

PhD Policy Studies Program

Ryerson
University

PhD Policy
Studies

Student Profiles Incoming Students, 2020-2021

Interested in learning more about our students and the PhD Policy Studies Program?

To learn more about our program, please contact:
polycystudies@ryerson.ca



ryerson.ca/polycystudies

Student List

Student Bio-Sketches for the PhD Policy Studies Program Incoming Students of 2020-2021

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Sobomate Amachree

jane.amachree@ryerson.ca

I am a researcher who is passionate about using data to effect policies that improve the lives of people and societies. I believe that accomplishing this requires innovation, good judgement, and humanity. I plan to incorporate these into my work at Ryerson University and beyond. My specialization would be labour market policy, and I am excited to explore the ways in which public policy can be developed to boost the labour supply in Canada as well as improve the labour market prospects of immigrants.

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy, Policy Studies, Currently Enrolled

Ryerson University, Toronto, ON

Master of Arts, Economics, 2019

University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB

Bachelor of Arts, Economics (Honours), 2015

University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB

POLICY STREAM

Public Policy and Administration

POLICY SPECIALIZATION

Labour market policy and law and public policy

RESEARCH FOCUS

I am interested in exploring possible modifications to immigration and labour market policies, which could improve the attraction and retention of immigrants with requisite skills to boost the labour supply in Canada. This research will delve into a robust exposition that could improve the attractiveness of the Canadian labour market to world-class talent. I plan to investigate pull and push factors for people who have an interest in migrating to other regions, as well as economic and social conditions that foster innovation among immigrants, post-arrival.

SELECTED WORK and PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- **Economist**, Government of New Brunswick, **December 2019 – August 2020**
- **Research Associate**, University of New Brunswick, **May 2019 – December 2019**
- **Teacher's Assistant**, University of New Brunswick, **September 2017 – December 2017**

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS and AWARDS

- Amachree, J. (2019) From Abundance to Scarcity: Labour Supply in New Brunswick Pre and Post -2008. JDI Roundtable on Manufacturing Competitiveness in New Brunswick. ([external link](#))
- Prize Winner, Graduate Research Conference, University of New Brunswick (2018)

Souhail Boutmira

Souhail.Boutmira@ryerson.ca



Proud recipient of the prestigious Canada Excellence Research Chair Doctoral Fellowship. I am in the Immigration, Settlement, and Diaspora Policies stream. My research interest focusses on migrants' wellbeing and policies. In particular, I analyze the politics behind welfare states' responses to recent migration flows to address social justice issues emerging out of globalization processes. My most recent contributions include research on older adults' experiences with language barriers and risk factors contributing to elder abuse in the context of migration and (re)settlement in Canada. My professional expertise in settlement strategies strengthens my ability to associate theories and practices to engage with current challenges of policy makings.

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy, Policy Studies, Currently Enrolled

Yeates School of Graduate Studies, Ryerson University, Toronto, ON

Master of Immigration and Settlement Studies, 2020

Yeates School of Graduate Studies, Ryerson University, Toronto, ON

Master of Globalization and Human Condition Studies, 2018

McMaster University, Hamilton, ON

POLICY STREAM

Immigration, Settlement and Diaspora Policies

POLICY SPECIALIZATION

Public policy and social justice

RESEARCH FOCUS

Grandparents are becoming essential to immigrant families in Canada to help with childcare responsibilities, among other household duties. Canadian immigration policies undermine their significance in Canadian society and prohibit their access to permanent status. The purpose of my dissertation is to help reimagine the concept of family reunification in Canada to include the grandparents.

SELECTED WORK and PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Research Assistant @ Daphne Cockwell School of Nursing, Ryerson University, **October 2018 – Present**
- Research Assistant @ Centre of Excellence for Teaching and Learning, Ryerson University, **November 2019 – March 2020**
- Research Assistant and Project Coordinator @ Daphne Cockwell School of Nursing, Ryerson University, **May 2018 – September 2018**

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS and AWARDS

- | | |
|--|--|
| • CERC PhD Scholarship recipient | • FCS Faculty Achievement Event – Presenter |
| • Graduate Scholarship McMaster University | • GTDP Certificate in teaching and development |

Bryanna Hines

bryanna.hines@ryerson.ca

Bryanna Hines is currently a Research Assistant and Ethics Coordinator at the Diversity Institute, Graduate Teaching Assistant, Ethics Board Reviewer and PhD student. Bryanna completed a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology in 2016, a Master of Arts in Early Childhood Studies in 2018 and a Master of Social Work in 2020. She has worked in the community with underserved women at Fred Victor, at Kids Help Phone as a Crisis Responder and at University of Toronto as a Research Assistant. Her experience, both academic and in the social work field has equipped her to identify and critically analyze policy issues as they relate to children and under-served populations. She has grounded her graduate work in focusing on the ethics of involving children in research working from a social constructivism paradigm, while adopting a 'new' sociology of children framework, rights-based framework and a critical and intersectional lens. Bryanna has a strong background in research methodology and ethics. She hopes to expand on her Master's MRP through examining the active participation of children in policy-making decisions in Canada while looking at the ways that other countries involve children in policy-making. Through examining this, Bryanna aims to develop a practical framework for the involvement of children in policy-making in Canada.

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy, Policy Studies, Currently Enrolled

Yeates School of Graduate Studies, Ryerson University, Toronto, ON

Master of Social Work, Social Justice and Diversity, 2020

Factor-Inwentash School of Social Work, University of Toronto, ON

Master of Early Childhood Studies, 2018

Yeates School of Graduate Studies, Ryerson University, Toronto, ON

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, 2016

Ryerson University, Toronto, ON

POLICY STREAM

Social Policy

POLICY SPECIALIZATION

Children's participation in policy-making, children's rights, social justice

RESEARCH FOCUS

Policy development in Canada is largely done by policy makers, stakeholders and researchers. A significant number of policies impact children's lives yet children are rarely involved in the policy development. In other parts of the world (UK, Australia), children have been engaged, at differing levels in the policy process and policy development; however, in Canada, this is not the case. I am hoping to add to the international literature around engaging children in policy change and building children's capacity to engage in policy development. This would fill a gap in the Canadian literature around engaging children in policy development beyond just consultation. Ultimately, I aim to show how policy can be informed by children's perspectives instead of being developed by adults while also avoiding tokenistic consultation with children.

SELECTED WORK and PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

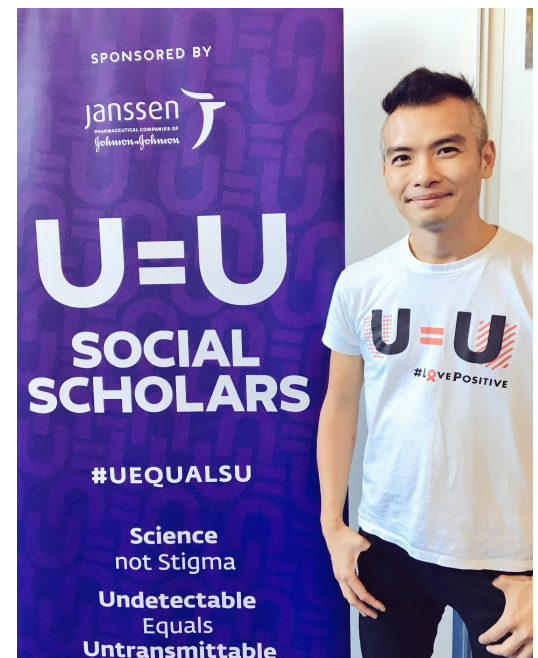
- Research Assistant/Ethics Coordinator, Diversity Institute, **2020 – Present**
- Reviewer, Research Ethics Board, **2017 – Present**
- Graduate Assistant, School of Early Childhood Studies, **2016 – 2018**

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS and AWARDS

- Hines, B. (2019, May). Social Research with Children: A Review of Methods Undertaken in a Selection of MRPs in the MAECS Program from 2007 – 2017. Oral presentation at the Qualitatives 2019, University of New Brunswick.
- Ontario Graduate Scholarship, University of Toronto
- GTDP Certificate in Teaching and Development, Level I & II

Christian Hui, MSW, RSW

c6hui@ryerson.ca



Christian Hui, MSW, RSW (he/him) is a settler living with HIV, an HIV and harm reduction advocate, a community mobilizer, a registered social worker, a CIHR Canadian HIV Trials Network Community Advisory Committee Member, a Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research (CANFAR) Ambassador, and a CIHR Vanier Canada Graduate Scholar.

He is an international steering committee member of the Undetectable=Untransmittable (U=U) Campaign, and a co-founder of two independent networks of people living with HIV: Ontario Positive Asians and the Canadian Positive People Network. He served on the Canadian Delegation at the 2016 UN High Level Meeting on Ending AIDS in 2016, and was awarded the Ontario AIDS Network Person Living HIV/AIDS Leadership Award in 2017.

Christian's doctoral research aims to demonstrate the impact of privilege on the clinical health outcomes of people living with HIV, and to co-create a sustainable Positive Health Equity Action Plan through the meaningful engagement of people living with HIV and members from key population groups, along with organizational representatives, researchers and policy makers. His academic interest includes bridging qualitative, quantitative and community-led research approaches and methodologies to inform the development of global health and social policies to advance equity for communities oppressed by neo-colonial policies.

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy, Policy Studies, Vanier Scholar & Ryerson Graduate Fellow, Currently Enrolled
Yeates School of Graduate Studies, Ryerson University, Dish with One Spoon Territory/Toronto, Turtle Island/Canada

Master of Social Work, 2017, Recipient, CIHR CGS – Master & Ryerson Graduate Development Award
Yeates School of Graduate Studies, Ryerson University, Dish with One Spoon Territory/Toronto, Turtle Island/Canada

Bachelor of Social Work (Hon.), 2016, School of Social Work President's Award for Community Engagement
School of Social Work, Ryerson University, Dish with One Spoon Territory/Toronto, Turtle Island/Canada

POLICY STREAM

Social Policy

POLICY SPECIALIZATION

Social Policy (Global Health Policy)

RESEARCH FOCUS

As a person living with HIV, an anti-oppressive social worker, and an HIV and health equity advocate, my two-part community-engaged, mixed-methods doctoral research aims to: 1) establish a quantitative evidence base on the effects of privilege on the clinical health outcomes of people living with HIV utilizing longitudinal cohort datasets; and 2) co-create sustainable, evidenced-based, community-informed health equity policies with people living and key population groups with HIV, organizational representatives, researchers and policy makers to advance health equity for the diverse communities affected by the health condition. I am interested in the topic because while people living with HIV on anti-retroviral therapy can live long and healthy lives, only 67% of those living with the health condition had access to medication at the end of 2019. It is my hope my research can help change the health inequity as experienced by people living with HIV.

SELECTED WORK and PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Knowledge Exchange and Network Engagement Lead, Ontario Harm Reduction Network, **2019 – 2020**
- Co-Founder, Ontario Positive Asians, **2015 – 2019** and the Canadian Positive People Network, **2014-2019**
- Civil Society Representative, Canadian Delegation - UN High Level Meeting on Ending AIDS, **2016**

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS and AWARDS

- CIHR Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship 2020
- CIHR Canada Graduate Scholarship – Master 2016
- Ryerson School of Social Work President's Award for Community Engagement 2015
- Hui, Dhakal, Shaikh, Usman, Penner, & Richman (2019). "Voices from the field: Celebrating successes while continuing our fight for Rights - U=U Campaign and more." *Indian Journal of Health, Sexuality & Culture* : 110-115.

Aaron Johnston

aaron.johnston@ryerson.ca



Aaron Johnston holds two degrees a M.A and a B.A(hons) and has worked for Nova Scotia Government and most recently for the Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO). While working for MTO he developed plans for new life saving regulatory changes for emergency light usage to enhance response times for volunteer first responders in Northern Ontario. Aaron's passion for evidence based public policies to enhance the greater good of society has motivated him to pursue a PhD in Public Policy. Beyond employment Aaron has experience with public speaking at the National Model United Nations in New York City where he competed twice securing awards consecutively.

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy, Policy Studies, Currently Enrolled
Ryerson University, Toronto, O.N.

Master of Arts, Public Policy and Administration, 2019
Ryerson University, Toronto, O.N.

Bachelor of Arts (Hon.) Political Science, 2017
Saint Mary's University, Halifax, N.S.

POLICY STREAM

Public Policy and Administration

POLICY SPECIALIZATION

Public Policy (General)

RESEARCH FOCUS

As an experienced policy analyst, I am keen to utilize my policy analysis skills to explore transportation equity and accessibility across Canada with regard to the effects that federal legislation, specifically the *Accessible Canada Act*, has on promoting transportation equity and accessibility.

SELECTED WORK and PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Jr. Policy Analyst, Ministry of Transportation Ontario, **May – August 2019**
- Assistant Development Controller, Halifax Regional Municipality, **May – August 2018**
- Clerk, Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, **November 2017 – May 2018**

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS and AWARDS

- William J Dalton Memorial Scholarship
- Distinguished Delegate's Award National Model UN
- Patrick Power Scholarship
- Honourable Delegate's Award National Model UN

Anna Karimian

Akarimian20@gmail.com

I am a lawyer practicing labour and employment law at a national law firm. I obtained an honour specialization degree in International Relations (“IR”) from Western University and an MA in the same field from McMaster University, where I primarily focused on applying feminism and gender relations to the theory of IR. In my current role as a lawyer, I advise clients in the technology startup space on a wide range of issues in human resources law and work with them to align their strategic objectives with their legal obligations. My research interest combines my academic background with my work experience by focusing on how governments can develop effective policies and programs as a possible solution for supporting women-led startups.

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy, Policy Studies, Currently Enrolled

Yeates School of Graduate Studies, Ryerson University, Toronto, ON

Juris Doctor, 2015

Western University, London, ON

International Relations, 2012

McMaster University, Hamilton, ON

Honours Specialization B.A., International Relations, 2011

Western University, London, ON

POLICY STREAM

Public Policy and Administration

POLICY SPECIALIZATION

Public policy (general), law and public policy, labour market policy

RESEARCH FOCUS

Since starting my legal practice in 2016, I have observed that there is a noticeable absence of female founders within the technology startup ecosystem. The stark underrepresentation of female entrepreneurs amongst my clients led me to conduct independent research into the issue on a national scale. The research showed that while the development and funding of technology startup ecosystems results in positive outcomes for the state economy, there is a significant gap in the number of Canadian businesses that are actually owned or founded by women. This discovery is the reason I have chosen to switch my focus away from law and apply to the PhD Policy Studies program at Ryerson University. The gross underrepresentation of females in the sector is a serious issue and a missed opportunity for the Canadian innovation economy. Proper government intervention by way of effective policies can close this existing gender gap and provide greater agency to Canadian women in the form of economic, social and political power.

SELECTED WORK and PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- **Labour and Employment Lawyer** at Borden Ladner Gervais LLP, Toronto, **2018 – Present**
- **Co-Chair, Employment and Labour Law Student Society**, Ottawa, **2014 – 2015**
- **Teaching Assistant**, Alternative Dispute Resolution - University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law, **2014 – 2015**

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS and AWARDS

- Graduate Scholarship McMaster University
- M.A. Graduation with high honors degree

Tasha Penney

tpenney@ryerson.ca



Tasha Penney is the Clinical Nurse Educator for Mental Health Acute Care at St. Michael's Hospital. She has a Master of Nursing degree from Ryerson University and holds the Canadian Nurses Association certification in Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing. A major theme of her graduate work was around homelessness and how it negatively impacts peoples' ability to maintain wellness in the community. Tasha is known for her two professional passions – mental health nursing and research. Her clinical experience includes acute care and community mental health nursing. Tasha has particular expertise working with homeless youth living with mental illness and substance use issues. Prior to her Educator role, Tasha worked at the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) in various roles including research associate, guideline developer, and implementation scientist. She achieved peer-reviewed publications and contributed to the development of numerous systematic reviews and nursing best practice guidelines. In her current role, Tasha serves as a role model and leader supporting nursing care that optimizes patient outcomes and experiences.

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy, Policy Studies, Currently Enrolled

Ryerson University, Toronto, ON

Master of Nursing (MN), 2012

Ryerson University, Toronto, ON

Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BScN), 2006

Ryerson University, Toronto, ON

POLICY STREAM

Social Policy

POLICY SPECIALIZATION

Health policy, social justice

RESEARCH FOCUS

I want to better understand how to effectively implement health policies that impact mental health and addiction services within health-care organizations. I have experience implementing new corporate policy and with writing unit-based policy based on legislation and health policy. There are often challenges implementing new policy which creates a gap between what is intended or expected to occur and what is happening in practice. Organizations have varied interpretation of policy informed by legislation which is evident in the differences between corporate policies across Ontario hospitals. In my experience, research has not informed policy implementation and I have often wondered why some policies fail transitioning to practice. For example, key stakeholder groups refusing to comply with policy or environmental constraints not considered in the context of policy development. I am interested in analyzing how policies that impact mental health and addiction service delivery are implemented.

SELECTED WORK and PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- **Clinical Nurse Educator, Mental Health Acute Care**, St. Michael's Hospital, **March 2018 – Current**
- **Implementation Manager, Mental Health and Addiction Initiative**, Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, **July 2017 – March 2018**
- **Research Manager**, Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, **January 2015 – July 2017**

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS and AWARDS

- Values in Action Award, Global Mental Health Nursing Social Responsibility Initiative
St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto, Ontario
- Nursing Excellence Award – Culture of Caring
St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto, Ontario
- Excellence in Academic Achievement
Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario
- Suva, G., Penney, T., McPherson, C. (2019). Medical assistance in dying: A scoping review to inform nurses' practice. *Journal of Hospice & Palliative Nursing*, 21(1), 46–53.

Alexandra Thatcher

alexandrathatcher@gmail.com



I am a settler and PhD student living and studying on the territory of the Huron-Wendat, Anishinaabe peoples, and the Rotinonhsiónni Confederacy. I am enrolled in the public policy and administration stream having recently completed my Master's at Carleton's School of Indigenous and Canadian Studies. There I complemented my studies as a researcher in a Senator's office, as a policy analyst at Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and as a teaching assistant. I am interested in Indigenous governance and sovereignty, as well as the Politics of Recognition.

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy, Policy Studies, Currently Enrolled

Yeates School of Graduate Studies, Ryerson University, Toronto, ON

Master of Arts, Indigenous and Canadian Studies, 2020

School of Indigenous and Canadian Studies, Carleton University, Ottawa, ON

Honours Bachelor of Arts, Canadian Studies & Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations – Modern, 2018

St. George Campus, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON

POLICY STREAM

Public Policy and Administration

POLICY SPECIALIZATION

Indigenous Governance and Policy

RESEARCH FOCUS

With my research I hope to contribute to the discussion on Treaty Constitutionalism and the Politics of Recognition. I am interested in how understandings of treaty relations and Indigenous sovereignty converge and differ between Anishinaabe knowledge holders and the Canadian media. I am further interested how these possible gaps may be addressed in a way that better respects Indigenous political orders and in a manner consistent with Indigenous resurgence. As a treaty partner this topic is important to me as I believe it can contribute to the mitigation of colonial violence. My research will likely shift as I form new relationships to ensure my research is useful to community, not merely extractive.

SELECTED WORK and PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- **Research Assistant (Bilingual)**, Senate of Canada, **September 2019 – April 2020**
- **Junior Policy Analyst**, Ecosystems Management - Indigenous Relations Team, Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans, **May 2019 – April 2020**
- **Teaching Assistant**, School of Indigenous and Canadian Studies, Carleton University, **September 2018 – April 2020**

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS and AWARDS

- University College Merit Award
- Honourable Robert P. Kaplan Scholarship Fund In Canadian Studies
- Moses And Anne Tartick Scholarship