Winter School Computational Social Science

Department of Information Science Stellenbosch University

What factors make a political movement successful? Can internet searches reveal patterns of economic inequality? Are bots influencing our elections?

For social scientists, the abundance of data produced in social networks, news media, online transactions, and other sources, has enabled new and exciting ways of understanding our lives and addressing the important questions facing society in the digital age.

From **15 to 26 June 2020**, the Department of Information Science at Stellenbosch University will host a Winter School in Computational Social Science in Stellenbosch, South Africa. Organised as a partner-site of the Summer Institute in Computational Social Science hosted jointly by Princeton and Duke Universities, the purposes of the winter school is to bring together postgraduate students and junior academic staff interested in computational social science. The Summer Institute is for both social scientists (broadly conceived) and data scientists (broadly conceived). The aim is to help early career social scientists and data scientists make the most of digital data.

The instructional program will involve lectures, group problem sets, and participant-led research projects. There will also be outside speakers who conduct computational social science research in a variety of settings, such as academia, industry, and government. Topics covered include text as data, website scraping, digital field experiments, non-probability sampling, mass collaboration, and ethics. There will be ample opportunities for students to discuss their ideas and research with the organizers, other participants, and visiting speakers. Because we are committed to open and reproducible research, all materials created by faculty and students for the Summer Institute will be released open source.

"It's an opportunity to bring together graduate students, postdocs and junior faculty to get exposure to new ideas and new people," said Matthew Salganik, a professor of sociology at Princeton who co-founded the annual institute in 2017 with Duke University sociologist Christopher Bail. "It's also a chance for us to create a community of computational social scientists that's interdisciplinary and that has norms that are in the best interests of society and science."

Participation is restricted to Masters and Doctoral students and junior academic staff who have not yet completed a PhD. Costs of the workshop, including most meals, will be covered. Additionally, there is limited funding available for accommodation and travel for some participants who are not based in the greater Cape Town area. We welcome applicants from all backgrounds and fields of study, especially applicants from groups currently under-represented in computational social science. Approximately 15 participants will be invited, and participants are expected to fully attend and participate in the entire two-week program.

To apply visit this page:

For more information on SICSS-Stellenbosch click here

For an example of the curriculum from previous years click here

For more information on SICSS click here

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The Summer Institute in Computational Social Science is sponsored by the Russell Sage Foundation, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, Facebook, and the Social Science Research Council.