

**C&IS** Human  
Communication  
Research Lab

*Keywords:* knowledge; questions; predictions; explanations

2020-2021  
Fourth Year Review

*“Every brilliant experiment, like every great work of art, starts with an act of imagination.” ~Jonah Lehrer*

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August 2021

The C&IS Human Communication Laboratory is a collaborative research space in Reese Phifer Hall at The University of Alabama—and completing our fourth year was as productive and rewarding as those that preceded it. Our lab had a wonderful first, we published a peer-reviewed journal article that incorporated many of our lab members (even those who have moved on to other academic roles/jobs). Other accomplishments include the awards and recognition of our lab members in their academic pursuits.

In this fourth year in review, we provide an overview of the lab space and resources, and highlight the students who used this space for their research endeavors and accomplishments in the last year. We hope you agree that the C&IS HCRL is a place where research ideas blossom and collaboration is the word of the day. As the director of the lab, I continue to be inspired by the brilliant and talented students who keep the group functioning. Please continue to follow our progress as we embark on our fifth year. In these pages you will learn about members of the lab in our fourth year (past) but we invite you to visit our webpage to discover those working currently in the lab (future): <https://djgriffin.people.ua.edu/cis-human-communication-research-lab.html>

Last, it is important to acknowledge all the administrators, faculty, and staff who contribute to the C&IS HCRL. So many to list – but not too many to thank. We appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

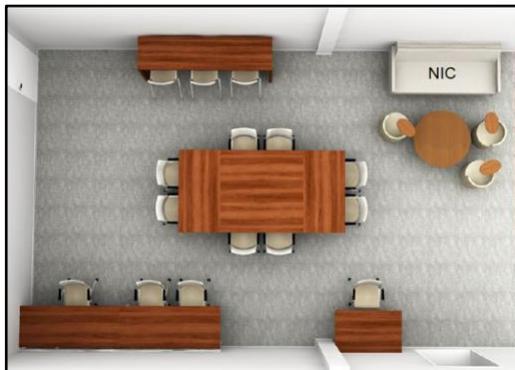
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darrin J. Griffin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D".

Darrin J. Griffin,  
Director of C&IS HCRL

## HCRL Space and Resources

The newest addition to the physical space that makes up the C&IS HCRL is the new windows installed over the summer of 2021.

The C&IS Human Communication Research Laboratory is ~500 sq./ft. of space located in the Institute for Communication & Information Research at Reese Phifer Hall. It is equipped with computers, a conference room table, a large TV monitor, and desk spaces for funded graduate assistants. The lab space is excellent for holding research meetings, conducting survey research, and facilitating experimental studies that involve human subjects. It has allowed for increased productivity in mentoring undergraduate and graduate student researchers and provides a think-tank style environment. Over the past several years, the HCRL has cultivated a mindset and way of doing research which teaches students to embrace, utilize, and share their unique experiences when collaborating with other members. It provides inspiration and support beyond what can be described in words on these pages.



## Graduate Members

The C&IS HCRL serves as a space for graduate students to produce and collaborate on research projects. During the 2020-2021 academic year, we had three graduate students and one post-doc student working in the lab. Below is a description of their accomplishments last year.



Xiaoti Fan was a third-year doctoral student (now graduated) in Communication and Information Sciences. She was awarded the Outstanding Research by a Doctoral Student Award, College of Communication and Information Sciences, The University of Alabama. She successfully developed and defended her dissertation entitled “In-Group Versus Out-Group: Examining Truth-Bias in Intergroup Communication”. Xiaoti served as the lab manager for the Spring 2021 semester. Xiaoti is now a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication Studies here at UA.



Samuel Hakim spent part of his time as a third year C&IS doctoral candidate continuing his tenure as HCRL Manager during the Fall of 2020. In Spring of 2021 he continued his membership after retiring from Lab Manager. His solo-authored manuscript entitled, “A tale of no cities: Analysis of fan identification and fanship in the Premier Lacrosse League” was published in International Journal of Sport Communication. In April of 2021, he successfully defended his dissertation entitled “Brushes with stardom: Interpreting interpersonal interactions between athletes and fans.” Sam is now a faculty lecturer teaching sports communication courses at Clemson University.



Andrew Laningham was a master's student and fully funded research assistant in the Communication Studies department at The University of Alabama. During the academic year, Andrew has researched interpersonal communication, political communication, moral codes, self-concept maintenance, and deception. Andrew was a coauthor on three peer reviewed publications and presented at two conferences. He was also awarded an Outstanding Research Award in the Communication Studies Department. He assisted with a funded National Science Foundation Research Grant, entitled "Mitigating Risk in Police Work through Social Telerobotic Communication," which dealt with bringing communication robotics to law enforcement. In the Summer of 2021, Andrew successfully defended his thesis, entitled "Bridging Self-Concept Maintenance and Truth-Default Theories."



Brock Preston was a first-year master's student who served as the HCRL secretary and whose research interests involve deception and telling lies during social support interactions. In the Fall, Brock presented at NCA on a panel about intercultural education and diversity. His paper covered formalizing STEM ASL signs and their integration into the standard science curriculum at schools in order to make STEM fields more accessible.

## Post-Doctoral Researcher



Fareed Bordbar, PhD, (2018) Educational Psychology. His research expertise is in educational and psychological measurement, assessment and applications in evaluating human conscious/unconscious information processing. Fareed is currently a part-time (9-month appointment) post-doctoral researcher on an NSF grant entitled, “Mitigating Risks in Future Police Work through Social Telerobotic Communication” that is a partnership with Mechanical Engineering. He is also collaborating with the lab on the Dactylo project that investigates use of virtual reality in sign language instruction.

## Undergraduate Researchers

The following undergraduate students worked on their own research projects in the C&IS HCRL during the 2020-2021 academic year.



Cheyenne Hayes was a fourth-year undergraduate and new AMP graduate student. She majored in Communication Studies with a minor in Criminal Justice. Her research interests revolved around the perception of tattoos and body art within the professional workspace. She was awarded the 2021 C&IS Service and Leadership Award in C&IS. Cheyenne presented research at the 2020 URCA conference. She graduated in Summer 2021 and is currently working as a full-time advisor with the College of Communication and Information Sciences.



Elizabeth Tagg was a third year undergraduate and new AMP graduate student this past academic year. She majored in Communication Studies and Religious Studies. Her work in the lab concerned how people form initial beliefs about social topics and what factors influence belief adoption and retention. She also served as a project lead for the Dactylo project, concerning the use of virtual reality in learning ASL fingerspelling. Elizabeth was awarded a UA Graduate Council Fellowship for excellence in research and awarded the Department of Communication Studies Outstanding Graduating Senior for 2020-2021 academic year. She graduated with her undergraduate degrees in Spring 2021 and will rejoin the lab as a graduate member in Fall 2021, serving as the lab manager.

## HCRL Librarian



James Gilbreath is the Lab Librarian. He worked to support the other members of the lab in their research endeavors, giving research suggestions and obtaining library resources when requested. Mentoring lab members has initiated his own research project examining verbal and nonverbal communication in the context of taboo topics and the impact liminal spaces can have on behavior.

## New Lab Members for 2021-2022

At the close of the academic year the C&IS HCRL group realized we were facing attrition due to many members graduating. We set out to recruit new members through a formal process that involved applications submitted through the C&IS Engagement Portal. Below are our new lab members who went through the entire application, interview, and selection process.



Abby Patterson is a fourth-year undergraduate in C&IS from Madison, Alabama. She is majoring in Public Relations and minoring in English and Communication Studies. Her research interests are deception within family communication and interpersonal communication.



Alex Russell is a fourth-year undergraduate majoring in Business Management and minoring in Communication Studies from Birmingham, Alabama. Her research interests include nonverbal and interpersonal communication, truth and deception, and perception. This upcoming year she is hoping to develop a study analyzing the strategies employed by psychic entertainers to build trust and mislead customers.



Gill Grenz is a second-year undergraduate majoring in Communication Studies, Foreign Languages and Literature (French) from Mendham, New Jersey. Her research interests include attachment theory, deception, cognitive abilities and ethics. This upcoming year she is hoping to develop a study analyzing these theories in relation to martyrdom complexes and cross-cultural labeling of cognitive disabilities.

## Awards & Recognition

**Darrin J. Griffin, Director:**

2<sup>nd</sup> place winner (\$3,000) at the 2021 UA Faculty/Staff Innovation Pitch Competition for Dactylo project.

**Andrew Laningham, MA Student:**

2021 Outstanding MA Research Award.

**Elizabeth Tagg, AMP Student:**

Awarded a UA Graduate Council Fellowship for excellence in research and awarded the Department of Communication Studies Outstanding Graduating Senior for 2020-2021 academic year.

**Cheyenne Hayes, AMP Student:**

Awarded the 2021 C&IS Service and Leadership Award.

**Lab Publication:**

During the Spring 2021 semester the C&IS HCRL produced its first fully collaborative publication entitled “Collaborations in communication: Authorship credit allocation via a weighted fractional count procedure” published in the journal, *Scientometrics*. You can view the article here: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11192-021-03927-w>

## Past Lab Members (pursing academic goals)

Though we have many past members of the C&IS HCRL, we have reserved the space below in our year in review for those who are continuing on in their academic journey. This is not a judgment of other students who go on to live full professional lives or spend their time seeking truth or happiness in other ways (we envy those students). However, here we focus on those past members who continue their academic quest.



Zachary Arth, PhD (2019) was a C&IS Doctoral Student and served as the lab manager for the 2018-2019 academic year. As a doctoral student he developed a collaborative manuscript with Dr. Griffin, "Truth Interview" that is published in the *Journal of Media Literacy Education*. His 2019 dissertation is entitled "Framing the Game Through a Sabermetric Lens: Major League Baseball Broadcasts and the Delineation of Traditional and New Fact Metrics" and has resulted in two journal publications. Zach is a tenure-track faculty at Marist College where he serves as an assistant professor of sports communication and is now in his third year. His presence continues to be missed and he left a major void in the HCRL.



Mackenzie Pike was a master's student in Communication Studies. She developed and defended her thesis entitled "The Power of words: The impact of power language in financial disclosure". Mackenzie served as the lab manager for the Fall 2019 semester. Mackenzie is now a doctoral student at UT Austin in her second year. She is currently working on her thesis manuscript and has submitted it to the *Southern Communication Journal*.



Before graduating from UA in 2019, Sydney Burkhart spent her final year as an undergraduate student in the lab. She primarily researched American Sign Language and has continued collaborating on the Dactylo project. She is currently a second-year graduate student with the University of Memphis studying speech pathology.

# Fourth Year Group Photo

COVID-19 sort of put a damper on things at the end of last school year. Research suffered and it took away the moments for us to celebrate our research accomplishments and victories. As a group we stayed together. As you can see from the photo of our last lab meeting, we maintained a positive mindset and enjoyed working with one another. May the 2021-2022 year be another successful year in the C&IS HCRL...one full of imagination, collaboration, and research success!

