### Faculty Name
Rachel Beatty Riedl

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Semester</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2018</td>
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<td>Fall 2018</td>
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<td>Winter 2019</td>
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<td>Spring 2019</td>
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**Project Title**
Religion and Politics in Africa

**Project Description**
What are the ways in which religious organizations are engaging in politics following the transition to multiparty politics in the last two decades? This project offers a conceptualization of various forms of religious-political engagement and offers an argument to explain why religious organizations pursue the goals and strategies of implementation that they do. The research will tell us about the ways in which associational life is (or is not) organizing in political forms in newly democratic contexts, and how different forms of identity groups mobilization and organization can have differential impacts on politics. That is, much work on identity politics in Africa has focused on ethnicity, to the detriment of the important effects of religious ideology, organization, and strong mobilizational potential. This research will empirically map out what forms of political engagement religious groups are pursuing, and how political actors relate to religious groups - from a range of repression and suppression to overt political mobilization. The goal is to explain the variation in religious organization engagement in the political realm, and understand the consequences of these actions for democratic participation and stability.

**Position Expectations**
This research project is assembling an empirical map of how religious groups and political actors are engaging with each other in the public realm across Sub-Saharan Africa. To do so, one component entails building a custom database from national newspaper articles that tracks mention of religion in 15+ countries across the continent. The RA project will entail using a lexis-nexus type search of African newspaper accounts of religious engagement in politics. From a close analytical reading of each newspaper report, the student will then select the relevant information to be entered into a custom database, identifying the relevant story, actors, groups, and types of engagement described. In the process, the student will learn about creating a coding classification, how to organize a database, and how to create various searches of relevant empirical sources. The RA will work closely with the professor during the database training period, but following the training, all work can be completed independently and at varied time intervals, such that the RA can work at anytime and anywhere they have access to an NU internet connection. The student will be expected to work 10 hours/week during the
academic year (and 20 hours/week during the summer if applicable) on the coding of newspaper articles into the database, following the initial training period (2-4 weeks of instruction and working on a set of samples). The student can select the country(s) he/she may be interested in from a list of remaining cases the Professor will provide.

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<th>Skills/Experience Required</th>
<th>An attention to detail and careful work is an absolute necessity for the precision of coding information from a general report into specific categories of information. Additionally, the student should be interested in analyzing news stories for broader patterns, trends, and categories contained within them. Some familiarity with Access database is preferred, and/or French, Swahili or Arabic language skills, but neither are required.</th>
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<td>What Will the RA Gain?</td>
<td>The RA will gain exposure to original content about politics in Sub-Saharan Africa, a conceptualization of identity types and political strategies, and an in-depth look at how to create and analyze data from primary sources. It is my hope that this experience will inform the student’s own interest in doing research and help to shape/expand their ideas about gathering data and possible methodologies for topics they are interested in. I would also hope to further engage promising students in interview work in Sub-Saharan Africa if there were overlapping research interests and funding to do so. The student will also gain practical, marketable skills (newspaper content analysis, Access database and coding training).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time Requirement</td>
<td>10 hours/week during AY and 20 hours/week during summer (if applicable for grant period).</td>
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