

Brenda Gellner

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

School of Public Policy, University of Connecticut
Visiting Assistant Professor, August 2024 – Present

EDUCATION

PhD in Public Policy and Management
Daniel J. Evans School of Public Policy and Governance, University of Washington, June 2024

Dissertation: *Primary Care Physicians as Street-Level Bureaucrats*
Committee: Heather D. Hill (Chair), Rachel Fyall, Ines Jurcevic, Christian Helfrich

Graduate Certificate in Demographic Methods
Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology, June 2021

Master of Public Affairs
Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin, Madison, May 2017

Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics, Minor in Spanish
Northwestern University, June 2014

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Street-level bureaucracy, administrative discretion, coproduction, mixed-methods, and computational text analysis.

MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW

Who Gets to Coproduce? Street-Level Discretion and the Interpretation of Technical Client Indicators.
(Revise & Resubmit at *Journal of Behavioral Public Administration*, August 2025).

MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION

How Discretion Feels: Narratives of Constraint Among Professional Street-Level Bureaucrats.
Explores how primary care physicians experience and narrate constraints on discretion in public service delivery using a phenomenological approach.

Primary Care Physicians as Street-Level Bureaucrats: A Theoretical Perspective.

Develops a theoretical framework for understanding primary care physicians as street-level bureaucrats.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Physicians in the Headlines: Media Framing of Physician Discretion in the U.S. Opioid Crisis

Analyzes how U.S. news media frame physicians' discretion, agency, and narrative roles during the opioid crisis. Combines qualitative coding and LLM-based annotation to develop a replicable workflow for large-scale content analysis.

Burned Out by the System: Primary Care Physicians and the Costs of Constrained Discretion

Draws on 30 interviews to examine how physicians respond to threats to their discretion. Identifies coping strategies such as boundary setting, mindset shifts, and changes to clinical practice. Analyzes implications for well-being and retention.

HONORS AND AWARDS

May 2025	Faculty Mentor, SHARE Virtual Summer Apprenticeship, Office of Undergraduate Research (\$500)
June 2024	Outstanding Teaching Assistant (selected by MPA students), Evans Student Organization, University of Washington
2022 – 2023	Dissertation Fellow, The Office of Graduate Student Equity and Excellence, University of Washington
November 2021	Travel Award, Daniel J. Evans School of Public Policy & Governance, University of Washington, Seattle
November 2019	Travel Award, Daniel J. Evans School of Public Policy & Governance, University of Washington, Seattle
May 2019	Dissertation Proposal Workshop Attendee (1 of 12 students selected), Howard University's Center on Race and Wealth and The Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin, Madison
November 2018	Equity and Inclusion Fellow, Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM)
2018 – 2019	Presidential Fellow, Graduate Opportunities and Minority Achievement Program (GO-MAP), University of Washington

CONFERENCE PANELS AND PRESENTATIONS

Paper presenter, *Discretion: Primary Care Physicians' Perceptions, Threats, and Coping Strategies*. The American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) spring conference (April 2025; Washington, DC).

Poster session moderator. Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) fall conference (November 2020; online).

Moderator, *Equity and Inclusion Session: Discussions with the Future Leaders of Tomorrow*. Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) fall conference (November 2019; Denver, CO).

Poster presenter, *Medical Team Discretion and Informal Caregiver Well-Being*. Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) fall conference (November 2019; Denver, CO).

Poster presenter, *Caregiver and Medical Team Interactions and Caregiver Well-Being and Perceptions of the Caregiving Experience*. Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science (IAPHS) fall conference (October 2019; Seattle, WA).

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Connecticut, 2024 – Present

Economic Analysis for Public Policy and Management. (PP 5375). Fall 2024, 2025. Both in-person and online formats.

Policy Analysis (PP 5342). Spring 2025, 2026. Both in-person and online formats.

Cases in Public Policy (PP 3020W). Spring 2026.

University of Washington, 2019 – 2024 (as Graduate Teaching Assistant)

Economics for Policy Analysis and Management I. (PUBPOL 516). Fall 2019, 2020, 2021, 2023.

Economics for Policy Analysis and Management II. (PUBPOL 517). Winter 2020, 2021, 2022, 2024.

Quantitative Analysis II. (PUBPOL 528). Spring 2021, 2022, 2024.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

University of Connecticut's School of Public Policy Research Seminar Series Committee, Member, 2025 – Present.

University of Connecticut's School of Public Policy MPP Committee, Member, 2025 – Present.

University of Connecticut's School of Public Policy MPA Committee, Member, 2024 – 2025.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)

International Shared Decision-Making Society (ISDMS)
Public Management Research Association (PMRA)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

June 2023 – August 2023	Mini-Capstone Advisor for the Public Policy and International Affairs (PPIA) Junior Summer Institute (JSI) Fellowship Program Daniel J. Evans School of Public Policy and Governance University of Washington, Seattle
September 2017 – June 2019 March 2020 – June 2020	Graduate Research Assistant to Professor Heather D. Hill Daniel J. Evans School of Public Policy and Governance University of Washington, Seattle
August 2016 – May 2017	Program Assistant to Research Associate Torsheika Maddox, PhD Office of the Vice Provost and Chief Diversity Office Division of Diversity, Equity, and Educational Achievement University of Wisconsin, Madison
January 2016 – August 2016	Project Management Intern Office of Economic & Workforce Development Dane County Executive's Office