



2025-2026

# NEXT STEPS

On the occasion of Caltech's 132nd annual commencement ceremony on June 12, the Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences is proud to recognize an exceptional group of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars. Please join us in wishing them well as they take their next steps!

## JACK ADENEY

*Postdoctoral Fellow,  
Chapman University*



Adeney graduates this month after defending his thesis, *Experiments in Decision-Making Under Risk and Uncertainty*, with Charles Sprenger as his advisor. As a graduate student in HSS, he collaborated with faculty members in the Center for Theoretical and Experimental Social Sciences (CTESS), part of The Ronald and Maxine Linde Institute of Economic and Management Sciences. He will join Chapman University's Economic Science Institute as a postdoctoral fellow.

## SNEHA AENUGU

*Postdoctoral Fellow, Salk Institute  
for Biological Studies*



Aenugu is interested in reward-modulated learning and planning by humans in complex state and action spaces. She earns her PhD after completing her dissertation, *Building Agency: Toward a Mechanistic Understanding of Human Autonomous Goal Pursuit*, with John O'Doherty as her advisor. She will join the Salk Institute for Biological Studies as a postdoctoral fellow after graduation.

## MATTHEW ESTES

*Assistant Professor of Law,  
University of Toledo*



Estes receives his master's degree and PhD this month after defending his thesis, *Essays in Law and Econometrics*, with Michael Alvarez as his advisor. In 2023, Estes received funding from the John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation to support his research project "Roadblocks to Justice: Estimating the Effect of Travel on Evictions." He begins his new role as an assistant professor of law at the University of Toledo this fall.

## ANIEK FRANSEN

*Computational Cognitive Scientist,  
Toyota Research Institute*



As a graduate student in HSS, Fransen received the A. Michael and Ruth C. Lipper Graduate Fellowship in both 2021-2022 and 2024-2025. She graduates this month after completing her dissertation, *Neural Dynamics of Adaptive Value Computation in the Human Brain*, with John O'Doherty as her advisor. After commencement, Fransen will join Toyota Research Institute as a computational cognitive scientist.

## MITCHELL LINEGAR

*Postdoctoral Scholar, Washington University in St. Louis*

Linegar's research focuses on methods to systematically counter political misinformation by estimating the dynamic interaction between political ideology and media consumption and scaling LLMs to extract information from large unstructured bodies of data. He earns his PhD after defending his thesis, *On (Mis)Information*, with Michael Alvarez as his advisor. He will begin his new role as a postdoctoral scholar at Washington University in St. Louis this summer.



## SWATI PANDITA

*Postdoctoral Researcher,  
University of Illinois  
Urbana-Champaign*



Pandita spent three years as a postdoctoral scholar in the Mobbs Lab, focused on the computational neuroscience of social media. In September, she began a new postdoctoral position at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, studying avatar-based interactions with computer scientist Dominic Kao.

## TESSA RUSCH

*Senior AI Research Scientist,  
Vorwerk Group*



As a postdoctoral scholar in neuroscience in the Adolphs Lab, Rusch collaborated on the COVID-Dynamic Longitudinal Study, which gauged emotions and mental health, social and political attitudes, and implicit biases and decision-making across different people and the same individuals over time to see how they changed. Rusch began her current role as a senior AI research scientist with the Vorwerk Group late last summer.

## SAEEDAH SADEGHI

*Postdoctoral Researcher  
and Rothenberg  
Research Fellow,  
University of Virginia*



Sadeghi joined the O'Doherty Lab in January 2024 to develop computational models of human valuation and decision-making processes, and she tested those models on behavioral, neuroimaging, and electrophysiology data. In August, she joined the University of Virginia's Division of Perceptual Studies as a postdoctoral research fellow, where she investigates the experiences of children with reported past-life memories and altered states of consciousness.

## PO HYUN SUNG

*Postdoctoral Scholar,  
Princeton University*



Sung earns her PhD this month after completing her dissertation, *Essays on Stochastic Choice*, with Omer Tamuz as her advisor. In 2024, she was awarded the Citadel Global Fixed Income Graduate Fellowship. She was also the recipient of the 2024–2025 third-year paper prize and the 2023–2024 John O. Ledyard Prize for Graduate Research in Social Science (both winning papers were written with social science graduate student Binyamin Wincelberg). After commencement, Sung will begin a postdoctoral appointment at Princeton University.

## QIANYING WU

*Postdoctoral Scholar Research Associate in Social and Decision Neuroscience, Caltech*



After defending her dissertation, *Large-Scale Computational Phenotyping of Social Cognition in Autism*, in November 2025 with Ralph Adolphs as her advisor, Wu remained with the Adolphs Lab as a postdoctoral scholar research associate in social and decision neuroscience. Her research aims to develop novel tasks and computational models to better understand and characterize social functioning challenges in clinical populations.

## CLASS OF 2026

Among the Caltech seniors expected to graduate, 11 percent (26 out of 246) are completing an option (major) or minor in the humanities or social sciences. Twenty students selected an HSS track for their second option (double major): 11 in business, economics, and management (BEM); five in economics; two in English; one in philosophy; and one in political science. Six students completed a humanities minor: two in English, one in history, one in philosophy, and two in visual culture.

Next steps for members of this impressive group of graduates include . . .

- advanced study, including a master's in mechanical engineering at Cornell University, a PhD in aerospace engineering at Georgia Tech, a PhD in computational and mathematical engineering at Stanford University, a PhD in economics at MIT, and a JD from Harvard Law School;
- careers in technology, including roles as a software engineer at Meta, a product manager at Microsoft, and an applied research scientist at a startup; and
- putting those BEM options to good use conducting quantitative research.