

BU Anthropology News

The official newsletter of the Boston University Department of Anthropology



WELCOME BACK!

Happy Spring Semester!

Welcome back from winter break! In our Spring newsletter we want to celebrate the achievements of our faculty and graduates during the fall semester and winter break. We also want to look forward to some amazing events we have planned for this semester!

Keep reading for an update of all the latest Department of Anthropology news and events. And don't forget to check out the end of the newsletter for information on how you can submit your own news for upcoming editions.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Department Talk Series:

- **3/20 "Death Economy, Market Governance, and Market Subjects: An Ethnography of Funeral Professionals in Urban China" w/ Dr. Lucia Huwy-min Liu**
- **4/13 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**

FEATURED: *CAPILLARY LIVELIHOODS*

New CFD Seed Grant for four BU Anthropologists

Q: Provide some background information about your project. What is the focus of it, and what are you doing with it?

Kendra: Our project title is, "Capillary Livelihoods: Histories of Displacement and the Cultivation of Digital, Ecological, and Communal Lifeworlds on and off Istiklal Street, Istanbul". The term "livelihoods" is most typically used to refer to the assets, capabilities, and activities that are required to sustain life. This particular definition of "livelihoods" enables the UNHCR, for example, to prioritize the economic inclusion of and sustainable living for migrants and refugees in the host country. But our project proposes a more capacious lens to understand how displaced communities build meaningful lives in Istanbul. We coin the term "capillary livelihoods" to address the racialized histories that shape and constrain migrant and minoritized lives, the digital worlds displaced groups participate in, the community networks they build, and the everyday practices they cultivate in relation to the built environment.

Meet the Team

Ayşe Parla is an Associate Professor of Anthropology and serves as the Provost's Faculty Fellow for Graduate Academic Programs and Policies. Her primary research is on migration, dispossession, and the afterlives of the Armenian genocide.

Caterina Scaramelli is a Research Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Earth & Environments. Her research focuses on the intersection between human and non-human livelihoods with ecology, scientific knowledge, morals, and infrastructure.

Kendra Gimblet is Sociocultural Anthropology PhD Student at Boston University, matriculated in Fall 2021. Her research focuses on forced migration and reconstruction of identities and livelihood.

Alize Arican is a Postdoctoral Scholar in the Society of Fellows at BU Arts & Sciences. Her research centers on political anthropology, migration, care, and urban life. Her current project focuses on these issues within the Tarlabaşı neighborhood of Istanbul.



FEATURED: *CAPILLARY LIVELIHOODS*

New CFD Seed Grant for four BU Anthropologists

Q: What is the CFD?

Kendra: The Center on Forced Displacement (CFD) supports research and engagement with forced displacement and humanitarian emergencies that is truly interdisciplinary and of the highest scholarly and ethical standards. The CFD seed grant we received in the amount of \$20,000 funds interdisciplinary and collaborative research.

Q: What are you most excited about with this grant/project?

Alize: It's hard to pin down what excites me most, but I can offer two thoughts. First, I am very excited about the opportunity to devote this summer to fieldwork, generously enabled by this grant. During my doctoral research, I worked closely with West African communities in Istanbul, yet this grant will give me some sustained time to build on those relationships and develop my second project. But besides the possibilities for my individual project, I am very excited by the unique possibilities this project provides—that is, being in conversation with Ayse, Kendra, and Caterina's work as I think about my own, all projects that I'm equally excited about. So, I'm animated by the opportunity to think across communities, places, political issues, and environments in Istanbul with a wonderful community of anthropologists and environmentalists.

Ayşe: One of the things I really appreciated in the CFD's call for proposals was their emphasis on learning directly from and with the communities grappling with the challenges of forced displacement. As one of the outcomes of this project, we are hoping to develop a digital archive in collaboration with the communities we work with and shaped according to the needs and wishes of those communities.

Q: What can we look forward to next?

Alize: We envision this project as an ongoing conversation, starting among ourselves and continuing in dialogue with the broader intellectual community at BU. So, this project will be a starting point for a speaker series we will organize in the upcoming academic year in collaboration with the Center on Forced Displacement, focusing on methods and theories around displacement. Stay tuned for this new series in Fall 2023, where you will get to hear more about our project, as well as other research on displacement and migration across Boston!

[Read the full interview on our website!](#)

FEATURED: JOHN MARSTON

Associate Professor of Anthropology and Director of BU Archaeology

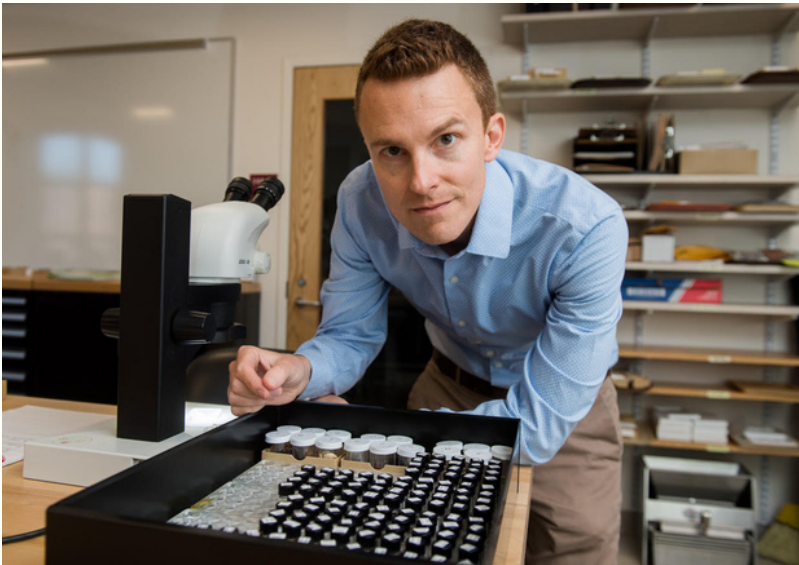


Photo Credit: Cydney Scott (BU MarCom)

John “Mac” Marston is the Director of the Archaeology Program and the Environmental Archaeology Lab as well as an Associate Professor of Anthropology and Archaeology. His primary research is on environmental, economic, and agricultural archaeology as explored through land use and agricultural strategies of ancient civilizations. Within his lab Professor Marston oversees research on sites in the Eastern Mediterranean and Central/Eastern Asia.

Q: Welcome Professor Marston! To start can you tell us a bit about yourself? How did you come to teach here at BU?

A: Well, I’ve been teaching at BU for 11 years now and to be honest, had very little thought of ever coming to Boston until I got this job offer. I did my Ph.D. at UCLA and after that, I taught at Brown for two years before I got the position at BU. At this point, I've now been teaching for well over 20 years, including in those other positions before I came here.

Q: Intersectionality is a major factor in your research and teaching, how do you define your central research topic and how do you connect the dots so to speak?

A: My core interest is in using the study of agricultural systems in the past to understand connections between people and environments, and the connections that we can see through agriculture are particularly meaningful for understanding that relationship because people use agriculture as a way to dramatically transform landscapes. People adapt their agricultural strategies to climatic conditions, to the nature of the soils, the plants, or some other aspects of the natural environment. Through this we observe how humans both respond to environmental change and actively- whether intentionally or not- create environmental change and I see agriculture really at the core of that relationship, which is why it's always been my focus. I choose to focus on agricultural systems in the areas that I do, in Eastern Mediterranean, Western Asia, and Central Asia, primarily because these areas are rather dry, and yet they're home to early agricultural societies. As a result, it's a great place to understand the intersections between the cultural dynamics that are shaping societies over the span of 1000s of years, environmental changes, and agricultural systems that have to function really at the edge of where agriculture is feasible. *(cont.)*

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In some of these places, droughts and bad crop years are huge problems because if you fall a little bit lower than the threshold for rainfall for your crop, you can have fairly massive failures. People need to be very strategic about the way that they do agriculture as a result, as opposed to a place that may have much better or more consistent environmental conditions and agriculture might be less of a risky proposition. There's a little bit less adaptability in that system, it doesn't need to change very much to suit the various conditions. I like to instead see how agriculture operates on the edges and how societies respond to that type of dynamic situation.

Q: What made you choose teaching?

I have always liked teaching. One of the aspects I really enjoy is the idea of being able to share the way that I do things as well as what I know. You get to share that with not just students but anyone who's interested in archaeology, so I've taught in formal settings like the classroom but also in external contexts, like training students who might come to do an internship in my lab or in the field during the summer. Some of those students may be students I've had at BU, but I also get dozens of students from other universities and I get the opportunity to teach them about environmental archaeology. Opportunities like that have always been part of my training and I myself have learned a lot from great teachers so I feel like this is a wonderful career.



Q: Is there any news, publications, or classes that you would like Anthropology students and faculty to keep an eye out for?

I would say probably one of the more exciting things that we have coming up is we are offering a summer class that has recently been converted for the summer session. As part of the spread of BU Hub credits, we have been trying to offer more Hub-related courses in the summer. This newly converted course, which I have taught as well as a colleague, is called AR280, Eating and Drinking in the Ancient World, and carries several Hub credits. The course focuses on the archaeology of food and has also been adapted into an asynchronous online format for the summer. It's a great opportunity for students who would like to take a summer class but can't be at BU or maybe have a nine-to-five job during the summer. We offered for the first time last summer and the response was great, the class filled up pretty much instantly! We're going to offer it again next summer at an even larger capacity so hopefully people will be able to take advantage of it.

[Read the full interview on our website!](#)

FEATURED NEWS

University Awards

Prof. Chris Schmitt has been awarded the 2023 Boston University Undergraduate Academic Advising award in the Faculty Academic Advising Category.



Congratulations!

Laboratory News

Welcome Samantha Kelley, our new Lab Coordinator!

Samantha graduated from Boston University with a BA in Archaeology and Biological Anthropology and an MS in Forensic Anthropology. She previously served as the Manager of the Zooarchaeology Laboratory and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) Collections Manager on campus, as well as a Research Analyst for the Smithsonian Institution. She can be reached at srkell19@bu.edu.



New Anthropology/Archaeology Faculty Member

Welcome Andreana (Andree) Cunningham who will be joining us as Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Archaeology, and African American & Black Diaspora Studies beginning in Fall 2023.

Professor Cunningham is an interdisciplinary anthropologist with a research focus in Trans-Atlantic slavery. We look forward to welcoming her to BU in the Fall!

STUDENT NEWS

The following students are now ABD, Congratulations!

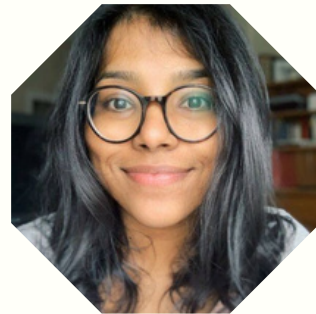
- Peter Kovacik
- Tong Xin
- Sumeyra Funes
- Martin Aucoin
- Dylan Renca
- Samantha Nadel
- Attyat Mayans

GRAF (Graduate Research Abroad Fellowship) Recipients

- Pritika Sharma (Long-Term)
- Amirah Fadhlina (Long-Term)
- Sumeyra Gunes (Long-Term)
- Martin Aucoin (Long-Term)
- Gabriel Vicencio Castellanos (Short-Term)

Other Research and Funding

- **Anu Ahmed and Hafsa Arain** were both awarded Bloom dissertation fellowship funding for their Summer 2023 writing!



Office News

The Anthropology Department has two new Marketing and Communication interns for Spring '23. Feel free to reach out with any news or suggestions for us!



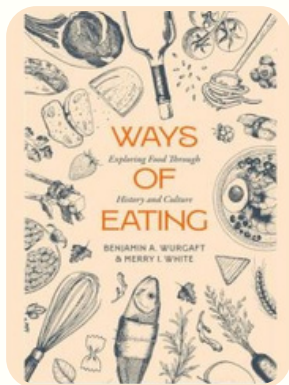
Marta Hammers (CAS '23) is a BioAnth Major with Archaeology and Core Curriculum minors.

Morgan Metzger (CAS '26) is a Sociocultural Anthropology Major



FACULTY GRANTS, AWARDS & PUBLICATIONS

- **Bob Hefner** joined the host of Law and Religion Down Under for a discussion of “registered religions”, the tension between pluralist and Islamist elements, and the future of religious freedom in the country. Listen [here](#).
- **Fallou Ngom** featured in BU Brink article, “Unearthing a Long-Ignored African Writing System, One Researcher Finds African History, by Africans” Read the full story [here](#).
- **Joanna Davidson** featured in BU Brink article, “Why Are Women around the World Opting Out of Marriage?”. Read the full story [here](#).
- **Merav Shohet** and Insa Marie Schmidt (School of Medicine/Boston Medical Center) were awarded a 2023 CISS Pilot grant for their research project “Stigma, Care, and End-Stage Kidney Disease (ESKD) in Racialized Boston Communities Fighting the Syndemic Sequelae of COVID-19”
- **Frank Korom** delivered the third formal public lecture, titled “The Democratization of Sufism in the South Asian Diaspora”, at Jadavpur University for the Centre for Studies in Islamicate Asia, Department of Comparative Literature.



- **Merry White** announced a new book in the works with University of California Press titled *Ways of Eating: Exploring Food Through History and Culture*.
- **Merry White** has been awarded a short-term travel grant from the Northeast Asia Council for her research on Japanese Whiskey.
- **Bob Hefner** attended the "Muktamar Internasional Fikih Perdaban" (translated as "International Conference on Civilizational Fiqh") in Surabaya Indonesia by invitation of the Chairman of Nahdlatul Ulama.
- **Ayse Parla** delivered a talk at Harvard’s CMES on January 25th titled, "Hamlet After Genocide: Haunting, Justice, and Empirical Fabulation"
- **John Marston** will deliver a talk on February 24th at Brown University titled, “Local Ecological Knowledge and Imperial Demands in Agricultural Practice”

PAST AND UPCOMING EVENTS

PAST EVENTS

World Anthropology Day Celebrations

From cookies at the department building to game night in the University, BU Anthropologists celebrated World Anthropology Day in style on Feb. 16th!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Anthropology in the Works

Anthropology in the Works (@anthroworksbu) is hosting a guest lecture with **Petra Slinkard**, Director of Curatorial Affairs for the Peabody Essex Museum.

The event is open to all and will be hosted on **March 22nd**. Follow @anthroworksbu for more updates and events in the future or email aitw@bu.edu with any questions.



 Arts & Sciences
Anthropology Department

THE FREDRIK BARTH ANNUAL LECTURE

MUSEUM POLITICS & THE PROBLEM OF VOICE

Dr. Lila Abu-Lughod

**WEDNESDAY
APRIL 19
2023**

4 pm – 7 pm
Talk followed by a
reception

One Silber Way
Metcalf Trustee
Center Ballroom



Inaugural Barth Lecture

Our first ever Barth lecture will be held on **April 19th** from 4pm-7pm. The event will be held in the Metcalf Trustees Ballroom (1 Silber Way Room 922) and is open and free to everyone. Registration information will be announced in March.

We will be hosting esteemed Guest Speaker **Lila Abu-Lughod** for her lecture titled. "Museum Politics and the Problem of Voice"

Giving Day

Giving Day 2023 is on the horizon! Be sure to watch your inbox and follow us on social media to get updates and announcements for this exciting event!

DEPARTMENT RESOURCES

*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 also want to hear from YOU! We are considering starting an Instagram takeover sign-up in order to feature more students, faculty, and alumni on our page. Takeovers would be short-form videos about people's days and experiences in/with Anthropology. Even if you are not interested in participating we would love for feedback on whether this initiative is something our department wants to see. You can fill out the [Interest Form here](#).

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/ 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/

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](https://www.instagram.com/anthroworksbu) !

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!

Thank you!

click the icons for more

Follow us on social media!

@buanthropology



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, vcittle@bu.edu

Derek Healey, Graduate Program Administrator, dhealey2@bu.edu

Nancy J. Smith-Hefner, Department Chair, smhefner@bu.edu

If you want to help support the Anthropology Department:

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Our mailing address is:

BU Anthropology

232 Bay State Rd

Boston, MA 02215-1403