The 2023 Hayward R. Alker Best Student Paper Award

The annual Hayward R. Alker award recognizes the student conference paper that best employs or analyzes interpretive methodologies and methods for the study of politics.

This award is named to honor the memory of Hayward R. Alker, former President of the International Studies Association and John A. McCone Chair in International Security at the School of International Relations, University of Southern California. Alker passed away on August 24, 2007. From his humanistic critique of mainstream political science, to the role he played in the development and promotion of interdisciplinary, historically grounded, linguistically and hermeneutically-informed approaches to political science, Hayward Alker was a tireless champion of interpretive methodologies. His commitment to nurturing and encouraging graduate students and young scholars makes this award a doubly appropriate way to honor his contributions.

Selection Criteria

Papers must come from PhD students in political science, and must have been presented at a political science association conference (e.g. American Political Science Association, Western Political Science Association, Midwest Political Science Association, other regional or state meetings, as well as other associations such as European Consortium for Political Research, International Political Science Association, or International Studies Association and its regional meetings) in the academic year preceding the award. Authors must be enrolled as PhD students at the time of the paper's conference presentation.

The award is given to papers presented during the academic year preceding the year of the submission deadline. The 2023 Alker Award will be given to conference papers presented between September 15, 2021, and September 14, 2022. Nominated papers should be identical to the version presented at the conference; subsequent revisions are not eligible.

Reflecting Hayward Alker's eclectic approach to political studies, the award will be given to a paper studying any aspect of political life that either (1) engages interpretive methodological issues or (2) reports the results of empirical research conducted using interpretive research methods.

Interpretivism may be understood as an approach to research that explicitly foregrounds and embraces the interpretive processes inherent to all inquiry and data analysis. Interpretive epistemologies attend to the ways individuals and collectives form ideas, arguments, or worldviews, seeking to understand how actors and researchers make sense of their social and political world, and how these modes of being and knowing impact behaviors, political outcomes, and the production of knowledge. In explaining how things—ideas, events, actors, bodies, institutions, laws, movements, physical artifacts—are made meaningful in specific research settings, interpretive scholars are acutely interested in the historical, individual, and social contingencies that constitute any given fact, data set, or theoretical frame. Thus, rather than assume categories or subjects exist empirically in a static form, interpretivists seek out context-specific meanings and prioritize lived experiences. For more background on interpretive methodologies and methods, please visit our website: https://connect.apsanet.org/interpretationandmethod/imm-conference-group-apsa/

Submission Process: Deadline March 31, 2023

To be considered for APSA 2023 award, nominated papers must be received no later than March 31, 2023. Please review the selection criteria carefully to confirm eligibility prior to submission.

Authors may self-nominate. We also encourage chairs of panels as well as discussants to nominate outstanding papers from their conference sessions.

One copy of the nominated paper should be emailed as a pdf or Word file to the chair of the award committee, along with a short statement (no longer than one paragraph) stating how the nominated paper speaks to interpretive methodologies and/or methods. Please include the date and name of the conference where the paper was presented.

Members of the award committee for 2023 are: Osman Balkan (Chair), Yuna Blajer de la Garza, and Jessica Soedirgo.

Please send nominated papers to Osman Balkan at obalkan1@swarthmore.edu.

The award will be announced and presented at the 2023 American Political Science Association conference during the business meeting or reception of the Interpretive Methodologies and Methods Related Group. The award committee is under no obligation to make an award for a year in which submissions do not merit such recognition.