

James A. Sieja

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

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EDUCATION

University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI, 2009-2015
M.A. Political Science, May 2010; Ph.D., August 2015

Dissertation: *Do They Know Them When They See Them?: The ABA Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary and Qualifications for the Federal Bench*

Abstract: The dissertation is an exploration of the unique role of the ABA's Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary (SCFJ) in the federal judicial nomination and confirmation process. In the first chapter, I identify the source and magnitude of the apparent bias against the nominees of Republican presidents to the courts of appeals. In the second chapter, I construct a new measure of nominee qualifications and test its usefulness in two empirical examples: the discourse in a nominee's confirmation hearing and a senator's decision to return a negative blue slip. The third chapter systematically explores the relationship between the SCFJ and executive branch and the SCFJ and the Senate Judiciary Committee. To complete the dissertation, I compiled a new data set on the composition of the SCFJ and the content of confirmation hearings, and I conducted archival research on the relationship between the SCFJ and other institutional actors.

Dissertation Committee: Kenneth R. Mayer (adviser), Alexander M. Tahk, Ryan J. Owens, Eleanor Powell, Sida Liu

Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH, 2005-2009
B.A., *summa cum laude*, Political Science and History, May 2009

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Confirmation politics, judicial behavior, American presidency, American political development

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Skidmore College - Visiting Assistant Professor

Introduction to American Government (GO 101), Fall 2015, Spring 2016
Courts, Politics, and Judicial Process in the United States (GO 211), Fall 2015
Constitutional Law (GO 311), Fall 2015
Civil Liberties (GO 314), Spring 2016
So You Want To Be a Judge? (GO 251C), Spring 2016

University of Wisconsin - Teaching Assistant

Teaching Assistant Award, Department of Political Science, 2012
Criminal Law and Justice (PS 452), Spring 2015
Instructor: Don Downs

TEACHING EXPERIENCE (CONT.)

American Judicial System (PS 417), Fall 2012, 2013, 2014

Instructor: Alexander Tahk

The American Presidency (PS 408), Spring 2014

Instructor: David Canon

The American Presidency (PS 408), Spring 2012, 2013

Instructor: Kenneth Mayer

Introduction to American Politics (PS 104), Spring 2010, Fall 2011

Instructor: Kenneth Mayer

Introduction to American Politics (PS 104), Spring 2011

Instructor: John Coleman

Introduction to American Politics (PS 104), Fall 2010

Instructor: David Canon

Health Policy and Politics (PS 440), Fall 2009

Instructor: David Weimer (non-section)

Election Law (PS 401), Spring 2011

Instructor: Kenneth Mayer (reader/grader)

PUBLICATION

Owens, Ryan J., and James Sieja. Forthcoming. "Agenda-Setting on the United States Supreme Court." In the *Oxford Handbook of the Law and Judiciary*. Lee Epstein and Stefanie Lindquist, eds.

WORKING PAPERS AND PROJECTS

"How You Rate Depends on Who Investigates: Partisan and Other Biases in ABA Ratings of Courts of Appeals Nominees, 1958-2013." (under review)

"Talkin' about My Qualifications: Adjusted ABA Ratings and Court of Appeals Confirmation Hearing Discourse, 1997-2012."

"Lawyers and Judges Revisited: Why the American Bar Association Rates Federal Judicial Nominees."

"Changing Horses or Staying the Course: Evaluating the 2012 Recall Elections in Wisconsin." (with Barry Burden, David Canon, Kenneth Mayer, and Donald Moynihan)

Federal Judicial Selection Stage Project. (with Stephanie Dean)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

"Confirmation Hearing Discourse on U.S. Courts of Appeals Nominees." Midwest Political Science Association Meeting, Chicago, IL. April 2015.

"Conspiratorial Predispositions and Belief in Voter Fraud." Conference on Conspiracy Theories, University of Miami, Miami, FL. March 2015. (with Alexander Alduncin, Jack Edelson, Christopher Krewson, and Joseph Uscinski)

"Adjusted ABA Ratings and Confirmation Behavior." American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Washington, DC. August 2014.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (CONT.)

- “Sources of ‘Bias’ for US Federal Courts of Appeals Nominees’ Qualifications Ratings.”
Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL. April 2014.
- “Bias, the Bar, and the Big Picture: Evaluating Circuit Court Nominees’ ABA Ratings, 1953 to 2011.” American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA. August 2012. (poster)
- “Political Timing Is Everything: Judicial Nominations and Political Experience on the US Supreme Court.” Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL. April 2012.

FUNDING

- Judith Johns Carrico ’65 Gift for Faculty Support, Skidmore College, Winter 2016 (research travel)
- Graduate Student Summer Initiative Funding, University of Wisconsin, Summer 2015 (research travel)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Obama war powers project - University of Wisconsin, Fall 2013

Analysis of President Obama’s uses of military force in comparison with his predecessors, especially Eisenhower
Supervisor: Kenneth Mayer

CARMA-MIP project - University of Wisconsin, Summer 2013

Gathered data and helped compile an R package in Windows to examine the influence of public opinion on newspaper coverage and vice versa
Supervisor: Alexander Tahk

2008 Presidential primary coverage - Bowling Green State University, Fall 2008-Spring 2009

Coded newspaper articles from early primary states during the 2008 presidential election
Supervisors: Jeffrey Peake and Melissa Miller

SERVICE

Reviewer, *Law and Social Inquiry*

University of Wisconsin

Teaching Assistant Brownbag

Panelist, “Tips, Tricks, and Activities for Discussion Section” (2014)

Panelist, “Teaching and Technology: A Few Cool Ideas” (2011)

Political Science Teaching Assistant Orientation

Panelist, “Working with Faculty and Other TAs” (2014)

Panelist, “Preparation and Lesson Planning” (2013)

Prospective Graduate Student Weekend

Panelist, “Life in Madison” (2013, 2014, 2015)