

2026 SOCIAL SCIENCES SUMMER WRITING INTERNSHIP PROGRAM SHOWCASE



Amita Ganesh



Lindsay Griesman



Zuzu Jansen



Krishna Nagarajan



Jieun Paik



Robin Sheng

Internship presentations and invited talks on
Tuesday
July 21st, 2026
10 am - Noon
704 Commonwealth Ave, Room 504

Agenda

Time	Presentation	Speaker
10:00 am	Welcome & Introductions	Deborah Carr, Director/CISS
10:10 am	SWIP Introduction	David Shawn, Associate Director for Writing in the Disciplines
10:15 am	Remarks	Jonathan Mijs, Associate Professor/Sociology
10:25 am	Remarks	Andrew Thurston, Editor/The Brink
10:35 am	Intern Presentations	Amita Ganesh Lindsay Griesman Zuzu Jansen Krishna Nagarajan Jieun Paik Robin Sheng
12:00am	Wrap Up & Thank Yous	Deborah Carr, Director/CISS
12:05 pm	Lunch	

Introduction

The Social Science Summer Writing Internship Program (SWIP) is a collaboration between the Center for Innovation in Social Science (CISS) and the Writing in the Disciplines program. SWIP provides paid summer writing internships to undergraduate students studying social sciences by placing interns at a social science research institute on the BU campus for a ten-week period in the summer and providing guidance to interns on their own individual writing projects. Interns work at their placement 15 hours per week and participate in a 90-minute weekly writing workshop/seminar led by Writing Program Senior Lecturer Dr. Stephen Hodin. All interns develop an individual writing project and come together to collaborate and share their work at the seminar. Interns participate in a concluding program that features interns' presentations and guest speakers.

Thank You

We would like to extend a special thank you to University and CAS Advisory Board Member, and alumna, Jennifer Simpson (CAS'00), and the Psalm 103 Foundation for their generous support of this program.

Amita Ganesh

Sociocultural Anthropology, CAS'27
Global Development Policy Center



Purity and Honor: Ethnographic and Bollywood Film Representation of the 1947 Partition

Amita Ganesh is a rising junior from Belmont, CA majoring in Sociocultural Anthropology on a pre-law track. Her general research interests include media studies, gender, and the ways that popular culture can shape social life.

This summer she worked with the Global Development Policy Center with the Economics in Context Initiative. While working at the GDP, Amita has written educational blogs on subjects like alternative sustainable energy and the domestic labor economy, identifying gaps in research relating to gender and protective economic policies. She is especially interested in making economic and social science research more accessible, relevant, and engaging for wider audiences.

She is currently developing her Honors Thesis in Anthropology, which examines how ideas of purity and honor shaped gendered violence during the 1947 Partition of India and Pakistan, with a particular focus on representations in Bollywood film and ethnography.

Amita Ganesh

Sociocultural Anthropology, CAS'27

Global Development Policy Center

While the current, traditional utilities system that rewards inefficiency and more sustainable options, like rooftop solar, being aggressively lobbied against, Local Power Networks (LPNs) can offer a proven, adaptable solution. At their core, these locally owned and operated mini-grids, create a shared reservoir of power that neighbors can pool and share. Such a design eliminates the defects of the centralized grid where up to 10% of energy is lost through transmission. LPNs, instead, keep power close to where it is generated as well as consumed. In terms of institutional design, LPNs create opportunities for community oriented ownership: communities, municipalities, or cooperatives can operate and benefit from their own energy sources. Additionally, LPNs can operate on "island mode" where it functions as a standby power source that can keep neighborhoods running smoothly during power demands or outages.

~ Amita Ganesh

Lindsay Griesman

Anthropology/Health & Medicine,
CAS'27

Center for Innovation in Social Science



For Health or Enhancement? GLP-1 Use in the Era of Molecular Biopolitics

Born and raised in New York City, Lindsay Griesman is a rising senior majoring in Medical Anthropology with minors in Biology and Public Health. Combined, these three tracks of study give Lindsay a critical perspective on the complexities of healthcare systems and the importance of the experiences of the people within these systems. This perspective helps her understand that accessible communication is essential to bridge the gap between important academic research and the realities of everyday life. Outside of the classroom, Lindsay has been a lifelong dancer and loves baking, concerts, and exploring new places.

Through SWIP this summer, Lindsay was placed with the Center for Innovation in the Social Sciences (CISS). There, she has been able to draw from various interdisciplinary interests to tell stories of the social sciences in real-world applications. From articles on an engineering team working on a groundbreaking medical device to detect early pre-eclampsia to the importance of mental health in minority populations, Lindsay's background in anthropology and passion for healthcare equality lend her a critical and careful perspective that has greatly benefitted the work that CISS does. Take a look at the CISS website to read her articles!

Lindsay Griesman

Anthropology/Health & Medicine,
CAS'27

Center for Innovation in Social Science

For her SWIP project, however, Lindsay decided to tackle one of the more controversial topics in the social sciences today: the biopolitics of GLP-1 drugs. Through weekly writing workshops and feedback from Stephen, Lindsay has carefully crafted a research paper to help understand the many sides of the GLP-1 debate, from the medicalized management of obesity to socialized body standards. Titled "For Health or Enhancement?: GLP-1 Use in the Era of Molecular Biopolitics," her paper draws on ethnographies, research, and personal interviews to show why the social sciences are more important than ever in this age of media, misinformation, and divisive politics.

The biomedical field is experiencing an impressive acceleration in the movement from treating discrete illnesses to proactively enhancing vital capacities. These technologies both challenge and reinforce cultural definitions of what it means to be in a "normal" or "healthy" body. They defend the idea that being thin and lean is a visible marker of discipline and efficiency yet challenge historic notions of the body as naturally resilient. In a society where being overweight has long been stigmatized as a personal failure, GLP-1s medicalize obesity as a disease that calls for pharmaceutical intervention, and somehow still normalize a body that is smaller and engineered to fit society's unrealistic standards. ~ Lindsay Griesman

Zuzu Jansen

Medical Anthropology, CAS'27 ✨
CAS Communications / Center for
Innovation in Social Science



Act Natural: The Weaponization of Scientific Language in the Anti-Trans Movement

Zuzu Jansen (CAS' 27) is a rising senior in the College of Arts and Sciences majoring in Anthropology, with a specialization in Health & Medicine. As part of the 2026 Social Science Summer Writing Internship Program (SWIP), she spent the summer working with CAS Communications. She is drawn to the intersections of health and human experience, and finds that medical anthropology provides a strong foundation to explore medicine and healthcare beyond the biological standpoint.

Zuzu first discovered her interest in the field through introductory anthropology courses during her time in the College of General Studies program. One of her favorite courses was AN 272: Introduction to Evolutionary Medicine with Professor Carolyn Hodges-Simeon who further solidified Zuzu's decision to declare the major, showing that the field might seem niche, yet is widely applicable. "It is a happy medium between health/medicine and human experience without requiring medical school or a heavy biology curriculum," she says.

Zuzu learned about SWIP through an email from her advisor Merav Shohet and it immediately caught her attention. While she enjoys academic writing, she finds it can be tedious from time to time. She was excited by the opportunity to make research more accessible to broader audiences and hoped to bridge the gap between academia and the wider community by highlighting the work of Boston University students and faculty. Not only does she get to improve her writing skills and work on a passion project, but also observe, work with, and give a platform (beyond the bubble of their field) to people who make an impact on a daily basis.

Zuzu Jansen

Medical Anthropology, '27 ✨
CAS Communications / Center
for Innovation in Social Science

Throughout the summer, Zuzu has contributed to a variety of storytelling projects for CAS Communications. She assisted with multiple photography and videography projects, including a visit to the Arnold Arboretum, where she documented a research team studying beetles. She has conducted several interviews, including one for an article currently in the editing stages titled “Technotribalism,” a philosophy research project that explores how modern technology and artificial intelligence shape political and social division. Alongside her communications work, Zuzu has been developing an independent research project that examines how scientific language is used to naturalize sex and gender within anti-trans discourse. Drawing on anthropological debates surrounding nature and culture, the project explores how language shapes perceptions of trans identities and contributes to larger systems of exclusion and discrimination. Zuzu has also been working to spotlight the experiences of fellow CAS students participating in summer research and internships, in the form of social media features and photo essays capturing how students experience Boston during the summer and the different ways they are making an impact across the university and beyond.

In his writings, the late philosopher Bruno Latour posited that our clear bounding of nature as “not the outcome of human activities” is what allows us to ultimately define and make culture. Both nature and culture are therefore human created concepts (Pollini, 2013). This ontological approach pushes back against nature as the root of all unchangeable truths, ultimately laying the foundation for people to argue about the definitions of sex and gender as (de)naturalized ideas. The trans identity falls squarely at the intersection of this proposed divide as anti-trans rhetoric often relies on ‘denaturalizing’ trans people in order to then deny their existence and basic human rights. In order to fight for trans rights, it is therefore critical to investigate what it means to be ‘natural’ and how this language is used.

~ Zuzu Jansen

Krishna Nagarajan

Economics, CAS'28

Center on Forced Displacement



Migration & Money: What It Means Be Locked Out of a Formal Economy

Krishna Nagarajan is a rising junior from San Diego, CA, majoring in economics at the BU College of Arts and Sciences. He is strongly interested in exploring how financial systems impact the lives and futures of displaced individuals. Outside of academics, he enjoys music production, reading, and playing sports with his friends.

This summer, Krishna interned at the Center on Forced Displacement, where he learned about the depth of interdisciplinary research on the topic of forced displacement. Under the help of Dr. Carrie Preston, he grew to further understand the extent to which forced displacement is a significant factor for systematic inequality. During his internship, he developed an interest in the particular ways that financial structures may interact with forced displacement, rooted in his background as an Economics major.

Krishna's research project is a natural extension and further exploration of his work for the Center on Forced Displacement. His research investigates the causes and implications of financial exclusion for immigrants around the world. The project was built upon the foundational understanding that immigration of a particular individual often involves a complex decision-making process of an entire family, an observation that Krishna made while personally working with undocumented immigrants in service jobs. Krishna noted that many undocumented immigrants, whose immigration was motivated by the difference in the worth

Krishna Nagarajan

Economics, CAS'28

Center on Forced Displacement

of money between the US and their origin country in the first place, tend to send much of their money earned in the US back to their country of origin. This was partially a consequence of their lack of access to banking services in the US. In fact, once they are able to open bank accounts, their power dynamic with their family members back home fundamentally altered, Krishna argues. Krishna then further extended the scope of his project to include global displaced populations, most notably refugees, who may have some level of access to banking services but remain financially excluded otherwise, demonstrating the importance of financial infrastructure availability beyond only banking systems.

In conclusion, this essay will seek to show how displaced communities globally live in a system of financial exclusion—the very same system that helps to build the so-called “American Dream”. Understanding how their struggles align, even in two entirely different worlds, is critical in the broader understanding of forced displacement and the people it impacts the most. ~ Krishna Nagarajan

Jieun Paik

English & Philosophy, CAS'28
Center on Forced Displacement



Food Sovereignty as a Way of Seeing

Jieun Paik is a rising junior from Wayne, NJ majoring in English and Philosophy with a minor in African American Black Diaspora Studies. They are interested in studying relational knowledge and practices as they manifest in the everyday, as well as in cultural, aesthetic, artistic, and political spheres. Last year, they presented her project titled “Movements, Relations, and Potentialities: The Wooden Figure” at a conference, presenting an Afro-Indigenous reading of Julie Dash’s “Daughters of the Dust”.

This summer, they interviewed alumni of the Center on Forced Displacement’s Border Studies programs, and also contributed to the center’s annual report, reviewing previous publications and the CFD’s contributions to conferences, publications, and other events.

Jieun is currently working on a historical and theoretical analysis of the food sovereignty movement. While the food sovereignty movement emerged as a primarily peasant’s rights response to corporatization of the global food system and unequal concentrations of economic power, they are interested in the movement’s current manifestations as a kind of “movement of movements.” Their project investigates the mechanisms of the movement and why it resonates with the various political groups involved. The larger focus of their project is on solidarity and organized political transformation and social movement.

Jieun Paik

English & Philosophy, CAS'28

Center on Forced Displacement

Today, the food sovereignty movement encompasses everything from agrarian reform (land reparation and tenure), to climate justice, to feminist care theory, to protecting the rights of migrant workers. ~ Jieun Paik

Robin Sheng

History, CAS'28

Institute for Global Sustainability



Half A Mile West and Away: The Orange Line Relocation and the Unfulfilled Promises for Roxbury's Washington Street Corridor

Robin Sheng is a rising junior in the College of Arts & Sciences majoring in history. Their research grows out of a interest in the history of Boston's neighborhoods, urban transit, and the politics of community self-determination.

This summer, Robin worked at the BU Institute of Global Sustainability, where they translate the work of IGS-affiliated researchers from professional jargon into accessible content for LinkedIn, Bluesky, and Instagram. Their main project is a news-style profile article on the eleven graduate research fellows the IGS is supporting this summer through its fellowship program, for which they are interviewing each fellow to gather quotes, writing individual profiles, and introducing the program as a whole. They also design visuals for their social posts and observe supervisors filming the fellows.

For their research project, Robin challenges the mainstream narrative that the Southwest Corridor Project fully realized the demands of the anti-highway protestors from the South End, Roxbury, and Jamaica Plain. That narrative, exemplified by Karilyn Crockett's *People Before Highways*, treats the relocation of the Orange Line from its Washington Street alignment to a new one-half

Robin Sheng

History, CAS'28

Institute for Global Sustainability

a mile west as a straightforward community victory. While this account captures the defeat of the highway, it overlooks a crucial condition: Roxbury's consent to the relocation was tenuous, contingent on an adequate replacement service for Washington Street. That replacement, the Silver Line Bus Rapid Transit, is widely regarded as insufficient. Robin argues that the struggle for community self-determination begun by the anti-highway protestors did not end with the highway's cancellation. Instead, it continued through the 1980s in Roxbury's transit activism, which spanned both support for a light rail replacement and support for retaining the Elevated Orange Line. This activism, in turn, overlapped substantially with broader community resistance to gentrification and displacement.

The Roxbury community's consent to the Orange Line relocation is tenuous and highly conditional upon the construction of an adequate replacement service on Washington Street. The ultimate replacement service in the form of the Silver Line BRT is widely regarded as insufficient for Roxbury. As such, it is reasonable to conclude that the result of the Southwest Corridor Project did not fully meet the demands of Roxbury. ~Robin Sheng

Partners



Boston University College of Arts & Sciences
Writing Program
Writing in the Disciplines

Writing in the Disciplines

www.bu.edu/writingprogram/writing-in-the-disciplines/

The Writing in the Disciplines serves as a resource to academic units, to faculty (individually and in groups), and to students. We collaborate with academic units to create unit-based writing plans, organize co-teaching experiences of Writing-Intensive courses, organize and administer unit-based peer writing tutoring through the Simpson Writing Fellowships, and provide summer internship opportunities for students. In consulting with faculty, we aim to help with implementing best practices for teaching writing, including designing and scaffolding writing assignments, commenting on student work, developing writing-to-learn exercises, navigating issues concerning GenAI, and providing opportunities for student reflective writing.

Working from a perspective that is informed by current scholarship on writing in the disciplines, the WID program emphasizes the distinctiveness of writing within disciplinary contexts. While writers across many disciplines may share common concerns and expectations about writing, each discipline has its own writing genres, writing conventions, citation styles, disciplinary histories, ways of using evidence, and views of what constitutes knowledge and knowledge production. The WID program is a resource to help both students in developing their writing skills & confidence and faculty in providing effective pedagogical approaches to teaching writing.

Internship Supervisors:

David Shawn, Associate Director for Writing in the Disciplines
Stephen Hodin, Senior Lecturer



Arts & Sciences

Center for Innovation in Social Science

Center for Innovation in Social Sciences

www.bu.edu/ciss

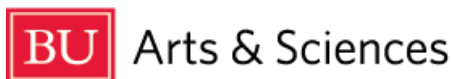
The Center was established in September 2021, with the mission of advancing a vibrant social science community, encompassing research, training, and public engagement among social scientists across disciplines and schools at BU. The Center will catalyze and support innovative social science research and practice, with the ultimate goal of informing urgent social issues on a national and global scale and understanding their historical roots, especially social justice and inclusion, inequality, and sustainability. With a core commitment to evidence-based research, the Center will affirm the tools employed by social scientists, including but not limited to ethnographic, observational, statistical, and historical approaches, and simultaneously strengthen the integration of data science and/or digital scholarship with the social sciences at BU. The Center is housed within the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), and its mission focuses on five domains: research infrastructure and support; community engagement; faculty development; undergraduate research and skill-building training; and graduate research training and skill-building training.

The Center strives to build productive alliances with other programs at BU, bringing together partners to build multidisciplinary research and teaching collaborations. CISS aims to celebrate the milestones of members of BU's social science community, by sharing their latest publications, achievements, and media attention.

Internship Supervisors:

Deborah Carr, Director

Shannon Landis, Center Administrator



CAS Communications

www.bu.edu/cas/faculty-staff/administrative-directory/communications/

Our goal is to tell the story of Arts & Sciences. We promote college news and events. We oversee the production of arts&sciences magazine. We pitch stories to BU Today, Bostonia, The Brink, and external media outlets. We showcase students, faculty, and alumni on our website, in our newsletters (CAS Faculty & Staff News, and on. In her articles on an engineering team working on a groundbreaking medical device, the detecting of early pre-eclampsia, and the importance of mental health in minority populations, we are a resource for our academic departments, programs, centers, and individual faculty members.

Internship Supervisors:

Sydney Gross, Assistant Dean for Communications

Leah Gilchrist, Digital Marketing & Communications Specialist



Center on Forced Displacement

www.bu.edu/cfd

The Center on Forced Displacement fosters interdisciplinary research and engagement with the global challenge of forced displacement. Our projects, research activities, events, and programs bring together multidisciplinary teams of researchers, practitioners, and artists from across schools and colleges at Boston University, around the country, and around the world. These collaborations are crucial to helping us better understand the history and sources of forced displacement, clarify the policies and practices that exacerbate or alleviate human suffering, and generate ethical interventions to improve the lives of displaced communities and their hosts.

CFD serves as a platform for educators, students, researchers, activists, and policymakers to engage in interdisciplinary research, discussion, and education about forced displacement. Through interdisciplinary, international collaboration, we identify, research, and work to resolve challenges of forced displacement, one of the major moral imperatives of our time. By connecting with local communities in Boston and the USA, as well as our partners in Uganda, Colombia, Lebanon, and the Western Balkans, CFD learns directly from and with the communities grappling with the challenges of forced displacement and creates venues for new ways of thinking, research, and program and project design.

Internship Supervisors:

Muhammad Zaman, Director

Carrie Preston, Associate Director



Global Development Policy Center

Global Development Policy Center

www.bu.edu/gdp

The Boston University Global Development Policy Center is a policy-oriented research center working to advance financial stability, human well-being and environmental sustainability across the globe through rigorous interdisciplinary research, policy engagement and strategic communications.

A University-wide research center in partnership with the Office of Research and the Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies at Boston University, the GDP Center is built upon achieving five pillars: fostering a global development policy community at Boston University, advancing scholarly 'research that matters' on global development policy, engaging in global policy dialogue and strategic communications, providing a 'vibrant academic experience' through student research and experiential learning, and solidifying the legacy of the GDP Center by developing a global support base.

In 2017, the GDP Center was inaugurated by former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who led the establishment of the Sustainable Development Goals and presided over the Paris Climate Agreement. Ban Ki-moon charged the GDP Center to not only be a university-based think tank, but also an action tank. Taking that directive seriously, the GDP Center advances policy-oriented interdisciplinary academic research, engages in policy dialogue and conducts strategic communications to advance its mission.

Internship Supervisors:

Kevin P. Gallagher, Director

Pratistha Joshi Rajkarnikar, Assistant Director for GDP's Economics in Context Initiative



Institute for Global Sustainability

Institute for Global Sustainability

www.bu.edu/igs

Advancing a Resilient Future

The Boston University Institute for Global Sustainability pioneers research to advance a sustainable and equitable future. Our focus on planetary and environmental health, climate governance and sustainability transitions, and energy systems of the future is grounded in equity and justice, robust data analysis, and real-world impact. IGS' research projects focus on equity and justice - from protecting the health of people and the planet to building sustainable energy systems.

IGS mentors the next-generation of sustainability scholars and leaders. With their university-wide partnerships, they provide research funding, support, and training.

Internship Supervisors:

Serrie Anderson, Director of Finance and Administration

Alexa Kwon, Communications Specialist