

Ricardo Vega León

Department of Political Science
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Academic Appointments

- 2025- **Assistant Professor, California Polytechnic State University**
 Department of Political Science
- 2024-25 **Postdoctoral Associate, Rutgers University**
 Center for Historical Analysis

Education

- 2024 **Ph.D. in Political Science, University of Massachusetts Amherst**
 Subfields: History of Political Thought (Distinction) and Contemporary Social
 and Political Theory (Distinction)
 Dissertation: *Capitalist Abolitionism: Racial Capitalism after the End of
 Slavery*
 Committee: Adam Dahl (Chair), Roberto Alejandro, Sonia Alvarez, Jane
 Gordon (University of Connecticut)
- Winner of the Stephen E. Bronner Dissertation Award, Caucus for a Critical
 Political Science, American Political Science Association (2025)
- 2022 **M.A. in Political Science, University of Massachusetts Amherst**
- 2017 **B.A. in Political Science and History (minor), Universidad de los Andes
 (Colombia)**

Publications

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

- 2024 “Tocqueville on the Abolition of Slavery in the French Caribbean: The
 Preemptive Dispossession and Proletarianization of Black Workers.” *Theory &
 Event* 27, no. 3: 481-509. <https://doi.org/10.1353/tae.2024.a932019>

Invited Articles

- Forthcoming “The Tensions of Abolitionism and Racial Capitalism.” *Social Research* 92, no 4.

Book Reviews

2025 Review of *The Price of Slavery: Capitalism and Revolution in the Caribbean* by Nick Nesbitt. *Philosophy & Global Affairs* 5, no. 1: 259-62.

Works in Progress

Capitalist Abolitionism: Racial Capitalism after the End of Slavery (book manuscript)

“Who Will Keep Cultivating Sugar? Harriet Martineau, the Haitian Revolution, and the Post-Emancipation Plantation Economy” (revise & resubmit)

“Robert Wedderburn on Common Land and the Emancipation of Black and White Workers” (co-authored article manuscript in early drafting stage)

Awards, Fellowships, and Grants

2025 Stephen E. Bronner Dissertation Award, Caucus for a Critical Political Science, American Political Science Association

2023, 2024 Research and Writing Grant, Department of Political Science, University of Massachusetts Amherst, \$2,500

2023 Grant, Fund for Latino Scholarship, American Political Science Association, \$500

2022 Graduate Fellows Travel Grant, Graduate School, University of Massachusetts Amherst, \$500

2019, 2022 Conference Travel Grant, Department of Political Science, University of Massachusetts Amherst, \$300

2019-22 Research Enhancement and Leadership Fellow, Graduate School, University of Massachusetts Amherst, \$18,000 (total)

Teaching Experience

California Polytechnic State University

POLS 112: American and California Government (Fall 2025 and Spring 2026)

POLS 338: African American Politics (Winter 2026)

POLS 349: Contemporary American Political Thought (Fall 2025)

POLS 430: Racial Capitalism (Winter 2026)

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Instructor

PoliSci 377: Interpretation and Analysis – Junior Year Writing (Fall 2021 and Spring 2022, 2024)

Teaching Assistant

PoliSci 171: Introduction to Political Theory (Fall 2018, 2019 and Spring 2021, 2023)

PoliSci 203: American Political Thought (Fall 2020, 2022, 2023 and Spring 2020)

PoliSci 293: Constitutional Democracy in Trumpian Times (Spring 2019)

Conference Presentations

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| 2025 | “Imperial and Transnational Labor Mobility: Racial Hierarchization, Value, and Primitive Accumulation.” American Political Science Association annual conference, Vancouver, BC. Accepted for presentation at the Association for Political Theory annual conference, Chicago, IL |
| 2024 | “Harriet Martineau, the Haitian Revolution, and Labor Discipline After Slavery.” American Political Science Association annual conference, Philadelphia, PA |
| 2023 | “The Disavowal of Slavery’s Capitalism in Liberal Political Economy.” American Political Science Association annual conference, Los Angeles, CA |
| 2021, 2022 | “Tocqueville’s Capitalist Abolitionism: From Enslaved Labor to a Black Proletariat.” Caribbean Philosophical Association annual conference, online and Western Political Science Association annual conference, Portland, OR |
| 2019 | “Herbert Marcuse and the Third World: Dialectics, Eurocentrism, and the Reproduction of Coloniality.” International Herbert Marcuse Society annual conference, Santa Barbara, CA |
| 2019 | “Decolonizing Herbert Marcuse: The Dialectics of the Third World, Eurocentrism and Latin American Critical Theory.” Latin American Studies Association annual conference, Boston, MA |

Invited Talks and Workshop Participation

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| 2025 | “Disavowing Capitalist Slavery.” Racial Capitalism in the History of Political Thought conference, Princeton University |
| 2024 | “Beyond Fear and the Expansion of Revolutionary Abolitionism: Harriet Martineau on the Haitian Revolution.” Center for Historical Analysis, Rutgers University |
| 2023 | Panelist, “Workshop on Presenting at an Academic Conference.” Department of Political Science, University of Massachusetts Amherst |
| 2019 | “Herbert Marcuse and the Third World: Dialectics, Eurocentrism, and the Reproduction of Coloniality.” UMass Amherst Critical Social Studies Workshop |

- 2019 “Tocqueville and the Three Races in the United States.” Introduction to Political Theory, University of Massachusetts Amherst
- 2019 “The Frankfurt School Beyond the North Atlantic: On Critical Theory and Decoloniality.” Universidad de los Andes DePolítica Workshop

Research Experience

- 2021-24 Research Assistant of Professor Adam Dahl

Professional Development

- 2019 Caribbean Philosophical Association Summer School, Williams College

Service to the University and Profession

- 2026 Chair, Stephen E. Bronner Dissertation Award selection committee, Caucus for a Critical Political Science, American Political Science Association
- 2025-26 Pi Sigma Alpha committee, Department of Political Science, California Polytechnic State University
- 2019-24 Co-organizer with Jane Gordon (University of Connecticut) of the Connecticut–Massachusetts Political Thought Group

Professional Affiliations

American Political Science Association
Association for Political Theory

Languages

Spanish (native), German (reading and speaking proficiency), Portuguese (reading proficiency)

References

Available upon request