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Supervisor's Name	Jacqueline Krikorian
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Supervisor's Department	Political Science
Project Title	Canada and the UN Human Rights Committee

Description of Research Project (1500 characters maximum)

This project asks why Canadians pursue legal claims in the international arena when the judicial decisions are neither binding nor conclusive of an issue. Why initiate challenges that cannot be enforced or that potentially require further litigation in other forums? Clearly the claimants are trying to address varying concerns, but what are their goals and are they being accomplished? What are the consequences of this litigation?

Drawing on historical institutionalism, this project challenges the conventional view that non-binding tribunals are limited in their capacity to effect change. Rather, Canadians undertake legal action in the international arena in order to address issues, modify their existing circumstances, and at times, alter public policy.

To address these issues, this project asks:

- 1) What is the nature and scope of Canadian litigation before the UN Human Rights Committee?
- 2) What are the litigants' objectives in initiating these legal challenges?
- 3) What is the impact of these challenges both in relation to the litigants' goals and in terms of the Canadian polity?
- 4) What factors facilitate or constrain the capacity of the litigants to effect policy change?

The project uses quantitative research methods to determine to determine patterns in the types of litigants and the nature of their claims over time. It also employs qualitative research methods that are used by political scientists to assess the nature and impact of domestic litigation. More specifically, it uses discourse analysis and process tracing to determine the litigants' objectives and it uses process tracing to measure the effects of the legal challenges both in terms of their impact on the litigants as well as the Canadian polity.

Undergraduate Student Responsibilities (1500 characters maximum)

This project provides one student with the opportunity to enhance their research and writing skills while, at the same time, building their CV. The underlying goal is to help an undergraduate student establish a strong academic record in order to facilitate their chances of successfully applying for graduate programs and scholarships in the fall of 2018.

More specifically, this project provides one student with the opportunity to co-author a paper. The completed manuscript will be submitted to refereed journal. The selected student will work alongside the faculty member to undertake research, write selected sections of the paper, and co-submit the finished paper for publication. A conference venue also will be selected to ensure the student can deliver his or her findings either on their own or with the faculty member.

Working with the faculty member at each stage of the project, the student will contribute to:

- 1) undertaking a literature review of secondary research on the international litigation and the Human Rights Committee;
- 2) compiling a database of all cases brought by Canadian litigants to the Human Rights Committee
- 3) assessing the implications of the tribunal's findings on Canada's legislative and policy framework by using process tracing and discourse analysis methodologies to undertake the analysis;
- 4) writing selected sections of the co-authored paper;
- 5) participating in the process of submitting the completed paper to a refereed journal; and,
- 6) delivering the findings in a conference setting.

Qualifications Required (750 characters maximum)

To be qualified for this position, the student should:

- 1) have an outstanding academic record;
  - 2) have experience in undertaking research;
  - 3) have a demonstrated interest in scholarship in the field of law, political institutions and the policy process;
  - 4) have an understanding of different methodological approaches in law and politics research;
  - 5) preferably, be a student enrolled in the Law & Society program or in the Department of Political Science at York University;
  - 6) preferably, be able to read in both French and English; and,
  - 7) preferably, be interested in applying for graduate programs and scholarships.
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