



Spring 2019 Project Menu

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ID: DipLab171730

Jamaican Lotto Scamming: Root Causes and Policy Alternatives

U.S. Embassy Kingston

Western Hemisphere Affairs to Jamaica

Overview:

Telemarketing fraud, known in Jamaica as “lotto scamming” because of the prominence of the tactic of the fraudsters’ luring American victims with tales of lottery winning, has grown dramatically in recent years. Anderson Cooper 360 did a segment on this crime in 2015 and CNBC’s “American Greed” will devote an entire show to it in 2016. Some of America’s most vulnerable citizens are losing significant sums of money – estimates range from \$300 million to over \$1 billion per year – and this has led to intense human suffering including a spate of suicides. This scourge is also damaging Jamaica’s international reputation and undermining Jamaica’s social stability and rule of law. Scammers are using their immense illicit gains on lavish lifestyles. This distorts the Jamaican economy writ large and serves as a major factor in driving up violent crime, specifically the homicide rate. The cultural justifications of lotto scamming – “Robin Hood”, informal “reparations for slavery” or victim blaming – are widely accepted, most disturbingly and increasingly among children in the regions of Jamaica with a high concentration of this fraud. Jamaican judges tend to give scammers suspended sentences, allowing them to go back to committing the crime. A professor of criminology in Jamaica projected that another major conflict, similar to the 2010 extradition operation in Tivoli Gardens that left 74 dead, could occur between authorities and criminals with lotto scamming ties in the phenomenon’s epicenter, Montego Bay, in western Jamaica. What are the sociological factors driving this epidemic? What are the best policy alternatives, including but not limited to social marketing and economic development, to combat this scourge? What law enforcement practices work best to apprehend and prosecute criminals, deter future scamming, and eliminate this menace? The answers to these questions will help inform the policy that Jamaican and U.S. officials implement to repair the severe damage it has done to Jamaican society and U.S. citizens.

Format of Final Project:

A four-page memo with a presentation and a data analysis describing research findings.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement; Sociology, Public Policy, Psychology

Comments:

None

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

Inclusive Legislation: Advancing Disability Rights – Regional Survey

MLGA / International Disability Rights

Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

Overview:

According to the 2011 World Report on Disability, jointly issued by the World Health Organization and the World Bank, the population of persons with disabilities worldwide exceeded 1 billion, accounting for 15% of the global population. Of these, approximately 650 million persons with disabilities live in the Asia-Pacific region. The number of people living with disabilities worldwide continues to grow, along with the aging population.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol was adopted in 2006. As a legally binding international human rights treaty, the CRPD advances the movement from viewing persons with disabilities as “objects” of charity, medical treatment, and social protection towards viewing persons with disabilities as “subjects” with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent as active members of society. Although over 170 countries have ratified or acceded to the Convention, many countries also need to more effectively implement and enforce the CRPD through domestic legislation. The State Department’s International Disability Rights Team requests university professors and students concerned about human rights to determine which CRPD parties have enacted and effectively enforced laws upholding the rights of persons with disabilities (and which countries have not). This initial research will target two regions and 44 countries: the East Asian and Pacific Region (31 countries) and South and Central Asian Region (13 countries). Research for the report would seek to understand laws, policies and programs on disability, as well as the inclusion of persons with disabilities in other relevant laws, policies and programs.

Format of Final Project:

The final report analyzing the regions’ efforts to promote laws and legal enforcement, and any particularly successful programs, will help the State Department to promote the rights of people with disabilities around the world by highlighting gaps and identifying effective practices that can be scaled up or replicated elsewhere.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Democracy & Human Rights; East Asian/Pacific Studies; Global Health; Human Rights; International Law; International Relations; South/Central Asian Studies; Disability Rights

Comments:

The International Disability Rights Team leads the U.S. comprehensive strategy to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities internationally. The United States, as part of our foreign policy,

works to remove barriers and create a world in which disabled people enjoy dignity and full inclusion. Discrimination against people with disabilities is not simply unjust; it hinders economic development, limits democracy, and erodes societies. In pursuing diplomacy that is inclusive and empowering of persons with disabilities, the United States: opposes discrimination against persons with disabilities everywhere and in all its forms; urges foreign governments to combat discrimination, prejudice and abuse against persons with disabilities in their countries, and to protect the rights and ensure the dignity and inclusion of all persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others; encourages and assists governments to learn about the development and effective implementation of laws to protect the rights of persons with disabilities; encourages and assists civil society organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities and their families, to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities; and encourages U.S. businesses operating overseas as well as domestic host country businesses to take into consideration persons with disabilities in relation to employment practices and local stakeholder engagement, including in their labor and human rights corporate social responsibility policies, programs, and practices.

Maximum Number of Projects: 5

Digital Storyteller – Social Media and Blog Contributor for International Youth Networks

IIP/PR/PR

International Information Programs

Overview:

Our office manages the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Network and the Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative (YLAI) Network. These networks are part of the State Department's digital outreach efforts to engage foreign audiences. They are vibrant communities of over half a million young African, Latin American, and Caribbean leaders.

We are looking for student teams who can help us produce creative and innovative multimedia (audio, visual, written) content for engaging YALI and YLAI Network members. Some content may be more generic in nature but we are also looking for teams to research what's trending for young African and young Latin American online users to make sure our content responds to the needs and interests of our audiences. Content will also focus on key U.S. policy priorities for these regions (e.g. human rights, transparency, economic prosperity, security, etc.). The content will be posted on our websites, social media platforms, and other digital platforms as appropriate. This is an opportunity to help the State Department's public engagement be cutting edge and digitally-innovative!

Some examples of requested tasks are:

Social media engagement (currently we are on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn):

- Research and draft social media content relevant to young African and Latin American leaders, highlighting both State Department resources and third party resources they can use to make change in their communities and succeed professionally.
- Review network member submissions about their experiences in the Screendoor and Google Forms platforms and draft social media and blog content highlights.
- Assist with the planning and monitoring of social media chats (Facebook or Twitter) with experts. Assist with follow-up by drafting social media and blog content highlights from the chat.
- Brainstorm ways we can engage network members on social media platforms.

Blog posts and videos:

- Research and draft/film blog posts and videos on policy issues, professional development resources, and other topics.

Graphic design:

- Create engaging graphics for social media and the websites as needed.

Format of Final Project:

Multimedia content (audio, visual, written) to post on the YALI and YLAI Networks website and social media platforms.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

African Studies; Civil Society; Communications; Democracy & Human Rights; Education & Cultural Studies; Gender Studies; Global Health; Human Rights; Marketing; Public-Private Partnerships; Sociology; Western Hemisphere Studies; Youth Issues

Comments:

We are looking for a creative, proactive students who can help us brainstorm and innovate interesting ways to engage foreign audiences using digital tools.

For YLAI: Spanish preferred but not required

For YALI: French or Portuguese preferred but not required

The project requires the use of Google docs and Slack.

For more information on the YALI Network, visit yali.state.gov.

For more information on the YLAI Network, visit ylai.state.gov.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

The Impact of English on Violent Extremism

Regional English Language Office for Central and East Africa

Educational and Cultural Affairs to Tanzania

Overview:

The U.S. State Department's Office of English Language Programs, through its Regional English Language Offices (RELOs) and U.S. Missions around the world, offers after-school English classes to at-risk youth in over 80 countries as a means of introducing U.S. culture, fostering mutual understanding between these host country nationals and Americans, and enhancing eligibility for educational and employment opportunities. Many of these English Access Microscholarship classes are Muslim-majority. Other English language learning programs, including English for imam classes and English/book clubs, are offered to Muslim populations as a way of promoting interfaith dialogue and tolerance. While it can be relatively easy to assess language progress in these programs, measuring changes in attitudes and behaviors—such as radicalization and participation in violent extremist activities—poses greater challenges. While there has been a good amount of research conducted on the correlation between education and radicalization, there is little exploring the effectiveness of language programs in countering violent extremism, one of the department's predominant foreign policy goals. We propose a project that explores this relationship. Is there any evidence that programs advancing language and cultural proficiency can have a tempering effect on radicalization and violent extremism? What realistic ways of measuring changes in attitudes and behaviors of participants in the aforementioned programs are available? Are there successful examples of language/cultural programs from other countries being used to counter violent extremism? Which language and cultural content is most likely to lead to changes (i.e., foster empathy, develop tolerance, build resilience to extremism)? What factors made them successful? Are there successful examples of virtual or online language/cultural programs or exchanges aimed at preventing online radicalization? Are some marginalized populations, such as girls, refugees and internally displaced persons, more likely to benefit from such programs than others? The answers to these questions and more can help inform and shape the development of the department's language and cultural programs—its soft power—so as to be more effective in addressing one of the most prominent issues it faces: Radicalization and violent extremism.

Format of Final Project:

The ideal deliverable is a 20-25 page research paper.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Counter Terrorism; Education & Cultural Studies; English Language Learning;

Comments:

Office of English Language Programs: <https://eca.state.gov/about-bureau/organizational-structure/office-english-language-programs>

Regional English Language Office for Central and East Africa: <https://tz.usembassy.gov/education-culture/regional-english-language-office/>

English Access Program: <https://exchanges.state.gov/non-us/program/english-access-microscholarship-program>

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

Public engagement on democracy, one slide at a time

Public Affairs Section

African Affairs to #Mozambique

Overview:

In 2019, Mozambique will hold its first presidential election since its independence in which the opposition party has a legitimate shot at ousting the ruling party. Leading up to this election, U.S. Mission Mozambique would like to engage in public outreach on democracy in general and electoral processes in particular. Given Mozambique's sensitivity to foreign outside interference, however, U.S. Foreign Service Officers cannot simply offer presentations that directly address the democracy challenges faced by Mozambique.

Instead, our people need to talk about the United States to draw the audience in. The Department's Office of International Information Programs offers generic presentations on U.S. electoral processes and democracy in general, but those presentations tend to be informational in nature as opposed to provocative, i.e. designed to provoke discussion with the audience.

What we are looking for is a series of fifteen independent modules, each consisting of a single Power Point slide with speaker notes. Each module would explain a discrete concept or historical event dealing with democracy or elections in the United States. For example, a conceptual slide could examine the concept of "Campaign Financing: Free Speech or Paid Influence?" Another could examine how the United States delineates boundaries for congressional districts (which would necessarily touch on gerrymandering). The Electoral College is an obvious concept. Historical slides would likely have to go back at least 20 years to avoid embroiling FSOs in current controversies, but could deal with suffrage, i.e. who should have the right to vote in a democracy? Or could examine elections with controversial / unexpected results.

Each module would contain the following elements in a single Power Point slide. All elements except the instructional visual would be located in the Speaker Notes of the slide. 1) Language-generic instructional visual; 2) Title; 3) Summary; 4) Detailed text; and 5) Discussion question(s). The instructional visual need be language-generic to 1) avoid the difficulty of student teams working in Portuguese; 2) avoid encyclopedic text-heavy slides; and 3) enable broader use by FSOs globally. The modules need be independent from each other to offer flexibility to FSOs in designing their own presentations depending on personal knowledge, audience interest, and time.

Finally, the modules should offer dichotomies, i.e. they should present questions related to democracy and elections that offer two possible answers, neither of which are "correct." Campaign financing is a great example. The Electoral College is another. A historical example might focus on a particular decision that could have gone either way, i.e. it's worthy of analysis/debate. We are happy to work with the student team(s) to come up with a topical outline prior to development of the individual modules.

Format of Final Project:

We'd like a fifteen-slide Power Point presentation. Each slide in the presentation would serve as an independent "module" of content with the following elements: 1) A language-generic instructional visual; 2) Title; 3) Summary (2-3 sentences); 4) Detailed text (100 - 300 words); and 5) 1-2 discussion questions.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Communications; Democracy & Human Rights; International Relations; History

Comments:

None

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

Designing For Diplomacy: Appropriate Architectural Representation for a U.S. Embassy of the Future and Façade Explorations with Parametric Digital Design

PDCS/DE/AD

Overseas Buildings Operations

Overview:

The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) is seeking academic proposals for the study of Embassy design at both the urban scale and at the detailed level of façade exploration utilizing parametric digital design.

Part I: Embassy of the Future: the Urban Scale

The U.S. Department of State has historically commissioned architectural designs for U.S. Embassies through a variety of methods ranging from competitions to mandated standardized designs. The resulting buildings have also ranged from the iconic embassies in Beijing, London and Lima to a more architecturally understated group in Manama, Berlin, and Islamabad.

The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) is seeking academic proposals for the study of appropriate architectural representation through the design of a U.S. Embassy of the Future. Student work should answer these questions:

1. At an urban scale, what is the role of architecture in creating the appropriate representation of the United States diplomatically for its centers for engagement, and define what constitutes that architecture?
2. Further, how does the architecture of an American embassy engage and compliment the culture and context of the host country?
3. How much does the local contemporary or vernacular architectural context, materials, landscaping, climate and infrastructure influence the embassy's design?
4. How can the need for security and the desire for openness be achieved through design and technological advancements?
5. In times of heightened security how can an American embassy of the future operate as a totally self-sufficient entity?
6. How does the embassy of the future create a better community within for its staff and visitors?

Part II Façade Exploration

The U.S. Department of State has historically built the new U.S. embassies with poured-in-place concrete due to its inherent strength, versatility, durability, and local availability nearly everywhere in the world. These concrete buildings are often clad in stone, pre-cast concrete, or masonry which is all considered traditional building materials. The biggest challenge in embassy design is how to balance need for security with the desire for openness.

The semesters work shall include the study of advanced building façade concepts and materials using parametric digital design analysis. Proposals could be inspired by ecological design, regenerative design, advanced acoustic design, light weight high strength structural and security products, and technological

advances for façade materials that address these two opposing needs

Design proposals shall not compromise the existing levels of security required at U.S. Embassies. Proposals shall assume that façade materials are backed up with poured-in-place concrete structural elements, or another material that will provide the necessary levels of physical security.

The study must embrace the notion that embassy typology requires principles of standardization such as standard bay sizes and certain building materials, however the typology does not need to result standard building design.

Format of Final Project:

These studies will be conducted as part of an architectural design studio that will address a specific embassy program on a specific site. Façade exploration will be conducted as an additional component of the studio. Studio deliverables will be in the form of 2D and 3D graphic architectural presentations and written text. Façade Exploration deliverables will be in the form of 2D and 3D graphic presentation supported by written text and data analysis.

It is anticipated that once a bid is accepted for this proposal, that Diplomacy Lab and the sponsoring School will enter into a detailed dialogue modifying and tailoring the content of the semesters work to address the goals and objectives of both the School and Diplomacy Lab within the definition of the project.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Architecture

Comments:

Resources:

<https://overseasbuildings.state.gov/>

<https://de.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/policy-history/chancery/building/>

<http://www.dw.com/en/new-us-embassy-in-berlin-triggers-architecture-debate/a-3325836>

<https://biomimicry.org/>

<https://living-future.org/lbc/>

<http://www.case.rpi.edu/>

<https://www.regenerative.com/what-is/regenerative-design>

<https://precast.org/2014/11/uhpc-offers-endless-possibilities/>

<http://www.taktl-llc.com/What-is-TAKTL>

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

Reaching Underserved Communities through Virtual Exchange

Collaboratory

Educational and Cultural Affairs

Overview:

Virtual exchanges and other forms of technology-enabled public diplomacy are increasingly important tools for engaging Americans with communities overseas. But the “digital divide” not only exists between developed nations like the United States and its overseas interest. Access to internet connectivity and bandwidth also varies within the United States, particularly along socioeconomic and geographically underserved populations. In this way a technology gap within the United States also becomes a “diplomacy gap.”

Underserved communities, schools, and public institutions that lack the resources for sustained real-time connections for potential exchange partners are unable to take advantage of virtual exchange and digital diplomacy opportunities currently available to other Americans. At the same time, underserved American communities are less visible in our public diplomacy efforts to use to share America’s stories with the world. As innovators and experts in developing virtual exchange programs within ECA, The Collaboratory is interested in assessing how digital divides contribute to diplomacy divides – and explore potential solutions to this emerging problem.

Format of Final Project:

Potential outputs include:

- An assessment of the technological and logistical needs of community colleges and other educational institutions in underserved communities in order to participate in virtual exchanges and other forms digital diplomacy.
- An evaluation of current ECA virtual program engagement with underserved rural and inner-city communities.
- Studies of the effects of a digital diplomacy divide on American foreign policy outcomes.
- Best practice recommendations for technological or social solutions to public diplomacy gaps in underserved communities.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Communications; Education & Cultural Studies; Information & Communication Technology

Comments:

The Collaboratory is an initiative of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs responsible for helping develop new approaches to public diplomacy in the digital age. The Collaboratory designs, pilots

and spreads new exchange models and programs including virtual and blended programs to promote mutual understanding and build reciprocal relationships between Americans and people overseas to advance US foreign policy goals.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Measuring Diplomacy: An Examination of the Effectiveness of the Department of State's Diplomacy Center Simulations

Executive Office

Public Affairs

Overview:

Background Information: The U.S. Diplomacy Center (USDC) aims to highlight, inform, explain, and clarify the role of U.S. diplomacy. In September of 2014, USDC's groundbreaking ceremony celebrated the establishment of a physical space dedicated to helping our nation's citizens better understand and appreciate the tremendous impact of American diplomacy. USDC maintains digital platforms to educate the American public about U.S. diplomacy through educational outreach programs, diplomacy simulations, and teacher trainings designed to form strategic partnerships with affinity groups to build more awareness.

USDC's educational programs offer several different diplomacy simulations in which students and teachers engage on critical global issues faced by U.S. diplomats. In 2016, USDC conducted 250 diplomacy simulations that covered substantive themes related to the environment, refugees, arms control, and public health. For each simulation, the Center's goal is for students to gain an understanding of the practice of diplomacy, exercise critical thinking and negotiation skills, and be inspired to learn more.

USDC measures levels of performance by monitoring group discussion and dynamics during a simulation. Using surveys, students and teachers can provide anonymous feedback based on their learning experiences. Then, the performance data is used to inform the design of future diplomacy simulation scenarios and materials. The goal is to constantly refine educational practices for the most effective outcome(s).

Project Description: To further examine the operational proficiency of USDC's simulations, the proposed examination is designed to further explore the overall efficiency of the simulations to include identifying redundancies, examine the use and application of resources, gauge level of impact, and ensure alignment to Public Affairs' strategic priorities.

This evaluation will seek to answer a series of questions and further advise PA Senior leadership on proposed courses of action to replicate successful aspects of the simulations and/or advise on ways to improve areas of the USDC simulation design, implementation, and overall execution.

The examination should seek to answer the following questions:

- 1) Why are the USDC simulations important?
- 2) How do the simulations further support the Department's and Bureau's mission?
- 3) Are these simulations the most cost-effective approach to providing educational awareness on the State Department's mission?

4) How do the simulations align and/address Public Affairs strategic goals and objectives?

The U.S. Diplomacy Center is envisioned as an independent storyteller of the U.S. foreign policy story both online and in a future museum and education center. The Diplomacy Center fills a gap in the museum tradition and experience of the United States. While over 300 military-themed museums exist in the United States there are no museums devoted to diplomacy. The USDC will allow the Department of State and the foreign affairs community to project to visitors and the population at large—through the museum and educational programs—the importance of diplomacy in U.S. history and in the achievement of our national priorities now and throughout our nation’s history.

*Ideal End Goal: This examination will help develop lessons learned to contribute to the development of a future museum on public diplomacy slated to open in 2020.

Format of Final Project:

Final product report should not exceed 25 pages and the report should include the following details: project design, research methodologies, list of best practices, and areas of improvement to include detailing recommendations to support Public Affairs and Dept. of State’s strategic objectives. Accompanying visual illustrations can be included in the report and can contribute to the page limit. Accompanying PowerPoint presentation is also preferred but not required.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Communications; Computer Science; Democracy & Human Rights; Education & Cultural Studies; Gender Studies; Human Rights; Marketing; Public-Private Partnerships; Science and Technology; Sociology; Statistics; Museum Sciences, History, Evaluation

Comments:

As available, University should be able to observe (in person, conference calls, and/or via skype as necessary) the full planning process of the simulations to include scenario design(s), implementation, and execution phases to gain more awareness on the simulations to make actionable recommendations.

This study will provide vital supporting analysis as the Department continues to explore building a museum related to highlighting the importance of diplomacy and various foreign policy initiatives. This project is an exciting opportunity to create innovative and impactful research!

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

Design the State Department's IT School of the Future

SAIT Innovation Sandbox

Foreign Service Institute

Overview:

SAIT strives to empower our workforce to navigate a rapidly developing IT environment while broadening our reach through innovative and impactful learning. In order to achieve these goals effectively, SAIT needs to continually innovate how we develop and deliver new curriculum, explore and understand emerging technologies while maintaining expertise for legacy systems, and expand our learning ecosystem beyond formal training via microlearning, social and peer-to-peer learning, and informal learning opportunities. This project will assist SAIT to modernize our curriculum development processes, training delivery methods, and promote procedural and programmatic innovation in the use of IT in American diplomacy.

Format of Final Project:

I. Research Presentation/Whitepaper/Analysis - Design recommendations for the IT School of the Future for the Department of State. Tabula rasa, blue sky thinking, starting from scratch! We want the ideal theoretical design of what a modern IT school supporting the foreign affairs community should be setting aside all historical contexts, political administrations, bureaucratic limitations, and budgetary constraints.

Through a holistic lens, provide data-driven recommendations on overhauling curriculum design, delivery methods, e-learning ecosystems, classroom technologies, and necessary educational skills and strategies IT instructors should have beyond their specific expertise/domain of knowledge.

II. Data Analysis/Report/Dashboard - Development of a business intelligence/data analytics dashboard for SAIT leadership and management to monitor and make decisions in real-time the school's performance in regards to enrollment rates, student data (e.g. level, job series, years at State), instructor data (e.g. podium hours, course load, and areas of expertise), classroom usage data, etc.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Communications; Cyber Security; Information & Communication Technology; Public-Private Partnerships; Training

Comments:

As the U.S. government's premier foreign affairs training provider, the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) is dedicated to ensuring career-long learning required for success in today's global arena. FSI is proud to serve the U.S. Department of State and the entire USG foreign affairs community as a strategic enabler of diplomatic excellence by providing training for substantive, regional, and linguistic expertise, leadership

finesse, and personal resilience and innovative problem-solving. The School of Applied Information Technology (SAIT) prepares all Department employees for their Foreign Affairs mission by developing proficiency in information technology and business applications; including but not limited to the installation, configuration, administration, troubleshooting, repair, and enterprise use of technology, IT Tradecraft, and information security.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Countering Fake News to Maintain The Department of State's Integrity

Executive Office

Public Affairs

Overview:

Examine the Department of State's international media capabilities to combat "fake news" and measure/quantify traditional media (i.e. print) content. Identify and/or propose strategies to combat "fake news" stories to include suggesting predictive reporting strategies (i.e. tactics to predict future "fake news" reports with actionable mitigation strategies). Suggest data analysis tools and/or softwares' that can further aid in the tracking of Department's international media footprint, identify impact, help predict "fake news" content, and develop actionable best practices.

Format of Final Project:

Final product report should not exceed 25 pages and the report should include the following details: project design, research methodologies, and how recommendations support Public Affairs and Dept. of State's strategic objectives. Accompanying visual illustrations can be included in the report and can contribute to the page limit. Accompanying PowerPoint presentation is also preferred but not required.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Communications; Information & Communication Technology; Science and Technology; Sociology; Statistics; Project Management, Social Science, Computer Programming, Data Analytics, Evaluation, Case Studies, Organizational Design

Comments:

- Data analytics experience (to include proficiency and/or working knowledge of sentiment analysis)
- Organizational design, project management, evaluation, research, and/or social science background(s).
- Proficiency and/or working knowledge of data analysis software's preferably based on examining communication engagement (e.g. software's such as Shared Count, Sysomos, Sysomos Expion, Crimson Hexagon, TrendKite, Crowd Tangle, SimilarWebb, Google Analytics (GA), GA-360, Hootsuite, Slack, etc.)

The team may have opportunities to participate in applicable meetings. The team is expected to provide project status updates. A timeline of deliverable dates will be further discussed between the Dept of State and the University.

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

Global Best Practices for Cryptocurrency Regulation

Office of Monetary Affairs; Communication and Information Policy; Office of Threat Finance
Countermeasures

Economic and Business Affairs

Overview:

Research project to explore and analyze the factors that influence the worldwide economic geography of cryptocurrency development, exchanges, and miners in order to provide U.S. policy makers with recommendations for regulatory best practices that should be pursued both domestically and in international fora to allow innovation, protect consumers, and prevent illicit financing.

Some potential questions to consider include:

- Is there a correlation between a country's regulatory environment and the prevalence of theft/misuse of cryptocurrencies in that market?;
- How important is the regulatory environment in determining where cryptocurrency developers, miners, and exchanges are located?;
- What lessons learned can be drawn from existing global cryptocurrency regulation experiences in terms of which policies work, which don't, and why?;
- Drawing on empirical data, what regulatory balance is necessary to allow innovation, protect consumers, and prevent illicit financing?;
- How susceptible are less sophisticated regulatory environments to offers of "get rich" schemes that could create domestic vulnerabilities and potential negative externalities elsewhere in the global financial system?

Format of Final Project:

A maximum 100 page research study with a 1-3 page executive summary of key findings.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; International Relations

Comments:

Potential Preliminary Reading:

https://www.jbs.cam.ac.uk/fileadmin/user_upload/research/centres/alternative-finance/downloads/2017-global-cryptocurrency-benchmarking-study.pdf

<http://www.imf.org/en/About/Key-Issues/Fintech>

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Who Run The World? Girls (& Women) In STEM

Office of Science and Technology Cooperation

Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs

Overview:

To inform the Department on best practices to incorporate into gender-inclusive initiatives in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields and create new international efforts around advancing women in STEM, we'd like to have a better idea of other initiatives happening around the world. In our offices, we focus on creating and maintaining strong science and technology cooperative efforts with countries around the world, and women in STEM is more and more an integral part of those efforts. Women in STEM fields are underrepresented whether it's in participation in academic settings, levels of employment, or attaining leadership positions. In addition, STEM is crucial to future women's economic empowerment. STEM can include everything from learning to code, selling renewable energy products, forming biotech startups, or becoming CEOs of global companies. With more women in STEM fields, science is better, technology is more innovative, engineering is more efficient, and math is more elegant. By researching existing governmental, civil society, and academic efforts internationally, your team will help advise our office to amplify and replicate successful models, build on existing efforts in priority countries, and effectively engage new partners. Because of the nature of the work we do, we are looking for large-scale, systemic efforts rooted in policy or advocacy – these should be novel and innovative. We will rely on your team's policymaking and research skills, focused attention to cut through the large amount of noise of this topic, and meaningful analysis of why these case studies matter. Your team taking on this project would advance our efforts to include meaningful and powerful women-in-STEM-specific initiatives in our science and technology relationships around the world. We can't wait to work with you.

Format of Final Project:

We would like to receive a PowerPoint presentation of 10 international case studies, along with a more detailed written report with greater levels of detail and data.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; Education & Cultural Studies; Gender Studies; International Development; International Relations; Public-Private Partnerships; Science and Technology

Comments:

Pew Research Center, the American Associates of University Women (AAUW), the World Bank and other multilateral orgs have some great reports to start with.

Maximum Number of Projects: 6

Investment Screening Mechanisms' Impact on Foreign Investment Levels

Office of Investment Affairs

Economic and Business Affairs

Overview:

With many countries around the world growing increasingly sensitive to the strategic dimensions of foreign investment and the possibility that investments from countries of concern may pose national security risks, governments are considering instituting new investment screening mechanisms and strengthening existing ones. The Office of Investment Affairs is deeply involved in engaging with foreign countries on this issue, and has been asked by foreign officials whether instituting an investment screening regime has any predictable impact on foreign investment inflows. Very little empirical economic research appears to have been done on this question. We would be interested in having a team of students in international economics and development finance do a study of the relationship between the existence of investment screening mechanisms (which may be focused on national security, may consider “net benefits” to the receiving country, or may simply exist as broad discretionary authorities or restrictions on investments in certain sectors), on the one hand, and foreign investment stocks, flows, and growth rates, on the other. Having a study to point to in our conversations with like-minded countries, particularly in Europe, will be invaluable in providing them with advice and technical assistance on the best way to protect shared national security interests while continuing to attract competitive levels of desirable foreign investment.

Format of Final Project:

Research paper of an appropriate length, to be determined, plus a presentation of the research findings.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; International Development; International Relations;

Comments:

We expect this project can be completed in one semester. We encourage students to look at data from BEA, AEI, Rhodium Group, and RWR Advisory/Inteltrak on foreign investment, as well as the OECD's openness to investment index, the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index, and Ted Moran's work on investment screening mechanisms.

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

Case Studies and Policy Recommendations: Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Messaging on Foreign Investment Screening

Office of Investment Affairs

Economic and Business Affairs

Overview:

As the United States Congress considers draft legislation to strengthen the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), and other governments of other economic powerhouses, such as Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the UK, consider taking similar steps, some industry associations have expressed misgivings about the impact that stronger investment screening will have on investment flows and business climates. From the U.S. government's perspective, stronger investment screening that remains focused on discrete national security threats does not present a debilitating regulatory burden for businesses, including well-intentioned foreign investors. Ideally, stronger investment screening will thwart illicit attempts to transfer technology, intellectual property, and proprietary data under the cover of foreign investments and joint ventures—a step that will level the playing field for firms from the United States and likeminded countries, and will bolster public confidence in a robust, rules-based open investment regime. Unfortunately, not every country's investment screening mechanism is strictly focused on national security, and even those that are can be incorrectly perceived as advancing a protectionist agenda. In a world of imperfect media coverage and outright disinformation campaigns sponsored by state actors, how can the U.S. government effectively spread its message that stronger national security investment review is an asset for open investment between the United States and like-minded countries, not a liability? We will be interested in multiple case studies, potentially from multiple research teams, of countries and industry sectors relevant to this discussion, including problems of political support and public opinion vis-à-vis U.S. government engagement on this issue. We will appreciate these case studies including recommendations for improving U.S. public diplomacy “messaging” to successfully communicate that “America is open for business” and supports a rules-based open investment regime with all countries willing to participate on the basis of free, fair, and reciprocal conditions, including the protection of sensitive technologies, critical infrastructure, and proprietary information from potentially hostile strategic competitors.

Format of Final Project:

We would request a succinct (maximum 5 pages, single-spaced) case study from each participating team, along with a one-page memo containing policy recommendations for messaging key audiences (government, public, private sector industry, civil society, academia, etc.) identified in the case study. Each team will be invited to present the case study and policy memo to Department of State officials working on this topic.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Communications; East Asian/Pacific Studies; Economic & Finance Issues; Energy Security; European & Eurasian Studies; Food Security; Information & Communication Technology; Marketing; Middle East/North African Studies; Western Hemisphere Studies

Comments:

We expect this project can be completed in one semester. We encourage students to look at coverage of foreign investment screening by CSIS (Matthew Goodman), AEI (Derek Scissors), Rhodium Group, and the Peterson Institute (Ted Moran), as well as the OECD's openness to investment index, the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index, and coverage in major national and international news outlets of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States. North American, European, Chinese, Japanese, and Australian media coverage on foreign investment screening is of particular interest. An article in the NYT entitled "CFIUS, Powerful and Unseen, is a Gatekeeper on Major Deals" is a good place to start analyzing coverage (and misperceptions) of CFIUS as an element of a protectionist economic policy.

Maximum Number of Projects: 6

Social Media as a Tool to Improve U.S. Public Opinion and Repair the Bilateral Relationship in Turkey

Public Affairs Section

U.S. Mission to Turkey

Overview:

The U.S. Mission Turkey seeks to create social media campaigns to increase positive appreciation for the U.S., Americans, and the bilateral relationship. In Turkey, positive public opinion of the U.S. hovers in the single digits, among the lowest in the world. Freedom of expression is limited, and disinformation, both from Turkish sources and foreign ones, is rampant. At the same time, Turks are also among the most digitally literate people on the planet with the average Turk using several social media accounts on various platforms.

Some questions that might need to be answered include:

- Who are Turkey's top social media influencers?
- How do they feel about the United States?
- Which platforms do they use and how?
- What do their posts say?
- Could we use them, and if so, how?
- What are the hot-button issues that get Turks posting on social media? And which platforms do they use for the various topics?
- How rampantly is disinformation spreading, and where is it coming from?
- What are the positive topics that get Turks posting on social media? Is it food, travel, family, soccer? (We suspect it's soccer, but would like that verified with stats!)
- How are posts and social media trends broken down by demographic? I.e. what are pro-government versus pro-opposition social media users talking about? And most importantly, what are the coveted "undecideds" (the people who don't either love or hate the U.S.) talking about?
- What would pique their interest in and/or appreciation for the U.S.?

Based on these findings (and any related research), we seek your students' analysis of the current social media environment, as well as their suggestions for a single campaign that would increase positive appreciation for the U.S., Americans, and the bilateral relationship.

Format of Final Project:

Data analysis, options memo

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Civil Society; Communications; Economic Sanctions; Education & Cultural Studies; European & Eurasian Studies; International Relations; Marketing; Political/Military Affairs; Statistics; Youth Issues.

Comments:

<https://tr.usembassy.gov/>

<https://twitter.com/USEmbassyTurkey>

<https://www.facebook.com/usdos.turkey>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/USEmbassyTurkey>

<https://www.instagram.com/abdbuyukelcilig/>

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

INL Mexico Technology in the Security Sector

INL Mexico

International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs in Mexico

Overview:

New technologies can offer police and law enforcement officers, such as investigators and prosecutors, many useful methods for combating criminal activity. Technologies improve the safety of both police and the public. INL Mexico is interested in understanding what technology is being used in Mexico at the State levels, what is being utilized within the U.S. and compare where broader application of technology could make impactful contributions to the security situation in Mexico.

INL Mexico knows about new apps that some Mexican States are using when a police officer encounters a situation, using the app to take the police report, using the app to record the police officer reading the suspect their rights, etc. There are other apps that are “pointer” for police to see where info may reside on a suspect, but does not pass along that info directly for privacy/security reasons. This enables police officers to then query the appropriate source for the info that is relevant to their cases.

INL Mexico is looking for those game-changing technologies that are already working within Mexico (that are open sourced - no proprietary systems) and best practices in the US that might be revolutionary within Mexico.

Format of Final Project:

Review and report of technology currently in use that could, if amplified, revolutionize law enforcements capabilities in Mexico.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement; International Relations; Narcotics & Law Enforcement.

Comments:

INL Mexico can assist in identifying some of the technologies in Mexico, but not all, nor do we have a view on what US officers are using.

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

Selling American Business in Singapore: Understanding Perceptions of U.S. Companies

U.S. Embassy Singapore

East Asian and Pacific Affairs

Overview:

There is a widespread perception that China is the dominant economic power in Southeast Asia and that the United States is not engaged economically, and to some extent politically, in the region. This perception does not match reality. U.S. investment in ASEAN is still consistently higher than that of China. American commercial presence in the region has never been stronger and it is continually growing.

Recent polling conducted in Singapore, which is home to 4,200 American companies, many of which serve as regional headquarters for the Asia-Pacific, does not reflect knowledge of the strength of American economic engagement. The polling shows that when asked “which country do you think has the best relationship with Singapore on trade and investment at present?” 46% said China and 26% said USA. When asked “which country do you think will have the best relationship with Singapore on trade and investment in five years?” 55% said China and 20% said USA. When asked “which country do you think has the best relationship with Singapore on technology and innovation at present?” 37% said Japan and 27% said USA. When asked “which country do you think will have the best relationship with Singapore on technology and innovation in five years?” 28% said China and 27% said Japan.

We would like to better understand how U.S. companies are portrayed in the media and in public discourse in Singapore. How do sentiments about American companies compare to other foreign companies amongst Singaporeans? What messages or approaches would best help to highlight the enduring importance of the U.S. business community to Singapore and the region?

Format of Final Project:

Phase 1: Research and analysis of local sentiments toward American companies compared to other foreign companies, including a written report of findings and presentation to the U.S. Embassy.

Phase 2: Recommendations for a public messaging campaign to highlight the role of U.S. businesses and shift attitudes amongst Singaporeans, including a written report of findings and presentation to the U.S. Embassy.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Communications; East Asian/Pacific Studies; Marketing; Business;

Comments:

The lead office for this project will be the Public Affairs Section of U.S. Embassy Singapore, in cooperation with colleagues from the U.S. Commercial Service and other elements of the Mission

community.

More information about the Embassy's work can be found at <https://sg.usembassy.gov/>

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

Bolster English Teaching and Learning in Costa Rica

Public Affairs Section

U.S. Mission to Costa Rica

Overview:

Recently, the President of the Republic of Costa Rica launched the Alliance for Bilingualism (Abi) as a national strategy to increase the coverage of English teaching and learning in the country. The alliance is due to the administration's awareness that English is the language of the Internet, commerce, culture, and is critical to the country's economic development. The President of Costa Rica has asked the U.S. Embassy to assist in their major endeavor to graduate 300,000 students with high intermediate English language level by 2022. The proposed two-pronged project will be presented to the Ministry of Public Education as they explore the best path forward in realizing their dream of a bilingual Costa Rica.

Research Component One: U.S. – Costa Rica Sister Schools

PAS San Jose is working with the Costa Rican Ministry of Public Education to create a new virtual exchange program to connect students and faculty of the U.S. and Costa Rica to enrich their Spanish language experiences while the Costa Rican students enhance their English language skills by exchanging culture, art, music, food, and traditions. Post seeks Diplomacy lab support for a team of university students to assist with the following study:

1. Produce a campaign to promote the virtual exchange opportunity.
2. Identify potential partners to participate in the program.
3. Develop a database with potential participants, including contact information to establish an ongoing relationship with the Ministry of Public Education.
4. Identify potential issues and obstacles to success.

Research Component Two: Case Studies

Some members of the Costa Rican cabinet want to amend the country's constitution to make English an official second language. For the second component, we propose that the group conducts a research on successful adoptions of English as a second official language in other countries with U.S. government assistance.

1. Are there successful examples of language programs from other countries (i.e., Asia, Africa) being used in the public school systems?
2. What factors made these programs successful (i.e. numbers of classes per week, number of hours per class, number of students per class, etc.)?
3. Is there any evidence that these programs advanced language acquisition and proficiency faster than regular English as a foreign language programs did?
4. What realistic ways of measuring the impact in participants are available?
5. Are there successful examples of virtual or online language programs or exchanges that have contributed to the success of the second language adoption?
6. What resources have been used from the U.S. Government to complement this language adoption process?

Format of Final Project:

The ideal deliverable is a 20-25 page research paper and a database of potential partners for the sister school project.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Education & Cultural Studies; International Relations; Marketing; English Teaching.

Comments:

To learn more about Costa Rica's educational system, see the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2017 report.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Building an Economy beyond the Beach: Diversification in Montenegro

Embassy Podgorica

U.S. Mission to Montenegro

Overview:

Montenegro's incredible natural beauty has contributed to a booming tourism sector and a growing economic disparity between those who live near the coast and those who do not. With a population of just 650,000 and a reliance on imported labor in the hospitality sector, it is clear that Montenegro needs to diversify its economic base. The government has expressed interest in rebuilding the manufacturing base lost after the dissolution of Yugoslavia and encouraging youth to embrace entrepreneurship. There is also great interest in bringing American businesses to the Montenegro, NATO's newest member country and aspiring member of the EU. The future can be bright in this tiny southeastern European nation - if they can focus on the right types of investments.

The project would challenge students to research and identify economic sectors which have been successfully developed in similar nations - small, tourism-heavy, and middle income. Are there tangential markets on which Montenegro should focus to attract FDI? What did other countries do to stimulate entrepreneurial development? And what types of jobs are outsourced to economies of this size, education level, and income level?

Format of Final Project:

A 10-20 page research paper with case study examples/ success stories that is connected to data analysis would be optimal.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; European & Eurasian Studies; International Development; International Relations; Public-Private Partnerships; Statistics; Youth Issues; Entrepreneurship.

Comments:

The project should focus on concrete deliverables as opposed to development theory. Example: Are there certain industries which have found success in similar markets, and why? What were the keys (infrastructure, tax, geography, etc) to bringing that investment to the target country?

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Research on U.S. industries interested in collaboration on innovative energy solutions research and applications

Public Diplomacy Section

U.S. Mission to Malta

Overview:

We propose a partnership with U.S. university teams and the University of Malta (UOM), in its capacity as advisor on energy/water policy to the government's Energy and Water Agency. The role of the Energy and Water Agency is to formulate and implement the Maltese government's national policies in the energy and water sectors, aimed at ensuring security, sustainability and affordability of energy and water supply in Malta. The UOM is one of the government's principal partners in researching and designing innovative energy solutions and in proposing policy related to the water and energy sectors. The UOM is currently conducting research on SolAqua (photovoltaics on water), on efficient energy performance of buildings and on shallow ground geothermal systems for space heating and cooling. The UOM is keen to link with U.S. industries active in researching and applying such innovative energy solutions.

Our proposal seeks to link the embassy with U.S. university teams that are competent to conduct research on innovative energy solutions in the U.S. and, simultaneously, to link the UOM with U.S. industry operators. Ideally research will be conducted in cities/towns that mirror Malta's Mediterranean climate and geography and its limitations as an archipelago made up of three small islands, with no resources and where the principal industry is tourism. The UOM has a fully equipped solar research laboratory for solar cell technology. Equipment includes: Plasma chemical vapor deposition and Dual Magnetron DC Sputter Coater, 3D Silk Screen Printer, Transmission Electron Microscope sample preparation, among others, all dedicated towards manufacturing and processing of advanced solar cells, including thin films and perovskites and a host of characterization equipment for semiconductor materials. The UOM would offer U.S. universities and/or U.S. companies that are engaged in solar cell technology the use of its lab for research and trial runs.

Format of Final Project:

We would like to see a data analysis document that gives a description of research and policy-making on innovative energy solutions for small island states. The document will also provide contact information for U.S. entities that are engaged in research and application of solutions and are interested in partnering with us and the UOM.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Energy Security; International Relations; Water Security;

Comments:

Below please find links to the Malta government's energy and water policies and research papers on action plans.

<https://energy.gov.mt/en/Pages/Energy%20and%20Water/The-Energy-and-Water-Agency.aspx>

<https://www.energywateragency.gov.mt/>

<https://www.um.edu.mt/ise>

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325465732_INTERREG_EUROPE_ZERO_CO2_PROJECT_-_ACTION_PLAN_FOR_MALTA_TO_PROMOTE_NEAR_ZERO_CO2_EMISSION_BUILDINGS

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325465732_INTERREG_EUROPE_ZERO_CO2_PROJECT_-_ACTION_PLAN_FOR_MALTA_TO_PROMOTE_NEAR_ZERO_CO2_EMISSION_BUILDINGS

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

Social Media in China: Influence, Identity, and Information

U.S. Embassy Beijing

Overview:

The U.S. Embassy in Beijing actively engages with Chinese citizens online and so do many other embassies and influencers. There are foreign missions from around the world competing for attention, to influence Chinese citizens, to provide information on travel and study opportunities, and to build a brand for their country. Who is successful? What attracts Chinese netizen attention? Do netizens use social media to voice opinions about the U.S. or about China?

We are seeking a comparative analysis of social media engagement by foreign embassies in Beijing to track engagement on various post types and topics to see what attracts debate, engagement, and where different embassies are successful. We plan to use this data to better target our outreach and engage more meaningfully with Chinese audiences online. Do comments drive engagement? Are cultural topics or policy more effective? What do netizens respond to best? Do netizens also use social media to critique Chinese positions or voice support for U.S. positions?

Format of Final Project:

We are looking for a comparative analysis that will include a high-level overview of the findings as well as the raw, collected data tracking post types by embassy and their effectiveness. We would also like to see proposals on how to attract a targeted audience of urban, educated, middle class audiences in China using social media; especially Weibo and WeChat.

One written report, not to exceed 10 pages, that presents key findings and data visualization in a format that is easily accessible to the layperson with a one page executive summary. The Embassy will provide input and consultation on the other Embassies to use for comparable analysis.

Reports can be sent via e-mail. In addition, team members should expect to be engaged in regular contact, via conference call and/or Skype, with the Embassy team, which will enable the team members to ask questions, clarify parameters and present report findings.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Civil Society; Communications; Computer Science; Democracy & Human Rights; East Asian/Pacific Studies; International Relations; Sociology; Statistics; Social Media, Data Analytics, Evaluation.

Comments:

An understanding of social media, search engine optimization, web navigation and institutional marketing is a plus. Language skills in Chinese are required, but translation software can assist the avid researcher

as well. We are looking for a creative, proactive students who can help us brainstorm and innovate interesting ways to engage foreign audiences using digital tools.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Sentiment Analysis of Chinese Media

U.S. Embassy Beijing

Overview:

The Press Office of the U.S. Embassy in Beijing seeks media, communications and/or social science students who are studying similar topics and have a good working proficiency of data analysis to perform sentiment analysis on Chinese media coverage of key narratives with a focus on the difference in sentiment between print and online. Information gathered from this project will be used to better inform the Embassy of media reporting, which can help drive strategic planning decisions on how, when, and where the Embassy can best use its resources for maximum impact. For this project, sentiment analysis would be used to identify and categorize coverage of a specific U.S. foreign policy priority to decipher the tone (positive, negative, and/or neutral) assigned by the media outlet to the priority. The team would be responsible for tracking the narrative on this priority in the media through the semester, and particularly, how the media coverage changes and/or is influenced by major public events and the difference in tone between online and print publications. For example, analyze the difference in tone and compare coverage on Global Times/People's Daily with coverage on Xiakedao/Niutanqin/The Paper. How is the tenor and posture of a given story different—consistently more aggressive/nationalistic in one language versus the other?

Format of Final Project:

The Embassy press team will expect the team to develop periodic snapshots of sentiment analysis of Chinese media coverage throughout the semester. Such snapshots should be 1-2 pages in length, to include an overview of results and then details, including data that informs the analysis. Ideally there is a baseline report, and then monthly follow ups on the specific foreign policy issue that is selected. The reports should be a baseline and then followed with reports that summarize changes over the semester on the selected foreign policy priority or priorities. Reports can be sent via e-mail. In addition, team members should expect to be engaged in regular contact, via conference call and/or Skype, with the Embassy team, which will enable the team members to ask questions, clarify parameters, and present report findings. The Embassy will provide input and consultation on what Chinese publications to focus on and possible foreign policy topics to select.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Civil Society; Communications; Computer Science; Democracy & Human Rights; East Asian/Pacific Studies; Economic & Finance Issues; Human Rights; Information & Communication Technology; International Relations; Statistics; Data Analytics, Evaluation, Organizational Design, Sentiment Analysis, Sentiment Analysis software experience

Comments:

Language skills in Chinese are required, but translation software can assist the avid researcher as well. We are looking for a creative, proactive students who can help us better understand how the United States is covered in Chinese media as we engage with Chinese audiences to advance U.S. foreign policy goals.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Immigration and Government Aid: Evaluating Cabo Verdean immigrants' reliance on public assistance programs

U.S. Embassy Praia, Consular Section

U.S. Mission to Cabo Verde

Overview:

Cabo Verdeans have a long history of immigration to New England. By some estimates, the community of Cabo Verdean Americans in Massachusetts and Rhode Island may be as large as the population of Cabo Verde itself. The consular section of the U.S. Embassy in Praia, Cabo Verde, is responsible for adjudicating immigrant visa applications for the steady stream of Cabo Verdeans intending to immigrate to join family in the United States. In FY2017, Embassy consular officers adjudicated the cases of over 2200 immigrant visa applicants in Praia.

The Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs recently revised guidance on the "public charge" visa ineligibility, granting broader discretion to consular officers overseas to determine whether a visa applicant is likely to depend on certain types of government assistance in the United States and therefore not qualified to receive a visa. To accurately make these life-changing decisions, the Embassy's consular officers are seeking information regarding Cabo Verdean first generation immigrants' actual use of public assistance programs. We envision a project that may involve both quantitative data regarding use over the past several years of certain categories of assistance by Cabo Verdean immigrants by age, gender, education level and length of time in-country, for example, as well as qualitative assessments through discussion with individual immigrants, community organizations, social workers, and others. Linked to this would be an evaluation of how the Cabo Verdean American community assists new arrivals and patterns of support provided for recent immigrants by their well-established family members.

Format of Final Project:

The ideal deliverable is a report that summarizes the data gathered regarding aid programs used and beneficiaries, and analyzes the qualitative trends. The report would highlight factors that appear tied to use of certain classes of public assistance and conclusions regarding the support that Cabo Verdean immigrants receive from their established family and community.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Anthropology; International Relations; Sociology; Public Policy/Government Studies/Demography;

Comments:

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/cape-verde-towards-end-emigration>

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

The Overstay Mentality: Understanding Unlawful Immigration of Cabo Verdeans

U.S. Embassy Praia, Consular Section

U.S. Mission to Cabo Verde

Overview:

Cabo Verdeans have strong ties to and a large diaspora in New England. In fact, by some estimates, the community of Cabo Verdean Americans in Massachusetts and Rhode Island is as large as the population of Cabo Verde itself. The consular section at the U.S. Embassy in Praia, Cabo Verde, is responsible for adjudicating tourist visa applications for the steady stream of Cabo Verdeans wishing to visit their family and friends in the United States. In FY2017, U.S. Embassy Praia's consular officers adjudicated nearly 5,000 nonimmigrant visa applications. However, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security estimates that in the same period 13.66% of Cabo Verdean travelers overstayed illegally in the United States, one of the highest overstay rates of travelers from any country.

To accurately make adjudication decisions, the Embassy's consular officers are seeking information about the prevalent overstay mentality amongst Cabo Verdeans. Why are so many Cabo Verdeans overstaying illegally in the United States and how can this trend be discouraged? We envision a project that could be both quantitative and qualitative. Quantitatively, students could examine publicly-available DHS overstay data to see how this trend has changed over time. Qualitatively, students could assess this overstay mentality through discussions with individual immigrants, community organizations, ICE, and CBP, among others. Linked to this would be an evaluation of the education Cabo Verdeans receive about visa regulations and the consequences of overstaying illegally in the United States. Ideally, this project could help U.S. Embassy Praia combat unlawful immigration without dissuading legitimate visitor travel to the United States.

Format of Final Project:

The ideal deliverable is a short analysis memo that includes suggestions on how to combat illegal immigration without dissuading legitimate Cabo Verdean travel to the United States.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Anthropology; International Relations; Sociology; Public Policy/Government Studies/Demography.

Comments:

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/cape-verde-towards-end-emigration>

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

Sargassum in the Eastern Caribbean and its Impact on the Blue Economy

Public Affairs Section

U.S. Mission to Barbados

Overview:

This project is of importance to the islands in our area of responsibility (e.g. Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and, St. Vincent and the Grenadines) because they heavily rely on revenues generated from their blue economies. Sargassum poses a threat to the livelihood of fishermen, marine life and the tourism industry. Assistance in helping these countries mitigate the effects of sargassum is increasingly of paramount importance.

Historically, small quantities of the floating macroalgae naturally drifted into the Caribbean from the Sargasso Sea to the north. Since 2011, however, sargassum from a new source—the north equatorial recirculation region (NERR)—has inundated the region with thick mats of seaweed. These mass accumulations of seaweed devastate marine and coastal ecosystems: they prevent vital sunlight from reaching coral reefs and seagrass beds, and their decomposition saps the water of oxygen and releases toxic hydrogen sulfide. The result is a rapid degradation of seagrass beds, mangroves, coral reefs, and other shallow coastal ecosystems.

Format of Final Project:

- A data analysis of the sargassum (i.e. size of blooms, occurrence, impact on marine life, decline in tourist arrival attributed to sargassum deposits on beaches, etc.) in the Eastern Caribbean.
- A presentation on the impact and strategies that can be implemented to mitigate the negative impacts.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Climate Change

Comments:

Please see articles below that cover some of the issues caused by sargassum in the Eastern Caribbean.

<https://www.hakaimagazine.com/news/the-eastern-caribbean-is-swamped-by-a-surge-of-seaweed/>
<https://antiguaobserver.com/the-attack-of-the-sargassum/>

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

Commercial 'Start-Up' Diplomacy

Economic Section

U.S. Mission to Tunisia

Overview:

Commercial 'Start-up' Diplomacy is project that aims to support U.S. exports of by connecting American start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises (that were developed and matured within American incubator spaces) to the world through a database that captures their products and services. One of U.S. Embassy Tunis' strategic objectives is to support entrepreneurship and job creation at the SME and start-up level. The Government of Tunisia aims to bring down unemployment from 15% to 12% by 2020 because high unemployment in the region is a national security concern.

Why should the big companies have all the fun? While the objective for this American start-up database would eventually be utilized by diplomatic posts worldwide, Tunisia will serve as the beta testing ground. Connecting foreign start-ups and SMEs with American partners supports U.S. exports, facilitates cultural exchange, and augments USG capacity to better conduct commercial diplomacy specifically at the SME level. In practice, the database would assist existing USG-provided commercial services. For example, if a Tunisian start-up were developing a communication device that required a specialized chip, the database would allow us to locate American start-ups that have the ability to design and export the product to the Tunisian customer. Once the Tunisian company identifies possible American partners, Commercial and Economic Officers would then facilitate connecting the parties.

While there are likely countless incubator workspaces in the United States, university teams would prioritize start-ups housed within or recently graduated from top incubator spaces identified by Forbes magazine. Students also will consider other factors to select incubators for regional diversity and competencies from different sectors across the United States. Parameters of the database and its usage can be discussed further with the team(s).

Format of Final Project:

We would like a database that has a modern interface, is user friendly and easy to manage. The objective is to run queries where we can search products, services or core competencies of American start-ups and SMEs. The database would have background information of the company including websites, location, and contact information. Each product, service and competency would need a description or pictures provided by the start-up. We are including SMEs because the database would capture start-ups that graduated from the incubator (within the past 3 years) and are now operating in their own workspaces. Features of the database can further be discussed and developed with the student team(s) to gain their input and creativity.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

African Studies; Economic & Finance Issues; Information & Communication Technology; International Development; International Relations; Marketing; Middle East/North African Studies; Statistics; Commercial Trade.

Comments:

This is the first phase of this database project. Once the beta test is completed in Tunisia. It is our hope that Commercial 'start up' Diplomacy will be managed by the U.S. Department of State or Commerce. Student will also come up with a name for the database.

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

Impact Analysis of the 10-Year Visa for Chinese Nationals

Nonimmigrant Visa Section

U.S. Mission to China

Overview:

In November 2014, the Department of State increased visa validity for Chinese visitor visas (B1, B2, and B1/B2 visas) from 1 year to 10 years. Given that Chinese travelers represent the largest international share of the U.S. tourism market, this research project aims to answer the question, “What impact, if any, has the change to 10-year validity for Chinese visitor visas had on Chinese traveler behavior and the U.S. economy?”

Sub-questions may include:

- Have the marketing tactics of visa and travel facilitators and the typical profile and travel style of Chinese tourists changed post-November 2014?
- How do Chinese travel patterns correlate with trends in the Chinese economy (for example, province- and city-level GDP changes, or the opening of new flight routes to the U.S.)?
- Has online discussion in Chinese social media reflected any notable changes in attitude toward travel to the U.S.?

The study results will be useful to Embassy Beijing as context for Chinese traveler motivations and typical travel patterns as we continue to facilitate legitimate travel while upholding border security.

Format of Final Project:

- Presentation of Research Findings
- Data Analysis and Corresponding Executive Summary and Report of Findings

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Anthropology; Communications; East Asian/Pacific Studies; Economic & Finance Issues; Education & Cultural Studies; Geography; International Relations; Marketing; Statistics; Tourism.

Comments:

As part of the research project, you will be liaising with the Beijing Nonimmigrant Visa Unit’s Metrics Team, who can answer questions, direct research, and serve as a resource on contextual or other information.

Potential sources regarding the economic relationship include news stories, tourism studies, and trackers on U.S.-China investment and travel, for example:

<https://www.cabi.org/leisuretourism/news/25577>

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-01-23/-12-000-trips-abroad-replace-chinese-new-year-treks-to-grandma-s>

<http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/15746/attachments/1/translations/en/renditions/native>

https://www.ustravel.org/system/files/media_root/document/Research_Fact-Sheet_Summary-Country-Profile_China.pdf

<https://rhg.com/impact/china-investment-monitor/>

<http://www.aei.org/china-global-investment-tracker/>

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

ID: 1824179

Statistical Analysis of Federated States of Micronesian Citizens in the U.S.

U.S. Mission

U.S. Mission to Micronesia

Overview:

Since the inception of the Compact of Free Association between the United States and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), concerns of the Compact's impact has been a lingering issue, especially in places where the majority of FSM citizens have migrated since the Compact went into effect. The majority of FSM citizens are living in Guam, Hawaii, Washington state, and the mid-west of the U.S. mainland. We do not have detailed statistics on FSM citizens residing in the U.S. and neither does the FSM government. According to perceptions, FSM citizens are a draw on public resources in these locations. It would be helpful to have a detailed study on FSM citizens residing in the United States that includes data on population, employment, income, education, age, mortality and health. The results of this study would help U.S. and FSM governments better understand their needs and conditions impacting their successes and failures; and more importantly, their contributions to society, including their services in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Format of Final Project:

A research paper with detailed statistics.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Statistics; Demographics.

Comments:

The project should take no more than 4 months.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Analyzing Russia's influence on modern Mongolia

Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy Ulaanbaatar

Overview:

Prior to 1990, when Mongolia officially joined the community of democratic nations, it was a vassal state of the former Soviet Union – heavily dependent on infusions of Soviet money and the leadership of Soviet advisors to maintain a functional, independent state. In fact, Mongolia was the first internationally declared socialist republic after the Soviet Union, and its systems of governance and economics, as well education and health care, were based almost entirely on Soviet models. Russian was taught in schools, and generations of Mongols were raised to respect and praise the Soviet initiative of keeping northern "outer" Mongolia independent of China as a sign of Russia's friendship for its less developed neighbor. Since 1990, however, Mongolia has become one of the few liberal, open-market democracies in the northeast Eurasian region, and remains one of the few stalwart partners of the United States on the international stage – including with continued troop deployments in Afghanistan in support of U.S. foreign policy goals.

This research project would analyze Russia's modern influence on Mongolia despite its emergence as a strong democratic partner of the United States. It is commonly believed that Mongolia's cultural affinity for and historical relationship with Russia still plays out at the governmental decision-making and diplomatic level. Mongolia is now thirty-one years into its democratic era, and it is not yet certain whether or not the country's "traditional" favor for Russia impacts national-level decisions at the level commonly believed. There is no available metrics-based assessment of Russia's current diplomatic and policy influence over Mongolia.

An analysis that looks at measures of how often Mongolia acts in line with Russian priorities would put this notion to the test. A few possible areas of research could be: a review of Mongolia's voting pattern at the UN and in particular the UN HRC during Mongolia's term as one measure of Russia's continued hold on Mongolia; or a review of cooperation agreements and treaties between Mongolia and Russia vice Mongolia and other countries. Such a project would support Mission Mongolia's 2017 ICS Goal of supporting Mongolia's continued democratic development, including strengthening its democratic institutions, by helping the Mission understand key levers and areas for further engagement or intervention with regard to countering Russian influence.

Format of Final Project:

A short research paper no longer than 20 pages.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Democracy & Human Rights; East Asian/Pacific Studies; European & Eurasian Studies; International Development; International Relations; Political/Military Affairs.

Comments:

N/A

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Ethiopia: The Importance of History in Current Events

Public Affairs

U.S. Mission to Ethiopia

Overview:

Ethiopia is embarking on unprecedented political reforms toward greater inclusivity and freedom. Amid these inspiring changes, ethnic violence is on the rise and over 2.5 million people have been displaced from their homes due primarily to conflict. As the country grapples with political change and a population that seems increasingly divided along ethnic lines, vastly different narratives about the country's history seems to be fueling the division at least in part. How can the country hold together through this process?

For this project, there are two potential areas of focus. One is to study whether the lack of a common view of history is as much a problem as it appears, and how that impacts current political challenges. If history is written by the victor, what happens when there is no agreement on who won? The second path would be to conduct research into Ethiopia's history to determine if it is possible to find a common narrative that includes all the various groups in the country (religious history could be a part of that). Answering these questions could help us address some of the underlying fissures that are appearing in Ethiopian politics and society.

Format of Final Project:

We are open to discussion on what a final project could look like. It could be a relatively concise report on the way that divergent understandings of history play out in current times, or a more in depth look at highlighting where those divergences occur. We're open to ideas!

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

African Studies; Conflict, Stabilization, & Reconstruction; Democracy & Human Rights; Education & Cultural Studies; International Relations; Youth Issues.

Comments:

The Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa manages all public outreach for the United States in Ethiopia. We are constantly looking for ways we can improve our efforts and engage with new audiences in new ways - this project could lead to some new avenues for us to explore.

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

Ethiopia: Understanding the Role of Social Media in Organizing Unrest

Public Affairs

U.S. Mission to Ethiopia

Overview:

Over the past 3 years, Ethiopia has been rocked by political unrest. The recent rise of a reformist administration has opened the doors for lasting political change and a more positive trajectory, but political unrest has been replaced by ethnic and social violence - attacks on people and investments - around the country. Years of repression left the traditional media weak and lacking capacity, leaving social media to fill the void, often with misinformation.

There are two areas we'd like to explore in this direction. The first is whether there is a data-supported way of understanding where key sources of information originate and how they spread in a country where internet access is approximately 15%. The second is how to engage effectively to counter misinformation and empower voices advocating constructive solutions. Traditional social media analytical tools do not seem to do the trick.

Format of Final Project:

We are open to suggestions. A data based or infographic approach could be useful in highlighting key trends and pathways for the spread of information. A written research paper could also work, but we are happy to discuss options.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Communications; Conflict, Stabilization, & Reconstruction; Democracy & Human Rights; Human Rights; Information & Communication Technology; International Relations; Youth Issues.

Comments:

We believe this project could uncover findings that apply well beyond Ethiopia's borders, but answers here could have a huge impact our ability to support the reform effort by understanding how information spreads in a society where the traditional media is unable to play its role in informing citizens.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

From research to revenue: U.S. best practices in connecting educational institutions with the market

Public Affairs Section

U.S. Mission to Greece

Overview:

The historical and political background in higher education in Greece, particularly in the 20th century, has directed academia to follow a path that is quite independent from the job market. Although several universities in Greece have career Services Offices and Technology Institutes, there are very few programs that focus on bringing university students into the job market, or offering students in the science and technology fields the opportunity to turn their research into products or services. Despite the fact that there is great talent and high levels of scientific research in Greek universities, there are very few university departments that offer entrepreneurship programs and training to students that could help them develop their technology projects into startups. Additionally there are very few, if any, mechanisms in place that connect universities with the marketplace in order to bring university research to the marketplace.

In order to understand the connections between universities and the marketplace, it would be useful to learn more about best practices in the United States for connecting educational institutions with the market.

Some questions that come to mind are: What are the best practices followed in the United States that connect education and research with the job market? What are some successful examples of U.S. universities that promote start-up development and entrepreneurship? What are some best practices in career development for students in U.S. universities? What skills do U.S. universities offer to students (as well as professors) to make them successful in their future careers? How do students make themselves more employable and their projects more attractive to the market? Consequently, how are university curriculums updated to sync with future jobs and market needs? How do U.S. universities view the connection between their research and the marketplace? What synergies exist between U.S. universities and private partners? How are those partnerships established? How do universities view those partnerships and what limits do they have? What role does outside funding play in research and development in U.S. universities? What role does the U.S. government play in research and development at U.S. educational institutions?

Format of Final Project:

Data analysis on the role that university research plays in the U.S. marketplace and how that relates to career prospects for students; a paper on the relationship between U.S. educational institutions and the market; 30-minute presentation on U.S. best practices in connecting educational institutions with the market and the benefits in doing so; Resource list including examples of universities with successful programs and partnerships

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; Education & Cultural Studies; Science and Technology; Youth Issues.

Comments:

Post can connect students with start-ups in Greece that have grown from academic institutions for background information on the local situation in Greece.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Beyond the monuments: U.S. best practices for innovative tourism

Public Affairs Section

U.S. Mission to Greece

Overview:

Despite Greece's plethora of geographic, gastronomic, and agricultural treasures most tourists see the country through the lens of the Acropolis and its islands, viewing it as a destination for archaeological tourism paired with a beach holiday. However, the tourism resources of Greece extend well beyond those two themes and include striking natural reserves, a world-renowned cuisine, intimate villages that evoke bygone eras, and agricultural riches such as olive farms and wineries. There is room to expand the notion of what Greek tourism is by capitalizing on its natural, gastronomic, and agricultural assets, and adding local areas that are off the beaten path to its array of historical and cultural sites. In addition, many historical sites lack the interpretive infrastructure (signage, guides, etc.), accessibility (for visitors with disabilities), and promotional support (either independently or via tourism organizations, etc.) needed for them to become popular destinations for international visitors. According to Greek tourism officials, more than 900,000 American tourists visited Greece in 2017, and more than 1,000,000 are expected to have visited Greece by the end of 2018. There is great potential in introducing these tourists to new areas of Greece, as well as new kinds of Greek tourism that highlight all of Greece's wonders.

In order to view the tourism landscape through a new lens, it would be useful to learn more about tourism development and best practices in the United States. Some questions that come to mind are: What are the best practices for American cultural heritage management? What are some examples of U.S. cultural sites that have been developed into tourism destinations? What technologies and innovative storytelling strategies have been used to tell the stories of U.S. destinations and institutions? How does a country transform its soft culture into distinct tourist destinations? How does a small town make a name for itself and become a tourist destination? How can food and food culture become actual "destinations" for travelers? Similarly, how can food/wine production sites be transformed to include a tourist experience? How can natural resources be promoted in a sustainable way for long-term tourism? How does adventure tourism fit into a country's natural surroundings? How can culture, nature, and history be connected with tourism development in an authentic and sustainable way? What funding streams are used to develop these strategies? How do private and public partners work together to develop and promote tourism destinations? What are best practices to ensure that tourism sites and destinations are accessible for all visitors?

Format of Final Project:

Data analysis on innovative tourism in the United States; A paper on best practices on innovative tourism in the United States; 30-minute presentation on Innovative Directions and Best Practices in American Tourism Development; Resource list including practitioners of innovative tourism/destinations/partners.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Anthropology; Architecture; Civil Society; Communications; Education & Cultural Studies; International Relations; Marketing; Public-Private Partnerships; Science and Technology; Arts Management; Tourism Studies.

Comments:

N/A

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Effects of U.S.-Morocco FTA on African Trade

Embassy Rabat Economic Section

U.S. Mission to Morocco

Overview:

Since the entry into force of the U.S.-Morocco Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in 2006, U.S.-Morocco bilateral trade has tripled. At the same time, U.S.-African trade and Moroccan trade with the rest of Africa have grown. The Moroccan government has been keen to advertise the country as a potential hub for trade and investment into Africa for U.S. firms. However, minimal data exists on whether U.S. firms have actually been able to utilize the U.S.-Morocco FTA to expand into other African markets.

The goal of this project would be to conduct research to establish whether the U.S.-Morocco FTA has had any impact on trade and investment flows between the United States and other African countries, in which sectors those flows have been present, and what barriers may have impeded further growth.

Format of Final Project:

Short research paper (6-10 pages) with data analysis.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; International Relations; Middle East/North African Studies.

Comments:

The U.S. Mission in Morocco hopes to use the results of this research to be able to further assist U.S. companies looking to do business in Morocco and the rest of Africa.

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

Determine the Value of Kuwaiti Educational and Medical Travel (and Possibly Shrink the U.S. Trade Deficit)

Economic Affairs Section

Near Eastern Affairs to Kuwait

Overview:

Embassy Kuwait seeks Diplomacy Lab assistance to survey, measure, estimate, and report on the total economic value of Kuwaiti spending in the U.S. education and health sectors. Your efforts to track these exports of U.S. services could lead to a material adjustment in the U.S. balance of trade with Kuwait, which is typically reported to be in deficit.

Kuwait relies disproportionately on U.S. institutions to improve the health and education of its citizens, to the benefit of both countries. More than 15,000 Kuwaitis currently study in the United States (one percent of all citizens!) Another 3000 Kuwaitis sought U.S. visas for medical treatment in the past year.

Despite earlier estimates of spending in the billions of dollars annually, we have reason to believe the value of this partnership is materially underreported in official statistics. Embassy Kuwait needs your help to prove (or disprove) this assertion and to create reporting and statistics we can reference in our diplomatic engagement, both in Kuwait and in Washington.

Format of Final Project:

- A short paper (about five pages) summarizing your research efforts and your methodology, including a detailed analysis that explains how you arrived at the dollar values you assigned.
- An estimate of the number of U.S. jobs attributable to Kuwaiti medical and educational travelers, directly or indirectly.
- An estimate of the export value of the U.S. services (and goods) used by Kuwaiti medical and educational travelers while in the United States.
- (if appropriate) a comparison of the U.S. trade flows with Kuwait, in light of growth in trade in services like education and health care. How do your findings compare with existing government statistics?
- (If appropriate) a PowerPoint presentation highlighting your most surprising findings.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; Education & Cultural Studies; Global Health; International Relations; Middle East/North African Studies; Public-Private Partnerships; Statistics; Youth Issues

Comments:

The economic section at Embassy Kuwait has sought to quantify the value of Kuwaiti spending on medical treatment and education for some time.

Kuwaitis' unique travel patterns make it difficult to extrapolate from other cost estimates or worldwide averages.

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

Smartphone APP for U.S. History in the Azores

U.S. Consulate Ponta Delgada

European and Eurasian Affairs to Portugal

Overview:

The U.S. Consulate in the Azores, located in the capital city of Ponta Delgada, seeks a creative and tech-proficient team to help research and design a smartphone APP that visitors to Ponta Delgada can use to venture around the city and learn about sites of historical importance to the U.S.-Azores relationship. 2017-2019 marks the centennial anniversary of U.S.-Azores cooperation during World War I, including the U.S. Marines fending off a German U-boat attack on downtown Ponta Delgada, as well as the first flight in the Azores, made by one of the U.S. Marines aviation units in February 1918. The team will collaborate with a local historian to identify a dozen or so points of historical interest (ex, cemetery where U.S. soldiers are buried), then develop text and graphics to inform the public of the many contributions the United States has made in defense of the Azores, one of Portugal's autonomous regions, and with strong ties to U.S. diaspora communities in MA, RI, and CA. This project will help the U.S. Consulate meet our strategic objectives of reinforcing the historic U.S.-Portugal relationship and supporting the growth of the local economy, which is based in large part on tourism.

Format of Final Project:

A working, user-friendly smartphone application.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Computer Science; European & Eurasian Studies; Information & Communication Technology; International Relations; Political/Military Affairs; Science and Technology;

Comments:

Depending on the group's progress, number of sites can be scaled down or increased to include other islands of the Azores. APP should be in English, and local partners can help translate content Portuguese as an add-on, if there is sufficient time.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab1827188

Research for Oldest Standing Synagogue in the Azores (Portugal)

U.S. Consulate Ponta Delgada

European and Eurasian Affairs to Portugal

Overview:

This project looks to preserve religious history and promote international religious freedom through a collaboration with the Sahar Hassamaim synagogue-museum in downtown Ponta Delgada, the capital of the Azores Autonomous Region. The team will review and translate from Hebrew into English several primary sources, including handwritten letters, and help document the history of Judaism in the Azores, including connections to Jewish communities in the United States.

Format of Final Project:

30-60 pages of translated text, either as literal translations or shorter English summaries.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Anthropology; European & Eurasian Studies; Human Rights; International Relations; Religious Studies; Hebrew Language

Comments:

Participating teams must be able to read Hebrew, the source-language of these original documents. Documents will need to be scanned locally, in some cases reassembled, and then emailed to the team for analysis.

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

Countering Chinese Influence Operations in Australia and Differentiating the United States as Australia's Partner of Choice

Public Affairs Section

East Asian and Pacific Affairs to Australia

Overview:

The U.S. Mission to Australia Public Affairs Section proposes a research project on Chinese Communist Party (CCP) influence activities in Australia including analysis of the views of Australians (between the ages of 18-35) on Australia's enduring partner of choice (U.S. vs. China). Specifically, the project should identify the factors that cause the Australian public to equate Chinese and U.S. soft power activities in Australia and provide recommended activities/messaging to counter this false equivalency, as well as the false narrative of a rising China replacing the U.S. as Australia's partner of choice.

In the past year, the government of Australia and Australian media have increased scrutiny of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) influence and interference activities. These activities vary from open and legitimate to covert, coercive, and/or corrupt. The release of a prominent book on CCP influence by Clive Hamilton (Silent Invasion), the departure of Sam Dastyari from Australian Parliament due to links with a Chinese "agent of influence," reporting on CCP-sponsored student groups on college campuses, a libel suit brought against two Australian journalist by billionaire Chau Chak Wing, and the passing of Australia's first foreign interference law have all increased the spotlight on this issue over the past year. However, despite these reports, the latest Lowy Institute Public Opinion Poll shows that only 41% of Australians see 'foreign interference in Australian politics' as a critical threat to Australia's vital interests. Furthermore, Australians have virtually equal concerns about Chinese influence as they do about U.S. influence despite very different approaches to soft power and China's use of activities "short of war."

The research project should develop a written report, PowerPoint presentation, recommended educational / outreach activities (with materials), and recommended messaging targeted to the younger Australian demographic.

Format of Final Project:

10-20 Page Research Paper, Executive Memo, PowerPoint Presentation, Program/Education/Messaging Materials/Examples

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Communications; Democracy & Human Rights; East Asian/Pacific Studies; International Relations

Comments:

N/A

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab171723

Explain A Complicated Process - Passport Website Instructional Videos

Bureau of Consular Affairs, Passport Services, Community Relations (CA/PPT/S/PMO/CR)

Consular Affairs

Overview:

Travel.State.Gov is the only official resource customers can access to get the most up-to-date information on all things passport. The website tends to be text-heavy due to the amount of information that must be communicated to the customer, and a series of videos would help condense that information. This project seeks to develop a series of visually coherent videos that explain the complicated passport process in a way the public understands. The topics would likely include renewing a passport, applying for the first time, and minor passports, but are up for discussion.

Format of Final Project:

A series of 4-5 short videos explaining how to undertake basic passport tasks, such as renewing a passport, applying for the first time, getting a child's passport, etc. Ideal production would include a mix of animation, graphics, and text. Any sound would need to meet current 508 Compliance for the disabled or hard of hearing (example: closed captioning).

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Marketing, Graphic Design, Photography, Film, Advertising, Tourism Studies;

Comments:

We are very open to suggestions for how these videos might look- and we will provide you all of the content you need.

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab171765

Analysis and recommendation on training satisfaction surveys to law enforcement personnel

Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, INL Mexico

International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs

Overview:

INL Mexico is conducting satisfaction surveys to around 7,000 law enforcement officials per year participating in training events, conferences and study tours. We look for a motivated team of students with experience in psychology, statistics and survey design that could help us review the current survey instrument and propose recommendations to improve it. This survey provides important information to decision makers on security cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico.

Format of Final Project:

20 page research paper, data analysis of 2016 and recommended survey instrument

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Psychology, statistics, survey design, Spanish

Comments:

None

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

Multilateral Nuclear Stability: Potential Contributions from Game Theory

Office of Verification, Planning, and Outreach

Arms Control, Verification and Compliance

Overview:

The primary objective of this project is to assess the potential of game theory to make significant contributions to analyzing multilateral nuclear stability. Drawing from the lessons learned from the large body of analysis that applied game theory techniques to the bilateral arms race and first-strike balance between the United States and the former Soviet Union during the Cold War, identify promising directions for research using game theory in a multilateral context.

At this juncture, we are not seeking a thorough analysis of multilateral nuclear stability, but to learn the following: 1) whether insightful multilateral nuclear stability games are possible, 2) to which multilateral strategic stability problems can game theory analysis be applied, and 3) which unique set of issues or challenges would need to be addressed in such multilateral games. On a more technical level, how would such a game be validated and how would the results be presented?

In a similar vein, game theory might also prove useful as an analytical tool for understanding motivations that might drive nuclear competition, and therefore help anticipate certain challenging verification and compliance scenarios, as well as identify mechanisms that could deter cheating.

Format of Final Project:

10 page paper

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Conflict, Stabilization, & Reconstruction; International Relations, Technology

Comments:

Expertise in the following disciplines and skills will be useful:

1) Stability, Deterrence and Reassurance; 2) International Relations and nuclear security policy; 3) Game Theory and Information technology.

Here is some background reading to get the groups started:

J. Scouras, "Multilateral Nuclear Arms Control: Can Game Theory Contribute?," JHU/APL, October 2012;

D. McGarvey and J. Scouras, "Multilateral Nuclear Arms Control and Game Theory," JHU/APL, May 2013;

Eldridge Colby and Michael Gerson, Strategic Stability: Contending Interpretations, Carlisle Barracks,

PA, Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, 2013;
Leyton-Brown, and Y. Shoham, "Game theory is the mathematical study of interaction among independent, self-interested agents," *Essentials of Game Theory: A Concise, Multidisciplinary Introduction*, Morgan and Claypool Publishers, 2008, p. xv
The Nobel Foundation, The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, 2005
(http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/economic-sciences/laureates/2005/)
S. J. Brams and D. M. Kilgour, *Game Theory and National Security*, New York; Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, Inc., 1988
Plous, "The Nuclear Arms Race, Prisoner's Dilemma, or Perceptual Dilemma?" *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 20, No. 2, May 1993;
R. Hardin, "Unilateral Versus Mutual Disarmament," *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 3, Summer 1983;
C. Nemeth, "A Critical Analysis of Research Utilizing the Prisoner's Dilemma Paradigm for the Study of Bargaining," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol. 6, L. Berkowitz (ed.) New York: Academic Press, 1972, pp. 203–234

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

Survival After LDC Graduation: Cabo Verde's Long Fight for Sustainability

Political/ Economic Affairs

Economic and Business Affairs to Cabo Verde

Overview:

Thanks in part to a locally peaceful transition from colony to independent country in 1975 and an educated and capable workforce, Cabo Verde graduated from the World Bank's list of least developed countries (LDC) in 2007. It is one of only four countries (Botswana, Maldives, and Samoa) to do so. While the development that leads a country to graduation is clearly beneficial, the loss of LDC status at graduation may result in important economic costs due to the loss of access to the International Support Measures (ISM) such as bilateral development assistance and technical assistance.

Cabo Verde remains heavily dependent on external financing such as official development assistance and remittances. While graduation may indicate greater resilience and/or reduced exposure to structural vulnerabilities, Cabo Verde remains particularly vulnerable to exogenous shocks. Moreover, the loss of eligibility for Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) provisions resulting from the graduation process has narrowed the policy space available to address these challenges. As a result indebtedness has increased substantially and debt has tripled, accelerating the increasing trend of the previous decade, to reach 128% of GDP in 2016. This partly reflects increased expenditure for compensating for the effects of the international financial crisis and the loss of donor aid. Cabo Verde runs structural current account deficits and relies heavily on external finance to support its capital accumulation.

Cabo Verde is a small archipelago with minimal natural resources and a population of only 550,000. At least as many Cabo Verdeans live in the diaspora, mostly in Portugal and the Boston area. There was no indigenous population when the Portuguese colonized in the 15th century. The climate is arid, and only around 10% of the land is arable. It enjoys a stable economy with the escudo pegged to the euro and a stable democratic government. Approximately 25% of Cabo Verde's GDP comes from tourism, mostly Europeans coming for the beaches. Another 15% comes from family remittances. Cabo Verde will be the first country in the world to complete its second Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact.

Although the country has advanced remarkably on the development trajectory, it suffers from a number of serious problems. Growth is estimated at over 4% in 2016, a recovery from 1.5% in 2015, but that is not enough to bring down the debt (128% in 2016). For 2017 and beyond, debt is likely to continue increasing from government liabilities for largely insolvent state-owned enterprises. Official figures put unemployment at 15%, and most observers believe that youth unemployment is close to 40%. Nearly 30% of the population lives in poverty.

Consolidating its achievements as a middle income country and strengthening the conditions for poverty reduction and shared prosperity will be key challenges for Cabo Verde. Given the strengths and weaknesses, what strategy can the country develop to overcome the debt issue and lack of financing?

Format of Final Project:

Strategy paper with actions and actors identified

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

African Studies; Economic & Finance Issues; International Relations; International Finance

Comments:

This question is, clearly, broader than Cabo Verde.

Maximum Number of Projects: 4

ID: DipLab1726125

German Youth Social Media Opinions

Public Affairs Munich

European and Eurasian Affairs to Germany

Overview:

What aspects of the German-American relationship positively resonate most in the minds of German youth as related to social media? What can we message to those positive thoughts and what social media format would be best to message and expand that messaging.

Format of Final Project:

Data analysis or presentation or options memo.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Communications; International Relations; Marketing; social media

Comments:

Thank You!

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Can You See Me Now? – Identifying Camera Problems Autonomously

DS/STO/QAL

Diplomatic Security

Overview:

Over 300 U.S. diplomatic buildings in almost every nation in the world rely on closed-circuit television systems (CCTV) as part of their physical security apparatus. Many video cameras are installed outdoors in harsh conditions of sand, sun, and salt spray and suffer from a range of maladies.

Dust, dirt, salt, lichen, and atmospheric pollution on the camera bubble degrade the quality of an image. A camera that is out of focus suffers a similar loss in quality. A broken camera may not produce an image at all. Pan, tilt, and zoom (PTZ) functions may not function. Over time, foliage can grow to block key parts of a camera view. Each of these situations degrades our ability to protect the people who work at and visit our diplomatic facilities.

Since dirty camera bubbles are the biggest problems, proposals must address this issue at a minimum. Teams can choose to address problems of focus, foliage, missing images, and PTZ functionality, as desired. Teams can also choose to use analog cameras, digital cameras, or both. If requested in the proposals, ST may loan the actual cameras and control systems that we use. Since we are looking for autonomous problem detection, the outcome must notify a person who is sitting at a computer. This could be done through email, SNMP trap or table, or any other method teams come up with.

Format of Final Project:

Teams can choose how they will communicate the results of their research. Keep in mind that the project's sponsor only has about 15 minutes to dedicate to understanding your efforts, as she has several solutions to review. You can provide an in-person demonstration -- recorded on video -- write a short paper, provide a dissertation with an executive summary, or come up with your own way of presenting your results. You must both communicate your results and document your project well enough that someone else can reproduce it.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Science and Technology;

Comments:

For proposal purposes, teams can plan for Samsung SNP-6320H cameras for IP-based systems and SCP-2373 for analog. Both of these are capable of pan, tilt, and zoom; teams can use these features or

not. Proposals can request additional hardware to build a system. When a proposal is accepted, ST will provide current hardware from our stock, which may differ from what is requested.

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

ID: DipLab171731

Kuwaiti Land Use: Understanding A Distorted Market and Improving Efficiency in Land Allocation

U.S. Embassy Kuwait, Economics Section

Near Eastern Affairs to Kuwait

Overview:

In Kuwait, 95% of land is owned by the government or controlled by the oil and gas sector. Less than five percent of the country's land is available for other uses. With only a small fraction of the country's land area available for building, competition is fierce and prices are astronomical. A 400 square meter (4500 square foot, 0.1 acre) residential lot can cost more than \$1 million, even in outlying areas. Larger plots can sell for more than \$10 million per acre. At the same time, Kuwait is littered with old and abandoned buildings serving no productive purpose. With no land taxes, property owners can let a valuable plot of prime land sit undeveloped for decades, further restricting the limited supply of usable land. Disinterest in selling land makes it difficult to assemble larger parcels needed for commercial and industrial use. This makes it more difficult for the non-oil parts of the economy to grow and substantially raises costs for large construction projects.

Questions: What can be done to make the Kuwaiti land market more efficient? Could property taxes provide the impetus to return unproductive land to the market? How can the government extract hydrocarbons without limiting access to the land above them? Would a more efficient land ownership system increase investment and GDP? Would such a system lead to lower costs for residential land?

Format of Final Project:

The final product would be a package of documents, including an analysis of pricing under various simulations (Excel workbook); a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the findings for an executive-level audience; a policy paper of 10-20 pages; and an executive summary of less than two pages.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; tax policy, petroleum exploration, Bedouin culture, Arabic language, land use, real property law;

Comments:

Government websites are not always kept up to date, so it might be difficult to get information or statistics.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Knowledge Management to Support African Union Peace Operations

United States Mission to the African Union (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

U.S. Mission to U.S. Mission to the African Union

Overview:

The African Union (AU) is one of the largest multilateral organizations outside of the United Nations system. As a Pan-African forum, the AU bridges regional divides through partnerships across its 55 member states and plays a leading role in the prevention, mediation, and management of conflict.

The AU Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD) plans, sustains, monitors, and manages AU peace operations. For PSOD to be more effective, it must improve information sharing and application of best practices and international standards. This project will be a partnership with the US Mission to the AU to assist PSOD to identify lessons learned and preserve best practices gained from AU engagement with its member states and partners.

Our university partners would help us in the following areas:

- I. Development of knowledge management guidelines for PSOD to leverage the multiplicity of its operational and policy documents in ways that are systematic and accessible to all relevant stakeholders.
- II. Creation of a systematic framework for PSOD to consolidate lessons learned and information relevant to the spectrum of peace support operations and policy implementation.
- III. Identifying, consolidating, and classifying documents generated by entities outside of PSOD but with relevance to the peace support, such as early warning and situation reports and threat assessments/analysis not currently part of the PSOD information architecture.
- IV. Development of an online portal to make all documents critical to achieving PSOD objectives available to all key stakeholders, thus facilitating communication and collaboration.

Format of Final Project:

Online Portal consolidating data from multiple sources

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Computer Science; Conflict, Stabilization, & Reconstruction; Counter Terrorism; International Relations; Political/Military Affairs

Comments:

None

Maximum Number of Projects: 1