Stanford



Emily "Sal" Salamanca

Postdoctoral Scholar, Political Science

Curriculum Vitae available Online

Bio

BIO

Emily “Sal” Salamanca is a political theorist whose research centers on ancient political thought and its reception, with particular attention to elite institutions, wealth inequality, and the aesthetics of law in self-governing communities. Her dissertation-based book manuscript, Legitimizing Luxury: Sumptuary Laws and Democratic Aesthetics in Athens, Rome, and Venice, reconstructs how legislation regulating the display—but not the holding—of wealth served as a consistent strategy for elites to secure power and legitimacy within broadly egalitarian political frameworks. By examining Athenian, Roman, and Venetian regimes, the project demonstrates how sumptuary laws mediated the tension between aristocratic lifestyles and democratic ideals, often at the expense of non-citizens, including women, foreigners, and religious minorities.

Her broader research agenda explores the ways myths, religious norms, and political rituals have been deployed to legitimize authority and preserve communal cohesion. She has published on topics ranging from Athenian ostracism understood as a collective ritual of democratic self-preservation, Machiavelli’s reworking of Florentine foundation myths, to Tocqueville’s projection of Protestant religiosity in Democracy in America. A second book project, in development, investigates the figure of the exile as a rhetorical and exemplary device in the history of political thought, from Greek and Roman antiquity through Renaissance humanism, analyzing how narratives of banishment shaped both communal self-understanding and later interpretive traditions.

Alongside her research, Salamanca maintains active interests in political historiography, democratic theory, and the reception of classical antiquity. Her work has appeared in journals such as American Political Thought, Philosophies, Polis, and Carte Italiane. She has also contributed to interdisciplinary scholarship in Italian studies and Classics, including translations and analyses of literary and cinematic texts.

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Laurence F. Rockefeller Graduate Prize Fellowship, Princeton University (2024)
- Travel Grant, Dean’s Fund for Scholarly Travel, Princeton University (2023)
- William S. Carpenter Fund in Politics Graduate Fellowship, Princeton University (2023)
- Political Philosophy Graduate Travel and Research Grant, Princeton University (2021)
- Georgiana Simpson Scholar, University of Chicago (2020)
- President’s Fellowship, Princeton University (2020)
- Phi Beta Kappa, Junior Inductee, University of Chicago (2019)
- Samuel T. Fleck Prize in Italian Studies, University of Chicago (2019)

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- PhD, Princeton University , Politics (2025)
- BA, University of Chicago , Political Science, Romance Language and Literature (Italian) (2020)

STANFORD ADVISORS

- Josiah Ober, Postdoctoral Faculty Sponsor

LINKS

- Website: emilysal.com

Research & Scholarship

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Civic Education
- History
- Philosophy

CURRENT RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY INTERESTS

Ancient political thought, Renaissance and early modern political thought, intellectual history, classical reception, history of democratic theory, aristocratic institutions, political aesthetics

Teaching

COURSES

2026-27

- Classical Seminar: Origins of Political Thought: CIVIC 230A, CLASSICS 181, CLASSICS 381, ETHICSOC 130A, PHIL 176A, PHIL 276A, POLISCI 230A, POLISCI 330A (Win)
- Designing Democracy: Constitutional Crises, Change, and Continuity: CIVIC 238T, HISTORY 258T, POLISCI 238T (Win)

2025-26

- Classical Seminar: Origins of Political Thought: CLASSICS 181, CLASSICS 381, ETHICSOC 130A, PHIL 176A, PHIL 276A, POLISCI 230A, POLISCI 330A (Win)
- Designing Democracy: Constitutional Crises, Change, and Continuity: HISTORY 258T, POLISCI 238T (Spr)

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **Reimagining Political Legitimacy: Ancestral Imagines in the Contional Speeches of Marius and Cicero** *POLIS*
  Salamanca, E.
  2025; 42 (2): 305-338
- **Reimagining Political Legitimacy: Ancestral imagines in the Contional Speeches of Marius and Cicero** *Polis: Journal of Greek and Roman Political Thought*
  Salamanca, E.
  2025; 42 (2): 305-338
- **Reconstructing Religion-contra-Democracy in Tocqueville's Democracy in America** *AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT*
  Salamanca, E.
  2024; 13 (4): 423-448

- **Pruning of the People: Ostracism and the Transformation of the Political Space in Ancient Athens** *PHILOSOPHIES*
  Salamanca, E.
  2023; 8 (5)
- **Il Giardino Tradotto: da Memoriale a Responsabilità nel Giardino dei Finzi-Contini di Bassani (1963) e De Sica (1970)** *La Fusta*
  Salamanca, E.
  2022; XXVIII
- **'Singulis Etruriae populis': The Political Mobilization of the Etruscan Foundation Myth in the Self-Conception of Renaissance Florence** *Carte Italiane*
  Salamanca, E.
  2021; 13 (1)