

Alison Higgins Merrill

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Employment

Susquehanna University, Assistant Professor. August 2018 -

Education

Ph.D. Political Science, Texas A&M University, 2018.

Fields: American Politics, Political Methodology

Committee: Joseph Daniel Ura (Chair), Paul M. Kellstedt, Scott J. Cook, Matthew E.K. Hall
(University of Notre Dame) and Robert K. Goidel

Dissertation: The Dynamics of Issue Attention on the United States Supreme Court
(Prospectus defended)

B.A. Political Science, Virginia Tech, 2011

Additional Training

2017. Empirical Implications of Theoretical Modeling (EITM) Summer Institute. University of California, Berkeley. June 26 - July 14, 2017.

2015. ICPSR Summer Program in Quantitative Methods of Social Research (Introduction to Applied Bayesian Modeling, Advanced Bayesian Models, Scaling and Dimensional Analysis). June 22 - August 14, 2015.

Publications

Merrill, Alison Higgins, Nicholas D. Conway, and Joseph Daniel Ura. 2017. "Confidence and Constraint: Public Opinion, Judicial Independence and the Roberts Court." *Washington University Journal of Law and Policy*. 54(1):

Ura, Joseph Daniel and Alison Higgins Merrill. 2017. "The Supreme Court and Public Opinion." In *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. Judicial Behavior*, eds. Lee Epstein and Stefanie A. Lindquist. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Working Papers

Merrill, Alison Higgins. "Selecting on the Economy? Economic Issues, Public Opinion and the Supreme Court."

Merrill, Alison Higgins. "Know Thy Neighbor: Ideological Distance and Strategic Decision-Making on the U.S. Supreme Court."

- Merrill, Alison Higgins, Nicholas D. Conway, and Morgan E. Winkler. "SCOTUS Interruptus: Speech Patterns and Opinion Authorship of Female U.S. Supreme Court Justices."
- Merrill, Alison Higgins. "Dynamic Issue Attention and Agenda Setting on the U.S. Supreme Court."
- Nicholas D. Conway, Alison Higgins Merrill and Joseph Daniel Ura. "Competing Public Agency: Public Opinion, Separation of Powers, and Judicial Review."
- Haglin, Kathryn M., Alison Higgins Merrill, Soren Jordan, and Joseph Daniel Ura. "Partisan Asymmetries in Evaluations of the Supreme Court."
- Ura, Joseph Daniel and Alison Higgins Merrill. "Signals or Noise? The Influence of Judicial Ideology and Public Opinion on Supreme Court Reversals and Affirmances."
- Merrill, Alison Higgins and Paul M. Kellstedt. "Bankers or Bankers? Exploring Gender Differences in Approval Dynamics During the Obama Presidency."

Conference Proceedings

Presentations

- Merrill, Alison Higgins. "Dynamic Issue Attention on the United States Supreme Court." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association and Texas A&M School of Law, Law and Social Sciences Workshop. April 2018.
- Merrill, Alison Higgins, Nicholas D. Conway, and Morgan Winkler. "Speech Patterns and Opinion Authorship of Female Justices on the United States Supreme Court." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association. April 2018.
- Merrill, Alison Higgins and Liana C. Gonzales. "Speech Patterns and Opinion Authorship of Female Justices on the United States Supreme Court." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association. September, 2017.
- Merrill, Alison Higgins. "Know Thy Neighbor: Ideological Distance and Strategic Decision-Making on the U.S. Supreme Court." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association. April 2017.
- Haglin, Kathryn M., Alison Higgins Merrill, Soren Jordan, and Joseph Daniel Ura. "Partisan Asymmetries in Evaluations of the Supreme Court." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association. April 2017.
- Merrill, Alison Higgins. "Selecting on the Economy? Economic Issues, Public Opinion and the Supreme Court." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association. September 2016.
- Conway, Nicholas D., Alison Higgins and Joseph Daniel Ura. "Judicial Self-Restraint: Public Opinion and Judicial Review in the Separation of Powers." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association. April 2016.
- Higgins, Alison and Paul M. Kellstedt. "Bankers or Bankers? Exploring Gender Differences in Approval Dynamics During the Obama Presidency." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association. January 2016.
- Higgins, Alison and Paul M. Kellstedt. "Forecasts or Memories? Explaining Gender Differences in Consumer Sentiment." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association. April 2015.

Ura, Joseph Daniel and Alison Higgins. "Signals or Noise? The Influence of Judicial Ideology and Public Opinion on Supreme Court Reversals and Affirmances." Paper presented at the mini conference on Judicial Behavior at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association. January 2015."

Higgins, Alison and Joseph Daniel Ura. "Floating or Following? Assessing Competing Claims about the Influence of Public Opinion on Supreme Court Decisions." Poster presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association. August 2014.

Higgins, Alison, and William T. Christiansen. "Political Action Committees and Perceived Political Efficacy: Exploring the Effects of PACs on Young Voters." Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association conference. April 2013.

Blessing, Jason, William T. Christiansen, Lauren Crandall, and Alison Higgins. "American Democracy and Voter Perception: Do Political Action Committees Influence Perceived Political Power?" Poster presented at the Midwest Political Science Association conference. April 2012.

Higgins, Alison. "Partisanship and Turnout: The Effect on the Outcome of the 2000 and 2008 Presidential Elections." Presented at the Virginia Tech Undergraduate Research Conference. April 2011.

Discussant and Chair

Discussant, "Methodological Challenges" at the NSF Conference on Facilitating Studies of Judicial Behavior on Constitutional Courts from a Comparative Perspective. Texas A&M School of Law, May 11-12, 2018.

Research and Teaching Interests

Research Interests

Judicial Politics
Judicial Decision-Making
Political Behavior
Public Opinion
Methodology

Teaching Interests

Judicial Politics
Political Behavior
Public Opinion
Constitutional Law
American Government
Methodology

Research Experience

Research Assistant, Summer 2017: Paul M. Kellstedt, Texas A&M University. Duties include data collection and analysis and collaboration on a co-authored article.

Research Assistant, Fall 2016-present: Scott J. Cook, Texas A&M University. Duties include collaboration on scholarly articles, assisting with the development of a new spatial estimator.

Research Assistant, Summer 2014-present: Joseph Daniel Ura, Texas A&M University. Duties include collaboration on scholarly articles, presentation of co-authored material at conferences, collaboration on a chapter in an edited volume, data collection and management, and data analysis.

Research Assistant, Fall 2013-Spring 2016: Paul M. Kellstedt, Texas A&M University. Duties include collaboration on scholarly articles, presentation of co-authored material at conferences, data collection and management, and data analysis.

Research Assistant, Fall 2013-Spring 2014: Charles A. Johnson, Texas A&M University. Duties include data collection, dataset construction and data management in *SPSS*.

Research Assistant, Spring 2013-Summer 2013: Craig L. Brians, Virginia Tech. Duties included drafting and submitting Transforming Undergraduate Education in Science (TUES) grant to the National Science Foundation.

Research Assistant, Summer 2012-Fall 2012: Craig L. Brians, Virginia Tech. Duties included drafting and submitting Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) grant to National Science Foundation.

Teaching Experience

Fall 2018 *Constitutional Law: Individual Rights & Liberties*, Susquehanna University

Fall 2018 *American Government & Politics*, Susquehanna University

Instructor of Record, Summer 2018, *American National Government*, Texas A&M

Instructor of Record, Fall 2017, Spring 2018, *National Judicial Politics*, Texas A&M

Teaching Assistant, Summer 2017, *Time Series Analysis II: Advanced Topics* with Paul M. Kellstedt and Mark Pickup, ICPSR Summer Program in Quantitative Methods of Social Research, University of Michigan

Supplemental Instructor, Spring 2017, *Quantitative Political Analysis II, Maximum Likelihood Estimation* with Scott J. Cook, Texas A&M

Supplemental Instructor, Fall 2016, *Quantitative Political Analysis I* with Paul M. Kellstedt, Texas A&M

Teaching Assistant, Spring 2016, *Introduction to Political Science Research* with Paul M. Kellstedt, Texas A&M

Teaching Assistant, Spring 2016, *Introduction to Political Science Research* with Kim Quaile Hill, Texas A&M

Guest Lecturer, Spring 2015, "Political Psychology" for *American National Government*, Texas A&M University. Instructor: Soren Jordan.

Guest Lecturer, Spring 2014, "Voting & Elections" for *American National Government*, Texas A&M University. Instructor: Grant Ferguson.

Lecturer, Summer 2013, *Introduction to Quantitative Research using SPSS*, Virginia Tech.

Teaching Assistant, Fall 2012, *Introduction to U.S. Government* with Craig L. Brians, Virginia Tech.

Teaching Assistant, Fall 2012, *Introduction to a Research University: First Year Experience* with Craig L. Brians, Virginia Tech.

Teaching Assistant, Spring 2012, *Judicial Process* with Karen M. Hult, Virginia Tech.

Directed Undergraduate Research, Spring 2012-Spring 2013. Coordinated by Karen M. Hult and John C. Tedesco, Virginia Tech.

Responsibilities included oversight of a 4 member undergraduate team: creating a reading list and facilitating weekly discussions, overseeing Institutional Review Board training, instruction in quantitative data analysis in SPSS, and developing a questionnaire with the assistance of the research team.

Teaching Assistant, Fall 2011, *Introduction to U.S. Government* with Craig L. Brians, Virginia Tech.

Teaching Assistant, Fall 2011, *Political Communication* with Craig L. Brians, Virginia Tech.

Professional Activities & Service

Service

Department Representative, Graduate and Professional Student Council, Texas A&M University, Spring 2015-present.

Graduate Student President, Department of Political Science, Texas A&M University, Summer 2016-present.

Coach, Texas A&M Undergraduate Moot Court Team, Fall 2016-present.

Honors and Awards

Recipient, Graduate Student Travel Award for the 2017 Conference for the Society of Political Methodology, National Science Foundation, 2017 (declined).

Recipient, Summertime for Advancement in Research (STAR) Award, Texas A&M University, 2017.

Recipient, College of Liberal Arts Professional Development Grant, Texas A&M University, 2015.

Recipient, College of Liberal Arts Professional Development Grant, Texas A&M University, 2014 (declined).

Memberships

American Political Science Association, Member, 2012-present.

Law and Courts section

Political Methodology section

Elections, Public Opinion and Voting Behavior section

Midwest Political Science Association, Member, 2012-present.

Southern Political Science Association, Member, 2014-present.

Skills & Development

Workshops

2015. Workshop in Empirical Modeling of Theory. Texas A&M University, taught by Rob Franzese. August 21 - 23, 2015.

2014. Causal Inference. Texas A&M University, Winter Institute in Methods, taught by Teppei Yamamoto and Chad Hazlett. January 8 - 10, 2014.

Research Certification

IRB Human Subjects Training Certification.

Software & Programming

Intermediate: L^AT_EX, STATA, R, SPSS, Excel

Beginner: WinRATS, JAGS, WinBUGS

References

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