

Honors College Fireside Chats

Fall 2021

A unique opportunity for Honors College first-years to connect with faculty in an informal setting and meet other students with similar interests.

Important Notes for Students

- Be sure that you are available to attend on the posted date and time before registering for a specific chat.
- Each student may attend one chat. We ask for your top 3 preferences in case all the available spaces for your first choice have been filled.
- In some cases, you may be contacted to attend other chats you are interested in if there are additional openings after the initial sign-up period concludes.
- FALL 2021 Fireside Chats will be taking place in-person unless otherwise indicated in the event information

Biomimicry in Engineering

Sunday, September 12th, 4-5:30pm.

Hosted by Dr. Caroline Szczepanski

Location: Engineering Building, Room 1202 EB

In this chat, we will discuss how nature and our surroundings have inspired technological innovations. We will discuss famous examples of engineering marvels that were designed with a natural example in mind, thus employing biomimicry. We will also discuss ongoing challenges in the field of biomimicry, and specifically how natural design may be critical to solving global challenges. Lastly, this chat will be used to brainstorm and reflect upon "untapped" inspiration surrounding us in nature.

Caroline Szczepanski is an Assistant Professor of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science. The research in her group falls at the interface of polymer engineering, materials science, and biomimicry. Her group develops techniques using polymers and polymer networks to produce materials with the order, functionality, and performance of examples surrounding us in nature. Beyond identifying materials that mimic natural functionalities, our research addresses the need for efficient and versatile methods that make this class of mimicry feasible for broad-reaching materials needs. The materials developed in her group are explored for a variety of applications including: biomaterials, coatings, plastics, membranes, and adhesives.

Navigating Life and Leadership Paths

Sunday, September 12th, 2021 - 4-5:30pm

Hosted by Dr. Sonja Fritzsche

Location: In front of Linton Hall

Every student who embarks on a journey at MSU has the potential to be a leader. This chat provides students with the opportunities to share their interests and potential directions. We will brainstorm strategies for navigating academic life at a very large university that help you figure out how to find some smaller, safe spaces. We'll swap ideas about how to try out different paths to try to find what the proverbial eventual "right" path might be. We will talk about identifying stepping stones, milestones, and your horizon that will help you explore your academic interests and learn how to eventually take on leadership roles in that area - this is intellectual leadership. The conversation will be low key, low pressure, and developmental and is great for first generation students.

Sonja Fritzsche is a Professor of German and is also Associate Dean of Academic Personnel and Administration in the College of Arts & Letters. She has been at MSU since 2015 and started as Department Chair of Linguistics, Languages, and Cultures. Her academic work focuses on German and European Cold War and cinematic history with a particular focus on science fiction film. One of her recent interests is creating an Arts & Humanities Extension that promotes bringing the Arts & Humanities to the broader public through collaborative community engagement initiatives throughout the state of Michigan together with the MSU Extension Children's and Youth Institute.

Government and Higher Education Interacting

Sunday, September. 12, 4-5:30pm

Hosted by Dr. Kathleen Wilbur

Location: Zoom

At a university the size of Michigan State, many do not realize that interacting with federal, state, and local governments is a key part of our responsibility. Our conversation will focus on how Michigan State University functions in those three environments and how we advocate on behalf of the university, students, faculty, and staff.

Kathleen Wilbur is Michigan State University's senior vice president for government relations. Wilbur served at Central Michigan University, is the only woman to direct three State of Michigan departments, and served on the MSU Board of Trustees. Before her MSU appointment, Wilbur, who joined Central Michigan University in 2002, was vice president for government and external relations. She also served as interim president for one year and then was vice president for development and external relations. Prior to that she was director of the Michigan Department of Consumer and Industry Services, director of the Michigan Department of Commerce, deputy director of the Michigan Department of Commerce, and director of the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulation.

Team Formation and Different Collaboration Styles of Teams

Wednesday, September 15th, 4-5:00pm.

Hosted by Dr. Hanzhe Zhang

Location: Koo room in Marshall Adams Hall

Our interdisciplinary NSF-funded research team studies how teams collaborate on projects. We collect email exchanges and meeting minutes of over twenty student teams in subjects including economics, computer science, construction management, and human resources and labor relations, and conduct entry, midway, and follow-up surveys on students. We analyze these data to see how the teams are collaborating. We plan to study how we can provide human and machine interventions to improve team collaboration and team functioning. I will also talk about how teams are freely formed.

Hanzhe Zhang is an Assistant Professor of Economics at Michigan State University and a faculty affiliate of Human Capital and Economic Opportunity Global Working Group at the University of Chicago. His research and teaching interests are microeconomics, matching theory, game theory, labor economics, and family economics.

Biotechnology, Genome Editing and Potatoes

Sunday, September 19th, 530 - 7pm

Hosted by Dr. Dave Douches, Thilani Jayakody, and Sami Sikora

Location: Conference room 2070 Molecular Plant Science

Potatoes are an essential crop that feed many people around the world and can play an integral role in the goal to achieve global food security. My potato breeding program resides at a U.S. land-grant university where we are challenged to solve agricultural problems and share them for the benefit of mankind. In potato breeding, this means the ongoing pursuit of better and more efficient traits. Also advancing in the 1990's was biotechnology. Biotech crops were a new innovation, and the science offered a new tool for breeders. Controversy has shadowed genetically modified products since their inception. Regardless of the reasons, plant biotechnology may be one of the most misunderstood technologies of all time. Genome editing now offers more opportunities to improve crops such as potato. Genome editing now allows us to target specific regions of the genome and make changes directly to the DNA. Ph.D. student Thilani Jayakody, Sami Sikora and others in the potato breeding and genetics lab are using gene editing tools to modify traits such as browning, storability, processing and self-compatibility as a breeding tool in potato. Our fireside chat will discuss the topics of plant biotechnology, genome editing and potatoes. We will bring fresh potato chips to taste from our research lab!

Dave Douches is a professor in Michigan State University's Department of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences, has led the MSU potato breeding and genetics program for over 30 years. The program has produced over 30 new potato varieties and has been recognized as a global leader in potato research. He has also served as the Director of the Plant Breeding, Genetics

and Biotechnology Graduate Program, as well as the Director of the USAID Feed the Future Biotechnology Partnership - Potato Project 2015-2026.

Why Cybercrime is a Human Problem

Sunday, September 19th, 2021 - 4:00PM-5:30PM

Hosted by Dr. Thomas Holt

Location: Zoom

When we hear stories in the news about ransomware, or major cyberattacks knocking out oil pipelines and threatening the country, it is easy to assume it is just a computer science problem to be solved through hardware or software. Though technical knowledge is certainly a part of these attacks, the criminals behind the computers are people and their actions are guided by the same decision-processes as everyone else. The more we understand what drives these actors and the influences that shape their decision to target certain resources or companies, the better we can defend against their attacks in the future. This discussion will help you understand why we need a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of cybercrime and cybersecurity, incorporating both the social and technical sciences. Real world examples of various cybercrimes and criminal offenders will be provided to highlight how cybercrime is a human problem that must be addressed.

Thomas J. Holt is Director and Professor in the School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University. He is a world-leading scholar in the area of cybercrime threats, and studies them using data from the Open and Dark Web, as well as various data sources from around the world. His research focuses on computer hacking, malware, and the role of the Internet in facilitating all manner of crime and deviance. His work has been published in various journals including Crime and Delinquency, Deviant Behavior, the Journal of Criminal Justice, and Youth and Society.

State Advocacy and Policy

Sunday, September 19th, 4 PM-6PM

Hosted by Drs. Matt Grossmann and Sarah Reckhow

Location: 313 Berkey Hall

Only three miles separate the MSU campus from the State Capitol. MSU students conduct research relevant to state policymaking; they are the most frequent interns in the state legislature; and they often find jobs in state government. Join political scientist Matt Grossmann, Director of the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research, to discuss the links between MSU and state politics and policy, including opportunities for students and research on policy issues. Meet at the Institute, which regularly surveys state residents and policymakers, trains candidates for office and state officials, and offers the most data on how the 50 American states differ and change over time. Share your policy interests and advocacy aspirations, ask questions about politics and policy, and find tools to learn about and influence public decisions.

Matt Grossmann is Director of the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR) and Professor of Political Science at Michigan State University. Most recently, Dr. Grossmann is publishing *How Social Science Got Better: Overcoming Bias with More Evidence, Diversity, and Self-Reflection* (Oxford University Press, 2021) on the topics of Trump's election, the Great Recession, what makes humans unique, models of infectious disease, social immobility, and racial bias in policing. His book, *Red State Blues: How the Conservative Revolution Stalled in the States*, is from Cambridge University Press. He finds that while the Republican Party has gained substantial political control of state governments but has largely failed to enact policies that advance conservative goals.

Sarah Reckhow is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at Michigan State University. She was awarded a fellowship from the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study for 2018-2019. Her research and teaching interests include urban politics, education policy, nonprofits and philanthropy, and racial and ethnic politics. Reckhow's work on urban schools has focused on policy reforms in New York City, Los Angeles, Oakland, and Detroit. Her award-winning book with Oxford University Press, *Follow the Money: How Foundation Dollars Change Public School Politics*, examines the role of major foundations, such as the Gates Foundation, in urban school reform. Reckhow was awarded a research grant from the W.T. Grant Foundation (with Megan Tompkins-Stange) to study the use of research evidence in the development of teacher quality policy debates.

Stopping Fear From Letting You Not Choose Science (or Other Things You Love) as a Profession

Thursday, September 23rd, 4PM-5:30PM

Hosted by Stephanie Watts

Location: The Graduate Hotel

Come join in conversation with me about overcoming fear, a wicked thing that can stop you from doing what you love. My example is as a woman in science, and I'll gladly share with you both my fears and how I (think?) I have overcome them to be the Professor I have always wanted to be. Some of those fears are gender specific, some are not. All are welcome.

Stephanie Watts is a Professor of Pharmacology & Toxicology at Michigan State University. Dr. Watts has served as PI of her own laboratory for 25 years and her team has situated themselves to be experts in the field of vascular research. Her laboratory focuses on vascular smooth muscle pharmacology, physiology and function, and is dedicated towards understanding the mechanisms by which the vasculature contributes to hypertension, obesity and obesity associated hypertension. In 2020, Dr. Watts was awarded the MSU Graduate School Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award for a senior faculty member Harriet Dustan Awardee of the Council on Hypertension of the American Heart Association.

Why Do Lawyers Keep Citing Slave Cases? Legal Ethics, Law School, and Working For A More Just Future

Sunday, September 26, 1:00-3:00 pm

Hosted by Dr. Justin Simard

Location: MSU College of Law

Did you know that American judges and lawyers still cite nineteenth century slave cases in their decisions? Or that more than 10% of American judicial opinions are within two cites of a case involving an enslaved person? We'll talk about what this says about the legal profession and law schools. We'll also talk about history and memory, and think about what the legal profession and the United States can do to atone for slavery. And after all that we'll talk about why you still might want to attend law school.

Justin Simard is an assistant professor at MSU College of Law, where he teaches Professional Responsibility, Legal History, and Commercial Law. Prior to joining the faculty at MSU Law, he taught at Willamette University College of Law in Salem, Oregon. Professor Simard received his bachelor's degree in History from Rice University, and he completed his Juris Doctor and Ph.D. programs at the University of Pennsylvania. With his background, he aims to bring a new perspective to legal education as a historian, presenting the big picture view of concepts taught in his courses.

Bringing the World to MSU

Sunday, September 26, 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM

Hosted by Dr. Krista McCallum Beatty

Location: International Building

MSU enrolls students from as close as East Lansing and as far away as Australia, Indonesia, Brazil, Kenya and over a 100 more countries! Join Dr. Krista McCallum Beatty and members of the International Students Association to share the similarities and differences in the experiences of students from around the world, including your own. Bring your taste buds, too, as we will sample a variety of food from around the world.

Krista McCallum Beatty is the director of the Office for International Students and Scholars. McCallum Beatty's career in international education spans more than two decades, and for several universities in and outside the U.S. An active member with NAFSA: Association of International Educators, she was recently director of the International Students and Scholars Office at Iowa State University of Science and Technology. Prior, she spent 10 years as director for International Student and Faculty Services at Ohio University.

Religious Freedom & LGBTQ Rights

Sunday, September 26, 2021 - 5:00-6:30PM

Hosted by Dr. Frank Ravitch

Location: MSU College of Law (Room TBD)

Questions of religious freedom and LGBTQ rights have become so politicized that we often fail to see the ability to find common ground. The law does not require that we must sacrifice one right for the other and in fact many faith traditions are supportive of LGBTQ rights and many members of the LGBTQ community are religious. This is often overlooked in public debates. Even where conflict has arisen it is often possible to find common ground to protect both sets of interests. There are exceptions to this, however. For example, when for-profit businesses claim a right to discriminate against members of the LGBTQ community the ability to find common ground is much more limited. This raises many questions about the underlying rights and freedoms and the ways in which the law shapes how we address these issues.

Professor Ravitch's career has included experience in private practice and on Capitol Hill. Since joining Michigan State University College of Law he has authored several books, numerous law review articles, essays, book reviews, and book chapters, as well as amicus briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court. He is the author of *Freedom's Edge: Religious Freedom, Sexual Freedom, and the Future of America* (Cambridge University Press, 2016); *Marketing Creation: The Law and Intelligent Design* (Cambridge University Press 2012), *Masters of Illusion: The Supreme Court and the Religion Clauses* (NYU Press 2007); *Law and Religion: Cases, Materials, and Readings* (West 2004)(2nd Ed. 2008) (3rd Ed. 2015 with Larry Cata Backer), *School Prayer and Discrimination: The Civil Rights of Religious Minorities and Dissenters* (Northeastern University Press, 1999 & paperback edition 2001).

Budgeting For College Success

Monday, September 27, 2021 - 6:00PM-7:00PM

Hosted by Dr. Allison Dellapelle

Location: Minskoff Pavilion (Room TBD)

Overwhelmed at the thought of paying back thousands of dollars in student loans once you graduate? Are you interested in learning more about how you can take control of your finances & establish simple, dependable methods for successfully managing your budget while you are in college? Come to this Fireside Chat to learn about how to set yourself up for financial success hosted by instructor Allison Dellapelle.

Instructor Dellapelle teaches within the accounting department of the Eli Broad College of business where she focuses on teaching financial accounting courses. She is an alumna of MSU's undergraduate and graduate accounting programs and was a member of the Honors College. Dellapelle is a licensed Certified Public Accountant and has experience in both public and corporate accounting. She also owns her own business, ManageMint Financial LLC, in which she helps individuals and small businesses manage their finances and make important financial decisions

Our Changing Earth, Environment, and Climate

Sunday, October 3rd, 4-5:30pm.

Hosted by Drs. Jeffrey Freymueller and Seth Jacobson

Location: TBD

In this chat, we will talk about solar system exploration. We will focus on NASA's and other space agencies' current robotic exploration missions around the solar system, what exploration is planned in the near future, and what scientific questions are driving this exploration. Questions are welcome about historical space exploration efforts and careers in planetary science and space exploration.

Jeffrey Freymueller is an Endowed Chair for Geology of the Solid Earth for the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences internationally recognized leader in the field of geodesy, and utilizes satellites from the Global Positioning System (GPS) to make highly precise measurements of movement on Earth's surface. In his far-reaching research activities, he has made discoveries in a wide range of topics including plate tectonics and plate boundary zones, faults dynamics, the continuing rebound of the Earth's surface from the melting of ice-age glaciers, inflation and deflation of volcanoes, and interpreting how changing water and ice levels deform the Earth. He is particularly well-cited for his work on using GPS to understand the crustal deformation in China, related to the formation of the Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau.

Seth Jacobson is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at Michigan State University. He is a planetary scientist who studies the planets, moons, asteroids, and comets of the Solar System as well as other planetary systems with computational tools from the fields of celestial mechanics, geophysics, and geochemistry. His science is driven by the big questions: Where did we come from? What else is out there? and, How unique is our history? His work includes the construction of the Solar System from a protoplanetary disk considering dynamical and compositional constraints, building physicochemical models of planet formation to compare to geochemical and geophysical data, and studying the long-term dynamical and compositional evolution of planets, moons, and asteroids to understand how time has changed them.

Transitioning From a Covid-induced Isolated Learning Experience to a Residential College Living-Learning Experience

October 3, 2021 - 5:30PM-7:00PM

Hosted by Dr. Kendra Spence Cheruvellil

Location: Holmes Hall Dean's Conference Room

This Fireside Chat is designed for those entering one of MSU's three residential colleges (RCAH, JMC, LBC), with the goal of building community and ensuring successful re-entries to in-person lives. During the past year and a half, we have had to work, learn, and socialize in isolation using remote, virtual, and online platforms. During our time, we will discuss how the 1st

month on campus has gone and share answers to questions such as: What can we do to help us successfully transition back to in-person living and learning? How can being part of a “residential” college help with this transition? What can we do to get us to the optimum living-learning experience?

Kendra Spence Cheruvellil is a professor in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife and the Lyman Briggs College. She is co-director of the Data Intensive Landscape Limnology Lab, and she conducts big-data research on lakes to understand how global climate change and land use intensification affect lakes across regions and continents. She was recognized as a Research Exemplar for leading and managing her research program with professionalism and integrity, and is credited with co-establishing the discipline of landscape limnology and pushing the boundaries of interdisciplinary team science. Cheruvellil previously served as associate dean of research and faculty affairs in the Lyman Briggs College. She was a fellow in the Big Ten Academic Alliance Academic Leadership Program, and co-authored the book chapter, "Professional Development of Women Leaders," in the 2019 edited book, *Women Leading Change in Academia*.

Mental Illness and Academia: How One Professor Has Coped with Mental Illness and Went On to Have a Successful Teaching/Researching Career

Monday, October 4th, 2021 from 7PM-8PM

Hosted by Dr. Robert LaDuca

Location: Zoom

Join Professor LaDuca for an evening of discussion about his history with mental illness, specifically focusing on how he learned to cope with it, so that he was able to have a successful career, both teaching and researching. Additionally, this chat will include discussion about careers in science involving teaching and researching. This chat is perfect for any student who is interested in a career in science academia, or who would like to learn from someone who has had a great deal of success, while experiencing periodic mental illness episodes. Dr. Rob LaDuca is a Professor of Chemistry in Lyman Briggs College. After receiving his PhD from Cornell University, he went on to teach at King's College before beginning his time at MSU. His research interests include synthesis and characterization of coordination polymers via hydro-thermal techniques; and organometallic approaches to inorganic polymers and ceramic materials. Additionally, he is an avid listener of progressive rock music and ran the largest American music festival in the genre for 13 years.

Rob LaDuca teaches general chemistry, organic chemistry, inorganic chemistry, and scientific communication seminars. He and his undergraduate-only research group investigate synthetic metal-organic hybrid crystals as detectors for environmental contaminants, and as catalysts for the safe degradation of toxic dyestuffs.

Success Strategies for Women in Science and Engineering

Tuesday, October 12, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Hosted by Drs. Angela Wilson and Karen Draths

Location: Room 220, Chemistry

Join Drs. Angela Wilson and Karen Draths for a discussion about strategies to use while in college to work toward a career in science. While the focus of the discussion will be targeted towards women in science and engineering, the discussion is open to students in any area. The discussion will target identifying and maximizing strengths, addressing any weaknesses, and early identification of opportunities. As well, we will have a positive discussion about the communication style and perspective differences between women and men, and how realization of them can aid in your success, from college to your career.

Dr. Draths is an Assistant Professor of Chemistry, with a rich background that includes time in industry. She has created and led her own company and has several patents on biocatalytic synthesis. Dr. Draths serves as the mentor for the MSU American Chemical Society (ACS) Women in Chemistry (WiC) group and is Chair-elect of the MSU ACS section. In her work, Dr. Draths creates microbial organisms for use in chemical synthesis. Her research encompasses the creation of new metabolic pathways that do not exist in nature, the construction of the microbial chassis needed to express these pathways, and subsequent microbial synthesis of targeted chemicals under controlled culture conditions in batch reactors, targeting both pharmaceutical and large-scale commodity chemical applications.

Dr. Wilson is the John A. Hannah Distinguished Professor of Chemistry, Associate Dean for Strategic Initiatives in the College of Natural Sciences, and Director of the MSU Center for Quantum Computing, Science, and Engineering (MSU-Q). She is currently President-elect of the world's largest scientific societies, the American Chemical Society, and has served as the Chemistry Division Director (head) of the U.S. National Science Foundation, managing ~\$1B in chemistry investments across the nation while there. Her physical chemistry research spans quantum chemistry/quantum mechanics as well as drug discovery, protein modeling, environmental science, and materials science.

Be The Change: How Social Work Makes an Impact through Practice, Research, and Activism

Sunday, October 17, 2021 - 4:00PM-5:30PM

Hosted by Dr. Anne Hughes

Location: 221 Baker Hall

Join Social Work faculty, students, and alumni to hear about how social work is transforming lives. We will talk about the social work approaches to solving wicked problems, career paths for social workers, and ways all of us can make meaningful change.

Anne Hughes is an Associate Professor and Director of the School of Social Work at Michigan State University. She earned her PhD at the University of Maryland, Baltimore and has been at Michigan State since 2009. She is a John A. Hartford Foundation Faculty Scholar in Geriatric Social Work and a former Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health (BIRCWH) scholar. Dr. Hughes' research interests center on decreasing the psychosocial impact of chronic illness.

Beyond Left versus Right: Dialogue and American Democracy

Sunday, October 17, 2021 - 5-7PM

Hosted by Drs. Eric Scorsone and Mary Schulz

Location: MSU Extension Center for Local Government Finance and Policy

Our world today is buffeted by the noise and clamor of political fights, legal battles and heated rhetoric and even violence. Despite the wide attention given to national politics, it is at the local and state level that American democracy is really played out. Come, listen and exchange ideas with two leaders from our state, the Honorable Mayor Sheldon Neeley of Flint (and former Democratic state representative) and the Honorable Thomas Leonard of Plunkett Cooney Law (former Republican Michigan Speaker of the House). Mayor Neeley and Speaker Leonard will discuss the challenges of operating across party lines into today's fractured world and the strategies needed for American democracy moving forward. Their discussion will include topics like criminal justice reform, public pensions, mental health reform, the Flint water crisis and other issues of interest to students.

Eric Scorsone rejoined MSU in 2011 as a fixed-term Extension specialist, State and Local Government Program, in the Department of Agricultural, Food, And Resource Economics. He worked as senior Economist at the Michigan Senate Fiscal Agency in 2010 and returned to Michigan State University in 2011. He also worked at MSU from 2005 to 2010. Prior to working at MSU in 2005, Dr. Scorsone developed award winning extension programs as an Assistant Extension Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Kentucky in the areas of rural health economics and economic development. He also served as an Economist for the Colorado Governor's Office of State Planning and Budget and as a Senior Economist for the City of Aurora, Colorado.

Mary Schulz is the associate director for the MSU Extension Center for Local Government, Finance and Policy. Prior to that she served as project director for the Michigan Local Government Benchmarking Consortium (MLGBC). Mary has been a Specialist in the Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics Department at Michigan State University since 1997. Prior to joining the faculty at MSU, Mary was a Federal Affairs Representative for the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC) & Crop Insurance Research Bureau (CIRB), and was a Legislative Assistant to Congressman Nick Smith, in Washington, DC. Mary received her B.A. in Economic and M.S. in Agricultural Economics from Michigan State University.