

NICHOLAS X. MUENCH

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS:

Holy Cross College:

Visiting assistant professor, Politics and Public Service Department, July 2026-present

Pitzer College:

Visiting assistant professor, Political Studies Field Group, July 2024-June 2026

Concurrent appointment, History Field Group, July 2025-present

EDUCATION:

University of California, Los Angeles:

Ph.D. in Political Science, June 2025

Dissertation: “Thinking across Borders: Islamic Political Thought in Moments of Crisis”

Committee: Anthony Pagden (chair), Davide Panagia, Tejas Parasher, and Michael

Cooperson (department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures).

Fields of study: Political theory (primary); international relations (secondary); Islamic studies (minor).

M.A. in Political Science, June 2020

Qualifying paper: “Rifa‘a al-Tahtawi’s Argument for Engagement with Europe: *Takhliṣ al-ibris fī talkhis bariz* as a Mirror for Muhammad ‘Ali.” Passed with distinction.

University of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN:

B.A., 2015. Majors: Program of Liberal Studies; Arabic Literature and Language

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS:

Dissertation Research Fellowship, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, September 2023-June 2024.

Dissertation Year Fellowship, UCLA Graduate Division, January-December 2023.

Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad, US Department of Education, May-December 2022, awarded for archival research in Madrid, Spain and Tangier, Morocco.

Swarr Prize, UCLA Department of Political Science, June 2020, awarded to the best unpublished paper in the department.

Foreign Languages and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship, UCLA Center for Near Eastern Studies, Summer 2019, awarded for Arabic language coursework at the Qasid Institute in Amman, Jordan.

Department Fellowship, UCLA, Department of Political Science, Summers 2018-2020.
University Fellowship, UCLA, Graduate Division, Fall 2017-Spring 2018.

PUBLICATIONS:

“Rifa‘a al-Tahtawi’s Mirror for Mehmed ‘Ali: Reconsidering the Genre of *Takhlis al-Ibriz*,” *Comparative Political Theory*, v. 4, no. 2 (2024),
<https://doi.org/10.1163/26669773-bja10068>.

MANUSCRIPT IN PREPARATION:

Thinking across Borders: Islamic Political Thought in Moments of Crisis.

WORKING PAPERS:

“*Aljamiado*, Nebrija, and the Politics of Translation in Early Modern Spain.” Under review with the *European Journal of Political Theory*.
“Language in Tension: Performing Islam in Early Modern Spain.”
“Al-Ghazali’s Critique of *Taqīd*: Revival and the Canon.”

SELECTED CONFERENCES AND INVITED PRESENTATIONS:

“The Embroidered Garment: The Poetics of Democracy in the Work of al-Farabi.”
American Political Association, Boston, MA, September 2026.
“Representing the Virtuous City: The Poetics of al-Farabi’s Political Thought.” Western Political Science Association, San Diego, CA, April 2026.
“Al-Ghazali’s Generative Poetics and the Politics of Mysticism.” American Political Science Association, Vancouver, Canada, September 2025
“Al-Ghazali’s Critique of *Taqīd*: Revival and the Canon.” Western Political Science Association, Seattle, WA, April 2025.
“Language in Tension: Translation, Interiority, and Early Modern Spanish Islam,”
Western Political Science Association, Vancouver, Canada, March 2024.
“Al-Ghazali’s Generative Poetics and the Politics of Revival,” UCLA Political Theory Workshop, Los Angeles, CA, February 2024.
“Thinking Comparison as Translation,” Association for Political Theory, Schenectady, NY, October 2023.
“Translating Political Theory: Translation as a Comparative Paradigm,” American Political Science Association, Los Angeles, CA, August 2023. Presented virtually due to the Unite Here Local 11 strike.
“Language In Tension: Translation, Interiority, and Early Modern Spanish Islam,”
Political Science Department Seminar, UCLA Department of Political Science, June 2023.

Discussant for William Selinger, University of Oklahoma, “Why Did Montesquieu Write *The Persian Letters*?,” UCLA Political Theory Workshop, June 2023.

“Unspeakable Faith: *Aljamiado*, Interiority, and Translation in Early Modern Spain,” Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, April 2023.

“*Aljamiado* Manuscripts at the Biblioteca Tomás Navarro Tomás,” Fulbright España Spring Seminar, Universidad de Málaga, May 2022.

“Al-Ghazali’s Criticism of *Taqlid*,” Western Political Science Association, Portland, OR, March 2022.

“Al-Tahtawi’s Mirror for Muhammad ‘Ali: *Takhlis al-Ibriz fi Talkhis Bariz* between Tradition and Change,” Western Political Science Association, virtual, April 2021.

Discussant for Jacob Levy, McGill University, “‘Quite Obscure until Now’: Montesquieu’s Constitutional History, Foundings, and the Modern State,” UCLA Political Theory Workshop, April 2021.

Discussant for Robert Nichols, University of Minnesota, “Theft is Property! Dispossession and Critical Theory,” UCLA Political Theory Workshop, February 2020.

“Difference and the General Will: Pluralism and Populism through Rousseau’s Social Contract,” American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, August 2019.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

Holy Cross College (as lead instructor)

- “Introduction to American Government,” politics and public service department, Fall 2026.
- “1492: The Politics of Personhood from Islamic Spain to the Aztec Empire,” Fall 2026.

Pitzer College (as lead instructor)

- “Political Theory and the Politics of Travel Literature,” Spring 2026.
- “Race, Religion, and Empire in Early Modern Spain,” Spring 2026.
- “Modern Political Thought,” Fall 2025.
- “Islamic Political Thought,” Spring 2025.
- “Conquest, Conversion, *Convivencia*: the Politics of Personhood in al-Andalus (Spain) and the Americas,” Fall 2024 and Spring 2025.
- “Introduction to Political Philosophy,” Fall 2024 – Spring 2026.

UCLA (as a teaching assistant, associate, or fellow)

- “Late Modern Political Theory,” Davide Panagia: Winter 2022 and Winter 2024.
- “Introduction to Political Theory,” Davide Panagia: Fall 2018 and Fall 2021.
- “The Roots of Democracy,” Daniel Treisman: Spring 2021.
- “The Politics of International Law,” Leslie Johns: Winter 2019 and Spring 2020-Winter 2021.
- “Early Modern Political Theory,” Anthony Pagden: Spring 2019.
- “The Laws of War and Peace,” Anthony Pagden: Fall 2019.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE:

Graduate student researcher, Davide Panagia, Department of Political Science, UCLA, Spring 2024.

Graduate student researcher, Leslie Johns, Department of Political Science, UCLA, Winter 2020-Summer 2020.

LANGUAGES:

English: native

Spanish: advanced

Arabic: advanced

French: intermediate

Portuguese: reading

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS:

Islamic political thought; Comparative and global political theory; early modern political theory; religion and politics; cosmopolitanism and pluralism; international law.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS:

American Political Science Association (APSA); Association for Political Theory (APT); Western Political Science Association (WPSA); Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA); Middle East Studies Association (MESA); American Society for Premodern Asia (ASPA).