
ANTHROPOLOGY DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

The latest Department newsletter is filled with good-byes as we celebrated the retirement of our colleague Rob Weller, and lauded the graduation of an impressive group of undergraduate majors, MAPA, and PhD students. In between, we had another terrific Barth lecture speaker, Tanya Luhrmann.

Cheers to a terrific summer!

-(Nancy J. Smith-Hefner, Chair)

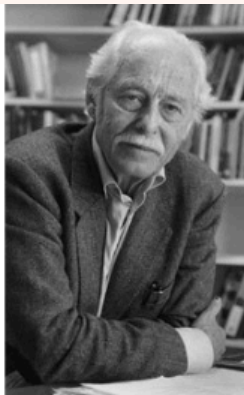


Fredrik Barth Lecture

The Department hosted the Fredrik Barth Annual Lecture to a terrific turnout. Our invited speaker, Dr. Tanya Luhrmann, gave a riveting talk entitled: "Voices: How do we know what is real?"

FREDRIK BARTH

Regarded by many as the greatest anthropologist of the second half of the 20th century, Fredrik Barth (1928-2016) taught in Boston University's Department of Anthropology from 1997 to 2008. Barth was an invaluable and colorful contributor to the department's intellectual life. Also, a beloved mentor to many graduate students.



His introduction to *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (1969) became his most well-known essay and was among the top 100 works cited on the social science citation index for several years. A pragmatic minimalist, Barth emphasized the role of traditions of knowledge among the "distributions and interconnections" that shape social action and a model of the individual as a "subjective and goal-pursuing actor."



ANNUAL LECTURE SERIES

The Fredrik Barth Lecture Series intends to foster discussion and debate on the relationship between individual knowledge and action in the world in the context of contemporary complex societies.

Dr. Tanya Luhrmann



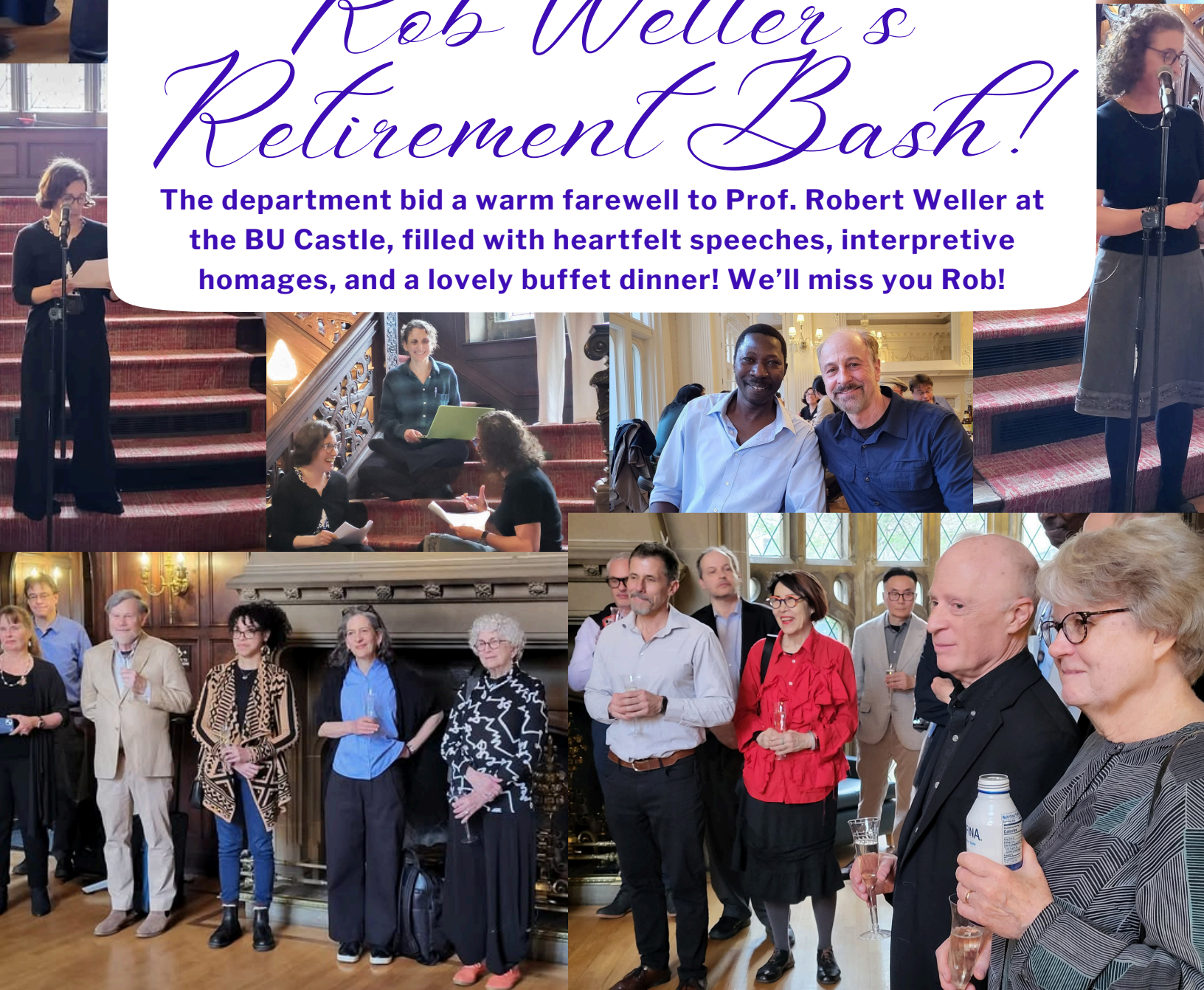
Tanya Marie Luhrmann is the Albert Ray Lang Professor in the Stanford Anthropology Department, with a courtesy appointment in Psychology. Her recent work has been on voices, visions, felt presence and other remarkable events in psychiatric illness and in religious experience. She has done ethnography on the streets of Chicago with homeless and psychotic women, and worked with people who hear voices in Chennai, Accra and the South Bay. She has also done fieldwork with evangelical Christians who seek to hear God speak back, with Zoroastrians who set out to create a more mystical faith, and with people who practice magic. She has written about psychiatry.

She was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2003, received a John Guggenheim Fellowship award in 2007, and was elected to the American Philosophical Society in 2022. In 2027 Norton will publish *Voices*.



Rob Weller's Retirement Bash!

The department bid a warm farewell to Prof. Robert Weller at the BU Castle, filled with heartfelt speeches, interpretive homages, and a lovely buffet dinner! We'll miss you Rob!





Convocation 2026

This year's Anthropology Department Convocation Ceremony took place in the Questrom Auditorium, where we celebrated 25 undergraduate majors, 1 MAPA student, and 15 graduating PhD students.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW MAPA & PHD GRADUATES

Alli Harkenrider



Masters in Public
Anthropology Student

"May you love without the fear of being hurt, and find home without constantly searching to belong."

Zoe Albert Miller



Thesis Title:

The Gut Microbiome as a Potential Modulator of Energetic Stress in Bornean Orangutans (*Pongo Pygmaeus*)

"Only if we understand, can we care. Only if we care, will we help. Only if we help, shall they be saved."

– Jane Goodall

Hafsa Arain



Thesis Title:

Reconciling the Self: Lateral Agency in Queer and Trans Communities in Karachi, Pakistan

"I am neither especially clever nor especially gifted. I am only very, very curious."

- Albert Einstein

Martin Aucoin

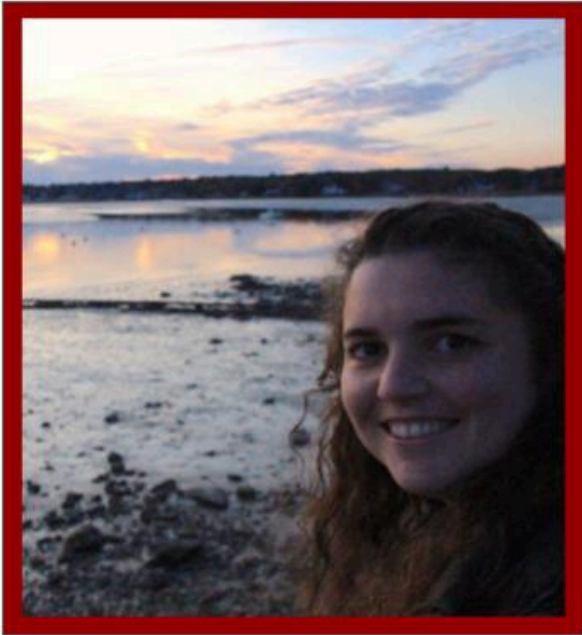


Thesis Title:

Leftovers: Surplus and Spoilage in a Global Poultry Commodity Chain

"Those chicken breasts still come with legs; we've got to find some way to make those valuable"

Anya Bounar



Thesis Title:

Golden Cages: Transiency and Perspectives of Privileged Temporary Migrants in Dakar, Senegal

"Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose."

- Zora Neale Hurston

Amirah Fadhlina



Thesis Title:

Repertoires of Recognition: Waria and Queer Belonging in Contemporary Indonesia

"You are growing into consciousness, and my wish for you is that you feel no need to constrict yourself to make other people comfortable"

- Ta-Nehisi Coates in *Between the World and Me* (2015)

Leyla Jafarova



Thesis Title:

Beyond Humanitarian Scripts: Emerging Truths and Living with the 'Maybes' of Disappearances in Post-War Azerbaijan

"It is not just good — it is good enough" (in the words of my husband)

Trevor Lamb



Thesis Title:

Culinary Roots: Root Vegetables for Food and Flavor in the Aleutian Islands and Kodiak Archipelago, Alaska

"In all my life I've never been in anything so crowded, so full of something, as the rooms of a vacant house. Sometimes I think only vacant houses are occupied...An Inhabitant is what you can't take away from a house. You can take away everything else—in fact, the more you take away the better you can see what this thing is."

– Wright Morris, "The Inhabitants" (1946)

Johnathan Norris



Thesis Title:

Ghāy Amman: Experiencing Violence and Finding Safety in the Everyday

"Charisma, Uniqueness, Nerve, Talent. What do these things have in common? I don't know, I'm not a scientist."
—Katya (Drag Queen, RuPaul's Drag Race)

Handrio Nurhan



Thesis Title:

Affording Happiness: Ethical Cultivation of Soka Gakkai Buddhists in Japan

"The transformation from a self-centered way of life to one dedicated to the well-being of others is the process of 'human revolution.' . . . This is a revolution that can start here, now—in the heart of every one of us."
—Daisaku Ikeda (1928 - 2023).

Pritika Sharma



Thesis Title:

Generational Negotiations of Middle-Class Belonging and Shifting Family Relations in Contemporary Indian Weddings

"Everyone was always becoming someone else."

- Benjamin Alire Sáenz

Ziqi Xie



Thesis Title:

Reproducing the "Ideal Chinese Family" and Technology: IVF Attempts, Reproductive Governance, and Biomedicine in Pronatalist China

"When one thinks in an adopted language, one arranges and rearranges words that are neutral, indifferent even. When one remembers in an adopted language, there is a dividing line in that remembrance. What came before could be someone else's life; it might as well be fiction."

- Yiyun Li

Aizaz Younas



Thesis Title:

Becoming Otherwise: Youth, Class, and
Everyday Life in Urban Lahore

*"There is a version of me who kept going even when
I didn't believe in myself—and today, I thank him."*

Mel Zarate



Thesis Title:

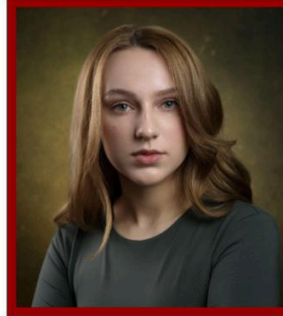
Evolutionary and landscape mitogenomics of
the yellow-tailed woolly monkey.

*"Only when our clever brain and our human
heart work together in harmony can we achieve
our true potential."*

– Jane Goodall

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW BACHELOR'S DEGREE RECIPIENTS

Rory Ahearn



Anthropology, Health and Medicine

Summa Cum Laude

"The amount of good things in your life depends on your ability to notice them."

Merilyn Oye Amponsah-Asamoah



Anthropology, Health and Medicine;
Biology

"Walk by faith, not by sight."

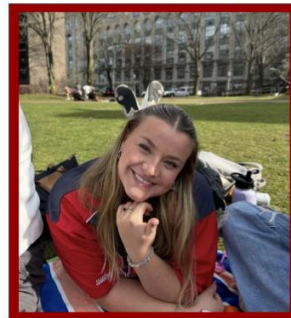
Shayla Brown



Sociocultural Anthropology

*"Your silence will not protect you."
– Audre Lorde*

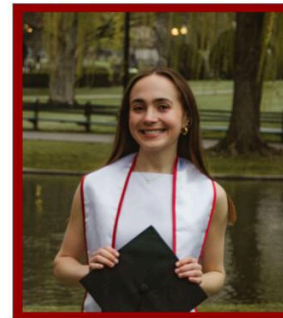
Lily Anne Brumbaugh



Anthropology, Health & Medicine;
Minor in Deaf Studies; Minor in Biology

*"Never ever depend on governments or institutions to solve any major problems. All social change comes from the passion of individuals."
– Margaret Mead*

Avery Cavanagh



Sociocultural Anthropology;
Minor in Public Relations

Magna Cum Laude

*"The trouble with life isn't that there is no answer, it's that there are so many answers."
– Ruth Benedict*

Karyna Cheung



Sociocultural Anthropology;
Journalism

Magna Cum Laude

*"So...what exactly are you studying?"
– Anyone I've ever told that I'm an anthropology major*

Yichen Cui



Sociocultural Anthropology

"To gain true knowledge, one must read widely and travel far."

Reese Hotten-Somers



Biological Anthropology;
Minor in Biology

Summa Cum Laude
Honors in Anthropology
Scholarly Excellence in Anthropology Award

*"I am among those who think that science
has great beauty."*
– Marie Curie

Yilan Hu



Sociocultural Anthropology;
Data Science

Cum Laude

*"Subdue the regret. Dust yourself off, proceed. You'll
get it in the next life, where you don't make mistakes.
Do what you can with this one, while you're alive."*
– Disco Elysium

Shengyi Huang

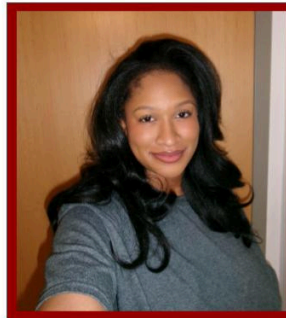


Sociocultural Anthropology; Religion
with a Minor in History

Summa Cum Laude
Honors in Anthropology
Research Excellence in Anthropology Award

"When life is held lightly, it flows gently."

Marly Hyppolite



Anthropology, Health & Medicine;
Minor in Human Physiology; Minor in
Biology

*"Double it and give it to the next person, I've
suffered enough."*

Coumba Haby Konate



Anthropology, Health & Medicine;
Minor in African Languages &
Literature; Minor in Public Health

*"I've learned life is a cycle: learning, mastering, then
starting again. I don't fear not knowing; that's how I
grow. When I feel off, I remember I'm becoming.
When I feel on top, I stay ready to learn."*

Poppy Livingstone



Sociocultural Anthropology;
Minor in Spanish

Magna Cum Laude
Honors In Anthropology
CAS College Prize Recipient

*"My doctor tells me not to have emotions. I should
damp down everything. Is this a philosophy? To live
longer by not being so much alive?"*

– Shmuel, Number Our Days by Barbara Myerhoff

Eva Matos



Anthropology, Health & Medicine;
Minor in Biology

Cum Laude

*"Science can explain how, but we need
spiritual values to remind us why."*
– Jane Goodall

Jennifer Mendoza-Melo



Sociocultural Anthropology; French
Studies

*"Exchange, it keeps the spirit going, and it keeps us moving
toward freedom. The more you acquire, the more I acquire.
And without you, it's not me. You make me and I make you."*
– Che Nieves quoted in Tip of the Spear by Orisanmi Burton

Morgan Metzger



Sociocultural Anthropology;
Minor in Holocaust, Genocide & Human
Rights Studies
Cum Laude

*"I've learned that people will forget what you
said, people will forget what you did, but people
will never forget how you made them feel."*
- Maya Angelou

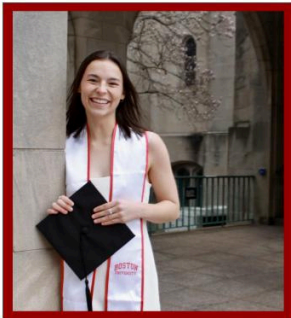
Shayna Parikh



Anthropology, Health & Medicine

*"Sometimes it takes only one act of kindness
and caring to change a person's life."*
- Jackie Chan

Zöe Patton-Meyer



Anthropology, Health & Medicine;
Minor in Public Health

*"Paying attention is a form of reciprocity with the
living world, receiving the gifts with open eyes
and open heart."*
- Robin Wall Kimmerer

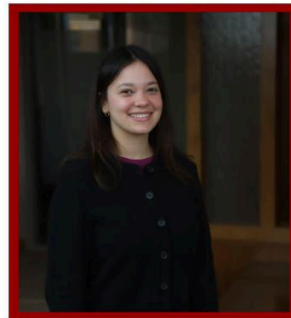
Mia Peterman



Sociocultural Anthropology;
Psychology

*"Never believe that a few caring people can't change
the world. For, indeed, that's all who ever have."*
- Margaret Mead

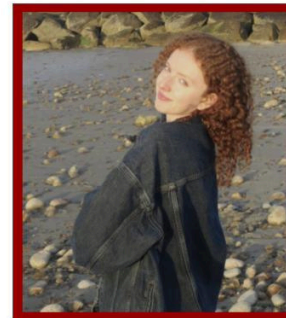
Daniela S. Santos Acosta



Anthropology, Health & Medicine

"Have courage and be kind."

Olivia Scappa

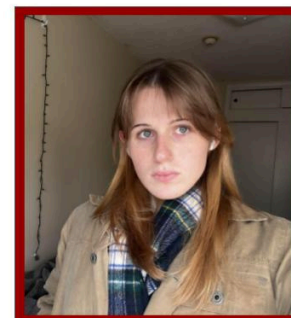


Biological Anthropology

Cum Laude

"What, like it's hard?"

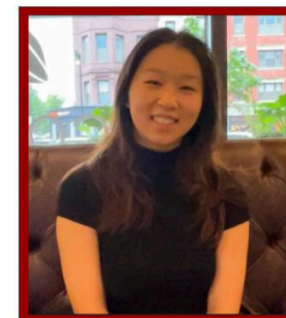
Dylan Snyder



Sociocultural Anthropology

"Nothing Human is Alien to me."

Yijun "Betty" Xie



Biological Anthropology

*Magna Cum Laude
Honors in Anthropology*

*"Isn't it crazy how coffee always gets weaker
at the end of the semester?"*

Thank you!

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