Sociology Department Research Apprenticeship Program
WI21 & SP21 Projects

Students interested in the Research Apprenticeship Program are required to apply to each project individually online.

The time commitment for participation in the research apprenticeship program will be roughly around 12 hrs a week hours per project (exact times will vary).

Available Projects (See specific page for details of project):

Project Descriptions:

WAP (What about people?): Mental health, race, and college
Doreen Hsu

This project builds on my previous research project about UCSD students' academic achievement and experiences of stress in college. I focused on how Asian American students think about their race, ethnicity, family backgrounds, and education experiences. I am expanding this research to incorporate virtual interviews and participant observations with campus organizations, social events, social groups, and other individuals to find out more about how the school as an institution deals with student mental health issues.

Key Topics(s)
- Asia and Asian America
- International Migration
- Education
- Family
- Mental Health
- Race, Gender, and Class
- Racial and Ethnic Minorities
- Sex and Gender

Anticipated Tasks for RA
All tasks will be conducted virtually. In winter quarter, I may ask RAs to complete a variety of fieldwork, data collection, and data analysis tasks. In spring quarter, RAs will have opportunities to participate in a collaborative writing project with the goal of publication. Overall, winter quarter tasks may include: 1) attend virtual campus social events relating to mental health, 2) participate in virtual campus presentations of research, 3) recruit research participants, 4) participate in virtual research participant interviews, 5) analyzing interview data, 6) do record-keeping, and 7) participate in weekly virtual meetings. In spring, I may also invite RAs to participate in some promotional or marketing tasks to advertise the RA program for this project. These tasks may include participating in making flyers or making a brief promotional video.

Specific Time Commitments & Comments
Collaborative work is very important to me, and I particularly look for students who are interested in developing their teamwork and social skills. Since we will be conducting interviews and participant observations, a flexible schedule for the California time zone is also a plus.
We will have meetings once or twice a week as a team, but RAs can complete their tasks whenever and wherever works best for them. Past RAs have described the time commitment as 10 hours a week on average.

Social Credit Systems in China
Chuncheng Liu

In 2014, the State Council of the People's Republic of China (State Council) issued a blueprint, "Planning Outline for the Construction of a Social Credit System (2014–2020)," aiming to build a national Social Credit System (SCS) in six years. The State Council claimed many current social problems in contemporary China, from food safety accidents to academic dishonesty, are the result from the lack of trust and strict regulation of those people who break social trust (xinyong). To solve these problems, an SCS is needed, which could systematically collect data about every individual and institution's creditworthiness and trustworthiness, and serve as a basis for a strong reward and punishment system. This research project aims to explore the

Key Topics(s)
- Asia and Asian America
- Crime, Law, & Deviance
- Economic Sociology
- Global and Transnational Sociology
- Law
- Political Sociology

multiplicities of Chinese SCSs with a focus on its origin and impacts on people.

Anticipated Tasks for RA	Specific Time Commitments & Comments
- Data collection (mostly public policy and newspaper data) - Archival research - Coding transcripts and policy documents	The time commitment is relevantly flexible. Understanding Chinese writings (simplified) is required.

The Impact of Market Conditions and Policies on Cultural Production: A Computational Study of Popular Music in China

Ke Nie

Key Topics(s)
- Asia and Asian America
- Communication, Information Technologies & Media Sociology
- Culture
- Economic Sociology
- Political Sociology
- Mathematical Sociology

Extensive research on the "Production of Culture" has already shown that the artwork is not a product of mere individual genius, but rather the outcome of external social conditions. However, few of them shed lights on how specific artistic features of the artwork, especially those with less linguistic expressions, can be the site for the struggle between artistic creativity, market conditions, and political interferences over time. Using an original dataset of Chinese popular music from 1980s to 2010s, I plan to study how Chinese popular music changes across time in terms of its sound and lyrics, and how it is impacted by significant changes of the market conditions and policies. I propose using mixed-methods, including both computational and qualitative approaches, to understand how these social conditions shape the production of popular music and why musicians react to them differently in their composition. The project will contribute to a more fine-grained understanding of the sociology of cultural production.

Anticipated Tasks for RA

There are four main tasks research apprentices will be asked to assist with:

Data collection from various sources; Coding and data cleaning; Data analyzing using computational techniques such as machine learning.

Specific Time Commitments & Comments

10 hours per week per student for data collecting, cleaning, and analyzing. 1-1.5 hours per week for meeting

Mandarin reading proficiency strongly preferred. Basic familiarity with programming languages such as R and Python is preferred. Musical knowledge will not be required but will be a bonus.

Uncertainty Detection in Risk Assessments: A human-AI collaboration in document analysis
Katie Hale

This project uses machine learning methods to study the role of uncertainty and ignorance in risk assessments written by scientific and technical experts. Its primary aim is to develop a natural language classifier that can reliably determine if a given sentence in a scientific document contains an expression of uncertainty or doubt. With this tool, it will be possible to compare how and when uncertainty is used within scientific discourse in different expert disciplines, such as food safety and environmental impact assessment, and in the differing policy contexts of the United States and the European Union.

The role of the RA will be to assist in improving the accuracy of the machine classifier. A previously-existing database of human-labeled uncertainty expressions within risk assessments published by the USDA, FDA, and EFSA (the European Food Safety Authority) serves as the classifier's initial training data. A first iteration of the classifier, trained on this dataset, will be applied to a subset of more recent, unlabeled documents, and the output classifications will be reviewed by the PI and RA for accuracy and precision. Once the validation/correction process on this subset is complete, another iteration of the classifier will be trained on the expanded dataset, and its outputs evaluated in turn. Through this iterative bootstrapping process, the goal is to develop a classifier which is reasonably accurate, and the limitations of its accuracy well-understood.

Anticipated Tasks for RA
Sociological coding to validate and improve machine classifications- the RA will read sections of EFSA risk assessments, flag sentences containing uncertainty, and review uncertainty expressions flagged by the machine for accuracy. The PI will perform these tasks as well, but separately from the RA.

Specific Time Commitments & Comments
A prior familiarity with sociological coding & content analysis is NOT required. Fluency in reading and understanding complex scientific and technical publications is required.

Ideally, the RA will have some prior experience or background in the biological or medical sciences, or, less ideally, experience in some other quantitative scientific discipline.

Experience in programming (Python, JavaScript) and/or machine learning methodologies (NLP, DNNs, transformer models) is welcome, but NOT required. The document coding

interface will be usable by anyone with basic web literacy and a computer with a modern web browser.

9-12 hours/week, with significant flexibility- the classification validation process can be done on the RAs own computer, at their convenience.

At odds or in unison? Understanding how international students fit within immigration policy debates
Karina Shklyan

Immigration policy in the United States has historically varied according to domestic politics, global trends, and ideologies of racism. In the late 19th and early 20th century, the US enacted increasingly restrictive policies to exclude immigrants based on national origin. However, for immigrants traveling to the US to pursue higher education, they could typically bypass these restrictions. In fact, some larger migration streams (e.g. Filipinos in southern California) began when individuals from that country arrived in the US to pursue education. Bipartisan political approval of international students is an anomaly within immigration policy. This project seeks to understand why international students have been a favored immigrant group and how support for them has been framed. We'll do so by analyzing legislative documents and historical records.

Key Topics(s)
- Comparative and Historical Sociology
- Education
- International Migration
- Political Sociology
- Racial and Ethnic Minorities

Anticipated Tasks for RA
Literature search Data collection (legislative, newspaper) Coding policy documents

Specific Time Commitments & Comments
General understanding of and/or interest in immigration policy

We will have weekly meetings, but the time commitment is flexible. I will make sure that the RA's responsibilities do not exceed the weekly allotted time.

Constructing Diversity and Inclusion in STEM Organizations
Stephen Reynders

The methods organizations use to address racial and gender discrimination are changing. These shifting strategies are influenced by multiple forces, such as the opportunities and pressures presented by the Movement for Black Lives (BLM), to the Trump administration's

Key Topics(s)
- Organizations, Occupations & Work
- Political Sociology
- Racial and Ethnic Minorities
- Science, Knowledge, & Technology
- Sex and Gender

executive directive banning certain types of diversity training in federal agencies. Research shows that organizations construct formal structures in order to signal compliance with equal employment opportunity laws, but these do not necessarily succeed in redressing issues of diversity and inclusion. This project focuses on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) organizations' strategies for combating discrimination and the roles played by professional scientists and engineers. STEM is an interesting context to examine these questions because certain scientific principles, such as universalism and value-neutrality, may obstruct recognition of the problem among professionals and/or shape organizational strategies. Both academic (universities) and industry (biotech, tech, life sciences, etc.) organizations are considered.

Anticipated Tasks for RA
Tasks will include:
-Reading and discussing sociological articles with the PI
-Collecting related sociological articles
-Collecting primary data from online sources, such as organizations' online material related to diversity, legal documents, and possibly other materials
-Organizing primary and secondary data
-Discussing sociological research design

Specific Time Commitments & Comments
-Remote meetings with the PI once a week (~1 hour long)
-Between 9-12 hours per week on research tasks
-Time expectations are flexible, depending on RA's weekly tasks and availability

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Gender Bias in STEM fields
Prof. Mary Blair

I lead a National Science Foundation-funded project on the subtle biases that continue to discourage and devalue women in STEM fields. I am seeking 1-2 undergraduate research apprentices to work closely with me on the research tasks listed below.

The apprentice will have a first-row seat to watch and assist in the process of assessing data and writing papers on this exciting topic. To learn more about this project, please see crg-stemm.ucsd.edu.

Key Topics(s)
- Organizations, Occupations & Work
- Race, Gender, and Class
- Sex and Gender

Anticipated Tasks for RA
1. Find and review recent social science research on gender inequality in STEM
2. Discuss the material with me
3. Read and comment on drafts of papers I write
4. Set up bibliographic data base with standard software to keep track of citations
5. Assist in final manuscript preparation and PowerPoint slide design.

Specific Time Commitments & Comments
Self-motivation. Good communication skills, including willingness to reach out whenever questions arise or additional guidance is needed.

Minimum of 10 hours a week. Given the corona virus precautions, the apprentice will work remotely with flexibly timed hours. Our weekly

DiaspoRicans in Nontraditional Destinations
Prof. Vanesa Ribas

This project examines the social experiences and political perspectives of diaspora Puerto Ricans who reside in California. Unlike established PR communities in places like New York, Chicago, and other East Coast cities, little is known about the history and contemporary lives of Puerto Rican-identified people in places like California. For this project, part of a larger project on Puerto Rican political subjectivities, I have been interviewing first, second, and third generation Puerto Ricans who reside in California. Research assistance would include transcription of interviews and literature review/annotated bibliography.

Key Topics(s)
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- International Migration
- Latinx Sociology
- Political Sociology
- Racial and Ethnic Minorities

Anticipated Tasks for RA
- Interview transcriptions
- Coding
- Literature review/Annotated bibliography

Specific Time Commitments & Comments
-Remote meetings with the PI once a week (~1 hour long)
-Between 9-12 hours per week on research tasks
-Time expectations are flexible, depending on RA's weekly tasks and availability

How Majors Matter
Prof. Richard Pitt

Different college majors provide students with different skills, and (presumably) these differences affect labor market experiences and earnings. Because people are hired before their actual productivity can be measured, college majors serve as a signal of these skills holdings. What those skills may be is still mostly undetermined. There is no dataset which actually catalogs the skills taught within or required for successful completion of college majors. Just as researchers in this area have moved to disaggregate the characteristics of jobs, it is useful for us to disaggregate the characteristics of the training that, ostensibly, leads to these jobs. This project analyzes a survey of 670 professors and teaching grad students at 359 colleges/universities that asked them about the relationship between their disciplines and 72 skills (e.g., computational math, teamwork, facility with foreign languages), temperaments, preferred tasks and preferred work/learning environments.

Key Topics(s)
- Culture
- Education
- Organizations, Occupations & Work
- Race, Gender, and Class
- Science, Knowledge, & Technology

Anticipated Tasks for RA
- Statistical analysis of survey data
- Finding, reading, and reviewing relevant literature
- Coding of occupational (O*Net) data
- Contributing to the writing of manuscript(s)

Specific Time Commitments & Comments

While we will mostly engage in a statistical analysis, knowledge of statistics is useful but not required. Facility with Excel is required. Facility with SAS statistical software preferred, but facility with STATA or R would be useful.

Analytical skills required: critical writing and oral communication, some computational math skills, reading to extract details, ability to organize data and ideas, reviewing and conducting research. Temperaments and interpersonal skills required: self-initiative, flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity, patience, teamwork, and active listening.

10 hours per week per student completing tasks on RA's own schedule
1-1.5 hours per week for meetings

Forced Back "Home": A Comparative Historical Analysis of Deportee Incorporation
Fatima Khayar

Key Topics(s)
- International Migration
- Latinx Sociology
- Political Sociology

This project aims to understand how deportees (re)claim their citizenship upon returning to the motherland. Using ethnographic and interview data with deportees and key stakeholders in Mexico, along with historical documents from archives in Mexico and the United States, I study the conditions that have shaped deportees' incorporation in Mexico across three waves of mass returns from the U.S. into Mexico: The Great Depression, the period that culminated with Operation Wetback and the contemporary period. I analyze the programs put in place to allocate rights and services to returning emigrants along with deportees' concomitant political mobilization. Differences in styles and modes of political mobilization on the part of repatriated citizens in relation to a regime's conceptualization of returnees' potential contribution to the nation-state building process explain why some repatriated citizens have been better able to (re)assimilate than others.

Anticipated Tasks for RA	Specific Time Commitments & Comments
- Review and coding of archival documents. - Memo-ing	Spanish reading comprehension required. 10-12 hours/week

Who deserves to be a refugee? Judicial determinants of asylum in South Korea, 1999-2018
Angela McClean

Key Topics(s)
- Asia and Asian America
- International Migration
- Law

Refugee status determination (RSD) – the legal and administrative process that decides whether a person in search of protection is a refugee under the law – is, unfortunately, not a fair or consistent procedure. Applying for refugee status in the United States, for example, has been equated as playing a game of "roulette" (Ramji-Nogales et al. 2009), as the result depends on a variety of uncontrollable factors.

This project explores the judicial determinants of asylum in a country that is notorious for accepting an incredibly low number of refugees – South Korea – compared to other rich liberal democracies in the Global North. In 2014-2018, for example, Korea's refugee recognition rate was less than 2 percent (compared to 19 percent of top ten OECD countries' grant rate). Using a novel dataset of over 2,800 court judgement documents from 1999 to 2018, this project explores the main determinants of asylum in Korea. It specifically asks: Who are the 2 percent of applicants winning the "lottery" that is Korea's RSD, and how are they different from the 98 percent of failed refugee status claimants? How are the legal and normative meanings of a "refugee" constructed in Korea?

Anticipated Tasks for RA	Specific Time Commitments & Comments
- Coding and detailed analysis of court judgement documents on asylum claims	- Must be able to read and understand Korean - Weekly meeting - The time commitment is relatively flexible - RAs can conduct research at a location and time of their choosing

How Are Students Financially Impacted by the Pandemic and What Do They Want the UCSD Community to Know?

Stacey Livingstone

In collaboration with Basic Needs and the Engaged Teaching Hub, this project seeks to describe what financial challenges students are facing during the COVID 19 pandemic and what they want TAs, instructors, staff and administrators at UCSD to know about themselves, their current situation and what types of support they would want to see from their campus community. This project will heavily involve the leadership team at Basic Needs as well as students who utilize their services. Data for this project will be collected using a survey and follow up interviews. Findings from this study will not only be shared with Basic Needs, but disseminated through Engaged Teaching Hub.

Key Topics(s)
- Inequality, Poverty & Mobility
- Race, Gender, and Class
- Sociological Practice and Public Sociology
- Teaching and Learning

Anticipated Tasks for RA
The RA will help conduct a literature review, meet with relevant librarians to learn how to conduct a literature review and marshal existing data, meet with members of the Basic Needs leadership team at UC San Diego to strategize framing of the project and participant recruitment, co-create a survey, conduct Zoom interviews and analyze interview transcripts with the PI.

Specific Time Commitments & Comments
Must have an interest in public sociology and participatory action research.

The RA can anticipate 10 hours of work a week and a flexible schedule in terms of when they can work. I also want to highlight that given the pandemic, growing economic insecurity and exacerbated racial tensions, to name a few realities that are impacting our students right now, I recognize that it can be a challenge to work in the current context and will acknowledge and respect where the RA is in terms of time to commit to the project each week.