

SPRING

ISSUE 7

K-STATE ANTHROPOLOGY

Anthropology Program Newsletter 2023



SEE BIG • SEE SMALL • SEE IT ALL

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Newsletter layout by Trevor Durbin. Content written by Trevor Durbin, unless otherwise specified. To submit your student, faculty, or alumni news for the next newsletter, contact Trevor at tdurbin@ksu.edu.

Four Guest Anthropologists Give In-person Talks to K-State Students and Faculty

For two years, the pandemic has kept guest speakers from visiting K-State in person. This year, that changed with four renowned scholars visiting from Rice University, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Australian National University.

John Hawks

John Hawks is a 1994 graduate of K-State, with degrees in Anthropology, English, and French. He is now the Vilas-Borghesi Distinguished Achievement Professor of Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has investigated the rapid evolution of modern humans within the past 40,000 years and has explored the contribution of ancient Neandertals to the ancestry of people living today. He spoke to students and faculty about his team's discovery of the new species *Homo naledi*, from the Rising Star cave system in South Africa. His talk was titled "From Kansas State to discovering human ancestors at the Cradle of Humankind."

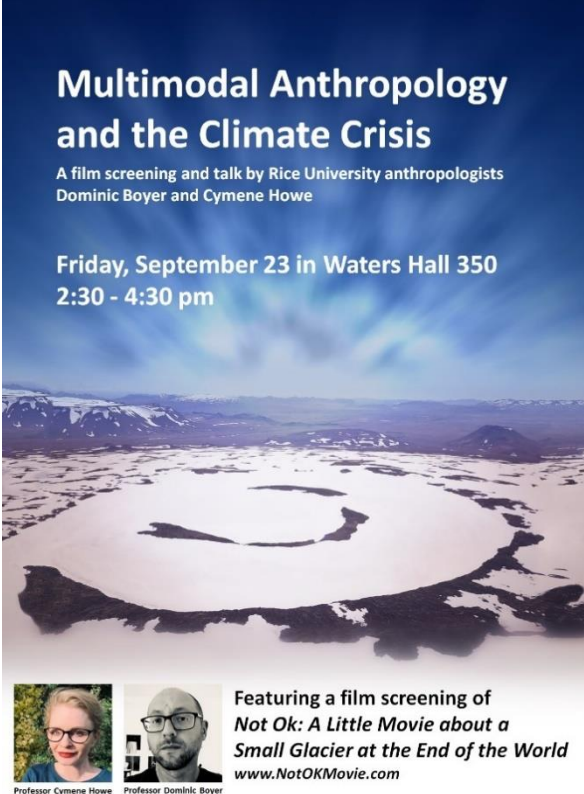


Dominic Boyer and Cymene Howe

Dominic Boyer and Cymene Howe are environmental anthropologists, filmmakers, and professors of anthropology at Rice University. They treated students and faculty to a hybrid talk and film screening titled “Multimodal Anthropology and the Climate Crisis” during which they explored several of their scholarly and public-facing projects dealing with multimodal and multimedia anthropology of climate change and energy. The talk included a screening of their ethnographic film “Not Ok: A Little Movie about a Small Glacier at the End of the World” about the disappearance of the Ok glacier in Iceland due to global warming.

Jane M. Ferguson

Jane Ferguson is a cultural anthropologist, ethnographer and associate professor of anthropology and Southeast Asian history at Australia National University. Her lecture “*Luk Thep: Challenging the Boundaries of the Human Passenger*” explored a spirit cult trend of adopting and nurturing *luk thep*, or (ลูกเทพ) “angel child” dolls. She described how people took their dolls to cafes and restaurants, indulging them with drinks and snacks and posting photos on social media. Thai Smile Airlines issued a memo requiring that cabin crew serve *luk thep* dolls, provided their owner purchased a separate seat for them. Her talk explored the *luk thep* as a problem for aviation logistics in a way that challenged the boundaries of the human and a renewed examination of the composition of the passenger.



Multimodal Anthropology and the Climate Crisis

A film screening and talk by Rice University anthropologists
Dominic Boyer and Cymene Howe

Friday, September 23 in Waters Hall 350
2:30 - 4:30 pm

Featuring a film screening of
Not Ok: A Little Movie about a Small Glacier at the End of the World
www.NotOKMovie.com

Professor Cymene Howe Professor Dominic Boyer



Megan Williamson Joins K-State Anthropology as New Archaeological Collections Manager and NAGPRA Coordinator

Contributed by Lauren Ritterbush

K-State welcomes Megan Williamson as the university's new Archaeological Collections Manager and NAGPRA Coordinator. Megan holds a Master's of Science in funerary archaeology and human osteology from the University of Sheffield and a Bachelor's of Science in biocultural anthropology from Oregon State University. In addition to her training in osteology, Megan has gained archaeological training through field schools and as a Pathways intern and archaeological technician with the National Park Service's Southeast



Archeological Center (SEAC). During her four years at SEAC, Megan gained useful hands-on experience with archaeological collections care and implementation of NAGPRA, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

At K-State, Megan serves as the coordinator for our institution's efforts to return the remains of Indigenous ancestors and funerary objects to their descendants in compliance with federal mandates. Her efforts continue progress started in 1998 through the efforts of Donna C. Roper and Lauren W. Ritterbush. Megan has actively engaged with the archaeological collections curated within the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work and has begun consultation with relevant Indigenous tribes in the region. Meanwhile, Megan is becoming familiar with regional archaeology and the non-NAGPRA collections held by K-State. She will be

working with Prof. Ritterbush and interested students in rehabilitating those collections to meet modern curation standards. We hope to make much progress in both of these major endeavors over the next two years while also developing a strategic plan for K-State's anthropological collections that aligns with future directions of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work and the College of Arts & Sciences.

We are excited to have Megan among the anthropologists at K-State and look forward to the contributions her work will bring to K-State.

Eight Students Travel to Vietnam for a New Class, "Ethnography Abroad"

Contributed by Michael Wesch

Eight students traveled with me and Alumnus Ben Adams ('17) to Vietnam for three weeks of immersive experiences in the Cao Dai religion of South Vietnam. By special invitation from the Cao Dai, we were invited to see the annual Festival Commemorating God, which attracts tens of thousands of people to the Cao Dai Holy See every year. The festival included a large exhibition, fireworks, a parade featuring the largest dragon dance in Vietnam, and an all-night Mass that filled the lawn in front of the grand Holy See with tens of thousands of white-cloaked devotees. Offering a fully immersive experience, the Cao Dai provided us with our own white gowns and invited us to see and experience every aspect of their lives. We were even invited to observe a funeral, as it is one of their most elaborate rituals of which they are most proud.



After one week with the Cao Dai we traveled to Central Vietnam where we made friends with some monks in the Mendicant Sect of Vietnamese Buddhism. They invited us to their first full moon festival, where we chanted famous mantras and sutras under the full moon along with hundreds of others.

Aside from the religious festivities we immersed ourselves in Vietnamese motor-scooter culture, danced and sang in Karaoke bars, took in the amazing movement cultures along the beach, and enjoyed a wide range of Vietnamese foods.

For more, follow my YouTube channel @mwesch for upcoming videos about the trip, and check out our Instagram hashtag: #ksuvietnam.



Follow K-State Anthropology on Instagram!
@kansas_state_anthropology

Notes from the Field

Contributed by Jessica Falcone

A friend of mine recently found this quote from a famous anthropologist and posted it to his Facebook page: "If one did not have to write notes, anthropology would be ideal fun." -- Meyer Fortes (in Foks 2023, p. 77).¹ Anthropologists far and wide got a chuckle from that post and hit the "like" button. Hanging out in the field without having to write down every little cultural detail would indeed be enjoyable: it would be a glorified vacation! I found this quip amusing, but upon reflection it didn't actually ring entirely true to me. The truth is that taking notes in the field doesn't bother me in the least. I could quite happily stay in the field producing endless fieldnotes forever. For me, the real slog is what's next: transcription, analysis, and writing it all up into sensible academic prose.

I am currently writing a book about a Buddhist temple in Hawai'i. I began fieldwork in 2015. Adding up all the one-month-long trips here and there, plus a much longer trip in 2017, and the work I did this winter, I now have about 10 months of full-time fieldwork on this project under my belt. It still doesn't feel like enough, but it never does.

I hadn't been back since before Covid, so when I went to Hawaii from late December 2022 through early February 2023, I did the work of reconnecting, and also getting a sense of what had changed at my fieldsite in the intervening years. What policies and practices were different? What was altered? What was new? Who had joined the temple in the intervening years, and why? What shadows had Covid times cast over my field informants, and what new challenges did they face?

I also reengaged in the daily tempo of temple life. I joined the "Soulful Strutters" group who do tai chi and then walk around the grounds for exercise and companionship. I joined the 6am zazen meditation group on Wednesdays and Fridays. (I am not a morning person. Zazen is fabulous for my inner concentration, and I love it, but make no mistake, it's very, very hard for me to get up on time!) I joined the weekly Samu crew, who clean the temple as part of their practice and out of a sense of community obligation. At Samu, I move everything aside, sweep and mop the floors of the altars, and then put it all back in its place. I sometimes clean the columbarium, and freshen flowers left for departed ancestors. I dust all the things. I did an interview with the Bishop in January who said something to the effect of, "cleaning toilets is a part of Zen practice too," and I agree. I felt wholly reintegrated with the subculture, after my three-year absence, as I focused diligently on cleaning lizard droppings off of the newly-painted hundred-year-old window frames.



I did interviews too: a group interview, and several individual interviews. I wrote pages of notes during my three weeks of fieldwork in Kona, and two weeks of concentrated, intensive work in the archives at University of Hawaii Manoa in Honolulu. I had reams of new data: I had audio to transcribe, files to code, and several new notebooks full of notes to integrate into already analyzed work from previous visits. It was glorious, the making of notes...

I could have stayed in Hawai'i for the duration of the spring semester. Despite the high cost-of-living there, I stay with family in their guest room, so I could have managed it. But I was pulled back to Kansas to focus, and to force myself out of the field. I had to once again pause the joyful work of researching with collaborators and learning from them. I got on a plane of my own volition and left a tropical paradise to return to Kansas in the middle of winter because it is time for the hard part. Now, I will take all the disparate pieces I collected and put them together so they create a culturally meaningful collage in prose form. Now I have to—I mean, I get to! I do know how lucky I am!— write the book. To me, “writing up” is the part of research that is most laborious, but also the most potentially rewarding. And so, as I sit down at my computer tomorrow with the accompanying weight of pressure to churn out paragraphs, I will remind myself that while writing ethnography may not be *ideal fun*, it is still fantastic work.

Update: Durbin and Klataske Publish Insights into the Farm Kid Paradox after Second Year of Fieldwork

Assistant Professor Trevor Durbin and field researcher Ryan Klataske wrapped up their second year of a five-year research project to better understand the Farm Kid Paradox, or the dynamic tension of risk and reward of raising children on farms and ranches. While continuing to conduct field research, they published two peer-reviewed pieces delivering insights and summarizing research findings from Kansas.



The first was published in the *Journal of Agromedicine* titled “Transitional Workplaces: Alt-Meat and Beef Producer Health and Safety in the Kansas Flint Hills.” This commentary was part of a larger collection that considers the future of agricultural workplace health and safety and was co-authored by Drs. Durbin,

Klataske, and Casper Bendixsen, Director of the National Farm Medicine Center. This work is the first to consider potential impacts of the alternative meat industry on the well-being of Kansas farm families and the environment. The second was a detailed research report, titled “Parent Perspectives on the Benefits and Risks of Child-Livestock Interactions,” and was published in the journal *Frontiers in Public Health*. In it, Klataske, Durbin, and three other co-authors from the Marshfield Clinic Research Institute, analyze ethnographic data and semi-structured interviews from 30 farm parents of children ages 10-18 who produce beef in Kansas. The analysis is the first to explore in detail what motivates parents to raise children around beef cattle and what they believe is beneficial about limited exposure to workplace risk during childhood.

The Farm Kid Paradox is a partnership between Kansas State University and the National Farm Medicine Center in Marshfield, Wisconsin and is supported by a \$400,000 grant as part of the National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety (NCCRAHS). NCCRAHS is housed in the National Farm Medicine Center and is a CDC-NIOSH funded Center of Excellence in Agricultural Disease and Injury Research, Education, and Prevention.

Alumni Spotlight

Ethan Copple

Contributed by Ethan Copple

Since graduating from K-State in Spring 2021, I've been working on a dual M.S. degree in Applied Anthropology and Industrial Engineering at Oregon State University. My research focuses on integrating systemic and applied anthropology approaches to identify barriers and enablers to accessing healthcare, with a particular focus in Buenos Aires, Argentina. I've also been fortunate to teach an Introduction to Humanitarian Engineering course and research on a National Science Foundation (NSF) funded project titled *Human-In-the-Loop Fairness Optimization in Machine Learning*. In Humanitarian Engineering, I've been named an Evans Family Graduate Fellow twice to support my fieldwork trips to Argentina. In April of 2022, I was awarded an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship to focus my research efforts on healthcare access and supply chains. I was one of four recipients at Oregon State University to receive the fellowship. Since graduating K-State, I've also had a research internship at Purdue University studying the impacts of the pandemic on engineering student group study habits.



K-State's Anthropology courses and faculty mentorship prepared me well for graduate studies. My combined master's classes have been challenging to balance; however, my previous exposure to theory through courses at K-State has given me a strong foundation that's given me confidence in framing my methodologies and theory in research. It's also always a great joy to have catch-up calls or see K-State faculty at conferences!

Sapiens Symposium 2022

This year the anthropology program relaunched the Sapiens Symposium after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic. The event began with a drop-in brunch where students got to know this year's guest speaker, alumna Jennifer McDonald ('15). Jennifer earned a Bachelor's of Science in Anthropology and a Master's in Public Health, both from K-State. She led Covid disease investigating for Douglas County as the Epidemiology Supervisor and helped coordinate and

deliver over 100,000 vaccine doses to community members as part of a multiagency mobile vaccination effort. She is currently a researcher at the University of Kansas and has a podcast with K-State engineering professor Will Hageman called *Don't Look Now* that explores culture change, history, and shares untold stories of those who have been historically marginalized. She spoke with students about her career path both within the anthropology program and after graduation.



Students did not just listen to McDonald, they also presented their own research, experiences, and ethnographic films. Student participation and energy was high as undergraduates talked about topics, including archeological research in the U.S. Southwest, an analysis of Byzantine Textiles, the Turkish-German experience in Germany, and an application of gift theory to Christian theology. The formal session ended with the program awards ceremony and was capped off with a post-awards reception.

Student Awards 2022



K-State Archaeological Field School Scholarship

Avery Williams

Patricia J. O'Brien Scholarship Award in Archaeology

Avery Williams

Biological Anthropology Achievement Award \$250

Wyatt Mattingly

Cultural Anthropology Achievement Award

Peter Sears

Zoe Thompson

Linguistic Anthropology Achievement Award

Aaron Middaugh

Congratulations Anthropology Graduates!

We are pleased to announce that between spring semester 2022 and fall semester 2022, 19 students have graduated with either a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science in Anthropology, 12 students have graduated with a Minor in Anthropology, and 5 have graduated with anthropology program certificates.

Majors

Spring 2022

Kayla Marie Craigmile
 Rio Ariella Sierra
 Sydney Tianna Wood
 Abigail Mae Brittain
 Kayla Rhiannon Hart-Jones
 Sophie Ivalee Hawks
 Alvin Franklin Holmes III
 Korrie Ray
 McKenna Lorraine Nease
 Peter Sears
 Alyssa Nicole Drummond
 Alexander Michael Wilson

Fall 2022

Ellen Elizabeth Coltrane
 Aidan Hale Nelson
 Morgan Kelly Reeder
 Madeline C. Mullinnix
 McKenna Lorraine Nease
 Roy Lee Sanders Jr.
 Ian Patrick Wilcox

Minors

Spring 2022

Maria Viktoria Apel
 Haley Rose Aufdemberge
 Bryce Alexis Brown
 Abby Lynn Cheesebrough
 Amber Marie Cox
 Hunter Michael Creech
 Makenzie Lynn Heffernon
 Colyn James Heimerman
 Delaney Marie Hiner
 Payton Mikel Monks
 Anna Turco
 Lake Winter

Fall 2022

Riley Rae Brandon
 Alexandra Claire Remick

Certificates

Global Health, Medicine, and Society

Christopher Alan Carter
 Korrie Ray
 Garret Allen Prendergast
 Alexander Michael Wilson

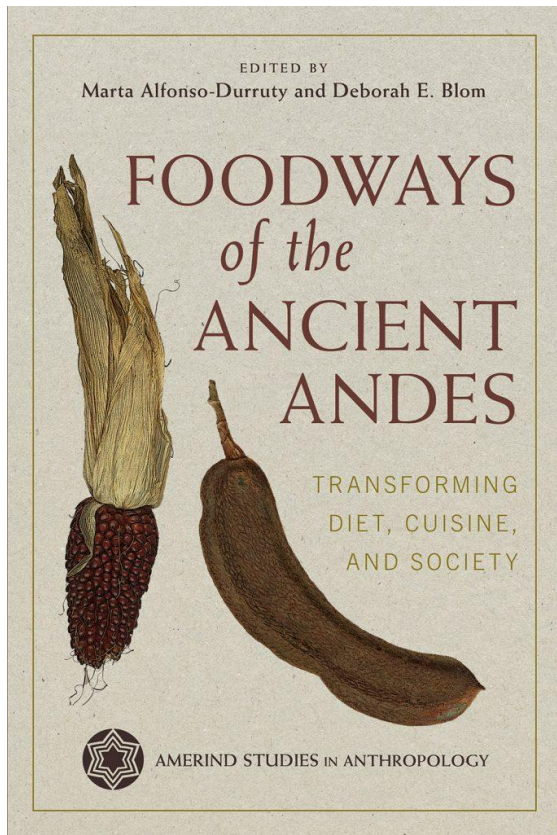
Religious Studies

Ian Patrick Wilcox

Biological Anthropology: From Chile to Kansas

Contributed by Marta Alfonso Durruty

During the last 10 months, I have been fortunate enough to have spent three and a half months in the field. This work is related to grants funded by NSF (USA), and FONDECYT (Chile). In collaboration with the Kaweskár and Yaghan communities, as well as the Instituto de la Patagonia, Centro de Estudios del Hombre Austral, and the Museo Martin Gusinde, we have continued to explore the origins and migration routes of the southernmost people of the Americas. Results obtained in this work have been published in the American Journal of Biological Anthropology (<https://er.lib.k-state.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fonlinelibrary.wiley.com%2Fdoi%2Fabs%2F10.1002%2Fajpa.24638>) and reveals both an inland and a coastal migration into this region. In addition, Dr.



Deborah Blom (University of Vermont) and I have recently published an edited volume "Foodways of the Ancient Andes: Transforming Diet, Cuisine and Society" sponsored by the Amerind Institute, and the University of Arizona Press. I am thankful for these fruitful collaborations, and for the insightful contributions of so many colleagues around the world (<https://uapress.arizona.edu/book/foodways-of-the-ancient-andes>).

All this work is also inspired by my students and Teaching Assistants. Noah Clayman and I are currently working on stable isotope data, that will allow us to create iso-scapes in Patagonia. This information will lead to a better understanding of the diet of past populations in this area. Wyatt Mattingly is working on science dissemination and education. Through this endeavor, we will reach a broader audience with whom to share our

results. The Teaching Assistants in the Introduction to Biological Anthropology (Noah Clayman, Genevieve Holmes, Jessica Hovis, Wyatt Mattingly, Rhianna Thomas, and Nina Tiger) are all working hard and helping me improve the course every week. A dedicated group of laboratory assistants (Susanna Jones, Kat Rieke, and Nina Tiger) led by Jessica Hovis (one of our graduating seniors) are making substantial progress at cataloging and preparing animal remains to enhance our reference and comparative collections. It is a busy and joyful time at KSU!

Sharing Lessons from Eight Years of Teaching Environmental Anthropology at K-State



Last year, the Open Learning and Teaching Collaborative at Plymouth State University in New Hampshire invited Assistant Professor Trevor Durbin to share his experience teaching environmental anthropology over the past eight years. In October, he gave an hour-long Zoom talk, “Teaching to Cultivate a Better Anthropocene: From Failure to Nurture,” to an international audience about his challenging yet rewarding pedagogical journey through the failures and partial successes of talking with students about planetary crisis. Participant feedback was enthusiastic, and a version of the talk was published as a peer-reviewed case study in the *Journal of Sustainability Education*, titled “Teaching to Cultivate a Better Anthropocene: Metaphor Work and the Conceptual Development of an Environmental Anthropology Course.” You can read the full article on the journal website (<http://www.susted.com/wordpress/>).

Dear Alumni, Your Support Matters

Even as we celebrate the successes of our faculty, students and alumni, we recognize that our students need increasing support, especially in the face of rising tuition and dwindling state funds. You can support K-State Anthropology by contacting the KSU Foundation Arts & Sciences development team at (800) 432-1578 or online at <https://ksufoundation.org/how-to-give/>. Please consider making a gift to the Anthropology (#F01477) or Archaeology (#F16500) funds, which make possible our annual scholarships and student awards.