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

University of Central Florida	Orlando, FL
Ph.D., Security Studies	August 2026
- Research Interests: Comparative Politics; Latin American Politics; Civil–Military and Civil–Police Relations; Political Trust and Public Opinion; Security, Human Rights, and Governance; Democratic Institutions and Backsliding; Policing and Criminal Justice - Dissertation: “<i>Appraising the Uniform: Stress, Predisposition, and Trust in Police among Latin American and U.S. Latino Populations</i>” https://stars.library.ucf.edu/gradstudies_etd_2026/307	
Hochschule Fulda University of Applied Sciences	Fulda, Germany
M.A., Intercultural Communication and European Studies	December 2018
Thesis: “ <i>Climate change and development policy: A case study on German-Costa Rican cooperation.</i> ”	
Technische Hochschule Köln, Germany	Cologne, Germany
B.A., Multilingual Communication (English and Spanish)	July 2016
Thesis: “ <i>Intercultural Competency in Business Communication – Comparison of Research Positions and their Representation in Practical Guides</i> ”	

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Postdoctoral Researcher	Orlando, FL
School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs	September 2026
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 & Kelsey Larsen), funded by the National Science Foundation, Award #2343728</i>	
- Lead coding of group chat data for strategy presence, strategy convergence, and language-based arousal in behavioral experiments - Analyze physiological arousal (electrodermal activity) data from wearable sensors in relation to group decision quality	

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)	2021-2026
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

Graduate Research Assistant 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 & Kelsey Larsen), funded by the National Science Foundation, Award #2343728</i> - Recruited participants and supervised experimental sessions using skin conductance (GSR) monitoring devices - Conducted literature reviews on group cognition, stress, and decision-making under uncertainty	08/2025–08/2026
Graduate Research Assistant/ Lab Manager 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> - Compiled data for the first Global Police Militarization Dataset (GPMD) - Mentored undergraduate research assistants and coordinated lab activities	01/2024–05/2025
Graduate Research Assistant 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> - Coded and analyzed Twitter data on election misinformation, foreign influence (sports-washing), and digital media literacy campaigns in Africa - Supervised undergraduate coders, cleaned datasets, and ran Intent-to-Treat (ITT) and Complier Average Causal Effect (CACE) models in R and Python	01–08/2023
Graduate Research Assistant 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 & Güneş Murat Tezcür), funded by the National Science Foundation, Award #2127193</i> Conducted and translated semi-structured and focus-group interviews on Latin American political behavior and linked fate	01–08/2022

- Developed national survey using Qualtrics and managed data transcription and analysis using Trint

Graduate Research Assistant

05/2017–02/2018

Department of Social and Cultural Sciences

University of Applied Sciences Fulda

Project in cultural studies under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Kristen Nazarkiewicz

- Conducted qualitative interviews with international students for an academic research project
- Translated interview materials and project documents into English

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- Instructor, *International Relations Theory & Practice* (INR 2002), University of Central Florida (Summer 2025; fully online); rated 4.6/5.0 on overall effectiveness of the instructor in student evaluations.
- Instructor, *Scope and Methods of Political Science* (POS 3703), University of Central Florida (Spring 2025); rated 4.6/5.0 on overall effectiveness of the instructor in student evaluations.
- Instructor, *Human Rights Policy* (INR 4075), University of Central Florida (Fall 2024); rated 4.8/5.0 on overall effectiveness of the instructor in student evaluations.
- Instructor, *International Relations Theory & Practice* (INR 2002), University of Central Florida (Summer 2024; fully online); rated 4.9/5.0 on overall effectiveness of the instructor in student evaluations.
- Instructor, *Scope and Methods of Political Science* (POS 3703), University of Central Florida (Spring 2024); rated 4.9/5.0 on overall effectiveness of the instructor in student evaluations.
- Instructor, *Human Rights Policy* (INR 4075), University of Central Florida (Fall 2023); rated 4.9/5.0 on overall effectiveness of the instructor in 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; fully online)
- Instructor, *German* (CEFR levels A1, A2, and C1), Centro Goethe Costa Rica (09-12/2019)

PUBLICATIONS

- 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*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/rep.2025.17>
- **Mainx, M. J.** (2026). "Democratic Backsliding and Militarization in Central America: Overcoming the Moral Hazard Problem". *Armed Forces & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X261432152>

RESEARCH UNDER REVIEW

- **Mainx, M. J.** "Climate change and development policy: A case study on German-Costa Rican cooperation."
- Mirilovic, N., **Mainx, M. J.**, & Hassaniyan, A. "The liberal international order and violent transnational repression."

WORKS IN PROGRESS

- **Mainx, M. J.** “Appraising the Uniform: Stress and the Trust Costs of Militarized Policing in Mexico and among U.S. Latinos.” Article manuscript in progress (from dissertation).
- **Mainx, M. J.** “Militarized Policing, Stress, and Trust in Police: Evidence from Nineteen Countries in the Americas, 2010–2023.” Article manuscript in progress (from dissertation).
- Mirilovic, N., & **Mainx, M. J.** “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), 59th 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), 96th Annual SPSA Conference, San Juan, Puerto Rico, January 2025.
- “The Liberal International Order and Violent Transnational Repression” at International Studies Association (ISA), 65th 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), 80th Annual MPSA Conference, Chicago, USA, April 2023.
- “Public Trust in Law Enforcement in Latin America” at Southern Political Science Association (SPSA), 94th 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 Gran Colombiano, Universidad Central, Universidad Militar (Bogotá), and Institución Universitaria Politécnico Gran Colombiano (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

Effects of Lawfare – Courts and law as battlegrounds for social change 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

Culture and Project Manager	03-12/2019
Centro Goethe Costa Rica, San José, Costa Rica	
▪ Managed a German–Costa Rican cultural platform in collaboration with the German Embassy and Humboldt School, San José	
▪ Directed a theater group and coordinated a book club	
▪ Taught German language courses at CEFR levels A1a, A1c, A2c, and C1c	
Intern	08-11/2018
Centro Goethe Costa Rica, San José, Costa Rica	
Program Assistant	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	
Intern	02–04/2015
Texas A&M University in College Station, TX, USA	

SERVICES AND AFFILIATIONS

- Reviewer, *Political Research Quarterly*
- Affiliate, Central American Politics Consortium (CAPC), Tulane University, New Orleans, USA (2024-present)
- Member, American Political Science 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 (2025-2026)
- 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 (2010-2012)

SKILLS

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

REFERENCES

Kelsey Larsen, Assistant Professor, MA Coordinator & ICCAE Associate Director
School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs, University of Central Florida

REFERENCES

Email: kelsey.larsen@ucf.edu

Relationship: Ph.D. advisor (chair)

Bruce Wilson, School Director & Professor

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

Email: bruce.wilson@ucf.edu

Relationship: Dissertation committee member

Jacopo Baggio, Associate Professor & Graduate Coordinator

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

Email: jacopo.baggio@ucf.edu

Relationship: Research collaboration

Erica De Bruin, Associate Professor of Government

Government Department, Hamilton College

Email: 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

Relationship: Research collaboration

William Moreto, Associate Professor

Criminal Justice Department, University of Central Florida

Email: william.moreto@ucf.edu

Relationship: Dissertation committee member