

# Ben Lyons

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## Appointments

2025 - Associate Professor, Department of Communication, University of Utah  
2019-25 Assistant Professor, Department of Communication, University of Utah  
2017-19 Research Fellow, Department of Politics, University of Exeter  
2016-17 Martin Fishbein Postdoctoral Fellow, Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania

## AFFILIATIONS

2026 - Member, Center on Aging, University of Utah  
2023 - Associate Member, Cancer Control and Population Sciences, Huntsman Cancer Institute, University of Utah  
2016 - Associate, Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance at University of Canberra

## Education

2016 *PhD*, Mass Communication, Southern Illinois University  
Dissertation: *Unbiasing Information Search and Processing through Personal and Social Identity Mechanisms*.  
• Top Paper, Intergroup Communication, ICA, 2017  
2013 *MA*, Media Theory and Research, Southern Illinois University  
2010 *BA*, Psychology and English-Writing, *summa cum laude*, Illinois College

## Publications and talks

### BOOK PROJECTS (3)

**Lyons, BA.** (under review). *How Generations Polarize: Understanding Age-Structured Polarization and the Future of Democratic Resilience*. In progress with Oxford University Press.

**Lyons, BA.** (2026). *Misinformation and the Aging American: The Paradox of Engagement and Truth Discernment*. Forthcoming from Oxford University Press. [[Pre-order](#)]

Stöckel, F., Stöckli, S., **Lyons, BA.**, Kroker, H., Reifler, J. (2025). *The Power of the Crowd*. Cambridge University Press, *Cambridge Elements in Experimental Political Science Series*.

### EDITED VOLUMES / SPECIAL ISSUES

Sun, Y., **Lyons, BA.**, Meier, A., Guest eds. *Human Communication Research*. Special issue: "Who Are We Studying in Communication Research? Revisiting Audience in a Transforming Media Environment." In progress.

### JOURNAL ARTICLES (55)

2026 **Lyons, BA.**, King, A., Barter, R.L., Kaphingst, K. (2026). "Exposure to low-credibility online health content is limited and is concentrated among older adults: Evidence from linked survey and digital trace data." *Nature Aging*. doi:10.1038/s43587-025-01059-x [[Pre-reg + data](#)]

• Coverage: *Health Day*. *Pourquoi Docteur*. *US News and World Report*. *KFF*. *AARP*.

Barnfield, M., Szwach, P., Stöckli, S., Stoeckel, F., Thompson, J., Phillips, J., **Lyons, BA.**, Mérola, V., Reifler, J. (2026). "Information on public climate attitudes has lasting effects on second-order beliefs, but limited and ephemeral effects on first-order beliefs." *Journal of Environmental Psychology*. doi:10.1016/j.jenvp.2026.102901 [[Pre-reg + data](#)]

2025 **Lyons, BA.**, King, A., Kaphingst, K. (2025). "Overconfidence in ability to discern cancer misinformation: A conceptual replication and extension" *Human Communication Research*. doi:10.1093/hcr/hqaf017 [[Pre-reg + data](#)]

Liao, Y. King, A., **Lyons, BA.**, Kaphingst, K. (2025). Limited Awareness of Alcohol-Related Cancer Risk Factors among Spanish-Preferring Adults in a National U.S. Survey. *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention* 34(5): 754761. doi:10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-24-1354

- Barnfield, M., Stoeckel, F., Phillips, J., Stöckli, S., Thompson, J., Mérola, V., Szewach, P., **Lyons, BA**, Reifler, J. (2025). "Forecasts Can Both Improve and Harm the Accuracy and Precision of Expectations." *Public Opinion Quarterly*. doi:10.1093/poq/nfaf003 [Pre-reg + data]
- Barnfield, M., Phillips, J., Stoeckel, F., Mérola, V., Stöckli, S., **Lyons, BA**, Thompson, J., Szewach, P., Reifler, J. (2025). [Wishful thinking in response to events: Evidence from the 2021 German federal election.](#) *Electoral Studies*. doi:10.1016/j.electstud.2025.102940 [Pre-reg + data]
- Lyons, B.**,\* Modirrousta-Galian, A.,\* Altay, S., Salovich, N. (2025). "Reducing blind spots? Performance feedback reduces confidence but does not improve subsequent discernment." *Collabra: Psychology*, 11(1): 138652. doi:10.1525/collabra.138652 [Data]
- 2024 **Lyons, BA**, Montgomery, J., Reifler, J. (2024). "Partisanship and older Americans engagement with dubious political news." *Public Opinion Quarterly*. doi:10.1093/poq/nfae044 [Data]
- Coverage: *El Pais*.
- Lyons, BA**, King, A., Kaphingst, K. (2024). "A health media literacy intervention increases skepticism of both inaccurate and accurate cancer news among U.S. adults." *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*. doi:10.1093/abm/kaae054 [Pre-reg + data]
- Voelkel, JG, Stagnaro, MN, Chu, J [...] **Lyons, BA** [...] Willer, R. (2024). "Megastudy testing 25 treatments to reduce antidemocratic attitudes and partisan animosity." *Science*. doi:10.1126/science.adh4764 [Pre-reg + data]
- Coverage (selected): *MSNBC. Sinclair National Desk. C-SPAN. Tech Policy Press. Fox News. NPR. Washington Post. The Atlantic. The Hill. Deseret News. Washington Post (2). St. Louis Post Dispatch. The Hill (2). New York Times.*
- King, A., **Lyons, BA**, Rivera, YM, Kogan, M., Hernandez, LH, Liao, Y, Kaphingst, K. (2024). "Accurate and Inaccurate Beliefs about Cancer Risk Factors among Spanish-Speaking Adults in the United States." *PEC Innovation*. doi:10.1016/j.pecinn.2024.100333
- Altay, S.\*, **Lyons, BA\***, Modirrousta-Galian, A. (2024). "Exposure to Higher Rates of False News Erodes Media Trust and Fuels Overconfidence." *Mass Communication and Society*. doi:10.1080/15205436.2024.2382776 [\*equal co-authors] [Pre-reg + data]
- Article of the year, *Mass Communication and Society* 2025
- Lyons, BA.**, Hasell, A. (2024). "Communicating Republicans level of support for climate policy briefly increases personal support in the United States." *Science Communication*. doi:10.1177/10755470241253 [Pre-reg + data]
- Stoeckel, F., Stöckli, S., Ceka, B., **Lyons, BA.**, Reifler, J. (2024). "The double-edged sword of user comments: Social corrections reduce the perceived accuracy of both false and real news in the UK, Germany, and Italy." *Communications Psychology*. doi:10.1038/s44271-024-00057-w [Pre-reg + data (UK)] [Pre-reg + data (Germany)] [Pre-reg + data (Italy)]
- 2023 **Lyons, BA.** (2023). "How orientations to expertise condition acceptance of (mis)information." *Current Opinion in Psychology*. doi:10.1016/j.copsyc.2023.101714. (Invited)
- Lyons, BA.** (with the students of COMM 5820). (2023). "The effects of narrative and statistical messaging about the health impacts of air quality." *Communication Research Reports*. doi:10.1080/08824096.2023.2282037 [Pre-reg + data]
- Lyons, BA.** (2023). "Older Americans are more vulnerable to prior exposure effects in news evaluation." *Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) Misinformation Review*. doi:10.37016/mr-2020-118 [Data]
- Lyons, BA**, Mérola, V., Reifler, J., Spälti, A., Stoeckel, F., Stednitz, C. (2023). "When experts matter: Variations in consensus messaging for vaccine and GMO safety." *Public Understanding of Science*. doi:10.1177/09636625231188594 [Pre-reg + data]
- Schmierbach, M., Andsager, J., Banning, S., Chung, M., **Lyons, BA.**, McLeod, DM., Meirick, PC, Pan, Z., Rojas, H. Sun, Y. (2023). "Another Point of View: Scholarly Responses to the State of Third-Person Research." *Mass Communication and Society*. doi:10.1080/15205436.2023.2193512 (Invited).
- Spälti, A., **Lyons, BA**, Stoeckel, F., Szewach, P., Mérola, V., Stednitz, C., López González, P.,\* Reifler, J. (2023). "Partisanship and anti-elite worldviews as correlates of science and health beliefs in the multi-party system of Spain." *Public Understanding of Science*. doi:10.1177/09636625231154131 [Pre-reg + data]
- Thompson, J., Spälti, A., Barnfield, M., Stöckli, S., Phillips, J., Stoeckel, F., **Lyons, BA**, Mérola, V., Szewach, P., Reifler, J. (2023). "Vaccine attributes and vaccine uptake in Hungary: Evidence from a conjoint experiment." *European Journal of Public Health*. doi:10.1093/eurpub/ckad043/7099642. [Pre-reg + data]
- Stoeckel, F., Thompson, J., Szewach, P., Stöckli, S., Barnfield, M., Phillips, J., **Lyons, BA**, Mérola, V., Reifler, J. (2023). "Correlates of support for international vaccine solidarity during the COVID-19 pandemic: Cross-sectional survey evidence from Germany." *PLoS ONE*. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0287257. [Pre-reg + data]

- Stoeckel, F., Thompson, J., Merola, V., Szewach, P., **Lyons, BA**, Reifler, J. (2023). "Public Misperceptions of European Integration: A Comparative Study of Six EU Member States." *European Union Politics*. doi:10.1177/14651165231193 [Data]
- 2022 **Lyons, BA**. (2022). "Why We Should Rethink the Third Person Effect: Disentangling Bias and Earned Confidence Using Behavioral Data." *Journal of Communication*. doi:10.1093/joc/jqac021 [Pre-reg + data]
- Lyons, BA**, Workman, K.\* (2022). Explicit voter fraud conspiracy cues increase belief among co-partisans but have broader spillover effects on confidence in elections" *Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) Misinformation Review*, 3(3). doi:10.37016/mr-2020-99 [\*Undergrad]. [Pre-reg + data]
- Lyons, BA**. (2022). *Insidiously Trivial: Meme Format Reduces Perceived Influence and Intent to Debate Partisan Claims* *Media and Communication*, 10(3). doi:10.17645/mac.v10i3.5388 [Data]
- Stoeckel, F., Carter, C., **Lyons, BA**, Reifler, J. (2022). "The Politics of Vaccine Hesitancy in Europe." *European Journal of Public Health*, 32(4): 636642, doi:10.1093/eurpub/ckac041.
- Stoeckel, F., Stöckli, S., Spälti, A., Phillips, J., **Lyons, BA**, Mérola, V., Reifler, J., Szewach, P. (2022). "Stamping the vaccine passport? Public support for lifting COVID-19 related restrictions for vaccinated citizens in Germany, France, and Sweden." *Vaccine* 40(38): 5615-5620. doi:10.1016/j.vaccine.2022.08.009. [Data]
- Spälti, A, Stöckli, S, Phillips, J, Stoeckel, F, Reifler, J, **Lyons, B**, Mérola, V, Szewach, P. (2022). "Which vaccine attributes foster vaccine uptake? A cross-country conjoint experiment." *PLoS ONE*, 17(5): e0266003. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0266003 [Pre-reg + data]
- 2021 **Lyons, BA**, Montgomery, J, Guess, A, Nyhan, B, Reifler, J. (2021). "Overconfidence in News Judgements is Associated with Susceptibility to False News." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 118(23). doi:10.1073/pnas.2019527118 [Pre-reg + data]
- Coverage (selected): *The Guardian*. *Snopes*. *CNN*. *The Independent*. *New York Daily News*. *Ars Technica*. *CNN* (2).
- Stoeckel, F., Carter, C., **Lyons, BA**, Reifler, J. (2021). "Association of vaccine hesitancy and immunization coverage rates in the European Union." *Vaccine*, 39(29): 3945-3949. doi:10.1016/j.vaccine.2021.05.062
- Stoeckel, F., **Lyons, BA**, Reifler, J. (2021). "Public Misperceptions of European Integration in the U.K." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*. doi:10.1080/17457289.2021.1945612
- Berlinski, N.,\* Doyle, M.,\* Guess, A., Levy, G.,\* **Lyons, BA**, Montgomery, J., Nyhan, B., Reifler, J. (2021). "The Effects of Unsubstantiated Claims of Voter Fraud on Confidence in Elections." *Journal of Experimental Political Science*. doi:10.1017/XPS.2021.18 [\*Undergrad] [Pre-reg + data]
- Coverage: *CNN*. *The Atlantic*. *ProPublica*. *The Guardian*.
- Spälti, A., **Lyons, BA**, Mérola, V., Reifler, J., Stednitz, C., Stoeckel, F., Szewach, P. (2021). "Partisanship and public opinion of COVID-19: Does emphasizing Trump and his administration's response to the pandemic affect public opinion about the coronavirus?" *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 31:sup1, 145-154. doi:10.1080/17457289.2021.1924749. [Pre-reg + data]
- Lyons BA**, Farhart, C, Hall, M, Kotcher, J, Levendusky, M, Miller, J, Nyhan, B, Raimi, K, Reifler, J, Saunders, K, Skytte, R, Zhao, X. (2021). "Self-Affirmation and Identity-Driven Political Behavior" *Journal of Experimental Political Science*. 115. doi:10.1017/XPS.2020.46 [Data]
- Recipient of the Rebecca Morton Best Article Award for the best article published in *JEPS* in 2022.
- 2020 Guess, A, Lerner, M., **Lyons, BA**, Montgomery, J, Nyhan, B, Reifler, J., Sircar, N. (2020). "A digital media literacy intervention increases discernment between mainstream and false news in the United States and India." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 117(27): 15536-15545. doi:10.1073/pnas.1920498117. [equal co-authors] [Pre-reg+ data]
- Awarded Honorable Mention for APSA Political Communication section Walter Lippmann award for Best article published in the field of political communication in the previous calendar year.
  - Coverage: *Consumer Reports* (1, 2). *Ars Technica*. *Hindustan Times*. *Nieman Lab*. *Healthline*. *The Conversation*. *Der Spiegel*. *The New York Times*.
- Lyons, BA**, Merola, VM, Reifler, J, Stoeckel, F. (2020). "How politics shape views toward fact-checking: Evidence from Six European countries." *International Journal of Press/Politics*, 25(3). doi:10.1177/1940161220921732. [Data]
- Coverage: *Thompson Reuters*. *The Independent*. *Nieman Lab*.
- Lyons, BA**, Merola, V, Reifler, J. (2020). "Shifting medical guidelines: Compliance and spillover effects for revised antibiotic recommendations." *Social Science and Medicine*, 255. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2020.112943. [Pre-reg + data]
- Hasell, A, **Lyons, BA**, Tallapragada, M, Jamieson, KH. (2020) "Improving GM consensus acceptance through reduced reactance and climate change-based message targeting." *Environmental Communication*, 4(7): 987-1003. doi:10.1080/17524032.2020.1746377.

[Data]

Guess, A, Lockett, D, **Lyons, BA**, Montgomery, J, Nyhan, B, Reifler, J. (2020). "Fake news" may have limited effects beyond increasing beliefs in false claims." *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review*, 1(1). doi:10.37016/mr-2020-004. [Data]

- Coverage: *The Washington Post. Lawfare.*

**Lyons, BA**, McKay, A, Reifler, J. (2020). "High-status lobbyists are most likely to overrate their success." *Nature Human Behaviour*, 4(2): 153-159. doi:10.1038/s41562-019-0761-9. [Data]

- Coverage: *National Affairs.*

**Lyons, BA**, Akin, H., Stroud, T. (2020). Proximity (mis)perception: Public awareness of nuclear, refinery, and fracking sites. *Risk Analysis*, 40(2): 385-398. doi:10.1111/risa.13387. [Data]

2019 **Lyons, BA.** (2019). Discussion Network Activation: An Expanded Approach to Selective Exposure. *Media and Communication*, 7(3): 32-41. doi:10.17645/mac.v7i3.2112. [Pre-reg + data]

**Lyons, BA**, Hasell, A, Tallapragada, M., Jamieson, KH. (2019). How Conversion Messages Change Attitudes: Strong Arguments, Not Costly Signals. *Public Understanding of Science* 28(3): 320338. doi:10.1177/0963662518821017. [Data]

- Coverage: *Scientific American. The Skeptical Inquirer. Wissenschaftskommunikation.de. Genetic Literacy Project.*

**Lyons, BA**, Merola, V, Reifler, J. (2018). Not Just Asking Questions: Effects of Implicit and Explicit Conspiracy Information about Vaccines and Genetic Modification. *Health Communication*, 34(14): 1741-1750. doi: 10.1080/10410236.2018.1530526. [Pre-reg + data]

- Coverage: *Psychology Today.*

2018 **Lyons, BA.** (2018). Reducing Group Alignment in Factual Disputes? The Limited Effects of Social Identity Interventions. *Science Communication*, 40(6): 789807. doi:10.1177/1075547018804826. [Data]

**Lyons, BA**, Hasell, A, Stroud, T. (2018). Enduring Extremes? Polar Vortex, Drought, and Climate Change Beliefs. *Environmental Communication*, 12(7): 876-894. doi:10.1080/17524032.2018.1520735. [Data]

- Coverage: *Reuters. NPR. El País (1, 2). Pacific Standard. Huffington Post.*

**Lyons, BA.** (2018). When Readers Believe Journalists: Effects of Adjudication in Varied Dispute Contexts. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 30(4): 583606. doi:10.1093/ijpor/edx013

- Coverage: *Wired [UK].*

2017 **Lyons, BA.** (2017). From Code to Discourse: Social Media and Linkage Mechanisms in Deliberative Systems, *Journal of Public Deliberation* 13(1): 4. doi:10.16997/jdd.270

Veenstra, AS, **Lyons, BA**, Degim, A. (2017) Intraparty Hostility: Social Identity, Sub-Identity, and the Hostile Media Effect in a Contested Primary, *Journal of Political Marketing*, 16(3-4): 365-385. doi:10.1080/15377857.2017.1334255

- Reprinted in C. Williams (ed.), *Social Media, Political Marketing and the 2016 U.S. Election*, Routledge, 2018.

2016 **Lyons, BA**, Veenstra, AS. (2016). How (Not) to Talk on Twitter: Effects of Politicians Tweets on Perceptions of the Twitter Environment, *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking* 19(1): 8-15. doi:10.1089/cyber.2015.0319

- Coverage: *Washington Post (Monkey Cage).*

Veenstra, AS, **Lyons, BA**, Fowler-Dawson, A. (2016). Conservatism vs. Conservationism: Counteractive Influences of Social Affiliation on Beliefs About Fracking, *Environmental Communication*, 10(3): 322-336. doi:10.1080/17524032.2015.1127851.

2015 **Lyons, BA.** (2015). Is Online Citizen News Really Alternative? A Multiplatform Analysis of BP Oil Spill Coverage, *Web Journal of Mass Communication Research*, 49. <http://wjmc.r.org/vol49>.

Veenstra, AS, Park, CS, **Lyons, BA**, Kang, CY, Iyer, N. (2015). Intra-medium Interaction and the Third-Person Effect: How Partisans Respond to YouTube Ads and Comments, *CyberPsychology, Behavior and Social Networking*, 18(7): 406-410. doi:10.1089/cyber.2014.0588.

2014 Veenstra, AS, Hossain, MD, **Lyons, BA.** (2014). Partisan Media and Discussion as Enhancers of the Belief Gap, *Mass Communication and Society*, 17(6): 874-897. doi:10.1080/15205436.2013.855791.

- Coverage: *National Affairs.*

## CHAPTERS, REPORTS, ETC. (6)

- 2020 **Lyons, BA**, Merola, V., Reifler, J. (2020). "How bad is the fake news problem? The effect of baseline information in public perceptions," in: Greifeneder, R., Jaffé, M., Newman, E., Schwarz, N. (eds.) *The psychology of fake news: Accepting, sharing, and correcting misinformation*. London, UK: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9780429295379-3.
- Guess, A **Lyons, BA** (2020). [Disinformation, Misinformation and Online Propaganda](#)," in: N Persily J Tucker (eds.), *Social Media and Democracy: The State of the Field*. Cambridge University Press.
- 2019 Guess, A, **Lyons, BA**, Montgomery, J, Nyhan, B, Reifler, J. (2019). "Fake news, Facebook ads, and misperceptions: Assessing information quality in the 2018 U.S. midterm election campaign." Democracy Fund report.
- Coverage: [Scientific American](#). [The Atlantic](#). [Los Angeles Times](#). [Facebook](#). [Columbia Journalism Review](#). [The Verge](#). [Washington Post](#).
- 2018 Guess, A, **Lyons, BA**, Nyhan, B, Reifler, J. (2018). [Avoiding the Echo Chamber about Echo Chambers: Why Selective Exposure to Like-Minded Political News Is Less Prevalent Than You Think](#)." Knight Foundation report.
- Coverage: [The Washington Post](#). [Lawfare](#). [Nieman Lab \(1, 2\)](#). [FiveThirtyEight \(1, 2\)](#). [Christian Science Monitor](#). [The Conversation](#). [The Verge](#). [Reason](#). [New York Times](#).
- Veenstra, AS, **Lyons, BA**, Sapienza, Z, Kang, CS. (2018). [Social Identities and the Illinois Pension Problem: Roles of Politics, Geography, and Media](#)." *Illinois Municipal Policy Journal*, 3(1), 97-116.
- 2015 Veenstra, AS, Iyer, N, Xie, W, **Lyons, BA**, Park, CS, Feng, Y. (2015). [Come Together, Right Now: Retweeting in the Social Model of Protest Mobilization](#), in N Rambukkana (ed.), *Hashtag Publics: The Power and Politics of Networked Discourse Communities*. New York: Peter Lang.

## MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW / WORKING PAPERS

- Merola, V, **Lyons, BA**, Reifler, J. "Partisan Bias in Factual Knowledge: Using Monetary Incentives to Disentangle Expressive Responding and Motivated Learning" Revise and resubmit to *Political Behavior*.
- Barnfield, M., Stöckli, S., Spälti, A., Phillips, J., Stoeckel, F., Thompson, J., **Lyons, BA**, Mérola, V., Szewach, P., Reifler, J. "The Limited Effect of Moral Framing on Vaccine Uptake: An Online Experiment in the Context of COVID-19." Revise and Resubmit to *Collabra: Psychology*.
- Xue, H., Li, Y., **Lyons, BA**, King, AJ. "[#MakeBeefGreatAgain: A Cross-Platform Analysis of Early #MAHA Discourse](#)".
- King, A. J., **Lyons, B. A.**, Barter, R. L., Kaphingst, K. A., Niederdeppe, J. "[Advancing Communication Research and Theory on Information Seeking Behavior by Comparing Self-Reports and Digital Trace Data](#)."
- Stoeckel, F., **Lyons, BA**, Ujhelyi, A., Kovacs, M. "Judging AI by Human Standards: Experimental Evidence on Public Perceptions of AI-Based Decision-Making."
- Fazio, L, Rand, DG, Lewandowsky, S, Susmann, M, Berinsky, A, Guess, A, Kendeou, P, **Lyons, BA**, Miller, J, Newman, E, Pennycook, G, Swire-Thompson, B, and Building a Better Toolkit Team. "[Combating misinformation: A megastudy of nine interventions designed to reduce the sharing of and belief in false and misleading headlines](#)."
- Coverage: [New York Times](#).

## GRANTS (FUNDED)

- 2026 PI. "[How Generations Polarize: Understanding Age-Structured Polarization and the Future of Democratic Resilience](#)." Andrew Carnegie Fellows Program. \$200,000.
- 2023 Co-I (w/ A. King K. Kaphingst). "Identifying and mitigating hereditary cancer risk misinformation in English and Spanish." University of Utah. Huntsman Cancer Institute, Cancer Center Support Grant, P30CA042014. \$29,750.
- 2022 PI (w/ A. Hasell), "Can Increasing Perceptions of Public Support for Climate Policy Have Lasting Effects on Personal Support?" Annenberg Public Policy Center Alumni Grant. \$10,000.
- 2022 Co-I (PI: L. Fazio) "[Large collaborative project to compare misinformation interventions](#)." The Mercury Project. \$477,916.
- Co-I. (PI: F. Stoeckel) "[Distrust, Conspiracies, and the Political Challenges of Coping with COVID-19](#)." British Academy/Leverhulme Small Research Grant. €9,995.
- 2021 PI, "How Voters React to Implicit and Explicit Conspiracy Cues." U of Utah College of Humanities Seed Grant. \$23,500.
- 2018 Co-PI (w/ A. Guess, J. Montgomery, B. Nyhan and J. Reifler) Democracy Fund. Support to YouGov for [midterm election research on Facebook ads and fake news](#). \$82,070.
- 2016 Co-I (PI: J. Reifler) ERC Consolidator Grant: [Debunker: The Problem of European Misperceptions in Politics, Health, and Science: Causes, Consequences, and the Search for Solutions](#). approx \$2,189,616/€1,498,917.

## BOOK REVIEWS

- 2017 *Social Media: Principles and Applications*, by Pavica Sheldon. [Reviewed](#) in *New Media and Society*, 19(5): 799-800.
- 2014 *Social Media in Disaster Response: How Experience Architects Can Build for Participation*, by Liza Potts. [Reviewed](#) in *New Media and Society*, 16(7): 1191-1193.

## COMMENTARY (SELECTED)

- 2025 [I research partisanship. Heres how we prevent political violence.](#) (2025, Sep. 17) *Salt Lake Tribune*.
- 2025 [Ask an Expert: Cancer Misinformation and Aging Populations.](#) (2025, May 8) *Huntsman Cancer Institute*.
- 2020 [We need universal digital ad transparency now.](#) (2020, Oct. 16) *TechCrunch*.
- 2018 [Avoiding the Echo Chamber about Echo Chambers.](#) (2018, Feb. 13) *Medium*.
- 2015 [Why People Believe in Conspiracy Theories.](#) (2018, Feb. 13) *Economic and Social Research Council*.
- 2015 [Using a Rumor Site to Investigate Scientific Fraud.](#) (2015, June 22). *Poynter*.
- 2015 [Human Nature and Science Journalism](#) (2015). *Gateway Journalism Review* 45 (338): 10-11
- 2015 [Facebook v. Science?](#) (2015). *GJR* 44 (337): 14
- 2015 [Ebola Reminds Us Perception Is Reality.](#) (2015). *GJR* 44 (336): 12-13
- 2014 [Should Journalists Be Responsible for Reporting Bad Science?](#) (2014) *GJR* 44 (335): 12-13.
- GJR author archive: <http://gatewayjr.org/author/benLyons/>

## INVITED TALKS

- 2026 Stanford Trust and Safety Research Conference. Invited panel. (upcoming, Oct. '26).  
Annenberg Public Policy Center Speaker Series.
- 2025 Harvard/Northeastern Misinformation Speaker Series.  
Stanford Cyber Policy Center Fall Seminar Series.
- 2022 Annenberg Public Policy Center Speaker Series.  
Edna Anderson-Taylor Communication Institute.
- 2019 Association for Psychological Science. Invited symposium.
- 2018 University of Illinois at Springfield.  
Oxford Martin School at the University of Oxford.
- 2017 London School of Economics.
- 2016 Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance at University of Canberra.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- ICA: 2013 (2), 2014 (3), 2017 (2), 2018, 2019, 2020(3), 2021, 2022, 2023, 2025 (2), 2026
- MAPOR: 2011, 2013 (2), 2014 (2), 2015, 2018 (2), 2019
- MPSA: 2016 (2), 2018 (2), 2019, 2020
- AEJMC: 2014 (2), 2015, 2016
- APSA: 2016, 2018 (2), 2019
- AAPOR: 2012, 2016 (3)
- SPSP: 2020, 2024
- APHA: 2014, 2024
- APS: 2019
- AAAS: 2018
- APLS: 2015

## Awards

### TOP PAPER AWARDS AND OTHER RESEARCH PRIZES

- 2026 Article of the year, *Mass Communication and Society* 2025, \$500. (Co-lead author)
- 2025 Kaid-Sanders Best Article of the Year Award (runner-up). ICA Political Communication Division  
Publication Award (runner-up). Behavioral Science and Policy Association
- 2023 Rebecca Morton Best Article Award. *Best article published in Journal of Experimental Political Science*. (Lead author)
- 2022 Strengthening Democracy Challenge ([one of three interventions that significantly reduced anti-democratic attitudes, support for political violence, and partisan animosity](#)) \$6,153 award (Sole author)
- 2021 Honorable Mention, APSA Political Communication Section Walter Lippmann Best Published Article Award. (Co-lead)
- 2018 Center for Open Science. [Preregistration Challenge Prize](#), \$1,000 (Lead author)
- 2017 ICA. Top Paper. Intergroup Communication Interest Group. (Sole author)
- 2014 ICA. Top 4 Student Paper. Philosophy, Theory and Critique Division. (Sole author)
- 2014 NCA. Top Paper. Spiritual Communication Division. (Lead author)

## FELLOWSHIPS AND HONORS

2026-27	Andrew Carnegie Fellow.
2025	Faculty Fellows Award. Vice President for Research. University of Utah.
2023	Distinguished Junior Scholar Award. APSA Political Psychology Section
2021	Rising Star in the Humanities. University of Utah
2015-16	Doctoral Fellowship. Southern Illinois University
2011-13	PROMPT Fellowship. <i>Awarded to students from families that have traditionally not had access to higher education with unique contributions to make to the discipline.</i>
2007	Illinois College Rammelkamp Scholar Award. <i>Schools highest academic honor.</i>

## Teaching

### COURSES TAUGHT

Utah	<p>Persuasion and Political Communication, COMM 5200.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● S2021. F2021. S2023. ~ 30 students</li></ul> <p>Strategic Comm Theory and Practice, COMM 2580.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● F2019, S2020, S2024. ~ 150 students</li></ul> <p>Designing Experiments in Science Communication, COMM 5820 (Capstone).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● S2022. ~ 15 students</li></ul> <p>PR Cases and Campaigns, COMM 5850 (Capstone).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● S2020. F2020. S2021. F2021. S2023. F2024. ~ 30 students</li></ul> <p>Science and Risk Communication, COMM 7260 (Graduate).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● F2020.</li></ul> <p>Media Effects, COMM 7560 (Graduate).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● F2023. S2025.</li></ul> <p>Quant. Methods Special Topics: Research Design, COMM 7800 (Graduate).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● S2022.</li></ul>
Exeter	<p>Digital Media and Politics, POL2087.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● S2019. ~ 20 students</li></ul> <p>American Politics, POL2047.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● S2018. ~ 190 students</li></ul>

### ADVISING

Mohammad Jasim Uddin - PhD committee member (2026- )  
Aly Hill - PhD committee member (2024- )  
Matthew Kumar - PhD committee member (PoliSci, 2024- )  
Henry Allen - MA committee member (2022-23)  
Laurie Simmons - MA committee member (PMST, 2021-22)  
Sam O'Neill - UG dissertation chair (University of Exeter 2017-18)

## Relevant experience

2014-15	Managing Editor, <i>Gateway Journalism Review</i>
2010-11	Reporter; Staff Writer, <i>The Jacksonville Source</i>

## Service and public engagement

### UNIVERSITY SERVICE (UTAH)

2026- 2019-22	Chair, Collaborative Utah Research Resource for Experimental and National Testing ( <a href="#">CURRENT</a> ) Student Media Council
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## DEPARTMENTAL AND COLLEGE SERVICE (COMM/HUMANITIES AT UTAH)

2026-	Graduate committee
2024-25	Dept. executive committee (at-large member)
2023-25	Humanities Scholars Faculty Mentor
2023-24	Search committee, assistant professor of emerging media and technology
2022-24	Graduate committee
2021-22	Search committee, assistant professor of science communication
2020-22	College executive committee
2019-21	Undergraduate committee

## PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

AAAS, AEJMC, APLS, APSA, ICA, MAPOR, MPSA, SPSP.

## REVIEWING AND EDITING | [PUBLONS PEER REVIEW PROFILE](#) | 188 REVIEWS OF 139 MANUSCRIPTS

**Associate Editor:** *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review* (2024- ).

Editorial boards: *Health Communication* (2024- ). *The Social Science Journal* (2018- ). *International Communication Research Journal* (2019- )

Ad hoc reviewing:

- *Science*
- *PNAS*, 2
- *Nature Human Behaviour*, 6
- *Nature Communications*, 4
- *Nature Climate Change*, 2
- *Nature Computational Science*
- *Science Advances*, 2
- *Scientific Reports*, 2
- *American Political Science Review*, 3
- *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 3
- *Journal of Communication*, 5
- *Political Communication*, 2
- *Communication Research*, 2
- *Human Communication Research*, 2
- *Information, Communication, and Society*
- *British Journal of Political Science*
- *British Journal of Psychology*
- *International Journal of Press/Politics*, 7
- *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*
- *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*
- *International Journal of Communication*, 2
- *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 4
- *Climatic Change*, 3
- *Public Understanding of Science*, 8
- *Psychological Science*
- *Health Communication*, 14
- *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review*, 7
- *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, 4
- *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 2
- *Electoral Studies*
- *Political Behavior*
- *Political Psychology*
- *Research and Politics*, 2
- *Communication Monographs*
- *Communication Methods and Measures*, 5
- *Psychological Science*
- *American Politics Research*
- *Media Psychology*, 2
- *Mass Communication and Society*, 13
- *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*
- *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*
- *Journalism*, 3
- *Digital Journalism*
- *Southern Communication Journal*
- *Motivation and Emotion*
- *Information Technology and Politics*, 4
- *Political Studies*, 2
- *Political Research Quarterly*, 3
- *CyberPsychology, Behavior and Social Networking*, 4
- *Environmental Sociology*, 2
- *Body and Society*, 2
- *Applied Environmental Education and Communication*
- *International Journal of Electronic Governance*, 2
- *Journal of Science Communication*, 2
- *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 2
- *Behavioural Public Policy*, 2
- *Behavior Research Methods*, 2
- *BMC Medical Research Methodology*
- *Policy and Internet*
- *Frontiers in Political Science*
- *PLOS One*, 3
- *PNAS Nexus*, 6
- *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review*, 2
- *Political Research Exchange*, 2
- *Communication Research Reports*, 3
- *PCI Registered Reports*, 2
- *Cambridge Elements (Political Communication series)*

Publons top reviewers in Social Science [2019] (Top 1% in field)

### Grant reviewing

#### External

European Research Council [2026]

The Leverhulme Trust [2026]

The Austrian Science Fund (FWF) Hertha Firnberg-Programme [2018]

#### Internal

Wilkes Center Seed Grant [2025]

MEDIA APPEARANCES | [ALTMETRIC](#) | [POLICY CITATIONS](#)

### Research coverage/citation

AARP. 2/27/2026. [Why Older Adults Should Beware of Health Advice on Social Media.](#)

KFF. 2/26/2026. [Older Adults See More Low-Quality Health Information Online, Study Shows.](#)

Health Day 2/23/2026. [Seniors More Likely To Browse Bad Medical Info On The Web.](#)

Pourquoi Docteur. 2/16/2026. [Désinformation médicale en ligne : qui sont les premières victimes?](#)

Washington Post. 12/12/2025. [Why Mormonism may have an answer for our toxic politics.](#)

The Week. 10/29/2025. [Are boomers the real phone addicts?](#)

Psychology Today. 10/9/2025. [Remaking the Culture of American Politics.](#)

New York Times. 9/19/2025. [Spencer Cox Wants to Pull Our Politics Back From the Brink.](#)

El Pais. 1/19/2025. [La gente mayor prefiere la información dudosa, no por falta de habilidades digitales, sino porque confirma su ideología.](#)

Popular Science. 11/22/2024. [How to talk to your skeptic family about science misinformation.](#)

The Dallas Morning News. 11/16/2024. [How we move past partisan animosity.](#)

Deseret News. 11/5/2024. [Eager to cool the political heat? Its possible, say University of Utah researchers and others](#)

Washington Post. 11/4/2024. [Can you guess for whom people will vote? Try this quiz.](#)

Guardian US. 11/3/2024. [Can you undo political polarization? Left and right might be closer than we think, study finds](#)

Science. 10/31/24. [Researchers are trying to inoculate people against misinformation](#)

Forbes. 10/1/24. [Political Extremists Really Are More Gullible. .](#)

Washington Post. 9/11/2024. [How TikTokers think about misinformation.](#)

The Atlantic. 8/19/2024. [The last man in America to change his mind about Trump .](#)

Politico. 7/25/2024. [No one has a clue about what happens on social media.](#)

ABC News. 7/16/2024. [Why it's so hard to measure support for political violence.](#)

New York Times. 7/12/2024. [Even Disinformation Experts Dont Know How to Stop It.](#)

Polity [Africa Check]. 7/12/2024. [Casting doubts and casting votes - the real-world effects of false election fraud claims.](#)

Mother Jones. 6/26/2024. [The Utah Governors Lonely Crusade to Make Politics Nice Again.](#)

Yahoo News. 6/17/2014. [Quiz: Most Americans are overconfident in their ability to spot fake news. Are you one of them?.](#)

New York Times. 4/24/2024. [Why Losing Political Power Now Feels Like Losing Your Country.](#)

WebMD. 4/18/2024. [Changing Entrenched Health Beliefs Is Not Impossible.](#)

Deseret News. 4/17/24. [Utah Gov. Spencer Cox takes Disagree Better to the TED Talks stage.](#)

Forbes. 2/12/2024. [The Role Of Humans And AI In Social Media's Battle Against Misinformation.](#)

George W Bush Presidential Center. 1/25/24. [Look to points of light for solutions to divisions.](#)

Dallas Morning News. 11/20/2023. [Utah Governor: lets disagree better at our Thanksgiving tables.](#)

Newsweek. 9/21/2023. [To Address Online Misogyny, Borrow from the Disinformation Defense Playbook.](#)

Wall Street Journal. 8/26/2023. [Why Tribalism Took Over Our Politics.](#)

Times-News. 7/22/2023. [We wont always agree and thats OK but we can disagree better.](#)

LSE USAPP. 7/21/2023. [Fake news is still a problem \[...\] how a robust public education program on media literacy could help.](#)

Axios. 7/14/2023. [New NGA chair Utah Gov. Spencer Cox wants Americans to "disagree better."](#)

PBS. 5/31/2023. [NewsHour 5/31 episode \(Whats driving Americas partisan divide and what might be done to reverse it\).](#)

Reason. 5/18/2023. ["The Future of Media Literacy Education."](#)

Psychology Today. 4/19/2023. ["Strengthening Democracy, One Experiment at a Time.](#)

Nature. 3/1/2023. ["How to tackle political polarization — the researchers trying to bridge divides."](#)

Psychology Today. 2/17/2023. ["How to Get People to Be More Civil."](#)

The New York Times. 2/8/2023. ["Meet the People Working on Getting Us to Hate Each Other Less."](#)

Forbes. 1/12/2023. ["Media Trends: Why Misinformation Is Here To Stay."](#)

LA Times. 11/22/22. [Op-Ed: How to talk to your disagreeable uncle at Thanksgiving.](#)

The Hill. 11/4/2022. ["Democracy under attack: Time to condemn political violence."](#)

St. Louis Post Dispatch. 11/4/2022. ["Short takes on unfocused politicians, off-focus protests and unlawful law enforcers.](#)

Washington Post. 11/1/2022. ["How can the U.S. help prevent more political violence?"](#)

CNN. 10/31/2022. ["Misinformation and hate are trending in this election year."](#)

Deseret News. 10/27/2022. ["Perspective: How a bipartisan ad from Utah helped reduce partisanship."](#)

The Hill. 10/23/2022. ["Utah opponents made a campaign ad together. Heres what it achieved."](#)

The Atlantic. 10/21/2022. ["How to Save Democracy."](#)

Washington Post. 9/13/2022. ["Heres what persuades Americans to support democracy over party."](#)

NPR. 9/6/2022. ["Stanford's 'Strengthening Democracy' study."](#)

Thompson Reuters. 9/5/2022/ ["Prebunking: how to build resilience against online misinformation."](#)

Fox News 9/4/2022. "The Next Revolution with Steve Hilton, September 4th episode."

The Independent. 8/28/2022. "How scientists used YouTube to prevent millions of people falling for misinformation."

Nieman Lab. 8/25/2022. "Can you inoculate people against misinformation before they even see it? This study says yes."

C-SPAN [Washington Journal]. 8/25/2022. "New study on reducing polarization in the U.S."

Tech Policy Press. 8/24/2022. "Challenge Yields Experimental Interventions to Strengthen U.S. Democracy."

Sinclair National Desk. 8/22/2022. "Researchers try to find ways to turn down America's political temperature."

MSNBC [Morning Joe]. 8/19/2022. "Study looks to strengthen how we feel about democracy"

LSE USAPP. 7/15/2022. "Misperceptions are much harder to correct in people who know less than they think they do [...]"

CNN. 10/7/2021. "What's stunning about the misinformation trend – and how to fix it."

The Guardian. 7/2/2021. "Researchers reveal corrosive power of Trumps lie of a stolen election."

Ars Technica. 6/2/2021. "Dunning-Kruger meets fake news"

The Independent. 6/1/2021. "Three in four Americans overestimate their ability to spot false news stories, study finds."

New York Daily News. 6/1/2021. "Americans most confident in spotting Fake News may be the most vulnerable to it."

The Guardian. 5/31/2021. "Overconfident of spotting fake news? If so, you may be more likely to fall victim."

Snopes. 5/31/2021. "Those Who Think They Can Spot Misinformation Are More Likely to be Duped by It, Study Finds."

CNN. 5/31/2021. "Most Americans think they can spot fake news. They can't, study finds."

Scientific American. 4/1/2021. "How to Debunk Misinformation about COVID, Vaccines and Masks."

The Conversation. 3/18/2021. "7 ways to avoid becoming a misinformation superspreader."

→ [Republished in Salon, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Arizona Daily Star, Seattle Post-Intelligencer etc.]

CQ Researcher [Congressional Quarterly]. 3/5/2021. "Expertise Under Assault."

The Washington Post. 11/6/2020. "Five myths about misinformation."

The New York Times. 9/11/2020. "Getting Wise to Fake News."

Der Spiegel 9/2/2020. "A dialogue is becoming increasingly difficult or even impossible."

ProPublica. 7/16/2020. "Outright Lies: Voting Misinformation Flourishes on Facebook."

LSE US Centre. 7/13/2020. "Using digital media reinforces inequalities in political participation."

The Conversation. 7/8/2020. "Coronavirus anti-vaxxers: heres how to change their minds."

Healthline 6/28/2020. "Learn to Spot Fake Health News with These 5 Tips."

Nieman Lab. 6/26/2020. "The little things (pop-ups, notifications, warnings) work to fight fake news, new evidence shows."

Consumer Reports 6/26/2020. "Facebook Will Warn Users Sharing Outdated Content."

Hindustan Times. 6/24/2020. "Heres why its important to be digitally literate and avoid spread of misinformation."

Ars Technica. 6/23/2020. "In the UK, social media use associated with COVID-19 conspiracy theories."

Consumer Reports 6/22/2020. "Facebook Gave Tips to Spot Fake News. A Study Says They Work Surprisingly Well.."

The Atlantic 6/19/2020. "The Damage of Trumps Voter-Fraud Allegations Cant Be Undone."

Lawfare 2/20/2020. "The Empirical Effects of Disinformation."

Nieman Lab 10/11/2019. "Focus here, not there: These are the gaps in political misinformation research."

FiveThirtyEight. 10/8/2019. "Media Bubbles Arent The Biggest Reason Were Partisans."

Reuters. 7/25/2019. "U.S. Democrats and Republicans cant even agree on the weather: Reuters/Ipsos"

NPR. 6/8/2019. "We All Owe Al Gore An Apology: More People See Climate Change In Record Flooding."

The Atlantic. 6/7/2019. "Some Real News About Fake News"

The Skeptical Inquirer. May/June 2019. "Skepticism And The Persuasive Power Of Conversion Stories"

LSE European Politics and Policy. 5/17/2019. "What do Europeans know about the EU before they go to the polls?"

Christian Science Monitor. 4/16/2019. Is Americas media divide destroying democracy?."

Los Angeles Times. 3/19/2019. "Some real facts about fake news and its influence on U.S. elections"

Medium. 3/7/2019. "We cant combat fake news if we dont really understand it"

Psychology Today. 2/8/2019. "Antivaxxers and the Plague of Science Denial"

Facebook Newsroom. 2/7/2019 "New Research Shows Facebook Making Strides Against False News"

Columbia Journalism Review. 2/7/2019. "Researchers say fears about fake news are exaggerated"

El País. 2/3/2019. Bienvenidos a la era de los extremos climáticos.

El País. 1/30/2019. Estados Unidos se hiela mientras Australia se quemaa.

Wissenschaftskommunikation.de. 1/21/2019. Kontroverse Themen: Gesinnungswechsel regen zum Nachdenken an

Genetic Literacy Project. 1/18/2019. Ex-GMO skeptics may be best advocates for crop biotech.

Huffington Post. 10/8/2018. Americans hit by extreme weather want the media to cover climate change.

Pacific Standard. 10/2/2018. Extreme weather won't convince climate skeptics.

The Conversation. 8/31/2018. Google News serves conservatives and liberals similar results, but favors mainstream media."

Neiman Lab. 6/8/2018. How can we restore trust in news?"

The Verge. 3/22/2018. If Facebook controls your mind, so do a lot of other tech companies."

FiveThirtyEight. 3/9/2018. Why do Americans hate the media?"

Axios. 2/22/2018. The science of conspiracies: Where Flat Earth meets Pizzagate."

Reason. 2/14/2018. When an echo chamber gets worked up about echo chambers."

New York Times. 10/20/2017. How fiction becomes fact on social media."

Wired [UK]. 9/14/2017. Journalists can help readers sift facts from false opinions."

Washington Post (Monkey Cage). 11/4/2016. Twitter trolls are actually hurting democracy

**Research roundups**

National Affairs. 4/3/2020. "Misrepresentative."

The Verge 2/6/2019. "Facebooks global crackdown on information operations is getting more intense."

Washington Post. 2/6/2019. Happy hour roundup."

American Press Institute. 6/23/2015. Need to know.

National Affairs. 7/28/2014. Drinking the Kool-Aid.

*Bookforum*. 4/1/2014. [A genius awareness.](#)

**Interviews**

*BBC Radio 5 Live*. 3/12/2026. [Adrian Chiles - March 12, 2026](#)

*ProPublica*. 10/20/2024. [Whos Mailing the Catholic Tribune? Its Not the Church, Its Partisan Media.](#)

*Wired*. 10/6/2017. [That flag-burning NFL photo isn't fake news. It's a meme."](#)

*Los Angeles Times*. 1/27/2017. [One man's assault is another man's meme](#)

*El País*. 11/7/2016. [Los memes mantienen vivos los carteles electorales.](#)

*Los Angeles Times*. 10/20/2016. [From Clinton's shimmy to Pepe the frog: Memes are the language of the 2016 election.](#)