



## Geography

### INSIDE:

March Happenings .....1

News from Around the Department .....2

Mixed Methods Field Trip.....4

Field Work in the Himalayas.....6



# Geography Newsletter

March 2018

## March Happenings

As usual, St. Patrick's Day falls during Spring Break so we'll just have to party the Geography way – with a newsletter!

The semi-annual FAST (Faculty and Staff Team) versus Students soccer match will be **Saturday, March 3 at 10 AM** in the Colvin Center. Results of this event and the bowl-a-rama (held February 28) will appear in the April newsletter, but we expect complete dominance by FAST as usual.

We have a dissertation defense scheduled this month:

- **Matt Haffner** will defend his dissertation, titled "Assessing the Validity of Location Based Social Media in the Study of Spatial Processes," on Friday, March 2 at 2:00 in 004A Human Sciences (HSCI). Rumor has it Dr. Fekete will attend!

We also have a colloquium at the end of the month:

- **Melvina Heish**, OK State Historic Preservation Office, will give a talk (title TBA) on Friday March 30 at 3:30 in NRC 207 (our "regular" room).

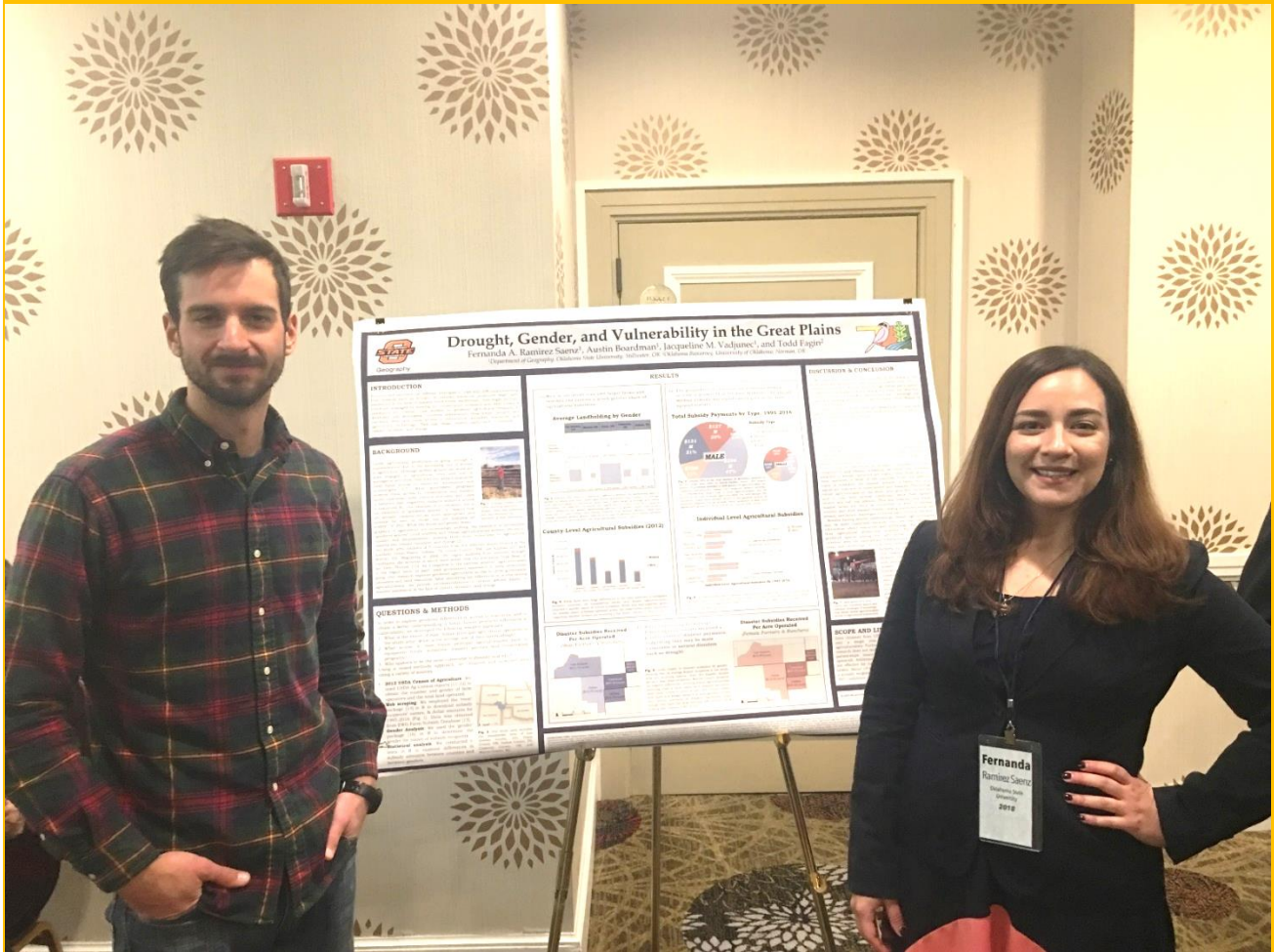
On March 6, a contingent from OSU will make its annual trek to the capitol for "GIS Day at the Capitol", a gathering of GISci professionals, academics, and students. Staff Cartographer **Michael Larson** and **Drs. Hongbo Yu** and **Adam Mathews** will take a group of students down to network, promote research projects in the department, and to demonstrate the importance of geospatial sciences to governmental leaders. Expect photos in the April newsletter.

Spring Break is the week of March 19-23, 2018 on the OSU campus. There are no classes but university offices are open.

Finally, AAG in New Orleans is just around the corner – if you're going, you'd better already have your travel plans.

## News from Around the Department

On Thursday, February 22, MS student **Austin Boardman** (below, left) and PhD student **Fernanda Ramirez Saenz** presented a poster at the Oklahoma Natural Resources Conference in Tulsa. The research is part of Dr. Jacqueline Vadjunec's [NSF grasslands project](#). The title of their poster was "Drought, Gender, and Vulnerability in the Great Plains." Other co-authors included Dr. Todd Fagin (formerly here in the department, now at OU) and Dr. Vadjunec.



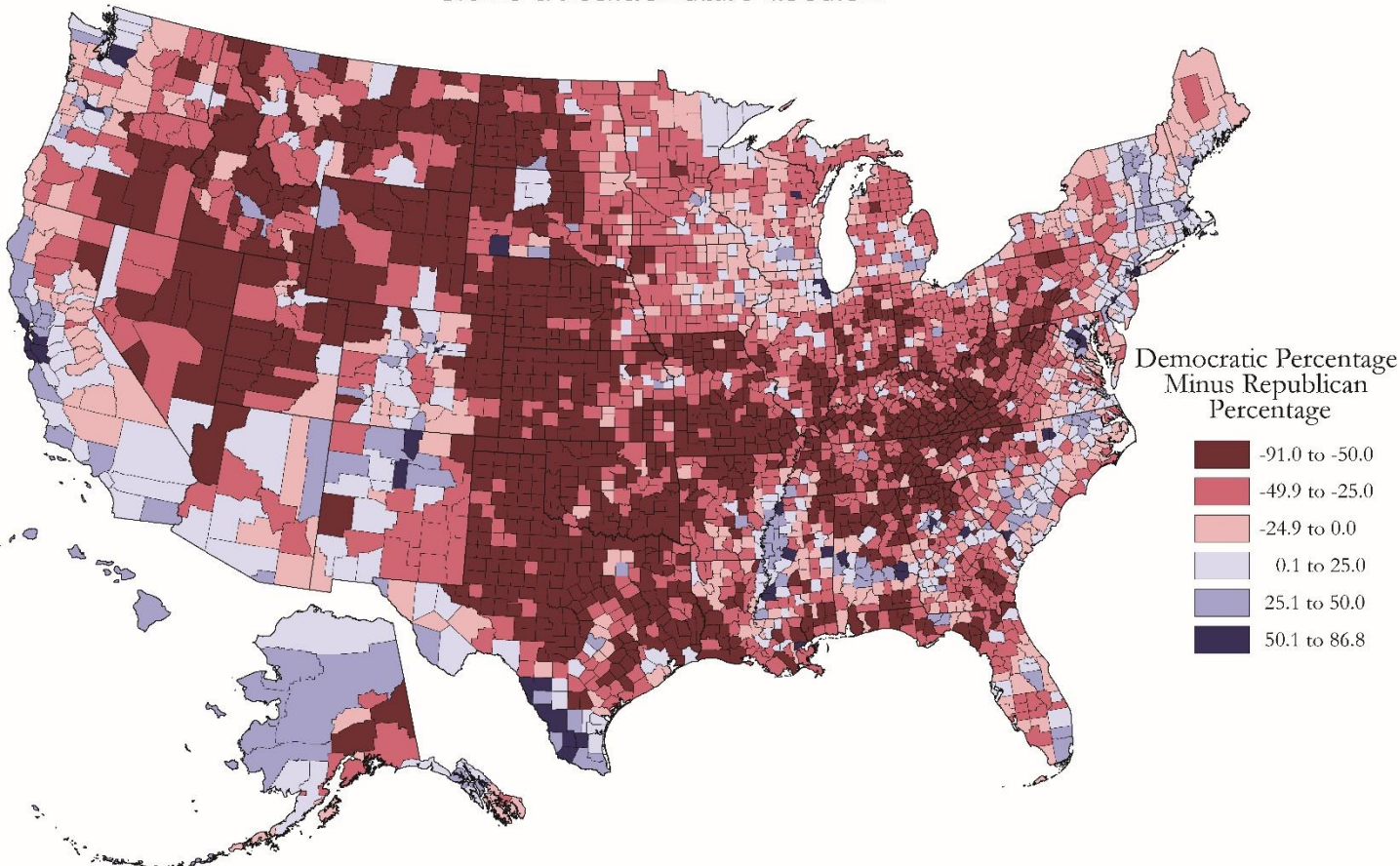
**Aswin Subanthore** (MS '05, PhD '16) completed his first year as the Vice-President (South Asia) at ENODO Global, a business intelligence firm based in Fairfax (VA). He oversees ENODO's daily operations, supervises Ph.D. students in their practicum projects, and conducts business development outreach. He is currently working on projects that apply his geography research skills to help populations in Mexico, Guatemala, and India.

## More News from Around the Department

PhD student **Kimberly Johnson** recently had a piece published in the *Atlas of the 2016 Election*. A complete citation is given below along with one of the maps from her chapter.

Morill, R and K. Johnson. 2018. Election Outcomes: Absolute and Relative. In *The Atlas of the 2016 Election*, eds. R. Watrel, R. Weichert, F. Davidson, J. Happen, E. Fouberg, J. Clark, R. Morrill, F. Shelley, and K. Martis. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

### Margin of Victory 2016 Presidential Election



On Friday, February 16, PhD student **Brian Gilson** gave a colloquium titled “Postsecularity in Azerbaijan: A Reconnaissance” to a packed house. Some geographers were even spotted in the crowd! Brian discussed his initial visit to Azerbaijan, how he has developed contacts there, and provided many wonderful photos of life in Baku.

## Mixed Methods Field Trip (Fall 2017)

Dr. Vadjunec's GEOG 6313 class visited Boise City in Cimarron County and the team of Maria Sol and Fernanda Ramirez Saenz and Kianoosh Hassani did some archival research at the Cimarron Heritage Center (see photos next page). They also did some key informant interviews, in which they ate home made cookies and had amazing conversations about how families faced severe weather in the past and present (they shared family experiences during the 1930s Dust Bowl and the recent 2015 cyclical drought).



Some proof dinosaurs and humans coexisted!

# Mixed Methods Field Trip (cont.)



## Fieldwork in the Darjeeling Himalayas

During December 2017 – January 2018, Samayita Bandyopadhyay was doing fieldwork in a small part of the eastern Himalayas. It was the 4<sup>th</sup> and final time she went to the field in Kurseong for her Ph.D. dissertation. Broadly, her work explores the role of land use land cover change in influencing people's vulnerability to landslide disasters. This time the tasks involved conducting community meetings, a few key-informant interviews, household surveys, and the collection geospatial data of major land covers there.

“Fieldwork is always exciting to me, as I get to learn much about the place and people, develop human connections that not only aids my research but also teaches me life lessons, helps me expand my perspective in seeing life as a whole. I met and spoke with more than 200 people in what was the most intensive fieldwork I have ever done. Here are some pictures to share with you all.”



Tingling plantation in Mirik: The most extensive land cover in Kurseong consists of acres of tea plantations. Although not the case everywhere, power lines in plantation have dislocated many houses and plantation area. Plantation workers believe one of the causes of landslides near this area is due to these power lines.



Cracks in houses still lived in in Makaibari Tea Plantation.

## Fieldwork in the Darjeeling Himalayas (cont.)



When even the most scenic landscape tires a fatigued traveler, people brings some energy back. Top left: A woman processing charcoal for household cooking; Top right: A little boy obliging me with a smile; Bottom: Elderly hosts asking to visit again as we leave their house.



At left, a factory worker drying tea leaves.