

# Ed Studies Newsletter

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Dr. Grewal

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## Alumni Spotlight: Dr. Imandeep Grewal

Dr. Imandeep Grewal (Cohort 1), alumna of the Educational Studies PhD program, is currently a full-time instructor in EMU's Department of Teacher Education teaching graduate and undergraduate courses in the Educational Psychology program area. For the 2016-2017 academic year, Iman is serving as the John W. Porter Distinguished Chair in Urban Education, which is a position designed to expand the university's role in urban districts in Michigan. During her appointment, Iman is concentrating on strengthening the presence of place-based education at EMU and formalizing a place-based teacher-preparation program.

Reflecting on the Educational Studies program's influence in relation to her academic trajectory, Iman says the program "helped me to clarify my research interests, provided a deeper philosophical grounding to my teaching, and the confidence to take calculated and professional risks." Her sense of awareness and intellectual risk-taking were the impetus for Iman's

powerful dissertation research. With an interest in the life outcomes of girls living in poverty, this particular study took Iman to her home country of India where she worked closely with twenty young girls, expressing that, "I would never had had the opportunity if it were not for this program."

While bearing witness to paralyzing deprivation and poverty, Iman describes being moved by the girls' "resilience and steely determination." Iman's completed dissertation, *The Environment of Poverty and the Limits of Girlhood: The Struggle for the Right to an Education in North India* Gareebi Ka Mahual Aur Ladkeo Ki Hud, is compelling work that ignited future efforts of education and activism.

Iman not only narrated a moving dissertation, but also continues to inspire us with her ongoing global engagement. In 2012, Dr. Grewal established Strengthening Girls Voices and Choices Through Education (Sikhya). Sikhya is a grassroots non-profit that aims to encourage and guide girls to take leadership roles and be

actively involved in making decisions about their lives. The organization is also dedicated to raising awareness of how gender, poverty, and education intersect to shape the lives of girls globally. Iman's work serves as a reminder of the ethical considerations and obligations we have as researchers in various communities.

While data collection remains her favorite part of the Educational Studies program, she asserts that "the dissertation process forced me to believe in myself and it helped me to find my voice." Dr. Grewal offers advice to those cohort members engaged in the dissertation process. "Do not be afraid," she says. "Learn from every experience, develop a community of support, and take care of yourself." We are grateful to Iman for her significant contributions to EMU's Department of Teacher Education and her collaborative efforts in establishing a place-based program for aspiring teachers. *If you are interested in learning how you can support Sikhya, please email Iman: [igrewal@emich.edu](mailto:igrewal@emich.edu)*

### **Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Studies**

The Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Studies prepares educators from a variety of community organizations (P-12 schools, higher education and other community contexts) to engage in effective research and practice about teaching and learning within complex social, political and economic systems. A key underlying emphasis of the program is a focus on poverty and its specific impact on urban, as well as suburban and rural communities.

## Writing Center for Graduate Studies

The Writing Center for Graduate Studies (WCGS) offers writing support is for graduate students in the College of Education, focusing on students' concerns with their writing. WCGS offers both face-to-face and online support. For more information, or to make an appointment, email Cindy Guillean at [cguillean@emich.edu](mailto:cguillean@emich.edu).

Information about all University Writing Center locations is available at [www.emich.edu/uwc](http://www.emich.edu/uwc).

## Mark Your Calendars

### EMU Commencement

December 17, 2016 Ypsilanti, MI

### University Closed

Dec. 23, 2016 - Jan. 2, 2017

### EcoJustice and Activism

Conference CFP Due Jan. 15

### Graduate Research Conference

March 24, 2017 Ypsilanti, MI

## Kudos and Congrats!

The following have successfully defended their doctoral dissertations:

- Audrey Bernard (Cohort 4)
- Marguerite DeBello (Cohort 2)
- DeAnna Gapp (Cohort 4)
- Katja Robinson (Cohort 4)
- Dawn Stewart (Cohort 2)

The following will graduate in December:

- Jennifer Banks (Cohort 2)
- Kristen Barnes (Cohort 3)
- Audrey Bernard (Cohort 4)
- Marva Brooks (Cohort 3)
- Cristal Nichols (Cohort 3)
- Katja Robinson (Cohort 4)
- Dawn Stewart (Cohort 2)

Nigora Erkaeva  
and son Finley



## Research Feature: Nigora Erkaeva

Native of Tajikistan, Nigora Erkaeva (Cohort 4), is one of several students bringing an international perspective that contributes to the inclusive nature of the Educational Studies Program. She is currently a PhD candidate, who first enrolled at EMU as a Fulbright Scholar earning a master's degree in Social Foundations of Education. Nigora is in the process of completing her dissertation research into the historical dominant discourse involved in the Soviet government's introduction of compulsory education in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century in Central Asia. "I use an EcoJustice framework with postcolonial theory to analyze the Soviet Union's support of industrialization at any cost," she explains, with the purpose of demonstrating "how the imposed mechanistic way of life undermined local cultures that lived in accord with nature, followed sustainable practices, and included more-than-human world." Nigora is using archival research and critical discourse analysis as her method of inquiry. Over the summer, she traveled to California and spent several days at Stanford University's Hoover Institution Archives, where Nigora was able to submerge herself into her work as this particular collection boasts strong holdings on Russia and the Soviet Union and political and ideological movements.

While reflecting about the EDST program and its attributes, Nigora believes the urban education focus helped her to situate her interests and questions in the context of bigger ecological, social, economic, and political situations. "Courses and discussions throughout my program expanded my understanding about the complexity of research and its importance in the field of ecological and social studies," she explains. "I think the program is strong because of dedicated, ethical, and supportive teachers and students." She also expresses gratitude to our community of scholars "where I was able to nourish my own growth professionally and personally."

In addition to being a passionate researcher, Nigora holds a deep commitment that education should be used to recognize and respect local societies and the environment. During her coursework, she held a graduate assistantship with the Southwest Michigan Stewardship Coalition (SEMIS) where she successfully cultivated educational partnerships. Nigora is also in the process of co-authoring two publications with members of faculty focusing on ethics and education, as well as phases of community partnerships. We appreciate Nigora's contributions to our program and to the larger conversations concerning EcoJustice framework and look forward to her defense in the coming months.

## Educational Studies Students and Alum Presenting at AESA 2016

The American Educational Studies Association (AESA) is a scholarly society comprised of students, teachers, and college and university professors who are interested in the foundations of education and research utilizing one or more of the liberal arts disciplines. In early November, AESA held its annual conference in Seattle, Washington. The conference theme, *Love, Labor, and Learning Under the Gun*, was meant to signify the personal and political pressure we feel in education to solve problems. It encouraged “educators’ imaginative capacities for ethical leadership, civil action, and curricular and pedagogical artistry.” Several students and alumni of EMU’s Educational Studies program shared research, presented papers, and participated in roundtable discussions at AESA this year.

### **Kaia-Marie A. Bishop** (Cohort 6)

Bishop, K. A. (2016). Forced to Conform: The Challenges of the Common Core.

### **Nigora Safarovna Erkaeva** (ABD, Cohort 4)

Erkaeva, N. S. (2016). Local Progressive Thinkers Jadids in Central Asia, early 20th Century: A Critical Discourse Analysis.

### **Kristi George** (ABD, Cohort 6)

Martusewicz, R., Mullen, J., & George, K. (2016). EcoJustice Symposium: Wendell Berry as Philosopher and EcoJustice Educator: On Love, Health and Neoliberalism.

### **Agnes Krynski** (Cohort 8)

Shields, M. K., Krynski, A., & Hamilton, M. (2016). Rethinking Pedagogy, Imagining Futures: Activating EcoJustice Frameworks in the Classroom.

### **John Lupinacci** (Alumnus, Cohort 1)

Au, W., Gorlewski, J., Lupinacci, J., & Ross, E. W. (2016). Academic Labor in the Age of Clinton versus Trump.

Happel-Parkins, A., & Lupinacci, J. (2016). Eco-Critical De(re)constructions and Re(con)figurations of STEM: A Critical Posthumanist Approach in Education Research.

Wiggins, J. W., & Lupinacci, J. (2016). Imaginative Capacities for Partnerships: Ethical Leadership, Scholar-Activism, and Community Organizing.

### **Amanda O. Maher** (Cohort 6)

Maher, A. O. (2016). Caught in the Crosshairs: Teaching Reading in Times of ‘War.’

### **John Mullen** (Cohort 7)

Martusewicz, R., Mullen, J., & George, K. (2016). EcoJustice Symposium: Wendell Berry as Philosopher and EcoJustice Educator: On Love, Health and Neoliberalism.

### **Monica K. Shields** (ABD, Cohort 3)

Shields, M. K., Krynski, A., & Hamilton, M. (2016). Rethinking Pedagogy, Imagining Futures: Activating EcoJustice Frameworks in the Classroom.



From left to right:  
Kaia Bishop,  
Rebecca  
Martusewicz,  
Kristi George,  
and Monica  
Shields