

Yusuf Can

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EDUCATION

Georgetown University, Department of Government

Washington, D.C.

Master of Arts in Democracy and Governance, *magna cum laude*

May 2023

- Awards: Outstanding Graduate Student Organization Award with Democracy and Society Journal

California State University, Sacramento, Department of Political Science

Sacramento, CA

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, *magna cum laude*

May 2020

Minor in Middle Eastern Studies

- Honors and Awards: Dean's List, Model United Nations Position Paper Award (2020)

EXPERIENCE

The Woodrow Wilson Center

Washington, D.C.

Analyst & Program Coordinator, Middle East Program

May 2023 – Current

- Editor of MENA360°, the flagship publication driving informed discourse on Middle Eastern affairs—curating expert contributions, managing editorial strategy, and producing special issues on regional diplomacy, economic shifts, and social transformations.
- Spearheaded initiatives such as Future of EURO-MENA and Turkey–U.S. Relations, with a strategic focus on regional geopolitics, trade dynamics, and energy cooperation—briefing U.S. congressional staff, diplomats, and multilateral partners on trends shaping transatlantic and Mediterranean alliances.
- Conducted in-depth research and authored policy briefs on regional economic development, workforce resilience, and inclusive growth strategies across MENA and Mediterranean countries, informing evidence-based policymaking in Washington, DC.
- Led collaborations with embassies, think tanks, and international organizations on projects addressing geopolitical shifts, migration, and institutional capacity-building in post-conflict and transitional contexts.
- Directed special research projects examining labor market dynamics, migration flows, and education-to-employment pathways, with a focus on North Africa and the Levant.
- Secured U.S. government and private-sector funding through high-impact proposals highlighting innovation in diplomacy, economic engagement, and strategic communications.
- Frequently quoted and published in top-tier outlets including The Guardian, BBC, VOA, and the Wilson Center, offering expert analysis on regional politics, security, and international affairs.

Georgetown University

Washington, D.C.

Editorial & Programming Associate, Democracy and Society Journal

October 2021 – May 2023

- Served as Assistant Editor for Democracy & Society, a peer-reviewed academic journal published by the Center for Democracy and Civil Society at Georgetown University. Oversaw the editorial production of Volume 19: Democracy and Crises and Volume 20: Democracy and Inequality, collaborating with contributors from diverse global and disciplinary backgrounds.
- Copyedited original academic articles covering pressing issues such as democratic backsliding, corruption, polarization, and post-pandemic governance. Ensured clarity, consistency, and quality in preparation for publication to an international audience of scholars, civil society professionals, and policymakers.
- Contributed an original co-authored article on the nexus of corruption and democratic backsliding, analyzing Turkey and Hungary as comparative cases (see p. 8 of Volume 19).
- Co-organized two global expert panels on the state of democracy in the United States, bringing together leading scholars to engage graduate students in timely, interdisciplinary debates.
- Designed and moderated six roundtable sessions on public policy and democratic challenges in the U.S., facilitating peer networking and broadening exposure to divergent policy perspectives. These sessions supported Georgetown graduate students' professional development and civic engagement.

Freedom House

Washington, D.C.

Program Associate, Europe and Eurasia Program

July 2022 – November 2022

- Conducted research and drafted policy briefs on legislative developments related to democratic governance and civil liberties in the broader Eurasia region. Regularly monitored and analyzed local media sources, government publications, and legal documents in support of Freedom House's advocacy and correspondence with policymakers.
- Facilitated collaboration with regional NGOs by coordinating cross-border initiatives to support frontline activists

and independent journalists, particularly during European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) proceedings involving cases of digital censorship, state repression, and press freedom violations.

- Edited and provided substantive feedback on 3,000-word policy papers focused on electoral integrity, judicial independence, and media freedom in Eurasia. Worked directly with scholars and civil society experts to develop actionable recommendations and amplify local voices in global policy discussions.

The Woodrow Wilson Center

Washington, D.C.

Research Assistant, Middle East Program

January 2022 – May 2022

- Drafted briefs on the ongoing political developments in the Middle East for official correspondence by researching local media outlets and sources, including NGO reports and official correspondence.
- Gathered and analyzed publicly available data for policy papers on the digitalization of the economy, online education, and employment status of youth and women during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Middle East.

California State University, Sacramento

Sacramento, CA

Program Associate, Community Engagement Center

January 2019 – May 2020

- Organized and executed six two-week volunteer initiatives focused on raising awareness and mobilizing student involvement around issues affecting underserved communities, including housing insecurity and food justice.
- Coordinated logistics and communications with over 30 local nonprofit partners and campus stakeholders to facilitate student placements, volunteer training, and reflection sessions that linked service to civic learning.
- Led data analysis for a comprehensive university-community engagement survey involving 1,200 faculty, staff, and community partners. Synthesized findings into an 80-page report with actionable recommendations to strengthen long-term, equitable partnerships.
- Contributed to the development of institutional policy proposals on service-learning, inclusive community outreach, and ethical engagement practices—informing the Center’s strategic planning and annual goals.

California State Senate

Sacramento, CA

Staff Assistant, Senator Dr. Richard Pan’s Office

December 2015 – December 2018

- Drafted official state resolutions to commemorate public servants, community leaders, and notable events, ensuring language aligned with legislative standards and protocols.
- Prepared weekly internal newsletters summarizing district news, upcoming hearings, and policy updates to inform the Senator and staff of relevant developments.
- Authored policy briefings and background memos on active and emerging legislation across various policy areas, including education, healthcare, and public safety, to support the Senator’s floor speeches and committee participation.
- Assisted with constituent services by tracking local concerns, responding to inquiries, and helping coordinate community outreach efforts, strengthening the Senator’s engagement with the district.

SKILLS AND PROFICIENCIES

Language: Turkish (native), English (native), Arabic (Limited working proficiency)

Computer Skills: Data Visualization, R, Stata, WordPress, Adobe Creative, Chartbeat.

REFERENCES

Ambassador James F. Jeffrey

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Merissa Khurma

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