

URSULA HACKETT

Reader in Politics, Royal Holloway, University of London

ursula.hackett@rhul.ac.uk · ursulahackett.com · Google Scholar · @UrsulaBHackett

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Royal Holloway, University of London

Reader in Politics	2022 -
British Academy Midcareer Research Fellow	2023-2024
Senior Lecturer in Politics	2019-2022
Lecturer in Politics	2016-2019
British Academy Postdoctoral Research Fellow	2016-2019

University of Oxford

Rothermere American Institute Junior Research Fellow in US Politics	2013-2016
Non-Stipendiary Research Fellow, Nuffield College	2013-2016
College Lecturer, Christ Church and Exeter College	2011-2012

EDUCATION

University of Oxford

Doctor of Philosophy in Politics	2013
<i>Winner of the Sir Walter Bagehot Prize for the best thesis in the field of Government and Public Administration (Political Studies Association, 2015)</i>	
Master of Philosophy in Politics: Comparative Government	2011
Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, Politics and Economics	2009
<i>First Class.</i>	

RESEARCH MONOGRAPH

America's Voucher Politics: How Elites Learned to Hide the State	2020
Cambridge University Press, New York	
Reviewed in <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> , June 2021	
<i>Winner of the Education Politics and Policy Best Book Award (American Political Science Association, 2021)</i>	
<i>Winner of the Richard E. Neustadt Best Book Prize, American Politics Group, Political Studies Association, 2022</i>	

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

13. [Dilutive Drift: The Racial Impact of Low-Change Redistricting](#) *Perspectives on Politics* 2026. First View.
12. [Rethinking America's racial policy alliances: beyond 'repair' and 'protect'](#) *Ethnic and Racial Studies* Volume 48, Issue 13, 2025. pp2586-2594
11. [Redrawing Democracy: Quantifying House District Continuity and Change, 1789-2024](#) *Studies in American Political Development* Volume 39, Issue 2, May 2025. pp110-124
10. [Litigating Policy Drift: Frozen Categories and Thresholds in Court](#) *Perspectives on Politics* Volume 22, Issue 4, December 2024. pp1065-1076.

9. Electoral Accountability for Rising Tuition in the US: Evidence from a Survey Experiment and Observational Data *The Journal of Higher Education* Volume 95, Issue 6, 800-823, 2024. With Zhamilya Mukasheva and Sofia Collignon.
8. The Reinvention of Vouchers for a Color-Blind Era: A Racial Orders Account *Studies in American Political Development* Volume 33, Issue 2, October 2019, pp 234-257. With Desmond King.
7. Attenuated Governance: How Policymakers Insulate Private School Choice from Legal Challenge, *Policy Studies Journal*, Volume 47, Issue 2, May 2019, pp 237-273
Winner of the 2022 Theodore J. Lowi Prize for the Best Article published at any time in Policy Studies Journal
6. Theorizing the Submerged State: The Politics of Private Schools in the United States, *Policy Studies Journal*, Volume 45, Issue 3, August 2017, pp 464-489
5. The Six Great Societies, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Volume 46, Issue 2, pp 284-305 (2016).
4. The Exit-Voice Choice: Religious Divides, Public Aid and America's Private Schools, *Politics and Religion*, Volume 9, Issue 2, pp 249-270 (2016).
3. The Goldilocks Principle: Applying the Exclusive Disjunction to Fuzzy Sets, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, Volume 19, No 5, June 2016, pp 551-574
2. But Not Both: The Exclusive Disjunction in Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) *Quality and Quantity*, Volume 49, Issue 1, pp 75-92 (2015).
1. Republicans, Catholics and the West: Explaining the Strength of Religious School Aid Prohibitions, *Politics and Religion*, Volume 7, Issue 3, pp 499-520 (2014).

EDITED JOURNAL SPECIAL ISSUES

2. Editors' Introduction: Symposium on the Politics of Religious Alliances, *Politics and Religion*, Volume 9, Issue 2, pp227-233 (2016). With David E. Campbell.
1. Editors' Introduction: 100 Days of Trump: Security and Foreign Policy Implications, *Critical Studies on Security*, 5(3), pp1-2 (2017). With Michelle Bentley and Clara Eroukhmanoff.

CHAPTERS IN EDITED VOLUMES

4. The United States, in *The Annual Register*, edited by Wendy Slater and Stephen Lewis. ProQuest. (2024 and 2025)
3. Barefaced Politics: Provocative Republican Policymaking Strategies, in *Changing Character of the American Right, Volume II: Ideology, Politics and Policy in the Era of Trump*, edited by Gillian Peele, Desmond King, Bruce Cain, and Joel Aberbach (2025)
2. Federalism, in *Developments in American Politics 9*, edited by Gillian Peele, Bruce Cain, Jon Herbert and Andrew Wroe, Palgrave Macmillan. (2022)
1. Offers and Throffers: Education Policy under Obama, in *The Obama Presidency and the Politics of Change*, edited by Edward Ashbee and John Dumbrell. Palgrave Macmillan. (2017)

PEDAGOGICAL OUTPUTS

3. Brilliant Essays
Bloomsbury Study Skills, London 2020
2. [YouTube Channel: How to Write Brilliant Essays](#) 28 original pedagogical videos, 900+ subscribers, 38,000+ views
1. [Website: How to Write Brilliant Essays](#) Free downloadable exercises and answers, FAQs, tips, blogs and video content

IN PROGRESS/UNDER REVIEW

4. District Protectionism: Public Opinion on Race, Partisanship, and Redistricting Change
3. Omission and Commission Drift
2. 'When Pressure Turns Into Compulsion': Coercive Federalism in Trump's America
1. Book Manuscript under review - Protecting the District: How Redistricting Entrenches Power

PRIZES AND HONOURS

10. Social Science Impact Accelerator Storytelling Competition
To develop a redistricting infographic with community organisers 2026
9. Richard E. Neustadt Best Book Award, (*America's Voucher Politics*)
American Politics Group, Political Studies Association 2022
8. Theodore J. Lowi Prize for the Best Article published at any time in *Policy Studies Journal*, American Political Science Association, Public Policy Section 2022
7. Education Politics and Policy Best Book Award, (*America's Voucher Politics*) 2021
American Political Science Association, Education Policy Section
6. Sir Bernard Crick Prize for Outstanding Teaching, Political Studies Association 2020
5. Royal Holloway Teaching Excellence Prize
For online teaching resources: How to Write Brilliant Essays website and YouTube channel 2020
4. Royal Holloway Politics and International Relations Society "Golden Apple" Award
For teaching excellence 2018
3. Royal Holloway Teaching Excellence Commendation
In recognition of my "transferable approach to fostering student engagement with research" 2017
2. Sir Walter Bagehot Prize
For the best dissertation in Government and Public Administration, Political Studies Association 2015
1. Richard E. Neustadt Prize
For the best paper presented by a postgraduate student at the American Politics Group Conference 2014

INVITED PRESENTATIONS AND CONFERENCES

Invited Presentations

The Declaration of Independence and the Politics of Inaction, UCL Institute for the Americas Annual Lecture 2026

Is US Democracy Dead? UCL Policy and Practice Series	2026
How to Write a Great Politics Essay, Financial Times-APG Conference	2026
Race, Illiberalism, and the State, University of Toronto	2025
Race and the Administrative State, University of Oxford roundtable	2025
The Shape of Democracy, Lecture at University of Southern Denmark, Odense	2025
Donald Trump and the Prospects for American Democracy and Foreign Relations, Word Festival, Odense, Denmark	2025
America, Now! Eccles Centre Roundtable, British Library, London	2025
The 2000 and 2016 Presidential Elections, Last Best Hope Podcast, Oxford	2024
The New Metropolis, Oxford Book Manuscript Roundtable	2024
Whose Vote Counts? Rothermere American Institute, Oxford	2024
Super Tuesday and the Race for the Presidency, LSE Roundtable	2024
The Politics of Citizenship, Finance, and Central Banks, Oxford	2024
The Politics of School Vouchers, National Council of State Education Attorneys	2023
The Rise and Fall of the Neoliberal Order, Roundtable, British Academy, London	2022
Biden Presidency and the 2022 Midterms, Rothermere American Institute, Oxford	2022
President Biden's First Year, Roundtable, London School of Economics	2022
Foreign and Commonwealth Office, How Washington Works 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023	
Polarization and the Future of American Democracy, Roundtable, ECPR	2021
Oxford-Stanford Conference on the Changing Character of the American Right	2021
Rooney Center for the Study of American Democracy, University of Notre Dame	2021
International School Choice and Reform Conference, Author Meets Critics	2021
Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Strategy Directors' Expert Group	2020, 2021
Education and Social Mobility Workshop, Nuffield College, Oxford	2019
American Politics Group Colloquium, British Library, London	2019
Institute for Education, University College London: The Politics of Education	2019
RBG Screening and Supreme Court panel discussion, Chatham House, London	2019
Live Webinar on Government Shutdowns, Chatham House, London	2019
Assessing the Midterm Elections, Chatham House, London (livestreamed)	2018
The Politics of Education, Nuffield College, Oxford	2018
America at the Crossroads, Miller Center (Virginia) and RAI (Oxford)	2018
Money and Politics, Nuffield College, Oxford	2017
Royal Holloway Speed Research, Trump: One Year On	2017
Prospect Magazine panel discussion, London, Earthquake America	2017
Royal Holloway, What Now? Policy Implications of the 2016 US Elections	2016
Institute for the Americas, University College London, 2016 US Elections	2016
Royal Holloway, What to expect in the 2016 US Elections	2016
US Election 2016: Battle Ground Policy Areas, Chatham House, London	2016

Conference Presentations

American Political Science Association (APSA) 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017(decl.), 2019, 2022(decl.), 2024	
European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR)	2017, 2021
International School Choice and Reform Conference	2013, 2021
Toronto Political Development Workshop	2016, 2017, 2018, 2019
Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA)	2014, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019
American Politics Group of the Political Studies Association (PSA)	2014, 2016, 2024
European Political Science Association (EPSA)	2014

Discussant Roles

Student Aid and Mass Higher Education, APSA Education Politics Winter Conference 2025	
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Education Reforms and Responses, APSA Education Politics Winter Conference	2025
Comparative Education Politics Poster Session, APSA	2024
Oxford-Stanford Conference: The Changing Character of the American Right	2020
American Political Science Association Conference, Washington D.C.	2019
The Trump Presidency and the Course of American Political Development, Oxford	2019
Transatlantic Conference on Money and Politics, Oxford	2017
Workshop on Social Movements and The American State, Oxford	2017
Black Politics in a Color-Blind Era Conference, Oxford	2015
Midwest Political Science Association Conference, Chicago	2015
European Political Science Association Conference, Edinburgh	2014

FUNDING AWARDS

British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship (£132,750)	2022
British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship (£278,536)	2016
Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Studentship (£45,000)	2011
Exeter College, University of Oxford, Amelia Jackson Scholarship (£13,580)	2010
Department of Politics and International Relations, Oxford, Studentship (£5000)	2010
British Academy training and conferences grant (£3000)	2017
Royal Holloway Research Strategy Fund for representation experiments (£1500)	2019
Andrew W Mellon funding awards for conferences (£1500)	2012, 2013
Rothermere American Institute, University of Oxford, Travel Award (£1250)	2010
Royal Holloway Research Strategy Fund for pilot survey experiments (£600)	2017
Harris Manchester College, Oxford, Travel Awards (£400)	2012, 2013

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Administrative Experience

Vice Dean for Research and Knowledge Exchange, School of Law and Social Sciences	2025
Departmental REF Lead, PIR, Royal Holloway	2023-24
Deputy School Director of Research, School of Law and Social Sciences	2020-1
Departmental Research and Knowledge Exchange Lead, PIR, Royal Holloway	2019-22
Chair, PIR Departmental Research Committee, Royal Holloway	2019-22
Member, School of Law and Social Sciences Steering Research Committee	2019-21
Probation Advisor for new lecturer, Royal Holloway	2019-21
Internal Advisor, AQPO validation of new BSc in Social Sciences	2019
History Liaison, School of Politics, Philosophy and IR, Royal Holloway	2018-19
Careers and Alumni Officer, School of Politics, Philosophy and IR, Royal Holloway	2018-19
Course Convener and Examiner, University of Oxford	2015-16
Doctoral Confirmation/Transfer of Status Assessor, University of Oxford	2014-16
Interviewer, Exeter College and Corpus Christi, University of Oxford	2013, 2014

Professional Service

External Examiner, Department of Politics and IR, University College London	2025-29
ESRC Assessor College, Member	2025 -
President, APSA Education Policy and Politics Section	2024-5
Prize Committee, APSA Religion and Politics Section, Aaron Wildavsky Dissertation Award	2024-5
External Member, Oxford appointment panel for Associate Prof. in US Foreign Policy	2024
UKRI ESRC Peer Review College, Member	2024 -
Prize Committee, APSA Politics and History Section, Walter Dean Burnham Dissertation Award	2022
Prize Committee, APSA Education Policy Section, Best Book Award	2022

Host, New Books in Public Policy, New Books Network Podcast Channel	2021 -
School Steering Research Committee, School of Law and Social Science	2019-22
International Network on Education Governance	2018 -
Departmental Research Committee, Royal Holloway	2017 -
Prize Committee, APSA Public Policy Section, Harold D. Lasswell Dissertation Award	2021
ESRC Grant Reviewer, UKRI New Investigator Grants	2020
External Examiner, PhD Work in Progress Panel, Copenhagen Business School	2020
Prize Committee, APSA Public Policy Section, Best Comparative Policy Paper	2020
Centre for International Public Policy, Royal Holloway	2018-19
Co-Director, American Studies Network, Royal Holloway	2017-18
Government and Sociology Panel, Oxford	2015-16
Executive Committee, Rothermere American Institute, Oxford	2013-16
Academic Committee, Rothermere American Institute, Oxford	2013-16

Journal and book reviews

American Journal of Political Science; Political Behavior; Perspectives on Politics; Political Research Quarterly; Policy Studies Journal; State Politics and Policy Quarterly; Policy Sciences; Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion; Politics and Religion; Administration and Society; Electoral Studies; Publius, the Journal of Federalism; Studies in American Political Development; American Politics Research; History of Education Quarterly; Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics; Canadian Journal of Political Science; Cambridge University Press; MIT Press; Bloomsbury; Oxford University Press

Editorial Boards

Member of the Editorial Board for the journal *Politics and Religion*, American Political Science Association, *Cambridge University Press* 2022 -
 Member of the Editorial Advisory Board, Political Development Series 2018 -
University of Toronto Press

PANELS ORGANIZED

The Shifting Politics of School Choice	2025
In Conversation with Professor Jeffrey R. Henig APSA Education Politics and Policy Winter Virtual Conference Panellists: Ursula Hackett, Jeffrey Henig.	
Shaping Minds, Shaping Nations: Democracy, Protest, and State Power	2025
Book Roundtable APSA Education Politics and Policy Winter Virtual Conference Panellists: Agustina S. Paglayan, Domingo Morel, Matthew Nelsen	
America's Voucher Politics: How Elites Learned to Hide the State	2020
Book launch: Rothermere American Institute University of Oxford (held virtually) Panellists: Ursula Hackett, Nigel Bowles, Desmond King, Sidney Milkis	
The Politics of Education Reform	2019
Organized panel: American Political Science Association Conference Ursula Hackett and Paul Manna (Discussants) Paper-givers: Leslie Finger and Sarah Reckhow, Richard Johnson, Jim Farney and Linda White, Michael Hartney and Sam Hayes	
The Constitutional Politics of Religion and Education in the US	2016
Jointly organized panel: Midwest Political Science Association Conference Melissa Deckman (Chair), David Campbell (Discussant)	

Paper-givers: Ursula Hackett and Andrew Lewis, William Blake and Amanda Friesen, Laura Olson, Stephen Mockabee

The New Politics of Education: Vouchers, Waivers and Racial Divisions 2015

Jointly organized panel: Midwest Political Science Association Conference

Jennifer Hochschild (Chair), Chloe Thurston (Discussant)

Paper-givers: Ursula Hackett and Desmond King, Will Howell, Michael Hartney, Richard Johnston

Framing and Racialization: The Politics of School Choice 2014

Jointly organized panel: American Political Science Association Conference

Margaret Weir (Chair), William G. Howell (Discussant)

Paper-givers: Ursula Hackett and Desmond King, Jeffrey Henig, Patrick J. Wolf, and Michael Tesler

Federalism, Educational Choice and Religious School Aid Provisions 2012

Organized panel: American Political Science Association Conference (cancelled due to hurricane)

Carol Weissert (Chair), Todd Swanstrom and John Kincaid (Discussants)

Paper-givers: Ursula Hackett, Patrick McGuinn, Steven G. Koven, and Patrick J. Wolf

CONFERENCES ORGANIZED

APSA Education Politics and Policy Winter Virtual Conference 2025

Two-day international virtual conference.

The Democratic Deficit in American Politics 2016

Two-day international conference. Co-organized with Lisa L. Miller.

The Strange Bedfellow Politics of Religious Alliances 2015

One-day international conference. Co-organized with David E. Campbell. Co-edited a symposium, which was published in 2016 by *Politics and Religion*

The Rights of the Political Minority in America 2014

Two-day international conference. Co-organized with Nicholas Cole.

TEACHING

[Brilliant Essays Twitter Account @Dr Essays](#) *Essay writing tips*

Twitter Takeover for National Writing Day, Bloomsbury Study Skills 2022

How to Write Brilliant Essays at Uni, Masterclass for Zero Gravity 2023

Courses Taught

American Political Development (undergraduate) Course Convener: 2016-

Government and Politics of the United States (undergraduate) Course Convener: 2019-

Undergraduate Dissertation in Politics or IR Course Convener: 2021-2022

Introduction to Politics (undergraduate) Contributor: 2025 -

Media, Power and Public Affairs (graduate) Contributor: 2016-2020

Doctoral Students Supervised

- Amber Macintyre *Campaigning by Numbers: Data Logic and Civil Society* (Completed, 2020)
- Zhamilya Mukasheva *The Politics of Cost-Sharing in Higher Education in OECD Countries* (Completed, 2022)

TRAINING

Quanteda Text Analysis, London School of Economics	2022
ECPR Summer School, Central European University	2017
Engaging Communications for Academics, Oxford	2016
Institute for Qualitative Research, Maxwell Syracuse University	2012
ESRC Media Training, Cambridge	2012
Research Methods Training, Oxford	2010

COMMISSIONED JOURNALISM AND BLOGS

14. [In voting for Prop 50, California has upended two centuries of redistricting tradition](#), *London School of Economics US APP Blog* November 7th, 2025
13. [Unlock Your Students' Potential: Set Brilliant Essay Questions](#), *Macmillan International Higher Education* March 20th, 2021
12. [How to Provide Better Essay Feedback](#), *Macmillan International Higher Education* March 10th, 2021
11. [4 Practical Ways To Reduce Students' Anxiety Around Essay Writing](#), *Macmillan International Higher Education* March 4th, 2021
10. [From Everyday Language To Brilliant Essays](#) , *Macmillan International Higher Education* January 5th, 2021
9. [Private School Choice: How to Win Big](#), *Fifteen Eighty Four Blog* April 17th 2020
8. [UK-US Relations in the Trump-Brexit Era](#), *Quintessentially commissioned article* June 27th 2018 (subscription required)
7. [Why Donald Trump will not be convicted](#), *Quintessentially commissioned article* December 11th 2017 (subscription required)
6. [This major church-state case makes direct funding of religious organizations more likely](#), *LSE American Politics and Policy Blog* June 30th, 2017
5. [How to Impeach Donald Trump](#), *Prospect Magazine commissioned article* February 10th 2017
4. [The submerged politics of Obamacare may make it harder to repeal than Trump and the GOP realize](#), *LSE American Politics and Policy Blog* December 14, 2016
3. [The appointment of Betsy DeVos as US Education Secretary is a green light for market forces in education](#), *LSE American Politics and Policy Blog* November 25, 2016
2. [What does the Chicago Teachers' Strike mean for Obama and the Democrats?](#), *Politics Inspires* September 24, 2012
1. [Santorum, Catholicism and the American Wall of Separation between Church and State](#), *Politics Inspires* March 6, 2012

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Governor of St Francis CE Primary School, Oxford	2011-2014
Vice-Chair of the Governing Body	2012-2014

Last updated: March 2026