

Faculty Development Leave: Spring 2024

Dr. Jennifer Epley Sanders

Professor of Political Science

Department of Social Sciences

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

TAMU-CC Presentation

Thursday, September 26, 2024

11:00am-12:45pm

Library: Second Floor Atrium

Introduction: Dr. Jennifer Epley Sanders

DEGREES: PhD and MA from the University of Michigan and BA from Vassar College

POSITION: Professor in the Political Science Program of the Department of Social Sciences at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (2010-Present).

BACKGROUND: As a political scientist, I use a **mix of qualitative and quantitative methods** to study the meaning and **significance of “identity” in politics** in order to facilitate critical thinking, connections, and cross-cultural understanding in academia and diverse communities.

My research agenda focuses on the politics of identity, which is a **cross-cutting research area** that draws theories and methods from multiple subfields within political science such as Comparative Politics, International Relations, Political Theory, Religion and Politics, and Women, Gender, and Politics.

The politics of identity is an **area of specialization** that examines how “identity” is both an independent variable (i.e., cause) and a dependent variable (i.e., effect) in politics.

Research Agenda & Project

RESEARCH AGENDA:

My research agenda and publication track record shows a consistent and demonstrated commitment to clarifying the complex interrelationships between identity (specifically ethnicity, gender, and religion), political attitudes, and political behavior in different domestic and international contexts as well as in educational settings. I pay particular attention to subject areas that are understudied and/or could benefit from nuanced, diverse perspectives about “identity.” My research agenda and resulting publications aim to **deepen and advance existing knowledge about what constitutes “identity,” its influences in our lives, and why identity matters for us personally, professionally, and politically.**

FDL SPRING 2024 RESEARCH PROJECT:

- **Title:** “Discursive Realms: Convergence and Divergence for Religion and Politics in Contemporary Southeast Asia” (3 separate but related studies)
- **Objective:** Describe and analyze public opinion data from qualitative and quantitative sources about individuals within and between different religious groups in Southeast Asia to illustrate and differentiate between the discursive realms for “religious,” “political,” and “religiopolitical” spheres.

Processes & Products

Summary:

- **Study 1 and Study 2 (pivoted):** Two conference paper proposals submitted; full papers are works in progress; applied and accepted into “Book Incubator – Fall 2024” series
- **Study 3 (delayed):** One manuscript in final draft stage
- **Supplemental Study (fast-tracked):** One manuscript submitted and accepted for publication
- **Additional Studies (maintained):** Two ongoing studies in progress
- **Specialized Research Training (renewed and new):** Two research certificates earned, and fifteen professional development trainings completed

Progress & Contributions

Research progress varied depending on internal and external factors such as technology challenges, publication opportunities, book considerations, necessary professional certifications and trainings, co-author exit, international needs and tools, personal health issues, and family caregiving responsibilities.

Future contributions will consist of research outputs/products that help inform the scholarly discipline and any practitioners or communities in need of certain data and/or analyses.

Suggested Success Strategies for FDL

- 1. Confirm** research resources and protocols prior to making the proposal, especially regarding university technology and compliance matters (e.g., international work and IRB approvals).
- 2. Plan for contingencies** with particular emphasis on research agenda timelines in conjunction with life timelines, health and wellbeing (e.g., personal and/or caregiving), institutional transitions (e.g., personnel, units, policies, etc.), and research context challenges (e.g., international collaborations and data).