

# Undergraduate Urban Research Colloquium

## LIST OF STUDENTS AND PROJECTS

**Name:** Samantha Stein, History of Sociology of Science

**Mentor:** Justin Clapp, PhD, MPH, Perelman School of Medicine

**Biosketch:** Samantha is a senior in the History and Sociology of Science department at the University of Pennsylvania. She has a keen interest in linguistic anthropology, focusing on semiotics and cultures of expertise. These interests inform her approach to an ‘anthropology of bioethics’ research agenda and her commitment to facilitating evidence-to-practice transitions between her ethnographic biomedical work and human subjects research policies that disproportionately affect urban populations.

**Project Abstract:** In 1996, the U.S. federal government amended Common Rule, a baseline policy governing human subjects research, to permit emergency medicine research in the absence of informed consent given that studies meet particular criteria stipulated in 21 Code of Federal Regulations 50.24. Since the amendment’s inauguration, clinician-scientists have conducted fewer than 40 exception from informed consent (EFIC) research studies; however, the majority of these few studies have been conducted in urban locales, and have thus enrolled primarily urban populations. The legacies of biomedical oppression borne by urban populations present complex moral and practical challenges for the clinician-scientists operating in this space, calling clinical ethics and biomedical research ethics into tension. This ethnographic project establishes trends in ethical negotiations amongst clinician-scientists working in the EFIC research space, and thus inherently an urban space. This project maps an urban story in that clinician-scientists’ rituals of ethical engagement evidenced in my ethnographic investigations are indexical of historic urban biomedical legacies, and precedent-setting for urban biomedical futures.

**Name:** Ava Esquier, Urban Studies

**Mentor:** Dr. Lisa Servon, City & Regional Planning, Weitzman School of Design

**Biosketch:** I am a senior in Urban Studies interested in the historical development and social implications of the financialization of the criminal justice system in the United States. My research interests are based on my experience working on innocence claims at the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office and assisting citizens on probation at a reentry organization in Philadelphia.

**Project abstract:** Dr. Servon and I are interested in the growing incarceration rate of women in the United States and the unique barriers they face to become financially stable and to access economic opportunity. We will examine how the financialization of the criminal justice system, alongside the development of mass incarceration, particularly affects women whose role as caregivers and community leaders is different from that of men. Geographically, our fieldwork is in Philadelphia. First, we seek to understand the increase in the incarceration rate of women and the variance of women’s incarceration regionally. Secondly, we will examine the financial impacts of costs related to incarceration. We plan to

analyze Pennsylvania court data, observe court proceedings, and interview formerly incarcerated women and criminal justice experts.

**Name:** Margaret Tebbe, Sociology

**Mentor:** Dr. Molly McGlone, Sociology, School of Arts & Sciences

**Biosketch:** I am a junior in Sociology with a minor in Urban Education and am primarily interested in the ways parents and families of elementary school students choose the schools their children attend. I have been working at Lea Elementary as an assistant strings teacher since the beginning of my freshman year, which has allowed me to interact with both students and families and gain an appreciation of how complex the school system is in Philadelphia.

**Project abstract:** My project, the West Philadelphia Neighborhood Community Study, is intended to take advantage of two major processes that will impact Philadelphia schools over the next few years: the School District of Philadelphia's Comprehensive School Planning Review (CSPR) and the University of Pennsylvania's renegotiation of its Memorandum of Understanding with the Penn Alexander School (Sadie Alexander School). We are planning to interview parents from a number of West Philadelphia elementary schools (both traditional public neighborhood and charter) in order to understand how they choose their schools, how they understand their ownership of the city around them, and gather their concerns about potential changes to their schools. The end goal is to present these gathered stories to both the District and Penn as an argument for the specific reforms desired by the parents of West Philadelphia. This is important for the CSPR in particular because the study being conducted by the District is entirely quantitative, which erases the actual voices and stories of the families who will be directly affected by whatever reforms are implemented as a result of it.

**Name:** Georgia Ray, Urban Studies

**Mentor:** Chaeri Kim, City & Regional Planning, Weitzman School of Design

**Biosketch:** I am a junior majoring in both, Urban Studies and Computational Cognitive Science with an interest in using new technologies to address urban issues with an extra emphasis on environmental issues and remedies to them in urban spaces. In previous research projects, I have focused on data analytics. I have interned with the Argentine government as well as the Public Interest Law Center in Philadelphia, and I am interested in the policy implications of research work.

**Project Abstract:** Our research work is focused on Green Stormwater Infrastructure and Equity. Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) is a relatively new alternative to how cities are dealing with their storm waste in these modern, environmentally conscious times. The technology mimics the natural environment and creates porous landscapes to minimize runoff. Traditional methods of stormwater management result in a litany of human health and environmental problems. Our project focuses on equity and whether or not these new systems have been disproportionately placed in certain racial and socioeconomic communities. We will also focus on the magnitude of benefits being reaped based on these differences. Methodologically, we will first focus quantitatively to understand the areas in which the GSI devices have

been placed, followed by a qualitative approach where we visit cities and conduct interviews with locals. The cities we will focus on is Philadelphia, Washington D. C., and New York.

**Name:** Anna Duan, Urban studies

**Mentor:** Alex Li, City & Regional Planning, Weitzman School of Design

**Biosketch:** I am a sophomore majoring in Urban Studies and minoring in Legal Studies and History. I am interested in urban inequity and the relationship between macroeconomic trends and micro-level urban phenomena. In the past, I have conducted research on urban villages in Shenzhen, China; the phenomena of “Bed Renting” in jails which have resulted in skyrocketing rural incarceration in past decades; and disparities in access to mental health resources for high school students of different socioeconomic status in US cities. Increasingly, I am interested in quantitative research and using cutting edge data collection methods to assess issues related to urban equity and I look forward to developing my knowledge of this area over the next semester.

**Project abstract:** This study aims to use open-sourced data to evaluate the accessibility of senior centres via public transit, looking at Philadelphia as a case study. As older adults age, many of them stop driving. Therefore, the accessibility of their daily activity destinations via public transit becomes increasingly important to their mobility and, by extension, their social inclusion. Existing studies on the accessibility of destinations for older adults focus mainly on driving as a travel mode, and the accessibility of healthcare facilities and parks. With the growing availability of open-sourced data such as General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data, Point of Interests (POI) data and the American Census Survey (ACS) data, it is possible to use and triangulate various data sources and expand the accessibility research focusing on older adults. This study will use the aforementioned open-sourced data sets to evaluate the accessibility of senior centres (a proxy for age-specific social activities, resources and services), via public transit for older adults in Philadelphia. In doing so, our study aims to propose more ageing-friendly citywide transportation planning policies. This may further have policy implications for other big cities in the United States.

**Name:** Trae Jordan, Wharton School

**Mentor:** Samuel Geldin, City & Regional Planning, Weitzman School of Design

**Bio:** I am a junior in Wharton studying Economics with a concentration in Real Estate. I am interested in social equity within the field of City Planning as well as resilience and disaster planning in urban areas. I am eager to learn about who lives where in cities and why and the risks that “natural” disasters pose to different populations across cities. This is my first opportunity to conduct research so I am excited to learn.

**Abstract:** I would like to research the vulnerability of urban areas across the U.S. in terms of susceptibility for natural disasters. I would like to include an understanding of the number of people that would be affected and the social consequences as well. What areas of the U.S. are most at risk and specifically, who within those cities are most at risk when disaster hits? Ultimately, are these areas ready to act and react when disaster comes and properly provide for the most vulnerable populations.