

Justin Daniels

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Education

University of Oxford

since August 2025

Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) in International Relations

- Funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council
- Dissertation (tentative): “Assessing the Electoral Effectiveness of Mainstream-Party Candidates’ Save-Democracy Rhetoric in Europe and the United States”

Facing populist or extremist opponents, mainstream-party candidates in the United States, Poland, and elsewhere in Europe are appealing to voters as defenders of democracy. I analyze whether these candidates’ appeals are effective (and with whom) through candidate interviews, voter surveys, and a dataset on candidate speech and election results.

University of Oxford

June 2025

Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Politics: Comparative Government, with merit

- Courses included Authoritarian Politics (73); Comparative Government (72); and Protest, Social Movements, and Revolutions (68)
- Thesis: “Controlling the Threat from Below: Indoctrination as a Response to Mass Mobilization in Autocracies, 1945–2021”

This thesis asks if autocrats adjust their strategies of indoctrination (in media and schools) in response to mass mobilization. It develops and tests a novel theory of regime-type variation in indoctrination strategies using the Varieties of Indoctrination dataset and case studies.

Stanford University

Sept. 2016 – June 2020

Bachelor of Arts in French. Minors in Political Science, History (Africa), Italian

- Honors in Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law. GPA: 3.91/4.3.
- Courses included The European Union in a Globalized World (A) and Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law (A).
- Thesis: “Defining ‘Disinterest’: U.S. Influence and Impact on the Creation and Reform of the Congo, 1876–1913”

Reviving a term from the period, “disinterest”, this thesis describes how – contrary to contemporary perspectives – the United States played an outside role in the European colonization of Africa through its support of (and later against) King Leopold II of Belgium’s Congo Free State.

Professional Experience

Editor-in-Chief

Oxford, UK

Oxford Political Review

beginning Oct. 2025

- Promoted from Managing Editor (2025) and Section Editor, Global Politics (2024).
- Lead a team of 30 to produce three print issues annually and regularly publish online essays.

Assistant Editor

Washington, D.C.

Journal of Democracy, *National Endowment for Democracy*

July 2020 – Sept. 2023

- Declined promotion to Associate Editor to attend Oxford.
- Edited scholarly essays (roughly 6,000 words each), book reviews, and web pieces on challenges to democracy around the world.
 - Examples: “The CCP After the Zero-Covid Fail” [🔗](#), “Do Russians Support Putin?” [🔗](#), and “Nicaragua: Doubling Down on Dictatorship” [🔗](#)
- Selected primary sources for inclusion in each issue’s “Documents on Democracy” [🔗](#).
- Proofread quarterly issues (about 170 pages).

Political Intern*U.S. Embassy Rome**Rome, Italy**June – August 2019*

- Drafted briefing memos, meeting summaries, and talking points for the ambassador.
- Wrote a cable analyzing military spending under recent Italian governments. Created Excel graphics using data from parliamentary reports.
- Researched religious-liberty violations in Italy for the 2019 International Religious Freedom Report.

Partnerships and Fundraising Intern*The House of Journalists**Paris, France**Oct. – Nov. 2018*

- Wrote a grant proposal in French to fund an expansion of press-freedom advocacy and programming in Francophone Africa.

Communications Intern*Center for American Studies**Rome, Italy**June – August 2018*

- Co-authored a report on the U.S.-Italy security relationship under Conte and Trump.
- Conducted, translated, and published interviews of invited speakers in English and Italian.

Research Experience

Doctoral Research Assistant to Prof Katerina Tertychnaya*University of Oxford**Oxford, UK**since Oct. 2025*

- Collect interviews for a new project on how international NGOs respond to repression in autocracies.

Research Assistant to Dr Anne Wolf*University of Oxford**Oxford, UK**since May 2025*

- Draft literature reviews on how autocrats employ democratic institutions to legitimize themselves and on first ladies in authoritarian regimes.

Editorial Assistant, Book Reviews*Perspectives on Politics**Oxford, UK**since January 2025*

- Work with Reviews co-editors to commission and copy-edit book reviews.

Editorial Assistant*St Antony's Series at Palgrave Macmillan, St Antony's College**Oxford, UK**since July 2024*

- Work with Series co-editors, volume editors, and authors to solicit and prepare proposals for books on politics, history, and area studies.
- Develop new promotion tactics (podcast, social media, and events) and website.

Research Assistant to Dr Larry Diamond*St Antony's Series at Palgrave Macmillan, St Antony's College**Stanford, Calif.**Jan. – June 2020*

- Drafted briefs on politics in Malawi and Nigeria using secondary sources.
- Wrote a report on covid-19 responses and public trust in government in West European countries.

Research Assistant to Prof JP Daughton*Stanford University**Stanford, Calif.**Nov. 2016 – May 2017*

- Conducted archival research on French-language missionary publications.
- Research used for *In the Forest of No Joy: the Congo-Océan Railway and the Tragedy of French Colonialism*.

Teaching

UG Comparative Gov't Collections Scheme Administrator and Marker*Department of Politics and International Relations**Oxford, UK**from Sept. 2025*

- Mark collections (mock exams) for the undergraduate comparative government course.
- Oversee distribution of collections to markers.

Tutor, Floreat Access Programme*Balliol College**Oxford, UK**August 2025*

- Teach politics tutorials to Year 12 students. Assigned topic and reading.
- Delivered lecture entitled "Democratic Breakdown: From the Roman Republic to Russia and (maybe) the

United States”.

Tutor, PPE UNIQ Summer School
Department of Politics and International Relations

Oxford, UK
August 2025

Selected Publications

- “[Democratization and Taxation in the Global South](#)” [↗](#) (with Anne Wolf). *Perspectives on Politics* 23 (special issue no. 3): 1128–29.
- “[Putin Is Assembling an Axis of Autocrats Against Ukraine](#)” [↗](#). 3 March 2023. *Foreign Policy*.
- “[The Risks of Engagement with China’s Sister Cities](#)” [↗](#) (with Ariane Gottlieb). 6 June 2023. Power 3.0 blog, National Endowment for Democracy.
- “[Lessons from Sri Lanka’s Constitutional Reform](#)” [↗](#). *Democracy & Society* 19 (2021–22): 16–18.
“Indoctrination and Democratic Backsliding: A Systemic Test, 1945–2021”

This paper asks whether leaders in backsliding democracies increase investments in indoctrination. Many accounts of backsliding focus on the erosion of norms and institutional mechanisms of control, particularly focused on the executive. But backsliding leaders may also seek to erode support for liberal democracy and civil liberties, address cultural grievances, or reinforce their popularity by investing in indoctrination. This paper offers a systematic test of democratic backsliding and indoctrination (measured as patriotic education and media) using country fixed-effects models, making contributions to the literature on propaganda, backsliding, and authoritarianism.

Accolades and Grants

Grand Union Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) Studentship <i>Economic and Social Research Council</i>	2025
◦ Funds for 3.5 year DPhil in International Relations at the University of Oxford. Approximately £180,000.	
Luce Scholarship (declined) <i>Henry Luce Foundation</i>	2025
◦ Funding for a year to live and work in Asia. Approximately \$40,000	
Students in Government Internship Grant <i>Stanford University</i>	2019
◦ Received a roughly \$5,000 grant to fund U.S. Embassy Rome internship.	
Freeman Spogli Institute Internship Grant <i>Stanford University</i>	2018
◦ Received roughly \$5,000 funding with Center for American Studies internship.	
Folds of Honor Scholarship	2016, 2017, 2019
◦ Received three undergraduate scholarships for \$5,000 each. Total \$15,000	

Volunteering

Flags for Formals Fundraiser Organizer , St Antony’s College	Nov. 2024 – March 2025
◦ Raised over £160 for subsidized formals tickets.	
Secretary, St Antony’s Graduate Common Room (Student Government)	Feb. – Oct. 2024
◦ Negotiated with supplier to lower prices on student merchandise.	
Candidate for Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner , <i>Washington D.C. District 3C06</i>	July – Nov. 2022
Commencement Speaker , Harford Day School, Bel Air, Md.	June 2021

Skills

Languages: French (advanced), Italian (advanced)

Technical: R, L^AT_EX, WordPress, HTML