

# Kaleigh Ruiz

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Last Updated: August 2026

## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

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**Belmont University**, Nashville, TN

*College of Law, June 2026–present*

Faculty Fellow, Course(s): Legal Information and Communication

**Vanderbilt University**, Nashville, TN

*Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, August 2023–May 2026*

Affiliate Researcher

## PUBLICATIONS

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“Gender & Judging” with Christina Boyd, Sara Heridia, & Rose Jordan, in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Crime and Gender*, Ed. Janet P. Stamatel (forthcoming).

“Gender & Consensus on the Courts,” 32(2) *Michigan Journal of Gender & Law* 249–318 (2025).

“Gender Differentials in the Content of Judicial Opinions,” 56(4) *Arizona State Law Journal* 1825–1919 (2025).

“The CARES Act Charitable Deduction and State Conformity” with Ugonna Eze, *Tax Notes*, November 5, 2020.

## WORKING PAPERS

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“Gendered Interruption Behavior on the U.S. Courts of Appeals”

“Expertise or Ideology? Judicial Review of Executive Branch Action” (with Sharece Thrower and Nicholas Bednar)

“The Impact of Prosecutorial/Defense Backgrounds on Judicial Diligence”

## TEACHING AND RESEARCH INTERESTS

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**Primary:** Torts, Civil Procedure, Family Law, Gender & the Law, Law & Social Science

**Secondary:** Constitutional Law, Federal Courts, Administrative Law, Jurisprudence, Criminal Law

## EDUCATION

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**Vanderbilt University**, Nashville, TN

*M.A. in Political Science, Center for Teaching Certificate, August 2024*

*Ph.D. in Political Science, Graduate Certificate in Gender and Sexuality Studies, May 2026*

DISSERTATION: Gender Differentials in Judicial Deliberation

**Committee:** Sharece Thrower (chair), James Bisbee, Christina L. Boyd, & John A. Dearborn

In its three essays, this dissertation project discerns whether and how women judges impact the judicial process. The essays test predictions about gender differences on a novel dataset of nearly 9,000 federal appellate cases across 23 years in varied issue areas. **Essay 1**, *Gender Differentials in the Content of Judicial Opinions*, examines the relationship between the gender of an opinion author and the length and number of citations in a majority opinion. In **Essay 2**, *Gendered Interruption Behavior on the U.S. Courts of Appeals*, I test whether women judges tend to use more collaborative speech tactics during oral argument. **Essay 3**, *Gender & Consensus on the Courts*, examines the relationship between the gender composition of a panel and unanimity in opinions.

- ACTIVITIES:
- Graduate Student Association, *Secretary*
  - Vanderbilt Graduate Worker’s Union

**The University of Chicago Law School, Chicago, IL**

*J.D., June 2021*

- ACTIVITIES:
- International Law Society, *1L Representative, Activities Coordinator*
  - Latinx Law Students' Association
  - Women's Law Caucus, *Outreach and Mentorship Committee Member*
  - 1L Orientation Leader

**University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA**

*B.A. in Politics-Philosophy, B.A. in French, Minors in Theatre Arts and Economics, Certificate in West European Studies, summa cum laude, May 2018*

- HONORS:
- Honors College Scholar
  - Dean's List every semester
- ACTIVITIES:
- Women's Choral Ensemble
  - Musical Theatre Club
  - Performance Collaborative

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

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**Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN**

*Courts & Social Policy (co-taught with Ed Rubin), Spring 2022 and Spring 2023*

- Educated college students on the role American courts play in shaping social policy writ large

**Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN**

*Constitutional Rights (Teaching Assistant for Carrie Russell), Fall 2023, Spring 2024, Fall 2025*

- Guest lectured for college students on the Commerce Clause and Fourth Amendment
- Graded mock legal memorandums and briefs on key constitutional issues

**Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN**

*American Presidency (Teaching Assistant for David E. Lewis), Fall 2024*

- Guest lectured for college students on legal approaches to interpreting executive power
- Held office hours to clarify concepts on the historical presidency and contemporary applications

**Peabody Program for Talented Youth, Nashville, TN**

*A Crash Course in Law, Summer 2022, Summer 2023, Fall 2023, Summer 2024, Summer 2025, Summer 2026*

- Provided honors high-school students with an introduction to the legal concepts taught in law schools (torts, criminal law, contracts, property, and constitutional law) over an intensive program

**WORK EXPERIENCE**

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**U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, Boston, MA (remote)**

*Judicial Intern for the Honorable Juan R. Torruella, Fall 2020*

- Produced bench memorandums on appellate-level matters, receiving exposure to Indian law, union disputes, Medicare fraud, employment discrimination, and equitable mootness
- Drafted district court opinions related to asylum and admiralty law

**Jones Day, Pittsburgh, PA and Washington, DC Offices**

*Summer Associate, Summer 2020*

- Researched and produced memorandums on legal issues in practice groups such as trademarks and unfair competition, government regulation, issues & appeals, and labor & employment
- Worked on various pro bono matters dealing with human trafficking and social justice initiatives

**Susan E. Loggans and Associates, Chicago, IL**

*Part-Time Law Clerk, 2019–2021*

- Engaged in legal research on a variety of matters

- Drafted complaints, discovery requests, discovery responses, and other trial documents for clients

**U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA**

*Judicial Intern for the Honorable Thomas Hardiman and the Honorable Peter Phipps, Summer 2019*

- Researched various legal topics in relation to pending legal matters at both the District Court and Third Circuit levels
- Wrote bench memorandums and drafted orders in relation to such research and pending cases

**PNC Bank, Pittsburgh, PA**

*Legal Operations Intern, Summer 2017 & 2018*

- Helped integrate law firm accounts into the bank's enterprise third-party management system
- Worked with a team to continuously oversee law firm matters and expenses
- Established a project plan to expedite future system's integration of third-party vendors

## GRANTS/ AWARDS

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Vanderbilt International Researcher Alliance Best Graduate Student Presentation Award, April 2025 (\$500)

Russell G. Hamilton Graduate Leadership Institute Grant, December 2024 (\$2000)

Graduate School Travel Grant, November 2024 (\$1000)

Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions Activities and Training Grant, October 2024 (\$5000)

Ruth B. Mandel Dissertation Research Award, June 2024 (\$2000)

J. Leiper Freedman Award, May 2024 (\$2300)

Graduate School Travel Grant, February 2024 (\$1000)

Political Science Skill Building and Research Fellowship, March 2023 (\$1500)

## SCHOLARLY PRESENTATIONS

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"Gendered Interruption Behavior on the U.S. Courts of Appeals" *Belmont University College of Law*, April 2026

"Gendered Interruption Behavior on the U.S. Courts of Appeals" *University of Georgia School of Law*, March 2026

"Gendered Interruption Behavior on the U.S. Courts of Appeals" *Loyola University Chicago School of Law*, March 2026

"Gendered Interruption Behavior on the U.S. Courts of Appeals" *Syracuse University College of Law*, October 2025

"Gendered Differentials in the Content of Judicial Opinions" *University of Chicago Annual Law Teaching Conference*, June 2025.

"Gender & Consensus on the Courts" *Southern Political Science Association's Annual Meeting*, January 2025

"Gendered Differentials in the Content of Judicial Opinions" *Law and Society Association's Annual Meeting*, June 2024.

"Gendered Differentials in the Content of Judicial Opinions" *Visions in Methodology Conference*, May 2024

"Gendered Differentials in the Content of Judicial Opinions" *Midwest Political Science Association's Annual Meeting*, April 2024

"Gendered Differences in Judicial Diligence" *Southern Workshop in Empirical Political Science*, March 2024.

## VOLUNTEERING

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**The Larry Keeton Theatre Board of Directors**, Nashville, TN

*President, 2026–present*

*Vice President, 2024–2026*

**Save Our Herders Outreach**, Nashville, TN

*Foster, 2023–2025*

## REFERENCES

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**Dr. Nick Bednar**, Associate Professor of Law, *University of Minnesota Law School*

326 Mondale Hall

229 19th Avenue South,

Minneapolis, MN 55455

E-mail: nbednar@umn.edu

Phone: 612.626.4035

**Dr. Christina L. Boyd**, Professor of Law, *Washington University School of Law*

566 Anheuser-Busch Hall

MSC 1120-250-05

One Brookings Drive,

St. Louis, MO 63130

E-mail: clboyd@wustl.edu

Phone: 314.935.3380

**Dr. John A. Dearborn**, Assistant Professor of Political Science, *Vanderbilt University*

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230 Appleton Place,

Nashville, TN 37203

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Phone: 615.343.7486

**Dr. Adam Chilton**, Howard G. Krane Professor of Law, *University of Chicago Law School*

1111 East 60th Street,

Chicago, IL 60637

E-mail: deanchilton@uchicago.edu

Phone: 773.702.9495

**Daniel Hemel**, Professor of Law, *New York University School of Law*

325 Vanderbilt Hall

40 Washington Square South,

New York, NY 10012

E-mail: daniel.hemel@nyu.edu

Phone: 212.998.6354

**Dr. Sharece Thrower**, Associate Professor of Political Science, *Vanderbilt University*

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230 Appleton Place,

Nashville, TN 37203

E-mail: sharece.d.thrower@vanderbilt.edu