

CURRICULUM VITAE
Karson Pennington Ray, Ph.D.

Contact:

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Education:

PhD, Political Science & International Affairs, University of Georgia, 2025

Dissertation: *The Criminal Court“Zoom”: Access to Justice in Criminal Hearings at the U.S. Federal District Courts*

Committee: Teena Wilhelm (chair), Christina L. Boyd, Harrison Frye, Susan Haire

Major Field: American Politics **Minor Field:** Political Theory

MA, Political Science & International Affairs, University of Georgia, 2020

Thesis: *To Assign or Not to Assign? Opinion Assignment at the Rehnquist and Roberts Courts*

Committee: Christina L. Boyd (chair), Susan Haire, Richard Vining

BA, History, University of Georgia, 2020

BA, Political Science, University of Georgia, 2020

Academic Appointments:

Lecturer, University of Georgia, 2025 — present

Publications:

“Redistricting and Party Loyalty in the State Supreme Courts” in *Journal of Law and Politics* with Teena Wilhelm, Garrett Vande Kamp, and Austin Petrie. 2025.

“Race and Gender in Judicial Selection in the United States” in Michael P. Fix and Matthew Montgomery, eds. *Research Handbook on Judicial Politics* with Matthew E. Baker, Christina L. Boyd, and Aidan Gonzalez. 2024.

“Constructing the Supreme Court: How Race, Ethnicity, and Gender Have Affected Presidential Selection and Senate Confirmation Hearings” in *Polity* with Christina L. Boyd, Paul M. Collins, and Lori A. Ringhand. 2023.

Teaching Experience:

Introduction to American Government (POLS 1101); Honors (POLS 1101H)

Criminal Justice Administration (POLS 3600)

Criminal Procedure (POLS 4720)

Supreme Court Politics (POLS 4760)

Special Topics in Law, Judicial Politics (POLS 4780)

Teaching Statement:

My goal in the classroom is to be a higher education instructor whose courses encourage students to respectfully engage with the political world around them. I seek to maintain a learning environment conducive to students of all kinds with interests in all subjects. In teaching American politics, my priority is to educate students about the world in which we live, encourage participation in their communities through a series of volunteer opportunities, and validate their presence as entities of change for our political future. My goal as an instructor is for each student to feel like they are learning from my instruction as well as from the contributions of other students, while also teaching and sharing their educational growth with the entire group. The roles of student and teacher are synonymous in many of my classroom settings, as I allow numerous opportunities for students to display their own knowledge for the benefit of the classroom. Rather than allow my students to feel as though I am talking *at* them, I aim to facilitate dialogues between myself and students which make them feel empowered and masterful of the material. Essentially, I aim to make myself accessible to students through demonstrating that they are teaching me, and each other, just as I am teaching them. Each student is recognized as a valuable asset to the class and brings something unique to the table. Taking advantage of the vast multitude of perspectives in any class is a main goal of mine.

Research Statement:

My research interests are in American judicial politics at both the federal and state levels. At the core of this is my dissertation project, "Access to Justice: A Balancing Act with Technology in the Criminal Courtroom." While the application of technology in civil cases has been considered by judicial scholars in other countries, consideration of potential impact in criminal cases has been understudied despite its relevance. Additional recent research not related to my dissertation has included analyzing whether state supreme courts make party-aligned decisions in redistricting cases, considering how judges who are women of color utilize distinct linguistic styles evidencing social identity theory and status generalizing processes, and documenting the impact of Trump-appointed judges to the federal appellate courts in immigration case outcomes. While I have primarily focused on the federal courts, I have great interest in expanding my research, especially on the impact of technology in criminal cases, to the state courts. In future research, I plan to consider the different ways that states utilize technology in the courtroom and the effects of that variation. My research agenda stems from my passion for greater understanding of justice in the United States and abroad. Alongside my work in American law and courts, I am greatly interested in how international courts utilize technology in efforts to increase access to justice. Our understanding of how technology expands or limits access to justice for criminal defendants is essential to our broader understanding of American law and courts in the technology age.