Biography

Hi, my name is Armani Porter and I am from New Orleans, Louisiana. I am currently a student within the MA Program in the Social Sciences at the University of Chicago (concentration: cultural anthropology). My research employs ethnographic and genealogical methods to inform the creation of data infrastructures. In short, through observant participation of everyday life, I address social problems through the implementation of novel data management techniques. For example, my master’s thesis is concerned with legal developments in Chile where a recent bill proposed in congress contains a ban on the commercialization of “neurodata.” In this paper, I demonstrate how Judeo-Christian anxieties regarding the commodification of the body could be assuaged through the use of a blockchain ledger. I intend to pursue a career in both academia and industry and will be applying to PhD programs in Cultural Anthropology Fall 2022.
**Personal Statement**

After two years of serving as a member of the Student/Postdoc Committee, I express my interest in the open Chair position. I have had broad exposure to the field of neuroethics as I have engaged with neuroethical questions within the disciplines of neuroscience, theology, Cognitive Science of Religion, bioethics, and cultural anthropology. In addition, this work has taken place on an international scale as I have had research affiliations with various institutions including the National University of Singapore, La Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, the University of Connecticut, the University of Notre Dame, Duke University, and the University of Chicago. The highly interdisciplinary and international nature of my research is a personal response to the intellectual blind spots that manifest in academic literature due to disciplinary reproduction.

I am interested in the practice of theory as well as the theory of practice and consider myself situated within the “making and doing” subfield of cultural anthropology. Through gaining an understanding of the institutions that produce life, this knowledge can be used to inform the creation of data infrastructures. I am specifically interested in data management practices as they relate to the storage and transmission of “neurodata” for both humanitarian and commercial purposes. Geographically, I am interested in neuroethics within the context of the Americas, namely the Southern Cone of South America.

I have served as the Operations Lead for Rymedi LLC, a blockchain based data and supply chain management company within the life sciences. I have also served as a member of the IEEE Standards Development Working Group for Blockchain in Healthcare and the Life Sciences. During this time, I became familiar with the importance of decentralized data governance. For example, I proposed a data stewardship protocol that enables third-party data sharing while ensuring the privacy of patient data. This protocol is in use by Rymedi today and is particularly useful for those who are members of vulnerable populations. On a related note, my talk at the 2019 INS Conference, “The Brain as Best Defense: A Study on the Presence of Neurological Data in the United States Justice System,” demonstrates that although the presentation of a brain scan does not increase a defendant’s likelihood of receiving a favorable outcome on appeal, it is important to note that a significant population of those who are incarcerated are unable to obtain a brain scan as a form of evidence due to a lack of access to healthcare. Given this, through decentering the healthcare system by allowing greater access to data, this creates the possibility for a more equitable distribution of resources both within and outside the hospital walls.

Further, my interest in the decentralization of scientific data extends beyond the field of neuroethics. For example, my master’s practicum at Duke University, “Death, DNA and Data: An Exploration of Ethical, Legal, and Practical Considerations Regarding the use of Investigative Genetic Genealogy to Identify Missing Migrants in the United States,” examines a novel forensic technique as a potential solution to regulations that prevent the cross-referencing of DNA data between commercial, non-profit, and state-owned genetic databases. In light of my professional and academic interests, as Chair I offer the Student/Postdoc Committee a perspective that is postured towards preventing the concentration of power that often occurs as a result of scientific endeavors.

I am beyond grateful for this nomination and am thankful for your time and consideration.

Peace,

Armani Niko Porter
EDUCATION

University of Chicago  2022
MA Program in the Social Sciences (Concentration: cultural anthropology)
Master’s Thesis: “Data Stewardship and Judeo-Christian Anxiety: Neurodata Regulation in Chile”

Duke University  2020
MA Bioethics and Science Policy (Concentration: philosophy)
Master’s Practicum: “Death, DNA, and Data: An Exploration of Ethical, Legal, and Practical Considerations Regarding the use of Investigative Genetic Genealogy to Identify Missing Migrants in the United States”

University of Notre Dame  2018
BA Neuroscience and Behavior
Senior Project: “Personal Uniqueness: Adaptive Behavior within Adolescence”
Theology (double major)
Senior Project “Anarquía en la iglesia”

RESEARCH

University of Chicago  2021-
Department of Anthropology
Supervised by Kaushik Sunder Rajan, PhD
Interests: Genealogy, Death Ethnography, Political Economy, Neurorights, Chile

Department of Anthropology  2021-
Supervised by Michael Dietler, PhD
Interests: Aesthetics, Blockchain, Frankfurt School
Project Title: “NFTs and Walter Benjamin”

Duke University  2018 –2020
Initiative for Science and Society
Supervised by Nita Farahany, PhD, JD- Science, Law, and Policy Lab

Northwestern University  2018—2020
Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago
Department of Pediatrics
Supervised by Sara H. Katsanis- Genetics and Justice Lab

University of Notre Dame  2015 – 2018
Department of Psychology
Advised by Daniel Lapsley, PhD- Moral and Adolescent Psychology Lab
Department of Theology  2017 – 2018
Advised by Peter Casarella, PhD
Affiliated with La Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
Department of Theology
Advised by Patrick Deegan, PhD
Project Title: “Jesus, Buddha, and the King: A comparative study of Catholicism within the context of Southeast Asian dictatorship regimes”

University of Connecticut  Summer 2017
Department of Anthropology
Advised by Dr. Dimitris Xygalatas, PhD - Experimental Anthropology Lab
Project Title: “Collective Effervescence and Group Synchrony”

National University of Singapore  Summer 2016
Department of Physiology
Advised by Dr. Chen Zhi Xiong, PhD - Neurodevelopment and Cancer Lab
Project Title: “The Effect of KIF1Bbeta and CSPG4 in Neuroblastoma Apoptosis”
**Research Presentations**

**The Keenan Institute for Ethics Religion and Public Life Conference**  
Fellowship Presentation, Subversive Life: A Reformation of Identity in Chile, June 2020

**International Neuroethics Society**  
Invited Talk, The Brain as Best Defense: A Study on the Presence of Neurological Data in the United States Justice System, October 2019  
Poster Presentation, The Brain as Best Defense: A Study on the Presence of Neurological Data in the United States Justice System, October 2019

**Society for the Advancement for Chicanos and Native Americans in Science**  
Invited Talk, Exploring Diversity and Career Pathways in Science Policy, November 2019

**Midwestern Psychological Association**  
Poster Presentation, Personal Uniqueness: Adolescent Adaptive Behavior, April 2018

**Employment**

**Rymedi**  
Job Title: Operations Lead (Full Time)  
Rymedi is a blockchain based supply-chain and data management company postured towards the life sciences.

**M&M Educational Group**  
Job Title: Spanish Tutor  
Spring 2020

**Center for Multicultural Affairs at Duke University**  
Job Title: Native American Graduate Assistant  
Spring 2019 – Spring 2020

**Duke Master in Interdisciplinary Data Science**  
Job Title: Teaching Assistant  
Course: Data Science Ethics  
Spring 2019

**Duke Fuqua School of Business**  
Job Title: Teaching Assistant  
Course: Ethical and Legal Issues in Analytics  
Fall and Spring 2019

**SciPol Science Writer**  
Job Title: Graduate Assistant  
Fall 2018 – Spring 2020

**Office of the Vice President at the University of Notre Dame**  
Job Title: Worker Participation Committee Summer Associate  
Summer 2018

**Leadership**

**IEEE Standards Development Working Group for Blockchain in Healthcare and the Life Sciences Member**  
2020 – 2021

**International Neuroethics Society Student Postdoc Committee Member**  
2019 –

**Trademark, Licensing, and Human Rights Committee (at-large, Notre Dame)**  
Member of the Licensee and Factory Assessments Subcommittee  
2018 –

**Duke University Hospital Ethics Committee Member**  
2018 – 2020

**Duke Libraries Graduate and Professional Students Advisory Board Member**  
2018 – 2020

**Duke University Native Student Advisory Board Member**  
2018 – 2020

**Student Worker Participation Committee Member**  
2015 – 2018

**Worker Participation Committee Member**  
2016 – 2018

**Diversity Council Representative for The Wabruda**  
2015 – 2017

**Vice President of the Native American Student Association of Notre Dame**  
2015 – 2017

**Alumni Relations Commissioner of the Black Student Association**  
2016 – 2017

**Vice President of BridgeND**  
2016 – 2017

**Publications**

AWARDS

University of Chicago’s Center for Latin American Studies Tinker Field Research Grant 2021 – 2022

Doan Fellowship Program

Master’s Thesis Grant 2017 – 2018

Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts

Senior Thesis Grant 2015

Flatley Center for Undergraduate Scholarly Engagement

Summer Comprehensive Grant 2015

Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies

Research Assistantship Grant 2015

Summer Research Grant 2015

SCHOLARSHIPS

University Scholarship 2020 – 2021

Bioethics Master Scholarship 2018 – 2020

Frazier Thompson Scholarship 2017 – 2018

Provost’s Scholarship 2014 – 2018

University Scholarship 2014 – 2018

Notre Dame Federal Credit Union Scholarship 2017

FELLOWSHIPS

Doan Fellowship Program at the University of Notre Dame 2016 – 2018

Dean’s Fellowship Program 2016 – 2018

Tocqueville Fellowship Program for Inquiry into Religion and Public Life 2017 – 2018

The Kenan Institute for Ethics Religion and Public Life Fellowship 2019—2020

ATHLETICS

Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball League 2013 – 2015

Coach Derek Brown: Baltimore Dodgers

University of Notre Dame Varsity Baseball 2013 – 2014

Coach Mik Aoki: Notre Dame Fighting Irish

SHADOWING

John’s Hopkins University Summer 2015

Maria Oliva-Hemker, MD, Division Chief of Pediatric Gastroenterology

Karla Au Yeung, MD, Pediatric Gastroenterologist

Doug B. Mogul, MD, MPH, Pediatric Gastroenterologist

Wikrom W. Karnsakul, MD, Pediatric Gastroenterologist

Dylan Stewart, MD, FACS, General Pediatric Surgery

David J. Hackam, MD, PhD, Division of General Pediatric Surgery

Jeffrey R Lukish, MD, General Pediatric Surgery

COLOQUIA/WORKSHOPS

Center for Buddhism and East Asian Religions at the University of British Columbia

Buddhism & Technology: Historical Background and Contemporary Challenges September 2019

International Network for Interreligious Research and Education

Normative Religious Traditions and Their Authority (Leipzig University), July 2018

Religious Heritage in a Diverse Europe (University of Groningen), June 2019

Notre Dame Consultation on Intellectual Virtues and Science Education

Intellectual Virtue in Academia, May 2017

University of Notre Dame Department of Philosophy

Current Issues on Self-Consciousness, November 2017

LANGUAGES

English – Native language

Spanish – Advanced Conversational