

Salil D. Benegal

Department of Political Science
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 [Personal website](#)
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Employment

Union College

Department of Political Science

Joseph B. Board Assistant Professor of Environmental Policy, 2023-present

Affiliated faculty: Environmental Science, Policy & Engineering Program (ESPE)

DePauw University

Department of Political Science

Associate Professor with tenure, 2022-2023

Assistant Professor, 2016-2022

Education

Ph.D.: Political Science, University of Connecticut, 2016

Graduate Certificate in Human Rights: University of Connecticut. 2012.

M.A.: Economics, University of Connecticut, 2010.

B.Sc.: Chemistry, Illinois Institute of Technology, 2008

Teaching and research

Environmental politics, climate policy, race and ethnicity politics, public opinion

Journal articles

19. Benegal, Salil D., and Ryan D. Williamson. 2026. "Climate Politics in the Primaries: How Primary Voters Shape Electoral Incentives and Climate Policy." *Political Research Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10659129261457363>
18. Furnas, Alexander, Tim LaPira, and Salil D. Benegal. 2026. "Political elites' partisan beliefs about climate change." *Environmental Research Communications*. <https://doi.org/10.1088/2515-7620/ae56d7>
17. Benegal, Salil D., Thomas J. Hayes, and Antonio Ugues Jr.. 2026. "The Politics of Enmity: Outgroup Hostility and Support for the Big Lie." *Political Research Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10659129261434612>

16. Benegal, Salil, and Mirya R. Holman. 2025. "Hostile sexism and overconfidence shape the public's views of climate change." *Climatic Change* 178, no. 8 (2025): 1-20.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-025-04000-8>
15. Hayes, Thomas and Salil Benegal. 2025. "Late Deciding Voters in US Presidential Elections." *American Politics Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532673X251343032>
14. Benegal, Salil and Lyle Scruggs. 2024. "Blame over blackouts: Correcting partisan misinformation regarding renewable energy in the United States." *Energy Research & Social Science* 113. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2024.103543>
13. Benegal, Salil and Jon Green. 2024. "Cost Sensitivity, Partisan Cues, and Support for the Green New Deal." *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences*.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13412-024-00897-2>
12. Motta, Matthew and Salil Benegal. 2023. "How Pandemic-Related Changes in Global Attitudes Toward the Scientific Community Shape "Post-Pandemic Environmental Opinion". *Public Understanding of Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09636625231167735>
11. Benegal, Salil, Flávio Azevedo, and Mirya Holman. 2022. "Race, ethnicity, and support for climate policy: Understanding group differences and mechanisms." *Environmental Research Letters*. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/aca0ac>
10. Benegal, Salil and Matthew Motta. 2022. "Overconfident, Resentful, and Misinformed: How Racial Animus Motivates Confidence in False Beliefs" *Social Science Quarterly*.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.13224>
9. Benegal, Salil and Mirya R. Holman. 2021. "Understanding the importance of sexism in shaping climate denial and policy opposition" *Climatic Change* 167: 2.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-021-03193-y>
8. Benegal, Salil and Mirya R. Holman. 2021. "Racial prejudice, education, and views of climate change" *Social Science Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.13004>
7. Bayulgen, Oksan and Salil Benegal. 2019. "Green Priorities: How Economic Frames Affect Perceptions of Renewable Energy." *Energy Research & Social Science* 47:1.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2018.08.017>
6. Benegal, Salil. 2018. "Overconfidence and the Discounting of Expertise: A Commentary." *Social Science and Medicine* 213, 95-97. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2018.07.039>
5. Benegal, Salil and Lyle Scruggs. 2018. "Correcting Misinformation About Climate Change: The Impact of Partisanship in an Experimental Setting." *Climatic Change* 148: 2, 61-80
<http://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-018-2192-4>
4. Benegal, Salil. 2018. "The Spillover of Race and Racial Attitudes into Public Opinion about Climate Change." *Environmental Politics* 27:4, 733-756
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2018.1457287>

3. Benegal, Salil. 2017. "The impact of unemployment and economic risk perceptions on attitudes towards anthropogenic climate change." *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences*: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13412-017-0452-7>
2. Scruggs, Lyle, and Salil Benegal. 2012. "Declining Public Concern About Climate Change: Can We Blame the Great Recession?" *Global Environmental Change* 22(2): 505-515. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2012.01.002>
1. Bai, James, Kaleyhia Flowers, Salil Benegal, Milagros Calizo, Vrudhdhi Patel, and Sandra Whaley Bishnoi. 2009. "Using the Enzymatic Growth of Nanoparticles to create a Biosensor: An Undergraduate Quantitative Analysis Experiment." *Journal of Chemical Education* 86(6): 712-716. <http://doi.org/10.1021/ed086p712>

Book chapters

3. Stecula, Dominik, John Cook, Arunima Krishna, Adrian Dominik Wójcik, Jean Carlos Hochsprung Miguel, Matthew Hornsey, and Salil Benegal. 2025. "Understanding the Political and Psychological Roots of Climate Misinformation and Its Impact on Public Opinion" in *Global Assessment of Climate Obstruction*, ed. J. Timmons Roberts. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197787144.001.0001>
2. Benegal, Salil, and Lyle Scruggs. 2016. "Economic Conditions and Public Opinion on Climate Change" in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia on Climate Change Communication*. <http://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228620.013.310>
1. Chapman, Audrey R., and Salil Benegal. 2013. "Globalization and the Right to Health." in *The State of Economic and Social Human Rights: A Global Overview*, ed. Alanson Minkler. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 61-85.

Working manuscripts

5. "The Big Lie and the Crisis of American Democracy." With Thomas Hayes and Antonio Ugues Jr. (Book manuscript)
4. "Race, Gender, and Opposition to Climate Action: Systems of Power, Elite Messaging, and Public Opinion." With Mirya R. Holman. (Book manuscript)
3. "Energy Inflation Attribution and Support for Clean Energy".
2. "Inter- and intra-partisan and gender variation on climate attitudes." With Mirya R. Holman.
1. "Anxiety, hope, and the limited impact of emotion on climate beliefs." With Nicholas T. Davis.

Public Scholarship

6. NPR Michigan Radio interview: Study: Republicans can be persuasive when correcting climate change misinformation. <https://www.michiganradio.org/environment-science/2018-04-26/study-republicans-can-be-persuasive-when-correcting-climate-change-misinformation>

5. Washington Post Monkey Cage editorial: Pruitt's EPA denies climate science. Republicans can correct him. Will they? <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/05/04/pruitts-epa-denies-climate-science-republicans-can-correct-him-will-they/>
4. DailyKos: Elite Opinions On the Right Might Be Key To Booting Pruitt. <https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2018/4/17/1757750/-Elite-Opinions-On-the-Right-Might-Be-Key-To-Booting-Pruitt>
3. Sierra Club: Climate Deniers Are More Likely to Be Racist. Why? <https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/climate-deniers-are-more-likely-be-racist-obama-trump-climate-change>
2. Washington Post (citation): White America's racial resentment is the real impetus for welfare cuts, study says. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2018/05/30/white-americas-racial-resentment-is-the-real-impetus-for-welfare-cuts-study-says/>
1. NexusMedia: Racial Resentment May Be Fueling Climate Denial. <https://nexusmedianews.com/racial-resentment-could-be-fueling-climate-denial-65d32fbaa8e/>

Recent conference presentations (Last 3 years)

Benegal, Salil, and Ryan D. Williamson. "Climate politics in the primaries: How primary voters have shaped electoral incentives and climate policy." Presenting at the 2026 Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting. Chicago.

Benegal, Salil, and Mirya R. Holman. "Inter- and intra-partisan and gender variation on climate attitudes." Presented at the 2024 New Research on Gender and Political Psychology Conference, and at the 2024 American Political Science Association Annual Meeting.

Benegal, Salil and Nicholas T. Davis. "Anxiety, hope, and the limited impact of emotion on climate beliefs." Presented at the 2024 Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, and at the 2024 American Political Science Association Annual Meeting.

Benegal, Salil, and Mirya R. Holman. "Meet me in the middle? Understanding how Independents, non-ideologues, and primary voters think about climate change and policy." Presented at the 2024 Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting. Chicago.

Hayes, Thomas, and Salil Benegal. "Late Deciding Voters in US Presidential Elections." Presented at the 2024 Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting. Chicago.

Benegal, Salil and Lyle Scruggs. "Correcting partisan misinformation over renewable energy in the United States" Presented at the 2023 Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting. Chicago.

Prior research grants:

DePauw University J. William and Dorothy A. Asher Fund in the Psychological Sciences (Spring 2018)

DePauw University Faculty-Student Summer Research Grant (Summer 2017)

DePauw University J. William and Dorothy A. Asher Fund in the Social Sciences (Spring 2017)

University of Connecticut Brain Imaging Research Center (BIRC) Seed Grant for fMRI Research (Fall 2015), with Mikhael Shor, Peter Molfese, and Thomas Hayes

"Media and Public Opinion about Renewable Energy", experimental survey design and analysis with Oksan Bayulgen, UConn Department of Political Science, 2015.

CIRI Human Rights Data Project, data coding for physical integrity rights violations for David Richards, UConn Human Rights Institute, 2013.

"Household Consumption and Gender Inequality: Evidence from India", data collection and analysis for Shareen Hertel and Nishith Prakash, UConn Human Rights Institute's Economic and Social Rights Program (ESRP), 2011.

"Explaining Public Opinion about Climate Change", data analysis with Lyle Scruggs, funded by UConn Center for Environmental Studies and Engineering (CESE), 2011.

"Globalization and the Right to Health", data analysis with Audrey R. Chapman, funded by UConn Health Center, UConn Human Rights Institute's Economic and Social Rights Program, and University of Ottawa. 2010-2011.

Social and Economic Rights Fulfillment (SERF) Index Project, data coding for economic rights outcomes for Susan M. Randolph and Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, UConn Department of Economics and Human Rights Institute. 2010.

Courses taught

American Politics

Introduction to US Politics / Introduction to American Government
Political Psychology

Environmental and Public policy

US Environmental Policy
US Energy Policy
Global Environmental Politics
Comparative Climate Change Politics
Climate Communication
Senior Seminar in Environmental Studies

Comparative

Comparative Politics and Government / Introduction to Comparative Politics
Introduction to Human Rights
Comparative Perspectives in Human Rights

Methods

Research Design and Writing

Social Data Analysis

Pedagogical workshops

Union College Faculty Development Institute Summer Course Incubator (2023)

DePauw University “Q” workshop on teaching Quantitative Reasoning (2018)

DePauw University “S” workshop on Speaking (2018)

DePauw University “PPD” workshop on teaching Power, Privilege, and Diversity (2017)

Professional service

Journal and grant refereeing:

Manuscript reviewer for:

American Politics Research; American Journal of Political Science, American Political Science Review; British Journal of Political Science; Canadian Journal of Political Science; Climatic Change; Energy Research & Social Science; Environment & Behavior; Environmental Communication; Environmental Politics; Environmental Sociology; Global Environmental Change; Interest Groups and Advocacy; International Journal of Public Opinion Research; Journal of Elections, Public Opinion, and Parties; Journal of Human Rights; Journal of Politics; Legislative Studies Quarterly; Nature Energy; Political Behavior; Politics, Groups, and Identities; Political Research Quarterly; Review of Policy Research; Social Science and Medicine; Social Science Quarterly, Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World, Time-Sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences.

Serving on editorial advisory board: *Environmental Politics* (2024-current)

Conference service

- Section Head/Organizer for Environmental Politics and Policy at 2025 Midwest Political Science Association Conference
- Discussant for 2023 Climate Pipeline Workshop
- Discussant for conference panel at 2023 Midwest Political Science Association Conference
- Chair for conference panel at 2019 Midwest Political Science Association Conference
- Chair for conference panel at 2018 American Political Science Association Conference
- Discussant for conference panel at 2018 Midwest Political Science Association Conference
- Chair and discussant for conference panel at 2017 Midwest Political Science Association Conference

Invited talks

NY-6 Liberal Arts Consortium (2024 roundtable on Teaching with AI)

University of Alabama in Huntsville (2021)

Wabash College (2016)

University-level service (Union College)

- Human Subjects Research Committee (HSRC)
- Environmental Science, Policy & Engineering Program (ESPE) Steering Committee
- Co-director, Climate Studies Minor
- Organizer, ESPE Seminar Speaker Series, Winter Term 2025

University-level service (DePauw)

- Institutional Review Board (IRB) member, 2020-2022.
- Environmental Fellows Honors Program Steering Committee, 2017-2021
- Honors Scholar thesis reader, 2017-2021
- Honors Scholar thesis primary advisor, 2018-2019
- Coordinator of faculty writing workshops, Fall 2017-2019

Department service (Union College Department of Political Science)

- Co-organizer, Pizza and Politics lunchtime speaker/seminar series (2024-25)

Department service (DePauw Department of Political Science)

- Search committees for American Government (2017, 2019) and International Politics (2018, 2019, 2020) term/one-year jobs.
- Department liaison for Pi Sigma Alpha (2020-2022)

Updated July 2026.