

Yongjai Yu

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Research Interests

- Presidential power and unilateral action
- American political institutions and separation of powers
- Intra-party accountability, partisan loyalty, and democratic backsliding
- Computational methods for political text and multimodal data

Education

University of California, Riverside Ph.D. in Political Science Subfields: American Politics and Mass Political Behavior	Riverside, CA 2022–Present
Seoul National University Master of Public Policy, Graduate School of Public Administration Thesis: <i>A Study on the Role of Contract Legislation in the Legislative Process</i> Advisor: Jisuk Woo Qualifying Exams: Public Policy Theory; Research Methodology	Seoul, Korea February 2022
Korea University Bachelor of Arts in History, College of Liberal Arts	Seoul, Korea February 2016

Dissertation

Strategic Unilateralism and Presidential Policy Choice

- Examines how presidents calibrate the policy content of unilateral actions under institutional constraint.
- Develops anchored embedding scaling (AES) to estimate the ideological locations of presidential directives in liberal–conservative policy space.
- Recovers inherited policy status quo points and estimates policy displacement produced by unilateral action.
- Develops a cost-constrained model of unilateral action in which presidents move policy strategically while anticipating institutional costs.

Publications

Cho, Eunmi, Sinjae Kang, Kyusik Yang, **Yongjai Yu**, and Yoonseok Lee. 2024. “Measuring Legislators’ Ideology and Analyzing Ideological Differences Across Standing Committees Using Wordfish: Evidence from the Minutes of Standing Committee Meetings in the 19th and 20th National Assembly.” *Journal of Research Methodology*. KCI. In Korean.

Working Papers

“When Sparse Beats Dense: Vocabulary Separability and Model Selection in Political Text Analysis.” With Eunseong Oh.

“When Conspiracy Belief Mobilizes Donors: Campaign Contributions in American Politics.”

“When Text Meets Image: Unlocking Frames of Political Videos with Multimodal CLIP.” With Eunseong Oh. Presented at PolMeth 2025.

Works in Progress

“Fandom Politics: A Formal Theory of Unconditional Partisan Loyalty and Democratic Backsliding.”

“Korean National Assembly YouTube Communication.” With Kyusik Yang. Multimodal analysis.

“Measuring Regulatory Change Through Delegated Legislation: Evidence from Korean Presidential Decrees.”

“Collaborative Pedagogy at Minority-Serving Institutions.” With Karina Alpayeva, Emmanoel Ferreira, Sarah Siddique, and Kim Yi Dionne.

Conference Presentations

Society for Political Methodology (PolMeth) 2026

- Accepted poster, “Measuring the Ideological Content of Presidential Directives Using Anchored Embedding Scaling.”

Society for Political Methodology (PolMeth) 2025

- Poster presenter, “When Sparse Beats Dense: Vocabulary Separability and Model Selection in Political Text Analysis.” With Eunseong Oh.
- Co-author, “When Text Meets Image: Unlocking Frames of Political Videos with Multimodal CLIP.” With Eunseong Oh.

Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) 2025

- Presenter, “Not Every Unilateral Action Is Ideological: Ideological Content and the President’s Strategic Behavior.”

Research Software and Data Products

poljacc. Python package for vocabulary separability diagnostics in political text classification. Companion software for “When Sparse Beats Dense.” github.com/YongjaiYu/poljacc

AES Explorer. Interactive visualization of 20,961 presidential directives on a liberal–conservative scale using anchored embedding scaling.

Korean Presidential Decree Explorer. Searchable explorer of 44,345 amendments to Korean presidential decrees across nine administrations, 1988–March 2026.

Text Polarization Workbench. Interactive tool for examining Democratic–Republican floor-speech vocabulary divergence across the 79th–119th Congresses, 1945–2026.

Teaching Experience

University of California, Riverside Riverside, CA
Teaching Assistant October 2023–Present

- **Graduate:** Survey of Quantitative Methods (POSC 202A); Survey of Quantitative Methods (POSC 202B)
- **Undergraduate:** American Politics (POSC 010); Comparative Politics (POSC 015); Politics of the Global South (POSC 017); Regulation: A Political Perspective (POSC 186); Politics and Economic Policy: American Politics (POSC 182E)

Fellowships, Grants, and Awards

- PolMeth 2025 Emory Travel Grant
- UC Riverside Chancellor’s Distinguished Fellowship Award
- GSA Travel Grant

Research Community, Service, and Training

Founder, Political Science Quantitative Methods Group Riverside, CA
University of California, Riverside June 2023–Present

- Founded a graduate-student methods group that provides methodological feedback on research projects and discusses emerging approaches in political methodology and computational social science.

Member, Identity & Politics Lab Riverside, CA
University of California, Riverside January 2025–Present

Participant, SICSS-Korea Daejeon, Korea
Summer Institute in Computational Social Science, KAIST and KDI School of Public Policy and Management July 2024

Professional Experience

Legislative Aide, Office of Assembly Member Yangsoo Lee Seoul, Korea
July 2018–July 2021

Senior Staff, Public Relations and Messaging Team, Seoul Mayoral Election Campaign Seoul, Korea
February 2021–April 2021

Manager, Strategic Planning Team, General Election Campaign Sokcho, Korea
Sokcho/Inje/Yangyang/Goseong District November 2019–April 2020

Manager, Strategic Planning Team, Uiwang Mayoral Election Campaign
October 2017–June 2018

Uiwang, Korea

Legislative Aide, Office of Assembly Member Shinhwan Oh
April 2015–July 2016

Seoul, Korea

Skills

Programming and Statistical Analysis: R, Python

Typesetting and Reproducible Writing: L^AT_EX

Methods: Bayesian statistics; causal inference; text analysis; large language models; deep learning; multimodal analysis

References

Kevin M. Esterling

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Additional references available upon request.