

José J. Alcocer

Contact Information

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Research Interests

Causal Inference (linear models, hypothesis testing, multi-level modeling, natural and randomized experimentation); Computational Social Science (Data Analytics, Machine Learning); Legislative Institutions; Political Communication; Public Policy Analysis; Representation; Race and Ethnicity; Social Media

Education

Ph.D. Candidate in Political Science and International Relations, August 2020 –
University of Southern California, Los Angeles CA

Fields: Methods and Research Tools; American Politics; Computational Social Science
Committee: Christian Grose (USC), Pablo Barberá (USC/Meta), Jeb Barnes (USC), Nicolas Duquette (USC/External)

Master of Public Policy, May 2019

University of Southern California, Los Angeles CA

Fields: Data Science and Policy; Econometrics and Program Evaluation; Health Policy; Environmental Policy
Certificate in Public Financial Management

B.A. Political Science, May 2017

California State University Long Beach, Long Beach CA

Fields: Law, Politics, and Public Policy
Certificate in Legal Studies
Pi Sigma Alpha Affiliate

Academic Research Experience

Graduate Research Assistant

Assistant to Dr. Benjamin Graham (University of Southern California | August 2023 –):

Contributing statistical assistance to multiple ongoing projects along with working in the Security and Political Economy (SPEC) Lab. Assist faculty and graduate students with questions on research design, causal inference, statistical models, and code inquiries in R, Python, and Stata. Onboard primarily for Everyday Respect Project.

Assistant to Dr. Sherry Zaks (University of Southern California | August 2021 – May 2022):

Translated archival documents of Salvadoran guerilla organization, FMLN, from Spanish to English using created language learning models. Annotated and created detailed summaries of Spanish documents conveying political organizational structure, combat and campaign strategies, and organizational policies. Contributed to building and updating a dataset on guerilla organizations transitioning to political parties.

Assistant to Dr. Abby Wood & Dr. Pamela McCann (University of Southern California | May 2021 – July 2022):

Analyzed several U.S. federal and state executive orders for the purpose of qualitatively coding and defining different definitions of essential workers and essential business industries throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Collected, cleaned, organized, and interpreted state-level data regarding essential worker definitions for the purpose of creating a dataset reflecting these several definitions across states. Created Python and R scripts that allowed the ability to web scrape tables from government websites and PDFs, such as the Book of the States reports. Researched and reported U.S. state differences in COVID-19 pandemic response, from their moment of closure to how they continued to evolve throughout the pandemic.

Assistant to Dr. Christian Grose (University of Southern California | August 2021 – January 2022):

Collected, cleaned, and organized data on U.S. state legislatures and their respective representatives' policy positions on several issues. Wrote several literature reviews on the topic of legislative term limits within the context of the U.S. Collected and analyzed several quantitative regression analyses related to citizen voting behavior within the U.S. Ran several racial polarized voting analyses and ability-to-elect analyses across several U.S. states using created Python scripts streamlining the output processes.

Directed Research Fellow

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Sarah Axeen (University of Southern California | January 2019 – May 2019):

Collected, cleaned, and organized data from various resources to conduct several statistical analyses. Quantitatively analyzed the collected data to construct several synthetic control models of Colorado in order to assess the causal impact of recreational marijuana legislation at the state level. Drafted and successfully published a manuscript that investigated the effects of recreational marijuana legislation on opioid overdose rates in the state of Colorado.

Academic
Teaching
Experience

Graduate Teaching Assistant

Course(s): POSC 110g: Ideology and Conflict (Spring 2023 | University of Southern California)
POSC 265gw: Environmental Challenges (Fall 2022 | University of Southern California)

Instructor

Course(s): Python for Social Science Workshop (Spring 2023 | University of Southern California)
Introduction to Programming in R (Summer 2022 | University of California, Los Angeles)

Industry
Experience

Administrator & Survey Statistician, October 2022 –

Federal Statistical Research Data Center (USC Branch), U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Enterprise Dissemination

Assist researchers with accessing and analyzing large-scale restricted microdata that is collected and governed by multiple federal agencies. Review complex research project proposals and work processes related to both administrative and technical programs to make recommendations for improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of the Census Bureau. Conduct U.S. Title 13 and Title 26 disclosure avoidance reviews on statistical outputs produced by researchers. Serve as point of contact between researchers, University of Southern California faculty, and the Census Bureau.

Policy Analyst, August 2018 – January 2020

The City Project, Los Angeles CA

Conducted several literature reviews concerning physical, mental, and social health effects related to public park and green space access—with an emphasis on underprivileged urban communities. Collaborated with a policy team to conduct interviews with various California city parks and recreational officials, conservancy officials, and city managers regarding their most recent park projects and grant writing procedures. Provided research support, qualitative data analyses, and writing on several agency working papers. Successfully drafted best practices white paper concerning California's Proposition 68 grant distribution process.

Publications

Alcocer, J. "Exploring the Effect of Colorado's Recreational Marijuana Policy on Opioid Overdose Rates", *Royal Society of Public Health*, 2020, Volume 185, 8-14.

Working
Papers

Alcocer, J. "Strategic Legislating: Causal Effects of Race and Ethnicity on Bill (Co)Sponsorship."

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Alcocer, J., and Christian Grose. “Top-Two Open Primary Systems Increase Ideological Diversity in State Legislative Parties.”

Alcocer, J. “Racializing Discourses: Are Minority Legislators Better Communicators?”

Alcocer, J. “Perceiving Tweets. Can Twitter Trends Influence Agenda Setting?”

Alcocer, J. “Presidential Influence on Congressional Agenda.”

Alcocer, J. “Tweeting Your Legislator. Strategic Use of Twitter to Increase Legislative Responsiveness.”

Grants and Fellowships

University of Southern California, Dornsife College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences:

2023 Political Science and International Relations Summer Grant, \$4,500

2023 Graduate School Summer Research and Writing Grant, \$2,000

2022 Graduate School Summer Research and Writing Grant, \$2,000

2022 Political Science and International Relations Summer Grant, \$1000

2021 Political Science and International Relations Summer Grant, \$2,500

2020 Graduate Diversity Scholarship and Full Five-Year Tuition Fellowship, \$34,000/yr.

Conference and Workshop Participation

Midwestern Political Science Association Annual Conference (MPSA). 2023

Western Political Science Association Annual Conference (WPSA). 2023

University of Oxford, Department of Politics & International Relations (DPIR), Spring School in Advanced Research Methods. 2023

Southern Political Science Association Annual Conference (SPSA). 2023

Syracuse University, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Institute for Qualitative and Mixed Method Research (IQMR) Annual Workshop. 2022

Technical Skills

Computer Languages: CSS & HTML, Java, JavaScript, LaTeX, Python, R, SQL, Stata

Web Applications: Google Suite, MS Office, Qualtrics, Survey Monkey

Language Skills: Spanish (Native Fluency), French (Limited Proficiency)

Packages Developed: topicmodelCV (R)