

# Sophia S. Helland

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## Education

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**Ph.D. Candidate in Public Policy and Management** Aug. 2022 - May 2027 (expected)

*University of Southern California, Sol Price School of Public Policy*

*Dissertation Topic:* Three Essays on Abortion Accessibility in the United States

*Dissertation Committee:* Nicolas Duquette (Co-Chair), Pamela McCann Co-Chair), Christian Grose, Rosalie Pacula

*Major Field:* State Policy and Political Institutions

*Minor Field:* Gender, Politics, and Policy

**Master's of Public Policy** August 2026

*University of Southern California, Sol Price School of Public Policy*

**B.A. Philosophy, Politics, and Economics; Dual Degree Economics** Aug. 2016 - May 2020

*Claremont McKenna College*

*Thesis:* "The Political Economy of State Minimum Wage Laws and Legislator Voting Behavior"

## Research and Teaching Interests

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Quantitative Methods and Econometrics; Health Economics and Policy; State and Local Policy

## Research Experience

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**Price School of Public Policy at the University of Southern California** Los Angeles, CA

*Research Assistant for Dr. Pamela McCann*

Aug. 2023-Aug. 2025

- Cleaned and analyzed 2020 CCES survey module data, conducting pre-registered hypothesis tests on federalism preferences, efficacy, and trust.
- Worked on designing a survey testing the mechanisms that shape citizens' trust in their local, state, and federal governments.
- Conducted text analysis of COVID-19 Executive Orders.
- Researched the role of emotions during the COVID-19 pandemic on federalism and emergency management venue preferences, and how crises and descriptive representation interact to form policy burdens.

**Rose Institute of State and Local Government**

Claremont, CA

*Graduate Researcher*

May 2025-Present

- Contributed to a successful Haynes Foundation grant proposal for a \$100,000 Planning Grant on LA County governance reform and worked on a research team assessing Measure G's anticipated impact on Eastern LA County municipalities through interviews with city managers and other county governance experts. Co-authored final report on findings and recommendations for the Government Reform Task Force.
- Analyzed affordable housing policies for the city of Ontario, CA, and conducted background research on financing affordable housing funds through impact and in-lieu fees.

**USC Schwarzenegger Institute and Unite America Institute**

Los Angeles, CA

*Doctoral Practicum Research Project*

March 2026-July 2026

- Collaborated on a team-based practicum to support a multi-institutional RFP on primary election reform, including RFP dissemination and communication with external stakeholders.
- Assisting in organizing an upcoming convening for finalist teams to present research proposals.

**Price School of Public Policy at the University of Southern California** *Los Angeles, CA*  
*Research Assistant for Dr. Alexandra Graddy-Reed* *May 2024-Aug.2024*

- Cleaned and analyzed data on biomedical research grants and awards to university faculty members.
- Conducted literature reviews on the role of funding sources in shaping career trajectories and research production.

**Price School of Public Policy at the University of Southern California** *Los Angeles, CA*  
*Directed Research Project for Dr. Jeffrey Jenkins* *Aug. 2022 – Dec.2022*

- Collected political data on federal grants to city governments.
- Cleaned and categorized data for text analysis on Congressional hearings.

**Columbia Law School** *New York, NY*  
*Staff Associate/Research Assistant for Dr. Edward R. Morrison* *Aug. 2020 – Jul. 2022*

- Assisted in Dr. Morrison’s research on bankruptcy law.
- Worked with large datasets, compiled literature reviews, and conducted econometric analysis for ongoing projects on corporate and individual bankruptcy, including strategic timing of declarations and declarations due to medical debt.
- Co-authored “The Healthcare System and Pandemics: Where is the Market Failure?” in the Ohio State Law Review.

## ***Presentations***

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“Risk and Accessibility in the Post-Dobbs Era: Survey Experiments on Interstate Travel to Reproductive Care.” Presented at the Midwestern Political Science Association Annual Conference. Chicago, IL. April 2026.

“Gender, Anger, and Federalism: Governing Preferences During the COVID-19 Pandemic.” Presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Conference (September 2024), the Midwestern Political Science Association Annual Conference (April 2024), and the Political Institutions and Political Economy Conference (March 2024).

## ***Publications***

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Helland, Sophia and Edward Morrison, “The Healthcare System and Pandemics: Where is the Market Failure?” Ohio State Law Review. Vol. 82, No. 5, 2021.

## ***Working Papers***

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Helland, Sophia. When Clinics Close: The Effect of Abortion Access on Fertility and Birth Outcomes. Working Paper. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=5604800>.

Helland, Sophia “The Diffusion of Electoral Vulnerability in U.S. House Elections”

Helland, Sophia “The Political Economy of State Minimum Wage Laws and Legislator Voting Behavior”

## Teaching Experience

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### Claremont McKenna College

*Visiting Lecturer in Economics*

*Claremont, CA*

*Aug. 2026-Dec. 2026*

- Served as the instructor of record for Econ125: Econometrics.
- Instructed undergraduate students in probability and statistics, simple and multiple regression, OLS assumptions, a brief introduction to time series and panel data methods, and statistical analysis in STATA.

### Price School of Public Policy at the University of Southern California

*Teaching Assistant*

*Los Angeles, CA*

*Sept. 2023-May 2025*

- Served as teaching assistant for PPD560: Methods for Policy Analysis, PPD558: Multivariate Statistical Analysis, PPD554: Foundations of Policy Analysis, and PPD303: Statistics for Policy, Planning, and Development.
- Duties included grading papers, tests, and problem sets; managing course resources on Blackboard, Brightspace, and Google Drive; assisting students during office hours and in class; facilitating case study discussions and leading STATA labs; and leading review sessions.

### Price School of Public Policy at the University of Southern California

*Workshop Instructor*

*Los Angeles, CA*

*October 2025*

- Designed and taught an Introduction to Survey Design Workshop for USC Master's of Public Policy and Master's of Public Administration students.
- Lectured on how to improve external and construct validity, best design practices, and strategies to improve response rates.
- Led in-class activities and discussions to accompany lectures.

## Grants and Honors

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Political Institutions & Political Economy Collaborative Fellow, 2022-2023

Graduated Magna Cum Laude, Dean's List, 2020

George S. Blair Award for Best Thesis in State and Local Government, 2020

Departmental Honors in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, 2020

Departmental Honors in Economics, 2020

J. Cleveland McKenna Student Researcher Award, 2019-2020

## Technical skills

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### Programming Languages/Tools Data Visualization

STATA, R, Python, MATLAB, HTML, L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X, Excel  
ArcGIS, Tableau, Adobe Suite (Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator)