

# ROBERT TANNER BIVENS, PhD

## Curriculum Vitae

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Illinois College  
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### Professional Appointments

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#### Illinois College (Jacksonville, IL)

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science (2026 – Present)

#### Eastern Illinois University (Charleston, IL)

Instructor, Department of Political Science (2024 – 2026)

#### Northern Illinois University (DeKalb, IL)

Graduate Instructor, Department of Political Science (2021 – 2024)

### Education

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#### 2024. Ph.D., Northern Illinois University

Political Science | Fields: International Relations & Comparative Politics  
Committee: Aarie Glas (Supervisor), Ches Thurber, Colin Kuehl, & Cai Wilkinson

#### 2017. M.A., Ohio University

Political Science | Fields: International Relations & Comparative Politics

#### 2012. B.A., Ohio University

International Studies (European Studies Certificate)

### Research & Teaching Interests

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International organizations; comparative regional governance; norm theory; human rights; LGBTQ+ Rights; authoritarian governance; Sub-Saharan Africa; Southeast Asia; social IR theory, qualitative methods; interpretivist methods

### Publications

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#### Peer-Reviewed Articles (5)

2026. “Cultural Cohesion in Regional Organizations: Equatorial Guinea, the CPLP, and its Death Penalty Abolishment.” *African Affairs*. 00(00): 1-19.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adaf031>.

2026. “Resistance is Not Futile: Rethinking Ethnicity, Tactics, and Outcomes in Civil Conflict.” *Journal of Peace Research*. 63(1): 28-40. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopres/xjaf009>. With Ches Thurber

2025. “Responses May Vary: Online vs. In-Person Interviewing.” *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research*. 23(1): 16-23. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15495596>.

2024. ““This is Not the 90’s”: Myanmar and Change in ASEAN’s Normative Order.” *Pacific Affairs*. 97(4): 773-794. With Rithiya Serey and Aarie Glas.  
<https://doi.org/10.5509/2024974-art5>.

2024. “Progress & Skepticism: What Angola’s New Penal Code Means for its LGBTQIA+ Community.” *Africa Today*. 70(4): 25-46. <https://doi.org/10.2979/at.00011>.

### **Editor Reviewed Chapters (2)**

2026. “Norm Neglect and Divergence Between LGBTQ+ Laws and the Social Acceptance of LGBTQ+ Communities: An Analysis to the Case of the Angolan Penal Code.” In Adam David Dubin, Frida Lyonga, & Rui Garrido’s (eds.) *Queering African Laws: Identity, Inclusion, and Rights Protection for LGBTQ+ People Across Africa*. Palgrave McMillian. (FORTHCOMING)

2026. “Existing Between the Poles: Luso-African States and their Place (or Lack Thereof) in the Queer Cold Wars” In Tatiana Klepikova, Emil Edenborg, & Maryna Shevtsova’s (eds.) *Queer Cold Wars: Deconstructing Bipolar Visions of Gender and Sexuality*. (FORTHCOMING)

### **Commentaries, Review Essays, & Assorted Non-Peer Reviewed Writings (1)**

2024. “Reflections on the Importance of Conference Panels for Graduate Students.” *Political Science Educator*. 27(2): 32-36.

### **Current Projects**

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#### **Book Projects**

*We Were Behind on That: The Role of Status Management in Regional Organizations on LGBTQ+ Acceptance*  
(Project in Prospectus Stage)

*The Autocrat’s Playbook: How Authoritarians Leverage Human Rights to Maintain Power*  
(Project in Conceptual Stage)

#### **Working Papers**

“Status Management in Regional Organizations: Transnational LGBTQ+ Norm Diffusion, Angola, and the CPLP.”

- 2024 APSA Human Rights Section Best Paper Honorable Mention Award

“Proactive vs. Reactive Pinkwashing: Understanding LGBTQ+ Rights Adoption in Authoritarian Regimes.” With Anna Grzywacz and Petra Alderman

“Addressing Complexity: The Pitfalls of Generalized Analyses in the Study of International LGBTQIA+ Norms.” With Malte Breiding.

“Sacredness and Sexuality in Public Policy: The Influence of Constitutional Islamization on Gay Rights.” With Farzana Sharmin

“Democracy in Progress: The Evolution of Democratic Consolidation in the Gambia’s Post Jammeh Period.” With Andrew Mendy

### **Future Projects**

““Let them be Gay!”: A Comprehensive Exploration of Political Homophilia as a Tool in World Politics.”

“Clever Community Resistance Against Authoritarian Ambivalence: *Íris Angola* and Angola’s Contemporary LGBTQ+ History.”

“Stop Thinking Like Holmes & Start Thinking Like Poirot: Interpretive Process Tracing”

### **Teaching Experience**

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#### **Graduate Courses Taught**

*Eastern Illinois University* (6)

Proseminar in Comparative Politics (1); Proseminar in Comparative Public Policy (1); Proseminar in Political Modernization (1); Proseminar in Public Policy Research and Analysis (2); Proseminar in Research Methods (1)

#### **Graduate Level Independent Study Courses Taught**

*Eastern Illinois University* (4)

African Regional Governance & Mitigating Conflict (2); Quantitative Research Methods (1); Research Methods in Public Policy (1)

#### **Undergraduate Courses Taught**

*Illinois College* (3)

American Foreign Policy (1); Comparative Politics (1); World Politics (1)

*Eastern Illinois University* (7)

International LGBTQ+ Politics (1); Introduction to International Relations (2); Introduction to International Relations – Honors Course (2); Politics of Latin America & the Caribbean (1); Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa (1)

*Northern Illinois University* (3)

Introduction to International Relations (3)

#### **Teaching Internships Supervised**

Introduction to Politics (1) (Student Teacher: Andrew Mendy)

#### **Course Format**

In-Person: 13

Hybrid In-Person/Online: 2

Online Asynchronous: 4  
Independent Study: 4  
Teaching Internship Supervision: 1

### **Graduate Theses Supervised (2)**

Camden Webb (MA, 2026): “Domestic Social Structures and International Trade Balance.”  
Position post-Graduation: R.A. Supervisor at the University of Illinois

Andrew Mendy (MA, 2025): “The State of Democracy in Post-Jammeh Gambia: Status, Prospects, and Challenges, 2017-2025.”  
Position post-Graduation: Ph.D. Student at the University of Mississippi

### **Graduate Capstones Supervised (3)**

Taeveon Gaines (MA, 2026); Maria Gerengo (MA, 2025); Quran Green (MA, 2025)

### **Graduate Thesis & Capstone Committee Membership (7)**

Max Boton (MA, 2026); Abby Carpenter (MA, 2025); Matthew Connolly (MA, 2025); Hannah Djabaku (MA, 2024); Christine Eldrenkamp (MA, 2025); Beka Murphy (MA, 2026); Lois Tetteh (MA, 2025); Justin Ulofoshio (MA, 2026); Odessa Wilson (MA, 2025)

## **Governance Roles & Service Record**

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### **Governance Roles**

2024-26. Committee Member. Eastern Illinois University (EIU) Women and Gender Studies (WGS) Advisory Committee.

2024-26. Secretary, American Political Science Association (APSA) Human Rights Section

2024-25. Graduate Student Member-at-Large, International Studies Association (ISA) LGBTQA Governance & Leadership

2017-19. Graduate Student Member, Northern Political Science Association (NPSA) General Council

### **Service Positions**

2026. Committee Member Assistant Professor in Public Administration Search Committee. Eastern Illinois University.

2025-26. Peace Corps Prep Program Academic Advisor. College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (CLAS), Eastern Illinois University

2024-26, Allied Faculty Member. Women, Gender, & Sexuality (WGS) Minor, Eastern Illinois University.

2025-26. Dual Credit Coordinator. Department of Political Science, Eastern Illinois University.

2024-25. Coach. EIU Model U.N.

2024-25. Scholarship and Awards Committee. Department of Political Science, Eastern Illinois University.

2024-25. Peace Corps Prep Program Exploratory Consultant. College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (CLAS), Eastern Illinois University.

2024-25. Best Book Award Committee Member. American Political Science Association (APSA) Human Rights Section

### **Events Organized**

2026. Teaching Demonstration. “Social Constructions of Target Populations (SCTP): Theoretical and Practical Implications for Policy Design.” Speaker: Farzana Sharmin.

2025. EIU Model UN Special Event “President Trump’s First 100 Days.” Speakers: Sace Elder and Bonnie Laughlin-Schultz

2025. EIU IR Seminar Series. “Career Opportunities in the US State Department.” Speaker: Susan Falatko

2024. EIU IR Seminar Series. “Rethinking African Politics: Addressing Truths & Misconceptions in Contemporary IR.” Speaker: Robert Tanner Bivens

### **Awards & Funding**

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#### **Awards**

2025 Eastern Illinois University Unit B Research, Scholarship, Creativity, and Service Achievement Award (\$1500)

2024 American Political Science Association (APSA) Human Rights Section Best Paper Honorable Mention Award

2024 Outstanding Graduate Instructor Award (\$400)

2023 Maryanov Award for Scholarly Professional Excellence (\$250)

2017 Ohio University Political Science Awards Committee’s Most Outstanding Teacher’s Assistant Award (\$200)

#### **Funding**

2025 Eastern Illinois University Redden Grant (\$250)

2024 Eastern Illinois University DWF Collaborative Redesign Initiative Grant (\$3000)

2020-2021 Northern Illinois University Great Journey’s Fellowship (\$18,500)

## Conference Participation

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### Select Paper Presentations

2026. “Proactive vs. Reactive: Understanding Authoritarian Decision Making in LGBTQ+ Rights Adoption.” *International Studies Association Annual Conference*. Columbus, OH. Co-Authors: Anna Grzywacz & Petra Alderman.
2026. “Transnational LGBTQ+ Norm Diffusion & the CPLP.” *International Studies Association Annual Conference*. Columbus, OH.
2025. “Norm Neglect & Divergence Between LGBTQ+ Laws & the Social Acceptance of LGBTQ+ Communities. An analysis to the case of the Angolan Penal Code. .” *International Studies Association (ISA) Virtual Conference*.
2025. “Existing Between the Poles: Luso-African States and their Place (or Lack Thereof) in the Queer Cold Wars.” *International Studies Association (ISA) Virtual Conference*.
2025. “Comparative Analysis of Democracy in the ECOWAS Region: Case Study of the Gambia and Nigeria.” *International Studies Association (ISA) Virtual Conference*. Virtual. Co-Author: Andrew Mendy (Student Co-Author)
2025. “Sacredness and Sexuality in Public Policy: The Influence of Constitutional Islamization on LGBT Rights.” *Western Political Science Association (WPSA) Annual Meeting*. Seattle, WA. Co-Author: Farzana Sharmin.
2025. “Socialization and Economics: The CPLP Socialization of Equatorial Guinea and its Death Penalty Abolishment.” *International Studies Association Annual Conference*. Chicago, IL.
2025. “Progress & Skepticism: What Angola’s New Penal Code Means for its LGBTQIA+ Community.” *12<sup>th</sup> Iberian Congress of African Studies*. Barcelona, ESP.
2024. “Socialization and Economics: The CPLP Socialization of Equatorial Guinea and its Death Penalty Abolishment.” *ISA Midwest 2024*. St. Louis, MO.
2024. “Sacredness and Sexuality in Public Policy: The Influence of Constitutional Islamization on LGBT Rights.” *ISA Midwest 2024*. St. Louis, MO. Co-Author: Farzana Sharmin.
2024. “Productive Shared Identity: Angola, the CPLP, and LGBTQIA+ Acceptance.” *International Studies Association 2024 Annual Convention*. San Francisco, CA.
2024. “Sacredness and Sexuality in Public Policy: The Influence of Constitutional Islamization on LGBT Rights.” *81<sup>st</sup> Annual Midwest Political Science Association Conference*. Chicago, IL. Co-Authors: Aarie Glas & Rithiya Serey
2024. ““This is not the 90s”: Myanmar and Change in ASEAN’s Normative Order.” *81<sup>st</sup> Annual Midwest Political Science Association Conference*. Chicago, IL. Co-Author: Farzana Sharmin

2023. ““This is not the 90s”: Myanmar and Change in ASEAN’s Normative Order.” *ISA-GSCIS 2023 Conference*. Bangkok, Thailand. Co-Author: Rithiya Serey & Aarie Glas
2023. “Productive Shared Identity: Angola, the CPLP, and LGBTQIA+ Acceptance.” *Illinois Political Science Association (IPSA) Annual Conference*. Elmhurst, IL.
2023. ““This is not the 90s”: Myanmar and Change in ASEAN’s Normative Order.” *119<sup>th</sup> APSA Annual Meeting & Exhibition 2023*. Los Angeles, CA. Co-Authors Rithiya Serey & Aarie Glas
2023. “Sharing Norms: The Process of LGBTQIA+ Norm Diffusion through the Shared Identity of Lusophone States.” *119<sup>th</sup> APSA Annual Meeting & Exhibition 2023*. Los Angeles, CA. 2023
2023. “Sharing Norms: The Process of LGBTQIA+ Norm Diffusion through the Shared Identity of Lusophone States.” *ISA 2023 Virtual Conference*. Online.
2023. “Ethnic Coalitions and the Trajectories of Civil Resistance Campaigns.” *4 Corners Conflict Network 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference*. Moab, UT. Co-Author Ches Thurber
2023. “Ethnic Coalitions and the Trajectories of Civil Resistance Campaigns.”. *International Studies Association Annual Convention*. Montreal, Quebec, CAN. Co-Author Ches Thurber
2023. “Scoring Commitment: Differentiating Human Rights Agreements Using Item Response Theory” *International Studies Association Annual Convention*. Montreal, Quebec, CAN. Co-Author Colin Kuehl
2022. “Understanding Diplomatic Practice Influences on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Norm Diffusion Dynamics.” *International Studies Association (ISA) 2022 Annual Convention: A Wider Discipline for a Smaller World*. Nashville, TN.
2021. “Norm Transference: Understanding Patron-Client Norm Diffusion in the Emergence of International Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Human Rights.” *ISA-Midwest Annual Conferences 2021*. St. Louis, MO.
2021. “Ethnic Coalitions and the Trajectories of Civil Resistance Campaigns.” *American Political Science Association (APSA) 2021 Annual Meeting & Exhibition*. Seattle, WA. Co-Author Ches Thurber
2021. “Ethnic Coalitions and the Trajectories of Civil Resistance Campaigns.” *International Studies Association (ISA) 2021 Annual Convention: Globalization, Regionalism and Nationalism: Contending Forces in World Politics*. Las Vegas, NV. Co-Author Ches Thurber.
2021. “Norm Transference: Understanding Patron-Client Norm Diffusion in the Emergence of International Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Human Rights.” *2021*

*Western Political Science Association (WPSA) Annual Meeting: Populism, Nativism, Democratic Backsliding, and Pandemic Politics.* Seattle, WA.

2018. “Human Security: The Evolution of a Definition and the Role of the State.” *International Studies Association’s (ISA) International Security Studies Section (ISSS) Annual Conference.* West Lafayette, IN.

2017. “Human Security: The Evolution of a Definition and the Role of the State.” *49<sup>th</sup> Annual Northeastern Political Science Association (NPSA) Conference.* Philadelphia, PA.

### **Roundtables Convened**

2026. “LGBTQ+ Politics and Alternative Modes of Justice Seeking Amidst Growing Backlashes.” *International Studies Association Annual Conference.* Columbus, OH. Co-Creator: Aditya Anand Singh

2025. “Exploring Positionality and Reflexivity: Ethical Considerations and Dilemmas of LGBTQ+ Field Research in the Global South.” *International Studies Association Annual Convention.* Chicago, IL. Co-Creator: Aditya Anand Singh.

### **Roundtable Participation**

2026. “LGBTQ+ Politics and Alternative Modes of Justice Seeking Amidst Growing Backlashes.” *International Studies Association Annual Conference.* Columbus, OH.

2026. “Author Meets Critics: Toward a Paradigm Shift in International Relations Studies: (Re)Claiming World Peace.” *International Studies Association Annual Conference.* Columbus, OH.

2026. “What Might an Alternative IR Paradigm Look Like?” *International Studies Association Annual Conference.* Columbus, OH.

2025. “Exploring Positionality and Reflexivity: Ethical Considerations and Dilemmas of LGBTQ+ Field Research in the Global South.” *International Studies Association Annual Convention.* Chicago, IL.

### **Chair & Discussant Roles**

International Studies Association Annual Convention (2026, 2025, 2024) (3)

International Studies Association Midwest Conference (2024) (1)

International Studies Association (ISA) Virtual Conference (2025, 2023) (2)

### **Review Services**

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#### **Journals**

*Global Constitutionalism* (1); *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* (3); *Journal of Religious & Theological Information* (1); *South African Historical Journal* (1)

## Presses

De Gruyter Brill (1); Oxford University Press (1)

## Media Appearance & Recordings

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### Video Podcasts

[Global LGBTQ+ Politics in Authoritarian Times](#) (KU Leuven)

## Working Groups, Invited Talks, & Other Accomplishments

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### Invited Talks, Guest Lectures, & Panel Participation

2026. Paper Presenter. African Politics Conference Group (APCG) 2026 Online Colloquium. “Status Management in Regional Organizations: Transnational LGBTQ+ Norm Diffusion, Angola, & the CPLP.” Online.
2025. Discussant. African Politics Conference Group Early Career Scholars Workshop. Hybrid Online & University of Nairobi. Nairobi, KEN.
2025. Panel Member. “Global LGBTQ+ Politics in Authoritarian Times.” KU Leuven. Leuven, BEL.
2025. Panel Member. “Pizza & the Presidency.” Eastern Illinois University. Charleston, IL.
2025. Guest Speaker. “The Contemporary Politics of LGBTQ+ Rights: Both Domestically and Abroad.” Eastern Illinois University. Charleston, IL.
2024. Guest Speaker. “Rethinking African Politics: Addressing Truths and Misconceptions of African Politics in Contemporary International Relations.” Eastern Illinois University. Charleston, IL.
2024. Panel Member. “Pre-modern Depictions of Gender in Gaming.” Eastern Illinois University. Charleston, IL.
2022. Panel Member. “Lusophone Africa and LGBTQ+ Identity.” Global Politics Seminar. Northern Illinois University. Virtual.

### Working Group Participation

2026. “*Feeling*” Norms: Emotional Resonance and the Resilience of International Norms in Times of Crisis. American Political Science Association (APSA) Virtual Research Meeting Workshop. Virtual.
2025. Early Career Research (ECR) Workshop. DeKalb, IL
- 2025: *Shifting Values: LGBTQ+ Politics Beyond the European Union*. Conference & Working Group. KU Leuven. Leuven, BEL.

2025. *Queer Cold Wars: Deconstructing Bipolar Visions of Gender and Sexuality* Working Group. Virtual.

2023. Mid-Midwest African Politics Working Group. South Bend, IN.

2020. Western Political Science Association (WPSA) Virtual Community Peer-to-Peer Mentorship. Virtual.

## Research & Teaching Proficiencies

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**Software Proficiencies:** R Studio, Excel, SPSS, & NVIVO

**Education Software Proficiencies:** Blackboard Ultra, Slack, & Direct to Learn (D2L)

**Research Work Experience:** Library Archivist (2 years)

**Statistical Proficiencies:** Linear Regression, Logit & Probit Models, Time Series Analysis, & Item Response Theory

**Field Work Experience:** *Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (CPLP)* (Spring 2023)

**Language Proficiencies:** English (Native); Portuguese (Advanced); Spanish (Advanced)

## Professional Membership

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American Political Science Association (APSA)

International Studies Association (ISA)

## Professional References

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Aarie Glas, Associate Professor  
(Dissertation Chair)

Northern Illinois University  
Department of Political Science  
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Ches Thurber, Associate Professor

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Karen Swenson, Professor  
(Department Chair)

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Jeff Ashley, Professor

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Department of Political science  
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