

**KIRA K. TAIT**  
Department of Political Science  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
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## **EDUCATION**

### **Ph.D. in Political Science (expected May 2021)**

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Dissertation: “Roadblocks to Access: Perceptions of Law and Socioeconomic Problems in South Africa”

Sub-fields: Public Law and Comparative Politics

### **BA (Hon.) in Political Science, December 2013**

John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY)

Senior Colloquium Thesis: Democracy & Development-Revisited

## **FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS**

### *External Fellowships & Awards*

2020 *APSA Centennial Center Research Grant* (\$4,500) to host pre-conference at 2021 National Conference of Black Political Scientists on “Overcoming Barriers: Transnational Black Womxn Scholars of African Politics Network.” (with co-organizers: Tiffany Willoughby-Heard, Robin Turner, Adom Getachew, Takiyah Harper-Shipman).

2018 *Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant* (\$18,348),  
Award Number: 1823644  
Law and Social Sciences Program, National Science Foundation

2018 *U.S. Fulbright Student Award* (\$26,750),  
Fulbright Student Research Award, Institute for International Education

2017 *Fulbright-Group Project Abroad Fellowship in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*,  
African Languages Program, University of Pennsylvania (Zulu Immersion Program)

2016 *Charles Mark Scholarship for Foreign Language Study* (\$2,000),  
Five College Center for the Study of World Languages (to study Zulu)

### *Internal Fellowships & Awards*

2020 Three-Minute Thesis Competition Winner and People’s Choice Award (\$1,500),  
Graduate School, University of Massachusetts Amherst

2019 *Summer Research & Writing Grant* (\$2,500),  
Department of Political Science, University of Massachusetts Amherst

- 2018 *Dissertation Fieldwork Grant* (\$4,500),  
Graduate School, University of Massachusetts Amherst
- 2017 *Summer Language and Training* (\$2,000),  
Department of Political Science, University of Massachusetts Amherst (to study Zulu)
- 2015 *Summer Research Grant* (\$2,000),  
Department of Political Science, University of Massachusetts Amherst
- 2014 *Diversity Fellowship* (\$18,500),  
Graduate School, University of Massachusetts Amherst
- 2013 *Undergraduate Research Scholarship* (\$1,500),  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY)
- 2013 *Summer Research Internship Grant* (\$2,000),  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY)
- 2012 *The Young Scholars Award* (\$1,500),  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY)

#### **WORKING PAPERS / UNDER REVIEW**

Tait, Kira and Taylor, Whitney K. "Doubt in the State of Rights: Looking Back on 25 Years of Democratic Rule in South Africa" (under review in *African Affairs*)

Tait, Kira. "The Violence of Evictions: The Poor's Removal from the Purview of the State," working paper.

#### **CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

"The State of Rights: Looking Back on Twenty-Five Years of Social Rights Constitutionalism in South Africa" with Whitney Taylor. Accepted at *Law & Society Association Annual Meeting*. Denver, Colorado. May 2020 (withdrawn due to Covid-19).

"The Violence of Evictions: The Poor's Removal from the Purview of the State in South Africa." Presented at *The National Conference of Black Political Scientists*. Atlanta, GA, March 2020.

"I Can't Go to Court, How Perceptions of Litigation Impact Legal Mobilization in Post-Apartheid South Africa." Presented at *American Political Science Association Annual Meeting*. Washington, DC, August 2019.

"To Claim or Not to Claim? How Interpretations of Rights and Courts Impacts Claims-Making Strategies in Post-Apartheid South Africa." Presented at *Law and Society Association Annual Meeting*. Washington, DC, May 2019.

"Roadblocks to Access: Interpretations of Legal Institutions in Post-Apartheid South Africa". Seminar presented at *South African Institute for Advanced Constitutional, Public, Human Rights and International Law* (SAIFAC). Johannesburg, SA, April 2019.

"Roadblocks to Access: Interpretations of Legal Institutions in Post-Apartheid South Africa". Presented at the *University of Texas at Austin Graduate Student Public Law Conference*. Austin, TX, November 2017.

"Judicial Review and Education in select African countries." Presented at *Northeastern Political Science Association Annual Meeting*. Boston, MA, November 2012

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

### *Instructor*

Introduction to Legal Studies (online): Winter 2020

Introduction to Constitutional Law: Fall 2019

### *Teaching Assistant*

Introduction to Comparative Politics: Fall 2020

Introduction to Legal Studies: Spring 2018, Spring 2017, Spring 2016, Fall 2015

### *Grader*

Introduction to World Politics: Fall 2017, Fall 2016

## **PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

1/2014-8/2014      **Supportive Children's Advocacy Network (SCAN)**  
Youth Counselor

2/2012-5/2012      **U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (New York)**  
Intake and Enforcement Intern

2011-2013          **John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY)**  
Research Assistant for Jennifer Rutledge, PhD

2011-2014          **Brooklyn Center for Rehabilitation and Residential Healthcare**  
Therapeutic Recreation Aide

## **DEPARTMENT AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

2016-2020      Graduate Peer Mentor, Department of Political Science & Legal Studies

Spring 2020      Law and Social Inquiry Reviewer

## **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

Law and Society Association

American Political Science Association

National Conference of Black Political Scientists

**LANGUAGES**

isiZulu (proficient reading and speaking)