

P3 Lab Background Information for Prospective PhD Students

We're thrilled that you're interested in joining the P3 Lab. We always encourage talented, committed, and curious students to apply to the Political Science Department at Johns Hopkins University and work with us at P3. We hope this document gives you a strong sense of what we are focused on and how we work together, as well as an overview of how to apply. If you have additional questions, please reach out to Jane Booth-Tobin, Lab Director, at jboothtobin@jhu.edu.

Our Vision, Mission, and Research

At P3, we envision a world where people's participation in public life is possible, probable, and powerful: people across race and class have to be able to participate, they have to want to participate, and their participation has to matter. Realizing this vision necessitates designing a new civic architecture that enables people to engage in public life in ways that are grounded in their own experience, connected to one another, and organized through vehicles of collective action that give people ownership over the ongoing process of systemic struggle and change.

The P3 Lab is grounded in learning and shared inquiry that meets the twin goals of relevance and rigor while helping to realize our vision. Our work simultaneously pushes the frontiers of strategic thinking in social movements and knowledge-building in academic scholarship.

To be a P3 scholar is to ground research in an analysis of people's fight for power and voice in public life, to understand the struggle for power as dependent on dynamic strategy, and to recognize that people's greatest source of power is their ability to act as a collective.

We conduct research animated by three key questions:

- How do we identify and remove barriers to making participation possible?
- What strategies can movements and organizations use to pull people of all kinds off the sidelines of public life and make their action more probable?
- How can movements and organizations translate the engagement of their base into the power they need to realize the world they want?

Our work differentiates itself not just in what we study, but how we study it. We are focused particularly on research that helps identify and sharpen the strategic choices political actors make. We believe in co-creating knowledge between academics and practitioners, and all of our research seeks to meet the highest standards of academic rigor while also generating usable knowledge for movement leaders and communities.

To learn more about our current research, you can visit [our website](#) or read this recent [New York Times op-ed](#) based on Hahrie's upcoming book with Elizabeth McKenna and Michelle Oyakawa, [Prisms of the People: Power & Organizing in 21c American Politics](#). We encourage you to check out recent academic publications listed on the "Research" page of our website and publicly oriented discussions of our work on the "Resources" page.

How We Work

At P3, we aim for a culture of collaboration, risk-taking, and mutual respect. Our team represents a wide range of backgrounds and skills in academia and social movements. We work together to leverage our

different expertise – whether that is in programming, qualitative methods, or community organizing – to develop innovative approaches to our research.

The lab will be a good fit for students who:

- Are excited about engaging in an active, cross-generational learning community that includes undergraduates, PhD students, postdocs, and project directors. This includes informal engagement on Slack and (someday) in our office, as well as participating in research discussions at our team meetings and participating in lab research projects as your class schedule allows.
- Share a commitment to co-created knowledge with the field. We believe true advances occur when knowledge is co-created between academics and practitioners, such that knowledge in one domain is not privileged over knowledge in another domain. We seek to work in partnership with the field so that we can mutually learn from the expertise and knowledge that we each bring.
- Want to learn and practice a range of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Our lab uses mixed-method observational research as well as field experiments to test causal identification. We also have a large-scale computational project going on that draws on NLP and network tools. We expect students to become skilled at both quantitative and qualitative research, to expand the set of tools in their toolbox.

All graduate students are expected to lead at least one research project that is integrated into the lab. This can be part of your dissertation project or otherwise, but the idea is for you to learn what it takes to lead a collaborative research project and integrate your work into a broader scholarly community.

Mentoring Model

The students who fit best in our lab are students who are willing to pursue big questions, take initiative, build relationships that enable them to learn empathically from people who disagree with them, and nurture the creativity, courage, and discipline needed to do good research. Our lab culture works well for people who are able to hold tension in a variety of ways—be creative but disciplined, be risky but pragmatic, seize leadership but learn humbly. We strongly believe in our lab that technique will set you free; it is through the discipline of learning good science and disciplined research that you are able to ask and answer the big questions that can impact the world. To nurture this, we seek to create a lab culture that nurtures joy, normalizes failure, encourages collaboration, and creates space for mistakes.

Students typically spend their first couple of years focused on their courses. This includes getting to know your field of study, developing the methodological expertise you need, and getting inculcated into lab culture. We encourage students to join research projects during this phase, as a way not only of learning the craft of research, but also learning to do the kind of juggling and develop the flexibility needed to have a career in research. Once students get past their coursework and qualifying exams, then they begin to pivot towards developing their own research program.

We believe that making the transition from being a consumer to a producer of knowledge is a craft. There is no formula, but there are skills that you need, particularly if you are committed to working consistently with the mission of P3. The best way to learn this craft is to take responsibility for your own project.

As graduate students progress through their careers, we seek to develop regular meetings with both Hahrie and Jane, the Lab Director. Through these meetings, we seek to understand your interests, how they connect to the lab, and cultivate the ability to do the kind of research that is simultaneously focused on answering core questions in the discipline you are grounded in and solving public problems in the world. We also have regular lab meetings with the entire lab community where we hear presentations, discuss research projects, comment on working papers, and host guest speakers. As we grow, we seek to develop a lab writing group where we meet over lunch once a month to talk about our writing goals and casual meetings where we select and discuss popular books over lunch.

Application Process & Funding

To study with Hahrie and join the P3 Lab as a PhD student, you must first be admitted to a department at Johns Hopkins University. Hahrie's affiliation is with the Department of Political Science, so she is best able to be your advisor if that is your home department. Students from other departments are also welcomed to apply to P3, but they will have to identify their own primary advisors, and work with their advisors to work out an appropriate relationship to P3. Students in Political Science are fully funded and, assuming that you are making progress, you can expect to have funding for up to five years.

You can find detailed information about the department and applications on their website, and we encourage you to reach out directly to other faculty in the department to get to know them.

Lastly, we believe that solutions to the challenges faced by our world are strongest when developed by communities closest to those very challenges, and that our research is strongest when co-created by a diverse range of people. We strongly encourage students not traditionally represented in academia – especially BIPOC, working class, and queer scholars - to apply.

If, after reading all this, you are interested in getting involved with P3, please contact Jane Booth-Tobin with the following information:

- Your resume or CV
- A short statement of your research interests, your existing research skills, and the methodological skills you hope to develop