Rachel Augustine Potter

CONTACT INFORMATION

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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Associate Professor, Department of Politics, University of Virginia	2021–present
Director of Graduate Admissions	2022–present
Associate Professor by Courtesy, Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy	2024–present
Assistant Professor, Department of Politics, University of Virginia	2014–21
Visiting Scholar, Center for the Study of Democratic Politics, Princeton University	2018–19

AFFILIATIONS

Nonresident Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution	2025–present
Senior Fellow, Miller Center for Public Affairs	2022–present
Affiliated Scholar, Scholars Strategy Network	2016–present
Contributor, Center for the Study of Regulation & Markets, Brookings Institution	2017–23
Consultant, Administrative Conference of the United States	2021–22

EDUCATION

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan
Ph.D., Political Science & Public Policy, 2014
M.A., Political Science, 2011

University of Southern California, Price School of Public Policy, Los Angeles, California
M.P.P., Public Policy, 2005

Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts
B.A., Communication, *Magna cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa, 2001

BOOKS

Going Private: Outsourcing the Administrative State
University of Chicago Press, Chicago Studies in American Politics, 2026 (forthcoming, fall)

Bending the Rules: Procedural Politicking in the Bureaucracy
University of Chicago Press, 2019

Awards: APSA-IPSA Theodore J. Lowi Award for the best first book in any field of political science, 2019; APSA Richard E. Neustadt Award for the best book on executive politics, 2019; National Academy of Public Administration Louis Brownlow Award for the best book on public administration, 2020; APSA Herbert A. Simon Book Award for significant contributions to public administration scholarship, 2024

Reviewed in: *American Review of Public Administration*, *Gestión y Política Pública*, *Congress & the Presidency*, *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, *Journal of Politics*, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, *Perspectives on Politics*, *Political Science Quarterly*, *Public Administration*, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, *Regulation* magazine, *Notice & Comment: Yale Journal on Regulation* (symposium feature)

Featured in: The University of Chicago Law Review Online, New Books in Political Science podcast, *Extensions*: A Journal of the Carl Albert Congressional Research Studies Center, APSA 2019 Author Meets Critics Roundtable, Science of Politics podcast

ARTICLES

"Buying Evidence? Policy Research as a Presidential Commodity." 2025. *Journal of Politics*, 87(2): 1468-2508.

"Regulatory Body Shops" (with Bridget Dooling). 2024. *Duke Law Journal*, 73(8): 1677-1742.
Review by Chris Walker in *JOTWELL*'s Administrative Law Blog

"Bureaucratic Politics: Blindspots and Opportunities in Political Science." (with Sarah Brierley, Kenny Lowande, and Guillermo Toral). 2023. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 26:271-290.

"Rulemaking by Contract" (with Bridget Dooling). 2022. *Administrative Law Review.* 74(4): 703-759.

"Not by the Numbers: Evaluating Trump's Administrative Presidency" (with Andrew Rudalevige, Sharece Thrower, and Adam Warber). 2022. *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 52(3): 596-625.

"Macro Outsourcing: Evaluating Government Reliance on the Private Sector." 2022. *Journal of Politics.* 84(2): 960-974.

"Congressional Oversight Revisited: Politics and Procedure in Agency Rulemaking." (with Kenneth Lowande). 2021. *Journal of Politics.* 83(1): 401-408.

"A Female Policy Premium? Agency Context and Women's Leadership in the U.S. Federal Bureaucracy" (with Craig Volden). 2021. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 31(1): 91-107.
Winner of the 2022 Riccucci-O'Leary Award for best article on diversity in a Public Management Research Conference journal

"Providing Political Guidance? Agency Politicization and 'As If' Policymaking." 2020. *Journal of Political Institutions and Political Economy* 1(1): 1-26 (lead article, inaugural issue).

"Continuity Trumps Change: The First Year of Trump's Administrative Presidency." (with Andrew Rudalevige, Sharece Thrower, and Adam Warber). 2019. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 52(4): 613-619 (lead article).

"Agency Rulemaking in a Separation of Powers System." (with Charles R. Shipan). 2019. *Journal of Public Policy* 39(1): 89-113.

"Slow-Rolling, Fast-Tracking, and the Pace of Bureaucratic Decisions in Rulemaking." 2017. *Journal of Politics* 79(3):841-855
Winner of the 2017 Kenneth J. Meier Award for the Best Paper in Bureaucratic Politics, Public Administration, or Public Policy, MPSA

"Organizational Capacity, Regulatory Review, and the Limits of Political Control." (with Alex Bolton and Sharece Thrower). 2016. *Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization* 32(2): 242-271.

"The Limits of Foreign Aid Diplomacy: How Bureaucratic Design Shapes Aid Distribution." (with Vincent Arel-Bundock and James Atkinson). 2015. *International Studies Quarterly* 59(3): 544-556.

Book Chapters

"The Contracting Out Paradox: Why Public Procurement Falls Short of its Promises." In *The Contracted State: How and Why Governments Rely on Private Contractors* (volume in progress), Alisha Holland and Gautam Nair (eds.)

"Learning from Failure: A 'Failure CV' for the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs." 2020. In *Executive Policymaking: The Role of the OMB in the Presidency*, Meena Bose and Andrew Rudalevige (eds.) Brookings Institution Press.

Select Work in Progress

"Policy Diffusion in the Administrative State" (with Chuck Shipan and Craig Volden) *Under review.*

"The President, the Unitary Executive, and the Assault on Federal Unions" (with Alex Bolton) *Under review.*

"Lawyering Up the Administrative State" *Working paper.*

"Does Congressional Oversight Pay? Legislators' Stock Holdings and Firm Performance in Federal Procurement" (with Lucy Ye Rim Hong and Justin Kirkland) *Working paper.*

"Flexing Feds? Understanding Federal Union Strength" (with Alex Bolton) *Working paper.*

Book Reviews

"Review of *Reviving Rationality* by Michael Livermore and Richard Revesz," 2021. *Notice & Comment: Yale Journal on Regulation*, October 13.

"Review of *Incomprehensible!* by Wendy Wagner," 2020. *The Regulatory Review*, March 31.

"Review of *Obama on the Home Front* by John D. Graham," 2020. *Presidential Studies Quarterly.* 50(1): 223-224.

"Review of *The Government Industrial Complex* by Paul C. Light," 2020. *Congress & the Presidency.* 47(1): 144-145.

Reports

"Research Primer on Schedule F," Center for Effective Government, University of Chicago, 2024

"Contractors in Rulemaking" (with Bridget Dooling), Report commissioned by the Administrative Conference of the United States, May 2022.

"Information Collection Budget of the United States Government." 2007. U.S. Office of Management and Budget. (Coauthored).

"Foundations for Los Angeles? The Scale, Scope and Reach of Foundation Philanthropy in Los Angeles County." 2006. Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy (CPPP), CPPP Series 6(1). University of Southern California (with James Ferris and Michael Tuerpe).

"Homeland Security: Further Action Needed to Promote Successful Use of Special DHS Acquisition Authority." 2004. U.S. Government Accountability Office. GAO 05-136. (Coauthored).

Other Writing

"Trump 2.0 and the Administrative State: A Personnel-Driven Revolution?" Miller Center for Public Affairs, September 10, 2025.

"How Much of Rulemaking is Done by Contractors?" Brookings Institution, Center on Regulation and Markets, February 16, 2022.

"Democratic Presidents Regulate. Republican Presidents Deregulate. Congress Could Stop the Pendulum Swing." Monkey Cage, *Washington Post*, Oct. 14, 2021.

"Improving White House Review of Agency Guidance" Brookings Institution, Center on Regulation and Markets, July 8, 2021.

"How Women Leaders can Enhance Rulemaking in the Biden Administration" (with Craig Volden). Brookings Institution, Center on Regulation and Markets, December 14, 2020.

"How Trump Uses a Crisis: Repeal Rules While Nobody is Looking" *PostEverything*, *Washington Post*, June 9, 2020.

"Keep Calm and Regulate On?" Brookings Institution, Center on Regulation and Markets, May 19, 2020.

"Member Comments: The Other (Less Visible) Way Congress Oversees Rulemaking" Brookings Institution, Center on Regulation and Markets, November 21, 2019.

"The Trump Administration's Regulatory Corner-Cutting isn't Just Bad for Democracy—it's a Bad Strategy" Brookings Institution, Center on Regulation and Markets, November 20, 2018.

"Regulatory Lobbying has Increased under the Trump Administration, but the Groups Doing the Lobbying May Surprise You." Brookings Institution, Center on Regulation and Markets, July 11, 2018.

"More than Spam? Lobbying the EPA through Public Comment Campaigns." Brookings Institution, Center on Regulation and Markets, Nov. 29, 2017.

"How the Trump Administration can use Benefit Cost Analysis to Justify Deregulation." Brookings Institution, Center on Regulation and Markets, Aug. 1, 2017.

"Why Trump Can't Undo the Regulatory State so Easily." Brookings Institution, Center on Regulation and Markets, Feb. 6, 2017.

Media

The Federal Drive with Tom Temin, "A New Look at how Agencies use Contractors in the Act of Rulemaking," April 11, 2022

Sunwater Institute, Reforming Congress Video Series, December 14, 2021

Sunday Morning Wake Up Call, "Presidential Executive Actions," Radio Show, March 7, 2021

Honors & Awards

Herbert A. Simon Book Award for significant contributions to public administration scholarship, APSA, 2024
Riccucci-O'Leary Award for the best article on diversity in a Public Management Research Conference journal, 2022
Louis Brownlow Award for the best book on public administration, National Academy of Public Administration, 2020
Theodore J. Lowi Award for the best first book in any field of political science, APSA-IPSA, 2020
Richard E. Neustadt Award for the best book on executive politics, APSA, 2020
Kenneth J. Meier Award for the Best Paper in Bureaucratic Politics, Public Administration, or Public Policy, MPSA, 2017
E.E. Schattschneider Award for the Best Dissertation in American Government, APSA, 2016
Mancur Olson Award for the Best Dissertation in Political Economy, APSA Political Economy Section, 2016
George C. Edwards III Award for the Best Dissertation in Presidency Research, APSA Presidency and Executive Politics Section, 2016
David Naveh Founders Award for the Best Graduate Student Paper, APSA Presidency and Executive Politics Section, 2013
Special Achievement Award, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, 2006
Graduate Commencement Speaker, USC School of Policy, Planning & Development, Spring 2005
USC Dean's Certificate of Merit for Academic Excellence, 2005
Boston College Arts and Sciences Honors Program, 1997 -2001

Grants & Fellowships

Quantitative Collaborative Seed Grant (with Justin Kirkland & Lucy Ye Rim Hong) ($12,000), 2025
Russell Sage Foundation, Presidential Grant (co-PI with Alex Bolton), 2023
Bankard Fund for Political Economy Grant ($35,000), 2023
Quantitative Collaborative Seed Grant (with Chinnu Parinandi & Jeff Harden) ($10,000), 2019
Bankard Fund for Political Economy Grant ($30,000), 2016
University of Virginia, Summer Research Award ($5,000): 2015, 2016, 2018, 2022
University of Michigan, Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship (university-wide competition), 2013–14
Gerald R. Ford Dissertation Research Grant ($3,800), 2013
Horowitz Foundation for Social Policy, Horowitz Foundation Research Grant ($7,500), 2012
University of Michigan, Faculty Women's Club Scholarship, 2012
University of Michigan, Rackham Precandidate Research Grant ($1,500), 2011
University of Michigan, Ford School Fellowship: 2011–12, 2012–13
University of Michigan, Rackham Regents Fellowship, 2009–10
Princeton University, Ph.D. Fellowship, 2008–09
Robert Bosch Foundation Fellowship (nationwide competition), 2007–08
U.S. Presidential Management Fellowship (nationwide competition), 2005–07
USC Dean's Merit Scholarship (full tuition support), 2003–05
Military Officers' Association of America Scholarship, 1997–01

Other Training

Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models (EITM)
NSF Funding Recipient, University of California at Berkeley, 2013

Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)
Summer Program in Quantitative Methods of Social Research, Ann Arbor, MI, 2009

Courses Offered

EGMT 1530, Times of Turbulence: 1968 & Beyond: F2025, S2026
PLAP 3500, Presidential Power: F2020, S2021, F2022, F2024
PLAP 3610, Introduction to Public Administration: S2015, F2015, F2016, S2017, F2021
PLAP 4500, Political Polarization in the United States: F2015, F2016, S2017, S2021, F2023

PLAP 4500, Contemporary Issues in American Politics: F2014
PLAP 7000, American Politics Core Seminar: F2019, F2020, F2022, F2024
PLAP 7010, American Political Institutions: F2014, S2016, S2018, S2020
PLAP 7500, Bureaucratic Politics: F2023
PLAD 8220, Graduate Professional Development Seminar: S2018
LPPP 7559 (Batten School), Influencing Public Policy: S2020
PS 300, Contemporary Issues in American Politics, SU2012 (University of Michigan)

Professional Experience

Robert Bosch Fellow, German Federal Interior Ministry, Berlin, Germany	2007–08
Policy Analyst, Office of Management and Budget, OIRA, Washington, D.C.	2005–07
Graduate Intern, U.S. Government Accountability Office, Washington, D.C.	2004
Paralegal, Kirkland & Ellis LLP, Washington, D.C.	2002-03

Testimony

Invited Testimony, House Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, Jan 2020

Invited Talks & Workshops

2026: University of Washington, Evans School (Feb); Rochester University (Mar); UVA American Politics workshop (Mar); UVA Quantitative Collaborative (Mar); University of Chicago (Mar); Stanford University, American Politics Workshop (Apr); Stanford Hoover Institution PEPCON conference (Apr); Harvard Kennedy School of Government (Apr); Yale University (June); Harvard Kennedy School of Government (Sept, planned)

2025: Georgetown University (May); Yale Conference on Executive Politics (June); UVA American Institutions Conference (June); Miller Center Conference on the American Presidency (Sept); Penn State University (Oct); Johns Hopkins School of Government (Dec)

2024: Political Economy & Public Law Conference, University of Florida (Feb); Princeton University Conference on Bureaucratic Politics (Mar); Yale Conference on Executive Politics (May); UCSD American Politics Conference (May); Workshop on the Contracting State, Harvard University (Dec)

2023: Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Mar), Clemson University (Apr), University of Toledo (Apr), ECPR Workshop on Stakeholder Participation, Sciences Po Toulouse (Apr); Democracy and Capitalism conference, University of Virginia (Mar); Federal Trade Commission, Women Employee Resource Group (Mar); National Capital Area Political Science Ass'n Workshop, American University (June)

2022: The Evolving Executive Conference, Vanderbilt University (Sept); Stennis Congressional Staff Fellows Program (Oct); Executive Politics Conference, University of Michigan (Oct); Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellows Progam (Nov); Power in the Administrative State Workshop (Dec)

2021: Seoul National University (virtual, Feb); Syracuse University (virtual, Mar); University of Pennsylvania, Annenberg School (virtual, Mar); Virtual American Executive Politics Seminar Vanderbilt University/ Yale University (virtual, Apr)

2020: University of Virginia Law School, Law & Economics Colloquium (virtual, Mar); Yale University (virtual, Sept), University of California at Berkeley (virtual, Oct); National Academy of Public Administration (virtual, Nov)

2019: Penn State (Jan); University of Chicago Law School (Feb); OMB Symposium Conference, Hofstra University (Apr); Regulatory Studies Center at George Washington University, book launch event (May); Visions in Methodology Conference, University of Georgia (May); Executive Politics

Conference, Ohio State University (June); Political Economy & Public Law Conference, Princeton University (June); University of Virginia Quantitive Collaborative (Sept); Political Economy of the Executive, PIPE conference, University of Southern California (Oct); Columbia University (Dec); Conference on Cultural Influences on Regulatory Capture, SSRC (Dec)

2018: Vanderbilt University (Apr), University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Apr); New Developments in Presidential & Executive Politics, Vanderbilt University (June); Princeton University (Nov)

2016: National Capital Area Political Science Ass'n Workshop, George Washington University (Jan); Texas A&M University (Jan); University of Virginia Quantitive Collaborative (Jan); Separation of Powers Conference, University of Georgia (Feb); University of Virginia Quantitative Collaborative (Mar); Princeton University (Apr); Emory University (Sept); Georgetown University (Dec)

2015: Empirical Rulemaking Conference, University of Wisconsin-Madison (Feb)

Book Workshops Attended

Ghostwriting Legislation; *White Shoes, Hidden Hands*

Annual Meetings

American Association of Law Schools: 2025
American Political Science Association: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2026
Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management: 2013, 2023
Midwest Political Science Association: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2022, 2024, 2026
European Political Science Association: 2023
Southern Political Science Association: 2016, 2021, 2023

Students Supervised, Ongoing

Ye Rim Lucy Hong (Chair in progress)

Zach Johnson (Dissertation committee member, in progress)

Rachel Payne (Dissertation committee member, in progress)

Kathryn Miller (Chair, in progress)

Beatriz Silva da Costa (Dissertation committee member, in progress)

Zach Watson (Dissertation committee member, in progress)

Yao Yao, University of Georgia (Dissertation committee member, in progress)

Students Supervised, Former

Nick Bednar, Vanderbilt University (Dissertation committee member, Placement: University of Minnesota Law School)

Andrew Clarke (Dissertation committee member, Placement: Lafayette College)

Ryan Laine (Chair, Placement: US Air Force)

Kenneth Lowande (Dissertation committee member, Placement: University of Michigan)

Nico Napolio, University of Southern California (Dissertation committee member, Placement: University of California at Riverside)

Idunn Nørbech, University of Bergen (Second opponent, Placement: University of Bergen postdoc)

Alex Pennington (First reader, MA thesis)

Taylor Pokrant (First reader, MA thesis)

Departmental & University Service

Member, Graduate Policy Committee, UVA Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 2024–present
Director of Graduate Admissions, UVA Politics department, 2022–present
Member, Chair's Advisory Committee, UVA Politics department, 2015–17, 2019–21, 2022-2024
Member, Selection Committee, Bankard Fund for Political Economy, 2023-2024
American Politics Subfield Co-Chair, UVA Politics department, 2021–2023
Member, American Politics Search Committee, UVA Batten School, 2022–23, 2024–25
Member, American Politics Search Committee, UVA Politics department, 2020–21
Ad hoc Chair Search Committee, UVA College of Arts & Sciences: 2016, 2020, 2026
Member, American Politics Search Committee, UVA Politics department, 2017–18
Member, UVA Graduate Admissions Committee, 2015–16
Co-Chair, Interdisciplinary Workshop on American Politics, University of Michigan, 2012–13
Member, Ford School Ph.D. Admissions Committee, 2012–13
Co-President, Graduate Association of Political Scientists, University of Michigan, 2010–11

Service to the Profession

President, Midwest Public Administration Caucus, MPSA, 2023-24
Chair, Bureaucratic Politics Section, MPSA, 2021-22
Member, Presidential Nominating Committee, MPSA Public Administration Caucus, 2021-22
Member, APSA President & Executive Politics Steering Committee, 2016-2022
Member, Founders Award for Best Graduate Paper Committee, PEP Section, APSA, 2019-20
Chair, Kenneth J. Meier Paper Award Committee, MPSA, 2019-20
Chair, Public Administration Section, SPSA, 2019-20
Member, Excellence in Mentoring Award Committee, Public Policy Section, APSA, 2018-19
Program Director, Midwest Public Administration Caucus, MPSA, 2018-19
Member, MPSA Herbert Simon Career Award Committee, 2015–16
Member, APSA Neustadt Book Award Committee for best book on the presidency, 2014–15

Journal Reviewer: *American Journal of Political Science*, *American Political Science Review*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *Congress & the Presidency*, *Governance*, *Health Affairs*, *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*, *Journal of Health Politics, Policy, and Law*, *Journal of Law and Courts*, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *Journal of Politics*, *Journal of Public Administration Research & Theory*, *Journal of Public Policy*, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *Perspectives on Politics*, *PLOS One*, *Policy Studies Journal*, *Political Analysis*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Political Science Research and Methods*, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, *Public Administration Quarterly*, *Regulation & Governance*, *Social Choice and Welfare*.

Editorial Boards: *American Political Science Review* (2024-present), *Journal of Political Institutions and Political Economy* (2023-present), *Journal of Politics*, (2019-2020), *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, (2026-present)

Book Reviewer: Cambridge University Press, University of Chicago Press.

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