

Sociology Department Research Apprenticeship Program WI20 & SP20 Projects

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

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<p>Social Credit Systems in China <i>Chuncheng Liu</i></p> <p>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 multiplicities of Chinese SCSs with a focus on its origin and impacts on people.</p>	<p>ASA Section(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asia and Asian America • Crime, Law, & Deviance • Economic Sociology • Global and Transnational Sociology • Law • Political Sociology
<p>Anticipated Tasks for RA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data collection (mostly public policy and newspaper data) - Archival research - Coding transcripts and policy documents 	<p>Specific Time Commitments & Comments</p> <p>The time commitment is relevantly flexible.</p> <p>Understanding Chinese writings (simplified) is required.</p>

Policy Innovation and Change: The Case of Gendered Pay Inequity in the U.S.

Heather Harper

The content of policy matters. The specific dollar amount in minimum wage laws will determine if some families can pay their bills. Whether or not gun laws require background checks at gun shows will influence who has access to firearms. The extent to which companies are held liable for contaminating water supply systems will affect the level of corporate compliance and thus the safety of our drinking water. These are just a few examples of how the specifics of a policy can have significant affects on people's lives. This fact is often ignored by the literature on public policy, which too often treats policies as interchangeable units and analyzes their passage or failure in abstraction from their contents.

This research uses the case of gendered pay inequity in the U.S. to fill this gap in the literature through an investigation into the factors that account for when and how new ideas about, and approaches to, pay inequity emerge.

Anticipated Tasks for RA

Literature search. Data collection from online sources. Cleaning text data in preparation for computational analysis. Coding of documents for venue, speaker, affiliation, year, and other categories.

ASA Section(s)

- Comparative and Historical Sociology
- Culture
- Labor and Labor Movements
- Political Sociology
- Race, Gender, and Class

Specific Time Commitments & Comments

We will have a weekly team meeting but RAs can conduct research whenever and wherever works best for them.

Gentrification, "Chronic Homelessness" and Homelessness Governance in U.S. Cities

Stacey Livingstone

This project is designed to understand the impact recent shifts in federal and local policy have on homeless individuals and families living in urban areas and the service providers that assist them. Specifically, this project seeks to describe how the federal prioritization of assistance for the "chronically homeless" impacts the "chronically homeless" and the recently unhoused within a context of "3rd wave" gentrification that continues to push many onto the streets and generate municipal ordinances that push the "chronically homeless" out of gentrifying urban cores where the majority of services have historically been situated. During the Winter 2020 quarter, data collection will focus on service providers who assist either recently unhoused or "chronically homeless" clients and will consist of participant observation in staff meetings at nonprofit organizations and regional taskforces and semi-structured

ASA Section(s)

- Community and Urban Sociology
- Inequality, Poverty & Mobility
- Organizations, Occupations & Work
- Sociological Practice and Public Sociology

interviews. During the Spring 2020 quarter, if the RA is interested in staying on, data collection will begin to focus on clients as well as service providers and will include observations as well as semi-structured interviews.

Anticipated Tasks for RA

The RA for this project would be asked to perform the following duties: transcribe interviews, code interview transcripts with the PI, conduct searches for relevant literature, read relevant literature when time permits, meet with relevant librarians (Sociology and Urban Studies subject specialists) to learn how to effectively conduct literature searches, meet weekly to discuss transcription coding and literature searches so as to put them into conversation with field notes generated by the PI.

Specific Time Commitments & Comments

The RA for this project will need to commit to approximately 10 hours/week (with flexibility to shift hours around during exams/assignments). The PI is very flexible with respect to when the PI and RA will meet for weekly meetings. The PI is also fully committed to maintaining the 10-12 hour maximum for this program: i.e. if duties are too much, we will collectively re-evaluate what the RA can do/should do/wants to do in about 10 hours a week.

It is required that the RA has the following background/skills: an interest in inequalities and public sociology, the ability to self-motivate and self-organize, typing proficiency.

It is preferred (but not mandatory) that the RA has the following background/skills: has taken a qualitative methods course, has taken a course on inequalities, class, or poverty, and has familiarity with N-Vivo software.

All Eyes on Me: Subjective Experiences of Mental Health Among College Students

Doreen Hsu

This project builds on my previous research project about UCSD students' academic achievement and experiences of stress in college. More specifically, I've focused on how Asian Americans think about their race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, family backgrounds, and immigration histories. Currently, I am expanding this research to incorporate interviews and participant observations with campus

ASA Section(s)

- Asia and Asian America
- Culture
- Education
- International Migration
- Medical Sociology
- Mental Health
- Race, Gender, and Class
- Racial and Ethnic Minorities
- Sex and Gender
- Sexuality
- Social Psychology

organizations, social events, social groups, and other individuals to find out more about how college students think about mental health.

Anticipated Tasks for RA

We are in the early development stages of this current research project, so tasks will be about getting this project off the ground. Over the course of a quarter, I may ask RAs to: 1) gather information and analyze data on campus organizations, student organizations, or other social groups, 2) attend campus social events relating to mental health, 3) participate in campus presentations of research, 4) recruit research participants, 5) participate in interviewing research participants with me accompanying, and 6) transcribing and analyzing interview data. I may also ask RAs to do some miscellaneous record-keeping.

Specific Time Commitments & Comments

We will have meetings twice a week with me and another experienced RA, 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, including our weekly meetings.

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

Ke Nie

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. In this project, I plan to collect an original dataset of Chinese popular music from 1980s to 2018. With the help of computational techniques that are able to extract and analyze the music and lyrics of the songs, I plan to study how Chinese popular music changes across time in terms of its form and content, and how it is impacted by significant changes of the market conditions and policies. This project proposes a distinctive approach to the sociological study of cultural artifacts and contributes to a more fine-grained understanding of the sociology of cultural production.

ASA Section(s)

- Asia and Asian America
- Communication, Information Technologies & Media Sociology
- Culture
- Economic Sociology
- Political Sociology

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

Familiar with programming languages such as R and Python.
Mandarin reading proficiency strongly preferred. Musical knowledge will be a bonus.

One Political Economic Regime or Multiple? Exploring the state-company relation in China

Bolun Zhang

There are two contradicting tendencies in understanding the state-company relationship in China. One holds that China could be seen as a coherent political economic regime where the state-company relation is dominated by the state, while the other demonstrates that there is a more complicated picture since there are tensions between local governments and central government in terms of politics and fiscal arrangement. This project proposes a pragmatist way of utilizing machine learning and text mining as tool to approach this question empirically. Based on local policy documents and court cases between the government and private companies on the provincial level, this project aims to first build new measurement about the state-company relations, compare it to more traditional measurement and then use it to explore more empirical questions that fit the larger debate.

Anticipated Tasks for RA

The RA will read and discuss literature together with the tutor.

The RA will go through some basic coding training online and also receive guidance from the tutor.

After training, the RA will utilize the skills they learn to collect data online and help tutor in analyzing the data.

ASA Section(s)

- Comparative and Historical Sociology
- Economic Sociology
- Political Sociology

Specific Time Commitments & Comments

The working time would be flexible, but I would ask RAs to attend two half-hour sessions each week. The first session we will discuss theoretical works, and the second session would be a tutoring session on text mining and machine learning.

Working language is English but prefer who read Mandarin.

No coding experience required but prefer students who are interested in Computational Social Science Minor or working in R and Python.