Benjamin Radd

Political Scientist · Constitutional Scholar · CBS News Contributor

Los Angeles, California benjamin@radd.cc benjaminradd.com

Political scientist and legal scholar who studies how decisions are actually made inside the rules and institutions that constrain them. He works in three settings: the classroom, where he teaches constitutional and comparative law at UCLA Law and USC Gould; the broadcast, where he analyzes Iran, U.S. foreign policy, and American government as a CBS News contributor and on networks in the United States and abroad; and the simulation, where he designs crisis exercises and wargames that test how leaders decide under pressure. His scholarship centers on Iranian constitutional development and the legal architecture of the Islamic Republic.

Current Appointments

2022–present **UCLA School of Law**
Lecturer in Law, Master of Legal Studies Program

Teaches legal research, writing, and analysis to working professionals. Advises students on legal problems inside public and private organizations and supervises their capstone research, proposed solutions, and presentations.

LAW 119 MLS Capstone Seminar

2023–present **USC Gould School of Law**
Lecturer in Law

LAW 101 Law and the U.S. Constitution in Global History, with comparative constitutionalism. Anchored by the Second Constitutional Convention, a course-length simulation with 161 students organized into nine factions.

LAW 401 Cybersecurity and Cybercrime. Includes a crisis-simulation capstone and a classroom adaptation of the Centaur exercise.

LAW 520 Introduction to the U.S. Legal System

2026–present **MIT Security Studies Program**
Affiliate (Non-Resident), Wargaming Lab

2023–present **UCLA Burkle Center for International Relations**
Senior Fellow

Advisory & Simulation Design

2018–present

Pyrsis Strategic Advisory

Founder · formerly Fascination Lab

A crisis advisory and risk management practice that uses immersive simulation as its distinguishing method. Designs and facilitates crisis simulations, wargames, and strategic learning exercises that test how leadership teams take in information, synthesize it, and decide under pressure. Develops experiential learning programs and curricula.

Selected clients and partners: Vet Voice Foundation; MIT; Brown University; UCLA Anderson School of Management; Harvard-Westlake School.

2023

Vet Voice Foundation

Designer & Gamemaster, *War Game*

Designed and wrote the complete six-hour exercise, including its mechanics and the actor speeches used as scenario developments. Ran it as gamemaster on January 6, 2023, and led the debrief. Former senior government, military, and intelligence officials confronted a fictional contested presidential transition and domestic insurrection. Consulting Producer of the resulting documentary, *War Game* (2024), directed by Jesse Moss and Tony Gerber, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and was named a *New York Times* Critic's Pick.

2026

The Islamabad Accord

A 90-minute, seven-delegation simulation of US–Iran final-status nuclear negotiations for the MIT Security Studies Program's Wargaming Lab, built on a custom platform with AI-scored public diplomacy and live prediction-market forecasting.

2026

The Singapore Protocol

A 90-minute multiparty crisis negotiation on a Taiwan Strait maritime energy blockade for twenty graduate students and faculty at the RSIS–MIT Singapore Summer Wargaming Institute (Nanyang Technological University, August 2026), run on a custom engine with AI-scored public diplomacy and an AI-played delegation.

2026

The Istanbul Framework

A multi-session negotiation simulation designed for an undergraduate political science course at Brown University (November 2026), in which student teams representing ten governments, among them Ukraine, Russia, the United States, the United Kingdom and France, negotiate a framework to end the war in Ukraine across five contested issues while managing public opinion at home and abroad, played on Pyrsis's Accord Console.

Media & Public Engagement

2026–present

CBS News

Contributor, Government and Politics

Film & Long-Form

War Game (2024), Consulting Producer. Sundance premiere; *New York Times* Critic's Pick.

How to Become a Tyrant, Netflix. Featured in two episodes, including the Saddam Hussein episode.

The Diary of a CEO. Two roundtable appearances, more than 10 million combined views.

Piers Morgan Uncensored, May 2026.

Recurring

The Story Is with Elex Michaelson, CNN

Press Play with Madeleine Brand, KCRW

Broadcast

CNN, CNN International, CBS, Fox News, BBC News, NBC, KNBC, NPR, Deutsche Welle, and Al Jazeera.

Original Formats

The BLUF. Daily 90-second video commentary.

Office Hours. Weekly deep dive built on live iPad sketching.

Invited Talks

"The Iran War: Why Now?" UCLA Senior Scholars.

Peacebuilding and the Positive Peace Framework in the Middle East and North Africa. Pacific Council on International Policy.

Previous Teaching Appointments

2022–2023

Pomona College

Visiting Assistant Professor of Politics

Comparative Law and Politics; American Constitutionalism; International Law and War Crimes; Public and Private Diplomacy; U.S. Foreign Policy

2015–2024 **UCLA Department of Political Science**
Lecturer (and Global Studies)
Crimes of War: The Pursuit of Justice in International Law; Public Diplomacy; Government and Politics of the Middle East; Judicial Oversight of the Bureaucracy; Law, Politics, and Executive Emergency Powers; Comparative Jurisprudence; U.S. Foreign Policy

2019–2020 **UCLA Department of Communication Studies**
Lecturer
Political Propaganda; Fake News and the Weaponization of Misinformation

2018–2019 **UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs**
Lecturer
Diplomacy by Design: International Negotiation and Decision-Making; Public Policy and the Separation of Powers

Education

2015 **PhD, Political Science**, University of California, Los Angeles
Dissertation: *Constitutionalism and the Republic: Understanding Iranian Constitutional Development from 1906 to 1989*

2003 **JD**, Stanford Law School

1999 **BA, Political Science**, University of California, Los Angeles

Affiliations & Languages

Affiliations: Security Fellow, Truman National Security Project

Languages: Persian (fluent)