The Department dedicates the March edition of its newsletter to showcasing a sampling of our alums and the exciting things that they have gone on to achieve. We hope our graduates will continue to keep in touch so that we can spread the word about their lives and accomplishments. It has been wonderful to reconnect with so many of you!

This year, Giving Day is on April 11th, 2023 And we look forward to sharing our goals for this year in this newsletter. The Department continues to offer new and exciting programs that support our students’ success, which is why this year’s Giving Day theme is cultivating community and showcasing research.

Upcoming Events

Department Talk Series:
- 4/13 "Experiencing Truth: How a Mood of Suspicion Creates ‘Good Data’" w/ Dr. Yael Assor
- 4/20 "Well-Connected: Everyday Water Practices in Cairo" w/ Dr. Tessa Farmer

Inaugural Barth Lecture
- 4/19 "Museum Politics and the Problem of Voice” w/ Dr. Lila Abu-Lughod"
Giving Day offers a moment when friends, students, staff, and faculty, can show their support for Boston University and, more specifically, for the Department of Anthropology. Last year we exceeded our goal of 20 donors, including our largest-ever donation to launch our Fredrik Barth Annual Lecture series. The combined efforts of everyone in our department placed us second in CAS departments overall for a $5,000 prize. In the end, we raised over $18,000 for the department!

Over the past year, we have used that money for a variety of important initiatives. Thanks to generation donations, we launched two new distinguished lecture series: the Fredrik Barth Annual Lecture with Dr. Lila-Abu Lughod on April 19th and the Contemporary Chinese Culture Lecture with Dr. Julie Chu on November 8th. We funded several undergraduate Anthropology in the Works events, including guest speakers and field trips. We contributed funds to support graduate student summer research and conference travel. We held vibrant social events to foster community, and we improved office conditions for our graduate students.

All of these amazing opportunities are thanks to the wonderful BU Anthropology Community. Every gift, no matter the size, is appreciated and is used to support department programs and initiatives. This year we are upping our donation goal to 40 donors and are reaching for a CAS Department Challenge! If you like to help us win this challenge please consider supporting on Giving Day (April 11th) during the hours of 2pm-4pm EST. We will be giving out baked goods from 2pm-4pm in front of the Anthro Building (232 Bay State) to show our gratitude to anybody who donates!

Keep reading to hear about the wonderful things our alumni have been doing!
Dr. Huwy-min Lucia Liu (GRS '15) received her Ph.D. in Sociocultural Anthropology from Boston University and is now an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at George Mason University. Her research focuses on social change and governing death in China. Her new book, Governing Death, Making Persons: The New Chinese Way of Death is an ethnography that illustrates how death management in China has affected the governance of people under the Chinese Communist Party.

Q: How did you first become interested in anthropology?
A: I took a course called “Ethnographic Film” when I was an undergraduate in Taiwan. I was actually a journalism major, so I knew nothing about anthropology.

The course was taught by an anthropologist and was about watching ethnographic films, and every week we would have to write comments on the film. There was a specific set of questions that we had to talk about. For example—I remember it so clearly—the first question was whether the film was from the native’s perspective or the anthropologist’s perspective. At that time, I was like, “What does that even mean?”. I started to get to know anthropology from that class. I liked it so much that after graduating, I worked as a journalist and at an NGO for two years, and I decided that I wanted to return to grad school. At that time, I knew that I did not want to be a journalist. I felt like I really wanted to try this thing anthropology, even though I didn’t really have real training because that was the only course I took in undergrad. I completed my Master’s and Ph.D. and am now an anthropology professor!

Q: How did you narrow the focus of your research on Chinese funeral practices and death?
A: When I got into BU, I definitely did not know I wanted to study death in China. After my first year at BU, I took a lot of courses, which opened up my mind and got me thinking about what I wanted to do. Every summer, the department would give funding to students to do fieldwork, especially preliminary fieldwork when they didn’t have a project. I went to China the first summer after I finished the first year of my Ph.D. There had been a big earthquake in China, and I visited post-earthquake. The timing of when I was in China got me interested in the concept of commodified compassion. I was trying to understand and make sense of a different form of compassion. I used my Taiwan background to bring some of the things I knew from Taiwan’s case and wondered if there was commodified compassion in China. That is what got me thinking about the funeral industry.
Q: Congratulations on your George Mason University Fenwick fellowship! What are you most excited about with this fellowship?
A: The new project is moving out of the death area, and instead of looking at governing deaths, we’re going to look at governing nature. There is some continuity there, but then there is a whole new set of territory. Sometimes when you are on the same topic for too long, it is nice to switch things up. On the one hand, it’s kind of scary in the sense that it’s a whole set of literature I have to make myself familiar with. It’s going to be very time-consuming, among other things. On the other hand, I’m really happy I’m doing research because I almost feel like a student again! That project is at an early stage, but now that my book is out, I’m looking forward to starting the next step. I still talked to some of the old BU faculty when I began to work on this next project proposal!

Q: Your new book Governing Death, Making Persons: The New Chinese Way of Death, is out now! What was the process of conducting fieldwork and writing an ethnography like for you?
A: It took me some time to develop the proposal, and I got a lot of guidance from professors at BU. I got guidance from class and from stopping by their office and chatting with them. When I was finally ready to do fieldwork, I had a pretty good idea about what I wanted to do in the field. Of course, when you’re in the field, you’re going to change things a little bit, but I think knowing what you need to do when you get there is really important. I’m really lucky that BU got me ready to do fieldwork. When I was in the field, there were a lot of things that didn’t happen that didn’t really work and some things that did work, but by having that really solid preparation, I knew how I could deal with all of those situations and how I could continue my work.

The fieldwork was roughly 1 ½ years; I wrote for roughly two or three years. The best part about BU’s graduate anthropology program is we have very dedicated professors, which I now know is rare. I was really lucky that I was at BU, and I had a group of faculty that organized writing groups for post-fieldwork Ph.D. students. Now that I’m a professor, I realize that all these writing groups don’t even count in their course load; everything is extra! That’s a big sacrifice. At that time, I did not realize how fortunate I was. They are amazing. We met every week. The writing part was kind of read loosely in the sense that four or five different professors were all a part of the writing. Of course, you’re going to have ups and downs. I think having faculty to help guide grad students on how we can make sense of the massive data was fortunate.

FEATURED ALUMNI: HUWY-MIN LIU
GRS 2015, Sociocultural Anthropology

Q: Congratulations on your George Mason University Fenwick fellowship! What are you most excited about with this fellowship?
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Read the full interview on our website!
Rachel Hall-Clifford (MPH ‘05, GRS ‘09) is a medical anthropologist and global health practitioner with research interests in accessible health care for marginalized populations, health systems strengthening in post-genocide contexts, and global health fieldwork ethics. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Human Health and Global Health at Emory University. She is co-founder of the Emory Co-Design Lab for Health Equity, which is dedicated to community-led solutions to health issues. As part of this work, she is co-founder of a social enterprise called safe+natal, a low-cost perinatal monitoring toolkit developed with lay Maya midwives in Guatemala to promote culturally sensitive maternal care and maximize health system resources. Rachel founded the Women in Global Health Georgia Chapter, a partner organization of the World Health Organization promoting gender equity in global health, and she is currently President of the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology, an AAA section.

Q: Welcome Rachel! Thank you for meeting with us today! To start can you tell us a bit about your time after Boston University? What year and program did you graduate in? If you can take a quick trip down memory lane, what jobs/projects have you had since graduating?
A: I finished my MPH in Global Health at BU in 2005, then went on fieldwork in Guatemala and finished the PhD program in Anthropology in 2009. I stayed in Boston for a year and taught medical anthropology for the department and was a postdoctoral research assistant in medical anthropology at Harvard. I then did a global health postdoc position at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and a research scientist position in medical anthropology at the University of Oxford. All along, I continued to work and support projects in my dissertation fieldsite in Guatemala, and I was really happy to move to Atlanta to be closer to that work and take a faculty job at Agnes Scott College that could support those interests. (I have the classic “two-body problem” and am married to another academic. The challenge of finding two perfect jobs in one place is real!) I loved my time at a small liberal arts college, but I decided a few years ago that the focus of the next phase of my career was going to be more intensively research-focused, so I moved to Emory University. It’s been a process to find the right-fit opportunities at the right points in my career and to recognize that careers, and lives, have phases.

Q: Alongside her current position as Assistant Professor of Human Health and Global Health at Emory University, Dr. Hall-Clifford also serves as the President of the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (NAPA). Could you explain how you joined that organization and what some of your missions are? Can current students or faculty get involved?
A: I became involved in NAPA through the NAPA-OT Field School in Guatemala, which teaches applied anthropology research methods and applications of the human right to health. This is the only field school supported by the AAA, and I saw an organization committed to
FEATURED ALUMNI: RACHEL HALL-CLIFFORD
GRS 2009, Sociocultural Anthropology & Master of Public Health (MPH 2005)

doing the work to build deep relationships within communities I cared about. I was hooked! As an organization, NAPA is dedicated to using anthropology to address real-world problems. The section offers opportunities for mentorship across the career span, hosts the annual Careers Expo at the AAA meetings, and hosts skills-building and applied ethics workshops and online toolkits. I wish I had known about NAPA earlier in my training, and I would love to have more involvement from our BU Anthropology network.

Q: How has the experience of doing fieldwork in Central America impacted your current research? What is the most memorable part of doing fieldwork abroad?

A: I’ve now worked in Guatemala for nearly 20 years, which is hard to believe! What started out as a few responses to actual airmailed letters that I sent from Bay State Road to set up my dissertation research has turned into a lifetime of research partnerships and friendships. Over the years Guatemala has become a second home, where my kids have godparents and where I have countless memories. During that time, I have done more traditional ethnography, but I have also contributed as a global health practitioner to applied health and development projects. I have seen so many failures in this space – some of them admittedly my own! Strangely, it’s the failures that have most shaped my work. For example, I now use anthropology research methods to work through a co-design process for global health program design, and I absolutely refuse to take on projects that are not led by and co-designed with end-user communities. Experience has taught me that projects that don’t do this are not only unethical, but they simply don’t work.

Q: What has been the most unexpected way Anthropology has impacted your life and research?

A: Anthropology has shaped my life and the family I’ve been fortunate to build. My two children are growing up on fieldwork in Guatemala, Rwanda, and beyond, and they understand that there are so many ways to live and be in the world. Being able to include them in my work as an anthropologist has been one of the most surprising and expected benefits of being an anthropologist. I was recently at the Society for Applied Anthropology meetings, and I realized how wonderful it felt to be “home” with anthropologists. I ran into friends from grad school days at BU, former and current colleagues, and inspiring leaders in our field. As much as I love interdisciplinary work and applied projects in global health, I realized how much I rely on anthropology theory, techniques, and communities to keep me centered.

Read the full interview on our website!
Linda Seminario graduated summa cum laude from Boston University in 2019 with a bachelor's in archaeology and socio-cultural anthropology and a minor in classical studies. She is currently a project archaeologist and archaeobotanist with Heritage Consultants and a master's student at UMass Boston. Her thesis explores the impact that enslaved individuals had on local economies as consumers and producers through the analysis of archaeobotanical remains.

Q: What was your major at BU and year of graduation?
A: I double majored in Archaeology and Anthropology and minored in Classics.

Q: What clubs were you involved in, while at BU?
A: I was heavily involved in Stage Troupe, Archaeology Club, and Shakespeare Society. I also participated in research within the Archaeology Department and helping to plan public archaeology events, such as the Eating Archaeology event and “Cabinet of Curiosities”. These events were meant to educate the public about archaeology in fun, exciting new ways.

Q: What did you love about BU Anthropology?
A: The professors truly care about your success. If you approach someone about doing extra research to broaden your horizons, they will happily set you up with a project! I also loved all my classmates, who were incredibly supportive and loved the field as much as I do. This is especially true of Professor Marston who nurtured my love for botanical analysis!

Q: In what way has Anthropology affected your life way BU and beyond?
A: Anthropology teaches you to look at different cultures in unique ways. I believe that my time studying Anthropology and Archaeology has given me the tools to look at the world around me and find common ground where several people would not.
Q: What research are you currently working on?  
A: I am trained as an archaeobotanist and working towards finishing my Master's thesis. My thesis is based in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and reconstructs the diets of enslaved individuals at Belle Grove Plantation, and utilizes the botanical data to discuss the impacts enslaved people had on the local economy. I also take contracts for botanical analysis, which currently include projects from the State Archaeologist of Connecticut, Heritage Consultants, and further work in the Shenandoah Valley.

Q: How do you use anthropology in your career?  
A: My full-time job is in cultural resource management (CRM). My official title is Project Archaeologist and Botanical Analyst. I use the lessons and anthropological theory I learned at BU to plan archaeological excavations in the face of the destruction through infrastructure work.

Q: What's something special no one knows about you?  
A: I didn’t originally want to be an archaeologist, but I’m sure glad I am!

Q: How do you think Anthropology at Boston University has shaped your career?  
A: When I first came to Boston University, I did not think there was a career in anthropology or archaeology within the United States. Mary Beaudry taught me that the use of archaeology in the recent past can be just as important as using it to explore deep time. Without her guidance, I don’t know where my career would have gone, but it would have been very different.

Find her on LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/linda-seminario-31a977210
"My book *Sufi Civilities: Religious authority and political change in Afghanistan* is under contract with Stanford University Press and will come out the end of November this year. I will also join the NIOD - Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies in Amsterdam/Netherlands in June as a Senior Researcher on their Afghanistan Project."

**GRS 2019  Mohammad Omar Sharifi**

The Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota has awarded Omar Sharifi a President’s Postdoctoral Fellow in the Global Policy that lasts for two years and will begin on August 28, 2023. He will also teach one course a semester at UMN. In their request, UMN wrote: "Before outlining the proposed terms of this offer, let me first emphasize my strong belief that your work here will be an integral component of our overall scholarship, service, public engagement, and training in public affairs. You will find the Humphrey School to be an interesting and inspiring place to launch this next chapter of your career. I’m confident you'll find exceptional opportunities to build and strengthen our School’s focus on Global Policy that will be both professionally fulfilling for you and tremendously significant for the School." Congratulations!

**GRS 2018  Martha Lagace**

"This spring I have several exciting projects coming to fruition. My article *Keyword: The Bush* is being published in the African Studies Review. With a biography of the late French-Ugandan musician Geoffrey Oryema as the throughline, the analysis draws on songs, social media, Ugandan and French press, scholarship, and correspondence with Ugandans. In addition, a special issue on migration and mobility that historian Daniela Atanasova and I have co-edited will be published in April in Stichproben: Vienna Journal of African Studies. The special issue features a contribution by BU PhD grad Gana Ndiaye and is titled *Across landscapes of hierarchy and belonging – Social meanings of spatial im/mobility*. I am also looking forward to the spring publication in "report" form of a history of African immigration in New York City, which I researched and wrote in collaboration with the Harlem-based nonprofit African Communities Together. I loved the creative work of researching, writing, choosing photos, and making illustrations using a drawing app. Also, although currently on medical leave, this spring I co-taught seven weeks of two African history courses at Boston College, and I am employed full-time as Research Associate at The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc., in Malden, MA, studying the intersection of US immigration and climate change. Warm regards to all BU anthropology alumni/ae, staff, professors, and students!"
ALUMNI SHORTS

Michael Sheridan  GRS 2001


Natalie Robinson  CAS 2018

CAS Anthropology alumna, and current Program Coordinator at Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program, Natalie Robinson has won an NSF GFRP (National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship) for her project entitled: "Comparative Assessment of Female Reproductive Hormones in Two Populations of Bornean Orangutans (Pongo pygmaeus wurmbii) & Implications for primate conservation".

SPH 2005; GRS 2009  Rachel Hall-Clifford

"In January, I became President of the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (NAPA), a section of the AAA. I’m also serving on the AAA members board as the Gender Equity seat. So I’d love to hear from BU Anthro folks interested in those issues! For my day job, I’m an Assistant Professor of Human Health and Global Health at Emory University, and I’m co-founder of safe+natal, a perinatal monitoring toolkit developed in Guatemala."

GRS 2021  Amy Scott

Amy just published a new paper "Mother-offspring proximity maintenance as an infanticide avoidance strategy in bornean orangutans (Pongo pygmaeus wurmbii) in the American Journal of Primatology with Professor Cheryl Knott. Read here!

Huwy-min Lucia Liu  GRS 2015

The following students are now ABD, Congratulations!

- Ana Barun
- Karen Stewart
- Pritika Sharma
- Amirah Fadhлина

Research News

- **Alexander Dorr** was recently awarded the Educational and Cultural Affairs Junior Research Fellowship at the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem. He will be in residence at the Albright for Spring semester of 2024, working on analyzing the faunal remains from the Hellenistic occupation at Tel Shimron as part of his dissertation research.

- **Melissa Zarate** published a paper based on her Master's thesis (*BU Biology, 2019*) this past January in the *American Journal of Primatology*: "Expanded distribution and predicted suitable habitat for the critically endangered yellow-tailed woolly monkey (Lagothrix flavicauda) in Perú". Read here

- **Christian Gagnon**, won a Dissertation Grant from The Leakey Foundation in support of his dissertation research, *Validating Signals of Selection using Cold-Mediated Expression of Wild Vervet (Chlorocebus spp.) UCP1 in Fibroblast-Derived Brown Adipocytes.*

- **Dylan Renca** received a Fulbright-Hays DDRA Award for the 2022-2023 year to fund his dissertation fieldwork in Indonesia. He was also recently nominated as a semi-finalist for the 2023-2024 U.S. Fulbright Student Program Research Award (with official decisions on this coming out in the next couple of months). This would allow him to extend his fieldwork for a second year.

- **Sumeyra Gunes** received a Wenner-Gren Dissertation Fieldwork Grant for her project on stand-up comedians in urban Istanbul.

- **Frank Short** received an NSF GFRP (National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship) for his project entitled: "Using Bioacoustics to Assess Anthropogenic Impact on Bornean Orangutan Habitat".

- Congratulations to **Anu Ahmed, Hafsa Arain, & Xuyi Zhao**, who were all awarded Core Writing Fellowships for 2023-24.
PHD DEFENSE NEWS

Faye Harwell successfully defended her dissertation, "Investigation of the Life History, Male Bimaturation and Sex Differences of Orangutans"

Mehrdad Babadi successfully defended his dissertation, "Marriage Postponed: The Transformation of Intimacy in Contemporary Iran"

FACULTY NEWS

- Shahla Haeri, has been invited to serve as this year’s Sheikholeslami-Batmanghelidj Visiting Scholar at Georgetown University
- WAITHOOD, a co-edited volume by Nancy Smith-Hefner, is newly available in paperback.
- Merav Shohet, with Insa Schmidt and colleagues, recently published an article, "Patients' Perspectives on Race and the Use of Race-Based Algorithms in Clinical Decision-Making: a Qualitative Study" in Journal of General Internal Medicine. Read here!
- Merav Shohet delivered a Nelson Lecture on Southeast Asia about her most recent book in December at UVA.
- Alize Arican published a new article, "Counterfactual future-thinking". Read it here!
- Chris Schmitt was featured in BU Today after winning a 2023 Academic Advising Award!
- David Carballo published a new article titled "Sustainability and duration of early central places in prehispanic Mesoamerica". Read here!

John 'Mac' Marston has been promoted to full Professor! Congratulations!
OUR COMMUNITY

UPCOMING EVENTS

Department Talk Series
We have two more Dept. Talk Series lectures coming up. The first is Dr. Yael Assor on the 13th and the second is Dr. Tessa Farmer on the 20th. Details are on our Instagram and posted in the department.

Inaugural Fredrik Barth Lecture
Our first ever Barth Lecture will be delivered by Dr. Lila Abu-Lughod. The talk, titled “Museum Politics and the Problem of Voice”, will be followed by a reception. RSVP here!

Archives and Knowledge Keepers
Native American and Indigenous Studies and the Art of History is hosting a symposium on May 4, 2023, 10am-5pm Metcalf Trustee Center Ballroom. Register here

AITW
Our undergraduate club AITW is looking for executive board members for the next year! If you have interest please email aitw@bu.edu or message them @anthroworksbu on Instagram. They will also be (virtually) hosting Dr. Jason De Leon on 4/20 for a guest lecture!
Happy Spring! This year we have set our yearly theme as "community and research in BU Anthropology". This initiative includes reaching out to our alumni network to see what communications and outreach you would like to see and/or participate in! Please fill out the short survey linked in the QR code to let us know your thoughts on newsletters, interviews, networking and more!
DEPARTMENT RESOURCES

News Submission Form

Do you have any news you would like to share with us? Now you can go to [bu.edu/anthrop/send-us-your-news/](bu.edu/anthrop/send-us-your-news/) to tell us about it! We will update all news to our website, Facebook, Twitter, and compile them for our newsletters. Check out what everyone is up to at [bu.edu/anthrop/community/department-news/](bu.edu/anthrop/community/department-news/)

Follow us on Instagram!
@buanthropology

Last year was the start of our official Instagram page @buanthropology. We have been using it to post about ongoing and future events. Find us on Instagram and follow for up-to-date announcements and news!

We are currently running Student Feature Fridays until the end of the semester, responses permitting! These spotlights are open to all students (and alumni can reach out as well) in our graduate and undergraduate programs. We ask you a couple brief questions and pair them with photos of your choosing. Please fill out [this form](bu.edu/anthrop/student-resources/) if you would be interested!

Alumni Resources
[bu.edu/anthrop/alumni-resources/](bu.edu/anthrop/alumni-resources/)
Want to be featured on our page? Fill out the Alumni Spotlight form. We will contact you when your spotlight is posted!

Student Resources
[bu.edu/anthrop/student-resources/](bu.edu/anthrop/student-resources/)
The Co-Directors of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) for the 2022-23 Academic Year are Prof. Merav Shohet and Prof. Carolyn Hodges-Simeon. The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) for Spring 2023 is Prof. Kimberly Arkin.

Follow Anthropology in the Works @anthroworksbu!
Thank you!

More news? Did we fail to include your achievements? Did we get something wrong? Please let us know and we will be happy to publish in a future newsletter.

**Contact us at anthro@bu.edu or 617-353-2195**
Veronica Little, Department Administrator, vclittle@bu.edu
Derek Healey, Graduate Program Administrator, dhealey2@bu.edu
Samantha Kelley, Laboratory Coordinator, srkell19@bu.edu
Nancy J. Smith-Hefner, Department Chair, smhefner@bu.edu

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Our mailing address is:
BU Anthropology
232 Bay State Rd
Boston, MA 02215-1403