

Donovan A. Watts, Ph.D.

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Academic Appointments

Auburn University Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science	Auburn, AL August 2024-Present
Drake University Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science Faculty Affiliate, Black Diaspora Studies Program	Des Moines, IA August 2023-May 2024 Des Moines, IA September-May 2024

Education

Indiana University Ph.D. in Political Science, Major Field: American Politics Second Field: Research Methods Minor: Sociology	Bloomington, IN July 2024
Central Michigan University, Cum Laude Bachelor of Science, Political Science, Minor - Economics	Mount Pleasant, MI December 2016
Schoolcraft College Associate of Arts	Livonia, MI May 2014

Peer-Reviewed Publications

Watts, Donovan A. "Black Millennials, Slipping Alliances, and the Democratic Party." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics* (2024): 1-24.

Peer-Reviewed Book Project

"The Politics of Black millennials" (under contract with University of Michigan Press)

Current Manuscripts in Progress

"Let the Church say Amen: Redefining the Black Church in Black millennials Political Engagement Process"

"Perception vs. Reality: Black Youth, Policing, and Public Perception of Law Enforcement Officers."

"The Generational Divide: Police Violence, Political Attitudes and African American Millennials"

Public Scholarship

Watts, Donovan A. "[Harris and Trump differ widely on gun rights, death penalty, and other civil liberties questions](#)" (October 23, 2024 – The Conversation)

Watts, Donovan A. "[Black party loyalty is wavering, and the Democratic Party must pay attention](#)" (March 13, 2024 – LSE United States Centre)

Teaching Experience

Auburn University,

Auburn, AL

POLI – 4200 Campaigns and Elections

POLI – 5210 Voting Behavior and Representation

POLI – 1090 American Government in a Multicultural World

Drake University,

Des Moines, IA

POLS – 119 African American Politics

POLS – 001 American Political Systems

POLS – 119 Generational Politics

POLS – 119 American Electoral Process

POLS – 001 American Political Systems

POLS – 119 American Public Policy

Indiana University,

Bloomington, IN

POLSY – 325 African American Politics (Online)

Awards, Grants, & Honors

Indiana University

Arthur F. Bentley Dissertation Research Grant (\$3,000)

May 2024

Indiana University

Arthur F. Bentley Dissertation Research Grant (\$2,000)

December 2022

Indiana University

Center for Research on Race and Ethnicity in Society Graduate Student Research Grant (\$2,000)

May 2022

Indiana University

Political Science Graduate Travel Award (\$500)

May 2022

Indiana University

College of Arts and Sciences Travel Award (\$400)

April 2022

Midwest Political Science Association

Racial and Ethnic Minorities Graduate Student Travel Grant (\$500)

February 2022

Indiana University

Arthur F. Bentley Dissertation Research Grant (\$1,000)

November 2021

Indiana University

Center for Research on Race and Ethnicity in Society Graduate Student Travel Grant (\$500)

November 2019

Indiana University

Political Science Graduate Travel Award (\$500)

November 2019

Indiana University
College of Arts and Sciences Travel Award (\$500)

November 2018

Indiana University
Political Science Graduate Travel Award (\$500)

November 2018

Indiana University
Center on American Politics Warner Chapman Fellowship (\$4,000)

Summer 2018 - 2021

University of Michigan
Scholarship for Political Science Research,
ICPSR Summer Program in Quantitative Methods of Social Research

May 2018

Indiana University
Graduate Student Leadership Award, Department of Political Science

May 2018

Indiana University
Katherine C. Greenough Award

April 2018

Indiana University
Mabel LaDuke Lauder Fellowship (\$2,600)

August 2018

APSA Minority Fellow
American Political Science Association Minority Fellow

August 2017

Central Michigan University
Deobold & Marcella Van Dalen Scholarship (\$10,000)

August 2015

Central Michigan University
John E. Warriner (\$4,000)

August 2015

Central Michigan University
Pi Sigma Alpha

April 2015

Conference Presentations

Midwest Political Science Association – Chicago, Illinois

April 2025

“Let the Church say Amen: Redefining the Black Church in Black millennials Political Engagement Process”

National Conference of Black Political Scientists

March 2025

“Let the Church say Amen: Redefining the Black Church in Black millennials Political Engagement Process”

Center of American Politics Workshop – Indiana University

January 2023

“Black Millennials, Slipping Alliances, and the Democratic Party”

Midwest Political Science Association – Chicago, Illinois

April 2022

“Black Millennials, Slipping Alliances, and the Democratic Party”

National Conference of Black Political Scientists – Virtual

March 2022

“Black Millennials, Slipping Alliances, and the Democratic Party”

Center of American Politics Workshop – Indiana University “Black Millennials, Slipping Alliances, and the Democratic Party”	February 2022
National Conference of Black Political Scientists - Atlanta, Georgia “Perception vs. Reality: Black Youth, Policing, and Public Perception of Law Enforcement Officers.” Panel Chair/Discussant	March 2020
National Conference of Black Political Scientists - Baton Rouge, Louisiana “The Generational Divide: Police Violence, Political Attitudes and African American Millennials”	March 2019
Center of American Politics Workshop – Indiana University “The Generational Divide: Police Violence, Political Attitudes and African American Millennials”	February 2019
Student Research and Creative Endeavors Exhibition – Central Michigan University “Police Violence, Civil Rights and African American Millennials: A Preliminary Study.”	April 2016
Michigan Political Science Association – Aquinas College “Police Violence, Civil Rights and African American Millennials: A Preliminary Study”	October 2015
McNair Fall Research Symposium – Central Michigan University “Police Violence, Civil Rights and African American Millennials: A Preliminary Study”	September 2015
Invited Professional Talks & Media Engagements	
Auburn University, The History Club Radio show guest – “It’s all History to Me” Served as a radio show guest at Auburn University for the “It’s all History to Me” radio show.	March 2025
University of Buffalo, School of Education Guest Speaker – “Black Millennials, Slipping Alliances, and the Democratic Party” Served as a guest speaker for the Center of K-12 Black History and Racial Literacy.	October 2024
Wesley Life Meals on Wheels Group Facilitator – “Generations over lunch” Organized and facilitated a large group discussion through the Meals on Wheels program on generational political attitudes.	April 2024
Poynter Institute Guest Speaker – “Black Politics in America” Spoke to a large group of local, state, and national journalists covering the Iowa caucuses about Black politics in America.	September 2023
Indiana University Guest Panelist – “Getting into Grad School” Spoke to a group of students about the graduate application process, requesting letters of recommendation from faculty, and what graduate school is like.	December 2021, February 2022
Indiana University Guest Feature: Pride of IU – “How to Support the Black Community” https://pride.iu.edu/advice-and-expertise/how-to-support-the-black-community/	September 2020

Indiana University

January 2019

Guest Speaker – “Introduction to Research”

Spoke to a class composed of underrepresented students who are participants in Hudson Holland, 21st Century Scholars, and about my current research as well as my path to becoming a researcher.

Central Michigan University, “*Speak up Speak Out Series*”

September 2016

Guest Panelist- Racism, Police, & Communities, 2016

Served on a panel discussing police shootings of African Americans and events in Ferguson which was televised by MAC TV. <https://vimeo.com/154634240>

Central Michigan University, “*WCMU Public Broadcasting, Central Michigan University*”

October 2016

Radio Guest- Racism, Police, & Communities

Provided expertise on race relations issues which focused on Tamir Rice and Michael Brown and was broadcasted across 44 different counties in Michigan. <http://wcmu.org/news/?p=21253>

Central Michigan University, “*Issue Day*”

October 2016

Social Justice and Advocacy Conference

Served on a panel centered around the Black Lives Matter Movements for the annual social justice and advocacy conference. Guest Panelists.

Central Michigan University, “*Speak Up Speak Out Series*”

October 2016

Guest Panelists – Domestic Policy of the Candidates

Served on a panel discussing presidential candidates’ views on criminal justice, racial division, and employment.

Leadership Experience

Indiana University

August 2018 - May 2019

Political Science Grad Student Association (PGSGA) - President

Served as President of the Political Science Grad Student Association for the 2018-2019 academic year.

Central Michigan University

May 2015 – December 2016

Pi Sigma Alpha - President

Serve as the President of Central Michigan University’s Pi Sigma Alpha chapter.

Professional Experience

Indiana University

May 2021 – July 2021

Indiana Political Analysis Workshop (IPAW) – Research Assistant

Assisted in recruiting students to the Indiana Political Analysis Workshop (IPAW), trained students on research methods during the summer research program and contributed to the development of the Russell Sage research grant.

Indiana University

August 2020 – May 2022

Recruitment and Retention Emissary

Serve as initial peer contact for pre-application graduate and professional students while working with the University Graduate School to support university recruitment, outreach, and advocacy efforts across diverse communities.

Indiana University

June 2020 - December 2020

Research Assistant

Served as research assistant under Dr. Vanessa Cruz Nichols. I analyzed mass survey data, created variable codebooks, and developed a comprehensive literature review on work in race & ethnicity.

Indiana University CRRES Research Symposium Committee Served on the CRRES Research Symposium Committee for the conference entitled “Interpreting Inequality and Promoting Justice: Bridging the Gap Between Academia and Activism”.	April 2020 (Rescheduled)
Indiana University Center on American Politics – Research Assistant Served as Center on American Politics research assistant. Duties included organizing weekly American Politics Workshop, recruiting visiting speakers, reserved lodging at nearby hotels, coordinated meetings with graduate students and faculty members.	August 2019 – May 2020
Indiana University Research Assistant Served as research assistant under Dr. Bernard Fraga. I developed congressional data files and analyzed mass survey data.	January 2018 – May 2018
Central Michigan University Group Dialogue Facilitator Facilitated a weekly class by involving and encouraging students in dialogue based on racism and discrimination. Met with faculty members and other students weekly to discuss future lesson plans and ideas.	January 2016 – December 2016
Central Michigan University Academic Advising Tutor – Economics Meet with students weekly to discuss course material while developing worksheets, practice exams, and study guides to strengthen classroom performance in economics courses.	October 2015 – December 2016
Central Michigan University Pi Sigma Alpha Inducted in April 2015 as a member of Pi Sigma Alpha, the only national political science honor society.	April 2015 – December 2016
Additional Training	
NCFDD Faculty Success Program	September 2024 - December 2024
ICPSR Program Scholar University of Michigan “Race, Ethnicity, and Quantitative Methods” “Advance Topics in Multivariate Statistics”	July 2018
Professional Memberships and Service	
Southern Political Science Association	January 2025 – Present
Midwest Political Science Association	October 2021–Present
Recruitment and Retention Emissary	August 2020 – May 2022
American Political Science Association	May 2020 - Present
Center for Research on Race and Ethnicity in Society (CRRES) Affiliate	March 2019-July 2024
National Conference of Black Political Scientists	November 2018-Present
Pi Sigma Alpha	May 2015 - Present