

LAURA D. YOUNG

Professor of Political Science | Department Chair

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RESEARCH PROFILE

Political scientist studying how citizens judge the authority of scientific and political institutions, with research on climate skepticism, confidence in science, political behavior, and executive action during crises. My work includes a *British Journal of Political Science* study of climate-contrarian networks and a *Presidential Studies Quarterly* article on presidential unilateralism. Current research uses American National Election Studies and General Social Survey data, original cross-national public opinion surveys, and historical institutional analysis. *The Terms of Trust: Science, Skepticism, and Democratic Authority* brings these lines of scholarship together to examine when public distrust is warranted and what democratic institutions must do to deserve confidence.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Georgia Gwinnett College, Lawrenceville, Georgia | 2015–present

Professor of Political Science (2026–present); Associate Professor (2021–2026); Assistant Professor (2015–2020); Chair, Department of Political Science, Criminal Justice and International Studies (2022–present); Associated Faculty, Institute of Environmental Science and Sustainability (2021–2025).

Aurora University | 2018–present

Associate Online Faculty, Master of Public Administration program.

Johns Hopkins University, Center for Talented Youth | 2009–2014; 2024–2026

Summer-program instructor.

Purdue University | 2008–2017

Limited-term instructor in Political Science and Communication (2013–2015); Summer Start instructor (2016–2017); graduate teaching assistant in Political Science and Communication (2008–2013).

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Political Science, Purdue University

M.A., Political Science, University of Memphis

B.A., International Studies: American Foreign Policy, University of Memphis

RESEARCH AREAS

Political behavior and public opinion; science trust, climate politics and skepticism; democratic accountability and executive authority; political socialization and generational memory; historical state formation.

PUBLICATIONS AND MANUSCRIPTS

Political Behavior, Science, Climate and Institutions — Publications

Young, Laura D. and Alfie Hoar. "Neoliberalism and Climate Change Denial." *Florida Political Chronicle*, 31:2, 2024.

Young, Laura D. and Erin B. Fitz. "Who Are the 3 Per Cent? The Connections Among Climate Change Contrarians." *British Journal of Political Science*, 52(4), 2022, 1503–1522. doi:10.1017/S0007123421000442.

Zimmerman, Kathryn, Laura D. Young, and Kelsey Woodard. "Measurement of Hazardous Air Pollutants in Metro Atlanta: A Political Analysis Regarding Environmental Justice." In *Environmental Chemistry: Undergraduate and Graduate Classroom, Laboratory and Local Community Learning Experiences*, American Chemical Society, 2018, 21–48.

Revise and Resubmit; Under Review; Submitted

Cross, Andre and Laura Young. "From Collective Trust to Individual Disaffection: How Economic Perceptions and Institutional Confidence Shape Black Men's Vote Choice in the Post-Obama Era." Revise and resubmit.

Young, Laura and Dovile Budryte. "Mistrusting the Messenger: Political Generations and the Framing of Scientific Authority." Under review.

Young, Laura D., Alexis Vanderhoof, L. Lea Bourland, Peyton McGuire, Andre Cross, and Alfie Hoar. "Disempowered by Design: Political Efficacy and the Roots of Climate Skepticism." Under review.

Young, Laura D., Alfie Hoar, and William Ripple. "Climate Science and its Dissenters: A Comparative Study of Petition Signatories and the Demographics of Consensus and Contrarianism." Under review.

Young, Laura D. "Generational Memory and the Formation of Science Trust." Under review.

"Why Citizens Endorse Public-Health Conspiracy Theories: Authoritarianism, Trust, and Information Processing in Comparative Perspective." Coauthored manuscript submitted to Health Policy.

Executive Authority and Crisis Politics

Young, Laura D. "Unilateral Presidential Policy Making and the Impact of Crises." *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 43(2), 2013, 328–352. doi:10.1111/psq.12026.

State Formation, International Relations and Diplomacy

Young, Laura D. and Nusta Carranza Ko. *Game of Thrones and the Theories of International Relations*. Lexington Books, 2019.

Young, Laura D. "Confirming Carneiro: Resource Scarcity and Pre-Modern Warfare." *Global Journal of Human Social Science: Political Science*, 23:1, 2023.

Young, Laura D. "Testing Tilly: Does War Really Make States?" *Social Evolution & History*, 21(1), 2022, 175–199. doi:10.30884/seh/2022.01.07.

Young, Laura D. and James McCann. "The Comparative Politics of Public Relations." In *The Global Public Relations Handbook: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 3rd ed. Edited by K. Sriramesh and D. Vercic. Routledge, 2019. PRIDE Award, National Communication Association.

Young, Laura D. "Celebrity Diplomacy." In *The Encyclopedia of Diplomacy*. Edited by Gordon Martel. John Wiley & Sons, 2018.

Teaching and Learning

Young, Laura D., Marie Ratchford, L. Lea Bourland, and Dovilė Budrytė. "An Assessment of Scaffolding in Senior Capstone Courses." *Journal of Political Science Education*, 2025 (online). doi:10.1080/15512169.2025.2546352.

Lewkowicz, Michael, Dovile Budryte, Scott Boykin, Laura Young, and Yohannes Gedamu. "Classroom Activities for OpenStax American Government." Political Science Ancillary Materials, 2, 2019.

Young, Laura D., Nusta Carranza Ko, and Michael Perrin. "Using Game of Thrones to Teach International Relations." *Journal of Political Science Education*, 2018. doi:10.1080/15512169.2017.1409631.

Lewkowicz, Michael, Laura D. Young, Dovile Budryte, and Scott Boykin. "Bringing the Study of American Government to Life in a Diverse Classroom: Internationalization and Personalization." In *Handbook of Research on Curriculum Internationalization and the Future of Global Education*, IGI Global, 2018, 1–17.

Kerven, David, Kristine Nagel, Stella Smith, Sherly Abraham, and Laura D. Young. "Cybersecurity: Scenario-Based Inquiry for Engagement in Computer Literacy Education." SIGCSE Technical Symposium on Computer Science, 2017, 303–308. doi:10.1145/3017680.3017753.

BOOK PROJECTS

Young, Laura D. *The Terms of Trust: Science, Skepticism, and Democratic Authority*. Book manuscript in development.

Young, Laura D. *Green Deceit: The Memories, Movements, and Money Behind Climate Change Denial*. Related book project in development.

OTHER RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Science, Trust and Political Behavior

Young, Laura D. "Political Agency and Climate Belief Across Europe: A Cross-National Analysis of the Efficacy–Ideology Pathway."

Young, Laura D. "Intersectional Memory and Epistemic Trust: How Race, Gender, and Media Regimes Structure Confidence in Science in the United States."

Young, Laura D., Isaiah Campbell, and David Felsen. "The Embrace of Climate Change Rhetoric by Right-Wing Parties in Europe."

Executive Politics

Fitz, Erin B. and Laura D. Young. "Are Federal Disaster Declarations Related to Economic Sentiment and Presidential Approval?"

Young, Laura D., Mark Petersen, Thomas McLean, and Matthew Gunning. "Foreign Policy Crises and Presidential Rhetoric, 1946–2020."

Teaching and Artificial Intelligence

Young, Laura D. et al. "The Mercy Gap in AI-Assisted Grading: A Scoping Review of Teacher Assessment, Feedback, Data, and Digital Literacies."

Young, Laura D. et al. "The Mercy Gap: Algorithmic Strictness, Human Discretion, and the Ethics of Fairness in AI-Assisted Grading."

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Research and Community Engagement

2024, VPASA Seed Grant Award, "American Attitudes Survey," Georgia Gwinnett College, with L. Lea Bourland.

2016–2017, Community Initiative Grant, "Measurement of Air Pollutants in Metro Atlanta," Georgia Gwinnett College, with Kathryn Zimmerman.

2012, Purdue Research Fellowship Summer Research Grant.

Teaching and Institutional Innovation

2026–2027, Governor's Teaching Fellows Academic Year Program, "Where Generative AI Skills and Human Essential Skills Meet in Higher Education," Louise McBee Institute of Higher Education, University of Georgia.

2025, VPASA Seed Grant Award, "The Use of AI to Increase Student Learning Outcomes and Professor and Staff Efficiency," Department of Political Science, Criminal Justice and International Studies.

2018, Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation Mini Grant, "Bringing the Government Textbooks to Life at GGC," with Dovile Budryte, Scott Boykin, and Michael Lewkowicz.

2017, Reacting to the Past Winter Conference Participation Grant, University of Georgia.

2016, "Analysis and Investigation through Cyber-Based Scenarios," NICER, Cyber Innovation Center, with Sherly Abraham, David Kerven, Kristine Nagel, and Stella Smith.

SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Political Behavior, Science Trust and Climate Politics

2024, Presenter, "The Age of Science Denial," American Political Science Association, September 8.

2024, Presenter, "Neoliberalism and Climate Change Denial," Florida Political Science Association, March 9.

2023, Presenter, "Overcoming Climate Skepticism with 'Right' Climate Rhetoric," Southern Political Science Association, January 13.

2021, Young, Laura D., Erin B. Fitz, and Dovile Budryte. "Still in Saigon: Collective Memories and Distrust in Science," American Association of Behavioral and Social Sciences, Virtual Conference, June 14–15.

2021, Young, Laura D. and Erin Fitz. "Cracking the 3%: The Money and Memories Behind Climate Change Denial," Southern Political Science Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, January 11.

2017, Zimmerman, Kathryn and Laura D. Young. "Community-Based Undergraduate Research: Measurement of Hazardous Air Pollutants with Regard to Environmental Justice," American Chemical Society National Meeting, San Francisco, California, April 3.

Executive and Crisis Politics

2013, Young, Laura D. and Mark Petersen. "Presidential Rhetoric and Unilateral Power," Northeast Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Delaware, November 15.

2013, Young, Laura D. and Mark Petersen. "Let's Talk Crisis," American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, August 30.

2013, Young, Laura D. "Making the Most out of Disasters: The Power of Presidential Disaster Declarations," American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, August 29.

Teaching and Pedagogy

2026, Presenter, "From Experiment to Insight: Using AI-Assisted Grading to Enhance Feedback Quality and Faculty Efficiency," USG Teaching and Learning Conference, Athens, Georgia, April 16–17.

2025, Presenter, "An Assessment of Scaffolding in Senior Capstone Courses," Science and Technology Teaching and Learning Symposium, Georgia Gwinnett College, April 30.

2022, Chair, "The Game of Thrones Simulation: How to Make International Relations Theories Fun to Learn," International Studies Association, Nashville, Tennessee, April 2.

TEACHING AND RESEARCH MENTORSHIP

Graduate Teaching — Aurora University

Public Policy and Analysis (2018–2023); Administration of Public Institutions (2022); Government and Community Relations (2018–2019, 2021); Public Administration Senior Capstone (2019–2023).

Selected Undergraduate Teaching

Paper to Publication (2024–2026); Senior Seminar (2019–2026); Research Methods and Research Methods: AI and Statistical Analysis (2024–2026); American Government (2015–2026); Global Green Politics (2013–2024); Introduction to Environmental Policy (2011–2024); Public Administration (2021); U.S. Foreign Policy (2023); Environmental Law (2019–2023).

Honors and Directed Research

Directed Study (2015–2026); honors supervision in environmental policy, clean energy, public health risks, hydroponics, and comparative water governance. Mentor students developing research papers, presentations, and graduate or professional-school pathways.

ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

Founding Chair, Department of Political Science, Criminal Justice and International Studies, Georgia Gwinnett College | 2022–present

- Established departmental curriculum governance, faculty evaluation, assessment, budget planning, and staffing processes during GGC’s transition to academic departments.
- Directed multidisciplinary program operations across political science, criminal justice, international studies, and world languages; undergraduate majors in Political Science increased from 155 to 237 over four years, and Criminal Justice majors from 460 to 505 over three years.
- Co-developed the Flexible Legislative Internship Program; its inaugural cohort placed sixteen students in Georgia General Assembly offices and received formal recognition by the Georgia House in April 2026.
- Mentor faculty in promotion and research development, including writing groups, publication guidance, and student research partnerships.

Program Director, Paralegal Certificate | 2018–2022; Political Science Internship Coordinator | 2019–2022

Selected service: Environmental Science Assessment Committee (2021–present); Environmental Science Curriculum Board (2019–present); John Tien Leadership Workshop Committee Chair (2017–2019); Paralegal Certificate Design Committee Co-Chair (2015–2018).

SELECTED AWARDS AND HONORS

2025, SLA Award for Excellence as a Senior Faculty Member, Georgia Gwinnett College.

2023, Outstanding Faculty Top Claw Recipient, Georgia Gwinnett College.

2015, Distinguished Faculty of the Year, Pi Sigma Alpha National Political Science Honor Society, Purdue University.

2015, Most Outstanding Faculty Member in Academics, Research, and Service, Favorite Faculty Student Committee, University Residences, Purdue University.

2013, Associate Fellow, Teaching Academy, Purdue University.

2012, Outstanding Independent Instructor Award, Purdue University.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND METHODS

American Political Science Association; Women’s Caucus for Political Science; International Society for Development and Sustainability.

Quantitative and survey research: R/RStudio, Stata, SPSS; cross-sectional and multi-wave survey analysis; statistical modeling; data visualization.