

# Sarah B. Bouchat

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EDUCATION	UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON	
	PhD, Political Science	exp. 2017
	<i>Fields:</i> Comparative Politics, Political Methodology	
	MA, Agricultural & Applied Economics	2016
	MA, Political Science	2013
	HARVARD UNIVERSITY–JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT	
	Master in Public Policy	2011
ADDITIONAL TRAINING	<i>Concentration:</i> Democracy, Politics, and Institutions	
	UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO	
	AB, International Studies (with General and Departmental Honors)	2008
	EMPIRICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THEORETICAL MODELS	Summer 2016
	IPSA–NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE—SUMMER METHODS SCHOOL	
	Bayesian Analysis	Summer 2015
	SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES SUMMER INSTITUTE	
DISSERTATION	Intermediate Burmese	Summer 2014
	Beginning Burmese	Summer 2013
	Beginning Khmer	Summer 2006
	<i>Title:</i> Common Knowledge: Elicited Priors and Low-Information Environments	
	<i>Committee:</i> Melanie Manion (Co-Chair), Scott Gehlbach (Co-Chair), Alexander Tahk, Rikhil Bhavnani, Ian Coxhead (Agricultural & Applied Economics), Edmund Malesky (Duke University)	

*Abstract:* My dissertation addresses the question: how can divergent prior knowledge be applied to the study of political questions? Determining effective ways to utilize the information experts provide is an important step in bridging quantitative and qualitative analyses—particularly in authoritarian and underdeveloped contexts, where qualitative researchers have significant prior experience but quantitative researchers are beginning to overcome data challenges. In a Bayesian context, elicited priors utilize the substantive knowledge of experts, whether through interviews or published research, to improve the accuracy of posterior estimates. My dissertation draws on machine learning methods to propose a new way to aggregate elicited priors—a way that improves statistical analyses and takes into consideration the much greater variation in “expertise” extant in the social sciences, and especially in authoritarian and underdeveloped contexts. I apply this method directly to a small dataset of the participation of Myanmar members of parliament (MPs) to show that the method allows for better estimation of a complex model even using small  $n$  data, but also uncovers motivations of MPs under authoritarianism that are more complex than previous work has led us to believe. I also apply the method in a study of US elections in order to assess what “expertise” is ideal for use in elicited-priors applications.

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS	Center for Southeast Asian Studies Field Research Grant, University of Wisconsin–Madison	2016
	Summer Initiative Funding, University of Wisconsin–Madison	2016
	Fulbright Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship (declined)	2015
	Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (Academic Year), Burmese	2015–2016
	Honorable Mention, Association for Asian Studies Usha Mahajani Award	2014
	Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (Academic Year), Thai (declined)	2014–2015
	Foreign Language & Area Studies Fellowship (Summer), Burmese	2014
	Center for Southeast Asian Studies Field Research Grant, University of Wisconsin–Madison	2014
	Summer Initiative Funding, University of Wisconsin–Madison	2014
	Leon D. Epstein Graduate Fellowship, University of Wisconsin–Madison	2013–2014
	Nominated, Association for Asian Studies Usha Mahajani Award	2013
	Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (Summer), Burmese	2013
	Summer Initiative Funding, University of Wisconsin–Madison	2013
	University Fellowship, University of Wisconsin–Madison	2012–2013
	Nominated, Best Policy Analysis Exercise (MPP thesis)	2011
	Carr Center for Human Rights Policy PAE Research Grant	2010
	Traub-Dicker Summer Research Fellowship	2010
	Kennedy School Grant	2009–2011
	Howell Murray Award, University of Chicago	2008
	Maroon Key Society, University of Chicago	2007–2008
	College Outstanding New Leader Award	2007
	Human Rights Program Internship Award, University of Chicago	2007
	Southeast Asian Studies Summer Institute Tuition Fellowship	2006
	Dean’s List, University of Chicago	2005–2008
PRESENTATIONS	International Methods Colloquium, Invited Speaker	2016
	University of Minnesota–Twin Cities Political Science Methods Colloquium, Invited Speaker	2016
	International Burma Studies Conference	2016
	American Political Science Association Annual Conference	2016
	Society for Political Methodology Conference, Poster Presenter	2016
	Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models Ending Conference	2016
	Midwest Political Science Association	2016, 2015
	Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting	2016
	Burma/Myanmar in Transition Conference, Lingnan University	2015
	University of Wisconsin–Madison Comparative Politics Colloquium	2014
	University of Wisconsin–Madison Experimental Politics Workshop	2014
	Foreign Policy Association Great Decisions Series—Myanmar	2013
	Harvard Gay Rights as Human Rights Conference	2011
	Face Value Campaign Advisory Board Convening	2010
	National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education	2007
TEACHING EXPERIENCE	UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON	
	<i>Instructor</i>	
	Political Science Dept. Incoming Student Math Camp	Summer 2016
	Political Science Dept. Incoming Student Math Camp	Summer 2015
	<i>Teaching/Lab Assistant</i>	
	Game Theory & Political Analysis (graduate, Prof. Alex Tahk)	Spring 2015
	Maximum Likelihood Estimation (graduate, Prof. John Ahlquist)	Fall 2014
	Introduction to Statistics in Political Science (graduate, Prof. Alex Tahk)	Fall 2014
	<i>Grader</i>	
	Political Inequality (undergraduate, Prof. Rikhil Bhavnani)	Fall 2015

HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
*Course Material Design*

Political Corruption (undergraduate, Profs. Jim Alt and Daniel Ziblatt)

Fall 2013

*Instructor/Trainer*

Harvard Law School Advocates for Human Rights

2009

RESEARCH  
EXPERIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN—MADISON—LAW SCHOOL  
*Research Assistant, Professor Jason Yackee*

Madison, WI  
Summer 2016

- Designed R script to conduct a text analysis and comparison of the language in bilateral treaties between developed and developing nations

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN—MADISON—POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT  
*Research Assistant, Professor John Ahlquist*

Madison, WI  
Summer 2015

- Wrote R script to clean and merge over 480 survey datasets from the World Bank for a study of informal sector performance worldwide

HARVARD UNIVERSITY—DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT  
*Research Assistant, Professor James Alt*

Cambridge, MA  
Summer 2011, Summer 2013

- Composed lectures and slides for a Fall 2013 undergraduate political corruption course on topics including: US Political Machines, Legislative Corruption, Campaign Finance, Bureaucratic Corruption, Civil Service Reform, Foreign Aid, Natural Resources & Kleptocracy, and Transparency

UNU—WORLDWIDE INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS RESEARCH  
*Research Assistant, Professors Rikhil Bhavnani and Kate Baldwin*

Helsinki, Finland  
June–Oct. 2012

- Constructed a database of secondary analyses of political experiments
- Conducted outreach to academics and researchers to solicit articles for inclusion in the database

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY  
*Research Associate, Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows Program*

Washington, DC  
Sept. 2011–July 2012

- Assisted fellows from Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Russia, Tibet, and the United States with research design and data collection on issues including electoral autocracy, democracy assistance and aid, civil society, liberation technology, and political parties
- Reviewed literature on electoral autocracy and rent-seeking, especially in the Caucasus
- Identified articles and books to assist in constructing syllabi about social capital, civil society engagement, and democratization for Russian university students, and women and gender studies for Tibetan college students in India

HARVARD UNIVERSITY—CARR CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY  
*Research Associate*

Cambridge, MA  
2010–2011

- Composed case studies of media and messaging strategies from historical US social movements to inform a public service advertising campaign combating LGBTQ stigma
- Co-facilitated a biweekly study group on human rights and social movements
- Managed logistics and volunteers for the 2011 Gay Rights as Human Rights Conference, with more than 125 participants and 30 presenters

*Traub-Dicker Fellow*

Summer 2010

- Conducted independent research on Singapore civil society organization tactics

*Associate Fellow*

2009–2010

- Compiled and analyzed US polling and public opinion data about anti-LGBTQ bias
- Created a presentation of goals and research as a fundraising mechanism for the nonprofit Face Value Project

	<i>Intern</i>	Summer 2009
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reviewed public health and sociology literature on the welfare of LGBTQ youth in schools to support a campaign for Massachusetts K-12 anti-bullying curricula</li> <li>- Assisted in developing and editing a survey of Myanmar democracy activists</li> </ul>	
	BÜNDNIS FÜR DEMOKRATIE UND TOLERANZ	Berlin, Germany
	<i>Human Rights Intern</i>	Summer 2007
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Devised impact measures to evaluate over 150 NGO immigrant rights projects</li> <li>- Developed recommendations for a national tolerance campaign based on prior NGO projects</li> <li>- Designed judgment guidelines and tracked submissions for the 2007 “Best Practices” NGO tolerance campaign competition</li> </ul>	
INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE	Myanmar	Dec. 2014–Jan. 2015
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conducted preliminary dissertation fieldwork, including interviews with civil society representatives and historical research at the Myanmar National Archives in Yangon</li> </ul>	
	Hong Kong SAR	Dec. 2010–Jan. 2011
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conducted semi-structured interviews with civil society activists for master’s thesis research examining social movement strategies in nondemocratic contexts</li> </ul>	
	Germany	June–Sept. 2007
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Served as a Human Rights Intern with the Bündnis für Demokratie und Toleranz for 3 months through the University of Chicago Human Rights Internship Program</li> </ul>	
	Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar	Aug.–Sept. 2006
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developed international advocacy strategies in collaboration with representatives of over 20 grassroots democracy organizations in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, and Mae Sot as a Free Burma Project/U.S. Campaign for Burma Delegate</li> </ul>	
AFFILIATIONS	Member, American Political Science Association	2012–present
	Member, Midwest Political Science Association	2012–present
	Member, Association for Asian Studies	2012–present
	Advisor, Harvard University Carr Center—Sexuality, Gender & Human Rights Program	2012–present
SKILLS	<i>Languages:</i> German (Advanced), Burmese (Advanced), Khmer (Beginner), Eastern Armenian (Beginner)	
	<i>Computer:</i> Mac OSX, Windows 10, R, L <sup>A</sup> T <sub>E</sub> X, STATA, SPSS, Microsoft Office	