

# Indiana University

## Department of Geography E-Newsletter

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Dear all,

A lot has changed here at IU since our last newsletter. After the deep disruptions of the Spring, campus life settled into a relatively smooth rhythm this Fall with a mixture of in-person, online, and hybrid courses. The Student Building has been almost eerily quiet, but the intellectual life of the department is going strong. Our professors and students are still engaging each other via lectures and discussions. Graduate students have passed their qualifying exams and thesis defenses with flying colors. Faculty have applied for (and won!) grants to pursue new research topics. And our online colloquium series has been going strong, particularly the monthly discussions on racism in scientific research organized by our committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Some consequences of the pandemic remain: our students are still having to cope with difficulties accessing the technology they need for online learning, with illness, and with other related issues. It is also clear that many students are struggling without the built in supports of campus life.

Overall, however, the semester has gone remarkably well. Students and faculty both have put a great deal of effort into making online learning vibrant. Our wonderful front office staff have kept things running smoothly. And there have been some lovely moments enabled by our new reliance on Zoom. My favorite example was a Ph.D. defense last month in which almost 40 friends and family members of the candidate attended the public portion, from countries across the world.

I hope you and your loved ones are thriving despite the extraordinary circumstances,

Rebecca Lave  
Department Chair

## Volunteer for the IU Geography Oral History Project!

I am excited to announce that the department is embarking on a project to collect and present histories of IU Geography. As part of IU's Bicentennial Oral History project, we will be interviewing alumni and retired staff and faculty. All interviews will be publicly available on the Bicentennial website (<https://200.iu.edu/signature-projects/oral-history/index.html>). We also hope to synthesize the interviews into a departmental history to be posted on our website.

We are looking for volunteers to conduct oral history interviews. The training is relatively simple. Both it and the interviews themselves can be done on your own time online, and you can do as many or as few as you wish.

Interested? Please let Rebecca Lave ([rлавe@indiana.edu](mailto:rлавe@indiana.edu)) know. We will be getting started next semester, and hope to conduct all interviews during 2021.

click here  
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## New Faculty Spotlight: Mike Dwyer

Dr. Mike Dwyer joined the Geography Department at IU in fall 2019. His work intersects with political ecology and development studies. More specifically, Mike studies the uneven geography of land politics in Southeast Asia using a mix of ethnographic and historical methods. His work examines agrarian transformations, changes in land use through new infrastructure projects and investment initiatives, and the tensions between formal-legal and market-driven geographies of land access.



Mike is currently working on three projects. The first is a book project that looks at how legacies of US Cold War intervention in Southeast Asia shape contemporary processes of enclosure and land grabbing. Focusing on Chinese rubber plantation deals in the borderlands of northern Laos, this project contributes to new scholarship that tries to “ground” the recent global land rush across the global south by looking at the interaction between contemporary and earlier processes of transnational geopolitics. His second project is on “REDD” carbon forestry in Laos. This project tries to explain why REDD initiatives tend to focus on smallholder-dominated areas rather than parts of the country that exhibit the highest rates of deforestation. This project continues the theme of uneven geographies of development intervention, and contributes to policy debates about how transnational climate-change mitigation can be both environmentally effective and socially and economically just. Finally, Mike’s new project is on the political ecology of electrification in Laos. Using a mix of ethnographic, historical and quantitative methods, this work looks at emerging contradictions in Laos’s export-focused energy development efforts to become the “battery of Southeast Asia.”



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Mike received his BA from Oberlin College in Mathematics and his MA and PhD from the University of California, Berkeley’s Energy and Resource Group. In addition to his academic work, Mike has done a range of policy-relevant research for civil society groups and governments (both local and donors) in Southeast Asia.

At IU, Mike currently instructs G208, Environment and Society, and has previously taught G417/517, Development Geography - A Critical Perspective. In his free time, Mike enjoys hiking, biking, running and cooking; he is especially into beans these days. His favorite part about the Geography department is the explicit commitment and structural organization to interdisciplinary work. From his background in both social and natural sciences he appreciates the broad and interdisciplinary focus that the department is committed to. From being raised in Ohio, Mike feels that he has back home while living in Bloomington.

## Alumni Spotlight: Dr. Angela Babb



Dr. Angela Babb received both her MA and PhD from the Department of Geography here at IU. Her MA thesis looked at the connections between food insecure populations in Bloomington and alternative food networks including, community gardens, farmers markets, and community supported agriculture. Through her research Angela found out that people were not getting enough food stamps. Following the completion of her MA in 2013, Angela worked on her PhD in the Department where her dissertation, inspired by her MA thesis, examined the food stamp calculation. She completed her PhD in 2017 with her committee chair, Dr. Dan Knudsen (Geography), and committee members Dr. Rebecca Lave (Geography), Dr. James Farmer (Anthropology), and Dr. Rick Wilk (Anthropology) signing off on her dissertation titled, *Making neoliberal consumer subjects: a political ecology of nutrition assistance in the US*.

During her time in the Department Angela won numerous awards including: the Graduate Fellowship Award for outstanding academic performance from the Department of Geography in 2012, the Campus Catalyst Award for Excellence in Student Leadership from the Office of Sustainability in 2014, the William R. Black Leadership Memorial Fellowship from the Department of Geography in 2015, the Departmental Geography Fellowship Award in 2017, the Lester Spice Poster Award from the Department of Geography in 2017, and finally the Alumni Associate Instructor Teaching Award from the Department of Geography in 2017. In addition to receiving multiple awards, research, and teaching classes, Angela also served as president of the Geography Graduate Student Organization for a year and on the colloquium committee where she was involved in organizing and preparing food for colloquium.

A mere two weeks after receiving her PhD, Angela received the Visiting Assistant Professor position in the IU Department of Geography where she taught classes for one year. She then went on to receive a two-year post-doc in the Ostrom Workshop in 2018 with the Sustainable Food Systems Science Initiative. This past summer she was promoted to Assistant Research Scientist at the Ostrom Workshop. During this time Angela continues to remain involved and connected to geography through labs, AAG, the annual Dimensions of Political Ecology conference, and continuing research on developing a new calculation for food stamps that's tied to research projects on SNAP where she evaluates the application process and the experience of participants, and budgetary needs for folks with special dietary restrictions.

For the past three years Angela has co-directed the Critical Food Studies lab with Dr. Knudsen, and when he retired, Angela took over as director. Her hope is to institutionalize the lab and find stable funding for it. Additionally, Angela hopes to put forward an alternative calculation for food stamps and one that is dynamic enough to respond to individual dietary needs as well as geographical changes in food prices. Some of her aspirations and hopes have come to fruition this past summer through her work on the People's Market, an alternative farmer's market where she spent most of her service hours this year helping to build the market. In addition to the People's Market Angela assisted in building the People's Open Pantry which is a subproject of the market. These projects have allowed food to be free and available for folks who cannot afford it through sponsorship programs. She sees these projects as improving equity in our local food system. Finally, Angela has served on the Bloomingfoods board of directors for the last few years, and encourages folks coming out of geography to run for the board as a food systems perspective is super important for the board. Angela also served on the Bloomington Food Policy Council for a few years and believes that it is important for folks researching and working on food systems to engage with food policy at the local level as a lot of change can be made there.

Looking back at her time as a graduate student in the Department of Geography at IU, Angela remembers the conversations had at the Upstairs Pub on Friday afternoons with the Department. Talking theory and sharing research with fellow geographers over beer is one of Angela's favorite memories in the Department.

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home in  
Geography**

## Undergraduate Student Spotlight: Andrew Brown



Andrew Brown is a senior at Indiana University double majoring in Geography and French. He enjoys studying French literature and had the opportunity to study abroad last year in Aix-En-Provence, a French town near Marseille. During his time in France he experienced the culture, architecture, and history, and had an amazing time. Andrew's concentration in the Geography Department is on water resources. For his senior thesis, he is developing a rating curve for the Campus River. He is interested in the Campus River because it is an urbanized watershed with an unique opportunity for restoration, since the watershed is almost entirely controlled by the university. This allows Andrew to understand the river's land use policy more clearly, and make better recommendations for change. He is also trying to quantify flooding from the river and provide specific solutions. Flooding is an issue that he sees continuing to worsen in the future as spring rains intensify due to climate change.

Andrew is a Bloomington native, and one of the watersheds that he is really interested in is the one that is closest to him, in the valley behind his house. He finds inspiration there because he sees things happen in the watershed that aren't well described in the literature. When deciding to attend IU he received a competitive scholarship package, The Provost's Scholarship. This scholarship has been enormously helpful to Andrew's time and studies at IU and has given him the opportunity to pursue his passions and interests in geography. He originally found his home in geography as he was looking for a program that was rigorous and allowed him the freedom to use both qualitative and quantitative methods. Andrew is grateful for the spatial tools he has learned in geography, and does not think he could have learned them elsewhere at IU. His favorite classes have been Dr. Rebecca Lave's course Ecological Restoration, and the course she co-taught with Dr. Darren Ficklin, Water in the Midwest.

After graduation, Andrew will be looking for grad school programs in water resources and watershed hydrology. While he is interested in exploring the academic and research side of his watershed interests, he is also considering searching for a management or public service role to manage a watershed in a working capacity.

Outside of studying, Andrew enjoys calligraphy, classical piano, and coffee. He is currently training to race in Little 500 for Forest's cycling team, and he loves being able to get around Bloomington on a bike. Andrew also spends his free time volunteering with WFHB Bloomington, a local radio station. There he was an editor and occasional anchor for a show called EcoReport, which shared environmental news on community radio.

## Graduate Student Spotlight: Rubaya Pervin



Rubaya Pervin joined the Indiana University's Department of Geography in 2018 after she completed her BS in Urban and Regional Planning from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology and MS in Geographic Information Science from the Department of Geography at San Francisco State University. She selected IU's Department of Geography for her interests in both understanding land cover change and using remote sensing techniques, and she found that in the Department of Geography she could do both. Because of her dual interests, Rubaya's concentration is both on GIS and Remote Sensing and Climate and Environmental Change. In general, Rubaya is interested in understanding vegetation change by using remote

sensing data. Specifically she focuses on understanding vegetation change in semi-arid savanna ecosystems. Vegetations in savannas are often a combination of grasses and dispersed shrubs, which are small woody plants and many prior studies identified increasing shrubs in grasses. Rubaya is developing methods to improve shrub versus grass detection. In her later projects she will focus on understanding what processes are causing the very specific spatial patterns of shrubs in the savanna ecosystem and why savannah shrubs are increasing in growth over time. Her committee chair is Dr. Natasha MacBean (Geography), and her committee members are Dr. Scott Robeson (Geography), Dr. Mallory Barnes (SPEA), and Dr. Vicky Meretsky (SPEA).

Rubaya just recently passed her qualifying exams while simultaneously conducting research and taking care of her son at home due to COVID-19. Rubaya found that COVID-19 became a huge struggle to balance work and childcare. Additionally, studying and doing her qualifying exams made that struggle even harder. She is grateful for all the support she got from the department and from her advisor. After completing her exams, Rubaya started working on a paper that she presented at AGU last year titled, "Multi-source Remote Sensing Data Fusion for Detecting Shrub Cover in Semiarid Regions." Her goal is to submit the paper for publication by the end of the spring 2021. Rubaya is also continuing to work as a research assistant with Dr. MacBean.

Rubaya has won a number of awards including the Department of Geography's Recognition Award for Outstanding Academic Performance, the American Geophysical Union student travel grant for 2019 Fall Meeting, 2019-20 Fall Travel Award through the College of Arts and Sciences, and the John Odland Award from the Department of Geography to collect data on her study area, Santa Rita Experimental Range in semi-arid savanna ecosystem in Arizona, but because of COVID-19 she was unable to go this year. However, Rubaya hopes that she can travel to her field site in Arizona in 2021.

Rubaya served in the Geography Graduate Students Organization by writing newsletters in 2018-19. Currently, she serves on the executive committee of the Bangladeshi Students Association. She loves to spend her free time with her family. While COVID-19 has limited Rubaya's time to play Badminton with friends, a pastime she enjoyed, it has allowed her more time to work in her garden, read Bengali stories and books, and learn how to play piano with her son while she stays home with her family.

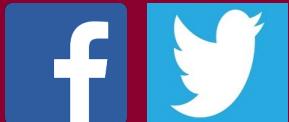
# Spring 2020 Award Winners

## Paul W. and Marie K. Baumann Scholarship

**Congratulations to Chiara Bangor-Giorgio!**



Hi! My name is Chiara, and I graduated from Indiana University in May of 2020. While not having a specific focus in the Geography Department, I based my coursework around urban geography, food studies, and climate and environmental change. Receiving the Paul W. and Marie K. Baumann Award has meant a lot to me, due to the financial and personal hardships I was going through at the time. This award gave me a sense of stability and a feeling of acknowledgement that I was on the right track, despite how I felt at the time. I'd like to thank all of my former professors and advisors, especially Dr. Annie Shattuck and Dr. Ishan Ashutosh, for challenging me, supporting me, and allowing me to become who I am today. Currently, I'm a Commissioner on the City of Bloomington's Traffic Commission, applying my knowledge from my undergraduate degree to improving local government. Once again, thank you to everyone in the Geography Department for making my time at Indiana University a wonderful experience, and thank you to Paul W. and Marie K. Baumann for sponsoring my education.



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## Two Robert N. Johnson Scholarships

**Congratulations to Emily Daugherty and Andrew Brown!**

I'm a senior in the department with a concentration in water resources. I hope to be able to pursue a graduate program with a focus on water resources as well next year. My programs of interest are at Colorado State University, the headwaters lab at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the O'Neal school at IU Bloomington. The Johnson scholarship has been instrumental in my final year of education. It will allow me to graduate debt-free and has given me the freedom and confidence to look into graduate programs with much more financial stability. Even before my income was greatly reduced by the pandemic, the Johnson scholarship was going to provide me a huge level of financial security. It now serves the same purpose, giving me confidence in my ability to further my education and be able to pay for it. In short, it is the reason I am able to consider graduate programs, and why I am able to pursue many of my academic interests today.



## Spring 2020 Award Winners cont'd

### William R. Black Leadership Memorial Fellowship

#### Congratulations to Mitchell Owens!



My research is primarily focused on understanding the impact of environmental policy (specifically the Clean Water Act) by comparing policy and water quality across jurisdictional boundaries to see if there is any relationship between the two. I'm also working on a SESYNC-funded project focused on understanding the relationship between discourse and environmental justice in freshwater systems. Within the department, I have served as the President and Vice-President of the Geography Graduate Student Organization; organized the 2019 Geography in Practice Symposium, bringing Jason Moore to campus for a series of talks and workshops; served on the department's Student-Faculty Relations committee; and have been a regular contributor to the department newsletter. Outside of the department, I have been an active member of the Society for Freshwater Science's Student Resources Committee, serving as the co-organizer of the Student-Mentor Mixer for the 2020 SFS Annual Meeting, as well as a regular member of that committee and the annual SRC Workshop committee in other years. I am currently serving on the Programming Committee for the 2021 SFS Annual Meeting. I have also spent time giving back to my undergraduate institution, the University of Texas at Dallas, as a member of the Eugene McDermott Scholars

### William R. Black Leadership Memorial Scholarship

#### Congratulations to Laxmi Palde!



# Other Award Recipients

## Thomas F. Barton Awards

G107 Physical Geography: Nico Lovinello  
G110 Human Geography: Taylor Kobylka  
G314 Urban Geography: Autumn Pryor  
G315 Environmental Conservation: Bethany Vaughn

## Founder's Awards

G109 Weather and Climate: Aaron Lack  
The Climatology Award: Tom Au  
The Indiana Award: Ben Lockwood

## Outstanding Senior in Geography Award

Anna Groover

## Norman J. G. Pounds Award

G120 World Regional Geography: Alana Shae O'Connor

## Robert C. Kingsbury Award

G237 Cartography & Geographic Information: Joey Sorrentino

## Departmental Graduate Student Fellowships

Allie Whitacre  
Dan Myers

## Alumni Associate Instructor Award

Tom Au

## John Odland Research Fund Award

Rubaya Pervin  
Sacha Siani

## Chair's Graduate Student Recognition Award

|                 |                    |                |                  |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Abdul Ajaz      | Ruhui Chai         | Mahsa Khodaei  | Sacha Siani      |
| Tom Au          | Meghan Engh        | Ben Lockwood   | Sharif Wahab     |
| Megan Betz      | Jessica Fan        | Dan Myers      | Jennifer Watkins |
| Jordan Blekking | Daniel Fobi        | Mitchell Owens | Allie Whitacre   |
| Josh Bregy      | Drew Heiderscheidt | Rubaya Pervin  | Lydia Zaked      |