

ROBERT TANNER BIVENS, PhD

Curriculum Vitae

Illinois College
Kirby Learning Center 206
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Professional Appointments

Illinois College (Jacksonville, IL)

Assistant Professor, Department of History, Philosophy, Political Science, & Religion
(HPPR) (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

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

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

Peer-Reviewed Articles (5)

2026. “Cultural Cohesion in Regional Organizations: Equatorial Guinea, the CPLP, and its Death Penalty Abolishment.” *African Affairs*. 124(497): 449-467.

<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

Book Projects

We Were Behind on That: The Role of Status Management in Regional Organizations on LGBTQ+ Acceptance

(Project is 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

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

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

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

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.” *12th 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.” *81st 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.” *81st 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.” *119th 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.” *119th 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 8th 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.” *49th 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

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

Video Podcasts

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

Newspaper

Eastern Daily News Article. *Eastern Daily News*. (FORTHCOMING)

Working Groups, Invited Talks, & Other Accomplishments

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

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

American Political Science Association (APSA)

International Studies Association (ISA)

Professional References

Aarie Glas, Associate Professor
(Dissertation Chair)
Northern Illinois University
Department of Political Science
415 Zulauf Hall
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Colin Kuehl, Assistant Professor
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