

Sean Nikos Messarra

Academic appointments

2025 Assistant Professor of History and Core Fellow
University of St. Thomas, Houston, Texas

Education

2024 Ph.D., History, UCLA
Dissertation: [“Persons, personation, and the personality of the *populus*: Cicero and the language of representation in scholastic political thought from St. Thomas Aquinas to Francisco de Vitoria.”](#)
Committee: Peter Stacey (chair), Anthony Pagden, Kevin Terraciano, Stefania Tutino

2018 M.A., History, UCLA

2015 M.A., Latin American Studies, UCLA
Thesis: [“Representation and the State in the Early Modern Spanish Empire.”](#)
Committee: Kevin Terraciano (chair), Anthony Pagden, Peter Stacey

2013 B.A., History, UCLA
Thesis: “The Second Discovery of the New World: Foreign Perspectives on Early Nineteenth-Century Mexico.” (Department Highest Honors Awarded.)
Advisor: Maria Eugenia Vazquez Samedani

Teaching & research specializations

Intellectual history and political thought, 1350-1850. Religion, politics, and early modern cultures. States and empires in Latin America.

Publications

Books

2026 *Representation, Scholasticism, and Early Modern Political Thought* (in progress).

Articles

2020 ["Representation and scholastic political thought,"](#) *History of European Ideas* 46, no. 6 (2020): 737-53.

Teaching

Instructor of Record

Fall 2026 "Politics and Society" & "History of Western Culture and Ideas." UST.
Spring 2026 "Politics and Society." UST.
Fall 2025 "History of Western Culture and Ideas." UST.
Spring 2023 "Conciliarism and Papalism: Lineages of Constitutionalism and Absolutism." UCLA.
Winter 2023 "Conciliarism and Papalism: Lineages of Constitutionalism and Absolutism." UCLA.
Fall 2022 "Representation in the History of Political Thought: The Roman Republic to the English Civil War." UCLA.
Spring 2019 "Hospitality & Cosmopolitanism: Political Thought from Ancient Greece to the Enlightenment." UCLA.
Spring 2018 "A Genealogy of Representation: Political Thought from Ancient Greece to Weimar Germany." UCLA.

Teaching Assistant (UCLA)

Winter 2019 "History of Modern Thought: 19th to 20th century," Theodore Porter & Amir Alexander
Fall 2018 "History of Modern Thought: 16th to 18th century," Joshua Dienstag & Sarah Kareem
Winter 2018 "History of Modern Thought: 19th to 20th century," Theodore Porter & Christopher Kelty
Fall 2017 "History of Modern Thought: 16th to 18th century," Joshua Dienstag & Sarah Kareem
Spring 2017 "Mystics, Heretics, and Witches in Western Tradition: 1000-1600," Teofilo Ruiz
Winter 2017 "Introduction to Western Civilization: c. A.D. 843 to c. 1715," Muriel McClendon
Fall 2016 "Colonial Latin America," Kevin Terraciano

Reader (UCLA)

Spring 2022 "History of European Political Thought: From Ancient Democracy to the French Revolution," Peter Stacey
Winter 2022 "Cultural and Intellectual History of Modern Europe: 15th century," Peter Stacey
Fall 2021 "History of European Political Thought: From Ancient Democracy to the French Revolution," Peter Stacey
Winter 2020 "Cultural and Intellectual History of Modern Europe: 16th century," Stefania Tutino
Fall 2019 "Early American Political Thought: 1789-1865," Cody Trojan

Invited Talks

- Winter 2024 Majoritarianism, Collective Action, and *Homonoia*
Discussant for paper presented by guest Daniela Cammack at UCLA, Political Theory Workshop

Conference papers

- Spring 2014 “The Spanish monarchy and its American kingdoms.”
Paper presented at the first UCLA International Institute Graduate Student Conference, University of California, Los Angeles, May 16, 2014
- Spring 2014 “Neglecting the Conquest: The Absence of Sixteenth-Century Spanish and Spanish-American Artwork of the Conquest of Mexico.”
Paper presented at the eighth annual UCR Graduate Student Conference, Representations of Violence in Cultural Production, University of California, Riverside, April 24, 2014
- Spring 2014 “Representation in the Spanish Empire of the Sixteenth Century.”
Paper presented at the Latin American Studies Section of the annual Western Social Science Association Conference, Hyatt Regency Downtown – Albuquerque, New Mexico, April 5, 2014
- Winter 2014 “America’s Place in the Western Tradition.”
Paper presented at the annual Latin American Studies Student Association Conference on Latin America, University of Texas at Austin, February 28, 2014
- Fall 2012 “Foreign Travelers’ Accounts in Historical Practice.”
Paper presented at the annual Southern California Regional Conferences for Undergraduate Research, California State University – Channel Islands, November 17, 2012

Awards, fellowships & grants

- 2022 Graduate Fellowship, UCLA Department of History
- 2021 Graduate Fellowship, UCLA Department of History
- 2020 Graduate Fellowship, UCLA Department of History
- 2019 Dissertation Year Fellowship (awarded for Teaching Award), UCLA Graduate Division
- 2019 Distinguished Teaching Award for Teaching Assistants, UCLA Academic Senate Committee on Teaching
- 2018 Weber Chair Research Funds, UCLA Department of History
- 2017 Weber Chair Research Funds, UCLA Department of History
- 2016 Graduate Summer Research Mentorship, UCLA Graduate Division
- 2015 Graduate Fellowship, UCLA Department of History

University & department service

- 2026 Committee member, Course description revisions for “History of Western Culture and Ideas,” UST.
2021 Graduate representative, Bruman chair in German history, faculty search committee, UCLA.

Languages & skills

English: native proficiency

Spanish, French, Latin: reading