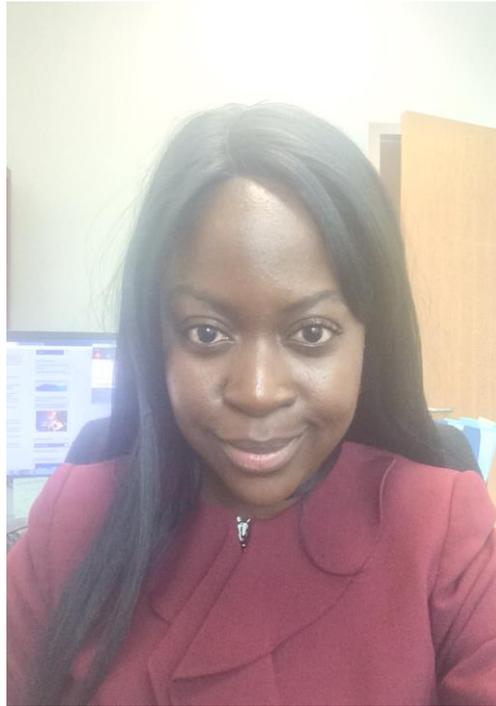




**Graduate College  
Research Certification**

**Congratulations to our incoming  
2019-2020 cohort**

# AMANDA ANNAN



**Master's student,  
Department of Health  
Care Administration  
and Policy**

**Advisor: Dr. Cochran**

Amanda Annan is an Executive Master of Health Care Administration (EMHA) graduate student in the Health Care Administration program at University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). She holds a certificate in Health Care Management and Leadership from University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), a Master of Public Health (MPH) from Loma Linda University, and a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in English Literature from University of California, Riverside (UCR).

Amanda's research interests include program evaluation and health outcomes research, maternal health, quality management and improvement, organizational management and behavior, health disparities, health equity, public health law, patient safety, and most recently traffic safety and injury prevention.

I believe the Graduate College Research Certification (GCRC) will further build and enhance my research understanding and problem-solving skills, as well as the professionalism to do the research. As a long-term goal, I hope to provide novel insights into the benefits of prevention which I believe will improve the quality of life for all mankind.

# BROOKE WOLFE



**M.A. student,  
Department of  
Communication  
Studies**

**Advisor:  
Dr. Jennifer Guthrie**



Brooke Wolfe is a first-generation college student entering her second year in the Communication Department. Her research focuses on societal narratives that discipline action and how those narratives influence women in romantic relationships.

From this program she hopes to gain experience condensing complex academic studies into accessible scholarly documents that work to improve the lives of women and disrupt problematic narratives. Additionally, she hopes to build community across disciplines to better understand the research of peers in other departments and promote research development on campus.

# CECILIA TURMAN

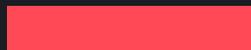
**Ph.D. candidate,  
Department of  
Teaching and  
Learning**

**Advisor: Dr. Linda  
Quinn**



As UNLV reaches the gold status of ranking 130 amongst 4,000 universities in the country, according with Carnegie Classification as R1 for its "very high research activity," I am a proud doctoral candidate participating in this exciting transition into a Top Tier strategic plan. Since the beginning of my doctoral studies, I had the opportunity to develop research in education with my colleagues' clinical studies contributing to better pedagogical approaches in teacher education practices. My interest in research grew as I completed key research courses while working with the department projects involving survey design and analysis. Taking advantage of the free workshops and open house events organized by the GPSA has been an incredible help in increasing my knowledge in research structural development. I definitely want to have a research certificate recorded in my transcripts as an academic achievement.

# CHENGCHENG LI



**Ph.D. student,  
Department of  
Teaching and  
Learning**

**Advisor:  
Dr. Shaoan Zhang**

First-year experience for undergraduate engineering students tends to be the first and also a vital piece in addressing the retention and graduation challenges facing the colleges and universities across the country. Being a major urban university in the southwestern region of the U.S., and ranked the most diverse campus in the country, we take a different approach in delivering the redesigned introductory first-year experience engineering course. The research aims to improve first-year engineering undergraduate's learning experience and their academic success by redesigning the introductory course.

I hope the GCRC program will help accumulate my knowledge in the field, enhance the transferable skills for my career, and provide insight on best research practices.

# CRISTINA HERNANDEZ

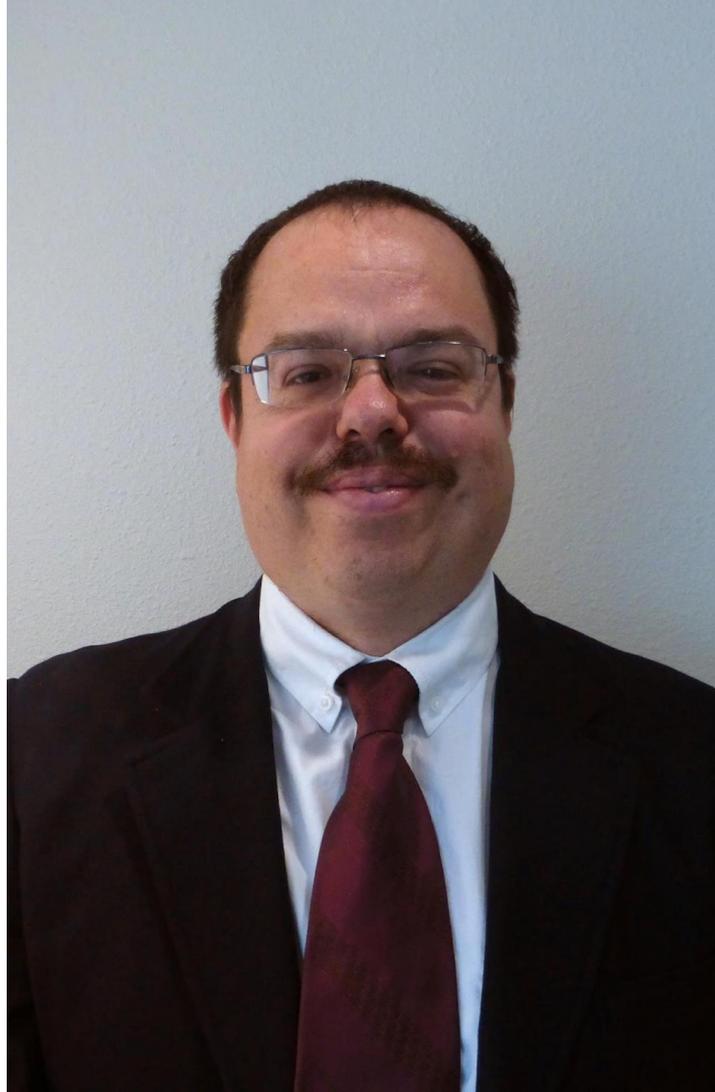


**Master's student,  
Department of  
Environmental and  
Occupational Health**

**Advisor:  
Dr. Marya Shegog**

I am in the Master's in Public Health program and I have been able to acquire valuable skills and learn more in-depth information using a Public Health lens. My area of interest is birth work, particularly how doulas can support birthing persons who have experienced trauma. Maternal and infant mortality research has been ongoing and there is a plethora of information on a national level but none specific to Las Vegas. I am interested in obtaining more knowledge on how to effectively research while using storytelling qualitative methods. Ideally, I'd like to complete mixed method research for my thesis. I believe a certificate in research will help make my skills robust and provide me hands-on experience. Ultimately, this certificate will help me reach my long term goal of creating policies that will support Medicaid paying for doula and midwifery services in the state of Nevada.

**EDWARD FRIESEMA**



**Master's student,  
Department of  
Computer Science**

**Advisor:  
Dr. Ajoy Datta**

I am applying to the Graduate Research Certification Program because I want to improve my skills in formulating, investigating and presenting my research so that it has the maximum impact. I am studying how to apply the latest tools in deep learning and artificial intelligence to solve new problems and grant new capabilities to model and visualize the world around us. My goal is to use virtual reality, vision recognition and language processing to create systems that can answer some of the most difficult question facing researchers today infields ranging from orbital mechanics to quantum chemistry. I am applying to the certificate program to gain a deeper understanding on how thoroughly research and present my ideas so that they can help promote and inspire change in a rapidly evolving field.

# EDMOND DAVIS



**Master's student,  
Couples & Family  
Therapy Program**

**Advisor:  
Dr. Katherine Hertlein**



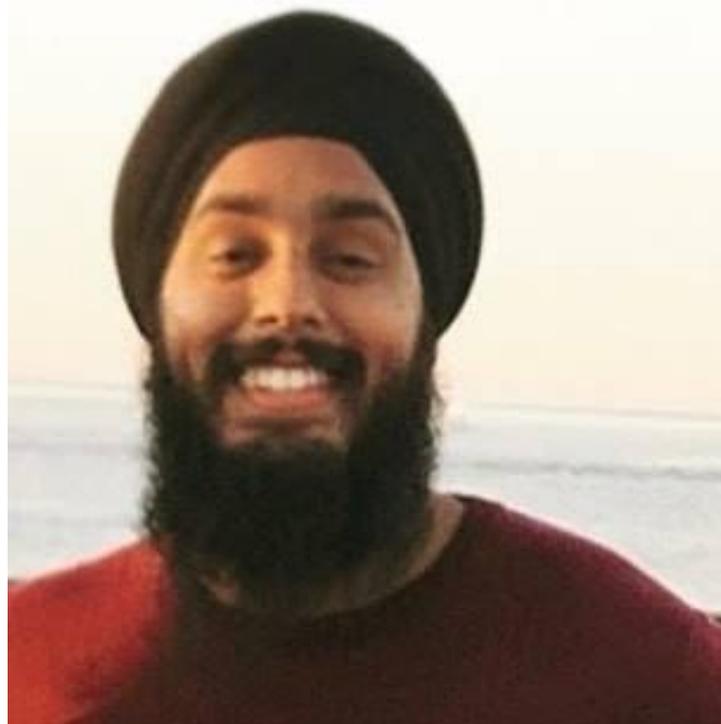
My research is on female orgasmic disorder. It is defined by either marked delay in, marked infrequency of, absence of orgasm or markedly reduced intensity of orgasmic sensations. The DSM-5 classifies female orgasmic disorder as one of several sexual dysfunctions for women. How does a woman orgasm? When does a woman not have the ability to orgasm? When and how is the female orgasm or lack thereof considered a disorder? There too are a number of ways for a woman to experience orgasms, what are those differences? These are some of the questions that I look to discover and answer through the research I will be workshopping with my cohort. The types of skills I wish to obtain through receiving the research certificate is the ability to communicate professionally with my peers and learn how to educate through research on the topics of human sexuality.

**HARJIV SINGH**



**Ph.D. student,  
Department of  
Kinesiology and  
Nutrition Sciences**

**Advisor:  
Dr. Gabriele Wulf**



The flexible and adaptive nature of the human motor system makes it one of the most unique and diversified conglomerates since the onset of our evolution. While much theorizing has been done in the past, most research and application has been geared towards practice conditions that may affect processing of task related information. Yet, what remains to be seen is the underlying role of attention and motivation which influence both motor learning and performance across all disciplines. Currently, I'm investigating how autonomy support, enhanced expectancies, and an external focus of attention affect functional movement variability. Taken together, how can we optimize instruction and feedback? By participating in the GCRC, I will challenge my own perspectives as I engage in various workshops and presentations which will evidently refine my skills to create impactful and applicable research.

# HEATHER GILMORE



My research focuses on school safety and crimes in schools. My current research projects address safety measures used in schools, geographical analysis of school shootings in relationship to local political affiliation, and student reporting of crimes in schools.

With the Research Certification, I will be able to prepare, structure, and conduct my research with more integrity. This will lead to more reliable findings that can benefit the community.



**Ph.D. student,  
Department of  
Criminology &  
Criminal Justice**

**Advisor:  
Dr. Gillian Pinchevsky**

**JACOB WHITE**



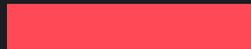
**Ph.D student,  
Department of  
Anthropology**

**Advisor:  
Dr. Daniel Benyshek**



My background includes both experimental immunology, osteology, and genetic research. I am interested in medical anthropology; specifically how human evolutionary health and political-economy interact to impact health outcomes. My research interests include transgenerational immunological shifts that are inherited from maternal mycobacterial infections, and long term health consequences of health during early life. As a biomedical anthropologist, I'm not just interested in the biological mechanisms involved in health outcomes but also how our social environments impact our physiological health and disease ecologies. I am excited to be apart of the GCRC program to learn methods to better manage my data, analyze my data, and to get professional training on how to conduct good research.

# JOHANNA ANDREWS



**Ph.D. student,  
Department of  
Environmental and  
Occupational Health**

**Advisor:  
Dr. Melva Thompson-  
Robinson**



Johanna Andrews is a Ph.D. student in Public Health with a concentration in Social and Behavioral Health, advised by Dr. Melva Thompson-Robinson. Her research focuses on stress and coping in food-insecure African Americans in Southern Nevada. With her research, Ms. Andrews would like to evaluate processes of coping with food insecurity and determine its impact on emotional well-being for African Americans. This population has a unique experience with food insecurity and an examination of their coping processes with this phenomenon will offer profound insight for a culturally relevant and tailored intervention.

Ms. Andrews would like to be in this Research Certificate program because as a future independent researcher in public health, gaining the skills and knowledge to become an effective researcher is essential for her career goals of improving public health and building health equity through evidence-based research one community at a time.

**KAI DE BECKER**



**Master's student,  
Couple & Family  
Therapy Program**

**Advisor:  
Dr. Brandon Eddy**



My goal is to bring new understanding to the significance of video games in the household. If the general consensus is that video games isolate particular family members and hinder bonding, then what if there were games that actually boosted family cohesion. The answer to this question might shift in perspective concerning the pervasive issue of technology addiction and give the general public a critical lens from which to judge, subsequently leading to healthier consumption. I want to be in the GCRC to gain the necessary skills in order to effectively conduct the quantitative study that is necessary for this endeavor.

# KAVITA BATRA

**Ph.D. student,  
Department of  
Environmental and  
Occupational Health**

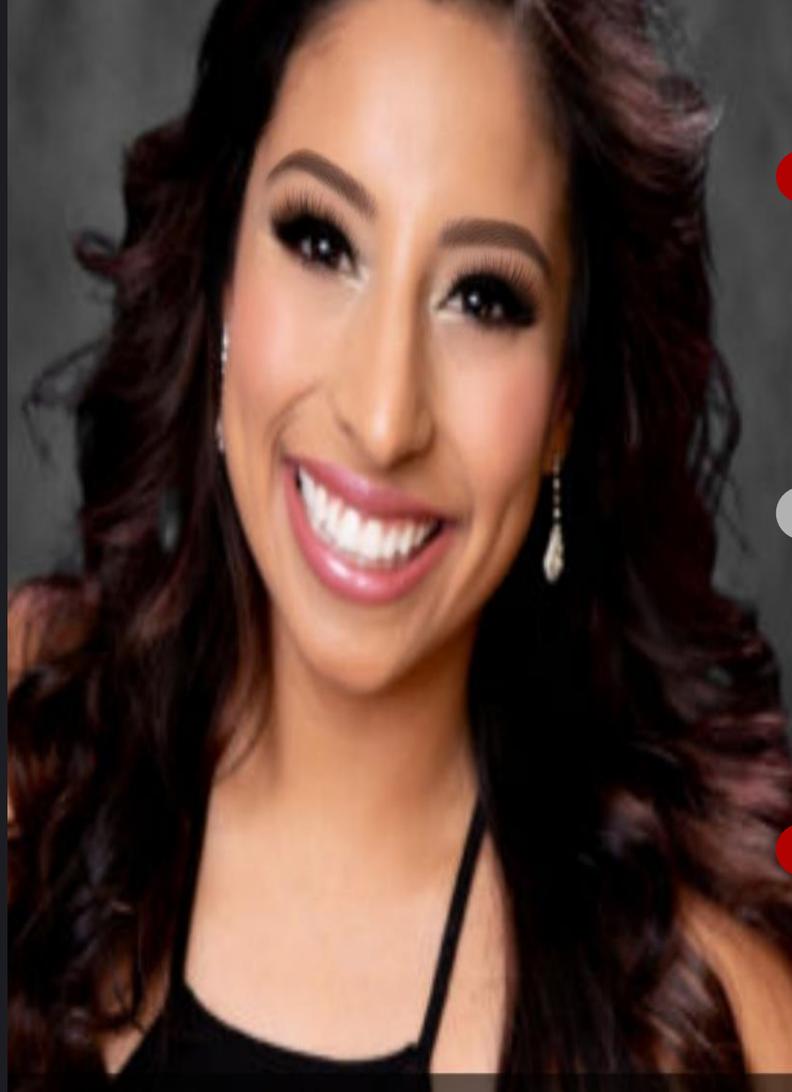
**Advisor:  
Dr. Patricia Cruz**



My research focus is directed towards improving the quality of life of high risk infants. I am particularly interested in determining the health care utilization of drug exposed neonates with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome, NAS. The NAS presents as a group of health conditions in babies experiencing withdrawal from certain drugs such as opioids used during pregnancy.

I am excited to be a part of the Graduate College Research Certificate Program (GCRCP). The GCRC will supply essential skills required to initiate and develop my research protocol to contribute novel knowledge to the field in the form of a dissertation. In addition, with my aim to perform independent research in the future, this certification program will facilitate my learning through research training, workshops, and the opportunity to present findings appropriately to target audiences. Also, I believe the intellectual gain through the GCRC program will be very advantageous for my academic and professional prospects in the field of public health.

**LILI EQUIHUA**



**M.S. student, Couple  
& Family Therapy  
Program**

**Advisor: Dr. Jordan**

I intend to participate in the Graduate College Research Certification so I may become a strong, creditable, and effective researcher. My future ambition for my career is to find and develop an effective and efficient therapy program for veterans in our nation. I hope to gain the knowledge and skills to conduct a proper research from Graduate College Research Certification program. My goal is to find a nationwide therapeutic practice that would be most effective and beneficial for our veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder. I am very passionate about a research and I believe research is the building blocks for any new innovative idea.

# LYNETTE TAUTE



**M.S. student,  
Couple and Family  
Therapy Program**

**Advisor:  
Dr. Sara Jordan**

This program will assist in my professional goal of becoming a licensed Couples & Family Therapist in NV. Through gaining the skills and knowledge necessary to be an effective researcher it will help me in obtaining my career goals. I aspire to help individuals and family members cope with the challenges of life hardships such as learning disabilities, the autism spectrum, and cognitive disabilities. Addictions, anxiety, trauma, depression, stress, PTSD, eating disorders, and grief, people in hospitals and in prisons have changed the lives of not only the client but influenced the entire family. The effects of art and play therapies in these environments had been written about extensively and I hope to gain the scientific knowledge that can be applied in clinical practice.

# MARYAM MOHIEDDIN RAD

PhD student,  
Department of  
Education, Teaching,  
and Learning  
Christine Clark



Maryam's research is focused on Muslim women's problems in education. She is now collecting preliminary data and performing a literature review for her Ph.D. dissertation research. Being a Muslim woman, she hopes her research can contribute to increasing the quality of education for Muslim women in higher educational institutes of the United States by identifying the existing issues and finding possible solutions to mitigate them.

**MICHAEL D. BERTETTO**



**M.S. student, William  
F. Harrah College of  
Hospitality**

This year, I will begin my second year as a master's student in hotel administration after nearly 15 years in Las Vegas' travel and tourism industry where I was part of the teams that helped create and launch some of the destinations most iconic brands. As such, my interests are focused on the development, branding, and evolution of the hospitality business specifically as it relates to integrated resorts and lifestyle hotels. My goal with this program is to better synthesize academic knowledge with the industry's immediate needs and opportunities. Being able to evaluate all relevant information that is timely and practical is key in delivering meaningful information.

# MOHSEN JAHANDARDOOST



**Ph.D. student,  
Department of  
Mechanical  
Engineering**

**Advisor:  
Dr. Shubhra Bansal**



I am working on a DOE-funded project on degradation in thin film solar cells. My interest is in developing new test methods for Potential-induced degradation of CIGS cells and understanding the effect of alkali post-deposition treatment.

On a grand scale, my project aims to find the reason for the efficiency drop in flexible solar cells when they are commercialized and prevent the performance drop caused by potential-induced degradation (PID).

This project is part of a joint group of other researchers in the US and Germany. I hope the GCRC program gives me the required skills to communicate with them more efficiently and represent my team and UNLV in a professional manner.

# NADIA ELDEMERDASH



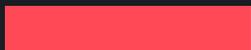
**Ph.D. student,  
Department of  
Political Science**

**Advisor:  
Dr. Michele  
Kuenzi**

My interests are in governance and political organization in the Middle East and the developing world, the causes and consequences of intrastate conflict, and the role of diaspora groups in facilitating both conflict escalation and resolution.

I look forward to gaining a wide range of skills as part of the GCRC Program, as well as meeting and working with a cohort of students dedicated to excellence in research.

# PHILIP DANQUAH



**Ph.D. Candidate,  
Department of  
Environmental and  
Occupational Health**

**Advisor:  
Dr. Melva Thompson-  
Robinson**



I am a doctoral candidate in the Public Health program with concentration in Social Behavioral Health Science. My research focus areas are HIV/AIDS prevention research, liver cancer epidemiology, health disparities, health equities, social epidemiology, and in promoting health and wellness among the human population.

Achieving optimal quality population health and bridging the gap in terms of health disparities are paramount to me as a student from minority background and necessary in shaping all forms of health outcomes. As I aim to complete my doctoral degree, my long-term goal is to be a distinguished researcher and educator in the social behavioral health sciences.

My goal in this research program is to gain indispensable skills that are fundamental to various forms of research processes and in shaping my future as a researcher.

# SAMANTHA THIES



Within communication studies I research interpretive, critical rhetoric. I examine the ways in which our everyday communication constructs meaning in society. In my research, I especially focus on the construction of human trafficking and sex work, as well as social perceptions of sex and gender. I decided to join the GCRC program because I hope to gain exhaustive skills allowing me to better navigate literature basis and other resources that will most help me in my future research.



**M.A. student,  
Department of  
Communication  
Studies**

**Advisor:  
Dr. Jennifer Guthrie**

# SERENA HICKS



**Master's student,  
Department of  
Communication  
Studies**

**Adviser:  
Dr. Donovan Conley**



Serena Hicks earned her B.A in Communication Studies at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She continued her education by going into the Master's Program for the Department of Communication Studies. She attained a graduate assistantship and teaches Com 101: Oral Communication. She is also a Research Assistant (RA) for her Department. Her research interests include algorithmic rhetoric, privacy issues, social media, and how it affects the public sphere. Her goals while participating in the GCRC program is to learn how to be an effective researcher, to be able to successfully initiate, conduct, and conclude research projects when it comes to her own academic work, and to gain knowledge about best research practices.

**TAMARA WYNNE**



My research focuses on the impact of solar panel facilities on native plants in the Mojave Desert. Currently, I am measuring the plant water use efficiency and plant physiology to monitor the effect. We planted the same species of native plants in North Las Vegas at the University's Center for Urban Water Conservation, monitoring plant physiology and water use. We are hoping to demonstrate *Larrea tridentata*, Creosote, and other prominent native plants have an optimum water use efficiency and maximum seed output with different precipitation amounts. I am interested in the program to help hone my skills of research methods and experimental setup as well as statistics and writing.

**Ph.D. student, School  
of Life Sciences**

**Advisor:  
Dr. Dale Devitt**

**TEREZA TREJBALOVÁ**



**Ph.D. student,  
Department of  
Criminal Justice**

**Advisor:  
Dr. Emily J. Salisbury**

Tereza Trejbalová is a fifth-year Ph.D. student of Criminology and Criminal Justice at University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She obtained her Master's Degree in Political Science from University of Nevada, Reno.

Her research interests include the death penalty in the US, Africa, and Asia, male victimization and trauma, women in corrections, and human rights. Upon graduation, she hopes to pursue a career in academia.

She would like to further expand upon her research skills, especially in regard to statistics, in order to make her more competitive on the job market, which she plans to enter in 2021.