

Advising & Mentorship Policy | Gail M. Ferguson, Ph.D. | Culture & Family Life Lab (Rev 9.2020)

What do we study? The psychology of globalization is a newer area of research that has emerged to describe, explain, and predict the ramifications of 21st Century globalization as a dynamic macro context for human development. The Culture and Family Life (CFL) Lab is on the leading edge of this sub-field by pioneering theory (e.g., remote acculturation), conducting foundational empirical studies and replications to test theoretical predictions, and translating this new scientific knowledge into interventions that promote the positive development and resilience of globalizing youth and families internationally. We focus our scholarship on immigrant/refugee youth and families in the United States and non-migrant youth and families across countries.

How do we conduct our research? Our research is *transdisciplinary* (blends psychology, media, and nutrition sciences), *transnational* (we study youth and families living across countries), and *translational* (we use the findings from our research studies to design resilience-promoting interventions). We place a high priority on cultural appropriateness and innovation in our methodologies – we believe this to be best scientific practice regardless of the topics and populations under study. We select research methods to best suit our research questions for a given study, using multiple methods within and across studies including quantitative designs (e.g., questionnaires, daily diaries), qualitative designs (e.g., focus group interviews, drawings, media projects), and mixed-methods approaches, whether sequential (e.g., large sample questionnaires followed by interviews of a small subsample) or concurrent (e.g., online survey including open-ended boxes for free-writes). Our studies tend to be community/school-based (i.e., field-based) rather than lab-based and we employ correlational and experimental designs (e.g., RCT), cross-sectional and over-time approaches. We use a team science approach in conducting and disseminating our research, and we maintain active collaborative partnerships across other labs at UMN, nationally (e.g., UIUC), and internationally (e.g., The University of the West Indies, Jamaica).

Who thrives in this lab?

- Flexible, creative, and integrative thinkers who are excited by innovation and like to push the boundaries of what is known, meaning that they are also highly meticulous in their approach to learning what is actually known on a topic before proposing new hypotheses. They cultivate high tolerance for ambiguities in expanding new scientific frontiers.
- Those who embrace a global perspective, have a deep interest in understanding development in cultural context, and are actively committed to a continual process of outward-focused cultural humility and learning and inward-focused cultural self-awareness and growth.
- Ambidextrous scholars who are highly conceptual and theory-oriented, yet also committed to applied research and translation.
- Those who welcome methodological diversity and are open to learning and using multiple research methods to answer a range of novel and important questions rather than shoehorning all research questions into a single methodological approach.
- Strong and clear communicators who enjoy collaboration and endorse the [G.O.D. principle](#) of the lab for research and collaborations – Gratitude, Optimism, and Determination.
- If you find yourself interested in a single content topic, if you prefer to work alone much of the time, or if you are very interested in lab-based research, this may not be the lab for you.

What is my mentorship philosophy and style? I view graduate students as junior colleagues and enjoy mentoring them as they pursue the training experiences they need in graduate school to chart their course towards the future career they desire. My mentorship style has these defining features:

- **Authoritative.** I have high expectations AND give high support – I encourage mentees' ambitious goals and support them in a variety of ways including directing them towards and advocating for resources they might need (including additional mentors), and allowing them flexibility to adjust course.

- **Collaborative.** I use a team science model in my lab so mentees always work in teams with me and researchers from other labs within and outside ICD. I am happy to co-advise students with other faculty and am particularly enthused when a student creates research that brings together the knowledge and skills of different mentors into a single well-integrated direction. I suggest, however, that my students narrow their *regular* involvement to two research labs in their second year and onwards to safeguard their own progress and professional focus.
- **Direct.** For clarity and efficiency I favor up-front and direct communication, whether email or face:face, so I will not have to guess what you are needing and you will not have to guess what I am expecting.
- **Responsive.** Under normal circumstances, I try to respond to mentee communications quickly, thoughtfully, and comprehensively so you can forge ahead. In unusual times (e.g., pandemic, international travel), I use technology to our advantage to get you the quickest response.
- **Active scaffolding.** I am generally more hands-on initially with new mentees to structure their training in the methodologies and processes of the lab's research. As learning progresses I step back, in dialogue with the mentee, to best foster their growth and leadership. My goal is to stay within the mentee's zone of proximal development; they should always feel as if they are stretching (& being stretched) forwards.
- **Mentor by involvement.** A lot of professional mentoring and learning in my lab occurs by volunteering on a project—this is the door that opens up other opportunities such as co-authoring a paper, co-reviewing on a manuscript, co-presenting at a conference, etc.
- **Mentor you to mentor others.** Everyone in the lab is being mentored and is also mentoring according to their skill level (e.g., I mentor graduate students and they mentor undergraduates).

Advising and Mentoring Expectations

- My advisees' research interests typically align with the topics studied in the lab, but I expect them to plumb the scientific literature along with other key sources of information (e.g., community perspectives) to **extend central theory and research from our lab in new directions.**
- The minimal expectation I have for students who benefit from any of my lab's resources (regardless of whether students are supported by TAs, RAships, or Fellowships) is to contribute to the lab's research activities for **10 hours per week at minimum.** However, be aware that students who are primarily concerned about minimizing their lab commitments may not thrive in this lab and are ultimately not likely to be successful in research careers.
- I expect all students working in my lab to **be HIGHLY conscientious and attentive to detail,** and to expect the same of me. Initiative, independence, and productivity are also necessary and expected.
- I expect, **open, honest, timely, and responsive communication** from mentees, and they can expect the same from me.
- Mentees will **attend monthly lab meetings and schedule 1:1 mentorship meetings** with me. There is flexibility and variability in the optimal frequency for these 1:1 meetings. Advisees set the agenda for these meetings and discussion often includes celebrating accomplishments, feedback on progress toward short and long-term goals, navigating hurdles, and check-in on self-care. It goes without saying that mentees are expected to be receptive to mentorship and to consult when advice is needed.
- Mentees will be **committed to [cultural humility](#),** meaning that they will nurture interest in, openness to, and respect for other cultures, beginning with the cultural backgrounds of lab members, our community partners, and our participants. Cultural humility is an antidote to ethnocentrism and Western bias, and is necessary to undergird ethical and productive contributions to psychological science (APA, 2013).
- Mentees will actively **strive for fuller awareness of their own positionality** in U.S. society and globally in relation to ethnicity, race, power, and privilege. This is important for all psychologists to minimize the negative effects of unconscious racial and cultural biases in our research and intervention (APA, 2019).
- Mentees will **share the lab's commitment to [anti-racist research](#)** by ensuring that all aspects of their research process (research questions, research methods, data analysis, interpretation of findings, dissemination efforts, and intervention efforts) intentionally promote the well-being of Black and other

youth and families of color in the United States and globally. This commitment includes but is not limited to using strength-based (versus deficit-based) frameworks, grounding the research in the cultural context being studied, and accounting for racial and structural inequalities related to developmental outcomes under study (particularly if multiple racial/cultural groups are being sampled) (SRCD, 2020).

- Mentees will dedicate **time and effort to develop cultural competence for the populations they study** (including Midwestern White middle-class American samples) as part of ethical and competent research. This includes partnering with and seeking mentorship from a cultural insider if the mentee is a cultural outsider to the population under study, diligently reading relevant sources to learn about the culture being studied and then discussing one's understanding with a cultural insider, and intentionally attending to within-group variability to avoid stereotyping.
- I expect **professionalism in mentees' communications** within and outside the lab, whether interacting face-to-face or via email, videoconference, or otherwise. This expectation extends to speech, body language, and attire where appropriate, and is especially critical with community partners/participants.
- Each graduate student is expected to be **mentoring 1 (or more) undergraduate** student in the lab.
- Advisees and other lab affiliates are expected to **contribute to CFL Lab efforts, whether big or small, glorious** (e.g., presenting a talk at a conference) or **inglorious** (e.g., taking meeting minutes). Advisees will be asked to contribute to lab papers/products/studies and all contributions will be recognized, even if they do not warrant authorship. The CFL Lab has a transparent system of establishing authorship that is informed by [APA guidelines](#) and clearly articulated by [Emerging Adulthood](#). This includes a generous and inclusive co-authorship policy in which graduate and undergraduate researchers are able to opt into (after invitation) the authorship on a paper/presentation or other product provided they commit to making the significant intellectual and practical contribution outlined, with necessary mentorship.
- I expect each graduate advisee to be **leading/co-leading a manuscript at any given time** using data from a lab project or their own project (note that IRB-governed projects led by graduate mentees require the faculty mentor to serve as PI, so will also be considered lab projects because they benefit from lab resources including assigned RAs). This gives the advisee continuous experience with publication, team science, and leadership, and will build a strong CV for the job market.
- I expect my students to **develop a comprehensive toolkit** for studying the contexts and processes of development, utilizing training opportunities in ICD and beyond. A comprehensive toolkit includes an understanding of and appreciation for multiple methodologies and multi-method approaches.
- I expect my advisees to make **ongoing investments in self-care**. They are forming health and work-life balance that will last for their entire career, so I encourage attention to sustainability.
- I expect my advisees to **attend conferences and present their research** nationally and/or internationally because developing a professional network is important. Relatedly, I expect my advisees to pursue their own funding for research, training, and travel (with my support).
- I expect **involvement in outreach** - "giving back" to school/community partners and to the broader national and global society. Our lab does this in many ways including school PTA presentations and consultations, briefs, radio program contributions, and lab social media, etc.
- I expect students to be **active members of the broader intellectual community** and to make service contributions to the collective (e.g., committees in ICD or a professional society like SRCD).