

Kevin J. Elliott

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Employment

Lecturer. Yale University, Program on Ethics, Politics and Economics, 2023-Present.

Assistant Professor of Political Science (awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor 6/2023). Murray State University, Department of Political Science and Sociology, 2018-2023.

The Morris and Alma Schapiro Core Faculty Fellow. Columbia University, Department of Political Science and the Center for the Core Curriculum, 2016-18.

Core Lecturer in Contemporary Civilization. Columbia University, Department of Political Science and the Center for the Core Curriculum, 2015-16.

Education

Ph.D. in Political Science, Columbia University, 2015.

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

M.Phil. & M.A. in Political Science, Columbia University, 2012, 2009.

M.Sc. in Political Theory, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2007.

B.A. in Political Science and Public Affairs, University of California, Los Angeles, 2006.

Summa Cum Laude; Departmental and Collegiate Honors

Books

Democracy for Busy People, University of Chicago Press (2023).

Peer-Reviewed Articles

“Participatory Democracy and Its Limits.” *Annual Review of Political Science*, Forthcoming.

“A Defense of Specialized Citizenship.” *European Journal of Political Theory*, OnlineFirst.

“What Is It Like to be a Partisan?: Measures of Partisanship and Its Value for Democracy.” *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 22, No. 3: Special Section on Partisanship and Political Division (September 2024).

“An Institutional Duty to Vote: Applied Role Morality in Representative Democracy.” *Political Theory*, Vol. 51, No. 6 (December 2023).

“Democracy’s Pin Factory: Issue Specialization, the Division of Cognitive Labor, and Epistemic Performance.” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (2020).

“Democracy and the Epistemic Limits of Markets.” *Critical Review*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (2019).

“Making Attentive Citizens: the Ethics of Democratic Engagement, Political Equality, and Social Justice.” *Res Publica*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (February 2018).

“Aid for Our Purposes: Mandatory Voting as Precommitment and Nudge.” *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 79, No. 2 (April 2017).

Other Publications

“Being a Citizen in the Rubble of Institutions.” *Political Science Quarterly*, forthcoming.

“Folk Constitutionalism, or Why It Matters How Ordinary People Think About the Constitution.” *Critical Review*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (2024).

“Inclusion and the Design of Democratic Executives in Steffen Ganghof’s *Beyond Presidentialism and Parliamentarism*.” *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy (CRISPP)*, Vol. 27, No. 2, (2024).

“Review of *Hanging Together: Role-Based Constitutional Fellowship and the Challenge of Difference and Disagreement* by Eric W. Cheng.” *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (September 2023).

“A Family Affair: Populism, Technocracy, and Political Epistemology.” *Critical Review*, Vol. 32, Nos. 1-3 (2020).

Reprinted in: *Technocracy and the Epistemology of Human Behavior*, Paul Gunn (ed.), Routledge, (2022).

Review of *Against Democracy* by Jason Brennan. *Contemporary Political Theory*, Vol. 17, No. 2 Supplement (May 2018).

Working Papers and Research Projects

A Trimodal Theory of Politics. (Book Project).

“A Trimodal Theory of Politics.” (R&R, *Perspectives on Politics*).

“Pluralists, Technocrats, and Friends & Enemies: A Trimodal Theory of Politics.” Draft paper.

“Game Change: Friend-Enemy, Pluralist, and Technocratic Modes of Modern Politics.” Draft paper.

The Duration of Power: Term Length and Democratic Institutional Design. (Book Project).

“Throw the Bums Out, Now!: The Comparative Institutional Design of Removal Mechanisms.” Draft chapter.

“Convinced by Comedy?: The Persuasive Effect of Political Humor in Deliberative Systems.” (with Andrew Guess). (In preparation).

“Towards An Ethics of Citizen Decision-Making.” (with Jeffrey Lenowitz) (In preparation).

“Towards a Political Theory of Appointment Power.” (with Victor Wu) (In preparation).

Honors, Awards, & Fellowships

Institute for Humane Studies, Research Expense Grant, “The Duration of Power: Term Length and Political Thought in Britain and the United States,” 2022-2024. (Amount: \$1,500).

Best Junior Scholar Paper Award, Ideas, Knowledge, and Politics (IKP) section of the American Political Science Association for “Issue Public Democracy: The Division of Democratic Labor, Deliberative Systems, and Epistemic Performance,” 2017-18.

University Center for Human Values, Princeton University, Faculty Research Grant (with Andrew Guess and Robert Y. Shapiro), “Can Comedy Be Convincing?” 2018-19. (Amount: \$44,125).

Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy (ISERP), Columbia University, Seed Grant (with Andrew Guess and Robert Y. Shapiro), “Can Comedy Be Convincing?” 2017. (Amount: \$8,300).

Morris and Alma Schapiro Core Faculty Fellowship, 2016-18.

Lead Teaching Fellowship, Columbia University, 2014-15.

Jack Miller Fellowship, Jack Miller Center, 2014.

Core Curriculum Preceptorship, Columbia University, 2014-2015.

Jacob K. Javits Fellowship, US Department of Education, 2009-2013.

John W. McDonald Jr., Ph.D. Fellowship, Columbia University, 2012-2013.

Faculty Fellowship, Columbia University, 2008-2009.

Summa Cum Laude, University of California, Los Angeles, 2006.

College of Letters and Sciences Honors, University of California, Los Angeles, 2006.

Department of Political Science Honors, University of California, Los Angeles, 2006.

Invited Presentations

“Throw the Bums Out, Now!: The Comparative Institutional Design of Removal Mechanisms.” Political Theory Workshop, Yale University, September 2025.

“A Trimodal Theory of Politics.” Getting Our Bearings conference, Princeton/Humboldt University “Constitutionalism Under Stress” and The Forum for the History of Political Thought, University Center for Human Values, September 2025.

“Game Change: Friend-Enemy, Pluralist, and Technocratic Modes of Modern Politics.” Jig-

saw/Google, March 2025.

“Three Games of Politics.” International Workshop on Reimagining Democracy (IWORD), Special Theme: Democracy and AI, December 2024.

“Three Games of Politics.” Elm Institute, September 2024.

“Democracy for Busy People.” Research Group on Constitutional Studies (RGCS) Lecture Series, Yan P. Lin Centre for the Study of Freedom and Global Orders in the Ancient and Modern Worlds, McGill University, March 2024.

“Democracy for Busy People.” Touchstones of Democracy Series, Karsh Institute of Democracy, University of Virginia, February 2024.

“Democracy for Busy People.” Philosophy, Politics, and Economics Speaker Series, Bridgewater State University, November 2023.

“Relic: The Federal Constitution in Comparative Perspective.” Constitution Day Lecture, Al- bertus Magnus College, September 2023.

“Democracy for Busy People.” Global Theory Workshop, Northwestern University, May 2023.

“The Ethics of Importance: A Defense of Specialized Citizenship.” Political Deference & Par- tisanship conference, The Edmond & Lily Safra Center for Ethics, Harvard University, March 2023.

“The Ethics of Importance: Specialized Citizenship and Its Epistemic Burdens.” The Sympo- sium on Experts, Citizens, and Knowledge Problems in Democracy, King’s College London, June 2022.

“Impeachment in Theory and Practice.” Constitution Day, Murray State University, September 2019.

“Asking Too Much: Injustice, Participation, and the Paradox of Empowerment.” Doing Democ- racy Differently Conference, Hamilton, Canada, March 2019.

“Better Democracy through Poll Taxes? The Paradox of Empowerment and the Moral Limits of Democratic Citizenship.” Faculty Research Colloquium, Murray State University, Murray, KY, February 2019.

“Democracy’s Pin Factory: Issue Specialization, the Division of Cognitive Labor, and Epistemic Performance.” Political Theory In / and / As Political Science Conference, Montreal, May 2018.

“Art or Science?: Aristotle and Hobbes on Political Expertise.” Center for the Core Curriculum, Columbia University, October 2015.

“Hobbes’s *Leviathan*.” Center for the Core Curriculum, Columbia University, November 2014.

Conference Presentations

“Throw the Bums Out, Now!: The Comparative Institutional Design of Removal Mechanisms.” Annual Meeting of the Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) Society, New Orleans, November 2025.

“Toward a Political Theory of Appointment Power,” with Victor Wu. Annual Meeting of the Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) Society, New Orleans, November 2025.

“Throw the Bums Out, Now!: The Comparative Institutional Design of Removal Mechanisms.” Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Vancouver, September 2025.

“Toward a Political Theory of Appointment Power,” with Victor Wu. Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Vancouver, September 2025.

“The Ethics of Citizen Decision Making,” with Jeffrey Lenowitz. Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, September 2024.

“What Is It Like to be a Partisan? Measuring Partisanship and its Value for Democracy.” Affective Polarization and Democracy Interdisciplinary Workshop, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, November 2023.

“Toward a Framework for the Ethics of Democratic Decision Making,” with Jeffrey Lenowitz. Annual Meeting of the Philosophy, Politics, & Economics (PPE), New Orleans, November 2023.

“The Keystone of Democracy? Mandatory Voting in Democratic Systems.” Annual Meeting of the Philosophy, Politics, & Economics (PPE) Society, New Orleans, November 2023.

“A Defense of Specialized Citizenship.” Annual Meeting of the Association for Political Theory, Union College, Schenectady, October 2023.

“What Is It Like to be a Partisan? Measuring Partisanship and its Value for Democracy.” Annual Meeting of the Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) Society, New Orleans, November 2022.

“An Institutional Duty to Vote.” Annual Meeting of the Association for Political Theory, Houston, October 2022.

“An Institutional Duty to Vote.” Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Montreal, September 2022.

“Can Comedy Be Convincing? The Persuasive Effect of Political Humor in Deliberative Systems.” Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, “Seattle,” October 2021.

“What Is It Like to be a Partisan? Measuring Partisanship and its Value for Democracy.” Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, “Seattle,” October 2021.

“Specialized Citizenship and Its Epistemic Burdens.” Conference on Knowledge, Citizenship, Democracy, University of Groningen, April 2021.

“Democracy’s Floor: The Case against Political Apathy.” Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, “San Francisco,” September 2020.

“Asking Too Much: Injustice, Participation, and the Paradox of Empowerment.” Annual Meeting of the Association for Political Theory, Irvine, CA, October 2019.

“Asking Too Much: Injustice, Participation, and the Moral Limits of Democratic Citizenship.” Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, April 2019.

Invited commentator. “Author Meets Critics: Alfred Moore’s “Critical Elitism.”” Annual Meet-

ing of the American Political Science Association, Boston, August-September 2018.

“The Moral Limits of Democratic Citizenship.” Annual Meeting of the Association for Political Theory, Ann Arbor, MI, October 2017.

“Issue Public Democracy: The Division of Democratic Labor, Deliberative Systems, and Epistemic Performance.” Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, August-September 2017.

“The Moral Limits of Democratic Citizenship.” Annual Meeting of the Association for Social and Political Philosophy, Sheffield, UK, May 2017.

“The Division of Democratic Labor and Epistemic Performance.” Institutional Design and Epistemic Democracy Conference, Montreal, May 2017.

“Democracy, Social Choice, and the Epistemic Limits of Markets.” Annual Meeting of the Association for Political Theory, Columbus, OH, October 2016.

“Democracy, Social Choice, and the Epistemic Limits of Markets.” Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, September 2016.

“Democratic Means for Liberal Ends: Making Attentive Citizens Without Coercion.” Conference on the Ethics of Participation, Loughborough, UK, June 2016.

“Should Democracy Include Everyone? Democratic Competence and Epistemic Democracy.” Science Po 3rd Graduate Political Theory Conference, Paris, June 2015.

“The Priority of Inclusion and the Danger of Deliberative Mini-publics.” Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, April 2014.

“What is Political Participation? An Intra-Disciplinary Reevaluation.” Annual Meeting of the Northeastern Political Science Association, Philadelphia, November 2013.

“The Priority of Inclusion and the Danger of Deliberative Mini-publics.” Harvard Graduate Conference in Political Theory 2013, Cambridge, October 2013.

“Rhetorical Justification.” Manchester University MANCEPT Workshop in Political Theory 2013, Manchester, UK, September 2013.

“Strengthening Democracy through Mandatory Voting.” Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, April 2012.

Teaching

Yale University

Classics in Ethics, Politics, & Economics

The Duration of Power: Time and Term Length in Political Theory

Murray State University

Ancient and Medieval Political Thought.

Modern Political Thought.
Ethics in Public Administration (Online).
Writing and Inquiry in the Social Sciences.
Topics in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE).
Markets: Theory, Practice, and Limits.
Introduction to Political Theory (In-person and Online).
American National Government (In-person and Online).

Columbia University

Contemporary Civilization in the West I.
Contemporary Civilization in the West II.
Problems in Contemporary Democratic Theory.
Public Opinion and Democratic Theory.
(as Teaching Assistant). Problems in Recent Democratic Theory, Prof. Melissa Schwartzberg.
(as Teaching Assistant). Transitional Justice, Prof. Louis Bickford.
(as Teaching Assistant). Human Rights and Business, Prof. Joanne Bauer and Christine Bader.
(as Teaching Assistant). Introduction to Political Theory, Prof. Michelle R. Smith.
(as Teaching Assistant). Introduction to American Politics, Prof. Justin Phillips.

Columbia University's Summer Program for High School Students

Visiting Instructor. Constitutional Law, Summer 2013.

Syllabi

The Duration of Power: Time and Term Length in Political Theory
Classics in Ethics, Politics, & Economics
Ancient and Medieval Political Thought
Modern Political Thought
Ethics in Public Administration
Markets: Theory, Practice, and Limits
Introduction to Political Theory
American National Government
Public Opinion and Democratic Theory

Problems in Contemporary Democratic Theory

Contemporary Civilization in the West I

Contemporary Civilization in the West II

Pedagogical Seminars

Organizer and Presenter. Course Design Workshop for Early Career Political Scientists, 13 February 2015.

Organizer and Presenter. Designing Successful Courses: Syllabus and Course Construction Strategies for Early Career Political Scientists, 8 December 2014.

Training

Teagle Foundation Summer Institute, New York, June 2013.

Professional Service and Other Activities

Reviewer. *American Political Science Review*; *American Journal of Political Science*; *Journal of Politics*; *British Journal of Political Science*; *Perspectives on Politics*; *Political Theory*; *European Journal of Political Theory*; *Politics, Philosophy & Economics*; *Political Behavior*; *Politics*; *Political Studies*; *Review of Politics*; *Contemporary Political Theory*; *British Journal of Political and International Relations*; *Representation*; *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*; *Episteme*; *Erkenntnis*; Oxford University Press; *Constellations*; *Res Publica*; *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*; *Moral Philosophy and Politics*; *Political Research Exchange*; *Public Policy and Administration*; *Politics and the Life Sciences*; Polity Press.

Conference Organizer (with Hélène Landemore (Yale) and Bruce Schneier (Harvard)), “International Workshop on Renewing Democracy (IWORD),” December 2025. Yale University.

Conference Organizer (with Sam Bagg (South Carolina)), “Reimagining the Anti-Corruption Toolkit,” May 2024. Yale University.

Adviser, Senior Essay in Ethics, Politics, & Economics (various students), Yale University, 2023-Present.

Member, Fulbright Study/Research Grants Committee, Yale University, 2023-Present.

Member, Best Book Award Committee, Ideas, Knowledge, and Politics Section of the American Political Science Association, 2021-2023.

Director, Constitution Day. Murray State University, 2022-2023.

Member, Masters Thesis Committee (Hillary Copeland), Psychology Department, Murray State University, 2022-3.

Member, Honors Thesis Committees (various students), Honors College, Murray State University.

Chair, Liberalism and Democracy Section, 2021 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association.

Member, Curriculum and Assessment Committee, Department of Political Science and Sociology. Murray State University, 2021-2023.

Faculty Advisor for Political Science Undergraduates, Department of Political Science and Sociology. Murray State University, 2020-2023.

Member, Hiring Committee, Department of Political Science and Sociology. Murray State University, 2022.

Member, Curriculum Committee, College of Humanities and Fine Arts. Murray State University, 2021-2023.

Member, Political Science Scholarship Committee, Department of Political Science and Sociology. Murray State University. 2020.

Member, Recruitment and Retention Committee, Department of Political Science and Sociology. Murray State University. 2021-2023.

Recruitment and Retention Director, Department of Political Science and Sociology. Murray State University. 2019-2021.

Library Liaison, Department of Political Science and Sociology. Murray State University, 2019-2023.

Member, Recruitment and Retention Committee, College of Humanities and Fine Arts. Murray State University, 2019-2023.

Manuscript Workshop Coordinator. Turkuler Isiksel's "Europe's functional constitution: A theory of constitutionalism beyond the state," Columbia University, 16 May 2014.

Conference Coordinator. "Responsiveness, Representation, and Democracy," Columbia University, 8-9 March 2013.

Graduate Student Coordinator. Columbia University Political Theory Workshop, 2012-2013.

Coordinator. Political Theory Works-In-Progress Seminar, 2013-14.

Summer Program Assistant. Institute for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University, Summer 2012.

Last updated: January 13, 2026