

AUSTIN VAN LOON

Ph.D. Candidate in Stanford Sociology Department

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EDUCATION

Graduate

Stanford University

📅 September 2016 – Present

📍 Stanford, CA

- Qualifying exams in Organizations and Economic Sociology
- 2nd year qualifying paper: "HIERARCHY AND BALANCE: Social Determinants of Structural Balance" (Readers: Robb Willer and Mark Granovetter)
- 3rd year qualifying paper: "WHAT DIVIDES US? Measuring Schemata of 'America' with a Word Association Task" (Readers: Amir Goldberg and Jeremy Freese)
- Teaching Assistant for:
 - Mark Granovetter's course "Economic Sociology" (Autumn 2017 & Autumn 2018),
 - Jeremy Freese's course "Sports, Competition, and Society" (Spring 2018 & Spring 2019)
 - Michael Rosenfeld's course "Sociological Methodology II: Principles of Regression Analysis" (Autumn 2019)
 - Amir Goldberg's course "People Analytics" (Winter 2020)
 - Robb Willer and Alia Crum's course "Self and Society: Introduction to Social Psychology" (Spring 2020)

Undergraduate

University of Iowa

📅 August 2012 – Spring 2016

📍 Iowa City, IA

- B.S. (with honors) in Sociology, B.A. in Psychology, minors in: (1) Philosophy, (2) Informatics, and (3) Music
- Honors thesis: "Stereotypes and Status in a Marching Band"
- Undergraduate Teaching Assistant for:
 - Alison Bianchi's course "Research Methods" (Fall 2015)
 - Karen Heimer's course "Juvenile Delinquency" (Spring 2016)
- Volunteer research assistant for the Center for the Study of Group Processes from 2013-2015 and was promoted to lab manager from 2015-2016

PUBLICATIONS

Salganik, M. J., Lundberg, I., Kindel, A. T., Ahearn, C. E., Al-Ghoneim, K., Almaatouq, A., ..., van Loon, A., ..., Datta, D. 2020. "Measuring the predictability of life outcomes with a scientific mass collaboration." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 117(15), 8398-8403.

van Loon, Austin, Jeremy Bailenson, Jamil Zaki, Joshua Bostick, and Robb Willer. 2018. "Virtual reality perspective-taking increases cognitive empathy for specific others". *PLoS ONE* 13(8):e0202442.

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

Institute for research in the social sciences (IRiSS) liaison to Sociology

📅 Autumn 2018 – Present

President of The Student Group for Computational Text Analysis in the Social Sciences (CTASS)

📅 Summer 2019 – Present

AWARDS

Ric Weiland Graduate Fellow in the Humanities & Sciences
Summer Institute in Computational Social Science (SICSS) RSF Travel Grant
IRiSS Computational Social Science Grant (*with Katariina Meuller-Gastelle*)
Lab for Social Research (LSR) Small Research Grant
The Dr. William H. Metzler Fellowship in Sociology

SELECTED COURSEWORK

POLISCI 452: Machine Learning with Application to Text as Data

📅 Spring 2019

Taught by Justin Grimmer

This course teaches various ways to utilize text as data, including how to discover empirical relationships through unsupervised machine learning, how to measure variables of interest through supervised machine learning, and how to perform casual inference with text as either treatment or outcome.

CS 224W: Analysis of Networks

📅 Fall 2018

Taught by Jure Leskovec

This class focuses on analyzing large networks both theoretically and empirically. Topics included graph and node embedding, influence maximization, outbreak detection, community and role detection, and the statistical analysis of networks. This course focused on algorithm implementation, formal proofs of efficiency, and broad conceptualization of network analysis.

ECON 293: Machine Learning and Causal Inference

📅 Spring 2018

Taught by Susan Athey

This course is a broad overview of the potential outcomes framework, the difference between explanation and prediction, and how to use state-of-the-art machine learning principles and techniques for causal inference. Methods discussed included meta-learners, matrix completion methods for panel surveys, doubly-robust estimators, Bayesian and frequentist approaches to the multi-arm bandit problem, and generalized random/causal forests.

CS224U: Natural Language Understanding

📅 Spring 2018

Taught by Chris Potts and Bill MacCartney

This course is focuses on introducing students to the over-arching problems in NLU, including lexical semantics and relation extraction. Distributed representations of meaning and applying machine learning to linguistic tasks are covered in-depth.

CS124: From Languages to Information

📅 Winter 2018

Taught by Dan Jurafsky

This course focused on extracting information from naturally occurring text. Topics covered includes regular expression, text classification with naive bayes and logistic regression, chatbots, recommender systems, and spellcheckers/the noisy channel.

MS&E 231: Introduction to Computational Social Science

📅 Fall 2017

Taught by Sharad Goel

This course gives a broad overview of different methods and ethical issues in computational social science. Topics include working with data that is too large for memory, optimization via stochastic gradient descent, visualization, basic text processing, basic machine learning, and an introduction to causal inference.