

Anthropology Department

Grinnell College



Photograph, belonging to Professor Nikolas Sweet's photo-ethnography project for his Introduction to Anthropological Inquiries class

Creative Teaching in Grinnell's Anthropology Department

The Anthropology Department prides itself on providing students with exciting experiences that allow them to experience anthropology within the classroom and beyond. Below are just a few examples from Fall and Spring 2021.

The final project for students in Jon Andelson's Intentional Communities class in Fall 2021 is for groups of three to four students to design an intentional community in which they would like to live. After receiving a "starting scenario" which stipulates the financial resources they can bring to the project, the students must plan all aspects of an actual community: where it will be located, whether it will have a unifying ideology, how decision-making will take place, how the community will survive economically, what the living arrangements will be, what rules the community will have, what its relationship will be to the wider society, and much, much more. The assignment, which Jon has used in some past iterations of the class, combines utopian imagining with practical problem-solving true to all intentional communities.

During the spring two term, Professor Brigitte French managed to safely provide a global learning experience for her anthropology seminar students despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Her seminar, "Discourses of Time and the Politics of Hope", examines the culturally defined and historically contingent notions of time through theoretical models and ethnographic examples. The courses' students had the opportunity to collaborate with a similarly designed course, "Remembering the Future", taught by Dr. Evi Chatzipanagiotidou at Queen's University Belfast.

Brigitte French
Chair, Professor

Jonathan Andelson
Professor

Vicki Bentley-Conditt
Professor

Douglas Caulkins
Professor Emeritus

Emily de Wet
Assistant Professor

Katya Gibel Mevorach
Professor

Cynthia Hansen
Assistant Professor

Kathryn Kamp
Professor

Tess Kulstad
Assistant Professor

Josh Marshack
Assistant Professor

Laura Ng
Instructor

Jackson Montgomery Roper
Associate Professor

Nikolas Sweet
Assistant Professor

Maria Tapias
Professor

John C. Whittaker
Professor

As part of the collaboration, Grinnell students remotely attended and participated in a Queen's University Belfast class session, discussing material and topics covered in both courses. In preparation for the combined class, Grinnell students read some of Dr. Chatzipanagiotidou's work and Belfast students read that of Professor French. Students from both schools also interacted directly online, where Grinnell students read and responded to blog posts written by the Belfast students. The blog posts, as well as a detailed description of the Queen's University Belfast course, can be found at this site:

<https://conflictandpeaceanthropology.wordpress.com/>



Photo exchanged during photo-ethnography project

Nikolas Sweet, assistant professor, linguistic and cultural anthropologist, worked on a photo-ethnography project that would broaden the scope of an Anthropological Inquiries course to include direct engagement with photo-ethnographies by two Senegalese peers. Professor Sweet conducted photo-ethnography training with his Senegalese counterparts via Whatsapp and phone-calls at the beginning of the term. Though the term has aligned with the month of Ramadan, which slowed the progress of the project, Sweet says it has been a great exchange of ideas, theory, and perspective that provides a good

base of cultural context for the project. Their projects complicate assumptions of modern and traditional agricultural techniques and place agriculture within a broader social framework. In the final weeks of the course, the students were able to share their own photo-ethnography projects and view photos produced by Alexis and Daouda, discussing nature-culture assumptions within agriculture.



Photo exchanged during photo-ethnography project



Alien Anthropology visits the Grinnell College Museum of Art to view and discuss the exhibition "Queer/Dialogue" with Leslie Wright and Tilly Woodward

Hinging on the motto "making the strange familiar and the familiar strange", Professor Marshack taught a First-Year Tutorial class entitled Alien Anthropology during the Fall 2021 semester. This course tackled the intersection between social science and science fiction, answering essential questions such as "what does it mean to be human?" through both a science fiction and anthropological lens.

In the first half of Fall 2021, Professor John Whittaker taught a short course on Prehistoric Technology. Everyone got basic hands-on experience with fire-making by flint and steel and with friction bow drills, flintknapping simple stone tools, making bone awls and sewing leather bags, making atlatls with stone tools and throwing spears with them, and processing and cooking acorns. We used these ancient skills to illuminate principles that apply to all technologies: Even simple technologies require sourcing and understanding materials, and ‘precursor’ technologies to produce the materials, tools, and parts needed. All technology requires learning skills, and practice to apply them. All technologies are learned from others and performed in social context, and have symbolic meanings.



Sarina Kopf pictured with atlatl and dart



Class making and hafting stone tools outside HSSC

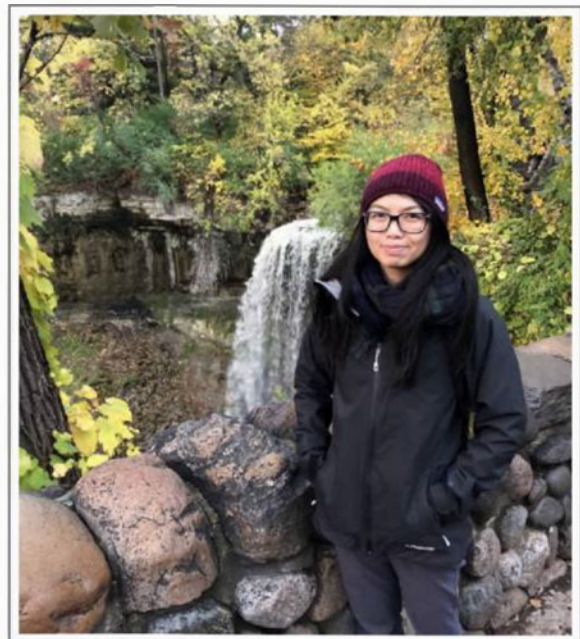
Laura W. Ng Joins the Department

My name is Laura W. Ng and I am Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology for the 2021-2022 academic year. I'm originally from Los Angeles, CA and I just completed my Ph.D. in Anthropology at Stanford University.

For my dissertation, I investigated Chinese transnational migration and the transpacific flows of goods and information in the late 19th and early 20th century. I worked closely with descendants of migrants who moved between the San Bernardino and Riverside Chinatowns and a home village in Taishan (Hoisan) County, Guangdong, China called Wo Hing. This research is personal to me because my parents are immigrants who were born and raised in villages from the same area and had ancestors who went abroad to work.

This semester I am teaching courses that incorporate many of my research interests:

Anthropological Inquiries: Human Migrations, Archaeological Field Methods, and a seminar course I designed called Archaeology of Racialized Communities. In the Spring, I will be teaching Anthropological Inquiries again and a special topics course called Historical Archaeology, which is my specialty in archaeology. I plan to incorporate Chinese American historical archaeology into course labs and projects.



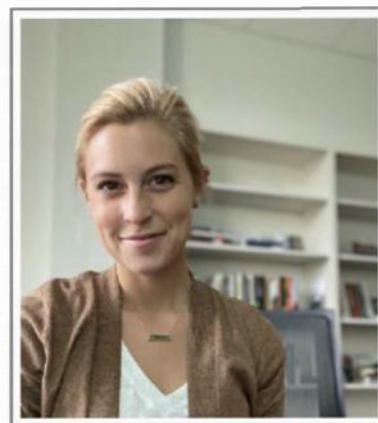
Outside of life at Grinnell College, I enjoy cooking and rock climbing. On the weekends, you can probably find me shopping at C Fresh Market in Des Moines or bouldering at Climb Iowa.

Emily de Wet Joins the Anthropology Department

I am a cultural anthropologist and moved to Grinnell from rural South Africa where I got used to finding chameleons during daily dog walks. However, most of my time in South Africa has been in the urban spaces of Cape Town where I study racial dynamics in the post-apartheid era through the lens of people living in townships. Townships continue to be segregated, under-resourced “margins” of the city where Black South Africans were forced to live during apartheid and where many people still live and continue to move to. My research encompasses many aspects of life here, including how people move around the city and the various forms of racism they encounter, youth style and embodied performances, the interactions between informal and formal food markets, and the consumption of meat as central to what gives a township a “vibe.” I really love that my work allows me to do the “deep hanging out” of ethnographic research and spend time getting to know people and their challenges, joys, and daily lived experiences.

I grew up in the United States, but my father is South African and spending time in South Africa has always been very central in my life in cultural, social, and, also, academic ways. I conducted my first research project as an undergraduate living in Cape Town. This project explored the tourism industry in townships through the perspectives of women whose homes are part of the tour; through it, I met many people who I continue to work with today. I then entered graduate school at University of Notre Dame with a commitment to understanding the legacies of entrenched and systematic racism and how people work to dismantle this legacy. My personal connections to South Africa fueled this interest and made me certain I wanted to consider these questions in post-apartheid South Africa.

As a cultural anthropologist, I use a wide range of research methods, from ethnographic methods to mapping. For example, when my research led me to the importance of the informal food market for people’s social, nutritional, and cultural needs, I worked in butcheries and with vendors, learning how to prepare, cook, and sell items such as sheep’s heads with small-business women. A large portion of my work is around studying “vibes” – which is a word that my interlocutors use to talk about aspects of living in townships that make life meaningful there. While people talk about the challenges of living in informal housing, under-resourced communities, and economically and socially marginalized spaces of the city, my research, through the theorizing of my interlocutors, suggests that when we only understand people’s experiences through this lens, we miss the complex textures of people’s real lives; we miss the vibes! To study vibes, I use multiple types of interviews, I live in townships, and I map “vibes” with people. “Vibes” maps render this ephemeral and intangible topic into something visual, comparable, and legible to policy makers. Broadly, my work and teaching converge around studying relationships of power – how hegemonic systems shape space through racist global capitalism, as well as how people resist such forms of power overtly through protest and direct action, and covertly. I learn so much from how people, especially women and those marginalized by these systems, create meaningful lives which are not solely defined by the racism, structural violence, and sexism and inequality that also affect them.



I bring many of these aspects of my research into my teaching. In our classrooms this Fall, we interrogated maps’ political uses, and made our own to think about how people use space differently and in shared ways. We studied processes of place-making and explored theories about marginality in both my Anthropological Inquiries class and seminar on Global Cities and Inequality.

I am also teaching introduction to Global Development Studies, where I focus attention on the history and context for global development studies, the way ethnography can illuminate how development projects actually work, and how we can consider interventions that do not simply re-entrench global inequalities.

In the Spring, I will be bringing my passion for studying food and food systems to the classroom through Anthropology of Food, a class that will incorporate cooking and studying food systems locally and around the world. Food is a powerful realm for studying many anthropological questions because eating is something we all do every day, and it is also imbued with layers of meaning, including those connected to class, gender, race, identity, the political economy, structural violence, and resistance!

Outside of the classroom, I have worked in a bakery, at farmers markets, and a baking co-op, in both the US and South Africa. I love to run and explore trails with my dog, Fig.

Faculty Scholarship

Jon Andelson authored an essay, *"The Community" and "the World": Place-Making and Re-Making in Amana*. The essay applies theories about place and place-making, especially those of Keith Basso and Edward Casey, to material from Jon's long-term study of Iowa's Amana Colonies. For twenty-five years, in Germany and America, the Amana Inspirationists had sought a place to call home, but one after another proved unsatisfactory for different reasons until they settled in Iowa. Even here, though, where they put down deep roots, the group's relation to the place changed over time. "Place-making is a way of constructing history itself," Basso says, "of inventing it, of fashioning novel versions of 'what happened here'..... Building and sharing place-worlds, in other words, is not only a means of reviving former times but also of revising them." In the last sixty years, both processes -- reviving the past and revising it -- have played important roles in Amana. Where the Amana people once viewed their Iowa home as a place of refuge from an evil world, where they could forge a spiritually motivated and independent way of life, today they are more apt to view it as a place of heritage to be preserved and shared with the world through the medium of tourism. The essay will appear in a forthcoming special issue of the journal *Communal Societies*.

Nikolas Sweet's chapter entitled "The Sociopoetics of Sanakuyaagal: Performing Joking Relationships in West Africa" was published by the University of Michigan Press this October. This chapter is included in the book *African Performance Arts and Political Acts*.

Fall 2021 Graduates

Arturo Hernandez-Ramirez

Esme R. Kayim-Yanko

Esme G. Rummelhart

Julia R. Welch

Fall 2021 Graduate Honors

To be considered for honors in anthropology, graduating seniors, in addition to meeting the College's general requirements for honors, must (1) have conducted original research judged worthy of honors by the faculty, and (2) exemplify professionalism in fulfilling commitments voluntarily undertaken within the department.

Esme R. Kayim-Yanko

Esme G. Rummelhart

Student Educational Policy Committee (SEPC) Election Results

Lucia Cheng, Mallory Graham, and Lila Podgainy have been elected to the Anthropology SEPC for 2021-2022, and will join continuing member Julia Welch. Many thanks to graduating SEPC members Wini Austin, Ruby Romero and Malia Wells for their service.

End of the Year Awards

Rachael M. Asrelsky '89 Memorial Prize in Anthropology. The Rachael Asrelsky Anthropology Paper Prize is given annually to the author of an outstanding paper written for an anthropology class. The prize honors Rachael Asrelsky '89 who died in the Lockerbie bombing while returning from an off-campus program.

First Place

- Abby Burrows, *Socio-political meaning of banqueting in female Etruscan burials*

Runner's Up

- Julia Tlapa, Research grant proposal on relationships between gender, power, and language in early modern Scottish witch trial courts
- Kit Perry (Podcast), *Befriending the Wolf*
- Finn Dierks-Brown, Indigenous Resistance in Oppressive Legal Systems

Spring 2021 Graduate Honors

To be considered for honors in anthropology, graduating seniors, in addition to meeting the College's general requirements for honors, must (1) take classes in each of the four subfields of the discipline, (2) have conducted original research judged worthy of honors by the faculty, and (3) exemplify professionalism in fulfilling commitments voluntarily undertaken within the department.

Winifred Austin

Marguerite Devine-Mraz

Andrew George

Anna Gjoleka

Thomas Hexter

Shanna Kang

Ruby Romero

Katherine Smith

Malia Wells

Spring 2021 Graduate News

Austin, Winifred A. This summer, I'll be moving back home to Boston to spend time with my family, apply for jobs, and do some farm and gardening work – a welcome change from a year of online classes. I hope to start working for a nonprofit or company working on environmental justice, arts & design, or social innovation in some other capacity.



Chen, Justin E. My plan for next year is to study Master of Science in Information Management at the Information Science school in University of Illinois Urbana Champaign. I plan to either work in a library and manage data or become an UX designer in the future.



Clayton, Naomi A. I graduated with a major in Anthropology and concentration in Science, Medicine, and Technology (Science and Technology track).



Putting my academic accomplishments to good use, I am currently interning at the Idaho Governor's Office of Species Conservation. I also work for my family's American Paint Horse breeding business as a horse trainer and the marketing manager. As I have breaks in my schedule, I enjoy being able to, once again, spend time in Idaho's spectacular outdoors.

Devine-Mraz, Marguerite. Next year I will be doing College Possible with AmeriCorps.

Gjoleka, Anna After Grinnell, I am planning on attending graduate school. I have not made a decision yet as to which school I will be attending, but I am highly considering doing a Master's program at the University of Chicago, before applying for a Ph.D. in linguistic anthropology.

Hexter, Thomas J. After graduation, I will keep putting my roots down in the wonderful community and ecology of Grinnell! This town can't get rid of me just by giving me a diploma. I will have my hands full with my position as a Poweshiek Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner and market manager for Grinnell FarmToTable, which I co-own with my dear friend and anthropology advisor, Professor Jon Andelson. In my free time, I'll be living out in a 1977 RV on a 5-acre vegetable farm I've been given as a space to create, and running a native garden installation business with my friends Caleb and Theo, Class of '22.



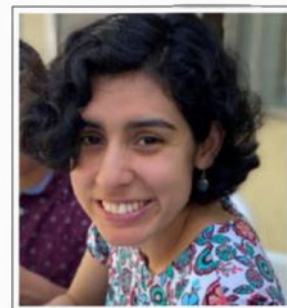
Kang, Shanna I will be at University College London for Bioarchaeology and Forensic Anthropology masters of science in the fall.

Kayim-Yanko, Esme R. This summer I'll be doing a Customer Experience Research Internship at Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield based in Des Moines, though I will be living in Minneapolis because it is a remote opportunity. Additionally, I will be walking at graduation though I will be back for the fall semester.

Romero, Ruby My plans are to study for the MCAT, which I am taking in August. After this, I will most likely work at a community-based health center in Los Angeles.

Smith, Katherine B.

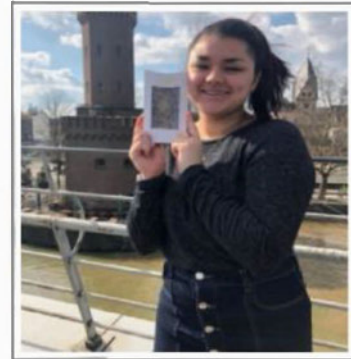
I will be starting as a Business Development Representative at TextIQ, a SaaS (software as a service) company that uses AI to help mitigate risk surrounding issues of privacy and security. A few years down the road, I hope to attend graduate school with a focus on food sustainability.



Villa, Rebecca D. My plan after graduation is to attend the University of Iowa to pursue my Masters in Public Health in Epidemiology with a concentration in Emerging Infectious Diseases.

Wells, Malia D.

After graduation, I will be taking at least one gap year before going to medical school to gain more clinical experience working with people in Milwaukee, which is where I grew up. I am considering both osteopathic medical school and traditional medical school, as well as other medical programs where I can work with children.



Wray, Chloe L.

After graduation and a brief summer at home in Ithaca, N.Y., Chloe Wray will be moving to Iowa City. She is not sure what she will do there, but after three and some years in Grinnell, she still feels there is so much more to know and discover about living in Iowa. If you have any journalistic job leads, know of any organic farms that need hands, or hear there's a bread baker taking on apprentices in the area, please send her an email!

Other S21 Graduates

Burrows, Abigail C.

Eber, Rachel H.

George, Andrew N.

Sharpe, Steven A.

Alumni News

Madeline Hart-Andersen, '10 was ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA) in November, and is now serving a congregation in Santa Fe, NM. When COVID restrictions are lightened and/or lifted, I am looking forward to exploring the many sites I read about at Grinnell. Though ministry and anthropology do not, at first look, have much in common, I landed in this vocation because of a deep curiosity about people and communities (thank you J. Andelson for coursework on intentional communities!), which is also how I landed in anthropology.

Bill Green, '74 has recently worked on his long-standing projects published. Here is a list of his recent publications:

- 2021 (W. Green, A. Wiewel, and S. De Vore) Geophysical Detection and Assessment of Leveled Mounds: An Example from the Upper Mississippi Valley. *American Antiquity* 86, in press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2020.103>
- 2021 (W. Green, J. Stoltman, G. Holley, C. Strong, J. Ferguson, and J. Tiffany) Caddo or Cahokian? Stylistic and Compositional Analyses of a Fine-Engraved Vessel from Northwest Iowa. *Plains Anthropologist* 66, in press. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00320447.2020.1801323>
- 2020 A Caddo-Style Cahokian Bottle from Northwest Iowa. *Central States Archaeological Journal* 67:182-183.
- 2020 The Toolesboro Dog-Paw Pot: A Unique Middle Woodland Vessel. *Central States Archaeological Journal* 67:214-216..
- 2020 Botanical Remains. In *Household Economy at Wall Ridge: A Fourteenth Century Central Plains Tradition Farmstead in the Missouri Valley*, edited by S. Lensink, J. Tiffany, and S. Schermer, pp. 102-119 and Appendix E. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City.
- 2020 (J. Tiffany, S. Lensink, J. Theler, W. Green, and S. Schermer) Interpretations and Summary. In *Household Economy at Wall Ridge: A Fourteenth Century Central Plains Tradition Farmstead in the Missouri Valley*, edited by S. Lensink, J. Tiffany, and S. Schermer, pp. 192-205. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City.
- 2020 (W. Green, R. Schirmer, and W. Billeck) Plant Remains and Associated Insects from the Millpede Site (13ML361), a Burned Earthlodge in Southwest

- Iowa. *Plains Anthropologist* 65:43-76.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00320447.2019.1585409>
- 2020 (W. Green, T.D. Price, and R.F. Boszhardt) In Memoriam: James B. Stoltman, 1935-2019. *The SAA Archaeological Record* 20(1):41-42. <http://onlinedigeditions.com/publication/?i=647266&p=43>
- 2020 (T. Perrin, T. Dachy, C. Guéret, D. Lubell, Y. Chaïd-Saoudi, and W. Green) Pressure Knapping and the Timing of Innovation: New Chrono-Cultural Data on Prehistoric Groups of the Early Holocene in the Maghreb, Northwest Africa. *Radiocarbon* 62(2):e1-e51. DOI:10.1017/RDC.2019.157

Currently, Bill is also working on publications that span topics such as an Arikara site in North Dakota, the Turkey River mounds of northeast Iowa, Capsian cultures of Algeria, Middle and Late Woodland circular villages of the Midwest and Midsouth, and early 20th- century Progressivism and archaeology.

Alice E. Rogoff, '71 became involved in a small press publishing and community theater after Grinnell. She received two MAs from San Francisco State University in English: Concentration Creative Writing and Drama. For several years, Rogoff was in a theater group that performed for and with seniors. Her thesis in "Drama was Unsilenced Stages: The Oppression and Survival in South African Theater Under Censorship." Additionally, she received a Certificate in Labor Studies from San Francisco City College which led to a poetry project sponsored by the San Francisco Arts Commission on women labor organizers in San Francisco.

Sunny Zhao, '18 became involved in the eleven-month Americorps CivicSpark program. The program has project sites across California and focuses on fostering community and volunteer engagement. Sunny contributed specifically to the Ballona Creek Revitalization Project in Culver City, CA. Sunny reflects on her CivicSpark service year as a pivotal step in exposing her to GIS, helping her reach her current goal as a GIS Specialist, and connecting her to a local nonprofit.

Donation Acknowledgement

We would like to extend a large thank you to those who have donated to the department in the past year:

Colleen T. Mahar-Piersma '91

Curtis L. Scribner '73

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