CAPC Research Assistantship

The Center for American Politics and Citizenship (CAPC) Research Assistantship program provides students with the opportunity to develop their research, analytical, writing and presentation skills. The Research Assistants (RAs) are paired with a faculty member. There are two components to the work of RAs. The first is that RAs help the faculty member with their research throughout the semester. This work can involve a number of activities that include finding data, collecting data, coding data, and compiling and summarizing a literature review. The second component is that students are expected to develop their own unique project, under the direction of the faculty member. The student's project can be related to the professor's work or entirely different.

In exchange for their work throughout the semester—work done for the professor and their own project, including a poster presentation—the RAs enroll in an independent study course and receive three hours of experiential learning credit.

Students may have the opportunity to participate in the CAPC RA program without receiving course credit if they are ineligible for further experiential learning credit and simply want to gain research experience. Students must receive approval for this arrangement from the CAPC Program Director.

Requirements

- Strong interest in researching issues related to political science
- A desire to gain and improve research skills
- 56 credit hours
- Minimum 3.0 GPA
- A completed independent study form, signed by your sponsoring professor before the drop/add date (not required with the application materials)

It's recommended that students have a sponsoring professor before applying, but not required

Benefits

- Receive training by a CAPC graduate student on the basics of how to conduct research and data analysis and how to use statistical programs and run basic statistics (descriptives, crosstabs, bivariate correlations, etc.)
- Work one-on-one with a faculty member and assist with his or her ongoing research.
- Strengthen your research, writing, and presentation skills by conducting your own research project, creating a poster, and presenting your findings to faculty and other guests at an end of semester symposium.
- Develop your analytical and research skills to improve your job prospects or graduate school application
- Opportunity to develop a project that can be continued beyond one semester and result in a paper that could be submitted to an undergraduate journal or used as a writing sample for graduate school.

- Earn GVPT course credit
- Network with other undergraduate students doing similar work.
- Have access to office space, including the CAPC kitchen.

Time Commitment

- Students are expected to spend 10 hours per week doing research. This time should be divided between work provided to the professor for his or her research and work toward your own research project. You should discuss with your professor how this time will be allocated.
- For the first 5-6 weeks of the semester, approximately 2 hours a week will be reserved for training sessions with the CAPC graduate students and 8 hours will be spent on assigned research.
- In the last two-thirds of the semester, training sessions will be replaced with one-on-one appointments with the CAPC graduate assistant to address issues related specifically to the completion of the student's research project.

Application Materials

- A cover letter detailing why you're interested in the program, what you want to research, and if you have a specific professor in mind to work with. The letter should also include contact information, major, class standing, UID, and contact for one academic reference
- A current unofficial transcript
- A one-page resume detailing educational and employment background that highlights courses and other experiences relevant to conducting research in political science
- A writing sample
- A 300-500 word essay on the following question: "Given the current political climate and the increasingly politicized atmosphere, how can research and scholarship support the development and protection of American democracy?"

Deadline
The application deadline is 5 PM on January 21, 2019. Late applications will not be accepted.

Submit application materials to Rachel Vierling, CAPC Coordinator, via email at rvierlin@umd.edu. Students with successful applications will be called for an interview with the CAPC Coordinator. Students will be notified of their acceptance to the program via email.