New Faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences for FY 16

**Department of Biological Sciences & Natural Science Research Laboratory**

*Dr. Caleb Phillips, Assistant Professor and Curator of Genetic Resources Collection NSRL:* Through Dr. Phillips’ work in evolutionary genomics, his research characterizes changes in gene structure and gene expression inferred to promote success across ecological radiations. This work is geared toward understanding mechanisms of gene recruitment and alternative splicing. His lab also studies the evolution of metagenomes and how changes in microbiome communities and their functional capacities have evolved to support host adaptation. The uniting theme of Dr. Phillips’ work is the leverage of unique attributes of natural systems to relate genomic and functional change. Caleb received his PhD from Purdue in Genetics in 2009. Prior to coming to TTU Dr. Phillips was a Principal Scientist at Research and Testing Laboratory, Lubbock, Texas. (Start Date: September 1, 2015)


**Department of Classical and Modern Languages and Literatures**

*Dr. Caroline Bishop, Assistant Professor:* Dr. Bishop has particular interests in Greek and Roman intellectual history, Cicero and the literature of the late Roman Republic, Latin prose, and the ancient and modern classical tradition. Much of her work focuses on questions of reading and interpretation in antiquity, and the way that ancient intellectual culture intersected with the literary tradition. Dr. Bishop received her PhD in Classical Studies from the University of Pennsylvania in 2011. Before joining TTU she was a visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Classical Studies at Indiana University. (Start Date: September 1, 2015).

Recent Scholarship: Bishop, C. 2015. Naming the Roman Starts: Constellation Etmologies in Cicero’s *Aratea* and *De Natura Deorum*. Under final review.

*Dr. Andrea Jonsson, Assistant Professor:* Dr. Jonsson’s research on French Slam poetry and Contemporary theatre analyzes the play between textuality and orality through the lens of Performance and Affect Studies. Her research has served as a framework for how to treat text as a performance, and how the link between affect and performance serves as a community builder in marginal populations. Andrea received her PhD in French in 2014 from the University of Pittsburgh where she specialized in 20th and 21st-Century French literature and culture.


**Department of Economics**

*Dr. Jan Duras, Assistant Professor:* Dr. Duras’ research interests are in the areas of labor economics and macroeconomics, with a focus on the effects of business cycles on labor market outcomes, and the identification of driving forces behind the fluctuations in unemployment and...
hours worked. Dr. Duras received his PhD from the Department of Economics, University of Minnesota in 2014. Before coming to TTU, Jan was a Visiting Assistant Professor at the Penn State University.

**Recent Scholarship:** Drus, J. Amplification of Shocks in a Model with Labor and Goods Market Search.

---

**Department of English**

**Dr. Daniel de Paula Valentim Hutchins, Assistant Professor:** Dr. Hutchins specializes in the literature and culture of the early Atlantic World. His teaching and research program draws from colonial literatures in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese; United States literature and culture to 1865; literary theory; Border Studies; Brazilian literature; and contemporary speculative fiction. Prior to coming to TTU Dr. Hutchins was a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of English at North Dakota State University. (Start Date: September 1, 2015)

**Recent Scholarship:** ‘Y el Cielo Como Bandera’: Tropicália and the Question of Brazilian Exceptionalism in the New Latin American Diaspora,” in Expanding Latinidad: Other Latinos. Edited by Luz Kirschner. LIT Verlag.

**Dr. Wyatt D. Phillips, Assistant Professor of Film and Media Studies.** Dr. Phillips’s scholarship focuses, more broadly, on the political economic histories of film and media and includes work in ecocritical studies, transnational genre flows, the late-nineteenth/early-twentieth century media landscape, copyright law, the diffusion of color television, and the development of the drive-in movie theater. His work in this area provides a critical historical component to the burgeoning field of media industry studies. Dr. Phillips comes to Texas Tech from New York University’s Department of Cinema Studies, where he completed his dissertation on the industrial history of American film genre production and distribution in 2013. Wyatt was a Visiting Assistant Professor here at Texas Tech last year. (Start Date: September 1, 2015).


---

**Department of Environmental Toxicology and The Institute of Environmental and Human Health**

**Dr. Degeng Wang, Associate Professor:** Dr. Wang studies the signaling and the gene expression regulation events during cellular responses to environmental factors as well as their aberrancy in human diseases, especially in cancers. Dr. Wang also has a long-standing interest in genomic evolution studies. His research uniquely combines statistical, computational and experimental biological analysis, enabling systematic genomic and proteomic investigation. Prior to coming to Texas Tech, Dr. Wang was an Associate Professor at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and spent a year visiting the University of Houston. (Start Date: September 1, 2015)

Department of History

Dr. Catharine Franklin, Assistant Professor: Dr. Franklin specializes in the history of the nineteenth-century United States Army, with an emphasis on indigenous peoples and the American West in the post-Civil War era. Her research address issues in nineteenth-century American history, military history, indigenous history, and the history of the American West and borderlands. Future research interests include a comparative study of the United States Army and the Northwest Mounted Police and the American West in film. Dr. Franklin earned a Ph.D in History at the University of Oklahoma (2010). She has received fellowships from the United States Army Center of Military History, the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, the Newberry Library in Chicago, and most recently a long-term fellowship from the Huntington Library. (Start Date: September 1, 2015)

Recent Scholarship: Franklin, C. “To Raid or Starve: Kiowa Indians and Federal Authority in Indian Territory and Texas, 1868 – 1872.” Under consideration at Southwest Historical Quarterly.

Dr. Sarah Keys, Assistant Professor: Dr. Keyes specializes in the history of the U.S. West with a focus on intercultural interactions between Native and Euro-Americans. Her current work explores these interactions along the overland trails to Oregon and California in the mid-nineteenth century. The working title of her book manuscript (based on her doctoral dissertation) is, "Foreign Burials in a Native Place: The Longue Durée of the Overland Trail." Her research has been supported by a number of institutions including the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), The Newberry and Huntington Libraries, the Mellon Foundation, and the American Antiquarian Society. Dr. Keyes is the 2008 recipient of the Organization of American Historian's Louis Pelzer Memorial Award which recognizes the best graduate student essay in American history. (Start Date: September 1, 2015)


Dr. Patrick Scharfe, Assistant Professor: Dr. Scharfe specializes in the history of the nineteenth-century Middle East, with an emphasis on Egypt and the Ottoman world. His recent doctoral dissertation “The Islamic Politics of Ottoman Reform: Muslim Scholars and the Public Sphere in Mehmed Ali Pasha’s Egypt, 1801-1848” examined the role played by Muslim scholars in shaping Ottoman Egypt’s political debates during early nineteenth century, a period of major upheaval and change. This study argues that the heightened significance of Egyptian public opinion in this period was an expression of an indigenous modernity, which had developed in the Ottoman context. Patrick received his PhD in 2015 in Islamic History from Ohio State University. (Start Date: September 1, 2015)


Department of Mathematics and Statistics

Dr. Angela Peace, Assistant Professor: Dr. Peace’s research in Mathematical Biology provides quantitative and qualitative improvements in the predictive power of theoretical and computational population ecology. She uses dynamical systems theory and tools to develop,
analyze, and interpret mathematical models of biological systems, spanning the fields of ecology, toxicology, and epidemiology. She has done work on investigating population dynamics and nutrient cycling across trophic levels, as well as, investigating the spread of infectious diseases and vector-host interactions in disease transmission. Dr. Peace received her PhD from the School of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences, Arizona State University in 2014. Prior to coming to TTU, she was a postdoctoral fellow at the National Institute of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences. (Start Date: September 1, 2015)


**Dr. Fangyuan Zhang, Assistant Professor:** Dr. Zhang's research focuses on statistical genetics, including developing parametric and nonparametric statistical methods to detect genomic imprinting and maternal effects under different study designs, and testing for association in a heterogeneous sample and its application to tumor clustering. Dr. Zhang received her Ph.D. in Biostatistics from the Department of Statistics at The Ohio State University in May 2015. (Start Date: September 1, 2015.)


**Department of Physics**

**Dr. Sharad Gupta, Assistant Professor:** Dr. Gupta’s research is focused on developing approaches to directly target cancer with nanoparticles, development of optical techniques for cancer detection and to build optical tweezers for studying cellular interactions. His work with nano-etched silicon wells will be useful for providing a platform for exploring virus-cell interactions. Dr. Gupta received his PhD in Physics in 2006 from I.I.T. in Kanpur, India. Before joining TTU he was an Assistant Project Scientist in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, at UC Riverside.


**Department of Political Science**

**Dr. Nathaniel Wright, Assistant Professor:** Dr. Wright’s research is in the areas Nonprofit management and the role that social advocacy nonprofits play in creating sustainable neighborhoods. His research specifically addresses how internal management practices and environmental conditions influence nonprofit performance and organizational capacity. Nathan received his PhD in Public Administration from the University of Kansas in 2014. Dr. Wright was a Visiting Assistant Professor at TTU before joining the faculty. (State Date: September 1, 2015.)

Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work

Dr. Debra Lavender-Bratcher, Assistant Professor: Dr. Lavender-Bratcher’s research is at the intersection of culture and racial identification. She collaborates with social workers and psychologists who are interested in understanding the development of racial identification by persons of mixed racial identity, especially those who have continually experienced exposure to microaggressions. In particular, she is interested in investigating the impact of tribal rejection of certain claims to tribal membership by Native Americans who are also descendants of the Freedmen’s population in Northeastern Oklahoma. Her scholarship provides evidence-based research that addresses the impact of rejection and questions of social justice. Dr. Lavender-Bratcher received her PhD from Capella University in 2013 in Human Services. Before joining Texas Tech she was an Associate Professor at Wayland Baptist University in Anchorage, AK and at Wayland Baptist University in Plainview TX. She is a licensed Clinical Social Worker in Texas, Alaska and Colorado. (Start Date: September 1, 2015).


Dr. Anna Novotny, Assistant Professor: Dr. Novotny’s research focuses upon the intersection of social complexity and leadership among commoners in complex societies as expressed through mortuary ritual. Her research interests include bioarchaeology, human osteology, biogeochemistry, biodistance, materialization of worldviews, and mortuary ritual in ancient and modern Mesoamerica and North America. Dr. Novotny received her PhD from the School of Human Evolution and Social Change at Arizona State University in 2015. (Start Date: September 1, 2015).


Institute for Forensic Science

Dr. Paola A. Prada, Research Assistant Professor: Dr. Prada’s research interests include the evaluation of human odor volatiles and the scientific development of forensic odorology, the science of linking and identifying human odors in criminalistics methods. She has worked with both national and international police/government agencies to help develop better collection, instrumental, and training techniques in various areas of odor detection, recently working in the area of humanitarian demining in Colombia. Dr. Prada received her Ph.D. in Chemistry with a forensic science concentration from Florida International University in 2010. She was awarded the 2010 Intelligence Community (IC) Postdoctoral Research Fellowship funded by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. Her postdoctoral studies have united interdisciplinary areas such as chemistry, animal behavior and national security to address issues critical to effective intelligence and defense capabilities. (Start Date: September 1, 2015)


Dr. Megan A. Thoen, Research Assistant Professor: Dr. Thoen’s research is multidisciplinary, including aspects of psychology, law, and criminal justice. Her research interests include the study of disenfranchised groups (e.g., minority races and cultures, severely mentally ill) and their
treatment within the criminal justice system (including case proceedings and case outcomes), the mental health and wellness of law enforcement members (e.g., police officers, correctional officers), and the management and care for the incarcerated mentally ill (particularly pre-trial incarceration). Additionally, Dr. Thoen is a licensed psychologist and completes court-ordered forensic mental health assessments for Lubbock County and the surrounding West Texas area as part of her role at the Institute for Forensic Science. Dr. Thoen received her PhD from the Department of Psychological Sciences (formerly the Department of Psychology) of Texas Tech University in 2013, and just completed a year as a post-doctoral research associate at the TTU Institute for Forensic Science. Prior to her return to TTU she was the mental health manager at the Lubbock County Detention Center. (Start Date: September 1, 2015)