

# Jay Seabrum



*Xajavion “Jay” Seabrum (he/him) is a first-year student in the Computational Linguistics, Analytics, Search and Informatics (CLASIC) professional masters program. I got to know Jay on a hike up Goshawk ridge organized through the #hiking channel on the CSGSA slack (linked on the CSGSA home page). His wealth of interests, aptitudes, and experiences make him a fantastic hiking partner and a valuable addition to the CS network!*

## **What is your path to CU Boulder?**

Jay grew up in the Northwest Atlanta area, Georgia. He describes his interest in linguistics as a constant throughout his life, first discovered while watching dubbed cartoons when he was four. Jay noticed that the sounds the characters were making did not match the movement of their lips and began teaching himself Japanese. His aptitude for solving puzzles centers around linguistics but extends in many directions, so upon graduating high school he went North to study Economics, Linguistics, and Japanese Language and Literature at Boston University. After completing his undergraduate degree, Jay spent two years working at Brandeis University, where he taught himself how to program in R and Python. After discovering a passion for data science, he began searching for a graduate program where he could explore the intersection between linguistics and computational analysis and ended up driving cross-country to join the CLASIC program at CU Boulder.

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## **How would you explain your research to a ten year old?**

Jay's studies are evenly split between linguistics and computer science. In his linguistics courses, he studies how languages function, and how their idiosyncrasies affect their function. In his computer science courses he studies how to develop clean, reusable, and efficient software. At the intersection, he is studying how computers can be used to interpret naturally spoken languages.

## **Who is one person who has helped you in some way? How?**

Jay can't honestly attribute help to just one person in his life, but that without all those who have been in his life, he wouldn't have been inspired to do and accomplish what he has done.

## **If you had an alternative career, what would it be?**

In another life, Jay would be a translator or a diplomat.

## **If you could make sure everybody in the world knew one thing, what would it be?**

How to be data-literate. Too many people don't know how to (decently) interpret and use data which is, at the very least, concerning.

## **What advice can you share with us?**

Don't be afraid to talk, don't be afraid to share, don't be afraid to care.

## **What are three improbable facts about you?**

Jay is a treasure trove of improbable inspiration. He has been to 25 of the 50 states and has friends across some of them. He would like to visit the other half, and will need to head out West. In his first winter ever in Boston he spent months trudging through three foot tall snow banks during the most intense Winter there on record. He likes to wake up early to be active and encourages other CS students to get outside, move their bodies, and lead healthy lifestyles. In his prime he could solve a 3x3 rubik's cube in under a minute. He has a black belt in Tae Kwon Do. And he found out on our hike that he has an affinity for Juniper trees.

## **Icebreaker suggestions?**

Jay is easy to talk to (in Spanish, Japanese, or English) and along with linguistics, exercise, and data science he is interested in the way different people are perceived in the field of Computer Science. One fruitful conversation we had stemmed from a question he posed to me: "If you saw me walking around the CS department before we knew one another, what would you think I studied?" and he encourages others to start the same conversation with him.

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