

Zahra G. Ahmed

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SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Twenty year's experience in higher education.
- Broadly trained in the field of politics with research and teaching focused on American politics, political mobilization and civic engagement.
- Practical organizing experience in partnership with local governments and community organizations.
- Certifications in Equity Education, Restorative Justice and Conflict Resolution.

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy (Political Science) University of California, Irvine	2010
Master of Social Work (Community Partnerships) Georgia State University	2001
Bachelor of Arts (English Literature) Southern University and A & M College	1995

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Assistant Professor – Political Science

St. Mary's College of CA

2018 - Present

- Instructor for multiple courses including: Introduction to American Politics, the U.S. Congress, State & Urban Politics, Media & Politics, and Elections & Voting Behavior. Also taught cross-listed courses including Comparative Minority Politics and African American Politics.
- Served on campus-wide, school-based and departmental committees including: Civic Engagement Assessment Committee, Black Lives Matter Committee and the Committee on Teaching and Scholarship.
- Led policy-focused student trip to Sacramento. Met with legislators, lobbyists and other key individuals re: the policy-making process. Led student de-briefs and reflection sessions.
- Participated in Politics Department assessment project aimed at strengthening and measuring civic and community engagement among majors.

Adjunct Professor – Political Science – In-person and Online Courses

Fullerton College - Social Sciences Division

2015 - 2018

Introduction to American Government

- Examined the institutions and policies underlying American government. Topics included the U.S. Constitution, the interplay between local, state, and federal governments, public policy making, and the federal bureaucracy.
- Utilized a project-based experiential learning model, which allowed students to identify social issues they care about and act as policy advocates to address those issues.
- Designed a hybrid course utilizing both on-line and in-person modalities. Used this structure to create community both on-line and in person.

Lecturer - Division of Undergraduate Education

University of California, Irvine

2010-2014

Served as lecturer for multiple departments at UC Irvine. Courses taught included:

- Sankofa Project (Intercultural Communication)
- Democratic Citizenship & Civic Engagement
- Bridges to Success (International Student Orientation Course)

Lecturer – Political Science, African American Studies, Women’s Studies, and Sociology Departments

University of California, Irvine

2004-2010

Served as lecturer for multiple departments at UC Irvine. Courses taught included:

- Comparative Minority Politics
- African American Politics
- Critical Political Theory (Upper Division Writing Course)
- Analytical Thinking, Reading, and Writing (Upper Division Writing Course)
- California State Politics
- Sociology of Popular Culture: Politics & Hip Hop
- Reproducing & Resisting Gender Inequality
- ACT for Leadership

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Director, Community Engagement & International Student Programs

University of California Irvine – Division of Undergraduate Education

2011 – 2018

- Developed the strategic vision for Community Engagement and International Student Programs and provided direct oversight of the overall management, evaluation, and long term development of the unit.
- Determined long and short-term budgetary needs and priorities. Responsible for sound fiscal management of \$500,000 annual operating budget.
- Provided high level coordination and guidance for all programs falling under the unit’s programmatic umbrella. These included a peer mentoring program, an academic excellence program, retention programming, and intercultural competence / community engagement programs.

Policy Advocacy Consultant

Ersoylu Consulting

2009–2018

- Designed technical assistance services to assist more than 50 First 5 Los Angeles grantees with policy advocacy work. Services included presentations, policy briefs, and creation of a policy advocacy readiness assessment tool.
- Provided health policy advocacy expertise for the Healthy Eating Active Living program run by the City of Ontario, CA. Facilitated stakeholder meetings, designed logic models and evaluation plans and led the assessment process for grant reporting.
- Applied multiple analytical tools to assist 10 non-profits in the Los Angeles area with impact evaluation. These included focus group design and facilitation, key informant interviews, survey design, and community-based action research.

Campaign Community Coordinator

Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Power & Potential (G-CAPP)

2001-2003

- Served as financial steward for a budget of \$350,000 / year.
- Led team of 25 in implementing 10 community-based programs including teen parenting courses for males and females, free afterschool programs, and job skills workshops.
- Built relationships with key legislators and community members to inform them of organizational policy positions.

Social Policy Analyst

Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Power & Potential (G-CAPP)

1999 - 2001

- Created annual legislative agenda and informed state legislators and stakeholders about our positions through legislative visits, community events, creation of policy briefs and fact sheets.
- Analyzed policy alternatives to support the organizational mission of offering a holistic approach to youth and family health and wellness.
- Maintained collaborative relationships with state legislators, parents and community leaders through creation of the Advocacy Network. Focused on implementing effective practices for children, youth and family services.

CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

Primary Investigator: Revolutionary Leadership: Social justice movement building at the East Bay Meditation Center

St. Mary's College of CA – Politics Department

May 2021 – Present

- The project explores the teaching and dissemination of mindfulness practices among social justice activists of color. I investigate the ways that mindfulness may benefit both the activists and the social justice movements they affiliate with through a study of the Practice in Transformative Action (PiTA) program, which is offered through the East Bay Meditation Center in Oakland, CA.

Primary Investigator: The Pedagogy of Political Mobilization

St. Mary's College of CA – Politics Department

Nov. 2020 – Present

- The project analyzes course assignments and student reflections from multiple politics courses to explore the possibilities for facilitating the development of political agency among college students.

PUBLICATIONS

- (In Progress) Ahmed, Zahra, Anita Chari, Becky Thompson (2021). "Teaching in these days of fire".
- (In Progress) McMahon, Sheila, Zahra Ahmed, Michelle Bemiller (2021). "Restorative Pedagogies".
- Ahmed, Zahra, 2021. "Introduction", *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, 42:1, 1-3.
- Ahmed, Zahra. 2021. "Leading from the Inside Out: Contemplative Practice as Radical Self-care for BIPOC Activists", *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, 42:1, 73-90.
- Ahmed, Zahra. 2019. Contracted by American Historical Review to review "Changing National Interest, Select Humanity, and the Defeat of the Dyer Anti Lynching Bill".

- Ahmed, Zahra. 2012. "A Step in the Right Direction." Review of *American Government in Black and White* by Paula McClain and Steven Tauber. In Charting the Range of Black Politics, David Covin and Michael Mitchell, editors. Transaction Publishers.
- Ahmed, Zahra. 2011. "A New Perspective on Interest Group Politics." Review of *Affirmative Advocacy: Race, Class, and Gender in Interest Group Politics*, by Dara Strolovich. In Black Politics in a Time of Transition, Michael Mitchell and David Covin, editors. Transaction Publishers.
- Ahmed, Zahra. 2010. "Strengthening Democracy through Service Learning". Joint Education Project Newsletter, University of Southern California, Fall, 2010.
- Ahmed, Zahra, Liz Hutter, Julie Plaut. 2008. "Reflection in Higher Education Service Learning". Scotts Valley, CA: Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2005/2008.
http://www.servicelearning.org/instant_info/fact_sheets/he_facts/he_reflection/index.php

PRESENTATIONS

- "Leading from the inside out: Exploring contemplative practices among social justice activists of color". National Conference of Black Political Scientists Annual Conference. March, 2020. Atlanta, GA.
- "Speaking Social Justice into Existence: a study of Practice in Transformative Action". Western Political Science Association Annual Conference. April, 2020. Los Angeles, CA.
- "Offering and Allowing: An agenda for political science educators in a time of pseudo-populism". Joint International Teaching & Learning Conference. June 2019. Brighton, UK.
- "Mindful micro-politics as a driver for social change". Western Political Science Association. April 2019. San Diego, CA.
- "Breathing life into social justice work". Continuums of Service Annual Conference. March 2019. San Diego, CA.
- "Our Culture is Our Strength: Sustaining social justice through culturally appropriate contemplative practices". National Conference of Black Political Scientists. March 2019. Baton Rouge, LA.
- "Culturally Relevant Contemplative Practice". Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education. October 2018. Amherst, MA.
- "Partnership: Walking Towards Our Talk and Living Our Values". Zahra Ahmed and Doug Paxton co-facilitated presentation. Place-Based Justice Network Leadership Retreat. December, 2018. Moraga, CA.
- "Commitment, Action and Impact: Supporting People of Color in Our Community Engagement Field". International Association of Research on Service Learning & Civic Engagement Conference. September 2017. Galway, IE.
- "Excellence through Engagement: The Development of International Student Excellence Programs at UCI". Reinvention Collaborative UVP Network Meeting. June 2017. Denver, CO.
- "UCI's Intercultural Citizenship Program: Experiencing Global Citizenship Through Local Community Engagement". Association of International Educators Annual Conference. June 2017. Boston, MA.
- "Building Community Among Community Engagement Professionals of Color". Continuums of Service Regional Conference. April 2017. Denver, CO.

- “Pedagogy of Political Mobilization: Practicing Politics in an Intro to American Government Course”. National Conference of Black Political Scientists. March 2017. Atlanta, GA.
- “Engaging Communities by Practicing Politics: an exploration of an Intro to American Government Course”. Experiential Learning Praxis Conference. University of California, San Diego. March 2016. San Diego, CA.
- “Supporting Students Through Peer Mentoring: Four Program Models That Work”. Association of International Educators Annual Conference. May 2015. Boston, MA.
- “Global Engagement: A value added to traditional civic and community engagement programs”. Continuums of Service Annual Conference. April 2015. Long Beach, CA.
- “Service Learning for Social Justice: The creation of the Engaged Student Leaders Program at UCI.” University of California, San Diego Experiential Learning Conference. January 2014. San Diego, CA.
- “Building Community through Critical Pedagogy”. University of Denver Pedagogy of Privilege Conference. June 2009. Denver, CO.
- “Underprepared, Underrepresented, and At-Risk: Education, Cultural Alienation, and their Impact on Students of Color”. National Conference of Black Political Scientists. March 2009. Houston, TX.
- “Values and Visions of Democratic Citizenship: Exploring Democratic Values Within Service Learning Practice”. American Political Science Association – Teaching and Learning Conference. February 2009. Baltimore, MD.
- Chair: The Methods Café - Western Political Science Association. March 2008. San Diego, CA.
- “Investigating Civic Engagement and Political Participation among California Colleges and Universities”. Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Institute. June 2007.
- “The Politics of Engagement: Locating the Citizen and the State in Civic Engagement Policy”. Western Political Science Association. March 2007.
- “From the Classroom to the Community: Reconsidering Service-learning in a Critical Pedagogical Context”. American Political Science Association. Sept. 2006. Philadelphia, PA.
- “Engaging our Youth: Interrogating Contexts for Civic and Political Engagement Among Students”. Association of Pan-African Doctoral Scholars. July 2006. Los Angeles, CA.
- “Considering Political Socialization Among African American Youth”. Midwest Political Science Association. April 2006. Chicago, IL.

AWARDS

- 2021 – Community Engagement Award, Catholic Institute of Lasallian Social Action
- 2018 – Scholarship for St. Mary’s College School of Liberal Arts New Faculty Writing Workshop
- 2018 – Contemplative Social Justice Scholarship – Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education
- 2017 – Fullerton College Faculty Development Award
- 2016 – Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) – Bronze Excellence Award – Community Support for UCI Fifty for 50 Community Relations Project
- 2013 – National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) – Bronze Excellence Award - Supporting Student Success through an International Transitions Committee
- 2008 - Celebration of Teaching Award - UC Irvine Teaching Learning & Technology Center
- 2006 - Pedagogical Fellow - UC Irvine Teaching Learning & Technology Center

- 2010 - Research Fellowship - Center for the Study of Latinos in a Global Society
- 2010 - Graduate Dean's Dissertation Fellowship
- 2009 - UC Irvine Political Science Summer Funding Award
- 2009 - UC Irvine Dissertation Writing Fellowship
- 2009 - Graduate Assistance Scholarship - National Conference of Black Political Scientists
- 2008 - UC Irvine Warmington Endowed Chair Fellowship
- 2007 - UC Irvine Center for Law and Society Fellowship
- 2007 - UC Irvine Political Science Summer Funding Award
- 2006 - Promising Graduate Student Award - Association of Pan African Doctoral Scholars
- 2006 - UC Irvine Pedagogical Fellows Award
- 2005 - Chancellor's Pre-dissertation Fellowship
- 2004 - UC Irvine Political Science Summer Funding Award
- 2003 - UC Irvine Political Science Departmental Fellowship

SERVICE

- Chair, Black Lives Matter Committee
- Internship Coordinator, Liberal Arts Bridge Program, School of Liberal Arts
- Campus-wide Committee on Teaching and Scholarship
- Campus-wide Committee on Admissions and Academic Regulations
- Faculty Senator
- Vice President – Adjunct Faculty Union
- Chair, International Transitions Work Group
- Chancellor's Task Force on International Student Outreach & Retention

CERTIFICATIONS

- Restorative Justice in Communal & Educational Settings
- State of CA Certified: Conflict Mediation
- State of CA Certified: Diversity & Inclusion
- Certified: Teaching Men of Color

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Member: American Political Science Association
- Member: Western Political Science Association
- Member: National Conference of Black Political Scientists
- Member: International Association for Research on Service-learning and Community Engagement
- Member: Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education