

Austin R. Nelson

University of South Carolina
Joseph F. Rice School of Law
1525 Senate Street
Columbia, SC 29208

Email: austin.nelson@sc.edu
Office Phone: 803-777-6022
Law School Office #240

EMPLOYMENT

- University of South Carolina, 2026–present** *Columbia, South Carolina*
Assistant Professor, Joseph F. Rice School of Law
Courses: Constitutional Law, Bankruptcy, Economic Liberty in Early America
- University of Michigan Law School, 2024–2026** *Ann Arbor, Michigan*
Visiting Assistant Professor, Michigan Faculty Fellows Program
Courses: Introduction to Constitutional Law, Economic Liberty in Early America
- 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
Dissertation: AMERICA’S BANKRUPT CONSTITUTION: CONTRACT RIGHTS, INSOLVENT DEBTORS, AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN FEDERALISM
Honors: Best Dissertation Award from the American Political Thought Section of the American Political Science Association (APSA), Honorable Mention for the Walter Dean Burnham Award from APSA’s Politics and History Section
- 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

PUBLICATIONS

- *Constitutional Pluralism on the Marshall Court*, 14 BELMONT L. REV. ____ (2027) (symposium).
- “*Passing a Complete Code*”: *The Framers’ Failed Effort to Nationalize Contract Law*, 33 GEO. MASON L. REV. 39 (2026) (article).
- *Evaluating the Evaluator: Has the ABA Rated President Trump’s Judicial Nominees Fairly?*, 99 TEX. L. REV. 193 (2020) (note) (received the law review’s Outstanding Political Note Award).
- *A Pragmatic Approach to the Second Amendment*, 24 TEX. REV. L. & POL. 263 (2019) (note).

PRESENTATIONS AT CONFERENCES & SYMPOSIA

- *Constitutional Pluralism on the Marshall Court*, Belmont Law Review Symposium: 250 Years of Independence: The Interconnection Between American Law and History, Belmont University College of Law, Nashville, Tennessee (Sept. 18, 2026).
- *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).

WORKSHOPS & SELECT PUBLIC TALKS

- Respondent to Jack Kieffaber, “The Inevitable End of Textualism: AI and Judging,” University of Michigan Law School (Jan. 30, 2026).
- *Rethinking Preemption*, Junior Faculty Forum, University of Michigan Law School (Oct. 11, 2025).
- “*Passing a Complete Code*”: *The Framers’ Failed Effort to Nationalize Contract Law*, Future Law Professors Workshop, University of Michigan Law School (Sept. 12, 2025).
- “*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).
- Respondent to Hon. Sarah K. Campbell (Tennessee Supreme Court Justice), “Reconsidering the Role of a Common Law Judge,” 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

- Best Dissertation Award, American Political Thought Section of the American Political Science Association (2026)
- Honorable Mention for the Walter Dean Burnham Award (best dissertation), Politics and History Section of the American Political Science Association (2026)
- 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 South Carolina Joseph F. Rice School of Law (2026–present)

- Member, Curriculum Committee (2026–present)

University of Michigan Law School (2026)

- Discussant, University of Michigan Law School Junior Scholars Conference (2026)
- Quarterfinals Judge, Henry M. Campbell Moot Court Competition (2026)

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)