

# Michael E. Shepherd, Ph.D.

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## Academic Appointments

**University of Texas at Austin, Department of Government, 2022-present**

Assistant Professor

**University of Texas at Austin, Health & Society Program, 2022-present**

Affiliated Faculty

**Vanderbilt University, Department of Medicine, Health, and Society, 2021-2022**

Postdoctoral Fellow

**Vanderbilt University, Data Science Institute, 2021**

Teaching Faculty

## Education

Ph.D. Political Science, Vanderbilt University, 2021

*Dissertation:* Unhealthy Democracy: How Partisan Politics is Killing Rural America

*Committee:* Larry M. Bartels (co-chair), Joshua D. Clinton (co-chair), Allison P. Anoll, and Katherine J. Cramer (University of Wisconsin)

M.A. Political Science, Vanderbilt University, 2019

M.A.P. Applied Politics, The University of Akron, 2015

B.S. Political Science, Murray State University, 2013

*Summa Cum Laude*

Commonwealth of Kentucky Secondary Education Teaching Credential

## Articles

1. (*Revise and Resubmit*). "Racializing COVID-19: Race-related and Racist Language on Facebook, Pandemic Othering, and Concern about COVID-19" (with Jonathan Metzl, Tara McKay, and Priya Bhatt (undergraduate)).
2. 2022. "The Politics of Pain: Medicaid Expansion, the ACA, and the Opioid Epidemic." *Journal of Public Policy*. 42: 409-435.

3. 2021. "The Politics of Locating Polling Places: Race and Partisanship in North Carolina Election Administration, 2008-2016" (with Joshua D. Clinton, Nicholas Eubank, and Adriane Fresh). *Election Law Journal*. 20(2): 155-177.
4. 2021. "Polling Place Changes and Political Participation: The Effect of Election Administration in North Carolina Presidential Elections, 2008-2016" (with Joshua D. Clinton, Nick Eubank, and Adriane Fresh). *Political Science Research & Methods*. 9(4): 800-817.
5. 2020. "The Effects of Big-City News on Rural Residents' COVID-19 Responses" (with Eunji Kim and Joshua D. Clinton). *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. 117(36):22009-22014.
6. 2020. "Exit Strategy: Career Concerns and Revolving Doors in Congress " (with Hye Young You). *American Political Science Review*. 114(1): 270-284.

## Book Project

1. *Unhealthy Democracy: How Partisan Politics is Killing Rural America*.

My dissertation book project explores the political causes and consequences of rural health disparities and, in doing so, addresses two related and fundamental political science questions. First, to what extent does partisan control of government shape (health) policy and the objective quality of the lives of Americans? And second, why do rural Americans, who tend to live shorter, less healthy lives and have more restricted access to health care than other Americans, increasingly support a Republican Party that's policies are antithetical to health needs of these people and communities and seemingly reject government assistance on these matters? On the former, I show that especially since the 1980s, the Republican and Democratic parties have pursued radically different health and social welfare policies, with Republican control and policymaking leading to worsened rural health outcomes. However, I demonstrate that by appealing to the shared racial, rural, and religious identities of sicker, lower-income, and social vulnerable rural whites, the Republican Party increasingly garners support from even the most struggling rural voters—despite the harmful contributions of Republican policies in giving rise to their personal woes.

Winner of the 2022 Best Dissertation Award, Class & Inequality Section, APSA.

## Working Papers

1. "The Right Against Life: State Party Control and Firearm Deaths."
2. "The New Deal, Public Sector Employment, and the Urban-Rural Government Divide" (with Brian Hamel).
3. "Physicians in Congress: Professional Backgrounds and Legislative Effectiveness" (with Daniel Skinner and Alexandra Fountaine)
4. "Institutional Collapse and Civic Engagement: The Case of Hospital Closures in Rural America" (with Derek Epp and Christian Cox).
5. "Dying for the Donald? The Politics of America's Rural Hospital Crisis."
6. "Look Up at That Mansion on the Hill: Does Mass Media Activate the Politics of Rural Resentment?" (with Marc Trussler).

Winner of the 2020 Timothy Cook Best Graduate Student Paper Award, Political Communication Section, APSA.

## Book Reviews and Other Published Work

1. 2019. "Republicans face political risks on impeachment. But history shows not all is lost." (with Jon Meacham). *The Washington Post*. Dec. 18, 2019.  
*Media Coverage*: MSNBC.
2. 2020. "The Public and the Electorate Before, During, and After the Civil Rights Movement." Appendix chapter in *His Truth is Marching On: John Lewis and the Power of Hope* by Jon Meacham. Random House: New York, 2020.
3. 2023. "Book Review; *Ethically Challenged: Private Equity Storms US Health Care*; by Laura Katz Olson. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press. *Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews*."

## Teaching Experience

Mass Media & Democracy (G) - Spring 2024  
Health & Society Capstone (UG) - Fall 2022, 2023  
Rural Politics Conference Course (G) - Summer 2023  
Mass Media & Democracy (UG) - Spring 2023  
Current Approaches to Health & Society (UG) - Spring 2023, 2024  
Politics of Health in the US (UG) - Spring 2022  
Exploratory Data Analyses (G) - Fall 2022  
Math Camp (G) - August 2016

## Honors, Awards, and Fellowships

Best Dissertation Award, Class and Inequality Section, American Political Science Association Annual Conference, 2022.  
Timothy E. Cook Best Graduate Student Paper Award, Political Communication Section, American Political Science Association Annual Conference, 2020.  
Best Graduate Student Paper Award, Department of Political Science, Vanderbilt University, 2020.  
Southern Political Science Association Travel Grant, 2020.  
Vanderbilt University Graduate School Travel Grant, 2019.

## Conferences and Invited Talks

American Political Science Association: 2018, 2019, 2022, 2023.  
Midwest Political Science Association: 2017, 2018, 2024.  
Southern Political Science Association: 2020.  
Keeping the Republic Conference (Notre Dame), 2023.

Rural Politics Conference (Colby College), 2024.

Colleges and Universities: *Syracuse University; University of Akron; University of Michigan; University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; University of Oklahoma; University of Texas, Austin; Vanderbilt University.*

Groups and Organizations: *Rural Urban Bridge Initiative.*

## Profession, University, and Department Service

### Profession:

Member, APSA, MPSA, SPSA.

APSA Class & Inequality Section Best Dissertation Award Committee (2023).

Panel Discussant &/or Chair: APSA, MPSA, SPSA.

Discussant, Keeping the Republic Conference, Notre Dame University (2023).

Referee for the *American Journal of Political Science, American Journal of Preventative Medicine, American Politics Research, Comparative Political Studies, Emergency Medicine Australasia, Health Economics, Journal of Politics, Journalism, Public Opinion Quarterly, Political Research Quarterly, Quarterly Journal of Political Science.*

### University and Department:

UT Expert–Health Policy and Politics Expert Witness and Media Commenter, the University of Texas at Austin.

Archer Fellows Program, Faculty Selection Committee, University of Texas at Austin.

Faculty Connections Program, Faculty Mentor, University of Texas at Austin.

Policy Agendas Project, Faculty Affiliate, University of Texas at Austin.

Politics of Race and Ethnicity Lab, Faculty Affiliate, University of Texas at Austin.

## Research and Teaching Interests

Class and Inequality, Social Determinants of Health, Race and Racism, Public Policy, State and Local Government, Campaigns and Elections, American Political Institutions, Political Communication.

## Other Professional Experience

Founding Member, Rural-Urban Bridge Initiative, 2021-present.

Research Consultant, Jon Meacham, Nashville, TN, 2019-2021.

AP Visiting Fellow, AP Government Exam, Summer 2020.

Voter Protection Fellow, Tennessee Democratic Party, Nashville, TN, Fall 2018.

Campaign Researcher, Jim Cooper for Congress, Nashville, TN, Summer 2015.

Fundraising Executive, Kimberly Wood and Associates, Akron, OH, 2014-2015.

## References

Available upon request

Last updated: December 11, 2023