Dina Dajani
Ph.D. Student, Psychology
College of Arts & Sciences

As a first year Psychology Ph.D. student, Dina Dajani has a lot to look forward to. With a focus on behavioral neuroscience, she is currently researching the development of brain networks using functional MRI in typically developing children and children with high functioning autism. “It is wonderful to work with children and adolescents with and without autism, I have new learning experiences each day,” said Dajani. As a native to Coral Springs, Florida, Dajani graduated from the University of Miami with a Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience. While she wanted to pursue graduate studies, the Dean’s Fellowship greatly impacted her decision to study at the University of Miami.

“I am honored to have received a fellowship that has allowed me to continue my research at University of Miami,” said Dajani. “The Dean’s Fellowship has allowed me to focus on research that I know will have an impact on lives in the future. It’s fulfilling to have such an amazing opportunity,” she added.

Her current work encompasses both data and interacting with children, which is both rewarding and influential in her field. "Dina has been working on fundamental open questions in the field of autism neuroimaging. Her current work seeks to provide insight into the important question of whether and to what extent local brain connectivity is altered in individuals with autism across development. Her work has the potential to provide much-needed clarity to this evolving literature, and she is making excellent progress,” said Dr. Lucina Q. Uddin, Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of Miami.

As far as future plans, Dajani is hopeful to secure a post-doctoral fellowship. “I would love to eventually have a career in research, but I can’t say if that will be in academia or industry,” she added. Until then, Dajani continues to make strides in her field and works as a Graduate Assistant in the Brain Connectivity and Cognition Lab at the Department of Psychology.
Joseph Masterjohn
Ph.D. Student, Computer Science
College of Arts & Sciences

When Joseph Masterjohn of Monson, Massachusetts was first accepted into the University of Miami Frost School of Music as an undergraduate jazz guitar performance major, he didn’t anticipate changing his course of study. However, during his sophomore year, the discovery of his love and aptitude for Math and Computer Science quickly took a front seat to his goals and endeavors. Masterjohn’s research initiatives started as an undergrad but have continued to flourish as a graduate student. As an undergraduate, he focused on large scale genetic network analysis, which has lead him to his current research. With the support of University of Miami Professor of Computer Science, Dr. Victor J. Milenkovic, Masterjohn is seeking to implement a new model of geometry to solve well known problems in Computational Geometry having to do with efficient and effective algorithms for applications. “I am having Joe implement a new approach to intersecting curves, which seems kind of dry but is key to CAD (computer aided design) and other areas,” said Dr. Milenkovic. “It hasn’t yet taken me more than a week to answer a question Joe has asked me,” he jokingly adds.

As he continues his studies, Masterjohn looks forward to combining all of his research passions surrounding computational geometry, graphics, and general purpose GPU programming to complete his dissertation.

“Receiving the Dean’s Fellowship has been the greatest honor I have received. The fellowship has given me the freedom to put my efforts into my research and has afforded me the opportunity to interact more with the academic community,” said Masterjohn.

As a first year Ph.D. student, Masterjohn plans to continue his research at the University of Miami and take advantage of the opportunities to collaborate with peers within his discipline. “The Dean’s Fellowship was an immense driving factor in my decision to pursue graduate studies. It will help relieve some financial burdens allowing me to focus on research while experiencing academic conferences and meetings with leaders in my field. In addition to his current research, Masterjohn is currently a TA for Android Programming. He received a Bachelor’s of Science in mathematics and Computer Science from the University of Miami in 2014.