



DEPARTMENT OF  
**GEOGRAPHY**

College of Arts and Sciences

# Geography Newsletter

September 2022

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## Hello Fall?

So it's the end of September, right? When will the cool, crisp weather finally arrive? Somebody needs to get on the ball and unleash the polar air from Canada!

### Upcoming October events:

Our regional professional meeting ([SWAAG](#)) is taking place October 27-29 in Fayetteville, AR and virtually. Abstracts can be submitted until October 15 so it's not too late to participate.

Some OSU geographers will be attending the [Applied Geography Conference](#) which is completely online October 20-22.

The department is participating in two undergraduate recruiting events.

- October 13, Student Union Ballroom, 10 AM to 1 PM: **Majors and Minors Fair.**
- October 17, Gallagher-Iba Arena, 8:00-9:45 AM: **OSU Up-Close.**
- Personnel are needed for both events; please let Carissa or Barbara know if you can help.

Homecoming Walkaround is Friday, October 21 and the big game itself is Saturday, October 22 against Big XII foe (for now) Texas. Kickoff time is still TBD.

## New Faculty

**Dr. Saber Brasher** is a climate scientist and physical geographer examining how changes in surface cover influence climate, and synergistically how climate change modifies the surface cover of the planet. Her major research area is the Northern Hemisphere, specializing in snow cover and sea ice as a highly dynamic, radiatively important land cover type, both as an influencer and a responder to climate change.



She has also worked on collaborative projects spanning many hydroclimate questions, such as: local climate relationships with streamflow and flooding/drought events, studies on precipitation frequency and magnitude changes, as well as climate influences on measuring evapotranspiration for agricultural purposes. Broadly, she is interested in how water (be it in its gaseous, liquid or frozen state) plays a major role in climate.

She earned her PhD in Climatology from the University of Delaware, her MS in Geography from Texas State University, and her BS in Physical Geography from Texas State University. Between her PhD and her appointment at OSU, she worked briefly as a Postdoctoral Researcher for the Center for Environmental Monitoring and Analysis at the University of Delaware.

She is very interested in fostering inter-disciplinary collaborations and applying her expertise in climate to solving real-world problems. A love for the great outdoors and nature is what brought her to the field of climatology! She loves trail running, rock climbing, hiking, bird watching, and being just about anywhere outside with her Australian Shepherd, River.

## New Faculty (cont.)



**Dr. Peter Crank** Peter J. Crank is an assistant professor in the OSU Department of Geography. An urban geographer and climatologist who received his PhD in Geography from Arizona State University (ASU), he studies urban climate and impacts of neighborhood scale urban design on microclimates and human health. His work is centered in hot cities, including Singapore and Phoenix as well as the Southern Plains.

In Singapore, he worked with the Cooling Singapore 2.0 project with SEC-ETH and Singapore Management University. At ASU, Peter worked in the School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning, the Urban Climate Research Center, the Design School, and the Health Urban Environments Initiative on various projects in the U.S. examining extreme heat and air quality impacts on the elderly, neighborhood planning and design, city park designs, and school renovations through field measurements, remotely sensed measurement via helicopter, and numerical modeling. Peter has a B.S. degree in broadcast meteorology from Mississippi State University (MSU) before pursuing degrees in applied climate and geography at MSU (M.S.) and Ph.D. (ASU).

Peter's research seeks to address questions of measuring and modelling urban spaces to understand the impact urban climate mitigation strategies have on the thermal environment as well as on all facets of human health (from physical heat stress to psychological disorders). His work has spanned across several U.S. cities in the Sunbelt, including Jackson (MS), Houston (TX), Phoenix (AZ), and Los Angeles (CA) in addition to work in Singapore.

Outside of work, Peter enjoys spending time in nature, reading classical literature, drinking coffee, as well as spending time with family and friends.

## New Graduate Students



I am **Lixiaona Yu**. People also call me Una. I am a first-year PhD student. My research interests are social media mining, human mobility, and geo-health. I have two bachelor's degrees both in GIS major at Sun Yat-Sen University and at Hong Kong Polytechnic University. I earned my master's degree in Surveying Engineering at Wuhan University. I like to travel and experience different food

My name is **Emmanuel Kumi**. I had my first degree in Bachelor of Science in Geography and Regional Planning from the University of Cape Coast in 2020. In the spring of 2022, I began my master's degree at OSU. My research focus is on land use change in hydrological ecosystems. I am keen to identify and help solve problems of common interest to society. I also enjoyed participating in conferences and forums where scientific issues are discussed.



**Nivedita Priyadarshini Kamaraj** is a new PhD student at OSU. Her research work focuses on using airborne and spaceborne imaging spectroscopy to monitor plant diversity. She graduated with her Master of Science degree in Geoinformatics from the University of Münster, Germany and she completed her master's thesis with the German Aerospace Center (DLR). She earned her bachelor's in Geoinformatics Engineering from India. She likes to seek out learning new things and is highly passionate to develop new skills.



## New Graduate Students (cont.)

**Christine Giles** is a new MS student in geography this fall. She completed her Bachelor of Arts degree in Global Studies in the Geography Department here at OSU, graduating in May 2022. She participated in the GUMP program in Fall 2019 working with Dr. Alyson Greiner and presented her research project on food deserts at SWAAG. Her research interests lean broadly toward justice issues with a particular interest in development and the Doughnut Economic Model. She enjoys coffee, deep conversation, music, movies, walking, kayaking, swimming, and laughing.



**Saiyed Momin Nori** is a new PhD student. His field of interests are geopolitics, hydro-politics, transboundary water cooperation, and water governance. He received his education in Kazakhstan starting with a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering at Eurasian National University followed by a Master of Arts in Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) at German – Kazakh University with a focus on transboundary water cooperation and governance. Before starting his PhD at OSU in the fall of 2022, he was working as an assistant lecturer at the University of Rwanda focusing on the water and environmental sectors. In his free time, he likes traveling, reading books, and running.

**Melissa Wynn** is a new MS student in the department. She graduated from Oklahoma State University with a BS in Secondary Education-Social Studies in Spring 2022. Her focus in Geography will be concerning effects on Native American tribes brought by cessation of land and adherence to agreements with US and around cultural/historical questions of space, place, memorialization, and sovereignty. She has many interests beyond research, but her two favorites are OSU sports and raising her three children.



## Geographers in the Field

**Dr. Carlos Cordova** and PhD student **Clayton Lucas** travelled to the area of Lake Texcoco, near Mexico City. They met with local communities as part of Clayton's initial dissertation research and on Dr. Cordova's ongoing geoarchaeological research in the area about the ancient Aztecs who inhabited the area between 700 CE and 1500 CE. During fieldwork they worked with local archaeologists and community enthusiasts on recovering archeological finds, including pottery, obsidian knife blades and spear points, and other artifact, as well as soil and sediment samples for further analyses. Along with this, drones were used to map features built by ancient peoples to control the waters of the lake and Dr. Cordova and Clayton plan to return in the near future to continue their work there.



## Geographers in the Field (cont.)



## News from around the Department

Emeritus Professor Dale Lightfoot appears in a new Vox video titled “Who made these circles in the Sahara?” (<https://youtu.be/twAP3buj9Og>). Created by Christophe Haubursin and Vox this story follows attempts to uncover the origin and purpose of unusual patterns in the Algerian Sahara. Lightfoot was consulted to help determine whether the features might be qanats or related water structures. Visible in Google Earth, the features in question serve as a catalyst for an exemplary tale of how resources and specialists available through the internet can be tapped to investigate a story and, in this case, solve the mystery of enigmatic features that vexed everyone involved.

We welcomed a new staff member in the main office this past summer, **Carissa Gabilheri**. Carissa loves to travel and spent a year as a Rotary Youth Exchange student in Brazil prior to college. She graduated from OSU in 2016 in Apparel Design & Production with a minor in Studio Art. After working in the fashion industry in Los Angeles, she discovered a disheartening future, so she pivoted into User Experience Design just before the pandemic. She also decided to move back to Oklahoma to be closer to family and have more outdoor space. Since then, Carissa has honed her skills in becoming a gourmet cook, an award-winning gardener, and an avid interior decorator. Carissa is very excited to be back working with people again and plans to enjoy her time here in the geography department while she figures out her next steps. Thank you all for the warm welcome!

Next page, Carissa in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico in June 2022.



