

ADAM D. SAXTON

Contact:

1363 E 52nd St. Apt. 3
Chicago, IL 60615

asaxton@uchicago.edu
612-991-5197

EDUCATION

Ph.D. University of Chicago, Political Science

August 2021 - Present

PhD Dissertation: *“The Labeling Game: Legal Labels in International Politics”*

Committee: Austin Carson, Paul Poast, Rochelle Terman

MA Thesis: “Classifying Conflict: Legal Labels and the Puzzle of Early Undeclared Wars”

Recipient of the department’s Kath Anderson Award for Best M.A. Thesis in Political Science

Qualifying subfields: International Relations (with honors), Quantitative Methods

M.A. University of Chicago, Committee on International Relations

2019

Thesis (with honors): “The Irony of International Law: How Regional Non-Intervention Commitments Incentivize Covert Intervention,”

B.A. University of Northwestern – St. Paul

2015

Majors: International Relations and History. Minor: Chinese Studies, *Summa Cum Laude*

Thesis: “Coming into the Light: Discerning the Normative Limits of Foreign Signals Intelligence,”

Additional courses in international relations at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities 2013-2015

PUBLICATIONS

Austin Carson and Adam Saxton, "History, Archaeology, and Espionage as Improvised Legibility" *European Journal of International Relations* 31, no. 4 (2025): 993-1019

WORKING PAPERS

“Legal Labels, Escalation, and the Puzzle of Early Undeclared Wars”

“Paper Wars: Belligerent Rights and Lingering States of War After 1945”

“Binding the Northern Colossus: The Curious Strength of Regional Treaties in U.S.-Latin American Relations”

“‘A Gift, Not a Trade’: Think Tanks, Extra-Governmental Expertise, and the Elite Politics of National Security” with Matthew Conklin

“Why Major Powers Stopped Declaring War: The Explosive Implications of Declaring a Legal State of War in the Nuclear Age” with Patrick Hulme

ACADEMIC CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“Paper Wars: Belligerent Rights and Lingering States of War After 1945”

- International Studies Association (ISA), Chicago, March 2025
- ISA - International Security Studies Section (ISSS), Pittsburgh, October 2024
- International Studies Association (ISA), Montreal, March 2023

“Classifying Conflicts: Legal Labels, Escalation, and the Puzzle of Early Undeclared Wars”

- American Political Science Association (APSA), Philadelphia, September 2024
- CATO Junior Scholars Symposium, Washington, DC, November 2024

“‘A Gift, Not a Trade’: Think Tanks, Extra-Governmental Expertise, and the Elite Politics of National Security”

- International Studies Association (ISA), San Francisco, April 2024 (with Matthew Conklin)

“War and the State of War: Legal Labels for Armed Conflict”

- Annual Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) Conference, April 2023
- Workshop on International Politics, University of Chicago, November 2022

“What’s in a Name? The Escalatory Implications of Declaring War”

- MPSA Conference, Chicago, April 2020 (Cancelled/Covid-19)

“Unintended Consequences: How International Law Incentivized Covert Interventions”

- MPSA Conference, Chicago, April 2022
- MPSA Conference, Chicago, April 2019
- ISA Annual Convention, Toronto, March 2019
- Program on International Politics, Economics, and Security (PIPES) Workshop, University of Chicago, March 2018

AWARDS, GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS

Center for International Social Science Research (CISSR), Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph Fieldwork Award, \$4,956, University of Chicago	2024-2025
Richard M. Weaver Graduate Fellowship, \$5,000, Intercollegiate Studies Institute	2024-2025
Kath Anderson Award for Best M.A. Thesis in Political Science, \$500, University of Chicago	Autumn 2023
Nicholson Graduate Research Fellowship Award, \$2,876, University of Chicago	Summer 2023
First Year Scholars, Summer Research Grant, \$2,000, University of Chicago	Summer 2022
Graduate Council Travel Fund Award, \$600, University of Chicago	Spring 2019
CIR Internship Award, \$4,000 for archival research in support of thesis, University of Chicago	Summer 2018
Full-tuition scholarship to pursue 2 nd year M.A. specialization, University of Chicago	2018-2019
Full-tuition scholarship (merit-based), Social Science Division, University of Chicago	2017-2018
Pearce Prize, \$1,000 prize for exceptional initiative and contributions to the program, CSIS	August 2016
Historical Research Grant, \$500, University of Northwestern	Summer 2012 & 2015

ARCHIVAL EXPERIENCE, TRAINING, AND SKILLS

Archives Visited

- UK National Archives, London, UK, Summer 2023
- Richard Nixon Presidential Library, Yorba Linda, CA, Summer 2022
- Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, Atlanta, GA, Summer 2022
- U.S. National Archives, NARA, College Park, MD, Summer 2018
- Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS, Summer 2018
- Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library, Austin, TX, Summer 2018

Professional Seminars

- Hans J. Morgenthau Fellowship Summer Seminar, 2025
- Clement Center on History and Statecraft, Summer 2025
- Summer Workshop on the Analysis of Military Operations and Strategy (SWAMOS), Summer 2024
- Bridging the Gap's New Era Workshop, Autumn 2023
- Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research (IQMR) Summer 2023

Skills

- R, Stata, LaTeX

SELECT NON-PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES, REPORTS, AND COMMENTARY

Adam Saxton, "U.S. Airstrikes in Syria and Iraq: Legal Authorities and Presidential War Powers," CSIS Critical Questions, July 8, 2021, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/us-airstrikes-syria-and-iraq-legalAuthorities-and-presidential-war-powers>.

Mark Cancian and Adam Saxton, "What's in a Name? Billions in Cuts Depend on Defining 'Legacy'?" *Breaking Defense*, March 10, 2021, <https://breakingdefense.com/2021/03/whats-in-a-name-billions-in-cuts-depend-on-defining-legacy/>.

Mark Cancian, Adam Saxton, and Nidal Morrison, "Covid-19 and the U.S. Military," *War on the Rocks*, November 10, 2020, <https://warontherocks.com/2020/11/covid-19-and-the-u-s-military/>

Mark Cancian, Adam Saxton, Owen Helman, Lee Ann Bryan, and Nidal Morrison, *Industrial Mobilization: Assessing Surge Capabilities, Wartime Risk, and System Brittleness* (Washington, DC: CSIS, December 2020)

- Also published in the *Naval Engineers Journal*, see "Industrial Mobilization: Assessing Surge Capabilities, Wartime Risk, and System Brittleness," *Naval Engineers Journal*, 132, no. 2 (June 2020): 39-49, <https://bt.e-ditionsbyfry.com/publication/?m=63540&i=670169&p=40>.

Adam Saxton and Mark Cancian, *The Conventional Force Perspective: Nuclear Integration in Doctrine, Concepts, and Exercises* (Washington, DC: CSIS, October 2020), <https://defense360.csis.org/the-conventional-force-perspective-nuclear-integration-in-doctrine-concepts-and-exercises/>

Mark Cancian and Adam Saxton, "Secretary Esper Previews the Future Navy," Critical Questions, CSIS, October 8, 2020, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/secretary-esper-previews-future-navy>

Mark Cancian and Adam Saxton, "2021 Budget Spells the End of US Force Expansion," *Breaking Defense*, February 14, 2020, <https://breakingdefense.com/2020/02/2021-budget-spells-the-end-of-us-force-expansion/>

Mark Cancian and Adam Saxton, "The Spectacular and Public Collapse of Navy Force Planning," *Breaking Defense*, January 30, 2020, <https://breakingdefense.com/2020/01/the-spectacular-public-collapse-of-navy-force-planning/>

Adam Saxton, "Drones: Russia's Hot New Propaganda Tool," *The National Interest*, April 29, 2016, <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/drones-russias-hot-new-propaganda-tool-15987>

Adam Saxton, "(Un)Dignified Killer Robots? The Problem with the Human Dignity Argument," *Lawfare*, March 20, 2016, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/undignified-killer-robots-problem-human-dignity-argument>

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Secret Side of International Politics, Professor Austin Carson, Autumn 2023

- Gave two guest lectures, one on using online archives and primary sources, and one on the history of the law of the sea treaty (UNCLOS)
- Assisted students write 25-page, original research papers supported by primary sources

Norms, Ideas, and Identities in International Politics, Professor Rochelle Terman, Winter 2024

- Gave a guest lecture on practice theory in international politics
- Assisted students write a 15-page thematic literature review and research proposal

Introduction to International Politics, Professor Paul Poast, Spring 2024

- Led a discussion section of 25+ students, wrote a 6 page paper assignment.
- Hosted a mock UNSC simulation on a mock South China Seas crisis, using CFR materials

War and the Nation State, Professor John Mearsheimer, Winter 2025

- Led a discussion section of 27+ students, discussing primary and secondary sources on the history of European warfare, with themes of nationalism, industrialization, and bureaucratization that came with the rise of the state from 1789 to 1945

SELECT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

Research Assistant to Austin Carson

2022, 2018-2019

Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC

International Security Program – Research Associate (Full-time)

International Security Program – Research Intern

2019-2021, 2016

Center for a New American Security, Washington, DC

Joseph S. Nye, Jr. Research Intern – Defense Strategies and Assessments Program

2015