

IR 392: Supervised Undergraduate Research Experience Spring 2017

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Course Description and Objectives

By enrolling in the course, students earn credit for participating in collaborative research projects with other students (both UG and PhD) under the supervision of a IR Faculty Research Mentor. Only students who have been selected to serve as RAs may enroll in the course. In order to facilitate student development and enhance the benefits of the research experience, students are expected to attend regular skills training and professionalization workshops and complete associated assignments. Student progress will be supported and monitored, not only by their Faculty Research Mentor, but also by Prof. Becker, the Director of the IR Undergraduate Research Program.

Students are expected to have completed IR 210 before enrolling in this course and it is strongly recommended that they have completed IR 211 or another introductory statistics course. The research project undertaken for this course must be different from any honors thesis research. While students may take this course for a single term, it is designed in a manner that allows for students to enroll for a full school year (students may repeat the course once).

In this course, students will:

- gain a greater understanding of international politics and the fundamentals of research, through direct experience with the process of research.

- develop skills that will make them more effective researchers and more marketable job candidates after USC.

- be able to articulate both short- and long-term personal and professional goals and have concrete plans for achieving them.

Texts and Resources

All students are required to purchase a copy of two texts. The first is **David Allen's *Getting Things Done***, which we will discuss during our first few professionalization sessions. The text will serve as a primer for organizing one's research activities in a productive manner, as well as encouraging long-term goal-setting.

Our required text for this term's training sessions will be ***Data Wrangling with R* by Bradley C. Boehmke (2016)**. This text is incredibly helpful, as it provides an introduction to many of the data management tasks you may be asked to be complete as a research assistant, but that are not always covered in general statistics courses.

All other course readings will be posted on Blackboard. Individual Faculty Research Mentors will also assign students background reading for their project—please discuss with your Mentor.

Grading

Your grade in this course will be based on following breakdown of assignments. The percentages in brackets represent the alternative grading scheme for students who have spent more than one year in the class:

<i>Collaborative Research Project</i>	40%
<i>Training Sessions</i>	20%
<i>Professionalization Workshops</i>	5%
<i>Progress Meetings</i>	5%
<i>Weekly Reports</i>	5%
<i>Short Article/Blog Post</i>	5%
<i>Short Presentation</i>	5%
<i>Poster Session</i>	5%
<i>End-of-Term Reflection Paper</i>	10%

Collaborative Research Project: The main component of the course is working with an IR Faculty Research Mentor on one of their projects. Particular details of the work to be done by the student will be determined by the Mentor. The assignments undertaken as part of the course will also be advised by the Faculty Mentor, but must be in addition to other paid work.

Training Sessions: There will be roughly six training sessions offered during the term. The purpose of these two hour sessions is to help students learn and develop their research skills. These workshops will vary from term to term, and topics offered will depend on student needs. Sessions will be offered in areas such as research design, general practical research skills, quantitative methods and qualitative methods. Students in the course are expected to actively participate in all training sessions (10% of grade), completing any pre-session readings and associated assignments (10% of grade).

Professionalization Workshops: These weekly hour-long sessions are meant to help students formulate and articulate goals and develop strategies for thriving both at USC and in their chosen

career. Organization/time management, goal-setting, and developing effective communication skills will be emphasized. Sessions will frequently involve guest speakers who can share their experiences and connect students with both internal and external resources to support their academic and career development. The grade for this portion will be based completion of assignments and active participation during the sessions.

Weekly Reports: Research can frequently occur in spurts, making it easy to lose sight of the greater whole. This disconnectedness can also lead to procrastination or dissatisfaction. To keep students on track with their research activities and keep the focus on progress, however small, each student will be asked to produce a very brief weekly report, describing what they did during the past week and what they are committing to do for the following week. Certain Faculty Research Mentors may have slightly different requirements for how these reports are to be communicated, but all students taking the course must submit a weekly report to Blackboard.

Progress Meetings: As the purpose of this course is to support students in their development as researchers and encourage their personal career aspirations, faculty must be kept up to date as these matters evolve. To this end, all students will be required to meet with Prof. Becker, both at the beginning and end of the term, as well as have an official progress meeting with their Faculty Research Mentor at the end of the term. In order to facilitate these meetings, students will be required to prepare a self-reflection and may be asked to fill out pre- and post-meeting surveys. All Progress Meetings will be summarized using a common form and forms will be filed to track students who participate in the collaborative research experience for longer than a semester.

Short Article/Blog Post: The development of communications skills is of the utmost importance in any type of career, but particularly research. Sharing ideas and evidence is the foundation of the academic enterprise. As such, students are required to write one short article related to their research activities each term. These articles will be published on the Undergraduate Research Program website, but students are also encouraged to consult with the Director and their Faculty Research Mentor to discuss opportunities for further dissemination beyond USC, such as submitting an op-ed to a newspaper or a research brief to a politics blog like The Monkey Cage.

Short Research Presentation: In addition to written communications skills, students will also be asked to develop their oral communication skills. Each week, 1 or 2 students will be asked to open the session with a 3-5 minute presentation on what they are working on. This will serve as an opportunity to develop academic communication skills and will allow all participants to learn more about the various projects being undertaken by their peers and learn something new about international politics. Sign-ups for presentation dates will take place at the beginning of the term and additional expectations for the presentations will be discussed during the first professionalization meeting.

Poster Session: For our last professionalization meeting of the term, we will be holding a poster session to showcase student work. All members of the POSC and IR community will be invited—students, grad students, and faculty. Students in the course will create an original poster which effectively conveys the main ideas and results of their project, either individually or in small groups of 2-3 (depending on project). More details on this assignment will be distributed in class.

End-of-Term Reflection Paper: During finals week, students will be expected to turn in a paper reflecting on their progress during the term. This paper will include a discussion of the student's research activities during the semester, how they relate to their academic and personal goals, and an assessment of one's own progress. Details of this assignment will be distributed in class.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Students requesting accommodations based on disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday-Friday 8:30-5:00. The office is in Student Union 301 and their phone number is 213-740-0776.

Policy on Academic Ethics and Honesty

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting or collaboration, consult your instructor

Course Schedule:

Week of January 9th

Professionalization: How to Thrive as a Member of a Research Team

Reading

Please come to the session having read the orientation materials provided by your lab.

Guest Student panel of senior UG lab members

Week of January 16th

Training: Annotated Bibliographies and Citation Software

Reading

“Literature Reviews” from USC Library Social Science Writing Guide

“Annotated Bibliographies” from Purdue Owl

Assignment

Please come to class having installed Zotero on your computer. We will have a workshop on using this citation software during our session.

Professionalization: *Getting Things Done* Part I

Reading

Read pages 1-118 in *Getting Things Done*

Week of January 23rd

Professionalization: *Getting Things Done* Part II

Reading

Read pages 118-211 in *Getting Things Done*

Assignment

Come to this session with your “Project List.” Choose at least one project from the list (perhaps the one that is most important to you/highest priority) and write a “Next Action” list for that project.

Week of January 30th

(Introductory) Training: Introduction to R Part I

Reading

- Lohr, Steve (2014): For Big-Data Scientists, ‘Janitor Work’ Is Key Hurdle to Insights. The New York Times. 17 August 2014. <http://nyti.ms/1mZywng>.
- Boehmke, Bradley C. (2016): Data Wrangling with R, pp. 3--33 and 79--84.

Professionalization: *Getting Things Done* Part III

Reading

Read “The Secret Weapon Manifesto” (<http://www.thesectionweapon.org>) and come to class having watched “The Secret Weapon” series of online videos (~1 hr of video).

Assignment

Download Evernote and use “The Secret Weapon” system to organize the Project List and Next Actions you created last week. We will discuss how we use The Secret Weapon to organize research workflow.

Week of February 6th

Training: Introduction to R Part II

Reading

- Boehmke, Bradley C. (2016): Data Wrangling with R, pp. 100--124 and 166--174.

Professionalization: Applying for Internships

Guest

Iva Bozovic, SIR Internship Coordinator

Assignment

Do a web search for internships that interest you. Come to class with a list of those internships, their application deadlines, and required application materials. Our discussion will focus on how to leverage your undergraduate research experience in your internship applications.

Week of February 13th

Professionalization: What are Conferences All About? (featuring a practice talk by a POIR graduate student)

Read

“Posters, Presentations, and Publishing,” excerpt from *Empirical Research and Writing: A Political Science Student’s Practical Guide* by Leanne Powner.

Assignment

Visit the website for the 2017 Meeting of the International Studies Association (<http://www.isanet.org/Conferences/Baltimore-2017>) and look around. Read the Call for Papers and write an abstract for your current project as though you were submitting to attend the conference. Bring two copies of the abstract to the session.

Week of February 20th

Training: Data Management in R

Reading

- RStudio (n.d.): "Data Wrangling Cheat Sheet." <https://www.rstudio.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/data-wrangling-cheatsheet.pdf>.
- Boehmke, Bradley C. (2016): Data Wrangling with R, pp. 224--238.
- Wickham, Hadley (2014): "Tidy Data." In *Journal of Statistical Software* 59(1), 1--12.

Professionalization: Interpersonal Communication

Reading

TBA

Week of February 27th

Training: Data Shaping and Reshaping in R

Reading

- Wickham, Hadley (2014): "Tidy Data." In *Journal of Statistical Software* 59(1), 12--23.
- Boehmke, Bradley C. (2016): Data Wrangling with R, pp. 215--223.

Professionalization: Marketing Yourself as a Researcher

Ashley Bonanno, SIR Career Advisor

Read

Excerpt from *Developing Transferable Skills: Enhancing Your Research and Employment Potential* by Pam Denicolo and Julie Reeves

“Effective Resumes and Cover Letters” from USC Career Center

http://careers.usc.edu/docs/handouts/Resume_Booklet_Small.pdf

Class activity

Come to class with 3 copies of your resume for a Peer Workshop. We will focus on how to translate and sell your research skills to different audiences.

Week of March 6th

Training: Introduction to String Operations in R

Reading

- Boehmke, Bradley C. (2016): Data Wrangling with R, pp. 34--61.
- R for Data Science Chapter 14: "Strings." <http://r4ds.had.co.nz/strings.html>

Professionalization: Visualizing Data

Reading

Excerpt from *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information* by Edward R. Tufte

Class Activity

Come to class with a brainstorm on how you might present the data for your poster presentation at the end of the term.

Week of March 13th SPRING BREAK

Week of March 20th

Training: Bringing it All Together in R

Reading

- Håklev, Stian (2014): "Starting data analysis/wrangling with R: Things I wish I'd been told." Random Stuff That Matters. <http://www.reganmian.net/blog/2014/10/14/starting-data-analysiswrangling-with-r-things-i-wish-id-been-told/>
- The Quartz guide to bad data. <https://github.com/Quartz/bad-data-guide>.

Class activity

Go through the "Data Wrangling Cheat Sheet" and pick one function that we did not yet discuss in class. Prepare a 3-minute demo to show how the function can be used for data management, based on the IPE data resource.

<https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/X093TV>

Professionalization: Writing Op-Eds I

Reading

"How to Write an Op-Ed" (http://newsoffice.duke.edu/duke_resources/oped)

"How to Write Op-Ed Columns"

(http://www.earth.columbia.edu/sitefiles/file/pressroom/media_outreach/OpEdGuide.doc)

Class activity

Come to class with 3 ideas for your Op-Ed topic. The topics should be related to your work as a research assistant.

Week of March 27th

Professionalization: Writing Op-Eds II

Class activity

Come to class with 3 copies of your draft Op-Ed for a Peer Workshop.

Week of April 3rd

Professionalization: Writing a Policy Memo I

Reading

“How to Write a Policy Memo” materials available at

<http://harris.uchicago.edu/gateways/current-student/harris-school-writing-program/policy-memo-guides>

Class activity

Come to class with 3 ideas for your Policy Memo topic. The topics should be related to your work as a research assistant. You may choose to continue with your Op-Ed topic or choose something different.

Week of April 10th

Professionalization: Writing a Policy Memo II

Class activity

Come to class with 3 copies of your draft Policy Memo for a Peer Workshop.

Week of April 17th

Professionalization: Self-Assessment

Reading pages 236-257 in *Getting Things Done*

Class activity

Come to class with the current version of your Projects List. We will talk about progress made, how projects change and the power of identifying Next Actions.

Week of April 24th

Professionalization: Poster Session

Students will have individual Progress Meetings with Prof. Becker this week.

End-of-Term Reflection Paper will be due during finals week: Date TBA