

Akayla A. Henson

University of Illinois | Department of Political Science
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Education

PhD, Political Science, <i>University of Illinois</i>	2023-present
Major: American Politics	
Minor: Comparative Politics	
BA, Political Science, <i>Murray State University</i>	May 2023
Minor: Criminal Justice	
<i>Cum laude</i>	

Research Interests

Race, Ethnicity, and Politics (REP), Gender, Political Representation, Political Behavior

Publications

Henson, Akayla A. and Brittany Wood. 2023. "The Mobilizing Effect of Descriptive Representation? The Impact of Representatives' Race and Gender on Participation," *The Commonwealth Review of Political Science* 6(1): 87-105.

Conference Presentations

"Transgender Issues: How Black Democrats Differ in Their Views" summer research project presented at the annual **Illinois Summer Research Symposium**, Urbana-Champaign, IL, July 2023.

"The Mobilizing Effect of Descriptive Representation? The Impact of Representatives' Race and Gender on Participation" poster presentation at the annual **Kentucky Posters at the Capitol**, Frankfort, KY March 2023.

"The Effects of Descriptive Representation on Political Participation" paper presented at the annual meeting of the **Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA)**, Chicago, IL, April 2022.

"The Impact of Descriptive Representation on Participation: Political Participation of Minority Groups" paper presented at the annual meeting of the **Kentucky Political Science Association**, Lexington, KY, March 2022.

Teaching Experience

Instructor

U.S. Racial and Ethnic Politics, *University of Illinois*, Summer 2025

Teaching Assistant

Introduction to US Government and Politics, *University of Illinois*, Fall 2025

Governing Globalization, *University of Illinois*, Spring 2025

Introduction to Political Science, *University of Illinois*, Fall 2024

Grants, Fellowships, & Awards

Diversity Fellowship, *American Political Science Association (APSA)*, Spring 2025

Graduate College Fellowship, *University of Illinois*, February 2023

Harry L. Waterfield Governmental Studies Scholarship, *Murray State University*, April 2022

Full Marvin D. Mills Scholarship, *Murray State University*, August 2020

Certifications

Core IRB Training, *Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative* 2025-2028

Service to the Discipline

Discussant, Undergraduate Poster Session - Race in Elections and Education, *MPSA*, 2025

University Service

Vice President, Political Science Graduate Student Association, *University of Illinois*, 2025-2026

Social Chair, Political Science Graduate Student Association, *University of Illinois*, 2024-2025

Community Involvement

Assistant Director of Recruitment, Missouri Leadership Seminar, 2022-Present

Senior Facilitator, Missouri Leadership Seminar, 2022-Present

Junior Facilitator, Missouri Leadership Seminar, 2019-2022

Memberships

Political Science Graduate Student Association, *University of Illinois*

Black Graduate Student Association, *University of Illinois*

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

McNair Scholars Program, *Murray State University*

References

Available upon request