



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
AT
CHAPEL HILL

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ISAAC UNAH

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My Research: <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Isaac-Unah>

SSRN: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/cf_dev/AbsByAuth.cfm?per_id=635772

EDUCATION

- Ph.D. 1995, Political Science, Stony Brook University
 - *Specializations:* Judicial Politics & Decision Making, Race & Punishment Politics, Regulatory & Bureaucratic Politics, Research Methods.
- M.A. 1991, Political Science, Stony Brook University
- B.S. 1989 (Honors), Economics & Management Science, SUNY College at Cortland, NY

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS AND LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

Associate Professor, UNC-Chapel Hill.

Chair, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Political Science, UNC-Chapel Hill (Member since 2016, Chair beginning 2020 to the present).

Interim Director, Moore Undergraduate Research Apprentice Program [MURAP], 2021.

Chair, Law & Courts Section of the American Political Science Association (2017-2018).

Acting Director, Institute of African American Research (IAAR), 2015.

Program Director, Law and Social Sciences Program, Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, National Science Foundation, 2005-2007.

Director of Political Science Subject Pool, UNC-Chapel Hill, 2008-2016.

Assistant Professor, UNC-Chapel Hill, 1997– 2003

Justice Thurgood Marshall Fellow, UNC-Chapel Hill, 1995-1997

Instructor, Stony Brook University, 1992-1994

PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

2009. *The Supreme Court in American Politics*. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan Press. 223 pages. Peer reviewed.

1998. *The Courts of International Trade: Judicial Specialization, Expertise, and Bureaucratic Policy Making*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. 233 pages. Peer reviewed.

ARTICLES IN PEER REVIEW OUTLETS AND LAW JOURNALS

Note: ** Coauthor is graduate or law student when study was conducted; * Undergraduate student.

2021. **“Echoes of the Feminine Mystique: Women Judges and Intergenerational Change in The U.S. Courts of Appeals.”** *Journal of Law and Politics*, Vol 35 (with Ryan Williams** and Stephanie Zaino*). Forthcoming.
2021. **“The Twilight of *Brown*: Empirical Analysis of Racial Re-segregation and Voluntary Adoption of School Integration Policies in the United States.”** *University of Florida Journal of Law & Public Policy*, 31:227-277 (with Catherine M. Blalock*).
2018. **“The Legacy of President Obama in the U.S. Supreme Court.”** In *Looking Back on President Barack Obama’s Legacy*. NY: Palgrave-McMillan Press, Wilbur C. Rich, ed. (with Ryan Williams**).
2018. **“Sharks and Minnows in the War on Drugs: A Study of Quantity, Race and Drug Type in Drug Arrests.”** *U.C. Davis Law Review*, Vol 52:729-801 (with Joseph Kennedy and Kasi Wahlers**).
2017. **“Media Exposure and Racialized Perceptions of Inequities in Criminal Justice.”** *Social Sciences*, Vol. 6 (#3):1-22 (with Valerie L. Wright).
2017. **“What is So Special about Specialized Courts in the United States?”** In *Handbook of Judicial Behavior*. Robert M. Howard & Kirk Randazzo, Eds. Routledge Inc. (with Ryan Williams**).
2015. **“U.S. Supreme Court Justices and Public Mood.”** *Journal of Law & Politics*, Vol. 30 (Issue #3): 293—340 (with Kristen Rosano* & K. Dawn Milam**).
2015. **“Divided By Race: Differences in the Perception of Injustice”** In *Deadly Injustice: Race, Criminal Justice, and the Death of Trayvon Martin*, ed. Devon Johnson, Patricia Warren, & Amy Farrell. New York: New York University Press (with Valerie L. Wright).
2013. **“When Governors Speak Up for Justice: Punishment Politics and Mass Incarceration in the American States.”** *Journal of Political Science & Public Affairs*. 1:101-112 (with K. Elizabeth Coggins**).
2012. **“Race and Death Sentencing.”** In *New Directions in Judicial Politics*. Kevin T. McGuire, ed. New York: Routledge Publications.
2011. **“Empirical Analysis of Race and the Process of Capital Punishment in North Carolina”** 2011 *Michigan State Law Review* (Issue 3): 609-658.
2009. **“Choosing Those Who Will Die: The Effect of Race, Gender and Law on Prosecutorial Decision to Seek the Death Penalty in Durham County, North**

Carolina” *Michigan Journal of Race & Law* 15:135-179

2006. **“The Effect of Race, Gender and Location on Prosecutorial Decision to Seek the Death Penalty in South Carolina,”** *South Carolina Law Review* 58:161-209 (with Michael J. Songer*)
2006. **“U.S. Supreme Court Decision Making, Case Salience, and the Attitudinal Model”** *Law & Policy* 28:295-320 (with Ange-Marie Hancock**).
2003. **“Explaining Corporate Litigation Activity in an Integrated Framework of Interest Mobilization.”** *Business & Politics* 5:65-94.
2001. **“The Incidence and Structure of Conflict on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.”** *Law & Policy* 23:69-93.
1997. **“Specialized Courts of Appeals’ Review of Bureaucratic Actions and the Politics of Protectionism.”** *Political Research Quarterly* 50:851-878.
1995. **“Specialized Courts, Bureaucratic Agencies, and the Politics of U.S. Trade Policy.”** *American Journal of Political Science*, 39:529-557 (with Wendy L. Hansen and Renee J. Johnson**).

OTHER PROFESSIONAL OUTLETS

- 2018 **“A Tribute to Professor Jeffrey A. Segal: The 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award Winner.”** *Law and Courts Newsletter* 28:1-5 (with Valerie Hoekstra and Robert M. Howard)
2008. **“Federalism”** In *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, 2nd Edition. William Darity General Editor. Gale-Cengage Publications.
2008. **“Judicial Review”** In *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, 2nd Edition. William Darity, General Editor. Gale-Cengage Publications.

REPORTS

2013. **Committee of Visitors Report**, Division of Social and Economic Sciences, National Science Foundation (with Steven Ruggles, Bernice Pescosolido and other COV Participants)
2001. **Race and the Death Penalty in North Carolina: An Empirical Analysis (1993-1997)**, with John Charles Boger. Funded by the Common-Sense Foundation and the North Carolina Council of Churches. September 16, 2001

BOOK REVIEWS

2002. **Judicial Politics in the D.C. Circuit Court** by Christopher P. Banks, (The Johns Hopkins University Press) *American Political Science Review* 96:202-203

2001. **Continuity and Change on the United States Courts of Appeals** by Donald R. Songer, Reginald S. Sheehan, and Susan B. Haire (University of Michigan Press, 1999). *Journal of Politics* 64:294-297
1996. "The Supreme Court's Institutional Stature and Role in Public Policymaking" *Policy Studies Journal* 24:679-685.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

BOOKS

- *The Dynamic Judicial Process*. Oxford University Press. Under contract and in progress.
- *A Deadly Symbol: Race and Capital Punishment in North Carolina*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press (with Frank Baumgartner and Seth Kotch). Under contract and in progress

ARTICLES

- "The Structure of U.S. Supreme Court Litigation Over Time." (with Emily Wager** and Katherine Wheeler*).
- "Judging Black Judges in Racialized Conflict" (with Taneisha Means, Vassar College).
- "Prosecutorial Discretion, Racial Threat, and the Death Penalty in Singapore."
- "The Informational Role of Floor Speeches in Senate Confirmation of U.S. Supreme Court Nominees" (with Ryan Krog,** George Washington University)
- "The Effect of Subject-Matter Expertise in the United States Supreme Court" (with Ryan Williams and Christopher Wall).
- "The Etiology of Government Error in Wrongful Convictions" (with Arielle Reid,* Columbia University).

Manuscript Referee: *American Political Science Review; University of Chicago Press; Princeton University Press; Oxford University Press, National Science Foundation; American Journal of Political Science; Journal of Politics; Law & Policy; Public Choice; Political Research Quarterly; Law & Society Review; Addison Wesley Longman Press; McGraw Hill Press; Social Science Quarterly; SUNY Press; University of South Carolina Press; Public Administration Review; Criminology & Public Policy; American Politics Research; Policy Studies Review; Homicide Studies: An Interdisciplinary & International Journal; Justice System Journal; Regulation & Governance; Journal of Law and Courts; Laws; Law and Social Inquiry; Journal of Political Science and Public Affairs; Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies; Criminal Justice & Behavior; Routledge Press; Punishment and Society; Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management; NYU Press.*

Editorial Board Memberships

Law & Society Review, 2007-2010

Justice System Journal, 2011-2018

Journal of Political Science and Public Affairs, 2013—2016

PRESENTATIONS AT CONFERENCES, UNIVERSITIES, AND ORGANIZATIONS

2020 “Roundtable Discussion on the Status of African Americans in Political Science” American Political Science Association Annual Meeting (Virtual).

2019 “Black Political Power and Drug Arrests” Presented at the annual meetings of the American Political Science Association, Washington D.C. Sept 1-3.

2018. “Prosecutorial Discretion, Racial Threat, and the Death Penalty in Singapore.” Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences annual meeting. New Orleans, LA. Feb 13-17 (with Walker Vincoli and Valerie Wright).

2017. “Strategic Diversion: Economic Conditions, Gubernatorial Politics, and the Risk of Execution in the American States.” Presented at the Southern Political Science Association, Puerto Rico.

2016. “Racial Gradient Thesis and Public Attitudes Toward Salient Criminological Events.” Presented at the 72nd Annual Meeting of the American Society of Criminology, New Orleans, November 16-19

2016. “Race, Gender, and Moral Conviction in Death Sentencing” Invited presentation at Washington and Lee University School of Law, Symposium on the Death Penalty, February 5-7.

2015 “Decline of the Death Penalty in North Carolina” Invited presentation, “Conversations in Human Rights Series,” Kenan Center for Ethics, Duke University, April 20, 2015

2015. “Prosecutorial Discretion, Racial Threat, and the Death Penalty in Singapore.” Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago IL, April 17-19 (with Walker Vincoli, UC-San Diego).

2015. “The Structure of U.S. Supreme Court Litigation.” Paper presented at the Southern Political Science Association Meeting, New Orleans, LA. January 15-16 (with Katherine Wheeler).

2014. “The Hierarchy of Victims in Death Penalty Processing.” Presented at the National Conference of Black Political Scientists, Wilmington DE, March 13-15 (with Frank Baumgartner)

2013. “Political Rhetoric and Mass Incarceration in the United States,” Prepared for Presentation at the American Society of Criminology Meetings, Atlanta GA: November 20-23

2013. Review Innovations and Program Management in the Social and Economic Sciences, *National Science Foundation*, Arlington VA, June 5, 2013

2013. "The 'Feminine Mystique' Revisited: Untangling the Intergeneration Effects of the Women's Movement on Female Judges in the U.S. Courts of Appeals." Presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association. April 13-14, Chicago IL (with Stephanie Shenigo*).
2012. "The Strategic Timing of Discretionary Position-Taking in the U.S. Senate during Supreme Court Confirmations." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago IL, April 11-15 (with Ryan Krog**).
2012. "The Etiology of Government Error in Wrongful Convictions" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago IL April 11-15 (with Arielle Reid*).
2011. "The Terrain of Race and the Death Penalty in North Carolina in the 1990s." Michigan State University School of Law, Symposium on "Moving Beyond Racial Blindsight?"
2011. "The Influence of Social Science Evidence after the North Carolina Racial Justice Act." April 7-8, East Lansing, MI.
2011. "The Effect of Subject-Matter Expertise in the United States Supreme Court." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago IL., April 1-3. (With Christopher M. Wall*, University of Chicago)
2011. "The Decline of the Death Penalty in North Carolina" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Criminological Society, San Francisco, CA. (With Frank Baumgartner)
2010. "The Politics of Punishment: Evaluating Political, Instrumental, and Rhetorical Explanations of Mass Incarceration." A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago IL., April 22-25 (with K. Elizabeth Coggins**).
2009. "Do Statutory Mitigating Circumstances Really Mitigate Death Sentences?" A paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Law and Society Association, Denver CO. May 29-30.
2009. "The Evolution of Oral Argument in the United States Supreme Court." Presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago April 2-5.
2009. "Race, Politics, and the Death Penalty in North Carolina." Presented at the annual meeting of the North Carolina Political Science Association, Greensboro NC February 17. (with Jack Boger)
- 2006-2007 Presentations on behalf of the *National Science Foundation* on proposal development, review process, and funding at: Vanderbilt University, Stony Brook

University, University of Maryland at College Park, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, University of Pennsylvania at Erie; UNC-Chapel Hill; Howard University; and various professional conferences.

2006. "Economic Conditions, Gubernatorial Politics, and the Risk of Execution in the American States." Presented at the annual meetings of the Law and Society Association, Baltimore, MD. July 6-9.
2005. "Economic Conditions and Death Penalty Outcomes." Presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, April 7-9, Chicago IL
2005. "Race and the Death Penalty in North Carolina." Presented at the National Science Foundation, Arlington, VA. March 28, 2005.
2005. "Race, Political Culture, and the Duration of Death Row Inmates in the United States." Presented at the Southern Political Science Association, New Orleans, LA May 6-8 (with Marco Steenbergen).
2004. "Explaining Corporate Litigation Activity." Presented at the Southern Political Science Association, New Orleans, LA. January 7-9, 2004.
2003. "Electoral Proximity and Prosecutorial Decision to Seek the Death Penalty." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, PA August 31, 2003.
2002. "Race and the Process of Capital Punishment in the New South." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston MA. August 30 September 1 (with John Charles Boger).
2001. "Race, Institutional Rules, and the Politics of Capital Punishment in the New South: Evidence from the "new" North Carolina." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association. San Francisco, C.A. August 30-September 2. (with John Charles Boger).
2001. "The Death Penalty in North Carolina" Presented at the annual meeting of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Airlie Virginia, July 20-21.
2001. "Litigating Death: An Empirical Analysis of Race and the Death Penalty in North Carolina." Presented at the Southeast Regional Civil Rights Conference. Sheraton Hotel, Chapel Hill, N.C. April 23-27.
2000. "Determinants of Corporate Litigation Activity" Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 1-3, 2000 Washington D.C.
2000. "Supreme Court Decision Making, Subissue Salience, and the Attitudinal Model." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association. April 27

-30 Chicago IL.

1999. "Issue Evolution in American Trade Policy." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Public Choice Society. New Orleans, LA, April 12-14 (with William R. Keech).
1998. "Differential Effects of the Attitudinal Model on Subissues Before the Supreme Court." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, MA. September 3-6 (with Ange-Marie Hancock**).
1998. "The Switch in Political Party Alignment in International Trade Politics" Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, MA. September 3-6 (with William R. Keech).
1997. "An Exploration of Judicial Conflict in the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals." Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago IL, April 9-12.
1996. "Specialized Court of Appeals Review of Bureaucratic Actions and the Politics of Protectionism." Presented at the Conference on the Scientific Study of Judicial Politics. Washington University - St. Louis, November 15-16.
1995. "Taming the Shrewd through Judgment: Judicial Influence Over U.S. Trade Policy Implementation" Presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago. *This paper received an Honorary Mention from the law and courts section of APSA as the best paper presented in 1995 in law and courts.* Paper eventually published in the *Political Research Quarterly*.
1995. "Judicial Specialization and Administrative Agencies: The U.S. Court of International Trade" Presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, IL.
1995. "Judicial Specialization and Deference to Administrative Agencies" Presented in the annual meeting of the New York State Political Science Association, New York City.
1993. "How The Supreme Court Decided Civil Rights Cases: 1954-1989" Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington D.C.
1993. "The Role of the Courts in U.S. Trade Policy-Making." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington D.C. September 2-5 (with Renee J. Johnson** and Wendy L. Hansen).
1993. "The Reciprocal Effects of Political Intolerance and Education." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Northeastern Political Science Association, Newark, NJ.

Related Activities

Invited Symposium Participant: Beyond Racial Blindsight? The Influence of Social Science Evidence After the North Carolina Racial Justice Act., *Michigan State Law School, East Lansing, MI, April 7-9th. 2011.*

Consultant: Defense Expert in the Death Penalty Case of North Carolina v. Keith Kidwell, 2010.

Invited Panelist: Race, Wrongful Convictions and Redemption” University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. April 7, 2010.

Invited Panelist: “Race and the Application of the Death Penalty in North Carolina” North Carolina Central University School of Law, November 16, 2001.

Participant, 1997. 2nd Annual Conference on the Scientific Study of Judicial Politics, Emory University, Atlanta, GA. November 14-16.

Discussant, 1993. "State of the State Bureaucracy" Panel. Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL.

INSTITUTION-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Political Science Profession

- Selection Committee, Law & Courts Section of American Political Science Association, 2020.
- Chair of Selection Committee, C. Neal Tate Award for Best Paper presented in the Southern Political Science Association Meetings, 2018
- Section Chair, Institutions and Public Policy, National Conference of Black Political Scientists, 2014
- Co-Chair, Committee of Visitors, Division of Behavioral and Economic Sciences, *National Science Foundation*, May 5-8, 2013
- Member, Selection Committee for Best Poster presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Conference, Chicago, 2012
- Treasurer, Law and Courts: An Organized Section of American Political Science Association
- Member, Committee on the Status of African Americans in the South of the Southern Political Science Association 2009-2010
- Member, Executive Council, *Law & Society Association* 2009
- Member, Selection Committee, *Phi Kappa Alpha Best Paper Award in Political Science*, 2008 (American Political Science Association)
- Member, Selection Committee, *Corwin Award for Best Dissertation in Judicial Politics* (2007) Law and Courts Section of the American Political Science Association
- Member, Executive Council, Southern Political Science Association, 2004
- Law and Courts Section Chair, Midwest Political Science Association Meeting, 2003
- Selection Committee, McGraw Hill Award for best political science journal article in law and courts, 2001
- Selection Committee, Law and Courts Section of APSA, 1997
- Selection Committee, “Best Graduate Student Paper” Law and Courts Section of APSA, 1996

Criminology

- Program Chair, Courts and Juries, American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, 2016
- Selection Committee, “Best Paper Published in a Criminology Journal in 2012” (2014)

UNC- Chapel Hill

- Member, Dean’s Faculty Diversity Advisory Committee, 2021-2023
- Elected member, Faculty Athletics Committee, 2021-2024
- Chair, Special Talent Advisory Committee for Undergraduate Admissions, 2021--
- Member, Special-Talent Advisory Committee for Undergraduate Admissions, Fall 2017--2021.
- Internal Reviewer, Andrew Carnegie Fellows Program, November 12, 2015-2017
- Selection Committee, Director of Student Conduct, 2014 (appointed by Dean of Students)
- Selection Committee, Assistant Director of Student Conduct, 2014
- Board Chair, Institute of African American Research, July 2013- July 2015 (appointed by University Provost)
- UNC Faculty Honors Advisory Committee, 2012-2015 (appointed by Chair of the Faculty)
- Faculty representative, Academic Support Program for Student Athletes, 2012-2015 (appointed by Dean of Academic Affairs)
- Selection Committee, Director of Athletic Support Program for Student Athletes (2013)

UNC Department of Political Science

- Graduate Admissions Committee, 2018---
- Director of Political Science Subject Pool, 2008---2016
- Undergraduate Studies Committee 1996-2010
- Diversity/EEO Officer, various years
- Recruitment Committees, various subfields, and various years
- Political Science Faculty Liaison to the UNC Honor Court (2011---2015; 2018---present)
- Service on Numerous Masters and Ph.D. Dissertation Committees
- Committee Service on over 30 Honors Theses completed. Directed at least 15.

COURSES TAUGHT

The United States Supreme Court (undergraduate)
Judicial Process (graduate and undergraduate)
Junior/Senior Seminar on Politics and Law (undergraduate)
American Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (undergraduate)
Policy Analysis and Evaluation (graduate, public administration program)
Political Economy of U.S. Trade Policy (undergraduate)
Urban Politics (graduate and undergraduate)
Politics of Crime and Justice (graduate)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Judicial politics and decision making (all levels)
Race and Punishment politics
Public policy and bureaucratic politics

Domestic politics of U.S. trade policy

RESEARCH GRANTS

- \$4000; College of Arts and Sciences, UNC-Chapel Hill (2019)
- \$75,000; North Carolina Council of Churches and Common-Sense Foundation. Awarded for death penalty research for which I was principal investigator (2000)
- \$4000; University of North Carolina Research Council (1998)
- \$3000; Center for the Study of the American South (2000)
- \$1,200; Junior Faculty Development Grant, UNC Research Council (2001)

ACADEMIC AWARDS/HONORS

- 2005: Commencement Speaker, Tompkins Cortland Community College, Dryden, NY
- 1995-1997: Thurgood Marshall Post-Doctoral Fellow, UNC Chapel Hill
- 1994-1995: Dissertation Research Fellowship, Stony Brook University
- 1993: Graduate student travel award for APSA Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.
- 1992-1993: Teaching and Research Fellowship, Stony Brook University
- 1989-1991: Burghardt Turner Graduate Fellowship, Stony Brook University
- 1988-1989: Empire State Scholarship for minority students, SUNY, College at Cortland
- 1988-1989: Lifetime Member, Omicron Delta Epsilon, national undergraduate honor society in economics

List of References

Frank R. Baumgartner

Richard J. Richardson Distinguished Professor of Political Science
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Navin A. Bapat

Dowd Professor in the Study of Peace and War
Chair, Curriculum in Peace, War, and Defense
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
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Mark J.C. Crescenzi

Nancy Hanes White Professor and Chair
Department of Political Science
University of North Carolina

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