

SARANIYA THARMARAJAH

EDUCATION:

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

PhD in Social and Behavioral Sciences, Department of Health, Behavior and Society 2025

Advisor: Rajiv Rimal, PhD; Doug Storey, PhD

Dissertation: *Research-Engaged Arts for Climate and Health (REACH) Framework: a Science and Arts Partnership to Expand the Scope of Communication*

University of Oxford, Oriel College

2019

MSc in Evidence-Based Social Intervention and Policy Evaluation, Department of Social Policy

Advisor: Aaron Reeves, PhD

Thesis: *Generational Decline of Immigrant Health in the US: A Systematic Review of the Immigrant Health Paradox*

Johns Hopkins University

BA in Public Health Studies

BA in Sociology

Minor in Theater Arts and Studies

2017

Thesis supervisors: Emily Agree, PhD; Meredith Greif, PhD

HONORS, AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS:

2025 International Communication Association Top Student Paper Session

2025 Distinguished Doctoral Research Award, Department of Health Behavior and Society

2024 Distinguished Doctoral Research Award, Department of Health Behavior and Society

2024 Eugene O'Neill Center National Playwrights Conference, Semi-Finalist

2023 Gordis Teaching Fellowship, Johns Hopkins University

2019 Oxford New Writing Festival, Winner

2018 Fulbright-Nehru Scholarship

2017 The President's Commendation for Service in the Arts, Johns Hopkins University

2017 Homewood Arts Certificate, Johns Hopkins University

2013 Woodrow Wilson Research Fellowship, Johns Hopkins University

GRANTS

2024 National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) P30 Core Center, Community Health Addressing Regional Maryland Environmental Determinants of Disease

- Awarded pilot intervention grant on developing a film installation to promote climate activism in partnership with environmental justice organizations at The Peale Museum
- Role: Principal Investigator
- *Communicating Climate Activism Behaviors through Entertainment-Education in Maryland*
- Total funds: \$40,000

**Grant rescinded due to reorganization of NIH in 2025*

2023 Gordis Teaching Fellowship, Johns Hopkins University

- Support for up to 10 fellows per year to teach small, seminar-style courses in the Undergraduate Program in Public Health
 - *Communicating Climate Change: Creative Approaches for Action*
 - Role: Instructor
 - Total funds: \$8,000
- 2024 Campus as a Living Lab Grant, JHU Office of Sustainability**
- Awarded to proposals that advance sustainability practices, research, and teaching that support priorities outlined in the university's Climate Action and Sustainability qualitative studies of health and medicine
 - *Engaging students in Climate Action on Campus through Arts-based Communication*
 - Role: Instructor and Principal Investigator
 - Total Funds: \$5,000
- 2021 Maryland State Arts Council Creativity Grant**
- Grant opportunity to serve the growing needs of relevant arts projects and collaborations within Maryland communities
 - Evaluation of the process and impact of communicating public health findings through the research-based theatre performance COVID Monologues
 - Role: Principal Investigator
 - Total Funds: \$3,400
- 2020 US Department of State Citizen Diplomacy Action Fund Rapid Response**
- Public service grant to promote community resiliency during COVID-19
 - COVID-19 Research-Based Theatre to facilitate a virtual production of research-based monologue festival on peer-reviewed COVID-19 public health research in partnership with Baltimore-based theatre artists
 - Role: Co-Creator, Project Lead, Producer, and Actor
 - Total Funds: \$10,000
- 2017 Homewood Arts Certificate, Johns Hopkins University**
- Grant awarded to graduating seniors who have made an ongoing and committed contribution to the co-curricular arts at Johns Hopkins to complete a significant original final project in the arts
 - *Confessions of a Coconut: a one woman show on immigration and identity*
 - Role: Playwright and performer
 - Total Funds: \$500
- 2015 Global Health Established Field Placement Grant, Center for Global Health**
- Grant awarded on global health project to conduct fieldwork on site
 - *C-TRIUMPH study on household transmission of Tuberculosis and HIV in Chennai, India*
 - Role: Research Assistant
 - Total funds: \$3,500
- 2013 Woodrow Wilson Research Fellowship, Johns Hopkins University**
- Fellowship awarded to ten undergraduates to conduct independent research
 - *Effects of forced Migration on Second-Generation Assimilation: Operationalization of a Hybrid Identity through a Global Cultural market:*
 - Role: Student PI and Lead Qualitative researcher
 - Total funds: \$10,000

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE:

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Research and Narrative Lead, PI: Dr. Rajiv Rimal July 2025-present
Storytelling for Climate Change: Using Transportive Narratives to Overcome Climate Change Skepticism
& Reduce Opinion Polarization
Discovery Grant, Johns Hopkins University

Doctoral Research Assistant, PI: Dr. Meghan Moran Oct 2024-present
Effects and Equity Impacts of Cannabis Policy on Tobacco and Cannabis Co-Use in Young Adults
National Institutes of Health and Food and Drug Administration

Doctoral Research Assistant, PI: Dr. Meghan Moran Oct 2024- present
From Perceptions to Behaviors: A Comprehensive Approach to Examine the Impact of Public Health
Communication Messaging about the Continuum of Risk for Tobacco Products
National Institutes of Health

Principal Investigator, Department of Environmental Health and Engineering Aug 2024-present
National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) P30 Core Center, Community Health
Addressing Regional Maryland Environmental Determinants of Disease

Doctoral Research Assistant (Qualitative lead), PI: Dr. Rajiv Rimal Aug 2022- present
Evaluation of Gender Resource Centers in Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, India
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Doctoral Research Assistant, PI: Dr. Carl Latkin Jun 2022- present
Identifying Facilitators and Barriers of Climate Activism Behaviors
Bloomberg American Health Initiative

Doctoral Research Assistant, International Vaccine Access Center Jun 2022- present
Combating Online Health Misinformation and Vaccine Hesitancy
Sabin Vaccine Fund

Doctoral Research Assistant, Center for Communication Programs Aug 2021- 2022
Non-communicable diseases and mental health in Tamil Nadu, India: An exploratory study
World Bank

Doctoral Research Assistant, Center for Communication Programs Aug 2021- 2022
USAID

Doctoral Research Assistant, Center for Communication Programs Aug 2021- 2022
Multisectoral Child Nutrition and Family Planning project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, USAID

Research Assistant, Department of Health, Policy and Management Aug 2020- 2021
Evidence-Based Practice Center
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

Research Assistant, Johns Hopkins School of Nursing Aug 2020-2021
Safety planning with survivors of intimate partner violence from marginalized groups

Research Assistant, Department of Health, Policy and Management
Center for Population Health IT Aug 2014- 2015

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

Goucher College

Adjunct Lecturer

Fall 2025

Undergraduate course, *Intro to Writing: Science Communication*

Department of Professional & Creative Writing

Center for Writing, Arts and Media

Johns Hopkins University

Faculty Instructor

Fall 2024

Undergraduate course, *Communicating Climate Change: Creative Approaches for Action*

Department of Public Health Studies

Department of Theater Arts and Studies

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public HealthGraduate Teaching Assistant, *Fundamentals of Health Behavior and Society*

Fall 2024

Graduate course taught by Rajiv Rimal, PhD

Guest lecturer & Graduate Teaching Assistant, *Sociological Perspectives on Health*

Fall 2024

Graduate course taught by Katherine Clegg Smith, PhD

Graduate Teaching Assistant, *Designing Social and Behavioral Communication Change Programs*

Fall 2023

Graduate course taught by Tilly Gorman, PhD and Uttara Bharath Kumar, MPH

Guest lecturer & Graduate Teaching Assistant, *Introduction to Persuasive Communications*

Fall 2023

Graduate course taught by Meghan Brigid Moran, PhD

Guest lecturer & Graduate Teaching Assistant, *Entertainment-Education for Behavior Change*

May 2022

Graduate course taught by Caroline Jacoby, MPH

Graduate Teaching Assistant, *Contemporary Issues in Health Communication*

January 2022- March 2022

Graduate course taught by Meghan Brigid Moran, PhD

Fulbright English Teacher

Kanchipuram, India

Infant Jesus Higher Secondary Matriculation School

June 2017- March 2018

MENTORING EXPERIENCE:

Tanisha Luthria, JHU Public Undergraduate Health Honors Thesis

Aug 2023 to May 2024

*Exploration of Gender Norms in villages in Madhya Pradesh, India in the context of Gender Resource Centers***PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS:****PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS:**

1. Moran, M. Tharmarajah, S., Czaplicki, L., Thrul, J, Spindle, T., (R&R). A narrative review of research on cannabis advertising in the United States. *Current Addiction Reports*.
2. Jamison, A, Ganjoo, R., Tharmarajah, S. Ganjoo, R., Rimal, R. N., , Parida, M., (2025). More Work For ASHA? A Qualitative Exploration of the Role of WhatsApp Messaging and Community Health Work in the Urban Slum Areas of Varanasi, India. *PLOS Global Public Health*.
3. Kuch, L., Tharmarajah, S., Ganjoo, R., Parida, M., Luthria, T., Stephens, D., Rimal, R. & Lapinski, M. K. (2025). Gender Norms and Outcome Expectations in Reporting of Gender-Based Violence: Evidence from Madhya Pradesh, India. *VeriXiv*, 2(159), 159.

4. Dayton, L., Parker, K., Ross, J., Tharmarajah, S., & Latkin, C. (2024). "Taking Action in Community Is Much, Much Preferable to Doing It Alone": An Examination of Multi-Level Facilitators of and Barriers to Sustained Collective Climate Change Activism Among US Residents. *Climate*, 12(12), 222.
5. Rimal, R. N., Ganjoo, R., Jamison, A., Parida, M., & Tharmarajah, S. (2024). Social norms, vaccine confidence, and interpersonal communication as predictors of vaccination intentions: Findings from slum areas in Varanasi, India. *Vaccine*.
6. Tharmarajah, S., Ganjoo, R., Lapinski, M. K., Kuch, L., Luthria, T., Bhaktaram, A., ... & Rimal, R. (2024). Uncovering the role of social norms, the diffusion and adoption of Gender Resource Centers in India: a research protocol. *Gates Open Access* (Accepted)
7. Hurley, E. A., Tharmarajah, S., de Mahy, G., Rassp, J., Salvatore, J., Jones, J. P., & Harvey, S. (2023). Audience Response to COVID Monologues: Research-Based Theater on the Societal Impact of COVID-19. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 08901171231216204.
8. Newman-Toker, D. E., Peterson, S. M., Badihian, S., Hassoon, A., Nassery, N., Parizadeh, Tharmarajah, S. & Robinson, K. A. (2022). Diagnostic Errors in the Emergency Department: A Systematic Review.
9. Sabri, B., Tharmarajah, S., Njie-Carr, V. P., Messing, J. T., Loerzel, E., Arscott, J., & Campbell, J. C. (2022). Safety planning with marginalized survivors of intimate partner violence: Challenges of conducting safety planning intervention research with marginalized women. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 23(5), 1728-1751.
10. Wilson, L. M., Tharmarajah, S., Jia, Y., Semba, R. D., Schaumberg, D. A., & Robinson, K. A (2021). The Effect of Lutein/Zeaxanthin Intake on Human Macular Pigment Optical Density: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Advances in nutrition (Bethesda, Md.)*, nmab071. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1093/advances/nmab071>

PEER-REVIEWED MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION:

1. Tharmarajah, S., Rimal, R. Effective health communication through an arts-science partnership: Introducing the Research-Engaged Arts for Climate and Health (REACH) framework.
2. Tharmarajah, S., Dayton, L., Latkin, C., Segmenting Audiences for a Climate Communication Campaign: Implications from a Latent Class Analysis of Climate Activism Behaviors in the US
3. Tharmarajah, S. and Hurley, E.. Ethical Challenges in Translating through Research-Based Theatre
4. Tharmarajah, S., Harvey, S., Hurley, E. Beyond the page and onto the stage: Understanding the process and value of a research-based theater project on COVID-19 in the US
5. Tharmarajah, S., Kuch, R., Ganjoo, R., Lapinski-Knight, M., Rimal, R.N. Barriers and facilitators of leadership of women in Gender Resource Centers in Odisha, India

6. Tharmarajah, S., Dayton, L., Ross, J., Parker, K., Latkin, C. Exploring effective messaging to initiate climate activism to support environmental policy in the US

REVIEWED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:

1. Tharmarajah, S., Kuch, L., Lapinski, M., Swain, M., Stephens, D, Luthria, T, Bhaktaram, A Ganjoo, R., & Rimal, R.. *In International Communication Association 2025*. ICA.
2. Tharmarajah, S., Hurley, E. Beyond the page and onto the stage: Understanding the process and value of a research-based theater project on COVID-19 in the US. In *UCL Centre for Behaviour Change Behaviour Change Conference 2025 on Health & Sustainability*, UCL.
3. Tharmarajah, S., Dayton, L., Ross, J., Parker, K., Latkin, C. Exploring effective messaging to initiate climate activism to support environmental policy in the US. In *APHA 2024 Annual Meeting and Expo*. APHA.
4. Tharmarajah, S., Kuch, L., Raj, P., Swain, M., Ganjoo, R., Rimal, R., & Lapinski, M. (2024, October). Exploring a structured approach to gender-based violence resolution through gender resource centers in madhya pradesh, India. In *APHA 2024 Annual Meeting and Expo*. APHA.
5. Jamison, A., Tharmarajah, S., Ganjoo, R., Panda, B. K., Mohanty, S., Parida, M., & Rimal, R. (2024, October). Building trust for "happier babies": A qualitative evaluation of the "happy baby programme" to promote childhood vaccination through whastapp in Varanasi, India. In *APHA 2024 Annual Meeting and Expo*. APHA.
6. Rimal, R., Ganjoo, R., Pandey, M., Rath, S., Parida, M., Prasad, K., ... & Tallam, M. (2024, October). Let's talk this through: Community conversations as mediators of intervention effects in promoting vaccination. In *APHA 2024 Annual Meeting and Expo*. APHA.
7. Ross, J., Tharmarajah, S., Parker, K., Dayton, L., Latkin C. Identifying barriers and facilitators of climate activism in the US. *Sustainability Leadership Symposium*.
8. Hurley, E, Tharmarajah, S. deMahy, G. Rassp, J. "COVID monologues": Research-based theater to disseminate studies on the impact of COVID-19 on US society. (Oral Presentation) In *APHA 2021 Annual Meeting and Expo*. APHA

INVITED GUEST LECTURES AND SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

AS.280.314. Truth, Evidence, and Influence: Case Studies in Public Health May 2025
Lecture to JHU undergraduate students: Climate Misinformation

PH 224.692. Methods in Formative Research and Human-Centered Design for Intervention Development, Johns Hopkins May 2025
Lecture to JHU graduate students: Using research-based theater to disseminate public health findings

Activating Friends and Family Through Narratives January 2025
Workshop for Citizen's Climate Lobby designed with Dr. Julia Fine

Mobilizing a Public Health Campaign, American Public Health Association October 2024

Invited guest panel speaker on using entertainment-education for climate communication

Social Impact for Entertainment Conference

December 2023

Invited panel moderator: Transformative Hits: Popular Shows for Impact

AS 280.454 Beyond the Peer Review: Data Dissemination, Johns Hopkins

May 2024

Lecture to undergraduate students: Using research-based theater to disseminate public health findings

PH 224.692. Methods in Formative Research and Human-Centered Design for Intervention Development, Johns Hopkins

May 2023

Lecture to graduate students: Using research-based theater to disseminate public health findings

Conversations on Social Justice and Equity, Johns Hopkins University

May 2022

Invited screening and discussion of COVID Monologues

University of Toronto, Representing Science on Stage

September 2021

Lecture to undergraduate students on COVID Monologues as a case study

National Institutes of Health NIAAA Race and Medicine Interest Group

May 2021

Invited screening and discussion of COVID Monologues

Alberta Museum Conferences

March 2021

Invited Speaker: Seeking beyond Our Silos: What Museums Can Learn From Theatre in the Time of COVID

ACADEMIC SERVICE:

INITIATIVES:

Practice Committee

Baltimore, MD

Representative for the Department of Health, Behavior and Society

August 2021 - 2024

- Served as the PhD representative for practice-related activities for the Department

Doctoral Student Council

Baltimore, MD

Representative for the Department of Health, Behavior and Society

August 2023- June 2024

- Served as one of two department representatives of an organization tasked with liaising between doctoral students across the Bloomberg School of Public Health and School administrators

Doctoral Enhancement Committee, HBS Department

Baltimore, MD

PhD Representative

August 2022- 2023

- Served as one of two student representatives on an ad hoc committee to improve the experience of doctoral students in the Department of Health, Behavior and Society

Health, Behavior and Society Student Organization

Baltimore, MD

PhD Co-Chair

August 2022- August 2023

- Served as the primary liaison between doctoral students in the Department of Health, Behavior and Society and department leadership
- Organized and coordinated student representation on departmental committees

SELECTED THEATER/FILM PERFORMANCES:

THEATER

<i>The Lake Effect</i>	Priya	1 st Stage, dir. Alex Levy
<i>As You Like It</i>	Le Beau	Chesapeake Shakespeare Company, dir. Ian Gallanar
<i>Is Edward Snowden Single?</i>	April	Single Carrot Theatre, dir. Alix Fenhagen
<i>COVID Monologues</i>	Alana	Single Carrot Theatre, dir. Genevieve de Mahy
<i>How to Make Friends and Then Kill Them</i>	Dorrie	Michael Pilch Studio, dir. Charlie Rogers
<i>Samsara</i>	Suraiya	Single Carrot Theatre, dir. Lauren Saunders

FELLOWSHIPS

Docs In Progress	2025 Story Development Fellowship
Theater Washington	2024 Mentorship Program

DIRECTING

FIRED UP!	Independent Documentary
<i>Bonbibí and Dakshin Ray</i>	Vital Matters, Creative Alliance
<i>Bandera</i>	Arellano Theatre
<i>Conversations with the Carrols</i>	Homewood Museum

PLAYWRITING & CO-CREATING

CHARMED Climate Conversations, Playwright and Director, Peale Museum 2025
COVID Monologues, Co-Creator, Single Carrot Theatre, HowlRound, National Institutes of Health, American Public Health Association, US Department of State
Confessions of a Coconut, Playwright, O'Neill NPC Semi-finalist 2024, Women Playwrights International Conference Alternate 2019, Oxford New Writing Festival 2019, Arellano Theater 2017
Bandera, Playwright, Arellano Theater
Blind Guy, Playwright Swirnow Theater

SELECTED PRESS:

The New York Times: [ER Doctors Misdiagnose Patients with Unusual Symptoms](#)
WYPR, NPR Baltimore: [Rousuck's Review: COVID Monologues](#); [Rousuck's Review: Is Edward Snowden Single?](#)
BroadwayWorld: [COVID Monologues Playwrights and Partner Theaters Announced](#), [Single Carrot Theater Announces the COVID Monologues, Art and Activism Masterclass](#), [COVID Monologues Announced](#)
The Baltimore Sun: [A Complex Journey to Parenthood in Samsara](#)
Bmore Art: [COVID Monologues: Pick of the Week](#),