

COMM GRAD NEWSLETTER

The newsletter guides graduate students about important events, resources, and beneficial opportunities. This issue introduces our new 2024 cohort, highlights resources for graduate students, and provides a detailed timeline for the upcoming academic year with key dates for grad-related events.

A MESSAGE FROM THE GRADUATE DIRECTOR

Welcome back to a new school year! I am excited to announce several new innovations regarding our graduate program. First, in response to grad student feedback, this year we implemented a new voluntary pre-orientation program called COMM Jumpstart. It consisted of workshops on statistics and R as well as professional socialization topics. Special thanks to Dan Lane, Hannah Overbye-Thompson, and Jacova Morris for their help in organizing this program!



We have also made several improvements to achieve more equitable grad mentoring through institutionalizing the use of mentor-mentee agreements and assigning informal faculty buddies to our new grads. Finally, we were successful in getting our graduate program re-classified as STEM, which means our international graduates are now eligible for extended OPT!

The newsletter guides graduate students about important events, resources, and beneficial opportunities. This issue introduces our new 2024 cohort, highlights resources for graduate students, and provides a detailed timeline for the upcoming academic year with key dates for grad-related events. I wish everyone a wonderful 2024-2025 academic year.

Inside this Newsletter

A Message from the Graduate Director.....p. 1

Welcome, 2024 Grad Cohort!.....p. 2-6

Congrats to our Recent Grads.....p. 7

Graduate Student Resources & Workshops.....p. 8

Research Colloquia & Professional Development.....p. 9

GSACC Leadership..p. 10

Grad Support.....p. 11-13

Important Dates....p. 14

About Us.....p. 15

WELCOME, 2024 GRAD COHORT!



ANDREW BREDLAND

I received my B.Sc. in Communication Arts and Science and Journalism and Mass Communication from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2021 and graduated with my M.A. in Communication from Michigan State University in 2024. I am deeply interested in examining the impact of new media technologies—including social networking sites, video games, and AI—on interpersonal dynamics and psychological well-being. More specifically, my research focuses on how new communication technologies reshape relationship development and their impacts on individuals' well-being. In my free time, I enjoy going out with friends, going to farmer's markets, and making delicious desserts.

SOUMYAJIT DE

I earned my bachelor's degree in chemistry from the University of Delhi and a master's in sociology from Pondicherry University. Currently, I'm focusing on organizational communication, specifically looking at how algorithms and social justice intersect in human resources. I'm particularly interested in how algorithms shape hiring and recruitment processes and how social biases can influence these systems. Outside of my research, I enjoy visiting new places, trying out new foods, and spending time improving my piano skills.



UC SANTA BARBARA

Department of Communication

WELCOME, 2024 GRAD COHORT!

SARAH DE VEGVAR

I recently earned my Bachelor of Science in Cognitive Science from UC Santa Cruz, with a specialization in Artificial Intelligence and Human-Computer Interaction, along with a minor in Statistics. I'm passionate about exploring how online platforms shape information dissemination, particularly in health-related contexts where users seek information outside the traditional medical system. I'm also focused on understanding the impact of automated recommendation and censorship systems. Currently, I'm expanding my senior thesis on chatbot repair perceptions into a full paper. Outside of work, I love cooking new foods, listening to podcasts, and wandering around in nature.



STEPHANIE HERRERA

I received BAs in Communication Technology and English Writing, Rhetoric, and Literacy from The Ohio State University in 2023. Following graduation, I worked as a Community Engagement Specialist for a library in the Chicagoland area specializing in connecting immigrant populations with resources. During my undergraduate career, I developed an interest in media effects. My research aims to examine the influence of stereotypical media depictions on the self-concept of marginalized groups. Outside of my academic pursuits, I enjoy practicing calligraphy with my pen pals, convincing strangers to join my book club, and dancing along to my favorite songs!



WELCOME, 2024 GRAD COHORT!



YUXIN JIN

I received my BA in Communication from UCSB in 2023. After graduation, I worked as a research assistant for the Santa Barbara Women's Fund and later interned at the Santa Barbara Courthouse with a judge. My research interests focus on organizational communication, specifically Gender Inequality and Women's Empowerment, exploring how financial inclusion and employment opportunities can elevate women on individual and societal levels. I also examine globalization through cross-cultural comparisons between East Asia and the U.S. In my free time, I enjoy visiting dog parks, exploring construction projects, horseback riding, and spending time by the sea.

ALISON OLIVER

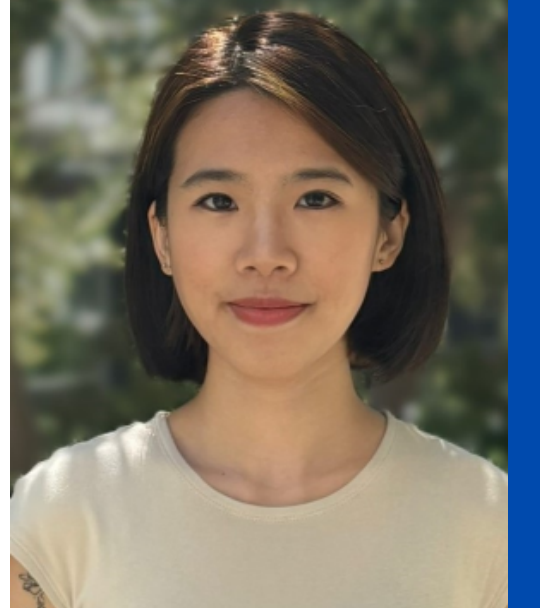
I received a B.A. in Behavioral Neuroscience from the University of San Diego and recently completed my M.S. in Health and Strategic Communication at Chapman University, where I collaborated with the Chapman Brain Institute. My research has focused on the sense of agency, free will, and mental health. As I pursue my Ph.D., I aim to continue exploring how external messages shape our emotions, beliefs, and perceptions, including how moral messages affect social cognition and behavior. In addition to research, I love baking/eating desserts, going to the beach, being around dogs, and sunsets!



WELCOME, 2024 GRAD COHORT!

YINGQI PAN

I received my Bachelor of Law in International Politics and a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism from Renmin University of China in 2021. After graduation, I worked full-time for a think tank and part-time with PwC & Strategy. In 2024, I earned my MA in Communication Studies from Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. My research focuses on political communication, with a particular interest in gender inequalities within online political engagement. I aim to probe the role of technology in perpetuating political inequalities and shaping individuals' political attributes. In my free time, I love hanging out with animals, exploring film photography, traveling, and visiting museums and galleries."



Monét Tchamdjoci

I received my BA in Communication from the University of Maryland, College Park, in 2022 and my MA in Communication from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 2024. My research interests center on health and interpersonal communication. In particular, I am interested in exploring how Black women decide whether to disclose their mental health conditions to their family members. I am passionate about advocating for the health and well-being of Black women and using my research as a way to bring attention to a marginalized group that is, unfortunately, often ignored and dismissed. In my free time, I enjoy hanging out with friends, creating vision boards, and listening to podcasts.



WELCOME, 2024 GRAD COHORT!



KARLA VAZQUEZ

I received my B.A in Sociology and a minor in Applied Psychology from the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB) in 2023. In undergrad I worked for numerous research projects such as the “Separación Familiar”, conducting a thematic analysis in “The Meaning of Allyship for DACA students”, and increasing access to prenatal care for indigenous women in the Santa Maria, CA area. My current research focus is on the communication within mixed-status families in relation to their mental health. I want to study how mixed-status families navigate and make sense of their identities in the context of immigration. After graduation, I worked in an elementary school providing assistance to children on the spectrum, tutoring kids experiencing homelessness or in foster care, and assisting on a political campaign. My ability to work with people of different backgrounds has helped me prepare for the kind of research I want to conduct. In my free time I love going to the beach, exploring different coffee shops, watching horror movies, and spending time with my dog.

JESSICA TIANLAI YE

I received my bachelor’s degree in Communication from the Communication University of China and my master’s in Communication Science from the University of Amsterdam. My research centers around persuasive communication, health decision-making, and the role of social influences. In my spare time, I love visiting cute coffee shops for a bit of people-watching. I enjoy spending time with loved ones, whether it’s cooking or making lattes for them. Recently, I’ve also embraced the challenge of keeping up with Lindy hop and bouldering!



WE’RE SO GLAD YOU’RE HERE!

CONGRATS TO OUR RECENT PHDS!

Congratulations to our impressive graduate students for earning their PhDs and securing career positions! We are excited to recognize their accomplishments. Please feel free to reach out to our graduate alumni.



DR. SUNGBIN YOUK
EWHA WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY

DR. AMERICA EDWARDS
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY



DR. ALLISON MAZUR
**POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW,
KINSEY INSTITUTE**

DR. JESSE KING
AMAZON



DR. CHRIS OTMAR
**UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA, SAN
FRANCISCO**

**DR. ABDULLAH
SALEHUDDIN**
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA



GRADUATE STUDENT RESOURCE CENTER

Check out the resources below from the GSRC!



Academic Counseling



Career Planning & Resources



International Student Resources



Wellness Resources



Upcoming GSRC Events on Shoreline

UC SANTA BARBARA
Department of Communication

CAMPUS WRITING RESOURCES

Improve and become a
more productive writer!

Graduate Writer's Room

The Graduate Writer's Room is a quiet space located in the Student Resource Building's Conference Room (SRB 1103). On Tuesdays from 10 am-4 pm, graduate students can work on their writing in peace—complete with all the coffee and snacks they need! Arrive and leave as you need. Great for any student looking for a space to write without distractions.

Writing Consultations

Students may request a one-on-one writing consultation with the university's Graduate Writing Specialist. Writing can be in any stage of development, from any discipline, and belong to any context. To schedule an appointment, please send an email to robby.nadler@graddiv.ucsb.edu. Please note that this is not a proofreading/editing service.

Editors for Hire

The Graduate Division now posts a list of editors for hire. This is a third-party service to connect students with potential editors: we do not officially endorse the quality or services of anyone on this list, nor do we receive compensation of any kind for business that transpires through this list. Information about editing experiences, rates, and contact information can be found by [clicking here](#).

RESEARCH COLLOQUIA 2024-2025

This year we will be organizing several research colloquia throughout the year, to help fulfill 505. Dan Lane and Katie Elder have organized three colloquia for the fall:

10/18, 3:30-4:45pm, SSMS 1009
CHAFFEE MEMORIAL LECTURE: SOCIAL MEDIA:
IRONY, CONTEXT, AND DIGITAL THRIVING
Dr. Jeffrey Hall, University of Kansas

11/1, 3:30-4:45pm, SSMS 1009
Research Symposium #1: Communication
Research in Times of Political Change
Featuring UCSB COMM Faculty & Students

11/15, 3:30-4:45pm, SSMS 1009
Research Symposium #2:
Big Beautiful Ideas Symposium
Featuring UCSB COMM Faculty & Students

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP SERIES

We will also host one professional development workshop per quarter this academic year. GSACC officers will facilitate the information panels, so they can tailor the workshop to meet the graduate students' needs.

Demystifying the Qualls Process

This fall we will be hosting a workshop on Demystifying the Qualls Process. Come to find out everything you always wanted to know (but were afraid to ask) about Qualls! This panel will be held on Friday, October 25th at 3:30 pm in SSMS 1009. Stay tuned for the winter and spring workshops.

If you have ideas for information panels, please send them to GSACC All-Grad Representative, Nancy Molina-Rogers (nancymolina-rogers@ucsb.edu) and Graduate Director, Dr. Jenn Gibbs (gibbs@ucsb.edu). Your ideas are welcomed and appreciated.

In addition, we plan to have one or more job searches this year – including an org comm position in Technology, Organizing, and the Future of Work – that will require time from faculty and graduate students; these too are outstanding opportunities for our graduate students to learn about job searches.

GSACC LEADERSHIP

ALL-GRAD



NANCY MOLINA-ROGERS

ABD



CYNTHIA MCLEOD

PHD



VERONICA WILSON

MA



KYUNGIN KIM

FIRST YEAR



MARGOT PLUNKETT

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT



KYUNGIN KIM

TA LIAISONS



STEVEN KUBITZA

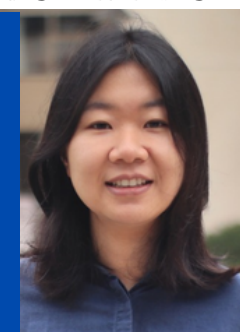


LAURENT WANG

OFFICE REPRESENTATIVES



BRITTANY WHEELER



MINGHUI WANG

KNOWLEDGE

COMMUNICATION CHAIR



LINDSAY MILLER

EXTERNAL OUTREACH



Hyojin Lee

BASE COORDINATOR



Cynthia McLeod

DEPARTMENTAL CLIMATE CHAIR



KYLIE WOODMAN

DEI GRAD REP



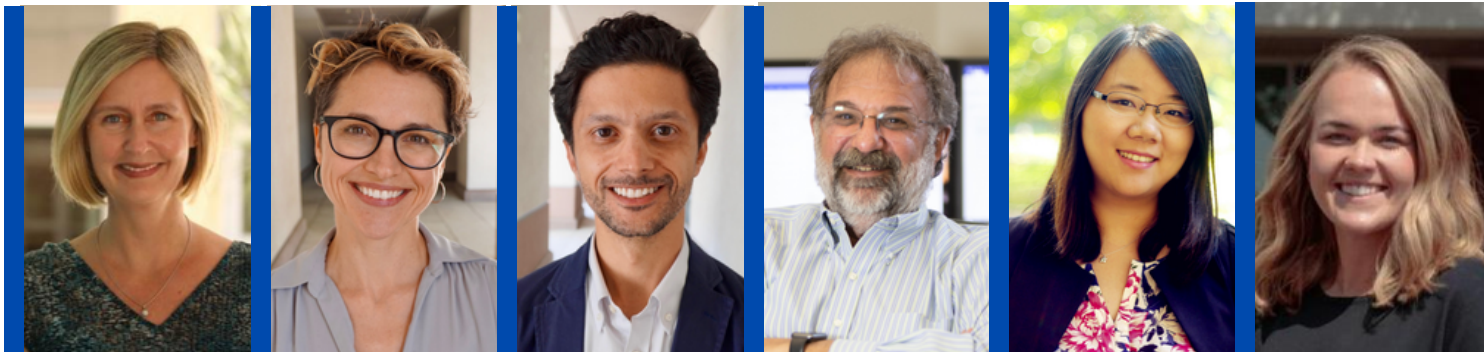
Erick Garcia

UC SANTA BARBARA

Department of Communication

GRAD SUPPORT

2024-25 GRADUATE COMMITTEE



JENNIFER GIBBS

AMY GONZALES

ANDY MEROLLA

JOE WALTHER

JIAYING LIU

JACOVA MORRIS



DR. MUNIBA SALEEM

GRADUATE DIVERSITY ADVOCATE

Dr. Muniba Saleem will serve as this year's Graduate Diversity Advocate for our Department. As the Graduate Diversity Advocate, Muniba will take the lead in supporting graduate student interests related to diversity, equity, and inclusion within our Department. Muniba encourages graduate students who have questions, concerns, or suggestions related to DEI to contact her at msaleem@ucsb.edu.

BUSINESS OFFICER

As Business Officer, Casey provides management support to the Chair, and establishes and implements administrative objectives and policies for the department. Her responsibilities include academic administration and support, purchasing and financial management, staff oversight, and facilities management. She works closely with the Chair and student affairs staff on department curriculum planning.



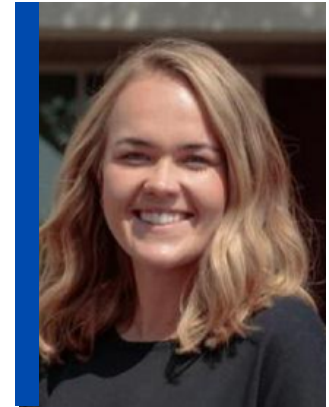
CASEY HANKEY

GRAD SUPPORT cont.

STUDENT AFFAIRS MANAGER & TA COORDINATOR

Jacova works with the Graduate Director to provide grads with clear and timely advising on administrative processes. She keeps track of grad students' progress in the program (fulfilling course requirements and milestones), assists with hiring TAs and Associates, and acts as a liaison with the Graduate Division and other graduate student resources on campus. She also oversees undergraduate advising and staff in the department.

This year, Jacova will be taking over TA Coordination duties! She will be working closely with the GSACC TA Liaisons to reevaluate the assignment process and build more equity and transparency into TA assignments. Stay tuned for more details!



JACOVA MORRIS

FINANCIAL ASSISTANT



MARIA BARTHEL

As Financial & Administrative Assistant, Maria manages accounts for the department, including Faculty Start-up/Retention, ASEN, FRAP & Misc. Grant Funding for Faculty & Grad Students. She is the primary Flexcard Purchaser for all department discretionary and faculty funds including equipment, books, supplies, human subject payments, memberships, etc. and assists faculty processing travel and entertainment reimbursement requests in Concur. She also is the department timekeeper, including user setup and timecard approval in Kronos. She provides high level oversight for departmental special events and space logistics.

GRAD SUPPORT cont.

UNDERGRADUATE ADVISOR

Sal provides individual academic advising to 1800+ pre- and full- majors in Communication. He advises students and faculty on all aspects of undergraduate affairs (i.e. major requirements, academic planning, course requirements, academic problems, transfer coursework, independent studies, internship opportunities and graduation, etc.). He processes student petitions as needed, interfaces with other advising offices, and works as a leading team member with student peer advisors. He communicates college policies to students and provides input to the Student Affairs Manager, Department Chair, and the Undergraduate Affairs Committee regarding a wide variety of issues affecting students.



SALVADOR
GONZALEZ GARCIA

ACADEMIC PERSONNEL



HILLARY YODER

Hillary provides administrative support for recruitment, appointment, and advancement for faculty and academic appointees, and also works with faculty to collect materials for their merit reviews and promotions.

IMPORTANT DATES

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

CLASSES BEGIN

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18
(3:30-4:45PM, SSMS 1009)

CHAFFEE LECTURE
DR. JEFFREY HALL

NOVEMBER 1

RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM 1

NOVEMBER 21 - 24

**NATIONAL COMMUNICATION
ASSOCIATION CONVENTION**
New Orleans, LA

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7
(4-7 PM)

**DEPARTMENT WINTER
PARTY**

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23
(9AM - 3:30PM)

**DEPARTMENT ORIENTATION
FOR THE 2024 GRAD COHORT**

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6
(12PM - 3PM)

**DEPARTMENT WELCOME
BACK POTLUCK**

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25
(3:30PM - 5PM, SSMS 1009)

**GRAD WORKSHOP ON
"DEMYSTIFYING THE
QUALS PROCESS"**

NOVEMBER 15

RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM 2

NOVEMBER 25

**GRAD FALL RECRUITMENT
EVENT (ONLINE)**

ABOUT US

Gordon Abra, Continuing Lecturer
 Tamara Afifi, Professor
 Walid Afifi, Professor
 Norah Dunbar, Professor
 Katherine Elder, Teaching Professor
 Andrew Flanagan, Professor
 Jennifer Gibbs, Professor
 Howie Giles, Distinguished Research Prof.
 Amy Gonzales, Associate Professor
 Kristy Hamilton, Assistant Professor
 Renee Houston, Teaching Professor
 Jennifer Kam, Professor
 Young Ji Kim, Assistant Professor
 Dan Lane, Assistant Professor
 Dan Linz, Professor
 Jiaying Liu, Associate Professor
 Guadalupe (Lupita) Madrigal, Assistant Professor

Dana Mastro, Professor, Associate Vice Chancellor
 for Academic Personnel
 Andy Merolla, Associate Professor
 Miriam Metzger, Professor
 Karen Myers, Professor
 Robin Nabi, Professor
 Prateekshit "Kanu" Pandey, Assistant Prof.
 W. James Potter, Professor
 Linda Putnam, Distinguished Research Prof.
 Scott Reid, Professor
 Ronald E. Rice, Distinguished Professor
 Muniba Saleem, Associate Professor
 Cynthia Stohl, Distinguished Professor, Emeritus
 Michael Stohl, Distinguished Professor, Emeritus
 Joseph Walther, Distinguished Professor
 René Weber, Professor

UCSB DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION RANKED 2ND IN THE WORLD

In its ranking of Academic Institutions in Communication Studies, ScholarGPS places UC Santa Barbara as the 5th institution globally (past five years) and 2nd (lifetime) in terms of its faculty's research productivity, quality, and impact.

The Department of Communication was founded in 1985 when Professors James Bradac, Anthony Mulac, and John Wiemann separated from the Department of Speech and Hearing to establish a Communication Studies Program. When the PhD program was approved in 1990, there were nine full time faculty in Communication. Presently there are 27 full time ladder or senate faculty members, 9 emeriti faculty, 2 non-senate faculty, and 7 affiliated faculty from political science, sociology, technology management, and brain and psychological sciences.