Mark R.S. Howard

Curriculum Vitae

Laurie J. Girand Center for Biomedical Ethics
Stanford University School of Medicine
300 Pasteur Drive,
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Department of Politics and Legal Studies
University of California Santa Cruz
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Santa Cruz, CA 95064
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EDUCATION

Ph.D. Department of Politics (Designated Emphasis: History of Consciousness), University of California Santa Cruz, 2024
Dissertation: *Between Reproduction and Renewal: Venture Capital and the Future of Social Necessity*
Committee: Matt Sparke (Chair), Mark Massoud, Massimiliano Tomba, Dean Mathiowetz

M.A. Department of Politics, University of California Santa Cruz, 2021

M.Sc. Department of International Relations, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2016

B.A. Department of Philosophy, Macquarie University, 2013

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2026–Present Postdoctoral Scholar, Stanford Training Program in ELSI Research (NIH/NHGRI T32), The Laurie J. Girand Center for Biomedical Ethics (GCBE), Stanford University School of Medicine

2025–Present Lecturer, Department of Politics and Legal Studies, University of California Santa Cruz

2025–2026 Lecturer, Crown College, University of California Santa Cruz

2023–2026 Lecturer/Teaching Fellow/Instructor, The Humanities Institute, University of California Santa Cruz

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Forthcoming Howard, Mark. *Hypergrowth: A Political Economic Theory of Venture Capital.* University of Michigan Press (under contract).

Peer Reviewed Journal Articles

2026 Howard, Mark. "Political Necessity in the Age of Hypergrowth: Venture Capital and the Silicon Valley Consensus." *Finance and Society*: 1-24. https://doi.org/10.1017/fas.2026.10035

2025 Howard, Mark. "Contrarian Optionality and Negative Mimesis: Venture capital and the institutional logic of Silicon Valley." *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory*: 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1080/1600910X.2025.2550269

2024 Cheikhali, Sarah., Ingy Higazy, **Mark Howard**, Henry McLaughlin, Gabriela Segura, Matt Sparke, and Lucia Vitale. "Alternative Archives: Researching Politics with Chunks of Reality." *Politics 0*(0): 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1177/02633957241292492

2024 Howard, Mark. "The Rapacious Ambivalence of VC Investment: Venture Capital, Value Capture, and the Valorization of Crisis." *Finance and Society 10*(2): 89-112. https://doi.org:10.1017/fas.2024.1

2022 Howard, Mark. "The Necropolice-Economy: Mapping Biopolitical Priorities and Human Expendability in the Time of COVID-19", *Societies 12*(1), 2: 1-15. https://doi.org/10.3390/soc12010002

2020 Howard, Mark. "The Never-End of History: Finding Meaning in the World Historical Moment", *Caustic Frolic 4*(1): 85-99.

Book Reviews

2024 Howard, Mark. "Book Review: Mission Economy: A Moonshot Guide to Changing Capitalism." *Review of Radical Political Economics, 56*(4). 2024: 630-634. https://doi.org/10.1177/04866134241247885

2023 Howard, Mark. "Book Review: Rentier Capitalism: Who Owns the Economy, and Who Pays for It?" *Review of Radical Political Economics, 55*(4). 2023: 728-732. https://doi.org/10.1177/04866134231183739

CURRENT RESEARCH

Postdoctoral Research

From Variation to Deficiency: AI-Enabled Genomic Drug Discovery and the Ethics of Biocommodification.

Postdoctoral research project examining how AI-enabled genomic discovery and computational representations of biological variation influence the identification of therapeutic targets, the classification of biological differences as pathological, and the prioritization of biomedical interventions. This research contributes to the broader *Legible Life* book project.

Works in Preparation

"Valuation Before Validation: AI Drug Discovery and the Political Economy of Promissory Technoscience in Two Bays." *Article manuscript in preparation.*

"Computational Legibility and the Political Economy of AI-Enabled Pharmaceutical Innovation." *Article manuscript in preparation.*

"Exiting in order to Exit: Charter Cities, Venture Capital, and the Disruption of Governance." *Article manuscript in preparation.*

Book Projects

Legible Life: The Political Economy of Computational Biology and the Specter of Biocommodification. Book project in development.

An interdisciplinary investigation into how computational approaches to biological life interact with the institutional and financial organization of biomedical innovation, shaping therapeutic priorities, biological classifications, and the distinction between health and disease. The project incorporates the postdoctoral research program *From Variation to Deficiency*, alongside related work on pharmaceutical innovation, computational legibility, and biocommodification.

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AWARDS

2026	Travel Grant, Finance and Society Conference, UCSC Unit-18 Professional Development Fund ($899)
2024	Travel Grant, UCSC Politics Department, Spring ($600)
2023	Humanizing Technology Mentors Fellowship, The Humanities Institute (UCSC) ($1500)
2023	Writing Fellowship, UCSC Social Sciences Division ($6000)

2022 Research Grant, Institutional Failure as Global Leadership: A Case-Based Study of the Present, University of California Humanities Research Institute (UCHRI), 2022–2023 ($1000)

2022 Summer Fellowship, UCSC Politics Department ($500)

2022 Humanizing Technology Fellowship, National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), The Humanities Institute (UCSC), 2022–2023 ($5000 + Teaching Appointment)

2022 ISA (International Studies Association) Travel Grant, Annual Conference in Nashville ($700)

2021 Travel Grant, UCSC Politics Department ($400)

2021 Qualifying Exam Fellowship, UCSC Politics Department ($8700)

2019 Travel Grant, UCSC Politics Department ($677)

Selected Awards Declined

2026–2027 Mercatus Fellowship, "The Political Economy of Markets, Minds, and Emerging Technology," Mercatus Center at George Mason University – declined

INVITED TALKS

2025 "Performative Divergence: Contrarianism and the Production of Value in Silicon Valley" University of Otago, May.

CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

Panels Organized

2021 "Revisiting Necropolitics Amidst COVID-19" ISA-West (International Studies Association West Region) Annual Conference (virtual), September.

Papers

2027 (accepted and forthcoming) "Computational Legibility: Biological Data, Assetization, and US-China Competition in AI-Enabled Biopharma" American Association of Geographers (AAG) Annual Meeting, New York, February.

2026 "Valuation Before Validation: AI Drug Discovery and the Political Economy of Promissory Life Science" Finance and Society Conference, Copenhagen Business School, September.

2026 "Valuation Before Validation: AI Drug Discovery and the Geographies of Promissory Life Science in Two Bays" American Association of Geographers (AAG) Annual Meeting, San Francisco, March.

2024 "Exiting in order to Exit: Charter Cities and the Financial Engineering of Governance," BISA Workshop, University of Edinburgh, September

2024 "Exiting in order to Exit: Charter Cities and the Financial Engineering of Governance," Finance and Society Conference, University of Sheffield, September

2024 "Historical Materialism 3.0: AI, UBI, and the Equity-Growth Playbook." Finance and Society Conference, University of Sheffield, September

2024 "Silicon Valley's New World Order: AI, UBI, and the Equity-Growth Playbook." European Sociological Association (Critical Political Economy Research Network) Conference, Porto, August

2023 "The Rapacious Ambivalence of VC Investment: Venture Capital, Value Capture, and the Valorization of Crisis." Critical Political Economy Research Network (CPERN) Mid-Term Workshop, Naples, June.

2023 "Anti/Establishmentarianism: Venture Capital, Disruption, and the Paradoxes of Libertarian Exit." MPSA (Midwest Political Science Association) Annual Convention, Chicago, April.

2022 "The Poetics of Exit: Venture Capital, Contracting Time, and the Moral Hazard of Competing Incentives." Conference on Divergent Temporalities: Capitalism and the Conquest of Space-Time, Athens, Greece, May.

2022 "Hedging a New World Order: Options Theory as a Strategic and Diplomatic Method." MPSA (Midwest Political Science Association) Annual Convention, Chicago, April.

2022 "Is diplomacy an Option? Hedging strategies for a new world order." ISA (International Studies Association) Annual Convention, Nashville, March.

2021 "The Necropolice Economy: Mapping Biopolitical Priorities and Human Expendability in the time of COVID-19." ISA-West (International Studies Association West Region) Annual Conference, Virtual, September.

2021 "International Police Economy: The New Leviathan and the Politics of Dissent." 14th Global Studies Conference (virtual), June.

2021 "Imagined Securitization: irrational actors, realist reason, and the COVID-19 pandemic." ISA (International Studies Association) Annual Convention. Virtual, April.

2020 "Is diplomacy an Option? Finance Theory and Brexit." APSA (American Political Science Association) Annual Conference, San Francisco. September.

Discussant

2022 New Directions in Diplomacy (Panel). ISA (International Studies Association) Annual Convention (Nashville), March 2022.

CAMPUS OR DEPARTMENTAL TALKS

2023 Humanities in the Age of Artificial Intelligence Research Cluster, "Silicon Valley's New World Order: OpenAI, Worldcoin, and Venture Capital," The Humanities Institute, University of California Santa Cruz

2021 Crown College Social Event Keynote "Bladerunner, Frankenstein, Intertextuality," Crown College, University of California Santa Cruz

2021 Faculty Focus Group, 'The Ethics of Technology,' Crown College, University of California Santa Cruz

2016 Poststructuralism in International Relations; International Law; Sovereignty, Department of International Relations, London School of Economics

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of California Santa Cruz, Sole Instructor

The Politics of Technology (*planned Winter 2027*)
Politics of International Trade (Spring 2026)
Citizenship and Action (Spring 2026, *planned Spring 2027*)
Legal Theory (Winter 2026, Fall 2026)
Global Organization (Fall 2025)
Law and Social Issues (Fall 2025)
Ethics and Technology (Spring 2023) (Spring 2024) (Summer 2025)
Global Capitalism: A History of the Present (Fall 2022)
Ethical and Societal Implications of Emerging Technologies (Fall 2021, Fall 2025)
US and the World Economy (Summer 2021)

International Political Economy (Summer 2020)

University of California Santa Cruz, Teaching Assistant

Constitutional Law (Winter 2024)
The Politics of East Asia (Winter 2022)
Modern Political Thought (Spring 2020, Winter 2021)
US and the World Economy (Spring 2019, Fall 2020)
Security, Conflict, Violence, War (Winter 2020)
Ancient Political Thought (Winter 2019, Fall 2019)
Keywords: Political Concepts (Fall 2018)

Stanford University School of Medicine, Teaching Assistant

Responsible Conduct of Research (Fall 2026)

Professional and Executive Education

Responsible AI Professionalization, Erdős Institute (ongoing) — curriculum targeting technical practitioners and data scientists

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2022 Research Assistant, University of California Santa Cruz
Advisor: Matt Sparke

National Science Foundation (NSF) Institutional Grant Research and Preparation.

2023–2024 Research Cluster Collaborator, Humanities in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (funded research cluster), The Humanities Institute, University of California Santa Cruz

Event planning and participation, resource gathering and communications, presentation of research in progress.

SERVICE TO PROFESSION

Peer Review

Article Reviewer, *Finance and Society,* 2026
Article Reviewer, *Economy and Society,* 2025
Article Reviewer, *Finance and Society,* 2025
Article Reviewer, *Socio-Economic Review,* 2025
Article Reviewer, *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 2024

Article Reviewer, *Qeios*, 2023
Article Reviewer, *EPC: Politics and Space*, 2022–2023

To Community

Juror/Judge, California State University (CSU) Student Research Competition, 2022

EDITORIAL WORK

2025–Present Special Issue Co-Editor, "The Political Economy of Venture Capital," *Finance and Society*, (forthcoming)

2018–2024 Founding Editor, *Keywords in Political Economy* (UCSC)

2015–2016 Editorial Review Board Member, *Millennium Journal of International Studies* (LSE)

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2024–Present Humanist-in-Residence (HU.MN), Ethical Resolve / HU.MN Academy — consulting and programming in responsible AI, data justice, and regulatory compliance

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS/AFFILIATIONS

American Association of Geographers (AAG), 2025-present
International Studies Association (ISA), 2018–present
Finance and Society Network, 2023–present
Design Justice Network, 2023–present
Philosophy, Politics & Economics Society, 2024–present
Critical Political Economy Research Network, 2021–present
American Political Science Association (APSA), 2020–present
National Venture Capital Association (NVCA), 2021–present

LANGUAGES

English (Fluent, native)
German (Reading, basic)

REFERENCES

Matt Sparke, Distinguished Professor of Politics, Co-Director of Global and Community Health
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