

LAURA D. YOUNG

Professor of Political Science | Department Chair

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LEADERSHIP PROFILE

As founding chair, built Georgia Gwinnett College's first departmental structure in political science in 2022, establishing the department's governance and operations where none previously existed, as Political Science, Criminal Justice/Criminology, International Studies, and World Languages transitioned from separate disciplines under the Dean's Office into a unified academic unit. Leads the only department in the School of Liberal Arts administering two majors, alongside an International Studies program and a World Language program in Spanish, French, and Chinese that together serve well over 2,000 additional students annually. Directs a multidisciplinary instructional workforce of more than 50 full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty, including 26 full-time faculty, across more than 200 active course sections each semester, administered with a lean central staff of one assistant chair and an administrative coordinator shared with two other departments. Reversed enrollment declines in both majors within the department's first year of leadership: Political Science grew from 155 to 237 majors over four years, and Criminal Justice/Criminology grew from 460 to 505 majors over three years after Criminal Justice joined the department in 2023. Built the department's governance, evaluation, and assessment systems where none previously existed, a foundation that has coincided with a marked increase in faculty promotion activity. Builds pathways connecting students to law, government, public service, international study, graduate education, and emerging professional fields. Research spans political behavior and institutions, executive politics, state formation, climate politics, international relations, and teaching and learning.

SELECTED LEADERSHIP ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Department transformation:** Appointed founding chair when Georgia Gwinnett College moved from a flat, point-of-contact model to hierarchical academic departments in 2022, building the department that housed Political Science, International Studies, and World Languages (Spanish, French, and Chinese) before Criminal Justice joined in 2023. The department's International Studies and World Language programs alone serve more than 2,000 students annually, and it remains the college's only department housing more than one major.
- **Enrollment turnaround:** Reversed declining enrollment in both majors within the first year of leadership. Political Science grew from 155 to 237 majors over four years, and Criminal Justice/Criminology grew from 460 to 505 majors over three years.
- **Capitol internship pathway:** Co-developed and provided academic leadership for the inaugural Flexible Legislative Internship Program. Sixteen students completed substantive work in Georgia General Assembly offices, at least four received full-time job offers, twelve were invited to return, and the Georgia House of Representatives formally recognized the cohort on April 28, 2026.
- **Academic and career pathways:** Directed the Paralegal Certification, which has produced 65 graduates since 2018, and the Political Science internship program, which recorded 277 placements during academic years 2019–2023, expanding career-connected learning across political science, criminal justice, international studies, legal studies, public administration, and world languages.
- **Assessment and student learning:** Led department assessment processes in which average paper scores rose from 2.21 to 2.69 in POLS 2101 and from 2.44 to 2.69 in POLS 4490 between 2022 and 2024, with a 23.6 percent posttest learning gain reported in 2024–2025.
- **Artificial intelligence and teaching innovation:** Secured and led a VPASA Seed Grant supporting a cross-disciplinary faculty and staff initiative spanning course integration, assessment, legal education, research methods, and responsible professional use.
- **Workforce planning:** Directed 23 adjunct searches across French, Spanish, Political Science, and Legal Studies in a single academic year to meet demand-driven staffing needs.

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Georgia Gwinnett College, Lawrenceville, Georgia

2015–Present

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

Aurora University 2018–Present
 Associate Online Faculty, Master of Public Administration Graduate Program
Johns Hopkins University, Center for Talented Youth 2009–2014; 2024–2026
 Instructor, summer programs
Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana 2008–2017
 Instructor, Summer Start Program, 2016–2017
 Limited Term Instructor, Department of Political Science, 2013–2015
 Limited Term Instructor, Department of Communication, 2013–2015
 Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of Communication, 2010–2013
 Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of Political Science, 2008–2013
Davis Law Firm, P.C., Memphis, Tennessee 1998–2008
 Senior Litigation Paralegal

ADMINISTRATIVE AND ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

Chair, Political Science, Criminal Justice and International Studies, Georgia Gwinnett College 2022–Present

- Built the department's core operating infrastructure from the ground up as founding chair, including curriculum governance, budget planning, hiring and staffing procedures, and communication systems, in a unit that previously operated as separate disciplines under the Dean's Office with only individual course scheduling.
- Replaced an informal, undocumented faculty evaluation process with a written system of standards and accountability, and overhauled the department's existing but limited assessment process by incorporating systematic data analysis into how the department evaluates and improves student learning. That shift toward clear expectations and accountability has coincided with a marked increase in faculty promotion activity: seven faculty have been prepared for promotion, four advancing this year and three positioned for the following year.
- Built shared operational infrastructure, including monthly newsletters, student ambassadors, course templates, and waitlist processes, to support the department through successive organizational changes, including the 2023 integration of Criminal Justice.
- Use enrollment, section, capacity, fill rate, and staffing data to guide academic planning, document resource needs, and communicate evidence-based recommendations to institutional leadership.
- Advance current and emerging credentials in legal studies, campaign management, international diplomacy and conflict resolution, professional legal administration, global studies, political economy, and Spanish for professionals.
- Coordinate partnerships with legislative offices, courts, law firms, public agencies, community organizations, and employers to connect academic learning with professional opportunity.

Program Director, Paralegal Certification, Georgia Gwinnett College 2018–2022

- Directed curriculum, implementation, advising, course coordination, assessment, and professional connections for the 18-credit certificate program, building on earlier work as co-chair of its design committee.

Political Science Internship Coordinator, Georgia Gwinnett College 2019–2022

- Coordinated student preparation, placements, employer relationships, academic oversight, and reflection for internships in government, law, policy, advocacy, and public service, helping institutionalize internships as a core program pathway.

Additional Institutional Leadership, Georgia Gwinnett College 2015–Present

- Chaired the John Tien Leadership Workshop Committee and IEE5 Goals Team; co-chaired the Paralegal Certification Design Committee; and contributed to faculty searches, general education, curriculum, assessment, sustainability, internships, and high-impact practice implementation.

FACULTY AND STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

- Mentor faculty in promotion, scholarly productivity, teaching innovation, professional development, and leadership growth; built and support faculty research and writing groups, publication mentoring, student coauthorship matching, directed research, and senior-seminar-to-conference pathways.
- Mentor students for law school, graduate education, public service, legislative work, research careers, and professional opportunities in government and legal settings, and expand opportunities for students to present at disciplinary conferences and connect academic work to professional networks.

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, Institutions, and Climate Politics; Crisis Behavior and Executive Politics; State Formation, Conflict, and International Relations; Teaching, Learning, Artificial Intelligence, and Pedagogy

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

I. Political Behavior, Institutions, and Climate Politics

Published and Scholarly Contributions

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*, 2021, 1–20. 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, and 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: Evidence from Three Waves of Cross-National Surveys." Submitted to Health Policy.

Current Research and Book Projects

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."

Young, Laura D. *Green Deceit: The Memories, Movements, and Money Behind Climate Change Denial*.

II. Crisis Behavior and Executive Politics

Peer Reviewed Publication

Young, Laura D. "Unilateral Presidential Policy Making and the Impact of Crises." *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 43:2, 2013.

Current Research and Book Projects

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."

Young, Laura D. *Divided We Fall: Crises, Polarization, and the Erosion of Democracy*.

III. State Formation, Conflict, and International Relations

Books, Peer Reviewed Publications, and Scholarly Contributions

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, 65–89. doi:10.30884/she/2022.01.03.

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.

Current Book Project

Young, Laura D. *Scarcity, Conflict, and the Evolution of State Power*.

IV. Teaching, Learning, Artificial Intelligence, and Pedagogy

Peer Reviewed and Scholarly Contributions

Young, Laura D., Marie Ratchford, L. Lea Bourland, and Dovile Budryte. "An Assessment of Scaffolding in Senior Capstone Courses." *Journal of Political Science Education*, 2025. <https://doi.org/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.

Current Projects

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

Leadership, Teaching Innovation, and Institutional Improvement

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.

Research and Community Engagement

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

2018, Faculty Learning Community Science and Technology Grant, "Hydroponic Gardening," Georgia Gwinnett College, with Seunjin Lee.

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.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

Leadership, Teaching, and Artificial Intelligence

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.

2026, Presenter, "Artificial Intelligence in Grading: Balancing Innovation, Efficiency, and Pedagogical Integrity," GGC Teaching and Learning Symposium, Lawrenceville, Georgia, January 15.

2025, Presenter, "Using AI Effectively for Beginners," Georgia Gwinnett College, September 19.

2025, Participant, "Teaching with AI Workshop Series," American Association of Colleges and Universities, September 8, 22, and 29.

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

2025, Presenter, "Effective Ways to Combat AI Usage in the Classroom," Georgia Gwinnett College, January 9.

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

2021, Panel Member, "Teaching in a Diverse Environment: Lessons from the Pandemic," International Studies Association South, October 8.

2017, Presenter, "Using Game of Thrones to Teach International Relations," International Studies Association Annual Conference, Baltimore, Maryland, February 3.

2016, Presenter, "Role Playing in International Relations," American Political Science Association Annual Conference, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, September 2.

Political Behavior, Institutions, 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.
- 2023, Chair, "Media and Political Communication," Southern Political Science Association, January 14.
- 2021, Presenter, "Climate Teach In," Environment Georgia, Lawrenceville, Georgia, October 10.
- 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.

Crisis Behavior and Executive 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.
- 2011, Young, Laura D. "Economic Crises and Changing Trade Preferences," Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, March 31–April 3.
- 2010, Young, Laura D. "Unilateral Presidential Policymaking and the Impact of Crises: An Examination of the Rise of Neoconservatism after September 11," Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois.

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.
- 2021, Teacher of the Month, Cain Injury Law, Lawrenceville, Georgia.
- 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.
- 2013, Committee for the Education of Teaching Assistants Award, Purdue University.
- 2012, Outstanding Independent Instructor Award, Purdue University.
- 2017–2020, Nominated for Georgia Gwinnett College full time teaching, service, and student engagement awards.

INSTITUTIONAL, PROFESSIONAL, AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community and Professional Engagement

- 2026–Present, Research Collaborator, Science for Georgia.
- 2025–Present, Education Ambassador, GPTZero.

Selected Institutional Service

2021–Present, Member, Environmental Science Assessment Committee, Georgia Gwinnett College.
 2020–Present, Member, Professional Studies Minor Committee, Georgia Gwinnett College.
 2019–Present, Member, Environmental Science Curriculum Board, Georgia Gwinnett College.
 2021–2022, Fellow, High Impact Practices Implementation, University System of Georgia.
 2019–2022, Member, School of Liberal Arts Internship Committee, Georgia Gwinnett College.
 2017–2019, Chair, John Tien Leadership Workshop Committee, Georgia Gwinnett College.
 2017–2018, Chair, IEE5 Goals Team, Georgia Gwinnett College.
 2016–2019, Advisor, Political Science Club, Georgia Gwinnett College.
 2015–2018, Co-Chair, Paralegal Certification Design Committee, Georgia Gwinnett College.
 2014–2016, Advisor, Student Sustainability Council, Purdue University.
 2014–2015, Advisor, Environmental Policy Think Tank, Purdue University.
 2014–2015, Faculty Fellow, Residential Life, Purdue University.
 2011–2014, Instructor, Learning Community, Purdue University.
 Additional service includes faculty searches, general education curriculum, sustainability, assessment, internship, game-based learning, and institute leadership search committees.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Graduate Courses (Distance Learning)

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

Undergraduate Courses

Paper to Publication	2024–2026
Senior Seminar	2019–2026
Research Methods: AI and Statistical Analysis	2026
Research Methods	2024–2025
Public Administration	2021
Environmental Science Capstone	2020, 2022
Legal Writing and Research	2019–2020
Introduction to Paralegal Studies	2018–2021
Introduction to Political Science	2016–2022
American Government (in-person and online)	2015–2026
Current Global Issues	2015, 2017
Introduction to International Relations (in-person and online)	2013–2022
Introduction to Public Policy (in-person and online)	2010–2018
Political Negotiation	2015–2016, 2019
Bargaining and Diplomacy	2015
Senior Seminar: Health Care Policy	2015
Global Green Politics (in-person and online)	2013–2024
Communicating Technical Information	2013
Introduction to Environmental Policy (in-person and online)	2011–2024
Fundamentals of Public Speaking	2010–2014
Environmental Law (in-person and online)	2019–2023

U.S. Foreign Policy (online)	2023
Our Dependence on the Environment (online)	2021–2023
Environmental Policies (online)	2018–2023

Undergraduate Honors Courses and Directed Study

LSAT/GRE Prep Course	2022
Directed Study	2015–2026
Introduction to Environmental Policy (Honors)	2014
Fundamentals of Public Speaking (Honors)	2014

Honors Research Projects Supervised

Hydroponics as a Commercial Alternative	2022
Hydroponics: A Comparative Project	2019
Risk Perception and the Clean Power Plan	2018
Water Pollution and Health Risks	2015
Green Policies in the United Kingdom	2015
Green Policies: A Comparative Analysis of the United States and China	2015
Comparative Domestic Water Management	2014
The Environment: Casualty of War	2014

Specialized Programs

Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth: Laws and Orders, Legal Systems Around the World	Summer 2024–2026
Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth: Global Politics, Human Rights and Justice	Summer 2009–2014
Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth: International Politics	Summer 2012
Purdue University Summer Start Program: Introduction to Environmental Policy	Summer 2016–2017
Early instructional experience: DeNeuville Learning Center (History; Microsoft Office Certification)	2005–2006

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

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

TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS

- **Academic administration:** Strategic planning, curriculum development, assessment, scheduling, enrollment analysis, staffing, faculty evaluation and development, program review, budget planning, and partnership building.
- **Data analysis and visualization:** R and RStudio, Stata, SPSS, Power BI, and Plotly.
- **Workflow and artificial intelligence:** Microsoft Power Automate, ChatGPT, Copilot, Claude, Perplexity, and AI supported teaching and administrative workflows.
- **Learning management systems:** Canvas, Blackboard, and Brightspace, including course design, grading workflows, and learning analytics.