



NextGenPop
Next Generation of Scholars in Population Research

NEXTGENPOP @ University of California, Irvine | June 22 – July 3, 2025

2025 NGP FELLOW BIOGRAPHIES



Simon Aizenstein (he/him)

Simon is a rising senior, studying sociology with a concentration in analysis and research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is fascinated by urban sociology, with specific interests related to housing affordability, homelessness, and carceral institutions. Simon plans to pursue a PhD in sociology to study these topics further.



Rose Sakura Anderson (she/her)

Rose is a rising 4th year at the University of California, Los Angeles, pursuing a degree in public health, with a minor in musicology. She is interested in understanding population health trends, especially in sustainable global health, women's health, and infectious diseases. She hopes to pursue a career as a physician, working at the intersection of clinical care and public health.



Cathy Dang (she/her)

Cathy is a recent graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she earned a degree in Psychology and Sociology with a minor in Neuroscience. Her interests broadly lie in understanding mental health disparities among marginalized groups with a specific focus on the impact of systemic factors and stigma on mental health outcomes. While this is her primary interest, she remains open to exploring other health-related topics. Following graduation, she intends to take a gap year before pursuing a PhD in Sociology to explore her research interests.

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/catdng/>



Joshua Dellacruz (he/him)

Joshua graduated in May 2025 with a Bachelor's degree in History and Sociology from the University at Albany (SUNY Albany). He completed an honors thesis on the racialization of the anti-communist Peekskill Riots of 1949, which laid the foundation for his current research interests. This fall, he'll begin a Ph.D. program in Sociology. His research focuses on the sociohistorical analysis of race, ethnicity, and political repression. Joshua is passionate about public scholarship and committed to uncovering and sharing suppressed histories through teaching, research, and engagement with public policy.



Calvin Franke (he/him)

Calvin Franke is a rising senior at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, pursuing a double major in Political Science and Statistics. His academic interests lie at the intersection of neurodivergence and politics, focusing on how neurodivergent individuals experience political inequalities and how their voices can be more effectively represented. Calvin's career aspirations include earning a PhD in Political Science and advocating for the political needs of the neurodivergent community at both national and local levels, ensuring their concerns are addressed and prioritized in policymaking.



Michael Garza (he/him)

Michael Garza is a recent graduate of The Pennsylvania State University, with majors in Sociology and Criminology, with minors in Human Development and Family Studies and Latino/a Studies. Michael's academic interests center on educational inequities, the role of social and cultural capital, and persistent racial and ethnic disparities affecting low-income populations. Motivated by both personal experience and scholarly inquiry, he aspires to pursue a Ph.D. in Sociology. Through future research and policy advocacy, Michael hopes to contribute to transformative social change by developing and promoting equitable opportunities for historically disenfranchised groups.



Gino Gonzalez (he/they)

Gino Gonzalez is a senior at Grand Valley State University, majoring in Sociology with a double minor in Communication and Public Advocacy and Human Rights. Gino's academic focus is on addressing economic inequality by examining societal narratives, institutional structures, and systemic disparities. After graduation, Gino plans to pursue a PhD in Sociology to contribute to research and advocacy efforts aimed at dismantling economic structural inequality.



Noor Hamed (she/her)

Noor Hamed is a rising senior at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she is majoring in Legal Studies & Sociology, with certificates in Middle Eastern Studies and Criminal Justice. She is interested in researching the Middle Eastern & North African population, specifically regarding immigration patterns. Noor hopes to combine her passion for research and law by pursuing a higher-level education where her work can make a difference in immigrants' lives.



Zoe McKillip (they/them)

Zoe is a rising senior at St.Catherine University, double majoring in Economics and Philosophy. Their research interests include housing and the criminalization of homelessness, as well as gender inequalities. Zoe plans to attend graduate school for and obtain their master's in Economics.



Sarah Neal (she/her)

Sarah Neal is currently a sophomore at Florida State University majoring in Environment and Society. Her current interests are climate change and environmental issues affected by population. She is looking forward to broadening her understanding of demography and researching new interests such as maternal health. Sarah plans on pursuing a masters in demography and population studies after her undergraduate.



Yessica Ornelas (she/her)

Yessica Ornelas is a graduating senior at the University of California, Irvine, double majoring in Business Administration and Criminology, Law, and Society. Her interests focus on immigration policy, civic engagement, and how local governments can build equity through data and trust. She conducted her honors thesis research on the impact of anti-immigration laws on birth outcomes in Latina women and leads civic programming in her hometown to make public institutions more accessible and rooted in community needs. After graduation, Yessica will pursue a Master of Public Policy at the University of Southern California (USC) to design community-informed policies and pursue a career in local or state government, where she hopes to expand civic power and rebuild trust in public institutions.

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Stephanie Pacheco (she/her)

Stephanie Pacheco is a rising junior at Loyola Marymount University, double majoring in sociology and psychology. Stephanie's current research interests involve studying how demographic trends and social constructions produce racial and ethnic inequities. Stephanie's career goal is to be a social science researcher who collects demographic data to uncover racial disparities and investigate population trends.



Nayeli Quiles (she/her)

Nayeli Quiles is a rising Senior at Boston University studying Political Science and Sociology. She is passionate about the intersection of policy and enhancing access to critical resources such as healthcare, civic knowledge, and social services for marginalized communities. After graduation, she hopes to pursue a joint Master's in Public Policy and JD certification. LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nayeli-quiles-768312178/>



Zoe Solberg (she/her)

Zoe Solberg is a rising senior at Boston University enrolled in a 4+1 program with a BA in Sociology and a Master's in Public Health with a concentration in Epidemiology and Biostatistics. She is interested in global health, forced displacement, and health equity for LGBTQ+ populations. After graduation, she plans to pursue a PhD in Population Health and work with city governments to implement evidence-based initiatives that will minimize health disparities. LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/zoe-solberg-91074b2a8



Sadie Steelman
(she/her/he/him/they/them)

Sadie Steelman is a rising senior at UNC Chapel Hill, majoring in Sociology with a minor in Biology. Her research interests include biopolitics, structural analysis of health, and carcerality. She is passionate about anti-colonial thought and connecting global political philosophy with health. After graduation she plans to pursue research abroad and matriculate a PhD program in political studies.



Luis Tejada (he/him)

Luis Tejada is a rising senior at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte majoring in Sociology with a minor in Statistics. His research interests include educational inequalities, immigration, and culture. After graduation, he plans to pursue a PhD in sociology.

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/luistejada1



Amelia Vance (she/her)

Amelia Vance is currently a senior at Utah State University majoring in sociology. Amelia's current research interests include social and environmental impacts of the global decline in saline lakes (particularly the Great Salt Lake). She is keeping an open mind to future prospects, but her goal is to get a master's degree in demography and study migration patterns influenced by climate change.