

— *The* —

## **SOCIAL SCIENCE SCHOLARS PROGRAM**



College of Social Science  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

You'll graduate  
with the skills,  
experiences,  
and maturity  
that will set  
you apart.

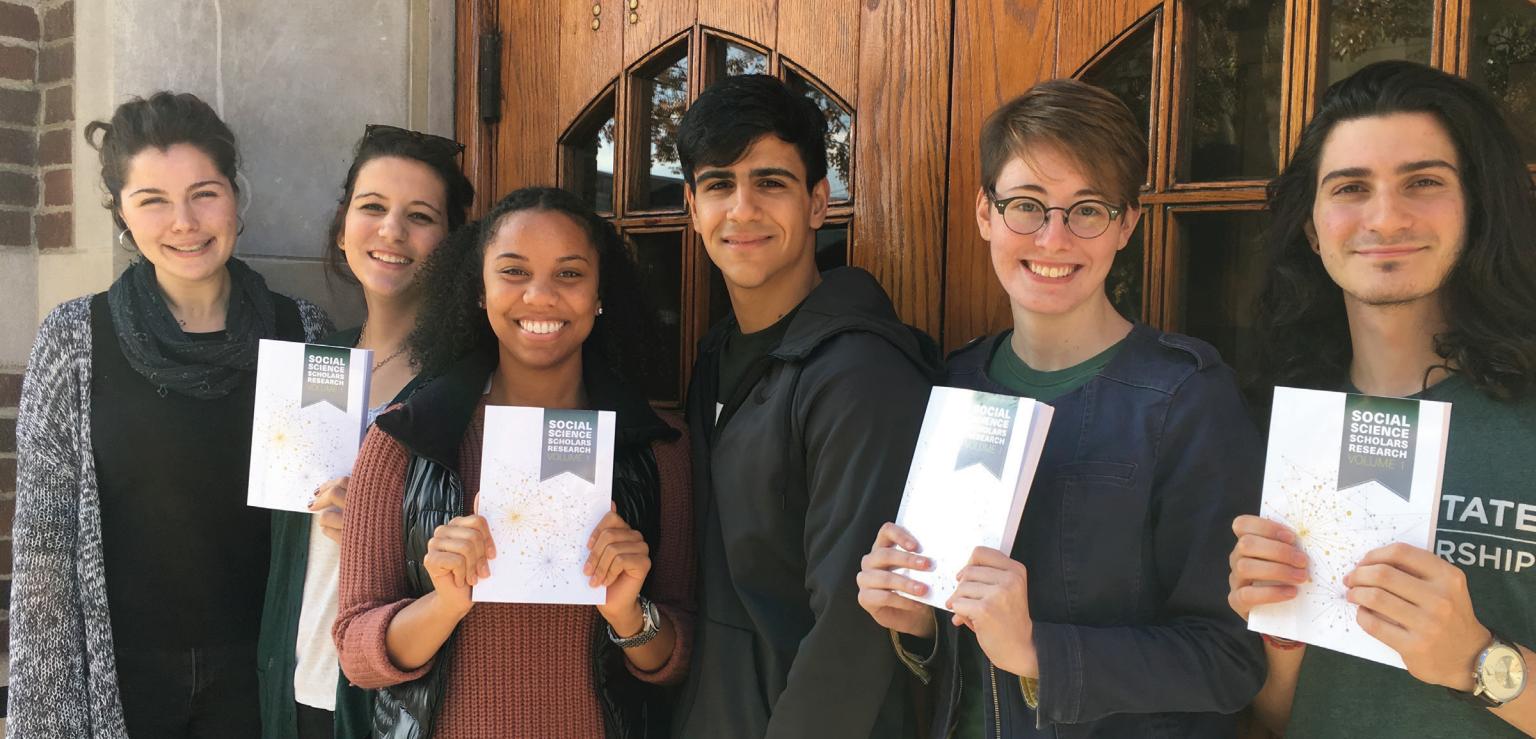
# Education for a Rewarding Career

The Social Science Scholars Program offers select groups of students a world-class education and ideal preparation for rewarding careers. As a member of the Scholars community, you will enjoy close faculty mentorship, the collegiality of small-group learning, the chance to publish your research, and opportunities for enriched experiential learning, such as internships and study abroad or away.

Our goals are to ensure that you do not feel lost in the crowd and that you receive the personal support and guidance that will allow you to make the most of your time at this top-tier research university. You'll graduate with the skills, experiences, and maturity that will set you apart. And, if you encounter academic, personal, or financial difficulties, we will always do everything we can to assist.

▼ The Social Science Scholars in the Old Cloister of New College, Oxford





▲ Scholars (from left) Grace Hough, Calla Michalak, Tristyn Walton, Elias Kokaly, Madge MacLean and Manny Alalouf with the Social Science Scholars book.

## Why become a Social Science Scholar?

### CAMARADERIE

You'll belong to a select and close-knit student community that shares your passion for social and political issues. Social Science Scholars have their own common room and work space.

### A WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION

You'll benefit from MSU faculty, alumni, and staff who are fully invested in your future success. You'll conduct research under faculty mentorship on the topics that most excite you.

### CAREER PREPARATION

You'll be prepared for a wide variety of high-profile careers in the public or private sectors and for advanced degree programs.

### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

It does not cost any extra to be a Social Science Scholar. In fact, as a Scholar you may be eligible for scholarships and you'll receive a subsidy towards experiential learning opportunities.

# First Year Scholars



In your first year as a Social Science Scholar, you'll take weekly seminars with your cohort that'll help you become a critical thinker, introduce you to key ideas from a wide range of social science disciplines, and give you a richer understanding of national and global issues.

In the fall semester, you'll be exposed to such topics as how genes and environment influence individual psychology, how our behavior is shaped by families and peer groups, why societies are so often deeply divided, why some countries fail while others flourish, how environmental threats can best be tackled, how we can lessen them-and-us divides, the factors that promote or imperil democracy, and the drivers of historical change. We'll also spend a month studying the history of Detroit. In the spring, you'll learn how social scientists approach making sense of various aspects of human behavior, including what is considered normative, the classification of deviant or criminalized behaviors, and the function of these social processes. Over these two semesters, you'll interact with dozens of experts from MSU and overseas. And, whatever the topic, you'll learn how to ask the right questions and see beyond the conventional wisdom that too often determines decision making.



Scholar, Nel Robinson,  
meeting an elephant on a  
research trip to Zambia.

## Second Year Scholars

During your second year, you'll take two more Scholars classes. In the fall, you'll gain valuable experience in conducting original research under faculty guidance. With fellow members of your cohort, you'll be paired with a community organization for which you will produce a detailed report to assist its endeavors.

We'll be sure to match you with an organization that aligns with your values and research interests. Our partners include agencies that are committed to increasing services for at-risk children, providing mental health support in prisons and jails, assisting the housing insecure in finding permanent accommodation, making the skilled trades more accessible to women, and reducing isolation among senior citizens. Your final reports will be presented to the community organization and at an annual forum of undergraduate research. They may also be included in a collection of Social Science Scholars research.

In the spring, you'll take a final Scholars class that allows you to draw on what you've learned to understand major historical and contemporary issues. These include the rise and fall of Apartheid in South Africa, the treatment of the mentally ill, work and politics in the age of Artificial Intelligence, why some economies thrive and others fail, and the impact of pandemics on human societies.

Over the summer of your second year, you'll gain practical internship experience. We'll help you identify internship opportunities and assist you in preparing your applications. These internships might be on-campus, in state government, or in one of the region's many non-profit organizations. Or they could be in out-of-state locations such as Washington DC, New Orleans, Detroit, New York, or Hawaii. Wherever you wish to go, we'll do all we can to ensure that you have the resume and the skills to make you competitive.

Your Scholars classes, study abroad and research project all earn college credits.



▲ Josie Danielkiewicz meets Senator Cory Booker while interning with Senator Debbie Stabenow's D.C. Office.

## Third & Fourth Year Scholars

By your third and fourth years, you'll be established in your declared major. You'll still interact with other Scholars socially and the program's faculty and staff will help you carry out further research, take part in community service, apply for scholarships, and secure additional internships. We will also assist as you get ready for life after graduation by helping you to prepare for job or graduate school applications and we'll closely mentor anyone interested in applying for prestigious graduate scholarships like the Truman, Rhodes, Gates Cambridge, Beinecke, and Marshall.

College of Social Science departments, schools, and centers with undergraduate programs include:

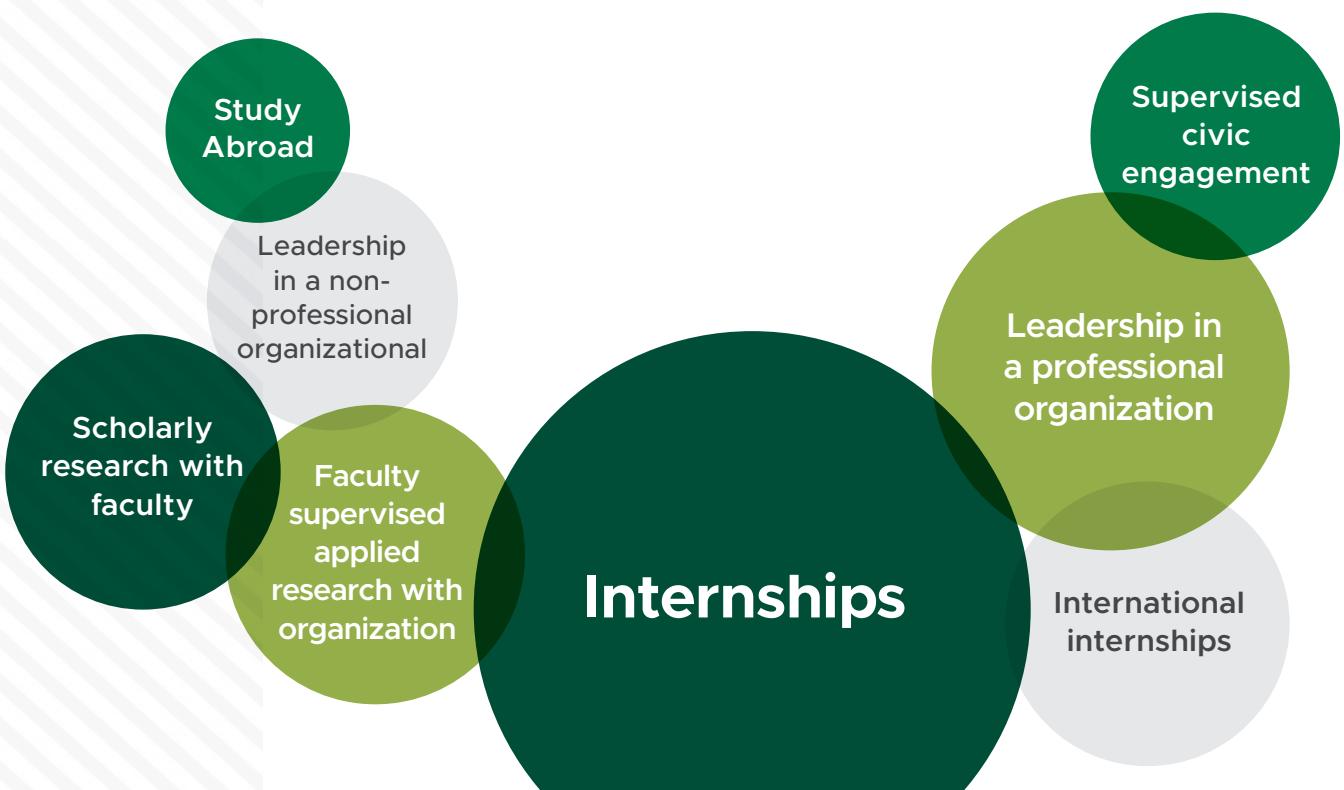
- Anthropology
- Criminal Justice
- Economics
- Geography, Environment, & Spatial Sciences
- History
- Human Development & Family Studies
- Human Resources & Labor Relations
- Integrative Studies
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Social Work
- Sociology

# How will this program improve my career chances?

Our objective is to help you stand out from the crowd in whatever field you choose.

As a Social Science Scholar you'll have many options when you leave MSU, from pursuing a career in business, finance, politics or public policy, to working for a think tank or Non-Governmental Organization, or studying for professional degrees in areas like law, government, academia, medicine, and international relations. The program's staff and faculty are here to help you select the appropriate courses for your career path.

Our objective is to help you stand out from the crowd in whatever field you choose. We'll achieve this by teaching high level skills in critical thinking, research, and communication. We'll also ensure that you have the kinds of experience that prepare you for a variety of careers. This program has been modeled on what researchers have consistently found to appeal most to employers. On the graphic below, produced by MSU's Dr. Phil Gardner, the size of each circle shows the relative importance attached to each kind of experience by prospective employers.





▲ Social Science Scholars at the summit of a mountain in the English Lake District during their study abroad trip to the UK

## Accordingly, we will help each Scholar to:

### **IDENTIFY AN INTERNSHIP**

We work with our students to identify professional opportunities that match their interests and aspirations. We also have longstanding relationships with organizations that provide internships in law and in health, housing, and environmental policy. Furthermore, Scholars can draw on the abundant connections provided by their peers and by our network of program alumni.

### **UNDERTAKE LEADERSHIP ROLES IN ORGANIZATIONS**

We will assist Scholars in finding campus organizations that reflect their passions and convictions.

### **PARTICIPATE IN FACULTY-SUPERVISED RESEARCH**

We offer plenty of opportunities for Scholars to undertake research projects with faculty members and community partners, to present their findings, and to write them up for publication.

### **EXPERIENCE SUPERVISED CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

All Social Science Scholars are encouraged to participate in service learning and the Scholars Program has several partnerships with community partners. These range from a nonprofit that seeks to reduce rates of eviction in Greater Lansing to a cross-generational befriending initiative to reduce loneliness among senior citizens.

### **TAKE PART IN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

All Scholars receive financial support for experiential learning (study away, study abroad, or internship).

# Meet some of our graduated Scholars

## ERYKAH BENSON

Being in the Social Science Scholars Program opened up an entire world for me in terms of learning about research as a career pathway. Today, I am a Sociologist studying race, technology, and justice, but I got to this point because the Scholars Program fed my curiosity about the social world and gave me the foundational tools I use as a researcher. I love how the faculty and staff in the program were always supportive of my creativity, and I appreciate the unique opportunities and connections I gained during my time in the program. Being at a large school like MSU can be overwhelming as an undergraduate student; it's easy to feel lost. But joining the Scholars Program allowed me to find community and gain connections with wonderful people.

## TANNER THERING

MSU is a great place to study Economics as an undergraduate; you'll be offered a diverse set of elective courses across many specializations in the field. The Social Science Scholars Program was a great complement to my Economics coursework, giving me a space to consider many social issues from a multidisciplinary perspective. The program surely aided my application for my first job, at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. It also prepared me for my current role at the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research based at the University of Michigan. There I work with data and researchers from a wide array of disciplines on a daily basis. Beyond this professional help, the Social Science Scholars Program was an exceptionally fun experience for me, and helped me make many friends.

## MICHAEL SANDOVAL

My time at MSU was an incredibly transformative experience that set me on the course to where I am today. Much of this is due to the guidance provided by Dr. John Waller and Dr. Melissa Fore. I benefited deeply from their commitment to helping me develop my craft as a writer, and their supporting me as a student, scholar, and friend. Since graduating in 2019, I have been able to thrive in my career, having worked for the Michigan Senate, Governor JB Pritzker's 2022 re-election campaign, the John G. Shedd Aquarium, and now at Protect Democracy. I have also received two Masters degrees from Arizona State University, and am currently a doctoral student in Creighton University's EdD in Interdisciplinary Leadership. I simply would not be where I am without continued support from leaders like Drs. Waller and Fore, to whom I'm forever grateful.

## JANET IBARRA

My experience at Michigan State University was nothing short of life-changing. I took full advantage of study abroad opportunities, the availability of local internships in the State Capitol and Washington, DC, and the chance to carry out original research. The Scholars Program always made me feel extremely supported with my research, my scholarship applications, and internship hunting. After graduating I spent a wonderful year at the University of Cambridge as a student of Latin American Studies. I am currently a student at Michigan State University College of Law where I am training for a career in immigration law.



## RENOLD MUELLER

I am currently a third year in the Ph.D. program in Political Science at Princeton University, which was only possible because my undergraduate experience included both broad exposure and intense study. At MSU, I took courses in Economics, Literature, History, Languages, Coding, and Math. Tying these together was the Social Science Scholars Program which offered courses which combined my interests and helped me to develop a robust profile of skills and knowledge. I also had a community of mentors and peers who pushed me to step up my game and pointed me in new directions---and more than occasionally pulled me out of the chaos of my late teens/early twenties! For the opportunities, encouragement, and inspiration it afforded me, the Scholars Program was fantastic preparation for my Ph.D. program.



## CARRIE NIELSEN

It's hard for me to imagine a place so full of opportunity as Michigan State University: there are so many corners of the school where you can find a community. But when you arrive on campus freshman year, it is incredibly daunting to start from scratch, which is just one reason why the cohort of like-minded but diverse peers that the Scholars Program provides is so great. The Scholars Program will expose you to many fields you may not have considered studying before - I actually chose to add Economics as a major because of the Scholars seminar on social and economic inequality. And that degree (and much assistance from Dr. Waller throughout my four years) helped get me hired as an Assistant Analyst at the Congressional Budget Office, where I research the impacts of climate change on the US economy. If you are passionate about social science and want a community which makes a large school seem small, this program is perfect for you!



## TRISTYN WALTON

Over a decade ago, when I decided that Michigan State University would be my new home, I felt a mix of excitement and uncertainty, most notably a deep sense of imposter syndrome. But I also remember Dr. Waller and Jenn Arbogast consistently reminding me that I belonged, and that my experiences and perspective brought real value to the program. Their affirmations, along with the academic rigor of the Scholars Program, transformed my undergraduate experience. They nurtured my confidence and equipped me with the tools to build a strong academic and professional foundation. That foundation has carried me through every step since.

I graduated from Emory University School of Law with honors, passed the bar exam on my first attempt, and now work as an executive compensation and employee benefits attorney at one of the nation's most prestigious law firms, Davis Polk & Wardwell. I began my career in the New York office and recently relocated to the Washington, D.C. office. In addition to my practice, I have worked on several pro bono matters, including racial justice initiatives and helping small businesses formalize their corporate documents and operate with greater clarity and confidence. The impact of the Scholars Program still endures. It instilled in me a lasting sense of self-belief and affirmed that I have a rightful place in any space in which I learn or work.

My parents imbued me with the wisdom of the African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child," and the Social Science Scholars Program was, and continues to be, an essential part of my village. It shaped not only my undergraduate years but also the trajectory of my personal and professional life.

# Program Leaders



## JOHN WALLER, PhD

Dr. John Waller, the Scholars Program's Director, has degrees in History, Human Biology, and the History of Science from Oxford University, Imperial College, London, and University College London. He joined the MSU faculty in 2006. He has authored seven books on various aspects of the history of science, medicine, psychology, genetics, and child labor. Dr. Waller is dedicated to student learning and research and is a recipient of MSU's Teacher-Scholar Award, the Honors College Award for Distinguished Contributions to Honors Students, the Engagement Innovator Award, and the President's Distinguished Teaching Award. Dr. Waller co-founded the Social Science Scholars Program in 2014.

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## KAREN HOLT, PhD

Dr. Karen Holt is an Associate Professor in the School of Criminal Justice. Having received her doctorate at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice at CUNY, Dr. Holt's research focuses on sexual offending and sexual deviance, topics on which she has published numerous articles. Dr. Holt was recently awarded funding through the Michigan State Police to conduct research on offenders identified through the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI). She is also a criminologist for the Michigan State Police First District's Cold Case Homicide Unit.

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## HEATHER MCCUALEY, PhD

Dr. Heather McCauley is an Associate Professor in MSU's School of Social Work. Trained in global health and social epidemiology at Harvard University, Dr. McCauley's research spans sexual violence, intimate partner violence, reproductive coercion, and sex trafficking, with an emphasis on populations experiencing marginalization. The author of many academic articles, she is also the founding member of Spark 4 Change, a community research lab dedicated to violence prevention.

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## MELISSA FORE, PhD

Dr. Melissa Fore is an Associate Professor in MSU's James Madison College. A graduate of MSU, Dr. Fore teaches how concepts of race, class, gender, and sexuality are socially and culturally constructed through social, political, and economic values. Dr. Fore co-leads the Scholars Program's off-campus experiences.

# Applications and Scholarships

Students must be accepted to MSU before they can be admitted to the Social Science Scholars Program. The deadline to apply for the Scholars Program is April 1 of the year in which a student wishes to join the program, but early application is strongly encouraged. Selection for the program is determined following an interview.

The enthusiasm of alumni and friends of MSU's College of Social Science allows us to offer a limited number of scholarships according to financial need.

## FAQs

### **[+] WHEN CAN I APPLY?**

We welcome both high school seniors and current MSU freshmen to apply.

### **[+] WHAT KINDS OF STUDENT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?**

We seek students who have the enthusiasm, kindness, and maturity to enjoy a close-knit learning environment, who wish to be involved in community initiatives, who feel strongly about social and political issues, and who will make a positive difference in their careers.

### **[+] IS IT POSSIBLE TO DOUBLE MAJOR OUTSIDE OF THE COLLEGE?**

Yes, as long as you also have a primary major in the College of Social Science.

### **[+] WILL THE PROGRAM INVOLVE A LARGE TIME COMMITMENT?**

Scholars do make extra time commitments because they are members of a program that offers exceptional opportunities. But we are accommodating and flexible and will work with you to ensure that the program is manageable and enjoyable and that you have plenty of time for other pursuits.

### **[+] HOW MANY CREDITS WILL I OBTAIN AS A SOCIAL SCIENCE SCHOLAR?**

Scholars take one seminar class each semester together for the first two years of the program (14 credits total).

### **[+] CAN I BE IN HONORS COLLEGE AND THE SCHOLARS PROGRAM?**

Absolutely. Most of the Social Science Scholars are in Honors College and several in each cohort hold Professorial Assistantships.

### **[+] HOW CAN I APPLY?**

Simple. Go to [socialscience.msu.edu/apply\\_scholars](http://socialscience.msu.edu/apply_scholars) and follow the instructions.

### **[+] HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SOCIAL SCIENCE SCHOLARS PROGRAM?**

You can email the program's director, Dr. John Waller ([wallerj1@msu.edu](mailto:wallerj1@msu.edu)), or the program's assistant director, Dr. Karen Holt ([holtkar1@msu.edu](mailto:holtkar1@msu.edu)). We will be pleased to answer any questions.



## CONTACT THE SOCIAL SCIENCE SCHOLARS PROGRAM

📞 517-353-6752

✉️ [SSC.Scholars@msu.edu](mailto:SSC.Scholars@msu.edu)



OUR SCIENCE **TRANSFORMS THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE**  
AND INSPIRES LEADERS



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