GSO Team Leader Bios 2016-2017

Anuj Gurung  Political Science, PhD  agurung@kent.edu

Intro:
Anuj is from Kathmandu, Nepal, and he is a doctoral candidate in Political Science with the academic focus on conflict resolution and migration. His hobbies include reading, running and conversations with new people. His favorite place in Kent is Last Exit Books.

Advice:
Graduate school is going to be an important journey. Have regular conversations with senior graduate students in addition to the faculty. Rely on your peers moving forward.

Colleen Dragovich  Educational Psychology, PhD  cdragovi@kent.edu

Intro:
Introducing GSO Team Leader Colleen Dragovich from San Diego, California. Colleen is working on her PhD in Educational Psychology. Currently, her research interests are focused on the development of scientific reasoning and informal science learning. She enjoys traveling, spending time with family and friends, reading comic books, and eating good food. Her favorite place in Kent is River Edge Park downtown because it’s a beautiful place, and she enjoys the peaceful walk.

Advice:
Graduate school is different for every person, but as you begin your studies, it’s important to ensure that you have a good support network, whether that be family, friends, or colleagues. Graduate school is stressful. Having these supports will help you succeed. Also, learn how to communicate with your advisors. It’s important that they know what your goals and aspirations are, so they can help you achieve your goals and graduate in a timely manner.

Danielle French  English, PhD  dfrenc12@kent.edu

Intro:
Danielle hails from the DC Metro area and is entering her third year of doctoral work in the English Department. Her research interests include memoir and graphic narrative genre studies, relational psychoanalysis, feminist pedagogy, and trauma studies. When procrastinating on qualifying exam and dissertation reading, she loves to do daily weight training, find fantastic local coffee shops, make luxury bath products, actively support greyhound (and other animal) rescue groups, and watch Netflix with her Siamese, Keely. Her favorite place in Kent is Scribbles.

Advice:
You will need a support system, and you will need to set healthy boundaries for your physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health. Learn how to say no, how to
collaborate with those inside and outside your department, and how to maintain a balance between your academic career, social life, and home life. Your peers may write more, conference more, publish more quickly, or seem to have things all figured out, but everyone faces unique struggles in grad school. It doesn’t have to be a competition. Finally, your health is more important than your research—take time to build relationships, set non-academic goals, take care of your body and mind, and do things that feed your soul.

Jennifer Mani  Counselor Education and Supervision, PhD  jmani@kent.edu

Intro:
This fall, Jennifer Mani will be starting her second year in the Counselor Education and Supervision Doctoral program. Her hometown is Melbourne, FL, but she attended KSU for my undergraduate degree, as well--go Flashes!!! Her current academic interests include: international counselor education and counseling, suicide, trauma and crisis, and the education of counselor educators. In her free time she loves spending time with family and friends, traveling, kayaking, hiking, and reading. She has lived in Kent for many years and one of her favorite places is Taco Tantos--check it out!!

Advice:
My tips for success to you, a new incoming graduate student are: get a planner, make a schedule (and live by it!), make friends outside your program, and get to know a place to study that is outside of your building. One thing I wish someone would had told me is that it's okay to be selfish with your time and not feel guilty about it. Remember the importance of self-care, taking time each week to reconnect with yourself.

Julien Roland  Translation Studies, PhD  jroland2@kent.edu

Intro:
Coming to you straight from Bordeaux, France—by way of Ibadan, Nigeria—Julien is a Ph. D. candidate in Translation Studies. He is a goofy over-analyzer, a sarcastic dreamer, and an embracer of contradictions. When he is not studying or teaching (or grading), Julien can be spotted at Scribbles, devouring novels (and/or muffins). He worships Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Meryl Streep.

Advice:
Your world can easily become one-dimensional: same department, same schedule, same people. I think it is important to do a few things to spice things up a bit. Join an organization, go to a Cavs game or a yoga class… and keep in touch with people you met at GSO (graduate student socials are a great way to do that)!!! GSO is a unique opportunity to meet people with diverse interests and backgrounds.

Karla Gutierrez Cuevas  Liquid Crystal Institute, PhD  kgutierrez@kent.edu

Intro:
Karla Gutiérrez Cuevas is from Monterrey, México, and she is a Ph.D. student in the Chemical Physics Interdisciplinary Program in the Liquid Crystal Institute here at Kent State. Her interest was to learn how researchers in the area of science got success, understand all about liquid crystals and her dissertation focus in the interaction of metallic nanoparticles with liquid crystalline media. Her hobbies include dancing and outdoor activities, and her favorite place in Kent is the Beckwith Orchards.

Advice:
As and advice for new students, I can suggest to make every effort to continue your dream and reach your goals, believe in yourself, and understand that the initial periods could be hard but not impossible. I strongly recommend reading more about what is more difficult until they can understand with their own perception. Also be prepared to complete your assignments on time and manage your time, which is the most valuable source at the graduate level.

Kate Klonowski  
Cultural Foundations, PhD  
kklonows@kent.edu

Intro:
Kate Klonowski grew up in Cleveland Heights, OH. Her undergraduate degree is in English and Secondary Education from the College of Wooster (Wooster, OH), and her masters is in Educational Technology from Northern Arizona University (Flagstaff, AZ). She is currently a doctoral candidate in Cultural Foundations of Education here at Kent. The focus of her dissertation research involves student/adviser dynamics in the development of democratic skills in scholastic media production. Kate loves teaching, knitting, mentoring, singing, road tripping, reading books she doesn’t understand, volunteering, piña coladas and getting caught in the rain.

Advice:
When I started my doctoral program, I wish I knew not to be impatient with the lengthy process of learning and be more open to the advice of my professors. Some of the best advice about grad school was given to me by someone who holds three doctorate degrees. He said that getting an advanced degree has much less to do with innate intelligence than it does with having the patience and diligence to endure the process. This isn’t to scare anyone off (or presume we are all idiots!), but the message is important: don’t let setbacks or frustration keep you from realizing your ultimate goal.

Kevin Spence  
Higher Education Administration, PhD  
kspenc22@kent.edu

Intro:
Kevin J. Spence is a Higher Education Administration doctoral student. Born in Painesville, Ohio, Spence served as an English Language Fellow in Kyrgyzstan. He has taught academic English at Al Akhawayn University in Morocco, La Universidad del Atlantico in Colombia, the University of Delaware and the University of Montana. Spence holds a Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Second Language from the University of Delaware; a Master of Science from the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University; and, a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies from the University
of South Florida. Prior to becoming a language instructor, he was a print news reporter, who has reported from Israel, the Occupied Territories and Cuba. Spence was also a general assignment news reporter for a New York City alternative weekly newspaper, and a statehouse reporter in Delaware. As a former journalist, his best advice for incoming graduate students is to listen.

Advice:
In graduate school, in order to meet your own and others’ expectations, be willing to be present with yourself and others. Observe. Not all opportunities and recommendations you receive will be advantageous, but don’t dismiss all offerings across the board. Be entrepreneurial. Reach out to others. Present original ideas and be receptive to new concepts. Be organized. It will take time, but always begin projects with some sort of blueprint, whether it be moving to a new apartment, submitting conference abstracts or meeting assignment due dates. Lists often help. Have a sense of humor. Remember, everyone else is likely preoccupied with himself. Be open. Most are willing to engage. Remember that everyone’s experience is unique. Yours will be too. Own it.

Kristen Traynor   Political Science, PhD   ktraynor@kent.edu

Intro:
Kristen Traynor is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Political Science. Her research focuses on political communication and human rights. For her dissertation, Kristen analyzes elite and media portrayals of prisoner treatment at Guantánamo Bay. She was born and raised in Boardman, Ohio, and is the youngest of eight children. Her hobbies include traveling, spending time with family, rooting for Duke University’s men’s basketball team, and attending as many concerts as possible. Her favorite place in Kent is Wild Goats Café. The restaurant has great tasting coffee and really good nightly specials, especially the Thursday night build-your-own beef, turkey, or veggie burger deal.

Advice:
My advice to new graduate students is to work on your time management skills as soon as possible. Organizing and budgeting your time is the key to being successful in graduate school. You will have to balance your duties as a graduate student with your job responsibilities and your social and personal responsibilities, which is a really difficult thing to do. Don’t forget to make time for yourself and for spending time with those who are important to you. The more intentional you are about how you budget your time, the better and more productive your graduate experience will be.

Lorriane Odhiambo   Biostatistics, Environmental and Epidemiology, PhD   lodhiamb@kent.edu

Intro:
Lorriane Odhiambo is a doctoral candidate from the College of Public Health, epidemiology concentration. She is originally from Nairobi, Kenya. Her research interests are in environmental health issues, i.e. reducing the impact of environmental factors on disproportionately affected populations both locally and globally. This
includes interventions for water-related diseases and respiratory conditions. Lorriane’s teaching experiences as a teaching assistant have greatly influenced her decision to continue teaching in addition to her research pursuits. On a lighter note, she enjoys art (drawing), listening to music, cooking, boxing and playing basketball. Her favorite place in Kent is anywhere with beautiful trees.

Advice:
I would advice new graduates to identify their area of focus earlier on in their program and start working towards networking with professors, researchers and colleagues in that area of study. Getting some real world experience in their chosen area will help decide whether it is the right choice, so where possible…volunteer and learn! Also, one should always seek opportunities that get them out of their comfort zone. With all the serious work that comes along with graduate school, amidst of it all, do not forget to have some fun! Welcome and all the best in your graduate studies!

Loubna Bilali                  Translation Studies, PhD                lbilali@kent.edu

Intro:
Loubna Bilali is originally from El-Jadida, Morocco. She is a PhD candidate in Translation Studies at Kent State University. She has been living in Kent-OH for eight years, and she feels blessed to belong to the Kent community. Loubna’s research interests revolve around localization (the translation of website and software apps), terminology management, corpus-based research, and translation pedagogy. She love swimming, cycling, all racquet sports, and writing. The things that motivate and inspire her when she is not busy working include reading biographies, watching motivational speeches and documentaries. Her favorite place in Kent is Cuyahoga River (Crooked River) in downtown Kent. It’s one of the most beautiful and highly regarded features of the city of Kent. It’s a stretch of 6.5 miles surrounded by very nice parks’ views.

Advice:
Grad school is amazing! It is such a mind-opening experience that allows you to grow personally and professionally. My advice to all graduate students is to have a goal in life and invest everything they have to get to it. Stay focused, get your priorities straight, and make sure to lead a balanced and healthy grad school life and get the best out of it. Enjoy learning more about your discipline and don’t forget to take the time to socialize with other grad students, attend different campus events, visit the recreation center or discover the Kent area. Welcome to Kent State! 😊

Lynda Mwakisha                 Communication Studies, Master's        lmwakish@kent.edu

Intro:
Lynda Mwakisha is a Global Communication Masters student in the Communication Studies program here at Kent State. Although she is from Nairobi, Kenya and has lived majority of her life there, she has also spent a lot of time in the US. As a result, her academic and research interests are in identity and the intercultural experiences of African women living abroad. Lynda loves meeting and interacting with new people, she
loves hearing about the world and all its difference and similarity- so she is really excited to be a GSO leader this summer! She also enjoys salsa dancing, traveling, playing volleyball, and… eating.

Advice:
To all incoming grad students: do NOT procrastinate. Say NO to later. NOW is the time to write that paper, send that e-mail, to eat, to study for that exam. It will do you good to avoid procrastination, seriously. Invest in a planner, and utilize it religiously. Break your day down to the hour. It’ll help. I promise. Study, read, and write about what fascinates you. That way, you’ll (somewhat) enjoy all those hours that’ll you spend interacting with your books. Above all though, find fun in EVERY situation. We’ve only got one life to live so laugh, and love- even when grad school attempts to get in the way.

Mayagul Satlykglyjova  Cultural Foundations, PhD  msatlykg@kent.edu

Intro:
This is Maya’s last year in her Ph.D. program. Currently, she is writing her dissertation and studying the construction of identity in female students from Central Asia. Maya’s work examines the process of identity transformation of Central Asian students through hybridity and feminist theories. Maya is from Balkanabat, Turkmenistan, and being originally from this particular geographical location triggered her interest in such dissertation topic. Maya enjoys spending quality time with her friends, and her favorite place in Kent is Tree City Coffee shop on Erie Street.

Advice:
For me, the biggest challenge in my Ph.D. program was finding a topic that I was passionate about. I changed my topic several times, thus I did more work than was necessary. If I knew for certain which line of inquiry was suitable for me during the time while I was taking courses, I would be much better prepared for the lonely dissertation writing process. Think about your interests early so that you can build and strengthen your topic with the help of many intellectuals and peers.

Naser Madi  Computer Science, PhD  nmadi@kent.edu

Intro:
Naser is pursuing a Ph.D. degree in Computer Science. He is interested in the field of computational cognition, and brain computer interface. When he is not studying, he likes to play flamenco guitar or biking around Kent.

Advice:
My advice for new graduate students is to focus on developing the ability to produce and recognize important research ideas on their own, because acquiring this skill is essential for a successful career in the future away from advisors or mentors. The second piece of advice is to balance work and life, and remember graduate students are allowed to have fun, too!
Odeh Halaseh  Political Science, PhD  ohalaseh@kent.edu

Intro:
Odeh is a graduate of The University of Akron with an M.A. in American Politics and Institutions, and he is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Political Science with a focus on American political behavior. Outside of graduate school, he enjoys reading for pleasure, exploring random parts of Akron/Cleveland, and spending inordinate amounts of time drinking coffee. His favorite coffee shops in Kent are Tree City and Scribbles Coffee Co.

Advice:
As a graduate student, your responsibilities will vary, and at times, will seem overwhelming or difficult to manage. My advice for graduate students is to learn how to stay organized and balance your coursework, research, fellowship/appointment responsibilities, and personal life. The earlier you can master that balance, the more likely you are to succeed. Remember, graduate school is a marathon, not a sprint; stay focused on finishing and let nothing stop you.

Samuel Boateng  Ethnomusicology, Master's  sboaten1@kent.edu

Intro:
Samuel is the last of three siblings in a family of five. He recently graduated from the M.A. Ethnomusicology program in the School of Music and will be pursuing his Ph.D. in Jazz Studies at the University of Pittsburgh this fall. His research focused on the changing narratives of sexuality and gender in Ghanaian Popular Music as reflected in song text and music videos. Outside of class, Samuel enjoys listening to and playing traditional and Ghanaian popular music, jazz, performing with his jazz and Afro-pop band, as well as composing for different kinds of ensembles. Samuel hopes to teach music, compose for film, and run a music production and publishing company.

Advice:
Opportunities may arise from attending conferences, writing and submitting good papers in class, and networking—all of which and more will add up to making your experience as a graduate student a memorable and enriching one. Secondly, do not hesitate to ask for help when you need it. There are many resources available that are present just for you: use them. Lastly, the first few weeks may be hard but know that “this too shall pass,” so press on!

Samyak Moktan  Communication Studies, Master's  smoktan@kent.edu

Intro:
Samyak Moktan is from the beautiful and culturally rich country of Nepal. Her hometown is Kathmandu, which is the capital and the largest city in Nepal. Samyak is a second year Master’s student in Communication Studies with a specific focus in Global Communication. She loves reading books, especially fiction. Samyak is a huge Harry Potter fan and likes to believe that she knows everything about it. She also has a huge
interest in learning about social identity, feminist movements, and parasocial relationships. Lastly, she is a vegetarian, an animal lover, and speaks out against animal abuse.

Advice:
My advice for the new graduate students would be:  
Don’t feel afraid to ask questions. The more you ask, the more you learn.  
Don’t skip your breakfast; it is the most important meal of the day.  
Work hard, explore, socialize and make the most of what you get, and there is no time like the present 😊

Sanjoy Paul   Physics, PhD  spaul11@kent.edu

Intro:
Sanjoy is from a village near to Calcutta in the state West Bengal, India. He is a doctoral candidate in Physics, and he is in preparation for the graduation. His experimental doctoral dissertation work focuses on organic semiconductors and devices. He wants to work in the area of organic solar cell for low cost clean and renewable energy. Beside research, Sanjoy has strong desire to be an efficient Physics teacher for the new generation science students.

Advice:
Hard work and careful planning are two major keys to be successful in graduate study/research. Prepare yourself and get organized early, make a schedule and follow it strictly, stay tuned with your classes and duties, and do not wait till the examinations knock your door. Kent State has all sorts of teaching, research, and career development resources for your graduate career and future - proper utilization will be definitely helpful. Beside your study and work, it is also important to spend and enjoy partial time with your friends and family.

Shakhnoza Yakubova Higher Education Administration, PhD syakubov@kent.edu

Intro:
In 2009, Shakhnoza Yakubova received her M.A. in Higher Ed. Administration from Kent State University. She also has an M.A. in Linguistics. In 2010, she founded and directed a nonprofit organization, Academic Resource and Career Consulting Center, to educate and counsel secondary and high school students in rural Kazakhstan. Shakhnoza is a recipient of 2012 EHHS Hall of Fame Alumni Award. Since 2013, she mentored high school-aged students within the Kent State Upward Bound Summer Institute. She serves on Kent State International Student Advisory board to advocate and support international students on campus. In her spare time, she enjoys outdoor and meeting people from different cultures.

Advice:
Life gets busy in graduate school, but take time to explore new cultures and make new friends.

Tanesha Walker          Counseling and Human Development Services, PhD  twalke30@kent.edu

Intro:
Tanesha is a Doctoral Candidate in the Counselor Education and Supervision program from Akron, Ohio. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor in Ohio and has been licensed for three years. Tanesha's research interests include cultural perceptions within student-teacher relationships, couples counseling, interpersonal relationship considerations, and minority issues within counseling. She enjoys volunteering in her local community, sports, and trying new outdoor activities. Tanesha's favorite place in Kent is Bar 145 because they have amazing burgers and truffle fries.

Advice:
My advice to new graduate students would be to take care of yourself! Self-care is extremely important in navigating through a graduate degree. Get involved and work hard, but don't take on too much. Listen to your body and know when to take time out to enjoy yourself.

Joe Bean            History, PhD  wbean1@kent.edu

Intro:
Joe Bean is a first year PhD student in history; his academic concerns are focused on US history in the 1950s and 1960s and on the nation’s role in international relations during that era. He worked as professional writer before returning to academia, and he continues to pay attention to contemporary marketing communications and trends in corporate communications. Away from campus, he is a soccer referee and referee instructor, a scuba diver, a wilderness canoeist, and an avid traveler – most recently completing a 12-day trek to Mt. Everest Base Camp at 17,600 feet in the Himalayan Mountains of Nepal.

Advice:
The “secret” to success as a graduate student at Kent State is obvious: there is no secret. There is no substitute for hard work, for paying patient attention to detail, or for using your time efficiently. Every graduate student should have a clock, a calendar and a book – all at arm’s length. The clock will keep you aware of the time, all the time. The calendar will help you stay forward looking, organized, and attentive to your demanding schedules. The book will give you something to read in those infrequently rare but always welcome spare moments.