Research Apprenticeships in Political Science
Winter-Spring 2015

OVERVIEW
(fuller descriptions are below)

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Projects

When do the people want the fall of the regime? Determinants of Protesters’ Demands in Demonstrations around the Arab World
Preventing Child Mortality: Service Provision and Government Accountability in Kenya
The Microfoundations of Mobilization: Cognitive Effects of Scarce Resources
Through the Looking Glass: Institutional Rules and the Magnification of Social Pressure on Vote Choice
Presidential Ideology: A New Measurement
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington: Administrative Utilization of Senate Freshman and its Consequences
Under Pressure: Social Interaction and Voting Behavior
National Leaders and International Relations
Theorizing and Institutionalizing the “Right to Have Rights”
Using Hypothetical Political Figures in Experiments
Immigrants’ Political Rights and Representation in Europe
Electoral Racism: Assessing the Minority Penalty
Party Committees in Chinese Businesses
Who Uses Twitter?
“Gut-and-Amend” Bills in California
Impact of State Politics on Charter School Governance
The Bewildering World of Deliberative Democracy
Does Throwing Away the Keys Work? The Effect of “Tough on Crime” Laws on Criminal Behavior
PROJECTS

When do the people want the fall of the regime? Determinants of Protesters' Demands in Demonstrations around the Arab World

Konstantin Ash
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The Arab Spring was not simply characterized by the occurrence of protest against autocratic regimes of the Arab World, but by the protesters' demands for the overthrow of incumbent regimes. The goal of this project is to explain why protest organizers and participants would make a demand for complete government overthrow given the greater risk of repression associated with such action. I argue that newer movements outside of autocrats' ruling coalitions are more likely to recruit participants that have less trust politicians for the political system and sway protests movements to demand government overthrow. The first stage of the project: evidence from a survey experiment in Lebanon, shows that individuals that are less politically involved and less trusting of political figures are more likely to participate in protests that call for government overthrow. The second stage consists of a statistical analysis of protests in Arab-speaking countries since 2000 and is intended to show that outsider movements are more likely to make absolutist demands.

Research assistants will participate in data generation for the second stage. Responsibilities include gathering detailed information on protest organizing groups and their demands for a particular protest based on existing data from the MMAD (Mass Mobilization in Autocracies Data-set) along with historical information on each organizing group. A secondary task will involve using R and ArcGIS to generate geographic data corresponding to each protest and organizing group. Research assistants are expected to have some experience with Microsoft Excel or comparable data management programs. I will provide instruction on basic use of ArcGIS and R for gathering geographic data. The student will also have unparalleled early access to protest data (not yet made public) from the Middle East/North Africa between 2002-2012 through the MMAD data-set for analysis in their own research as part of the apprenticeship.

Preventing Child Mortality: Service Provision and Government Accountability in Kenya

Nathan Combes
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Every year approximately 800,000 children under the age of five die from diarrheal diseases. In Kenya, that number nearly reaches 40,000 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. This research seeks to test why government efforts to prevent diarrheal mortality in Kenya have largely failed. Much of the data for the early analysis of this project has already been completed. In the summer of 2014, I completed a 120 question survey of 1,006 respondents. I also have a research assistant in Kenya who is continuing to collect media articles about the Kenyan health sector. The undergraduate RA will be expected to research newspaper articles about the health sector in Kenya and comparative cases. Furthermore, the RA will be asked to find specific information about government programs that have been implemented to combat child mortality in comparative cases.

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.

**The Microfoundations of Mobilization: Cognitive Effects of Scarce Resources**

Elaine Denny  
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Why do the poor often mobilize for political change at disproportionately lower rates than their more affluent counterparts – particularly considering that in many cases they stand to benefit most from policy change? By building on research and methodologies in cognitive science, psychology, and behavioral economics, this project investigates how scarce resources unconsciously influence how individuals make decisions. The research also seeks to measure how anxiety affects the probability that one will take different forms of political action. The project’s research methods include survey experiments (online, on campus, and in the field), behavior games with small groups of UCSD students, and an observational study/natural experiment in Central America.

RAs will contribute to the project as follows, with specific tasks allocated based on RAs’ abilities and interest:

1. Assist with coding and implementation of online survey experiment; no prior programming experience necessary.
2. Conduct background topical research and obtain relevant data sets; ability to interpret regressions and/or a familiarity with R or Stata is helpful.
3. Support project’s on-campus studies of group dynamics; professionalism and attention to detail are essential.
4. Conduct background research on sites for field work and prepare written briefings on relevant cases; strong writing skills, Spanish fluency, and a desire to make connections across disciplines are relevant here.

Ideal RAs will be good writers, critical thinkers, and curious about the topic described above. Spanish skills (or other foreign languages) are not required but could be an additional asset. This RA opportunity is a particularly good fit for students looking to gain skills in project management, survey research, policy briefings, and/or quantitative data analysis. RAs may have the opportunity to incorporate their own survey questions into current projects and develop original data for their research in the spring quarter.

**Through the Looking Glass: Institutional Rules and the Magnification of Social Pressure on Vote Choice**

Scott Guenther  
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This project explores social pressures on individual voting decisions. Specifically, we will be examining voting patterns at town meetings in rural Vermont communities that elect no mayor or city council. Many towns choose to pass large budgetary items like school budgets, employee salaries, etc. through public votes where members of the community can see one another's voting decisions. This radically different decision-making environment offers a unique opportunity to explore the degree to which individuals are willing to bend their own preferences to conform with their neighbors.

Working with moderators of these town meetings, research assistants will assist in the implementation of a field experiment in these town meetings. Additionally, research assistants will collect important information on historical tax rates, educational outcomes, and demographic data. The wide range of content covered in these town meetings and the rich contextual information provided in the town meeting reports research assistants will have an opportunity to identify and explore a variety of issues they may want to pursue as their own research project.

**Presidential Ideology: A New Measurement**

Scott Guenther  
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The President frequently sends memos to Congress detailing his position on important legislation in Congress. These Statements of Administrative Purpose represent an understudied opportunity to better understand presidential ideology as it relates to Congress. This project seeks to unveil the effects of information about the President’s position when the House and Senate vote on the issues.

Research assistants will assist with collection of Presidential Statements of Administrative Purpose 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 that they may want to pursue as their own research project.

**Mr. Smith Goes to Washington: Administrative Utilization of Senate Freshman and its Consequences**

Scott Guenther  
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The U.S. Senate requires freshman members of the majority party to spend significant time presiding over the Senate. While many of their peers infrequently spend time on the chamber floor, these senators will often spend hundreds of hours over a two-year congressional session presiding over the floor activity of the Senate. This time is spent counting roll call votes, listening to speeches and debates, and missing.

Research assistants for this project will help code never before utilized records kept by the Senate cloakroom of who presides over the Senate at any given time. With his information we will look at the benefits and consequences of time spent presiding over the chamber.

**Under Pressure: Social Interaction and Voting Behavior**

Scott Guenther  
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This project explores social pressures on individual voting decisions in a laboratory setting. Specifically, we will be examining how individuals vote in settings where we experimentally manipulate information about what others in the election desire. Doing so will allow us to gain leverage on age old questions in the literature about the degree to which individuals vote selfishly or are influenced by the impacts of policies on others.

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 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.

**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.

**Theorizing and Institutionalizing the “Right to Have Rights”**

John LeJeune  
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In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) Hannah Arendt famously proffered the “right to have rights” as a response to the inadequacies of abstract notions of human rights and of liberal conceptions of human rights—the former attached to goodwill efforts of international organizations; the latter inextricably tied to citizen rights and the nation-state—to effectively safeguard human security and well-being in times of great crisis. In particular, Arendt saw the modern paradigm of human rights as unable to adequately respond to the problem of “statelessness” among those for whom regular channels of citizenship rights were unavailable.

The goal of this project is three-fold. First, we hope to better understand what Arendt means by a “right to have rights” and its relationship to law and citizenship. Second, we will investigate
more carefully how the idea of a “right to have rights” is or is not consistent with the basic normative and institutional presuppositions of modern liberalism, liberal democracy, and the idea of the nation state. If as Arendt says the recognition of a “right to have rights” is fundamental for safeguarding human well-being, how and to what extent have liberal democracies incorporated this idea into law? What obstacles, ideological and institutional, obvious and hidden, stand in the way of their doing this? Is a “right to have rights” actually consistent with liberal democratic principles?

Third and finally, we seek to compare and contrast different ways in which the idea of a “right to have rights” has been pursued, articulated, and implemented at the national level, (particularly in democratic states) and in international organizations. The research assistant’s responsibilities will include investigating the development of international law with respect to the “right to have rights,” reading and analyzing speeches, and locating key evidence in primary source documents. It will also include examining laws in specific country cases, looking specifically at policies with respect to immigration, refugees, and asylum.


Justin Levitt
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In 2003, California expanded the ability to litigate on racially polarized voting beyond the requirements set in the Federal Voting Rights Act and Thornburg v Gingles. The law eased the ability to sue in non-district-based (at large) election systems by eliminating the need to prove intent to discriminate when filing suit. The law also allowed plaintiffs to recover damages if the jurisdiction was found guilty, while defendants would not be able to recoup costs if found innocent. However, a jurisdiction would not be liable under the California Voting Rights Act if it already had district-based elections. As a result, while some jurisdictions were sued, others voluntarily switched from at-large to district elections.

This project aims to use the 2011 post-2010 Census (re)districting to determine the consequences for the number of non-Whites who ran for office and were elected as a result of the California Voting Rights Act. We will be testing whether institutional reform affects the probability of non-White entry and success, as well as whether there are differences between voluntary and involuntary changes to the electoral process. The project will focus on the eight-county Central Valley (San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and Kern) as this was the focal point for CVRA issues in 2011.

The RA will be interested in racial politics, legal studies, and/or local government, and should have some experience with database programs such as Excel or STATA. The project will involve
collecting data, so persistence is also a necessary skill. Knowledge of Spanish, the Central Valley, or voting rights issues may be useful, but are not by any means necessary.

Using Hypothetical Political Figures in Experiments

Adeline Lo
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Social science experiments often turn to the usage of hypothetical political candidates in experiments to causally identify effects of a variety of candidate features such as gender, race, etc. on voter’s support. The benefit of such hypothetical candidates lie in the researcher’s ability to randomize the qualities of interest of the candidate in an experimental setting; some proponents of this methodology argue that a hypothetical candidate provide a ‘blank slate’ of sorts to control information provided to an experimental participant — subjects have no priors on the hypothetical candidate. Yet introducing a hypothetical element to an experiment might also lower a respondent’s motivation to respond optimally - in other words, it might exacerbate the cheap talk problem that is characteristic of survey research more generally. Respondents may also mentally characterize vague hypothetical candidates based on some combination of previous experiences and knowledge, obtained outside the experimental setting but affecting their perceptions of described hypothetical candidates. This project will explore the methodological implications of using hypothetical candidates in political science experiments through a series of pilot interviews and survey experiments.

The RA will work closely with Adeline Lo and Claire Adida on designing and executing pilot interviews, reviewing literatures in political psychology and survey methodologies, assisting with survey experiments, and entering data. The project has a strong emphasis on political methodology; interested undergraduates with good organizational skills and familiarity with data analysis programs (R and/or STATA are preferred, though not required) will have the opportunity for hands-on experience designing, implementing and analyzing a social science experiment.

Immigrants’ Political Rights and Representation in Europe

Mike Nicholson
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Over the last several decades, many European countries have experienced unprecedented immigration. Rising inflows have prompted debates among policymakers concerning the incorporation of first- and second-generation immigrants into electoral politics. Mounting migratory flows, high immigrant fertility, and stringent integration policies have given rise to
large immigrant-origin communities lacking access to citizenship in countries such as Switzerland and the Netherlands, among others.

Since the 1970s, 16 European states and several sub-national regions across Europe have granted some non-citizens the right to vote in local elections. In other countries, however, non-citizen voting rights remain a highly contested and salient topic. My research seeks to answer the following question: does the introduction of immigrant voting rights at the local level increase immigrants’ *substantive* representation in local politics? That is, does the introduction of voting rights induce politicians to pay heed to the concerns and political preferences of non-citizens?

To answer this question, I plan to leverage data from Switzerland. I am especially interested in the canton of Neuchâtel, which granted immigrants the right to vote in cantonal elections in 2007. I plan to use a difference-in-differences design to gauge whether the introduction of cantonal voting rights increased immigrants’ substantive representation at the cantonal level— as compared to the neighboring cantons of Fribourg and Vaud which have similar immigration patterns and integration policies but do not allow immigrants to vote at the cantonal level.

The RA will be responsible for finding and coding canton-level roll-call votes between 2003 and 2012 in Neuchâtel, Fribourg, and Vaud. I will work with the RA to find the data and code its relevant dimensions. This position is appropriate for anyone interested in immigration, citizenship, or European politics more generally.

Candidates must possess an advanced knowledge of French. If interested, please e-mail Mike Nicholson and attach a short French-language writing sample.

**Electoral Racism: Assessing the Minority Penalty**

David M. Searle  
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Race and racial politics cannot be avoided in American politics, and has defined this country from the Civil War to the Civil Rights Movement. Although evidence exists that some Americans exhibit racist feelings, scholars have found mixed results when assessing their impact on electoral outcomes. Conflicting research has failed to demonstrate an electoral ‘penalty’ for being a non-white candidate in congressional elections, in particular for the House of Representatives. This project seeks to remedy that by analyzing the race of all members of congress over the last forty years. The project focuses on the reelection vote share of non-white congressional incumbents compared to similar white congressional incumbents. Additionally this project examines how this minority penalty has changed over time and across different racial minorities and geographic areas.
Research assistants will begin by researching and identifying all non-white members of congress for the last forty years. They will build a complete dataset for analysis of all members of congress attributes including race and gender. The assistant will need to gather this information through a variety of online sources and visually identify which racial category the member of Congress belongs. There are no prerequisites needed for participation in the project. It offers an excellent opportunity for entry into performing a research project, especially for those interested in racial politics.

**Party Committees in Chinese Businesses**

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The 2012 congressional report on whether the Chinese telecom giant Huawei presents a security threat cited the company's internal communist party committee as evidence for party influence and control. Party groups (dang zu) and party committees (dang wei) are not only ubiquitous in China's state-owned firms, but also common among private firms such as Huawei. The influence and clout of these party units are shrouded in considerable mystery. We will collect data on the presence and composition of party groups and committees in China's largest corporations, beginning with state-owned enterprises and listed firms. Wherever possible we also compile information on the activities of these party units. The questions we ask include but are not limited to: Who sits on the party group/committee? What explains the variation in party committee composition across firms? What kind of firms publicly advertise their party organs when others do not (or may not even possess any party organs)? What kinds of firm activities do party committees tend to lead or participate in? This exploratory project is one component of a larger research plan that investigates the extent to which autocratic leaders direct the behavior of economic actors. The resulting paper at the end of the apprenticeship will comprise at the minimum a political ethonography of party commitee members in China's largest state and private corporations.

The student(s) must be able to read simplified Chinese with native or near native proficiency and be familiar with Excel. Programming skills for automated web content extraction is helpful but not required. If interested, students may also learn skills for automated textual analysis through this project, but prior knowledge is not required.

**Who Uses Twitter?**

Zachary Steinert-Threlkeld  
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Twitter has become an increasingly important data source. Social scientists have discovered its utility for studying phenomena as diverse as meme diffusion, protest prediction, political campaigns, language evolution, and the stock market. One limitation of using Twitter data, however, is that very little is known about the demographics of each account. Twitter only requires a user to provide a name, which could be fake, and an e-mail address to register; there is not even a choice to provide basic information such as gender, age, education, or profession. This limitation makes it difficult for researchers to know if their data are biased; since bias limits the breadth of inference one can make, the lack of demographic information tests the limits of Twitter’s usefulness for social science. Learning more about Twitter users is therefore essential to progress in a wide range of fields.

The research assistant will code a random sample of users from the United States of America and Ukraine. They will be coded for profession, age, gender, education, and possibly other factors. While some of this information is available by visiting a user’s Twitter profile, the assistant will also have to conduct Google searches to learn more about the person behind the account. For some accounts, a lot of demographic information will appear; for others, little to none. These data lend themselves to a variety of research areas that the assistant can pursue for the seminar paper.

“Gut-and-Amend” Bills in California

Mona Vakilifathi
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One way legislators can advance their bill ideas during the lawmaking process is by “hijacking” or “gutting and amending” a bill – deleting the contents of a bill in its entirety and inserting new bill language that may or may not relate to the original bill’s content. Although this practice is well known in Sacramento, it is unclear how often this occurs, when this occurs during the legislative session, and what policy areas are most impacted by the practice in recent years.

This project will uncover the frequency of gutted and amended legislation in California. Research assistants will code the universe of introduced legislation from 2001-2014 to measure the gutted and amended bill rate per legislative session. Research assistants will produce a non-partisan policy report and present their findings to representatives from the California State Assembly and the Cal Poly Institute for Advanced Technology and Public Policy. The results of this project will be used by policymakers to determine whether greater transparency measures are necessary.

Impact of State Politics on Charter School Governance

Mona Vakilifathi
When state elected officials create a new government program, how do they decide whether a state or local government agency will be in charge of the program? Will state elected officials’ preferences vary based on the cultural, financial, or political features of a state? Using charter school legislation enacted in 40 states from 1991-2008, this project will determine whether a state’s cultural, financial, or political features best predict the instances of policy discretion and policy constraints enforced upon state departments of education, county offices of education, school districts, and charter schools.

Research assistants will hand code enacted charter school-related legislation for the type of actor subject to each instance of policy discretion or policy constraint. Research assistants are encouraged to pursue the aforementioned research question or to develop their own research question and variables to code using this legislation dataset. This legislation dataset provides students with the opportunity to pursue research questions related to state and local politics, state legislatures, state bureaucracies, and charter schools. Research assistants will receive training on theory and hypothesis development, research design, data collection, content analysis, and statistical analysis to produce a writing sample to apply a position at a think tank or for admission to graduate school.

The Bewildering World of Deliberative Democracy

Alan Ward
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Democratic theorists have recently highlighted the importance of deliberation in the legitimation process. Many proponents of deliberation claim that laws and institutions are legitimate to the extent that all those affected are given a meaningful opportunity to make their voices heard. But what constitutes “meaningful” deliberation, and what kind of deliberation actually succeeds at legitimizing laws and institutions? While the deliberative democracy literature is vast, it is also quite fragmented, and as a result many authors who try to answer these questions end up talking past each other instead of engaging in a coherent debate.

This project attempts to organize the disparate deliberative democracy literature into coherent conceptual categories. Your primary responsibilities will be to (1) locate literature pertaining to deliberative democracy and deliberation more generally, and (2) organize this literature in distinct categories.

This project is ideal for students interested in political theory. Those interested in democratic theory in particular are especially encouraged to apply. No prior knowledge of the topic is necessary – I’ll get you up to speed. The main skills I'm looking for are an ability to read and sort
texts relatively quickly. The main traits that I'm looking for are genuine enthusiasm, an ability to work independently, and a commitment to putting out quality work.

By the end of the apprenticeship you will have an excellent introduction to a very fashionable subfield of democratic theory. What's more, you will learn material that can be applied across many other fields, including comparative politics, ethnography, and law. Finally, I will help you develop important research, analytic, and writing skills that will be helpful should you choose to attend graduate school or law school.

**Does Throwing Away the Keys Work? The Effect of "Tough on Crime" Laws on Criminal Behavior**

Paul Zachary and Christopher Fariss  
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What is the effect of “tough on crime” policies on actual behavior? Historically, politicians assume that stricter laws make communities safer and automatically decrease crime. The evidence underpinning this claim, however, is shaky and has not been put to rigorous testing. While social scientists know that zero tolerance criminal laws have many negative social outcomes, including high levels of incarceration decreased earnings and educational attainment, the effect of such laws on crime is currently unknown. This is surprising, as the government spends billions of dollars every year enforcing such laws. In this project, we test this claim by exploring recent changes in states’ criminal sentencing guidelines. To test how criminal law affects crime, we are building one of the most detailed datasets on criminal incidents in the United States through hundreds of public records requests in order to acquire incident reports. Made by police officers after every arrest, these statements contain incredible amounts of information about the circumstances, behavior, and reasons for criminal prosecution. After receiving these records, we turn these documents into data with new machine learning and text analysis techniques to create a georeferenced dataset of crime. We then use the resulting dataset for quantitative analysis.

The RA’s primary tasks will be twofold. First, we ask that you help manage our ongoing public records requests requests to various agencies. This involves keeping track of requests, sending reminders, and clarifying requests. Second, and most importantly, we will ask you to help process the data that we receive. Examples include extracting location information from reports, separating each file out into unique reports, etc. Helpful background skills include (1) good communication skills; (2) prior experience with software like Excel; and (3) an interest in studying the effect of the law.