



MARCH NEWSLETTER 2021

Issue 5

MACALESTER GEOGRAPHY

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Upcoming Dates!

- ★ Lecture with **Kafui Attoh '06**, Assistant Professor at City University of New York, CUNY School of Professional Studies on **“Public Transportation and the Right to the City”**
 - Wednesday, March 24th (4:45 pm - 5:45 pm) – [Zoom Request](#)
- ★ **Honors Information Session**
 - Thursday, March 25th (5:00 - 5:45 pm)
- ★ **Prospective Geography Majors Information Panel**
 - Tuesday, March 30th (11:30 am - 12:30 pm)
- ★ Lecture with **Robert T. Walker**, Professor at University of Florida on **“Avoiding Amazonian Catastrophes in the 21st Century”** (p.6)
 - Monday, April 5th (4:45 pm - 5:45 pm) – [Zoom Request](#)
- ★ **Geography Honors Day**
 - Wednesday, April 14th (time TBD)
- ★ **Geography Spring Social**
 - Tuesday, April 20th (5:15 pm)
- ★ **Midwest Undergraduate Geography Symposium (MUGS)**
 - Saturday, April 24th (10:00 am - 2:00 pm)
 - Registration Deadline: Friday, April 2nd

A letter from your GTU co-presidents:

Hello Mac geographers!

Thank you for engaging with this edition of our department newsletter! Read more to learn about the recently concluded Medical Geography capstone projects, MUGS presentation opportunities, exciting department announcements, upcoming speakers for our lecture series, and more. Of particular importance this month, we are also happy to welcome 22 new members to Macalester’s GTU chapter! Taking this exciting step to become more involved in our department and the discipline as whole are three seniors, twelve juniors, and five sophomores. We look forward to all that these majors/minors will bring to our community in the years to come! As always please reach out to us with questions, concerns, and ideas!

With love,
Anisha and Jim
GTU Co-Presidents

arajbhan@macalester.edu; jsmith17@macalester.edu

Department Opportunities!



Intro GIS Fall 2021 Waitlist is Open!

You can find the Intro GIS Fall 2021 Waitlist on the Geography Department website, at the bottom under “Links for Current Students”! Or you can access it [here](#).

Permission is based on a first-come basis. While we prioritize Geography Majors, they do actually have to be on the list.

GIS Lab Assistant Position Openings for the 21-22 Academic Year:

GIS Lab Instructor Ashley Nepp is looking for students interested in being Lab Assistants for the 21-22 academic year. The only requirement is that you have taken Intro GIS; experience with any platform (ArcGIS Online, ArcGIS Pro or ArcGIS Desktop) is fine, you will receive training and support to refresh your skills.

The posting on JobX is live, apply for "GIS Lab Assistant - Tier 2." Hiring priority is given to students with a work-study award, but all are encouraged to apply. Link to job posting can be found [here](#).

Honors Information Session:

Hey everyone! Do you have a cool idea for a senior project? Have you heard of an honors thesis? Do you want to write one in your senior year? Come meet with the current Geography honors students!

The honors cohort is hosting an informational session on **March 25th at 5 pm**. This session is meant to introduce interested students to the honors projects and process. We'll talk about our projects and answer any questions you have about researching for and writing an honors project. First years, sophomores, and juniors are welcome. [Register for Zoom link](#)

Hope to see you there!

-Finn Odum '21

HONORS INFO SESSION

**Come learn from current
Geography seniors about
their projects and the honors
process!**

Featuring: Aubrey Hagen, Anisha RajBhandary, Jane Servin,
and Finn Odum

Thursday March 25th 5-5:45 pm

Department Announcements!

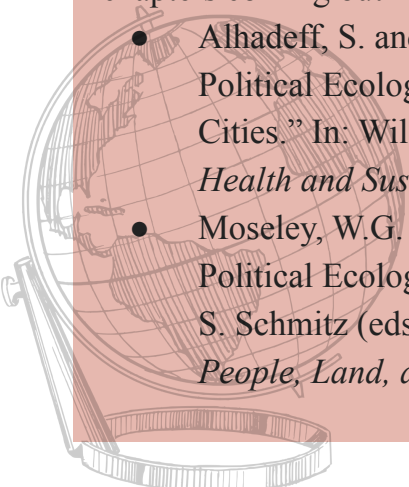
The Geography Department is delighted to announce that [Dr. Xavier Haro-Carrión](#), our Berg Postdoctoral Fellow, has accepted an offer to become our newest tenure track faculty member beginning AY 2021-2022. Dr. Haro-Carrión is a land change scientist with expertise in Remote Sensing and biodiversity conservation, and a geographic focus in Ecuador and South America. He uses Remote Sensing methodology to study patterns of land and vegetation change at different geographic and temporal scales, with the ultimate goal of improving our understanding of land change processes and their consequences so that we can better inhabit our planet.

Images: (1) Xavier is pictured here at his home hosting his Mac FA 2019 remote sensing class. (2) FA 2019 remote sensing class out in the field at Macalester's Katharine Ordway Natural History Study Area.



Kudos to recent geography alums **Sophia Alhadeff '20** and **Eliza Pessereau '19** who have chapters coming out in forthcoming edited volumes:

- Alhadeff, S. and W.G. Moseley (forthcoming). "Canvas Totes and Plastic Bags: The Political Ecology of Food Assistance Effectiveness at Farmers' Markets in the Twin Cities." In: Williams, A. and I. Luginaah (eds). *Gender Matters Globally: Geography, Health and Sustainability*. London: Routledge.
- Moseley, W.G. and E. Pessereau. (forthcoming). "Mother's Little Helper: A Feminist Political Ecology of West Africa's Herbicide Revolution." In: Barcus, H.R., R. Jones and S. Schmitz (eds). *Rural Transformations: Globalization and its Implications for Rural People, Land, and Economies*. London Taylor & Francis Group.



Dr. Xavier Haro-Carrión has a new open access publication that can be found here:

- Haro-Carrión, X., B. Loiselle & F.E. Putz. 2021. Tree species diversity, composition and aboveground biomass across dry forest land-cover types in coastal Ecuador. *Tropical Conservation Science*, 13, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1940082921995415>

Better late than never! This publication derives from my M.Sc., that ironically I was able to revisit "thanks to pandemic". It examines tree diversity conservation along a gradient of land-cover types, from natural forests to managed pasturelands, in a highly fragmented landscape. It might be a good reading for students interested in the intersection of land change science / geography and ecology / biodiversity conservation. -Xavier

What is MUGS?

The

Midwest Undergraduate Geography Symposium

is an annual conference that brings together dozens of undergraduate geography programs from all over the Midwest. The focus of the event is student scholarship, and **students of all class years are encouraged to present** papers, research, and other work.

Sign up now!

Present during one of the **Paper Sessions** or **Lightning Sessions**. All of us have done work this year (though past years' work is encouraged as well) that qualifies to do one or the other! *What's the difference?*

Lightning Session:

- 5 minute presentation
- 20 minutes of panel discussion (with seven other presenters)
- Better for **term papers (any level class!) and shorter GIS projects.**

Paper Session:

- 15 minute presentation
- 5 minutes of questions
- Better for **capstones, honors work, and longer research papers**

See the flyer on page 5 for more info!!

MUGS 2021

MIDWEST
UNDERGRADUATE
GEOGRAPHY
SYMPOSIUM

APRIL
24

10 AM - 2:00 PM

MUGS, hosted annually by a rotation of Geography programs in the Midwest, provides an opportunity for undergraduates to present their research at a formal Geography symposium.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

<https://tinyurl.com/mac-mugs/>

All MUGS 2021 sessions will run virtually via the Zoom platform



Hosted by

MACALESTER COLLEGE GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT
Saint Paul, Minnesota USA

44.938951, -93.169306

Upcoming Geography Speakers

Kafui Attoh '06, Assistant Professor

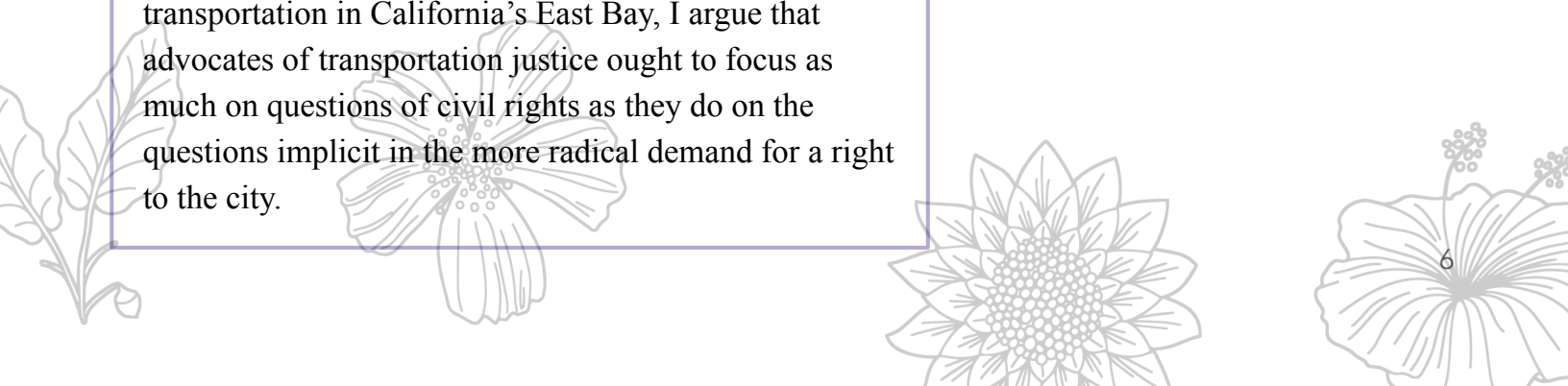
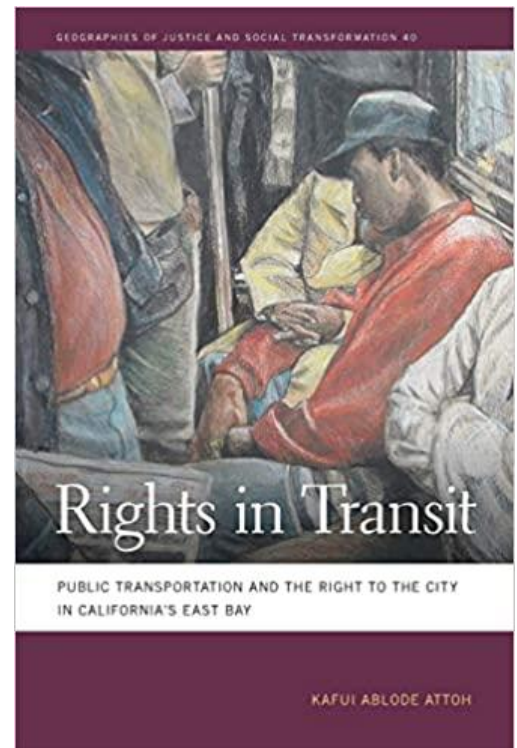
City University of New York, CUNY
School of Professional Studies

Public Transportation and the Right to the City

March 24, 2021 (4:45 pm – 5:45 pm) –
[Zoom link request](#)



Is public transportation a right? Should it be? For those reliant on public transit, the answer is invariably “yes” to both. When city officials propose slashing service or raising fares, it is these riders who are often the first to demand their “right” to keep their bus. In this presentation, I start from the presumption that such riders are justified. For those who lack other means of mobility, transit is a lifeline. It offers access to many of the entitlements we take as essential: food, employment, and democratic public life itself. While accepting transit as a right, the goal of the presentation will be to suggest that there remains a desperate need to think critically, both about what is meant by a right and about the types of rights at issue when public transportation is threatened. Drawing on a detailed case study of the various struggles that have come to define public transportation in California’s East Bay, I argue that advocates of transportation justice ought to focus as much on questions of civil rights as they do on the questions implicit in the more radical demand for a right to the city.



Robert T. Walker, Professor

Department of Latin American Studies &
Department of Geography, University of Florida

Avoiding Amazonian Catastrophes in the 21st Century

April 5, 2021 (4:45 pm – 5:45 pm) – [Zoom link
request](#)



A new threat now confronts the Amazon Forest in the form of a massive infrastructure program, the Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America, or IIRSA. This presentation details the results of a projection analysis showing that IIRSA could push the Amazonian forest past a “tipping point,” replacing it with tropical savanna, or some form of degraded, secondary vegetation. In addition to the threat of infrastructure, recent research on regional climate change in the Basin suggests that a tipping point could be reached before the end of the century, even without a new wave of deforestation. Such a catastrophe would precipitate significant environmental impacts, with reductions in biodiversity and carbon sequestration potential. It would also endanger the water security of millions of people throughout the South American continent, dependent on moisture transport from the Amazon Basin for agriculture and consumptive use.

Environmental policy in Brazil reduced deforestation at the turn of the millennium, raising hopes that the Amazonian Forest had been conserved at last. However, eroding environmental governance throughout the Basin and difficulties in implementing global action on mitigating greenhouse gas emissions have once again raised the specter of an environmental catastrophe in the form of a tipping point transgression. Very little now stands in the way of rapid development of the Basin except for Amazonia’s indigenous peoples, who are willing to defend their territories in the face of powerful forces that would otherwise appropriate them. At the moment, the Munduruku People of the Tapajós River Valley have managed to protect their territorial environments despite the Brazilian government’s strong desire to dam the river and channelize it, turning one of the world’s most spectacular rivers into the “Mississippi of Brazil.”

Spring 2021 Capstone Feature!

Students from the Spring 2021 GEOG 475 Medical Geography Seminar presented their individual research projects on issues in Medical Geography during the last week of Module 3. Below each student introduces their project.

An introduction from the course professor, Eric Carter:

“This amazing group of talented students channeled a wide range of interests -- risk, health equity, environmental justice, nutrition, indigenous health practices, human rights, the history of the senses -- into intellectually ambitious capstone papers. They adjusted well to the pace of the module system to take deep dives into the research process, not only engaging in stimulating scholarly conversations, but also contributing their insights to them. I appreciate all their hard work and willingness to support one another through the last two months.”



Annabel Gregg, she/her, '22
Geography Major; Statistics Minor;
Community and Global Health
Concentration

Symptoms of Closure: Diagnosing Rural Obstetric Units in Decline

My project seeks to identify symptoms in rural communities that are associated with an increased risk of hospital-based obstetric care loss. I have long been passionate about maternal and infant health and this project is the culmination of much of my research at Mac but is also part one of my honors project.



Elika Somani, she/her, '22
Global Health and International
Development Major; Political Science
Minor; Pre-Med Track

The Costs of Education: COVID-19 and School Re-Opening Decisions in Minnesota

My capstone is a prelude to my honours project. In Minnesota, despite a generally similar statewide epidemiological burden of COVID-19, school teaching modality during the past year of the pandemic has varied dramatically. My research is centered on understanding what factors (a county's political affiliations, COVID-19 burden, internet access, etc) are most significant to a county's K-12 school reopening decision in Minnesota. The capstone serves as an opportunity to develop my research proposal and methodology. I will begin conducting my research and collecting the data in Mod 4.



Jane Servin, she/her, '21
Geography Major; French Minor;
Community and Global Health
Concentration

Wild and semi-wild plant consumption and nutrition among women farmers in Southwestern Burkina Faso

My capstone project focuses on one of three research questions in my honors thesis. Using data from ongoing research by Bill Moseley and his team, I study the relationship between dietary diversity and wild plant consumption. My results suggest that wild foods are important for getting fruits and vegetables into the diet, and for creating dietary diversity. With these findings, I argue that wild and semi-wild foods should not be overlooked in projects for improving nutrition and agricultural productivity.



Grace Armon, she/her, '22

Geography Major; Urban Studies & Community and Global Health Concentrations

Polluted Parishes: Narrating Illness and Industry in Louisiana's Petrochemical Corridor

My project is an historical narrative about Louisiana's petrochemical corridor, or "Cancer Alley." This region is the stretch of the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans that is mostly populated by rural Black communities and is home to over 130 petrochemical plants. The proximity to industry and obscene amounts of pollution have been blamed for poor health in the region, yet Louisiana law continues to make it easy for industry to locate there. I'm looking into (in no particular order) health perceptions in the region, how studies differ between residents and researchers, issues with cancer data aggregation, and collusion between the state government and industry.



Riley Hinklin, she/her, '22

International Studies and Geography Majors

Slowing the Spread: Appropriate Travel Restrictions as a Response to Disease

Should countries implement travel restrictions to protect themselves from disease outbreaks? Short answer: maybe. Longer answer: if travel restrictions are implemented in a way that is effective, legal, and ethical, they can be an appropriate way to slow the arrival of a disease. Longest answer: you'll have to read my capstone paper!



Nora Fried, she/her, '22
Geography & Geology Majors

Vaccine Skepticism: Evaluating Theories of Risk and the Covid-19 Pandemic

My capstone project explores the relationship between Covid-19 Vaccine Skepticism and social theories of risk to answer the question: Why are so many people skeptical about the COVID-19 vaccine? I was super curious about this question, my project explores a variety of explanations rooted in a deep history of interdisciplinary social science research.



Emma Ziegler, she/her, '22
Geography Major; Chemistry Minor;
Community and Global Health
Concentration

Improving Maternal Health Outcomes in Indigenous Communities Through the Incorporation of Indigenous Practices

My capstone explores midwifery as a solution to poor maternal health outcomes for Indigenous people. I found that in Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, midwifery that incorporated traditional practices improves health outcomes and reduces stress for the patient and child. Ultimately, I propose a way that the United States can move towards returning birth to Indigenous communities and incorporating Indigenous practices in childbirth via midwifery.



Anna Kleven, she/her, '21
Geography Major; Community and
Global Health Concentration

Science versus maternal instinct: theorizing the anti-touch turn in parenting advice in the Progressive Era

Covid lockdown have made social touch risky. I wondered whether past pandemics had anything to do with why the U.S. was relatively socially distanced even before Covid. After narrowing my research onto parenting advice on touch, I noticed that the anti-touch trend in parenting advice between 1880-1930 parallels with the popularization of germ theory. However, I propose that it was not fear of contagion that inspired caution about physical contact, but instead the medicalization of motherhood, which antagonized the maternal "instinct", so closely linked to touch. I argue that concepts from sensory history can help theorize how germ theory and Scientism in the progressive era are responsible for the low-touch trend, even though the recommendations themselves were not based on scientific findings.

Geography Tea Time March 11th 2021



Thanks to all the students and faculty who joined us for the last Geography Tea Time!

Geography Department Patch

Thanks to Laura Kigin, the Geography Department has a new patch featuring Macalester's very memorable coordinates!

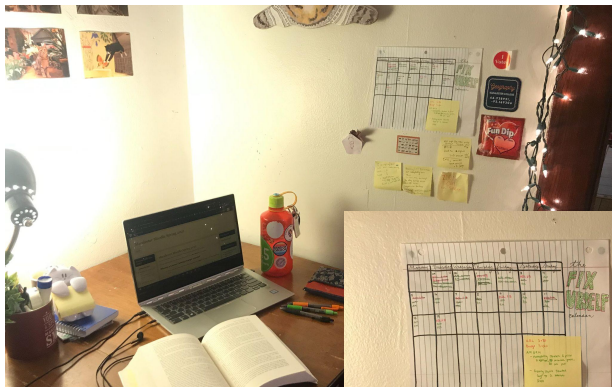
*Note: If you are a Geography major who did not receive a patch, please email kigin@macalester.edu with your current mailing address requesting one!



Laura Kigin's aesthetic bulletin board!



"Felt appropriate to put my patch next to my fav map!" - Becca Gallandt '22

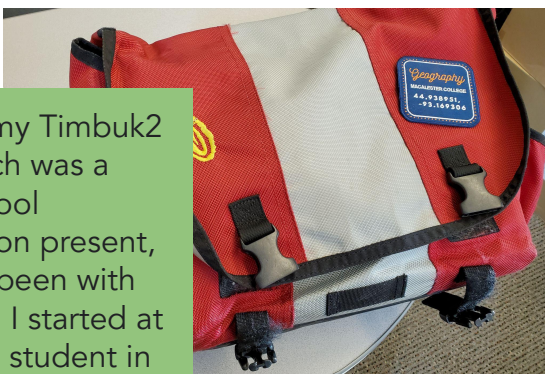


"The patch keeps me company at my workspace during the long Zoom days." - Eva Birkholz '22

"I don't have any clothes to pin this on, so I keep it on my desk calendar so that Mac Geography is always a part of my schedule!" - Finn Odum '21



"It's on my Timbuk2 bag which was a high school graduation present, and has been with me since I started at Mac as a student in 2004!" - Ashley Nepp '08



"I sewed my patch on this backpack to combine my love for two great communities on campus: the golf team and the Geography Department!" - Jim Smith '21

