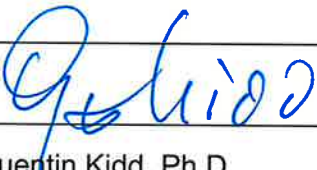


NOMINATION SIGNATURE PAGE

2024 Virginia Outstanding Faculty Awards

Nominations must include this as the cover page of the nomination package PDF submission

Name of Applicant:	Dr. Johnny Finn
Institution:	Christopher Newport University
Category (choose only one): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baccalaureate Institution• Masters/Comprehensive Institution• Research/Doctoral Institution• Two-Year Institution• Rising Star	Masters/Comprehensive Institution
Signature of President or Chief Academic Officer:	
Printed Name of President or Chief Academic Officer:	Quentin Kidd, Ph.D.
E-mail address of President or Chief Academic Officer:	qkidd@cnu.edu
Telephone number of President or Chief Academic Officer:	+1 757-594-8499

Christopher Newport University Mission Statement (excerpted)

The mission of Christopher Newport University is to provide educational and cultural opportunities that benefit CNU students, the residents of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the nation. Christopher Newport provides outstanding academic programs, encourages service and leadership within the community, and provides opportunities for student involvement in nationally and regionally recognized research and arts programs.

Our primary focus is excellence in teaching, inspired by sound scholarship. . . We are committed to providing a liberal arts education that stimulates intellectual inquiry and fosters social and civic values. Christopher Newport students acquire the qualities of mind and spirit that prepare them to lead lives with meaning and purpose. As a state university, we are committed to service that shapes the economic, civic, and cultural life of our community and Commonwealth.

Summary of Accomplishments

Dr. John Finn is an exceptional teacher-scholar whose research, teaching, and service are socially relevant and locally engaged. He is beloved by his students, and he is known by his colleagues for his dedication to the university, his active role in leading undergraduate research, and his connections to the community. In 2020 Dr. Finn was awarded CNU's Faculty Excellence Award for Scholarship, and in 2021 Dr. Finn was honored with the CNU Alumni Society Award for Teaching and Mentoring, Christopher Newport University's highest faculty award.

Scholarship of Teaching

Dr. Finn is an outstanding teacher who simultaneously expects much of, and is respected by, his students. He has a confident and relaxed teaching style based on critical pedagogy and learner-centered education, and he aims to maintain a dynamic classroom that facilitates active student engagement in the learning process. Dr. Finn's pedagogical efforts are not lost on his students, and he has earned a strong reputation across the university. "Passionate," "engaged," and "relatable" are common throughout his course evaluations. Words such as "challenging" and "tough" are also frequent, but are almost always followed by some version of: "but I learned a lot." One comment from Dr. Finn's spring '23 student evaluations capture who he is as an educator: *"Dr. Finn is honestly one of the best professors I've had at CNU. He makes an effort to understand every student's point of view, difficulties, and teach the material in a way that includes everyone. He is not only excellent at incorporating diverse perspectives, but is also knowledgeable of his subject to an extent that can be rare in lower-level classes."*

As a teacher, Dr. Finn is dedicated to designing courses that are theoretically robust, technologically advanced, socially relevant, and community engaged. His course on urban social geography is a perfect example. Throughout the course students complete a series of customized assignments that integrate theoretical readings, qualitative and quantitative data collection, experiential learning, GIS analysis, and community engagement. These assignments focus on the industrial history of Newport News, the lasting impacts of redlining and racial segregation, the crises of affordable housing, and the cumulative impacts of urban environmental degradation that disproportionately affect communities of color. Through these and other pedagogical interventions, Dr. Finn takes his students into the community to talk to residents, community leaders, and activists, leading his students to become more attuned to how urban inequality plays out in their own community. Through this, students not only begin to understand how they are implicated in systems of urban social inequality, but vitally, how they can begin to think about dismantling the socio-spatial structures that maintain and reproduce it. Two comments from Spring 2021 course evaluations capture the transformative impact of this course:

- *"Dr. Finn has been one of the most important people at CNU that is responsible for my growth as a student and a person overall. He has completely changed how I view the world for the better and I cannot overstate how good of a professor and mentor he is."*
- *"Dr. Finn will definitely go down as one of the more memorable teachers I have at this school. The enthusiastic attitude that he consistently brought, even when addressing some deep topics, really helped to keep the class positive. I greatly enjoyed his unique and truly interactive assignments. This is the only class I've ever taken in college that really challenged me to go outside and attempt to experience and understand the community around me (outside of CNU). I'm very grateful for this, because I do now feel a much deeper connection to Newport News than before... The work that [Dr. Finn] does in the greater Hampton Roads community is inspiring. I hope to stay in contact with him after this class ends."*

Scholarship of Discovery

Dr. Finn's Scholarship of Discovery is remarkable, and he has emerged as a nationally and internationally recognized scholar. His research brings together literatures on racial capitalism, critical landscape studies, and environmental justice to document and theorize the ongoing

economic, environmental, and health impacts of persistent racial segregation in the United States, and to advocate for more racially and environmentally just futures. Since joining CNU's faculty in 2012, Dr. Finn has published over 40 articles, book chapters, reports, special issues, and op-eds, has attracted nearly \$200,000 in research grant funding, and has given more than 100 invited lectures and keynotes across North America, Latin America, and Europe.

For the last six years Finn has directed a mixed-methods project entitled "Living Apart: Geography of Segregation in the 21st Century," which uses oral history interviews, experimental photographic methodologies, historical and archival research, and interactive mapping to trace the history of how overtly discriminatory federal housing policy created structures of racialized inequality in housing that continues to perpetuate profoundly unequal urban and environmental outcomes. Dr. Finn and his research team have conducted over 100 qualitative interviews, distributed cameras to dozens of participant-photographers and interviewed them about their photographs, and used secondary data from the U.S. Census, the EPA, the CDC, and numerous other governmental and non-profit sources to build a series of immersive online maps that enable viewers to visualize and better understand the devastating impacts of segregation in terms of racialized economic, educational, and environmental inequality.

Based on this project, Dr. Finn was invited to create and open a solo exhibition at the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), which ran in MOCA's Fleming Gallery from November 2022 through February 2023. The exhibition featured 12 original maps, historical maps and documents scanned from the National Archives, 50 participant-directed photographs, a 700-sq ft. wall-to-wall floor map made from high resolution aerial photography, several interactive mapping displays that Dr. Finn designed, and a documentary short on the impact of the Newport News coal depot on air quality and asthma in the formerly redlined SE Community. Over 5,000 people visiting the gallery to see the show during its three-month run. After the exhibition closed at the Virginia MOCA it traveled to the Torgler Fine Arts Center for a two-month run, and is currently installed at the James Wise Gallery at Norfolk State University. In short, Dr. Finn's work is having impacts far beyond the traditional walls of academia. To Dr. Derek Alderman, Professor of Geography at the University of Tennessee and Past President of the American Association of Geographers, Dr. Finn: *"is quickly emerging in our field . . . as a role model for other faculty wishing to engage communities as full and meaningful partners in scholarly endeavors rather than merely subjects of research. His locally important Living Apart project mobilizes the best in social theory, data mapping and analysis, and creative use of photography and community oral histories to address and challenge one of the central aspects of American and Virginian life—racial segregation. Johnny represents one of our discipline's most exciting 'reparative storytellers,' someone who leverages the unity of instruction, scholarship, and civic engagement with the hopes of effecting change and writing and realizing an alternative narrative for the future."*

This project has also led to a book currently under contract with the University Press of Florida, several academic articles that will go out for review in the coming months, a series of articles commissioned by *Encyclopedia Virginia* the impacts of urban renewal in Virginia, an article accepted for publication on the Depression-era redlining map of Norfolk, VA, for the *Mapping Inequality* project at the University of Richmond, and multiple op-eds on issues related to fair housing. Based on this research Dr. Finn has also been invited to give dozens of invited lectures, including at the headquarters of ESRI (one of the largest geo-spatial software companies in the world), the Union of Concerned Scientists, the Virginia Office of the Attorney General, the U.S. Census Bureau, the College of William & Mary Law School, the University of Buenos Aires, the University of Córdoba (Argentina), the University of Missouri – Columbia, and George Washington University. Dr. Finn has been invited to participate in panel discussions with former Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring and with the renowned author Richard Rothstein, he appeared on screen in Soledad O'Brien's *Disrupt and Dismantle*, which aired on BET, and has been interviewed for and/or quoted in stories in the Washington Post, CBS News, Slate, ESPN, WHRO, WHOV, WTKR3, WAVY10, the *Virginian-Pilot*, and the *Daily Press*.

Scholarship of Knowledge Integration

Dr. Finn's work exemplifies the integration of teaching, scholarship, service, and interdisciplinarity. The courses that Dr. Finn regularly teaches contribute to five different majors, the university's Liberal Learning Core Curriculum, the Masters of Teaching program, and numerous minors across campus. Dr. Finn's scholarship spans the social sciences, humanities, and visual arts, it prominently features student research, and is deeply engaged in the local community.

Two recent occurrences demonstrate how Dr. Finn's work truly exemplifies knowledge integration. First, the aforementioned "Living Apart" project shows how Dr. Finn uses his active research agenda to mentor undergraduate students in the research process. Over the past six years, 12 undergraduate students have worked as research assistants on this project. From the very beginning of the project, these students took part in discussions about the basic shape of the project and the questions it sought to answer. Under Dr. Finn's guidance, several students took the lead in writing successful funding proposals for CNU's prestigious Summer Scholars and Ferguson Fellowship programs. In data collection, Dr. Finn's RAs have accompanied him on interviews, joined him in community meetings, and given presentations to local organizations and government officials. And Dr. Finn's RAs play an important role in the dissemination of the project, from co-authoring articles and essays to participating in academic and public presentations across the country. One former research assistant wrote of her time working on this project: *"When I joined the Living Together / Living Apart team, I never imagined that my academic life would change the way it has. With Dr. Finn as a mentor, I have had many amazing opportunities in just a short amount of time. ... He taught me many important research methods as my mentor. To name a few: contacting participants, conducting interviews, transcribing interviews, creating GIS maps, presenting research, and many more. In addition to this, I have learned many important life skills through his mentorship. My public speaking has improved, I feel more comfortable networking, I have attended important meetings regarding the research project, and I have been able to practice academic writing. Dr. Finn's mentoring has had lasting impacts on my life. He gives his mentees the resources they need, he provides guidance, but he also gives his mentees the opportunity to perform on their own."*

Second, in spring 2019 Dr. Finn taught an upper-level interdisciplinary course entitled "Field Explorations in Anthropology and Geography." For this course Dr. Finn partnered with the Virginia Peninsula Foodbank to create a model for community-engaged pedagogy. The project in this course centered on food justice in Newport News' Southeast community, a formerly redlined neighborhood that is today characterized by concentrated poverty and high levels of food insecurity. For a one-semester course, their output was substantial: Students spent the first six weeks studying the methods and ethics of field research and completing individual research-based assignments. Dr. Finn organized a panel discussion including representatives from the City of Newport News, the VA Peninsula Food Bank, the Hampton Roads Community Action Program (HRCAP), the Peninsula Baptist Association, and Old Dominion University. The class organized a community meeting in which the public was invited to hear a short presentation about the project and sign up to participate if they were interested. And students engaged in participant observation, collected GIS data to map food security, conducted in-depth interviews with community members, community leaders, and elected officials, conducted a survey of residents modeled after the USDA food security survey, and recorded detailed food diaries with ten participants. In the end, Dr. Finn and his students prepared an 8,000-word report and a series of 16 interactive, web-based maps, gave a personal briefing to the Mayor of Newport News and city's Director of Planning, and organized a second community meeting where they presented the results of the student to community members, community leaders, and elected officials.

As Kendra McSweeney, Professor of Geography at The Ohio State University, writes of Dr. Finn: *"It's hard for me to disentangle Dr. Finn's teaching and service contributions, because much*

of his teaching is simultaneously a form of service. ... By getting students out into their communities, working with residents and archives and political representatives to understand this problem, where does the teaching end and the service begin? Many scholars aspire to do relevant, outward-facing work such as this. Few pull it off—it's just really hard to engage in this way, on tough topics, and to bring out voices that too often remain silent, and to get money to do it, and to inspire students along the way. Dr. Finn does it."

Scholarship of Service

Dr. Finn is an active member of both the CNU and greater Hampton Roads communities. As Chair of the Department of Sociology, Social Work, and Anthropology, Dr. Finn oversees 16 full-time faculty members and over 300 students majoring and/or minoring in one or more of the department's five programs: Sociology, Criminology, Anthropology, Social Work, and Geography. Dr. Finn also just concluded four years as an elected member of CNU's Faculty Senate, including two years as Senate Vice President. In the early months of Covid-19, Dr. Finn worked tirelessly with the Senate Executive Committee and the university administration to devise a return-to-campus plan that balanced public health and pedagogical best practices. Dr. Finn was also a founding member of the Senate's Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, took a lead role in drafting and fielding an extensive faculty DEI survey, and was a lead author of reports on the gendered impacts of the pandemic on CNU faculty and on DEI issues related to student evaluations of teaching as a measure of teaching effectiveness. Vivally, Dr. Finn is a champion of his students, and in the last ten years has written over to 100 letters of recommendation for graduate schools, medical schools, law schools, scholarships, fellowships, study abroad programs, research camps, and post-CNU employment and volunteer programs.

Dr. Finn's commitment to service does not end at campus' edge. In 2021 Dr. Finn co-founded CNU's Center for Crime, Equity, and Justice Research and Policy, a research center with a core mission of engaging in public-facing and community-engaged research. Dr. Finn also co-created and continues to co-direct the annual Hampton Roads Social Justice Conference, a conference that brings together hundreds of researchers, policy makers, elected officials, nonprofit organizations, community activists, and faith leaders from across the region for in-depth dialogues on society's most pressing social justice challenges. Based on his expertise in the areas of urban history, racial segregation, and environmental justice, Dr. Finn has conducted research for and/or advised on projects for the City of Hampton, the San Diego-based Institute for Public Strategies, the Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia, St. Paul's Community Development Corporation, and the Virginia Peninsula Foodbank. According to Vivian Oden, Vice President for Equity and Inclusion at the Hampton Roads Community Foundation: "*[Dr. Finn's] passion for supporting the community through his projects on inequity in housing shows his leadership and determination to bring about change. His willingness to step outside the box to engage the community and bring attention to such an important topic is a great step to moving the needle forward in addressing these issues. ... He is a trailblazer in his research that involves mapping and other tools that has garnered him national attention. He is truly a gem to our community.*"

Conclusion

Put simply, Dr. Finn embodies Boyer's four areas of scholarly endeavor. As a teacher, Dr. Finn inspires his students inside the classroom and in the field. As a researcher, Dr. Finn has a long record of high-impact, community-engaged scholarship. In the area of knowledge integration, Dr. Finn is known for the interdisciplinary nature of his teaching and scholarship, both of which are socially relevant and intimately linked to the community. And in service, Dr. Finn is an integral member of the university and Hampton Roads communities. In short, Dr. Finn's impressive record at Christopher Newport University over the last 11 years serves CNU's mission to be a university that "stimulates intellectual inquiry and fosters social and civic values," helping students to "acquire the qualities of mind and spirit that prepare them to lead lives with meaning and purpose."

Personal Statement

In 1844 the German sociologist Karl Marx wrote that “[w]e realize all the more clearly what we have to accomplish in the present . . . a ruthless criticism of everything existing.” I see this quote as a mission statement for education, demanding that we remain skeptical about how the world seems simply to exist in a particular way. Our goal should be—it has to be—to demystify that which seems natural, and to denaturalize that which seems to be just the way it is. We shouldn’t aim just to see and observe the world, but to critically understand the social, cultural, economic, and political processes that bring it into being in one particular way rather than in infinite other possible ways. That is, our goal should be to ask not just how things are, but why things are the way they are, how they got to be that way, and if that’s the way they should be.

As a geographer, this is most obvious to me in the way that all kinds of social inequalities are made physical and material in the cities that we build for ourselves and that we inhabit. And in my adopted home in sociology, this becomes clear in the ways that the institutions that we build produce and reproduce systems of power, normalizing and naturalizing all kinds of inequalities, not least the racial and gender inequalities that surround us.

Now, perhaps more than at any other time in living memory, we’re seeing on the one hand the vital importance of understanding how central our past is to realizing social and racial justice in the present and future. And on the other hand, precisely because this understanding threatens to upend the hegemonic social order, we are experiencing a backlash of moral panic, of book banning, and of historical whitewashing. This is why a ruthless criticism is as important today as ever.

In my research, I try to understand the ways that overtly discriminatory housing policies in our past reverberate in the present through ongoing racial, economic, environmental, and health inequalities. For instance, the U.S. government spent much of the 20th century engineering racial segregation. Across America, Black and Brown neighborhoods were redlined during the New Deal, and post-WWII public housing was segregated and built in formerly redlined neighborhoods. From coast to coast, interstate highways were built through minority neighborhoods, which have also long been targeted with forced displacement in the name of redevelopment. All the while, the suburbs were kept white through racially restrictive covenants and exclusionary zoning.

Even now, more than 50 years after the passage of the Fair Housing Act, banks still discriminate against Black and Brown home buyers; real estate agents still steer non-white clients to lower income and higher minority neighborhoods; appraisers still assign higher home values to white properties; and single-family zoning still perpetuates the lines of racial segregation. But when we walk out onto the street and have a look around, all this is gone – poof – and what we see *seems* to be just individual people making individual choices as they go along in their lives.

It is only through unearthing and truly contending with our history that we can see the oftentimes invisible forces that maintain and perpetuate our unequal reality. The civil rights activist and writer James Baldwin once said that “History is not the past. It is the present. We carry our history with us. We *are* our history.” My research team’s analyses have shown that neighborhoods that were redlined 80 years ago are today more likely to be majority Black, to have lower home values and significantly higher poverty rates, to be food deserts, to breathe lower quality air, to be overexposed to environmental toxins, to have limited access to parks and green spaces and as a result to be hotter—significantly hotter—on summer afternoons.

We can’t escape our past. We can’t pretend it never happened. “We *are* our history.” It’s now, upon these landscapes of inequality, that we are collectively building our future, and as a society, we have choices to make about how we construct this future.

That’s where my students come in. As a teacher, I endeavor to create spaces where students can mount their own ruthless criticisms, where they can envision a more socially, racially, and environmentally just future, and where they acquire the skills and tools turn these visions of the future into realities. I’ll highlight two examples.

Several years ago I challenged students in my intro to human geography course to think of an everyday cultural landscape that has the effect of naturalizing some kind of social inequality. After some thought and in-class discussion, one student raised her hand and said, “you mean like all the statues around here?” I said, “well, what about them?” to which she replied, “they’re all men.” She rattled off a list: “The statue of Captain Chris; Leif Erikson at the entrance to Mariners’ Park; the statue ‘Taming the Wild’ along the Nolan Trail; the statue of St. Francis of Assisi right out there on the Great Lawn.” She named several more.

This student and two of her classmates set about finding every single piece of public art in the city that depicted a person or group of people. They visited each one, made detailed observations, took photographs, and after two weeks of fieldwork came back with their results: of the dozens of statues they analyzed, only six represented women, and of those, only two showed women unattached from men. In addition, they found that while men were depicted as powerful leaders and protectors of the land, women, where present at all, were portrayed as either mythical heroines—usually bare-breasted or with wings—or as fragile, passive subjects. They argued that it was not that these statues were individually or consciously sculpted to portray blatant gender stereotypes. Rather, they argued, this landscape of public art seemingly innocently reflected broader power structures within society. And through its apparent innocence, unequal social structures were normalized and naturalized into the physical world. Through their ruthless criticism of this almost unnoticed dimension of our cultural landscape, these students began to see the ways in which gender inequality is literally built into our physical world, and how women are routinely erased from the physical places that we inhabit. These three students wrote up the results of their research in a paper that they presented at two national conferences and that was ultimately published in a peer-reviewed academic journal.

The second example unfolded just last year. Throughout their years at CNU, two of my former students were continually unnerved by the Newport News Coal Terminal, a 200-acre pile of coal that sits open just a couple miles south of CNU’s campus. For them, that coal wasn’t just something they drove by on the way to the beach, something that they wondered about for a couple seconds before moving with the flow of traffic into the Monitor-Merrimac Bridge-Tunnel. They asked themselves more probing questions—why is this pile of coal—1.7 million tons of it—located *here*, immediately adjacent to the poorest, highest proportion non-white community on the Peninsula? And what is the impact of it on the air people in this community breathe, on their lungs, on asthma rates, and on life expectancy. They interviewed community members, activists, researchers, and elected officials as they sought to understand—to denaturalize—this coal pile, and grapple with what a more environmentally just future might look like. They turned their ruthless criticism into a truly outstanding documentary short that has racked up thousands of views, has garnered attention from local and state-wide media and political leaders, and won the top prize at the 2023 Richmond Environmental Film Festival.

I began this statement with a quote that one of the most urgent tasks in the present is “a ruthless criticism of everything existing.” But where does this ruthless criticism leave us? Where does it *lead* us? Criticism is a good horse to ride, but we have to ride it *to* someplace. What’s the point of a ruthless criticism without subsequent action? We must ask ourselves how we can use our ruthless criticism of the realities of the old world in the construction of a new one. In this way we can pry open new spaces of creativity, spaces to envision alternative futures, spaces not just for seeing the world the way it is, but for envisioning how it could be different.

This is what I strive for as a teacher-scholar at Christopher Newport University: innovative teaching, locally-engaged and socially-relevant research, and mentorship of student research where students are active agents in the ongoing process of discovery. At the end of the day, my goal is for students to channel their ruthless criticism toward the creation of a more socially just future for us all.

Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae

Education

2011 PhD, Geography, Arizona State University
2006 MA, Geography, University of Missouri – Columbia
2003 BA, International Studies, University of Missouri – Columbia

Academic Affiliation

Christopher Newport University (2012-present)

Awards

2021 Christopher Newport University Alumni Society Award for Teaching and Mentoring
2020 Christopher Newport University Faculty Excellence Award in Scholarship

Grants (\$198,138 total while at CNU)

Funders include: Virginia Geographic Alliance; National Park Service; Ferguson Fellowship Program; Christopher Newport University Faculty Development Grant Program; Christopher Reynolds Foundation; Institute for Human Geography

Solo Exhibition: Living Apart: Geography of Segregation in the 21st Century

- James Wise Gallery, Norfolk State University, Norfolk, Va (Oct 4 - Dec 1, 2023).
- Torggler Fine Arts Center, Newport News, VA (Feb 18 - Apr 12, 2023)
- Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, Virginia Beach, VA (Nov 18, 2022 - Feb 5, 2023)

Book

Living Apart: Geography of Segregation in the 21st Century. University Press of Florida (Under contract, expected publication in fall 2024).

Articles in Progress (* denotes co-authorship with students)

*Public Geographies of Racial Segregation: Designing Museum Spaces to Embody Histories and Emplace Identities. *International Handbook of Heritage and Affect: Designing and Experiencing Places of Heritage* (Routledge).

Climate Change, Social Murder, and the Violence of Urban Redevelopment in Norfolk, Virginia. *Antipode*.

The Cumulative Legacies of Redlining in Southeastern Virginia: Lasting Segregation, Economic Inequality, Environmental Injustice, and Health Disparity. *The Southeastern Geographer*.

Select Articles, Book Chapters, Op-Eds, & Reports (*denotes co-authorship students)

2023 HOLC “Redlining” Map of Greater Norfolk. Forthcoming in *Mapping Inequality*.

2023 Urban Renewal in Virginia. Forthcoming in *Encyclopedia Virginia*.

*2023 Markets, reciprocity, and redistribution in a rural food economy in Cuba: a socio-spatial framework for analyzing a diverse black. Currently under review in *Sustainability*.

2022 Paisajes musicales del patrimonio y la memoria: investigando la construcción musical de lugar. *Revista Punto Sur* 6: pp. 112-128.

2021 St. Paul’s redevelopment plan offers one false choice after another. *The Virginian-Pilot*.

2020 Covid-19 in Latin America. *Journal of Latin American Geography* 19(3): pp. 167-176.

2020 Cities of Middle America and the Caribbean. In *Cities of the World: Regional Patterns & Urban Environments*, 7th ed (pp. 97-138). Rowman & Littlefield.

2019 REPORT: *Food Access & Food Security in Newport News, VA*.

2018 Promise of Fair Housing still unfulfilled 50 years later. *The Virginian-Pilot*.

2017 Critical Geographies in Latin America. *The Journal of Latin American Geography* 16(1): pp. 1-15.

- 2017 Food Diaries to Measure Food Access: A Case Study from Rural Cuba. *The Professional Geographer* 69(1): pp. 59-69.
- 2017 Cuban Kitchens: Spaces of Food and Life in Cuba. *GeoHumanities* 3(1): pp. 221-232.
- 2017 Geographies of Contemporary Cuba. *Human Geography*. 10(3): pp. 1-6.
- 2015 Muscscapes of heritage and memory. In *Social Memory and Heritage Tourism Methodologies* (pp. 153-169). Routledge.
- *2015 History Written in Stone: Gender and the Naturalizing Power of Monuments in Hampton Roads, VA. *The Southeastern Geographer* 55(4): pp. 434-458.
- *2015 The Cultural Legacies of Slavery in Virginia: Advancing Geo-Literacy in an Interdisciplinary Context. *The Geography Teacher*. 12(4): pp. 139-143.
- *2015 Race, Place, and History through Culture and Performance. *The Geography Teacher*. 12(4): pp. 144-151.
- *2015 Teaching Race, Place, and History through Landscape. *The Geography Teacher*. 12(4): pp. 152-158.
- 2014 Soundtrack of a Nation: Race, Place, & Music in Modern Brazil. *Journal of Latin American Geography* 13(2): pp. 67-95.
- 2012 Entre la historia y el patrimonio: la raza debajo de la superficie del paisaje urbano. *Estudios Socioterritoriales* 12(2): pp. 37-66.

Courses Taught at CNU

GEOG 210 (Introduction to Human Geography); GEOG 211 (Geography of Human-Environment Interaction); GEOG/SOCL 308 (Urban Social Geography); GEOG/ANTH 388 (Field Research in Geography); GEOG 570 (World Geography for Teachers); SOCL 201 (Global Social Problems); IDST 267 (Introduction to Latin American Studies); HONR 366 (Global Cities in Crisis)

Select Keynotes and Invited Lectures (100+ while at CNU, * denotes keynote)

- 2023 Eastern Virginia Medical School; Norfolk State University; Texas State University; Torggler Fine Arts Center; Virginia Commonwealth University Medical School
- 2022 American Planning Association; Civic Leadership Institute; College of William & Mary Law School; George Washington University; Maryland State Geographic Information Committee; Northeast Ohio GIS Symposium*; San Diego County Alcohol Policy Panel*; University of Missouri-Columbia; Universidad de Buenos Aires (Argentina); Universidad de Córdoba (Argentina); Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA) GIS/Valuation Technologies Conference*; Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities; Virginia Wesleyan University*
- 2021 California State University San Bernardino; Cisco Meraki; Faith-Walk Hampton's Juneteenth Celebration*; Hampton Roads Community Foundation; Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia; National Conference on Geographic Education*; Richmond Public Schools; United States Census Bureau; Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA) GIS-Pro Conference*; Virginia Office of the Attorney General
- 2014- Bank of America; College of William & Mary; ESRI; George Washington University;
- 2020 Hampton History Museum; Mainz University (Germany); Old Dominion University; Slover Public Library; Union of Concerned Scientists; University College Maastricht (Netherlands); University of Havana (Cuba); University of Leuven (Belgium); Urban Land Institute

Select University Service

- 2021 – present Chair, Department of Sociology, Social Work, and Anthropology
- 2019 – 2023 Faculty Senate, Christopher Newport University
- 2017 – 2021 Graduate Council, Christopher Newport University
- 2014 – 2021 Core Advisor, CNU

Letters of Support (Excerpted)

Supervisors

Dr. Quentin Kidd, Provost, Christopher Newport University

Dr. Finn is the epitome of the teacher-scholar that society needs at this very moment. He is among the most engaging and engaged classroom instructors at Christopher Newport. His students love him, not because he is easy or a pushover, but because he engages them in the serious and timely questions of the day. His community of Hampton Roads is his laboratory, and he actively both engages that community and takes his research into the community. His scholarship of discovery, which is built on knowledge integration, finds its way into the community in a way that often turns the traditional view of “service” on its head... in the best way possible.

Dr. Tatiana Rizova, Dean, College of Social Sciences, Christopher Newport University

Driven by his passion for education and research, Dr. Finn shines as a teacher-scholar. He skillfully guides students to ask and answer difficult questions, challenge assumptions, and subvert established theories by assembling and analyzing evidence. Dr. Finn not only fosters his students’ intellectual growth, but also nurtures a critical mindset, which is invaluable as students prepare to navigate their professional lives beyond a university setting. As an educator, researcher, and mentor, Dr. Finn profoundly influences his students’ academic and professional journeys by broadening their horizons, enriching their lives, elevating their humanity, and preparing them to analyze, understand, and solve the most critical social problems of their communities. His students cherish him not only as their teacher and mentor, but also as a role model worthy of being emulated.

Colleagues

Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander, Endowed Professor of Virginia Black History and Culture, Norfolk State University

I have been impressed by Dr. Finn’s scholarship, the collaborative nature of his work, his focus on translating his scholarship to students and the public, and his commitment to his field. In particular, he has a passion to ensure that his work is seen and understood by educators, the public, scholars, politicians, and those in municipal positions who can make a difference. Few in the academy have demonstrated a capacity to straddle the line between scholarship and public service, but that is the unusual and commendable quality that Dr. Finn possesses. I have spoken with many of his students who admire his professionalism and genuine warmth; qualities rarely seen in the academy. Knowing Dr. Finn, I can see why he is so admired. His commitment and easy collaborative nature have proven to be an incredible resource to me professionally. I am currently working with Dr. Finn on projects that continue the dialogue about ongoing issues of environmental justice with an eye toward spurring change in Hampton Roads.

Dr. Jeremy Hoffman, Director of Climate Justice and Impact, Groundwork USA

On multiple occasions over the last several years, I have met an early-career person who truly stands out among their peers in their capacity for systems thinking, spatial reasoning, and perspective synthesis on topics ranging from environmental planning to social justice. Over time, I have become less and less surprised to learn that these extremely impressive early-career people are products of Dr. Johnny Finn’s teaching and community-engaged research at CNU. Dr. Finn challenges his students to think about root causes of present-day challenges and to apply interdisciplinary thought and skills to solve them. I am especially impressed by how Dr. Finn weaves true community engagement into his curriculum, including hosting social justice symposia at CNU and publishing place-based research that weaves community voice, vision, and experience into academic pursuit without coming off as extractive or non-reciprocal. Dr. Finn is the embodiment of a teacher/scholar that many of us strive to manifest in our own work.

Dr. Derek Alderman, Past President, American Association of Geographers, Professor of Geography & Betty Lynn Hendrickson Professor of Social Science, University of Tennessee

Dr. Finn is at the leading edge of a national community of academic geographers who combine teaching, student mentorship, research, and public outreach in critical and consequential ways. He is the editor of one of our discipline's most historically respected peer-reviewed journals, *Journal of Latin American Geography*, charting a course for that outlet that pays close and needed attention to patterns of social and spatial inequality and the region as touchstone for some of the most pressing debates about borders, migration, and US geopolitical responsibility.

Community Leaders

Dr. McKinley L. Price, DDS, Mayor (2010-2022), City of Newport News

Dr. Finn's scholarly research and mentorship of students is tightly connected to local issues, including racial justice, housing issues, and food security. . . . I have had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Finn, along with his students, on numerous occasions both in my office and at a public presentation where his students gave a specific briefing on the interactive maps that they had created. In my capacity as Mayor . . . it is evident that Dr. Finn is passionate in his commitment to education, his students, and our community, and is most deserving of being recognized for his superior accomplishments in teaching, research, and public service.

Rev. John Kenney, Pastor, 3rd Baptist Church of Hampton, VA

I have had the privilege of serving alongside Dr. Finn in critical issues surrounding environmental & social justice. His knowledge, insight, understanding and compassion for the truth, and the communal well-being of humanity, is a rich treasure on both a local and national level. He embodies the essence of truth-telling, a much-needed commodity for the perpetuation of history.

Current and Former Students

Elizabeth Chung (BAs in Anthropology and Art History, Minor in Art History, 2019, Cum Laude)

Throughout my undergraduate experience I had the privilege of working closely with Dr. Finn. We first began working together on the Living Apart project during my junior and senior years. Dr. Finn has been instrumental in affording me incredible research opportunities. Dr. Finn actively seeks to conduct research that not only advances geographical scholarship but tangibly and positively contributes to our local community. Much of the research we conducted was intentionally collaborative between our research team and the Newport News community. Dr. Finn is also highly committed to both students' academic and personal well-being. He consistently makes every effort to help students beyond what's expected, from class assignments to exploring post grad opportunities. He trusts his students' capabilities and has provided me (and many others) significant academic roles both in and outside the classroom.

Kaija Craft (BA in Sociology, Minors in Civic Engagement and Social Entrepreneurship, 2019, Magna Cum Laude with Service Distinction)

I had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of participating in Dr. Finn's fieldwork class, in which Dr. Finn revolutionized teaching at the undergraduate level. Dr. Finn designed our course as a collaborative research project dedicated to serving our local community. While the Southeast community of Newport News is located only seven miles from our university, it is classified as an urban food desert. As preparation for fieldwork, we read texts that were pertinent to understanding the implications of research. We had intimate class discussions about how to avoid pathologizing those who were struggling with food insecurity. Because of Dr. Finn's enthusiastic and encouraging teaching style, each student feels inherently worthy as a valuable member of the research team. As a lifelong resident of Hampton Roads, it brings me so much joy to see someone that is passionately serving our community. I am so grateful that I had Dr. Finn as my professor because it has largely shaped the way I see the world.