Megan Ming Francis, University of Washington associate professor of political science, has been named a fellow with the Thurgood Marshall Institute. The institute is a multidisciplinary research and advocacy policy center within the NAACP's Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF).

Francis studies American politics, race and the development of constitutional law, with an emphasis on the establishment of rights and citizenship and black political activism. In her work with the institute, she will research present-day voting rights challenges in the context of the history of southern politics, as well as the development of the southern criminal justice system after the Civil War. She is also at work on a new book about that post-war era, examining the role of the criminal justice system in the rebuilding of southern political and economic power.

Francis is the author of the 2014 book “Civil Rights and the Making of the American State” which won honors from the American Political Science Association and the National Society of Black Political Scientists. The book tells the story of how the NAACP's early campaign against state-sanctioned racial violence shaped the modern civil rights movement.

"LDF has been a leader in the fight for racial justice because of its bold and innovative vision," Francis said. "I'm excited to join TMI and further build the institute's social science research capacity."

James Cadogan, director of the institute, said Francis's research and expertise will be indispensable to their work on racial justice and equality. Sherrilyn Ifill, the LDF's president and director-counsel, said Francis's research on civil rights, social movements and political activism in the African-American community will offer us vital perspective as we continue to reimagine how best to achieve equal justice in this country."

Francis is one of three Thurgood Marshall Institute fellows and her term is for a year, ending in February, 2019.

Michael McCann, UW professor and chair of political science, called Francis “an extraordinary scholar whose research is changing how we understand black resistance to racial subjugation and struggles for civil rights over the last 150 years.”

Her appointment to the yearlong fellowship, McCann said, “will bolster the contributions she is making to the advancement of social justice.”

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Based on a news release from the LDF. For more information about Francis and her work, contact her at meganmf@uw.edu.