Davia Downey

I currently teach courses in local politics, public policy and public administration at Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Michigan. My most recent publication, “Civic Culture in Ottawa: The Endurance of Local Culture, co-authored with Laura A. Reese and Raymond Rosenfeld can be seen in Comparative Civic Culture published by Ashgate Publishing in 2012. It illustrates my interest in global urban issues, particularly in the ways civic culture and political institutions interact.

Prior to joining the faculty at GVSU in 2011, I served as a research and graduate assistant for the Global Urban Studies Program at Michigan State University. I consider my work with the program as integral to providing an international perspective on the inter-workings of local government, federalism and public policy. As the economy of the world continues to globalize, I think it’s very important that students of public administration, political science and policy understand how culture, institutions, historical practices, religion and feeling toward government interact. My experience at MSU in GUSP has influenced my desire to provide this kind of course at Grand Valley. The program at Michigan State University is unique in that it incorporates these strands of scholarship in an integrated way and allows students of different majors an opportunity to explore these issues as well.
Minting Ye

Hi, I am Minting Ye. I am a PhD student in the Department of Geography at Michigan State University. I also have a graduate specialization in Global Urban Studies. My main research areas are in urban and regional development and redevelopment, land use and urban environment. I have published more than ten articles on these topics in a variety of academic journals. The title of my dissertation research is Exploring the Diversity of Gentrification and the Role of Gender in Hong Kong, 1986-2006.

Over the past few years, I worked as a Research Assistant in GUSP. I have participated in projects in a wider global context as well as across different disciplines. In a project on economic development policy, with GUSP Director Laura Reese, I collected and analyzed economic development surveys, census data, and a variety of other data covering climate, health, and amenities with the assistance of ArcGIS. This experience had resulted in a joint publication in Economic Development Quarterly.

Funded by GUSP, I participated in two professional conferences; the Urban Affairs Association meetings in Chicago and Pittsburgh. The GUSP mentorship, research experience, engagement in various events, and diverse environment all provided me a perfect opportunity for professional development and growth. My long-term career goal is a research and teaching career in Geography or Urban Studies.

Jenn Wray

The Global Urban Studies Program (GUSP) specialization provides a unique interdisciplinary component to my doctoral degree allowing me to work with faculty and graduate students across multiple disciplines, and experience a variety of perspectives. My experiences in GUSP have helped me develop as a sociologist. Course work requirements for GUSP are structured to link theoretical components from a variety of fields to urban issues on a global scale. The courses I have taken as a GUSP graduate student have allowed me to expand my sociological imagination and apply my perspective to global urban issues from a multidisciplinary perspective.

The GUSP specialization is helping me to develop the tools required by today’s interdisciplinary job market to set me apart from other scholars. As a graduate research assistant for GUSP director Dr. Laura Reese I have gained valuable research experience conducting, and transcribing field interviews, as well as researching public records in the city of Detroit. The goal of our research project is to author an academic book on the issues and untold stories of Detroit, Michigan.

Eric Walcott

I graduated in May of 2013 from the Master of Public Policy program with a specialization in Global Urban Studies (GUSP). Working for GUSP and taking courses for the GUSP specialization, I had the opportunity to study local government, education, urban politics, economic development, living conditions, and service provision in both the U.S. and abroad. I worked with GUSP faculty to develop an extensive database of municipal government indicators for U.S. cities and Mexico’s Federal District. In my own courses and research, I studied living conditions in the slums of Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, and Sao Paulo. My capstone project examined the impact of fiscal decentralization on access to basic services in Latin America.

Following graduation I took a job as a legislative assistant in the Michigan House of Representatives. There I am using the knowledge and skills I acquired through the Global Urban Studies Program to do policy research and assist with constituent casework.