

Human Development and Social Policy Labs and Research Groups 2024-2025

FACULTY-LED GROUPS

Life-Span Development Lab

Faculty leader: Claudia Haase

Website: <https://haaselab.sesp.northwestern.edu>

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We examine pathways towards happy and healthy development across the life span with a focus on emotions in individuals and couples. Our research combines insights and paradigms from affective, life-span developmental, and relationship science. We use multiple methods (e.g., autonomic physiology, behavioral observations, subjective emotional experience assessments, linguistic markers, neuroimaging), age-diverse samples (e.g., from adolescence to late life), diverse study designs (e.g., experimental, longitudinal), and single-subjects and dyadic approaches (e.g., studying couples, parents and children, and friendship dyads). Lab meeting times in fall 2024 are Thursdays 5-6pm in Annenberg 201.

Destin Lab

Faculty Leader: Mesmin Destin

Website: <https://sites.northwestern.edu/destinlab/>

Contact: m-destin@northwestern.edu

Our research investigates how social environments shape people's identities and the consequences for motivation, behaviors, and trajectories in life. We place particular emphasis on understanding the ways that socioeconomic resources come to influence young people's academic outcomes. Using social psychological methods, we conduct laboratory and school-based field experiments to examine the types of contexts, experiences, interactions, and information that support motivation and well-being for students from a variety of backgrounds.

Foley Center for the Study of Lives Research Group

Faculty leader: Dan P. McAdams

Website: <http://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/foley/>

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Funded by a grant from the Foley Family Foundation of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the Foley Center for the Study of Lives is an interdisciplinary research project committed to studying psychological and social development in the adult years.

Bringing together perspectives from personality psychology, life-course developmental research,

qualitative sociology, and studies of biography and culture, the Foley Center sponsors the research program developed by Professor Dan McAdams and his students and collaborators in the Human Development and Social Policy PhD program and in the **Psychology Department at Northwestern University**. The researchers associated with the Foley Center focus considerable attention on such prosocial aspects of adult development as generativity, social commitment, altruism, life-long learning, and the development of self-understanding across the adult life course.

The Foley Center is dedicated to advancing the rich intellectual tradition associated with Henry A. Murray, Robert White, Erik Erikson, David McClelland, Silvan Tomkins, and those other scholars who established "personology" as the scientific study of the whole person in biographical and cultural context.

Ispa-Landa Lab

Faculty leader: Simone Ispa-Landa

Contact: s-ispalanda@northwestern.edu

A space for students to connect and present early drafts or works-in-progress. Email Simone to be added to the listserv.

COAST Lab (Contexts of Adolescent Stress and Thriving)

Faculty leader: Emma K. Adam

Website: <https://adamlab.sesp.northwestern.edu/>

Contact: ek-adam@northwestern.edu

We study how everyday life factors such as school, family, and peer relationships influence levels of stress, health, and well-being in children and adolescents. We try to trace the pathways by which stress "gets under the skin" to contribute to poor health and affect behavioral, academic, and emotional development.

By using noninvasive methods such as measurement of the stress-sensitive hormone cortisol, we study how adolescents react to stress, as well as explore how their daily experiences, stress hormone regulation, and sleep habits influence their everyday functioning as well as their health and well-being as they become adults.

Development, Early Education and Policy Lab (DEEP Lab)

Faculty leader: Terri Sabol

Website: <https://sites.northwestern.edu/deep/>

Contact: elansrich@gmail.com

The DEEP lab applies developmental theory, psychological measurement, and mixed methods approaches to pressing social policy issues that affect children and families. We pay particular to the earliest stages of life (birth to age 5) and the ways in which advanced developmental theory and methods can inform early childhood programs and policies. The lab meetings include undergraduate students, full time research assistants, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows. Students have the opportunity to present their work as well as participate in reading discussions, writing workshops, and one-time sessions on topics of interest led by experts in the field. Lab meeting times are TBD for Fall Quarter 2022

Culture, Brain, and Human Development Lab

Faculty Leader: Yang Qu

Website: <https://sites.northwestern.edu/qulab/>

Contact: yangqu@northwestern.edu

Our lab takes an interdisciplinary approach that combines developmental psychology, cultural psychology, and neuroscience to examine how sociocultural contexts shape adolescent development. In this vein, we have two lines of research. First, we investigate the psychological and neural mechanisms underlying cultural differences in adolescents' academic, social, and emotional development. Second, we examine how parents influence adolescents' beliefs, behavior, and brain, with attention to the implications for adolescents' learning and psychological adjustment.

Health as Human Capital (Research Area)

Faculty Leader: Hannes Schwandt

Website: www.hschwandt.com

Contact: schwandt@northwestern.edu

Physical and mental health are core aspects of human development. Health matters both as an input in social and economic empowerment and as an endpoint determining personal and social wellbeing. My research seeks to explore the causal drivers of health disparities in our society and how those disparities translate into economic and social differences. Moreover, I study how economic and social disparities impact short- and long-term health outcomes.

Education Lab

Faculty Leader: Jonathan Guryan

Website: <https://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu/labs/education>

Contact: wolfj@uchicago.edu, fmomeni@uchicago.edu

The Education Lab partners with civic and community leaders to identify, rigorously evaluate and learn how to scale programs and policies that improve education in America's most distressed urban neighborhoods.

Econlab

Faculty leaders: Ofer Malamud, Jon Guryan, Kirabo Jackson, Diane Schanzenbach, Hannes Schwandt

Contact: ofer@northwestern.edu

A workshop for students to present work in progress related to the economics of education and social policy.

Politics & Policy Lab (PPL)

Faculty coordinators: Tabitha Bonilla, Quinn Mulroy, and Sally Nuamah

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The Politics & Policy Lab provides a place for graduate students to explore ideas, thoughts, and questions on research that touches the political space. The workshop is designed to be interdisciplinary: attendees need not be experts on politics or policy, but we intend to, with your help, foster a community for acquiring and sharing knowledge, and finding discussion, camaraderie, and guidance on writing and thinking about political topics. The lab is inclusive of different methodological approaches – whether quantitative or qualitative, all are welcome and will find fellowship. **Please email us to be added to the lab's email listserv.** You can sign up to present [here](#).

Coburn Projects

Faculty leader: Cynthia Coburn

Contact: cynthia.coburn@northwestern.edu

Participating students are involved in one of three lines of work related to policymaking and policy implementation, often related to mathematics instruction:

- 1) COHERE: a study of efforts to promote preK-3 alignment in mathematics in district, school, and classroom under the auspices of the DREME Network (<https://dreme.stanford.edu>)
- 2) Crafting coherence: A study of California Education Partners' partnerships to foster preK-3 coherence in mathematics with four small-to-midsize school districts in California
- 3) National Center for Research in Policy and Practice: Two studies (one with Jim Spillane) about the role of research and other forms of information in district and school decision making (<http://ncrpp.org/>)

All projects are currently in data analysis phase. We welcome those who are interested in working independently or as part of the team to investigate a range of question using our existing project data.

Spillane's Education System Building for Equitable and Excellent Instruction Lab

Designing School Systems to Support Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)

Faculty leader: Jim Spillane

Postdoctoral Fellow: Christa Haverly

Contacts: j-spillane@northwestern.edu or zena.ellison@northwestern.edu

This study, funded by the National Science Foundation, examines the work of designing education systems to support ambitious elementary science instruction. In collaboration with the University of Michigan, the purpose of this study is to produce fundamental research on the work of developing school-level and system-level STEM learning environments that bridge from the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) as an aspirational policy to high quality science instruction in elementary school classrooms. The project team meets remotely once a week at a time determined at the beginning of each quarter.

NebraskaMATH Study

Faculty leader: Jim Spillane

Website: www.distributedleadership.org

Contact: j-spillane@northwestern.edu, zena.ellison@northwestern.edu

The NebraskaMATH study, funded by the National Science Foundation, is a collaboration with the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. The project aims to improve achievement in mathematics for all students and narrow achievement gaps among at-risk populations. We have collected several years' worth of both qualitative and quantitative data from teachers and other school staff and are now mostly working on analyses. This study includes graduate students in SESP and faculty with appointments at George Washington University's Graduate School of Education and Human Development and at UC San Diego's Department of Education Studies.

The Comparative School Systems Lab

Faculty leader: Jim Spillane

Contact: j-spillane@northwestern.edu, zena.ellison@northwestern.edu

This study, funded by the Spencer Foundation, is a collaboration with the University of Michigan. School system building has become central to educational reform in the US. As reformers and policymakers envision systems as powerful sources of instructional improvement a critical question is: How do school systems define, design, manage, and improve instruction? We research how six school systems define, design, and manage instruction and instructional improvement. We want to learn about how *systems* interact with and affect instruction, maintain instructional quality, and enable instructional improvement.

** Many faculty members do not have official research groups. Faculty not listed are nevertheless open to meetings and discussions. If you have an interest in particular faculty members you should not hesitate to email them or talk to their students.*