

Samir (Sammy) Duggasani

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Education

Harvard College | Cambridge, MA

September 2021 – May 2025

- B.A. in Government and Data Science, Minor in Computer Science, GPA: 3.89
- Organizations: Institute for Quantitative Social Science, The Harvard Advocate, South Asian Association, Ghungroo

Projects

Harvard Weatherhead Center for International Affairs | Hyderabad, India & Cambridge, MA

May 2024 – May 2025

Undergraduate Associate & Rogers Family Research Fellow

Senior Thesis: YouTube Influencers, WhatsApp Strategy, and Generative AI Content in India's Elections

- Received a \$4,000 grant to conduct fieldwork on AI-enabled misinformation in India's 2024 post-election landscape; later awarded the **Hoopes Prize**, Harvard's highest undergraduate thesis honor, including a \$5,000 prize and archival in the University's permanent collection
- Conducted 22 in-depth, **in-person interviews** totaling 30+ hours with politicians, consultants, and synthetic media firms, establishing key insights into AI's role in misinformation and securing connections with IT wings of four major political parties
- Developed a multilingual **WhatsApp scraper** from scratch to analyze AI-generated content and campaign messaging in 24 political party groups across English, Hindi, Marathi, and Telugu-speaking networks
- Extracted 10,000+ messages from groups of up to 1,000 members under **IRB protocols**, leveraging **OpenAI API** to translate texts and applying **sentiment analysis** to provide novel insights into the content political parties disseminate on WhatsApp
- Scraped 1,000+ videos via **YouTube API** to identify interviews of politicians using **NLP-based name extraction** from titles and sentiment analysis of top 25 comments, then applied a **difference-in-differences** design to measure causal impact on vote share

Harvard University, Department of Government | Cambridge, MA

August 2024 – December 2025

2024 U.S. Presidential Election Forecasting Blog

- Built and deployed a weekly-updated election forecast using **R** with polling, economic, demographic, and campaign data; implemented **Bayesian updating**, **random forests**, **OLS**, **binomial logit simulations**, and **multilevel regression and poststratification** to model state-level outcomes
- Engineered features from sources like the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Federal Election Commission, and Census; used **cross-validation**, **bootstrapping**, and **regularization (LASSO, Ridge, Elastic-Net)** to improve model accuracy/generalizability
- Published results and narrative commentary in a public-facing blog with interactive visualizations (**ggplot2**, **plotly**, **leaflet**), benchmarking forecasts against *FiveThirtyEight* and *Silver Bulletin*

Harvard University, Department of Government | Cambridge, MA

August 2023 – December 2023

Research Assistant for Prof. Feyaad Allie | Project: The Politics of Marginalized Groups in Multi-Ethnic Democracies

- Built a comprehensive dataset on ethnic quotas by compiling data on minority protections across 163 countries, filling a critical gap in global governance research and contributing to a forthcoming book project
- Normalized, cleansed, and analyzed 350,000+ observations from three datasets using **Python (Pandas, NumPy)** and **R (dplyr, ggplot2)**, identifying trends in attitudes toward political representation, democracy, and caste-based discrimination.

Harvard Business School, Ethical Intelligence Lab | Cambridge, MA

September 2022 – May 2023

Research Assistant for Prof. Julian De Freitas | Project: The Impact of Moral Failures on Consumer Perception and Firm Identity

- Designed and executed **A/B tests** via randomized **Qualtrics** surveys; calculated appropriate sample size using **power analysis** to ensure statistical validity and used **logistic regression** for post-hoc subgroup analysis of treatment effects on brand perception

Experience

Center for AI and Digital Policy | Washington, D.C.

May 2024 – August 2024

US AI Law and Policy Fellow

- Facilitated Hill outreach, establishing **bipartisan** working relationships with House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) and Rep. Rich McCormick (R-GA) to promote **responsible AI** legislation
- Secured support from the National Association of Voice Actors for a Federal Trade Commission complaint addressing copyright infringement and privacy abuses by AI startups, advocating for artist rights over their likeness and intellectual property
- Conducted legal research using **LexisNexis** to analyze precedent cases, drafting public comments for the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board to advocate against the unrestricted use of AI in counterterrorism operations

Slingshot, Y Combinator S22 | San Francisco, CA

June 2023 – August 2023

Operations Intern

- Drove lead generation for an early-stage startup leveraging AI to correct medical billing errors, engaging healthcare stakeholders through targeted outreach and **cold calling**
- Built and deployed automation tools using **React** to streamline financial aid applications for nonprofit hospitals, reducing manual filing time and improving integration with billing systems

Skills

Programming: Python (NumPy, pandas, scikit-learn, TensorFlow, Keras, PyMC, Hugging Face Transformers, spaCy, seaborn, matplotlib, BeautifulSoup), **R** (dplyr, ggplot2, caret, randomForest, glmnet, leaflet, stm), **SQL**

Machine Learning: neural networks, random forests, gradient boosting, feature engineering, hyperparameter tuning

Tools: Google Analytics, Jupyter, Git, dbt, Qualtrics, Amplitude

Languages: Spanish (fluent), Telugu (conversational)