

AMY KRISTIN SANDERS

John and Ann Curley Chair in First Amendment
The Pennsylvania State University

FULL-TIME ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

The Pennsylvania State University

Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications

Tenured Full Professor and Endowed Chair

Penn State Dickinson Law

Affiliate Faculty

State College, PA

01/25—present

01/25—present

The University of Texas at Austin

Moody College of Communication – School of Journalism and Media

Tenured Associate Professor

School of Law

Associate Professor (by courtesy)

Austin, TX

01/19—12/24

09/21—12/24

Northwestern University

Journalism & Strategic Communication Department

Associate Professor in Residence

Doha, Qatar

08/14—01/19

University of Minnesota—Twin Cities

School of Journalism & Mass Communication and Law School

Tenured Associate Professor of Mass Communication and Law

Assistant Professor of Law (by courtesy)

Assistant Professor of Mass Communication

Minneapolis, MN

08/13—07/14

08/09—08/13

08/07—08/13

EDUCATION

University of Florida (Gainesville, FL)

Doctor of Philosophy in Mass Communication with emphasis in Media Law

Defining Defamation: Community, Plaintiff Status & Harm in the Age of the Internet

12/07

University of Iowa (Iowa City, IA)

Juris Doctorate with emphasis in First Amendment Law

Master of Arts in Professional Journalism

12/03

Truman State University (Kirksville, MO)

Bachelor of Arts in Communication with an emphasis in Journalism

Bachelor of Science in Justice Systems

8/01

RECENT RESEARCH-RELATED GRANT FUNDING

External Sources of Funding

Arthur W. Page Center, Page Legacy Scholars Grant, \$5,000

Summer 2024 to Summer 2025

New America's Public Interest Technology University Network, \$90,000

January 2022 to April 2023

National Science Foundation, Open Knowledge Networks, \$5 million

Academic Years 2020-2021 to 2023-2024

Internal Sources of Funding

UT Good Systems, “Being Watched: Embedding Ethics in Public Cameras,” \$750,000

Collaborator

Academic Years 2021-2022 to 2024-2025

RESEARCH-RELATED FELLOWSHIPS

Social Justice Informatics Faculty Fellow, Public Interest Technology-University Network, \$5,000

January 2021 to December 2021

The fellowship partners university researchers with governmental and nonprofit organizations to engage in research projects related to technology designed to advance social justice and address a range of injustices experienced uniquely and intersectionally across identities.

Resulted in a successful grant application to PIT-UN.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

T. BARTON CARTER, MARC A. FRANKLIN, **AMY KRISTIN SANDERS** & JAY A. WRIGHT, FIRST AMENDMENT AND THE FOURTH ESTATE (Foundation Press 14th ed., forthcoming 2025, 13th ed., 2021; 12th ed., 2016; 11th ed., 2012).

Chapters authored in most recent edition include Introduction: The Legal System; Introduction: Freedom of Expression; Defamation; Privacy; Liability for Harm; National Security; Press Coverage of the Administration of Justice; Confidentiality in Newsgathering; and Newsgathering from Non-Judicial Sources.

Casebook used by law schools as well as graduate mass communication programs.

JOURNAL AND LAW REVIEW ARTICLES

Amy Kristin Sanders, *Saving Sullivan: Strategic Advocacy to Defend Defamation’s Actual Malice Standard*. *Forthcoming in CONNECTICUT LAW REVIEW* (2026).

David Schwartz, Kat Albrecht, Adam Pah, Christopher Cotropia, **Amy Kristin Sanders**, Sarath Sanga, Charlotte Alexander, Luis Amaral, Zachary Clopton, Anne Tucker, Tom Gaylord, Scott Daniel⁺ & Nathan Dalberg⁺, *The SCALES Project: Making Court Records Free*, 119 NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY LAW REVIEW 23-64 (2024).

Amy Kristin Sanders, Daxton “Chip” Stewart & Steven Molchanov⁺⁺, *Is It Just Dumb Luck? The Challenge of Getting Access to Public Records about Smart City Technology*. 6 JOURNAL OF CIVIC INFORMATION 1-17 (2024).

Amy Kristin Sanders, *Revisiting Rosenbloom: Can a Return to the “Matter of Public Concern” Standard in Defamation Cases Quiet Sullivan’s Skeptics?* 88 MISSOURI LAW REVIEW 770-810 (2023).

Amy Kristin Sanders & Daxton “Chip” Stewart, *Let’s Not Be Dumb: Government Transparency, Public Records Laws and Smart City Technology*. 33 FLORIDA JOURNAL OF LAW & PUBLIC POLICY 167 (2023).

Amy Kristin Sanders & Kirk von Kreisler⁺⁺, *Is Defamation Law Outdated? How Justice Powell Predicted the Current Criticism*. 20 FIRST AMENDMENT LAW REVIEW 1-29 (2022).

Lead article in the issue.

⁺ Indicates graduate student co-author

⁺⁺ Indicates undergraduate student co-author

Amy Kristin Sanders & Daxton “Chip” Stewart, *Ghosted by the Government: Why Government Entities Should Be Required to Respond to Public Records Requests*, 3 JOURNAL OF CIVIC INFORMATION 1-13 (2021). <https://tinyurl.com/3JOC11>
Lead article in the issue.

Amy Kristin Sanders, *The ‘Exceptionalist Trap’: Why the Future First Amendment Must Take Fundamental Human Rights into Account*. 65 WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY JOURNAL OF LAW & PUBLIC POLICY 61-89 (2021). <https://tinyurl.com/65WUJLP61>
Symposium issue.

Amy Kristin Sanders & William Kosinski⁺⁺, *Fixing FOIA: How Third-Party Intervention Thwarts Transparency*. 9 JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT LAW 235-272 (2020-2021). <https://tinyurl.com/3JIMEL235>

Amy Kristin Sanders, *COVID-19, Death Records and the Public Interest: Why Now is the Time to Push for Transparency*, 2 JOURNAL OF CIVIC INFORMATION 1-22 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.32473/joci.v2i4.127490>
Lead article in the issue.

Amy Kristin Sanders, *Looking Forward by Looking Backward: Justice Brandeis’ Concurrence in Whitney v. California and the Future of Communication Law Scholarship*. 25 COMMUNICATION LAW & POLICY 429-446 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1080/10811680.2020.1805944>
Featured as part of the journal’s 25th anniversary celebration issue

Kyu Ho Youm & **Amy Kristin Sanders** (Guest Editors), *International and Comparative Law as a Reverse Perspective on Communication Law*, 25 COMMUNICATION LAW & POLICY 103-122 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1080/10811680.2020.1735184>

BOOK CHAPTERS

Media Freedom in the United States. In MEDIA FREEDOM IN AN EVOLVING LANDSCAPE FOR JOURNALISM (Jingrong Tong, ed. 2026). Routledge.
*under contract

Qatar. In THE INTERNATIONAL LIBEL & PRIVACY HANDBOOK (David Heller, ed. 2024). LexisNexis Publishing.

The Middle East. In THE INTERNATIONAL LIBEL & PRIVACY HANDBOOK (David Heller, ed. 2024). LexisNexis Publishing.

Privacy, Surveillance & Data Protection. In SOCIAL MEDIA & THE LAW: A GUIDEBOOK FOR COMMUNICATION STUDENTS AND PROFESSIONALS (Daxton Stewart, ed. 2022). Routledge Publishing.

Obscenity, Nonconsensual Pornography, and Cyberbullying. In SOCIAL MEDIA & THE LAW: A GUIDEBOOK FOR COMMUNICATION STUDENTS AND PROFESSIONALS (Daxton Stewart, ed. 2022). Routledge Publishing.
*co-authored with Adedayo Abah

The Rise of Social Media in the Middle East and North Africa: A Tool of Resistance or Repression? In CONSTITUTIONALISING SOCIAL MEDIA (Celeste, Heldt & Keller, eds. 2022). Bloomsbury/Hart.

+ Indicates graduate student co-author

++ Indicates undergraduate student co-author

Qatar. In THE INTERNATIONAL LIBEL & PRIVACY HANDBOOK (Charles Glasser, ed. 2022). LexisNexis Publishing.

The Middle East. In THE INTERNATIONAL LIBEL & PRIVACY HANDBOOK (Charles Glasser, ed. 2022). LexisNexis Publishing.

Qatar. In THE INTERNATIONAL LIBEL & PRIVACY HANDBOOK (Charles Glasser, ed. 2020). LexisNexis Publishing.

The Middle East. In THE INTERNATIONAL LIBEL & PRIVACY HANDBOOK (Charles Glasser, ed. 2020). LexisNexis Publishing.

INDUSTRY AND TRADE PUBLICATIONS

Amy Kristin Sanders, *If It Seems Like Attacks on Texans' Expressive Freedoms Are Escalating, It's Because They Are*, AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN (June 9, 2025).

*co-authored with Daxton "Chip" Stewart

Amy Kristin Sanders, *Don't Get SLAPPED: Minimizing the Risk of Vexatious Libel Lawsuits*, REYNOLDS JOURNALISM INSTITUTE (April 30, 2025).

Amy Kristin Sanders, *Can Texas Ban Masked Protests?*, DALLAS MORNING NEWS 21-30 (December 3, 2024).

Amy Kristin Sanders, *Darkening Skies Cloud Transparency on College Campuses*, THE IRE JOURNAL (March 18, 2025).

*Also picked up by the Hot Springs (AR) Sentinel Gazette, Midland (MI) Daily News and the North Country (NY) Gazette.

Amy Kristin Sanders, *Sunshine Week Calls Attention to Darkening Skies over Pennsylvania?*, JOHNSTOWN TRIBUNE-DEMOCRAT (March 17, 2025).

*Also picked up by the Bradford (PA) Era, Meadville (PA) Tribune, New Castle (PA) News, Times News (PA), Daily Herald (PA)

Amy Kristin Sanders, *TX Lawmakers Could Strip You of Free Speech*, AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN (February 26, 2025).

*Also picked up by the Brownsville (TX) Herald, myRGV.com, Gilmer Mirror, The Facts (Brazoria County), Cleburne Times Review, Sealy News, Burnet Bulletin, Breckenridge American

Amy Kristin Sanders, *Can Texas Ban Masked Protests?*, DALLAS MORNING NEWS (December 3, 2024).

Amy Kristin Sanders, *Adding Some Bite to Their Bark: Using AI to Transform the Way the Press Covers the Judiciary*, 39 COMMUNICATIONS LAWYER 21-30 (January 2024).

Amy Kristin Sanders, *We need to do a better job teaching citizens about the First Amendment*, USA TODAY (October 22, 2021).

A similar version of this column was published on multiple Gannett news sites.

Amy Kristin Sanders & Daxton "Chip" Stewart, *Don't make the national anthem mandatory at Texas sports events*, HOUSTON CHRONICLE (April 12, 2021).

+ Indicates graduate student co-author

++ Indicates undergraduate student co-author

Amy Kristin Sanders & Rachel Davis Mersey, *Texans shouldn't have to pay for public records*, HOUSTON CHRONICLE (March 18, 2021).

A similar version was published in nearly a dozen news outlets as part of Sunshine Week.

Amy Kristin Sanders, *When Verification Counts: Tips and Tricks to Try*, 96 Texas Press Messenger 3 (January 2021).

INVITED PANEL PARTICIPATION, PAPER PRESENTATIONS AND TALKS, INCLUDING KEYNOTES

What's the Matter with Texas: A Study of the Escalating Assault on First Amendment Protections and Values, Paper presentation at AEJMC National Conference, August 2025. San Francisco, CA.

*co-authored with Daxton "Chip" Stewart

*Top Faculty Paper Award, Law & Policy Division

Teaching Media Law in Tumultuous Times, Paper presentation at the World Journalism Education Congress, August 2025. San Francisco, CA.

*co-authored with Daxton "Chip" Stewart

Requiring Responsibility: Re-Interpreting the Press Clause to Include Duties and Expanded Rights, Pre-conference presentation at the AEJMC National Conference, August 2025. San Francisco, CA.

It's Really Not That Urgent: Slowing Down for Focus, Creativity and Workplace Wellbeing, Pre-conference presentation at the AEJMC National Conference, August 2025. San Francisco, CA.

Reporting the News of Tomorrow: AI & Journalism, Panel presentation at the University of Kansas School of Law's Media and the Law seminar, May 2025, Kansas City, MO.

Funnel Cakes on the Boardwalk – A Regulatory Hypothetical, Luncheon workshop at the American Bar Association's Representing Your Local Broadcaster seminar, April 2025, Las Vegas, NV.

The ESRB at 30: Rating the Raters and How They Address Speech, Violence & Morality, Panel presentation at the Broadcast Education Association national conference, April 2025, Las Vegas, NV.

The Undying Myths of the First Amendment, Panel presentation at Southeast Regional Colloquium, March 2025. Chapel Hill, NC.

What's the Matter with Texas: A Study of the Escalating Assault on First Amendment Protections and Values, Paper presentation at Southeast Regional Colloquium, March 2025. Chapel Hill, NC.

*co-authored with Daxton "Chip" Stewart

Is the Clock Ticking? A Discussion of TikTok's Legal Issues and the Platform's Future, Panel at the Entertainment Law Institute, November 2024. Austin, TX.

What's the Matter with Texas: A Study of the Escalating Assault on First Amendment Protections and Values, Paper presentation at the FIRE Faculty Network Conference, October 2024. Boston, MA.

*co-authored with Daxton "Chip" Stewart

The Changing Media Landscape: How Technology Has Eroded Civic Discourse, Keynote Speaker – Free Speech Week, Lawrence University, October 2024. Appleton, WI.

+ Indicates graduate student co-author

++ Indicates undergraduate student co-author

Becoming a Public Scholar. Panel presentation at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication conference. August 2024. Philadelphia, PA.

Risk Management in AI and Autonomous Systems. Texas Defense Research Symposium. April 2024. Austin, TX.

Tweet, Post or Protest: The Digital Age of Free Expression. Continuing Legal Education seminar at SXSW. March 2024. Austin, TX.

Actual Malice: Ongoing Threats to New York Times v. Sullivan and Its Progeny. Bech-Laughlin First Amendment Center at the University of Texas Law School. March 2024. Austin, TX.

LLMs and Journalism. Continuing Legal Education seminar for the University of Florida Levin College of Law. Technology, Media and Privacy Conference. March 2024. Gainesville, FL.

Cancel Culture on Campus. Continuing Legal Education seminar for the American Bar Association's Forum on Communications Law. February 2024. Santa Barbara, CA.

Media Law & Ethics: The Defining Moments. University of Massachusetts – Amherst. December 2023. Amherst, MA.

The Promise and Peril of AI: A Case Study for Journalism, Social Justice and Access to Courts. University of Minnesota Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication. October 2023. Minneapolis, MN.

Data Justice: How Innovative Data is Transforming the Law – Access to Justice. Northwestern University Law Review Symposium. October 2023. Chicago, IL.

Partnering with Civil Society. Public Interest Technology Network 2023 Convening. October 2023. Boston, MA.

Journalists and Surveillance: What You Need to Know to Stay Safe. Society of Professional Journalist's Media Fest. October 2022. Washington, DC.

Navigating Solutions for Teaching Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in a Democratic Society. Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. August 2023. Washington, DC.

Dobbs Makes for Strange Bedfellows Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. August 2023. Washington, DC.

Public Interest Technology: The Emergence of a New Academic Discipline and Its Relationship to Public Interest Communications. University of Florida Summer Institute on Public Interest Communication. Houston, TX.

Journalists and Surveillance: What You Need to Know to Stay Safe. Society of Professional Journalist's Media Fest. October 2022. Washington, DC.

Finding Stories in the Federal Court System: Examining Criminal and Civil Litigation with the Help of an AI-Powered Data Platform. Media Party. June 2023. Chicago, IL.

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What if New York Times v. Sullivan is Next: The Future of Journalism and Defamation Law. University of Missouri Law Review Symposium. March 2023. Columbia, MO.

Social Media Laws. The University of Texas Federalist Society. February 2023. Austin, TX.

Emerging Technology and the Media – Ethical and Legal Dilemmas. Continuing Legal Education seminar for the American Bar Association's Cyberspace Law Institute. February 2023. Austin, TX.

Journalists and Surveillance: What You Need to Know to Stay Safe. Society of Professional Journalist's Media Fest. October 2022. Washington, DC.

The ABC's of Libel. Society of Professional Journalist's Media Fest. October 2022. Washington, DC.

The Fate of Content Moderation: Constitutional and Practical Implications of the Texas Social Media Law. University of Texas Law School's Journal of Law and Technology. October 2022. Austin, TX.

The Constitution in the Digital Age: Data, Technology, Surveillance and Privacy. September 2022. University of North Texas Constitution Day celebration. Virtual.

Best Practices in Reviewing Law & Policy Research. August 2022. Pre-conference Panel at Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Detroit, USA.

Trust, AI and the Newsroom. March 2022. Technology, Media, Privacy & Law Conference: Implications for Public Health and Safety. University of Florida (via Zoom).

Fresh Thinking on Government Transparency. February 2022. AEJMC Law & Policy Division & UNC Center for Media Law & Policy Sunshine Week panel (via Zoom).

Promises and Perils of Free Speech. October 2021. University of Texas at Austin Free Speech Week (via Zoom).

Securing Grant Funding for Collaborative Research. August 2021. Pre-conference Panel at Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (via Zoom).

The Rise of Social Media In the Middle East and North Africa: A Tool of Resistance or Repression? May 2021. Constitutionalising Social Media Conference. Leibniz-Institute of Media Research (via Zoom).

Medical Data, Surveillance and the Pandemic. March 2021. Technology, Media, Privacy & Law Conference: Implications for Public Health and Safety. University of Florida (via Zoom).

You Are the Product: Risks, Rewards and Dangers of Surveillance Capitalism. March 2021. Technology, Media, Privacy & Law Conference: Implications for Public Health and Safety. University of Florida (via Zoom).

Best Practices in Teaching Media Law. August 2020. Pre-conference Panel at Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. San Francisco, CA (via Zoom).

Strategies for Success as Research in Communication Law & Policy. August 2020. Pre-conference Panel at Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. San Francisco, CA (via Zoom).

+ Indicates graduate student co-author

++ Indicates undergraduate student co-author

SELECTED MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Chicago Tribune, [Baltimore Ravens kicker Justin Tucker Hires Law Firm](#), March 20, 2025
 Baltimore Sun, [Protecting Justin Tucker](#), March 20, 2025
 Reynolds Journalism Institute, [Journalists Must Negotiate a Climate of Uncertainty](#), January 29, 2025
 Nieman Lab, [Why Criminal Courts Are Still a Black Box](#), October 31, 2024
 Podocracy, [Misinformation, Civics in America and Discourse](#), October 17, 2024
 Badger-Herald, [Penn State Student Newspaper Removal Causes Stir](#), October 7, 2024
 The Daily Texan, [UT Has a Free Speech Problem](#), September 17, 2024
 KVUE, [Universities under UT System Cannot Adopt Political Positions](#), August 26, 2024
 WAER, [SU Student Fights Conduct Sanctions](#), July 20, 2024
 Austin American-Statesman, [UT Takes Fight to Keep Records Private to Court](#), July 11, 2024
 The Drag, [How Surveillance Technology Can Improve Public Safety](#), June 12, 2024
 San Antonio Express-News, [Why the City is Using NDAs](#), May 3, 2024
 KXAN, [UT Students, Faculty Demand University President Resign](#), April 25, 2024
 Texas Observer, [Did Police Violate the First Amendment Rights of Protesters?](#), April 25, 2024

RECENT HONORS & AWARDS

Research Awards & Honors

First Place Research Paper, Faculty Division, AEJMC Law & Policy Division, 2025
 Second Place Research Paper, National Freedom of Information Coalition, 2022
 Top Research Paper, National Freedom of Information Coalition, 2021

Teaching Awards & Honors

University of Texas at Austin Provost's Teaching Fellow, May 2022-August 2024
 Microsoft Collaborative for Access and Equity Fellow, January 2022-January 2023
 University of Texas at Austin Open Education Teaching Fellow, January 2022-January 2023

TEACHING AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Courses Taught at Penn State

COMM 403 Mass Communication Law
 COMM 409 News Media Ethics

LEADERSHIP, SERVICE & PROFESSIONAL OUTREACH

Service to the Discipline/Profession/Interdisciplinary Areas

Board of Directors, Truman State University Foundation (Kirksville, MO), 2024-present
 Finance and Audit committee, 2024-present
 Governing Committee, American Bar Association Forum on Communication Law, 2023-present
 Annual Conference Planning Committee, entertainment sub-committee, 2024-2025
 Chair, First Amendment Law Diversity Moot Court Competition, 2024-present
 Editor, *Communication Law & Policy*, August 2021-present
 Co-founder, Media Law & Policy Scholars Conference, 2021-present
 Board of Directors, Student Press Law Center (Washington, DC), 2019-2022
 Governance Committee chair, 2020-2022
 Co-founder and co-director, SPLC Summer Media Law & Policy Institute, 2020

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PROFESSIONAL LICENSURES

Florida Bar Association, licensed attorney
Missouri Bar Association, licensed attorney
*inactive status as of January 2020

January 2006-present
August 2006-present

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

St. Charles County Prosecuting Attorney's Office (St. Charles, Mo.)
Rule 13 Prosecuting Attorney – Misdemeanors & Domestic Violence

August 2003-Dec. 2003

JOURNALISM EXPERIENCE

The Gainesville Sun (Gainesville, Fla.)
Copy Editor and Page Designer
The Brechner Report (Gainesville, Fla.)
Editor and Designer

May 2006-August 2007

January 2005-2006

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