Maya Kerr Coste

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Research Interests

Domestic terrorism; hate crimes; elite rhetoric and political violence; racial/ethnic relations in political violence.

Education

2024–Present **Ph.D.**, Political Science, Pennsylvania State University

2024–2026 **M.A.**, Political Science, Pennsylvania State University

2019–2023 **B.A.**, College of Arts and Sciences, The Ohio State University
Major 1: International Studies–Security & Intelligence
Major 2: Criminology/Criminal Justice (Research Distinction)
Minor: International Conflict & Peace Studies
Certificate: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.

Research Experience

2025–Present **Master's Thesis– The Power of Permission: Elite Cues, (De)humanization, and Support for Political Violence**
Advisor: Dr. James Piazza
Experimentally examines how elite rhetoric and framing shape public tolerance for political violence. Also tests de-escalation frames that reduce support for harm.

2024–2025 **Research Paper: Threats to White Dominance, Intergroup Conflict Orientation, Illiberalism, and Support for Political Violence among White Americans**
Co-authored paper with Dr. James Piazza using a nationally representative survey experiment to better understand how minority political, economic, and cultural empowerment influences White individuals' attitudes toward political violence. *Currently under review.*

2022–2023 **Undergraduate Thesis: The Impact of Presidential Tweets on Anti-Latinx Hate Crimes**
Advisor: Dr. Laura Dugan
Implemented time-series analyses on Twitter data to assess temporal relationships between elite rhetoric and hate-crime incidence. Successfully presented and defended my thesis to a faculty committee and graduated with Research Distinction.

2021–2023 **Research Assistant: Perceptions of Discrimination in the U.S.**
Advisor: Dr. Lauren Valentino
Conducted qualitative coding and thematic analysis in Dedoose; developed knowledge of interview protocols and contributed to cross-case comparisons.

2022 **University of Maryland – Summer Research Initiative (BSOS SRI)**
Advisor: Dr. Michael Jensen
Used multivariate regression to understand predictors and characteristics of hate crime offenders.

2022 **Michigan State University – Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP)**
Intensive two-week quantitative data analysis training in Stata and SPSS; presented findings to faculty mentors and peer researchers.

Policy & Applied Experience

2026–Present **Parents for Peace, Intern**
Support prevention-focused efforts addressing radicalization and pathways to violence. Analyze behavioral patterns, risk factors, and case dynamics to inform intervention strategies.

2022 **START – Bias Incidents and Actors Study (BIAS), Intern**
Conducted open-source data collection and research on hate crime offenders, contributing to work on risk factors associated with escalation into violence.

Teaching Experience

2026–Present **Teaching Assistant – American Politics**
Facilitated student engagement with complex political material, supported analytical writing, and provided feedback on assignments in a large lecture course.

Presentations

2025 Kerr Coste, Maya (presenter) & Piazza, James. "Threats to White Dominance, Intergroup Conflict Orientation, Illiberalism, and Support for Political Violence among White Americans." Presentation at the *Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA)*, Chicago, Illinois.

2022 Jensen, Michael & Kerr Coste, Maya (presenter). "Hate Crime: Exploring the Characteristics of Mass Casualty Offenders." Poster presented at the College of Behavioral Sciences Summer Research Initiative, University of Maryland, College Park.

2022 Jensen, Michael & Kerr Coste, Maya (presenter). "Hate Crime: Exploring the Characteristics of Mass Casualty Offenders." Presentation at the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START).

Fellowships, Scholarships & Grants

2026-2027 **Rock Ethics Institute Fellow**
Awarded the Forrest S. Crawford Graduate Fellowship in Ethical Inquiry for the academic year. This is awarded to support an outstanding dissertation on a topic that advances an understanding of ethics. Additionally, they provide a $1,000 scholarship to support research activities.

2026 **APSA Diversity Fellow**, American Political Science Association
Awarded $2,000 to support research that engages with race and ethnic politics.

2026 **McCourtney Institute for Democracy Research Grant**
Awarded $4,500 to support research that examines how interactions with the criminal legal system shape patterns of democratic inequality and discrepancies in hate crime measurement in the United States.

2025 **Center for American Political Responsiveness (CAPR) Fellowship**
Awarded for the Fall 2025 semester based on academic performance and promise in American Politics.

2025 **McCourtney Institute for Democracy Research Grant**
Awarded $3,350 to support independent research on political violence in the United States.

2025–2027 **Center for American Political Responsiveness (CAPR) Graduate Summer Scholarship**, Penn State University.
Awarded $2,000 for the first three summers in the doctoral program.

2024-2025 **Bruce R. Miller and Dean D. Lavigne Distinguished Graduate Fellowship**, Penn State University.
Awarded for full academic year.

2019–2023 **Morrill Scholarship Program (MSP)**, The Ohio State University
Four-year full tuition merit scholarship recognizing leadership and service in diversity and social justice.

Technical Skills

Software: R / RStudio, Stata, SPSS (novice), LaTeX, Dedoose (qualitative software), ArcGIS (intermediate)
Experimental & Survey Design: Qualtrics, Prolific, Lucid / Cint panels