

## Undergraduate Research Assistantship Programme, 2026/27

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Project Title:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | What explains the shape of fair-trade coalitions? |
| <b>Faculty member:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Boram Lee                                         |
| <b>Department:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | International Relations                           |
| <p><b>Description</b></p> <p>Since NAFTA passed by a slim margin with historical labour and environmental side agreements, American political leaders have strived to build fair trade coalitions for trade liberalization. Politicians anticipated that strong labour, environmental, or human rights concessions from partner countries could continue to assuage domestic groups; the government negotiated labour and environmental chapters in trade agreements, anticipating pro-trade endorsements from domestic groups that promote fair trade.</p> <p>However, this coalition strategy has not always been successful in forming a broad-based fair-trade coalition. Original data shows that fair-trade coalitions within the United States were surprisingly thin in the past two decades. During trade negotiations, approximately one third of major labour and environmental groups remained consistently disengaged, and only a quarter provided concrete input to the government to gain concessions. Most interestingly, only a small subset of high engagement groups endorsed trade deals, forming a fair-trade cleavage, whereas many were critical of concessions and viewed trade as a focal point to mobilize protectionist agenda. Given the decades-long hype about fair trade among politicians, it is puzzling that many groups refused or disengaged with fair trade agendas.</p> <p>What explains the shape of fair-trade coalitions? Why do issue linkage elicit support from some fair traders, not others? Focusing on the United States from 2000 to 2024, Dr Lee's book project explains the shape of fair-trade coalitions and theorizes why concessions in value- based issues appeal to some more than others. Dr Lee will be completing the final empirical chapter of the book project, focusing on whether and how gender and sexuality rights groups engaged with trade negotiations. The project will look at human rights organizations around the negotiations for the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the US-Mexico-Canada agreement, and other trade preferences mechanisms (e.g., the AGOA).</p> <p>During the current academic year, Dr Lee will collect data on US human rights groups' positions on the TPP, USMCA, and any trade issues from 2010 to 2024, and will provide a list of US human rights groups to the Research Assistant (RA). The RA is expected to investigate the groups' positions on US-related trade issues. They will look at two sources: a) human rights groups' websites (if any), and b) news articles via LexisNexis.</p> <p>The RA will record individual human rights groups' positions in an Excel spreadsheet. The RA should save relevant letters, news articles, or documents to substantiate the final coding. The RA and Dr Lee will meet in person for an induction. During the induction, the RA will be shown how to access LexisNexis through the LSE library. After the induction, correspondence will be virtual</p> <p>The RA should be able to manage their workload during term time (weekly updates and deliverables will be expected) and be punctual. The RA will use AI for their searches and will be expected to share relevant chat logs with the supervisor (e.g., Claude project share).</p> |                                                   |

## Undergraduate Research Assistantship Programme, 2026/27

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Project Title:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | A quantitative and qualitative analysis of legal conflicts over US public lands (1960 to 2024) |
| <b>Faculty member:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Cheryl Schonhardt-Bailey                                                                       |
| <b>Department:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Government                                                                                     |
| <p><b>Description</b></p> <p>Over the past two years, the second Trump Administration has cut staff in national parks by about 25%, moved to sell off public lands to private actors, and drastically reduced protections to endangered species, clean water, clean air, national forests, and so on. All these measures are opposed by large majorities (85% or more) of Americans and have consequently intensified and politicized competing arguments over the usages of public lands, ranging from preservation, to recreation, to energy development.</p> <p>While presidential administrations can initiate policy changes, ultimately it is the legal system that adjudicates conflicts and settles competing arguments for how public lands should be managed and who should serve as the rightful stewards of these lands.</p> <p>This project investigates these legal cases in the modern era of environmentalism. It seeks to capture the shifting priorities for litigants in public lands disputes and how their arguments have changed from the 1960s to present day. The project's goal is to capture empirically how these arguments have evolved to reflect new priorities for the American "public", and more broadly whether these new priorities can be interpreted as contributing to more political cohesion or more polarisation over US public lands.</p> <p>Over the past couple of years, Professor Schonhardt-Bailey (together with Research Assistants [RAs]) has compiled two large datasets—one quantitative (N=c5000 cases) and one qualitative (N=c500 cases). Both datasets contain cases of litigation on issues pertaining to US public lands, dating from 1960 to 2024. Overall, the cases cover some 64 years of environmental litigation. The goal over the 2026-27 academic year is to complete the analysis of the existing data, run robustness checks, and test our key hypotheses. In particular, we seek to gauge the extent to which substantive "modern" issues—e.g., environmental justice, rights to recreate, climate change and the cultural rights of indigenous peoples—became increasingly prominent in US environmental litigation, and by their outcomes shaped US environmental policy. Further, we aim to identify the key actors and what arguments they used in legal cases. In documenting trends, this project seeks to uncover whether regions of the US have different priorities for different users, whether some special interests are gaining/losing legal standing over time, and what might all these trends mean for US environmental policy as it has evolved from the pivotal Wilderness Act of 1964 to present day.</p> <p>A further potential return from this project is that it offers a means to map out the content and trajectory of public lands litigation over a 64-year period, allowing us to gauge whether times really have changed or not, and thereby place the current changes of the Trump Administration in perspective.</p> <p>The RA's focus for this project is in conducting the analysis and statistical tests on the quantitative dataset. The RA should be proficient in statistical analysis, data analysis and management, and possibly also quantitative text analysis.</p> |                                                                                                |

## Undergraduate Research Assistantship Programme, 2026/27

Interested applicants may benefit from [reading](#) how a previous RA assisted with the compiling of the two datasets and how this has shaped her subsequent research interests and professional development.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Project Title:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Wargaming and nuclear escalation |
| <b>Faculty member:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Colleen Larkin                   |
| <b>Department:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | International Relations          |
| <p><b>Description</b></p> <p>When, if ever, would decision-makers use nuclear weapons? How did civilian and military strategists in the United States think about nuclear escalation during the Cold War? This project examines the drivers of US nuclear strategy by tracking the narratives underpinning nuclear deterrence—stories about the causes of war and peace in the nuclear age. Unlike other areas of strategy, nuclear strategy lacks “empirical evidence,” since nuclear weapons have not been used in war since 1945. Dr Larkin argues that the development of nuclear strategy in the US was intertwined with the development of narratives through domestic elite debates. A narrative emerged where deterrence lay in fears of unacceptable escalation, but where credible deterrence required dominant warfighting capabilities to win various nuclear wars.</p> <p>This portion of the project examines narratives of credibility and nuclear escalation in historical wargames. Throughout the Cold War, civilian and military strategists (including notable figures like Thomas Schelling) regularly participated in wargaming exercises to simulate nuclear crisis decision-making. Newly available archival wargames, including recently declassified government wargames, offer exciting insights into nuclear decision-making. In particular, the rich data on participants’ deliberations and reflections on the games shed light on participants’ thinking about nuclear warfare in an immersive scenario. Dr Larkin aims to use the archival wargames to analyse not only how US strategists contemplated nuclear escalation, but also the narratives they adopted to justify their choices. This research will take place using digital archives, particularly the Hoover Digital Wargaming Collection through Stanford University.</p> <p>The Research Assistant will assist with the data collection and processing of wargames from the Department of Defense, Naval Academy, RAND, and MIT, available on digital archives. They will create a dataset to record metadata about the games, including the participants, game designs, and details of the hypothetical scenarios provided. They also read through the deliberations and reflections collected during the games, using qualitative coding procedures to highlight discussions of nuclear escalation. This will allow us to trace evolving discourses around credible threats, nuclear escalation, and theories of victory in nuclear crisis scenarios.</p> <p>The research assistant will check in every two weeks with updates on their progress. The ideal candidate will have a high degree of organization and attention to detail. They should also have an interest in wargaming or nuclear politics, as well as an interest in reading primary documents. Some familiarity with text analysis is a plus but not required.</p> |                                  |

## Undergraduate Research Assistantship Programme, 2026/27

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Project Title:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Using AI to understand Anglo-American cooperation and conflict in the early 20th century |
| <b>Faculty member:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | James Morrison                                                                           |
| <b>Department:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | International Relations                                                                  |
| <p><b>Description</b></p> <p>This project further extends Dr Morrison’s broader research agenda, specifically on Anglo-American financial cooperation and the “passing of the torch” from the UK to the US in the 20th century. This project has two parts, each involving archival material collected by Dr Morrison and a PhD student. Both projects are rooted in the documents surrounding the political-economic collaboration between the US and the UK across the first half of the 20th century.</p> <p>The first is about Anglo-American interwar trade relations and involves materials which previously informed a PhD but now requires better organisation and review. These materials will support an academic paper, “Re-globalising the World: How Walter Runciman stemmed the interwar protectionist slide” which analyses how Runciman worked with liberals in the UK and the US to stop the global protectionist slide, following the US’s passage of the Smoot-Hawley tariff. The project will involve working back through primary source material to pull out a coherent narrative.</p> <p>The second part relates to the financial relations between the US and UK during the First World War. Dr Morrison has collected a dataset of materials including thousands of pages of materials from numerous archives and collections over the years and further materials from PhD students and other researchers. These materials relate to Anglo-American political and economic cooperation in these crucial decades.</p> <p>This project will build on previous work to organise these photographs into folders/PDFs of the documents themselves requiring analysis to determine dates for documents, their authorship and their relevance. Where possible, optical character recognition has been used, but some transcription is required (i.e. of handwritten elements). The project will also utilise AI tools to help better document, organise, and analyse this large corpus of documents.</p> <p>The project will involve two types of tasks. First, the Research Assistant (RA) will work to help organise, review, and process these many documents. This will include the collections from the US (especially the US Federal Reserve) and the UK collections (especially papers of Walter Runciman and the Board of Trade).</p> <p>Second, Dr Morrison and the RA will develop new, and enhance existing, workflows using AI will be used to help us better understand the materials, to organise them better, and to build the tools that enable more capacious analysis—both computer-assisted and human-driven.</p> <p><b>Skills required by the Research Assistant</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most important: a passion for climbing into piles of digitised primary documents about the global economic order in this period and the ability to use AI to build tools, workflows, and programmes/scripts.</li> </ul> |                                                                                          |

## Undergraduate Research Assistantship Programme, 2026/27

- An eye for detail, and the ability to work in an organised, systematic fashion. Those students who are the most meticulous and methodical are those who enjoy this work the most.

In the application, students should provide a paragraph or two describing their experience with the following:

- Command line interfaces such as BASH
- Programming and scripting
- TMUX and/or herdr
- AI that runs on the command line rather than web browser). For instance, Claude Code rather than <https://claude.ai>.
- Git (not just downloading from Github)
- Linux (and which distributions)
- Terminal based file managers (such as LF, yazi, and Ranger)
- vi/vim/neovim
- ZFS and/or btrfs

For this project, Dr Morrison will work together regularly in person, side-by-side, with the RA to build the tools and make the analysis.

### Value for the student

In the past, students have reported that they enjoyed working through these materials and getting to know the colourful characters themselves. The practical skills of data management and information organisation will prove valuable to employers in the private sector and those in research-oriented pursuits. This project offers great training in both research experience and more practical skills understanding and using AI.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Project Title:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Why do great powers cooperate with rising challengers? US-China relations 1992-2001 |
| <b>Faculty member:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | John Minnich                                                                        |
| <b>Department:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | International Relations                                                             |
| <b>Description</b><br><br>This project revisits the question of why established great powers sometimes cooperate with rising challengers through the lens of US-China relations from 1992-2001. Specifically, it investigates the role played by corporate lobbying within the United States in securing US support for a policy of “comprehensive engagement” with China, and for China’s accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001. Existing works frame this decision in strategic and/or ideological terms. The goal of this project is to uncover whether and to what extent US decision-making in this crucial period of what has become its single most consequential foreign relationship was influenced by the commercial interests of large American (and other foreign) multinational enterprises seeking to deepen their access to the Chinese market and workforce. |                                                                                     |

## Undergraduate Research Assistantship Programme, 2026/27

The project is currently at an early stage of development. The primary goal of the work the Research Assistant (RA) will be involved in will be to collect, organize, and analyse archival data (including memoirs of relevant policymakers), conduct reviews of relevant literatures, and (depending on their skillset) help compile firm-level lobbying data for quantitative analyses.

The main research activities involved in this project will be data collection (both qualitative and quantitative), organization, and analysis. Dr Minnich and the RA will work very heavily with Claude and other LLMs to collect and analyse large amounts of textual and lobbying data, including the use of LLM agents, so the RA will develop significant facility/expertise in AI use for research purposes. The RA will also gain experience with how to stand up large-scale research projects and in thinking through basic issues around social science research design. Finally, the RA will have an opportunity to develop substantive knowledge about a key period in China’s rise and relationship with the United States.

The RA’s core duties will involve a combination of library-based and online research.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Project Title:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | How the second Trump administration uses AI-generated content in security and foreign policy discourses |
| <b>Faculty member:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Jonny Hall                                                                                              |
| <b>Department:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | International Relations                                                                                 |
| <b>Description</b> <p>This project explores the use of AI-generated content in the security and foreign policy discourses of the second Donald Trump presidency. The creation or resharing of AI content has been a notable feature of social media accounts of the second Trump administration, including output related to Gaza (reimagined as a beach resort with a golden Trump statue), border security (a “Jet2holiday” deportation clip), the Iran War (mixing real footage of the conflict with video game clips), and territorial expansion concerning Canada, Cuba Greenland, Mexico and Venezuela (showing the US flag superimposed over their territories).</p> <p>This content is significant because it foregrounds themes of territorial acquisition and military force in ways that depart sharply from established norms of diplomatic communication, presenting contested and, in some cases, legally disputed policies as desirable or already accomplished. Given that generative-AI tools of this kind did not exist during Trump's first term, and that the phenomenon remains largely unstudied, it is important to understand what political work this output performs in the representation of contemporary US foreign policy. As such, this project asks how the second Trump administration has used AI-generated content to legitimate its foreign and security policies? In doing so, the project builds upon studies of Trump’s Twitter diplomacy from his first term in the White House, along with nascent research on Trump’s use of AI (Crilley and Saunders 2025). It aligns with broader trends in International Relations scholarship, including the ‘aesthetic turn’ (Bleiker 2001) and contemporary research on how internet memes contribute to security discourses.</p> <p>The research assistant will conduct a literature review related to social media and the visual turn in IR, before creating the database of AI content and conducting preliminary empirical analysis. This</p> |                                                                                                         |

## Undergraduate Research Assistantship Programme, 2026/27

project involves no human subjects and will be conducted entirely through analysis of historical documents and existing datasets, meaning no ethical approval will be needed.

The research assistant will have three tasks as part of this project:

### 1) Conduct a literature review (approx. 40 hours)

The RA will conduct a literature review related to the visual turn in IR, Trump's use of social media, and the role of social media in security discourses more broadly. There is also a small nascent literature on Trump's use of AI content. The end goal of this task will be a written literature review of around 2,500 words, which will be useful practice for the RA going forward either in academia or relevant policy fields.

### 2) Create and code a database of the Trump administration's AI-content (approx. 45 hours)

The RA will be tasked with creating a comprehensive dataset of the Trump administration's AI-content that involves foreign and security content. The RA will be asked to carry out some preliminary coding to help categorise key themes of this content. This will be based off a codebook that Dr. Hall will provide the RA, though this will be an iterative process that allows the RA to identify potentially important themes. Dr. Hall will provide the RA with advice on how to locate, organise, and code the content. The end goal of this task will be a document summarising the relevant AI content and categorising the output into relevant themes.

### 3) Provide preliminary analysis for the project (approx. 15 hours)

Based on their engagement with the AI-content and their theoretical grounding from carrying out the literature review, the RA will provide a preliminary analysis of the project, particularly in terms of answering the project's overarching research question. This task will improve the RA's analytical skills and help inform my own analysis. Including this final task allows the RA to effectively have conducted their own research project, which will be beneficial if they later complete a dissertation as part of their further study.

Throughout the above tasks, Dr Hall will meet with the RA approximately once every three weeks, with the frequency adjusted depending on the task and its current stage. Along with the gains in analytical and project management skills, working as part of a research project will enhance the RA's teamwork, time management, and organisational skills.

|                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Project Title:</b>                                                                                                                                                                        | Beyond the blob: realism, elites, and the US foreign policy establishment |
| <b>Faculty member:</b>                                                                                                                                                                       | Luca Tardelli                                                             |
| <b>Department:</b>                                                                                                                                                                           | International Relations                                                   |
| <b>Description</b>                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                           |
| This project builds on a paper presented at ISA 2025 ('Realism and The State: Towards a Sociological Turn?'), which argues that Realist accounts of the US foreign policy establishment (the |                                                                           |

## Undergraduate Research Assistantship Programme, 2026/27

so-called 'Blob') rely on an implicitly Pluralist conception of the state, and proposes instead grounding Realism in Classical Elite Theory.

The aim of this project is to revise the paper into a submission for a peer-reviewed International Relations journal. A central task in this revision is to strengthen the paper's empirical basis: existing Realist accounts of the Blob (e.g. Walt, Porter) have been criticised for offering a poorly bounded definition of the group and for providing little systematic evidence for their sociological claims. The selected research assistant will help address this gap by researching the structure, composition, and ideas of the US political elite and foreign policy establishment, with particular attention to how it has changed over time and, especially, since the rise of Trump. Ultimately, this project aims to critically engage the IR Realist literature on the US Blob and evaluate the degree of continuity and consensus on foreign policy matters existing within the US foreign policy establishment.

### *Qualifications:*

- Familiarity with US politics and foreign policy debates
- Familiarity with Realist theory in IR is an advantage but not essential
- Ability to conduct systematic academic literature searches
- Ability to identify and analyse survey/polling data and secondary quantitative sources
- Strong academic writing and referencing skills

### *Duties and expected outputs:*

- Bibliographic research on the literature on the US political elite as well as its foreign policy establishment (e.g. Mills, Saunders), producing an annotated bibliography.
- Identifying and compiling relevant surveys, polls, and datasets on the composition, views, and turnover of the US political elite and foreign policy establishment (e.g. elite-opinion surveys, Chicago Council surveys), with a short data-inventory memo.
- Assisting with analysis of this material to characterise elite composition and change, including comparison of the pre- and post-Trump periods.
- Contributing a written literature review/bibliographic essay section summarising findings for use in the article.
- Reference-checking, proofreading, and formatting citations for the manuscript.

*Professional development:* The RA will gain relevant experience in the process of turning a conference paper into a peer-reviewed journal submission, develop skills in academic literature review, bibliographic and data research, and receive direct mentorship on IR theory-building and empirical research design.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Project Title:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | The Persians amongst us: SAVAK in the United States |
| <b>Faculty member:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Roham Alvandi                                       |
| <b>Department:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | International History                               |
| <b>Description</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                     |
| Dr Alvandi is currently working on a scholarly article that examines the activities of Pahlavi Iran's intelligence service, SAVAK, in the United States in the 1970s. This is part of a larger research project examining the role of human rights in the 1979 Iranian Revolution. This article will examine |                                                     |

## Undergraduate Research Assistantship Programme, 2026/27

SAVAK's role in monitoring Iranian students and dissidents in the United States in the 1970s and the impact this had on the Carter administration's relations with the Shah's Iran in the lead-up to the 1979 Iranian Revolution. An issue of particular concern was whether the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) were helping SAVAK to monitor Iranians in the United States.

In this project, the Research Assistant (RA) will conduct historiographical research on controversies in the United States surrounding domestic intelligence and surveillance by the CIA and the FBI in the 1960s and 1970s. Dr Alvandi is interested in what my research on SAVAK in the United States might be able to contribute to the broader literature on American intelligence history in this period.

The RA will compile a bibliography of existing work on the CIA and FBI's illegal domestic surveillance activities, like the FBI's COINTELPRO programme and the CIA's Operation MHCHAOS and write a 5,000-word historiographical essay, outlining the major debates and controversies in this literature. This will help Dr Alvandi to identify what intervention might be made in this literature with my research on SAVAK in the United States. Of particular interest is any work that has been done on cooperation between the CIA or the FBI with foreign intelligence agencies operating in the United States.

The RA should be familiar with the tools of historiographical and bibliographical research, such as Google Scholar. The RA should ideally have some background in the discipline of History and have undertaken some coursework in the field of US History; US diplomatic history; and/or US foreign policy.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Project Title:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Sheltered entrepreneurship: rethinking migrant shelters as hubs of innovative entrepreneurial strategy |
| <b>Faculty member:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Sandra Núñez                                                                                           |
| <b>Department:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Department of Management                                                                               |
| <b>Description</b><br><br><p>This project explores the following question: can urban migrant shelters become hubs of innovative entrepreneurial strategy? If so, how?</p> <p>Scholars who have studied migrant urban shelters tend to conceptualize them as places of hardship and uncertainty where residents, such as asylum seekers or refugees, are usually in limbo: waiting for their immigration cases to be resolved or to move to more permanent housing.</p> <p>This project aims to offer an alternative lens to the study of migrant shelters by examining the innovative business strategies migrants are developing within these spaces. Amidst the necessity to survive and the wait for the status to change, asylum seekers living in migrant shelters often engage in economic and social activities. One such activity is entrepreneurship. Drawing on 57 in-depth interviews with asylum seekers who launched their businesses while living in New York City (NYC) shelters in 2023, this project aims to examine the conditions created by living in a migrant shelter that enable residents to develop innovative entrepreneurial strategies amidst restrictions.</p> |                                                                                                        |

## Undergraduate Research Assistantship Programme, 2026/27

The preliminary data points to the phenomenon Dr Núñez calls “sheltered entrepreneurship”, a type of entrepreneurial activity defined by three conditions in which 1) physical restrictions (e.g., a lack of kitchens, limited movement, constant surveillance) that force residents to find creative solutions and new ways of doing business, 2) the concentration of people sharing the same difficult circumstances creates a ready-made customer base and tight-knit social world that works as a breeding ground for entrepreneurial experimentation through, for example, WhatsApp groups, and 3) being legally shut out of formal employment leaves residents with unusually strong incentives to take entrepreneurial risks.

All work will take place either remotely (Research Assistants [RAs] can work from home) and in London. RAs are expected to attend planning meetings in person with Dr. Nunez in her office at LSE every four weeks. As part of this program, RAs will also get support and mentorship from Dr. Núñez to develop their own projects, if needed.

All 57 interviews have been conducted and transcribed. With my guidance, the research assistants will engage in activities that will allow them to get first-hand experience on how a qualitative research project is designed and executed. Duties include:

1. **Inductive coding development** — the RAs will work alongside Dr. Núñez to inductively develop a coding framework from the interview transcripts, rather than applying a pre-existing codebook. This will involve close reading of transcripts to identify emerging themes, followed by iterative application and refinement of codes as the analytical framework takes shape (e.g., around physical restriction, concentration of a shared customer base, and exclusion from formal employment).
2. **Literature review** — the RAs will build an annotated bibliography on migrant entrepreneurship, informal economies, and/or shelter-based research, supporting the framing and positioning of the paper's literature review.
3. **Data organization and anonymization** — the RAs will assist in standardizing transcript formatting, redacting identifying information, and organizing interview metadata (e.g., dates, business type, shelter location) into a master tracking spreadsheet.
4. **Contextual and policy research** — the RAs will track relevant developments in NYC shelter policy, asylum policy, and news coverage, contributing to a contextual timeline reflecting the evolving U.S. policy landscape.
5. **Proofreading and referencing** — the RAs will proofread drafts and format citations and references in preparation for journal submission.
6. **Dissemination support** — the RAs will assist in preparing presentation materials, such as slides or summary documents, for conference presentations or the Phelan Centre's project showcase.

|                        |                                                    |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Project Title:</b>  | How American leaders make foreign policy decisions |
| <b>Faculty member:</b> | Sophie Kaldor                                      |

## Undergraduate Research Assistantship Programme, 2026/27

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Department:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | International Relations |
| <p><b>Description</b></p> <p>When do state leaders have enough information to move from exploring their options to taking political action? Why are some leaders indecisive about foreign policy, while others make rapid strategic decisions without sufficiently testing their assumptions? In the pursuit of acquiring enough information to act with confidence, leaders risk spending too much or too little time exploring alternative courses of action.</p> <p>This project re-examines major decisions in US foreign policy history to investigate how American leaders have navigated this trade-off. It asks how leaders sought to reduce uncertainty about the likely consequences of different courses of action; what prompted them to shift from information-gathering and experimentation to committing to a strategy; and how these processes shaped the decisions they ultimately made. By comparing across historical cases, the project seeks to identify patterns in how decision-makers manage uncertainty and to explain variation in the length of deliberation before commitment.</p> <p>The project is interdisciplinary, bringing insights from cognitive neuroscience on how actors navigate uncertainty into the historical study of US foreign policy and grand strategy. Research will primarily take place at LSE and through online access of digitised US archival collections and databases.</p> <p>The Research Assistant (RA) will contribute to the development of detailed historical case studies examining how and why major US foreign policy decisions were made. Dr. Kaldor will provide an initial set of cases, a research framework, and guidance on the types of evidence to be collected.</p> <p>The RA will conduct desk research using scholarly and other high-quality secondary sources to reconstruct the context and sequence of events preceding each major strategic decision. For each case, the RA will produce a concise research memo identifying the principal policy options under consideration, the information available to decisionmakers, major areas of uncertainty and the ways in which leaders sought to resolve this uncertainty. The RA will also construct structured timelines tracing how leaders' assessments and policy options developed in the lead-up to each decision. Particular attention will be paid to evidence of information-seeking, debate between competing policy options, changes in leaders' assessments, efforts to test assumptions, and moments at which decisionmakers moved from exploring alternatives to committing to a course of action. This will require careful judgement about the relevance and reliability of evidence and the ability to synthesise material from multiple sources into a coherent account.</p> <p>Where useful, the RA will consult primary-source collections, including the <i>Foreign Relations of the United States</i> (FRUS), to clarify key moments in the decision-making process. Relevant materials may include meeting minutes, policy memos and telephone transcripts.</p> <p>The principal outputs will be structured case studies and decision timelines that can be compared across cases and used in the project's subsequent analysis.</p> |                         |

## Undergraduate Research Assistantship Programme, 2026/27

### Skills required:

- A strong interest in US foreign policy history and enthusiasm for reading, analysing and synthesising historical material.
- Excellent attention to detail and the ability to work in an organised and systematic fashion.
- Strong critical reading and analysis skills.
- Some previous experience with historical case-study research or archival material would be helpful but not essential.

### Value for the Student

The assistantship will give the student direct experience of how qualitative research in International Relations is designed and conducted. They will develop practical skills in historical research, source evaluation, evidence organisation and the synthesis of primary and secondary material. The RA will also gain experience translating an abstract theoretical question into systematic empirical research. These skills will be particularly valuable to students considering their own dissertations, postgraduate study or research-oriented careers.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <b>Project Title:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | The State of the States                    |
| <b>Faculty member:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Chris Gilson and Professor Peter Trubowitz |
| <b>Department:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Phelan US Centre                           |
| <b>Description</b> <p>In 2018 the Phelan US Centre launched The State of the States, a map-based interactive online resource bringing together US state-level information all in one place. This resource went on to win a Guardian Universities Award for Digital Innovation in April 2019. The State of the States is now being developed, with the assistance of colleagues in LSE Research and Innovation, into a new subscriber-based online platform to help those working for US state and local government to make better decisions about policy and implementation through a database with important and useful state-level facts and figures, and a repository of best practice case studies on policy implementation and effectiveness.</p> <p>The Research Assistant (RA) will assist in the further development of The State of the States by providing support, including researching and writing state policy case studies, compiling key related data covering state elections and state government and updating the platform with this information, researching organisations and individuals to contact to further validate the platform, supporting meetings with US-based local policymakers, and assisting with writing up blog articles to promote the project to external policy audiences, primarily in the US.</p> <p>The RA will have several main tasks and responsibilities in this project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To research and/or write short policy case studies to support the State of the States platform in policy areas including, but not limited to, homelessness, and unemployment.</li> </ul> |                                            |

## Undergraduate Research Assistantship Programme, 2026/27

- To identify, via desk research, organisations and individuals and other potential stakeholders (including US state and local authorities) to contact to assist with the further validation of the project.
- To support meetings with US state and local policymakers who are interested in contributing to the State of the States platform
- To monitor and update data sources related to state policy and political information relevant to The State of the States platform.
- Assist with the writing up of blog articles to promote the platform, with an opportunity for co-authorship.

In their work on this project, the RA will gain valuable experience in understanding the inner workings of US federalism, state politics and policy, organisational learning, and policy diffusion. They will also gain significant experience in finding, cleaning, and working with large datasets in the context of an important public-facing digital project. The experience gained from working on this project will be invaluable to students who wish to work on US state-level policy issues, especially in the areas of including homelessness and unemployment, as well as those who have an interest in public interest digital projects covering political and policy issues.

The importance of case studies to this project will mean that the RA should have an interest in US public policy as well as research skills and the ability to work with both academic and non-academic sources, such as newspaper articles and US state government documents. The ability to summarise information from a diversity of sources into a coherent narrative would also be advantageous.

There is flexibility in terms of hours for this project. Given the development of The State of the States, certain tasks will be a priority in any given week. The work will be managed via informal biweekly meetings with the RA.