

2016 Research Apprenticeship Projects

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Principal Investigator(s)	e-mail	Project Title
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Garrett BREDELL	gbredell@ucsd.edu	Careers of Taiwanese Politicians through the Legislative Yuan
Nathan COMBES	NathanCombes@gmail.com	Preventing Child Mortality: Political Incentives for Inefficient Service Delivery in Kenya
Scott GUENTHER	sguenther@ucsd.edu	Under Pressure: Social Interaction and Voting Behavior
Scott GUENTHER	sguenther@ucsd.edu	A New Way to Measure Presidential Ideology
David LINDSEY and Will HOBBS	dlindsey@ucsd.edu whobbs@ucsd.edu	What did the President know and when did he know it? Exploring the CIA's top secret presidential briefings
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Some People Want the Fall of the Regime: Explaining Demands for Regime Change in the Arab World

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Why do some protests call for moderate policy changes while others call for the fall of the regime? The question is central to the Arab Spring, as revolutionary protests in Tunisia and Egypt actively called for and ultimately led to regime change, while those making moderate demands fizzled and obtained small amounts of reforms. This project seeks to explain why protest groups call for regime change and which individuals participate in regime-changing protests. I argue that individuals that lack political socialization in either political or civil society groups are more likely to attend protests that demand regime change. This is confirmed by findings from a survey experiment in Lebanon. The next stage of the project is to extend data

analysis to protests themselves, through constructing a data-set on protests in 19 Arab World countries between 1992 and 2014. With the full data, I will be able to test whether civil society groups and political parties are less likely to call for regime change than ad hoc groups.

Research assistants will have two responsibilities. First, RAs will use a structured hand-coding technique to extract data on protests from LexisNexis by country and time period. RAs will be assigned to code one country (or potentially two, depending on progress) for the duration of a quarter. From my experience, this is an excellent way to gain expertise on the political history of a country. Second, RAs will be responsible for researching the political history of groups that organized or participated in protests. The data-set is an ideal source for RAs to conduct a data-driven research project in the spring quarter and coding will hopefully provide students with research ideas. I will provide students with instruction in statistical analysis using Stata and/or R, as necessary for use in their projects. The best applicants will have an interest in the Middle East and North Africa and some general research experience.

Careers of Taiwanese Politicians through the Legislative Yuan

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Taiwan's legislative body, the Legislative Yuan, is an understudied case of semi-presidential politics in the East Asian region. As a semi-presidential system, Taiwan features a president who is elected directly elected in elections separate from Legislative Yuan members. These features, and others, provide potentially interesting leverage for comparative studies of legislative bodies, their members, and participating political parties. Data collected from this project will be used in an array of studies examining legislative dynamics, party discipline, and political behavior. Most importantly, this project aims to track the movement of Taiwanese politicians across their careers to determine who is shifting political party affiliations and when.

Students interested in collaborating on this project will be responsible for collecting data on politicians elected to the Legislative Yuan, with emphasis in the post-1996 period. Most sources for this data are available exclusively in Mandarin, including the Legislative Yuan's home page, as well as biographical and newspaper accounts. Research apprentices must be able to read Mandarin language sources, as well as be familiar with basic functions in Microsoft Excel. Students who wish to gain the most leverage over output of the project should also be familiar with a statistical analysis software package such as R, STATA or SPSS.

Preventing Child Mortality: Political Incentives for Inefficient Service Delivery in Kenya

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Every year approximately 800,000 children under the age of five die from diarrheal diseases. In Kenya, that number reaches 11,000 annually. These deaths occur despite the Government of Kenya's constitutional mandate to protect the lives of children and the fact that deaths from diarrhea are easily and cheaply

prevented. My dissertation uncovers that politicians are incentivized to spend the health budget on services that are not the most efficient for protecting the lives of children. Specifically, politicians tell me that it is in their personal best interest to invest in constructing new health facilities because everyone in the community will *literally* see the work that they are doing. As such, politicians are provided little incentive to invest in supplying sufficient stocks of medicine because less people will see that service. The result is a country full of half-built health facilities that provide zero services, and a constituency that lacks access to basic, essential medicines.

The data for my dissertation has been fully collected. In the summer of 2014, I completed a 120 question survey of 1,006 respondents. In the summer of 2015, I conducted a survey of 402 health facilities in Kenya and interviewed 16 Kenyan politicians. I also have a large dataset of newspaper articles about the Kenyan health sector (for which new articles are collected every day).

The undergraduate RA will be expected to read the incoming newspaper articles and record what type of service the article was about (is it about a new building, new x-ray machines, new medicines, etc). Furthermore, the RA will be asked to find specific information about government programs that have been implemented to combat child mortality in Kenya.

My career aspirations are to find a position in a small college that emphasizes teaching. Thus, my focus in this partnership is primarily to work with the undergraduate student on writing a stellar term paper and improving their research skills. Therefore, students who wish to focus on a jointly authored paper and improving their research skills (literature reviews, writing style, STATA) are better suited for the position than students who prefer working on different tasks each week. All of my previously collected data will be made available to the selected student for their term paper. This RA-ship is best suited for students who are interested in Africa, Public Health, Service Provision, or Government Accountability. Previous experience with POLI 30 or plans to complete it in Winter 2015 is a strong plus, though not required.

Under Pressure: Social Interaction and Voting Behavior

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This project explores how social pressure alters voting decisions in laboratory election games. Specifically, we will be using experiments where subjects receive manipulated information about other voters in the election. The experimental process allows us to gain leverage on age-old questions in political science, such as when and why people consider the well-being of others. For the project, Research Assistants will assist in the design and implementation of the experiments, which will take place on campus. Assistants may be asked to review and summarize previous findings in the literature, as well as assist with the recruitment of participants. Research assistants will have an opportunity to learn how laboratory experiments work and can utilize that chance to identify and explore a host of issues they may want to pursue as their own research project.

A New Way to Measure Presidential Ideology

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Presidents frequently send memos to Congress detailing their preferences on important legislation under consideration in Congress. These memos, known as Statements of Administration Policy, provide an untapped opportunity to better understand presidential ideology as it relates to members of Congress and their votes. This project will use the memos to develop a measure that can be used to compare the ideology of the President to legislators. Research assistants will assist with collection of these Statements of Administration Policy and the coding of the President's position in these documents. With the wide range of content covered in these documents research assistants will have an opportunity to identify and explore a number of topics related to Presidential power and influence that they may want to pursue as their own research project.

What did the President know and when did he know it? Exploring the CIA's top secret presidential briefings

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The President's Daily Brief is America's most sensitive intelligence product. Presented to the president each morning, it summarizes top secret intelligence from around the U.S. government. Until recently, the Central Intelligence Agency had blocked the release of even the oldest editions of the President's Daily Brief but recently reversed course. Now, for the first time, thousands of declassified editions of the brief are available, presenting a unique window onto America's secrets. Join us as we explore the contents of the brief for the first time ever. We will answer important questions: What did the president know? How accurate are the CIA's most sensitive predictions? Is intelligence gathering worth the money? Your main role will be to read these documents and record what they contain. Depending on your level of interest and involvement in the project, we would be willing to coauthor a published paper with you on the basis of these findings.

National Leaders and International Relations

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National leaders shape international political and economic relations by crafting foreign policies. While the indispensable role of leaders in world affairs is well-known in the mass media, there is little systematic evidence for their relevance in the international relations literature, which tends to emphasize the effect of political institutions, rather than individual leaders, on foreign and public policy outcomes. This research project aims to explore the relevance of leaders for international affairs by exploring how aspects of leaders' personal backgrounds shape their policy preferences, and the conditions under which these

preferences are consequential for policy. The research assistant will help us to produce a unique global dataset of national leaders that will allow for the rigorous analysis of the effects of leaders around the world on a wide range of interesting domestic and international policy outcomes. There is no prerequisite for being participating in this research project. It offers an excellent opportunity for those without prior research experience to learn how to collect and analyze original data using social-scientific methods. We are particularly interested in working with undergraduates that are considering writing an honors thesis, or applying to graduate school in the future.

Are International Organizations Independent? - Powerful States and World Bank Officials

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International financial institutions (IFIs), especially the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, like to present themselves as independent, neutral actors who provide beneficial technical expertise and financing to their client countries. But are these actors as “neutral” as they seem? What political motivations shape their lending policies and technical advice? Do powerful countries, like the United States, exercise undue influence in their decision-making? If so, how do powerful countries compromise the IMF and Bank’s independence? What goals do they pursue? This research project aims to answer these questions by examining the composition of the staff members at the IFIs, in particular the World Bank. In particular, it examines the background of World Bank officials across a number of dimensions – education, career, nationality, and political partisanship – and theorizes that powerful state actors will seek to place actors whose background complements state goals in important positions in the World Bank bureaucracy. These officials, in turn, exercise a strong influence on World Bank lending policies, determining what projects are pursued (or abandoned) and what conditions are attached to loans.

The research assistant(s) will perform two tasks. First, they will help to survey the relevant literature on the World Bank, to identify the structural chains of authority within the Bank’s bureaucracy (especially in the lending process), as well as the relevant policy debates that have occurred within the Bank over the past few decades. Second, they will assist in the compilation and coding of a unique dataset of past World Bank officials, including information about their educational, career, national, and political background. There are no prerequisites to participating in this project, and candidates from a number of disciplines including political science, economics, and sociology are encouraged to apply. This project would be especially useful for students looking at a career in international policymaking or international development, those interested in academic research, or any student pursuing an honors thesis.

Candidate Learning: How Polls Inform Campaigns

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Polls represent the best way for candidates to ascertain the state of their candidacy. While presidential candidates may conduct polls weekly, congressional campaigns often conduct only one or two polls during an election. Given the difficulty in determining the exact geography of a district, congressional polling may also be less instructive than a typical nationally representative poll. Other research highlights how winning and losing candidates differ in their advertising strategies when they know who will win. However, it remains unknown how candidates learn they will win the election. This project seeks to collect polling data in all House of Representative races in recent elections. This will provide evidence on the signal campaigns receive about the likelihood of winning as well as the reliability of such polls.

Research assistants will begin by researching and identifying all polls conducted in House races since 2000. They will build a complete dataset for analysis including key characteristics of each poll, such as the polling firm. The assistant will need to gather this information through a variety of online sources. There are no prerequisites needed for participation in the project. It offers an excellent opportunity to be exposed to collecting and compiling data as part of a research project, especially for those interested in American politics and especially congressional elections.

What Happens in the World?

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How do we know what we think happens in the world is actually what has happened? Political scientists rely on newspaper articles, NGO reports, or archival material to learn about events such as campaign speeches, protests, murders, or riots. Unfortunately, there exist many problems with relying on newspapers. They report on a small fraction of what happens in a given day, focus on cities, and give more coverage to novel stories than ongoing events. For example, using newspapers to study protests may lead one to think a country's protests have subsided when in fact they occur with the same intensity. Moreover, political scientists studying foreign events usually rely on English-language papers, and these papers are more likely to publish events of import to Western audiences.

This project seeks to overcome these problems by relying on Twitter to generate data, with a focus on protests (broadly defined to include riots and state repression). With over 300 million users generating 500 million tweets per day, many more events are reported on Twitter than will ever appear in newspapers. "Reporters" are normal people, so they are more likely to report on events in their neighborhood, regardless of whether the event is small, the neighborhood is outside a major city, or they speak English. For example, in 2011, activists in Bahrain used Twitter to announce raids the Bahrain government undertook on suburbs of the capital, but no consistent mention of these raids appears in newspapers. The research assistant(s) will help me code protest events based on Twitter data. The focus of the final paper will be decided during the research process and could be about topics as diverse as the Arab Spring, social media and politics, best practices on events data, protests, or state repression, among others.