

Sheahan G. Virgin

Washington and Lee University
Department of Politics
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Academic appointments

2024– : Assistant Professor of Politics, Washington and Lee University | Lexington, VA

2023–24: Visiting Assistant Professor of Politics, The University of the South | Sewanee, TN

2020–23: Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science, Grinnell College | Grinnell, IA

2019–20: Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science, Saint Mary's College | Notre Dame, IN

Research & teaching interests: Electoral rules and reform; Campaigns and voting behavior; Democracy and democratic decline; Nationalism and patriotism; American political institutions; Survey methods

Education

2019: Ph.D., Political Science, Vanderbilt University | Nashville, TN

Fields: American Politics; Comparative Politics (with honors)

Dissertation: “Extra-partisan Electoral Reform in the U.S.: The Effects of Geographic Self-interest, Core Values, and American Exceptionalism on Electoral Rule Choice.”

Advisors: David E. Lewis & Elizabeth J. Zechmeister (co-chairs)

2018: M.A., Political Science, Vanderbilt University | Nashville, TN

2010: M.A., Social Science (*Concentration:* Political Science), University of Chicago | Chicago, IL

2008: B.A., Political Science, Grinnell College | Grinnell, IA

Refereed publications

S.Virgin. (2021). “The Effect of Core Values on Support for Electoral Reform: Evidence from Two Survey Experiments.” *The American Journal of Political Science*. 1–18.

S.Virgin. (2017). “Competing Loyalties in Electoral Reform: An Analysis of the U.S. Electoral College.” *Electoral Studies* 49: 38–48.

Other publications

S.Virgin. (2023). “Is the Electoral College Undemocratic?” In, *The U.S. Constitution in 5 Minutes*. Equinox Publishing.

Current projects

“Take Your Foreign Rules and Shove ‘Em: The Effect of American Exceptionalism on Americans’ Support for Electoral Reform.” (*working paper*)

“To Hell with the Experts: The Effect of Trust-in-science on Americans’ Support for Electoral Reform.” (*working paper*)

Awards & certifications

Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant, College of Arts and Science, Vanderbilt University | 2018

Competitive university-wide award that recognizes “exceptionally effective” instruction by a T.A.

Erwin C. Hargrove Outstanding Teaching Assistant, Dept. of Political Science, Vanderbilt University | 2017

Competitive departmental award that recognizes “excellent” graduate student contributions to teaching

Certificate in College Teaching, Center for Teaching and Graduate School, Vanderbilt University | 2017

Instructor of record

Public Opinion & Political Behavior, POL 295, Washington and Lee University | Winter 2025

American National Government, POL 100, Washington and Lee University | Winter 2025

Campaigns & Elections, POL 295, Washington and Lee University | Fall 2024

Campaigns & Elections, POLS 212, The University of the South | Spring 2024

The Presidency, POLS 203, The University of the South | Fall 2023 ×2

Introduction to American Politics, POLS 101, The University of the South | Fall 2023; Spring 2024 ×2

Comparative Electoral Systems, POL 295, Grinnell College | Spring 2021; Spring 2022; Spring 2023

Democratic Decline in the U.S., POL 395, Grinnell College | Spring 2021; Fall 2021; Spring 2023

Introduction to Political Science, POL 101, Grinnell College | Fall 2020; Fall 2021; Fall 2022 ×2; Spring 2023

Public Opinion & Public Opinion, POL 295, Grinnell College | Fall 2020; Spring 2022

Research Methods in Political Science, POSC 210, Saint Mary’s College | Spring 2020

Impeaching the President, POSC 151, Saint Mary’s College | Spring 2020

Political Psychology, POSC 390, Saint Mary’s College | Spring 2020

Democratic Decline and Renewal, POSC 151, Saint Mary’s College | Fall 2019

Political Participation & Elections, POSC 314, Saint Mary’s College | Fall 2019

Mass Media & Public Opinion, POSC 313, Saint Mary’s College | Fall 2019

Campaigns & Elections, PSCI 3893, Vanderbilt University | Fall 2018

Comparative Electoral Politics, Vanderbilt Summer Academy (PTY) | Summer 2016; Summer 2017

Other professional experience

Researcher, U.S. AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, Vanderbilt University | 2019 survey; 2021 survey

Research fellow, FairVote: The Center for Voting & Democracy | 2011–12

Areas of focus: Electoral College/NPVIC; Proportional representation; Ranked-choice voting

Conference participation

Southern Political Science Association Annual Conference, San Juan, PR, Jan. 2020

- *Presenter*, “Take Your Foreign Rules and Shove ‘Em: The Effect of American Exceptionalism on Americans’ Support for Electoral Reform.” ‘Elections: Fairness, Manipulation, & Reform’ section

Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference, Chicago, IL, Apr. 2019

- *Presenter*, “Take Your Foreign Rules and Shove ‘Em: The Effect of American Exceptionalism on Americans’ Support for Electoral Reform.” ‘Nationalism & Foreign Policy’ section
- *Discussant*, ‘Election Ballots’ section

Southern Political Science Association Annual Conference, Austin, TX, Jan. 2019

- *Presenter*, “The Effect of Core Values on Support for Electoral Reform: Evidence from Two Survey Experiments.” ‘Electoral Systems’ section
- *Discussant*, ‘Values, Ideology, & Moral Foundations’ section

Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference, Chicago, IL, Apr. 2017

- *Presenter*, “Competing Loyalties in Electoral Reform: An Analysis of the U.S. Electoral College.” ‘American Electoral Institutions and Politics’ section

Service

Member, APSA; MPSA; SPSA

Referee, *Election Law Journal*; *Electoral Studies*

Committee member, Truman Scholarship, Grinnell College | 2022–23

Faculty mentor, First Gen & Low Income Student Group, Grinnell College | 2021–23

Committee member, Rosenfield Program, Grinnell College | 2022–23

Faculty mentor, Partners in Education (PiE), Grinnell College | 2020–21

Faculty mentor, International Student Orientation Program, Grinnell College | 2021

Coordinator, Graham Graduate Student Symposium Series, Vanderbilt University | 2017–18

Co-president, Political Science Graduate Student Association, Vanderbilt University | 2015–17

Affiliate, Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions (CSDI), Vanderbilt University | 2014–19

Invited speaker, “How to Publish as a Graduate Student,” Research Design, PSCI 8355 (L.Zechmeister), Vanderbilt University | Feb. 2018

Invited practice & pedagogy leader, “Experienced T.A.s in Political Science and History,” Teaching Assistant Orientation (TAO), Center for Teaching, Vanderbilt University | Aug. 2018

Invited panelist, “Experienced T.A.s in Political Science and History,” Teaching Assistant Orientation (TAO), Center for Teaching, Vanderbilt University | Aug. 2017

Public-facing work

S.Virgin. (May 2024). “*Valse triste*—First performance: Jean Sibelius’s famous piece was performed on 14 April 1904 in Vaasa, ten days before its purported premiere in Helsinki.” *International Sibelius One Society*.

S.Virgin. (Jan. 2024). “Many on the Sea of Life: Sibelius’s Op. 23 Songs.” *International Sibelius One Society*.

References

David E. Lewis, Ph.D.
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Nashville, TN 37203

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