

NATALIE AYERS

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Use of data analytics, computation, modeling, and machine learning for conflict, security, and foreign policy applications, including developing and evaluating methods for societal stability post-conflict and investigating conflict intervention efficacy and improvements.

EDUCATION

Harvard University , Cambridge, MA	Expected May 2027
PhD in Government	
MA in Government	May 2025
Harris School of Public Policy, University of Chicago , Chicago, IL	
MS in Computational Analysis and Public Policy, with Honors	June 2022
Siebel Scholar, Class of 2022: awarded annually for academic excellence and demonstrated leadership to over 90 top students from the world's leading graduate schools	
Pearson Certificate in Global Conflict Studies	
Kenyon College , Gambier, OH	
BA in Classics, <i>summa cum laude</i> ; Minor in Statistics	May 2017
College Year in Athens, Study Abroad Program , Athens, Greece	January 2016 – May 2016

RESEARCH

PUBLICATIONS

- [“Statistical Intuition Without Coding \(or Teachers\).”](#) With Gary King, Zagreb Mukerjee, and Dominic Skinnion. *Forthcoming at Political Science & Politics*.

WORKING PAPERS

- “External Support and Persistent Authoritarianism in the Middle East.” With Daniel Baissa and Melani Cammett.
- [“Diversionary Escalation: Theory and Evidence from Eastern Ukraine.”](#) With Christopher Blair, Joseph Ruggiero, Austin L. Wright, and Konstantin Sonin.
- “After Rebels Rule: The Developmental Legacies of Rebel Occupation in Iraq.” With Nihad Aboud, Laura Saavedra-Lux, and Blair Welsh.
- “Computational Approaches to the Study of Ancient Greek Conflict.”
- “Optimal Subsetting for Text Data.” With Naijia Liu, António Câmara, and Saki Kuzshima.

DATASETS

- “VIINA 2.0: Violent Incident Information from News Articles on the 2022 Russian Invasion of Ukraine.” With Yuri M. Zhukov. <https://github.com/zhukovyuri/VIINA>

RESEARCH AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Melani Cammett, Harvard University	August 2025 - Present
<i>Research Assistant</i>	Cambridge, MA
▪ Assist with data development and analysis for Dr. Melani Cammett’s research into political leadership and intergroup relations in post-conflict countries	

Department of Government, Harvard University	August 2025 - Present
<i>Concentration Advisor</i>	Cambridge, MA
▪ Advise 50 Harvard undergraduate Government concentrators on their academic plans, coursework, and goals	

Political Violence Research Workshop, Harvard University
Student Coordinator

August 2023 – December 2025
Cambridge, MA

- Plan and organize speakers, attendees, food, and other logistics for bi-weekly meeting of the Political Violence Research Workshop at Harvard University, with faculty coordinator Christoph Mikulaschek

Department of Government, Harvard University
Thesis Advisor

August 2024 – May 2025
Cambridge, MA

- Advised two Harvard undergraduate Government concentrators through conceptualization, research, and writing of their senior theses

Department of Government, Harvard University
Teaching Fellow

August 2024 – December 2024
Cambridge, MA

- Led teaching sections, developed teaching materials (eg, [Downloading Remote Sensing Data StoryMap](#)), held office hours, and graded student assignments for Gov 1008: Introduction to Geographic Information Systems, taught by Kanglin Chen

Institute for Quantitative Social Science, Harvard University
Research Assistant

June 2022 – March 2025
Cambridge, MA

- Co-develop [2k1-in-Silico](#), a R Shiny dashboard used to teach statistical distributions and concepts, for Dr. Gary King

University of Chicago

September 2021 – July 2022

Teaching Assistant

Chicago, IL

- Led teaching sessions, led office hours, and graded student assignments for Computing for the Social Sciences, an R-language course taught by Dr. Benjamin Soltoff
- Led teaching sessions, assisted with student questions, and graded course material for Harris School of Public Policy's Program Evaluation course taught by Jeffrey Grogger
- Assisted with student questions and graded course material for Harris Introduction to Machine Learning course taught by Guillaume Pouliot

Oeindrila Dube, University of Chicago

December 2021 – March 2022

Research Assistant

Chicago, IL

- Developed record linkage processes in Python to support Dr. Oeindrila Dube's research into Pakistani elections

Cook County Medical Examiner's Office

January 2021 – July 2021

Research Intern

Chicago, IL

- Perform spatial and statistical analysis on Cook County gunshot homicides and opioid deaths; create [interactive visualizations](#) and [presentation](#) of main findings

Micah Myers, Kenyon College

January 2015 – May 2017

Digital Classics Research Assistant

Gambier, OH

- Assisted in research of Micah Myers to visualize travel in ancient texts for publication on [Mapping Ancient Texts](#)
- Responsible for data creation, data input, data management, and CARTO mapping for 8 travel narratives of 57 unique locations associated with a specific city of interest

Kenyon College

August 2016 – May 2017

Introductory Greek Assistant Teacher

Gambier, OH

- Developed and executed weekly, 1-hour classes for the Introductory Ancient Greek class to review and clarify material
- Tutored students outside of weekly session

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Crisis Ready
Data Science Affiliate

March 2023 – Present
Cambridge, MA

- Contribute to production of and enhancements for [ReadyMapper](#), an interactive tool providing mobility, vulnerability, and health infrastructure data for active crisis situations. Built in Vue, using Python for backend data processing
- Co-lead design and development of [Climateverse](#), an LLM-enhanced climate database designed for non-expert users to facilitate climate data analysis in the Global South

United Nations University - WIDER <i>Data Science Consultant</i>	January 2026 – Present Helsinki, Finland
• Perform data generation, analysis, and data science tasks in Python and R in support of UNU-WIDER research into conflict, climate, and development.	
World Bank and United Nations University - WIDER <i>Consultant</i>	June 2024 – June 2025 Helsinki, Finland and Maputo, Mozambique
• Led data generation and analysis in R and Python for the project Assessing the costs of conflict in Mozambique; used satellite, survey, and financial data to build statistical and ML models to assess costs and identify risk factors of the conflict	
Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health <i>Data Science Research Assistant</i>	January 2024 – September 2024 Cambridge, MA
▪ Develop pilot digitization application for Guyana Ministry of Health malaria records. Built as a Python optical character recognition model accessible via a web application	
Center for Effective Global Action, University of California, Berkeley <i>Data Science for Development Intern</i>	June 2021 – September 2021 Berkeley, CA
▪ Developed learning modules for novel geographic datasets, primarily remote sensing data, and advanced data techniques as part of CEGA's Geo4Dev initiative to lower their barriers to use for researchers and policy makers	
Keyrus USA <i>Senior Consultant (previously Data Technology Consultant, Data Technology Analyst)</i>	August 2017 – September 2020 New York, NY
▪ Headed reporting data ecosystem for Customer Success department of 9,000+, international financial services company	
▪ Provided full-service business intelligence support to multiple clients including requirements discovery, solution design, solution implementation, user testing, production deployment, and maintenance	
▪ Conducted multi-day client trainings for groups of up to 50 in BI technologies; mentored 9 junior colleagues	
Kenyon College <i>Introductory Statistics Grader</i>	August 2016 – December 2016 Gambier, OH
▪ Graded all assignments for Professor of Mathematics and Statistics Brad Hartlaub's Introductory Statistics course	

VOLUNTEER WORK AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Harvard Government Department Graduate Student Association <i>Rules and Elections Official</i>	September 2023 – May 2024 Cambridge, MA
▪ Ensure compliance with GSA constitution; implement annual elections for GSA positions.	
Institute of Politics, University of Chicago <i>Graduate Chair on Student Advisory Board; Fellows Ambassador</i>	March 2021 – June 2022 Chicago, IL
▪ Foster graduate student engagement with the IOP; shape IOP programming and offerings to meet graduate needs	
▪ Helped lead and plan weekly, virtual seminars and office hours as a member of IOP Fellow Sally Yates' team	
Project on Political Reform <i>Co-Chair (previously Secretary)</i>	October 2020 – June 2022 Chicago, IL
▪ Plan and execute university events promoting political reform and fostering communication among divergent groups	
▪ Co-produce Project on Political Reform podcast exploring connections between politics and development	
▪ Record and organize minutes for board meetings	
Kenyon College <i>Kenyon-STEM Treasurer and Science Café Co-Chair</i>	January 2015 – May 2017 Gambier, OH
▪ Planned and led monthly, cross-discipline Science Café discussions of current topics in sciences and humanities	
▪ Planned, managed, and distributed funds for 10+ organization events and outreach initiatives	
Kenyon College <i>Production Stage Manager (previously Assistant Stage Manager)</i>	August 2013 – February 2016 Gambier, OH
▪ Organized and managed rehearsals, materials, and production for teams of up to 33 actors and crew members	
▪ Called cues and managed staff for performances with audiences of over 300 attendees	

- Met regularly to provide advice and encouragement to freshmen students interested in the STEM fields

LANGUAGES

- English, French (Intermediate)

HONORS AND AWARDS

Weatherhead Center Research Cluster on Identity Politics Graduate Fellow	September 2023 – May 2025
▪ Selected as graduate fellow with funding as part of Identity Politics research cluster dedicated to understanding and addressing ethnic and religious conflict	
Siebel Scholar, Class of 2022	September 2021
▪ Awarded annually for academic excellence and demonstrated leadership to over 90 top students from the world's leading graduate schools	
Phi Beta Kappa	May 2017
George L. Brain Prize in Classics	April 2017
▪ Awarded annually to one graduating senior for top performance in Classics	
Carl Diehl Prize in Classics	April 2015
▪ Awarded annually to one student for top performance in Introductory Ancient Greek	
Kenyon College Merit List	December 2013 – May 2017

SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

- Python, SQL, R, ArcGIS Pro, Git, LaTeX, Alteryx, Tableau, AWS, Stata, Snowflake, Powershell, Bash, Tidal, Alation, Microsoft Office Suite, JIRA, SSIS, CARTO, Oracle, Vertica, Microsoft SQL Server, Hive, and MongoDB
- Knowledge of data analysis, machine learning, natural language processing, GIS, satellite imagery and remote sensing, deep learning, web scraping, data warehousing, data visualization, data cleansing, ETL design and deployment, statistical methods, research, business intelligence, project management, client relations, training, presentation

CONFERENCES

PAPER PRESENTATIONS

Nihad Aboud, Natalie Ayers, Laura Saavedra-Lux, and Blair Welsh. Sept 2025. “After Rebels Rule: The Developmental Legacies of Rebel Occupation in Iraq.” Presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Conference in Vancouver, CA.

Natalie Ayers, Akash Yadav et al. Feb 2024. “The state of data for climate impact ascertainment and adaptation.” Presented at the Organizations and Environmental Sustainability Conference at Stanford University, CA.

Akash Yadav, Natalie Ayers, et al. Feb 2024. “Climateverse: An LLM-enabled, searchable, open data repository of curated datasets for climate adaptation.” Presented virtually at the Climate Change and Health Research Coordinating Center’s Climate and Health Conference, jointly sponsored by the Harvard T.H. Chan and the Boston University Schools of Public Health.

Natalie Ayers, Chris Blair, and Austin Wright. Oct 2023. “Diversionary Proxy War: Opposition Protest and Russian Escalation in Eastern Ukraine.” Presented at the Empirical Study of Conflict Project’s 2023 Annual Meeting at the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs, DC.

Natalie Ayers, Chris Blair, and Austin Wright. Sept 2023. “Diversionary Proxy War: Opposition Protest and Russian Escalation in Eastern Ukraine.” Presented at the Conflict Research Society Conference at King’s College London, UK.

PANELS

Moderator. March 2024. “Data Science for Humanitarian Work in Conflict Zones.” Panelists Dr. Erica Nelson, Daphne Joseph, and Rana Hussein. Part of the Women in Data Science Cambridge event in Cambridge, MA.

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Natalie Ayers. July 2025. Intergroup spatial integration and post-conflict recovery. Presented at the Political Methodology Conference 2025 at Emory University, GA.

Natalie Ayers. July 2023. [*Computational Approaches to the Study of Ancient Greek Conflict*](#). Presented at the Political Methodology Conference 2023 at Stanford University, CA.

Natalie Ayers, Lorenzo Gitto, and Ponni Arunkumar. Oct 2022. [*Cook County Gunshot and Opioid Death Historical Analysis*](#). Presented at the National Association of Medical Examiners 2022 Annual Conference in Dallas, TX.

Sam Fishman and Natalie Ayers. Oct 2021. [*Open Resources and Data for Geospatial Analysis of Development Programs*](#). Presented virtually at Evidence for Development: What Works Global Summit 2021.

Natalie Ayers. May 2017. [*Modeling HIV-1 Persistence and Treatment*](#). Presented at Kenyon College, Gambier, OH.