law - Bates College (Winter 2024) Purposeful Work Infusion Course
- U.S. Political Institutions and Processes - Bates College (Winter 2024)
- The U.S. Presidency: Development and Problems - Bates College (Fall 2023)
- American Parties and Elections - Bates College (Fall 2023)
- Judicial Process - South Alabama (Fall 2020, Spring 2021, Summer 2021, Fall 2021, Spring 2022, Fall 2022, Spring 2023, Summer 2023)
- Introduction to Criminal Justice - South Alabama (Spring 2021, Fall 2021, Spring 2022, Fall 2022)
- Administrative Law - South Alabama (Spring 2021, Fall 2021-Directed Study, Spring 2022, Spring 2023)
- Media and Politics - South Alabama (Fall 2020)
- Civil Rights and Civil Liberties - Francis Marion (Spring 2020)

- Introduction to Criminal Justice - Francis Marion (Fall 2019)
- U.S. Government - Francis Marion (Fall 2019; Spring 2020)
- The US Supreme Court - UNC (Spring 2018; Fall 2018)
- Political Parties and Elections - UNC (Summer 2017, Fall 2017, Summer 2018)
- Introduction to Government in the U.S. - UNC (Summer 2016 (Co-Instructor), Fall 2016, Spring 2017, Spring 2018 (Online), Spring 2019 (Online))

Courses as Teaching Assistant

- Introduction to Government in the U.S. - UNC (Fall 2015, Spring 2016)
- State and Local Government in the United States - UNC (Fall 2014)

Courses as Graduate Research Consultant (GRC)

- State Governments: Laboratories of Democracy - UNC (Spring 2016)
- Constitutional Policies and the Judicial Process - UNC (Fall 2015)

HONORS, AWARDS, AND FELLOWSHIPS **University of New England:**

- Innovation in Education Award
 - Awarded by Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and the Office of Innovation

Bates College:

- Bates Faculty Development Fund Award, 2023-2024 (\$3750)
- Bates Faculty Development Fund Award, 2023-2024 (\$3396)

University of South Alabama:

- 2022 Top Prof, Sally Steadman Azalea Chapter of Mortar Board Honor Society
- College of Arts and Sciences 2022 Advising Award (competitive, college-wide award)
- Arts and Sciences Summer Professional Development Award, 2021, 2023 (\$3125, \$4750)
- New Faculty Scholars Program, AY 2020-21
- Faculty Learning Community, “Timely Topics in Teaching”

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill:

- Lampley Graduate Fellow, AY 2018-19 (\$5,000)
- Future Faculty Fellow-UNC Center for Faculty Excellence, Spring 2018
 - Program provides instruction on evidence-based teaching practices and participation in learning communities.
- Thomas M. Uhlman Summer Research Fellowship 2016, 2017
- Whit Ayres Conference Travel Grant, 2015, 2016, 2017.
- Southern Political Science Association Prestage-Cook Travel Grant, 2016.
- Doctoral Merit Assistantship, 2013-2014 (\$47,500)

The University of Georgia:

- Graduated Summa Cum Laude
- Honors in Political Science and Honors in Digital and Broadcast Journalism
- Phi Beta Kappa, 2013

PROFESSIONAL
SERVICE AND
TRAININGS

- Co-organizer, University of New England Criminology Program Speaker Series: Careers in Criminology, 2025 - Present
- University of South Alabama Pre-Law Advisor (August 2020-May 2023)
- Referee: *Justice System Journal*, *Political Behavior*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Journal of Law and Courts*, *Journal of Women, Politics, and Policy*, *Social Science Quarterly*
- University of South Alabama Faculty Advisor: Pre-Law Society (August 2020-May 2023)
- University of South Alabama Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (2021-2023)
- University of South Alabama College of Arts and Sciences' Diversity Committee (2022-2023)
- University of South Alabama Faculty Search Committee for Full Time Tenure-Track Assistant Professor in International Relations (2021)
- University of South Alabama Faculty Search Committee for Full Time Non-Tenure Track Assistant Professor in Criminal Justice (2021)
- University of South Alabama Chair, Undergraduate Honors Thesis Committee (2021- Present)
- University of South Alabama Committee Member, Masters in English Thesis (2021 - 2022)
- University of South Alabama MPA Comprehensive Exam Committee (2020, 2021, 2022, 2023)
- University of South Alabama Department Student Awards Committee (2021)
- Bates College Department Thesis Advisor - 3x
- Editorial Assistant, *Journal of Law and Courts* (Fall 2017-Spring 2019)
- Mental Health First Aid Certified

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Ordinary Least Squares Regression
- Generalized Linear Models
- Time Series Analysis
- Panel Data Methodology
- Game Theory I
- Qualtrics
- Statistical Packages: R, Stata, \LaTeX .

MEMBERSHIPS

- American Political Science Association
- Midwest Political Science Association
- Southern Association of Pre-Law Advisors

REFERENCES

Dr. Sarah Koon-Magnin
Associate Professor
The University of South Alabama, Humanities 232
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Dr. Jaclyn Bunch
Associate Professor
The University of South Alabama, Humanities 222
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Dr. Thomas Shaw
Associate Professor
The University of South Alabama, Humanities 234
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