

**The Department of
Geography & Planning
2020 Awards**

Geography



Geography & Planning
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Message from the Graduate Chair

Scott Prudham **Acting Chair, Graduate Geography & Planning**

On behalf of the entire tri-campus Department of Geography and Planning at the University of Toronto, I am pleased and honoured to offer you congratulations on your awards and the recognition of the hard and excellent work they represent. You have made us all proud, but most importantly of all, you should feel justifiably proud of yourselves. Your standards of achievement serve as inspirations for all of us to follow. Take a moment to celebrate yourselves as we in turn celebrate you. Wishing you all the best.

Award Descriptions

Donald F. Putnam Graduate Scholarship

Established in honour of the late Professor Donald Fulton Putnam, the Department's Chair from 1951 to 1963, this scholarship is awarded annually to graduate students concentrating on physical and environmental geography.

John D. Barnes Geodetic Sciences Fellowship

This award is given to a graduate student enrolled in a program in geography. Preference will be given to students who are doing graduate work in the field of GIS/Geomatics.

Graduate Geography Award for Black Students

To be awarded to students who identify as Black. Priority will be given to students who do not hold major scholarships, and who have not previously received departmental awards.

James T. Lemon Memorial Scholarship

To be awarded to a graduate student in urban and historical geography, with special consideration given to students whose research speaks to issues of social justice, based on academic merit and financial need.

Award Descriptions

JBR Whitney Award

In establishing this award, the University of Toronto Association of Geography Alumni (UTAGA) recognizes Joe Whitney's contribution as a founding member of UTAGA and his dedicated service to the Association. The award is given on the basis of academic excellence to a graduate student studying the environment or international development.

Graduate Alpar Scholarship

This scholarship was established in honour of the late Zehra Alpar, the Department's student advisor from the 1960s through 1990s. Created by friends, colleagues and alumni upon her retirement in 1994, this award is given to outstanding students who have made significant progress in completing their degrees.

George Tatham Geography Alumni Graduate Scholarship

This scholarship is for graduate students in the Department of Geography and Planning, on the basis of academic merit.

John Horner Scholarship in Geography

Awarded to a graduate student in the Department of Geography & Planning based on academic merit.

Graduate Geography Award for International Students

To be awarded to International students. Priority will be given to students who do not hold major scholarships, and who have not previously received departmental awards.

Award Descriptions

RBC Fellowship in Public and Economic Policy

To be awarded to graduate students undertaking a course of study in the general area of public/economic policy. The award is given on the basis of academic merit and financial need.

Oscar J. Marshall Graduate Fellowship

This award is given to a graduate student enrolled in a program in geography. Preference is given to students who are doing graduate work in the field of Geographic Information Science/Land Information Systems/ Geomatics/Remote Sensing.

The Griffith Taylor Scholarship in Geography

The Griffith Taylor Scholarship was launched at the Department of Geography's 70th Anniversary luncheon. This award is presented to an outstanding graduate student in the Geography or Planning Program.

Joseph A. May Scholarship

Created in honour of the late Professor Joe May, this award is given to an outstanding graduate student who has approached the study of one or more of the following fields from a qualitative rather than quantitative perspective: history and philosophy of geographic thought; historical geography; social and cultural geography; geography of Canada.

AWARD RECIPIENTS

Amanda Loder



Amanda is a 4th-year PhD Candidate in Physical Geography. As part of the Paleoecology Laboratory, she examines how landuse and climate change have affected carbon stores in marshes in the past as a means to understand how carbon stores will be affected in the future. Amanda is committed to applying science and evidence to aid in the conservation of wetlands. Outside of research, Amanda has a wide range of interests including science education, piano, physically-active living and environmental sustainability.

Donald F. Putnam Scholarship

Amy Protheroe



Amy is an MScPl student interested in public and active transportation. Her research interests lie at the intersection of public health and the built environment. Her current research looks at transit station access in Calgary and Edmonton. She investigates the role of park and ride facilities, land use patterns, bus networks, and active transportation infrastructure in shaping how individuals access light rail transit. Her work also seeks to understand differences in municipal policy and the way that has influenced station access mode share in both municipalities.

Graduate
Alpar
Scholarship

Leonard Mwesigwa



Leonard Mwesigwa is a PhD Student in Planning at University of Toronto. Born and raised in Uganda, he is a professional Civil Engineer with a masters in Transportation Planning from Newcastle University, UK. He also holds an MBA from Heriot Watt University, UK, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Project Planning & Management from Uganda Management Institute. As a practicing Transport Planner he is passionate about urban transit systems in the Global South. His research aims at examining the potential use of public private partnerships (PPPs) in the effective delivery of sustainable urban transit systems in rapidly urbanizing African cities. Specifically, he will explore how urban transit should be planned, financed and delivered in a neoliberal era.

**Graduate
Geography
Award
for Black
Students**

Omobolanle Oshinusi



Omobolanle's research interests lie in how sustainable practices and infrastructures can be used in combination with solid waste management policies and processes, particularly in major West African cities. She's interested in analyzing how these communities can contribute to the development and implementation of such processes, in order to help improve urban planning, environmental public health and social development indicators.

**Graduate
Geography
Award
for Black
Students**

Mariba Douglas



Mariba is pursuing her PhD through the department of Geography & Planning at the University of Toronto. Her research examines pressing issues within institutions of higher education, and it examines how racialized, classed and gendered processes are profoundly spatialized ones. In particular, she is interested in the history and expansion of equity, diversity and social inclusion initiatives and the persistence of anti-Blackness on campus. Her methods of inquiry are informed by the abundance and depth of Black energy that has given way to a multitude of interventions and has highlighted the importance of Black placemaking on Canadian campuses.

**Graduate
Geography
Award
for Black
Students**

Gregoire Benzakin



Gregoire is a 3rd year PhD student in Human Geography, working on the intersection of infrastructure anthropology, more-than-human geographies and assemblage theory. His doctoral research questions how the growing digitalisation of city infrastructure impacts our understanding of urban ecology and our various modes of existence. More specifically, he is exploring how a relational account of digital infrastructure can help us move away from modernist predicates of control and management which are so often embedded in such projects. By reshuffling the traditional framing of nature, his research seeks to identify concrete opportunities to reframe the approach to sustainability in urban contexts.

**Graduate
Geography
Award for
International
Students**

Hernan Bianchi Benguria



At the intersection of clean energy hinterlands, sustainable development policies, and socioenvironmental justice, Hernán's research is concerned with how the electromobility transition—marketed as a technological fix in the global move towards decarbonization in face of climate change—is interacting with the traditional livelihoods of local Atacameño/Lickanantay Indigenous communities in the Atacama Salt Flat, Chile. His research aims to uncover how the electromobility industry, facilitated by the Chilean state and sustainable development policy, is driving narratives that essentially make invisible the territorial and ecological dispossession of Indigenous communities due to processes of mineral extraction required for manufacturing batteries for EVs.

**Graduate
Geography
Award for
International
Students**

Nathaniel Baker



Nathaniel is a student in human geography and Jewish studies with research foci in queer geographies, imperial architectures, and Israel/Palestine. His current project considers the afterlives of Tel Aviv City Hall.

**James
T. Lemon
Memorial
Scholarship
in Geography**

Kristen Regier



Kristen's research interests lie in the intersection of climate change adaptation, green infrastructure, and environmental justice. Her current research examines green infrastructure as a climate adaption strategy through the lens of procedural-distributional justice within the context of Toronto. She is also interested in themes of resiliency and sustainable design.

JBR Whitney Award

Leah-Marie Marajh



Leah's interests fall broadly in the areas of human-environment interactions and geospatial systems. She is particularly interested in how environmental change is impacting local climate and livelihoods. Her current work combines remote sensing techniques and semi-structured interviews to identify long-term patterns of change and the drivers underpinning those changes. While her past and current work has focused on regions in the Tropics, she is interested in pursuing future research in North America and applying social dimensions of understanding to complex and changing landscapes.

**John D.
Barnes
Geodetic
Sciences
Fellowship**

Ece Ikiz



Ece Ikiz is currently pursuing an MA in Geography at the University of Toronto, focusing on waste management research. Most recently, she has published an article examining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on waste diversion and reuse practices in multi-residential buildings in Toronto. Her current project explores how COVID-19 has changed attitudes towards single-use plastics and regulation through an analysis of Canadian news media. Ece is also developing a guide for universities to build a sustainable waste management system on their campuses, highlighting strategies to maximize waste diversion and resource recovery and reduce the pressure on natural systems.

John Horner Graduate Scholarship in Geography

Sneha Mandhan



Sneha Mandhan (she/her) is an urban planner and designer who is broadly interested in the integration of physical form with social and cultural forces within cities, social justice and equity through design, urban informality, community engagement, and spatial planning pedagogy. Through her PhD, she aims to study the influence of settlement practices on culture and use of space among immigrant communities in Toronto, and to connect their experiences translocally to their families 'back home.' Her goal is to develop creative research methodologies, storytelling techniques, and design practices that are geared towards making immigrants feel at home, like they belong, in North American cities.

**John Horner
Graduate
Scholarship
in Geography**

Kate Nelischer



Kate's research interests center on the governance of planning processes, including public participation, and are influenced by her experience as a public servant and consultant. Her dissertation explores the planning of Sidewalk Toronto, a recently disbanded public-private partnership between Sidewalk Labs (a subsidiary of Alphabet Inc.) and Waterfront Toronto (a tripartite government agency). Her research analyzes the project's planning and engagement processes and contextualizes this work within the history of development on Toronto's waterfront, contributing to contemporary academic and policy debates around the role of smart cities in the privatization of planning.

John Horner Graduate Scholarship in Geography

Hazelmae Valenzuela



Hazelmae Valenzuela is a second year in the Master's of Science in Planning (MScPI) program specializing in urban design, with research interests in building inclusive cities, community-based planning and policy and creative mixed-use (CMU) developments. Currently, Hazelmae works with the School of Cities researching CMU partnerships and operations models and recommendations for incentivizing more CMU developments in Toronto. She holds an Honours, Bachelor of Arts in City Studies and Public Policy (co-op) from the University of Toronto, with previous experiences leading research and urban governance projects, supporting policy development at the provincial and municipal governments.

**John Horner
Graduate
Scholarship
in Geography**

Hannelore Yager



Hannelore is a second-year Planning student whose research interests involve exploring how sustainable food systems contribute to community resiliency, with a particular interest in food security. She enjoys exploring issues in food justice and sovereignty through the lens of political ecology, social-ecological systems, and decoloniality. Her thesis will explore the impact of COVID-19 on the resiliency of food relief organizations operating in Toronto.

**John Horner
Graduate
Scholarship
in Geography**

Annie Yachen Yuan



Annie's academic interests involve human-environmental relationships, sustainable development, and green infrastructure planning in cities. Her master's thesis focuses on examining urban residents' knowledge and attitude towards green infrastructure. This includes surveying residents in Philadelphia about green infrastructure features and environmental concerns. This work seeks to identify barriers and opportunities to green infrastructure installation and its long-term management. By completing this research, Annie will explore the relationship between humans and the environment on the ground level and examine how urban residents will affect future green infrastructure planning and development in residential landscapes.

**John Horner
Graduate
Scholarship
in Geography**

Haifa Alarasi



Haifa is a PhD candidate focusing on digital ethnographic explorations in reproductions of childhood. Her doctoral research examines questions related to mobility practices that are embedded in the environment, the social, and the material. Using grounded spatial visualizations, she broadens constructions of marginalized bodies and their associated urban experiences. Outside her dissertation, Haifa is working on mapping ancestral diasporic mobilities and producing personal audiovisual vignettes on the semiotics of 'home', belonging, and regrounding.

**John Horner
Graduate
Scholarship
in Geography**

Jeff Allen



Jeff Allen is a PhD candidate in geography. His PhD research examines long-term changes in cities (e.g. suburbanization, transit investments, gentrification) and how these changes affect daily travel and activity participation. Outside of his studies, you'll likely find him exploring the streets of Toronto (usually on foot or by bike), reading, thinking about urban form, or designing maps.

John Horner Graduate Scholarship in Geography

Robert Catherall



Robert Catherall is a current researcher and PhD student at the University of Toronto focusing on urban planning strategies for cities at night and the experiences of workers in nighttime industries. His academic work has been published in Queen's Policy Review, PLAN Canada, and FilmMatters, and he recently edited a special edition of PLAN Canada on international planning practices. Some of his recent projects include research on policy frameworks and regulatory regimes as well as stakeholder engagement for the Vancouver Music Ecosystem Study, Nova Scotia Music Impact Assessment, and the Victoria Music Ecosystem Study. He is currently leading a collaborative project between the City of Toronto and Arup to develop implementation strategies for the Toronto Nightlife Action Plan as part of the U of T School of Cities' multidisciplinary urban capstone course.

Joseph
A. May
Scholarship

Natasha Goel



Natasha's research considers discrimination and racial residential segregation in Toronto. It updates and expands upon Toronto's residential segregation literature using 2016 census data and raises questions about the literature's emphasis on voluntary segregation. Ultimately, the project aims to demonstrate that visible minority concentrations are a cause for concern in Toronto despite our brand of diversity and inclusion.

Joseph
A. May
Scholarship

Loren March



Loren March is a PhD student in human geography at the University of Toronto's Department of Geography and Planning. Their research focuses on complex processes and experiences of change in urban environments. Specifically, they critically examine gentrification, redevelopment, and creative place-making practices, employing a diverse range and mixture of qualitative methods. Their most current dissertation work explores affective relations in contexts of urban environmental gentrification, and looks at the more-than-human implications of capitalist urbanization in Toronto.

Joseph
A. May
Scholarship

Phuong Duc Dao



Phuong Dao is currently a PhD candidate in Physical Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Toronto. He is working on a grassland drought project in the Remote Sensing and Spatial Ecosystem Modeling Laboratory. His research focuses on changes in grassland biophysical and biochemical properties, including leaf pigments, chlorophyll fluorescence, water, leaf area index, and biomass under drought stress in various native and invasive grass species in Southern Ontario using close-range and airborne hyperspectral remote sensing, chemical experiments, and modeling. These studies provide local governments and agencies with essential information for grassland management and conservation. He earned a MSc degree (2015) in Remote Sensing Science and Technology from the National Central University in Taiwan and a BEng (2011) in Surveying Engineering from Hanoi University of Mining and Geology in Vietnam.

Oscar J.
Marshall
Graduate
Fellowship

Yihong Liu



Yihong's research interest is to use remote sensing methods to study the global carbon cycle. He is now working on using satellite data of solar-induced chlorophyll fluorescence and leaf chlorophyll content to capture plant photosynthetic capacity on the global scale. This research offers opportunities to improve global carbon cycle modelling and helps to better understand the response of terrestrial ecosystems to climate change.

**Oscar J.
Marshall
Graduate
Fellowship**

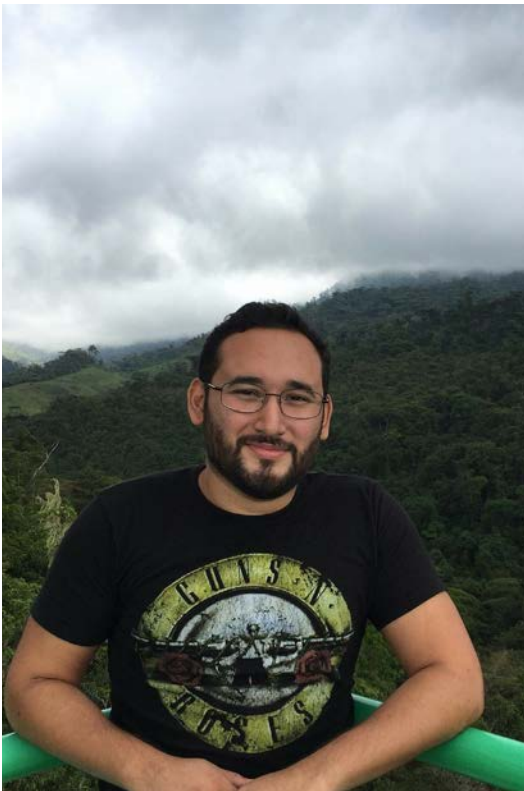
Kayla Greenberg



Kayla Greenberg is a second-year MScPI student specializing in environmental planning. Kayla's graduate research is focused on identifying best practices for using air rights development for planning parks and public spaces in dense urban centers. In her free time Kayla enjoys volunteering and is an advocate for access to bicycling for minority groups and improving children's literacy.

**Royal Bank
Graduate
Fellowship
in Public and
Economic
Policy**

Juan Carlos Jimenez



Juan's research examines community-based adaptation strategies to climate change in rural communities in Nicaragua and El Salvador. During his MA degree, his research examined the impacts of droughts on rural livelihoods in Nicaragua, evaluating adaptation methods used by farmers, including renewable energy technologies and agro-ecology. Now, in collaboration with Prof. Ryan Isakson, Juan will be working on research in El Salvador, analysing how "index-based agricultural insurance" shapes and is shaped by the existing socio-economic realities of rural peasant economies. As a community-based researcher and activist, he is also conducting research on Central American migration to Ontario, exploring themes of belonging, development and intergenerational learning through Photovoice, digital stories, interviews, and focus groups.

**Royal Bank
Graduate
Fellowship
in Public and
Economic
Policy**

Mark Tennenhouse



Mark's research interests are in housing policy, real-estate development, and the role of an expanded public sector in addressing persistent housing crises. This has included evaluations of the effects and efficacy of rent controls, and more recently, the temporary use of hotels as shelter spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic. This recent work explores opportunities for the public acquisition of privately held hotels and their conversion to non-market housing. Mark grew up in the Winnipeg north-end and calls Toronto home.

**The George
Tatham /
Geography
Alumni
Graduate
Scholarship**

Rhys Edward Buceta



Rhys Buceta is an Msc student at UTM where he also completed his Bsc. For his undergraduate research he employed digital mapping to document glaciers in the Nepali Himalaya and to quantify drainage basin reorganization. Now, for his graduate research, he is applying a novel biological proxy to soils in the Canadian Subarctic. With this proxy he hopes to reconstruct past temperatures in order to better understand how the Canadian Subarctic warmed from the last ice age.

**The Griffith
Taylor
Scholarship
in Geography**

Thank

You!
