

These are the Political Science graduate student mentors who are looking for undergraduate Research Assistants. Project descriptions and contact information are provided below.

## Alison Boehmer

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### Work and Political Control

#### **Project:**

My dissertation studies the relationship between structural workplace characteristics (e.g., the degree and kind of surveillance, the physical organization of workers) and workers' political activity in the United States. I argue that, as an implication of gendered-racial capitalism, the workplace can facilitate the repression, channeling, and constraining of worker political action both inside and outside of the workplace. My theory proposes the mechanisms through which and conditions under which workplaces exert such political control, and how workers exercise political agency within these structures. I study this relationship between work and political activity both generally and in the context of prison labor, due to the tight link between the carceral state and gendered-racial capitalism. Empirically, this is a multi-method project (i.e., I use both qualitative and quantitative data and analysis approaches); however, the two aspects of the project on which I seek assistance are qualitative: Pending IRB approval, research assistants will attend interviews I conduct with formerly incarcerated individuals and/or workers from the San Diego community, help with real-time note-taking, aid in the transcription process, and engage in an interpretive analysis of interviews. The second aspect on which I seek research assistance involves the collection and analysis of archived prison-based newspapers found on JSTOR's American Prison Newspapers archive.

#### **Mentorship:**

Given IRB approval, RAs who attend interviews will travel with me to an interview site (in San Diego), help set-up recording devices/help to take real-time notes and reflections, and transcribe interview recordings. As an exercise, the RA team will also learn and engage in interpretive analysis of the transcriptions. (NOTE: If IRB does not approve of RA's attending interviews, RAs will still engage with the interviews through transcription and analysis. Furthermore, in this case, we will still discuss the interview process, field notes, and my reflexivity process so that RAs may still learn about the approach.)

In terms of engaging with the archived prison newspapers, RAs will download and run each newspaper edition through optical character recognition (OCR) software in Adobe, use keyword searches to identify relevant articles within the issues that discuss incarcerated people's experiences with and reflections on work and/or political activity in prison. RAs will then apply a qualitative "coding scheme" to relevant articles.

No previous experience with qualitative methods, labor/work-related scholarship, or (critical) prison studies is required, but those with interest in or experience with any of these topics are encouraged to apply. Prior to engaging in either empirical dimension of the project, RAs will read through and discuss a brief “syllabus” (3-5 articles) covering the methodology and substantive concepts of the project, as well as a draft of my dissertation’s theory chapter. Prior to engaging with any interview process, I will also provide you with “training sessions” based on how I was taught ethical ethnography.

There are three elements built into the Research Apprenticeship Program project I propose that seek to promote undergraduates’ education and research skills in an inclusive manner:

1) Teach useful skills and frameworks: As further detailed below, before RAs begin engaging in data collection or analysis for this project, we will read through and discuss a short “syllabus” that includes literature on both the qualitative methods we will practice and the substantive theories, ideas, and lived experiences on which we will be focusing. Additionally, I will hold at least one “training session” prior to RAs participating in any part of the interview process, which is based in the ethical ethnography practices in which I was trained. Through these two elements, students will be exposed to methodological approaches and substantively important topics through the research process. In this way, the project will not just extract labor from the students, but will seek to prioritize their learning through transparency, active discussion, and in-depth involvement in the research process.

2) Prioritize students’ goals, input, and experiences: A primary tenet of this project is to minimize the extractive relationship between me/the project and the RAs; to ensure a collaborative and enriching environment for all involved, I will install mechanisms within the apprenticeship that prioritize students’ goals, input, and experiences. To the end of prioritizing students’ goals, at an initial meeting I will ask RAs to come prepared with their goals for the apprenticeship (i.e., skills they want to learn; any deliverables they would like to produce, like a writing sample for graduate school applications); in response, I will adjust the research project as possible so that they can meet such goals. Furthermore, I will distribute an anonymous feedback survey during week 5 so that the RA team can give me honest feedback on how I can better improve their apprenticeship experience, particularly in terms of the goals they set. To the end of prioritizing RAs’ input, I will allot a portion of each check-in meeting to discussing how the project might be improved methodologically and substantively, as the RAs will have first-hand experience with the empirical dimensions of the project giving them unique and important perspectives. This time will be for RAs to speak freely and honestly about their concerns, frustrations, and ideas related to the project, as I firmly believe that it is my privilege to learn with, from, and alongside the research team. To the end of prioritizing RAs’ experiences, because the content with which we will be engaging involves state violence, particularly against individuals who experience race, gender, and/or class-based subjugation, I will prioritize creating spaces for reflection and discussion—if the students so choose to participate. A central tenet of my work is that the “researcher” should actively involve her whole self in a project, that she should be changed as a person, thinker, and community member as a result of her research. This is sometimes a hard, exhausting, and vulnerable process that I want to acknowledge with the RAs. This might mean, depending on RA preferences, taking a few hours off of work during a week that deals with particularly difficult subject matter, discussing resources from scholar-activists who have confronted similar difficulties, or having a check-in meeting dedicated to discussing reflections—at which I may or may not be present, depending on RA preferences.

3) Model healthy, sustainable research practices: Another core tenet of this apprenticeship, as well as how I have led other undergraduate RA teams, is respect for the RAs’ time and energy. This means I will

be committed to balancing the goals of the project and my desire for RAs to get the most out of the experience, with the reality that many undergraduates are constantly balancing many time commitments—jobs, family care commitments, self-care and rest, etc. I will prioritize flexibility in two ways: 1) While some meetings will need to be held at designated times, most of the work will be remote and on the RAs' own time. If some weeks are busier than others, RAs will be encouraged to move hours/tasks around to accommodate their schedule. 2) I will prioritize process over product, meaning I will not be regularly checking RAs' "timesheets" or setting firm deadlines, but will instead attempt to "model by example" a research practice that focuses first on the process by which progress is made.

Through my experience with leading a team of undergraduate RAs over the past year as part of a coauthorship with a professor, I have learned that the first step in handling challenges/problems is knowing where, how, and why they exist in the first place. Having consistent and varied forms of communication with RAs is crucial to identifying challenges/problems early; I do this in my current practice by 1) distributing anonymous feedback surveys, 2) encouraging the RAs to curate a space for their own discussion without me so that they can collectively discuss the challenges they are facing and come to me with them as a group, and 3) coming to check-in meetings having reviewed their previous work so that I can better anticipate challenges they are facing. Once learning that a challenge/problem exists, my general approach in solving it will be to propose a new process/solution to the RAs and then encourage RA input on the proposal. When I have done this with RA teams in the past, it has generated creative solutions with which the RAs have buy-in because they contributed to solving the problem by grounding it in their experience. Another general approach I will take in handling challenges is to foreground this apprenticeship as a learning experience for both the RAs and me. That is, I will be transparent, vulnerable, and humble to the end of communicating to the RAs both that I am subject to mistakes and that they hold invaluable knowledge from which I am learning and from which the project is greatly benefiting.

## Yeilim Cheong

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### The Fate of Opposition Successor Parties in New Democracies

#### **Project:**

Prior authoritarian elites, their offspring, and their political parties have been surprisingly successful in democratic elections. South Korea's Park Geun-hye in 2012, Malaysia's Mahathir Mohamad in 2018, and the Philippines' Bongbong Marcos in 2022 are just a few examples. My dissertation focuses on such countries where former autocratic elites or their parties inherit clientelistic networks, significant party-financing resources, strong party brands, or positive personalistic legacies, providing them with enduring advantages in electoral competition following the collapse of an autocratic regime. In such contexts where prior authoritarian elites or their parties maintain a significant appeal to some groups of voters under democracy, my research employs an original dataset to investigate how some pro-democracy movements, leaders, or groups that previously opposed authoritarian rule succeed in

building durable political parties and win in nationwide elections, while many others dissolve or decline shortly after a country's democratic transition. Furthermore, I examine whether and under what conditions the electoral success of these surviving opposition successor parties (OSPs) contributes to the resilience of the country's democracy or exacerbates political polarization. The project that I propose for the Research Apprenticeship Program involves identifying empirical cases of opposition successor parties worldwide and collecting data on those parties, including their leadership and electoral results. As far as I am aware, this will be the first dataset to be compiled on opposition successor parties globally. Through their participation in this project, undergraduate students will gain hands-on research experience and learn how to compile an original dataset from a wide range of primary and secondary sources in a replicable and transparent manner. Students will also contribute to a deeper understanding of the long-run development of political parties, democratic stability, and political polarization.

### **Mentorship:**

As a mentor, I prioritize open communication, mutual learning, and collaboration. I believe that every idea has the potential to enhance the research process, and I always welcome your feedback and innovative thoughts. I will guide you through each step of the research process, including effective strategies for navigating through a vast array of primary and secondary resources, and tips for organizing research using free, open-source software. Joining my team will offer hands-on experience in creating an original global dataset and conducting cross-national research. Your work will contribute to deepening our understanding of the sources of democratic stability, party development, and political polarization. Furthermore, I firmly believe in the reciprocal nature of learning and regard each of my mentees as a valuable source of knowledge. Your language expertise and familiarity with the societal and historical contexts of countries that I may be less acquainted with are invaluable assets. I am also a strong advocate for collaborative research. I will actively seek opportunities for you to engage in collaborative endeavors, ensuring that your contributions are valued and recognized.

## Gabriel De Roche

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### Climate Migration: Public Opinion and Policy Outcomes

#### **Project:**

This project examines how public opinion and policies form around new issues: in this case, climate change-induced migration. Climate change has the potential to increase migration flows to unprecedented levels, yet few of the countries that can afford to provide resettlement to climate displaced people have created policies in this area. With a focus on advanced industrialized democracies, the first part of the project examines how the public forms opinions and preferences on this novel migration driver, and the second part examines the policymaking and advocacy dynamics around managing increased demand for resettlement due to climate change.

## **Mentorship:**

Common tasks for Undergraduate RAs:

Finding relevant academic literature and summarizing; finding party platforms and coding positions on immigration and the environment; compiling datasets on public opinion across multiple countries; compiling datasets on legislature composition in multiple countries.

Promoting undergraduates' education and research skills in an inclusive manner:

I will begin the mentorship process by meeting with the RA to discuss their educational and research background in detail and create an individualized plan for how we will work together so that there is transparency and mutual accountability. I will ensure that my contributions to all our interactions are respectful and empathetic, and I will focus not just on achieving my own goals from the project, but also providing my RA(s) with experience that contributes to their own professional and academic goals.

The individualized plans that we will create at the beginning of the project will help provide an accountability mechanism. But if challenges occur, I will be able seek guidance from my own mentor (Prof. Tom Wong) who himself manages a large number of undergrad RAs. Typically, I expect most challenges to be resolvable with weekly meetings and more hands-on management and guidance with tasks, as well as making amendments to the individualized plan to get back on track. If challenges persist, I will seek advice and guidance from the PoliSci department's undergraduate advisors.

# Bianca Freeman

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## Race and International Intervention

### **Project:**

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is a collective commitment to mass atrocity prevention. Although R2P was designed to protect populations around the world from the worst forms of violence and persecution, this global principle is selectively applied toward African societies. Despite this pattern, little is known about how race shapes international intervention. This paper examines the role of race in the decision to invoke R2P. Through this investigation, my study aims to deepen our understanding of international intervention through its focus on racial inequality. By establishing systematic evidence of disparity in R2P, we can inform a more humane, equitable approach to atrocity prevention.

### **Mentorship:**

RAs will help collect data on atrocities globally. To this end, they will: 1) Read annual atrocity reports for different countries; 2) Identify what types of atrocities are reported in the annual atrocity reports; 3) Organize the types of atrocities in a spreadsheet that I will provide (entry-level coding of variables); 4) Weekly check-ins.

My enthusiasm for the Research Apprenticeship Program comes from a desire to promote diverse scholarly engagement with today's global problems. I believe that the study of race in International Relations (IR) is necessary for such engagement. Despite the role of racialized violence in the construction of nation-states and the world system they inhabit, empirical inquiry into its role remains limited in the literature. Teaching has a similar void. To this end, I seek to foster an intellectual environment that sees this omission as an opportunity to advance IR and the inclusion of students and scholars that study it.

As a mentor, I am committed to promoting undergraduates' education and research skills in an inclusive manner. I would accomplish this by making learning accessible and equitable such that students are equipped with research skills that translate beyond the project. Students likely enter the apprenticeship program with different training, identities, and motivations. To be sure, this diversity is a strong asset to building a research project in political science. At the beginning of the program, I would establish the norms of an inclusive learning experience and set the expectation of mutual respect at the outset. When reviewing research goals with students, I would assure that each student feels confident in their ability to work on each task and equally comfortable raising any questions as they arise. I would also have time devoted to checking in with each student on their progress. Challenges with undergraduate research assistants can occur. I would handle hiccups by first communicating with and seeking to understand any issues students are having. Empathy is key to this. Then I would strive to come up with a plan that better accommodates the students' capacity to meet deadlines for the project.

## Jennifer Gaudette

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### Interest Group Influence in Local Politics

#### **Project:**

My dissertation is a collection of papers studying the various methods used by interest groups to influence local politics and policy. I focus on three primary mechanisms of influence for this project: endorsements, campaign donations, and information provision and messaging. Research Apprentices would help me collect endorsements, pair donation data with other measurements, and analyze methods of influence. Common tasks include internet research, data collection, and coding in R studio.

I have management experience from my previous career that has enabled me to work well with students who are dealing with personal issues or struggling with professional behavior. I work to understand the problems and create solutions alongside students.

I would promote undergraduates' education and research by explaining to them why and how I am engaging in research methods, including them in every step of the process so they can better understand academic research. I would also work to understand their research goals so I could help support their own research.

**POLI 30 is required for this project.**

## Sichen Li

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### The Political Economy of Trade and Investment Barriers in High-Tech Sectors

#### **Project:**

My project examines why governments in advanced economies are increasingly invoking national security to justify restrictions on trade and investment activities in high-tech sectors. A salient example is the Trump administration's ban on TikTok. Students collaborating with me will be tasked with coding national security-based investment screenings conducted by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS). This will involve analyzing various information sources, including news reports, law firm briefs, and firms' annual reports. My research adopts a multi-method approach, integrating network analysis, text analysis, field interviews, and case studies. If you are interested in learning any of these research techniques, I am happy to provide suggestions and guidance on how to get started.

#### **Mentorship:**

Weekly meetings will be held with students to check their progress. The first week will feature an introductory session explaining how investment screenings work in the US and the role of CFIUS in the process. In subsequent weeks, students will begin the process of data entry for investment screenings conducted by CFIUS. The schedule for discussing research techniques of interest will be determined based on the students'

availability. I will try to foster an inclusive learning environment by encouraging students to ask questions, learn from each other, and provide feedback on the project. Students are expected to engage in the following tasks:

- (1) Gathering information about investment screenings in the US using sources such as lawyers' CVs, news reports, and firms' annual reports.
- (2) Data entry for relevant variables associated with individual CFIUS reviews.
- (3) Coding and classifying public comments made by US firms targeted by CFIUS reviews.

## Zayne Sember

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### Timely Talk: Responsive Legislator Communication

#### **Project:**

When do legislators respond to their constituencies? In this three-paper dissertation I use the public communications of legislators to investigate how changes in the constituency and the country motivate members of Congress to adapt how they present themselves to the public. In the first paper, I pair congressional press release and Census data to measure the effect of changes in constituency demographics on what legislators talk about, finding some evidence that legislators adapt their communications in response to changes in electoral safety and the size of certain demographic groups in their constituency. In the second paper, I leverage the COVID-19 pandemic to test for legislators' responsiveness to local and national conditions in their social media posts cross-sectionally and longitudinally, finding mixed evidence of responsiveness to constituency conditions. In the third paper, I consider how the nationalization of on and offline media impacts legislators' attention to local and national topics in their social media posts and press releases. Together, these studies contribute to literatures concerning legislator responsiveness and political communication by moving beyond traditional methods of measuring legislators' activities in favor of using the text as data methods to measure how legislators present themselves to the public and represent their constituents.

#### **Mentorship:**

Research apprentices are needed to help classify congressional communications (press releases, social media posts, and newsletters issued by members of Congress) in order to train a machine learning classifier. In doing so they will learn the canonical categories of legislator communication as well as how textual analysis is performed. If students are comfortable programming in R or Python and wish to gain more experience with text as data they may also be tasked with cleaning text data. I am committed to mentoring students not only in performing data collection and processing text data, but also in how to approach quantitative research more generally. I intend to keep an open line of communication via Slack or other means with the student to quickly answer questions or clarify their tasks.



# Laura Uribe

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## Elements of Latinidad

### **Project:**

The crafting of the Hispanic/Latine identity has historically been a multidimensional, multi-actor tug of war. The bounds for the identity have been stretched and clarified for decades along non-exhaustive lines of national origin, language, race, generational status, citizenship, and geographic context. Given the extensive literature, discussion, and interpretation of the Hispanic identity, one might expect a straightforward answer to the question of “What is Latinidad?” This research project aims to dig deeper into the politics of Latinidad by promoting one explanation for in-group political variation—and the substantive implications on policy and partisan choices—by studying a concept I propose called the Hispanic status hierarchy. I theorize that the elements that construct

Latinidad are not actually presented mixed as in a salad bowl, but rather are carefully structured in a hierarchical orientation that positions some elements and attributes as superior to others. This positioning is informed by white supremacy, global racial hierarchies, and settler-colonial hierarchies. When certain attributes afford higher status and they are in a sub-group’s identity repertoire, individuals may choose to distance their identification from the broad identity group and politicize their sub-group. My theory suggests that the Hispanic status hierarchy is connected with how some members of Latine sub-groups see their sub-group as having higher status than other sub-groups or the group at large. I theorize that as some Latine sub-groups are afforded higher status than the status afforded by the pan-ethnic group, they will behave in ways to either escape or create distance between themselves and the other Latine sub-groups who they perceive as inferior. This orientation may lead to policy choices that aim to exclude or police other Latines (e.g., stricter immigration policy preferences, and Republican identification).

### **Mentorship:**

I would contribute to the promotion of undergraduate education and research skills inclusively by not only providing comprehensive guidance and support tailored to individual needs along minoritized identities and varied experiences, but also by actively fostering an environment that embraces and values a wide range of perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences—particularly among Latinidad, if I am lucky enough to get Latine-identifying students. I would prioritize open dialogue and frequent questions, equitable

access, and a culture of respect. This would hopefully aid in creating an atmosphere where all students feel empowered and encouraged to excel in their academic pursuits.

## Sam Williams

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Do schools polarize? Adolescent motivated processing and the evaluation of political information in the classroom.

### **Project description:**

My dissertation seeks to answer the following questions: can formal political curriculum shape political attitudes and encourage political engagement in adolescents? If so, what effect might these politically charged curricula have on students? Despite popular beliefs about the capacity of education systems to politically socialize and homogenize, empirical evidence reveals that students often respond to education interventions in divergent ways. My dissertation proposes a theoretical framework of information processing that explains how students respond to explicit and implicit political information contained in curriculum. I argue that one key—and previously ignored—mechanism explaining the attitudinal and behavioral impacts of a curriculum relating to political engagement is the extent to which students perceive the information presented by a curriculum as congruent with their emerging political attitudes. Using a mixed methods approach, I evaluate the extent to which students (1) possess opinions on political issues, and (2) use those opinions as a perceptual screen for evaluating political information transmitted through curricula.

### **Mentorship**

I plan to set clear expectations with my undergraduate RA in order to preempt any potential issues during the research process. If problems do arise, I intend to create an environment of collaboration wherein undergraduates of any background feel comfortable asking me for further clarification or for help in the tasks I am asking them to perform. I believe that the best way to make research inclusive is to ensure that any undergraduate RA, regardless of their background, feels comfortable asking questions and making mistakes. I hope to create an environment where recognize that research is a learning process and opportunity to learn skills. I will promote inclusion by creating a working environment where students feel comfortable asking questions and making mistakes. I want RAs to understand that research is a learning experience, and that they should not feel dissuaded from participating in it just because they don't have

specific skills or requisite knowledge. I hope that work on my project can be a learning experience and that my managing style can be open and communicative so that RAs feel comfortable asking questions.

In general, RAs will be helping me with the following tasks:

- Qualitative coding and assessment of interviews with high school students
- Data collection and cleaning
- Research for case studies (i.e. looking for prominent cases of political curriculum that can be assessed qualitatively and quantitatively).
- Qualitative assessment of curriculum materials (i.e. looking at instructional materials--textbooks--that could be used as experimental interventions for classroom experiments).

**POLI 30 is required for this project.**