

## Ideal Trajectory for SNaPP Lab Members

Every student will have a slightly different experience in the lab based on the nature of their interests, skills, and the state of Prof. Settle's active research projects. However, the goal is to develop a multi-faceted experience designed around your particular research ideas that allows for exploration of both independent and group projects.

### ***Your first year:***

In your first year in the lab, you will complete "Boot Camp" (two credits), wherein you will learn the fundamentals of research methods and design alongside other first-year lab members. Throughout this course, you will work on an independent research project, applying the information you have learned to this process. You are invited to sit in on the boot camp instruction in subsequent years, but you cannot receive credit for doing so unless you propose a substantially new research focus from the previous year.

In addition to participating in boot camp, you will take part in a group project with members from the rest of the lab, exploring one of Professor Settle's ongoing research topics.

If you are interested in pursuing a larger capstone research project throughout your time in the lab, you should narrow your research interests down to 1-3 specific research questions by the end of your first year. This likely means that you have taken several core courses in a relevant department (government, economics, psychology, neuroscience, linguistics or data science), as well as at least one upper-division elective related to your research interests. You hopefully have found ways to integrate your research interests with assignments in your classes.

Ideally, in the summer after your first or second year (or both!) you would be able to spend at least five weeks on campus, funded through either a Chappell Grant (to work directly with Prof. Settle) or an independent summer grant (pursuing one of your research questions).

### ***Subsequent years:***

In subsequent years of the lab, you will focus your energy on exploring Professor Settle's ongoing research projects in small groups (one credit). In addition, if you so choose to, you are able to complete a capstone research project, either in the form of a Honors Thesis, a summer research experience, or an independent study.

It is encouraged that you take at least one research design course outside of the lab, several core courses in a related department (government, economics, psychology, neuroscience, linguistics, or data science), as well as at least one upper-division elective related to your research interests.

Returning lab members will also help mentor new students and take on leadership roles within their assigned projects.

For those that are interested in pursuing a longer capstone research project, the main goal of your junior year is to lay the groundwork for this meaningful capstone research experience,

ideally an honors thesis conducted during the summer before and during your final year on campus. You want to have taken enough coursework (including methods courses), and done enough independent reading, to identify a research project that you can feasibly complete.

By December of your junior year, you should have two-three feasible research questions that could be successfully tackled in an honors thesis. You will submit your proposal in early March to (hopefully) receive funding from the Charles Center, and you can be on campus for at least five weeks in the summer working on your project. Especially prepared students may also have the opportunity to travel to the Political Networks Conference or other training opportunities.

The final year should be a capstone experience in the lab. You are working on a thesis or other independent or team project that you can submit to the Midwest Political Science Association in Chicago in April. Especially sophisticated projects may be suitable to submit as co-authored publications with Prof. Settle. You also take on a leadership role in the lab to help mentor younger students, or you may be working as a Methods Fellow in the SSMRC. Finally, you could also be completing an internship that puts your data analysis skills to use.