

My experience with a one quarter research project in the
[Program in Quantitative Social Science](#) at [Dartmouth College](#)

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In my experience, the Quantitative Social Science one quarter project was an excellent opportunity to demonstrate what I learned from core major classes, and it challenged me to build on these experiences in a research setting. For my research project, I studied the politicization of Instagram and specifically if a candidate's campaign presence on Instagram is predicted by the demographics of his or her constituency. This research question was something I found interesting, and it was closely related to the social science electives I took as part of the QSS major curriculum. To complete my project, some courses that I found particularly relevant to the research project were Data Visualization, Intermediate Statistics, and the Special Topics in QSS. The Special Topics courses were especially relevant because each of these courses involved a written research exercise that mimicked the one quarter project, albeit on an accelerated timeline. I personally benefitted from taking these courses close to the start of my one quarter project, so that the lessons were fresh in my mind. While the other courses noted above were especially relevant, I found myself relying on all QSS required courses throughout my winter quarter research process.

To successfully execute my research project, I found it essential to manage my time intentionally and to leverage the support of faculty and staff. The one quarter research project is quick, and it requires intentional planning of each research component in order to successfully present in ten weeks time. In my experience, developing a research topic early and paying special consideration to issues of data availability prepared me well to execute my project. Indeed, one of the hardest parts of the one quarter research project, in my experience, was selecting a research question that could be answered with publicly available data. Finding good data can sometimes be a challenge. To overcome challenges that I faced while working on my project, I relied on the help of the QSS faculty, librarian, statistical consultant as well as other professors and advisors. Each of these individuals was happy to help with research challenges, and all were essential to the success of my project.

The QSS one quarter project was a fantastic learning experience, one in which I was able to draw on QSS major courses and apply what I learned in them to a culminating experience. The research skills that I acquired through the QSS major have, in my experience, extended beyond the classroom. In my past internships, the lessons that I learned through the QSS major were valuable for communicating and visualizing data to inform actionable recommendations in a business setting. I expect to draw on these research and analytical skills in my position beginning after graduation.