Job Posting: Research Assistant

Dr. Ahmed Al-Rawi from SFU’s School of Communication is looking for an SFU Master’s or PhD student for part time work as a research assistant beginning September 2019, and continuing through the 2019-2020 academic year, with a possibility of longer term work.

The fake news in Canada research project is a fully funded SSHRC project that seeks the following objectives: understanding how Canadian journalists define fake news and identify the way they deal with this phenomenon, exploring fake news coverage and scope by categorizing all Canadian mainstream news stories into news types, finding the major topics discussed on Canadian mainstream media and social media posts that reference fake news by using a machine learning method, and providing a clearer conceptualization of fake news in order to expand existing theories of disinformation and fake news based on the examination of previous research and the coding of news stories in this project. Much of our work is based on computational analyses as well as qualitative content analysis of news stories. We supplement this work with a range of techniques including systematic literature reviews, using a broad range of digital tools to support our work including qualitative and quantitative data analysis software.

Funding is in place. On the job training will be provided.

The Position: Working as a research assistant, you will provide research support to a range of projects including (but not limited to) completion of a few research papers, conference presentation and funded travel, proofreading and editing research papers, textual coding of news stories, submission of an ethics application for new research, and other tasks related to ongoing projects undertaken by the research team.

The RA’s tasks will include but not be limited to:

• Conducting well documented literature reviews and writing summaries of previous studies (annotated bibliographies);

• Formatting academic publications as per varied templates provided by publishers and publication venues;

• Preparation of graphics for presentations and publications;

• Analysis of numeric data using excel and creation of charts and graphs;

• Assisting in submission of materials to the university’s Office of Research Ethics for review;
• Identifying journalists to interview for the fake news project, initiating contact with them as per ethics approval and interviewing them;

• Transcription of tape recordings of interviews and/or proofreading and editing transcribed notes from interviews;

• Attending meetings with members of the research team and other project stakeholders;

• Other research tasks as required.

**Eligibility & Qualifications:**

The ideal candidate will:

• Be currently enrolled in a graduate program in SFU’s School of Communication willing to make a minimum of a 1 year commitment;

• Interest in areas of fake news, computational journalism, and big data analysis;

• Have an interest in working in a team environment;

• Willing to work approximately 15-20 hours a week on Burnaby campus;

• Willing to maintain a regular work schedule with set work days and times;

• Superior oral and written communication skills;

• Ability to work and problem solve independently;

• Ability to summarize complex research information;

• Attention to detail.

**The following skills would be assets:**

• Familiarity with programming languages like Python or R.

• Familiarity with Gephi and/or Tableau;
• Familiarity with Microsoft Word;

• Familiarity with NVivo;

• Familiarity with Excel.

Research Assistant hours and schedule are negotiable, thought **regular hours will be required on SFU’s Burnaby Campus.** Pay commensurate with SFU RA and funder guidelines.

**Start date:** September 2019

**Benefits to RA:**

• Training and mentorship by an SFU researcher/scholar;

• Exposure to a wide range of tasks required to succeed in a research intensive career;

• More predictable work load and regular hours than working as a TA;

• Opportunities to publish.

**Compensation:** Compensation will be consistent with university guidelines for payment of RAs (which reflect level of education and experience), and within any limitations set by external funders.

**How to apply:** Please call 778-782-3860 if you have any questions about whether or not this opportunity may be suitable for you.

Please submit your cover letter (including a phone number where you can be reached), a resume (including the names and contact information for references) and transcript (unofficial) to Dr. Ahmed Al-Rawi at aalrawi@sfu.ca and please place Re: job ad in the subject line.

**Applications will be reviewed beginning of July and will be considered until the position is filled.**