

# Danielle M. Thomsen

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- CONTACT INFORMATION Department of Political Science  
University of California, Irvine  
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E-mail: [dthomsen@uci.edu](mailto:dthomsen@uci.edu)  
Website: <http://daniellethomsen.com/>
- APPOINTMENTS Professor, Department of Political Science, University of California, Irvine, 2025–  
Associate Professor, University of California, Irvine, 2021–25  
Assistant Professor, University of California, Irvine, 2018–21  
  
Visiting Scholar, Center for the Study of Democratic Politics, Princeton University, 2018–19  
  
Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, 2015–18  
  
Post-Doctoral Fellow, Political Institutions and Public Choice Program, Duke University, 2014–15
- AFFILIATIONS Advisory Board Member, Center for Effective Lawmaking, UVA and Vanderbilt University, 2024–  
Faculty Affiliate, Center for Effective Lawmaking, 2018–  
Faculty Affiliate, Center for the Study of Democracy, University of California, Irvine, 2018–  
Senior Research Associate, Campbell Institute, Syracuse University, 2015–2018
- EDUCATION Ph.D., Government, Cornell University, 2014  
Dissertation: “Party Fit in the U.S. Congress”  
Winner of APSA E.E. Schattschneider Award for the Best Dissertation in American Politics  
  
B.A., Political Science and Spanish, Minnesota State University, Mankato, 2007
- BOOKS *The Money Signal: How Fundraising Matters in American Politics*. 2025. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chicago Studies in American Politics series.  
  
*Opting Out of Congress: Partisan Polarization and the Decline of Moderate Candidates*. 2017. New York: Cambridge University Press.  
  
Reviewed in *Choice*, *Congress & the Presidency*, *The Forum*, *Perspectives on Politics*, and *Political Science Quarterly*. Featured on C-SPAN BookTV.
- ARTICLES “Legislative Effectiveness, Progressive Ambition, and Electoral Success,” with Sarah Treul, Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman. Forthcoming at the *American Political Science Review*.  
  
“Early Money and Strategic Candidate Exit.” 2025. *British Journal of Political Science* 55(e101): 1-18.  
  
“Understanding the Policy Priorities of Republican Women in the US House of Representatives,” with Michele L. Swers. 2025. *Politics & Gender* 21(2): 306-332.  
  
“Competition in Congressional Elections: Money versus Votes.” 2023. *American Political Science Review* 117(2): 675-691.

- “The Primary Path for Turning Legislative Effectiveness into Electoral Success,” with Sarah Treul, Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman. 2022. *Journal of Politics* 84(3): 1714-1726.
- “Women’s Representation and the Gendered Pipeline to Power,” with Aaron S. King. 2020. *American Political Science Review* 114(4): 989-1000.
- “Gender Differences in Legislator Responsiveness,” with Bailey K. Sanders. 2020. *Perspectives on Politics* 18(4): 1017-1030.
- “Ideology and Gender in U.S. House Elections.” 2020. *Political Behavior* 42(2): 415-442.
- “Which Women Win? Partisan Changes in Victory Patterns in U.S. House Elections.” 2019. *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 7(2): 412-428.
- “Joining Patterns Across Party Factions in the U.S. Congress.” 2017. *The Forum* 15(4): 741-751.
- “Gender Equality Mood Across States and Over Time,” with Julianna Koch. 2017. *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 17(4): 351-360.
- “Which Women Can Run? Gender, Partisanship, and Candidate Donor Networks,” with Michele L. Swers. 2017. *Political Research Quarterly* 70(2): 449-463.
- “Party, Policy, and the Ambition to Run for Higher Office,” with John H. Aldrich. 2017. *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 42(2): 321-343.
- “Why So Few (Republican) Women? Explaining the Partisan Imbalance of Women in the U.S. Congress.” 2015. *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 40(2): 295-323.
- “Ideological Moderates Won’t Run: How Party Fit Matters for Partisan Polarization in Congress.” 2014. *Journal of Politics* 76(3): 786-797.
- BOOK  
CHAPTERS
- “Candidates and Competition in U.S. House Primaries.” 2025. In *Congress Reconsidered*, 13th edition, eds. Lawrence C. Dodd, Bruce I. Oppenheimer, Ruth Bloch Rubin, and C. Lawrence Evans. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- “Women Running, Women Winning: Voter Preferences in 2018.” 2021. In *Congress Reconsidered*, 12th edition, eds. Lawrence C. Dodd, Bruce I. Oppenheimer, and C. Lawrence Evans. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- “Parties and Polarization in Congress.” 2020. In *New Directions in Congressional Politics*, 2nd edition, eds. Jamie L. Carson and Michael S. Lynch. New York: Routledge.
- “Building a Campaign Donor Network: How Candidate Gender and Partisanship Impact the Money Chase,” with Michele L. Swers. 2020. In *Good Reasons to Run*, eds. Shauna L. Shames, Rachel I. Bernhard, Mirya R. Holman, and Dawn Langan Teele. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- “Gender and Political Citizenship,” with Eileen McDonagh. 2020. In *The Oxford Handbook of American Political History*, eds. Paula Baker and Donald T. Critchlow. New York: Oxford University Press.
- “When Might Moderates Win the Primary?” 2018. In *The Routledge Handbook of Primary Elections*, ed. Robert G. Boatright. New York: Routledge.

“Republican Women, Then and Now: Ideological Changes in Congressional Candidates from 1980 to 2012.” 2018. In *The Right Women*, eds. Malliga Och and Shauna L. Shames. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Press.

BOOK  
REVIEWS

Review of *Life in the Middle*, by Neilan S. Chaturvedi. 2022. *Perspectives on Politics* 20(4): 1466-1467.

Review of *The Cash Ceiling*, by Nicholas Carnes. 2019. *Perspectives on Politics* 17(2): 576-577.

Review of *Building the Bloc*, by Ruth Bloch Rubin. 2018. *The Forum* 16(2): 365-366.

WORK IN  
PROGRESS

“Candidate Wealth and Early Money in Congressional Elections,” with Ryan Mundy. Revise and resubmit.

“A New Look at Fundraising Disparities: Race, Gender, and Early Money,” with Savannah Plaskon. Winner of the 2024 Best Paper on Intersectionality Award, APSA Women, Gender, and Politics Research Section. Under review.

“How are Primary Nominees Decided? The Role of Large-Dollar Donors,” with Ryan Mundy.

“Effective Government through Candidate Recruitment,” with Daniel Stid.

“Counting Candidates.”

FELLOWSHIPS,  
GRANTS, AND  
AWARDS

Portman Center for Policy Solutions, University of Cincinnati, 2025

New Perspectives in Studies of American Governance Research Grant, American University (with Ryan Mundy and Savannah Plaskon), 2024-25

Dr. Joseph L. White Award for Outstanding Mentorship, UCI School of Social Sciences, 2024 Best Paper on Intersectionality Award; Women, Gender, and Politics Research Section (with Savannah Plaskon), 2024

*State Politics & Policy Quarterly* Best Paper Award (with Sarah Treul, Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman), 2023

Center for the Study of Democracy Research Grant, 2022-23; 2023-24; 2024-25

QQuery On Inc. Money in Politics Research Grant, 2021-22

Center for Effective Lawmaking Research Grant, 2020-21

Congressional Research Grant, Dirksen Congressional Center (with Ruth Bloch Rubin), 2019-22  
Emerging Scholar Award, American Political Science Association, Political Organizations and Parties Section, 2019

Visiting Scholar, Center for the Study of Democratic Politics, Princeton University, 2018-19

Center for Effective Lawmaking Research Grant (with Sarah Treul), 2018-19

Negotiating Agreement in Congress Research Grant, Anxieties of Democracy Program, Social Science Research Council, 2018

Campbell Institute Research Grant, Syracuse University, 2016, 2017

E.E. Schattschneider Award for the Best Dissertation in American Politics, 2015

Post-Doctoral Fellow, Political Institutions and Public Choice Program, Duke University, 2014-15

Janice N. and Milton J. Esman Dissertation Prize, Cornell University, 2015

Congressional Research Grant, Dirksen Congressional Center, 2014-15

National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant, 2013-14

American Association of University Women Dissertation Fellowship, 2012-13

Malcolm Jewell Award for the Best Graduate Paper, SPSA Conference, 2013

Dean's Prize for Distinguished Teaching, Cornell University, 2012  
Janet Box-Steffensmeier Award for Women to Attend the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), University of Michigan, 2011

TEACHING  
EXPERIENCE

University of California, Irvine: Introduction to American Government, American Politics Field Seminar (Graduate), American Political Institutions (Graduate), U.S. Congress, Gender and Politics (Undergraduate, Graduate)

Syracuse University: Introduction to American Government, Campaign Analysis, Gender and Politics (Undergraduate, Graduate)

Duke University: Campaigns and Elections, Women and Politics

Instructor, Auburn Correctional Facility, Auburn, NY, Cornell Prison Education Program: Gender and Politics in the United States

ADDITIONAL  
TRAINING

Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models, Princeton University, 2012  
Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, University of Michigan, 2011  
Summer Institute in Political Psychology, Stanford University, 2010

OTHER  
WRITING

"Looking at campaign spending shows that most elections are less competitive than vote totals suggest." London School of Economics, American Politics blog. May 2023.

"A record number of women are serving in Congress. That's good news for constituents," with Bailey K. Sanders. Monkey Cage, *Washington Post*. January 2021.

"Women are less than a quarter of all U.S. House candidates this year, but that's still record breaking." Center for American Women and Politics blog, Rutgers University. June 2018.

"Member joining patterns across party factions in the 115th Congress." LegBranch.com blog. April 2018.

"This is why Charlie Dent and other moderates are disappearing from Congress." Monkey Cage, *Washington Post*. September 2017.

"This explains why there are so few Republican women in Congress," with Michele L. Swers. Monkey Cage, *Washington Post*. June 2017.

"Where have all the moderate candidates gone?" *Raleigh News & Observer*. August 2014.

"Political polarization discourages moderate state legislators from running for Congress." London School of Economics, American Politics blog. July 2014.

"Fed up with Congress? Then help elect more Republican women." *Washington Post*. December 2013.

ANNUAL  
MEETINGS

American Political Science Association conference: 2011, 2012, 2014-18, 2020-25  
Midwest Political Science Association conference: 2011-19, 2021-24  
Southern Political Science Association conference: 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017

INVITED  
TALKS AND  
CONFERENCES

2026: Johns Hopkins University and American Enterprise Institute Convening, Washington, DC; Vanderbilt University, Center for Effective Lawmaking, Legislative Effectiveness in State Legislatures Mini-Conference; University of Notre Dame, Keeping the Republic Conference; University of Notre Dame, Gender and Representation Workshop; University of Southern California, Pathways to Primary Election Reform Conference; University of Virginia, Center for Effective Lawmaking Conference; Brennan Center for Justice, NYU Law School, Money in Politics Workshop (scheduled); Princeton University, Center for the Study of Democratic Politics (scheduled)

2025: University of Southern California, American Politics Speaker Series; UC Irvine, APSA Presidential Task Force on Democratic Innovations; Vanderbilt University, Center for Effective Lawmaking, Legislative Effectiveness in State Legislatures Mini-Conference; Leading to Govern Convening, Washington, DC; University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Social Science Research Colloquium; Vanderbilt University, Conference on Representation, Democracy, and the Economic Backgrounds of Politicians; American Enterprise Institute; Georgetown University, American Politics Speaker Series

2024: University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies; UC Berkeley, Research Workshop in American Politics; Leading to Govern Convening, Washington, DC; University of Virginia, Center for Effective Lawmaking Conference; Harvard University, APSA Presidential Task Force on Democratic Innovations; University of Wisconsin-Madison, Women in Legislative Studies Conference; Thomas Mann House, The Virtues and Limits of Political Compromise in Liberal Democracies

2023: Columbia University, American Politics Speaker Series; University of Chicago, American Politics Workshop; Florida State University, Department of Political Science; UCLA, American Politics Workshop; UC Davis, Department Speaker Series; University of Houston, Politics of Gender, Diversity, and Representation Conference; Vanderbilt University, Center for Effective Lawmaking Conference; Washington University in St. Louis, American Politics Conference; University of Iowa, Women and Political Parties Conference

2022: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, American Politics Research Group; Women in Legislative Studies Research Workshop (virtual); University of Oklahoma, Carl Albert Center Legislative Studies Conference; University of Virginia, Center for Effective Lawmaking Conference; Rice University, Women in Legislative Studies Conference; SoCal Political Economy and Institutions Workshop; University of Wisconsin-Madison, American Politics Workshop; Yale University, American Politics and Policy Workshop

2021: UC Berkeley, Travers Conference; University of Tennessee, Department Speaker Series; Vanderbilt University, Center for Effective Lawmaking Conference; Texas A&M University, Department Speaker Series

2020: UC San Diego, American Politics Workshop; UC Berkeley, Travers Conference (cancelled); Duke University PIPC Book Seminar (cancelled); Vanderbilt University, Center for Effective Lawmaking Conference (cancelled)

2019: University of Maryland, Conference on the Organizational Climate of Congress; National Institute for Civil Discourse Conference, Tucson, AZ; University of Southern California, PIPE Workshop; Harvard/MIT, Congress & History Conference; University of Virginia, Center for Effective Lawmaking Conference; University of Georgia, Visions in Methodology Conference; Yale University, Workshop on Party Discipline; Wesleyan University; CIDE, Mexico City, Empirical Study of Gender Research Network; Rutgers University, Women and Politics Workshop; Vanderbilt University, Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions

2018: Princeton University, Center for the Study of Democratic Politics; UC Berkeley, Research Workshop in American Politics; Social Science Research Council, Anxieties of Democracy Program, Workshop on Negotiating Agreement in Congress; Duke University, Aldrich Celebration Conference; Stanford University, American Politics Workshop; Saint Anselm College, New Hampshire Institute of Politics

2017: University of Pennsylvania, Gender and Candidate Recruitment Conference; University of Notre Dame, Rooney Center for the Study of American Democracy; Social Science Research Council, Anxieties of Democracy Program, Workshop on Polarization and Legislative Institutions, Berlin, Germany; University of Pittsburgh, American Politics Workshop; Hartwick College; Stony Brook University, Visions in Methodology Conference

2015: Brigham Young University, Gender and Candidate Emergence Conference; Duke University, Parties as Micro-Politics Conference; Duke University, Political Institutions and Public Choice 20th Anniversary Conference

2014: Case Western Reserve University, Women, Gender, and Conservative Parties Conference

2013: SUNY-Binghamton, Political Parties and Party Systems Conference

DEPARTMENT  
AND UNIVERSITY  
SERVICE

University of California, Irvine: American Politics Field Coordinator (2020-24); Women's Caucus Faculty Co-Advisor (2020-22); School of Social Sciences Committee on Faculty Diversity, Inclusion, and Development (2020-23); American Politics Speaker Series Co-Organizer (2021-22); Provost's Leadership Academy (2023-24); Diverse Educational Community and Doctoral Experience (DECADE) Mentor (2023-25); Undergraduate Scholarship Review Committee (2025-26); School of Social Sciences Executive Committee (2026-28)

Syracuse University: Political Science Research Workshop Coordinator (2017-18); American Politics Field Coordinator (2016-18); Graduate Admissions Committee (2017); American Politics Search Committee (2016-17)

STUDENT  
ADVISING

Colleen Burton, Elizabeth Gonzalez (chair, MA), Samantha Koprowski (Rutgers PhD), Kyle McWagner, Mellissa Meisels (Vanderbilt PhD), Melina Much, Liz Muehlmann, Ryan Mundy (chair), Savannah Plaskon (co-chair), Sebastian Rivera, Bailey Sanders (Duke PhD), Jacob Sutherland

PROFESSIONAL  
SERVICE

Editorial Board Member, *American Journal of Political Science*, 2025-27  
James A. Thurber Article of the Year Award Committee, 2026  
Richard E. Matland MPSA Paper Award Committee, 2024  
E.E. Schattschneider Best Dissertation in American Politics Committee, 2024  
*American Journal of Political Science* Best Article Award Committee, 2023  
Editorial Board Member, Cambridge Studies in Gender and Politics, 2022-24  
Editorial Board Member, *Politics & Gender*, 2019-22  
Carl Albert Dissertation Award Committee, 2021  
*Politics & Gender* Best Article Award Committee, 2021  
Emerging Scholar Award Committee, Political Organizations and Parties Section, 2020  
Midwest Political Science Association Conference Program Committee, 2018  
Visions in Methodology Conference Program Committee, 2017

Reviewer: *American Journal of Political Science*; *American Political Science Review*; *American Politics Research*; *British Journal of Political Science*; *Congress and the Presidency*; *Electoral Studies*; *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion, and Parties*; *Journal of Experimental Political*

*Science; Journal of Politics; Journal of Women, Politics & Policy; Legislative Studies Quarterly; Perspectives on Politics; Political Behavior; Political Research Quarterly; Political Science Quarterly; Political Science Research and Methods; Politics & Gender; Public Choice; Public Opinion Quarterly; Quarterly Journal of Political Science; State Politics & Policy Quarterly; Cambridge University Press; University of Chicago Press.*