Message From The Chair

Although we have emerged from some (but not all) of the disruptions of the pandemic era, the area has experienced another excellent year of accomplishments and program growth. Here are some highlights to celebrate, many of which will be explored in more depth elsewhere in the Newsletter.

In the fall, we welcomed an excellent group of incoming graduate students, including Olivia Chang (Joint SW), Lester Mejia Gomez, Myriam Al Bcherraoui, Yanghyun Park (Joint SW), and Emily Briggs. This is a truly impressive group with diverse research interests. I also want to thank the admissions committee, headed by Professor Volling, who helped us to recruit another outstanding cohort. Joining the developmental area next Fall are Kayley Dotson, who will be working with Professor Warneken, and Lori Chen, who will be working with Professor Kovelman. The resumption of the in-person recruitment weekend was a delightful return to long standing traditions, and an opportunity to socialize with faculty, students, and prospective students.

It was also a productive year for the developmental psychology training grant. During the 2022-23 academic year, the training grant supported four students: Deaweh Benson (Developmental), Sunghyun Hong (Developmental and Social Work), Katie Ross (Clinical), and Heidi Westerman (Clinical) who, along with postdoctoral fellow (Scott Tillem) all participated in a weekly seminar and integrated new dimensions into their research.
We also want to CONGRATULATE AND CELEBRATE the students who are completing, or have completed, their PhD during this academic year: Lolita Moss (Joint with SW), Kaitlin Ward (Joint SW), and Valerie Freund. Go forth and continue to make us proud!

Last year, we enjoyed a great opportunity to socialize at the first in-person colloquium area event since the start of the pandemic, hosting Megan Gunnar at the Arnold Sameroff Lecture on Developmental Theory, and we look forward to next year’s lecture in this series. With Professor Sameroff’s encouragement and approval, we were also able to host a UM Developmental Reception at the SRCD Biennial Meeting in March, in Salt Lake City. This was another great opportunity to connect with current and past UM colleagues and friends, renewing a long-standing tradition at the SRCD Biennial Meetings.

Finally, I am delighted to announce that a new area chair will be assuming the role this July. Professor Pamela Davis-Kean has agreed to lead us going forward in 2023, and we all know that we are in very good hands for the future. Thank you, Pam!

On a sadder note, we were deeply saddened to learn of the loss of a distinguished faculty member, superb colleague, and close friend to many of us in the developmental program, John Schulenberg. Over a long and eminent career, he supported the research and doctoral progress of many developmental students whom he mentored, including Valerie Freund in the past year. Below is the memorial for John that appeared in the Department and the ISR websites:

Professor Schulenberg was a fellow of the American Psychological Association and president of the Society for Research on Adolescence (2014-2016). He was a member of the Monitoring the Future (MTF) leadership team for 32 years. John published widely on topics related to psychosocial development from adolescence through adulthood. He proposed conceptual models of how common developmental transitions in work, relationships, and achievement across adolescence and the transition to adulthood set the stage for differential trajectories in health and well-being across the life course. His scholarly career brought a developmental perspective to theory and research on substance use and psychopathology, while also bringing a broad population perspective using large-scale survey data to developmental psychology. He enjoyed collaborating and mentoring and viewed supporting early- and mid-career scholars as a key part of his contribution to the field. Professor Schulenberg will be remembered for his devotion to formally and informally mentoring dozens of scholars, enthusiasm for interdisciplinary collaboration, and passion for developmental science.
In Remembrance:
Professor John Schulenberg (1957 - 2023)

John Schulenberg, Research Professor at the Institute for Social Research and Professor of Psychology at the University of Michigan, passed away on February 9, 2023 at the age of sixty-five.

Professor Schulenberg received his B.A. from the University of Cincinnati in 1979 and his Ph.D. from Pennsylvania State University in 1987. He was an assistant professor of Adolescent Development in the Department of Child Development and Family Studies at Purdue University from 1986-1991. In 1991, Professor Schulenberg came to the University of Michigan as an assistant research scientist in the Survey Research Center at the Institute for Social Research and an adjunct assistant professor of psychology. He was promoted to associate research scientist and associate professor in 1995, research associate professor in 1997, and research professor and professor in 2001.

Professor Schulenberg served as the associate director of the Survey Research Center from 2003-2006 and 2010-2014. Professor Schulenberg was a fellow of the American Psychological Association and president of the Society for Research on Adolescence (2014-2016). He was a member of the Monitoring the Future (MTF) leadership team for 32 years. MTF is an integrated epidemiological and etiological research program that examines current prevalence levels and long-term trends in substance use behaviors and attitudes among adolescents and adults in the US. The project has been funded continuously by the National Institute on Drug Abuse for nearly five decades and serves as a primary source of national data on historical, developmental, and cohort-related changes in substance use and its correlates. From 2017 to 2022, John served as the Principal Investigator for the MTF Panel Study, following nationally-representative samples of 12th grade students longitudinally from ages 18 to 60.

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Professor Schulenberg is survived by his wife, Cathleen Connell, and children Clayton and Franny. He relished coaching youth baseball and softball teams for many years. His warmth, generosity, and humor will be deeply missed.

Professor Schulenberg’s obituary can be found here — Department of Psychology, February 2023
THANKING: DR. HENRY M. WELLMAN

Harold W. Stevenson Collegiate Professor Emeritus of Psychology

This year we mark the retirement of Professor Henry Wellman, a long-term member of our area. Professor Wellman received his B.A. (1970) degree from Pomona College and his Ph.D. (1975) degree from the University of Minnesota. Professor Wellman joined the University of Michigan faculty as an assistant professor in 1977, and was promoted to associate professor in 1981, and professor in 1986.

Professor Wellman is one of the most important developmental psychologists of his generation and remains one of the most well-cited developmental psychologists today. He is a devoted and award-winning mentor and an outstanding teacher. His research helped establish a new and thriving field of study known as “theory of mind”, namely, how children come to understand the minds of others, with implications for our human ability to communicate, cooperate, make friends, and deceive others. He created robust methodological tools to assess the development of children’s social cognition from infancy through older childhood; these tools are used all around the world and have uncovered both universal patterns and culturally specific variation. He pioneered the study of mental state reasoning in infants, and of neuroimaging to discover which brain regions process these mental states. He examined the linguistic underpinnings to theory of mind in carefully selected populations (such as deaf children without access to sign language), and the role of parental input to these developments. He has studied children’s understanding of artificial minds (robots) and extraordinary minds (Gods). He has authored eight books and monographs and nearly 200 scientific papers.

Professor Wellman has received many honors throughout his career, including the G. Stanley Hall Award from the APA for distinguished contributions to developmental psychology, the Mentoring Award for Developmental Psychology from the American Psychological Association (APA), an NIH Merit Award, and book awards from the APA and the Cognitive Development Society. He served as president of the Cognitive Development Society and is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Read more about Professor Wellman’s career and research from this website and this article.
WELCOME TO THE DEPARTMENT!

NEW STUDENTS

Left to right
Emily Briggs: p.6
Lester A. Mejia Gomez: p. 7
Myriam Al Bcherraoui: p. 7-8

Left to right
Yanghyun Park: p. 8
Olivia Varney-Chang: p. 9
Enrica Bridgewater: p. 9-10

Left to right
Alaa Al-Kahalah: p. 10
Christel Portengen: p. 11

NEW POSTDOCS

Left to right
David Menendez: p.12
Esmeralda Hidalgo-Lopez: p. 12
EMILY BRIGGS

Prior Institution: Towson University

What were you doing before coming to the U of Michigan? Before coming to Michigan I completed my honors thesis at Towson University under the guidance of Dr. Kim Shifren. My research investigated the impact of a 6-week virtual art intervention on loneliness and well-being in undergraduate students during the COVID-19 pandemic. I was also an active member of Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity, holding both Executive Board and Executive Council positions.

Current Advisors: Dr. Jacqui Smith, and Dr. Toni Antonucci

Research Interests: I am broadly interested in well-being in older adulthood. My current research looks at how feelings of belonging and community engagement can impact feelings of well-being.

A teacher that changed the way you felt about learning? I have had some amazing mentors throughout the years, I am forever thankful for the guidance I have had throughout my academic journey. I am specifically grateful for Mr. & Mrs. Forcucci in 12th grade for encouraging me to take risks and persevere. I am also grateful for Dr. Shifren, my honors thesis advisor, for always encouraging me.

If you were not in developmental psychology what endeavors would you be pursuing instead? I think I would still be in Psychology somewhere! I was very interested in clinical work for a few years, I could see myself having pursued Art Therapy had I not discovered my passion for research. I also thoroughly enjoyed my time working as an Activities Coordinator in an assisted living facility, I came to work with the sole mission everyday of making people happy, It was an incredibly rewarding & fun job!

One thing you are looking forward to doing this summer? I am looking forward to sunshine, longer days, and reading a good book on the beach!

Favorite thing about Michigan so far? Everyone in Michigan is so nice!

What are some of your hobbies or recreational interests? I am an avid reader, when I am not reading journal articles I love a page-turning thriller! I recently taught myself how to crochet and I made some nice winter gear to survive my first "Michigan winter." I also enjoy cooking and trying new plant-based recipes, as well as staying active by going to the gym and practicing yoga.

If you could have any superhuman ability, what would it be? I would love to be able to fly!

Words you live by? "Grow through what you go through"
LESTER A. MEJIA GOMEZ

Prior Institution: Wingate University

What were you doing before coming to the U of Michigan? I was a student at Wingate University pursuing a double-major in psychology and sociology and minoring in Spanish. Additionally, I was a research assistant in the Conceptual Development Lab and the Purpose Lab

Current Advisors: Dr. Susan Gelman and Dr. Germine Awad

Research Interests: Broadly, I am interested in investigating how children from underrepresented communities learn and understand social concepts (e.g., race) and issues (e.g., immigration). More specifically, I am interested in how children learn about colorism, develop colorist beliefs, and discriminate according to their beliefs.

A teacher that changed the way you felt about learning? Drs. Chloe Beck and Terese Lund at Wingate University believed in my research abilities and helped me pursue the questions I am interested in through research.

If you were not in developmental psychology what endeavors would you be pursuing instead? I would not be too far because I would probably study sociology and law.

One thing you are looking forward to doing this summer? I look forward to mentoring the lab’s incoming MSPICED intern, exploring the nature of Michigan, and finding new hobbies.

Favorite thing about Michigan so far? My favorite thing about Michigan is all the outdoor activities available in the summer months!

What are some of your hobbies or recreational interests? As a lifelong soccer fan and player, I love watching and keeping up with my favorite teams and playing whenever possible. I also love playing all sorts of board games, but my favorite is chess.

If you could have any superhuman ability, what would it be? Teleportation

Words you live by? “Be the person you wish you had in your life.”

MYRIAM AL BCHERRAOUI

Prior Institution: Lebanese American University

What were you doing before coming to the U of Michigan? I was completing my Bachelors degree in Psychology, spending most of my time with family and friends before my move, and visiting places in Lebanon that I had not been to before!

Current Advisors: Dr. Brenda Volling and Dr. Toni Antonucci

Research Interests: I am interested in how parent-child relationships support children’s social and emotional development and prevent negative behavioral outcomes. I am also interested in exploring how early family relationships serve as a source of emotional security that promote children’s healthy development across the lifespan, and contribute to later behavioral and health outcomes.
A teacher that changed the way you felt about learning? My high school English teacher, she believed in me and taught to pursue what I am passionate about despite the challenges that I might face. So long as you are passionate, determined, and do the best that you can, you ought to achieve great things.

If you were not in developmental psychology what endeavors would you be pursuing instead? I would probably be pursuing something in the arts, maybe become a painter!

One thing you are looking forward to doing this summer? I am excited to experience my first Michigan summer, visit my family in Lebanon, read all the books I have been collecting over the semester, and make progress on my 619 project!

Favorite thing about Michigan so far? The nature, the lakes, and that we experience all four seasons!

What are some of your hobbies or recreational interests? I love drawing, reading, and learning new baking recipes!

If you could have any superhuman ability, what would it be? To travel between time and space.

Words you live by? "You did not come this far to only come this far."

Yanghyun Park

Prior Institution: Sungkyunkwan University, The University of Texas at Austin

What were you doing before coming to the U of Michigan? I worked as a medical social worker at a small nonprofit clinic.

Current Advisors: Dr. Kathryn Maguire-Jack (Social Work) and Dr. Brenda Volling (Developmental Psychology)

Research Interests: Child maltreatment, parenting, intimate partner violence

A teacher that changed the way you felt about learning? Mr. Grimm, my photography teacher from high school

If you were not in developmental psychology what endeavors would you be pursuing instead? Stay at home mom (though I’m not even married yet)

One thing you are looking forward to doing this summer? My parents are visiting me from Korea!!

Favorite thing about Michigan so far? The city being so small that I can just take local roads, and the weather being not hot at all

What are some of your hobbies or recreational interests? Watching cooking channels on Youtube, cooking (and eating), taking walks

If you could have any superhuman ability, what would it be? Healing

Words you live by? "There is always something to be grateful for."
OLIVIA VARNEY-CHANG

Prior Institution: University of Michigan
What were you doing before coming to the U of Michigan? I was a double major in Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience and American Culture (Ethnic Studies) at the University of Michigan. During that time, I was Lab Manager of Dr. Shawna Lee’s Parenting in Context Research Lab and an Evaluation Assistant at the School of Social Work.
Current Advisors: Dr. Pam Davis-Kean and Dr. Shawna Lee
Research Interests: Child maltreatment prevention, positive parenting, and strengthening families
A teacher that changed the way you felt about learning? Dr. Ava Purkiss: Learn the literature, but always have dialogue with it and never be afraid to challenge it
If you were not in developmental psychology what endeavors would you be pursuing instead? I would (still) be pursuing my Master’s in Social Work
One thing you are looking forward to doing this summer? Traveling and spending time with friends and family!
Favorite thing about Michigan so far? I’ve been in Michigan for a while, but I love that there’s always something different to explore or something new to see.
What are some of your hobbies or recreational interests? Playing tennis, graphic design, and watching mystery movies.
If you could have any superhuman ability, what would it be? Time traveling! I’d love to go back in time and see how people and places have changed.
Words you live by? “Work hard and be kind”

ENRICA BRIDGEWATER

Prior Institution: Brooklyn College CUNY
What were you doing before coming to the U of Michigan? I worked for Brooklyn College Community Partnership, a non-profit organization that provides STEAM-based after school programming for youth across New York City. I worked here first as a data entry assistant and then as a program assistant from the time I graduated in 2018 right up until I entered my PhD program in 2020.
Current Advisors: Dr. L. Monique Ward
Research Interests: My research interests fall into three main areas: representations of minoritized groups in entertainment media; media contributions to identity development and psychological well-being across the lifespan; and the role of algorithms in shaping children’s digital content.
A teacher that changed the way you felt about learning? Erika Niwa -- she was both my professor and undergraduate research advisor. Taking her Psychology of Adolescence class in Fall 2016 is one of the main reasons why I wanted to become a developmental scientist!

If you were not in developmental psychology what endeavors would you be pursuing instead? Okay, this would only happen in a universe where I had any artistic abilities, but I would have loved to become an animator at Pixar! I’ve always loved animated movies and it would be so cool to be part of the various teams that make the movies we love and enjoy.

One thing you are looking forward to doing this summer? Sleeping (I’m perpetually in a state of tiredness) and going for walks as it continues to get nicer outside!

Favorite thing about Michigan so far? Eating Korean BBQ at Tomukun and cupcakes at Bakehouse 46. I go to both places way too often, but they’re so good!

What are some of your hobbies or recreational interests? I am in the process of finding more hobbies, but I do enjoy listening to music and watching movies.

If you could have any superhuman ability, what would it be? Teleportation would be so great.

Words you live by? As the beloved blue tang fish named Dory once said, "Just keep swimming, just keep swimming, swimming, swimming."

Alaa Al-Kahalah

Prior Institution: Undergrad: UofM!

What were you doing before coming to the U of Michigan? I was completing my undergrad in psychology! At the University of Michigan!

Current Advisors: Dr. Susan Gelman

Research Interests: Parental language in relation to parenting styles and how it influences child’s empathy

A teacher that changed the way you felt about learning? My Islamic Studies teacher in high school: she taught me that the best why to teach/learn is through story telling

If you were not in developmental psychology what endeavors would you be pursuing instead? I would love to open a bakery and taste test recipes all day!

One thing you are looking forward to doing this summer? Reading outdoors (backyard, parks, beaches, etc.)

Favorite thing about Michigan so far? Been living in Michigan for over 5 years now and the trees during fall never fail to disappoint me. I also love apple fritters (not sure if thats a Michigan thing tho:))

What are some of your hobbies or recreational interests? Embroidery and baking

If you could have any superhuman ability, what would it be? Snap my fingers and have all my assignments/papers done! *thanos*

Words you live by? "Don’t be afraid to look at the world through someone else’s lens "
CHRISTEL PORTENGEN

Prior Institution: Utrecht University

What were you doing before coming to the U of Michigan? I’m currently doing a PhD in neuroscience/pedagogical sciences in the Netherlands

Current Advisors: Dr. Joyce Endendijk and Prof. Dr. Anneloes van Baar, but at the UM I am working with Dr. Adriene Beltz

Research Interests: My research focuses on children’s gender-differentiated emotion expression and parental gender socialization. Specifically, we’re examining whether parents’ neural responses towards gendered information is related to the way parents use gender-differentiated parenting strategies with their children. More broadly, I’m interested in the social determinants of gender differences in emotion expression in children and adolescents.

A teacher that changed the way you felt about learning? Dr. Joyce Endendijk

If you were not in developmental psychology what endeavors would you be pursuing instead? I would most likely be pursuing a career as teacher or data scientist (so basically the same but in industry).

One thing you are looking forward to doing this summer? After my time here I’ll be traveling in Canada (west-coast) which has been on my bucket list for years! Really excited

Favorite thing about Michigan so far? Your passion for merchandise. So many people wearing Michigan-related clothing/accessories. Love it!

What are some of your hobbies or recreational interests? I’m a huge music fanatic, with interests ranging from jazz-rock-pop to EDM and pretty much everything in between. I read a lot, like to cook, and like to explore new/foreign places

If you could have any superhuman ability, what would it be? Transportation! I love going places but hate the commute.

Words you live by? "Carpe diem"
DAVID MENENDEZ

Prior Institution: University of Wisconsin-Madison
What were you doing before coming to the U of Michigan? Finishing my PhD
Current Advisors: Dr. Susan Gelman
Research Interests: Conceptual development, Cognition and education, and culture
A teacher that changed the way you felt about learning? Dr. Martha Alibali
If you were not in developmental psychology what endeavors would you be pursuing instead? Maybe being a librarian?
One thing you are looking forward to doing this summer? Moving to Santa Cruz, CA
Favorite thing about Michigan so far? Biking along the river in the summer

What are some of your hobbies or recreational interests? Biking, baking and making soap
If you could have any superhuman ability, what would it be? Teleportation
Words you live by? "Don’t take yourself too seriously, nobody else does :)

ESMERALDA HIDALGO LOPEZ

Prior Institution: University of Salzburg, Universidad Autonoma de Madrid
What were you doing before coming to the U of Michigan? I was studying sex hormones effects on brain structure and function.
Current Advisors: Dr. Adriene Beltz and Dr. Chelsea Kaplan
Research Interests: Cognitive neuroscience, neuroendocrinology, neuroimaging, computational neuroscience
A teacher that changed the way you felt about learning? My biology high school teacher, Concepcion Mulas.
If you were not in developmental psychology what endeavors would you be pursuing instead? Consciousness
One thing you are looking forward to doing this summer? Exploring the Upper Peninsula!
Favorite thing about Michigan so far? Kerrytown in A2
What are some of your hobbies or recreational interests? Bouldering, nature, reading, cinema, live music... I try really hard with gardening, but I’m a natural (and unintentional) plant killer.
If you could have any superhuman ability, what would it be? Time travel
Words you live by? "Memento mori."
PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL MILESTONES

FACULTY AWARD

Nicole Gardner-Neblett: 2023 Department of Psychology Diversity Research Award

Susan Gelman: 2023 American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Fellow

Ioulia Kovelman: 2023 Association for Psychological Science (APS) Fellow

Vonnie McLoyd: 2022 Association for Psychological Science (APS) William James Fellow Award; 2022 American Psychological Association (APA) Award for Distinguished Scientific Contributions; 2022 Elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences

Monique Ward: 2022 American Psychological Association (APA) Div. 35 Carolyn Wood Sherif Award; 2023 U-M Center for the Education of Women+ (CEW+) Sarah Goddard Power Award

PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Ioulia Kovelman: Promoted to Full Professor

STUDENT AWARDS, GRANTS, SCHOLARSHIP, & FELLOWSHIP

Enrica Bridgewater: Jay and Kay Peters Graduate Psychology Student Award

Joonyoung Cho: Joanne Yaffe Doctoral Scholarship 2023; Jay and Kay Peters Graduate Psychology Student Award

Jasmine Cooper: National institute on aging (NIA) diversity supplement

Ana Patricia Esqueda: Barbara Oleshansky Memorial Fund Award

Felicia Hardi: Nadelman Graduate Student Research Award; Hagen-Stevenson Dissertation Research Award

Sunghyun Hong: School of Social Work Joint Doctoral Program Grant

Rita Hu: 2023 University of Michigan Psychology Dissertation Grant; Harold T. and Vivian B. Shapiro Prize; Pillsbury Research Award

Jay Kayser: John Longres Award in Psychology or Sociology

Joonyoung Park: Hagen-Stevenson Award and Eric Bermann Research Award

Danielle Rosenscruggs: Barbara Oleshansky Memorial Fund Award

Kari Sherwood: UM Rackham Conference Travel Grant, 2022; CEW+ Mary Malcomson Raphael Scholar, 2022; Barbara Oleshansky Memorial Fund Award; Patricia Gurin Award

Olivia Varney-Chang: Honorable Mention - Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship

Chi-Lin Yu: 2023 Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship; 2023 Hagen-Stevenson Dissertation Research Award; 2023 University of Michigan Psychology Dissertation Grant
PROGRAM MILESTONES

Sarah Probst: Defended prospectus Winter 2023

Danielle Rosenscruggs: Completed 619 ("The Multidimensional Internalized Sexism Scale: Development and Initial Validation of a Measure of Internalized Sexism in Women"), completed prelims, advancement to candidacy

Kari Sherwood: Advanced to Candidacy Fall 2022

ALUMNI AWARDS

Maria Arredondo: now a faculty at the University of Texas at Austin, has received two early career awards: APS Rising Star and SRCD Early Career Research Contributions Award.

Neelima Wagley: a graduate of our program and a postdoctoral fellow at Vanderbilt University, has accepted a tenure-track assistant professor position at Arizona State University in Speech and Hearing

PUBLICATIONS (FIRST-AUTHOR ONLY)


Gross, E.B. How to get to where they are: Notes from an open group with unhoused LGBTQIA2S+ youth. (2023); Health Promotion Practice.


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**STUDENT TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS**


**PERSONAL MILESTONES**

**Frederick Morrison:** Recipient, Honorary Doctoral Degree, University of Jyvaskyla, Jyvaskyla Finland, May 2023

**Felicia Hardi** and her partner Jonathan welcomed baby Sean on January 20th, 2023.

**Deaweh Benson** adopted kitten Louie this year! "He's a ball of love and such a handful. In the first picture, I had to pull over after he escaped from his cat carrier. Fortunately, he was willing to pose for a quick photo before he eventually agreed to go back into his carrier. In the second picture, he's taking his comfy cat nap:)

**2022 Developmental Area cohort**
hang out (L-R): Emily, Lester, Myriam, Yanghyun, Olivia

**2021 Developmental Area cohort**
hang out (L-R): Rose, Jada, Rachel, Rachel's sister, Linda, Jessica
Warmest Congratulations!

Dominic Kelly defended dissertation titled “Using Intensive Longitudinal Data to Model Person-Oriented Relations Between Cognition and Personality to Inform Development”
Committee chair: Dr. Adriene M. Beltz

Valerie Freund defended dissertation titled “Negative Affect Associations with Adolescent Psychopathology and Substance Use”
Committee chair: Dr. John E. Schulenberg

Kaitlin Ward defended dissertation titled “Ecological Influences of Parental Discipline Behaviors and Child Outcomes among Families in Low- and Middle-Income Countries”
Committee chair: Dr. Pamela Davis-Kean & Dr. Shawna Jo Lee

Committee chair: Dr. Lorraine M. Gutierrez & Dr. L. Monique Ward

Committee chair: Dr. Ioulia Kovelman & Dr. Twila Tardif
SPOTLIGHT: AN INTERVIEW WITH OUR LECTURERS

Meet our lecturers:

Dr. Katie Jodl
Jacquelynne S. Eccles
Collegiate Lecturer IV

Dr. Liz Buvinger
Lecturer II

Q: What do you teach and how long have you been teaching at UM?

I teach Intro Psych, a 401 seminar called Autism in the Mainstream Media, Developmental Research Methods Labs, and I will be teaching Cognitive Development next Winter. I have also taught 250 (Intro to Developmental Psych) and 303 (Intro to Research Methods) in the past. I have been teaching in the department since I was in graduate school here (starting in 2007), and I continued teaching throughout my postdoc (at the Center for Human Growth and Development), then transitioned to lecturing full time in 2017.

Currently, I am teaching three seminar-based classes this semester. These include a first-year seminar on emerging adulthood, a senior upper-level seminar in emerging adulthood, and a 400 level topics seminar called attachment across the lifespan. In general, I also taught larger classes such as Introduction to Developmental and Social Development.

I first started teaching at the University of Michigan as a postdoc in the late 90s, when I was asked by Arnold Sameroff to step in and teach a one-off class on adolescents. However, it wasn't until 2007 or 2008, when a colleague asked me to teach a class, that I began teaching consistently. I started part-time, but for the past 10-12 years, I have been teaching full-time. (Paraphrase from live interview)
Q: What did you do prior to becoming a lecturer in the developmental area?

After college I worked for two years as a research assistant in a lab focused on creating school-based social skills interventions for children with ADHD at James Madison University in Virginia. Afterwards, I did a year of a master's program in Psychological Sciences at JMU. Directly following that, I came to graduate school here at University of Michigan in the Developmental area, working with Dr. Cathy Lord. Following my PhD, I did a joint postdoc at CHGD and Pediatric Endocrinology at Michigan Medicine for 3 years.

I studied at the University of Minnesota as an undergraduate, majoring in Child Psychology and History. I then earned my PhD in Developmental Psychology at the University of Virginia. Following that I came to the University of Michigan to do my postdoc. (Paraphrase from live interview)

Q: What is your favorite part about teaching?

I love teaching undergraduate students and seeing their passion for Psychology grow throughout the course of a semester with me. Those moments where I can see them making meaningful connections to their own lives or having "Aha!" moments are my favorite. I also really love getting to know students in office hours or in my smaller seminar courses. I went to a tiny liberal arts college and so I'm always trying to replicate that smaller environment for my students who are used to being here at such a large university.

As a lecturer, I find the best part of my job goes beyond just the academic aspect of it. While I do love the energy and ambiance of being on campus, what I really value are the relationships I've built with my students and fellow faculty members. ...Working one on one with students, whether it's for career development or working on papers, is one of my favorite parts of the job... I also find the nature of developmental psychology to be very collegial and supportive, and I really appreciate this. Some of the people I've collaborated with have been friends for years, and it's those relationships that make my job enjoyable. (Paraphrase from live interview)
Q: What other hobbies or favorite activities do you have - or any other information you would like to share with our area members?

Over the spring/summer when I have more time for hobbies, I love gardening - mostly vegetables and herbs. Over the past few years when we were all spending more time in our homes, I also really started loving to watch all the birds and wildlife in our yard. My family enjoys looking up all the different birds in a little bird book they got me for Mother's Day a couple years ago :) My husband and I also really love traveling and going to live concerts and theatre, and we’ve been happy to have the opportunity to do more of that this past year or so.

I would like to share a memorable moment during my teaching career! One that stands out to me is a class I taught on emerging adulthood several years ago. The class was so engaging and the relationships between the students were so tight that it always stands out in my memory. One fun part of that experience was when an outside organization came to film our class for teaching modules. The students were so good and had such great senses of humor that even though it was awkward, it ended up being a fun experience. (Paraphrase from live interview)

Q: What advice do you have for doctoral students just beginning their teaching careers?

My best advice is to find a mentor and/or colleagues who love teaching. Having a community of colleagues with whom you can bounce around ideas is invaluable. I also highly recommend working with whatever the CRLT equivalent is at the institution at which you’re employed; having professional feedback is so helpful when trying to get a class created or updated. Lastly, don’t be afraid to take risks! I have gained so much from trying all sorts of different teaching strategies - some of which have worked well, and some of which have totally flopped, and that’s okay! Challenging ourselves as educators makes us stronger and better at teaching and supporting our students.

In my opinion, I think it's important for graduate students to gain some teaching experience. Publications are crucial for getting a job in academia, whether it's a faculty position at a liberal arts college, or at a research-intensive institution like a Big 10 university, or any other academic position. However, teaching broad courses like Introduction to Developmental Psychology can provide a good overview of the field and improve public speaking skills. Additionally, many teaching-focused institutions, such as liberal arts colleges may prioritize candidates with teaching experience. Overall, I really think that gaining some teaching experience can be a great idea for anyone looking to enter academia. While research is certainly important, you might be surprised how much teaching your knowledge to someone else can give you new perspectives on your research! (Paraphrase from live interview)
This year’s Society for Research in Child Development meeting was held in Salt Lake City, Utah from March 23-25, 2023. Many members of the Developmental Area flew to SLC to present their research, as well as reunite with others in the community. Below are some snapshots of poster presentations by some members of our area!

Photo contributions by Chi-Lin Yu

Left to right (Top to bottom):
Valerie, Rose, Chi-lin, Ana Patricia
SPOTLIGHTS FROM OTHER CONFERENCES

Top: SRA 2023 spotlight (L-R: Christel, Rachel)
Right: APS 2022 spotlight (R: Jasmine)