

New Faculty at Rhodes College



Dr. Chathurika Abeykoon

Chathurika Abeykoon joins the Department of Mathematics and Statistics as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Abeykoon received her Ph.D. in Mathematics with a concentration in Statistics from the University of Mississippi last spring. Her research work lies at the intersection of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science focusing on the theoretical foundations of machine learning and deep learning concepts. Recently she has been exploring the double descent behavior in neural networks for classification.

 abeykoonc@rhodes.edu



Dr. James Engman

James (Jamie) Engman joins the Biology Department as a Visiting Assistant Professor. He earned his Ph.D. in Biology from the University of Cincinnati in 1994, and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. He comes to Rhodes after serving as Professor of Biology at Henderson State University. His current research involves the ecology of some unique caves in central Tennessee. He has taught courses in Biology, Aquatic Ecology, Zoology, Entomology, Tropical Marine Biology and Neotropical Ecology.

 engmanj@rhodes.edu



Dr. Patrick Harris

Patrick Harris joins the Search Program as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Dr. Harris received his Ph.D. in History from Rutgers University-New Brunswick in 2021. He previously taught as a lecturer in the History and Humanities departments at Rhodes as well as Rutgers. His research focuses on the entangled intellectual and political histories of the British and French colonial empires, and in particular on exile and emigration during and after the French and Haitian Revolutions.

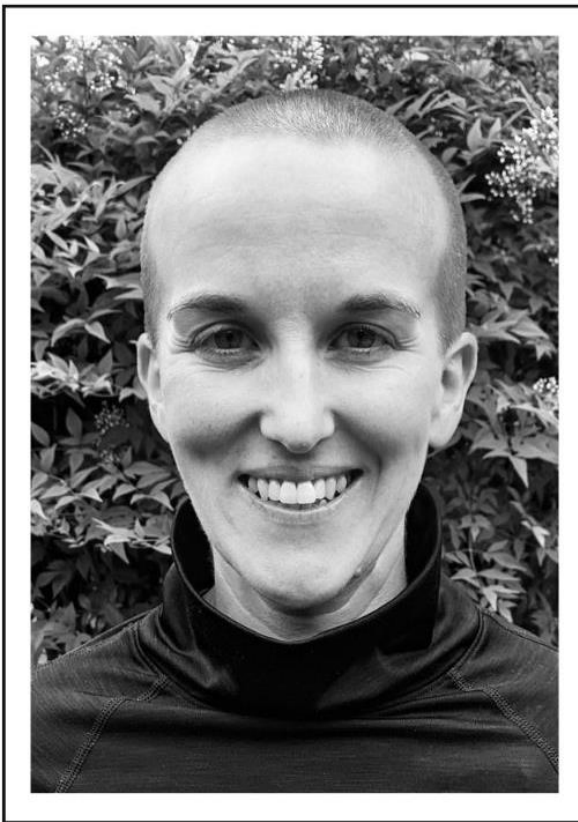
 harrisp@rhodes.edu



Dr. Amanda Hasselle

Amanda Hasselle joins the Psychology Department as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Hasselle received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Memphis in 2021. She comes to Rhodes after completing two years of Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center and the University of Memphis. Dr. Hasselle's research centers around understanding factors across the social ecology that facilitate and hinder resilience among youth affected by adversity. Additionally, she focuses on disseminating and evaluating interventions designed to promote positive functioning among youth, with the ultimate goal of improving access to evidence-based interventions and reducing mental health disparities.

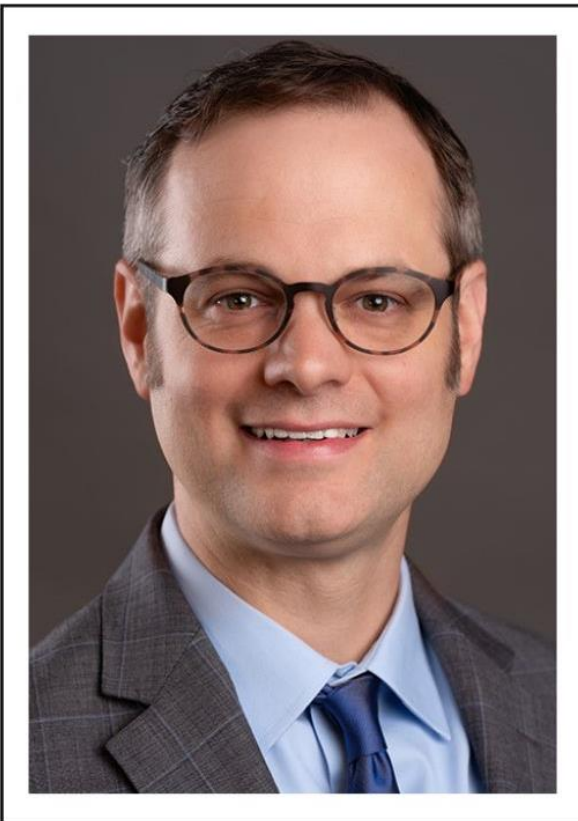
 hassellea@rhodes.edu



Dr. Beck Henriksen

Beck Henriksen joins the Department of Religious Studies as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Dr. Henriksen received their Ph.D. in Religious Studies and a Certificate in Women's and Gender Studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2023. Their research interests center on the anthropology of religion and gender and sexuality studies. Dr. Henriksen's first project focuses on evangelical beliefs around gender, leadership, and LGBT policies in contemporary Rwanda. Their second project examines trans medical care in the context of politicized Christianity in the United States. They have taught courses titled Gender Theory and the Study of Religion, Religion and Violence, Religious Things, and Introduction to Religion and Culture.

 henriksen@rhodes.edu



Dr. Eric Horne

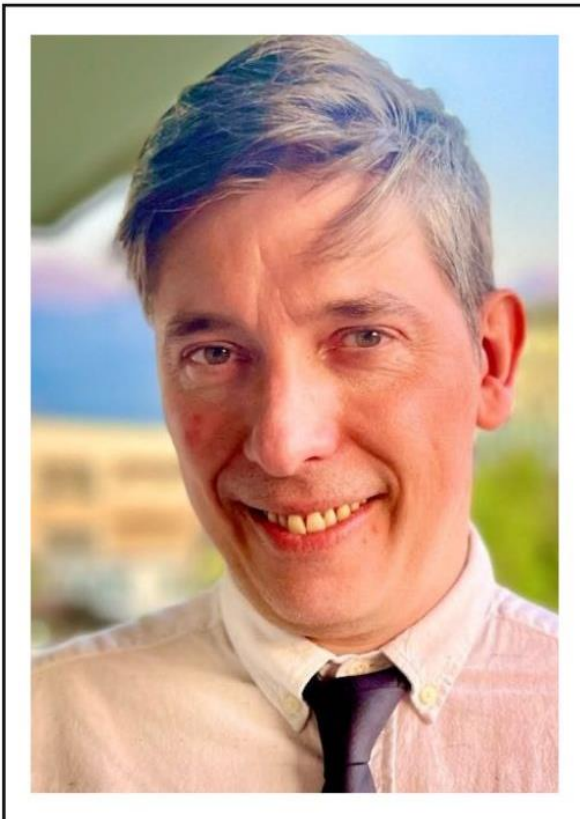
Eric R Horne, Ph.D. joins the Business Department. Eric conducts financial accounting research that investigates corporate governance, ethics, and firms' relationships with non-owners. His current work examines the role of debt covenants in corporate governance, the value orientation of auditors, and sustainability reporting.

 horne@rhodes.edu



Dr. Sean Kugele

Dr. Kugele's joins the Computer Science Department. His research focuses on artificial intelligence, cognitive modeling, and neuro-symbolic systems. The goal of his research is to understand how natural minds (such as human minds) work and to implement biologically inspired software systems based on the same principles. Dr. Kugele has worked for over a decade as a software engineer and software architect. He has undergraduate degrees in computer science, mathematics, and anthropology, and a PhD in computer science from the University of Memphis.

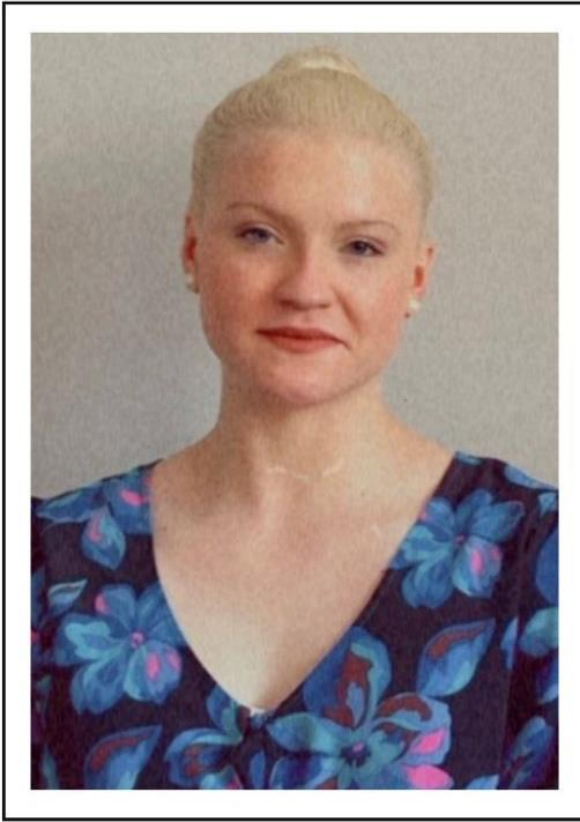


Dr. Carlos Lafourcade

Dr. Lafourcade joins the Neuroscience Department. He received his PhD from the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 2009, after doing his experimental work at the University of Baltimore at Maryland. He went on to pursue his postdoctoral studies at Yale and Zurich University (Switzerland), becoming an assistant professor at the University of Los Andes (Chile) and a lecturer at the Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (Suzhou, China). His research interests include the modulation of neuronal circuits by cannabinoids.



lafourcadec@rhodes.edu



Dr. Zoe Laulederkind

Zoe Laulederkind joins the Economics Department as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Dr. Laulederkind received her Ph.D. in Economics from University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee in December 2022. She is a Rhodes College alumna, Class of 2018. Dr. Laulederkind's research interests center on applied microeconomics. She has taught courses titled Environmental Economics, Introductory Microeconomics, Introductory Macroeconomics and Introductory Economics.



laulederkindz@rhodes.edu



Dr. Kailey Lawson

Kailey Lawson joins the Department of Psychology as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Lawson received her Ph.D. from the University of California, Davis in 2022. She comes to Rhodes after serving as a visiting assistant professor at Oberlin College. Her research program focuses on the nature, development, and assessment of personality traits and the influence of these traits on mental health. Dr. Lawson teaches courses on personality, measurement, and statistics.



lawsonk@rhodes.edu



Dr. Kathryn LeCroy

Kathryn LeCroy joins the Biology Department as an Assistant Professor. Dr. LeCroy received her Ph.D. from the University of Virginia in 2021. She comes to Rhodes after serving as a postdoctoral research fellow at Cornell University. During her time at Cornell, Dr. LeCroy taught undergraduates about the diversity, ecology, and conservation of our 20,000 species of bees described worldwide. Dr. LeCroy studies the ecology of native and introduced solitary bees, including their health outcomes across urban, agricultural, and natural landscapes with the help of community scientists and undergraduate researchers. Dr. LeCroy is originally from Pleasant Grove, Alabama and enjoys botanizing, porch-sitting, and live music.

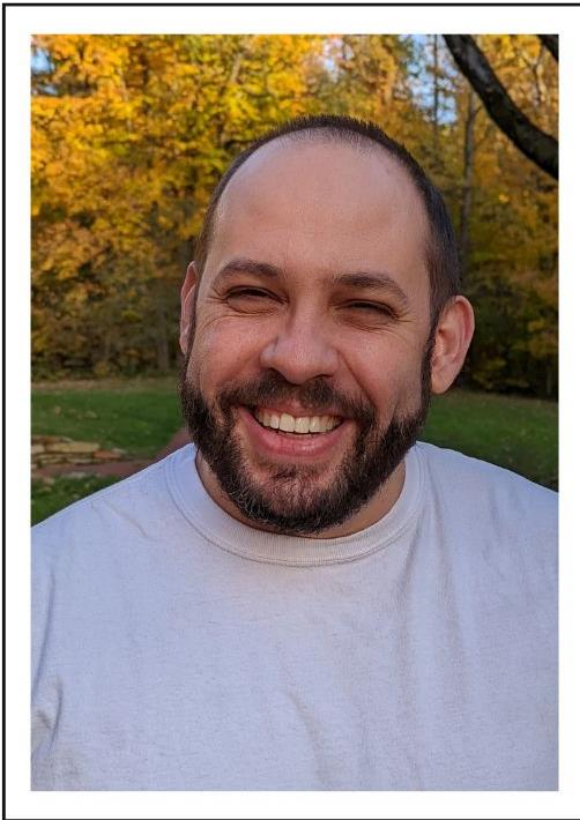
 lecroyk@rhodes.edu



Ms. Laura Leisinger

Laura Leisinger is enthusiastic to join the Anthropology & Sociology Department as Assistant Professor of Anthropology. Laura attended the University of South Florida's Applied Anthropology program for her masters and doctoral studies. Rooted in a transnational feminist and Marxist political economy theoretical approach, her current ethnographic research explores Haitian migration to the U.S., emotion, the state, and social movements. She maintains active interests in the Caribbean, gender studies, and political aesthetics, and in participatory research methods and oral history.

 leisingerl@rhodes.edu



Dr. Ricardo Martins

Ricardo Martins joins the Spanish, Media Studies and Latin American and Latinx programs as a Visiting Assistant Professor, after receiving his PhD in Portuguese at Indiana University, Bloomington. At Rhodes he will work on interdisciplinary and transnational courses on Latin American culture and languages, cinema, interactive narratives and videogames.



martinsr@rhodes.edu



Ms. Alix Matthews

Alix Matthews joins the Biology Department as a Visiting Instructor/Assistant Professor. Ms. Matthews is currently in her final year of her doctoral program at Arkansas State University where she is pursuing her Ph.D. in Molecular Biosciences. She is a Rhodes alumna (2014, B.Sc. in Environmental Sciences), received her M.Sc. in Biological Sciences from Arkansas State University (2017), and served as a Research Laboratory Manager prior to her Ph.D. work. Ms. Matthews' research focuses on host-symbiont interactions, coevolutionary ecology, biodiversity, and genomics. She has taught biology courses ranging from genetics and cell biology to ecology and data analysis.



matthewsa1@rhodes.edu



Dr. J. David Maxson

J. David Maxson joins the Media Studies program as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Dr. Maxson received his Ph.D. at the Pennsylvania State University in 2018 where he earned an Alumni Association Dissertation Award in the Fine Arts and Humanities. His research centers on the ways activist communities in the American South use local places and practices of public memory to create more just forms of remembrance. Dr. Maxson has developed and taught courses on media and memoryscapes, public speaking, college writing, contemporary African American communication, and rhetoric and civic life.



maxson@rhodes.edu



Ms. Nina Morais

Nina Morais joined the Modern Languages and Literatures Department as a Visiting Assistant Professor of German in the Spring of 2023. Her research focuses on questions of transculturality, hybridity, and anthropophagy/cannibalism as transcultural literary strategies. Specifically, she is looking at the relationship between Germany and Brazil starting from early travel logs, collected tales from Theodor Koch-Grünberg, the Brazilian modernist Mário de Andrade, up to the contemporary theater of Milo Rau. She is also interested in the study of Fairy Tales, transnational and migration literature, race and ethnicity studies, as well as Germany-Africa and Germany-South America relations. In her classroom, her teaching is informed by performative pedagogy, and she has worked with German, English, Spanish, and Portuguese as second languages since 2009.



moraisn@rhodes.edu



Dr. Nate Phillips

Nate Phillips joins the computer science department as an assistant professor. Dr. Phillips received his PhD in computer science from Mississippi State University in 2022, where he taught fencing and was the lab lead for the Spatial Perception and Augmented Reality lab. Dr. Phillips' research focuses on augmented reality, data visualization, and depth perception.



Dr. Ramesh Sapkota

Ramesh Sapkota began his academic journey at University of North Texas, where he pursued a passion for Physical Chemistry. He completed his doctoral studies and obtained a Ph.D. in Physical Chemistry with a focus on Atmospheric and Computational chemistry from University of North Texas in 2023. He also has five years' experience as Teaching Assistant at University of North Texas for hundreds of undergraduate. He has mentored several graduate students, guiding them through their research and helping them develop critical scientific skills. His research interests encompass areas such as kinetics, atmospheric chemistry and computational chemistry which have helped him develop a robust understanding of cutting-edge advancements in the field. His expertise extends to various experimental and theoretical techniques, making them a researcher in the realm of Physical Chemistry.



sapkotar@rhodes.edu



Dr. Katherine Shields

Kate Shields joins the Environmental Studies and Sciences Program as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Shields received her Ph.D. in Geography from the University of Oregon in 2023. Her research interests include human-environment geography, political ecology, critical development studies, and feminist mixed-methods. Her current work focuses on rethinking development and environmental transformation in the Aral Sea region of Uzbekistan.

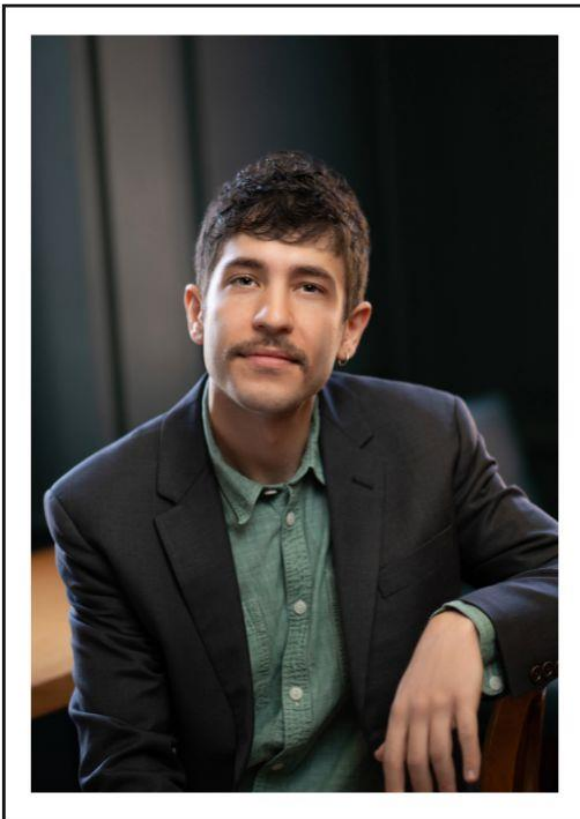
 sheildsk@rhodes.edu



Dr. Be Stone

Be Stone joins the Politics and Law Department as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Stone received their Ph.D. in Political Science from The City University of New York in 2023. Be's research examines the intersection of public policymaking and political culture from a feminist and critical race perspective. They teach courses in American politics, public policy, and qualitative-interpretive research methods.

 stoneb@rhodes.edu



Mr. Jacob Sunshine

Jacob Sunshine is incoming Assistant Professor in the Music Department at Rhodes College. He will be defending his doctoral dissertation in Ethnomusicology at Harvard University this summer. At Rhodes, he teaches courses in Ethnomusicology, Urban Studies, Latin American Studies, and Africana Studies. Sunshine also received a B.A. from Columbia University in Anthropology and Jazz Studies. A scholar of sound cultures in the Caribbean, Africa, and the United States, his current book project focuses on sound system culture in Barranquilla, Colombia, the West and Central African guitar music that these sound systems play, and urban conflict over sound in public space. Prof. Sunshine is also an electric guitarist, writer, solo artist, and producer and has collaborated and recorded with a diverse array of New York and Boston-based groups and solo artists.

 sunshinej@rhodes.edu



Dr. Sean Wu

Sean Wu joins the Physics Department as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Dr. Wu earned his Ph.D. in Physics from Texas A&M University in 2017. He comes to Rhodes after serving as a Visiting Assistant at Washington and Lee University.

Dr. Wu uses evidence based pedagogical practices in his classes and is interested in making coding accessible to all students.

He has taught introductory physics for pre-meds and engineers, designed laboratory courses, and has given lectures in Advanced Electrodynamics.

 wus@rhodes.edu