

2020-2021 Newsletter

Chair's Welcome



This year was a year like no other, and I am incredibly proud of the Department of Anthropology just for having survived it. With campus mostly closed down, all the little rituals of academic life were suspended: faculty no longer ran into each other in the hallways; students couldn't strike up casual conversations while waiting for class to start; no one got to know the janitors or the guy who delivers the mail. Instead, we had to re-create ourselves as a virtual community held together only by Zoom meetings and e-mails. And we did it! In this newsletter, you'll read about seniors who wrote honors theses, graduate students who defended their dissertations, and faculty who received honors – all the usual work of a busy, lively department, conducted under the most extraordinary circumstances. I'm always impressed by the dedication of our students, professors, researchers, administrators and support staff, but never more so than this year. Above all, I was moved by the many examples I witnessed of compassion and mutual support. Teachers and staff helped one another learn how to navigate online instruction, mentors comforted distressed advisees, and administrators fought for additional funding for students. I would especially like to acknowledge the support offered by staff, who worked steadily in an environment of constant uncertainty and change. The sudden arrival of new policies in our inboxes became a regular (and dreaded) occurrence, as the college and the university adapted to each new phase of the pandemic and its economic fallout. If there is one phrase to sum up this year, it might be this: we rolled with the punches.

As the year progressed, we fell into the new rhythms of our working lives. The staff were scattered – sequestered in their homes or doing solo duty in 1810 Hinman – but they started each workday with good morning emails and signed off each day at the end. Students and teachers became accustomed to the weird intimacy of Zoom – peeking into one another's bedrooms, living rooms, or kitchens, and meeting the pets and kids who tumbled unexpectedly into view. Faculty meetings and department parties happened on screens, with rows of individual faces confined within individual boxes. A few labs re-opened, and we even managed to offer one small hands-on course for seniors – spread out into multiple classrooms to allow social distancing.

It wasn't all bad by any means. I learned to love 'break-out rooms', which put small groups of the people together for intimate conversation. In those spaces, my quietest students blossomed into speech. Pre-recorded lectures turned out to be a good thing too, giving students the chance to digest information in their own time and on their own terms.

Nevertheless, the toll on some of us has been high. People lost family members or became ill themselves; our international students were cut off from home, and from those they loved. In some households, there was too little privacy, as children and working parents jockeyed for space and attention; in others, there was too much privacy, as solitary individuals tried to manage their isolation. And for a profession that defines itself by 'going to the field' -- whether 'the field' is Milwaukee or Ghana – the cessation of travel was simply horrible. We make our research plans months and even years in advance, gradually erecting a fragile edifice of funding and visas, budgets and itineraries. The pandemic threw everything into disarray – a turn of events that felt especially catastrophic for our graduate students, as their carefully plotted timetables for completing their degrees came apart before their eyes. 'Resilience' – a buzzword these days in academic writing – became lived reality, and the job of academic advisor became crucially important.

It was a tumultuous year in national and international politics, too – and that also affected many of us deeply. Some marched in protests or campaigned for issues or candidates; faculty began re-writing syllabi and engaging in collective self-education around issues of race, Indigeneity, anti-Blackness and white privilege. We hope to emerge from this year more thoughtful and less complacent: better anthropologists, better teachers, better citizens.

Most of all, we are itching to be back together again. We want to hold all the celebrations we had to put off this year, and to welcome back our students, colleagues, alumni and friends. We missed you all in 2019-2020, and we look forward to seeing you again in 2020-2021!

Mary J. Weismantel

Professor and Chair

Department of Anthropology

Faculty News, Awards and Honors

News:

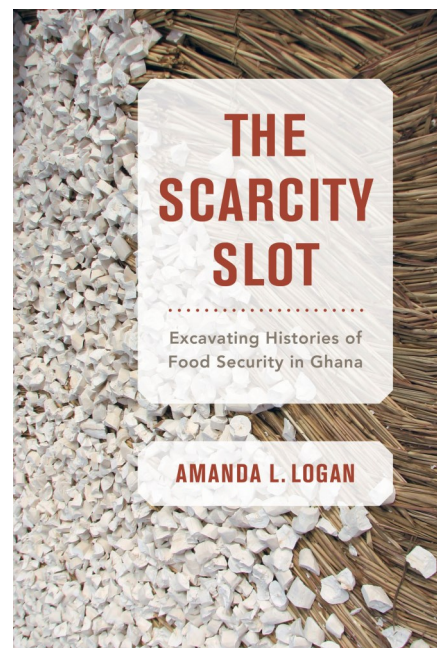
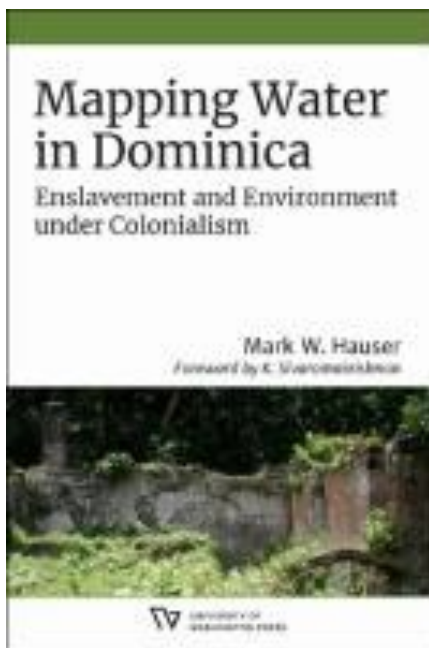
- **Hiro Miyazaki** was cited in the [New York Times](#) and [NPR](#) on the 10th anniversary of the Fukushima disaster.
- A [story](#) on **Thom McDade's** coronavirus antibody study in made the front page of the June 30 Chicago Tribune.
- **Noelle Sullivan** was interviewed by University of Toronto medical students for a [podcast](#) on medical tourism and medical voluntourism.
- Professors **Jessica Winegar** and **Ana Aparicio** speak about Social Movements in [Northwestern Magazine](#).
- **Thom McDade** was interviewed by [NBC 5 Chicago](#) on the efficacy of coronavirus vaccines.

Award and Honors:

- **Shalini Shankar** was named Martin J. and Patricia Koldyke Outstanding Teaching Professor from September 1, 2020 through August 31, 2023.
- **Rebecca Seligman** has been awarded a Senior Research Award from the National Science Foundation for a project with postdoc **Maddalena Canna**: "From sensations to symptoms: The social shaping of functional illness experience"
- Adia Benton has been named a [Kaplan Institute](#) Fellows for 2021-2022!
- **Peter Locke** was named the Outstanding Educator of the Year for 2019-20 by the Center for Global Health Education for his classroom teaching, Directorship of the study abroad program, Comparative Public Health: Serbia & Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in his work as Co-Director of Undergraduate Studies in the GHS program.
- **Thom McDade** was elected to the [National Academy of Sciences](#) and the [American Academy of Arts & Sciences](#).
- **Cynthia Robin** was awarded a Wenner-Gren Foundation grant for the project "Human-Environment Relationships and Urban Longevity at Aventura, Belize", and an AIA-NEH Grant for Archaeological Research for her research, "Aventura: Economic Factors of City Longevity, Belize".
- **Bill Leonard** has been awarded the prestigious Franz Boas Distinguished Achievement Award for 2021 by the Human Biology Association.
- **Beatriz Reyes** was named to the Associated Student Government (ASG) Faculty Honor Roll for 2019-20. The ASG recognized Beatriz for her outstanding teaching in Global Health 320: Qualitative Research Methods in Global Health
- **Robert Launay** has been named the 2019-2020 Faculty Mentor by the Anthropology Graduate Student Association.
- **Sera Young** was named to the Associated Student Government (ASG) Faculty Honor Roll for 2019-20. The ASG recognized Sera for her outstanding teaching in Global Health 390: Ecology of Infant Feeding.
- **Emrah Yildiz** has been awarded a Global Connections Seed Grant from the Buffett Institute for Global Affairs and support from the Wenner Gren Foundation for his workshop, "kaçak: fugitive forms of bureaucracy and economy in Southwest Asia," in collaboration with the Mekanda Adalet Derneği, the Center for Spatial Justice in Istanbul, Turkey, September, 2021.
- **Katherine Hoffman** was awarded a Provost Faculty Grant for Research in Humanities, Social Sciences and the Arts.
- **Katie Amato** and **Thom McDade** receive [grants](#) for COVID-19-related health projects.
- **Emrah Yildiz** has been invited to join the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle, Germany as a Visiting Fellow during the 2021-2022 academic year.
- **Katie Amato** is cited in the article *Spoiled Rotten: The taste for fermented food goes back a long way* in The Economist, March 2021.

Faculty Publications

- **Robert Launay's** article, *Savagery in 18th-Century Scotland: An Intellectual Portrait of Adam Ferguson* has been published in [BEROSE](#) International Encyclopaedia of the Histories of Anthropology, Paris.
- New [book](#) from **Amanda Logan**: *The Scarcity Slot: Excavating Histories of Food Security in Ghana*, December 2020.
- See **Hiro Miyazaki's** new publication, *Hiroshima and Nagasaki as Models of City Diplomacy* in [Sustainability Science](#), published May 2021.
- **Melissa Rosenzweig** has an article in *American Anthropologist*, *Confronting the Present: Archaeology in 2019*.
- **Mark Hauser's** [book](#) *Mapping Water in Dominica* is published, May 2021.
- **Hiro Miyazaki** had an [Op Ed](#) published in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, *A Fukushima lesson: Victim compensation schemes need updating*, March 2021.
- Amanda Logan's article, *Africa manages Covid-19; why can't it manage food security?* is published in October 2020 on [The Africa Report](#)
- **Diego Arispe-Bazán** has a new journal [article](#), *Disreputable Spaniards Versus Middle-Class Limeños: The Coloniality of Speech in Lima, Peru*, published in the Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, May 2021.
- **Erin Waxenbaum's** article *Influence of climatic stress on nonmetric sexually dimorphic features of the skull and pelvis*, was published in *American Journal of Human Biology*.



Message from Erin Waxenbaum, Director of Undergraduate Studies



Our world today is ever-changing and Anthropology provides a cross-cultural, comparative analysis of diversities and inequalities worldwide. Understanding cultural, biological, archaeological and linguistic differences and similarities is central to everything we do. Graduates, we applaud you! We are eager to see what you will do in the years to come!

As anthropology majors, many of our graduates wrote theses, presented their research, received grants, and won awards:

Four Anthropology majors were elected to Phi Beta Kappa, America's most prestigious academic honor society that recognizes excellence in the liberal arts and sciences and champions freedom of thought:

Meghna Gaddam

Madeline Hultquist

Allison Mo

Chloe Wong

Eight Anthropology majors wrote year-long senior theses based on original research in Anthropology:

Myles Kobe Bowen

Perpetual violence and livable resistance: historicizing Louisiana's toxically fertile "cancer alley"

Advisor: Melissa Rosenzweig

Award: Elizabeth M. Brumfiel Award for Distinguished Honors Thesis in Environmental Anthropology

Meghna Gaddam

Homeless menstruation: A construction of embodied experiences and a breakdown of amplified psychological and structural issues

Advisor: Rebecca Seligman

Annamarie Jedziniak

A case study of maternal health policies production of a positive pregnancy experience in Australia, New Zealand, and Ireland

Advisor: Rebecca Seligman

Shannon Lally

Irish language revitalization in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland

Advisor: Shalini Shankar

Allison Mo

Traditional Chinese medicine in western contexts: translation, trust, and efficacy

Advisor: Rebecca Seligman

Award: Friends of Anthropology Award for Distinguished Honors

Thesis in Public Health

Sonali Patel

Humanity in the face of climate change: the past, present, and future

Advisor: Erin Waxenbaum

Chloe Wong

Radical caring: a qualitative study on the role of frontline workers in eradicating gender-based violence in Asian American communities

Advisor: Shalini Shankar

Anna Yang

Intersectional traumas: resilience and mental health in post-apartheid South Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic

Advisor: Peter Locke, Andrew Kim

Award: Oswald Werner Prize for Distinguished Honors Thesis in Anthropology

We also congratulate those students who presented their work at the Undergraduate Research Expo 2021 this year:

Myles Bowen, "Perpetual Violence and Livable Resistance: Historicizing Louisiana's

Toxically Fertile 'Cancer Alley'".

Meghna Gaddam, "Homeless Menstruation: A Construction of Embodied Experiences

and a Breakdown of Amplified Psychosocial Issues".

Annamarie Jedziniak, "A Case Study of Maternal Health Policies Production of a

Positive Pregnancy Experience in Australia, New Zealand, and Ireland".

Shannon Lally, "Irish Language Revitalization".

Allison Mo, "TCM in Western Contexts".

Madelyn Moy, "Gut Microbes, Immune Markers, Pregnancy".

Chloe Wong, "Radical Caring: A Qualitative Study on the Role of Frontline Workers

in Eradicating Gender Violence in Asian American Communities".

Anna Yang, "Intersectional Traumas: Gendered Resilience in Post-Apartheid COVID-

19".

Our rising seniors are already beginning to embark on their senior research projects in Anthropology. We cannot wait to see what they will develop as their research adventure begins for 2022!

-Erin Waxenbaum, Director of Undergraduate Studies and Associate Professor

Message from Amanda Logan, Director of Graduate Studies



At this time last year, outgoing DGS Thom McDade reflected on the challenges we faced last year, as the COVID-19 pandemic raged and as outrage grew in the wake of racially motivated violence.

While many hoped things would return to normal post haste, these twin pandemics have also revealed the depth of inequities in our communities. We commend our graduate students for surviving this year and all of its myriad challenges, and for critical conversations about a future that is better than the old “normal.”

We welcomed the first virtual cohort in the Fall, and conducted the first virtual Recruitment Week in March. We redesigned the Bridging Seminar to occur virtually over the entire year, as a way to touch base with our newest students. Collectively, we tried to recreate the strong sense of community camaraderie that distinguishes NU’s Anthropology department through Zoom classes, talks, workshops, and movie nights. We look forward to meeting all of our new students in the Fall.

Most current students radically redesigned their projects. Some moved to lab- and archive-based projects from field-based ones. Others switched their field sites. These tasks required monumental effort from our students, staff, and faculty, and for this reason, we celebrate their accomplishments with extra enthusiasm, including a long list of external awards from Wenner-Gren, NSF, SSRC,

and more.

We’re very proud of our recent alumni who landed academic positions this year, and equally proud of our graduating PhDs who are still on the market. The sharp contraction in the academic job market has encouraged us to do more to prepare our students for a wide range of careers. We responded by launching an Anthropology Career Diversity series that brought in speakers from industry, government, higher education administration, and more.

Our main challenge in the coming months and years is supporting our students financially. Dramatic shifts in dissertation projects often extend time to degree and make initial grant funding more difficult to obtain. Our recent grads need all the support they can get as they transition to a radically changed job market. Now more than ever, if you are able, contribute to the department’s Friends of Anthropology (FAN) fund to help support our amazing students.

A special thanks to Tracy Tohtz, whose tremendous commitment to and knowledge of the graduate program helped us all weather a particularly difficult year; and to Jessica Winegar, who served as interim DGS in the Spring.

- Amanda Logan, Director of Graduate Studies and Associate Professor

Graduate News

- **Sari Ratri** has been awarded a The Wenner-Gren Dissertation Fieldwork Grant for her project “Nourishing the Future: The Roles of Midwives in Indonesia’s Changing Policies.”
- **Melissa Manus** had an [article](#) published in the American Journal of Human Biology titled *Comparing different sample collection and storage methods for field-based skin microbiome research*.
- **Sophie Reilly** has received an SSRC (Social Science Research Council) Dissertation Proposal Development Award for her project, *Food Strategies and Empire: A Study of Food Security in Transconquest Chachapoyas, Peru*.
- **Stephen Sullivan** has a new publication in [Anthropology News](#).
- **Sofyan Ansori’s** article, *The Politics of Forest Fires in Southeast Asia*, has been published in [Contemporary Southeast Asia](#), ISEAS.
- **Melissa Manus** received an NSF DDIG and Wenner-Gren award for her project: *The influence of the social environment on the infant skin microbiome*.
- **Aydin Ozipek** has received a three-year postdoctoral position at the Institute for Religious Studies, University of Leipzig.
- **Sindhunata Hargyono** has a new [article](#), “Development Zones in Asian Borderlands,” published by Amsterdam University Press.
- **Idil Ozkan** has been awarded a Wenner-Gren Dissertation Field Work Grant for her project, “Tracing Spanish Roots, Curating Ancestry: Language Ideologies, Materiality, and National Belonging Among Turkish Jews”
- **Andrew Kim** was published in [Psychological Medicine](#): *Evaluating the Mental Health Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Urban South Africa: Perceived Risk of COVID-19 Infection and Childhood Trauma Predict Adult Depressive Symptoms*, June 2020
- **Bobbie Benevidez** has been awarded an Graduate Research Fellowship from the National Science Foundation.
- **Ashley Agbasoga** has been selected as a 2021 Edward A. Bouchet Graduate Honor Society Inductee, recognizing outstanding scholarly achievement and promoting diversity and excellence in doctoral education and the professoriate.
- **Livia Garofalo’s** essay *Wounded Attachments: Intimacy, Infrastructure, and Harm in the National Public Hospital* was published by [Somatosphere](#).
- **Melissa Manus** was awarded an NSF DDIG award titled: *Doctoral Dissertation Research: The influence of the social environment on the infant skin microbiome*
- **Liz Koselka** was awarded a Wenner-Gren dissertation grant and an NSF-DDIG award for her project "Eating to fit in: Impacts of acculturative stress on diet change and metabolic health among immigrant young adults in Spain".
- **Mariam Taher** has received a Wenner-Gren for her dissertation project *In the Shadow of Territory: Gendered Mobilities in Siwa, Egypt*.
- **Andrew Kim** wrote an op-ed, *COVID-19 has changed the way South Africa’s only toll-free mental health helpline works. Here’s why it matters*, on [Bhekisisa](#)— Centre for Health Journalism and was interviewed on [TV](#) and [radio](#).
- **Dario Valles** was awarded the Taft Institute at the University of Cincinnati postdoctoral fellowship, but then was awarded the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Emerging Voices Fellowship at the Institute for the Study of Women, Gender & Sexuality (IRWGS) at Columbia University. He declined the Taft Institute and accepted ACLS/Columbia University.

FAN FOSTER AWARDS

Austin Bryan
Haley Ragsdale
Molly Jones
Maggie Butler
Ashsish Premkumar
Amrina Rosyada (Lobban Award)



Retirements

This year, the department says goodbye to two faculty members who have announced their retirement. We will miss Caroline Bledsoe and Micaela di Leonardo as active teachers, mentors, and colleagues, but we welcome them into the ranks of the emeriti, and thank them for their many years of service. Brief biographies of them both are below:



Caroline Bledsoe joined the department in 1985 and was promoted to Full Professor in 1994. When she joined the department, she had conducted field work in Liberia and published a major monograph with Stanford University Press. As the political situation in Liberia did not allow her to return, she pursued her work in neighboring Sierra Leone, conducting research on child fostering. When Sierra Leone was in turn torn by civil war, she formulated a new and pioneering project in Gambia. Her projects in West Africa have centered on cultural visions of marriage, fertility technology, the lifecourse, and child fosterage, several of which were followed up with U.S. counterpart studies: for example, contemporary struggles over visions of the natural among women and obstetric professionals in the conduct of birth. Her most formative project, in *The Gambia (Contingent Lives: Fertility, Time, and Aging in West Africa, 2002, University of Chicago Press)*, confronted Western views of the lifecourse, which equate aging with the

passage of linear time, with a West African model, which views aging as contingent on the cumulative effects of “wear,” especially, for women, that encountered in obstetric trauma. A subsequent study of technical writings in Western obstetrics, most notably by Chicago obstetrics pioneer Joseph B. De Lee, revealed unmistakable support for the African view. Her most recent project, “Transnational vital events: birth, law, and migration between Africa and Europe,” asks how people distribute their key life moments – especially birth and marriage – across international boundaries as rights to work and live in Europe shift so dramatically.

Bledsoe’s numerous publications have won her international recognition. Notably, she has been awarded both Guggenheim and Woodrow Wilson Fellowships, and her most recent book has won the Amaury Talbot Prize for best English-language anthropological monograph in African Studies.

Micaela di Leonardo came to the department in 1991, the same year in which she published *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge*, a truly pathbreaking collection of essays she edited in the burgeoning field of feminist anthropology. She had already published a monograph on Italian-American ethnicity in California, establishing her as an important contributor to the anthropology of the United States. In these and in her subsequent publications, she demonstrated her commitment to an approach that insisted on the intersection of gender, race, class, and ethnicity as modes of creating and maintaining inequalities.

She was promoted to Full Professor in 1997, quickly following up with the publication of another volume, *Exotics at Home*, a critical examination of American anthropology in historical perspective that focused in particular on the career of Margaret Mead. She co-edited two more important anthologies: *The Gender/Sexuality Reader* with Roger Lancaster and *New Landscapes of Inequality: Neoliberalism and the Erosion of Democracy in America* with Jane Collins and Brett Williams. Recently, she published another monograph, *Black Radio/Black Resistance: The Life&Times of the Tom Joyner Morning Show*.

Her distinguished record of publication has always been accompanied by a personal commitment to political activism, within as well as outside of academia. For many years, she contributed articles to *The Nation*, in her determination to reach as broad an audience as possible. She was an active and often demanding but generous mentor, not only to graduate students within the department but to young scholars outside it, especially to underrepresented minorities.



2020–2021 Dissertations

Kacey Grauer

Title: Ontologies, Ecologies, and Inequalities: Human-Environment Relationships at the Ancient Maya City of Aventura, Belize

Degree: PhD Spring 2021

Advisor: Cynthia Robin & Amanda Logan

Committee: Mark Hauser, Matthew Johnson

Aydin Özipek

Title: The Promise of Authenticity: Neo-Ottomanist Historicity and Politics of Youth Culturing in Turkey

Degree: PhD Spring 2021

Advisor: Jessica Winegar

Committee: Shalini Shankar, Robert Launay, Jessica Greenberg

Julianna Perez

Title: "More than sun and skin: An investigation into the social and development determinants of vitamin D"

Degree: PhD Spring 2021

Advisor: Thom McDade & Bill Leonard

Committee: Katie Amato, Sera Young

Calen Ryan

Title: Tradeoffs between reproduction and aging in the human epigenome

Degree: PhD Fall 2020

Advisor: Chris Kuzawa

Committee: Bill Leonard, Thom McDade

Andrew Wooyoung Kim

Title: Biological memories of apartheid: Intergenerational effects of apartheid-based trauma on birth outcomes, stress physiology, and mental health in Soweto, South Africa

Degree: PhD Fall 2020

Advisor: Chris Kuzawa

Committee: Thom McDade, Emma Adam, Shane Norris

Jared Bragg

Title: Three Modeling Problems in Human Evolutionary Ecology: Implications for Integrative Biocultural Anthropology

Degree: PhD Winter 2021

Advisor: William Leonard

Committee: Chris Kuzawa, Thom McDade

M. Bilal Nasir

Title: "Redemptive Surveillance: Race, Secularism, and Muslim Politics in the City of Angels."

Degree awarded: PhD Fall 2020

Advisor: Shalini Shankar (Chair)

Committee: Robert Launay, Sylvester Johnson (Virginia Tech University), Junaid Rana (University of Illinois-Urbana)

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