

2019

STUDENT
DIRECTORY



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MELLON MAYS UNDERGRADUATE
FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

AARUSHI SHAH

Mather House | Class of 2021

Hometown: Chicago, Illinois

Concentration(s): Social Anthropology and Global Health and Health Policy

Research Interest/Area: Intimate Partner Violence Within Marginalized and Immigrant Populations .

Born and raised in an Indian household in the suburbs of Chicago, I am quite interested in studying the intersection of social anthropology and global health. I am extremely passionate about women's reproductive health and rights, and thus I am concentrating my efforts on researching healthcare access and health outcomes in women of color who have survived intimate partner violence. My hobbies include baking, watching wildlife at the Charles, (attempting to) complete jigsaw puzzles, and engaging in any and all outdoor activities! When I am not studying, I can be found curled up in my room reading (or most likely napping)!



ANDREW PÉREZ

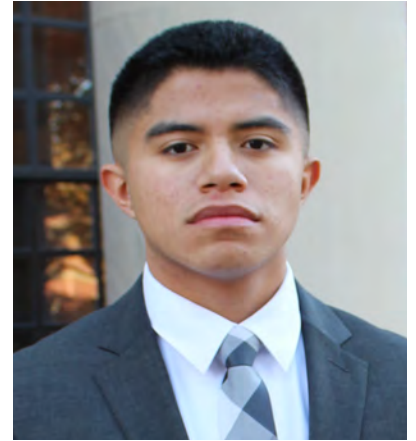
Mather House | Class of 2020

Hometown: Pico Rivera, CA

Concentration(s): Sociology

Research Interest/Area: Unpaid Student Labor from Marginalized Communities in Higher Education

I am from the beautiful city of Pico Rivera, a suburb of Los Angeles, and the proud son of two Mexican immigrants. As a first-generation college student, I have not had as much guidance as to how to navigate institutions of higher education as some of my peers. With this lack of insider knowledge, I have found myself advocating for first-generation students. This work has been both rewarding and exhausting. I want to study how students from marginalized backgrounds are forced into pseudo-administrator roles as they (typically) work towards "fixing" their universities without financial compensation.



ANNE LHEEM

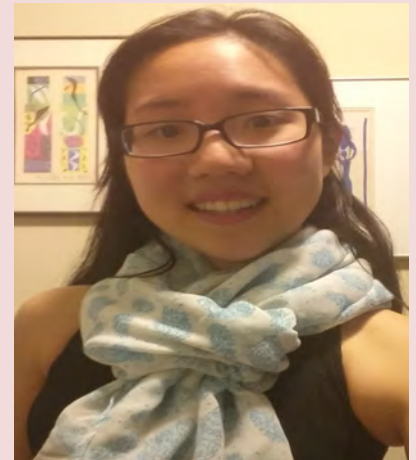
Eliot House | Class of 2021

Hometown: Fayetteville, NC

Concentration(s): Anthropology

Research Interest/Area: South Korea's beauty obsession: key factors, mechanisms of beauty norm construction, and implications on health.

I grew up in a small town in North Carolina and am the proud daughter of Korean immigrants. While I hold many interests across both social science and STEM disciplines, I am most passionate about global mental health, topics of global health equity, battling stigma against mental health and illness, education reform, and approaching the right to health and education through the lens of human rights. My current research focuses on understanding the origins and effects of South Korea's beauty standards on the lived experiences and mental health of South Korean women. Outside of my anthropology-based research, I am engaged in global health advocacy, peer counseling, epidemiological research, and dancing of all styles!



ANSELM KIZZA-BESIGYE

Mather House | Class of 2021

Hometown: Nairobi, Kenya

Concentration(s): Social Studies

Research Interest/Area: Political and cultural transformation in the postcolonial context

Born in Kenya to two Ugandan parents and raised abroad, Anselm is defined by having borne witness to struggles for change in Uganda and elsewhere. These experiences have led Anselm to an interdisciplinary interest in processes of postcolonial social transformation and have left Anselm with a commitment to social justice. Anselm's ethnographic research, in conversation with contemporary social theory, explores the process of social transformation in Sub-Saharan Africa. Outside of research, Anselm's interests include Arabic & Middle Eastern Studies; literary and film nonfiction; and funk music of all orientations and origins.



ASHLEY COOPER

Quincy House | Class of 2021

Hometown: Cherry Hill, New Jersey

Concentration(s): Neuroscience (Mind, Brain & Behavior Track) and Social Anthropology;
Secondary: History of Science; Language Citation: French

Research Interest/Area: Investigating the racialized perception of schizophrenia as an inherently black male disease.

Hailing from Cherry Hill, New Jersey, Ashley aspires to pursue a career in Medical Anthropology, focusing on mental health across the African Diaspora. She is eager to conduct research on the interaction of identity, culture, systemic barriers and social inequities within psychiatric care. Particularly, she plans to investigate how the scientific model of the “speed freak”, became heavily associated with the archetype of a violent and paranoid schizophrenia. Through her work, she hopes to eradicate the stigma surrounding mental illness by proposing innovative intervention grounded in historical understanding. Outside of her research, Ashley is an actress and a singer and serves as President of Harvard’s Foundation for International Medical Relief of Children.



CECIL WILLIAMS II

Leverett House | Class of 2020

Hometown: Elk Grove, CA

Concentration(s): Folklore and Mythology

Research Interest/Area: California Dreamin’

Snowy ranges, fertile valleys, rugged coastlines and low lying deserts endow the Golden State with a uniquely magical romance. "Topography" in its Greek root means "the theory of places". California's physical and metaphysical presence prey on angst, allowing outsiders to reimagine their lives as something better. The idea of California has become synonymous with the possibility of self-actualization. These physical and transcendental qualities have made California a charming storyteller. I study these narratives, how they have shaped the Californian experience over time and continue to do so today.



CHE APPLEWHAITE

Cabot House | Class of 2021

Hometown: London, UK

Concentration(s): History and Literature, Anthropology

Research Interest/Area: Homophobia, religion, and the post-colonial governance of desire in Trinidad and Tobago and Britain

Born in Trinidad & Tobago but growing up in London, Che developed interests in art, politics and writing - interests he continues to pursue at Harvard both in his extracurricular and academic life as a member of the Art Board of the Harvard Advocate and the Student Labor Action Movement (SLAM). His engaged research approach aims use the academy to serve communities in struggle by illuminating the relationship between praxis and grounded theory, history's salience in contemporary social contexts and how art intervenes in oppression. His current project aims to investigate how transnational colonial structures of governance regulate queer desires, activism and homophobia. He loves anything related but not limited to, decolonial/Black Marxist/posthuman social theory, aesthetic experiences and international film/filmmaking.



ELIJAH EZEJI-OKOYE

Lowell House | Class of 2020

Hometown: Watsonville, California

Concentration(s): Sociology

Research Interest/Area: Drag Queens as a Case Study for the Global Political Economy of Fame

Raised in an agricultural beach-town in Northern California, Elijah is a proud queer, mixed-race child of parents from Canada. Upon arriving at Harvard and meandering through a myriad of courses from an array of disciplines, Elijah discovered that the most salient courses he took was in sociology. Broadly, he enjoys studying gender, sexuality, class, race, and the nexuses these intersecting identities. Equipped with a sociological framework, Elijah plans to revisit his past--in which his queer role models were predominantly sourced from the media--and study the use of social media as a means of branding among elite drag queens in New York as a case study of the larger political economy of fame and the commodification of social media. In his free time, Elijah enjoys being in nature, laughing with friends, and catching up on sleep.



ELIJAH DEVAUGHN

Mather House | Class of 2021
Hometown: Compton, California
Concentration(s): History and Literature
Research Interest/Area: Political History

Elijah Christopher DeVaughn, Jr. (a.k.a. EJayy) hails from Compton, California. He is a God-fearing man who defines himself as a storyteller. Raised by an educator, Elijah, from an early age, understood the value of public service, and its ability to change lives. Elijah is Founder and CEO of EjayyTalks, a lecture series he conducts in Compton to inspire youth. He is the Chair of the Fellows Study Group program at Harvard's Institute of Politics. Finally, he is one of Harvard College's Public Service Representatives. Through his research, Elijah hopes to examine the travails and victories of black political leaders as a means to understand how they used their platforms for change. With this research, Elijah hopes he can inspire the students of tomorrow to not only find their platforms but also use their platforms to create what ought to be.



JORDAN VILLEGAS

Adams House | Class of 2020
Hometown: Cicero, NY
Concentration(s): Anthropology and History, Secondary in Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality
Research Interest/Area: "On the History of Women in America": U.S. Settler Colonialism and The Archival (Dis)Assemblage of Indigeneity

My research aims to "unsettle the archives" by examining the logics of settler colonialism within American archival tradition, challenging historic (dis)assemblages of indigeneity and Native kinship networks carried out through U.S. settler colonial jurisdiction (i.e. federal recognition, blood quantum laws, etc.) and through the perpetuation of hegemonic imperialist historicities constructed within the archives. My other research interests include queer temporalities, transmasculine identities, queerness and "monstrous" bodies, pornography/erotica, and late-twentieth century feminist praxis. When not researching within/against the archives, I enjoy gardening, baking, reading/writing speculative fiction, defending the humor of arguably incoherent memes, and supporting my local drag artists.



KRISTINE GUILLAUME

Lowell House | Class of 2020
Hometown: Forest Hills, New York
Concentration(s): History and Literature and African American Studies
Research Interest/Area: Criminalization and Mass Incarceration; Racial Segregation of Neighborhoods

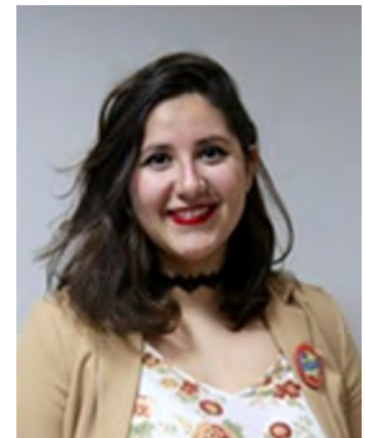
Kristine, the daughter of Haitian and Chinese immigrants, grew up in Queens, New York. Kristine is an aspiring scholar and writer with a passion for black history and literature. Her specific interests include issues of criminalization, mass incarceration, and inequities in the education system's problems that plague the past, present, and future of young black Americans. Outside of her research, Kristine serves as a reporter for The Harvard Crimson's News Board.



LAURA VEIRA-RAMIREZ

Leverett House | Class of 2020
Hometown: Bogota, Colombia/Norwalk, CT
Concentration(s): History and Literature
Research Interest/Area: Gender and Sexuality in Borderlands

Laura was born in Bogota, Colombia and immigrated to Norwalk, CT at three years old. She lived in the same place until moving to Harvard, where she now spends the majority of her time. She focuses on immigration and is interested in the intersectionalities within the community that she has her own ties to. On campus she writes for The Harvard Crimson and is one of the Co-Directors for Act on a Dream.



MING LI WU

Leverett House | Class of 2021
Hometown: Huntsville, AL and Reno, NV
Concentration(s): History and Literature
Research Interest/Area: Queer Puerto Rican communities

I'm interested in researching human (im)migration, diaspora, queer community building, borderlands, troubling binary narratives, and in-betweenness. Currently, I'm focusing on how queer Puerto Ricans find and form communities. I also write and perform poetry, engaging with the visceral physicality of identity-driven tension, as well as sites of dis/belonging across different facets of identity. When not writing, I can be found frying plátanos for whoever will let me use their kitchen, roaming Boston in search of good soup, or eating said soup. I love living in a city and used to be a law-abiding pedestrian, but last year I learned how to jaywalk.



MIRIELLE WRIGHT

Eliot House | Class of 2021
Hometown: Bowie, MD
Concentration(s): African-American Studies and Government Joint
Research Interest/Area: Black Urban Communities and Culture, Black Criminalization and Criminal Justice, Black Feminism, etc.

Mirielle is the daughter of African-American and Black Caribbean ministers, their involvement in her local community of Washington, D.C. making public service a key part of her life since she was young. Having lived in D.C., Maryland, and Brooklyn, NY, she is interested in the historical development of Black communities and questions regarding racial construction and culture. Her research interests are wide ranging, but she hopes to explore how race and inequality shape our current circumstances, as well as theorize ways forward.



RAJ GAMBHIR

Cabot House | Class of 2021
Hometown: Aliso Viejo, California
Concentration(s): Social Studies
Research Interest/Area: Past, Present, and Future of Intergovernmental Institutions.

Raised in the wonderfully multicultural area between Los Angeles and San Diego, I have nevertheless maintained a deep connection to my Sikh faith and the subcontinent from which my parents hail. A Social Studies concentrator pursuing a citation in Standard Mandarin, I love studying history, technology and climate policy, and the debates surrounding development economics. In order to (somehow) combine all of these interests, I plan to research the roots of intergovernmental organizations and what the formation of new Southern institutions and the technological/climatological challenges of the coming century mean for this arrangement.



SADIE PATE

Winthrop House | Class of 2020
Hometown: Bentonville, AR
Concentration(s): Linguistics with a related field in psychology
Research Interest/Area: The Perception of Marginalized Languages in Society

A member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Sadie was raised in Arkansas surrounded by forests, dirt roads and probably one too many chickens. Since coming to Harvard, she has found her passion for the study of language and psychology, and hopes to combine these interests into a research project that considers the role language plays in our perception of others. Focusing on marginalized languages, including her knowledge of ASL and interest in Choctaw, Sadie hopes that her research will shed light on the tendencies and stereotypes we encounter daily.



SALMA ABDELRAHMAN

Eliot House | Class of 2020

Hometown: Miami, FL

Concentration(s): Sociology

Research Interest/Area: Public Libraries, Race and Inequality

Hailing from Miami, FL, Salma is a first-generation immigrant, Muslim-American, and woman of color. Salma grew up going to her local branch library, Coral Reef Public Library, every day after school and on the weekends. For her, the public library has been a central place of identity formation. Through her research, she hopes to explore the ways in which the public library interacts with inequality in local communities, aiming to understand how the public library can be used to further the project of justice.



TANIA DOMINGUEZ-RANGEL

Pforzheimer House | Class of 2021

Hometown: Mexico City, Mexico and Roswell, GA

Concentration(s): Romance Languages & Literatures w/ a secondary in Film Studies

Research Interest/Area: Film, literature, and art highlighting undocumented immigrant narratives

I was born in Mexico D.F. and moved to Georgia with my family at the age of 2. I'm very interested in the intersection between art and activism and how that affects representation in various visual mediums and in the entertainment industry. On campus, I'm the president of Harvard-Radcliffe RAZA, the Mexican/Chicanx cultural organization at the college, as well as PALABRITAS, Act On A Dream, Her Campus Harvard, and I perform with 21CC.



TOLUWALASE OLADITAN

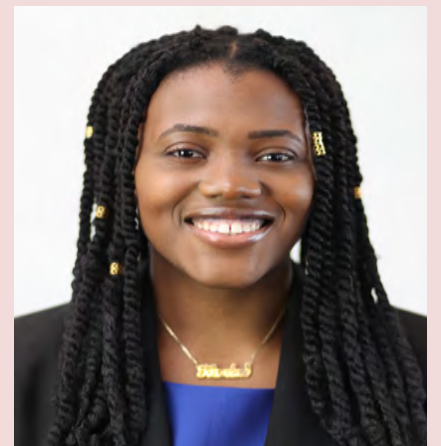
Dunster House | Class of 2020

Hometown: Brooklyn, New York

Concentration(s): Biomedical Engineering

Research Interest/Area: Drug Delivery, Gene therapy, Medical device technology

I was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York where I grew up in a Nigerian immigrant household. I am an aspiring engineer and researcher, interested in engineering technologies involving disease detection and therapeutics. My desire to revolutionize the field of biomedical engineering, technology, and healthcare stems from growing up in an underserved community and witnessing the struggles that low-income families face when it comes to accessible, affordable, and effective healthcare. I hope my work will inspire more students of color to pursue careers in STEM.



VANESSA RUALES

Pforzheimer House | Class of 2020

Hometown: Springfield, MA

Concentration(s): Social Studies

Research Interest/Area: Effectiveness of Obesity Prevention Efforts/ Perceptions of Food

I was born in a little town called Otavalo, nestled in the Andean highlands of Ecuador. When I turned seven years old, my family moved to Jacksonville, FL. The stark political, economic, and daily life differences between living in Ecuador and the United States prompted me to become fascinated by the study of governance and how behavioral insights can be leveraged to help citizens and leaders make better decisions. I am interested in the intersection of these topics and the issue of obesity in Latin America. My hobbies include listening to Led Zeppelin, Argentinian rock music from the 1980s, and opera, as well as being a news junkie.



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Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship