

Social Science Faculty Research Assistant Opportunities Summer 2026

This list indicates the range of projected 2026 summer research projects for faculty in Swarthmore College's Social Science Division. Students interested in working as a summer research assistant on one or more of these projects should reach out to the appropriate faculty members.

Since faculty research projects change over time based on faculty interests and the availability of funding, the list is an incomplete projection and is subject to revision. If a student would like to work as a summer RA for an unlisted faculty member, the student should reach out to that faculty member to ask about opportunities.

The order of the list is alphabetical by department and by faculty member's last name.

DEPARTMENT	FACULTY MEMBER	AREA OF RESEARCH
Economics	Syon Bhanot	Professor Bhanot is looking to hire at least one student to work at the Busara Center for Behavioral Economics in Nairobi, Kenya (where Prof Bhanot conducts research and sits on the Board). The student(s) would work on some of Prof. Bhanot's projects on behavioral economics that are located in Kenya and supported by the Busara team, but would also support Busara projects across their portfolio, and report regularly to supervisors at Busara.
Economics	Daifeng He	Professor He is looking to hire 1-2 student RAs to support ongoing research in health economics and health policy. One example studies how a well-intended federal law may lead to more uninsured individuals in the US. Another example studies rising hospital sticker prices. RAs may work on other projects as well. Main responsibilities include conducting literature review, data cleaning, preliminary analysis, and other related research tasks. Must have taken Econ 21 Introduction to Econometrics. Econ 35 Econometrics is a plus.
Economics	Steve O'Connell	Professor O'Connell is looking to hire a student to assist with a macroeconomic research project that features computationally intensive modeling and estimation of investment by households in the early-age human capital of their children. Applicants should have taken ECON 031 and multivariable calculus and be comfortable programming in Python. Experience with Unix is a plus but not required. Students will work on campus using a data enclave with confidential access to survey data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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Economics	Jennifer Peck	Professor Peck is looking to hire one RA for the summer of 2025 for several projects on women's employment in Saudi Arabia. Tasks will include assisting with data analysis and background research. Applicants must have taken EC31 and have experience with Stata. Arabic language skills are a plus.
Economics	Emma Rackstraw	Professor Rackstraw is looking to hire at least one student to contribute to ongoing research on the economics of the criminal legal system. Likely projects will focus on increasing the hiring prospects of workers with criminal records in the United States. Some experience with econometrics and with data cleaning and manipulation is a plus.
History	Diego Armus	Professor Armus is looking to hire two RAs to contribute to the preparation of an updated version of a book about the past and present of modern Buenos Aires. Among other tasks, the RAs will survey recently published scholarship, produce an annotated bibliography, and identify relevant primary sources. Interested students should reach out to Professor Armus and also send a résumé and a statement of interest. Reading proficiency in Spanish is encouraged but not required. Prior courses in the History Department (particularly HIST 64) or courses on Latin America are preferred.
History	Elise A. Mitchell	Looking to hire at least one RA to assist with the digital project "Smallpox and Slavery" and preparation of the book manuscript <i>Morbid Geographies</i> . This will involve creating an annotated bibliography about the history of slavery, the slave trade, and public health, reviewing digitized archival documents concerning the slave trade and public health, checking citations, reviewing draft essays/chapters for the digital project and book, and joining meetings about web design and database mapping. Prior courses with Dr. Mitchell are required.

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History	Vivian Truong	Looking to hire at least one RA to contribute to a digital archive project with CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities (archives.caaav.org). Previous students digitized, researched, and uploaded archival photographs to the website and curated their own exhibits and timelines. Prior courses with Prof. Truong or in Asian American studies/history preferred.
Linguistics	Ted Fernald	Looking to hire an RA to contribute to online Navajo language project.
Linguistics	Yagmur Sag Parvardeh	Looking to hire at least 1 RA this summer to contribute to my ongoing research or for me to help with research that the RA wants to conduct in semantics and/or pragmatics. Opportunities include lit. review, experiment design and data analysis (if experimental), collaboratively writing an abstract and sending to conferences. Interested students must have taken LING 040 and should reach out to me.
Peace & Conflict Studies	Michael Wilson Becerril	Research assistants will join the Peace Praxis Lab. Each will co-create 20-minute videos, a podcast, and two short reels. Our goal will be to make key, critical, actionable insights from Peace Studies scholarship (e.g., on colonialism, ecocide and environmental justice, and organizing) accessible to the public. RAs will collaboratively review research, synthesize information into appealing scripts with original insights, storyboard to brainstorm visuals, and produce multimedia projects. Media savviness is welcome but not required.
Political Science	Justin Casey	Professor Casey is seeking 1 RA this summer to assist in research related to international security. Students will assist in literature reviews and analyzing archival documents to contribute to my research projects on propaganda. Interested students with poly sci experience should reach out by email with a resume and brief paragraph (5 sentences) stating their interest and experience. Experience working with primary-sources and ability to read cursive are assets.

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<p>Political Science</p>	<p>Sam Handlin</p>	<p>Professor Handlin is seeking up to 2 RAs this summer to assist in a project involving research on how the Venezuelan government built a powerful digital surveillance state, the implications of digital surveillance for authoritarian rule, and the digital surveillance industry. Students will assist in looking through documents (in Spanish), newspapers (Spanish), archives of a political intelligence newsletter (in English), and secondary sources (largely English).</p> <p>At least one student will need to be able to read Spanish at a high level, but students without Spanish should still inquire as they may be able to just do the English language part of the research. Students should have an interest in the topic, a willingness to learn, and an ability to take ownership of a task and meet deadlines.</p>
<p>Political Science</p>	<p>Yi-Hsuan Huang</p>	<p>Professor Huang is seeking up to two research assistants this summer to help with a book manuscript production and two other articles related to democracy, gender, and politics. The RAs will help with drafting literature review, producing policy briefs, copy-editing drafts, and brainstorming ideas. Interested students should have taken at least one course in political theory or philosophy, and share their CV with a list of relevant courses, and include two paragraphs of motivation statement describing (1) their interest in their political theory research and (2) how the positions advance their personal interests or pursuits.</p>
<p>Political Science</p>	<p>Ayse Kaya</p>	<p>Professor Kaya is seeking up to two research assistants to work on a project compiling and analyzing firm-level data on multilateral climate finance flows into countries. Preferred skills: Data compilation, cleaning; Stata is preferred, but R is also good; Python would be a bonus.</p>
<p>Political Science</p>	<p>Firat Kimya</p>	<p>Professor Kimya is seeking up to two research assistants to work on a project involving a historical comparative analysis of democratization in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. The research examines recurring authoritarian tendencies from the late nineteenth century to the present, exploring patterns and factors shaping political regimes over time. For this project, students will review the academic literature on democratization, path dependency, historical persistence, and democratization in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. Knowledge of Turkish is a plus but not required.</p>

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<p>Political Science</p>	<p>Emily Paddon Rhoads</p>	<p>Prof. Paddon Rhoads is seeking <u>two summer RAs</u> for separate projects. The first RA will support research on civilian self-protection in conflict settings, with a focus on the White Helmets in Syria. Responsibilities include transcribing, organizing, and coding interview data; conducting local and regional media searches; and assisting with manuscript preparation and background research. Strong writing and analytical skills, attention to detail, and interest in civilian protection, humanitarianism, or international politics are especially encouraged. Experience with qualitative research is helpful but not required; training will be provided. Advanced Arabic is an added value but not required.</p> <p>Prof. Paddon Rhoads also seeks a second RA to support a project on how international organizations interpret and enact core values amid global turmoil. The RA will help organize qualitative data, conduct targeted document searches, support interview preparation and transcription, and assist with coding UN documents and managing bibliographic materials. Students will gain experience with qualitative methods and global governance research. Strong writing, attention to detail, and interest in peacemaking or organizational values are welcome. Experience with NVivo or similar software is a plus.</p>
<p>Political Science</p>	<p>Warren Snead</p>	<p>Professor Snead is seeking up to two research assistants this summer to assist with various projects on the Supreme Court and public policy. Students should be ready to author literature reviews and peruse historical records. Students should share a copy of their CV if interested.</p>
<p>Political Science</p>	<p>Susanne Schwarz</p>	<p>Professor Schwarz is seeking up to two research assistants who can assist in the collection of historical incarceration data as part of her Historical Political Economy Lab. Students should be able to read cursive handwriting. Experience with data cleaning in R is an asset, but not a requirement. Students should share a copy of their CV as well as a paragraph or two describing their interest in Historical Political Economy research.</p>

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Political Science	Dominic Tierney	Prof. Tierney is seeking 1-2 student researchers to continue work on topics in US foreign policy.
Psychology	Thursday November 6, 7:00 pm, Singer 033	Join the Psychology Department faculty for a meeting about research opportunities in psychology. We will discuss ways to get involved in research, including through courses, thesis projects, and summer research fellowships. We will discuss the process and timeline for applying for summer research fellowships and for developing a plan for a senior thesis. Department faculty give brief presentations about their research areas and opportunities for students that are available in their labs.