

Mara Suttman-Lea, Ph.D.

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Research & Teaching Interests	American Politics Election Administration Urban Politics	Voting Rights American Political Development
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Academic Positions	<i>Connecticut College</i> Assistant Professor Department of Government and International Relations	2018-present
	<i>Skidmore College</i> Visiting Assistant Professor Department of Political Science	2017-2018

Education	<i>Northwestern University</i> Ph.D., Political Science	2017
	<i>Northwestern University</i> M.A., Political Science	2013
	<i>DePaul University</i> B.A., Political Science, Islamic World Studies	2009

Peer Reviewed Publications	1. "The Impact of Voter Education on Voter Confidence: Evidence from the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election." <i>Election Law Journal</i> (2023) 22(2): Online ahead of print (with Thessalia Meriavaki)
	2. "Don't Drown the Message: The Effects of Voter Education on Mail Ballot Acceptance in North Carolina." <i>Journal of Election Administration Research & Practice</i> (2022) 1(2): 69-95 (with Thessalia Meriavaki)
	3. "Can Electoral Management Bodies Expand the Pool of Registered Voters? The Effects of Face-to-Face, Remote, Traditional, and Social Media Outreach." <i>Policy Studies</i> (2022) 44(3): 377-407 (with Thessalia Merivaki)

4. "Designing Voter Education Across the States: State Responses to the Help America Vote Act." *Election Law Journal* (2022) 21(1): 46-59 (with Thessalia Merivaki)
5. "Determinants of Rejected Mail Ballots in Georgia's 2018 General Election." *Political Research Quarterly* (2022) 75(1): 231-243 (with Enrijeta Shino and Daniel A. Smith)
6. "Poll Worker Decision Making at the American Ballot Box." *American Politics Research* (2020) 48(6): 714-718

Edited Volumes and Book Chapters

1. Editor: "The Frontline of Democracy: How Local Election Administrators Support, Staff, and Defend American Elections." (with Paul Gronke, David Kimball, Thessalia Merivaki, Christian Grose, and Bridget King). – Under contract with Palgrave MacMillan
 - a. Author: "The Culture of Local Election Administration." (with Paul Gronke)
 - b. Author: "How LEOs Engage and Educate Voters about Voting Requirements and Election Reforms." (with Thessalia Merivaki)
2. Pandemic at the Polls: How the Politics of COVID-19 Played into American Elections." Dari Tran (Editor) – Under contract with Lexington Books.
 - a. Author: "The Frontline Workers of Elections Are Not Immune to Hostility Online." (with Joelle Gross, Samuel Baltz, Thessalia Merivaki, and Charles Stewart III)

Research In Progress

1. The #TrustedInfo2022 Dataset: States' Trust-Building Social Media Campaigns During the 2022 Election Cycles." (with Thessalia Merivaki) *Revise and Resubmit*
2. "Staying Close to Home: Preferred Sources of Election Information and Voter Confidence." (with Thessalia Merivaki and Rachel Orey) *Under Review*
3. "Are you there, voter? It's me, your election official." (Previously titled: "Are hashtags enough? Assessing the role of state election officials as information and opinion leaders.") (with Thessalia Merivaki and Rachel Orey) *Under Review*
4. "Presidential Electoral Competition and Voter Education in the United States." *Working Paper*

5. The Right (To Know How) To Vote: Voter Education in American Democracy (Working Title). *Book Project*

Book Reviews

1. "Crisis! When Political Parties Lose the Consent to Rule" by Cedric De Leon. *Political Science Quarterly* (2021) 1361(1): 207-208

Awards, Grants, and Fellowships

1. Andrew Carnegie Fellow Nominee, Connecticut College (2023) **Award decision pending** \$200,000
2. United States Election Assistance Commission (EAC) Voter Education Grant. Assessing the evolution and impact of local election administration innovations on the voter experience , (with Thessalia Merivaki, Mississippi State University). **Proposal Under Review, Pending Approval** \$180,324
3. United States Election Assistance Commission (EAC) Voter Education Grant. *Tracking the Implementation of Voter Education Programs Across the States*, (with Thessalia Merivaki, Mississippi State University) (2022-2024) \$219,113
4. M.I.T. Election Data and Science Lab- Evolving Election Administration Landscape Grant. *#TrustedInfo2022: How Election Officials Build Trust and Combat Misinformation*, (with Thessalia Merivaki, Mississippi State University) (2022-2023) \$134,076
5. M.I.T. Election Data and Science Lab- Evolving Election Administration Landscape Grant. *Whom Can I Trust? Exploring the American Public's Sources of Election Information* (with Rachel Orey, Katie Harbath, Collier Fernekes, and Michael Wagner, consulting for the Bipartisan Policy Center) (2022-2023) \$121,000
6. Andrew Carnegie Fellow Nominee, Connecticut College (2021)
7. Social Science Research Council Social Data Fellowship (2020-2021) *Voter Education in the Digital Age: Local Election Official Use of Social Media*. \$34,829
8. Susan A. Lynch Scholar, Connecticut College (2018-2023) \$6000

9. M.I.T. Election Data and Science Lab Research Grant (2017-2018) *The Deserving Voter: Poll Worker Decision Making at the American Ballot Box* \$10,000
- Media, Invited Talks, and Panels**
1. "Are you there voter? It's me, your election official." with Thessalia Merivaki and Rachel Orey. *Schambaugh Conference, University of Iowa*. 2023
 2. "[Public Hearing on Voter Education](#)." *United States Election Assistance Commission, Washington D.C.*, August 2, 2023
 3. "[Webinar: Building Trust in Elections](#)." *M.I.T. Election Data and Science Lab Learning from Elections Project*. July 28, 2023 (virtual)
 4. "[Media and Elections](#)." *Untangling the Tally Speaker Series: Connecticut's Old State House*. October 20, 2022
 5. "[Connecticut professor shares recap of Jan. 6th hearings](#)." *FOX 61*
 6. "[Voter Education Cultivates Resilience to Misinformation](#)." *TEDxConnCollege*. April 9, 2022
 7. "[Mara Suttman-Lea Talks Voter Education](#)." *Zoom with Czarny: A Conversation with Onondaga County, New York, Democratic Election Commissioner Dustin Czarny*, April 15, 2022
 8. "Online Voter Education and Student Voting." *State of the Student Vote Workshop*, April 27, 2022 (virtual)
 9. "What Do I Need to Vote? The Value of Voter Education for Voter-Centric Election Administration." *Election Community Scholar Network*, February 10, 2022 (virtual)
 10. "[#Trusted Info: Online Voter Education in the United States](#)." *Electoral Integrity Project Seminar Series*, November 17, 2021 (virtual)
 11. "[Adaptation, Adjustment, and Learning from the 2020 Election](#)." *Stewards of Democracy Initiative*, October 27, 2021 (virtual)
 12. "Voter Education and U.S. Election Administration." Guest lecture for Dr. Paul Gronke's campaigns and elections course, September 2021, Reed College (virtual)
 13. "[The Voices of Local Election Officials in Election Reform](#)." *Stewards of Democracy Initiative*, July 27, 2021 (virtual)

14. "Race and Presidential Elections." Guest Lecture for Dr. Julia Azari's U.S. Presidency Course, April 2021, Marquette University (virtual)
15. "Voter Education in the Digital Age: Local Election Official Use of Social Media." *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill American Politics Research Group*, February 26, 2021 (virtual)
16. "[Election Administration and the 2020 Presidential Elections](#)." *Loyola University, Chicago, Department of Political Science*, October 10, 2020 (virtual)
17. "[Voter Suppression: Past and Present](#)" *Andrea Mitchell Center for the Study of Democracy at the University of Pennsylvania*, October 28, 2020 (virtual)
18. "Conn Votes: A Community Webinar." *Connecticut College*, October 15, 2020.
19. "Running an Election in a Pandemic." *Connecticut College Fall Weekend*, October 2, 2020.
20. "Presidential Primaries Super Tuesday Pre-Game Panel." *University of Virginia's Center for Politics*, March 2, 2020
21. "Measuring Voter Engagement in Election Administration: How Much Do States Expect from Local Election Officials?" *Election Inclusion and Integrity II: Innovation, Investment, and Critical Conversation*, *Auburn University*, October 13-15, 2019

**Public Facing
Research**

1. "[Midterms 2022: Mail voting remained secure, despite concerns](#)" *The Conversation*. November 8, 2022. (with Thessalia Meriavaki)
2. "[New Survey Data on Who Americans Look to for Election Information](#)." *The Bipartisan Policy Center*. November 2, 2022 (with Katie Harbath, Rachel Orey, and Michael Wagner)
3. "[As midterms loom, here's how election officials can help voters](#)." *The Washington Post- Monkey Cage Blog*. October 5, 2022. (with Thessalia Meriavaki)
4. "[Local election offices are often missing on social media—and the information they do post often gets ignored](#)." *The Conversation*. August 31, 2022. (with Thessalia Meriavaki)
5. "[Online voter education by local election officials is a powerful tool for reaching 100% student voting](#)." *State of the Student Vote*, June 21, 2022 (with Thessalia Meriavaki)

6. ["Voter Education in the Digital Age."](#) *Mediawell, Social Science Research Council*, February 3, 2022
7. ["How Do Local Election Officials Reach New Voters?"](#) *MIT Election Data and Science Lab*, November 4, 2021 (with Thessalia Merivaki)
8. ["Local Election Official Use of Websites and Social Media During the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election."](#) *MIT Election Data and Science Lab*, June 17, 2021
9. ["In Georgia, vote by mail isn't working for many new, young, Black, Hispanic, and Asian voters."](#) *London School of Economics American Politics and Policy Blog*, April 19, 2021 (with Enrijeta Shino and Daniel A. Smith)
10. Interview: ["Vote by Mail in the 2020 Elections: How to Do It and Why"](#). *Teen Vogue*, August 17, 2020 (with Virginia Kase)
11. Interview: ["How Can Researchers and Election Administrators Work Together?"](#) *MIT Election Data and Science Lab Talking Elections Series*, May 28, 2020 (with Veronica Degraffenreid, Thessalia Merivaki, and Charles Stewart III)
12. ["Here's the Problem with Mail-in-Ballots: They Might Not Be Counted."](#) *The Washington Post- Monkey Cage Blog*, May 21, 2020 (with Enrijeta Shino and Daniel A. Smith)
13. ["Don't be shocked by the North Carolina absentee fraud elections. Absentee ballots are much less secure than polling places."](#) *The Washington Post, Monkey Cage Blog*, December 13, 2018
14. ["Early voting in the 2017 Montana special congressional election."](#) *London School of Economics American Politics and Policy Blog*, June 7, 2017
15. ["Prospects for Success in the Trump Presidency."](#) *London School of Economics American Politics and Policy Blog*, January 12, 2017
16. ["The 1980s Republican roots of Hillary Clinton's early voting strategy."](#) *London School of Economics American Politics and Policy Blog*, October 26, 2016
17. ["In Illinois, Tammy Duckworth's better funded campaign puts Mark Kirk's Senate seat in a precarious position."](#) *London School of Economics American Politics and Policy Blog*, October 11, 2016

Select Conference Papers

* Indicates version of paper now under review

** Indicates version of paper now accepted for publication

1. "Are hashtags enough? Assessing the role of state election officials as information and opinion leaders" with Thessalia Merivaki and Rachel Orey. Presented at the *Election Sciences, Research, and Administration Conference, Athens, GA, the Electoral Integrity Project Conference, Virtual, and the American Political Science Association Annual Conference. 2023 **
2. "#TrustedInfo2022: Variation and Patterns in How Election Officials Maintain a Transparent Information Ecosystem Online," with Thessalia Merivaki. *Southern Political Science Association Annual Conference, St. Pete Beach, FL. 2023**
3. "Whom Can I Trust? Exploring the American Public's Sources of Election Information," with Rachel Orey, Collier Fernekes, and Katie Harbath. *Southern Political Science Association Annual Conference, St. Pete Beach, FL. 2023 **
4. "The Impact of Voter Education on Voter Confidence: Evidence from the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election," with Thessalia Merivaki. *American Political Science Association Annual Conference, Montreal, Quebec, CA. 2022 ***
5. "Don't Drown the Message: The Effects of Voter Education on Ballot Acceptance in North Carolina," with Thessalia Merivaki. *Southern Political Science Association Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX. 2022 ***
6. "Educating Voters Online: Local Election Officials' Use of Social Media During the 2020 Presidential Election," with Thessalia Merivaki. *American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA. 2021***
7. "Can Local Election Officials Expand the Electorate? Face-to-Face, Traditional, and Social Media Outreach and Voter Registration," with Thessalia Merivaki. *Election Sciences, Research, and Administration Annual Conference. Virtual Meeting. 2021 ***
8. "Voter Education in the Digital Age: Local Election Official use of Social Media." *Southern Political Science Association Annual Meeting. Virtual Meeting. 2021*
9. "Assessing Rejected Mail Ballots in Georgia: Implications for COVID-19," with Enrijeta Shino and Daniel A. Smith. *American Political Science Association Annual Meeting. Virtual Meeting. 2020 ***
10. "Won't You Be My Neighbor? Descriptive Representation and Poll Worker Performance." *Election Science, Reform, and Administration Conference. Virtual Meeting. 2020*
11. "Poll Worker Decision Making at the American Ballot Box." *Election Science, Reform, & Administration Conference, Philadelphia, PA. 2019 ***

12. "Measuring Voter Engagement in Election Administration: How Much Do States Expect From Local Election Officials?" with Thessalia Merivaki. *Election Science, Reform, & Administration Conference, Philadelphia, PA.* 2019 **
13. "Poll Worker Evaluations of Minority Voter Eligibility." *State Politics and Policy Conference, College Park, MD.* 2019
14. "The Deserving Voter: Poll Worker Decision Making at the American Ballot Box." *American Political Science Association Annual Conference, Boston, MA.* 2018
15. "Are You a Russian Agent? Working with U.S. Election Administrators in an Era of Electoral Mistrust." *Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference, Chicago, IL.* 2018

Teaching

Assistant Professor, Connecticut College

- Introduction to American Politics (Fall 2018, Spring 2019, Fall 2019, Spring 2020, Spring 2021, Spring 2022, Fall 2022, Fall 2023).
- Campaigns, Parties, and Elections (Fall 2018, Fall 2020, Fall 2022)
- Urban Politics (Fall 2019, Fall 2020, Spring 2022, Fall 2023)
- The Politics of Voting Reforms (Spring 2019, Fall 2019, Fall 2020, Fall 2022)
- Presidential Primaries- Seminar (Spring 2020)
- American Political Development – Seminar (Spring 2022)

Visiting Assistant Professor, Skidmore College

- Introduction to American Politics (Fall 2017, Spring 2018)
- The American Presidency (Fall 2017)
- Congress and the Legislative Process (Spring 2018)
- Campaigns, Parties, and Elections (Spring 2018)

Service to the Profession

1. *Election Sciences, Reform, and Administration Conference*, Program Committee, 2023
2. *Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference*, Section Head: Electoral Representation, 2023
3. *Stewards of Democracy Initiative, Early Voting Information Center (EVIC), Reed College*. Track Leader, 2021
4. *Southern Political Science Association Annual Conference* Panel Discussant, 2021, 2022, 2023

5. *American Political Science Association Annual Conference*,
Panel Discussant, 2018, 2021, 2022

6. *Southern Political Science Association Annual Conference*,
Election Sciences Conference within a Conference, Organizer,
2021

7. *Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference*,
Panel Discussant, 2018, 2019, 2023

**Advising and
Service to the
College**

1. Undergraduate Honors Thesis Committee Chair

Emma Pyles- *Food Insecurity and Access to Voting* (2023-2024)

Kevin Rissmiller- *The Political Impacts of Climate Activism in the United States*
(2022-2023)

Stephanie Martinez-*Beyond the Ballot: How Latinx College Youth Define Political
Participation* (2020-2021)

Grace Killian- *Failure to Mobilize and Invest in Youth Voters- the Limitations of
Presidential Advertising in Elections from 1996-2016* (2020-2021)

2. Undergraduate Honors Thesis Committee Member

Joseline Urbina- *Representation and Intersectionality: The Massachusetts 7th
Congressional District, the 2018 Democratic Primary, and the Political Strategies
of U.S. Representative Ayanna Pressley* (2018-2019)

3. Mellon Mayes Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) Faculty Advisor

Faculty advisor for students in the MMUF program, which aims to create a
pathway to the professoriate for racial and ethnic minority students

4. Elected Faculty Representative, Educational Planning Committee (2022-
2025)

5. Member- Institutional Review Board (2023-2024)

Affiliations

Member

- American Political Science Association (APSA)
- Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA)

Mara Suttman-Lea, Ph.D.

- Southern Political Science Association (SPSA)

Reviewer

- Public Opinion Quarterly
- American Political Science Review
- Journal of Politics
- State Politics and Policy Quarterly
- Political Behavior
- New England Journal of Political Science
- American Politics Research
- Election Law Journal
- Social Science Quarterly
- Research and Politics