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

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

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!

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.

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

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.
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.

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.

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.

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.

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!

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)
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.

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

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

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Fall Picnic Pictures!

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

Some of our department newlyweds!

Avery: the big star
Fall Picnic Pictures!

Our very own Concetta!

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 :-)

HDFS NEWSLETTER
Fall Picnic Pictures!

Faculty at the picnic
From left to right: Greg Fosco, Cynthia Stifter, Scott Gest, Doug Coatsworth, and Steve Zarit
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. That'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!

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**Dr. Sy-Miin Chow can be reached at:**

114M Henderson Bldg
University Park, PA 16802
Email: symiin@psu.edu
Summertime, a Season of Harvest on Love, Career, and Fun!

Personal Milestones—Congratulations!

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!

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!

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 Countermine, 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!

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 Athen, GA in mid-June. I have to say I love the campus of UoG!

Amanda Griffin
I travelled to California and Colorado.

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.

The Balanced

**Deirdre Hon:**

Learning SEM and long bike rides!

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!

Contact Ni and Aaron about newsletter business and ideas at:
jn198905@gmail.com OR amm371@psu.edu

HDFS Cryptogram...Can you solve the puzzle?

CQZRW IMD PMY YUZXBRA CQU PZOO RUTHOUCCUY.
OMMW PMY Z RUT UXBCBMR BR XUGUNKUY!

Hint: U equals E.