# 2017 Summer Mentorship Experience

## Student Proposal

### Student Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduation Date</th>
<th>Major/Minor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/1/2019</td>
<td>Major: Spanish and Political Science Minor: Blount Undergraduate Initiative</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentorship Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>Anywhere in Alabama or Washington, DC</td>
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### Financial Award

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<tr>
<th>Project Budget</th>
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### Academic Credit and Department

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
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<tr>
<td>Public Policy</td>
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<tr>
<th>Research Advisor</th>
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<th>Negotiable Project?</th>
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**Student Experience**

As a Spanish major, I have reached a proficiency in the language that allows me to facilitate and maintain conversations with native speakers with ease. I have always been cognizant of immigration issues nationwide, and in my home state of North Carolina, and this summer mentorship experience will only augment the scope of my knowledge. In high school, I was a member of the Spanish Honor Society, and for my service requirement, I translated for Spanish-speaking families at school functions such as parent-teacher conferences. Therefore, I have hands-on experience with interacting with Spanish-speaking families in my community, and translating English to Spanish, and vice versa. Whereas I have had no previous experience with working at a law firm or public policy think tank, I am eager to expand my comfort zone and gain valuable insight.

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<th>Approximate End Date</th>
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<td>7/31/2016</td>
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<td>8 weeks</td>
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<th>Project Description</th>
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If there was one major takeaway from this most recent presidential election season, it was that immigration reform was at the forefront of the platform for both political parties. President Donald Trump advocated a strong anti-illegal immigration stance during his campaign and announced his intention to not only deport undocumented residents but also construct a wall.
along the southern border that our country shares with Mexico. The future of millions of undocumented residents hung in a state of limbo and uneasiness as they awaited the determination of their fate; with the election of Donald Trump undocumented residents now have a heightened fear and apprehension of racial profiling, discrimination, and - perhaps most devastatingly - deportation. Even those undocumented residents born in the United States cannot rest easy under the rule of President Trump's anti-immigration administration. In this current political climate of anxiety and trepidation, undocumented residents need to find consolation and security in legal services and representation that will ensure the legitimization of their civil liberties.

Plan of Action
My objective in obtaining a summer mentorship experience is to gain practical knowledge and insight of legal services, at a law firm or nonprofit organization whose clientele are Spanish-speaking residents of the United States, both legal and undocumented. As a Political Science and Spanish double major on a pre-law track, I want to employ my bilingual abilities and passions for Latino and Hispanic culture to affect a positive change within Spanish-speaking communities in Washington, DC and across the state of Alabama. Whether in Alabama or Washington DC, I intend to enhance my education of Latino communities and establish personal and professional relationships with community members. In tandem with learning more about legal services, I will research immigration policy specific to the state of Alabama. My intended project is to write a policy paper that pertains to the current immigration policy of Alabama. Furthermore, the policy recommendation will offer suggestions as to how our state legislature may modify and expand immigration policy to adopt a more humanitarian and inclusive attitude towards the undocumented residents that make positive contributions to our state every day.

I have identified a potential community partner that is eager to assist in broadening the scope of my summer internship experience. Adelante Alabama is a nonprofit organization based in Hoover, Alabama that provides deportation defense to undocumented residents, and organizes numerous outreach and community programs and initiatives that serves the Birmingham metropolitan area. Their focus is labor rights, and they implement Know Your Rights campaigns that articulate employees' protections against discrimination in the workplace, and advocate for higher wages. Their office is full of artwork and cultural artifacts made by community members and their positive influence in the Spanish-speaking communities of the area is apparent.

Timeline
- April-May: Immigration Policy research
- June 1st-July 31st: Research/Hands-on Legal Experience and meetings
- August: meetings and presentation of information to community partner, and at the Annual Symposium

This summer mentorship experience will enable me to enhance my knowledge of public policy and legal services, while simultaneously serving undocumented residents and other Spanish-speaking clientele. Through writing the policy paper, I will not only augment my understanding of policy issues but also inform others of current Alabama immigration policy and the areas in which it can improve and progress. My hope is to obtain information and insight that will allow me to create a product that will benefit the state of Alabama.
2017 Summer Mentorship Experience
Student Proposal

Student Information
Graduation Date and Major/Minor
5/1/2018
Major: German Language and Literature
Minor: Social Welfare
Mentorship Location
Anywhere in Alabama

Financial Award
Project Budget

Academic Credit and Department
Classification
Research

Research Advisor
Yes
Dr. Thomas Fox

Negotiable Project?
Open to alternatives

Student Experience
Last semester I wrote a paper with the guidance of Dr. Fox, titled "Nazi and Neo-Nazi: Entartete Musik" and Racialized Perceptions of Music. It examined the differences of public rhetoric surrounding "Black" and "White" produced music. I will be presenting a poster about this research at the Illinois-Wesleyan University Annual German Undergraduate Conference late March. The paper was a semester long endeavor, searching through neo-Nazi websites, Facebook pages, Twitter threads, and the like, as well as analyzing mainstream perceptions of music through magazines, tweets, and vocalized opinions. My conclusion was that the hierarchies and associated musical and cultural values of Nazi Germany are closely tied to the current hierarchies and associated values of the Alt-Right and conservative mainstream today.

I am passionate about the intersection of German and American studies, which I view this research to encapsulate. After three years studying German at the collegiate level and the same amount of time immersing myself in queer theory, African American studies, diverse communities, and protest movements, I feel prepared to take on the interdisciplinary work my proposed research will require. Not only will my academic background help me, but my personal as well. I have met Nazis - both from the Third Reich and from the new resurgence. I have engaged in critical discussions about the Holocaust with my German high school classmates at Auschwitz as the lone foreigner in the room. I have witnessed the seeming hypocrisy of American democratic rhetoric mirrored in that of the German. From the colonial era onward, there is no major difference between the two nations' popular discourses.
I also have a strong relationship to the Southern Poverty Law Center, which among its many worthy causes, focuses significantly on hate group monitoring and research. This will be necessary for this project.

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<th>Approximate Start Date</th>
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<td>Approximate End Date</td>
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<td>12 weeks</td>
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<td>Issue(s)</td>
<td>Discrimination (Racial)</td>
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Project Description

Abstract:

The author seeks to expose the relationship between the foundational writings and influential philosophies of American citizens during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the current writings, philosophies, and self-representation of twenty-first century Neo-Nazis (commonly referred to as the Alternative-Right). Much of current mainstream coverage about the American Neo-Nazis is framed as either an American “phenomena” or something that is ghastly un-American, which is remarkably ahistorical and revisionist. America has always required slavery and genocide, amongst other forms of exploitation, to create a White Christian Supremacist and capitalist state. Because the liberal-moderate seeks to weigh every opinion as worthy, the resistance against the Alt-Right/Neo-Nazi becomes increasingly more futile, as the true roots of the right-radical movement continue to be ignored in favor more palatable interpretations. Many chose to believe that the Alt-Right’s actions and language come from the insecurity of being “economically disenfranchised”, instead of coming from their fervent support of a white supremacist state. Through the presentation of in-depth and cohesive research concerning the basis of “American values” and their support of Neo-Nazism, the author hopes to re-center and inform honest coverage of the movement and the events they influence. Sources will include written and visual material from seventeenth and eighteenth century Americans, modern day analyses of said material, and online footprints of Neo-Nazi individuals and groups, with guidance from the Southern Poverty Law Center’s monitoring organization Hatewatch and a Blackburn mentor.

Proposal:

The intended final form of the proposed project is a research paper and a digital pamphlet, which will contain the results of the paper in simplified form. The research paper will be submitted to various peer reviewed journals, while the pamphlet will be sent out to the community partner and others. I hope that the pamphlet will educate and guide both Alabama media and interested individuals in their comprehension of Neo-Nazism, also known as ‘the alt-right’. Because of the danger of the movement garnering more support than it already has, it is critically important to shape the resistance as one steeped in correct information. Acceptance of ‘alternative facts’ that fuel the post-truth movement is best combated by those that both grasp reality and wield the powerful weapon of intersectional and historical context.

Right-radical websites such as Breitbart and The Daily Stormer organize followers to engage in vicious group attacks. Current ‘twitter trolls’ and 4chan ‘spies’ demonstrate an incredible
capacity for the subversion of liberal moderate language and identity politics for their own
movement’s gain. The League of the South, in part emboldened by the ever-widening support of
the right-radical movement, recently declared a commitment to outright militancy. American
society is being confronted with a very fragile and dangerous situation.

Non-American historical mistakes regarding the address of problems posed by right-radical
movements, most notably European fascism post-World War I, are given virtually exclusive
attention in the references and coverage of the current American radical-right. This perpetuates
a one-sided and ahistorical view of extensive ‘American’ endorsement of xenophobia, ethnic
cleansing, violent imperialism, homo- and transphobia, and Christian extremism from the Colonial
to Reagan era.

Support from Blackburn enables the author to develop relationship to non-academic experts in
the field, most specifically with the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Hatewatch staff and
Blackburn’s Fellow network. The findings will be provided to the SPLC Hatewatch and other
Alabama-based advocacy groups as a media guide for correct coverage of the radical-right
movement. I will also look to provide the information to AL.com, UA’s College of Communication
and Information Sciences, and the Crimson White.

Timeline:

• March 31 - April 1, 2017: Illinois Wesleyan University Poster Presentation of “Entartete
  Kunst And Racialized Perceptions of Music: Kanye West and Taylor Swift in Neo-Nazi and
  Mainstream Culture”
• April 2017 (TBD): Meeting with SPLC Hatewatch staff to establish a framework for safety,
  access Hatewatch materials, and interview experts. Potential interviews with right-
  radical members and leaders, if conditions allow.
• May 2017: Research will continue with analyses of internet hangouts, monitoring of
  correlated Facebook and Twitter postings, and examinations of early American written
  and visual sources.
• June 2017: Meetings continue with Blackburn mentor as well as with SPLC Hatewatch
  point of contact. If deemed safe/appropriate, contact made and meeting scheduled with
  Neo-Nazi from the League of the South or other Alabama-centric white nationalist
  group.
• July 2017: Results compiled for drafting process.
• August 1, 2017: Final written draft of research submitted to Blackburn Institute
• August 11, 2017: Presentation of results to community partner.
• August 25-26, 2017: Presentation of research given at the Blackburn Annual Symposium,
  if Blackburn Institute Summer Mentorship Experience is awarded to Student.
• Fall 2017: Submission of paper to various peer reviewed journals and conferences,
  depending on current calls for papers not yet released.
• Spring 2018: Presentation of completed work at the URCA Spring 2018 conference and
  possibly spring 2018 Illinois Wesleyan German Undergraduate Conference.
### Student Information

**Graduation Date and Major/Minor**
- 5/1/2018
- Major: Public Health
- Minor: Civic Engagement & Leadership

**Mentorship Location**
- Anywhere in Alabama or Washington, DC

**Financial Award**
- [Redacted]

**Project Budget**
- [Redacted]

**Academic Credit and Department**
- No
- Classification: Research, Public Policy
- Research Advisor: No
- Negotiable Project?: Open to alternatives

### Student Experience

As a Public Health major, I am already aware of the pressing health issues facing citizens of our state and country. I enjoy keeping up with what research and technology could influence health in the future, and genomics are a large part of that. On the Blackburn Institute’s fall travel experience, I toured HudsonAlpha and saw firsthand what a genomic research facility does and how it benefits Alabama. I have already taken several classes that pertain to ethics, either for my major or my minor, and would love to explore the ethical issues at play in genomic research.

### Approximate Dates

- **Start Date**: 6/1/2016
- **End Date**: 7/31/2016
- **Preferred Duration**: 4 weeks, 6 weeks, 8 weeks, 10 weeks, 12 weeks

### Issue(s)

- Public Health (Research), Other (Specify)
- Genomics

### Project Description

The Human Genome Project finished sequencing the entire human genome in 2003. Because of this scientific advancement, researchers now have an unprecedented wealth of knowledge about human genes. According to Healthy People 2020, the federal government’s 10-year agenda for improving health in the United States, genomics play a role in 9 of the 10 leading causes of death. Successfully decoding the human genome is an exciting and monumental step in preventing disease and improving quality of life; however, the scientific community should keep ethics in mind as they pursue this research. For example, genetic testing can help people discover their susceptibility of acquiring a specific disease, but it does not help them cope with the news. There
is also emerging research on not only how to analyze genetic information but how to change it. While this could be a helpful form of therapy, there need to be ethical standards and regulations in place when developing these new treatments.

More and more biotechnology organizations are forming in Alabama, creating new jobs and giving the economy a much-needed boost. HudsonAlpha and The University of Alabama at Birmingham, among other organizations, have made our state a world leader in genomic research. Alabamians have the opportunity to improve quality of life not only in our state, but worldwide. I would love to be part of the excitement. This is also an opportunity for Alabama to prove its commitment to scientific ethics and improve its reputation following the Tuskegee Syphilis Study of the 1930s-1970s.

As part of the Blackburn Institute Summer Mentorship Experience, I would like to research the societal, legal, ethical, and policy implications of genomic research and what this could mean to the state of Alabama. This summer, I will discover what federal and state regulations exist when conducting clinical trials and developing new biotechnologies. I will also explore the ethical implications of genomic research and give recommendations on how Alabama policymakers should respond to this growing industry. I am willing to be in Alabama or in Washington, D.C. for this summer internship.

Sample timeline:

- June 5-9: Learn genomic terminology and basics.
- June 12-16: Who are the researchers? Who are the regulators?
- June 19-23: What are organizations, in our state and worldwide, doing?
- June 26-30: What policies are currently in place?
- July 3-7: Independence Day holiday with family and friends
- July 10-14: What policies should be in place?
- July 17-21: Write recommendations for policymakers.
- July 24-28: Write a report for the public, in layman’s terms, on what I learned.
- July 31-August 4: Prepare presentation for Symposium.

Thank you for this opportunity, and I hope to hear from you soon.