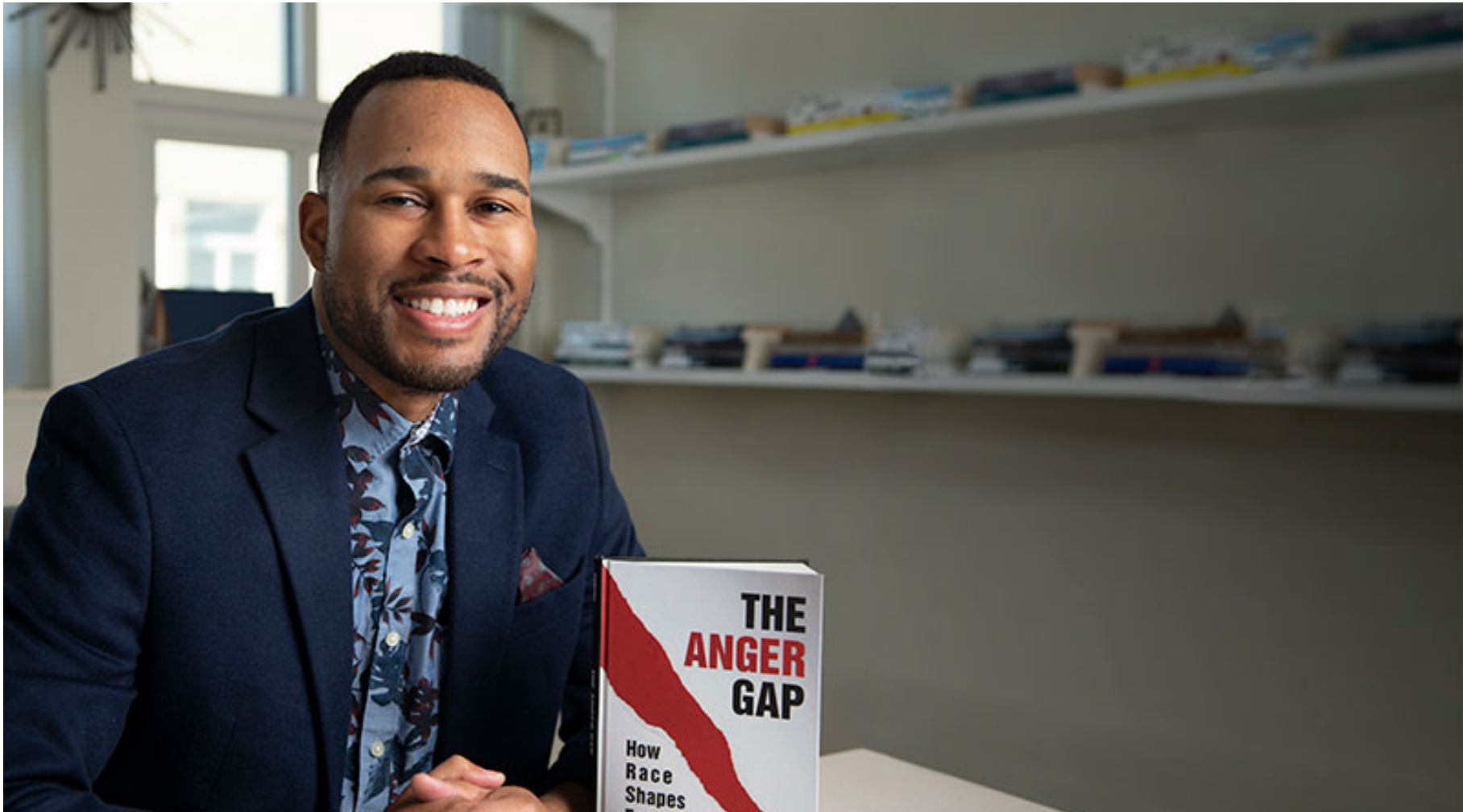


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ALUM PUBLISHES TEXT ON ANGER AND RACE IN POLITICS

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA POLITICAL SCIENTIST DAVIN PHOENIX SEES RACIAL DIVIDE
IN HOW THE ELECTORATE EXPRESSES ITSELF.

by [Brian McGuire](#) | February 18, 2020

Above: Davin Phoenix

Read time: about 1 min

Alumnus and noted political scientist Dr. Davin Phoenix '05 has published *The Anger Gap: How Race Shapes Emotion in Politics*, an exploration of racial patterns in Americans' emotional responses to politics. He has found that African, Latin and Asian Americans consistently express less anger over political figures, regimes and environments than their white counterparts.

Phoenix argues that there are two main reasons for such a gap. First, racial minorities' perception that politics is generally unresponsive or even hostile to their demands inhibits action-inducing anger. Second, expressions of anger from people of color – especially African Americans – may come at great cost. For example, he says, the “angry while black” label can be socially stigmatizing or carry a risk of greater notice from law enforcement.

Phoenix says his novel approach considers consequences like this that arise from the differences in how people “feel their way through politics.” He sees a clear relationship between expressions of anger over politics and participation in a wide variety of actions, ranging from volunteering for and donating to campaigns, to contacting elected officials, to protesting. The book also offers insights into the types of messaging that can and cannot effectively mobilize communities of color.

“Identifying which emotions effectively move different sets of Americans to take political action is critical for understanding how people participate (or do not) in an era marked by intense partisan and racial polarization,”

Phoenix said.

Phoenix' work has drawn notice from many, particularly Dr. Rachel Bitecofer, political science professor and assistant director of Christopher Newport's Wason Center for Public Policy, who is nationally known for her election prediction model. "[This] book makes one of the most important contributions to political behavior in the past decade and is proving instrumental in my own work," she said.

Phoenix is assistant professor of political science at the University of California, Irvine, and an award-winning teacher and scholar. He is also co-director of the First Generation First Quarter Challenge, which mentors students who are seeking to become the first in their families to graduate from a four-year university. He earned a bachelor's degree in [political science](#) from Christopher Newport and completed his doctorate at the University of Michigan.
