

## Duke Workshop 2017 Bios



Mohammed H. Al Hajji, M.P.H., C.P.H., Ph.D. candidate. I have a bachelor's degree in biomedical sciences from Colorado State University (2010), and a master's degree in public health from the University of South Florida (2013). My research interest for my doctoral dissertation is on the area of mental health and religion and how religious beliefs can affect help-seeking behaviors and attitudes towards mental illness among Muslims (mainly in Saudi Arabia). In addition to my teaching assistant position, I am a research assistant at the Risk Communication Lab at Temple University where we employ perceptual mappings technology to understand perceptions of and facilitators and barriers to seek various treatments. E-mail: [alhajji@temple.edu](mailto:alhajji@temple.edu).



Abdullah Ahmed M. Alkhani. Abdullah a second-year medical student at Alfaisal University. His grandfather is a well-known pioneer of psychiatry in Saudi Arabia, and having spent some time with him, his interest in this field has increased. Abdullah's research activities mainly include studies to improve medical education. He attended a neurobiology summer course at Harvard University and tries to make the most of his summers. This year, he looks forward to attending the Spirituality, Theology and Health workshop to help him learn more and enhance his critical thinking. He enjoys eating, playing tennis and squash, in that order. He also loves being involved in volunteering and community service. E-mail: [aaalkhani@alfaisal.edu](mailto:aaalkhani@alfaisal.edu).



Ghader Alrebeh. Ghader is from Qatif, Saudi Arabia. She has been passionate about medicine for as long as she can remember. She'll be starting her second year at Alfaisal University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia this coming fall. During her first year, Ghader headed a committee within the Medical Student Association, volunteered in and for numerous student clubs, and got involved in basic research activities available to first year students. Her on-going research studies are focused towards Psychiatry and Medical Education. She always has been interested in human behavior and the reasons behind them, and now she aims to expand her understanding this science. For hobbies, Ghader is interested in photography, swimming, music, and reading. E-mail: [galrebeh@alfaisal.edu](mailto:galrebeh@alfaisal.edu)



Hajar Adel Alreefi. Hajar is a second-year medical student at Alfaisal University College of Medicine in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Upon graduating from high school, she completed her pre-freshmen preparatory year at the University of Pennsylvania. Hajar is an eager student who has a modest background in medical research. She has worked on studying mitochondrial dysfunction in Huntington's disease-associated neuro-degeneration through inhibition of DRP1-dependent mitochondrial fission in the Physiology and Biophysics Department at Case Western Reserve University. She has also worked on developing a pipeline to do structural analysis in 3D reconstructions from brain samples in collaboration with the Human Brain Project at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology. Moreover, Hajar is involved in community work; she has co-founded Maseera, which is a student-led, non-profit organization that focuses

on guiding Saudi youth and providing them with mentorship to push their abilities beyond the realms of classroom-oriented academia. She is currently the General Secretary of the Medical Students' Association at Alfaisal University. E-mail: [halreefi@alfaisal.edu](mailto:halreefi@alfaisal.edu).



Zahra Haider Alshurafa. Zahra is a second-year medical student at Alfaisal University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. She is interested in learning more about the advances in the world of medicine. She is also interested in research and have published my first article this year. She enjoys reading books about self-development and mindfulness. She is taking part in this workshop because it corresponds to her interest in psychiatry, religion, and learning more about personalities and attitudes, which will help her in her future career. E-mail: [zalshrafa@alfaisal.edu](mailto:zalshrafa@alfaisal.edu).



Charles E. Bennett, Ph.D. My doctorate in Sociology (special fields: Demography & Human Ecology), U. of Chicago (1975) led me into epidemiological surveillance (public health, 1977-1988, 1993-2005) and clinical epidemiology (So. IL U. School of Medicine) (1988-1993).

Having retired (2005), I am now on the Advisory Council of the (Springfield, IL) Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center. After the CSTH Research Workshop, I hope to serve as adjunct faculty at SIU-SM and Univ. Illinois – Springfield, Dept. of Public Health. My research interests related to religion/spirituality and health (recovery) include a special interest to look for and understand *specific* “operational components” or “active ingredients/agents” (so to speak) in spirituality/ religious faith; and how those components are or might be “activated” (again, so to speak), whether by religious instruction, fellowship, winsome good deeds/love, related educational components in patient care about forgiveness, etc., and/or by science/history/law-based apologetics that may counter the growing philosophical and spiritual skepticism in modern society. E-mail: [chzbennett@gmail.com](mailto:chzbennett@gmail.com).



LtCol Matthew Boarts, M.Div. Matthew is a Chaplain in the United States Air Force and is endorsed by the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. He earned his M.Div. at Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, Indiana, and a Master of Pastoral and Spiritual Care at Iliff School of Theology, Denver, Colorado. He has been stationed at several bases in the United States as well as Japan. His deployments include Afghanistan, DoD Port Mortuary in Dover, DE, several locations in the Middle East, and the Balkans. He currently serves as the Branch Chief of the USAF Chaplain Corps Resource Development Center, Maxwell AFB, AL. E-mail: [matthew.boarts@us.af.mil](mailto:matthew.boarts@us.af.mil).

Barbara Britting, B.C.C. Barbara has been a chaplain with Catholic Health in Buffalo NY for 11 years, having begun her Clinical Pastoral Education in 2004. She received her M.A. in Pastoral Ministry from Christ the King Seminary in East Aurora, NY. Her research interests involve learning more about this dimension of the medical model in order to participate in promoting the field of chaplaincy in healthcare. Her ministry is currently focused in the ICU, NICU and Emergency Department. Her desire in ministry is to move deeper into both the inclusion of guided imagery/mindfulness with patients struggling with anxiety and exploring ministry to neuro-intensive care patients and their families. E-mail: [bbrittin@chsbuffalo.org](mailto:bbrittin@chsbuffalo.org).



The Rev. Mary Virginia Burks, M.Ed., M.Div. The Rev. Mary Burks is director of Norton Healthcare's Clinical Pastoral Education in Louisville, KY. [She](#) earned her B.S. and M.Ed. in counseling and guidance from the University of Montevallo, and her M. Div. from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary with coursework in research design. In 2016 she received a John Templeton Foundation grant to create and implement curriculum on research literacy for her chaplain residency. Her interests are to further chaplaincy research literacy, evidence-based practice for professional chaplains and explore how spirituality and health interrelate. E-mail: [mary.burks@nortonhealthcare.org](mailto:mary.burks@nortonhealthcare.org).



Biju K. Chacko, D.Min., ACPE Supervisor. Biju is a member of the Faculty of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) at Duke University Hospital. He was raised in Kerala, India where he served as the Founding Dean of the India Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife have two sons. Biju earned his Bachelor's degree in Marketing from the Kerala University, Masters of Divinity in the Philippines, Masters of Theology in India, and a Doctor of Ministry from Gardner-Webb



University. Biju completed his CPE supervisory training at Duke while also serving as the psychiatry chaplain. Biju's doctoral project focused on developing pastoral identity in CPE students at Duke University Hospital. Biju's energy has been in training clergy to integrate theological education with practice of pastoral care. E-mail: [biju.chacko@duke.edu](mailto:biju.chacko@duke.edu).



Cherie Conley, B.S.N., M.S.B., Ph.D. student. For the past 20 years I have worked in a variety of capacities in international and domestic public health research, policy, and programming. I am also a nurse and have seen over and over again how small problems, like uncontrolled blood sugars, become big problems when people don't have the support they need to manage or, even better, to prevent chronic disease while at home in their community where they spend most of their time. Currently I am a doctoral student at Duke University School of Nursing. My proposed project is to continue community based work to prevent chronic disease by maximizing resources, like faith communities, and build capacity within African American communities. E-mail: [cherie.conley@duke.edu](mailto:cherie.conley@duke.edu).



Kaitlyn Daly, R.N. I am a Registered Nurse and Marquette University graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing and Theology & Religion. I am pursuing advanced schooling and career opportunities focused on spiritual care in health care, specifically from a nursing

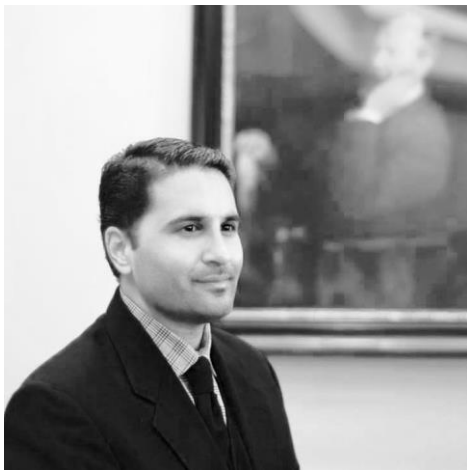
perspective. While eager to expand upon my research knowledge and skills, my hope is to contribute further to the research in this area being conducted, published, and implemented. My research interests include, but are certainly not limited to: dignity in dying; role of storytelling in health care; care for the mind, body, and spirit at end of life; spiritual care for patients with cancer; spiritual care for nurses and other health care professionals; and, spiritual care training for health care professionals and educational institutions. With a background in nursing and theology coursework and clinical experience, this summer research course is an exact intersection of my interests. I am encouraged in my exploration of research opportunities in spirituality, theology and health. Email: [kaitcdaly@gmail.com](mailto:kaitcdaly@gmail.com).



Melody V. Escobar. Melody is a third-year doctoral student in spirituality at Oblate School of Theology. She received her master's degree in pastoral ministry from Oblate and bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Texas at Austin. Her experience includes a former career in corporate communications spanning 18 years, in addition to serving as a Roman Catholic lay minister for more than 10 years, speaker, teacher and Chaplain resident for CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Health System. She is formulating a dissertation topic on the connection between spirituality and healing through equine therapy for children with special needs. E-mail: [mescobar@me.com](mailto:mescobar@me.com).



Karl Hamner, Ph.D. Karl is Director, the Office of Evaluation for The University of Alabama College of Education. He is a social science and health researcher, program development and evaluation consultant, and training specialist. He has extensive experience conducting research and evaluation on educational initiatives, multi-cultural health, and social issues, and has conducted professional development workshops and trainings on a wide range of topics. He is an emerging leader in the area of Military to Civilian Transitions and has a strong interest in the intersection of military/veteran identity and moral injury. His Ph.D. is from UCLA in 1993 in Sociology. E-mail: [khamner@ua.edu](mailto:khamner@ua.edu).



Omar Sultan Haque, M.D., Ph.D., M.T.S. Omar is a psychiatrist and social scientist. He attended Harvard Divinity School, Harvard Medical School, and Brown University, and is Lecturer in the department of Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School. He has published research on religion and cooperation, anthropology of religion, moral psychology, bioethics, and law and psychiatry. At Harvard he has taught courses in the Department of Anthropology (Medical Anthropology, with Professor Arthur Kleinman) and Department of Psychology (Psychology of Religion). He is interested in connecting the study of religion to the medical



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Shannon Hood. Mr. Hood serves as the Academic Manager for AIFC (the Australian Institute of Family Counselling) where he is responsible for the design and accreditation of course curriculum. With over 500 students, AIFC is Australia's largest trainer of Christian Counsellors - a course recognised by Australia's peak counselling bodies (ACA and PACFA). Shannon is a registered ACA Counsellor and Supervisor, with a private practice specialising in trauma. Shannon holds Bachelor Degrees in Theology and Engineering, Masters Degrees in Commerce and Education and Post Graduate qualifications in Ministry and Psychotherapy. He is a PhD candidate researching the efficacy of spiritual/religious interventions in clinical psychotherapy. E-mail: [shannon.hood@aifc.com.au](mailto:shannon.hood@aifc.com.au).



Samra Iqbal. Samra Iqbal is from Long Island, New York and is now starting her third year of medical school at Alfaisal University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Samra serves as a volunteer to help advanced cancer patients by her efforts in contributing to clinical research. Outside of medical school, she is a research assistant at the Oncology Center of King Faisal Specialist Hospital. She is currently working on researching the predictive factors of stem cell collection dose on hematopoietic stem cell donors. She is also the second author of "Incidence of Thyroid Cancer in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2000-2010", published in Hematology/Oncology and

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Cameron H.J. Jorgenson, Ph.D. Dr. Jorgenson (PhD, Baylor University; MDiv, Fuller Theological Seminary) is the Associate Professor of Christian Theology and Ethics at Campbell University Divinity School in Buies Creek, North Carolina. His research explores the intersection between classic theological themes and the task of spiritual formation. He is especially interested in the roles of love and the virtues and vices in traditional Christian understandings of the pursuit of the good life. He hopes to connect this rich moral tradition to conceptions of health and wholeness. E-mail: [jorgensonc@campbell.edu](mailto:jorgensonc@campbell.edu).



Caroline C. Kaufman, B.A. Caroline graduated from Williams College with a double major in Psychology (with honors) and Religion. She is currently a third year clinical psychology doctoral student at The University of Memphis. Her research interests include: spirituality as a construct in psychological research, spirituality in the context of adversity, strengths-based interventions, and sexual risk. In graduate school, Caroline has also conducted research exploring obesity and overweight at The University of Memphis and neuropsychological functioning in children living with sickle cell disease at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. She is interested in pursuing a research career enriched by clinical practice. E-mail: [carolinekaufman42@gmail.com](mailto:carolinekaufman42@gmail.com).



Hadley Kifner, M.Div. In between receiving a B.A. in English from UNC-Chapel Hill and M.Div. from Duke Divinity School, Hadley traveled in rural Western Africa working with interfaith missionaries in agrarian communities. She completed her Clinical Pastoral Education training with a dual focus in Women's and Children's Health and currently serves as the pediatric chaplain at the NC Children's Hospital. She is ordained in the United Church of Christ and Board Certified by the Association of Professional Chaplains. In addition to providing pastoral care to patients and families in crisis and at the end of life, Hadley meets with medical students throughout their clinical rotations, inviting emotional and spiritual reflection as they process their encounters. Her research interests include spiritual formation and meaning-making for health care providers and narrative approaches to suffering and healing. E-mail:

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Janice M. Lowden-Stokley, R.N. My career in nursing extends over 30 years. I started working in the 1980's as a staff nurse on a Med-Surg Unit. I worked in Med-Surg for several years before expanding my nursing career into the Emergency Room, Labor and Delivery, Mother Infant, and eventually to the outpatient area, Family Practice and Internal Medicine at a HMO Clinic. I earned my MSN in 2002 at the University of Central Florida and started teaching nursing at Adventist University of Health Sciences, a private not for profit university. Currently I am an Associate Professor in a generic BSN program at Adventist University of Health Sciences. I am currently enrolled in a PhD in Nursing program at Barry University on Miami FL. My area of research focus is spiritual care development in nursing. E-mail: [Janice.Lowden-Stokely@adu.edu](mailto:Janice.Lowden-Stokely@adu.edu).



Katja Milner, PhD student. Katja is a PhD student researching spirituality, mental health and mental health recovery at the University of Nottingham in England, UK, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). She is particularly interested in the role spirituality plays from the perspectives of those with lived experience of mental health difficulties. Prior to this she has worked in a diverse range of mental health and therapeutic roles including seven years as a spiritual care practitioner and spirituality lead in the UK National Health Service. Katja has a passionate interest in spirituality and the role it plays in health and mental health and has explored a wide variety of spiritual and healing practices, approaches and belief systems throughout her adult life. E-mail: [Katja.Milner@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:Katja.Milner@nottingham.ac.uk).





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Richard A. Nisbett, Ph.D., M.S.P.H. I work on the frontlines of global health at the interface of medical anthropology, community ecology, and public health. For the past quarter century, I have implemented health interventions, academic curricula and disease-ecology studies for transdisciplinary projects in low-resource African and Circum-Caribbean settings. Collaborating with the United Methodist church, I developed and disseminated faith-based health education and disease-control materials throughout the Subregion during the West African Ebola Epidemic. Current projects include curriculum integrating public health and spiritual formation for the Gbarnga School of Theology (Liberia) and a book-length manuscript on the anthropology of religion and health for global health practice. E-mail: [ranisbett@gmail.com](mailto:ranisbett@gmail.com).





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Denise Ogorek, M.S.N., A.R.N.P. Denise is a certified Biblical counselor (ACBC) who has been persuaded by the life changing power of the Word of God. Experienced counselor with youth and adults; 2017 Transform Conference break-out session speaker, "Biblically Counseling Children". Presently, her doctoral research project, "Evaluation of a Biblical Counseling Program for Depression" is underway at the Biblical Counseling Center at Faith Bible Church in Spokane, Washington. Denise is a lecturer in the Gonzaga University Department of Nursing, Family Nurse Practitioner track. As a nurse practitioner, she volunteers at the faith-based Union Gospel Mission health clinics. E-mail: [ogorek@gonzaga.edu](mailto:ogorek@gonzaga.edu).



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Rachel L. Rush, DNP, MBA, RN, NEA-BC. Rachel serves as a director of nursing at Ben Taub Hospital, a Level 1 Trauma Center in Houston, Texas. She is an experienced registered nurse that holds a doctorate in nursing practice and a master in business administration. Her nursing experience includes clinical and leadership roles in medical-surgical, intermediate and critical care practice settings. Her research interest is in spiritual care screening, nurse education and relation between spirituality and health. E-mail: [rushrl03@gmail.com](mailto:rushrl03@gmail.com).



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Karl Shieh. I am currently a pharmacy technician who hopes to pursue a master’s degree in public health. After receiving bachelor’s degrees in biochemistry and biology, I spent three years in medical school. However, I eventually left after deciding that medicine was not the best way to pursue my interests in mental health. During my graduate studies, I started to become interested in the effects that health professionals could have on people’s self-perception. That interest has since broadened to a desire to research what regular mental healthcare could provide to improve people’s quality of life as a preventative measure. E-mail: [kshieh12@gmail.com](mailto:kshieh12@gmail.com).



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Ahmed Yasser Souid. Ahmed was born to the joyful Faten and inspiring Abdul in Manlius, NY. He earned a B.A. in Mathematics from Syracuse University with a thesis under his mentor, Dr. Jack Graver. During these years, Ahmed felt a calling to ministry and served as a pastoral visitor at Crouse Hospital with formative training from Rev. Katherine Day and Rev. Wes Fleming. Ahmed continued his spiritual journey by relocating to the Berkeley, CA to study Islam at Zaytuna College with its distinguished faculty including Sheikh Hamza Yusuf, Dr. Rania Awaad and Ustadh Faraz Khan. In 2015, he completed a unit of CPE at SUNY Upstate Medical Center under the tutelage of Rev. Terry Culbertson. Ahmed is an applicant to MD/PhD programs and is interested in the spiritual relationship patients have with their ailments and the role of caregivers as participants and counselors on its periphery. E-mail: [ahmed.souid@zaytuna.edu](mailto:ahmed.souid@zaytuna.edu).



Krys Springer. Krys is currently a graduate student in the Master of Divinity program at Marylhurst University in Portland, Oregon. She has a Masters in Counseling Psychology and has studied the importance of attachment and the impacts of Early Childhood Trauma on development throughout the lifespan. She has taught developmental psychology at the collegiate level for the past six years. Following the completion of her Masters of Divinity, she is planning to work in hospital chaplaincy. She is currently researching how to better support women who have experienced the loss of a child. Email: [krysleespringer@gmail.com](mailto:krysleespringer@gmail.com) or [christy.springer582@marylhurst.edu](mailto:christy.springer582@marylhurst.edu).



Prasanna Tadi, M.D. I did my neurology residency from Brown University and then finished stroke fellowship from UPMC, Pittsburgh. Throughout my life, I have believed strongly in the conception of health as holistic including spirituality and religion at its core. Spirituality, Religion and health is my lifelong interest and passion. I am always interested in factors influencing health, religion and patient satisfaction and developing strategies and



techniques to improve the satisfaction and wellness of our patients. I am looking forward to do research in these areas. E-mail: [drtadir@gmail.com](mailto:drtadir@gmail.com).



Christian Taylor, M.Div., B.C.C. I serve as the Oncology Chaplain for Florida Hospital Orlando, in Orlando Florida. My faith background is Seventh-day Adventist. I began my journey into chaplaincy at Oakwood University where I received a B.A. in Theology with Pre-Chaplaincy concentration (2012). Following, I entered CPE Residency (3 Units) at Florida Hospital, working among Pediatric, Cardiac, and Oncology. Following, I acquired an MDiv. from Andrews University (2015). I returned to Florida Hospital Orlando to work as a Staff Chaplain, while I completed my 4<sup>th</sup> CPE unit. I'm interested in researching topics such as Bone Marrow Transplant patients' responses to "hope" related questions on Personal Health History screening, and Oncology RN Spiritual/Emotional wellness. E-mail: [Christian.taylor@flhosp.org](mailto:Christian.taylor@flhosp.org).



Kate Hendricks Thomas, Ph.D. Kate is an Assistant Professor of Health Sciences at Charleston Southern University and is the Director of their Public Health program. Her research focuses on resilient reintegration for veterans, with specific focus on military and veteran women. More about her research and writing is at: [www.drkatethomas.com/](http://www.drkatethomas.com/). Kate is a former Marine and the owner of JRWI Wellness, a small business that provides resilient leadership training for military veterans. She is keenly interested in emphasizing prevention of mental health issues from entry-level training in the active component, and in broadening the focus of behavioral health research and practice beyond the post-incident treatment realm. She is a yoga and meditation teacher as well as the author of *Brave, Strong, and True: The Modern Warrior's Battle for Balance*. E-mail: [kthomas@csuniv.edu](mailto:kthomas@csuniv.edu).