

# MAREN JULIA MAINX

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School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs | University of Central Florida

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## EDUCATION

### University of Central Florida

#### Ph.D., International Relations and National Security Studies

- Research Interests: Political Psychology, Public Opinion, Military Regimes, Conflict & Human Rights, Transnational Repression, Latino/Immigration Politics
- Dissertation: *“Public Perception of Law Enforcement: How Stress, Trauma, and Cognition Impact Citizens’ Trust Behaviors Toward Police”*

Orlando, FL

Expected May 2026

### Hochschule Fulda University of Applied Sciences

#### M.A., Intercultural Communication and European Studies

Fulda, Germany

December 2018

Thesis: *“Climate change and development policy: A case study on German-Costa Rican cooperation.”*

### Technische Hochschule Köln, Germany

#### B.A., Multilingual Communication (English and Spanish)

Cologne, Germany

July 2016

Thesis: *“Intercultural Competency in Business Communication – Comparison of Research Positions and their Representation in Practical Guides”*

## RESEARCH AWARDS & GRANTS

Doctoral Research Support Award, College of Sciences, University of Central Florida (\$2,400)	2025
Student Scholar Symposium Winner, College of Graduate Studies, University of Central Florida (\$300)	2025
Doctoral Research Award, School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs, University of Central Florida (\$2,000)	2024
Doctoral Grant for Summer PhD Course: Effects of Lawfare – Courts and law as battlegrounds for social change, University of Bergen (NOK 40,000)	2022
Research Grant for Field Work in Costa Rica from the University of Applied Sciences Fulda, Fulda, Germany (€1,800)	2018

## RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS, FELLOWSHIPS & STIPENDS

Graduate Assistantship, College of Graduate Studies, University of Central Florida (\$20,000 yearly) (funded by the National Science Foundation in 2022 and 2025)	2021-Present
Graduate Research Assistantship, Hamilton College, NY (\$6,400) (funded by the National Science Foundation in 2024 and 2025)	2024-2025
UCF Graduate Presentation Fellowship, School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs, University of Central Florida (\$2,500 total)	2024-2025
UCF Graduate Conference Fellowship, College of Sciences & School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs, University of Central Florida (\$2,500 total)	2023-2025
Graduate Dean’s Fellowship, College of Graduate Studies, University of Central Florida (\$5,000)	2022
Doctoral Scholarship, Fulda Graduate Centre of Social Sciences, University of Applied Sciences Fulda (€14,400)	2020-2021

## **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

<b>Graduate Research Assistant</b>	08/2025–present
School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs University of Central Florida <i>Project on group cognition, stress arousal, and environmental feedbacks in decision-making and adaptation under uncertainty (PIs: Drs. Jacopo Baggio &amp; Kelsey Larsen), funded by the National Science Foundation, Award #2343728</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Recruited participants and supervised experimental sessions using skin conductance (GSR) monitoring devices</li><li>▪ Conducted literature reviews on group cognition, stress, and decision-making under uncertainty</li></ul>	
<b>Graduate Research Assistant/ Lab Manager</b>	01/2024–05/2025
Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center Hamilton College, NY <i>Policing Lab under the supervision of Dr. Erica De Bruin (PI); project on global patterns of police militarization, funded by the National Science Foundation, Award #2241490</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Compiled data for the first Global Police Militarization Dataset (GPMD)</li><li>▪ Mentored undergraduate research assistants and coordinated lab activities</li></ul>	
<b>Graduate Research Assistant</b>	01–08/2023
School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs University of Central Florida <i>Projects on political communication, foreign influence, and digital media interventions under the supervision of Dr. Kevin Aslett</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Coded and analyzed Twitter data on election misinformation, foreign influence (sports-washing), and digital media literacy campaigns in Africa</li><li>▪ Supervised undergraduate coders, cleaned datasets, and ran Intent-to-Treat (ITT) and Complier Average Causal Effect (CACE) models in R and Python</li></ul>	
<b>Graduate Research Assistant</b>	01–08/2022
School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs University of Central Florida <i>Project on political behavior and opinions of Latin Americans (PIs: Drs. Kenicia Wright &amp; Güneş Murat Tezcür), funded by the National Science Foundation, Award #2127193</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Conducted and translated semi-structured and focus-group interviews on Latin American political behavior and linked fate</li><li>▪ Developed national survey using Qualtrics and managed data transcription and analysis using Trint</li></ul>	
<b>Graduate Research Assistant</b>	05/2017–02/2018
Department of Social and Cultural Sciences University of Applied Sciences Fulda <i>Project in cultural studies under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Kristen Nazarkiewicz</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Conducted qualitative interviews with international students for an academic research project</li><li>▪ Translated interview materials and project documents into English</li></ul>	

### **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

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- Instructor, *International Relations Theory & Practice* (INR 2002), University of Central Florida (Summer 2025) Received 4.8 /5.0 average rating for teaching effectiveness from student evaluations.
- Instructor, *Scope and Methods of Political Science* (POS 3703), University of Central Florida (Spring 2025) Received 4.4 /5.0 average rating for teaching effectiveness from student evaluations.
- Instructor, *Human Rights Policy* (INR 4075), University of Central Florida (Fall 2024) Received 4.8 /5.0 average rating for teaching effectiveness from student evaluations.
- Instructor, *International Relations Theory & Practice* (INR 2002), University of Central Florida (Summer 2024) Received 4.8 /5.0 average rating for teaching effectiveness from student evaluations.
- Instructor, *Scope and Methods of Political Science* (POS 3703), University of Central Florida (Spring 2024) Received 4.9 /5.0 average rating for teaching effectiveness from student evaluations.
- Instructor, *Human Rights Policy* (INR 4075), University of Central Florida (Fall 2023) Received 4.8 /5.0 average rating for teaching effectiveness from student evaluations.
- Graduate Teaching Assistant, *Democracy, Capitalism, and the Individual* (POT 4305) and *Global Perspectives* (INR 4008), University of Central Florida (Fall 2022)
- Graduate Teaching Assistant, *Politics of the European Union* (CPO 4101) and *Human Rights Policy* (INR 4075), University of Central Florida (Fall 2021)
- Instructor, *Introduction to STATA*, Ph.D. Summer Methodology Workshop (Summer 2023, 2024, 2025), School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs, University of Central Florida
- Instructor, *German Development Policy in Times of Climate Change*, University of Applied Sciences Fulda (Winter 2020/21)
- Instructor, *German* (CEFR levels A1, A2, and C1), Centro Goethe Costa Rica (09-12/2019)

### **PUBLICATIONS**

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- Wright, K., Tezcür, G. M., **Mainx, M. J.**, & Tafoya, J. (2025). "They are hiding the truth and plotting: Conspiracy beliefs among Latinos." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics*.

### **RESEARCH UNDER REVIEW**

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- **Mainx, M. J.** "Democratic backsliding, corruption, and militarization in Latin America: New ways to overcome the moral hazard problem?" *Armed Forces & Society*.
- **Mainx, M. J.** "Climate change and development policy: A case study on German-Costa Rican cooperation."

### **WORKS IN PROGRESS**

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- Mirilovic, N., **Mainx, M. J.**, & Hassaniyan, A. (2025). "The liberal international order and violent transnational repression." Article manuscript in progress.
- **Mainx, M. J.** (2026). "Trust in law enforcement in Latin America: The importance of policing strategy and degree of militarization." Article manuscript in progress.
- Mirilovic, N., & **Mainx, M. J.** (2026). "Transnational repression during Operation Condor: Gender-specific differences between Uruguayans." Article manuscript in progress.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

- “Legacies of Insecurity: How Militarized Policing Shapes Trust in the Americas” at Peace Science Society International (PSSI), 59<sup>th</sup> North American Annual Meeting, Orlando, Florida, USA, November 2025.
- “How Stress and Trauma Affect Public Perception of Police” at American Political Science Association (APSA), APSA Annual Meeting & Exhibition, Vancouver, Canada, September 2025.
- “Climate Change and its Effect on Development Policy: A Case Study on German-Costa Rican Cooperation” at Latin American Studies Association (LASA), Poner el cuerpo en Latinx América, San Francisco, USA, May 2025.
- “Public Perception of Police. How Legacies of Stress and Trauma Impact Policing Strategies’ Success in Central America” at Southern Political Science Association (SPSA), 96<sup>th</sup> Annual SPSA Conference, San Juan, Puerto Rico, January 2025.
- “The Liberal International Order and Violent Transnational Repression” at International Studies Association (ISA), 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, San Francisco, USA, April 2024.
- “Democratic Backsliding and Militarization in Central America: Overcoming the Moral Hazard Problem at inaugural Central American Politics Consortium” (CAPC) Workshop, Tulane University, New Orleans, USA, January 2024.
- “The Government is Hiding the Truth and Plotting: Explaining Latinx Belief in Conspiracy Theories” at Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA), 80<sup>th</sup> Annual MPSA Conference, Chicago, USA, April 2023.
- “Public Trust in Law Enforcement in Latin America at Southern Political Science Association” at Southern Political Science Association (SPSA), 94<sup>th</sup> Annual SPSA Conference, St. Petersburg, USA, January 2023.
- “Rethinking Law & Democracy Education: Student-Led Learning at Bergen Exchanges on Law & Social Transformation” (BeEx2022), Centre on Law and Social Transformation, Chr. Michelsen Institute and University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway, August 2022.

## **INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND STUDY**

- M.A. fieldwork in Costa Rica (5 weeks; April through May 2018)
- Research trip to Bogotá and Medellín, Colombia to present M.A. thesis at Institución Universitaria Politécnico Grancolombiano, Universidad Central, Universidad Militar (Bogotá), and Institución Universitaria Politécnico Grancolombiano (Medellín) (February through March 2020)
- Study at Universidad Pontificia de Comillas, Madrid, Spain (August through December 2016)
- Study at Universidad de Salamanca, Salamanca, Spain (January through May 2013)

## **SPECIAL COURSE WORK**

<b>Effects of Lawfare – Courts and law as battlegrounds for social change</b> Summer PhD Course (AORG908), Department of Administration & Organization Theory, LawTransform / Research Group on Law, Politics & Welfare Track on “Democracy & Autocratization”, University of Bergen, Norway	08/2022
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## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

<b>Culture and Project Manager</b> Centro Goethe Costa Rica, San José, Costa Rica	03-12/2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Managed a German–Costa Rican cultural platform in collaboration with the German Embassy and Humboldt School, San José</li><li>▪ Directed a theater group and coordinated a book club</li><li>▪ Taught German language courses at CEFR levels A1a, A1c, A2c, and C1c</li></ul>	

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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

<b>Intern</b>	08-11/2018
Centro Goethe Costa Rica, San José, Costa Rica	
<b>Program Assistant</b>	10/2012-08/2016
Academy for International Education (AIB), Bonn, Germany	
▪ Instructor, German language tutoring groups	
▪ Project Coordinator, film casting and production projects (Germany and Spain)	
▪ Conducted and translated interviews in German, English, and Spanish	
<b>Intern</b>	02-04/2015
Texas A&M University in College Station, TX, USA	

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## SERVICES AND AFFILIATIONS

- Reviewer, *Political Research Quarterly*
- Affiliate, Central American Politics Consortium (CAPC), Tulane University, New Orleans, USA (2024-present)
- Member, American Political Studies Association (APSA), Latin American Studies Association (LASA), International Studies Association (ISA), Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA), Southern Political Science Association (SPSA)
- Peer-Mentor for Security Studies Ph.D. program, School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs, University of Central Florida (2025-present)
- Student Liaison for Security Studies Ph.D. program, School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs, University of Central Florida (2024-2025)
- Elected Member, Student Parliament of Hochschule Fulda University of Applied Sciences, Fulda, Germany (2017-2018)
- Member, QSL-Commission (Quality, Study and Teaching), Hochschule Fulda University of Applied Sciences, Fulda, Germany (2017-2018)
- Member, Welcome In Wohnzimmer, refugee initiative, Fulda, Germany (2017)
- Foreign Student Mentor, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Bonn, Germany (2012-2013); Technische Hochschule Köln, Cologne, Germany (2015-2016)
- Ambassador & Regional Head of Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Open Door International, Cologne, Germany (2020-2012)

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## SKILLS

- Proficient in statistical analysis and software (R, Stata, and Qualtrics)
- Basic use of Python and Excel
- Native German, proficient in English and Spanish (CEFR C2), intermediate French (CEFR B1/B2), basic Italian (CEFR A2)

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## REFERENCES

**Kelsey Larsen**, Assistant Professor, MA Coordinator & ICCAE Associate Director  
School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs, University of Central Florida  
Email: [kelsey.larsen@ucf.edu](mailto:kelsey.larsen@ucf.edu)  
Relationship: Ph.D. advisor (co-chair)

**Bruce Wilson**, School Director & Professor  
School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs, University of Central Florida  
Email: [bruce.wilson@ucf.edu](mailto:bruce.wilson@ucf.edu)

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**REFERENCES**

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Relationship: Ph.D. advisor (co-chair)

**Jacopo Baggio**, Associate Professor & Graduate Coordinator  
School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs, University of Central Florida  
Email: [jacopo.baggio@ucf.edu](mailto:jacopo.baggio@ucf.edu)  
Relationship: Research collaboration

**Erica De Bruin**, Associate Professor of Government  
Government Department, Hamilton College  
Email: [edebruin@hamilton.edu](mailto:edebruin@hamilton.edu)  
Relationship: Research collaboration

**Nikola Mirilovic**, Associate Professor  
School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs, University of Central Florida  
Email: [nikola.mirilovic@ucf.edu](mailto:nikola.mirilovic@ucf.edu)  
Relationship: Research collaboration