2024-2025
NEXT STEPS

Strike up the band and fire the cannon! Caltech hosts its 131st annual commencement ceremony on June 13, and the Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences is pleased to present another outstanding group of departing graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and postdoctoral instructors. Please join us in wishing them well in their next steps!

PATRICK BURAUEL
Quantitative Researcher, Citadel

Burauel joined Citadel after completing his postdoctoral scholar appointment, working with Frederick Eberhardt as his sponsor. During his time in HSS, he received a two-year fellowship from the Leopoldina, the German National Academy of Science, to continue his research on causal inference using the principle of independent mechanisms.

POLINA DETKOVA
Postdoctoral Research Assistant, Royal Holloway, University of London

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Detkova graduates this month after defending her thesis, *Essays in Experimental Economics*, with Marina Agranov as her advisor. During her time with HSS, she received the Linde Institute Graduate Fellowship in 2021–2022 and the Lance E. Davis Graduate Fellowship in 2024–2025. This summer, she begins her new role in the department of economics at Royal Holloway, University of London.

CONG CAO
Postdoctoral Associate, Department of Population Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences, Cornell University

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Cao's research leverages advanced artificial intelligence and machine learning techniques to address complex challenges in environmental health, economics, and policy. As a postdoctoral instructor, she taught an undergraduate course on public health economics and policies, and she collaborated with faculty in The Ronald and Maxine Linde Center for Science, Society, and Policy (LCSSP). Cao departs Caltech later this summer for Cornell University.

WEILUN DING
Postdoctoral Scholar Research Associate in Social and Decision Neuroscience, Caltech

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After defending his dissertation, *Core Reinforcement Learning Computations Underlying Distinct Behavioral Strategies and Their Implications in Psychiatry*, in November 2024 with John O'Doherty as his advisor, Ding remained with the O'Doherty Lab as a postdoctoral scholar.
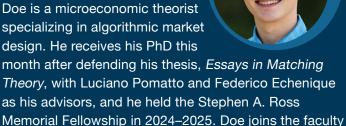
PETER DOE

Assistant Professor of Economics, Hope College

Doe is a microeconomic theorist specializing in algorithmic market design. He receives his PhD this month after defending his thesis, *Essays in Matching Theory*, with Luciano Pomatto and Federico Echenique as his advisors, and he held the Stephen A. Ross Memorial Fellowship in 2024–2025. Doe joins the faculty at Hope College this fall.

KEXIN FENG

Postdoctoral Associate, Yale Economic Growth Center

Feng completed her dissertation, *Tensions, Trade, and Transformation: Essays on Chinese Economic History During the Warlord Era*, with Jean-Laurent Rosenthal as her advisor. She was a Repetto-Figueroa Family Graduate Fellow (2021–2022 and 2024–2025) and a James and Karen Gerard Fellow in Social Sciences (2023–2024). She also received the 2025 Eleanor Searle Prize in Law, Politics, and Institutions. Feng joins Yale University's Economic Growth Center this fall.

NA YEON KIM

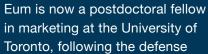*Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, UC Riverside*

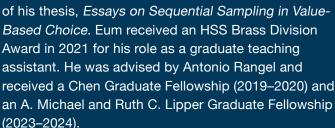Kim is completing a postdoc in neuroscience with the Adolphs Lab, where she has used eye-tracking and functional-MRI methods to study how attention facilitates social cognition and how it is affected in autism spectrum disorder. Her research on the subject appeared in the journal *Autism Research* in April 2024. Kim joins the department of psychology at UC Riverside this fall.
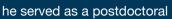
BRENDEN EUM

Postdoctoral Fellow in Marketing, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto

Eum is now a postdoctoral fellow in marketing at the University of Toronto, following the defense of his thesis, *Essays on Sequential Sampling in Value-Based Choice*. Eum received an HSS Brass Division Award in 2021 for his role as a graduate teaching assistant. He was advised by Antonio Rangel and received a Chen Graduate Fellowship (2019–2020) and an A. Michael and Ruth C. Lipper Graduate Fellowship (2023–2024).

OZAN GURCAN

Gurcan is a moral philosopher with a background in biomedical sciences and qualitative research methods. For the last two years, he served as a postdoctoral instructor in science, society, and public policy, and he collaborated with faculty in the LCSSP. He also led Caltech's inaugural Ethics Bowl team to regional success in December 2024. Gurcan is currently weighing options for future employment.

BEATRICE MAGISTRO

Assistant Professor in AI Governance, Northeastern University

Magistro's work bridges political science, public policy, and political economy. As a postdoctoral scholar in computational social science in HSS, she collaborated with Michael Alvarez and other members of the LCSSP. In August, she takes up a joint faculty appointment in the department of political science and the School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs at Northeastern University.

VINCENT MAN
Machine Learning Scientist, Apple

Man was a postdoctoral scholar in neuroscience in the O'Doherty Lab, where he studied the neural mechanisms of learning and decision-making, before beginning his new role as a machine learning scientist at Apple. While in HSS, he led a study that validated a theoretical idea about the relationship between reward and risk in the decision-making process, published as a paper in the March 2024 issue of *Nature Communications*.

JACOB MORRIER
Associate, Analysis Group

Morrier is a data and quantitative social scientist with expertise in applying sophisticated quantitative methodologies. He earned his PhD after defending his thesis, *Essays on Political Accountability and Representation*, with Michael Alvarez as his advisor. After graduation, Morrier will begin his role as an associate at Analysis Group, an economic consulting firm in Los Angeles.

KE SHI
Assistant Professor of Finance, Shanghai Advanced Institute of Finance, Shanghai Jiao Tong University
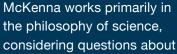
Shi graduates this month after defending his dissertation, *Essays in Empirical Industrial Organization and Corporate Finance*, with Jean-Laurent Rosenthal as his advisor. He received the James and Karen Gerard Fellowship in Social Sciences (2021–2022) and the Clarence J. Hicks Memorial Fellowship (2024–2025). He also received the 2022 John O. Ledyard Prize for Graduate Research in Social Science for his paper titled "Venture Capital: A Tale of Three Networks." Shi joins the faculty of Shanghai Jiao Tong University this fall.

TRAVIS MCKENNA
Assistant Professor of Philosophy, North Carolina State University

McKenna works primarily in the philosophy of science, considering questions about models and explanation, how applied mathematics works, the role that laws play in scientific inquiry, and conceptual engineering. After a year in HSS as the Ahmanson Postdoctoral Instructor in Philosophy of Science, he joins the faculty of North Carolina State University this summer.

NINA ROUHANI
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Southern California

Earlier this year, Rouhani joined the faculty at USC after completing a postdoc in neuroscience in the Adolphs Lab. While with HSS, she examined individual differences in emotion and decision-making using fMRI data, and she received a grant from the National Institutes of Health for her project "Dissecting the Features and Neural Mechanisms Supporting Naturalistic Social Inference."

ANNA STIELAU
Assistant Professor of Art History and Visual Culture, OCAD University

Weisman Postdoctoral Instructor in Visual Culture Stielau departs HSS later this summer for a tenure-track position with OCAD University in Toronto. She studies the intersection of activist politics, fine art, and questions of media and technology. Since joining the division in 2023, Stielau taught undergraduate courses including Seeing Race and Representation Matters?, and she received the HSS Brass Division Award for Teaching in 2024.

LAURA TAYLOR

Faculty Lecturer, Department of Environmental Science and Policy, University of Miami

Taylor spent the last three years as a postdoctoral instructor in the social sciences, supported by the Resnick Sustainability Institute and The Ronald and Maxine Linde Institute of Economic and Management Sciences. In addition to joining the University of Miami this fall, she will hold a postdoctoral fellowship (2025–2026) with the National Bureau of Economic Research.

FAN WU

Assistant Professor, Peking University HSBC Business School

As a graduate student in HSS, Wu received the Roger and Marjorie Davisson Graduate Fellowship (2024–2025), and he pursued research interests in microeconomic theory, particularly information acquisition, information design, and mechanism design. He earns his PhD after completing his dissertation, *Essays on Information Economics*, with Omer Tamuz as his advisor. Wu will continue his academic career on the faculty at Peking University.

SANGHYUN YI

Applied Scientist

Yi defended his thesis, *Neurocomputational Understanding of Decision-Making in Novel Environments*, in September 2024 with John O'Doherty as his advisor. The former Chen Graduate Fellow (2018–2019) spent the last year as an applied scientist intern with Amazon Web Services, and he recently joined a stealth AI startup.
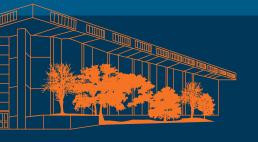
Class of 2025

Among the seniors expected to graduate, 12 percent (32 out of 269) are completing an option (major) or minor in the humanities or social sciences. Three students chose business, economics, and management (BEM) as their first option, and one of those students also completed a second option in political science. Twenty-four students selected one of our tracks for their second option (double major): 18 in BEM, three in economics, two in philosophy, and one in political science. Five students completed a humanities minor: two in English, one in history, one in philosophy, and one in the history and philosophy of science.

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

- Pursuing advanced degrees at Princeton University (master's in finance), Harvard University (master's in computer science), and MIT (one PhD in aero/astro engineering and one PhD in social and engineering systems at the Institute for Data, Systems, and Society);

- Beginning careers in New York as a management consultant at Bain & Company and a software engineer at Bloomberg;

- Following entrepreneurial endeavors—and more!

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