

CIARA STERBENZ

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EDUCATION

University of California, Los Angeles

PhD in Political Science – Sept 15th, 2024

“Diversionary Diplomacy: Executive Appeals to Historical Memory in Nationalist Standoffs”

Master of Arts – Dec 10th, 2021

Master of Applied Statistics (Articulated Program) – Anticipated Spring 2026

Columbia University in the City of New York, Columbia College

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science – Spring 2016

Bachelor of Arts in Physics – Spring 2016

Dean’s List – Fall 2013, Fall 2014 – Spring 2016 (6/8 semesters)

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Postdoctoral Fellow at the Identity and Conflict Lab, Yale University – AY2025-26

Rosenwald Postdoctoral Fellow in US Foreign Policy and International Security at Dickey Center for International Understanding, Dartmouth College – AY2024-25

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

US-Korea NextGen Scholar at Center for Strategic and International Studies – 2024-2025

US-Asia Grand Strategy Pre-Doctoral Fellow at Korean Studies Institute, University of Southern California – AY2023-24

US-Asia Grand Strategy Pre-Doctoral Fellow at Korean Studies Institute, University of Southern California – AY2022-23

Political Psychology Dissertation Fellowship at UCLA – Winter 2022

Graduate Student Research Mentorship Award at UCLA – Summer 2019

*Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (Korean) at UCLA – Awarded for AY 2018-19**

* Funds awarded, but unfortunately not received due to federal grant to all of UCLA for Asian Languages not being renewed

Graduate Student Research Mentorship at UCLA – Summer 2018

Edwin E. Pauley Fellowship at UCLA – AY2017-18

PUBLICATIONS

Hartman, E., Hazlett, C., & Sterbenz, C. (2024). “Kpop: A kernel balancing approach for reducing specification assumptions in survey weighting.” *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society Series A: Statistics in Society*

Sterbenz, C., Trager, R. (2019). “Autonomous Weapons and Coercive Threats.” *Pulse*, website special topic, “AI in Strategic Context: Development Paths, Impacts, and Governance.”

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Sambanis, N., Tsakonas P., Lee A., Majumdar R., Sterbenz, C., Yakir I. “Misperceiving Nationalism: Beliefs About Others’ Beliefs and Group Conformism in Foreign Policy.” Working Paper. Fall 2025 (under review)

Sterbenz, C. *Convenient Rivals: Executive Appeals to Collective Memory in Nationalist Standoffs*. Book Project. Fall 2025.

Sterbenz, C. “Diversionary Diplomacy: Executive Appeals to Collective Memory in Times of Insecurity.” Working Paper. Fall 2025 (Accepted to APSA 2023, 2024, ISA 2026)

Sterbenz, C. “Nationalism, Collective Memory, and Public Support for Aggressive Foreign Policy.” Working Paper. Fall 2025. (Accepted to ISA 2026)

Sterbenz, C. “Autocratic Power Consolidation in Times of Conflict.” Working Paper. January, 2021. (Accepted to ISA 2021)

Sterbenz, C. “Conflict and the Fate of Autocratic Leaders.” Working Paper. January, 2020.

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

“Nationalism, Collective Memory, and Public Support for Aggressive Foreign Policy.” March 2026. ISA Annual Meeting. Paper in Panel “Studies in Public Opinion”

“Diversionary Diplomacy: Executive Appeals to Collective Memory in Times of Insecurity.” March 2026. ISA Annual Meeting. Paper in Panel “Studies in Narratives and Narrative Analysis”

Convenient Rivals: Executive Appeals to Collective Memory in Nationalist Standoffs. May 2025. Dickey Center for International Understanding International Relations Seminar. Book Proposal Presentation

“Working with Data in the Social Sciences.” January 2024. USC *Korean Studies Institute* Undergraduate Fellows Program

“Diversionary Diplomacy: Elite Rhetoric in Nationalist Standoffs.” September 2023. APSA Annual

Meeting in “Foreign Policy Panel: Elite Cues, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy” (An updated version of this paper was also accepted to APSA 2024 and 2025, but, unfortunately, I was unable to attend)

“Diversionary Diplomacy: Elite Rhetoric in Nationalist Standoffs.” February 2023. USC Korean Studies Institute Working Paper Series.

“Employing LLMs in Social Science Research: Large-Volume Classification of Elite Rhetoric.” March 2023. Invited Talk at USC Information Sciences Institute.

“Diversionary Diplomacy: Elite Rhetoric in Nationalist Standoffs.” October 2023. Bridging Asia Conference hosted by USC Korean Studies Institute.

“Autocratic Power Consolidation in Times of Conflict.” March 2021. Annual ISA Meeting in “Back to the First Image: Leaders and Conflicts.”

“Kpop: A Kernel Balancing Approach for Reducing Specification Assumptions in Survey Weighting.” April 2021. UCLA Causal Inference Group.

“Kpop: A Kernel Balancing Approach for Reducing Specification Assumptions in Survey Weighting.” with Erin Hartman and Chad Hazlett. July 2020. PolMeth XXXVII.

“Conflict and the Fate of Autocratic Leaders.” January 2020. UCLA Burkle Center Graduate Conference on Great Power Politics.

TEACHING AND MENTORSHIP EXPERIENCE

Instructor for major requirement "Introduction to Data Analysis" for Political Science undergraduates (Summer 2023)

Instructor for upper-division, specialized-topic seminar for undergraduates “Politics of East Asia: Unique Puzzles for International Relations” (Summer 2023, Summer 2021)

Instructor for Introductory Math Camp preparation course for incoming Political Science PhD Students (Fall 2021)

Math Maven Mentor offering weekly one-to-one mentorship in statistics and political methodology for graduate students in the Political Science Department (AY 2021-22, AY 2022-23, AY 2023-24)

- In collaboration with Derek Holliday, developed website to house original R tutorials and resources for students in the graduate methods sequence (<https://methodsmavens-psucla.github.io/>)

Graduate Teaching Assistant for the following graduate-level courses in the core methods sequence at UCLA for Political Science PhD Students

- *200C Causal Inference for Social Science* with Chad Hazlett (Spring 2020, 2021)
- *200D Maximum Likelihood Estimation* with Jeff Lewis (Winter 2021, 2022)
- *200E Experimental Design for Social Science* with Graeme Blair (Spring 2022)

Undergraduate Teaching Assistant for Introduction to International Relations (Fall 2021)

Political Science Graduate Student Association Co-President with Derek Holliday. AY 2018-19

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Graduate Student Researcher for Associate Professors Chad Hazlett (UCLA) and Erin Hartman (UC Berkley) in support of co-authored collaborative project – Fall 2019 – Fall 2020

- Assisted in writing the R package KBAL to perform kernel balancing for causal identification of treatment effects among treatment and control groups as well as for representative weighting of a survey sample to a population (currently under review with CRAN for distribution)
- Analysis of original survey results conducted in January 2020 and application of the kernel balancing method to calibrate samples to the US population for 2016 Presidential Election

Graduate Student Researcher for Associate Professor Robert Trager (UCLA) – Summer 2018 – Fall 2019

- Developing measurement approaches toward the concept of “relationship status” between international actors with the ICEWS database
- Preparing and organizing ICEWS database for future network analysis work
- Co-authored a paper for the UCLA School of Law *AI in Strategic Context Conference* on the impact of Autonomous Weapons Systems on the conduct of threat-making and signaling
- Assistant Editor for *International Studies Quarterly*

Student Researcher for LANSCE Facility at Los Alamos National Lab, Los Alamos, NM – Summer 2015, 2014, 2013

- Created original C++ program to re-analyze *KamLAND* experimental neutrino oscillation data with new anti-neutrino spectra from the *Daya Bay* experiment and presented results at 2015 Fall *American Physical Society Division of Nuclear Physics Annual Meeting*
- Responsible for electronics testing and installment for *CAPTAIN* liquid-Argon neutrino experiment
- Analyzed and modeled data from *MiniBOONE* and *CAPTAIN* neutrino experiments

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Language – Korean (proficient), French (proficient)

Programming proficiency in R, Python, Java, C++