

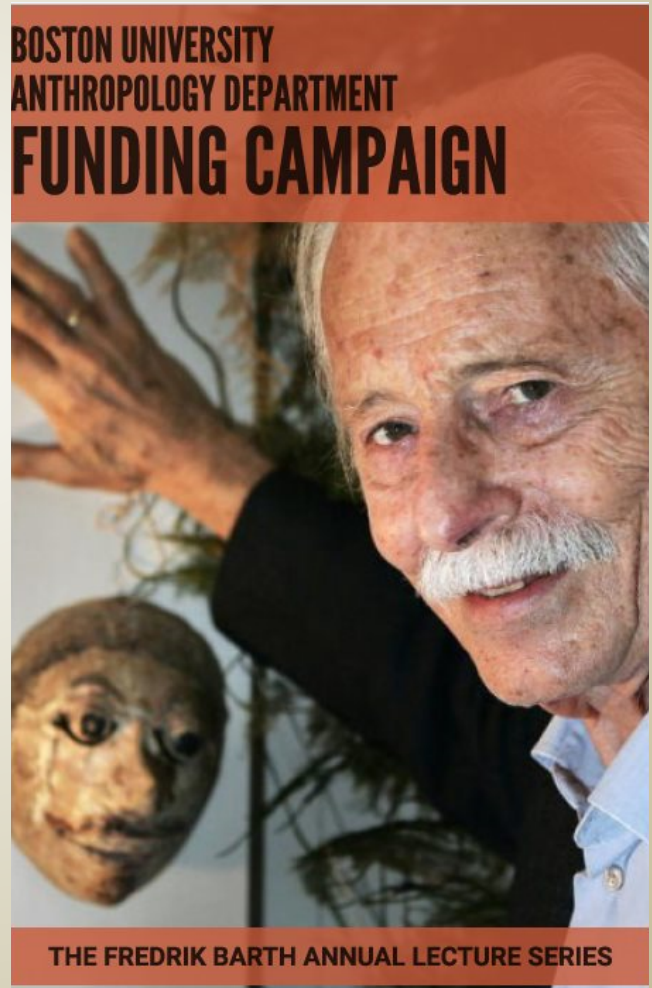


Anthropology News

March 2021

ALUMNI UPDATE ISSUE

It's hard to believe that we have finally made it through the winter and are facing the end of the semester and, hopefully soon, the end of the pandemic. We have lots of end-of-the-semester department news and awards coming up in our May issue, but this issue is dedicated to our alums who report fabulous accomplishments since graduating from the Department of Anthropology at Boston University.



Anonymous BU Alum, pledges \$10,000 donation to the Department of Anthropology for the launch of the Fredrik Barth Annual Lecture Series.

FROM THE CHAIR'S DESK

Nancy J. Smith-Hefner

Professor & Chair



Welcome to the Department of Anthropology's Alumni edition!

We are dedicating this edition of the newsletter to showcasing a sampling of our graduates and the really exciting things that they have gone on to achieve. The timing, just prior to graduation, is intentional. A perennial question from anxious parents and graduating students facing the job market is “What can I do with my Anthropology degree?” The stories offered here demonstrate that an Anthropology diploma can lead in many exciting directions: to the State Department, to law school, to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, to Borneo, to the Field Museum in Chicago, to medical school, to directing community-based projects with refugees in Worcester, to research in obstetrics, and to teaching at Princeton. The accomplishments of our graduates are truly impressive.

The Department continues to offer new and exciting programs that support our students' success. We have just launched a new undergraduate specialization in Anthropology, Health and Medicine, and a new MA degree in Public Anthropology. In AY 2020-21, the department sponsored two innovative Emerging Scholars' Programs that brought bright, young scholars from under-represented minorities to campus to engage with our undergraduate and graduate students on issues of indigenous and community-centered archaeology, and on the politics of migration and mobilities. Planned initially for this spring, but postponed due to the pandemic, we are back on track and preparing to launch the Fredrik Barth Annual Lecture Series in AY 2021-22.

This newsletter also coincides with BU's “**Giving Day**,” scheduled for **April 7**. “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. Every donation, no matter how small, is appreciated and is used to support department programs and initiatives.

Alumna Spotlight



Anita H. Fábos (GRS 1999)

Anita H. Fábos received her Ph.D. in Anthropology from Boston University in 1999. She is currently Professor and Associate Director of International Development, Community & Environment (IDCE) at Clark University in Worcester, MA. Anita works on topics relating to displaced populations and forced migrants, especially refugees in urban areas of the Middle East and Africa. She is interested in gender, diaspora and issues of citizenship and belonging. She has worked and conducted research together with Muslim Arab Sudanese refugees in the Middle East, Europe, and North America.

Anita was formerly the Director of the Forced Migration and Refugee Studies Program at the American University in Cairo, and later, Program Coordinator for the graduate program in Refugee Studies at the University of East London. She has incorporated refugee and forced migrant perspectives into collaborative work with scholars, practitioners, refugee organizations, policy makers, and international organizations. At Clark

University, her students have carried out community-based projects that have investigated refugee participation in community development initiatives, refugee access to higher education, refugee livelihoods in Worcester, and experiences of belonging and home for people from refugee and non-refugee backgrounds.

Anita has published widely. Her current book project (with Catherine Brun, Professor and Director of CENDEP, Oxford Brookes University) is on home and home-making for people in circumstances of long-term displacement.

She is also a principle investigator of Project MISTY, a six-city initiative that explores the ways that migration interacts with sustainability concerns in destination cities, with an emphasis on the unrecognized benefits that it can bring.



Alumni Updates



Graham Grail (CAS & SED 2018)

Graham Grail graduated in 2018 with two degrees from BU: a BA with Honors in Biological Anthropology with a minor in Biology, as well as a BS in Deaf Studies. Work from Graham's honor's thesis (under the supervision of Prof. Carolyn Hodges-Simeon) on speech and gender presentation in transgender men has been published in *Nature Scientific Reports* ("Testosterone Therapy Masculinizes Speech and Gender Presentation in Transgender Men") and in *Steroids*. Both are peer-reviewed publications. Graham's research was recently the focus of an article in *BU Today* and *The Brink*. Graham will graduate in May with an MS in Crime Scene Investigation from George Washington University and plans to apply to medical school next fall.

Alumni Updates



Elizabeth Thomas Crocker (GRS 2017)

Liz joined the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in Washington D.C. in 2017 as a member of their Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion Program. In 2019, she began a new position with AAAS at the Center for Public Engagement with Science and Technology. She runs workshops training scientists to consider language, culture, and worldview when communicating about their research. She also helps run the AAAS If/Then Ambassadors Program, which seeks to encourage women in STEM fields and manages an award for public engagement with science.

Alumni Updates



Christopher Taylor (GRS 2015)

Chris Taylor has worked at the State Department since 2015 managing a foreign assistance fund for human rights and new technologies. Most recently, he has been working on a new project entitled *Freedom in the Code*, a cross-cultural investigation of internet policy and how governments and global civil society can collaborate to better protect human rights online. He has continued this past year as a Research Scholar at the Ali Vural Ak Center for Global Islamic Studies at George Mason University, outside of Washington, DC. In November of 2020, he helped to organize a conference there on "Islam and Humanitarianism" that included a paper by BU's own Salwa Tareen. He is revising his manuscript *Transformations in Islamic Charity* for publication.

Chris also serves as a member of the National Association of Practicing Anthropologists (NAPA), where he helps support their strategy to promote more avenues for anthropologists to practice anthropology.

Chris writes: "There are many diverse careers which increasingly need the scholarly and holistic perspective we anthropologists bring! Contact me for more information about NAPA's professional mentorship program, for networking, and mentorship in pursuing jobs from sectors such as applied research, healthcare, marketing, the tech sector, government, and more."



Alumni Updates

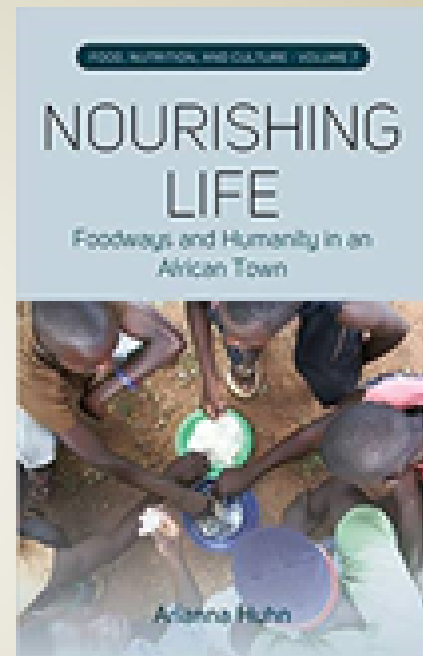


LEXI RAE LANG (CAS 2018)

Lexi Lang graduated in 2018 with a major in Biological Anthropology and a minor in Hebrew and was awarded with the College Prize in Anthropology. While at BU, she completed an honor's thesis exploring obstetric fistula from an evolutionary perspective and was a member of Dr. Cheryl Knott's primatology research group. Upon graduation, she completed her MSc in Medical Anthropology at The University of Oxford. While there, she joined Dr. Alex Alvergne's Reproductive Ecology research group, completing research work on menstruation and a master's thesis exploring birth from an evo-ecological perspective. She is currently pursuing her doctorate of medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine, where she is a first year student. She is a co-leader of Tufts Obstetric Patients Students (TOPS), a community service group that works to provide support for mothers in need, and a member of the leadership board for the OBGYN interest group.

Lexi was recently selected to be a Sam W. Ho Health Justice Scholar. Upon completing her degree, she hopes to train as an OBGYN and focus her career on improving maternal morbidity and mortality through advocacy and by applying anthropological research to medical practice.

Alumni Updates



Arianna Huhn (GRS 2013)

Arianna is an Assistant Professor at California State University, San Bernardino, and Director of the CSUSB Anthropology Museum. She holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology from Boston University and an MA in Museum Studies from George Washington University. Her research and training focus on Africa, medical anthropology, and museology. Her book *Nourishing Life: Foodways and Humanities in an African Town*, which is based on her research in Mozambique, was published by Berghahn Press in 2020.

Alumni Updates



Navid Fozi-Abivard (GRS 2011)

Navid is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Bridgewater State University in Bridgewater, Massachusetts. He works on topics of minorities, migration, and pluralism in Iran and the Iranian diaspora. His research on ethnoreligious minorities in Iran has resulted in a book, *Reclaiming the Faravahar: Zoroastrian Survival in Contemporary Tehran* (Leiden University Press, 2014). His current project is based on his 2014-2017 field research among Iranian asylum seekers in Turkey, conducted as a fellow of the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK) at the Middle East Technical University of Ankara. The work is tentatively entitled, "Diaporic Counterpublics: Multiplicities, Challenges, and Trajectories of Iranian Asylum Seekers in Turkey."

Alumni Updates



Elizabeth Alva-Rajakumar (CAS 2016)

Lizzie graduated from BU with a BA in anthropology in May 2016. She then earned a law degree from Loyola in 2019. Immediately after law school, Lizzie began working at the Jenesse Center—a non-profit dedicated to helping victims of domestic violence—as the Loyola Law School Post-Graduate Public Interest Fellow. She has since become an in-house staff attorney at Jenesse, helping undocumented victims of domestic violence pursue visas and legal immigration status in the United States. She would be happy to talk to undergraduates about how she uses her anthropological training in her work and about the kind of expertise that professional anthropologists provide in legal settings.

Alumni Updates



Alexis Winter (CAS 2009)

Alexis Winter graduated with a BA in sociocultural anthropology in 2009, after writing an honors thesis exploring the identity practices of Irish punk bands in and around Boston. She now manages communications for the Field Museum's Keller Science Action Center, an interdisciplinary group of scientists and educators working to protect and restore biodiversity both in South America and in Chicago, where she is based.

Alexis writes, "I first got involved in this work ten years ago when I reached out to an anthropologist here [in Chicago]; she just happened to be looking for someone to help study perceptions of climate change in Chicago neighborhoods. This work inspired me to pursue a master's degree in applied anthropology at University of South Florida, and when I finished I came back to the museum.

While I might have arrived where I am today with a degree in environmental science or communications, I'm glad I made my way here through cultural anthropology, starting at BU. Anthropology gave me a set of tools for understanding environmental issues in their full cultural, historical, and political-economic context. It also gave me a deep respect for local knowledge and the diverse ways people relate to nature. All of this makes me better equipped to communicate conservation science in a way that's accessible, compelling, and culturally relevant."

Alumni Updates



Andrea L. DiGiorgio (GRS 2019)

Andrea started a position teaching STEM writing in the Princeton Writing Center in the fall of 2019. In this role, she's worked with several freshmen on conference posters and one publication (*Will Individual Actions Do the Trick? Comparing Climate Change Mitigation through Geoengineering versus Reduced Emissions*, Murray & DiGiorgio 2021). She has also continued her research on orangutan nutritional ecology with a publication from her dissertation (*Wild Bornean orangutan feeding rates and the marginal value theorem*, DiGiorgio et al. 2020), and now as a part of Erin Vogel's lab investigating orangutan health as it correlates to varying fruit availability. In addition, Andrea began a project examining how conservation organizations can best craft social media posts by using machine learning to classify viewer comments to conservation-based YouTube videos.

Alumni Updates

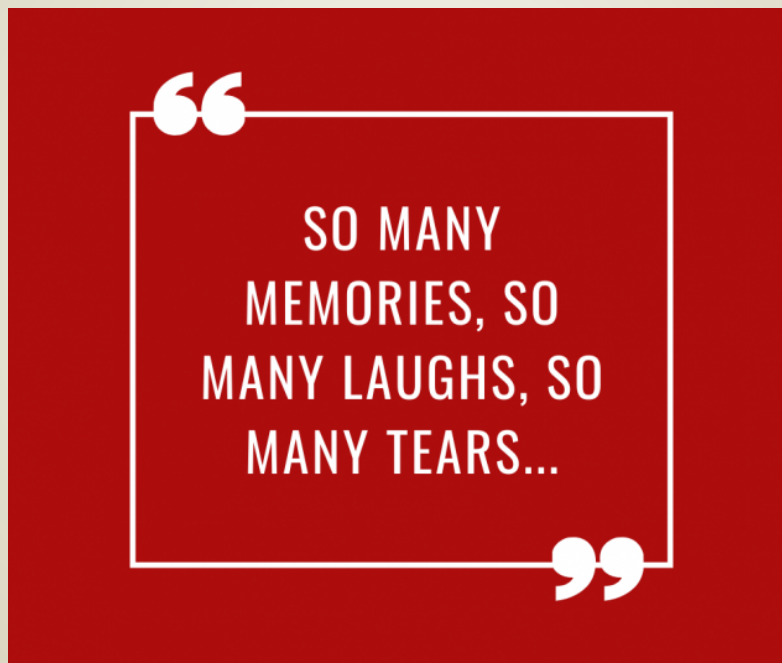


Robert Rodriguez Suro (CAS 2013)

Robert Rodriguez Suro graduated in 2013 with a dual major in Biology (with specialization in Behavioral Biology) and Biological Anthropology. After graduating, he spent a year in Borneo as a research volunteer for the Gunung Palung Orangutan Project, led by Professor Cheryl Knott. In 2014, he was awarded a National Geographic Young Explorer Grant (now called the Early Career Grant) for an independent research and media project called "The Lives of Orangutans." In collaboration with Prof. Knott and GPOP, he spent another year at Gunung Palung doing long-term orangutan follows, obtaining data on male orangutan home ranges, and documenting rare orangutan cultural behaviors on film. Some of his work was featured in the 2017 short documentary, ["Person of the Forest."](#)

Robert is currently a first year medical student at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. In regards to his time at BU, Robert writes: "Everything I learned and all the opportunities that came with being a student at BU's anthropology program made me feel like I could have

pursued many different careers. We are fortunate to have amazing faculty willing to mentor us and create opportunities for us to grow. Since starting medical school, I've felt that I can contribute a lot of unique knowledge and perspectives to my medical school class, and it all goes back to the anthropology program at BU and the opportunities that came with it."



Alumni Updates



Lynsey Farrell (GRS 2015)

Lynsey Farrell has taken an unusual path by academic standards. Focused on the intersections of youth, livelihoods, informality and urbanization, she completed her ethnographic field research in Nairobi, Kenya while directing the American University's study abroad program on sustainable development in Kenya. After returning to the United States to write up her dissertation, she joined Ashoka: Innovators for Public, where she led a \$6.6 million Mastercard Foundation grant that sourced and supported social entrepreneurs across Africa who were seeking to solve the complex issue of youth unemployment on the continent. Also while at Ashoka, Lynsey honed skills in translating complex knowledge into publications for practical action, such as her innovation guide *Youth Unstuck: Innovations for Youth Livelihoods and Leadership* and *Emerging Insights*.

For the last two years, Lynsey has been a Senior Lecturer in Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania and the Africa Director at the Lauder Institute of Management and International Studies.

Lynsey is now embarking on a collaborative research project that challenges the paradigm of work in Africa and just concluded a participatory workshop with academics and practitioners to interrogate what we think we know about labor, livelihoods, work and the African hustle. Boston University alumni, Marc Sommers, was a featured panelist.



Alumni Updates



Macken Murphy (CAS 2020)

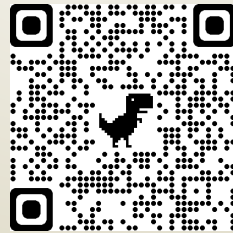
Macken Murphy graduated in 2020 with a dual major in History and Biological Anthropology. He was honored as the student speaker for the 2020 commencement. During his sophomore year at Boston University, Macken launched *Species*, a “Podcast About Animals.” Each episode examines one type of creature at a time, drawing audiences in the thousands. This past year, Macken has been involved in City Year, in Providence, R.I., where he helps teach science to seventh graders. He continues to produce *Species* every week and is also working on a book based on his keystone project for Kilachand Honors College. *A Boston Bestiary* explores the everyday fauna around us that are often overlooked. He is working with an illustrator and hopes the book will be published in 2021. Macken was recently featured in *BU Today*. He will be pursuing an MSc in Cognitive and Evolutionary Anthropology at Oxford University next year.

Support BU Anthropology!

GIVING DAY

#PROUDTOBU

APRIL 7, 2021



This is only a small sample of the department's terrific alums and the exciting work they have been doing. If you would like to be included in future newsletters, please let us know. We would love to include your news! Contact: vclittle@bu.edu or smhefner@bu.edu

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