

Vanessa S. Williamson

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- EMPLOYMENT Brookings Institution
Senior Fellow, Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center. April 2019 to present.
Senior Fellow, Governance Studies. January 2019 to present.
Fellow, Governance Studies. July 2015 to December 2018.
- EDUCATION Harvard University
Ph.D. in Social Policy. May 2015.
- New York University
M.A. Institute of French Studies, high honors. 2004.
B.A. in French, magna cum laude. 2003.
- BOOK PROJECT *Taxation for Representation* traces the role of tax policy in the advances and reversals of American democracy. Just as it is essential to the initial development of representation, taxation shapes political developments when the bounds of representation are contested. Movements to expand suffrage have sought emancipatory taxation and public spending that would ensure a rough economic parity among American citizens and provide poor and marginalized people with the economic independence necessary for full political participation. The most powerful forces resisting taxation in America have also been the country's most anti-democratic elements; ready to support suffrage restrictions, malapportionment, minority rule, and sometimes direct intimidation and violence, to keep fiscal power in elite hands. Moreover, the same reactionary movements have also fought to undermine the state's fiscal powers where they might threaten wealth, and to push tax responsibilities onto the marginalized.
- BOOKS Vanessa Williamson. 2017. *Read My Lips*. Princeton University Press.
- Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson. 2012. *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism*. Oxford University Press.
- SELECTED
RESEARCH
PUBLICATIONS ‘We all want what’s best for our kids’: Discussions of public school options in an online forum. 2021. *Brookings*. Forthcoming, with Jackson Gode, and Hao Sun.
- [Closing the racial wealth gap requires heavy, progressive taxation of wealth](#). 2020. *Brookings*. December 9.
- [The long shadow of white supremacist fiscal policy](#). 2020. *Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center*. November 4.
- [Tax Time Voter Registration](#). 2020. *Tax Notes Federal*. August 10. pp. 931-935, with Jeremy Bearer-Friend.
- [How to boost voter registration at tax time](#). 2019. *Brookings*. October 15.
- [The Filer-Voter Experiment: How effective is voter registration at tax time?](#) 2019. *Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center*. April 2.

[The 'Tax Cuts and Jobs Act' and the 2018 midterms: Examining the potential electoral impact.](#) 2018. *Brookings*. August 27.

[Who are 'The Taxpayers'?](#) 2018. *The Forum* 16(3): 399-418.

[Public Ignorance or Elitist Jargon? Americans' Overestimates of Government Waste and Foreign Aid.](#) 2018. *American Politics Research* 47(1): 152-173.

[Black Lives Matter: Evidence that Police-Caused Deaths Predict Protest Activity.](#) 2018. *Perspectives on Politics* 16(2): 400-415, with Kris-Stella Trump, and Katherine Levine Einstein.

[What Makes Taxes Seem Fair?](#) 2017. *Tax Policy Center*. March 29.

[The impact of open government: Assessing the evidence.](#) 2016. *Brookings*. December 7, with Norm Eisen.

[The Polarizing Effect of the Stimulus: Partisanship and Voter Responsiveness to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.](#) 2016. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*: 46(2): 264-283, with Katherine Einstein, and Kris-Stella Trump.

[On the Ethics of Crowdsourced Research.](#) 2016. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 49(1): 77-81.

[The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism.](#) 2011. *Perspectives on Politics* 9(1): pp. 25-44, with Theda Skocpol and John Coggin.

SELECTED
POPULAR
PUBLICATIONS

[The Austerity Politics of White Supremacy.](#) *Dissent*. Winter 2021.

[Tonight, Biden could use Trump's returns to shift the debate on taxes.](#) *Washington Post*. September 29, 2020.

[The Philanthropy Con.](#) *Dissent*. Winter 2019.

[Public Futility.](#) *Democracy Journal*. Winter 2019.

['Tax-the-rich' policies are all the rage in the U.S.](#) *The Hill*. February 17, 2019.

[Right-to-Work Laws Have Devastated Unions – and Democrats.](#) James Feigenbaum, Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, and Vanesa Williamson. *New York Times*. March 8, 2018.

[How tax cuts for the wealthy became Republican orthodoxy.](#) *Washington Post*. December 21, 2017.

[How much do the poor actually pay in taxes? Probably more than you think.](#) *PBS Newshour*. June 8, 2017.

[What can \(or should\) activists learn from the tea party?](#) Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson. *Washington Post*. May 11, 2017.

[Americans are proud to pay taxes – except when they think others are cheating.](#) *Washington Post*. April 18, 2017.

[Tax Day brings out the revolutionary in us.](#) *CNN*. April 14, 2017.

[Could this be the left's tea party moment?](#) *CNN*. February 12, 2017.

[How the Women's March could have a lasting historical impact.](#) *Teen Vogue*. January 19, 2017.

[Tax Me. Please.](#) *New York Times*. October 8, 2016.

[Getting federal stimulus money turned blue U.S. counties bluer and red counties redder. How can that be?](#) Katherine Einstein, Kris-Stella Trump and Vanessa Williamson. *Washington Post*. June 2, 2016.

[Americans Love Paying Taxes.](#) *The Atlantic*. April 15, 2015.

[Whose Tea Party is it?](#) Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson. *New York Times*. December 26, 2011.

WORKING PAPERS	From the Bargaining Table to the Ballot Box: Political Effects of Right to Work Laws. James Feigenbaum, Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, and Vanessa Williamson.
SELECTED GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS	New Venture Fund, 2019-2021. Wellspring Philanthropic Fund. 2019-2021. New Venture Fund, 2017-2018. Arnold Foundation, 2016-2019. Tides Center, 2016. Washington Center for Equitable Growth, fellowship, 2014-2015. Blue Mountain Center, summer residency, June-July 2014. Harvard University, Center for American Political Studies, Program on the American Republic fellowship, Fall 2013. National Science Foundation IGERT Inequality and Social Policy Fellowship, 2011.
SELECTED PRESENTATIONS	“Reconstruction, Redemption, and the Rise of Taxpayer Citizenship.” Impact 2019. December. “Capitalism and Democracy: Can They Coexist?” The CUNY Graduate Center, May 2019. “Filer Voter: An Experiment Testing Voter Registration at Tax Time,” Indiana University School of Law Tax Policy Colloquium, February 2019. “Saving America, Once Again: Comparing the “Resistance” to the “Tea Party.” Columbia University. March 2018. “Why Americans Are Proud to Pay Taxes,” Oklahoma Policy Institute Annual Conference, Keynote. January 2018. “The 2016 Elections: Trump, Sanders and Political Transformation.” UCLA Center for Social Theory and Comparative History, April 2016. “Democracy and Its Discontents,” Central European University, October 2015. Columbia University, Graduate School of Journalism, October 2012. “Polarized Politics.” Berlin Colloquium, Europäische Akademie Berlin. May 2012. “Voter Mobilization: The Impact of the Occupy Wall Street and Tea Party Movements,” Columbia University, Institute for Social and Economic Research, March 2012. “Occupy Wall Street.” Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Institute of Politics, October 2011.

House of Representatives Committee on Veterans Affairs, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, July 2008.

APSA 2019, 2018, 2016, 2013. MPSA 2017, 2016, 2013, 2012. SSHA 2017, 2012. Policy History 2014.

TEACHING
EXPERIENCE

Johns Hopkins University
“Making Social Change.” Fall 2015, 2016, 2017.

San Quentin State Prison, Prison University Project (now Mt. Tamalpais College)
“Introduction to American Government.” Fall 2013.

Harvard University
“Sophomore Tutorial in Government.” Spring 2012. Teaching fellow.
“Foundations of Comparative Politics.” Fall 2012. Teaching fellow.

PREVIOUS
PROFESSIONAL
EXPERIENCE

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America
Research and Policy Director, 2006-2009.
Field Director, 2005-2006.