

HDFS Newsletter

September/October
2012



Welcome Back!



Welcome back HDFS!

As we begin another successful scholastic year, we are pleased to offer you the latest edition of the HDFS newsletter. Inside you'll learn all that you need to know about the happenings in and around the HDFS graduate program. We look forward to the coming year and the journey we'll share along the way!

Ni Jian and Aaron Miller



The First-Year cohort and visitors from Jena!

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Meet the First Years



Lauren Bangerter

From: Maui, HI

Research interests: Adult development and aging

Advisor: Dr Zarit

Education background: BA in psychology MA in communication studies Both from Arizona state university

Hobbies: Running, cooking, hiking, crafting, working out

Something interesting or

unique about you: When I get nervous I talk in a Minnesota accent.

Ali Doub

From: Waynesboro, PA

Research interests: Individual and family system influences on the development of obesity in infancy and early childhood.

Advisors: Dr. Cindy Stifter and Dr. Leann Birch

Education background: Penn State: B.S. Human Development and Family Studies, Minor in Psychology

Hobbies: Brewing coffee, jogging, preparing healthy meals

Something interesting or unique about you: I attended a Quaker boarding high school



Kristine Bova

From: Mechanicsburg, PA

Research interests: Childhood brain development, decision making, and risk-taking behavior. Prevention/intervention in the education system.

Advisor: Lisa Gatzke-Kopp

Education background: BS in psychobiology and German from Lebanon Valley College

Hobbies: Yoga, walking,

crafts! (sewing, scrapbooking), playing piano

Something interesting or unique about you: I love reptiles and amphibians and owned a blue-tongued skink names Cobalt.

Nicole DePasquale

From: Toms River, New Jersey

Research interests: Adult development and aging, intervention and prevention science

Advisor: David Almeida

Education background: BA from Rutgers University in Communication, minors in Psychology and Sociology; Master of Science in Public Health (MSPH) in Health Education and Health Communication from the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health



Hobbies: Couponing :)

Something interesting or unique about you: I was a competitive figure skater for several years as well as a figure skating instructor



Rachel Koffer

From: Herndon, Virginia

Research interests: I'm interested in adult development and aging, with more specific interests regarding the links between socioeconomic status and health, buffers for daily stressors, and methodology.

Advisor: David Almeida and Nilam Ram

Education background: B.A. from Brandeis University with a double major in Psychology and Economics and a minor in Environmental Studies

Hobbies: photography, particularly nature and landscape photography, which also go hand in hand with hiking and finding beautiful places for day trips when I have time.

Something interesting or unique about you: I have an identical twin, who I hope will visit sometime this year!



Amanda Griffin

From: Alexandria VA

Research interests: adolescent development

Advisor: Dr. Bo Cleveland

Education background: B.S. from Virginia Tech

Hobbies: Hiking, traveling, and

Something interesting or unique about you: I have traveled to eight countries, speak two languages, and have never had cable.

David Lydon

From: A little seaside town called Spiddal in county Galway, Ireland.

Research interests: The development of brain systems underlying responses to incentives and cognitive control and how it relates to adolescent risk-taking.

Advisor: Charles (Chuck) Geier

Education background: B.A. in Psychology and English Literature in 2011 at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland.

Hobbies: I enjoy writing/playing music and hanging out with friends. I would like to say I'm active and sporty, but when I'm not working I mostly just sit around listening to country music while eating ludicrously-sized lumps of Brie.

Something interesting or unique about you: I have broken two bones, on two separate occasions, while practicing Ireland's national sport - Irish dancing. I am currently petitioning for Irish dancing to be recognized as an official Olympic sport for the 2016 games.



Lu Ou

From: Chengdu, China

Research interests: Primarily in Methodology.

Advisor: Dr. Symiin Chow

Education background: I got my BS in Mathematics and Applied Mathematics in Zhejiang University, China.

Hobbies: I love musicals, yoga and languages and I'm open to almost all kinds of sports.

Something interesting or unique

about you: Nearly everyone I know laugh at my laughter. I don't know why it is that special.

Jon Reader

From: Stroudsburg, PA

Research interests: Infant and child development; Sleep research

Advisor: Doug Teti

Education background: B.S. in HDFS from Penn State

Hobbies: Watching movies, doing puzzles, reading

Something interesting or unique about you: I started as an undergraduate in business management until I got to a statistics course, then switched into HDFS to avoid taking it. It caught up with me!



Stephanie Magee

From: Marlton, NJ

Research interests: Methodology

Advisors: Peter Molenaar and Mike Rovine

Education background: I received my BS in Psychology from Virginia Tech

Hobbies: Cooking, snowboarding, and bicycling

Something interesting or unique about you: I held a Koala bear in Australia.



Jenny Padilla

From: Los Angeles, CA

Research interests: I am interested in the context of adolescents' development including the larger sociocultural context and more proximal familial contexts that affect educational outcomes. Within the family, I am specifically interested in studying the role of sibling experiences in educational achievement. I would like to understand how sibling relationship quality affects youths' academic achievement and the potential role of sociocultural factors in this process.

Advisor: Susan McHale

Education background: B.A. in Psychology

Hobbies: Bike riding, sewing, going to shows, watching movies, taking photos of new places

Something interesting or unique about you: I make a lot of movie references, especially with my brothers. I consider them some of my best buds.

Courtney Polenick

From: New Castle, PA

Research interests: Late-life depression and caregiving relationships

Advisor: Dr. Lynn Martire

Education background: M.S. in Applied Behavior Analysis; BA in Music (Both from Youngstown State University)

Hobbies: Painting (Oils and Acrylics)





Briana Sprague

From: Valley Falls, KS

Research interests: I am interested in the effects of stress and physical activity on cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease.

Advisor: Marty Sliwinski

Education background: I received my B.A. in psychology with a quantitative psych minor from the University of Kansas.

Hobbies: I really enjoy cooking, and I'm starting to get into bellydancing (or dancing in general really).

Something interesting or unique about you: When I was growing up, my dad was in the military, so I grew up all over the US and in Germany.

Rose Wesche

From: Chicago, IL

Research interests: adolescent and young adult romantic and sexual relationships

Advisor: Eva Lefkowitz

Education background: BA in Psychology from Oberlin College

Hobbies: knitting baking (and eating baked goods) running

Something interesting or unique about you: I went to the same high school as Michelle Obama



Emily Waterman

From: Syracuse, NY

Research interests: Human sexuality

Advisor: Eva Lefkowitz

Education background: B.A., Siena College

Hobbies: skiing, hiking, yoga

Something interesting or unique about you: Over the summer, I got into bird watching.



Mengya Xia

From: Wuhan, China

Research interests: Family system process, family dynamic and its correlation with individual development

Advisor: Gregory M. Fosco

Education background: MEd in Basic Psychology, Wuhan University, BS in Psychology and BE in Computer Science and Technology, Wuhan University

Hobbies: Photographing, swimming, badminton, yoga, classical music and dance

Meet the Jena Students



Kristina Schubert

From: I study in Jena, Germany, but I am originally from Magdeburg, Germany.

Research interests: I am interested in looking at the effects which damages to the central nervous system can have on a person's cognition, emotions, and behavior. Another field of study that I am interested in is the writing of expert reports about the extend to which a person fulfills the requirements of a certain job position.

Advisor: Marty Sliwinski

Education background: B.S., 2011, Psychology, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Germany; currently in Master's program in Cognitive Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Germany

Hobbies: I like to travel, go sightseeing, go for a walk, paint, read, spend a lot of time with family and friends :)

Something interesting or unique about you: I have been skydiving.

Anne Gröper

From: Where are you from?

Halle, Germany

Research interests: work-family-spillover, entrepreneurship, Human Resources

Advisor: Dr. David Almeida

Education background: psychology (B.S & currently M.S.)

Hobbies: yoga, outdoor activities, cooking, American TV series

Something interesting or unique about you: I am a vegetarian for over 10 years and I have lived in Indonesia and Finland.



Fall Picnic Pictures!



Fourth Year begins for Alexis, Mary Jon, Lawrence
and Kathleen!



Some of our department newlyweds!

Fall Picnic Pictures!



Keepin' it Steve....Zarit that is!

Kameron and Katie were introducing 1st year cohort.



Nilam is taller than Doug? What's happening here?



Doug's real height :-)

Fall Picnic Pictures!



Faculty at the picnic

From left to right: Greg Fosco, Cynthia Stifter, Scott Gest, Doug Coatsworth, and Steve Zarit



Faculty Interview: Dr. Sy-Miin Chow

We would like to welcome the newest faculty member to HDFS, Dr. Sy-Miin Chow. Dr. Chow comes to us from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and extends the methods faculty that we have here in HDFS. She was kind enough to sit down with Aaron for a short interview to share information about her background and interests.



Aaron: Can you tell me a little bit about your education?

Dr. Chow: I did my undergrad at Drexel University in Philadelphia, in Psychology. After I got my undergrad degree I had no clue what I wanted to do. I had not even heard of quantitative psychology at that point. I was applying to graduate schools, trying to delay getting an actual job, so I was looking at graduate school programs in the states that I really wanted to go to. I really wanted to go to Virginia, so I looked up Virginia Tech, University of Virginia, and I went in and eliminated the things I knew that I did not like. I definitely did not want to do clinical psychology, social psychology I like but it's hard to find a job. By elimination I came across quantitative psychology. They were talking about Skinnerian models, models of learning, and I thought 'not too bad, I like the idea, let's apply and see what happens!' I only applied to one quantitative psychology program at UVA. I ended up going there to work with John Nesselroade. I'm very glad in retrospect that I took that path, but I ended up in quantitative psychology by accident. After I got into the field I realized that this is a very interesting field, and there are a lot of possibilities.

Aaron: What was your career path after graduate school?

Dr. Chow: After my PhD, I accepted a faculty position at the University of Notre Dame. I was there for about three years or so, and then I was recruited to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I spent about five years there. I was pretty happy in both places but I moved to UNC from Notre Dame

primarily because of family reasons. My husband was looking for a job in the South Bend area - he's an electrical engineer - and there was nothing much besides the university in South Bend, Indiana. So we moved and I was on the faculty at UNC-Chapel Hill. About five years later Penn State had this opening. The fit is very good because there's a core group of people who do Dynamic Modeling, which is basically the area that I'm in. So in terms of professional development this is a great place.

Aaron: What are your current research interests or upcoming projects that you're excited about?

Dr. Chow: My area is Dynamic Modeling. Basically I look at developing difference and differential equations to describe how people change over time. Some of the constructs that I look at are emotional processes, how things like positive and negative emotions change over time, and how to translate that into a statistical model. Then I work on fitting models like that to data and some of the challenges that come up in the process. Sometimes we're working with data that are noisy. In social and behavioral sciences we tend to have data that are a little bit shorter in length compared to other sciences where they use dynamic modeling but with thousands of time points. We have to think about how parsimonious the models are given the sample size, how to fit models to the data, how to pick better models from worse models - issues like that. Basically I extend the existing faculty group who are all specialized in dynamic modeling. In terms of other extra research, I do Bayesian dynamic modeling as well. I bring something new in that regard in terms of extending the existing curriculum on dynamic modeling.

Faculty Interview: Dr. Sy-Miin Chow

Aaron: What do you see as being your role this year and in coming years with the graduate program?

Dr. Chow: I have interests in applying models to substantive problems such as emotions - so that adds something in terms of integrating interests that people have from HDFS like temperament and regulation - and then using dynamic modeling to get at phenomenon like that. I'm currently teaching HDFS 516 so I get to see all the new students, an energetic bunch when they first get here.

Aaron: And I'm sure you remember what it was like yourself to be a first-year student. That actually leads into my next question. If you could travel back in time and give your graduate student self a single piece of advice, what would that be?

Dr. Chow: Quantitative psychology methodologies are pretty interesting stuff. And it all turns out fine in the end!

Aaron: Sounds like good advice for us too! What is your favorite stats package, and why?

Dr. Chow: Probably R, because it's free.

Aaron: That's as good a reason as any. What's something interesting that you've learned or done in State College since you've been here?

Dr. Chow: Well, I've been to State College a few times even before moving here. I think given the size of the town and how isolated it is from everything else, it is still a pretty decent place to live. Some of the restaurants are pretty decent. For instance, even though there aren't a lot of Mexican restaurants, there's one good one for instance. And I just went to a café with really good crepes. For State College I was surprised to find something so good.

Aaron: What are your interests outside of work? What are your hobbies?

Dr. Chow: I really like doing yoga. One of the things I wish they would offer more in State College would be yoga classes. There isn't a lot of variety in terms of the yoga classes that are offered. In yoga they have a lot of different styles and philosophies and they have a lot of different classes in North Carolina.

Aaron: Maybe you can start a group!

Dr. Chow: In order to do that I think you have to go to teacher's training. It's something I've always wanted to do but haven't had the time! So if I were to go back in time and talk to my graduate student self I would say 'Go for the teacher's training'!

Aaron: If you could visit one place in the world where would that be?

Dr. Chow: I'd like to take a cruise to Alaska, but that's not the *one* place. There are many places that I'd like to visit. Actually, staying home doesn't sound so bad either!

Aaron: Do you have any hidden talents that we should know about?

Dr. Chow: Oh no, they're too hidden!

Aaron: Hm. Well now I'd like you to imagine a world overrun by dinosaurs. What would your role be in such a world?

Dr. Chow: I don't want to have anything to do with that world! I like my current world. Has anyone ever given a real answer to that question?

Aaron: Only those interested in survival. Now, if you could be any land-based mammal what would it be?

Dr. Chow: I like homo-sapiens. I think I'll go with that.

Aaron: Wise choice. Alright, last question for you. Bears - for or against?

Dr. Chow: <pause> I think I'm going to have to give up on that one. I don't want to commit to an answer on paper that would offend someone.

Aaron: Fair enough, we are a department of bear-enthusiasts. This has been a wonderful and informative interview, thanks for sharing your thoughts with the HDFS community.

Dr. Chow: My pleasure!

Dr. Sy-Miin Chow can be reached at:

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University Park, PA 16802
Email: symiin@psu.edu*

Summertime, a Season of Harvest on Love, Career, and Fun!

Personal Milestones—Congratulations!



Avery Elise Miller

Megan Mass had a baby named **Harper**!

Aaron Miller had a baby named **Avery**!

Julia Bleser (Terr-Malloy) got married!

Deirdre Hon got married to Garren!

Lauren Philbrook got married on June 16th!

Emily Pressler got married and moved to new York!

Allison Reamy got engaged with Andrew!

Jacqui Cox got engaged to Aaron!

Amanda Griffin hiked two 14,000 ft. mountains in Colorado!



Harper Marie Dewey

Professional Milestones

4th Years **Alexis Harris**, **Kathleen Zadzora**, and **Jacqui Cox** were part of the Penn State team that brought home the Sloboda & Bukoski Memorial Cup from this year's Society for Prevention Research conference in DC in June . "The Cohort Effect" beat out teams of graduate students and post docs from UVA, Oregon State, and the University of Minnesota with their project predicting latent trajectories of substance use in the transition to high school. Other team members included Charlie Beekman from Dev. Psyc, and Shu (Violet) Xu from the Methodology Center.



Nicole Constance — defended my masters on Aug 21st and completed a summer internship with the US Census Bureau.

Brandon McDaniel — taught my first university course (HDFS 229: Child Development), chaired and presented in a symposium on paternal co-parenting quality at the International Conference on Infant Studies, and got a paper accepted for publication in the Journal of Family Psychology. And I passed my candidacy meeting!

Team power! From left to right: Shu (Violet) Xu, Kathleen Zadzora, Alexis Harris, Jacqui Cox, and Charlie Beekman.

Nicole DePasquale — since the end of last semester I have had a manuscript accepted for publication by Health & Social Work in which I am the lead author, and have two other first-author manuscripts currently under review. Another manuscript in which I was a co-author was accepted for publication in the American Journal of Kidney Diseases. Two other manuscripts in which I played a supportive role are also currently under review.

Mary Jon Barrineau — I passed comps!

Alexis Harris — I defended my comps in June!

Rebecca Madill and **Yao Zheng** — We wrote comps at the same time in May. We both successfully defended them in August. The 5th-years are all ABD now (except for one Phd)!

Hye Young (Grace) Rhee defended her comps!

Amanda Griffin — I graduated from Virginia

Tech and went to SRA, my first conference!

Jon Reader presented a poster at ICIS!

Molly Countermeine, Max Crowley, Kyungmin Kim, Ian Lam, Jeong Eun Lee, Siwei Liu, and Deborah Temkin graduated this summer. Congratulations and we already miss you!

what did you do during the summer?

Brandon McDaniel

My family and I loved traveling to Florida for vacation this summer.

My wife and I especially had fun going to Universal Studios together and visiting The Wizarding World of Harry Potter!

Kameron Moding

I visited my family in Colorado and my best friend in Georgia!

Amanda Griffin

I travelled to California and Colorado.

Concetta Mineo

I went to the Dominican Republic to visit my fiancé, and then to Utah for a wedding. I also had a lot of fun hanging out with my family and friends in New Jersey.

Yao Zheng

I went on a short conference trip to Athens, GA in mid-June. I have to say I love the campus of UoG!



Emily Pressler

For my honeymoon I went to Paris and Reykjavik Iceland.

So when we were booking our trip to Paris, we found out that with Iceland Air you can have a lay over for up to 5 days without paying an additional fee. So we decided to also go to Reykjavik too. It was great, Paris had the best food and was gorgeous.

We loved going to all the museums and doing people watching at the cafes. Iceland is maybe one of the prettiest countries I've ever been to, and if you like sea food this is the place for you. We tried the local hot dogs and as odd as it sounds I highly suggest you go try them if you're ever in Iceland. They put like 3 types of mustard on them, and 2 types of onions, so I would bring some mints if you want to have a romantic evening ;)

Amanda Leggett
“Other than work I performed in *Seussical the Musical* at the Boal Barn.”
(Amanda is at the left of the picture)



What do you look forward to this year?

The Academic Side

Nicole Constance: Finishing the last of my classes and being closer to finishing grad school!

Concetta Mineo: Defending my thesis and receiving my Masters degree in psychology!

Brandon McDaniel: Learning multi-level modeling -- I know I'm a geek! But I'm excited to learn this because many of the things I study I need to look at longitudinally and I often have dependent data.

Kameron Moding: Defending my master's thesis (hopefully!)

Jon Reader: Starting off my new career in academia.

Allison Reamy: I am looking forward to collecting data for my dissertation. I am partnering with an older adult facility in the Philadelphia area and will be interviewing older adults and their adult daughter caregivers.

Yao Zheng: Finishing my few manuscripts, and preparing to propose my dissertation, besides taking and teaching classes.

Aaron Miller: Writing an awesome newsletter with my friend Ni and sharing it with all the great people in HDFS. Also, cake. The sweet cake of academia.

Nonacademic

Anonymous: Moving out of dear old South Henderson.

Amanda Griffin: Going to Colombia for Thanksgiving break.

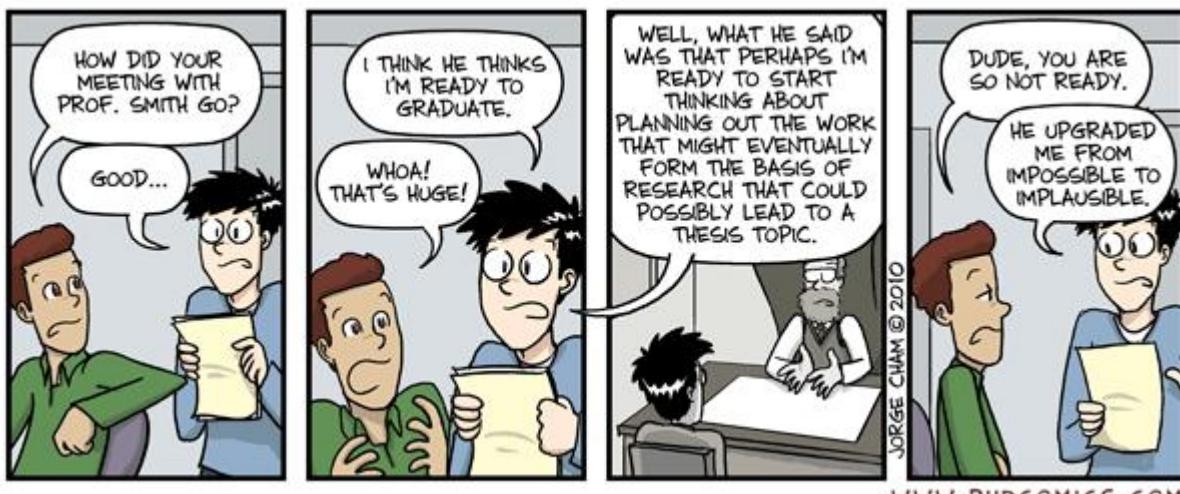
Amanda Leggett: Attending my best friend's wedding in South Africa!

Ni Jian: Leaves turning colors in fall in central Pennsylvania!

The Balanced



Deirdre Hon:
Learning SEM and long bike rides!



**Do you have questions? Ideas? Comments? Criticisms? Compliments?
Complaints? Just want to gab?**

Contact Ni and Aaron about newsletter business and ideas at:

jin198905@gmail.com OR amm371@psu.edu

HDFS Cryptogram...Can you solve the puzzle?

CQZRW IMD PMY YUZZXBRA CQU PZOO RUTHOUCCUY.

OMMW PMY Z RUT UXBCBMR BR XUGUNKUY!

Hint: U equals E.

