

2013 New Faculty



RANDAL WESTRICK, Ph.D, M.S., B.S.
Assistant Professor
CAS - Biology

Dr. Randal Westrick's career in genetics started on his family's 1,300-acre dairy farm in Marine City Michigan. As an undergraduate at Michigan State University, he initially pursued his interest in agriculture. He worked in a pesticide research center studying biological-control agents-managing pests such as insects by using their natural predators. Through his undergraduate science coursework, however, Dr. Westrick discovered his passion for human physiology and genetics. After graduating in 1993, Dr. Westrick worked as a technician in David Ginsburg's laboratory at the University of Michigan with the intention of enrolling in medical school. After several successful years in the lab, he dropped his plans to pursue a career in research and did the Human Genetics PhD program at the University of Michigan.

Research in Dr. Westrick's laboratory presently focuses on one of the most important medical issues spanning the fields of cardiology, hematology/oncology and vascular biology: understanding and preventing the development of pathologic intravascular blood clot formation (also known as thrombosis). Diseases resulting in thrombosis are responsible for approximately 40% of deaths in the United States. Although susceptibility to thrombosis is estimated to be 60% heritable, at least two thirds of the genetic risk for both venous and arterial thrombosis remains to be elucidated. Dr. Westrick's lab uses mouse models and Next Gen sequencing approaches to identify and study the genetic determinants of thrombosis susceptibility. This includes whole genome high throughput screening approaches as well as the development of new transgenic mice.

The current focus is on characterizing genes isolated from a sensitized whole genome ENU mutagenesis screen for thrombosis in the mouse. His work recently identified a missense mutation in *Actr2* that acts as a thrombosis suppressor. *Actr2* encodes a major component of the ARP2/3 complex, which is involved in the control of cell shape and the generation of lamellipodia that are central to platelet attachment and spreading and suggests that alterations in platelet cytoskeletal function may be protective in the setting of severe thrombosis. Mutants from 7 additional suppressors are also being identified and studied.



GALINA TIRNANIC, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
CAS – Art and Art History

Galina Tirnanic is Assistant Professor of Art History in the Department of Art and Art History at Oakland University. She received her PhD from the University of Chicago in 2010. Her main area of research is visual culture of the Byzantine Empire and she will be teaching courses on Medieval and Early Modern art. She has published several articles and is currently working on a book based on her dissertation, "The Art of Punishment: The Spectacle of the Body on the Streets of Constantinople." The book examines the human body and the physical environment of Constantinople's public spaces as media for the expression of imperial justice. She has worked as curatorial assistant at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles and as research assistant at the Getty Research Institute. In 2010-11 she held a postdoc as Senior Fellow at the Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations in Istanbul.



AMANDA STEARNS-PFEIFFER, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
CAS - English

In 2001, Amanda began her career in education as a high school English teacher. She kept that position until 2008 when she accepted a fellowship at Western Michigan University to complete her Ph.D. in English Education. Upon graduation from WMU in [April 2012](#), Amanda served as assistant professor in the English department at University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire for one year before continuing her academic career at Oakland University. At OU, Amanda is an assistant professor in English and the STEP (Secondary Teacher Education Program) English major/minor advisor. Her current research interests include the Common Core Standards (their implementation, consequences, and challenges), effective professional development models for teachers, and preparing pre-service English teachers for successful internship experiences.



DAVID SZLAG, Ph.D

CAS - Chemistry

I recently held the rank of Associate Professor of Chemistry and Environmental Sciences at Lake Superior State (LSSU) in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan where I developed and taught courses in physical chemistry, hydrology, environmental science, and Geographic Information Science (GIS) over the span of 11 years. My current research is focused on modeling sediment transport and its effects on aquatic microbiology and contaminant transport. This research is amenable to both the graduate and undergraduate levels—particularly with regard to the use of GIS modeling technology. I have mentored many students in their capstone senior thesis at LSSU that combined GIS and environmental science/chemistry on projects ranging from white-tail deer management, sea lamprey control, radon management, stream restoration and management of parks for the Huron-Clinton Metro Park Authority in Detroit and surrounding areas.

My academic preparation includes a Ph.D. in Civil and Environmental Engineering with an emphasis in water resources and a M.S. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Colorado at Boulder. I also hold a B.S. in Chemical Engineering from Wayne State University in Detroit. I am a registered Professional Environmental Engineer and have eight years experience at the U.S. EPA Research Laboratories in Cincinnati, Ohio. My last assignment at USEPA in the Sustainable Technology Division was hydrology team leader where my colleagues and I developed an award winning GIS based system for allocating tradeable storm water credits. Prior to my work at the USEPA I was employed as a research engineer with NIST, Department of Commerce in Boulder Colorado where I investigated large-scale bioseparations using aqueous biphasic systems.

I enjoy developing curriculum and have served multiple terms on the LSSU Curriculum Committee. I also like working across disciplinary boundaries and have been successful in helping my colleagues integrate GIS technology into the Biological Sciences, Geology, Criminal Justice, and Business programs.



David Shaerf, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
CAS - English

Dr. David Shaerf is starting his first year as Assistant Professor of English - Creative Writing for Film & Television. He received his Ph.D. in Film Studies from the University of Exeter in the UK in 2011. His research and teaching interests include film history and criticism, narrative theory, screenwriting and documentary film analysis. He is currently producing a documentary film inspecting the fan culture surrounding Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*.



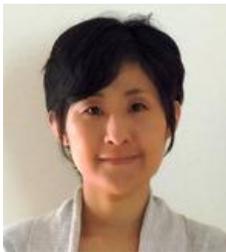
DEREK ROBERTS, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
CAS – Sociology & Anthropology

Derek Roberts became Assistant Professor of Sociology at Oakland University after serving for one year as Special Lecturer. He holds a BA in German from Arkansas Tech University and a Ph.D. in Sociology from Michigan State University. He also studied Theology in Toronto and Hamburg. His research interests included sociology of the body and cultural responses to social inequality, especially within urban settings.



JAMES NAUS, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
CAS - History

Dr. James Naus is excited to be a new assistant professor in the Department of History at Oakland University. Dr. Naus received his B.A. from Duquesne University (2003) and M.A and Ph.D. from Saint Louis University (2006, 2011). Though interested in all periods of history, Dr. Naus's research focuses on the Middle Ages, and, in particular, the early crusading movement. He has published extensively in this field, and is currently finishing a book-length study of the early crusading movement. In addition to his research, Dr. Naus looks forward to teaching History 101 as well as several upper-division classes on medieval history.



MI HYE SONG, Ph.D
Assistant Professor
CAS - Biology

Dr. Mi Hye Song received her Ph.D. degree at University of California, Berkeley, following undergraduate and master degrees at Seoul National University in South Korea. She joined University of Michigan Ann Arbor for her post-doc, and continued her postdoctoral training at National Institutes of Health, until she started her own lab as the principle investigator at Michigan Tech University in 2010, where she established her independent research on "Centrosome Regulation," and got awarded with her first NIH (AREA) grant as the PI. Dr. Song is very much excited to join the Department of Biological sciences at Oakland University this fall. Her laboratory uses a round worm, *Caenorhabditis elegans*, a model organism to study how cells divide, by primarily focusing on "CENTROSOME", which contributes to understanding the mechanisms of cancer biology.



COLLEEN LUDWIG, MFA
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
CAS – Art & Art History

Colleen Ludwig received her MFA in Time and Interactivity from the University of Minnesota in 2005 and her BFA in Film and Television from NYU in 1989. Colleen's immersive environments, video works and performance pieces focus on metaphors of skin and boundaries and have been shown in the United States and Canada. Her interactive environment, *Shiver*, was featured in 2012 at the Albuquerque Museum as part of the International Society of Electronic Artists' (ISEA) Machine Wilderness exhibition and festival. It is also being exhibited at the Burchfield Penney Art Center in Buffalo NY in 2013/14. She will be joining the faculty at OU in the Department of Art and Art History. Working in the New Media area, she will be developing curriculum in physical computing and digital fabrication.



ELIZABETH KATTNER, PhD
Assistant Professor
CAS – Music, Theatre and Dance

Elizabeth Kattner is joining the Department of Music, Theatre and Dance as an Assistant Professor of Dance with a focus on Dance Studies. She earned her B.A. in Anthropology and M.M. in Dance from the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, and completed her Ph.D. in Theatre Studies at the Free University Berlin. Her doctoral research was published in the book, *Early Life and Works of George Balanchine (2013)*. She has given numerous presentations and workshops at the annual conferences of the *Society of Dance History Scholars* and the *American College Dance Festival Association*, and has published in *Ballet Review* and *The Scholarship of Teaching*. In addition to her academic work, she has performed widely in the U.S. and Germany with various ballet and baroque ensembles including *Nevada Dance Theatre*, *L'Autre Pas* and *Contretem(p)s Berlin*. She is an active choreographer. Her original work *Hide and Seek (2012)* was presented at *American College Dance Festival Association*. In 2012 she was awarded a grant from the Ruth Mott Foundation-Share Art Flint to establish the *Dance in Schools* program which has introduced the art of dance as a means of physical expression and communication to hundreds of young people in Michigan.



SARAH HOSCH, Ph.D
Assistant Professor
CAS - Biology

I received my undergraduate degree in Biochemistry from Alma College, and went on to graduate school at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities in the Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Biophysics Ph.D. program. During my graduate training, I studied the regulation of Natriuretic Peptide Receptors. I received my PhD. in 2004. For the next three years, I completed post-doctoral training at the University of California, San Diego in the area of insulin sensitivity, inflammation and type-II diabetes. In 2007, I began teaching at Oakland University in the Department of Biological Sciences. I have since taught numerous lower and upper level biology and biochemistry courses and have been active as a biology faculty advisor.



ADAM GOULD, MFA
Assistant Professor
CAS - English

Adam Gould began his career over 17 years ago working in broadcast commercial production in Ohio. Over the years he has gained extensive experience as a professional non-linear editor working in several areas including narrative and documentary filmmaking, traditional broadcast and web-based studio production, corporate and educational video production and experimental video art. Most recently Adam has worked as editor on a feature-length documentary expected to screen in international competition, produced and edited an independent feature film and created experimental art videos for festival submission. Adam began teaching at Columbia College Chicago and the Illinois Institute of Art – Chicago in 2007. He was a full time member of the Illinois Institute of Art – Chicago faculty from 2010 - 2013. Adam received his Bachelor of Arts, Film Studies from the University of Michigan and his Master of Fine Arts, Film & Television from Savannah College of Art and Design.



JEFFREY HEISLER, D.M.A., M.M.
Assistant Professor
CAS – Music, Theatre and Dance

Award-winning saxophonist, Jeffrey Heisler, is an Assistant Professor of Saxophone and Conducting in the Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance at Oakland University. He holds degrees from Bowling Green State University (D.M.A., M.M.) where he studied with Distinguished Artist Professor John Sampen and Central Michigan University (B.M.E.) where he studied saxophone with John Nichol. Among his significant accomplishments include a 2005 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition 1st prize gold medal as the soprano saxophonist with the Blue Square Saxophone Quartet, Outstanding Classical Instrumentalist in Downbeat Magazine's (2002) Music Awards, and prizewinner at the MTNA National Chamber Music and Solo Competitions. Heisler's research interests include the creation of new repertoire for the saxophone. He has worked with the Pulitzer-Prize winning composer Ellen Taaffe Zwilich on a transcription of her violin work *Episodes* for soprano saxophone and piano, a work of which he gave the world premiere. He also collaborated with electronic music pioneer and composer Morton Subotnick in creating a new version of his *In Two Worlds* for alto saxophone and interactive computer (MAX/MSP). Heisler has performed the premiere performances of his composer-approved transcriptions of Steve Reich's *Vermont Counterpoint* (for saxophone(s) and pre-recorded tape), Chen Yi's *Monologue* (for solo soprano saxophone), and Louis Andriessen's *Elegy* (for tenor saxophone and piano). In addition, he has presented the American premieres of *Recit (Chemins VII)* by Luciano Berio, *Blitz* by Vincent Dunet, *Magic* by Ivan Fedele, *Entfuhrung* by Karlheinz Stockhausen and in 2009, premiered *Double Image*, a concerto for saxophone(s) and wind ensemble by David R. Gillingham. Heisler is in demand as a guest recitalist and has appeared at the prestigious Portes Ouvertes aux Nouveaux Talents concert series in Paris, France, Ball State University's New Music Festival, the Interlochen Arts Academy, Grand Valley State University's Free Play Concert Series, Central Michigan University's Alumni Series, BGSU's New Music & Art Festivals, the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, the North American Saxophone Alliance Biennial Conferences, and the XIII World Saxophone Congress. He has performed with Brave New Works, Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra, Benny Goodman Orchestra, John Philip Sousa Band, Toledo Symphony Orchestra, Midland Symphony Orchestra, and the Stuttgart Ballet Orchestra. Prior to his appointment at Oakland University, Heisler served on the faculties of Wayne State University (Detroit, MI) and Kent State University (Kent, OH).



LINDA GJOKAJ, Ph.D. (pronounced: Jokai)
Assistant Professor
CAS – Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work and Criminal Justice

Linda Gjokaj is a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work and Criminal Justice. She received a B.A. degree in Sociology from Oakland University and an M.A. degree in Sociology from Michigan State University. She will receive her PhD in Sociology from Michigan State University after she defends her dissertation on August 16th, 2013. Linda's dissertation examines problems of continuity and change among Albanian immigrants and ethnics who live in Michigan. Prior to joining Oakland University, she conducted research on refugee communities in Michigan, and was an Instructor at Michigan State University. Her research and teaching interests include immigration, gender, families, social statistics and social research methods.



FELICIA CHONG, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
CAS - Writing & Rhetoric

Felicia Chong received both a bachelor of arts in professional communication and a master of science in technical communication from Metropolitan State University, St. Paul. She taught graphic communication classes as a high school teacher in Minneapolis before pursuing her doctoral degree in rhetoric and technical communication at Michigan Technological University. She has also taught college composition, technical communication and digital media. She is joining Oakland as a new Assistant Professor of Writing, and her research interests include usability, technical communication and digital media.



JON CARROLL, Ph.D
Assistant Professor
CAS – Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work and Criminal Justice

I recently completed my doctoral dissertation in the Department of Anthropology at Michigan State University. My research interests are in cultural transmission, social interaction and integration, political and economic organization, and the social science applications of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and computer modeling and simulation.



LORI BURRINGTON, PhD
Assistant Professor
CAS – Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work & Criminal Justice

Lori Burrington (Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work, and Criminal Justice) received her undergraduate degree in political science from the University of Michigan and her law degree from Ohio State University. After practicing law in metropolitan Columbus, Ohio for 11 years, she obtained a Ph.D. in sociology from Ohio State, specializing in criminology. Her primary research and teaching interests focus on the importance of social contexts—such as residential neighborhoods, schools, families, and romantic relationship dyads—for predicting crime, delinquency, and health-risk behavior among adolescents and early adults. In particular, she is interested in the ways that social contexts inhibit (or contribute to) behavioral outcomes such as youth violence, substance use, and sexual risk-taking. Her current work examines the extent to which neighborhood and school structural characteristics and social processes are differentially relevant in their effects on delinquent and problem behavior outcomes, depending on an individual's social status (race/ethnicity, nativity, socioeconomic status) relative to that of others in the same social context.



MEAGHAN BARRY, MFA
Assistant Professor
CAS – Art and Art History

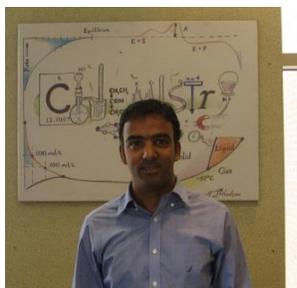
Meaghan Barry is a Detroit-based designer, creative and educator. Barry is a co-founder of [Unsold Studio](#), a collaborative design duo based in Detroit and Toronto practicing creative interaction and experimentation, as well as producing a range of self-initiated work. She received her MFA in 2D Design from Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, MI, studying under Elliott Earls. She previously received her BFA in Communications Design from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY. Barry has previously taught as a Visiting Professor at Lawrence Technological University in Southfield, MI, and will begin as an Assistant Professor of Art – Graphic Design at Oakland University in Rochester, MI in Fall 2013.



Linda Morrison, Ph.D., MSW
Visiting Assistant Professor
CAS - Social Work

Linda Morrison, PhD, MSW, is returning to Oakland University as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Social Work. She was previously at OU from 2001 to 2006; in 2007 she moved to Pittsburgh to teach Sociology and Human Services at Duquesne University.

Dr. Morrison's research has focused on the community of activists working to expand human rights advocacy in mental health, identified as the consumer/survivor/ex-patient movement. She will be teaching Sociology of Mental Health, Social Welfare Policy, Foundations of Multi-Cultural Social Work, and Fundamentals of Social Work Practice.



ABDUL REHMAN, Ph.D., M.S.
Visiting Assistant Professor
CAS - Chemistry

Abdul Rehman started his career in analytical chemistry as an instructor of chemistry in university of the Punjab after doing his MS from the same institute. Then he got a doctoral scholarship to start his research career in university of Vienna where he completed his thesis focused on the development of chemical sensors based on selective materials and nanomaterials. The science fund of Austria (FWF) awarded him with Erwin Schrodinger Postdoctoral Fellowship to acknowledge his research, for which he travelled to university of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He also completed a postdoctoral research project at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. His research focus in all these years was the development of chemical sensors and sensing materials for harsh real life environments for which he has mostly worked on QCM, electrochemical and EQCM sensors for detection problems in environment and body fluids.

In 2013, he joined the Oakland University faculty as visiting assistant professor for teaching assignments in General as well as Analytical chemistry. The current focus of his research activities includes the integration of electrochemical and QCM sensors for increasing the sensing reliability for which innovative materials and sensing designs are required, which will be pursued in the coming years. Moreover, the commercialization of sensor technologies to reap the real fruit of research is one of his goals as well.