

Madeleine Inez Stevens

Assistant Professor

Department of Political Science and International Relations
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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

El Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico
Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Relations August 2025-present

EDUCATION

University of Chicago, Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science 2025
Dissertation: Weaponizing Uncertainty: The Politics of Disappearance in Latin America
Committee: Paul Staniland (chair), Susan Stokes, Austin Carson, Benjamin Lessing
Fields: Comparative Politics, International Relations
Certificates in College Teaching, Human Rights, and Latin American and Caribbean Studies 2025
Master of Arts in Political Science 2021

University of Chicago, Master of Arts in Social Science 2017

University of Pennsylvania, Bachelor of Arts *summa cum laude* 2015
Communication and Public Service (honors) with a minor in Political Science
Benjamin Franklin Scholar 2011-2015
Phi Beta Kappa 2014; Dean's List 2011-2015; Charles Morris Price Prize 2015

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Political violence and its legacies, covert action, human rights, repression, counterinsurgency, Latin America, qualitative methods, research ethics.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Book project:

Weaponizing Uncertainty: The Politics of Disappearance in Latin America

Why do states and armed groups perpetrate disappearances? Existing research explains enforced disappearance as a tactic used to evade blame for violence against civilians, but blame often comes even to those whose victims vanish. In my book project, I address why rulers use the tactic when it is not effective for avoiding blame. I show that, through disappearances, rulers send information about their political projects to internal and external audiences using qualitative historical evidence from three late 20th century Latin American cases: Argentina, Mexico, and Colombia.

Working papers:

Variation in Enforced Disappearance

Subversives and Delinquents: The Rhetoric of Disappearances in Latin America

Disappearances, Distrust, and Demobilization: A Survey Experiment in Colombia and Mexico
with Ana Paula Pellegrino

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS

External

2025

Steven C. Poe Best Graduate Student Paper Award, International Studies Association Human Rights Section (for paper presented at ISA 2024).

2024-2025

Harry F. Guggenheim Emerging Scholar Award, Harry F. Guggenheim Foundation (\$25,000).

2023-2024

USIP-Minerva Peace and Security Scholar Fellowship, United States Institute of Peace (\$20,000).

Tecnológico de Monterrey

2026

Faculty Research and Development Support Grant

University of Chicago

2025

The Pearson Institute Research and Innovation Fund Grant (\$5,000; *with Ana Paula Pellegrino*).
The Pozen Family Center for Human Rights Grant (\$2,439)

2024-2025

Provost Dissertation Completion Fellowship, Division of the Social Sciences (declined; \$5,000).
Pozen Doctoral Fellowship, Pozen Family Center for Human Rights (\$3,000).
Dissertation Support Fellowship, Center for International Social Science Research (\$5,000).

2024

The Pearson Institute Research and Innovation Fund Grant (\$10,000).

2023

Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph Field Research Award, Center for International Social Science Research (\$4,981).

The Pearson Institute Research and Innovation Fund Grant (\$10,000).

2022

The Pearson Institute Research and Innovation Fund Grant (\$10,000).
The Pozen Family Center for Human Rights Research Grant (\$5,000).
The Center for Latin American Studies Mellon Research Travel Fellowship (\$5,000).

2021

The Pearson Institute Research and Innovation Fund Grant (\$8,457).
Grodzins Prize Lectureship (\$6,000).

2020

The Pozen Family Center for Human Rights Research Grant (\$5,000).
The Center for Latin American Studies Mellon Research Travel Fellowship (\$5,000).
Department of Political Science Bienen Summer Research Award (\$1,800).

2019

The Center for Latin American Studies Tinker Field Research Grant (\$4,200).

SELECT PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

American Political Science Association (APSA) Annual Meeting: 2021, 2023, 2024, 2025

International Studies Association (ISA) Annual Meeting: 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025

Latin American Peace Science Society (LAPSS) Annual Conference: 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026
Latin American Studies Association (LASA) Annual Congress: 2024, 2026
Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) Annual Meeting: 2025, 2026
Southern Political Science Association (SPSA) Annual Conference: 2025
Tecnológico de Monterrey Annual Political Science Conference: 2025, 2026

INVITED TALKS

“Argentina’s Last Dictatorship,” given to POLS 336: The Politics of Latin America, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana, February 1st, 2024.

LANGUAGES

Spanish – advanced proficiency (high pass on the University of Chicago’s proficiency exam, 2025)
French – working proficiency

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Tecnológico de Monterrey

Global Challenges in International Relations (Fall 2025, Spring 2026)
Introduction to Social Sciences (Fall 2025)

University of Chicago

Instructor of Record

- Individuals, Communities, and Conflict (Spring 2022)
- Grodzins Prize Lectureship
 - Original seminar course

Teaching Assistantships

The Practice of Social Science Research (Fall 2022)
Introduction to International Relations (Fall 2021)
Introduction to Comparative Politics (Spring 2021)
Revolution, Dictatorship, & Violence in Modern Latin American History (Winter 2020)

SERVICE

Steven C. Poe Best Graduate Student Paper Award Committee, ISA	2025-2027
Co-organizer, “Criminal States, State Criminals” Conference within a Conference, MPSA	2024-2025
Organizer, Political Violence Working Group, University of Chicago	2023-2025
Discussant	
Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference	2025
Comparative Politics Workshop, University of Chicago	2020, 2021, 2024, 2025
American Political Science Association Annual Meeting	2023
Student Representative, Political Science	2019-2021
Dean’s Advisory Council, University of Chicago	
Reviewer	
International Studies Quarterly; American Political Science Review	

FIELDWORK

Argentina, Colombia, and Mexico

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

The Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research

June 2023

I completed the modules “Process Tracing and Bayesian Reasoning,” “Interpretation and History,” and “Ethnographic Methods.” I was one of fifteen people selected from the general open applicant pool to attend the institute.

Advancing Research on Conflict Consortium Summer Program

September 2022

I attended the 2022 edition of the ARC Consortium Summer Program, which is “a week-long residential training for Political Science and International Studies Ph.D. students preparing for research in fragile and violence-affected settings. The course includes rigorous instruction in the practical design and implementation of qualitative and quantitative field methods, intensive discussion of research ethics, and conversations with experts in trauma and psychology. Students also receive training in first aid, data protection and management, risk assessment, and managing IRB protocols.”

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Political Science Association
International Studies Association
Midwest Political Science Association
Latin American Studies Association

REFERENCES

Professor Paul Staniland

Department of Political Science
University of Chicago

Professor Austin Carson

Department of Political Science
University of Chicago

Professor Susan Stokes

Department of Political Science
University of Chicago

Professor Benjamin Lessing

Department of Political Science
University of Chicago