

LEAH A. RANSOM

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo | leransom@calpoly.edu | 805-458-7568 | leahransom.com

RESEARCH AREAS

Philosophy of technology; informational representations of persons; simulation and virtual worlds; AI agency and attribution of mind

EDUCATION

- Ph.D.** Communication Studies, University of Texas at Austin May 2025
Concentration: Rhetoric, Language & Political Communication
Dissertation: “Subjectivity, Simulation, and Signal Bleeding: Playing with Reality in the Remedy Connected Universe”
Committee: E. Johanna Hartelius (chair), Joshua Gunn, Scott Stroud, Kenneth Fleischmann, Shira Chess
- M.A.** Communication Studies, California State University San Bernardino 2008
Thesis: “The Use of Violence as Feminist Rhetoric: Third-wave Feminism in Tarantino’s Kill Bill Films”
- B.A.** Communication Studies, California State University San Bernardino 2004

PUBLICATIONS AND MANUSCRIPTS

Article Under Review

“(De)constructing the Archival Avatar: How Digitality Complicates the Informational Self.” *Philosophy & Rhetoric*. Second-round revision submitted July 2026.

Book Chapter

Parra, Dex, Leah Ransom, and Scott R. Stroud. “Free Speech and Ethics.” In *Media, Ethics, and Democracy*, edited by Scott R. Stroud, 37–53. University of Texas at Austin, 2023.

Book Reviews

- Ransom, Leah A. “A Review of *The Ethics of Virtual and Augmented Reality: Building Worlds*.” *Media Ethics* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2023).
- Ransom, Leah. “Beyond Civility: The Competing Obligations of Citizenship.” *Argumentation and Advocacy* 58, nos. 3–4 (2022): 184–86. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511431.2022.2088133>

Selected Work in Progress

“The Ludic Constitution of Subjects: Rhetorical Gameworlds Within and Beyond Games.” Manuscript in preparation.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant, Campaign Mapping Project, University of Texas at Austin, Summer 2022

Assisted in refining a content-coding system and applied it to keyword-in-context passages examining how American politicians—both named and generic—were characterized by the press, citizens, and political figures in presidential campaign discourse, 1948–2020.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Lecturer**, Communication Studies Department, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo 2015–present
- Graduate Teaching Assistant**, Department of Communication Studies, University of Texas at Austin 2021–2025
- Adjunct faculty appointments**, Bakersfield College; Mt. San Antonio College; Victor Valley College; Antelope Valley College; and Barstow College 2010–2014
- Graduate Teaching Assistant**, California State University, San Bernardino 2008

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

- Argument and Advocacy; Introduction to Public Speaking; Principles of Oral Communication
- Public-speaking instruction delivered in person, online synchronously, and online asynchronously

University of Texas at Austin — graduate teaching assistantships

- Digital Ethics; Social Interactions in Virtual Environments; Digital Communications; Political Communication; Introduction to Communication and Leadership; Gender and Communication; Working Virtually; Dark Side of Political Communication

Additional courses taught

- Interpersonal Communication; Family Communication; Processes of Communication

SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- “(De)constructing the Archival Avatar: How Digitality Complicates the Informational Self.” 2024
National Communication Association, New Orleans, Louisiana.
- “Ancient Skepticism as a Precursor to Critical Rhetoric.” 2024
Rhetoric Society of America, Denver, Colorado.
- “The Devil’s Greatest Trick Is to Convince You that QAnon Is a Lie: Meta-Conspiracy Beliefs and the Practice of Guarding Against the Devil.” 2024
Rhetoric Society of America, Denver, Colorado.
- “A Foucauldian Analysis of Control: Bodies in Space.” 2023
National Communication Association, National Harbor, Maryland.

PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

- Probeck, Trent A., Leah A. Ransom, and Scott R. Stroud. “The Ethics of Skinvertising.” Media Ethics Initiative, Center for Media Engagement, 2024.
- Augsburg, Finja I., Leah A. Ransom, and Scott R. Stroud. “Scientists as Superheroes?” Media Ethics Initiative, Center for Media Engagement, 2024.
- Byrd, Lauren, Leah A. Ransom, and Scott R. Stroud. “The Ethics of Amazon Alexa.” Media Ethics Initiative, Center for Media Engagement, 2023.

SELECTED MEDIA APPEARANCES

- Televised interview, “Cal Poly Class Teaches Students How to Identify Misinformation.” KSBY News, February 4, 2025.
- Interview, “Local Educators Share Advice for News Literacy Week.” KSBY News (January 28, 2022)

SELECTED SERVICE

- Public Speaking Course Advisory Committee, California Polytechnic State University (2026–present)
- Conference reviewer, International Communication Association; National Communication Association; Rhetoric Society of America (ongoing)
- Textbook reviewer, Cognella, *Empowering Public Speaking* (2026)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Philosophical Association • Society for Philosophy and Technology • National Communication Association • Rhetoric Society of America