

SSL 2026 Fall Fellowship Projects

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Prof. Kim Yi Dionne (Political Science)

Title of the Project: Pandemic Politics in Africa

Short description of the project: This project supports research for a book on how politics shapes pandemic response across African states. Research assistants will help build an archive of state responses to pandemics (including HIV/AIDS, Ebola, monkeypox, and COVID-19). Tasks will include: collecting and organizing government documents, public health reports, and news coverage; constructing country-level timelines of pandemic response; coding government actions according to a codebook; preparing evidence logs and country memos; and organizing materials for comparative analysis across cases.

Number and type of students: 2–4 graduate students.

Required/preferred skills: Strong work ethic and ability to manage assigned tasks independently with limited supervision. Clear and proactive communication, including willingness to ask questions and seek guidance when needed. Demonstrated reliability, attention to detail, and commitment to honest and transparent research practices, including documenting decisions and communicating mistakes promptly. Ability to collaborate effectively with other members of the research team. Proficiency with Excel/Google Sheets and document

organization preferred. Ability to read and synthesize information from primary documents, including but not limited to parliamentary records, policy documents, and technical reports prepared by health agencies and organizations. Interest in African politics and/or global health preferred.

Prof. Adrián Félix (Ethnic Studies)

Title of the Project: Mexican Machiavelli: The Political Life and Death of Andrés Bermúdez

Short description of the project: This project is a political biography of the late Andrés Bermúdez, a U.S.-based return migrant turned mayor and self-professed migrant deputy in the Mexican Chamber of Deputies at the time of his death. Research tasks will include: policy analysis of proposed bills and legislation that Congressman Bermúdez endorsed and/or voted on in the Chamber of Deputies, as well as review of committees he served on therein (e.g. Committee on Migrant Affairs).

Number and type of students: 1 graduate student (preferably in the *humanistic* social sciences)

Required/preferred skills: Experience with/training in oral histories and archival research (Fluent in Spanish strongly preferred).

Prof. Indridi H. Indridason (Political Science)

Title of the Project: Private Member Bills in a Comparative Perspective

Short description of the project: The project aims to examine legislators' use of private member bills in parliamentary systems. The initial aim is to cover the legislatures of those Western European countries that allow legislators to present private member bills and make data on private member bills available in electronic format. The main tasks will include scraping information on private member bills and their process through the legislature as well as background information about legislators.

Number and type of students: 1-2 graduate students.

Required/preferred skills: Ideally some experience with scraping data, reasonably proficient in the use of R and/or Python.

Prof. Jennifer Merolla (Political Science)

Title of the Project: Gender and Defense Ministers Project

Short description of the project: This project examines the factors that help or harm evaluations of women leaders in the defense and foreign policy space. The first part of the project entails building a database of defense ministers. The database will track the background of those who have been appointed as defense ministers, the circumstances around their appointment and the end of their tenure in the position, as well as contextual information about any threats faced by the country. Research assistants will help build this database. The main tasks will involve reading available public documents about each defense minister, coding that information according to a codebook, and entering the information into a google sheet.

Number and type of students: 2-4 graduate students.

Required/preferred skills: The fellows should be able to find and review information from primary sources, some of which may be in different languages so the ability to work with translation software would be helpful. Students should also be proficient working with excel/googledocs. Students should have strong communications skills, demonstrate attention to detail, and the ability to collaborate with others.

Prof. Jennifer Merolla (Political Science)

Title of the Project: The Political Causes and Consequences of Loneliness

Short description of the project: This project examines the political causes and consequences of the global loneliness epidemic. The project entails building a database of loneliness programming by governments and nonprofits across countries and developing an annotated bibliography of existing research on loneliness. Research assistants will research loneliness programming and enter information into a database. The main tasks will involve searching for existing scholarship on loneliness, entering it into a google sheet, and developing an annotated bibliography from that. Additional tasks involve researching loneliness programming across countries and entering that into a database.

Number and type of students: 2-4 graduate students.

Required/preferred skills: The fellows should be able to find and review academic literature, and feel comfortable looking for primary data on loneliness programs across countries. Students should also be proficient working with excel/googledocs. Students should have strong communications skills, demonstrate attention to detail, and the ability to collaborate with others.

Prof. Jennifer R. Nájera (Ethnic Studies)

Title of the Project: [Mapping Chicana/Mexicana Voices in the Borderlands](#)

Short description of the project: This project documents the varied forms of Chicana/Mexicana activism and community advocacy in the borderlands of South Texas and Southern Arizona through oral history. Now in the phase of digitization, we are requesting a graduate student to: assign metadata and tags to existing interviews; clean bilingual transcripts; and systematically collect secondary sources related to women's activism on the border.

Number and type of students: 1 graduate student (preferred)

Required/preferred skills: Digital humanities experience preferred; Bilingual (Spanish/English) required; Ability to read and synthesize material from secondary sources; Facility with Google Docs and Zotero.