

SAMARA H. SHAZ

404.539.7952 | samara_shaz@brown.edu | she/they

Education

Brown University, 2026 –

Doctoral Student, Political Science

University of Chicago, 2024 – 2026

Master of Arts, Committee on International Relations

GPA: 3.95

Thesis: The Ecosystem of American Nuclear Rhetoric

Wellesley College, 2017 – 2021

Major: Political Science, Minor: Chemistry

Cum Laude with High Honors in Political Science

Thesis: Rethinking the Nuclear Option: The Emergence of the TPNW and a Counter-Order in the Nuclear Regime

Awards & Fellowships

Atomic Anxiety in the New Nuclear Age Fellows Scheme, University of Glasgow 2026

Rebecca A. Boylan and Thomas W. Sidlik Fellow, University of Chicago 2025 – 2026

Existential Risks Lab Fellow, University of Chicago Summer 2025

Sean Yu Travel Award, University of Chicago March 2025

Accelerator Initiative, Stanley Center for Peace and Security 2024 – 2025

Young Professional Track, Council on Foreign Relations 2024

Experience

Existential Risk Lab, Project Lead Sept 2025 – present

- Manages three research interns to produce an explainer course on the technical components of nuclear weapons, providing both resources and feedback
- Writes accessible content on the intersection of emerging technology, particularly artificial intelligence, and nuclear weapons

University of Chicago, Student Ambassador Sept 2025 – present

- Hosts one-on-one meetings and coffee chats with prospective students, serving as a representative for the University and providing detailed information on application processes, program expectations, and personal experiences
- Supplements recruitment initiatives by creating databases for relevant contacts and researching peer institutions

University of Chicago, Teaching Assistant Jan – March 2025

- Provided technical assistance, as well as course and syllabus feedback, to Dr. Kennette Benedict in her Nuclear Policy course at the Harris School of Public Policy
- Substantively supported students during office hours

Carnegie Corporation of New York, Program Assistant July 2022 - Aug 2024

- Assisted in managing the \$8 million Nuclear Security grantmaking portfolio, including recommending proposals, evaluating grantees, and running focus groups of early career professionals to assess programmatic strategy
- Provided support for other Carnegie initiatives, including organizing and evaluating proposals in grant competitions on emerging security challenges and working with the communications team on outreach and digital literacy of nuclear issues

MIT's Security Studies Program, Research Coordinator Oct 2020 - June 2022

- Conducted original research for Dr. Jim Walsh's grant-funded project on domestic nuclear weapons politics and analyzed elite and social media reactions to previous North Korean nuclear tests
- Managed a team of four researchers
- Oversaw the production of fact-based nuclear weapons media, including video and written research products

World Resources Institute, Systems Change Lab Intern June - Aug 2020

- As part of the Wellesley in Washington cohort, conducted literature reviews and interviews with relevant experts to support the research of sustainable, local solutions to climate-related issues

- Created modes of monitoring key policy transitions through analyzing theory and case studies, finding similar initiatives, and funding work related to the environmental paradigm shift

Union of Concerned Scientists, Research Assistant

Sept 2019 - May 2020

- Under Dr. Cameron Tracy, extensively researched current nuclear disarmament policy and history through the lenses of political science, sociology, and materials science
- Used STATA to analyze the marginal effects of different demographics on American nuclear policy

Office of House Representative Dylan Fernandes (Mass.), Research Intern

Jan - March 2020

- Generated daily briefings to Rep. Fernandes that synthesized local news and national case studies relevant to his policy goals, such as zero-carbon efforts, into concise memos and represented Rep. Fernandes at meetings and hearings
- Implemented organizational standards and populated content banks on a long-term policy project for proposed carbon tax and ocean acidification bills

Publications

Shaz, S. (2023). From the Cuban Missile Crisis to Russia's War in Ukraine: Strategic Empathy as Feminist Foreign Policy. *Peace Science Digest*. <https://warpreventioninitiative.org/peace-science-digest/from-the-cuban-missile-crisis-to-russias-war-in-ukraine-strategic-empathy-as-feminist-foreign-policy/>.

Weiner, Sharon, and Samara Shaz. "Nuclear Weapons and You: Nuclear Threats." Carnegie Corporation of New York, 20 July 2023, www.carnegie.org/our-work/article/nuclear-weapons-and-you/.

Shaz, S., & Weiner, S. K. (2023, August 2). Barbie evolved beyond cold war logic: Oppenheimer froze it in time ... The Hill. <https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/4131186-barbie-evolved-beyond-cold-war-logic-oppenheimer-froze-it-in-time/>

Conference Presentations & Invited Lectures

Presenter, "Regime Change and Credibility: Implications of Democratic Backsliding on Deterrence," Workshop on Democratic Backsliding, Chicago Center on Democracy, University of Chicago, January 2026

Presenter (with Sharon Weiner), "Protecting Nuclear Weapons from AI Risks," Alva Myrdal Centre for Nuclear Disarmament Conference, Uppsala University, June 2025

Presenter, "The Ecosystem of American Nuclear Weapons Critiques," Workshop on International Politics, Department of Political Science, University of Chicago, January 2025

Invited speaker, "An Interdisciplinary Introduction to Nuclear Weapons," Department of Political Science, Professor Unislawa Williams, Spelman College, February 2024

Invited speaker, "Career Options in the Nuclear Field," International School on Disarmament and Research on Conflicts, January 2023

Skills and Interests

Intermediate knowledge of Arabic Language (Modern Standard, Moroccan); research-level proficiency in Microsoft Office, STATA, R, and Python; marathon finisher and crossword fanatic