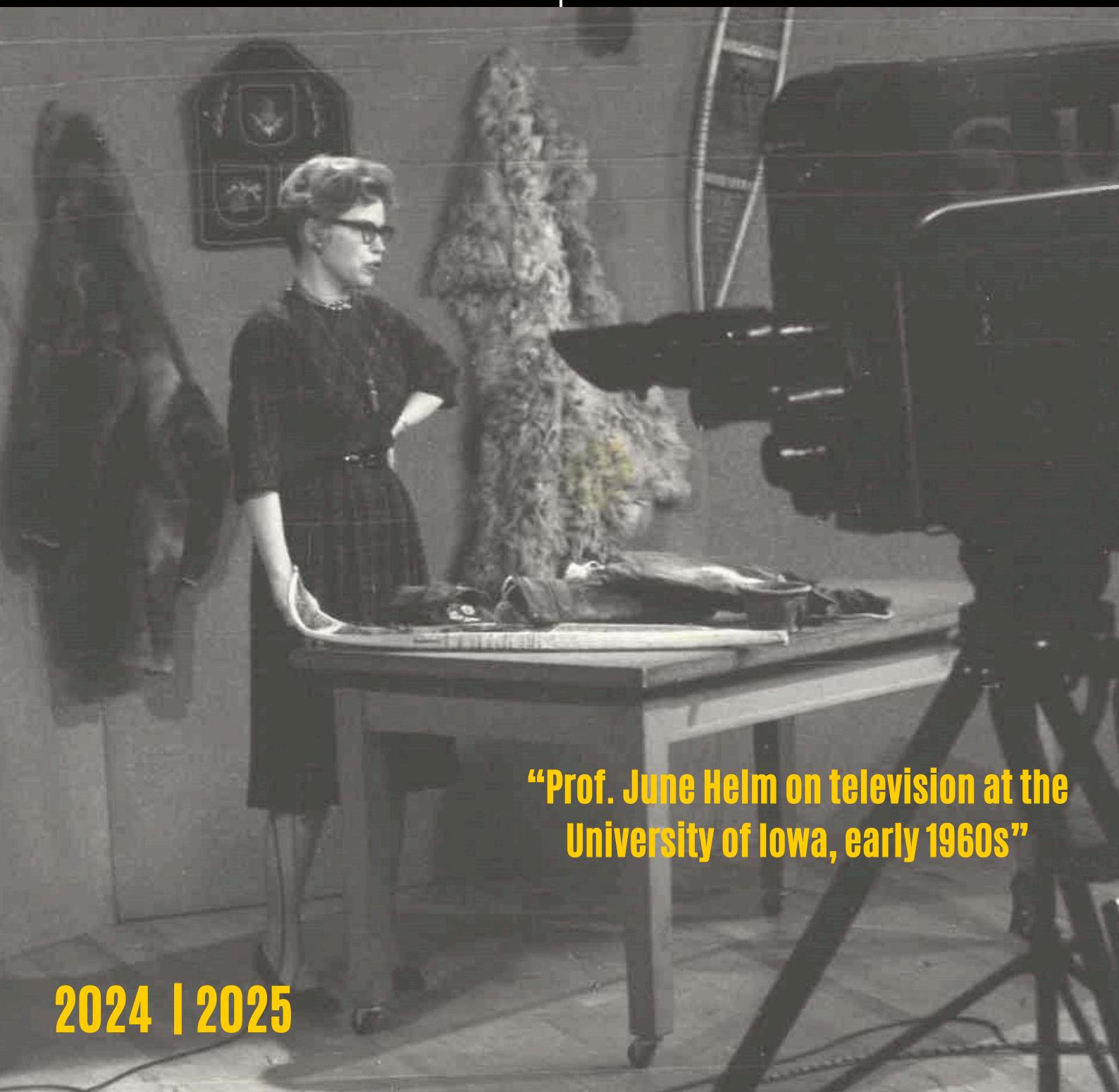


# IOWA

Department of  
Anthropology



“Prof. June Helm on television at the  
University of Iowa, early 1960s”

2024 | 2025

# AnthroObserver

# In This Issue of The Anthr0bserver

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# A LETTER FROM THE DEO

It has been another exciting year for the Department, and this is true for all members of our community, including students, staff, and faculty. We continue to succeed in all roles in our three main areas of focus: teaching, scholarship, and service. In this way, the 2024-2025 academic year saw the continuation of a tradition of excellence established decades ago, which members of the department are fortunate to maintain and extend to subsequent cohorts of students and scholars.

Our faculty have been active this year, and I have many exciting updates to share with you, including promotions and career distinctions. Brady G'Sell was tenured and promoted to Associate Professor, whilst Meena Khandelwal was promoted to Full Professor. Meena Khandelwal was also honored with the President and Provost Award for Teaching Excellence, which is the highest teaching distinction offered by the University of Iowa. Our faculty continued to publish their research, receive critical funding, and engage with the public. G'Sell and Khandelwal each published books this past year, and this February Elana Buch led a discussion of her colleagues' books in front of a large crowd at Prairie Lights. Ted Powers published and presented on the different perspectives and practices of vaccination in the response to COVID-19 in the U.S. and South Africa. Our faculty continued to publish their research,



**by Prof. Andrew Kitchen**

receive critical funding, and engage with the public. Erica Prussing hosted a student research poster session with students from her Ethnographic Field Methods course, which she helped revise with Humanities for the Public Good funding. This is part of an ongoing Humanities Lab project titled "Ethnography as Social Justice Practice" that is a collaboration between Elana Buch, Brady G'Sell, and Erica Prussing. Margaret Beck's project to investigate North American Plains ceramics received funding from the Obermann Center for Advanced Studies. Department alumna Sarah Trabert (currently at University of Oklahoma) is a collaborator on this project with Margaret. Katina Lillios

received substantial funding from International Programs and the Arts & Humanities Initiative to support her summer fieldwork in Portugal. The Jamestown and Plains dog research projects led by Matt Hill, in collaboration with Department alumna Ariane Thomas, remains funded by multiple sources; Matt and Ariane produced high profile papers this year that were written-up for broad consumption in *The New York Times*, *Smithsonian Magazine*, and *Daily Mail*, amongst others. John Doershuk's excavation of a mastodon was published far and wide on social media; we hope to get some ancient DNA from this discovery. I could go on and on about the exciting scholastic and creative work our faculty are producing.

Our faculty are also very active in leadership across the University and the profession. Cynthia Chou remains the Director for the Center for Asian and Pacific Studies and took time from her busy schedule to host her colleagues from Singapore for a week this Spring, during which they served as the judging team for the College of Public Health's Global Health "Case" competition. Bob Franciscus was a guest editor for the *Proceedings of the National Academies of Sciences*. Glenn Storey continues as the Chairman of the Board of the Human Relations Area Files, when he is not working on two book manuscripts. These are but a sample of the leadership positions and professional roles that our faculty members perform.

**"I could go on and on about the exciting scholastic and creative work our faculty are producing."**

The Department will be undergoing a restructuring in 2025, as the Board of Regents approved the relocation of the Global Health Studies program into the Anthropology Department. We will be welcoming three new faculty colleagues to our department this summer: Kristine Muñoz, Waltraud Maierhofer, and Anne Kiche. The Global Health Studies program offers both B.A. and B.S. degrees, a minor, and a graduate certificate - all of these will now be housed within Anthropology. This is an exciting development that will benefit both programs. We have said goodbye to our good colleagues Terry Tharp and Ben Landsee, who left for other positions within the University, while also welcoming Ignacio Alvarez as our new undergraduate advisor. As always, Sarah Horgen and Shari Knight in the office keep us in line, and in so doing, keep the Department afloat. Without our staff, the Department would be lost at sea.

**“The Department continues to be an exciting and supportive place to discover, learn, and succeed.”**

Our graduate students continue to meet the high bar for excellence set by their peers. Caleb Klipowicz, Steven Keehner, and Brittany Anderson graduated with their Ph.D. this year. Caleb is a lecturer at Coastal Carolina University, and Brittany is working at the Veterans Administration hospital in Iowa City. Andrés Restrepo-Sánchez was awarded a Wenner-Gren Dissertation Fieldwork Grant to conduct research in Colombia; he also published an article in the high-profile journal *Hypatia*. First-year graduate student Shannon Casey received a Stanley Award for International Research to support her summer fieldwork in Portugal, which will be performed under the supervision of Prof. Katina Lillios. Victoria Priola, who is also advised by Katina, won a Dissertation Writing Fellowship from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, which funds students in the final semesters of their doctoral program. Derick Juptner continues our streak of graduate students winning the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Awards. Mackenzie Cross received a grant from the Office of Sustainability and Engagement to support her outreach project with Iowa secondary school students.

Undergraduates continue to succeed and distinguish themselves. Twenty-seven will graduate this academic year with their BA or BS in Anthropology, six with Distinction or High Distinction in Anthropology, and another 20 students will have received minors in Anthropology. Korbin Yauk (Class of 2026) was invited to accept membership to Phi Beta Kappa, and Seren Castellano (Class of 2026) was named a Goldwater Scholar, a prestigious and competitive national scholarship. We are proud that our constant attention to the undergraduate program continues to produce strong students.

The Department continues to be an exciting and supportive place to discover, learn, and succeed; what makes it so are the people in the Anthropology community at Iowa, past and present. Your generous support and enthusiasm help make Anthropology at the University of Iowa ever renewing - our old friends are never gone, and our new friends are forever present.

**Prof. Andrew Kitchen**  
Professor and DEO, Anthropology

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*Prof. Andrew Kitchen (andrew-kitchen@uiowa.edu) is a biological anthropologist who studies human population history and the origins of human infectious disease, using evolutionary and computational approaches, and serves as the Anthropology Department Executive Officer (DEO)*

# Promotions and Awards

## FACULTY

### Promotions

**Andrew Kitchen and Meena Khandelwal**, Full Professors

**Brady G'Sell**, Associate Professor

### Internal Awards

**Matthew Hill** Collegiate Scholar Award from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

**Meena Khandelwal** President and Provost Award for Teaching Excellence

### External Awards

**Brady G'Sell** Presidents' Civic Engagement Leader Award by the Seed Coalition

## Graduate Students

### Internal Awards

**Baishali Bhaumik** June Helm Summer Research Grant

**Derrick Juptner** June Helm Award for Service and Excellence in Anthropology for 2024-2025  
And Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, UI

**Jessica Ramirez** Lulu Merle Johnson Recruitment Fellowship

**Mack Cross** Graduate Engagement Corps Grant 2024

**Shannon Casey** Stanley Award for International Research

**Victoria Priola** Dissertation Writing Fellowship from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

## External Awards

**Andrés Restrepo Sánchez  
Ebenezer Olamiposi Adeyemi**

Wenner-Gren Foundation Dissertation Fieldwork Grant  
ACT Scholars' Program Fellowship 2024

## Graduations

**Master of Arts  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**Anna Banowsky & Binit Gurung  
Brittany Anderson & Steven Keehner**



PhD candidates **Andrés Restrepo-Sánchez** and **Kyle Bikowski** presented their capstone projects and received their Graduate Certificate in Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies during Spring 2024.

# Undergraduate Awards and Prizes

## *Native American and Indigenous Studies Award*



**Max Halbach**

## *Phi Beta Kappa Society Invitation*



**Korbin Yauk**

## *Undergraduate Scholarship for Experiential Learning*



**John Morris**



**Misha DeBoef-Misyuk**

*Recognized in “Dare to Discover” Campaign and as a Goldwater Scholar*



**Seren Castellano**

Support the work of our Graduate and Undergraduate students by contributing to our Gift Fund at <http://www.givetoiowa.org/anthropology>

# Colloquium Series

## **“Anthropological Perspectives on Cancer Care and LGBTQ+ Health in Iowa”**



**Aaron Seaman, PhD.**  
Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine  
UI Carver College of Medicine



## **“Reworking Citizenship in South Africa.”**

**Brady G'Sell**  
Associate Professor of Anthropology &  
GWSS

## **“A Community-Inspired (and Energized) Mastodon Excavation in Southern Iowa”**



**John F. Doershuk, PhD**  
Adjunct Professor, Anthropology,  
State Archeologist of Iowa



## **“Revisiting the Bronze Age and Medieval Histories of Agroal (Ourém, Portugal): New Questions, New Methods”**

**Katina Lillios**  
Professor of Anthropology

## **“The Geology of Color: Red Pigment in the Midcontinent”**



**Margaret Beck,**  
Professor of Anthropology



## **“Precontact Burial Mounds of Iowa: Inventory and New Findings”**

**William Whittaker**  
Associate Director, OSA  
University of Iowa

# Community Engagement



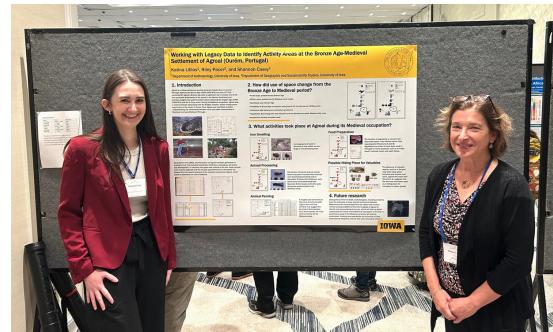
African Festival of Art and Culture by Brady G' Sell



**“Ghar Janu”: Ethnographic Studies of Return Migration  
Among Sikkimese Youth in India.  
By Binit Gurung**



**Dr. Lillios and Shannon Casey** Presented their Poster at the Society for American Archeology, Denver





"Climate Change, Gender, and Biomass Cookstoves in India"

By Professor Meena Khandelwal

At the Iowa City Public Library (also streaming online).



Book Matters: Celebrating Iowa Authors **Brady G'Sell** and **Meena Khandelwal** hosted by **Elana Buch**



"Decolonizing Care in Latin America: Cultural Competencies in Nursing from Anthropology and Decolonial Theory"

Universidad del Valle - Latin American Nursing Meeting

Birthing amid Violence: Obstetric Reform and Legacies of Conflict in Medellín, Colombia  
Universidad del Cauca - XVIII Anthropology Congress in Colombia.

By Andrés Restrepo-Sánchez

# Alumni Spotlight

When I reflect on all my experiences as an anthropology graduate student at the University of Iowa (even if it was only a little over a year ago), there are two prominent features that stick out. First, this program provides the space for students to choose their own career path. Graduate students can opt for a research-oriented path that strengthens their grant writing skills or lean towards teaching. While many students can and do both, the flexibility to emphasize one over the other is an important trait for a graduate program that produces candidates for research or teaching careers. The anthropology graduate program sets itself apart by exposing students to nearly every facet of a faculty role. Since there are many career opportunities available to graduates, involvement in all aspects of academia can direct the career trajectory that is best suited for each student.

**“But at its heart, and the most outstanding feature to me is that the program is a community.”**



**Ariane E Thomas**

While I was a graduate student I applied to local and national grants, mentored students, taught as a sole instructor and developed a research project that I am continuing in my postdoc. I am grateful for having those experiences as a graduate student because many of those opportunities are not available to me in my new role.

But at its heart, and the most outstanding feature to me is that the program is a community. I relied on professors, graduate students, and undergraduates to help shape my project and move it forward. There were so many people available to listen to my practice talks, revise papers and funding applications, or just be a supportive friend when I needed it. I owe this community a great deal and my greatest solace is that even after graduating and moving hundreds of miles away, those ties are still there for me, and it will be for all of you that come through the program.



Brittany L. Anderson

### *Rolling with the Punches: Transitions during Graduate School*

I entered graduate school in 2016 with little more than a concept for my dissertation research. Building on previous experience in the field- during 2017 and 2018, I built a project around the long-term health consequences of the 2014-2016 Ebola epidemic and sought to examine how Ebola survivors chose to fight for access to medical support in Freetown, Sierra Leone. When I received a Fulbright grant, I was excited and determined, and when I left for fieldwork on March 3rd, 2020, I had laid out plans for nine months of ethnographic research in a city I had come to know well. As you can imagine, my plans for my dissertation were disrupted significantly. I returned to Iowa City just two weeks after leaving, and in the subsequent months, I designed a new project that I could complete in the constantly changing and uncertain COVID landscape. I successfully defended that new dissertation (*Attunements of Care: The Role of Environmental Services Staff in the Care and Surveillance of Continuing Care Retirement Communities*) in May 2025.

The most important lesson I learned in graduate school was not how to write or analyze data, although these were skills I developed with the close assistance and guidance of faculty and peers, but how to adapt to changing circumstances. Knowing when to pivot, how to modify my approach, and when to “throw in the towel” on an idea that was integral to my success during graduate school. While I hope that others do not have to learn how to change quite as drastically as my dissertation did, the ability to move in unsteady and changing circumstances has proven an invaluable skill. Learning flexibility during graduate school has made me successful in my professional role as a qualitative analyst for the Veterans Health Administration, which involves working on multiple team-based research projects simultaneously. With the close support of Anthropology faculty, staff, and fellow graduate students, I was given the time, space, and resources to learn how to roll with the punches.

# Publications

# 2024-2025

**Beck, Margaret E.** 2024. "James M. Skibo and Pottery Function." *Ethnoarchaeology* 16 (2): 409-14.

**Beck, Margaret E.** 2025. "Ochre in Sedimentary Rock: Sources in the Central Great Plains." *American Antiquity*, 1-15.

**Beck, Margaret E. and Matthew E. Hill.** 2025. "The Right Red: Comparing Red Pigment Hues with CIELAB." *Advances in Archaeological Practice* 13 (2): 256-72.

**Beck, Margaret E., Glen A. Freimuth and Brandi L. MacDonald.** 2024. "Slips, Films, and Material Choice: Long-Distance Hydrothermal Pigments on Middle Mississippian Red Ware." *Journal of Archaeological Science* 54: 104456.

**Franciscus, Robert G., and Scott D. Maddux.** Forthcoming. "The Neandertal Facial Skeleton." In *Neandertal Skeletal Anatomy: Form, Function and Paleobiology*, edited by Libby. W. Cowgill and Scott D. Maddux. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**G'Sell, Brady.** 2024. *Reworking Citizenship: Race, Gender, and Kinship in South Africa*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

**Khandelwal, Meena.** 2024. *Cookstove Chronicles: Social Life of a Women's Technology in India*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

**Khandelwal, Meena R.** 2025. "Politics of Domestic Technologies: How Can US-Based Feminist STS Research Illuminate Cookstove Improvement in India?" *Journal of Social and Economic Development* 27 (S1): 41-56.

**Khandelwal, Meena.** 2024. "What Counts as Drudgery, and Who Decides?" *Anthropology News*.

Lillios, Katina T., Zhuo Tang, and Jay Bowen. 2025. "The Engraved Slate Plaques of Late Neolithic and Copper Age Iberia: A Statistical Evaluation of the Genealogical Hypothesis." *European Journal of Archaeology* 28 (1): 43-60.

Lillios, Katina. Forthcoming 2025. "Learning Archaeology through Graffiti." In *Learning Archaeology*, edited by A. Katherine Patton, Danielle Macdonald, and Michael Chazan. London: Routledge.

Powers, Theodore, and Jimmy Pieterse. 2024. "Vacillating Vaccines: Responses to Covid-19 in the United States and South Africa." *Anthropology Southern Africa* 47 (1): 6-19.

Restrepo-Sánchez, Andrés. 2025. "Intersecciones de Sexo, Género y Sexualidad En Las Prácticas de Cuidado de Enfermeros Colombianos." *Revista Ciencia y Cuidado* 21 (2).

Restrepo-Sánchez, Andrés. 2025. "Autonomy, Violence, and Consent in the Obstetric Field." *Hypatia* 40 (3): 498-524.

Restrepo-Sánchez, Andrés. 2024. "Gastroregionalism in Colombia: Enforcing Paisa Culture Through 'Traditional Food'." *Graduate Journal of Food Studies* 11.



## Cookstove Chronicles

Social Life of a Women's Technology in India

Meena R. Khandelwal

# Grad Student Updates



## Andrés Restrepo-Sánchez

Andrés Restrepo-Sánchez is a PhD candidate in Sociocultural Anthropology, advised by Dr. Elana Buch. He completed a year of ethnographic fieldwork in Medellín, Colombia, where he explored pregnancy and birth experiences in contexts of violence. Andrés conducted historical archival research, institutional ethnography, and over 130 interviews with healthcare workers, doulas, midwives, and families. With this data, he will start writing his dissertation and work towards additional publications, including an already accepted chapter for the upcoming edited book, *The Routledge Handbook of the Anthropology of Doulas*. He has presented the preliminary results of his research at national and international conferences and published in peer-reviewed journals.

## Baishali Bhaumik

Baishali Bhaumik is a PhD student in Anthropology advised by Dr. Meena Khandelwal. She earned her bachelor's degree in Sociology from Calcutta University, her master's from Presidency University, and her MPhil from Jadavpur University. Her research focuses on gendered labor, environmental precarity, and feminist political economy in the Sundarbans delta of India. Baishali has conducted extensive fieldwork in the Sundarbans as part of her MPhil and through collaborations with the River Delta Anthropocene Project. Working closely with local communities, she has focused on reproductive health, informal labor, and the uneven impacts of conservation and development. Her PhD project will explore kinship, sex work, and ecological governance



through a feminist and decolonial lens, foregrounding the moral and affective economies through which women negotiate survival, care, and refusal in a climate-fragile landscape. In summer 2025, she will undertake archival research, drawing on historical and policy archives to trace the shifting logics of ecological governance and its impact on gendered labor in the Sundarbans.



## Binit Gurung

Binit Gurung is a PhD student in Sociocultural Anthropology at the University of Iowa, advised by Dr. Meena Khandelwal. He holds a Master's degree and an MPhil in Sociology from the University of Delhi and, in 2024, a Master's degree in Anthropology from the University of Iowa. In May 2025, he presented a paper titled "Ghar Janu: Ethnographic Studies of Return Migration among Indigenous Sikkimese Youth" at the Stanford Humanities Center workshop *Writing the Life Process*, where he shared his work with South Asian scholars whose

research is situated in India. His PhD project examines the relationship between return migration, development, and modernity among Sikkimese educational migrants. During the 2025 to 2026 academic year, he will prepare for his comprehensive examination and develop his dissertation prospectus, which he plans to defend in Spring 2026.

## Corinne Watts

Corinne is an archaeology PhD candidate advised by Dr. Katina Lillios. Her research focuses on the provenance of lithic materials during the Neolithic and Chalcolithic in central Iberia, examining how ground stone tools made from unique materials were sourced and used in the Madrid region of Spain. This year Corinne completed work on co-mentoring an Office of Undergraduate Research Project focused on experimental archaeology. This summer, she will be finishing up data collection for her dissertation in Madrid, Spain with generous support from the Center for Global and Regional Environmental Research.





## Derick Juptner

Derick is in his 3rd year of the PhD program under Dr. Matthew E. Hill, Jr. He received his MA in the program in 2022 and his BA in anthropology from Texas A&M University in 2019. Derick studies the archaeology of the Indigenous peoples of the Great Plains, Rocky Mountains, and Great Basin regions of western North America. His dissertation focuses on subsistence strategies, land use practices, and diet breadth of ancestral Apache groups on the high plains of western Nebraska during the 16th and 17th centuries.

This past year, Derick received funding for his dissertation from the Donna C. Roper Fund through the Plains Anthropological Society to generate radiocarbon dates for the archaeological site of focus for his project. He also received the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award from the University of Iowa Council on Teaching for his above and beyond efforts in teaching and mentoring undergraduate students in the courses he has taught for this year. Additionally, Derick is working with the United Action for Youth Center to provide hands-on activities in archaeology for the youth in Iowa City. Derick is also the recipient of the department's 2024-2025 June Helm Award for Service and Excellence in Anthropology. In the coming year, Derick intends to continue progress on his dissertation in the program while also publishing work on previous research projects and collaborations.

## Ebenezer Olamiposi Adeyemi

Ebenezer Olamiposi Adeyemi is a PhD candidate advised by Dr. Ted Powers. Ebenezer received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology (2015) and a Master's degree in Peace and Conflict Studies (2018) from the University of Ibadan in his home country, Nigeria. Additionally, Ebenezer received a Master's degree in Anthropology (2021) from the University of Iowa. During the 2024/2025 academic year, Ebenezer continued working on his doctoral dissertation.



His dissertation is exploring the strategies that residents of Makoko, a large informal settlement characterized by government marginalization and inadequate infrastructure, in Lagos, Nigeria, utilize to build infrastructure to manage infectious diseases, including malaria and typhoid, in their community. Ebenezer received the ACT Scholars' Program Fellowship in August 2024 to support the completion of his dissertation. Additionally, in Spring 2025, Ebenezer was nominated for election into the position of Graduate Student Representative of the Association for the Anthropology of Policy (ASAP), a section of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) by two past co-presidents of ASAP. His tenure of service within the AAA will begin formally at the AAA conference in November 2025. Also, Ebenezer submitted a proposal for a panel that he and his faculty mentor, Dr. Ted Powers, proposed to organize at the AAA in November 2025.

This summer, Ebenezer is organizing a panel at the Lagos Studies Association (LSA) Conference, one of the largest African Studies Conferences. Both panels will explore how the study of infrastructure, a major conceptual focus in Ebenezer's dissertation, can deepen our understanding of different topics in Africa. Specifically, his panel at the LSA, entitled "Infrastructure Studies in Africa: Interdisciplinary Perspectives" will bring together scholars from different disciplines and parts of the world to discuss how the study of infrastructure can engender the understanding of society, including power, daily livelihood, global health disparities, economy, etc. Furthermore, the panel he and Dr. Powers proposed to organize at the AAA, entitled "Anthropological Approaches to Infrastructure in Africa" will focus on how the anthropological study of infrastructure can enhance our understanding of African societies.

## Jessica Ramirez

Jessica Ramirez has completed her 1st year in the PhD program in Cultural/Medical Anthropology. She is co-advised by Dr. Elana Buch and Dr. Erica Prussing. She received her B.S. in Anthropology from Texas State University and an M.A. in Anthropology from the University of Texas at San Antonio. She is expanding on her master's research by further studying the state/local and private/public dynamics of paid family care for older adults in her community back home in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. She is also obtaining a Master's in Public Health alongside her PhD at the University of Iowa. She is also a graduate recipient of the Lulu Merle Johnson Recruitment Fellowship. She plans on conducting pilot research for her dissertation this summer 2025.





## Kyle Bikowski

Kyle Bikowski is a Ph.D. Candidate under the joint advisement of Dr. Brady G'Sell and Dr. Laurie Graham (Emeritus). His broad research interests are the intersections of globalization, geek culture, and masculinity, with particular focus on the emergence of Gaymer (gay-gamer) as a self-identified “global” queer masculinity. His dissertation aims to shift narratives of queer studies from a focus on suffering toward an examination of joyful experiences. His project is

an investigation on how Gaymers in Santiago de Querétaro, Mexico build and maintain virtual and analog communities through fun, humor, and play. Kyle is currently finishing a year of fieldwork in Mexico funded by a Wenner-Gren Foundation Dissertation Fieldwork Grant, during which he has worked with a group of 20 Gaymers. During this time, he has been attending and observing board game nights, informal get togethers, pool parties, and anime conventions with research participants, as well as taking notes on a group WhatsApp chat. He is also looking forward to the publication of his first chapter in an edited volume about role-playing games as agents of social change, due out later this year.

## Logan Moore

Logan is a biological anthropology PhD Candidate advised by Dr. Robert Franciscus. Logan received a Bachelor of Science in Anthropology from Illinois State University in 2018. Additionally, since entering the program, Logan earned his M.A. from the University of Iowa in 2020 and was promoted to candidacy status in 2022. For his doctoral dissertation work, Logan has been investigating the evolution of the



human thorax, an area that has historically been understudied when compared to other regions of the body. His work focuses on the shape differences between modern and archaic human ribcages. An understanding of the degree to which the ribcage in our evolutionary predecessors may have changed in form and under what selective behavioral pressures this could have occurred has only recently come into focus in sufficient detail and with adequate analytical approaches to make real headway. One of his primary interests is to better understand

stand the activity levels of modern and archaic humans and how these may be reflected in morphological change. In the last academic year, Logan continued to work on his doctoral research by overcoming methodological hurdles and collaborating with other researchers at the University of Iowa to generate and analyze his data. He has finished collecting his data and a large portion of his analysis in an investigation of rib shape and form differences at independent rib levels. Additionally, he has been conducting analyses of body shape and size variables, as well as pulmonary function (i.e., spirometric variables), to investigate differences such as sexual dimorphism in living humans. He has added new variables, including observations on data regarding the size of the heart and its subsequent chambers and how these dynamics relate to thoracic performance. His work will continue with an investigation of rib shape and form, and how those variables may also relate to pulmonary function.

Finally, Logan submitted and gave his first podium presentation at the annual meetings for the American Association of Biological Anthropologists regarding his work titled "Variation in extant modern human rib morphometrics shows weak correspondence with measures of lung capacity and function," in which he argues that extant modern humans have generally low correlations between their pulmonary function and thoracic measurements, the opposite position of the assumed performance and few analyses conducted in this area of research. Logan is currently working on a thesis chapter resulting from this presentation, which will be developed into a planned article to be submitted in 2025. Another article is planned for submission in early 2026.

## **Lucas Howser**

Lucas is a PhD student in Anthropology with a focus on archaeology, advised by Dr. Margaret Beck and Dr. Matt Hill. Lucas received his Bachelor of Science in Anthropology from Northern Illinois University in 2018 and his Master of Science in Cultural Resource Management Archaeology from St. Cloud State University in 2022. His research examines geomorphology, GIS-based inter-site analysis, precolonial lithic technologies, and the archaeology of the American mid continent.

## **Max Lieberman**

Max Lieberman is completing his dissertation under the guidance of Dr. Scott Schnell (Prof. Emeritus). His dissertation research focuses on the conflict concerning the wild bison herds of Yellowstone National Park. Max is also a research assistant for Dr. Erica Carlisle, a pediatric surgeon at the Carver College of Medicine. Max returned to the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) for six months of fieldwork in November of 2024. The Yellowstone bison migration can begin as early as November, but this year started in March. It was a fruitful winter connecting with year-round residents of the GYE and following the movements of the bison.



## Mackenzie Cross

Mack is a Ph.D. candidate in Biological Anthropology. Her dissertation explores how adaptive traits evolve in both an ecological and genetic sense. In order to do this, she uses machine learning methods to curate large collections of ecological data across primates (and perhaps mammals), and phylogenetic methods to infer the influence of evolutionary history on restricting (or facilitating) a species' adaptive potential. This work contri-

butes to the discourse surrounding the "repeatability" of evolution, as the degree to which species are free to innovate new adaptive solutions to shared ecological problems is debated. Currently, she is finishing the publication of her masters work on the evolution of umami taste perception in primates. Once submitted, she will begin training a machine learning algorithm to extract ecological data from published abstracts in order to develop a large ecological trait dataset, which will be used to test hypotheses regarding adaptive trait evolution. She is also preparing grant applications to sequence the genomes of colugo and tree shrew species in Malaysia for a comparative genomics project, as these groups of animals can better inform our understanding of primate origins.

In a broader sense, Mack is interested in how species co-create ecosystems together, and how species niche is negotiated within ecosystems. Last year, she received funding from the Office of Community Engagement to develop a community engaged science project at Lake Anita State Park in collaboration with CAM High School, which she attended growing up. Through this work, she aims to improve rural student engagement with science, while working with students to characterize species presence and identify how animals use the park (e.g., which areas animals spent most of their time within, and the types of resources within those areas). They have completed almost a years worth of data collection from 4 camera traps, and have identified a lot of deer, as well as opossums, raccoons, rabbits, skunks, and several birds of prey. Most recently, they captured a spectacular image of an owl mid-flight in the middle of the day with a snake hanging from their beak. Further, this summer, they will begin to identify the flora around these cameras to characterize the microhabitat of each particular camera region. Together, they hope to identify why particular regions of the park experience increased animal activity as opposed to other regions, which can inform restoration efforts where the goal is to create a space capable of supporting diverse animal species.



## Victoria Priola

Victoria is a Ph.D. Candidate in archaeology advised by Dr. Katina Lillios. She spent this past year further developing her teaching skills and working on her dissertation. In the summer of 2024, Victoria conducted her first course as lead instructor, teaching a condensed and accelerated version of World Archaeology. She taught a second course as lead instructor during Fall 2024, designing and implementing a new version of “Issues in Anthropology” on

the topic Sex, Gender, and Sexuality in Archaeology. Outside of the classroom, Victoria has made progress writing up her dissertation, which explores textile production and regional interactions during the Copper Age in southwestern Iberia through the study of ceramics loom weights from two important sites, Perdigões (Alentejo, Portugal) and Valencina de la Concepción (Andalucía, Spain). Victoria received CLAS Dissertation Writing Fellowships to support the completion of this work.

## Shannon Casey

Shannon is a second-year archaeology graduate student under the co-advisement of Dr. Katina Lillios and Dr. Margaret Beck. She received her B.A. in Archaeology from the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse. This summer, Shannon will be travelling to Portugal with her advisor, Professor Katina Lillios, to study the medieval ceramics at Agroal, an archaeological farmstead site that was occupied during both the Bronze Age and the medieval period. Her research will focus on identifying activities carried out at the site, clarifying Agroal's relationship to other communities, and contributing to our understanding of medieval Portugal. To conduct this research, she was awarded the Stanley International Research Award and the June Helm Summer Funding.



# Faculty Updates

## Andrew Kitchen

The academic year was, again, productive and exciting for the Evolutionary Anthropology group. One graduate student (Mary Wilson-Ph.D.) and one undergraduate student (Rachel Ford-B.S.) in the group received degrees this year. Whilst Rachel has moved on to medical school and Danielle Johnsen has left us to pursue teaching certification, Mary will remain in the lab as an honorary postdoctoral fellow. The other members of the group have also been busy, of course! Mackenzie Cross, Seren Castellano, and Krishna Bharadwaj have all presented their research at regional or national conferences. Seren Castellano won a prestigious Goldwater Scholarship and is spending her summer working at Harvard University with funds from the NSF REU program. Mackenzie Cross completed her comprehensive exams and is now a Ph.D. candidate. We have been fortunate to host several outstanding summer students in 2024-2025, including Lilly Spade (Luther College - NSF REU), Ava Blackledge (Western Kentucky University/Stanford University-NSF REU), and Jennifer Lin (Texas-the SSTP program), and are looking forward to welcoming a new graduate student, Christine Mains, and new undergraduates, such as Caius Connolly and Lizzie Samara, to the group in the Fall. We remain busy working on lost crops, North American dogs, SARS-CoV-2, polyomaviruses, and selection pressures acting on primate genes - a truly diverse range of topics. It was another great year for the group, reflecting the hard work of everyone in the lab, with (we hope) further successes to come.

## Brady G'sell

This was a busy and momentous year. In August, my book *Reworking Citizenship: Race, Gender, and Kinship in South Africa* came out with Stanford University Press. I gave book talks at the African Studies Association Annual Conference, the African Studies Workshop at the University of Chicago, and, most delightfully, a Book Matters reading at Iowa's Prairie Lights with colleagues Dr. Buch and Dr. Khandelwal on how we incorporate feminist anthropology into our work. Late September was the first annual African Festival of Arts and Culture which attracted over



2500 attendees for food, music, art, and dancing into the night. The planning committee was awarded a Community Catalyst award by Better Together 2030 acknowledging the success of the festival and its impact on Iowa City. I have continued to enjoy collaborative work with the African immigrant community in Iowa and was honored to be awarded a Presidents' Civic Engagement Leadership Award by the Seed Coalition. In May I learned that I have been promoted to Associate Professor and I look forward to working with students, colleagues, and collaborators at this new level.

## Cynthia Chou

Cynthia had a full talks schedule this past academic year. She presented a paper, chaired a panel and co-convened a roundtable discussion on sea nomadism at the 13th International Convention of Asia Scholars: Crossways of Knowledge in Surabaya, Indonesia. A highlight in Spring 2025 was a visit by her research team from Singapore to the University of Iowa. The visit resulted in seeing her and her research team being invited to deliver a series of talks about their project on breast cancer amongst Malay women in Singapore to various units across campus. They were also invited to serve on the judges panel for the Annual Institute for Public Health Practice, Research and Policy Global Health Case Competition in collaboration with the Public Health Research Office and Global Public Health Initiative. In this past academic year, Cynthia also gave talks to the International Studies Program about her food studies project, the School of Nursing about ethnographic research and the Secular Humanists of the Unitarian Universalist Society about sea nomadism.

Together with Maxime Boutry of the National Center for Scientific Research in France, Cynthia also began work on editing a special journal issue with TRaNS: Trans-Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia on sea nomadism in honor of the late James Scott.

In her capacity as the Director of the Center for Asian and Pacific Studies, Cynthia organized and brought various units across the university and alumni together for a Lunar New Year 2025 Celebration Global webinar. She also continued to serve as a member of the UI International Programs Advisory Council, the UI Fulbright program, the UI Center for Human Rights Advisory Board, the Obermann Center for Advanced Studies Advisory Committee and the International Studies Academic Advisory Board.

## Elana Buch

I continue to work on ethnographic research investigating later life as a time of social experimentation and population aging as a driver of social change and innovation. Popular discourse, and the bulk of scholarship paint later life as a part of the life course dominated by decline and loss, while population aging - a term that refers to the increasing proportion of the population over the age of 60 - is widely depicted as a looming economic and social threat. My work challenges these ageist approaches to thinking about later life. In one project, I examine the ways that USian older adults and their kin navigating new romantic relationships in later life are reworking ideas of family relations and relatedness. Another project investigates older adults' experiments with housing in the United States, as families and communities respond to the combined pressures of housing shortages, economic inequality, and need for care. I continue to contribute to the anthropology of care via collaborations with colleagues. One project develops an anthropological approach to care as a category for comparative analysis. Another collaboration uses multidisciplinary, mixed methods to develop efficient tools for understanding and grouping the holistic experiences of caregivers of people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. We aim to facilitate systems that better match caregivers with supportive interventions that reflect their diverse experiences.

I continue to learn with and from our brilliant graduate students. In the spring, Brittany Anderson successfully defended her dissertation on the role that Environmental Services Staff at Continuing Care Retirement Communities play in providing invisible care and facilitating timely transitions between levels of care. She is now working at the VA as a part of the Ethnographic Methods and Implementation Core. Andrés Restrepo Sanchez has spent the year conducting ethnographic fieldwork on obstetric violence in Medellín, Colombia. This year, Jessica Ramirez joined the department as a doctoral student whose research focuses on the experiences of paid family caregivers in Texas' Rio Grande Valley.

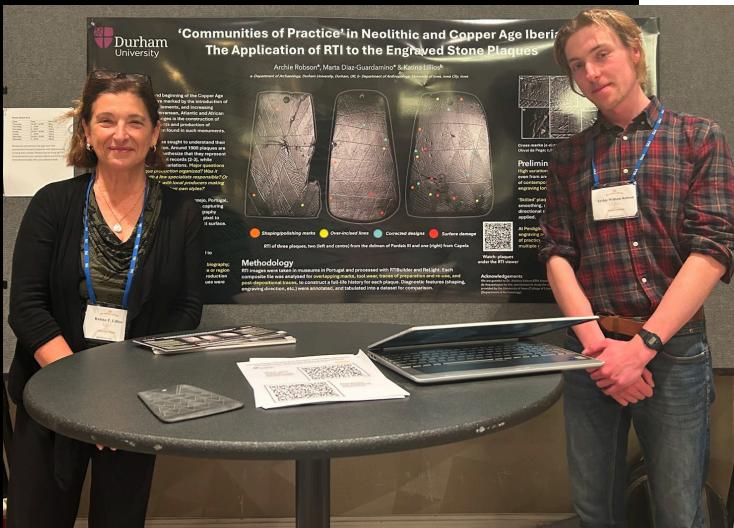
## Erica Prussing

Erica's research continues to ethnographically examine efforts by epidemiologists to incorporate equity and justice priorities into their highly technical field. Her forthcoming book with Johns Hopkins University Press documents key experiences and perspectives of epidemiologists who center Indigenous health equity, for instance, in their studies of population health patterns and determinants. Her current projects examine further examples of the complex cultural, social and political work of incorporating pro-equity, anti-racist and other critical perspectives into epidemiological research and teaching--with an eye toward how these creatively integrate humanistic with scientific ways of knowing, in contexts of shifting U.S. and global cultural politics. Erica continues to teach a variety of courses in cultural and medical anthropology and Indigenous studies. She also helped to successfully launch the department's newly revised graduate seminar in "Ethnographic Field Methods" in spring 2025, in which students collaborate on a community-engaged project to better understand international graduate student experiences on campus. This spring's class projects focused on student experiences with cultural connections and information flow and as teaching assistants, during a period of escalating political pressures on international students in the U.S.

## Glenn Storey

My friend and mentor Peter Green died September 16 just three months shy of his 100th birthday. Luckily, the Herodotus translation and commentary were virtually complete. I will have to finish them alone, editing and adding small additions. I gave a paper at the SAAs in honor of Kenneth Hirth's retirement, focused on interesting similarities between ancient Roman and colonial Mexican retailing practices. I also continue to research a short book for Cambridge University Press on ancient urban economies which may feature a possible rehabilitation of Jane Jacob's view of ancient Catal Hoyok.





## Katina Lillios

This year, Katina resumed life as a full-time faculty member after her term as DEO. She continued her investigations on the engraved stone plaques from Neolithic Iberia: she published an article with Zhuo Tang and Jay Bowen in the European Journal of Archaeology ('The Engraved

Slate Plaques of Late Neolithic and Copper Age Iberia: A Statistical Evaluation of the Genealogical Hypothesis'), she gave a lecture on the plaques at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Archaeology Brown Bag series, and she collaborated with archaeologists Archie Robson and Marta Díaz-Guardamino from the University of Durham on an SAA poster entitled 'Communities of Practice in Neolithic and Copper Age Iberia: The Application of RTI to the Engraved Stone Plaques'. Katina also began plans for new analyses of the Medieval occupation of Agroal, a rural farmstead in central Portugal that she excavated for her doctoral dissertation. She gave a presentation (over Zoom) on the project to the Instituto de Estudos Medievais of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, she collaborated with graduate students Riley Pacer and Shannon Casey on an SAA poster entitled 'Working with Legacy Data to Identify Activity Areas at the Bronze Age/Medieval Settlement of Agroal (Ourém, Portugal)', and she received grants from the Arts and Humanities Initiative and International Programs to carry out new collaborative studies on the Medieval ceramics from Agroal and to use remote sensing to map and possibly identify new architecture from the site. Katina was happy to see a Covid project also come to fruition: her chapter 'Learning Archaeology through Graffiti' will be published in the summer of 2025 in *Learning Archaeology* (Routledge, edited by A. Katherine Patton, Danielle Macdonald, and Michael Chazan).

## Margaret Beck

As an archaeologist, Margaret Beck studies how people make what they need from locally available materials. This includes research on non-industrial potters today and in the past and on materials used for red pigment and paint. Her activities this year include a talk in the department colloquium series in September 2024 titled "The Geology of Color: Red Pigment in the Midcontinent." Recent articles include "Slips, Films, and Material Choice: Long-Distance Hydrothermal Pigments on Middle Mississippian Red Ware" (Beck, Freimuth, and MacDonald 2024 in *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports*), "James M. Skibo and Pottery Function" (Beck 2024 in *Ethnoarchaeology*), and "The Right Red: Assessing Slip Color with CIELAB" (Beck

Material Choice: Long-Distance Hydrothermal Pigments on Middle Mississippian Red Ware" (Beck, Freimuth, and MacDonald 2024 in *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports*), "James M. Skibo and Pottery Function" (Beck 2024 in *Ethnoarchaeology*), and "The Right Red: Assessing Slip Color with CIELAB" (Beck and Hill 2025 in *Advances in Archaeological Practice*) and a manuscript in review titled, "Ochre in Sedimentary Rock; Sources in the Central Great Plains" (Beck 2025).

Beck also continues her research on Indigenous Great Plains ceramics. With funding from an Obermann Center for Advanced Studies Interdisciplinary Research Grant (IDRG), she will meet in August 2025 with collaborators Sarah Trabert (University of Oklahoma) and Kacy Hollenback (Southern Methodist University) for a project about post-AD 1500 ceramics in the Great Plains.

## Matthew Hill

In the last year, Matt continued to focus on his three main research interests: the earliest big game hunters of the Americas, the appearance of Ndee populations on the High Plains of North America, and the colonial human-dog relationship in the Chesapeake Bay region. This past summer he was also very fortunate to work in the field with a group of wonderful undergraduate and graduate students.

## Meena Khandelwal

Meena Khandelwal's monograph *Cookstove Chronicles: Social Life of a Women's Technology in India* was released in October 2024. The book focuses on India's traditional mud stove (chulha in Hindi), women who use it, and those trying to improve it. This sole-authored volume is part of a broader project based on several years of multidisciplinary collaboration with colleagues on campus, including archaeologists Matthew E. Hill and Margaret Beck. *Cookstove Chronicles* is part of University of Arizona Press's Critical Green Engagements series and was selected to become an open-access e-book (after a three-year delay) as part of Path to Open "to provide libraries with affordable access to diverse, high-quality frontlist titles; support small and medium university presses in open access publishing; help authors reach a global audience; and advance equity of access to underserved researchers around the world". Meena published a short public-facing essay on the development buzzword "drudgery" in *Anthropology News* for the Association of Feminist Anthropology. Separate from the book, Meena also published "Politics of Domestic



Technologies: How Can US based Feminist STS Research Illuminate Cookstove Improvement in India?" (2025) in the Journal of Social and Economic Development. Meena is beginning to pursue two new questions that emerged from the cookstove work. On carbon credit markets, she presented a paper "How do we measure 'clean' cooking?" at the AAA meetings in November 2025, as part of a panel, Troubling Accounts: the relations, politics, and ethics of reckoning climate and environmental change organized by Shaila Seshia Galvin and John Paulraj. She has won an ICRU award to work with an undergraduate student, Serenity Delgado, to explore the culture and practice of repairing things in the Iowa City area during the 2025-2026 academic year. Meena is also deeply honored to have been awarded the 2025 President and Provost Award for Teaching Excellence and grateful to Anthropology colleagues and students who nominated her.

## Theodore Powers

During the 2024/25 academic year, I continued to develop my research while also maintaining a high level of service to the department and discipline. Relative to research, I published a peer-reviewed article titled "Vacillating Vaccines: Responses to COVID-19 in the United States and South Africa" in Anthropology Southern Africa. The paper was part of a special issue that focused on the socio-cultural dynamics of COVID-19 across Southern Africa and beyond, edited by Jonathan Stadler and Gcobani Qambela. I presented my ongoing research at the 2024 AAA conference via a paper entitled "Abstraction, Simplification, Violence: COVID-19 and the Return to "Normal" in the United States." I was also invited to present my research as part of a World Café co-hosted by the University of Iowa and University of Johannesburg, along with Professor Ashwin Desai. Finally, I participated in a conference hosted by the Department of Anthropology at the University of Johannesburg entitled 30 Years of Pandemics and Epidemics in Southern Africa.

With respect to teaching, I developed a new class that I taught during the Spring 2025 semester "Fighting to Live: Anthropology and Health Movements," a topic that builds on my long-standing interest in health, inequality, and social movements. Relative to service, I continued to serve within the American Anthropological Association (AAA) via my election as the co-President-Elect of the Association for the Anthropology of Policy (ASAP). As part of this appointment, I am co-chairing the ASAP Program Committee for the 2025 AAA conference. Across the university, I continue to serve as an executive board member of the Iowa Global Health Network. Relative to the community, I was invited to serve as a board member of the Iowa City Foreign Relations Council.



## Robert G. Franciscus

Bob was on leave in fall 2024 in his second year of phased retirement but remained busy with his project comparing extant human cranial and postcranial skeletal robusticity measures to evaluate behavioral and androgenic factors related to the global spread of modern humans from Africa and the Levant after 80,000 years ago. This multi-phase work, which has involved both graduate and undergradu-

-te students, tests hypotheses from a model of increased social tolerance and prosocial behavior in *Homo sapiens* argued to be reflected in key anatomical craniofacial traits. As such, the work has strong ties to a more general model of human “self-domestication” in Late Pleistocene *Homo sapiens* and its ramifications for understanding the emergence and rapid global spread of our species and the extinction of all pre-modern forms of humanity. Bob also took a few weeks off in the fall to visit his old graduate school stompin’ grounds in New Mexico, including a visit to the UNM campus (see the photo image). Despite the many years that have flown by since his graduation from there in 1995, much of the campus remains unchanged from those exciting years living and studying in the “Land of Enchantment.” After the winter break, Bob and one of his former PhD students, Scott Maddux (Associate Professor, Center for Anatomical Sciences, University of North Texas Health Science Center), used the spring 2025 semester to put the finishing touches on a co-authored chapter: “The Neandertal Facial Skeleton” which will appear in the forthcoming volume: *Neandertal Skeletal Anatomy: Form, Function and Paleobiology*. Cambridge University Press (Eds. L.W. Cowgill & S.D. Maddux). Bob was also a co-author on a paper given by his current doctoral student, Logan Moore, at the American Association of Biological Anthropologists meeting in Baltimore this past March: “Variation in extant modern human rib morphometrics shows weak correspondence with measures of lung capacity and function.” *American Journal of Biological Anthropology*. Suppl. 79:115. Finally, Bob also served as an invited paleoanthropology guest editor for the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, USA*.

## A Note From The Editor

I would like to first and foremost thank all the students and faculty for their sincere contributions to this year's AnthrObserver. It was fun working on this gig and learning about the diverse & exciting intellectual work our department is producing in anthropology. I would also like to extend special thanks to Sarah Horgen and Shari Knight for their patience, guidance, and continued support throughout this process. I take full responsibility for any mistakes or omissions in the 2024 to 2025 newsletter.

Cheers,  
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