

Research Apprenticeship Program

Winter 2023 & Spring 2023

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:** How Diverse Candidate Selection Creates Racial Coalitions at the Ballot Box

Graduate Student: Cassidy Reller

Email: creller@ucsd.edu

- **Brief Description of Research Project:** Have parties benefited electorally by fielding racially diverse candidates in US elections? This paper examines how nominating racially diverse option sets of candidates in an election cycle leads to the formation of motivated racial coalitions on election day. Diversity in nomination ensures that different racial groups feel better represented by the party they are voting for. Descriptive representation in whom a party nominates leads to descriptive motivation from the racial group represented. The paper also examines how salient the nomination must be for a racial group to feel descriptively motivated in that election. Importantly, diverse candidate sets lead to racial coalitions impacting both turnout and the likelihood of winning when multi-racial candidate blocs are nominated by one party. Finally, the unique heterogeneous effects of diversity for both the Democratic and Republican Parties and their implications are explored.
- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project include:** Data collection, analysis, and news archive research.
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?:** No

2. **Title of Research Project:** God and Globalization. How Economic Exposure to the Global Economy Induces Religious Conservatism

Graduate Student: Thomas Flaherty

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- **Brief Description of Research Project:** A significant body of research shows that international trade can devastate entire local economies. This leaves voters trapped in affected areas little opportunity to adjust to local decline. This project shows how such voters turn toward local church organizations for refuge and support. However, a byproduct of greater religiosity is greater exposure to the church's socially conservative views such as opposition toward abortion and the LGBTQ+ community. I show support for this using individual-level panel data combined with exogenous exposure to international trade from Mexico and China. The paper contributes to our understanding of how economics and culture interactively influence political beliefs and behavior.
- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project include:**
 - 1. Write Briefings on relevant peer-reviewed articles.
 - 2. Data acquisition
 - 3. Entry-level coding of variables.
 - 4. Report summary statistics in R or STATA.
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?:** Yes

3. Title of Research Project: The Economic Geography of Climate Change Politics

Graduate Student: Thomas Flaherty

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- **Brief Description of Research Project:** First-hand experience with climate change does not consistently shape voters' climate policy preferences or political behaviors. This is surprising given the significant economic effects of climate-related hazards within certain regions. We argue that voters' political reactions to local climate shocks depend on their geographic mobility. Climate change creates regional variation in droughts and floods. Local exposure to these events affects the entire local economy, which elevates the importance of individual geographic mobility for how voters respond. Those who can easily migrate to regions with livable and low variance climates have little incentive to alter their climate policy preferences. By contrast, those anchored to high risk and increasingly vulnerable localities have the greatest incentive to demand policy solutions.
- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project include:**
 - 1. Write Briefings on relevant peer-reviewed articles.
 - 2. Data acquisition
 - 3. Entry-level coding of variables.
 - 4. Report summary statistics in R or STATA.
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?:** Yes

4. Title of Research Project: Origins of LGBT+ Civil Society in the Global South

Graduate Student: Siddhartha Baral

Email: sbaral@ucsd.edu

- **Brief Description of Research Project:** The politics of sexual and gender minorities has seen remarkable development on a global scale in the past few decades. Yet, we know little about the roots of this new social movement outside of the global North. Using a mixed-methods approach, my dissertation plans to investigate this phenomenon by exploring the causes of LGBT+ civil society growth in the global South. What accounts for the remarkable growth of domestic LGBT+ associations in countries with virtually no history of LGBT+ organizing prior to the 80s? I propose an answer rooted in a public health crisis—namely, the HIV/AIDS epidemic—that fostered in a new model of LGBT+ organizing, particularly in settings with little LGBT+ organizing history prior to the HIV/AIDS onset. Through this investigation, my study will attempt to answer some first order questions of a new social movement that is fast becoming an important political cleavage globally.
- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project includes:**
 - The RA will help collect data on historical and existing LGBT+ organizations globally. To this end, they will investigate LGBT+ organizations listed in an existing dataset and collect information on various details related to these organizations via various online sources.
 - The RA will help in the research and writing of short reports on early LGBT+ civil society development in countries included in the sample.
 - The RA will regularly report to me on their work progress, via a weekly check-in and through ad-hoc emails. RA may also be expected to be a part of the meetings with the larger collaborative team that includes two more researchers (another PhD student, and a professor) based out of Princeton University.
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?:** Preferred, but not required
- **Other:** This apprenticeship would be particularly ideal for students who are personally interested in LGBTQIA+ politics outside of the global North. Language ability (beyond English) and regional knowledge of any given part of the world will also be valuable.

5. **Title of Research Project:** Friend or Foe: The Political Construction of International Threats

Graduate Student: Nick Smith

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- **Brief Description of Research Project:** Why do leaders sometimes portray foreign powers to their domestic audience as hostile and belligerent, while at other times as partners in cooperation? How and to what extent does elite rhetoric shape the likelihood of conflict and the prospects of peace? My dissertation project studies how political leaders, such as American Presidents, shape public perceptions of foreign actors and the effect their rhetoric has on foreign policy behavior. My project uses a combination of game theory, original survey experiments, computational text analysis, and historical case studies to investigate how elite rhetoric influences strategic interaction among international actors. The computational text analysis component of my dissertation applies machine learning tools to measure variation in how American Presidents publicly portray the motivations and intentions of foreign actors in their written and spoken remarks. Student researchers will study, read, and assign labels to how American presidents publicly characterize the intentions of different foreign actors across time. Working knowledge of Excel and R is preferred but not required. By working on this project, students will have a unique opportunity to acquire and develop data analysis skills. Individuals who have experience working with and analyzing data in programs like R and Excel are highly sought after by employers in many industries such as tech, law, government, and the nonprofit sector.
- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project includes:**
 - Reading and labeling Presidential speeches and documents that mention particular foreign actors
 - Study how Presidents publicly portray and discuss the motivations and intentions of actors that the U.S. has conflicted and cooperated with over time
 - Work in Excel and R to clean, visualize, and manage data
 - Interest in the foreign policy of the United States
 - Interest in data analysis and computational social science
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?** Preferred, but not required

6. Title of Research Project: Net Zero for Whom? Private Regulation as a Political Strategy

Graduate Student: Nathan Mariano

Email: n1marian@ucsd.edu

- **Brief Description of Research Project:** This project investigates the political incentives that firms have to engage in environmental private regulation (self-regulation beyond what is required by law), using the example "Net Zero" emissions reduction pledges by businesses. I am interested in whether firms are behaving in ways that signal a complementary dynamic (in which net zero pledges & public regulation work together) or a substitution dynamic (in which net zero pledges may be intended to reduce the strength of, or even replace, public regulation). To do this, I study what types of firms are making net zero targets & how this behavior responds to the political environment at the state level (in the US context). The research assistant will be involved in merging datasets to extend this project to look at how firms' private regulatory behavior correlates to their lobbying behavior.
- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project include:**
 - Use R to match inexact firm-name text strings across datasets
 - Clean results of firm name matching output (to identify correct matches)
 - Help develop a machine learning text string matching procedure (if necessary, and student has interest)
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?** Yes

7. 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:**
 - Hand code some firm-level variables (e.g., firms' positions in global value chains) based on some online information.
 - 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.
 - Other tasks that the student is interested in doing.
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?:** Preferred, but not required.

8. **Title of Research Project:** No War, Yet No Peace: How Armed Groups Exist and Persist Alongside States

Graduate Student: Wendy Wagner

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- **Brief Description of Research Project:** "We often think of armed groups as a constant challenge to the state, as perpetrators of violence, and participants in civil war. Yet, in more cases than not states tolerate the presence of armed groups such as militias, rebels, and insurgents. Between suing for peace and actively fighting, there exists an underexplored middle ground. These are neither-nor situations in which the state and armed group neither have a formal peace agreement resolving their dispute nor are actively fighting. It is paramount to understand when the state and groups coexist in such a way to further our understanding of when peace breaks down and violence erupts. Furthermore, the state can allow a group to exist or grant it extensive rights to govern people and control territory. Untangling the variation in these relationships gives us insights into differently governed spaces where the state is not the sole sovereign.

In summary, this project addresses two major questions: (1) Why can states coexist with some armed nonstate groups in the absence of formal peace and not with others? (2) What explains the variation in the ways governance is organized in these contexts?"

- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project includes:**
 - Participating in development of data collection strategy,
 - Combing various data sources on armed groups and civil war
 - Reading about cases of armed groups and their relations to the state
 - Developing a case manual and writing case descriptions
 - Inputting case characteristics into the database
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?:** Preferred, but not required.

9. Title of Research Project: When Does Religion Trump Economic Voting? Evangelical Christians and Elections in Brazil

Graduate Student: Leo Falabella

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- **Brief Description of Research Project:** While much has been debated on whether religion supersedes economic voting, we know little about when voters turn to religion. With a study of Brazilian evangelical Christians, I argue that voters reward candidates with good records as public goods providers. Without signals, however, voters are more likely to favor candidates with close religious values, as voters believe that such candidates have qualities associated with public goods provision. To test if candidates behave in accordance with my argument, I have scraped over 10,000 tweets of gubernatorial and presidential candidates in Brazil's 2022 elections. In this part of the project, I plan to work with RAs to analyze these tweets. I expect to find that candidates with good records as public goods providers are less likely to make appeals to religion, whereas candidates without office experience are more likely to appeal to religion.
- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project includes:** I use supervised quantitative text analysis to classify tweets on whether they contain appeals to religion. A person codes a subset of tweets into different categories, and this human coding is used to train computers to classify the remaining tweets accordingly.

Undergraduate research assistants will work with me on coding the subset of tweets that will be used to train computers. RAs should be able to read Portuguese, but students fluent in Spanish are encouraged to apply, as they may be able to perform the job.

- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?:** No

10. Title of Research Project: The Political Consequences of Foreign Land Investment

Graduate Student: Rachel Skillman

Email: rskillma@ucsd.edu

- **Brief Description of Research Project:** This project explores how foreign land investment (FLI) for agricultural production results in costs and benefits for individuals who are exposed to FLI. I then want to understand whether these consequences will affect voter behavior and support for left/right parties. In particular, I also want to explore whether campaign financing can help protect pro-FLI politicians from voter backlash.
- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project includes:** I will be working with my RAs on the last part of the project mentioned above. I will use their help to identify campaign financing from pro-FLI interests. Part of this will involve using media reports and NGO research to map out pro-FLI groups/companies/etc. on a state-by-state basis.
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?** Preferred, but not required

11. Title of Research Project: Targeted Repression of the Media in Non-Democracies: Evidence from Russia

Graduate Student: Malika Talgatova

Email: mtalgato@ucsd.edu

- **Brief Description of Research Project:** What do autocrats consider to be a threat? What are they afraid of? How to mitigate the risk of violence for independent press? In my research, I am guided by these broad questions, as I attempt to uncover which voices get silenced in an authoritarian setting and how it shapes the independent press in general. More specifically, in this project, I explain why some journalists get attacked while others do not, and what may shield journalists from repressive actions.

In order to demonstrate that, I engage in extensive and original data collection efforts, focusing on independent federal media outlets in Russia operating between 2012 and 2021. Creating the list of the media lays the groundwork for identifying all journalists affiliated with these outlets and collecting and analyzing all materials published by these journalists. I also complement these data with the data on attacks on journalists in Russia, using the information from several press freedom NGOs, news archives, and detailed Google search data. These data allow me to explore which features increase the likelihood, or determine the intensity, of attacks, as in my dataset, I differentiate the attacks by severity, expanding the conventional range of attacks to include milder tactics (e.g., intimidation, warnings, threats, and unofficial visits). Moreover, using these data will also allow me to analyze the consequences of such repressive actions for the public, for each individual journalist, and for the journalist network in general - all these are parts of my larger dissertation project. The project might be of interest to students interested in human rights and non-democratic politics. Some knowledge of Russian is preferred, but students who do not speak the language are more than welcome to apply.

- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project includes:**
 - Data classification/coding for sentiment analysis
 - Data collection for the attacks dataset
 - Occasional literature reviews
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?** No

12. Title of Research Project: Domestic Distribution and International Influence: The International Political Economy of Protected Areas and Biodiversity

Graduate Student: Austin Beacham

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- **Brief Description of Research Project:** Protected areas are an integral solution to the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, which are key current and future concerns for all states. Their effect, however, is dependent on where they are located, and historically they have been biased toward cheap rather than effective locations. My dissertation argues that democratic institutions and integration into the international community can shift protected area placement toward biodiverse and carbon-storing places — a key outcome in preventing environmental disaster. I test my theory with new geospatial data techniques complemented by intensive case analysis. My work contributes to both scholarly and policy debates by demonstrating the importance of both domestic and international institutions in environmental outcomes and specifically in protecting what's left of earth's vital natural heritage.
- **Common tasks required of Undergraduate Research Assistants for this project includes:**
 - Reading, coding, and documenting research reports
 - Data analysis
 - Potentially literature review
 - Other tasks as they develop
- **Is completion of POLI 30(D) - Political Inquiry required?** Preferred, but not required