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## Newsletter Spring 2016

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

Graduate School

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## Amanda Malloy Blends Art, History, and Southern Culture for a Winning 3-Minute Thesis



In November, Southern Studies student Amanda Malloy emerged victorious as the Grand Champion of the University of Mississippi's Three-Minute Thesis competition. In February, she traveled to Charlotte, North Carolina, to represent the university at the 3MT competition hosted by the Council of Southern Graduate Schools. Malloy was one of only roughly forty students invited to compete at this level.

Throughout her career, Malloy has made it her business to see art through two lenses: cultural context, and the physical lens of William Eggleston's camera. Pursuing her Master's in Southern Studies, Malloy has chosen to focus on the Memphis native's work representing the South during the critical flux of the 1960's and 1970's.

Most photographers of the time focused on either a romanticized view of the South, full of rocking chairs and mint juleps, or its poverty-stricken agrarian regions. However, Malloy found that the focus of her thesis was more concerned with depicting what she calls "his South."

It was this program differentiation from other photographers that drew Malloy's interest to Eggleston. Beginning her Master's, she intended to focus on folk or intuitive art, and she didn't know much about photography, much less specifically Southern photography.

On her shift in interests, she said, "I'm interested in Southern art in general...But pretty much from the beginning, I wrote one of my first papers on Eggleston, not really sure where to start, and once I finished that, I just realized how much more I wanted to research. More questions just kept coming up."

Far from allowing her academic research to be polarized from her professional work, Malloy also works for the Mississippi Arts Commission, writing for their online publication, *Mississippi Folklife*. In her capacity as Visual Arts Editor, she travels around the South, interviewing artists, and writing about their works.

Malloy considers her approach to the study of art and art history distinct from the status quo, thanks to her chosen course of study. While the focus of her undergraduate studies was on Art History and Classical Studies, she feels that it is her Southern Studies education that gives her an edge.

She said, "Because I have a Southern Studies background, it means I study art history in a contextual way...I want to learn about the artist and where they came from, what kind of life they had, and how that informs the kind of art they create, which not everybody in art history necessarily follows."

On the subject of her discipline, Malloy applauded the program for its diversity and breadth, saying, "Southern Studies is so interdisciplinary. We have strong ties to English and to History. We have a whole food ways department, a documentary department. We have so much."

Malloy cited Dr. Kris Belden-Adams from the Art History department as a special influence, saying that Belden-Adams helped her understand the work of William Eggleston in the broader context of the South.

For her part, Dr. Belden-Adams has certainly enjoyed working with Malloy. Of her former student, she said, "I worked with Amanda in an Independent Study class in the fall of 2015, and had the pleasure of watching her develop a body of research...Amanda is just wonderful. She's sharp, thoughtful, and very personable. I am so proud of her work!"

Moving forward, Malloy originally intended to move into a professional field but has recently decided she would like to stay in academia. She plans to apply to Ph.D programs in Art History beginning next year.

She also intends to continue her research on Eggleston, who still lives in Memphis, but she hopes to do it from the Northeast. According to Malloy, Eggleston's first show was at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, and his photographs were especially problematic to the northern audience. Not only did he work in color, previously reserved for advertisements and photojournalism, he also portrayed the South at a time when it was becoming less agrarian and more suburbanized, thus more homogenous with the rest of the country.

This representation proved frustrating to Eggleston's audience, who Malloy theorizes did not enjoy having their traditional, likely stereotypical views of the South challenged by this new information. This is, perhaps, why Malloy is now increasingly interested in studying what she calls "Northern representations of the South in photography".

As for her plans to study Southern art from afar, Malloy believes one need not be in the South to study it. Though, she said, "if there were [a Southern Studies Ph.D program], I would definitely stay."

Malloy's 3-Minute Thesis presentation is now publicly available on Youtube, on the University of Mississippi Graduate School Channel, along with other winning presentations from UM students.

## Pharmacy Ph.D Provides Pharmaceutical Marketing Expertise from Oxford to the World



For Dr. Amit Patel, the process of coming to Oxford, Mississippi, was a challenging one. He received his Bachelor's degree in Pharmacy while living in Mumbai, and when he and his wife were applying to graduate schools, they always knew the University of Mississippi was one of their top picks. His wife was promptly admitted to the Pharmacy Administration program just a few short months after her application. Patel, however, had to take a more circuitous route.

"My wife still teases me about how quickly she got in," he shared.

With the University of Mississippi off the table, Patel pursued his Master's at St. John's University in Queens, New York, but he never gave up his original goal. He frequently came to visit his wife in Oxford, and as his Master's program came to an end, he spoke frankly with the department faculty about what he would need to do to be admitted for his Ph.D.

"The faculty in the department is phenomenal," he said. "We would get lunch and hang around a bit... and they gave me a list of criteria that I needed to meet so they could consider me."

After retaking his GRE, he was granted conditional and then full admission into the program in 2001. Patel characterizes his path to the University of Mississippi as "an uphill battle", but one that has proved to be well worth it.

Since graduating in 2006, Patel has pursued a career with Medical Marketing and Economics, LLC, an international biopharma strategy consulting firm in Oxford that was founded by one of his advisors. MME is largely concerned with helping biopharma companies develop the strategy around product releases, specifically prescription drugs, including market access, optimal pricing, and reimbursement. As director, Patel is called upon to travel frequently, at least a few days out of every week.

With business taking him around the country, Patel is sometimes greeted with confusion with regards to his southern base, often from other Indians who chose to settle in more metropolitan areas. Fortunately,

he's all too happy to defend the city where he and his wife have chosen to put down their roots.

"I get asked, 'Where is it you're coming from?'" he said. "People don't quite understand. They ask, 'How are you doing this phenomenal work in Mississippi?'...I tell them they don't understand what it's like being in a smaller college town. They can't understand what it's like unless they come visit us."

In the last decade since his graduation, Patel and his wife have very much made Oxford their home. They both work at MME, along with several other Pharmacy Administration Ph.D graduates from the University of Mississippi. Their two children, a 3 year-old and a 6 year-old, were both born in Tupelo. And Patel has continued to be involved with the university, now as a professor.

Dr. John Bentley, formerly Patel's research advisor and now his neighbor, was involved in the decision to offer him a position at the university. He said, "Because of his extraordinary involvement, enthusiasm, commitment, interest, and skill set, we offered Dr. Patel an Adjunct Assistant Professor position in our Department. He has adjunct faculty appointments at several other Schools/Colleges of Pharmacy as well. He is well-known among graduate students and potential graduate students, not just here, but abroad. He gives of his time to help others find success in our discipline...Just as he does now, as a student Dr. Patel went above and beyond the call of duty in all of his endeavors."

Patel is proud of the work he does with the university, and he believes that the University of Mississippi's program has only grown in recent years.

He said, "We've just improved and grown from where we were...I'm also faculty at St. John's in Queens, in the School of Pharmacy, and I'm visiting faculty at the University of Toledo in Ohio.

I see these programs, and I compare and contrast them in my mind all the time. And all of these schools have their strengths, but we just knock it out of the park all the time, especially the Pharmacy Administration program."

While the path to Oxford might have been a difficult one, it has been well worth it for Patel.

Of his success, he said, "It's all because of the learning, the training, the people skills, all those things, from those five years. We either developed those skill sets here or polished them...We are where we are right now, and we're happy. We love the town, and we love the faculty."

And the feeling, according to Dr. Bentley is very much mutual. He said, "Dr. Patel's curiosity, drive, imagination, intuition, interpersonal skills, volunteerism, and practical research experience and knowledge are some of his many admirable qualities and traits. He exemplifies what it means to be a loyal and involved alumnus. In addition to the many achievements in his relatively short career thus far, Amit is a wonderful person. He goes out of his way to welcome people and to help them feel that they are a part of our community. I am quite proud of Amit and it is a honor to call him my colleague and friend."

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## IMC Student Showcases Women's Basketball Team, Injured Athletes Through "Ballin" with Brett



Some people believe in fate, some rely on hard work, and some people strike a careful, perfect balance between the two. Brett Ball, first year Integrated Marketing Communications Master's student, is a champion of that balance.

Beginning her undergraduate career at the University of South Carolina, Ball was set to play basketball with a full scholarship. Her first few weeks of summer training went according to plan, but health issues arose that brought her career to a tragically early halt.

"I had some heart complications," she said. "I went to a doctor, and they diagnosed me with a heart condition. They told me I couldn't play anymore."

Just like that, Ball found herself nine hours away from home and without a sense of purpose.

She said, "I just thought, 'I came here to play basketball, and I'm not really good at anything else!' I didn't know what else I could be good at, because my whole life had been so consumed with sports."

The coaches continued to honor Ball's scholarship, but she quickly found herself bored at practices, unable to play and feeling disconnected from the team. Fortunately, someone from the media team floated the idea of having her act as an embedded reporter, recording team activities on a small flip camera she could carry in her pocket. And it was there that "Ballin' With Brett" took its first breath.

Ball credits the team for her early success. She said, "It all worked together because we had a team that had personalities, and when you have personalities and a camera, those two things make a world of difference. That's when you can produce good stuff."

What began as a project that felt like busywork, something that would allow Ball to feel useful and contribute to the team, soon began to line up with something close to her heart: injured athletes.

"I had always been interested in athletes' response to injury," she said, "and so I started looking for ways to combine that with the media field. Eventually, by about my junior year, I figured out, maybe I can have my own show, interviewing athletes in that position and giving them a platform to tell their stories."

With this new goal settling into place, Ball began working with Gamecock Productions, learning the finer points of video editing with the goal of being able to tell a story effectively and in a way that others would understand. This clarified direction also brought on the realization that graduate school would be the best next step.

Ball said, "Once I really realized what Ballin' With Brett could be, that's when I knew I wanted to go to grad school and study IMC, because I felt like it could help me brand myself...I think the Lord just sent me in this direction, and it all just worked out. And I've learned so much more than just what I can apply to Ballin' With Brett!"

At the University of Mississippi, Ball works closely with Ole Miss Productions' multi-media specialist Mo Smith. Smith admires Ball's ambition and dream of giving injured athletes the opportunity to talk about their journeys.

According to Smith, "Brett is an incredibly driven and intelligent person who has a natural ability to relate to all individuals. She is very tough on herself at times, but that just speaks to the drive that lives within her to be great at whatever task is in front of her."

## Physics Ph.D Making Strides with Neutron Stars



When prompted, Dr. Emanuele Berti describes his advisee, Hector Okada da Silva, as “one of the best students we’ve had in the physics department since I came to Ole Miss in 2009,” and da Silva’s rapidly-growing list of accomplishments supports that assessment.

Da Silva earned his Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in Physics at the Universidade Federal do Pará in Brazil, and it was there that he was first put into contact with Dr. Berti. Dr. Berti was working with an international network, funded by the European Union. Some of its nodes include institutions in Spain, Italy, and Portugal, along with, of course, Brazil and the University of Mississippi.

Since coming to Mississippi and working with Dr. Berti, da Silva has coauthored two papers that were published by the *Classical and Quantum Gravity* physics journal. The two papers pertained to neutron stars, which are very dense and cannot be described with traditional Newtonian gravity. The idea behind their research is to test general relativity’s predictions, comparing theories of gravity against observations in an astrophysical context. The end goal of streamlining current theories about gravity to yield more accurate predictions. One paper specifically aims to bypass the limitations of one theory and allow for it to still make broad predictions.

Said da Silva, “I’m not a theorist in the sense that I propose [theories]. I learn about them and explore the consequences of them in astrophysics, to see if the predictions are in accordance with what we actually see.”

In addition to being published in the formal journal, these two papers were also included on CQG+, the journal’s companion website. On CQG+, some of the more interesting papers from *Classical and Quantum Gravity* are paraphrased and elaborated upon for a wider readership, perhaps one with a less thorough background in physics. They were invited to write, as da Silva put it, “a less technical explanation” of their findings, which are now available online through CQG+ to a slightly more layman audience.



In the future, da Silva would like to work more on a project he and Dr. Berti are currently undertaking: taking theories of gravity and relativity that emerge from the cosmological branch of study and exploring what consequences they have in the context of astrophysics. According to da Silva, though the two fields of physics both study incredibly similar subject matter, there is relatively little communication between the two, but if a unified theory is to ever be found, it should apply equally to both fields.

This initiative comes as no surprise to Dr. Berti, who said, “He is very mature, independent and productive. At this point he comes up with his own ideas and starts his own collaborations; he operates more as a postdoc than as a PhD student.”

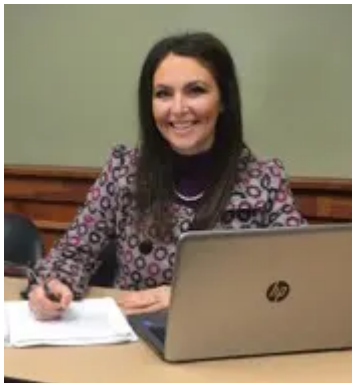
In terms of individual achievements, da Silva was recognized for giving the best student talk at the Gulf Coast Gravity Meeting organized by the American Physical Society last February.

While working with Dr. Berti was da Silva’s primary motivation in coming to the University of Mississippi, he has found a supportive environment in the Department of Physics and Astronomy overall. He said, “The department offers a good structure and a good environment for doing research. I’ve always gotten the support I need, both from the department and Emanuele as an advisor.”

For his part, Dr. Berti considers his role as da Silva’s advisor a pleasure.

“I collaborate with people at leading research institutions like Caltech and Princeton, and I think that Hector is at the level of the best physics students at those institutions,” he said. “I was very fortunate to be his advisor.”

## Tanya Robertson Uses Experience and Technology to Give Education Undergrads and Edge



With 10 years of teaching under her belt and the desire for a Master's in Curriculum and Instruction, Tanya Robertson was the ideal candidate to help lead the fledgling Teach Live program in the School of Education. Partnered with an ex-principal who goes only by "Mr. C.", Robertson now presides over near-daily sessions of Education undergraduates learning the finer points of classroom management.

Classroom management, according to Robertson, can be one of the hardest things for a first-time teacher to learn. With this in mind, the goal of the Teach Live program is to give students experience in this practical aspect of teaching that is so often excluded from traditional training.

Mr. C. describes Teach Live as "an interactive program that allows all our juniors in the School of Ed, when they take their first two big education courses, to teach a lesson in the Teach Live Lab...Tanya and I have a rubric that we take turns doing, marking them on certain things we look for in a teacher. It's a good way to practice teaching experience without having real students. If they make a mistake, they aren't hurting anything! We don't expect them to be perfect."

Teach Live, which is in its 4th year of implementation at the University of Mississippi, hinges on an elaborate Skype-based system by which Education majors can give a lesson to a class of middle school aged "children". These children are portrayed by animated avatars, but they are voiced by real adults, some of whom have backgrounds in theater or education. The five "students" in the Teach Live classroom have a variety of personalities, including a disruptive child, a sleepy child, and a child who is distracted by her cell phone. These types are all, according to Robertson and Mr. C., very realistic and true to the types of students that a teacher will one day experience in their classes.

One of the "students" is very quiet and withdrawn, intelligent but hesitant to come forward, and he shows some subtle signs of being abused. Ideally the "teachers" will take note of these signs, because,

as Mr. C. says, “It’s oftentimes a teacher who first discovers these things because they’re with the kids all day long.”

In her capacity as a Teach Live coordinator, Robertson relishes the opportunity to pass on the knowledge she’s gained as a teacher. She said, “It worked out great, because I’m able to get my Master’s and still work in education! I’ve always taught first and second grade, so this is a different age group for me, but I love being able to take what I’ve learned from my experiences and offer suggestions to them, whether it be classroom management suggestions or instructional suggestions. I’ve learned a lot. Hopefully they’ve learned a lot!”

There’s solid evidence to suggest that the students have been learning and gaining real insight from Teach Live and Robertson’s suggestions. Students participate in Teach Live twice, once per semester of their junior year. Robertson says, “There aren’t as many nerves in the second semester!...Mr. C. and I both agree, every single student has shown a tremendous amount of growth from the first time they did it in the fall to the second time. And that’s what’s so encouraging to him as a principal and to me as a teacher, to see the confidence that grows in them. I think we can see the suggestions we offer them the first semester put them into play the second time. I just feel like they’re much more prepared after this!”

Mr. C. couldn’t say enough in praise of Robertson’s teaching abilities. “Tanya is a 10-year veteran teacher...I tell people, if I were still principal at Oxford Elementary, I would be trying to hire her away from Lafayette Elementary! She has done more for this program than anything, since I’ve been doing it. She is a jewel.”

Whether or not Robertson has administrative aspirations is unknown, but Mr. C. has high hopes for the Master’s student. “I’ve been pushing her to get her principal’s license. What she does in here is a very principal-like thing, supervising other teachers, and I think she’d be great.”

Teach Live is still a young program, and Robertson is in her first year of facilitating it, but there already seem to be very noticeable benefits, both for the students and the proctor. This may bode well for the future of the program, as the University of Mississippi is currently the only institution in the state to put it into practice.

## Mental Health Awareness for Graduate Students:



In recent years, there has been an observed and well-documented prevalence of mental health issues among graduate students, ranging from anxiety to depression and suicidal tendencies. Graduate students come under an incredible amount of stress, whether it be from their workload, their course load, their reservations about the future, or, most likely, the crushing combination of the three. Often students can feel isolated or like they are falling behind their classmates, when in truth, a huge portion of their peers are experiencing the same insecurities. There's no reason to shy away from addressing these issues or from seeking support from free, on-campus resources.

The Counseling Center on campus provides professional therapy services free of charge for any student or employee. The Center is bound by the legal limits of confidentiality dictated by the state of Mississippi, so privacy is never a concern for anyone seeking assistance.

Per the Counseling Center's website, they act in accordance with "the direction of the codes of ethics of the American Counseling Association, American Psychological Association, and National Association of Social Workers. No record of counseling is contained in any academic, educational, or personnel file. No information written or oral will be released to other persons without the client's written permission. By law limitations of confidentiality include when there is risk of imminent harm to the student or others."

Services offered include personal counseling and therapy, group counseling and therapy, and 24-hour crisis intervention for emergency assistance. They can also provide referrals to other doctors and services. The Counseling Center is housed in Room 320 of Lester Hall, and office hours are Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm. Appointments are recommended, but in the case of an emergency, it is possible to walk in without an appointment and ask to see the counselor that is on call.

Mental health issues are proven to crop up in college and graduate school, even if a student has never had a history of them before. Given that there is no risk to a student's privacy, trust, or finances associated with taking advantage of the Counseling Center, there is no reason to allow any emotional or mental discomfort to go untreated. Students should be aware that they are not the only ones in their

particular situations by a long shot, and they are encouraged to seek solidarity and understanding with a counselor or peer group. Pursuing higher education should never be the cause of extreme distress or a deterioration in health.