

Austin R. Nelson

University of Michigan Law School
625 South State Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1215

Email: austinrn@umich.edu
Office Phone: 734-763-4162
Office: Legal Research #806

EMPLOYMENT

University of South Carolina (starting August 2026) *Columbia, South Carolina*
Assistant Professor (tenure-track), Joseph F. Rice School of Law

University of Michigan Law School, 2024–2026 *Ann Arbor, Michigan*
Visiting Assistant Professor, Michigan Faculty Fellows Program

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, 2023–2024 *Little Rock, Arkansas*
Law Clerk, Hon. Lavenski R. Smith

EDUCATION

Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin, 2025 *Austin, Texas*
College of Liberal Arts, Department of Government
Major Field: Public Law, Minor Field: American Politics
Committee: H.W. Perry Jr., Jeffrey Tulis, Sanford Levinson & William Forbath

J.D., University of Texas School of Law, 2022 *Austin, Texas*
With Honors, Dean's Achievement Awards in Constitutional History & Evidence
Texas Law Review, Articles Editor (vol. 99) & Outstanding Political Note Award (2021)
Texas Review of Law & Politics, Submissions Editor (vol. 26) & Manuscripts Editor (vol. 25)
Supreme Court Clinic (represented Ramirez in *Ramirez v. Collier*, 595 U.S. 411 (2022))

M.P.P.A., Baylor University, 2017 *Waco, Texas*
College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Political Science
Honors: Departmental award for distinguished master's student

B.A., Hendrix College, 2015 *Conway, Arkansas*
First Major: Politics, Second Major: Philosophy & Religious Studies
Honors: *Summa cum laude*, distinction in both majors, three departmental awards

COURSES TAUGHT

- Introduction to Constitutional Law (Spring 2026)
- Economic Liberty in Early America (Spring 2025)

PUBLICATIONS

- “*Passing a Complete Code*”: *The Framers’ Failed Effort to Nationalize Contract Law*, 33 GEO. MASON L. REV. ___ (forthcoming Dec. 2025).
- Note, *Evaluating the Evaluator: Has the ABA Rated President Trump’s Judicial Nominees Fairly?*, 99 TEX. L. REV. 193 (2020) (received the Texas Law Review’s Outstanding Political Note Award).
- Note, *A Pragmatic Approach to the Second Amendment*, 24 TEX. REV. L. & POL. 263 (2019).

CONFERENCE PAPERS

- *Rethinking Preemption*, University of Michigan Law School Junior Faculty Forum, Ann Arbor, Michigan (Oct. 11, 2025).
- *Making Militant Democracy Democratic: The Case for Legislatures*, Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association (APSA), Seattle, Washington (Oct. 3, 2021) (awarded APSA’s Lee Ann Fujii Diversity Fellowship Program Travel Grant).
- *Reconstituting American Federalism: The Marshall Court and the Contract Cases*, Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) (Apr. 16, 2021) (virtual).
- *Reconstituting American Federalism: The Marshall Court and the Contract Cases*, Annual Meeting of the Western Political Science Association (WPSA) (Apr. 3, 2021) (virtual).
- *Commercial Republicanism and the Origin of the Contract Clause*, Shawnee Trail Regional Conference on American Politics and Constitutionalism, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs (Apr. 20, 2018).
- *A Pragmatic Approach to the Second Amendment*, Shawnee Trail Regional Conference on American Politics and Constitutionalism, University of Missouri, Columbia (May 21, 2016).
- *Race and Redistricting: How Racial Gerrymandering Benefits Black Voters and Republicans*, Annual Meeting of the Arkansas Political Science Association (ArkPSA), Hendrix College, Conway, Arkansas (Feb. 28, 2015) (received ArkPSA’s Best Undergraduate Paper Award).
- *Race and Redistricting: How Racial Gerrymandering Benefits Black Voters and Republicans*, Pi Sigma Alpha National Undergraduate Conference, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. (Feb. 14, 2015).

SELECTED TALKS

- “*Passing a Complete Code*”: *The Framers’ Failed Effort to Nationalize Contract Law*, Legal Theory Workshop (weekly faculty lunch), University of Michigan Law School (Aug. 19, 2025).
- “Reconsidering the Role of a Common Law Judge,” Respondent to Hon. Sarah K. Campbell (Tennessee Supreme Court Justice), University of Michigan Law School (Mar. 20, 2025).
- “*Passing a Complete Code*”: *The Framers’ Failed Effort to Nationalize Contract Law*, Student Scholarship Workshop, University of Michigan Law School (Mar. 13, 2025).
- “Affirmative Racial Redistricting and the Voting Rights Act,” Geometry of Redistricting Workshop, University of Texas at Austin Department of Mathematics (Feb. 4, 2018).

RESEARCH GRANTS

- Graduate School Summer Fellowship, University of Texas at Austin (2023)
- Malcolm Macdonald Dissertation Fellowship, University of Texas at Austin (2022)
- Humane Studies/Dan Searle Fellowship, Institute for Humane Studies (2020–2021)
- Minority/Diversity Fellowship, American Political Science Association (2018–2019)
- Pre-Dissertation Research Fellowship, University of Texas at Austin (2018)

AWARDS, HONORS & SCHOLARSHIPS

- Graduate Student Fellowships, University of Texas at Austin (2017–2020, 2023)
- Diversity in the Profession Bar Preparation Scholarship, State Bar of Texas (2022)
- Tex Lezar Memorial Scholarship, *Texas Review of Law & Politics* (2021–2022)
- Outstanding Political Note Award, *Texas Law Review*/Norton Rose Fulbright (2021)
- Gregory S. Coleman Memorial Scholarship, *Texas Law Review* (2020–2021)
- Tex Lezar Memorial Scholarship, *Texas Review of Law & Politics* (2020–2021)
- Dean’s Achievement Award in Evidence, University of Texas School of Law (Summer 2020)
- Dean’s Achievement Award in Constitutional Law II: Constitutional History, University of Texas School of Law (Fall 2019)
- Dean’s Presidential Scholarship, University of Texas School of Law (2018–2022)
- Nonresident Tuition Scholarship, University of Texas School of Law (2018–2022)
- Richard D. Huff Award (distinguished master’s student), Baylor University (2017)
- Graduate Tuition Scholarship (full tuition), Baylor University (2015–2017)
- Best Undergraduate Paper Award, Arkansas Political Science Association (2015)
- Dr. John A. Ziegler Law Award (top constitutional law student), Hendrix College (2015)
- W.C. Buthman Prize in Politics (top politics major), Hendrix College (2015)
- Robert G. Shoemaker Award (top philosophy major), Hendrix College (2015)
- Pi Sigma Alpha, National Political Science Honor Society (2014)
- National Finalist, Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation (2014)
- Dean’s List (6x) (all As and 16+ hours of coursework), Hendrix College (2011–2014)
- Hendrix Academic & Odyssey Scholarships (full ride), Hendrix College (2011–2015)
- Governor’s Distinguished Scholarship (top 300 students attending in-state colleges), Arkansas Department of Higher Education (2011–2015)
- National Merit Scholarship, National Merit Scholarship Corporation (2011–2015)
- Valedictorian, Catholic High School for Boys, Little Rock, Arkansas (2011)
- Stephens Award, The City Education Trust of Little Rock (2011)
- National Hispanic Scholar, National Hispanic Recognition Program (2010–2011)
- Executive Women International of Little Rock Scholarship (2010)

ACADEMIC SERVICE

University of Texas at Austin (2018–2022)

- Co-organizer, University of Texas Graduate Conference in Public Law (2018–2022)
- Volunteer, Latino Law Day (recruitment event for Hispanic students), Chicano/Hispanic Law Students’ Association, University of Texas School of Law (2019–2021)

American Political Science Association (2018–2020)

- Co-chair, Committee on the Status of Graduate Students in the Profession (2018–2020)

BAR ADMISSION

- Texas (2022–present)