

Gabriella Colello

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Professional Summary

Ph.D. candidate in International Relations whose work investigates how institutions interpret and respond to high-stakes security challenges, including nuclear escalation, AI-assisted security infrastructures, and catastrophic environmental impact. My research draws on archival investigation, interviews, qualitative coding, and evidence triangulation to analyze how decisionmakers assess risk and justify policy choices.

Core Competencies

Nuclear weapons politics and strategic stability • AI and emerging technologies in security and decision systems • Global catastrophic and systemic risk • Institutional behavior under uncertainty • Environmental security • Differential vulnerability under catastrophic risk, including gendered and intergenerational patterns • Politics of Oceania • Qualitative and interpretive methods • Archival research • Interviewing and field-based evidence collection • Qualitative coding and document analysis • Process tracing and source triangulation • FOIA navigation • Legislative and policy analysis • Data management •

Education

Ph.D., Political Science (ABD, expected 2027)

University of California, Irvine

Fields: International Relations; Political Theory;

Dissertation: *Securing Precarious Worlds: Institutions, Catastrophic Risk, and the Politics of Survival*

M.A., Political Science

University of California, Irvine

B.A., Political Science (summa cum laude)

Quinnipiac University

Policy Relevant Experience

Research Assistant

University of California, Irvine | July–Aug 2023

- Conducted research on nuclear politics and environmental security in Oceania.
- Performed document analysis for an ACLS/Mellon project on community-engaged governance.
- Produced a thematic index for publication to support cross-cutting institutional analysis.

National Political Advocacy Intern – Equality Division

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Washington, D.C. | June–Aug 2022

- Developed a federal legislative strategy proposal including political feasibility assessments.
- Created opposition research and legislator-specific briefings using multi-state policy data.
- Built and analyzed a dataset of 200+ state-level legislative actions related to Indigenous justice.

Policy Fellow & Researcher

Central European Institute at Quinnipiac University | Sept 2020–May 2021

- Produced quarterly policy briefs on minority rights and governance in Hungary.
- Monitored political developments and assessed implications for regional stability.

Legislative Intern to the Senate President Pro Tempore

Connecticut General Assembly | Jan–Apr 2021

- Tracked active legislation and produced briefings for senior staff.
- Synthesized constituent feedback and legislative priorities.

Additional Relevant Experience

Adjunct Professor, Introduction to Comparative Politics

Fullerton College | 2025–Present

- Design and teach a survey course for 40+ students covering institutions, environmental politics, nuclear command and control, public health governance, regime stability, etc.
- Develop modules that translate complex comparative politics concepts into clear, accessible lesson plans and assessments for an introductory class.
- Integrate simulations/“wargaming,” case-based analysis, and structured decision exercises to strengthen analytical reasoning among early-stage undergraduates.

Lead Facilitator & Coach, Fellowship Mentorship Program

University of California, Irvine (Graduate Division) | 2023–Present

- Design and deliver 30 hours of annual training curricula for grant/fellowship writing coaches, focusing on high-stakes national funding opportunities.
- Oversee recruitment, hiring, training, and performance evaluation for 6–8 coaches each cycle.
- Have successfully coached grant and fellowship applicants through 150+ hours of individualized support, adapting strategies to align with shifting funding landscapes and political climates.
- In the 2025 award year, program participants made up 50% of UCI's NSF GRFP awardees and 38% of Honorable Mentions in 2024-25, achieving a 20% success rate despite historic federal funding cuts.

Data Collection Lead, International Mining Risk Analysis

Spatiotemporal Information Analysis Services | 2019–20

- Managed environmental and regulatory datasets for 7,000+ mine sites and supported integration of large-scale data into a global environmental risk database.

Select Trainings

Public Policy and Nuclear Threats (PPNT) Bootcamp

UC Institute on Global Conflict & Cooperation

- Intensive training in the technology and policy surrounding nuclear deterrence, command and control, arms control regimes, escalation dynamics, and decisionmaking.

Qualitative and Interpretive Methods Workshops

International Studies Association

- Included both feedback and training in interviewing, process tracing, interpretive analysis, qualitative inference, and mixed-methods design for security and institutional research

Human Rights and Global Engagement Symposium

Oxford Consortium on Human Rights, virtual

- Workshops on global governance, political violence, and institutional accountability

Select Fellowships and Awards

National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship (NSF GRFP)

2023–2028 • Award: \$147,000

Eugene Cota-Robles Graduate Fellowship

2022–2028 • Award: \$107,256

Kugelman Research Fellowship, UCI Center for Citizen Peacebuilding

2025–2026 • Award: \$1,500

Brython-Davis Fellowship

2025 • Award: \$12,000

Cascading Mentorship Fellowship

2025 • Award: \$3,981.55

References

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