

# Sociology Department Research Apprenticeship Program

## WI18 & SP18 Projects

Students interested in the Research Apprenticeship Program are required to [apply to each project individually online](#).

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### Deported Politics: How Returned Mexicans Confront the Place they were Born

*Prof. Abigail Andrews*

In this project, we will study how deportees living in Tijuana understand and come to participate in civic life in Mexico. On one hand, deportees are Mexican citizens. On the other hand, many have lived in the United States for a decade or more, and have only returned to Mexico by force. In addition to forced return, deportees face great hurdles of family separation, personal trauma, and local discrimination. We will look at what past experiences and local support systems help deportees reintegrate into Mexico. We will also consider what policies and practices create unnecessary hurdles to their civic integration. Finally, we will consider what motivates some deportees to mobilize politically in relation to the United States.

#### ASA Section(s)

- Community and Urban Sociology
- Global and Transnational Sociology
- Human Rights
- International Migration
- Latin@ Sociology
- Political Sociology
- Race, Gender, and Class
- Racial and Ethnic Minorities

#### Anticipated Tasks for RA

RAs need to speak fluent or near-fluent Spanish. It may be possible to accommodate RAs who do not speak excellent Spanish, in order to survey English-speaking deportees or conduct data entry and analysis, but please talk with the PI first.

#### Specific Time Commitments & Comments

RAs need to be available at least one weekday per week for the full day. While there may be some flexibility, the preferred day is Fridays. During that time, we will travel to Tijuana to conduct the fieldwork. RAs will also be asked to participate in a one-hour meeting each week with the rest of the research team.

### Precarious Work: The Effect of the Loss of Stable Career-Paths on the Professional Middle Class

*Lindsay DePalma*

This project is concerned with how the changing nature of work affects how professionals define good work, good employers, and good employees, and how they construct the meaning of work in their lives. It asks: how do

#### ASA Section(s)

- Altruism, Morality and Social Solidarity
- Comparative and Historical Sociology
- Culture
- Economic Sociology

professionals negotiate the contradictions between cultural narratives about success, agency, and passionate work, and structural changes that render their work precarious?

In order to answer this question, I have conceptualized two broad experiences of work: Work within the market economy is characterized by more instability, risk, flexibility, and precariousness; Work within the organizations economy is characterized by more stability, less risk, rigidity, and security. Using 74 in-depth interviews, as well as a survey measuring self-identified levels of precarity, I compare professionals who experience work as precarious to those who do not by analyzing three occupations that have positions in both economies: engineers, graphic designers, and nurses. The broad impact of this research is to generate insights about how changes in work are changing workers, which will help to develop new structures that grant employers the flexibility and skills that the market demands and grant employees the securities, satisfaction, and cultural coherence they need to thrive in a market economy.

- Organizations, Occupations & Work
- Religion
- Sex and Gender
- Social Psychology

#### Anticipated Tasks for RA

The RA will primarily be converting selected questions and their answers from the interviews into dichotomous quantitative data. Secondly, the RA will work on cleaning the survey data and connecting each respondent's survey to their corresponding interview transcript. Finally, if time allows, the RA will research and develop extended memos on the professions included in my sample (engineers, graphic designers, and nurses). These memos will include occupation histories, demographics, and basic ecosystems.

#### Specific Time Commitments & Comments

The RA needs to be self-motivated (once trained, of course!) and detail oriented. The RA would be need to be available to meet PI on campus during Winter/Spring Quarter. But in general, the RA will be free to work on the tasks whenever it works best for them!

### Equally Free or Free to be Unequal? Uses of Equality and Liberty in American Politics

*Heather Harper*

#### ASA Section(s)

- Culture
- Political Sociology

Elite political discourse plays a crucial role in determining the range of possibilities for political action and policy choices. However, existing research fails to adequately describe and explain historical shifts and divergences in the United States. My research seeks to address this gap through a comparative text analysis of Republican and Democratic National Party Platforms from 1932 to 2016. Because virtually all political and policy debates are permeated by notions of equality and freedom—e.g. the role of the state, taxes, abortion, LGBTQ rights, education, etc.— I analyze the usage of equality and freedom in order to identify shifts within and across the party platforms.

So far, I have completed the coding of all Republican and Democratic national party platforms starting in 1932 and ending in 2016 using the coding software. The next stages of the project are to 1) recompile coded sections from the platforms in preparation for computational analysis; and 2) to collect historical data concerning electoral outcomes and major events that might correlate with the identified patterns in the previous two stages.

Thus, far, I have completed the coding of all Republican and Democratic national party platforms starting in 1932 and ending in 2016 using the coding software Atlas.ti. The next stages of the project are to 1) reassemble the corpus based on the hand coding (i.e. the corpus will now consist of combined document excerpts and their derived labels [e.g. “freedom from x” or “equality for y”]) to prepare the text for computational analysis; techniques to be used include topic modeling, sentiment analysis, and SVM classification using tf-idf weighting; and 2) to collect historical data concerning electoral outcomes and major events that might correlate with the identified patterns in the previous two stages.

**Anticipated Tasks for RA**

The RA would be free to decide his or her own work hours; we would decide together dates for specific goals (e.g. 2 weeks to complete the coding of 8 party platforms), but when and where the work is done will left to the RA’s discretion. Overall, an RA assistant would gain wide-ranging research experience using multiple collection and analysis techniques (collection of government data, general coding strategies, the use of textual coding software, and an introduction to multiple computational analysis techniques).

**Specific Time Commitments & Comments**

No specific skills required; an interest in U.S. politics preferred (as reading through party platforms may become tedious for those with little interest in party politics and policy).

**Three Eras of Food Activism**

*Prof. Jeff Haydu*

My larger (book-length) project is to explore the similarities, differences, and continuities among three eras of food activism: the 1830s (evangelical dietary reform), the 1890s-1900s (food safety, domestic science, health food), and the 1970s-80s (early organic). My focus this year is on organic. In this part of the project, I am looking specifically at the roots of organic food advocacy in the 1960s counterculture (such as the latter’s critique of corporate agriculture, soulless technology, and environmental degradation).

**ASA Section(s)**

- Collective Behavior & Social Movements
- Consumers and Consumption

**Anticipated Tasks for RA**

The RA would look for connections between countercultural ideology and institutions and organic food. Specifically, s/he would search two library databases -- Independent Voice and Alternative Press Index -- that index and provide access to digitized copies of alternative press publications in the 1960s and 1970s. The searches would be for some obvious keywords (e.g., "organic gardening," "pesticide free") and some less obvious ones (e.g., "food conspiracy"). The RA would then save and/or summarize relevant articles, advertisements, and cartoons, including information about dates, authors, and places.

**Specific Time Commitments & Comments**

None

## Taiwanese and Japanese Women's Career and Marriage Aspirations

*Doreen Hsu*

This is my Master's thesis that I completed at my university in Japan, and I am looking for research assistants to help me with revising this thesis and conducting more data analysis for publication.

Currently, this thesis extends existing research on career life courses of young Taiwanese and Japanese women and queer individuals to understand the motivations behind quitting careers after marriage and childbirth. Previous research on Japanese and Taiwanese women's careers have focused on how institutional factors and other societal circumstances have likely overpowered women's own decisions for their careers. Compared to past generations, it is obvious that Taiwanese and Japanese women in their 20s and early 30s have experienced changes in legal, business, and educational institutions intended to boost women's lives as career women and as mothers. Furthermore, media representations, as an important influencer of cultural norms, have also changed over time to reflect or inspire changes in women's societal roles. Taiwan and Japan are rapidly aging societies with delayed marriage rates, and local government efforts to increase continuous employment of women and female leadership have resulted in a slew of corporate advertisements that encourage women to choose both an illustrious career and a warm family.

Public discourse created by news reports, advertisements, works of fiction, and other media indicate that the new generations of young, working Japanese and Taiwanese women should see no reason to sacrifice their careers for raising a family. However, the barely visible rise in female leaders at the tops of corporations and government offices indicate significant stalls in government backed campaigns for gender equality in the workplace. Furthermore, labor participation rates of young Japanese and Taiwanese working women indicate that while most women stay in the workforce after marriage, some women still leave the workforce after the birth of their first child. Both governments have focused their efforts on promoting women's active participation in the workplace during the past 15 years or so, but clearly this has not been working. At the same time, the shrinking of domestic economy market as well as rising housing prices in urban Taiwan and Japan indicate that most households need two incomes to break even. We do not know if women actually want to work after giving birth—perhaps they only do so because of their expectations of future or current financial situations.

At this time, this study primarily uses semi-structured interviews to include a deeper consideration of media, shared Confucian cultural values, queerness, and transgender identities in Taiwan and Japan. Research objectives are established as follows: 1) Do Taiwanese and Japanese women and LGBTQ individuals want to continue working after marriage and children? 2) How do individuals interpret media portrayals that support women's work and child rearing? A total of 25 individuals were interviewed for this research, with 14 Taiwanese participants and 11 Japanese participants. The sample of Taiwanese participants includes one bisexual woman, one lesbian woman, one

### ASA Section(s)

- Asia and Asian America
- Culture
- Education
- Family
- Global and Transnational Sociology
- Human Rights
- Organizations, Occupations & Work
- Race, Gender, and Class
- Racial and Ethnic Minorities
- Sex and Gender
- Sexuality
- Social Psychology

transgender FTM individual, and one genderqueer individual. The group of Japanese participants includes one transgender woman.

#### Anticipated Tasks for RA

Conduct online or library searches for relevant literature, finding relevant data sets, copy editing drafts of the thesis for academic or non-academic publishing, re-transcribing interviews, coding interviews, recruiting for interview participants, shadowing during interviews, etc.

#### Specific Time Commitments & Comments

Fluency in Japanese or Mandarin Chinese preferred but not required. Familiarity with Japan and Taiwan would also be a bonus.

### Why do they deserve our help?

*Fatima Khayar Camara*

This research aims to better understand the dialectical relationship between cultural representation and the formulation of return migration policy in Mexico. Since Tijuana is the city that receives the most number of Mexican deportees per year from the United States, I will analyze the reasons provided by Tijuana's migrants' advocates as to why deportees deserve to be the focus of social welfare policies.

Tijuana's advocates' preferred strategy for pushing the welfare agenda has been via the printed press. While there is consensus about the efficiency of such a strategy, there is divergence of opinion among welfare champions as to why deportees deserve to receive State resources in their efforts to (re)integrate into Mexican social, civil, and economic life.

By analyzing local newspaper articles featuring interviews with activists, and journalists' opinion pieces, I will ask what kind of State assistance is stressed by advocates, and on what basis this assistance is demanded. I will anchor changes in these discourses over events taking place both in Mexico and the United States between 2008 and 2018.

#### ASA Section(s)

- International Migration
- Latin@ Sociology
- Political Sociology

#### Anticipated Tasks for RA

The RA will be trained in historical research by reviewing newspapers on online databases, as well as visiting public and private archives in San Diego and Tijuana.

The Ra will be trained in discourse analysis by learning how to code the gathered data along specific topics. The RA will be asked to generate a working database based on their analysis.

Finally, the RA will assist me in creating a time-line highlighting major political events in Mexico and the US, as well as changes in US and Mexican migration policies.

#### Specific Time Commitments & Comments

Spanish comprehension required.

## Democracy and Public Goods

*Prof. Isaac Martin*

### ASA Section(s)

- Community and Urban Sociology
- Economic Sociology
- Political Sociology

How should society pay for things like public education and public roads? The Democracy Project is a research project devoted to the study of how democracies pay for public goods. Our current case study is California. Over the last four decades, California voters have decided on thousands of measures concerning the basic structure and financing of local government. Our research team has collected the full texts of these measures along with related information from the published voter information guides and sample ballots from 1986-2012, and are presently engaged with a variety of research and analytical tasks at the nexus of fiscal, urban, and political sociology. We are particularly interested in how the policy design features of local taxes (e.g., who is taxed, how often does the tax occur, what will the taxed dollars fund) affect voters' willingness to pay for public goods.

### Anticipated Tasks for RA

RAs will join a team project, led by a faculty member, that employs 1 postdoc and 1 GSR this academic year, and that has (as of fall 2017) two other affiliated researchers. We have work enough, and supervisory capacity enough, to guide at least three RAs.

1) Data collection. We plan to update our archive with the full texts and sample ballots from local agencies from 2013 to present. An RA's job would be to collect and catalog these texts. Most of them are available online, but some might require public records requests, interaction with local officials, making interlibrary loan requests, and other creative strategies for tracking down public documents. This is a good opportunity to learn about California government (and how to use the public records act!).

2) Data cleaning. We have a large archive of textual materials describing proposed laws that have been scanned to .txt format, and we need detail oriented copy editors who can spot and correct errors that were introduced by the object character recognition software. This is a job for one or more RAs who might find it interesting to read legal texts.

3) Web design and maintenance. We will have a project website for sharing publications, working papers, and data, and we will need help making the web site user-friendly, publicly accessible, and up-to-date. This is a job for someone with web design skills and a commitment to making social science accessible to the public.

### Specific Time Commitments & Comments

We will have regular project meetings involving the PI, the postdoc, the GSR, and two other affiliated grad student researchers, and it would be best if the RAs could attend at least some of those meetings. Meeting schedule for winter and spring quarters is TBA.

## The Racial Politics of Higher Education

Jennifer Nations

In this project I will explore the ways that race and ethnicity have been woven into the fabric of U.S. public postsecondary institutions in the American Southwest. I study how this has been done through legislative policies on financial aid, racial and ethnic minority recruitment, affirmative action, and immigrant rights. I focus on when, and to what extent, elected officials and university leadership used need-based financial aid (a race-neutral policy) to recruit racial and ethnic minority students. I then discuss the ways that state policies on affirmative action and immigrant rights (race-targeted policies) complicated or changed their attempts to diversify the populations of state colleges.

### Anticipated Tasks for RA

Tasks will mostly be related to coding. Documents are newspaper articles, briefs and hearings of state legislatures, reports and news from public postsecondary education commissions, etc.

Additional analysis and interpretive tasks could also be completed by the RA in collaboration with me, depending on their level of interest.

### ASA Section(s)

- Comparative and Historical Sociology
- Education
- Inequality, Poverty & Mobility
- Political Sociology
- Racial and Ethnic Minorities

### Specific Time Commitments & Comments

If they've taken a class in any way related to the analysis of organizations or public policy that would be a plus. SOCI 126 (Social Organization of Education), SOCI 152 (Inequality and Public Policy), or other.

## Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Medical Curricular Change: Humanistic and Social Scientific Knowledge in Medical Education

Lauren Olsen

This project examines how humanities and social sciences scholars, medical educators, and medical students – those that shape and receive medical education – understand the purpose of humanistic and social scientific knowledge for medicine and how their interpretations shape knowledge integration across epistemological divides. Through the collection of in-depth interviews, archival materials, and observations, this project describes this new interdisciplinary moment in improving patient care by examining how humanities and social sciences scholars, medical educators, and medical students (1) conceptualize the value of humanistic and social scientific knowledge for medical education; (2) cooperate (or compete) with each other across disciplines and approaches; and, (3) are enabled (or constrained) by the structure and culture of medical education in their efforts to integrate humanistic and social scientific knowledge into the curriculum.

### Anticipated Tasks for RA

A central dimension of this project is identifying the different ways in which medical educators include social scientific and humanistic knowledge, and whether there are particular institutional features of medical schools that pattern these curricular configurations. I have in-depth information from interviews with educators and students at 37 schools, but would like to be able to make claims about my data more generally.

### Specific Time Commitments & Comments

Proficiency with Microsoft Excel and Word; would be nice (for them and for me) if they had an interest in medical school.

For the first phase of data collection projected to last about the duration of the Winter quarter, I do not anticipate a specific time for the student to meet; they can do the data collection when it suits them best.

### ASA Section(s)

- Education
- Medical Sociology
- Science, Knowledge, & Technology

The main objectives for the RA would be data collection and analysis. First, the RA would be asked to create profiles of each medical school (N=133) through their publicly available information (e.g., the website). This first task of data collection I would envision for the Winter quarter. Second, the RA would be asked to work with me to analyze the data. This second task of analysis I would envision for the Spring quarter.

#### **Data Collection (Winter):**

Each school's profile would include information on the school's:

- location (e.g., urban/suburban/rural; proximity to the undergraduate campus),
- rank (e.g., from U.S. News & Reports)
- faculty demographics/disciplines (e.g., racial and gender composition; professional degree and training)
- student demographics/disciplines
- mission statements
- diversity, equity and inclusion statements
- centers, institutes, programs (e.g., center on humanities in medicine; program on social justice)
- curricula (e.g., required courses, elective courses, panels, resources, assignments)
- research requirements
- community service requirements

I envision the RA creating a separate document containing the relevant information from each of the schools and an Excel sheet that records the schools that have been completed, and which schools did not have information that others did.

#### **Analysis (Spring):**

I'd like to work with the RA, teaching them what coding means, how I plan to go about it, and then engage in actual coding and the related tasks therein (writing, reflecting, clarifying, troubleshooting).

I would structure this Spring quarter's work in the beginning of the quarter like a 1 on 1 seminar, but one where my preparation and in-class time advanced my dissertation writing goals.

Week 1: Assign RA reading on inductive and deductive coding, in general; assign RA reading on my project's theoretical motivations and existing codes from my interview and nonparticipant observation data

Week 2: Discuss readings, existing codes, and begin coding together (proceeding slowly, writing along the way, pausing to reflect)

But for the second phase where we would begin to code these schools' profiles, however, I do anticipate us finding a mutually agreeable time to meet almost every week. In this case, I would like to work with the student to go through each school to examine the collected data. In my estimation, we would meet 1-2 times a week, in my office or the SSB computer lab, to work together. Toward the end of the quarter, we would not need to do this together, but certainly for the first half.

Week 3: Continue coding together (proceeding a little quicker, clarifying and honing codes, writing, reflecting)

Week 4: Continue coding together, start coding side-by-side (clarifying, writing, reflecting)

Week 5: Code side-by-side (troubleshoot)

Week 6-9: Code side-by-side or separately

Week 10: Work together to write up an extensive methods section and a long memo based on previous memos

## **Economic Elites and Tax System in Mexico: An Analysis of Recent Tax Reforms, 1990-2014**

*Germano Ribeiro*

### **ASA Section(s)**

- Economic Sociology

In Latin American countries, economic elites have been traditionally influential in politics. But how do these elites achieve their policy goals? This project seeks to identify some of the mechanisms through which Mexican economic elites influence policy by looking at two recent legislative processes of tax reforms held in the country. These include the initial legislation text, committee reports, legislative hearings, and the final text with all the approved changes to the initial bill.

### **Anticipated Tasks for RA**

Research apprentices involved in the project will help with the coding and further analysis of these archival materials. The first step is to identify in these texts signs of elite influence; second, which are the types of elites that mattered for these policy reforms; third, which are the mechanisms employed (examples of these are campaign financing, lobbying, media, etc.). Finally, these codes will be crossed with the approved legislation text, in order to match types of elites with mechanisms and policy outcomes. This will be done with the help of a qualitative data analysis package (NVivo).

### **Specific Time Commitments & Comments**

Instrumental knowledge of Spanish language is required..