

Michael E. Shepherd, Ph.D.

University of Michigan
School of Public Health (SPH II 3509)
415 Washington Heights
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Phone: 734) 764-5425 (dept. office)
Email: meshep@umich.edu
Homepage: <http://www.michaelleshepherd.com>

Academic Appointments

University of Michigan, School of Public Health, Department of Health Management & Policy

Assistant Professor, 2024-present

University of Michigan, Department of Political Science

Assistant Professor (by courtesy), 2024-present

University of Texas at Austin, Department of Government

Assistant Professor, 2022-2024

University of Texas at Austin, Health & Society Program

Affiliated Faculty, 2022-2024

Vanderbilt University, Department of Medicine, Health, and Society

Postdoctoral Fellow, 2021-2022

Vanderbilt University, Data Science Institute

Teaching Faculty, 2021

Education

Ph.D. Political Science, Vanderbilt University, 2021

Dissertation: Unhealthy Democracy: How Partisan Politics is Killing Rural America

Committee: Larry M. Bartels (co-chair), Joshua D. Clinton (co-chair), Allison P. Anoll,
and Katherine J. Cramer (University of Wisconsin)

M.A. Political Science, Vanderbilt University, 2019

M.A.P. Applied Politics, The University of Akron, 2015

B.S. Political Science, Murray State University, 2013

Summa Cum Laude

Commonwealth of Kentucky Secondary Education Teaching Credential

Peer-Reviewed Articles

1. 2025. "Texas in the Rearview Mirror? How the Democratic Party Ignores Rural America and Underperforms in Elections." (with Clinton Willbanks◇). *Political Behavior*.
Media Attention: Jacobin.
2. 2025. "Measuring Disparities to Emergency Medicine with 200 Million Voter Records: The Case of Rural Hospital Closures." (with Derek Epp and Christian Cox). *Journal of Rural Health*.
3. 2025. "The Politics of Rural Hospital Closures." *Political Behavior*.
Media Attention: The New York Times, Health Medicine Network; MedicalXpress; Mirage News.
4. 2024. "Access to Healthcare and Voting: The Case of Hospital Closures in Rural America" (with Derek Epp and Christian Cox). *American Political Science Review*.
5. 2024. "Physicians in Congress: Professional Backgrounds and Legislative Effectiveness." (with Daniel Skinner and Alexandra Fountaine◇). *Legislative Studies Quarterly*.
6. 2024. "Racializing COVID-19: Race-related and Racist Language on Facebook, Pandemic Othering, and Concern about COVID-19" (with Jonathan Metzl, Tara McKay, and Priya Bhatt*). *Political Communication* 42(2): 286-305.
7. 2022. "The Politics of Pain: Medicaid Expansion, the ACA, and the Opioid Epidemic." *Journal of Public Policy*. 42: 409-435.
8. 2021. "The Politics of Locating Polling Places: Race and Partisanship in North Carolina Election Administration, 2008-2016" (with Joshua D. Clinton, Nicholas Eubank, and Adriane Fresh). *Election Law Journal*. 20(2): 155-177.
9. 2021. "Polling Place Changes and Political Participation: The Effect of Election Administration in North Carolina Presidential Elections, 2008-2016" (with Joshua D. Clinton, Nick Eubank, and Adriane Fresh). *Political Science Research & Methods*. 9(4): 800-817.
10. 2020. "The Effects of Big-City News on Rural Residents' COVID-19 Responses" (with Eunji Kim and Joshua D. Clinton). *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. 117(36):22009-22014.
11. 2020. "Exit Strategy: Career Concerns and Revolving Doors in Congress " (with Hye Young You). *American Political Science Review*. 114(1): 270-284.

*Undergraduate Student; ◇ Graduate/Professional Student

Book

1. (Under Contract). *Unhealthy Democracy: Partisan Politics and the Rural Health Spiral*. University of Chicago Press.

My book explores the political causes and consequences of rural health disparities and, in doing so, addresses two fundamental political science questions. First, to what extent does partisan control of government shape health policy and the health of Americans? And second, why do rural Americans, who tend to live shorter, less healthy lives and have more restricted access to health care, increasingly support policies and a Republican Party that are antithetical to their health needs? On the former, I show that especially since the 1980s and 1990s, the Republican and Democratic parties have pursued widely different health and social welfare policies, with Republican policymaking leading to worsened rural health outcomes. However, I demonstrate that by appealing to the shared

racial and rural identities of sicker and working-class rural whites, the Republican Party increasingly garners support even from struggling rural voters.

Winner of the 2022 Best Dissertation Award, Class & Inequality Section, APSA.

Book Reviews, Edited Volume Chapters, and Other Published Work

1. (In production). Edited Volume Chapter. "Exploring The Rural-Urban Health Divide: Place-based Experiences and Attitudes." Chapter in *Rethinking Rural: Place-Based Identity, Political Ideology, and Policy in Rural America*. ed. Nicholas Jacobs. De Gruyter.
2. 2025. Opinion column. "Medicaid cuts will harm rural Republican communities most." (with Miranda Yaver). *The Hill*. June 2, 2025.
3. 2024. Review Article; "Who is the Rural Voter? A Review of *The Rural Voter: The Politics of Place and the Disuniting of America*"; by Nicholas F. Jacobs and Daniel M. Shea. Columbia University Press, 2023." *Political Science Quarterly*.
4. 2024. Opinion column. "Can Policy Make Rural Politics?" (with Jennifer Silva). *Jacobin* Summer 2024 Ed.
5. 2023. Book Review; *Ethically Challenged: Private Equity Storms US Health Care*; by Laura Katz Olson. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 2022. *Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews*. 52(4): 364-367.
6. 2020. Appendix Chapter. "The Public and the Electorate Before, During, and After the Civil Rights Movement." Appendix chapter in *His Truth is Marching On: John Lewis and the Power of Hope* by Jon Meacham. Random House: New York, 2020.
7. 2019. Opinion column. "Republicans face political risks on impeachment. But history shows not all is lost." (with Jon Meacham). *The Washington Post*. Dec. 18, 2019.
Media Coverage: MSNBC.

Working Papers

1. (*Revise & Resubmit*). "Beyond Relief: The Lasting Legacy of New Deal Spending on the Geography of Government." (with Brian Hamel). *Journal of Politics*.
2. (*Under review*). "How Potential Policy Change Mobilizes Gun Owners." (with Chris Cassella).
3. (*Under review*). "Hiding in plain sight: How physician-led "Get out the vote" efforts can diversify the electorate and influence policy ." (with Hilary J. Izatt, Kelly Hunter, Daniel Nielson, Katherine McCabe, Zoe C. Walker, Wylie Chang, and Alister Martin).
4. (*Under review*). "Abortion Politics: Physician Mobilization in the Wake of the *Dobbs* Decision." (with Kelly Hunter, Hilary J. Izatt, Eve Bryner, and Alister Martin).
5. (*Under review*). "Transitioning through Uncertainty: Assessing Political Reactions to Clean-energy Investment in Rural Michigan." (with Parrish Berquist).
6. "Angry Ballots and Long Lines: The Role of Emotions in Decisions to Mobilize in the Face of Voter Suppression." (with Hilary J. Izatt and Dan Magelby).
7. "Don't Take Your Guns to Town? Rural Socialization and the Long-term Politics of Firearms." (with Kristin Lunz Trujillo and Alee Lockman).

Work in Progress

1. "The Long-term Influence of Rural Identity on Political Attitudes." (with Kristin Lunz Trujillo and Alea Lockman).
2. "The Long-term Influence of Rural Identity on Health." (with Kristin Lunz Trujillo and Alea Lockman).
3. "Dobbs and Democracy." (with Jenna Salzman).
4. "Rural Reproductive Health After *Dobbs*." (with Jennifer Silva).
5. "Women's Gun Ownership and Firearms Attitudes." (with Jennifer Silva).
6. "The Influence of Varieties Suburbanization on Local Politics and Policy." (with Stephanie Ternullo).

Honors, Awards, and Fellowships

University of Michigan "Road" Scholars Fellowship, 2025.

Best Dissertation Award, Class and Inequality Section, American Political Science Association Annual Conference, 2022.

Timothy E. Cook Best Graduate Student Paper Award, Political Communication Section, American Political Science Association Annual Conference, 2020.

Best Graduate Student Paper Award, Department of Political Science, Vanderbilt University, 2020.

Grants

1. 2021-2024: Postdoctoral Researcher & Research Consultant, Commonwealth Fund, #20213323, "Addressing Beliefs About Race, Health, Community, and Ideology Regarding Coverage Expansion in the U.S. South." Principal Investigator: Jonathan Metzl. (\$398,812 total).

Conferences and Invited Talks

American Political Science Association: 2018, 2019, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025.

Midwest Political Science Association: 2017, 2018, 2024, 2025.

Southern Political Science Association: 2020.

Health Politics and Policy Conference (Dartmouth College), 2025.

The Political Economy of Geographic Polarization in Rich Democracies (Stanford University), 2025.

Consortium on the American Political Economy (Yale University), 2024 & 2025.

The Joe Biden Presidency: Legacy and Record (University of Mount Union), 2025.

Rethinking Rural Conference (Colby College), 2024.

Keeping the Republic Conference (Notre Dame), 2023.

Colleges and Universities: *Syracuse University* (2021); *University of Akron* (2022, 2023, 2024); *University of California, Berkeley* (2025); *University of Michigan* (2023); *University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill* (2021); *University of Oklahoma* (2021); *University of Texas, Austin* (2021); *Vanderbilt University* (2021).

Groups and Organizations: *Michigan League for Public Policy* (2025); *Michigan's Children* (2025); *Network for Responsible Public Policy* (2024); *Rural Urban Bridge Initiative* (2021).

Media Appearances and Interviews

1. Trump's Bill Slashes Safety Net That Many Republican Voters Rely On. By Jason DeParle, *The New York Times*. June 26, 2025.
2. Proposed Medicaid cuts could lead to thousands of deaths, study finds. By Kaitlin Sullivan, *NBC News*. June 16, 2025.
3. GOP senators uneasy about budget bill's rural health impact. By Lia DeGroot, *CQ-Roll Call*. June 2, 2025.
4. How 'Rural Studies' Is Thinking About the Heartland. By Emma Goldberg, *The New York Times*. June 29, 2024.
5. Bipartisan Congressional Caucus Addresses Payments to Rural Hospitals By Liz Carey, *The Daily Yonder*. December 11, 2023.
6. Trump promises to rescind Obama's signature health care law spurs Democratic criticism. By Reena Diamante, *Spectrum News*. December 5, 2023.
7. Rural Hospital Legislation's Long Wait in Congress. By Liz Carey, *The Daily Yonder*. November 14, 2023.
8. Rural Health Care Figures Prominently in 2023's Limited Political Races. By Liz Carey, *The Daily Yonder*. November 6, 2023.
9. Voting Rights Battles Move to States After Supreme Court Ruling. By Ryan Teague Beckwith, *Bloomberg News*. July 2, 2021.

Profession, University, and Department Service

Profession:

Scholars Strategy Network Affiliate (2025-present.)

Scholars Strategy Network Medicaid Working Group Member (2025-present.)

APSA Health Politics & Policy Best Paper Award Committee (2025).

Discussant, Health Politics and Policy Conference, Dartmouth College (2025)

Discussant, Keeping the Republic Conference, Notre Dame University (2023).

APSA Class & Inequality Section Best Dissertation Award Committee (2023).

Discussant &/or Chair: APSA, MPSA, SPSA (2019-).

Referee for the *American Journal of Political Science*, *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, *American Politics Research*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *De Gruyter Books*, *Emergency Medicine Australasia*, *Health Economics*, *Journal of Politics*, *Journal of Legislative Studies*, *Journalism*, *Perspectives on Politics*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *Political Behavior*, *Political Geography*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*.

University and Department:

Residential Masters Degree Committee, Department of Health Management & Policy, University of Michigan, 2025-present.

Health Policy Student Association, Lansing Day Advisor, University of Michigan, Spring 2025.

Institute for Social Research, Faculty Associate, University of Michigan, 2025-present.

Center for Political Studies, Faculty Associate, University of Michigan, 2025-present.

Institute for Health Policy Innovation, Faculty Affiliate, University of Michigan, 2024-present.

UT Expert-Health Policy and Politics Expert Witness and Media Commenter, the University of Texas at Austin (2022-2024).

Archer Fellows Program, Faculty Selection Committee, University of Texas at Austin (2023-2024).

Faculty Connections Program, Faculty Mentor, University of Texas at Austin (2022-2024).

Policy Agendas Project, Faculty Affiliate, University of Texas at Austin (2022-2024).

Politics of Race and Ethnicity Lab, Faculty Affiliate, University of Texas at Austin (2022-2024).

Teaching Experience

Public Health Advocacy (UG) - Spring 2025

Rural Health Politics and Policy Reading Course (G) - Spring 2025

Gun Politics Reading Course (G) - Spring 2024

Mass Media & Democracy (G) - Spring 2024

Health & Society Capstone (UG) - Fall 2022, 2023

Rural Politics Reading Course (G) - Summer 2023

Mass Media & Democracy (UG) - Spring 2023

Current Approaches to Health & Society (UG) - Spring 2023, 2024

Politics of Health in the US (UG) - Spring 2022

Exploratory Data Analyses (G) - Fall 2021

Math Camp (G) - August 2016

Advising Experience

Doctoral Committees

Sujatha Changolkar (2025-present), committee member, University of Michigan.

Betty Compton (2024-present), committee member, University of Texas at Austin.

Seung Wook Ethan Yoo (2023-present), committee member, University of Texas at Austin.

Chris Cassella (defended 2025), committee member, University of Texas at Austin.

Master's Committees

Allison Verrilli (2023-2024), committee member, University of Texas at Austin.

Clinton Willbanks (2023-2024), committee member, University of Texas at Austin.

Senior Thesis Committees

Jordana Hozman (2025), second reader, University of Chicago.

Max Beard (2024), second reader, University of Texas at Austin.

Jake Dring (2024), chair, University of Texas at Austin.

Beril Saygin (2024), second reader, University of Texas at Austin.

Dylan Shears (2024), second reader, University of Texas at Austin.

Jenna Patton (2023), second reader, University of Texas at Austin.

Advocacy/Community Engagement

Michigan Health and Hospital Association–Rural Council. June 2025.

Office of Senator Raphael Warnock. June 2025.

Office of Representative Marc Veasey. June 2025.

Families USA. June 2025.

National Rural Health Association. June 2025.

Center for Health Care Strategies. June 2025.

Michigan's Children. April 2025.

Michigan League for Public Policy. March 2025.

Other Professional Experience

Founding Member, Rural-Urban Bridge Initiative, 2021-present.

Research Consultant, Jon Meacham, Nashville, TN, 2019-2021.

AP Visiting Fellow, AP Government Exam, Summer 2020.

Voter Protection Fellow, Tennessee Democratic Party, Nashville, TN, Fall 2018.

Campaign Researcher, Jim Cooper for Congress, Nashville, TN, Summer 2015.

Fundraising Executive, Kimberly Wood and Associates, Akron, OH, 2014-2015.

References

Available upon request

Last updated: June 30, 2025