

Research Apprenticeship Program

Winter 2022 & Spring 2022

How to Apply:

- [1] Read the project descriptions below.
 - [2] Download and complete the preference form.
 - [3] Prepare a cover letter and resume. [Read the guidelines about how to write a cover letter.](#)
 - [4] Download your academic record.
 - [5] E-mail the completed form with a cover letter, resume, and copy of your academic record to the Mentor of each project to which you are applying.
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Graduate Student Projects

1. Title of Research Project: Anti-Asian Racism and American Public Opinion

Graduate Student: D.G. Kim

Email: dak110@ucsd.edu

- **Brief Description of Research Project:** My project examines the political causes and consequences of anti-Asian sentiments and racism in the United States, utilizing public opinion surveys, survey experiments, media coverage, and social media data. More specifically, for example, I examine the correlates of anti-Asian sentiments in public polls such as individual economic conditions, local backgrounds, and other political outlooks. My research also highlights the intersection between domestic racial politics and evolving U.S.-China relations, focusing on how elite rhetoric on China shapes public racial sentiments and how the anti-Asian racial resentment, in turn, factors into American public opinion on the rise of China.
- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project includes:**
 - Research assistants will help me with collecting and cleaning large-scale public opinion survey data, multi-year national census, (social) media data for quantitative analyses. Given the quantitative nature of the project, candidates with strong skills in R and/or Python are preferred.
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?:** Yes

2. Title of Research Project: Political Economy of High-Technology Trade Disputes

Graduate Student: Sichen Li

Email: sili@ucsd.edu

- **Brief Description of Research Project:** Book Abstract: What are the political and economic determinants of high-tech trade disputes? This project plans to answer this question by examining economic features of high-tech industries and the issue of linkage between high technology and national security concerns. Chapter 1 examines how the economic characteristics of high-tech industries, namely, short product life cycles and high levels of uncertainties about returns on investments, create obstacles to bilateral settlements of trade conflicts. In chapter 2, I plan to investigate the policy preferences of high-tech producers in China and the United States and how these preferences connect with trade policy outcomes. In chapter 3, I will study when politicians choose to connect the development of high technology with national security concerns.
 - **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project includes:**
 - 1. Hand code some firm-level variables (e.g., firms' positions in global value chains) based on some online information.
 - 2. Scraping or downloading some online information and making them into R-readable text (txt) files. I will teach the student about web scraping if he/she is unfamiliar with it.
 - 3. Other tasks that the student is interested in doing.
 - **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?:** Preferred, but not required.
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3. Title of Research Project: State Legislative Scorecards Project

Graduate Student: Cassidy Reller

Email: creller@ucsd.edu

- **Brief Description of Research Project:** The United States is dominated by two political parties. The Republicans represent broad conservative coalitions and Democrats progressive coalitions. However, within these coalitions are partners with specific issues and priorities. This project aims to understand how interest groups with environmental, libertarian, and racial priorities try to leverage their electoral influence to change specific state legislators and parties' legislative priorities and behavior. Broadly, how do environmentalists get Democrats to prioritize climate over other legislative goals?
- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project include:** The goal is to collect state legislative scorecards from environmental, libertarian, and minority focused groups. Common tasks research assistants will be asked to do is record data, and find different sources for data.
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?:** Preferred, but not required.

4. **Title of Research Project:** Use Their Force: How Political Conflicts Fuel Cross-border Investment: Firm-level Evidence from Two Waves of Anti-Asia Backlash in the United States

Graduate Student: Sichen Li

Email: sili@ucsd.edu

- **Brief Description of Research Project:** This project leverages firm-level data on Japanese and Chinese mergers and acquisitions (M&As) and joint ventures in the United States to demonstrate that political tensions between two countries increase cross-border mergers and acquisitions, contrary to the conventional wisdom that political conflicts reduce cross-border investment. We develop and test a consumer-driven mechanism, whereby the rise of consumer animosity toward Chinese (since 2016) and Japanese products (in the 1980s) in the United States incentivizes Chinese (Japanese) companies to engage in merger and acquisitions with American firms to make their national identity less visible to consumers. Our theory predicts that Chinese/Japanese firms that produce goods that are closer to the final consumer market in global supply chains are more likely to engage in mergers and acquisitions with U.S. companies compared to comparable firms that produce intermediate goods. Profit-seeking firms have a repertoire of tools to address changing consumer preferences abroad and political tensions can fuel globalization.
 - **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project include:** The student RA does not need to work for the second project if he/she is unwilling to do so. If the RA is interested in the project, he/she will be responsible for cleaning and merging datasets. Other: The ability to read Chinese is preferred but not required.
 - **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?:** Preferred, but not required.
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5. **Title of Research Project:** Repressive Institutions and the Politics of Artificial Intelligence

Graduate Student: Eddie Yang

Email: z5yang@ucsd.edu

- **Brief Description of Research Project:** This project aims to understand the implications of politics for the development of artificial intelligence (AI). Specifically, the project studies the types of data that are collected by repressive institutions such as surveillance and the criminal justice system and such data's impact on AI. AI applications under study in this project includes but are not limited to facial recognition, natural language processing,
- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project includes:**
 - 1. Literature review
 - 2. Case studies based on news reports
 - 3. Data collection and cleaning
 - 4. Experimenting with machine learning algorithms
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?:** Preferred, but not required.

6. Title of Research Project: Why Parkland, Not Pulse? Understanding How Race Shapes Policy Response to Mass Shootings

Graduate Student: George Markarian

Email: gmarkari@ucsd.edu

- **Brief Description of Research Project:** My dissertation, entitled “Why Parkland, Not Pulse? Understanding Disparate Policy Responses to Mass Shootings”, seeks to understand how victims’ race and ethnicity shape policy responses to disasters and public health crises. I find that states are more likely to tighten gun laws in response to mass shootings when victims are white versus when victims are racial and ethnic minorities, linking victims’ racial and ethnic differences to divergent policy decisions. The findings suggest that policy in the United States is more responsive to disasters and public health crises when victims are white versus when victims are racial and ethnic minorities. This research is motivated by a comparison of Florida’s aggressive policy response to the Parkland shooting, which resulted in the death of 17 people, and its nonexistent policy response to the Pulse nightclub shooting two years earlier, which resulted in the death of 49 people. In my dissertation, I offer one explanation for disparate policy responses to mass shootings, borrowing from research in political science, public health, and media studies. I argue that the news media and elites frame mass shootings differently in response to the racial characteristics of the victims affected. I contend that both actors are more likely to use “policy-centric frames” to discuss a mass shooting when victims are white, highlighting policy failure and increasing public support for restrictive gun laws. However, both actors are more likely to use “group-centric frames” to discuss a mass shooting when victims are people of color, cueing implicit biases associated with gun violence, shifting blame away from gun policy, and limiting public support for gun policy reforms.

I provide empirical support for the theory by leveraging a broad set of methodological tools ranging from supervised machine learning for text classification to comparative qualitative case studies. In one empirical chapter, I find that legislators are more likely to blame gun policy failure and call for gun policy reforms after a mass shooting as white fatalities increase but not as racial and ethnic minority fatalities increase. In another chapter, using a novel 30-year state panel dataset, I find that states are more likely to implement restrictive gun policies in response to mass shootings as the number of white victims increases but are no more likely to implement restrictive gun laws as the number of racial and ethnic minority victims increases.

- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project includes:**
 - 1. Data coding
 - 2. Data collection from public online sources
 - 3. Data analysis and visualization
 - 4. Crafting of literature reviews
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?:** Preferred, but not required.

7. Title of Research Project: Local Election Timings and Political Representation

Graduate Student: George Markarian

Email: gmarkari@ucsd.edu

- **Brief Description of Research Project:** In a co-authored paper (with Z. Hajnal and V. Kogan, forthcoming in American Political Science Review), we investigate the impact of election timing on the representativeness of the electorate using Catalist voter data. We find that holding local elections concurrently with presidential elections, instead of off-cycle, leads to a significantly more representative electorate. More young people, people of color, working class people, liberals, and democrats participate in local elections when they are held concurrently with presidential elections, reducing gaps in participation. The improvements in participation rates are particularly pronounced for Latinx voters, who experience nearly a 7-percentage point increase in turnout when local elections move from being held off-cycle to being held concurrently with presidential elections. This research provides evidence that a simple policy change, shifting election dates to be on-cycle, can reduce gaps in political participation.

In future projects, we aim to understand how local election timing shapes who gets elected, what elected officials do once in office, and what ballot measures are successful, focusing on racial, ethnic, and socio-economic justice.

- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project includes:**
 - 1. Data collection
 - 2. Crafting literature reviews
 - 3. Data coding
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?** Preferred, but not required.

8. Title of Research Project: Understanding Why Criminal Organizations Kill Government Officials

Graduate Student: Marco Alcocer

Email: m2alcoce@ucsd.edu

- **Brief Description of Research Project:** Throughout Latin America, criminal organizations frequently assassinate or attack politicians and police. However, very little research exists exploring this phenomenon, leaving us with an incomplete understanding of why and when criminal groups kill government officials. This project seeks to analyze these dynamics by looking at Mexico, where hundreds of politicians and thousands of police officers have been killed by cartels over the past twenty years.
- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project include:** The primary tasks will be helping create novel datasets on assassinated politicians and police officers. This will include searching for and investigating these cases, recording key information for each case, creating codebooks, and thinking through relevant theoretical issues I will introduce you to.
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?** No

9. Title of Research Project: American Identity & Foreign Policy

Graduate Student: Alexandra Lange

Email: arwoodru@ucsd.edu

- **Brief Description of Research Project:** What does it mean when a policymaker calls a particular foreign policy “un-American” or instead argues that a foreign policy “reflects American values”? Why do policymakers choose to frame foreign policy in terms of American identity? In this project I aim to 1) describe the landscape of “American” and “unAmerican” foreign policy and 2) understand how and why politicians appeal to national identity to mobilize their constituents, and 3) explore the consequences of these frames.

This project may be of particular interest to students interested in the domestic politics of International Relations (especially public opinion about foreign policy and political psychology). Students from all backgrounds are encouraged to apply. Please don’t hesitate to email me with any questions.

- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project include:** The primary task will be reading and analyzing Senators' press releases in which Members of Congress use American national identity to motivate their foreign policy preferences. For interested students, there may also be opportunities to use R to clean and analyze webscraped text.
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?** No

10. Title of Research Project: Foreign Aid and South Asia

Graduate Student: Syeda ShahBano Ijaz

Email: ssijaz@ucsd.edu

- **Brief Description of Research Project:** I will work my undergraduate RA to clean data on geolocated aid projects in South Asia (using the Aid Data database) and merge this with data on economic and growth indicators. I hope to achieve a co-authored paper with my mentee on the domestic consequences of foreign aid in South Asia.
- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project includes:**
 - Cleaning datasets
 - Conversations on understanding theory behind foreign aid and its consequences in developing countries
 - Collating bibliographies
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?** Yes

11. Title of Research Project: Ambiguous Delegations: Executive Factions and Lawmaking in China

Graduate Student: Jiyang Jiang

Email: jjj090@ucsd.edu

- **Brief Description of Research Project:** The Chinese legislation is riddled with ambiguous delegations. Rule-making and enforcement authorities are delegated to “relevant authorities” and the same regulatory task is assigned to different entities without delineating jurisdictions. Ambiguity in authoritarian lawmaking is puzzling. Why don’t Chinese lawmakers clarify the recipients of delegations? How does ambiguity of delegations affect post-legislative policymaking and implementation?

I propose a power-sharing account. My study frames statutory ambiguity as a strategic choice by Chinese top leaders to manage intra-executive conflicts and maintain elite loyalty. I argue that ambiguous delegations in law 1) allow the authoritarian leader to break bureaucratic impasses by reaching a temporary consensus among competing executive factions, and 2) empower bureaucratic stakeholders to pursue their own interests in post-legislative policymaking. I further argue that ambiguous delegations will delay the promulgation of administrative regulations and fragment departmental rule-making, leading to inconsistencies, inefficiencies and jurisdictional disputes when policies are implemented at the local level. This study evaluates the proposed theory through a mix-methods analysis using lawmaking data from China. I combine in-depth case study research of antitrust legislation and quantitative text analysis for all cases of executive-sponsored bills, administrative regulations and departmental rules promulgated between 1998 and 2020.

- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project includes:**
 - 1. Text analysis of bills and NPC reports
 - 2. Data collection and cleaning
 - 3. Literature review assistance
 - 4. Students shall be fluent in Chinese to apply
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?:** Preferred, but not required.

12. Title of Research Project: Women Politicians and Gender Violence in Mexico

Graduate Student: Marco Alcocer and Rachel Skillman

Email: m2alcoce@ucsd.edu & rskillma@ucsd.edu

- **Brief Description of Research Project:** Gender related violence, and in particular violence against women, has become a focal issue in Latin America. At the same time, in many countries there is an increasing number of female politicians. But, are female politicians combating gender-based violence more than male politicians? Using data on violent crime against women, including femicides, and electoral returns from Mexican municipalities, we will explore whether electing a female mayor decreases violence against women.
 - **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project includes:**
 - Researching candidates for mayoral races
 - Systematically collecting data on women politicians
 - Investigating gender-based policies in Mexico
 - **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?:** No
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13. Title of Research Project: 3 Papers on the Economy and Environmental Policy

Graduate Student: Nathan Mariano

Email: n1marian@ucsd.edu

- **Brief Description of Research Project:** 3 paper dissertation - One paper looks at how firms faced with the prospect of government regulation of greenhouse gas emissions respond with self-regulation, and why. Another uses a survey experiment to examine how individuals' consumer behavior and identities affect climate policy preferences. Third paper is in development.
- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project includes:**
 - Helping to to design and administer a survey experiment, using coding software and Qualtrics
 - Data wrangling to assemble a dataset of firm climate pledges & firm-level information
 - Annotated bibliography and/or literature reviews of topics pertinent to the project
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?** Yes

14. Title of Research Project: Congressional Sentiment over Use of Military Force

Graduate Student: Patrick Hulme

Email: mhulme@ucsd.edu

- **Brief Description of Research Project:** Text analysis of congressional speeches to identify whether a member of congress supports or opposes a potential use of military force.
- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project includes:**
 - Text analysis and machine learning in R
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?** Preferred, but not required