Ishita Gopal

CONTACT INFORMATION

302 Pond Lab
Department of Political Science
Penn State University
University Park, PA 16802

Phone: (925)394-8793
Email: ishitagopal@gmail.com
Linkdin: http://bit.ly/1LtCmq7
Github: IshitaGopal

EDUCATION

Pennsylvania State University
Ph.D. (Dual Title) Political Science and Social Data Analytics — 2018 - 2023

University of Warwick
M.Sc. Economics — 2014 - 2015

Miranda House, University of Delhi
B.A. (Honours) Economics — 2011 - 2014

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Machine Learning, Data Mining, Natural Language Processing, Internet and Politics, Environmental Politics

LANGUAGES

Python, R, Stata

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Energy & Resources Institute, New Delhi
Research Associate - Modelling and Scenario Building Group — 2016 - 2018

- Contributed to stacking and scenario building exercises to study the impact of varying levels of 'new' renewable energy adoption on future fossil fuel consumption in India. A key finding indicated the possibility of eliminating the need for coal capacity additions beyond the year 2026 and advises the government to increase RE capacity proportionally. I was accepted to attend the International Summer School on Energy Systems, Germany 2017 (with funding) to present the findings of this project.
- Used time series methods for demand side forecasting of electricity consumption across states and within agriculture, industrial and residential sectors in India. The projections were a key input for electricity demand assessment under the Energy Transmissions Commission (ETC), India - that provides policy assessment support for the Government of India's de-carbonation goals.
- Designed and wrote a proposal that would employ a large scale randomized control trial to test the impact of peer effects on electricity consumption in the residential sector. This idea was selected for funding under the Framework Agreement between the Norwegian Government and TERI. The expected impact was to identify the usefulness of behavioral instruments for demand side management of electricity.

The Commonwealth Secretariat, London
Intern — November 2015

- Prepared country overviews related to the Hub and Spokes program
- Contributed to writing a short proposal for the analysis of cross country trade data using the gravity model of international trade

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Pennsylvania State University

Research Assistant for Professor Kevin Munger — Fall 2019

- Wrote scripts in Python to parse information stored in JSON and extract the start and end terms of legislators serving in the United States Congress since 1789. The aim was to create a time series of participation across all session of Congress to help understand the generational distribution of legislators across time.

Research Assistant for Professor Bruce Desmarais — Summer 2019; Spring 2020

Project: This working paper aims at study the impact of peer effects in the diffusion of support for environmental policies amongst legislators in the United States.

- Compiled a unique data set of legislators who support environmental legislation in the US using letters published on NCEL's (National Caucus of Environmental Legislators) website
- Used the igraph library in R to analyze network data created using the above data-set.

University of Warwick

Research Assistant for Professor Thiemo Fetzer — Nov 2015 - March 2016

- Developed scrapper programs in Python to automatically extract biographic information for a set of 60,000 politicians from Wikidata.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Pennsylvania State University

Teaching Assistant for Professor Kevin Munger — Fall 2019

- Assisted an advanced undergraduate course in Text as Data. Helped students deploy models, gave feedback on programming assignments and lead five programming lectures in R.

WORKING PAPERS

"Targeting and the Timing of Online Censorship: The Case of Venezuela"

"Legislative Support for Environmental Policy Innovation: An Experimental Test for Diffusion through a Cross-State Policy Network" (With Bruce Desmarais)

"Accessibility and Generalizability: Are Digital Media Effects Moderated by Age or Digital Literacy?" (With Kevin Munger, Jonathan Nagler, Joshua Tucker)

AWARDS

Winner of Nudgeathon, http://bit.ly/1OTkLsg

- Designed a money saving application - Rain and Shine App - which utilized insights from behavioral science
- App had 24-hr design and development cycle.
- Delivered team presentation and won first position with a £500 reward.