The Presidential Fellowship

An award winning program

The Presidential Fellowship program is USC’s highest university-wide award for promise of excellence at the graduate level. Unique among peer institutions for its reach across disciplines and focus on professional development, the fellowship is awarded to outstanding prospective students enrolling in any college or school within the university. The merit-based program awards Fellows a supplemental stipend totaling $32,000 for doctoral students (awarded over 4 years) and $20,000 for MFA students (awarded over 5 semesters). This amount is in addition to fellowships and assistantships students receive from their academic programs. Currently 29 doctoral and MFA programs are represented. In 2013, the Presidential Fellowship program at the University of South Carolina was awarded the CSGS/ETS Award for Excellence and Innovation in Graduate Admissions at the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools, an organization of over 200 graduate schools from the southern region of the United States.
A Letter from the Director

Welcome new and returning Presidential Fellows! This year marks the fourth year of USC’s prize winning Presidential Fellowship program. There are now more than 80 fellows from 29 academic programs and 9 colleges enrolled who range from brand new graduate students to those preparing for graduation and entry into the professional worlds you have chosen. You are both doctoral and MFA students. How proud we are of your many accomplishments and your example as leaders in your academic disciplines, on campus, and in your communities.

It is truly a delight to have the opportunity to work with each and every one of you over the course of your studies at the University of South Carolina. Facilitating the Presidential Fellows program and GRAD 801, the bi-monthly seminar held on Fridays from 11:15 a.m. -1:15 p.m. in Wardlaw 126, is a gift that I cherish.

Please reach out to me, Lacy Ford, Dean of Graduate Studies, and any of our colleagues in The Graduate School if we can be of any assistance.

Here’s to a productive and fun year.

Sincerely,

Jessica I. Elfenbein

Senior Associate Dean, The Graduate School
Professor of History
The Graduate School at the University of South Carolina is the 2013 recipient of the CSGS/ETS Award for Excellence and Innovation in Graduate Admissions for the community oriented, merit-based Presidential Fellowship program.
Andrew Allen - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** Music, D.M.A.  
**hometown:** Gainesboro, TN  
**contact:** allenaj2@email.sc.edu

An advocate of new music, I have premiered nearly a dozen new works for the saxophone by American and South Korean composers, and have performed at conferences throughout the United States and Great Britain. I have a bachelor's in music performance from Tennessee Tech and a master's from Central Michigan University. My work has been published in *The Instrumentalist, School Band and Orchestra*, and the North American Saxophone Alliance *Update*. My research focuses on the large saxophone ensemble and contemporary and experimental music written for the saxophone. For the past two years, I served as an adjunct instructor of music at Claflin University; this fall, I will assume a position as a tenure-track faculty member at Valley City State University in North Dakota, where I will teach woodwinds, chamber music, jazz ensemble, and music history.

Kevin Ash - 2010 Scholar

**major & degree:** Geography, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Oklahoma City, OK  
**contact:** ashkd@email.sc.edu

I earned my bachelor's degree from the University of Oklahoma and my master's from the University of Florida. My primary research interests are in how people perceive risk in hazardous environments, how critical preparedness and warning information is communicated, and how people in hazardous environments choose a course of action to mitigate danger. My research is currently focused on how the preparedness and warning processes operate for populations that are particularly exposed to extreme weather events, such as how manufactured home residents take shelter from tornadoes. I hope to secure a job that allows me to pursue these specific research interests. I would prefer an academic position; however, I am open to any opportunities to continue my research on hazard risk perception, communication, and behavior.
Alexandra Basilakos- 2013 Scholar

major & degree: Communication Sciences and Disorders, Ph.D.
hometown: Greenville, SC
contact: abasilakos@gmail.com

I received a bachelor’s in experimental psychology from the University of South Carolina and a master’s in communication sciences and disorders from the University of Georgia. I am interested in the brain’s role in language processing. Specifically, my research interests include using imaging and electrophysiological techniques to study how neural networks that support language are affected by acquired brain damage and subsequently respond throughout recovery. I hope to use research to maximize treatment options for the thousands of individuals annually affected by aphasia, a language disorder resulting from neurologic insult to the brain’s language areas.

Benjamin Beaver - 2011 Scholar

major & degree: Linguistics, Ph.D.
hometown: Honea Path, SC
contact: beaverbr@email.sc.edu

I graduated with a bachelor’s degree from Clemson University and a master’s degree from the University of Salamanca in Spain. My research interests within linguistics are in the field of second language acquisition and pedagogy. I am specifically looking at beginner-level foreign language courses, especially at the secondary/post-secondary level and the pedagogical materials used in those courses. There is a push now towards the use of authentic materials—materials created in the target language intended for speakers of that language—in classrooms instead of traditional, textbook, or teacher-generated materials. My objective is to examine these authentic materials and see how effectively they can be implemented at the beginner level, especially since these materials are intended for native speakers, not initial learners.
Benjamin Belgrad – 2013 Scholar

**major & degree:** Marine Science, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Youngstown, OH
**contact:** bbelgrad@email.sc.edu.

I spent the majority of my childhood in Youngstown, Ohio. Since high school I have sought to become a marine biologist. I earned my bachelor’s at Eckerd College in Florida where I majored in marine science and minored in mathematics and chemistry. While at Eckerd I earned the Goldwater Scholarship and became a Hollings Scholar, allowing me to intern at NOAA and study neurotoxicity on the salmon olfactory system. At USC I hope to delve into the relationship between animal behavior and morphology. Specifically, I will be working with Dr. Griffen to determine the degree aggressive/bold crab behavior influences crab size and to examine the effects of a crab’s size on its behavior.

Brandon Boesch - 2012 Scholar

**major & degree:** Philosophy, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Hasting, NE
**contact:** boeschb@email.sc.edu

I graduated from Benedictine College in Kansas where I received degrees in philosophy, biology and Spanish. I am now studying in the Ph.D. program in philosophy where I specialize in applied ethics (especially as applied to biological and medical fields). I also have a high level of interest in philosophy of science and philosophy of mind. In my free time, I enjoy playing piano, golfing, fishing, hiking, reading American literature, and spending time with my friends and family.
Stephanie Boone - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** English, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Ona, West Virginia  
**contact:** boonese2@email.sc.edu

I studied English and history at Hiram College in Ohio, and then went to the University of Arizona to pursue an MFA in nonfiction. After graduating, I moved to New York and worked as a freelance writer and college writing instructor. Working with a diverse body of students cemented my passion for teaching and sparked my interest in the role language ideology plays in writing instruction. My current research explores the ways in which instructors respond to the work of college writers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Beginning in Fall 2013, I will also serve as Assistant Director of First-Year English at USC and Vice-President of USC’s chapter of the Rhetoric Society of America. When not working, I enjoy running, yoga, and spending time with my husband.

William Brixius - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** Experimental Psychology, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Eastern seaboard and the Midwest  
**contact:** brixius@email.sc.edu

I graduated from Kennesaw State University in Georgia with a degree in psychology and a minor in statistics. I previously obtained an AAS degree in architecture, but don’t like to talk about that much. I am working primarily with Dr. Henderson (and helping out with various other labs), currently investigating the neural correlates of visual attention and change detection. For this, I use eye-tracking hardware in tandem with fMRI to map behavioral phenomenon to specific regions of neural activation. I am also interested in stroke rehabilitation research, particularly that involving visual field deficits, and intend to eventually branch out to include TMS/tDCS in my research in order to more fully explore my tried and true passions —blindsight and representational momentum/gravity.
Douglas Cahl - 2013 Scholar

**major & degree:** Geological Sciences, Ph.D.

**hometown:** Edison, NJ

**contact:** dougcahl@gmail.com

My mother introduced me to mathematics and my father gave me my first introduction to experimental science: building go karts. At Rutgers, where I received my bachelor's in physics, I worked on a particle accelerator. I earned my master's in physics from the University of Maine. While there I helped design, build, and program a steerable radio telescope. My thesis work involved liquid nitrogen, germanium detectors, radioactive isotopes, and computer programming. I just started my Ph.D. at the University of South Carolina, where I am studying surface ocean currents and related phenomena (wind, waves, etc.) using a high frequency radar system, acoustic current profilers, wind/wave buoys, and oceanic models. I hope to significantly contribute to the knowledge of the ocean, particularly near Long Bay, SC, within 200km from the shore.

Xuemei “Blossom” Cao - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** Scenic Design, Theatre MFA

**hometown:** Hebei, China

**contact:** cao8@email.sc.edu

I hold a B.A. in scenic design for drama and movies from China’s Central Academy of Drama. From 2004 to 2011, I worked at Tianjin People’s Art Theatre as a scenic designer. Previous design credits include *Cat and Rat* (Children's Art Theatre, Tianjin), *Born to Be Coward* (people's Art Theatre, Tianjin) and *Meirenjiao* (National Center for the Performing Arts, Beijing). Among my awards are “Best Project Award” for *The Hero of Jianghuai* (Huangmei Opera, 2009) and “Best Visual Effect Award” for *Beijing Courtyard* (Chinese Scenic Exhibition, 2003). Most recently, I designed the USC productions *Present Laughter* and *Compleat Female Stage Beauty*. 
Dominic Casali - 2011 Scholar

major & degree: Chemical Engineering, Ph.D.
hometown: Melbourne, FL
contact: casali@email.sc.edu

I completed my undergraduate studies in chemical engineering at Florida Institute of Technology. During the summer between my junior and senior years, I participated in the Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program at the University of South Carolina. I enjoyed it so much I decided to come back for graduate school. Now a third year Ph.D. candidate, I work in Dr. Mike Matthews’ lab studying the biomedical applications of compressed carbon dioxide, particularly in decellularization and tissue engineering applications. Outside the lab, I am an officer in GSA and Gamecock Toastmasters, and am the president of the Chemical Engineering Graduate Student Organization. I am also an active member of the St. Thomas More Center and play several intramural sports.

Lewis Cawthorne - 2011 Scholar

major & degree: Computer Science & Engineering, Ph.D.
hometown: Hickory, NC
contact: cawthorn@email.sc.edu

A simple data entry part-time job in middle school was my first exposure to computers. In high school I spent several years designing and maintaining a relational database and managing the network for a mail order company. Prior to earning my bachelor’s at the University of South Carolina, I worked in the internet service provider industry. Now I am researching quantum complexity theory with Professor Stephen A. Fenner. I am currently focusing my attention on the problem of finding mutually unbiased bases in six dimensional and larger vector spaces. The problem of finding sets of mutually unbiased bases has an impact on quantum cryptography through secure quantum key distribution. My long term goal is to research and teach at a university.
Cristin Chall - 2012 Scholar

**major & degree:** Philosophy, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Detroit, MI
**contact:** chall@email.sc.edu

I grew up in Detroit, MI; then, I moved to Washington, D.C. in order to study physics at Howard University. During my last year there, I decided that I didn't want to pursue physics at the graduate level, but was still very interested in some of the pressing questions of modern physics. I decided to pursue philosophy, and to that end I enrolled in Virginia Tech's terminal master's program in philosophy. At Tech I received the background needed to finish my graduate education in the field. Now that I am enrolled in a doctoral philosophy program, I intend to continue my exploration of the big questions in the philosophy of physics, including investigating the puzzles of quantum mechanics, relativity, and time. Ultimately, I hope to become a tenured professor, continuing to read, write, and think about physics around my teaching duties.

Chia-chun Chiang - 2012 Scholar

**major & degree:** Business Administration, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Taipei, Taiwan
**contact:** chiangc@email.sc.edu

I received my bachelor’s degree in finance and master’s degree in insurance from National Taiwan University. Before coming to the University of South Carolina, I worked for Cathay Life Insurance Corporation, where I was inspired to pursue a Ph.D. in finance after dealing with a complicated type of insurance product at my work in 2008. While I was in charge of evaluating a hedging program for investment-guaranteed products at that time, unexpected risks significantly reduced expected hedging effectiveness. The first-hand encounter with the 2008 financial crisis inspired me to seek advanced risk management study in the field of finance. I intend to research risk management for financial institutions. In particular, I want to define measures which can help identify and control risks.
Evelyn Chukwurah - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** Biomedical Science, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Lagos, Nigeria
**contact:** chukwura@email.sc.edu

I attended Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee, receiving my bachelor’s in chemistry in 2010. I am currently a graduate student at the University of South Carolina's Department of Biological Sciences. My current research interests involve elucidating the effects of over-expressing a member of a group of proteins implicated in stress induced programmed cell death, the RNA-induced silencing complex, and viral replication. I hope that my research translates into better and more affordable anti-viral therapies. I ultimately want to continue in research and teaching.

Paul Coats - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** Linguistics, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Newberry, SC
**contact:** coatspj@email.sc.edu

Coming from a family of eleven, I have had a large support system throughout my academic career. I graduated as the first in my major from Clemson with a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish. I had always enjoyed languages and teaching, which led me to the University of South Carolina’s M.A./Ph.D. track in Linguistics. Being enrolled concurrently in the linguistics doctorate program and the Spanish master’s program, I have been able to pursue both of my interests: teaching language while researching it.
Lesley Craft - 2010 Scholar

**major & degree:** Health Promotion, Education and Behavior, Ph.D.

**hometown:** Mishawaka, IN

**contact:** crafttr@email.sc.edu

I received a bachelor’s in psychology from Purdue University and an MPH from Indiana University. I am a Certified Health Education Specialist and much of my research and professional career has focused on women’s health, sexual health education, and intimate partner violence prevention. My current research focuses on the institutionalization and sustainability of teen pregnancy prevention programming in schools throughout the state. Prior to moving to South Carolina, I served as the Program Director of the Office of Women’s Health, Indiana State Department of Health, and most recently, as the Director of Health Education for the St. Joseph County Health Department. I spend my free time painting and writing.

Brady Cunningham - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** Marine Science, Ph.D.

**hometown:** Gaithersburg, MD

**contact:** cunninbr@email.sc.edu

My research blends my background in ecology from the University of Maryland, College Park, with biological and chemical oceanography. I study the interactions between phytoplankton, marine viruses, and trace metals. Viruses play an important role on ecology in the oceans by affecting everything from small single-celled organisms to much larger marine vertebrates. Currently, I am focusing on nutrient-virus-phytoplankton interactions, specifically in cyanobacteria and picoeukaryotes. In the future, I am interested in studying competition among different viral strains infecting a specific host grown in varying trace-metal concentrations. Once finished with my Ph.D., I would like to either work for an environmental consulting firm focusing in marine systems or work for a company developing algal biofuels.
Betsy Davis - 2010 Scholar

**major & degree:** Clinical-Community Psychology, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Beaumont, TX
**contact:** davisba6@email.sc.edu

My undergraduate degree is from Southwestern University, the oldest institute of higher learning in Texas. Broadly, my work is promoting the community integration of people with serious mental illness, especially through exploring the social and community experiences of having a mental illness (e.g., stigmatizing attitudes, discrimination). I’m also interested in community-engaged research practices, program evaluation, and the translation of research (evidence-based practices) to real-world settings. Eventually I hope to work in community mental health contexts, researching and implementing innovative programs that promote community participation of those who use mental health services. Outside of graduate school, I enjoy all things food: cooking and baking, farmer’s markets, and food trucks.

Stephanie DeJong - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** Chemistry, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Ripon, CA
**contact:** dejongs@email.sc.edu

I came to USC after earning a bachelor’s in chemistry from Trinity Christian College, along with minors in history, biology, and English. Currently, I am a second year graduate student in the analytical division of the department of chemistry and biochemistry at USC, pursuing my Ph.D. My current research is focused on estimating the detection limits for blood on fabric by combining chemometric techniques with spectroscopy. This is part of a project to develop an infrared imaging system for use in forensic investigations. My general research interest is using spectroscopy to answer questions or offer new solutions to problems. I would like to continue research throughout my future, either as a scientist in industry or a national laboratory, or a professor at a research university.
Audrey Duke - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** Chemistry, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Montgomery, AL  
**contact:** dukeas@email.sc.edu

After receiving a bachelor’s degree in chemistry from Auburn University, I chose to attend USC for my graduate studies. I have just finished my second year in the Ph.D. program in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry studying the finer points of surface science and catalysis in the division of physical chemistry. My love of chemistry has always been driven by a desire to understand fundamentally why things are the way they are, and so my research focuses on what materials look like and how they behave at the atomic level. This is useful in real world applications since my research can be used to design new and better materials for things such as fuel cells and automotive catalytic converters.

Ashleigh Eldemire Poindexter - 2012 Scholar

**major & degree:** Business Administration, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Boston, MA  
**contact:** eldemire@email.sc.edu

I studied chemical engineering and Japanese at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. While at U of M, I interned for several companies, including a summer appointment at the NASA-Kennedy Space Center. After graduation I moved to Dallas, Texas, with my spouse and began graduate work in economics at the University of Texas at Arlington. In 2012 I joined the University of South Carolina as a doctoral student in the Finance Department of the Darla Moore School of Business. My studies are motivated by my ambition to contribute to the ongoing research and conversations in finance. Specifically, I am interested in empirical corporate finance and fixed income securities.
Christopher Farina - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** Linguistics, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Toledo, OH  
**contact:** farinacj@email.sc.edu

My undergraduate career was spent at Xavier University in Cincinnati, where I had a major in classical languages (Latin and Attic Greek), and I had minors in philosophy, psychology, and the natural sciences. After a brief hiatus spent in the workforce at the University of Pittsburgh, I decided to return to academia as a graduate student. Currently, I am a second-year M.A./Ph.D./TESOL student in the linguistics program. I am interested in historical linguistics, which studies language change. I have secondary interests in history, anthropology, language study and pedagogy, computer programming and modeling, and semantic and pragmatic theory, especially the psychological to the philosophical perspectives. After I finish the program here at USC, I would like to stay in academia as a professor.

Through an innovative progression of monthly seminars, Fellows benefit from **community building** outside of their discipline, a **broadened understanding** of university research, and **collaborations** with peers within and beyond their home departments.
Deeonna Farr - 2012 Scholar

**major & degree:** Health Promotion, Education and Behavior, Ph.D.

**hometown:** Brooklyn, NY

**contact:** farrde@email.sc.edu

I received a bachelor’s in human development from Cornell University and an MPH from George Washington University. My public health career consists of experience in health advocacy, health education and clinical research. In my most recent position I was a project manager for the Stroke Disparities Project funded by the NINDS/NIMHD. As a result of my work with health disparities in the context of infant mortality and stroke research, I decided to pursue my DrPH in order to improve my understanding of the determinates of chronic disease disparities and what strategies can be employed to successfully reduce these disparities. Specifically, I am interested in learning which individual and structural factors combine leading to the increased rates of cancer and cardiovascular mortality present in communities of color.

Roel Feys - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** Philosophy, Ph.D.

**hometown:** Bilzen, Belgium

**contact:** feys@email.sc.edu

I graduated from Hasselt University in 2005 with a degree in economics. I worked in the private sector for a while as an information technology consultant. After two years, I decided to go back to school to study philosophy and enjoyed it so much that I chose to pursue a doctoral degree. The areas of philosophy that interest me are early modern philosophy and applied ethics; particularly, bioethics and business ethics. After I graduate I want to enter academia, because I enjoy both research and teaching. I would like to combine my academic assignments with work in the public and/or the private sector, and to interact with researchers in other disciplines. Hence, I very much look forward to getting to know all of you better!
Jennifer Fill - 2010 Scholar

**major & degree:** Biological Science, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Littleton, MA
**contact:** fill@email.sc.edu

I received my bachelor’s in biology with a minor in wildlife conservation from the University of Massachusetts Amherst in 2009. After graduation I spent six weeks as an intern in China researching the effects of environmental restoration on pastoralist livelihoods, and six months as an intern in Australia. There I researched the diet of amethystine and carpet pythons, snorkeled the Great Barrier Reef, and discovered my favorite activity of all time: night spotlighting in the rainforest! I have broad interests in ecosystem science and landscape ecology, especially the relationships between organisms, their environment, and the processes shaping these interactions. A major goal of my research pursuits is to obtain information that will be useful to natural resource and wildlife management.

Taylor Garrick - 2013 Scholar

**major & degree:** Chemical Engineering, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Simpsonville, SC
**contact:** garrictr@email.sc.edu

While still an undergrad at the University of South Carolina, I had the opportunity to work with Dr. John Weidner and his lab. After having such a positive experience, I decided to return to USC for graduate work. I will soon be starting my first year as a Ph.D. candidate in the chemical engineering department. I will be working in Dr. Weidner’s lab studying batteries, fuel cells, and ethanol and methanol oxidation. Upon graduation, I hope to work in industrial research and development, or work in a national lab. I play several instruments including the piano, organ, guitar, bass guitar, clarinet, mandolin, and banjo. Some of my hobbies include playing ultimate Frisbee, running, reading, and playing bluegrass. I released a CD entitled *The Dawning* in February of 2013.
Gerad Gentry-2013 Scholar

major & degree: Philosophy, Ph.D.
hometown: Cooperstown, NY
contact: gerad.gentry@gmail.com

I am invested in the intersection of art and rationality. My work focuses on German Idealism and the philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel. My secondary interest is bioethics within an Aristotelian tradition of ethics. As an undergraduate at Houghton College I majored in art, English literature, and philosophy. I received a master’s in philosophy from the University of Chicago. In 2011 my wife, Megan, and I were 2011 Vita Institute Research Visitors at the University of Notre Dame, where we both studied bioethics. For the past three years my wife and I have lived and worked in Chicago, where I was an adjunct professor of philosophy and also taught art to at-risk high-school students. A 2013-2016 Lilly Fellow, I enjoy soccer, throwing pottery, and spending time with my wife and our daughter.

Stephanie Gray-2013 Scholar

major & degree: Public History, MA; History, Ph.D.
hometown: Kirtland, Ohio
contact: segray@email.sc.edu

A native of Ohio, I headed to Massachusetts for my undergraduate studies at Mount Holyoke College. I graduated in 2013 with a Bachelor of Arts with high honors in history. Funded by a departmental grant, I traveled to Scotland to conduct research for my senior thesis, which explored prescriptive views of the institution in the late nineteenth century and how subsequent changes in design and decoration helped define Scottish national culture. At the University of South Carolina, I am pursuing an M.A. in public history and Ph.D. in history. My current research interests revolve around historic site interpretation, commemoration, and historic preservation. From working as a seasonal park guide for the National Park Service, I have become particularly interested in American material culture and the relationship between people, objects, and landscapes.
Robert Greene - 2012 Scholar

major & degree: History, Ph.D.
hometown: Augusta, GA
contact: greeneii@email.sc.edu

I received a B.A. in writing and linguistics, with a focus on creative writing, at Georgia Southern University in 2008. I also finished an M.A. at Georgia Southern University in history in 2010. During my undergraduate and graduate years, I filled various roles as a student journalist, winning two state-wide awards from the Georgia College Press Association. Currently, I am in my second year at the University of South Carolina, pursuing a doctorate in history. My fields of focus are American history since 1789, African American history, and 20th century intellectual history. In addition, I also dabble a bit in the field of sports and cultural history. My career goals include teaching American history on a college level, and writing for magazines as a public intellectual.

Adam Griffey - 2011 Scholar

major & degree: English, Ph.D.
hometown: Misenheimer, NC
contact: griffeya@email.sc.edu

Before starting my Ph.D. at the University of South Carolina, I studied at Berea College, Harvard University, Murray State University, Western Carolina University, and Appalachian State University. Currently, I am writing a dissertation that deals with apocalyptic novelists of the American South. I am also researching the editor Albert Erskine, who was possibly the most influential editor of fiction in America, having worked with William Faulkner, Cormac McCarthy, Robert Penn Warren, Eudora Welty, Ralph Ellison, and James Michener, among many others. Long term, I plan on writing a history of apocalyptic thought in America.
Bob Hamilton - 2010 Scholar

**major & degree:** Philosophy, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Laurel, MS  
**contact:** hamilt49@email.sc.edu

I entered USC's Ph.D. program in philosophy in 2010 with the goal of building upon twenty years of prior experience in formal and applied linguistics (Ph.D., 1997, USC). My primary research emphasis in philosophy has been—not surprisingly, given my background—the philosophy of language, though in future research I am interested in combining this linguistic emphasis with concerns in applied ethics, particularly the ethics of science. More specifically, I am interested in the ways in which language may in part shape the way that society, scientists, and policy-makers understand and accept (or resist) the reported findings of science. I am also keenly interested in certain areas of the philosophy of religion, in particular the philosophical status of the ‘new atheism’ and the generally perceived increasing secularization of modern society.

Timothy Hines - 2012 Scholar

**major & degree:** Biomedical Science, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Fayetteville, NC  
**contact:** hinestj@email.sc.edu

I was born in Ansbach, Germany, and moved around some when I was little because my dad is in the army. I stayed in Fayetteville, NC for a long time and then went to Appalachian State University, where I studied psychology, chemistry and German. Now I’m here learning biology.
Gary Hollis - 2011 Scholar

major & degree: Physics, Ph.D.
hometown: Columbia, SC
contact: hollis@email.sc.edu

I was born and raised in Columbia, South Carolina. I was homeschooled after the first grade; my next venture into public school was when I attended USC as an undergraduate. I have always had an interest in science; consequentially I am working towards a Ph.D. in physics. My primary area of focus is experimental nuclear physics, and I hope to contribute to our understanding of the strong nuclear force in the nonperturbative regime.

Cameron Howell - 2010 Scholar

major & degree: Anthropology, Ph.D.
hometown: Knoxville, TN
contact: howellcs@email.sc.edu

I have 13 years of cultural resource management experience, and a wide range of interests such as martial arts and cycling as well as playing bass and strategic games. My bachelor’s degree is from the University of Tennessee; currently I am a fourth year Ph.D. candidate with a focus in archeology. While some of my research is focused at the individual artifact level, I am also interested in understanding an artifact’s placement within larger units of time and space. By including qualitative methods from geography and the utilization of geographic information systems, cultural interactions can be modeled from the household level to those of entire multistate regions. Ultimately, I would like to become a professor, combining aspects of geography and anthropology/archaeology into a melded curriculum which will establish a more holistic approach for future archaeologists.
Sarah Grace Hudspeth-2013 Scholar

**major & degree:** Communication Sciences and Disorders, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Athens, GA  
**contact:** saragrace.hudspeth@gmail.com

I am a certified speech language pathologist. I graduated from the University of Georgia with my bachelor’s degree, and from the University of South Carolina with my master’s degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders. My research interests include improving aphasia rehabilitation for individuals who have suffered a stroke, increasing our understanding of the neural substrates of speech and language, and the impact of aging on speech and language. I have spent several years working with adults with aphasia at the University of South Carolina, first with Dr. Julius Fridriksson, and currently with Dr. Jessica Richardson. I hope to use structural and functional MRI, eye-tracking, and brain stimulation, among other tools, to investigate these areas.

Lauren Huffman-2013 Scholar

**major & degree:** Clinical-Community Psychology, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Mobile, AL  
**contact:** lehuffman1@gmail.com

My interest in childhood obesity treatment and prevention stems from my experience as student-director of a service-learning program at University of Alabama that educated elementary students on the importance of healthy eating and physical activity. My professional goal is to study obesity as a professor or as part of an interdisciplinary research team. I plan to use my training in the Behavior-Biomedical Interface Program and the Clinical-Community Ph.D. program in pursuit of those goals. I am excited to join USC’s Clinical-Community Psychology program as a member of Dr. Dawn Wilson’s lab, where I will be studying childhood obesity interventions.
Stephen Iwanowycz - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** Biomedical Science, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Cape May, NJ
**contact:** iwanowyc@email.sc.edu

I went to Bob Jones University and majored in biochemistry and molecular biology, where I graduated summa cum laude. While there I met my wife, whom I married in May 2012. I am currently working on a Ph.D. in biomedical sciences in Dr. Greg Brower’s lab studying gender differences in cardiac remodeling during hypertrophy and heart failure. I am interested in studying repair and remodeling and would like to use my knowledge of chemistry and molecular biology to enter the field of biomedical engineering and targeted drug delivery. I would like to spend my research career at either a biotech company or a government lab.

Kathleen Jocoy-2013 Scholar

**major & degree:** Experimental Psychology, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Fort Mill, SC
**contact:** jocoyk@gmail.com

I received my undergraduate degree from Winthrop University in 2008 and my master’s degree from Appalachian State University in 2010. After graduation, I served as a research associate for the Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine, where I worked to better identify soldiers at risk for substance abuse. At the University of South Carolina I will focus primarily on quantitative psychology including statistical methods and modeling. My research interests include methodological development, statistics, substance abuse, pain perception and video games. After graduation, I hope to become a professor at a university where I can explore new methods of data analysis and improve upon various methods of data collection.
Ryan Kennerly - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** Creative Writing, MFA  
**hometown:** Fort Dodge, IA  
**contact:** kennerlr@email.sc.edu

After graduating from the University of Iowa with a degree in computer science and working for six years as a software engineer, I decided to pursue what had first been a hobby, then a dream – writing fiction. I am currently enrolled in the MFA program in creative writing at USC, and my ultimate goal is to publish one or more works of fiction, and to support myself and my family with my writing.

Samuel King-2013 Scholar

**major & degree:** History, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Myrtle Beach, SC  
**contact:** sck122890@gmail.com

I obtained my bachelor’s in history from New York University, with a minor in East Asian Studies. At USC, my research will focus on the history of American foreign policy in East Asia from the late 19th century to the present, with an emphasis on China. I developed a great interest in this topic from my studies in East Asian history at NYU, as well as from giving guest lectures on 19th century China at Horry-Georgetown Technical College in Myrtle Beach. I am a native of South Carolina, born in Florence and raised in Myrtle Beach. However, by the time I move to Columbia, I will have spent less than 24 cumulative hours in the state capital in the past 22 years. I’m very much looking forward to all this exciting city has to offer. After USC, my goal is to become a Foreign Service Officer and to work for the U.S. Department of State.
Jongwan Kim - 2010 Scholar

**major & degree:** Experimental Psychology, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Seoul, South Korea
**contact:** kim253@email.sc.edu

I am from South Korea, where I obtained my bachelor’s and master’s degrees. In Korea I studied cognitive engineering psychology focusing on affective aspect of user experience, and music psychology focusing on the emotional responses to musical structure. At USC my research interests are twofold; one is to investigate the relationship between emotion and decision making. I recently found significant effect of affective states on loss aversion and risk attitude in risky choices. The other is to find the underlying structure of affective space using various types of measures including behavioral, physiological, and neuroimaging data. This area is one of the most complicated and difficult topics in psychology so my academic aspiration is to better understand the relationship between emotion and decision making and their relationship.

Michael Laughlin - 2012 Scholar

**major & degree:** Mathematics, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Navarre, FL
**contact:** laughlim@email.sc.edu

My highschool teacher, Mr. Loudon, got me hooked on math. He showed me that the subject was not only an interesting challenge, but that it also held a wide array of mysteries that were all provable within the discipline itself. The self-contained nature of math remains highly appealing to me, and musing about various theorems provides me with endless volumes of things to discover. The time I spent at Auburn further cemented my choice. Despite my brief forays into chemistry and biology, ultimately I settled on Applied Mathematics as my major. It was during this time at Auburn that I gained my first research and teaching experiences, both of which I found highly enjoyable. I hope to conduct research in Combinatorics and earn my Ph.D. in mathematics so that I may become a professor.
Kathryn Levasseur - 2011 Scholar

major & degree: Biological Sciences, Ph.D
hometown: South Windsor, CT
contact: levassek@email.sc.edu

I earned a master’s degree in biodiversity and conservation biology in 2007 after completing a double major in ecology and evolutionary biology and molecular and cell biology at the University of Connecticut. I traveled to South Africa to learn ecological survey techniques and worked for four years as a field director for the Jumby Bay Hawksbill Project (JBHP) in Antigua, West Indies. My research focuses on the use of genetic markers to supplement over two decades of mark-recapture nesting data collected by the JBHP in order to investigate population structure, life history patterns and nesting behavior in Hawksbill sea turtles. I am interested in using these studies to best inform recovery plans for the endangered Hawksbill. I aspire to use research and community outreach to strengthen marine conservation strategies.

Christopher Ling - 2012 Scholar

major & degree: Business Administration, Ph.D.
hometown: Oakville, Canada
contact: lingcj@email.sc.edu

I have an undergraduate degree in business administration from the University of Toronto, with an emphasis in marketing. Following graduation I briefly worked for a facebook game. I completed my master’s in management at Queen's University, where I looked at product aesthetics and the impression management concerns they inspire. My current research interests are in the areas of emotion (specifically happiness), social influence and judgment and decision making as they relate to consumer behavior. Originally from Oakville Ontario, Canada, I moved down to South Carolina for my doctoral studies in 2012, where I am currently enjoying the cuisine and weather. In my spare time, I enjoy playing the piano and guitar as well as playing strategy games.
Rachel Mann - 2012 Scholar

major & degree: English and American Literature, Ph.D.
hometown: Hazen, ND
contact: mannrj@email.sc.edu

I earned my bachelor’s degree from the University of North Dakota in 2006; in 2012 I received a master’s degree in English literature and a certificate in the teaching of composition from San Francisco State University. Although my research focuses most intently on the works of Aphra Behn and Jane Barker, I hope to conduct an expanded inquiry into the practice of print and manuscript circulation in the long-eighteenth century as well as explore the construction of masculinity and femininity in the pages of popular eighteenth-century women’s fiction. I posit that the collision of such areas represents an arena in which the notion of the author and the development of the “self” through the construction of a gendered “other” both diverge and overlap.

Emily McDowell - 2012 Scholar

major & degree: Mathematics, Ph.D.
hometown: Houston, TX
contact: mcdoweej@email.sc.edu

After initially foraying into cognitive neuroscience while attending UPenn, I abruptly switched gears my junior year to major in mathematics. I haven’t looked back since. I do not yet know in what area my research will be; however, my gut feeling is that I will wind up somewhere inside the Venn diagram of number theory, algebra, and combinatorics. I spend much of my time hunched over a desk, furiously scribbling strange symbols onto a stack of yellow pads. Nonetheless, I have also been known to enjoy baking scones, jamming on my keyboard, mashing Super Nintento controllers, or curling up with a book and a cup of hot tea. I am a fan of several spots in Columbia, including the Nickelodeon, the City Roots farm in Rosewood (delicious produce), and Thursday night trivia at Harper’s.
Marissa Miller - 2012 Scholar

**major & degree:** School Psychology, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Annapolis, MD  
**contact:** mille879@email.sc.edu

I graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park, with a double degree in psychology and journalism. Despite amazing journalism internships and a love of writing, my interest in psychology quickly eclipsed journalism. My research and career interests focus on children who are at risk for developing social, emotional, and academic problems, the development of these concerns, and interventions for them. I plan to work to prevent such factors that put children at risk for negative outcomes, such as depression and anxiety, and to treat these concerns should they arise. Additionally, I want to focus not only on the children, but also on the parents and teachers who are so influential in their development. I’m looking forward to the challenges and discoveries along the way!

Timothy Minella - 2010 Scholar

**major & degree:** History, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Kennett Square, PA  
**contact:** minella@email.sc.edu

I grew up in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia. I attended Hamilton College where I took a double major in government and physics. I entered the history department as a Ph.D. student in 2010. I study the history of science in the early United States. My dissertation examines how Americans knew what they knew about the natural world, how the natural sciences helped to construct authority in the early republic, and how this kind of scientific authority affected the political economy of the young nation. I investigate these issues through topics such as agriculture, geological surveys, and the natural history of insects. I enjoy rooting for Carolina athletic teams and sampling local microbrews.
Emily Neger - 2012 Scholar

**major & degree:** Clinical-Community Psychology, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** New York, NY  
**contact:** neger@email.sc.edu

I am originally from New York City. I lived in Boston for seven years, first as an undergraduate at Tufts University, and then working as a research assistant at Tufts Medical Center. As a second year Ph.D. candidate in the clinical psychology program, I have the good fortune of working with Dr. Ron Prinz in the Parenting and Family Research Center. I am particularly interested in childhood mood and behavior disorders and how parent-child relationships contribute to the onset and treatment of these conditions. My current research focuses on the role of parents’ sense of self-efficacy as a predictor of parenting behavior. In the future, I hope to develop evidence-based interventions and provide direct clinical care to children and their families.

Chase Nelson - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** Biological Sciences, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Holland, MI  
**contact:** nelsoncw@email.sc.edu

I am a biologist and musician currently pursuing a Ph.D. in bioinformatics with Dr. Austin L. Hughes. I graduated from Oberlin College in 2010, where I performed honors research on gene expression divergence in mutation accumulation lines of Arabidopsis. My current research focuses on the use of computational methods to detect natural selection at the nucleotide level. In 2013 I was awarded an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship for my design of novel tools for next-generation sequence analysis and work with geographic information systems. This summer I also received an NSF EAPSI Fellowship to study the evolution of maize/rice transcriptional divergence at Academia Sinica in Taipei, Taiwan. Besides science, I also study acting and music and have been featured in several Trustus Theatre productions and community events, including Pride Talent.
Zi-Jia Ng- 2013 Scholar

**major & degree:** School Psychology, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Singapore, Singapore
**contact:** zijia85@hotmail.com

I graduated from the National University of Singapore with a bachelor’s degree in psychology. After graduation, I worked as a research assistant with incarcerated youths, maltreated children, youths with disabilities, and children from divorced families or underprivileged backgrounds. I wondered why some children recover from setbacks easily, why some take a longer time, and why others never do. I became curious about the human potential to recover and rebound from life’s curveballs and setbacks. At USC I look forward to working with Drs. Scott Huebner and Kimberly Hills to study resiliency in children. I am interested in elucidating resilient qualities and mechanisms that promote healthy development trajectories and prevent future psychopathology. Beyond the school walls, I enjoy travelling around the globe and immersing myself in artistic creativity by making handmade cards and tactile art and crafts.

Joel Owens - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** Business Administration, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Spartanburg, SC
**contact:** owensja@email.sc.edu

My research focuses on judgment and decision making in earnings management decision contexts. I work at the intersection of psychology, financial accounting, managerial accounting, auditing, and human resources. Prior to entering the Ph.D. program, I earned a master’s in accountancy from USC and worked as a senior auditor with a regional public accounting firm. I am a Certified Public Accountant in South Carolina, and have audit experience in multiple industries including manufacturing, real estate, government, and not-for-profit. In my free time, I enjoy attending rock concerts and rollerblading.
Kwame Owusu-Daaku-2013 Scholar

**major & degree:** Geography, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Kumasi, Ghana
**contact:** owusudaaku.kn@gmail.com

I have a bachelor’s in development planning from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana and a master’s in urban and regional planning from the University of Iowa. I am interested in climate change and development: particularly how climate change affects the livelihoods of people and the strategies the affected persons employ to adapt to climate change. I chose USC because of my advisor’s research focus, which includes my home country of Ghana. I am excited to work in an academic program that allows its students to explore and engage in interdisciplinary work, and look forward to discovering and becoming part of the University of South Carolina community with my wonderful wife Ama.

Douglas Page - 2010 Scholar

**major & degree:** Political Science, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Bennettsville, SC
**contact:** pagedd@email.sc.edu

My bachelor’s degree is from Vanderbilt University. Currently I am a fourth year doctoral student in USC’s political science program. My research agenda entails the comparative politics of gender in civil society and courts. I study the enlargement of the European Union, where candidate governments work to meet criteria on gender equality issues in the process of attaining EU membership. In my studies of gender’s impact on political systems, I also research American women’s political mobilization and the effects of judge and litigant gender on judicial decision-making. I plan to use research techniques from my study of American politics (such as population-based survey experiments) in the EU candidate states in order to understand the impact of women constituencies on gender equality legislation and courts’ women’s rights decisions.
Ivan Panchenko - 2012 Scholar

**major & degree:** Computer Science and Engineering Engineering, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Lviv, Ukraine
**contact:** panchenk@email.sc.edu

Having become familiar with computer programming and applied mathematics in the lyceum, I was admitted to one of the oldest technical schools in Ukraine, National University “Lviv Polytechnic,” and received a state fellowship for the duration of my studies. After that I worked as a research assistant in Research Institute of Mechanics of M. Lomonosov Moscow State University. In the General Mechanics Lab I helped create an Exoskeleton - a system of robotic human lower limbs that can multiply carrier’s dynamical force. All in all, my research interests lie primarily in microprocessor architecture, reconfigurable systems, hardware description languages and embedded systems.

Jieun Park-2013 Scholar

**major & degree:** Business Administration, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Seoul, South Korea
**contact:** jieunpark695@gmail.com

I have B.A. and M.A. from Ewha Womans University in South Korea and M.A. from Ohio State University. My research interests include group dynamics, identification, emotion, diversity, and entrepreneurship. My prior research lies in the analysis of organizational phenomena from the multilevel perspective. Specifically, I have focused on the effects of group-level procedural justice on the relationship between psychological contracts and employees’ satisfaction and commitment using multilevel analysis and response surface analysis. I would like to continue to study how employment relationships directly impact individual attitudes and behaviors during my doctoral studies.
Chandni Patel-2013 Scholar

**major & degree:** Clinical-Community Psychology, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Gaborone, Botswana  
**contact:** chandni19@gmail.com

I received my bachelor’s degree in psychology from Kennesaw State University in 2006 and my master’s degree in clinical psychology from East Tennessee State University in 2008. Since then I have been involved in Positive Behavioral Support (PBS) training and implementation for state psychiatric hospitals. Broadly, my research interests involve studying the environmental impact (maltreatment, exposure to crime, parental factors, community supports) on child and adolescent adjustment, risk factors and factors that lead to resiliency. Some of the research questions I’d like to study include: how can we build resiliency in children who have a negative/harmful environment; what factors play a role in children who have been maltreated/abused and don’t have challenging behaviors? Within the community, what supports are needed to build resilience in at-risk youth?

Jeremy Patterson- 2013 Scholar

**major & degree:** Comparative Literature, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Greenville, SC  
**contact:** jeremyp@email.sc.edu

I grew up in Japan, and returned to the United States to go to Bob Jones University. I majored in journalism with the hope of returning to Japan and working in a bilingual context, but my plans changed drastically when a French professor at BJU asked me to consider graduate studies in order to replace him. Staying in the United States and teaching languages were both new ideas for me, but I went on to do a master’s in translation studies and am currently completing a doctorate in modern languages (French and Spanish) from Middlebury College. In the Ph.D. program in comparative literature at USC, I hope to focus on French, Spanish, and English postcolonial literatures, particularly of the Caribbean.
Michael Philben - 2010 Scholar

**major & degree:** Marine Science, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Redding, CA  
**contact:** philben@email.sc.edu

I earned my Bachelor of Arts from Northwestern University. Currently I am a fourth year Ph.D. candidate in USC’s Marine Science Program. My research focuses on the sources and fates of nitrogen in soil and peats. I have developed a new technique to determine the relative contributions of plant and microbial remains to soils, based on their protein composition. I am currently applying this new approach in systems ranging from seagrass beds in Laguna Madre, Texas, to peatlands in western Siberia. In my spare time I enjoy running and cycling.

Laura Reinman-2013 Scholar

**major & degree:** Clinical-Community Psychology, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Gunnison, CO  
**contact:** laura.reinman@gmail.com

I am a native Coloradan and received my bachelor’s in psychology from the University of Denver in 2011. While attending the University of Denver, I was an undergraduate research assistant for three years and completed an honors thesis on the stress and health of Hispanic immigrant children and their mothers. More recently, I worked as a professional research assistant at Children’s Hospital Colorado. There, I worked with children who sustained traumatic brain injuries and with children on the autism spectrum. I am very excited to work alongside Dr. Jeff Schatz in the Neuropsychology and Human Development Laboratory at USC. In my free time I enjoy being outside, running, riding horses, watching sports, and spending time with friends and family.
Cameron Rekully - 2013 Scholar

**major & degree:** Chemistry, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Harrisburg, PA  
**contact:** crekully@gmail.com

I graduated from Franklin & Marshall College (F&M) with a bachelor's in chemistry in 2012. During my time at F&M I participated in research on the development of molecular probes for the quantification of intermolecular interactions in solvated systems. My involvement in this research culminated in an independent research project that exposed me to experimental design, data analysis, and the preparation of results for publication. It was during the course of this project that I became particularly interested in pursuing a career in scientific research. My involvement in a laboratory manual development project after graduation reinforced my interest in chemistry. After graduate school, I plan to pursue a career as an analytical chemist in either academia or at a governmental agency.

James Rhea - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** Philosophy, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** La Mirada, CA  
**contact:** rheajc@email.sc.edu

I am interested primarily in applied ethics, especially on subjects related to assisted reproductive technologies, genetic enhancement, gene therapy, clinical ethics, informed consent, and emerging technologies. An ongoing project of mine revolves around concerns about the risk information disclosure practices of American fertility clinics with respect to human egg donors. Most recently I’ve been assisting a faculty member on a project aimed at identifying appropriate benchmarks for measuring quality in clinical ethics services. When I’m not reading or writing on applied ethics, I enjoy playing with my two-year old daughter and perusing bookstores with my wife.
Megan Riley - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** Biological Sciences, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Oak Ridge, NC  
**contact:** rileyme3@email.sc.edu

Prior to beginning my graduate studies, I earned a bachelor’s in biology with a minor in Latin American and Iberian studies from the University of Richmond.

While at Richmond, I utilized novel molecular techniques to investigate the trophic ecology of soil nematodes, which serve as important components of soil ecosystems. My graduate research blends my previous experience in trophic ecology with my interest in the impact of environmental variation and anthropogenic disturbances on coastal systems. My current research is focused on the altered resource use and life history characteristics associated with the climate change-mediated range expansion of a key mangrove consumer. After graduation, I hope to pursue a career in environmental policy.

Alycia Roberts - 2010 Scholar

**major & degree:** School Psychology, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Victor, NY  
**contact:** rober299@email.sc.edu

I graduated in 2008 from Hobart William Smith, a small, liberal arts college in Upstate New York, with a dual degree in psychology and French. After graduation I worked for two years at a center devoted to psychological research with children. My research interests are in the areas of assessment (specifically cognitive assessment) and neuropsychology. I’m currently managing several studies in the Applied Cognitive Neuropsychology Lab—investigating cognitive profiles of children with traumatic brain injuries, a reliability study of electroencephalography (EEG), the relationship of EEG with cognitive functions, and a few studies involving neurofeedback—the last of which is the focus of my dissertation.
Kristin Roberts - 2013 Scholar

major & degree: School Psychology, Ph.D.
hometown: Zanesville, OH
contact: klroberts@outlook.com

I am a first-year school psychology doctoral student. I earned my undergraduate degree from Ohio University, where I graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology. Prior to graduate school, I worked at a regional campus of Ohio University for several years. My research interests include learning disabilities, psychological assessment, and academic assessment and intervention. I will be working in the Applied Cognitive Neuropsychology Lab here at USC, under the direction of Dr. Scott Decker. In my spare time, I enjoy traveling, listening to music, and photography.

Nathan Saunders - 2010 Scholar

major & degree: History, Ph.D.
hometown: Greenville, SC
contact: saundenj@email.sc.edu

I earned a Bachelor of Arts in history from the University of South Carolina in 2002 and a Master of Arts in teaching from Duke University in 2003. After teaching high school in North Carolina and South Carolina for several years and earning a Master of Divinity from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, I returned to the University of South Carolina in 2010 to pursue a doctorate in history. I am currently writing my dissertation on the rise of megachurches in the Sunbelt suburbs during the 1970s and 1980s. I also work at South Carolina Political Collections, an archive on campus that holds the papers of twentieth-century South Carolina politicians. I live in Anderson, SC with my wife Ruthanne and our daughter Lillian.
Danielle Schoffman - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** Health Promotion, Education and Behavior, Ph.D.
**hometown:** San Anselmo, CA
**contact:** schoffmd@email.sc.edu

I am a native of the San Francisco Bay Area. I received a dual Bachelor of Arts degree from Stanford University majoring in human biology and anthropological sciences. After graduation, I worked as a project coordinator at the Stanford Prevention Research Center, managing clinical trials for behavioral weight management and conducting data analysis. My research interests are in public health nutrition, physical activity, and obesity prevention; use of mobile technologies in behavioral interventions; and novel approaches to objective measurement of physical activity. I plan to continue my research career after graduation, through a postdoctoral fellowship and eventually a faculty position at a research university.

Amol Singh - 2010 Scholar

**major & degree:** Electrical Engineering, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Varanasi, India
**contact:** singhak@email.sc.edu

I did my schooling in the lush, green, hilly areas of the Himalayas in India. I received a bachelor’s degree in materials and metallurgical engineering and a master’s in electrical engineering from Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, India. Between my undergraduate and graduate degrees I moved to Bangalore to join the software giant Wipro Technologies, where I worked and programmed in various languages, platforms and packages. Currently I am working in materials research. I am growing graphene in the lab, and am using the material to make highly-sensitive toxic gas detectors. After finishing the Ph.D., I plan to get industrial experience; thereafter, I plan to move to India to stay in academia to deal with all possible aspects of semiconductor and graphene.
Rachel Steward-2013 Scholar

major & degree: Biological Sciences, Ph.D.
hometown: Kenmore, WA
contact: rsteward@email.sc.edu

A Seattle native, I earned my B.S. in biology from Tufts University in Boston. While at Tufts, I conducted extensive research on the chemically mediated adaptation of a native New England butterfly to habitat invasion by a nonnative host plant. After graduating in 2011, I worked on several projects to increase my exposure to different biological communities. I censused trees in the rainforest of Puerto Rico, explored the unique ecosystems of New Zealand, and managed coastal shrubland habitat in Rhode Island. Through these experiences my interests circled back to the impacts of nonnative plant invasions, especially as they are reflected in butterfly populations. This fall I will join the biological sciences program as a first year Ph.D. student studying community ecology and evolutionary biology. I enjoy the outdoors and all activities that take me there.

Calvin Thomas-2013 Scholar

major & degree: Chemical Engineering, Ph.D.
hometown: Opelika, AL
contact: calvinrobertthomas@gmail.com

I graduated Auburn University in May 2013. My first experience in research was with USC’s Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program in the summer of 2012. During this time, I discovered how much I enjoyed doing research in catalysis. When I returned to Auburn I got involved in research concerning contact lenses and ocular comfort there. I presented my USC REU research at the 2012 National AIChE Conference Poster Session and my Auburn University research at the 2013 AIChE Southern Regional Conference Paper Session. I placed second in my section at both conferences. I find both teaching and research very rewarding, and would like to eventually become a professor at a university.
Chung “Moses” Tsai - 2012 Scholar

**major & degree:** Art Studio, MFA  
**hometown:** Austin, TX  
**contact:** tsaics@email.sc.edu

I was born in Taiwan and moved to the United States with my family when I was six years old. I received my BFA from University of Texas at Austin in 2008. My current sculptural ceramics work derives from early 19th century medical photography. The different type of medical issues of that time period gave me insights and inspired me to portray the beauty of the figures into my works. I had also traveled around Asia and seen many of the different cultural works of each country I visited. I learned from a local master the traditional wood firing methods and anagama kiln. My hobbies are exercising, photography, and collecting 20th century and contemporary arts.

Tolga Ulusemre - 2010 Scholar

**major & degree:** Business Administration, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Bursa, Turkey  
**contact:** tolga.ulusemre@grad.moore.sc.edu

I was born and brought up in Turkey. After receiving a master’s degree in marketing from University of Bath in England, I worked in Dubai for two years. I came to the United States in 2010 to start my Ph.D. and now live in Columbia with my wife, Xiaolei, and our son, Ayhan. My research focuses on top management decision making in multinationals. I am particularly interested in the impact of managerial cognition on international strategy. Upon completing the Ph.D. program, I would like to continue my research in another high-quality research school. I like playing tennis and swimming, and try to do both whenever I have the chance to take a break from my work. I also enjoy international travel with my family. Despite not being a part of my current professional research, I am an enthusiastic reader of culture, history, and international relations.
Blaire Umhau-2013 Scholar

**major & degree:** Marine Science, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Owings, MD
**contact:** bpumhau@gmail.com

I recently graduated with both general and departmental honors from the University of Miami, where I earned a bachelor’s in marine science and chemistry with a minor in French. I am interested in marine biogeochemistry, particularly interactions between biogeochemical cycles and global climate change. My work has taken me from my native Chesapeake Bay to the Dominican Republic and French Polynesia to research topics ranging from habitat quality assessment based on phytoplankton and nutrient levels in Chesapeake Bay tributaries to relationships between dust flux and paleo primary productivity in the Eastern Tropical South Pacific. I hope to continue my travels as I pursue my degree. In my free time, I enjoy sailing and running.

Katherine Upton-2013 Scholar

**major & degree:** English, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Fleet, Hampshire, England
**contact:** uptonke@email.sc.edu

Although American by birth, I lived in England for most of my life. I read English at Girton College, University of Cambridge. After graduating, I taught English in London for two years before deciding to pursue a master’s degree. I completed my M.A. in American Literature at the University of South Carolina in 2013. My research interests are in 19th & 20th-century Southern literature and childhood studies with a particular focus on the influence of Romanticism in both areas. I am a tri-chair of the American Literature Colloquium, a graduate organization which arranges faculty talks and professional development workshops. As part of the USC Writing Center, I tutor students on general writing techniques and research how to support learning difficulties related to writing and composition in higher education.
Andrew Valencia - 2012 Scholar

major & degree: Creative Writing, MFA  
hometown: Dinuba, CA  
contact: valencaj@email.sc.edu

I graduated with a bachelor's in English from Stanford University, where I served as chairman of the editorial board of *The Stanford Daily* and worked as a peer mentor in the Stanford English department. My fiction has been published in the Stanford University literary magazine *Leland Quarterly* and in the online journals *Switchback*, *Mixed Fruit*, and *Subtle Fiction*. In addition, I participated in the Levinthal Tutorials of the Stanford creative writing program and taught creative writing to middle school students. Over the past four years, I travelled extensively and worked as an EFL teacher in South Korea, Panama, and Taiwan. After completing my MFA at USC, I hope to continue to write and publish fiction and eventually teach creative writing at the university level.

Mark Van Driel - 2011 Scholar

major & degree: History, Ph.D.  
hometown: Greeley, CO  
contact: vandriel@email.sc.edu

I spent three years at the University of Colorado studying physics. During this time I became interested in population studies. I spent a year as a disaster relief and development volunteer in Peru (and I desperately miss the food!). After I returned from Peru, I earned a bachelor’s in history from the University of Northern Colorado. My senior thesis looked at the intersection between politics, family size, and population planning from specific points in history. After two years of teaching, I decided to earn a Ph.D. at USC, where I have further developed my interest in family size and population planning, with a focus on consumerism and advertising as forces that significantly impact family life, as well as an interest in the role technology has had in shaping families and family life. I still love hiking, and am on my way to visit every state park in South Carolina.
Lauren Neal Vaughn - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** Biological Sciences, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Dallas, TX
**contact:** vaughnls@email.sc.edu

I attended Pennsylvania State University for the first two years of my degree, finishing my bachelor’s in biology at the University of Texas at Dallas. My research interests are in molecular biology, focused specifically on mammalian molecular biology and disease. I am currently looking to elucidate the functional consequence of a particular protein mutation found in DYT16 dystonia and how it is involved in the pathogenesis of a disease. I aspire to continue to be active in my research while being able to teach a new generation of students.

Eric Walker - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** Chemical Engineering, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Atlanta, GA
**contact:** walke299@email.sc.edu

After earning a bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering from Georgia Institute of Technology, I worked as an associate engineer maintaining the processing of nuclear fuel in a unique government facility. Through college courses and work experience, I discovered that I enjoyed written and computational work more than hands-on-work. My present research is in the mathematical modeling of Lithium-ion batteries. I compare a combination of models and state estimation algorithms for their accuracy in making predictions about the future failure of a Lithium-ion battery. In particular, I’ve investigated as a prediction algorithm the particle filter which makes approximate probability distributions of the states with a finite number of particles. The particle filter makes more accurate predictions than other methods with correct initial state estimates and when estimating many states. In the near future, I plan to progress to making uncertainty quantification in micro-kinetic models of catalysts.
Brittany Walter - 2012 Scholar

**major & degree:** Anthropology, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Tampa, FL  
**contact:** walterbs@email.sc.edu

My research interests are in human skeletal biology, paleodemography, paleopathology, and forensic anthropology. I received my bachelor’s in anthropology from the University of Florida where I interned at the C.A. Pound Human Identification Laboratory and Medical Examiner’s Office. I completed my master’s in anthropology as a Dean’s Fellow from the University of Central Florida. While there, I assisted in casework for the Medical Examiner’s Office in Orlando, FL and interned with the Orange County Sheriff’s Office Forensic Unit. My master’s thesis has been published by Forensic Science International. Currently, I am a research assistant on an NSF grant investigating temporal changes in plague mortality patterns and the effects of the Black Death. Recently I contributed to a bioarchaeological project in Egypt analyzing ancient human remains.

Jillian Weber-2013 Scholar

**major & degree:** English, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Chicago, IL  
**contact:** weberjm@email.sc.edu

I have a bachelor’s from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a master’s from the University of South Carolina. Before coming to USC to pursue graduate studies, I lived and worked in Chicago and Miami. In both cities I interacted with a diverse cross section of people, leading to my interest in the confluence of cultural identities. More specifically, I’m interested by the representations of racial and ethnic identities in African American literature as something geographically imposed upon characters. I hope to continue examining representations of space as a racialized discourse of classification, particularly in cities, like New Orleans, that are often thought of as culturally diverse. After completing my Ph.D., my goal is to obtain a position as a professor of English literature.
Justine Wells - 2010 Scholar

**major & degree:** English, Ph.D.  
**hometown:** Madison, WI  
**contact:** wellsjb@email.sc.edu

I am a Ph.D. candidate studying rhetoric who moved to Columbia from Chicago. My areas of focus are rhetorical theory, ethics, environmental rhetoric, and 19th century American literature. Before coming to the English department at USC, I pursued master’s degrees at the University of Wisconsin in psychology (where I studied psycholinguistics) and philosophy (where I studied bioethics and business ethics). All of this feeds into my current work in rhetoric, which continues my interest in ethics and language. My dissertation, “Consuming Ethos: Rhetorics of Taste in American Environmentalism,” explores how recent food activism enrolls food in the material transmission of environmentalist sentiment, cultivating environmental awareness specifically by impacting people’s taste. The project assesses the dangers and potential of taste-based activism as a cultivar of distributed, human-nonhuman modes of political agency and consumer ethics.

Wanze Xie - 2012 Scholar

**major & degree:** Experimental Psychology, Ph.D.  
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Prior to starting the experimental psychology program at the University of South Carolina, I studied at East Tennessee State University and Shandong Normal University in China. I am interested in cognitive/developmental neuroscience, especially on infant cognitive development and electrophysiology, such as EEG and MRI. I am working with Dr. John Richards as his graduate assistant. My goals for the doctoral program are to continue to learn research skills and conduct research in the developmental neuroscience area, and, after I obtain my Ph.D. degree, I will continue to do research in this area.
Charlton Yingling - 2011 Scholar

**major & degree:** History, Ph.D.
**hometown:** Ona, West Virginia
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I work on themes of counterrevolution, popular religion, race, and nation in colonial Spanish Santo Domingo amidst the influences of the intersecting Haitian/French Revolutions. My regional specialization is the Caribbean, particularly through the lens of broader Atlantic connections. I hold a bachelor’s in history from Marshall University and a master’s in Latin American studies from Vanderbilt University. I have recently published in *Sociales* (Dominican Republic), *Early American Studies*, and *Crossing Boundaries: Ethnicity, Race, and National Belonging in a Transnational World*. My research has been funded externally by the Conference on Latin American History of the American Historical Association and Harvard University Atlantic History Seminar, and by the Institute for African American Research, Walker Institute for International Studies, and Office of the Vice President for Research at the University of South Carolina.

Yue Zheng - 2012 Scholar

**major & degree:** Mass Communications, Ph.D.
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I have a Bachelor of Arts from Remnin University of China and a Master of Science from Iowa State University. My primary research interest is health communication, in particular, how health information is presented in media and how mass communication can be used to promote public health. My other research focuses are visual communication and public relations. I have been awarded the lifetime membership of Kappa Tau Alpha national honor society. An amateur photographer, my hobbies include traveling, jogging and swimming.
Have a great year!