

# Alexander Ross

Postdoctoral Researcher  
Université Laval

aross005@ucr.edu or alexander-frederick.ross.1@ulaval.ca  
(510) 816-0461  
alexrosspolisci.com

## Academic Appointments

- **Postdoctoral Researcher** **Fall 2024 - Present**  
Université Laval, Department of Political Science  
*Center For The Study of Democratic Citizenship*

## Education

- **PhD in Political Science** **2024**  
University Of California Riverside, Department of Political Science
- **Master of Public Policy** **2017**  
University Of California Riverside, School of Public Policy
- **Bachelor of Arts in Political Science** **2013**  
University Of California Riverside, Department of Political Science

## Dissertation

- Title: *Owed: The Politics of Student Debt*

My dissertation investigates how federal student loan debt affects the political engagement and attitudes of debtors and non-debtors. Student loan debt is relatively unique among the factors that influence one's financial situation. It can increase perceived precarity in the way that other financial stressors known to potentially reduce participation and affect policy preferences do, such as unemployment and low income status. But it is also though often held by people with distinct characteristics from those impacted by other stressors that might counteract the participatory and attitudinal consequences of greater financial distress (e.g., higher education levels). Using a series of survey experiments and observational tests, I assess the impact of debtor status on student debtors' political participation and policy preferences. I do so both in the absence of political stimuli and in response to policy proposals regarding said debt. I also, through survey experiments, examine the determinants of support for policies perceived to benefit debtors and attitudes towards debtors themselves among non-debtors. My findings suggest that debt is unique as a socio-economic stressor, with behavioral impacts distinct from what the literature finds with other comparable phenomena, and have implications for the literatures on poverty and inequality.

**Committee:** Dr. Daniel Biggers (Chair), Dr. Jennifer Merolla, Dr. Loren Collingwood

## Research Interests

- Political Behavior, Politics of Personal Debt, Politics of Inequality, Public Policy

## Publications

- **Strategic Considerations and Support for Direct Democracy in the United States**  
with Daniel R Biggers. *Electoral Studies*  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2023.102716>

## Working Papers & Conference Presentations

- **Deserving Debtors? The Determinants of Attitudes Toward Federal Student Loan Debtors**  
Presented at the APSA Conference, 2023, currently under review
- **Participating in Integration Activities and Participating in Quebec Society: A Study of Integration Programs' Use and Impacts**  
with Valérie-Anne Mahéo and Thomas Gareau-Paquette. Presented at the CPSA Conference, 2025
- **Yelp stars and partisan stripes: Evidence of affective polarization in online business reviews**  
with Adam Hobbs and Loren Collingwood. (Accepted and scheduled to be) Presented at the MPSA conference 2026
- **Housing Shocks and Redistributive Preferences**  
with Adam Hobbs. Presented at the MPSA conference, 2024 & the APSA conference, 2025
- **Owed Gratitude? The Impact of Attempted Debt Cancellation on Attitudes and Behaviors**  
Presented at the APSA conference, 2024
- **Debtors and Democracy: The Impact of Federal Student Loan Debt on Participation and Attitudes among Debtors**  
Presented at the MPSA conference, 2023.
- **Voting and Proactive Social Norm Compliance**  
with Daniel R Biggers. Presented at the APSA Conference, 2023
- **Dropbox Proximity and Voting Propensity**  
with Loren Collingwood and Benjamin Gonzalez O'brien

## Teaching Experience

- **Instructor of Record**  
UC Riverside, Political Science Department  
Money In Politics (2021)  
American Politics (2022)  
Politics of the Underdeveloped World (2023)  
Regulation: A Political Perspective (2024)

- **Teaching Assistant**

UC Riverside, Political Science Department

American Politics, Comparative Politics, Elections and Political Participation, Global Politics,  
Political Ideologies, Politics of Mexico, Politics of The Underdeveloped World.

UC Riverside, School Of Public Policy

Intro to Public Policy, Politics and Public Policy, Policy Evaluation

## **Grants**

- UC Riverside Graduate Division, Dissertation Year Program Fellow, Fall 2022
- UC Riverside Political Science Department, Gabbert Research Funds Award, Fall 2022
- UC Riverside Graduate Divisions, Dissertation Completion Fellowship Award, Winter 2024

## **References**

- Dr. Daniel Biggers  
Associate Professor  
Department of Political Science  
University Of California, Riverside  
biggers@ucr.edu  
951 827-5797
- Dr. Jennifer Merolla  
Professor & Chair  
Department of Political Science  
University Of California, Riverside  
merolla@ucr.edu  
951 827-4612
- Dr. Loren Collingwood  
Associate Professor  
Department of Political Science  
University of New Mexico  
lcollingwood@unm.edu  
505 277-5104