

A topographic map of a mountainous region, likely the Appalachian Mountains, showing a dense network of ridges and valleys. The map uses a color gradient from light tan to dark brown to represent elevation. A prominent river system is visible on the right side, flowing through a deep valley. The overall texture is highly detailed, showing the intricate patterns of the terrain.

# **The Monadnock**

**Clark University Geographical Society**

**Volume 63**

**2024**

## Letter from the Director



*Jim Murphy, Director, GSG*

Dear Alumni and Friends of the Graduate School of Geography:

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the latest and greatest edition of *The Monadnock* – the official magazine of the Clark University Geographical Society (aka CUGS). It has been a few years since the last issue (2021), and it is wonderful to see this reboot, thanks principally to the efforts of co-editors Arman Bajracharya and Sergio Carvajal.

Throughout most of the century-plus history of the Graduate School of Geography (GSG), *Monadnock* has been essential in documenting the comings, goings, doings, and “achievements” of faculty, students, alumni, and staff. Moreover, it has provided an outlet for students to offer reflections on their research projects, field experiences, and contemporary issues facing the world. In preparation for last year’s GSG Centennial celebration, I spent significant time reading through old *Monadnocks* and learning about “epic” field trips in the 1920s-1930s, visits from eminent leaders of 20<sup>th</sup> Century geographic thought (e.g., Hartshorne, Gilbert White), the accomplishments of faculty (e.g., from Atwood to Semple to Kasperson to Cohen to Kates to Hanson.... anon), and the *zeitgeist* of different historical and intellectual eras that have marked the GSG’s 103-year history. Beyond this being an entertaining, informative, and pride-inducing experience, I was also struck by the GSG’s long-standing commitment to diversity with regard to the enrolling, supporting, and training of international, female, and, more recently, BIPOC students – well ahead of the curve in this regard when compared to many of our peer institutions in North America.

The Centennial celebration offered a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with old colleagues and former students and acknowledge the many legacies and contributions of the GSG over its long history. It was also a reflective, forward-looking event wherein we considered, debated, and discussed what is to come for the next century. Pressing existential challenges facing the planet today – including climate change, inequality, racism, and geopolitical polarization – demand the kinds of leading-edge, critical, and substantive engagements that Clark geographers have always been able to provide and the novel insights, techniques, and solutions that these efforts generate. Geography(ers) remains central to our understanding of planetary systems, transnational relations, environmental changes, and the political-economic-social factors and forces that produce uneven development outcomes. We have never been more relevant/essential, and the future looks bright for the GSG, the discipline of geography, and the trans- and interdisciplinary communities that our faculty and students contribute to.

All told the *Monadnock’s* resurgence comes at an ideal time, and it offers the chance to document some major changes, additions, and accomplishments that have been made since 2021. In the pages that follow, you will read about new and older cohorts of PhD students, learn about CUGS field research experiences, recognize the milestones/achievements of CUGS members, acknowledge the fantastic work of staff who have recently left us, and welcome the five (5) new faculty members who have joined our ranks since 2021. There is much to take in and digest here and to be proud of. We are indeed a special, unique community, something that *The Monadnock* has always reminded us of. Enjoy, and please keep them coming!

Jim Murphy  
Professor and Director  
Graduate School of Geography

## Note from the Editors



*Monadnock co-editors: Arman Bajracharya & Sergio Carvajal*

Dear CUGS,

We are delighted to present the 63rd edition of *Monadnock* magazine. First published in 1927, it has been roughly a century since the inaugural issue.

A lot has happened since the last issue of this magazine. CUGS has observed around a couple of dozen scholars metamorphose into doctors. It has been an honor to craft this issue of the *Monadnock* with the intention of sharing a glimpse of CUGS, an ode to joy and togetherness amid continued days, months, and years of hardships. We have upheld and hope to continue the rich traditions of CUGS, including the mental gymnastics of linking the conceptual potluck dish to a relevant geography concept, entrusting the lit candle under the supervision of fellow CUGS members as milestones are chased, and using significant brain power to create fitting masterpieces for the Halloween party.

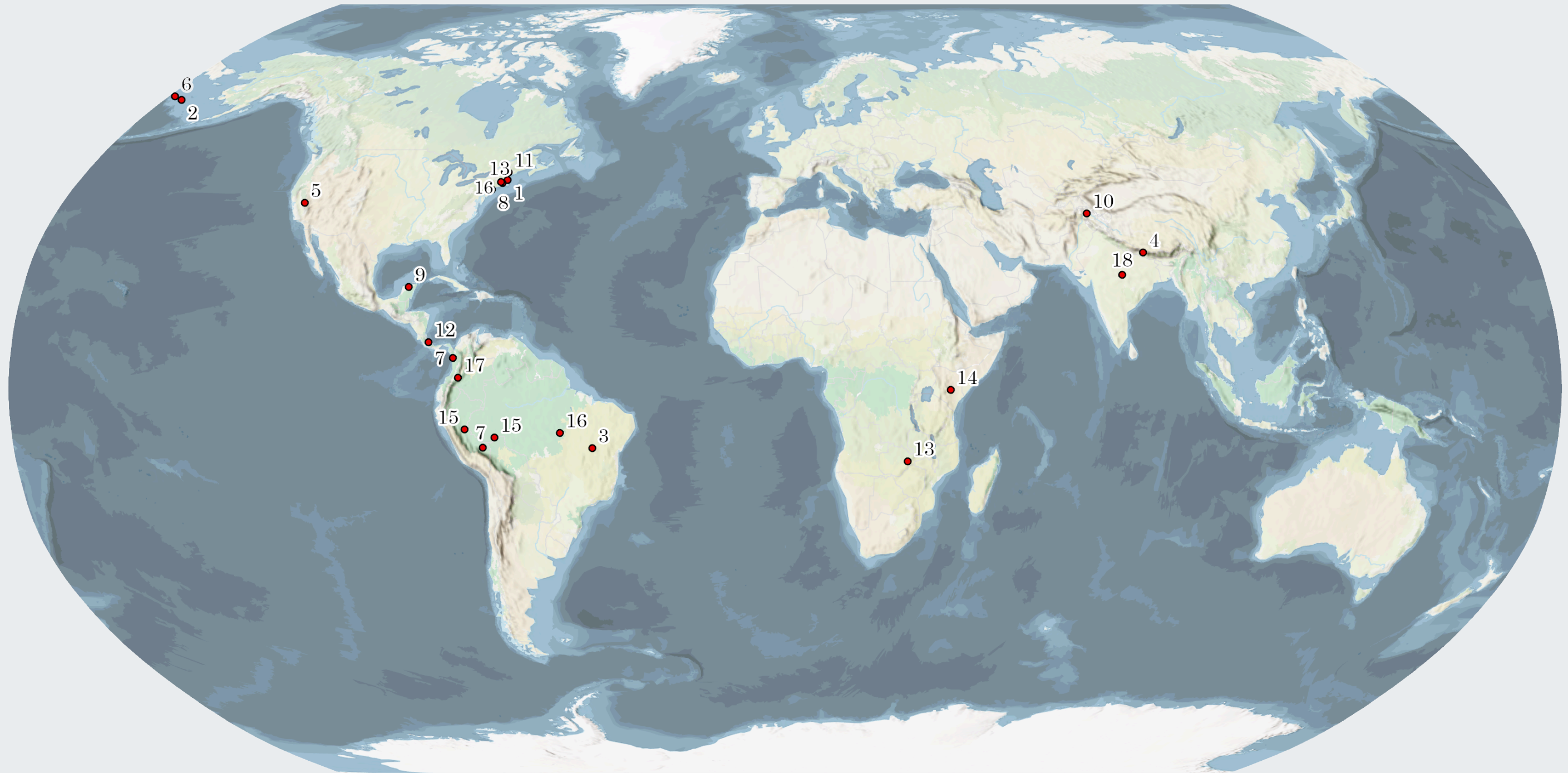
This issue includes reflections from the field by Mwangi Chege, Clare Gaffey, and Anna Zhu. We also highlight a retrospective from the Clark Graduate Workers United (CUGWU), authored by Sarah Lerman-Sinkoff, following the successful strike of 2022 to reset the current conditions for working and learning as a graduate student at Clark.

We are excited to feature incoming faculty who have yet to be highlighted in *Monadnock*: Abby Frazier, Max Ritts, Gustavo Oliveira, Hamed Alemohammad, and Siobhan McGrath. As we welcome new members to the GSG family, we bid farewell to Brenda Nikas-Hayes and Aidan Giasson.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of the *Monadnock* as much as we have enjoyed creating it.

Arman Bajracharya & Sergio Carvajal  
Editors  
The *Monadnock* Magazine

# Research Sites of Current Doctoral Students



- 1. **Aiyin Zhang**, Plum Island Ecosystems
- 2. **Anna Zhu**, Bering and Chukchi Sea (Distributed Biological Observatory DBO)
- 3. **Antonio Fonseca**, Western Bahia state, Brazil
- 4. **Arman Bajracharya**, Sindhupalchok district, Nepal
- 5. **Ashley Hoffman**, Sierra Nevada Mountain Range, California, USA
- 6. **Clare Gaffey**, Pacific Arctic to the North Pole
- 7. **Gisselle Vila-Benites**, Peru (Madre de Dios, Cusco, Puno), Colombia (Chocó, Antioquía), Ecuador (Imbabura, Azuay)

- 8. **Julia Wagner**, New York City
- 9. **Karen Hudlet Vázquez**, Yucatán, Mexico
- 10. **Khadija Nisar**, Karakoram, Gilgit baltistan, Pakistan
- 11. **Maddy Kroot**, New Hampshire and Western Maine
- 12. **María Guillén-Araya**, Lake Atitlán in Guatemala; Talamanca in Costa Rica
- 13. **Michael Cecil**, Sutton, MA; Mufulira, Chilanga, Choma, Kabwe in Zambia
- 14. **Mwangi Chege**, Kenya

- 15. **Pilar Delpino Marimon**, Peru (Pucallpa & Chancay), Brasil (Cruzeiro do Sul & Rio Branco)
- 16. **Ricardo Barbosa, Jr.**, Brazil, New England
- 17. **Sergio Carvajal**, Huila, Colombia
- 18. **Shan-yu Wang**, India

*Based on self-reported data from CUGS in Spring 2024.*

*Basemap based on data from ESRI, TomTom, FAO, NOAA, USGS*

## Progress to the Ph.D: Degrees and Milestones 2020 - 2024

### Degrees Conferred

#### Doctoral

Su Ye (December 2020)  
 Azadeh Hadizadeh Esfahani (December 2020)  
 Michelle Cole Wenderlich (June 2021)  
 Jacob Chamberlain (June 2021)  
 Janae Davis (June 2021)  
 Alireza Farmahini Farahani (June 2021)  
 Mario Machado (June 2021)  
 Helen Rosko (August 2021)  
 Yu Zhou (August 2021)  
 Jaclyn Guz (December 2021)  
 Luisa Young (May 2022)  
 Melissa Bollman-Shih (August 2022)  
 Benjamin Fash (August 2022)  
 Marc Healy (August 2022)  
 Roopa Krithivasan (August 2022)  
 Wenjing Jiang (May 2023)  
 Surendra Shrestha (May 2023)  
 Lei Song (May 2023)  
 Nathaniel Strosberg (August 2023)  
 Nicholas Geron (August 2023)  
 Brittany Lauren Wheeler (August 2023)

#### MA en route to PhD

William Collier (August 2021)  
 Sarah SanGiovanni (August 2021)  
 J Michael Athay (May 2022)  
 Clare Gaffey (August 2022)  
 Sitian Xiong (August 2022)  
 Andrea Cabrera Roa (December 2022)  
 Emily Holloway (December 2022)  
 Inge Salo (December 2022)  
 Maria del Pilar Delpino Marimon (May 2023)

### Progress-to-Degree Milestones

#### Dissertation Defenses

10/26/2020 - Azadeh Hadizadeh Esfahani  
 10/29/2020 - Su Ye  
 12/7/2020 - Alireza Farmahini Farahani  
 4/1/2021 - Michelle Wenderlich  
 4/2/2021 - Dan Santos  
 4/6/2021 - Janae Davis  
 4/7/2021 - Mario Machado  
 5/14/2021 - Helen Rosko  
 5/19/2021 - Jacob Chamberlain  
 6/28/2021 - Yu Zhou  
 10/29/2021 - Jaclyn (Jackie) Guz  
 4/8/2022 - Louisa Young  
 5/4/2022 - Melissa Bollman – Shih  
 5/11/2022 - Roopa Krithivasan  
 5/12/2022 - Benjamin Fash  
 6/23/2022 - Marc Healy  
 11/10/2022 - Wenjing Jiang  
 3/29/2023 - Lei Song  
 4/5/2023 - Surendra Shrestha  
 5/24/2023 - Nathaniel Strosberg  
 5/25/2023 - Brittany Lauren Wheeler  
 6/6/2023 - Nicholas Geron  
 10/30/2023 - Mara Van Den Bold  
 10/30/2023 – Karen Hudlet Vazquez  
 12/13/2023 - Thomas Bilintoh  
 2/16/2024 – Sarah SanGiovanni

#### Dissertation Proposal Defense

9/3/2020 - Michael Cecil  
 5/21/2021 - J Michael Athay  
 9/14/2021 - Thomas Bilintoh  
 11/23/2021 - Sitian Xiong  
 12/13/2021 - Andrea Cabrera Roa  
 2/4/2022 - Mwangi Chege  
 3/8/2022 - William Westgard Cruice  
 4/13/2022 - Amy Dundon  
 5/4/2022 - Clare Gaffey  
 5/6/2022 - Gisselle Vila Benites

5/24/2022 - Sarah Lerman-Sinkoff  
 9/23/2022 - Emily Holloway  
 10/12/2022 - Inge Salo  
 12/9/2022 - Ashley Hoffman  
 1/19/2023 - Pilar Delpino Marimon  
 3/20/2023 - Maddy Kroot  
 4/10/2023 - Maria Guillen-Araya  
 5/16/2023 - Aiyin Zhang  
 5/20/2023 - Julia Wagner  
 2/5/2024 - Arman Bajracharya

#### Doctoral Examinations (orals)

7/15/2020 - Michael Athay  
 10/27/2020 - Marc Healy  
 11/5/2020 - Michael Cecil  
 12/8/2020 - Surendra Shrestha  
 12/21/2020 - Louisa Young  
 2/17/2021 - Nathaniel Strosberg  
 4/12/2021 - Clare Gaffey  
 6/4/2021 - Mwangi Chege  
 10/4/2021 - Nicholas Geron  
 11/4/2021 - Amy Dundon  
 12/9/2021 - Emily Holloway  
 2/9/2022 - Maria Jose Guillen-Araya  
 2/17/2022 - Pilar Delpino Marimon  
 4/28/2022 - Sitian Xiong  
 5/9/2022 - William Westgard Cruice  
 9/16/2022 - Andrea Cabrera Roa  
 11/17/2022 - Thomas Bilintoh  
 1/31/2023 - Maddy Kroot  
 2/6/2023 - Sarah Lerman – Sinkoff  
 3/17/2023 - Giselle Vila Benites  
 4/28/2023 - Arman Bajracharya  
 5/3/2023 - Ashley Hoffman  
 5/23/2023 - Julia Wagner  
 1/29/2024 - Aiyin Zhang

## Farewell: Brenda Nikas-Hayes

I started at Clark in September 2008 and except for a short stint from November 2017 - June 2020, when I left to pursue a job in a non-profit, my years at Clark were the most rewarding. I finished my Bachelor's and a Master's at Clark while working full-time. Because of my job, my degrees were in communications. But my heart was in Geography. I was incredibly proud when my youngest son joined Clark (class of 2016) and chose Geography as part of his dual degree in both Geography and Theater. So, Clark is in our blood.

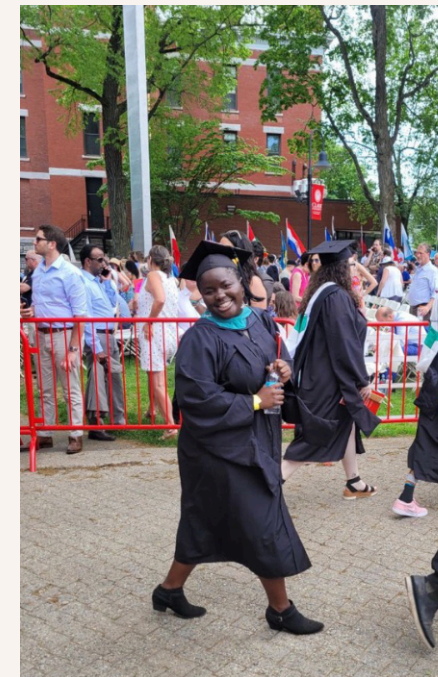
Attached is a photo from my recent visit from Yaa Poku and Aidan Giasson during Clark's spring break week. I chose this because my time at Clark was infused with the relationships I developed among faculty, students, and staff. All of us in this photo are Clarkies. I prided myself on hiring qualified Clarkies as my staff during my time as department administrator and Assistant to the Director. It was a winning combination.

I treasure my time there and the many friends among the faculty, students, and staff I call family and always will. I am forever grateful to Clark Geography for making the end of my professional career the most exciting and gratifying. I will forever be a GSG Clarkie.



Photo courtesy of Brenda, from a recent visit during Clark's spring break week. (From left: Yaa Poku, Brenda Nikas-Hayes, Aidan Giasson)

## Farewell: Aidan Giasson



Photos courtesy of Aidan.  
 Top: Aidan during the commencement ceremony. Center: (from left) Beth Nugent and Aidan overlooked by Brenda on Zoom. Right-bottom: (from left) Aiyin Zhang, Arman Bajracharya, Maddy Kroot, and Aidan in the GSG Commons

My name is Aidan Giasson, and I am originally from Rockland, Maine. I started in the GSG in April of 2017 when I saw Professor Rinku Roy Chowdhury speak during my Traina Scholar Night during my Senior year of High School. That night, I decided I wanted to major in Geography, and subsequently, Professor Roy Chowdhury was my undergraduate major advisor. In my Sophomore year, I started working in the main office as an office assistant, which I continued until I graduated in 2021. When my then boss, Beth Nugent, was retiring, discussion about my interest in applying for her Office Coordinator job began, which later became a reality. As I worked on getting my Master's in Public Administration, I also started my first full-time job as an Office Coordinator until July 2023. I now work as the Principal Clerk and Typist for the City of Worcester Division of Public Health. I am very grateful for all of the opportunities and relationships the GSG has given me as I keep in contact with the staff I worked with during my time in the department.



## Meet the CUGS: Cohort of 2023



*Cohort of 2023. Top row (from left): Sergio Carvajal, Ryan Lennon, Sushil Paudel, Walter Poulsen, Antonio Victor Galvão da Fonseca, Ricardo Barbosa. Bottom row (from left): Mobeen Akhtar, Sunita Phuyal, Mikayla Schappert, Khadija Nisar, Christopher Lamb*

**The Monadnock Team:** Welcome to Clark, the GSG and CUGS, what are your impressions on your first year?

**Sergio Carvajal:** This has been a challenging but stimulating environment. Clark is a nice place to reflect critically on the relations between climate change and capitalism. CUGS has been a supportive and caring community, which has made the process a bit easier.

**Mikayla Schappert:** Both GSG and CUGS have been extremely welcoming and supportive. The strong sense of community and making connections with people have been important parts of my success in my first year.

**Antonio Victor Galvão da Fonseca:** My first year at Clark University was a period of discovery in which I explored the many opportunities and potential that the university offers geography PhD students to develop our skills. It's been a period of self-reflection, during which I've identified areas for improvement and realized the immense value of professors and peers in this process. I've been fortunate to find a close-knit community of friendly and

helpful students and professors who are there to lend a hand in overcoming challenges.

**TMT:** Outside of school and research, what do you do for fun?

**AF:** I started cycling initially, which has helped me maintain regular physical activity and has also been a great way to explore the city of Worcester. More recently, I've been getting involved in weekend activities at Hadwen Arboretum. I enjoy outdoor activities and am looking for ways to stay active and enjoy the outdoors during the colder seasons.

**MS:** I enjoy hiking with my dog and being outdoors, as well as photography and horseback riding. In my free time I also like to explore new places with friends.

**SC:** I have been swimming, roller skating with WooSkates, going to a few shows at Ralph's, and trying to participate in activities demanding the end of the apartheid and the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

**TMT:** What are you most looking forward to the next school year?

**MS:** I am excited to start the position of RA for Dr. Florencia Sangermano where I will also explore the early stages of starting my dissertation proposal. We will be looking at scale of effect and I am interested in landscape heterogeneity/pattern, fragmentation, and conservation.

**AF:** Next year, I plan to get into my dissertation research and start making strong connections in the academic world. I'll be looking for more feedback on my work, trying to publish some early results, and getting involved in as many conferences and workshops as possible. I also want to make sure I keep a good balance between work and life, so I aim to manage my time better and stay healthy and happy while doing it all.

**SC:** The seminar on Capitalist Natures, starting directed studies, and doing fieldwork in Latin America to understand how REDD+ projects are transforming social and political relationships among forest communities.



*At the summit of Mount Monadnock. Photo: Khadija Nisar*

## Meet the CUGS: Cohort of 2022



Cohort of 2022. (from left): Ali Mert Ipek, Fatemeh Kordi, Rabebeh Abedi, Hemant Raj Ghimire, Kwabena Antwi, Shan-yu Wang, Jewon Ryu

**The Monadnock Team:** How has your journey at Clark fared this year?

**Kwabena Antwi:** My two years at Clark have been quick and oscillating. Overall, it's been a journey of adaptability and growth.

**Jewon Ryu:** It has been great! When I returned after the summer break, Clark was no longer a mysterious place to me. I had a better understanding of the faculty, my friends, and Worcester. Additionally, I was able to develop my research topic over the summer, which gave me a clearer goal as I took classes throughout my second year. As one of the CUGS DEI reps, we organized our first Geogathering event in April. It was a nice opportunity to learn about what others are interested in, and I hope we can continue this event in the future, maybe holding it twice a semester.

**Shan-yu Wang:** Fruitful but tired. I'm honored to write a book review of

“Streaming” on Antipode with Max, Jewon, Jacob, and Abby in politics of sensing. Also write a paper with Yuko and Eunyong about and semiconductor and geopolitical strategies of East Asian countries. We got minor revision, hope we can pass review successfully, finger crossed. About classes, I also take graduate seminars from Jim, Siobhan, and Gustavo, these are very helpful. However, doing things above together is really challenging, I even have insomnia and black circles on my face. Hope this AAG 2024 at Hawaii will bring my fatigues away.

**Hemant Raj Ghimire:** Coming from a non-geography background and joining graduate school after a long gap, I feared a little about my transition to school. However, I found that the Clark Geography and CUGS communities are so warm and welcoming, which made the transition easier than I thought. In the second year, I feel like

Clark is my home, and sometimes I forgot that I returned to graduate school after 10 years. I have taken various courses in Geography as well as other departments, which I think are useful for the interdisciplinary research I am aiming for in my dissertation. I finished my skill requirements, PDW, and prepared a preliminary draft for my orals in the second year. I think this year is nice academically as well as personally, as my family joins me here in Worcester, and reconciliation with family is nice. Overall, I feel like the journey at Clark was enjoyable this year.

**TMT:** Outside of school and research, what do you do for fun?

**SW:** In my first year, Mike invited us to play squash; some folks also joined, such as Naoya(MSGIS), Chris, Dhiraj (MS management), Vanchy, and Fatemeh. In the second year, Sitian became our weight

training guru, and we worked out three times a week from chest to back to legs.

Watching baseball games is fun, too. Mike brought us to Woosox to see Taiwanese player Yucheng Chang, but he got a concussion when a runner bumped him, and Woosox even lost the game! There's music, like Yoyo Ma's concert at BSO or Geller Jazz Series like Omar Sosa or trumpeter Randy Brecker.

**HRG:** Outside of school, I love hanging out with my family. As a parent of young kids, I find it difficult to travel; however, there are various beautiful places around Massachusetts. The good thing about living in the heart of New England is that various beautiful places are within driving distance. In my free time, I explore places around Worcester and New England. In addition, I also watch cricket games during my leisure time.

**KA:** Beyond academia, I'm a homebody at heart. You'll often catch me crafting culinary creations. I proudly hold my title as the 2023 Best Conceptual Dish Winner!

**JR:** I enjoy exploring the excellent food scene around Boston! Besides that, I've started playing 'Stardew Valley' with friends. I never imagined myself enjoying farm chores, but now I do! It's been a nice break from all the readings.

**TMT:** What are you looking forward to, and what do you hope to achieve next year?

**JR:** I'm ahead of conducting preliminary fieldwork this summer, so hopefully, I will have completed my proposal and oral exam by the end of my third year next year! Outside of academic pursuits, I hope to work out more and spend more time outdoors.

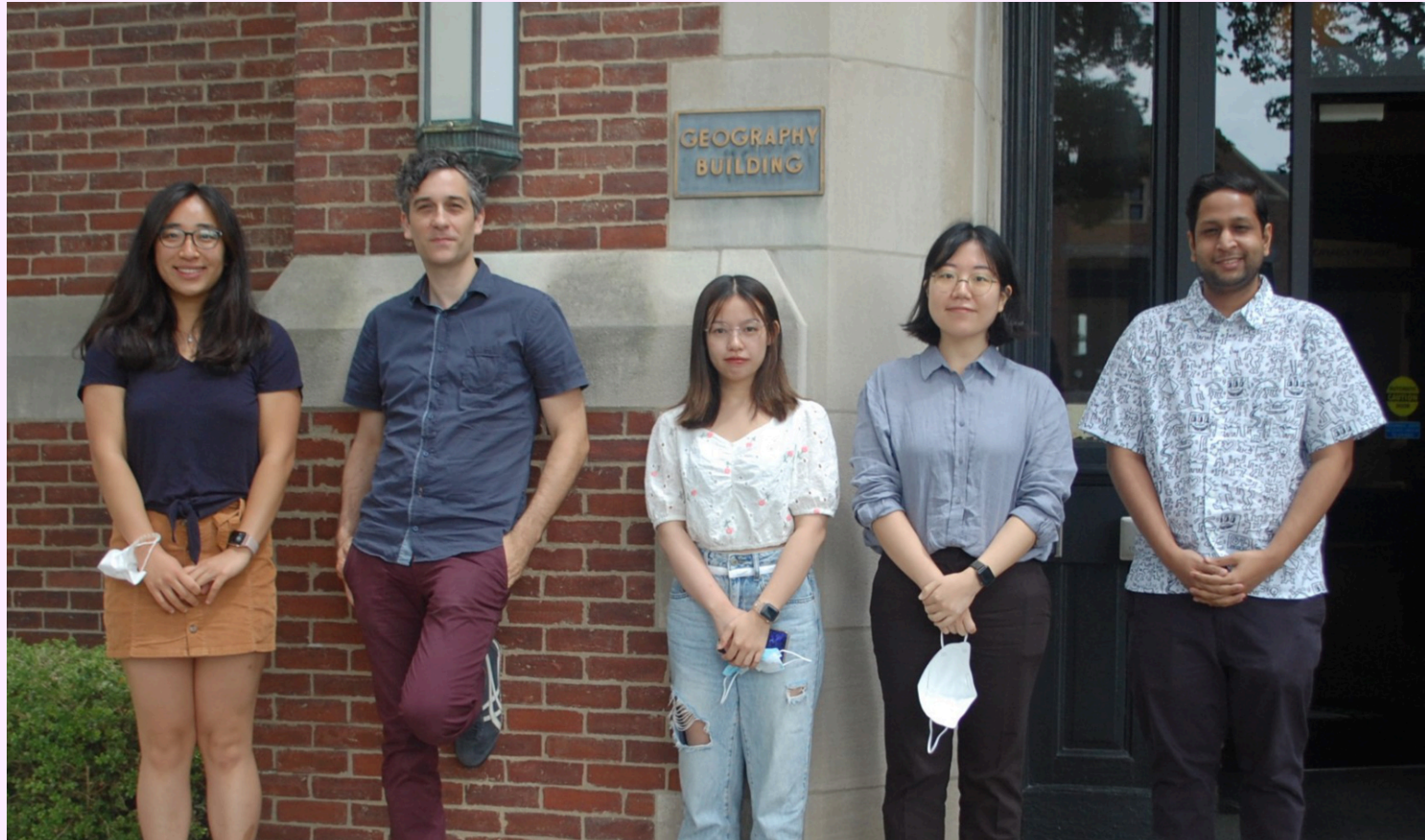
**SW:** I will absolutely step into ABD and go to India for my pilot study. I will build up some potential networks. I'm planning to buy a drone and take some photos in my fieldwork. I will also try to strike a balance between life and work.

**KA:** I look forward to challenging conventions to cement my research focus.

**HRG:** I am planning a lot of things for next year. In the summer, I will be exploring other parts of the States with my family. I have not been outside New England in the USA, so I plan to visit New York City, Niagara Falls, and the Western Parts of the USA. I plan to develop the proposal in the coming fall and apply for funding. Completing my oral examination and getting ABD is my plan for the next year, after which I will start my fieldwork for my dissertation.



## Meet the CUGS: Cohort of 2021



Cohort of 2021. (from left): Anna Zhu, Jacob Mitchell, Vanchy Li, Eunyeong Song, Spandan Pandey

**The Monadnock Team:** How has your (nearly) three-year journey been at Clark?

**Vanchy Li:** My three-year journey at Clark began with tears, sweat, and fears, but it has evolved into something great. I feel grateful for joining CUGS and being part of such a warm and supportive community that is accompanying me through my Ph.D. life. Along the way, I've learned, experienced, and grown, sharpening my academic skills and capabilities in ways I never imagined possible. As Yaa once told me, I am shedding old skin and rejuvenating myself like my adorable lizards, and this transformative opportunity is provided by Clark Geography.

**Eunyeong Song:** How fast! It's hard to believe that three years have passed. When I reflect on my three years at Clark, I cannot think of a more fitting phrase.

**Anna Zhu:** Clark and CUGS have become such a central part of my life over the last three years. PhD life

sometimes feels a little stagnant, but I look forward to making more progress along with all of CUGS!

**TMT:** Outside of school and research, what do you do for fun?

**ES:** I love to travel, so I enjoy watching YouTube videos related to it. Also, sometimes, I make a list of places that I want to visit, and if I have a chance, I visit them. But at the same time, I am open to the list, and I enjoy discovering places on the site.

**VL:** Outside of school and research, I've recently taken up climbing. I am afraid of heights, but I find myself enjoying scaling to great heights - a contradiction. In that case, sometimes when I reached the top and found no way to go down but jumping, I could scream for three minutes and tried to descend, mingled with sweat. Other times, I like to cuddle with my lizards and experience new cooking styles.

**AZ:** Outside of school and research you can find me running around Worcester (literally) and scoping out new breweries and cafes.

**TMT:** What are you looking forward to, and what do you hope to achieve, next year?

**AZ:** Within this year, I'm looking forward to becoming ABD. I'm also excited to go on my fourth Arctic field cruise with my advisor and lab mates this summer. Outside of school, I'm running a 30-hour ultramarathon (or at least attempting to) in October, so I look forward to both that race and training for it!

**ES:** Next year, I aim to have a clear idea of my research and be ABD. Based on that, I hope to get research funding as well.

**VL:** I am hoping to complete my proposal defense and oral exam next semester, as they are the two major milestones on my academic journey at the moment. I am keeping my fingers crossed that everything goes smoothly.



## Meet the Faculty

*The Monadnock Team reached out to the incoming faculty who joined us between the Fall of 2021 and the Fall of 2023. We asked Abby Frazier, Max Ritts, Gustavo Oliveira, Hamed Alemohammad, and Siobhan McGrath about their experience in the GSG, and their reflections on their interests.*

### **The Monadnock Team: How would you describe your experience teaching in the GSG?**

**Abby Frazier:** I've really enjoyed teaching at Clark. I find the students to be extremely engaged and curious, very much exceeding my expectations. These first few years have been a calibration period to assess where the students are at, and it's been a fun challenge to figure out how to push them further. Teaching is an iterative learning process for me, and I'm always looking forward to bringing in new ideas and trying new techniques in the classroom.

### **TMT: Could you briefly describe your current research?**

**AF:** I am a climatologist and the majority of my research is based in the Pacific Islands. I study the impacts of climate variability and change across spatial and temporal scales, and collaborate closely with partners to produce locally-relevant and actionable results to improve climate change decision making. I am currently involved in many different research projects. Recently I completed the 5<sup>th</sup> National Climate Assessment (NCA5) as chapter lead for the Hawaii and US-Affiliated Pacific Islands chapter. This 3-year process has resulted in a comprehensive report on climate change impacts in the region, and I've been heavily involved in lots of public engagement, including a national webinar and podcast, and presentations for state and county legislators. I have two follow-up papers in review reflecting on the process of writing a regional chapter and how we can broaden diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion in the process and development of climate assessments.

I am also the co-lead of the Pacific Drought Knowledge Exchange, which explores knowledge co-production among researchers and resource managers with the goal of expanding the utility of drought-related information for end users through information, training, and tools. This project began with partners in Hawaii, and has since expanded to Guam, American Samoa, and Palau. We examine drought and fire linkages in the Pacific Islands, and recently published a paper in the Journal of Biogeography on fire regimes in Micronesia. I was interviewed by over 20 media outlets on the contributing factors for the Hawaii wildfires in 2023.

### **TMT: What are the most interesting developments for you in geography now?**

**AF:** My field, broadly, has been embracing ideas of knowledge co-production, actionable science, centering Indigenous and local knowledge, and challenging norms around diversity, equity, and inclusion. It is very exciting for me to see traditional academic outlets embracing other ways of knowing, and recognizing the importance of boundary organizations and non-traditional knowledge products. Many climatologists have been working in climate services for many years, at the boundary of science and policy/management/etc. (e.g., state climatologists), but we are now seeing expansion of these roles, and more diverse participation from different communities. I'm excited to see how these ideas continue to grow and be applied in how we produce and report climate science. Geographers have a huge role to play in bringing our



Abby Frazier

interdisciplinary lens to tackling climate change.

### **TMT: What do you do away from scholarship?**

**AF:** I love to travel and explore new places – this year I finally made it to Palau, and snorkeling in the Rock Islands was absolutely incredible. My partner and I research different dog-friendly parks, hikes, or wineries to explore with our pup on weekends. I also love to host game nights, and enjoy trivia nights, comedy shows & concerts, Woo Sox games, and beach days. I try to keep up with NCAA softball in the spring and NFL games in the fall, and watch way too much Netflix. I spend a lot of time with my family in northern Vermont – it's been great to see them more frequently after being in Hawaii for so long!

### **The Monadnock Team: How would you describe your experience teaching in the GSG?**

**Gustavo Oliveira:** Teaching both undergrad courses and grad seminars at the GSG has been very enjoyable and fulfilling. I have been creating new undergraduate courses that bring students into geography and political ecology through debates about sustainable development, climate change, geopolitics, and current affairs. It has been wonderful to see how smart and critical Clarkies are from the get go, and how excited they are to discuss everything from the history of capitalism to current affairs. Graduate seminars have been especially exciting for me. They are an opportunity for me to not only revisit foundational texts that shape geography and political ecology to this day, but also for me to explore new cutting edge material in conversation with our brilliant PhD students. The GSG basically runs an R1 department at a small institution that is almost a liberal arts college, and it really provides the best of both worlds: we have relatively small undergraduate classes with academically ambitious students, but faculty also benefit from the collaboration of PhD students as TAs. This allows me to dedicate more time to my research, while still providing the students with opportunities for small groups discussions and activities with the TAs, who also take up a substantial amount of the time consuming labor of grading quizzes and assignments. Moreover, this combination of a relatively small liberal arts program with an academically rigorous and ambitious research-oriented department enables coursework to launch undergrad and graduate students into research collaborations as well, and when this integration of students into my research projects works well, it is truly wonderful.

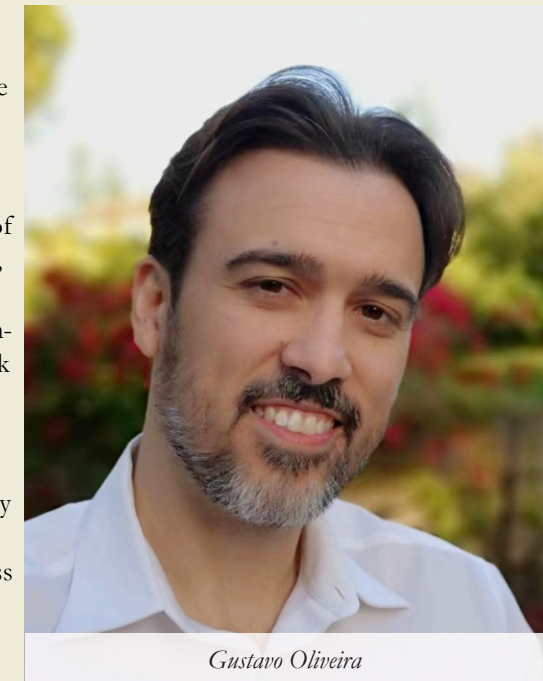
### **TMT: Could you briefly describe your current research?**

**GO:** I conduct long-term ethnographic research on Chinese investments in Brazilian agribusiness, finance, and infrastructure. Currently I am in the final stretch of a book about this topic, while reading a lot on the political ecology of infrastructure and the critical geopolitics of climate change for the next stage of this project. Since I wasn't able to return to Brazil or China during the

pandemic, I launched a very large collaborative research project on the impacts of the pandemic on food supply chains in the US. I am still publishing several articles from this project, engaging themes of socio-economic inequalities in revenue loss and access to government funds, the limitations of firm-level resilience and adaptation strategies, and the differences in consumer behavior change during the pandemic across the urban-to-rural continuum. Since being hired at Clark in 2022, I launched a collaboration with Gil Pontius for a NASA-funded project on the political ecology of irrigation in the Brazilian cerrado ecosystem. This work builds upon my long term scholarship on the political economy and political ecology of agribusiness in Brazil, especially related to soybeans in the cerrado, but it also integrates remote sensing and GIS analysis. Joining Clark has been a remarkable opportunity to develop an integrative geography research projects like this, and I believe that we can train the next generation of leaders in geography through work on projects like these. I continue pursuing additional external funds and opportunities for collaboration especially on the political ecology of climate change.

### **TMT: What are the most interesting developments for you in geography now?**

**GO:** In the areas where I work, there have been lots of debates in the past decade or so about infrastructures not simply as objects but as an analytical lens on its own right, new ontologies and materialisms, multispecies geographies and more-than-human agency, the so-called plantationcine, racial capitalism(s), etc. I find the theory-driven aspect of these debates to have diminishing returns, often playing out as an intellectual fad that does little more than advance some individuals' academic careers. Yet there are also some important debates that emerge from political struggles beyond academia. For example, there is a much necessary effort to connect studies of climate change with the political economy of agrarian change, there are crucial studies emerging in critical resource geographies that tackle the geographical and material dimensions of a post-fossil fuel energy transition, and the political ecology of health has gained much space and prominence since the pandemic. There are also vibrant



Gustavo Oliveira

discussions about how different theoretical frameworks may contribute to the advancement of these struggles, such as the debate between proponents of degrowth and advocates of eco-socialist modernization, and very concrete examination of tactics and strategies for social change in the face of climate change, including critiques of non-violence and theoretically-informed calls for disruption of business-as-usual through more militant eco-sabotage and mass mobilization of labor unions for strikes by workers in strategic sectors.

### **TMT: What do you do away from scholarship?**

**GO:** I am an extremely happy father of a 1.5 year old girl right now, so my wife and I spend as much time as we can with her. Our relationship transitioned from the romance of newlyweds to the love of a young family, so I still try to take my wife out on dates when we can, but often what we do for fun is guided by what parents and a toddler can enjoy together. We enjoy cooking our own meals still, and going out on hikes or picnics now that the weather is warmer again. We frequently visit the Eric Carle Museum, and I'm excited to visit the Whydah Pirate Museum. Sometimes, just having an opportunity to share drinks and a nice meal with friends is more than enough to keep me happy away from work!



**The Monadnock Team: How would you describe your experience teaching in the GSG?**

I would describe it in very positive terms. I've taught at UBC, Minnesota, and Cambridge, and Clark. In my opinion, Clark students offer the best mixture of scholarly rigor, curiosity, and political commitment. This is true for the graduates and the undergraduates. It might partially be a function of the small class sizes, which facilitates getting to know students and their interests. And it may also have to do with the experiences I've gained elsewhere and the appreciation I now have for my privileges here: like being able to design my own courses and set reading lists. But honestly, I would say that Clark's students are the best thing about being a professor at Clark.

**TMT: Could you briefly describe your current research?**

I'm just beginning a new study into the political economy of sensing – by which I predominantly mean sensor technologies and associated infrastructures; but also the laboring bodies that sensing practices involve. Right now, this appears to be moving in the direction of 'the digital mine' – a concept geographers are using to describe the intercalation of digital technologies – including digital sensors – in nearly all aspects of mining site surveying, inventorying, extraction, and work discipline. The mining sector is infamously hard to study, which is why my research collaborator Katie Mazer and I are looking into the informal sites where the digital mine is being consolidated, like remote college campuses, and perhaps even video game conferences. It is not purely coincidental that Cambrian College, located in resource-rich Sudbury ONT, features both The Centre for Smart Mining and a Centre for Video Game Development among its recent initiatives.

A second project is taking shape with Clark Alum, Jim Thatcher. It is about Canada's push to develop "universal broadband coverage" in remote areas, and especially in remote Indigenous communities. To address this, we are looking into the world of space environmentalism, satellite junk, spectrum auctions, spectrum sovereignty, and the applicability of the "socioecological fix" to all of the above. It is slow going but interesting stuff!

**TMT: What are the most interesting developments for you in geography now?**

There is a lot to say here. The disciplinary interest in settler colonialism continues to blossom in interesting ways, including in ways that are productive question the growing attention in Indigenous research methods



Max Ritts

coming from the developmental state. Novel collaborations across cultures are really important, but marine conservation, to take one example, is also as a site where collaborations are now emerging that appear less than beneficial to the communities in question. I'm slightly envious of people working on race, repair, and care because there's so many amazing communities coming together around that work, particularly from feminist political economy. I think the politics of energy transition has inspired a wealth of great research – including here at Clark. Finally, I have to mention sound studies, and not only because that's long been a thing for me. The fact that UC Berkeley has a "Black Geosonicologies" group tells you something about the kinds of connections that are being made there.

**TMT: What do you do away from scholarship?**

Well, I now have two kids, but in the remaining 1% of my waking life I am learning more about gardening in New England (something I should be good at, given my time in the Pacific Northwest, but which sadly I am not). I listen to lots of music, and across lots of genres (my favorite radio station is nts.live) and fantasize about playing in a band again. I am also a small but eager part of this amazing Jewish singing group ("Havurah"), which is not only great for music, but also childcare, getting involved in local politics, and connecting with broader communities as well.



Hamed Alemohammad

**The Monadnock Team: How would you describe your experience teaching in the GSG?**

**Hamed Alemohammad:** Exciting and fun! I love teaching interactive courses, and I've the opportunity to teach GEOG 213/313 on Advanced Geospatial Analytics w/ Python in GSG now. Majority of the course involves hands-on programming for which we (students, TA and myself) work on coding exercises to tackle different types of geospatial data. Last Fall, one of the students brought a problem to the class from her dissertation and we co-developed a solution for it. This was very rewarding for myself and students as we used the tools from the course to build a solution to a real-world problem.

**TMT: Could you briefly describe your current research?**

**HA:** My research falls at the intersection of geospatial analytics and geography as it relates to addressing global environmental challenges. Primarily, I focus on 1) developing novel geospatial analytics models and tools that can use various remotely sensed data and derive insights, and 2) working with stakeholders on applied projects that have practical constraints and can be implemented using advanced geospatial analytics.

For example, with our team at Clark CGA, we recently collaborated with NASA and IBM to implement and evaluate a Geospatial Foundation Model, named Prithvi, for a set of applications such as crop and land cover classification, and gap filling of cloudy satellite imagery. This project developed cutting-edge AI models for geospatial applications by adapting advancements in AI to the geospatial field. In another project, we are working with Kenya Space Agency and Microsoft AI for Good teams to use drone imagery for mapping agricultural field boundaries and building footprints. In this case, our solution is built with our stakeholder and by considering availability of resources (data and compute) on their end.

**TMT: What are the most interesting developments for you in geography now?**

**HA:** In the areas related to remote sensing, GIS and geospatial analytics, I'm excited about three major developments:

1. Growing availability of observations from a diverse range of sensors; this includes several new satellites from NASA and ESA (e.g. NISAR mission) and commercial satellites from the private sector. We are monitoring the pulse of our planet with observations at an unprecedented rate and accuracy.
2. Development of advancement AI techniques for geospatial data analysis. In recent years, we have observed a rapid increase in the number of tools and models that are built specifically for geospatial data and I'm excited to see their advancement and further adoption to address environmental and societal challenges.
3. Embracing open-science and open-source principles. Our community is adopting new principles for publishing (paper, data, tools, tutorials, and know-hows) to ensure our science is reproducible, and that everyone with any level of resources can access them. This is going to lead to a more diverse and inclusive community and as a result better solutions to our global challenges.

**TMT: What do you do away from scholarship?**

**HA:** I love photography and hiking. Over the years, I have taken photos of our natural landscape and night sky (I would be an astronomer if it wasn't for geography). Recently, I traveled to Main (near a place called Chain of Ponds) to catch the total solar eclipse on Apr 8, and photographed the sun using my DSLR camera. Here is one of my photos that shows the sun prominences during the totality.



Photo by Hamed Alemohammad

April 8, 2024 | Chain of Ponds, ME, USA



Siobhan McGrath

**The Monadnock Team: How would you describe your experience teaching in the GSG?**

**Siobhan McGrath:** I'm loving it! I started teaching in 2010, so in some ways I feel very comfortable in my teaching role – but I've been teaching in a very different system, so in other ways it feels as if I am just starting out again. There are advantages to both systems but I prefer the liberal arts model; it's more flexible and I am able to engage with the students more. Last semester I led the Introduction to Economic Geography course. This semester I have been teaching a course on Labor Geography where we have had guest speakers from labor organizations, thanks to support from GSG and the Dean of the College's office – and that's been wonderful. The students are really able to see the topic come to life through these guest talks. I've also been leading a seminar-based course on Unfree Labor where the students have really impressed me, stepping up to the challenge and highlighting aspects of the readings that I hadn't focused on.

**TMT: Could you briefly describe your current research?**

**SM:** My research to date has focused on labor, particularly two themes: labor within Global Production Networks; and forms of unfreedom in labor relations. Related to the latter, I've also researched the contemporary politics of "anti-slavery." Moving back to the US and to a new institution has

felt like a good moment for branching out into a new area of research. So this past semester I have been working with Eunyeong Song to look at "restrictive covenants" in employment contracts. These are clauses which serve to restrain workers labor market mobility – for example, non-compete agreements and so-called "stay or pay clauses" or training repayment agreement provisions (TRAPs). It's a new topic for me, but it links to some of the conceptual questions about freedoms and unfreedoms in the labor market that I've been thinking about in relation to so-called "modern slavery." We are still working out what this new project will be.

**TMT: What are the most interesting developments for you in geography now?**

**SM:** Can I dodge the question and just talk about labor geography? That's what I've been thinking about the most for the past couple of months. Here the revitalization of the labor regimes framework has been really promising. This is an interdisciplinary project, but geography is central to it – and social reproduction is a key theme within it. Likewise there's been some scholarship on labor and livelihoods "beyond the wage" – broadly in a post-work or anti-work tradition – that I think raises important questions and issues. Lastly I think that labor geography is finally engaging with theories of racial capitalism, which is arguably overdue.

**TMT: What do you do away from scholarship?**

**SM:** I don't have any exciting hobbies at the moment, probably because I am still settling into my new home. I like getting outdoors for what I call "gentle" hikes and bike rides. I also enjoy seeing movies, especially at the theater. Mainly my partner and I have an incredible eight-year old kid to hang out with. They insist on playing video games together, which I inevitably lose (though let it be said for the record that I legitimately won a game of 'Boomerang Fu' recently.) My kid's current career ambition is to be a game designer - so maybe they will attend Clark one day!

## Reflections from CUGWU

By Sarah Lerman-Sinkoff

In October 2022, Clark Graduate Workers United (CUGWU) successfully ended a five-day, open-ended strike for a first contract.

Throughout the union drive and contract campaign, many students within the Geography department sustained and grew the collective power to bring about change. I am proud of how our department brought the humanistic and quantitative skills cultivated in our discipline to bear on improving Clark as a workplace and a site of scholarship: from facilitating meetings, to reassuring apprehensive colleagues in taking action, to researching university finances and more.

The editors of *The Monadnock* asked me to produce a retrospective for this issue as a member of the union's original organizing committee and an elected representative of the bargaining committee. Personally, I am grateful that the Geography department fostered camaraderie (amidst trepidation) among grad workers, yielded coffee and snacks from faculty at the picket line, and elicited grace from students who supported us despite disruptions to their courses. (Some students even stayed up all night to shore up our 24/7 picket!) These demonstrations of care contrasted starkly with my experiences at the bargaining table with the administration's contracted legal champion, Damien DiGiovanni. (NB: in his public professional biography, Damien brags about successfully blocking attempts to reinstate a charter school teacher who had been leading a union drive.) In my professional life after Clark, I hope to never again have to spend six months with a white-shoe lawyer quibbling over the definition of "student" while my coworkers struggle to buy groceries and pay rent.

Looking ahead to the 2025 contract campaign, I hope the broader Clark community takes to heart two key lessons from 2022 strike. First, academic labor



CUGWU Organizing Committee after winning the union election. Photo: María José Guillén-Araya

struggles force the administration to address the gap between the University's purported and actual priorities. As we demonstrated by withholding our labor, without grad workers the University's core missions of teaching and research cannot be carried out. Capital campaigns, like land acquisition and new construction, must be in service of those missions, and not the other way around. If the University's budget does not reflect those priorities, academic workers can and should take necessary corrective action.

Second, Clark depends on the broader working class in Worcester, and any successful labor action on campus similarly relies on off-campus solidarity. Worcester's labor movement made real sacrifices on our behalf: every UPS driver that refused to service a port-a-potty, every janitor who refused to service a crane operator that drove away, and every construction worker who walked off a job site, did so knowing that they were potentially forgoing the day's pay. The material ramifications of this solidarity cannot be understated, and I remain incredibly grateful for the town-gown support they demonstrated. By ending our strike quickly, we were able to donate nearly

all of the \$12,000 we fundraised for our strike fund: we split the money between the undergraduate mutual aid fund and a college scholarship fund for children of the broader Teamsters Local 170. These recipients were selected in order to help current and prospective students afford the education we provide.

While the first contract set a new standard for working and learning conditions, there are still key gaps. With inflation as high as it was during the campaign, the enormous raise we won (46% in one year for Geography) still fell several thousand dollars below a living wage by the time of contract ratification. Masters student workers still need subsidized health insurance premiums, all graduate workers need vision and dental insurance, and childcare remains prohibitively expensive for many. Moreover, as we learned in the campaign, the letter of any policy is only as strong as workers' ability to collectively enforce it. Moving forward, my hope is that the GSG continues to approach academic labor struggles as what they are: collective efforts to protect and promote high-caliber education and research.

# Reflections from the Field

## Doubt, decolonization and a little miracle

By Mwangi Chege

When does field work start? When does it end? There were no clear points in time for me demarcating the start and end of fieldwork. Instead, there were pockets of intensity interspersed with uncertain lulls. So, to the pockets of intensity.

These were numerous, simultaneously exhausting and exhilarating, concentrated in the latter half of 2022, and into 2023. My research focuses on medium-scale, urban-based farmers who are active in the rural areas of Nakuru and Narok counties in Kenya. Nairobi is Kenya's capital city where many urban-based farmers have their residence, while the rural expanses of Nakuru and Narok counties are areas where these urban-based farmers are actively farming. My research project was motivated by investigations that evidence how urban residents in Kenya, and several other African countries, are acquiring rural land and engaging in agricultural activities with the aim of securing stable financial returns (Jayne et al., 2019). My work examines how and whether these urban-based farmers are shaping processes of agrarian change towards the development and entrenchment of commercial agriculture in rural areas. I address my research findings in my dissertation, but in this brief piece I want to reflect on some of the experiences and encounters I came across during those moments of intensity in the field.

My fieldwork was multi-sited, encompassing Nairobi, Nakuru and Narok counties. I spent considerable amounts of time moving from one farm to another, sometimes with agricultural officers from each county, and other times on my own. Those moments traversing through rural Kenya were truly eye-opening for someone like me who had spent most of his life in urban areas. One striking reality was seeing how much agricultural land Kenya's elites have acquired for themselves. This in turn has forced rural people to juggle different activities – some legal, some not – to secure their livelihoods. I remember watching a couple of cyclists carrying bales of freshly harvested grass on the carriers at the back of their bicycles. The county official beside me explained that they had just left the farm that belonged to Kenya's former president, Uhuru Kenyatta. Poor rural people would steal into the farm and harvest bales of grass which they would sell to small livestock farmers to feed their cattle, sheep and goats. Interestingly, the county official did not seem concerned about stopping the pair of cyclists despite her suspicions about them. Sometimes they would get caught, other times not. For me, it was a reminder of Kenya's still unresolved land question (Kanyinga, 2009). Following independence from the British in



Top: Swahili hotel for a decent breakfast  
Bottom: Going to the market in Nairagi Enkare, Narok.

1963, Kenya instituted various land reform processes that were supposed to have redistributed land which the settler colonialists had hoarded for themselves, to rural poor populations who had been deprived of access to their ancestral lands. But these land reform processes largely benefited the country's elites who allocated land to themselves. This further underscored the prescience of Fanon (1963), the revolutionary intellectual-activist who wrote in *'The Wretched of the Earth'* about the betrayal of formerly colonized people by post-colonial elites. The struggles of Kenya's rural poor are a reminder about the incomplete processes of decolonization that still play out to this day, and of their material consequences in people's everyday lives.

During my travels from one farm to another, I would introduce myself as a doctoral student, and because I was talking to people who were involved in farming, they often immediately thought I was studying for a PhD in an agricultural-related course and would ask for advice with their farming. One farmer asked me about how much in maize yields she should be targeting for her farm. I had to disappoint her by saying that I was only studying for a Geography PhD. She looked at me quizzically, as if she was wondering why someone would do that. Many times, I did wonder about what I was doing. Would the information I was collecting and eventually write about be useful to anyone else besides myself and the few people in academia who would read my work? It's an issue I am still wrestling with as I write my dissertation. The answers are not immediately clear, but I hope they will be with time.

Fieldwork was not all about scholarly angst though, there were many moments of joy. Like the morning in Nakuru when a county officer and myself returned to a farm we had visited the previous day and were told by the farm manager that one of the cows had given birth after our visit. The manager insisted that we had brought good luck to the farm. We went to look at the newborn calf, still trying to find its legs in this world it had been plunged into. I didn't want to think about its future as meat, for now it was enough to enjoy this little miracle.

While I am now focused on dissertation writing, my fieldwork has not ended as I still have to reach out occasionally to my interlocutors for information about something or the other. These encounters and interactions serve as a constant reminder that the PhD is truly a collective endeavor, one that can only be achieved with the generosity of numerous others.

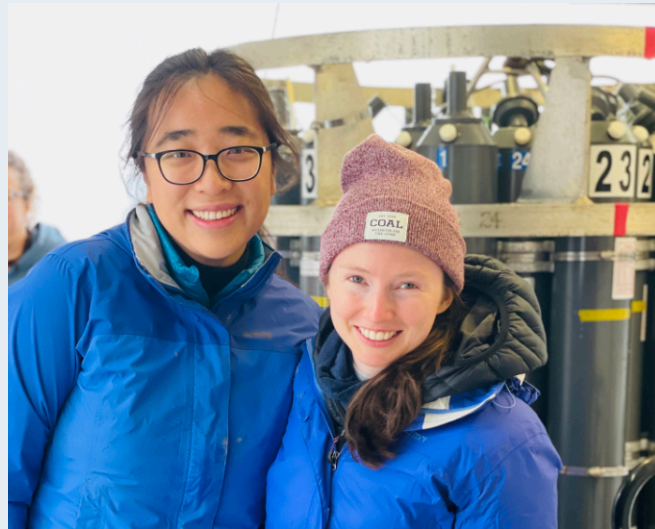
### Photos courtesy of Mwangi

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Top: Newborn calf, few hours after its birth  
Bottom: Motorcycle taxis, also called bodaboda, will take you anywhere



By Clare Gaffey & Anna Zhu

Climate change is transforming the Arctic. The Arctic is warming four times faster than the rest of the globe, leading to rising ocean temperatures, reductions in sea ice, melting permafrost, coastal erosion, and alterations to water masses, including increased freshwater inputs and infiltration of lower-latitude warmer waters. These physical changes threaten marine ecosystems and people's livelihoods in the Arctic. Phytoplankton, the foundation of the ecosystem, grows at different times of the year. Fatty phytoplankton communities are being replaced by smaller phytoplankton types that are much less nutritious, leading to trophic cascades, which is evident in mortality events of sea birds and marine mammals. Worse yet is the increased prevalence of harmful algal blooms in Alaskan seas, consumption of which has led to human and (suspected) wildlife deaths in recent years.

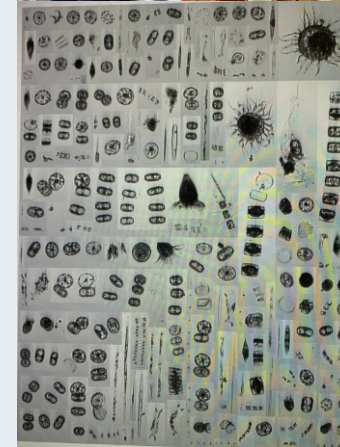
In our quest to obtain a PhD and contribute to our universal understanding of some of these changes, we (Anna and Clare) have traveled to the Arctic every summer as part of Karen Frey's NSF-funded Distributed Biological Observatory. Each July, we board the Canadian Coast Guard Ship *Sir Wilfrid Laurier* to sample chromophoric dissolved organic matter, chlorophyll-a pigments, phytoplankton communities, and suspended particulate matter. These properties, combined with others collected by partners at Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, are used to monitor marine ecosystem health at biological hotspots in the Bering and Chukchi Seas.

Fieldwork on an icebreaker is otherworldly. All your space is shared with fellow scientists and coast guard crew on the

open ocean for weeks. The reality outside this floating vessel pauses in your mind but continues without you. You are entirely off the grid for a few days to a week or more, which is a relief for some and stress for others. Work shifts do not exist for our sampling teams. When we arrive at our sampling locations, we work until we finish. Sometimes, that means through the night; sometimes, that means through the day *and* night. Sleep is coveted and precious, maintained only by short naps between stations and a very long sleep once the trip ends. In the polar summer, day and night bleed into one another. There is no reason to remember the days of the week. The chaos, close quarters, whales, walrus, epic sunrises/sets, and occasional polar illusions (e.g., sundogs, northern lights) define a workspace we are always ready to return to.

Beyond our shared fieldwork, we have additional fieldwork to carry out:

Anna: This upcoming cruise will mark my fourth expedition to the Arctic seas. I often reminisce about my first cruise in 2021, where I met my advisor Karen and Clare for the first time while sitting on the floor of the Seattle airport. Since then, I have been fortunate to have numerous unique,



unforgettable experiences and have forged many meaningful connections. Through one of these connections, I have the opportunity to travel to Oregon State University each summer, where I work in my external committee member's lab on an instrument called the Imaging Flow Cytobot (IFCB). The IFCB allows me to image otherwise microscopic phytoplankton cells to identify them for the broader goal of examining phytoplankton populations in our study area and how those are changing over time and space with our changing oceans. Living in Oregon during the summer, even if it's just for a month or so, is also such a refreshing experience. I really enjoyed exploring all the nature Oregon has to offer as well as the eccentric college-town of Corvallis!

Clare: This upcoming July will be my seventh Arctic research cruise. In addition to the Canadian cruises, I collected samples as part of the Synoptic Arctic Survey, an international effort to create baseline data for the pan-to-central Arctic Ocean. For this, I spent two months on the US Coast Guard Cutter *Healy*, traveling to the North Pole to collect ocean optics and chlorophyll-a pigments throughout the Pacific and Central Arctic. Unsurprisingly, the best day of this cruise was when we reached the North Pole. We spent the day playing on the sea ice, cartwheeling, and taking turns riding a fat tire bike. We took pictures and enjoyed a visit with Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus, and I flew my DJI Mavic drone to its sad, cold death out on the sea ice 5 km away. Lesson learned: never fly in attitude mode near the geographic North Pole!

There is much more to fieldwork than the experiences themselves, the people we meet, the science, or the sacrifices made. The most significant takeaway is the personal responsibility that fieldwork instills in us. As PhD students, we are drawn to research topics that resonate with us. Even if our topics are niche and perhaps only interesting to a small group of people, we dedicate a significant portion of our time to identifying, describing, and connecting to the broader world on these matters outside of ourselves. Fieldwork strengthens this commitment as it is the conduit between the researcher and the subject. It makes it real. We are not the work, but the work creates us.

Photos courtesy of Clare and Anna



# CUGS Gallery



Students congregate to organize picketing CUGWU from dawn to dusk



PC: Arman Bajracharya; Kwabena Antwi





CUGS + MSGIS Get-together



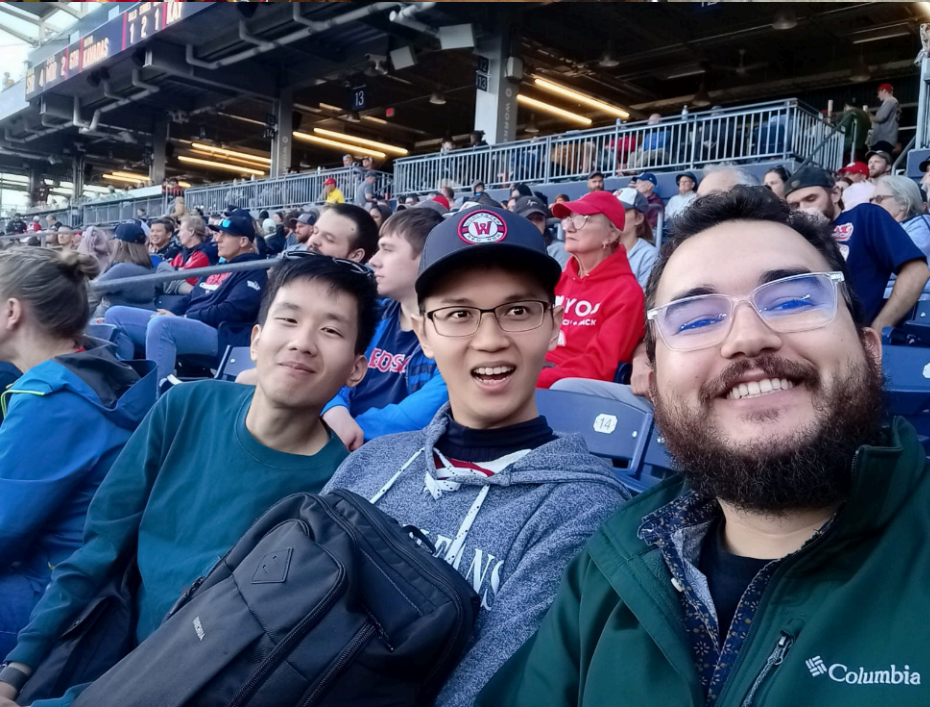
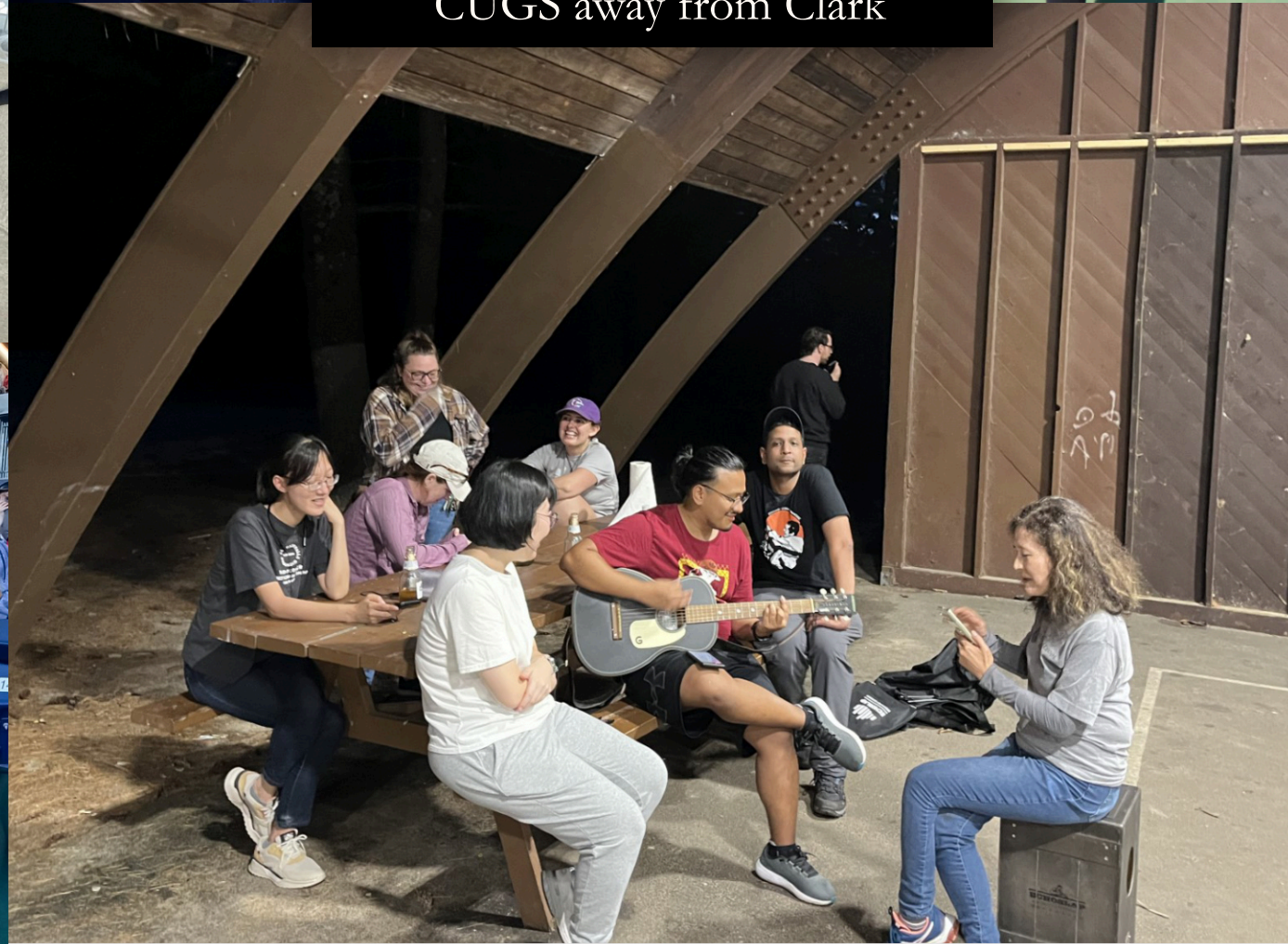
CUGS present themselves as their secondary identities on Halloween



Attempted séance at Casa CUGS



PC: Shan-yu Wang, Kwabena Antwi, Arman Bajracharya



CUGS away from Clark

PC: Pilar Delpino Marimon; Shan-yu Wang; Kwabena Antwi, Anna Zhu



Conceptual Potluck 2023 Best Concept Winner: Kwabena Antwi

Conceptual Potluck 2023 Best Taste Winner: Rinku Roy Chowdhury

Conceptual Potluck 2024 Best Taste Winner: Gisselle Vila-Benites  
Conceptual Potluck 2024 Best Concept Winner: Arman Bajracharya

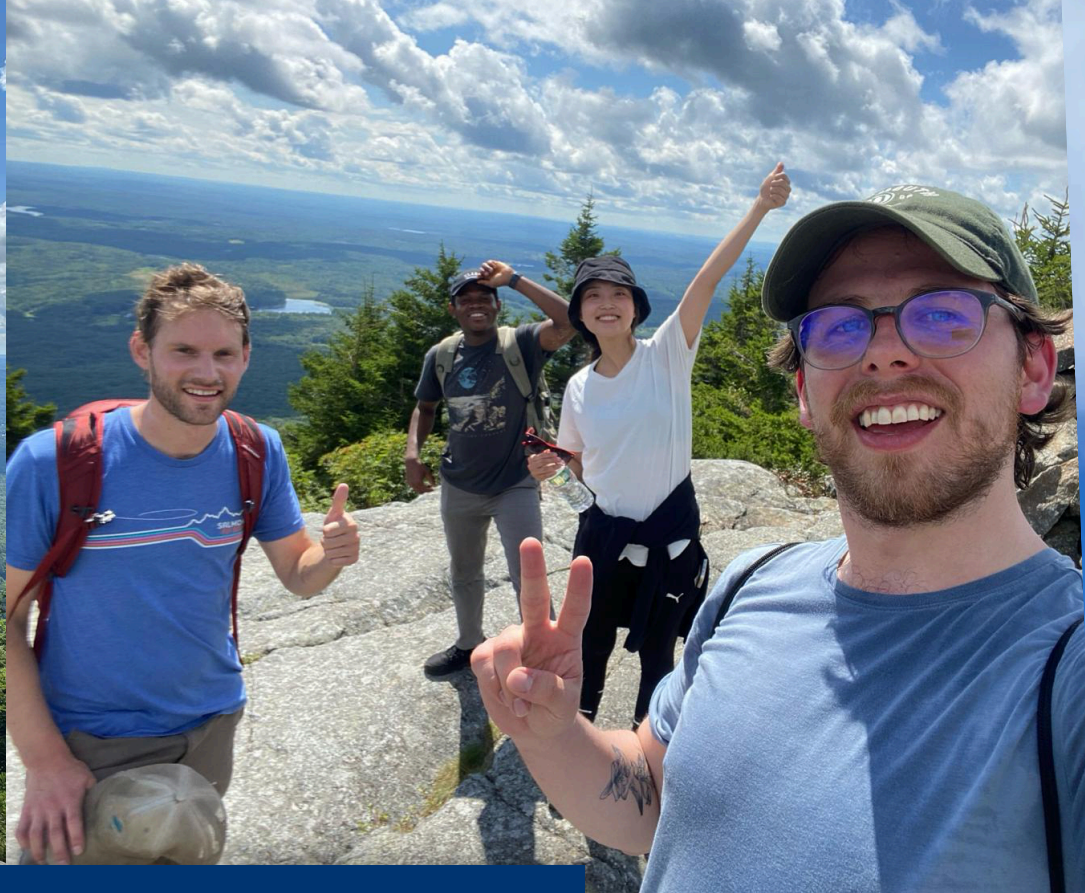
PC: Shan-yu Wang, Kwabena Antwi, Arman Bajracharya



Conceptual Potluck 2023

Conceptual Potluck 2024





Field Camp and Mount Monadnock Hike 2023



An aerial photograph of a mountain range, likely the Monadnock region. The terrain is rugged and densely forested, with a prominent river valley running through the center. The lighting is dramatic, with the sun low in the sky, creating long shadows and highlighting the textures of the forest and the winding paths of the river. The colors range from deep greens in the shadows to bright yellows and oranges on the sunlit slopes.

# **The Monadnock**

**Editors:  
Arman Bajracharya  
Sergio Carvajal**