



GRADUATE STUDENT LOOKBOOK

2026-2027



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2026–2027 American Academy of Advertising Graduate Student Lookbook!

The AAA Graduate Student Lookbook introduces AAA members and member institutions to the next generation of advertising scholars entering the academic job market in 2026–2027.*

Each profile provides an overview of the student’s background, research interests, expertise, and contact information. We invite you to explore the exceptional scholars featured in this year’s lookbook and connect with candidates whose expertise and aspirations align with your program’s needs.

We hope this lookbook helps foster meaningful connections between emerging advertising scholars and academic institutions seeking their next faculty members.

*** Entries listed in alphabetical order of the last name.**

MEET OUR GRADUATE STUDENTS

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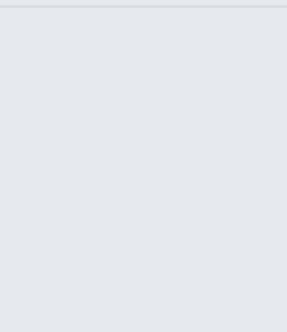


Lingyan (Lia) Zhang

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The Chinese University of Hong Kong

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Temilade Adeeko

Ph.D. Candidate | The Pennsylvania State University

Strategic communication

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Bio

Temilade Adeeko is a Ph.D. Candidate in Strategic Communication at Penn State. Her research examines AI-mediated communication, virtual influencers, and emerging technologies in advertising and strategic communication, focusing on how these technologies shape persuasion, trust, and consumer responses. She has teaching experience in undergraduate courses including Telecommunications Technology (COMM 280) and Research in Advertising and Public Relations (COMM 420).



Chinwendu Praise Akalonu

Ph.D. Candidate | University of South Carolina

Strategic communication; Emerging technologies

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Bio

Chinwendu Praise Akalonu's research examines how communication, technology, and society intersect, with a focus on the societal impact of digital innovation. Her work builds culturally representative theories of media technology and reworks existing frameworks to better fit the realities of mass communication in a digital age.



Bahareh Amini

Ph.D. Candidate | University of Alabama

Advertising

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Bio

Bahareh Amini is a Ph.D. Candidate in Communication & Information Sciences at The University of Alabama, with research focused on human–AI interaction in advertising and strategic communication. Her work examines topics such as consumer trust in AI, AI anthropomorphism, computational advertising, and responses to AI-generated communication. She has experience using experimental, computational, and quantitative methods, including SEM ad, Classification, and social media analytics. She has also served as an Instructor of Record for undergraduate advertising courses (advanced digital marketing) and has experience managing research and data analytics labs.



Jie Chen

Ph.D. Candidate | University of Tennessee, Knoxville

AI in advertising; Social media advertising; Green advertising

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Bio

Jie Chen is a PhD candidate with a focus on the intersection of artificial intelligence and advertising, particularly AI advertising regulation and disclosure, consumer responses to AI technologies, and the effects of AI-related messaging on advertising perceptions. Her broader research interests also include green advertising and social media advertising. She currently has three journal publications in these areas, including one as first author. She has taught undergraduate Advertising Principles for four semesters. Moreover, she brings one year of professional experience from iHeartMedia, along with three internships in social media and digital advertising. At iHeartMedia, she gained hands-on experience across multiple stages of the advertising process, from campaign planning to deployment, while collaborating with cross-functional advertising teams. These experiences allow her to bring practical industry insights to her research and teaching in advertising.



Soyon (Michelle) Choi

Ph.D. Candidate | University of Texas at Austin

Advertising

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Bio

Soyon (Michelle) Choi's research examines the psychological mechanisms of persuasion in sports marketing, with current work focusing on name, image, and likeness (NIL), sports betting, personalization, and consumer-brand relationships. Her work explores how identity, preexisting involvement, and expectations shape consumers' responses to persuasive messages. In the classroom, she brings these questions to life through real-world experiences—from podcast participation to Super Bowl advertising discussions—helping students connect advertising theory to industry practice and everyday life. Before returning to academia, she worked as a project manager at a startup, in the sports industry, and at an embassy, professional experiences that continue to shape both her research and teaching.



Seo-Jeong Heo

Ph.D. Candidate | University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Advertising; Strategic communication

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Bio

Seo-Jeong Heo is a Ph.D. candidate in Advertising at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Across her professional experiences at the Smithsonian Institution, Cheil Worldwide (Samsung Electronics' in-house advertising agency), and UX design startups, she became interested in a recurring question: When people encounter an unfamiliar entity, how do they perceive it and infer what it can do, what role do they expect it to play, and how closely do they allow it into their lives? She pursues this question through her research on AI—a new kind of other that can communicate with consumers, persuade them, act on their behalf, and enter their social lives. Her research comprises three connected streams: (1) AI understanding—what consumers believe AI can think, feel, and do; (2) AI reliance—when consumers accept AI's influence or delegate decisions to it; and (3) AI relationships—how AI acquires emotional and relational significance in consumers' lives. Across 13 projects, she combines online and interactive experiments, behavioral process measures, computational content analysis, and field and platform data. Her first-authored work includes an article published in the *Journal of Business Research* and four additional manuscripts under review at the *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *Journal of Business Research*, and *International Journal of Advertising*, including manuscripts in first- and second-round review. She has received research support from the Bart A. Cummings Gift Fund and the Washington Media Scholars Foundation Fund through the Advertising Division of AEJMC. She has twice been named to UIUC's List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent by Their Students and has been invited to serve on the Editorial Review Board of the *Journal of Advertising Research*.



Haneul Jang

Ph.D. Candidate | University of Texas at Austin

Advertising

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Bio

Haneul Jang's research explores how emerging technologies (e.g., Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Reality) shape consumer responses and how brands can strategically use these technologies to communicate more effectively. Specifically, her research program examines three interrelated areas of AI-mediated brand communication: AI-generated advertising, AI agents as brand communicators, and AI in immersive environments. Before pursuing her Ph.D., she worked for several years in international wholesale sales in the cosmetics industry, collaborating with local buyers to develop marketing and promotional strategies. This experience gave her a strategic understanding of how brands identify market needs and develop effective communication approaches. Together, her professional background and research expertise allow her to enrich advertising and brand communication courses with real-world cases and strategic applications of AI and immersive technologies.



Jeewon (Joanne) Kim

Ph.D. Candidate | University of Texas at Austin

Advertising; Strategic communication; Consumer behavior

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Bio

Jeewon (Joanne) Kim is a Ph.D. candidate in Advertising at The University of Texas at Austin. Drawing on five years of professional experience in business consulting and marketing—including roles at Bain & Company, KPMG, Boston Consulting Group, and Deloitte Consulting, she integrates strategic insight with academic rigor to advance human-centered technology research. Her research is organized around three interconnected domains: consumers, brands, and emerging technologies. At their intersections, she examines how emerging technologies including AI chatbots, deepfake, virtual influencers, and robotics shape consumer judgment, persuasion, and brand communication. Her research on the Consumer AI Anxiety Scale has been recognized by the 2025 AAA Best Student Conference Paper Award. She has also independently taught three undergraduate course sections at UT Austin across Advertising and Popular Culture and Introduction to Advertising and Public Relations Research (two times). Drawing on her industry experience, she uses contemporary cases and experiential projects to connect consumer behavior and decision-making theories with practical challenges, including projects in which students apply AI tools to support local businesses and organizations.



Gurpreet Kour

Ph.D. Candidate | Purdue University

Strategic marketing communication; Digital and AI-enabled marketing;
Sustainability

gkour@purdue.edu

Bio

Gurpreet Kour is a Ph.D. candidate in Hospitality and Tourism Management at Purdue University whose research examines how organizations use strategic marketing communication, digital platforms, artificial intelligence, and sustainability-oriented strategies to create value for customers, communities, and firms. Her work focuses on AI-enabled customer engagement, digital consumer behavior, platform strategy, sustainability storytelling, and stakeholder-centered brand value. Her research has appeared in the Journal of Service Management, Journal of Business Research, and the Journal of Indian Business Research. Prior to her doctoral studies, Gurpreet served as a faculty member at the Indian Institute of Management Shillong and NMIMS Mumbai, where she taught Marketing Strategy, Marketing Management, Integrated Marketing Communications, Services Marketing, and Product Innovation in undergraduate, MBA, and executive-MBA programs. At Purdue, she teaches and supports courses in strategic management, marketing, services, and has been recognized through a Teaching Excellence Award, an Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award, the IMPACT Scholar program, and a Service-Learning Fellowship for designing applied, student-centered learning experiences.



Yujin (Floria) Lee

Ph.D. Student | University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Advertising; AI & consumer behavior

yujinl3@illinois.edu

Bio

Yujin (Floria) Lee is a Ph.D. student in Advertising at the Institute of Communications Research, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, advised by Dr. Chang Dae Ham. Her research interests are closer to human-computer interaction than traditional advertising research, focusing on how people perceive and respond to AI-mediated systems such as virtual influencers, AI-generated endorsers, and personalized ad content. She studies trust, authenticity, and reactance in these interactions using mind perception theory, source credibility, and construal level theory.



Qinran Li

Ph.D. Candidate | University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Advertising

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Bio

Qinran Li is a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, studying influencer advertising from a consumer protection perspective, with a focus on how persuasive cues in fitness and health influencer content create consumer vulnerability. Her work uses theory-driven experiments and her research has appeared in the *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, with a second paper accepted by the *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*. She has served as Instructor of Record for Advertising Research Methods and as a teaching assistant across several advertising and public relations courses, including a recent focus on AI and creativity in advertising. Her industry experience includes an account executive internship at BlueFocus Digital Marketing Agency and a Future Educators Fellowship agency residency at Tombras.



Yan (Anna) Liu

Ph.D. Candidate | University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Emerging technologies; Data and quantification; Persuasion; Strategic communication; Computational social science

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Bio

Yan (Anna) Liu's research follows two lines: (1) Broadly, how emerging technologies transform content generation and media exposure in strategic communication. More specifically, she focuses on how AI-generated summaries (AIGS) synthesize information, how it transforms advertising messages and media strategies in the contexts of social media, search engines, and online review platforms, as well as how consumers process the synthesized and streamlined information in AIGS. Additionally, her research on generative AI (GenAI) also explores GenAI and users' information-seeking, as well as GenAI and advertising creativity. (2) Broadly, she studies the social impact of data and quantification in strategic communication. More specifically, how brands and organizations communicate numerical data effectively and ethically in persuasive messages, and how to leverage regulatory forces and consumers' own data literacy for consumer protection. She uses mixed methods in her research, including computational (e.g., computer vision, machine learning, sentiment analysis, etc.), qualitative, and traditional quantitative methods. In terms of teaching, she served as instructor of record or as a TA for Advertising Research Methods, Consumer Insights, Data Literacy, Innovations in Advertising, Advertising and Brand Strategy, Social Media and Personal Branding, and other courses offered by the Charles H. Sandage Department of Advertising at UIUC. Moreover, she has 5 years of professional experience in the marketing research industry. Before joining ICR, she was a Senior Research Manager at Ipsos (Beijing office), one of the world's top three global marketing research firms.



Md Shahedur Rahman

Ph.D. Student | University of Colorado Boulder

Advertising

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Bio

Md Shahedur Rahman is a Ph.D. student in Strategic Communication at the University of Colorado Boulder, with research interests centered on advertising technology, AI-generated advertising, LLM advertising and marketing funnel, consumer decision-making, and emerging media. His work examines how consumers respond to technological innovations in advertising, including AI-generated content, LLM advertising, Chatbot advertising, novelty effects, personalization, and other features of digital advertising. He has experience using experimental, survey, meta-analytic, and computational approaches in my research. In addition to his research, he has taught undergraduate courses in Research Methods, Strategic Writing and Public Speaking and has industry experience in digital and social media marketing, including managing paid advertising campaigns for international brands.



Lucy M. Rodriguez

Ph.D. Candidate | University of Florida

Advertising

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Bio

Lucy M. Rodriguez is a Ph.D. candidate in Mass Communication at the University of Florida, where her research examines how language choice & code-switching in advertising shape consumers' message processing, persuasion, & purchase intention. Her work uses consumer psychology to inform more culturally resonant advertising strategies. Alongside her research, she brings three years of teaching experience as an Instructor of Record at UF, where she has taught undergraduate courses in multicultural advertising. Her perspective is further shaped by industry experience as a LAGRANT Foundation scholar, having collaborated with major brands & agencies including Mars Wrigley, P&G, MMC, & Omnicom. Combined with a professional master's degree, this industry background gives her a practitioner's eye for translating academic insights into actionable strategy, allowing her to bridge rigorous scholarship with real-world advertising & marketing practice.



Hui “Any” Shi

Ph.D. Candidate | University of Miami

Advertising

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Bio

Hui “Any” Shi’s research focuses on purpose-driven marketing, international advertising, and consumer behavior in social media and AI-mediated contexts, resulting in nine accepted peer-reviewed publications. She actively pursues research funding and have participated in 18 grant applications that have collectively secured \$71,481.01. Her teaching experience spans both foundational and emerging areas, including Principles of Advertising, Research Methods for Advertising, International Advertising, and AI for Advertising. She also brings higher education work experience as a student counselor, admissions officer, and events manager, which has strengthened her commitment to student mentorship and academic engagement.



Tre'elle Tolbert

Ph.D. Candidate | Liberty University

Strategic media

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Bio

Tre'elle Tolbert is a Ph.D. Candidate in Strategic Media at Liberty University, where her scholarship is grounded in Brand Engineering — a framework bridging psychology, digital strategy, and electrical engineering to reveal how brands communicate, connect, and create. A South Carolina native and Navy veteran, she currently resides in Hampton Roads, Virginia. She holds an M.S. in Digital Audience Strategy from Arizona State University and a B.S. in Psychology from Regent University. Her research weaves personal narrative, digital strategy, and audience engagement, sitting at the intersection of academic research and applied creative strategy. Alongside her academic work, she brings a multi-hyphenate creative practice — as a graphic and web designer, brand consultant, and photographer/editor — into her scholarship on branding and identity.



Carrie Jingyi Xiao

Ph.D. Candidate | University of South Carolina

Advertising

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Bio

Carrie Jingyi Xiao's research examines how consumers form social judgments and emotional responses toward AI-mediated communicators and how these perceptions shape persuasion and consumer-brand relationships. Using experiments, biometric and psychophysiological measures, and large-scale social media analytics, she studies consumer responses to generative AI, service chatbots, virtual influencers, and algorithmic media systems. Her research has received three national student paper awards, including the 2026 Best Student Paper Award from the AAA and two Top Student Paper honors from AEJMC divisions. She was also inducted into Kappa Tau Alpha, the national honor society for journalism and mass communication. Carrie is committed to professional service, interdisciplinary collaboration, and student mentorship. She serves as the graduate student representative on the AEJMC Advertising Division Executive Committee and as a member of the American Academy of Advertising's Graduate Student Interest Committee.



Lingyan (Lia) Zhang

Ph.D. Candidate | The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Corporate sustainability communication; Consumer behavior

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Bio

Lingyan (Lia) Zhang is a Ph.D. candidate at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Her research examines how marketing and communication can advance sustainability and consumer well-being, with particular interests in consumer pro-environmental behavior, corporate sustainability communication, and emerging technology. She primarily uses behavioral experiments, complemented by large-scale behavioral data modeling and computational analysis of unstructured content. Her teaching interests include consumer psychology, corporate sustainability communication, digital marketing and quantitative research methods. Before pursuing her Ph.D., she worked in consulting, corporate branding, and performance analytics for service businesses.



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THANK YOU FOR EXPLORING OUR GRADUATE TALENT

We appreciate your interest in our students and look forward to connecting exceptional talent with meaningful opportunities.

2026–2027 AAA GRADUATE STUDENT INTEREST COMMITTEE

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- **Joshua Cloudy**, *University of Georgia*
- **Nan Zhang**, *Indiana University*
- **Nate Evans**, *University of Georgia*
- **Sitan Li**, *University of Tennessee, Knoxville*

STUDENT MEMBERS:

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- **Jingyi (Carrie) Xiao**, *University of South Carolina*
- **Jiwon Kim**, *University of Georgia*
- **Julio Velasquez**, *University of Miami*
- **Rachel Rogers**, *Southern Methodist University*
- **Yang (Josie) Zhou**, *University of Alabama*



If you are looking to go on the job market next year and would like to be featured in the next 2027–2028 lookbook, please contact Linwan Wu at linwanwu@sc.edu.



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