

Are Americans truly independent?

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The number of independent voters has grown over the last decade, yet they remain misunderstood by both media and academics alike.

On Thursday (Nov. 3), nationally known political scientist Samara Klar will present her views on independent politics in a program titled Why Americans Pretend They're Independent and Why It Matters.

The talk will take place at 4 p.m. in the Anna Many Lounge at the Caroline Richardson Building on Tulane University's uptown campus. It is sponsored by the [Newcomb College Institute](#) of Tulane, the Scholars Strategy Network and the Tulane [Department of Gender & Sexuality Studies](#).

J. Celeste Lay, an associate professor of political science at Tulane, says Klar will explain the "myth" behind independent politics – people who ultimately hold clear partisan beliefs and consistent preferences for partisan candidates yet misrepresent their own partisanship by claiming to be independent.

Klar is an assistant professor of political science at the University of Arizona and founder of [Women Also Know Stuff](#), a web directory dedicated to promoting the work of women political scientists.

As an assistant professor of political science at the University of Arizona School of Government and Public Policy, she uses experimental methods, survey analyses and other statistical tools to study how individuals' social surroundings and personal identities influence their political attitudes and behavior.

She is co-author with Yanna Krupnikov of the book Independent Politics, published by Cambridge University Press earlier this year. The book explains what motivates so many Americans to identify as independent and why this matters so much for American politics.

"We show that many Americans have grown embarrassed of their own partisan attachments," Klar says. "In turn, they deny to pollsters, party activists, friends, and

even themselves their true partisan tendencies, instead choosing to go 'undercover' as independents."