

Ricardo Vega León

Department of Political Science
California Polytechnic State University
1 Grand Avenue
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

rvegaleo@calpoly.edu
ricardovegaleon.com

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

- 2026 “Who Will Keep Cultivating Sugar? Harriet Martineau, the Haitian Revolution,
and the Post-Emancipation Plantation Economy.” Accepted for publication in
Modern Intellectual History.
- 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

2025 “The Tensions of Abolitionism and Racial Capitalism.” *Social Research* 92, no. 4: 915-40. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sor.2025.a981023>.

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)

“Freedom’s Ground: Landed Emancipation Beyond Reparations and Republicanism” (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

- 2026 “Freedom’s Ground: Landed Emancipation Beyond Reparations and Republicanism.” Accepted for presentation at the American Political Science Association annual conference, Boston, MA
- 2025 “Imperial and Transnational Labor Mobility: Racial Hierarchization, Value, and Primitive Accumulation.” American Political Science Association annual conference, Vancouver, BC and 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

- 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

Manuscript Reviewer: *Polity*

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