

Anthropology Grinnell College



Fall 2020



The windowed corner of HSSC South seen here has two classroom spaces dedicated to anthropology, one for archaeology and one for our intro course.

Anthropology Department
Grinnell College
Grinnell IA 50112

Monty Roper
Associate Professor,
Chair

Jonathan Andelson
Professor

Vicki Bentley-Condit
Professor

Douglas Caulkins
Professor Emeritus

Xavier Escandell
Associate Professor

Brigitte French
Professor

Katya Gibel Mevorach
Professor

Cynthia Hansen
Associate Professor

Kathryn Kamp
Professor

Tess Kulstad
Assistant Professor

Josh Marshack
Assistant Professor

Nikolas Sweet
Assistant Professor

Maria Tapias
Professor

John Whittaker
Professor

Campus News

The Department of Anthropology finally gets its fall newsletter out!

By Monty Roper (Chair)

Yes, spring is right around the corner, and we are actively working on our “graduation edition” newsletter. But, we have news to share from the fall and here it is. Our late fall letter reflects both the challenges we have faced over the past year, but also the great perseverance of our students and faculty. Huge credit and thanks go to Kit Perry '22, our primary editor.

New Anthropology Endowment, HSSC Classroom Named

By Kit Perry '22

Special thanks to Anne Stein '84 for writing the original article on this story

For Sallee Garst Haerr '74, Grinnell College is part of the family. The anthropology and English double major was neither the first nor last person in her family to attend the college—her aunt Tosh Lee '54 and great aunt Julia Shafer Chrystal 1915 (stepmother to former trustee John Chrystal, the Chrystal Center namesake) preceded her, and her younger brother, James (Jimmy) Garst '79' attended the college shortly after her graduation. Both Haerr's mother, Jo Garst, and her uncle, Harold Lee, served on the college's Board of Trustees.

Both Haerr and her brother were drawn to anthropology—Haerr to urban and cultural anthropology, while Garst was most interested by archaeology. Haerr described her brother as “gregarious, generous, funny, and an independent thinker.” He was also known for living in a tipi while at Grinnell.

Both siblings were inspired by Professor Douglas Caulkins. Professor Caulkins began his career as a professor of anthropology at Grinnell the same year Haerr began taking classes, in the fall of 1970. Taking his classes motivated Haerr to major in anthropology, where Caulkins became her mentor—and a family friend.

When her brother Jimmy Garst passed away last summer, only a year after Haerr's close friend Avram Machtiger '74 passed away as well, Haerr was inspired to honor the college, her brother, and all the memories and connections she had found through Grinnell. “At this point I'm in a very reflective part of my life,” she says.

The opportunity to honor the College's impact on Haerr's life and those she cared about appeared when selling a family business in 2019. After talking with extended family about their Grinnell legacy, Haerr decided to donate stock to the College in honor of her brother Garst and Professor Caulkins. Part of the funds went towards naming a classroom in the new Humanities and Social Studies Center (HSSC) after Caulkins. The rest became an endowment to support students of the anthropology department in honor of Jimmy Garst.

Haerr saw this as the best time to donate to the college. “I'd rather make the impact on the College while I'm alive and can see the benefits, than when I'm gone,” she says. “When this family business sale was going on, I thought if I'm going to make an impact, let's do it now when it seems right, and I can honor my brother and honor Doug Caulkins while he's still around.”

Museum Class Designs New HSSC Displays

By Kit Perry '22

The new HSSC building meant the addition of several new display cases to Grinnell's campus. With this new space to fill, Professor Kathy Kamp teamed up with the director of the Grinnell Museum of Art, Lesley Wright, along with approximately fifteen students to design new displays for some of these spaces. Listed as both an anthropology and a humanities course, "Designing Museum Displays" drew in students from a wide array of disciplines. This variety was a valuable when designing displays for departments across the social sciences and humanities, such as religious studies, English, and, of course, anthropology.

Divided into groups of three, students curated objects, wrote labels, and developed an overall message for the case they designed. When the second half of the course went online due to the pandemic, the class found a way to persevere, creating diagrams of their cases so the professors could install them over the summer. These student-designed display cases can be found on the south wing of the first floor of the HSSC and the north wing on the second and third floors.

Another, larger case was installed outside the renovated ARH auditorium. For this case, students collected one or more objects from each professor whose department resides in the new HSSC building, and the newly renovated and adjoining ARH and Carnegie. The students then divided the objects up to create several small "Cabinets of Curiosity." Such cabinets were the precursors to modern museums and were displays or rooms filled with a variety of different objects, often arranged around an unconventional theme. This display includes sections with themes such as the human form, words, and inventions.



Case outside of anthropology classroom in HSSC S1



Cabinet of Curiosity Case in ARH

Meet the SEPC

Julia Welch

Julia is an anthropology and biology major from the beautiful city of Minneapolis, Minnesota. She is interested in medical and biological anthropology and how those areas of interest coincide with healthcare practices. Julia is also very interested in human nutrition and the ethics surrounding modern food production and consumption. Outside of academia, she is a volleyball player, Student Athletic Mentor, and a clumsy backwards-walking tour guide. Through the anthropology major, she has been able to pursue many of her niche interests and gain a wider breadth of knowledge about human physiology and evolution.



Malia Wells



Malia, from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is a 4th year Anthropology and Biochemistry double major with an interest in pursuing pediatric medicine, specifically osteopathic medicine. She is a part of the Quest Bridge chapter at Grinnell. She is interested in the ability of children to adapt in psychological and physiological ways to changing and stressful environments, such as in a medical setting. She likes volunteering and working with children. On campus, she worked at Mid Iowa Community Action through the Service-Learning Work Study program for the first 3 years.

Wini Austin

Wini is a fourth-year Anthropology major from Cambridge, Massachusetts. She is especially interested in environmental anthropology and the anthropology of emotion. She loves making and learning about art and is interested in exploring the intersection between design and the social sciences after she graduates from Grinnell. For people interested in anthropology, she would recommend reading *The Land of Open Graves* by Jason De León, *Liquidated: An Ethnography of Wall Street* by Karen Ho, and *Friction* by Anna Tsing – amazing ethnographies!



Ruby Romero



Ruby is a fourth-year biology and anthropology double major from Los Angeles, California. She is also pre-med! She loves cooking, dancing, and watching true crime documentaries in her free time. She was drawn to anthro after taking intro with Kulstad and falling in love with cultural anthropology. She hopes to pursue a career in medicine and work with disadvantaged communities. Through all she has learned at Grinnell, she knows that she wants to use aspects of holistic medicine to provide care.

Student News

MAPs/theses

Several students participated in MAPs, senior theses, or independent projects in 2020.

Olivia Jensen (ANT 397) Tourism and Study Abroad (SP 20)

No abstract has been submitted at this time.

Wren Frueh (ANT 397) Food & Farming in C. Iowa (F 20)

The popularity of local food is on the rise in the US. Among farmers, local food movements and their popularity are generally praised, however, nuances between their perspectives differ between the products they raise and the practices they use. The purpose of this paper is to compare farmer's practices to their perspectives on local food and the local food system in Grinnell specifically. Going in, I expected there to be a sharp divide of perspectives between conventional farmers and sustainable farmers, but the reality is much more complex. While farmers in and around Grinnell have different perspectives about best methods and practices, they seem to generally agree in the value of local food. Even producers that have critiques of local food and direct to consumer selling (CSAs, farmers markets, etc.) agree that the movement has potential and is, or could become, a positive trend in American agriculture. Sustainable farmers and farmers that sell locally (especially farmers that sell directly to consumers) tend to consume more local food; however, the majority of farmers I interviewed did incorporate some local food into their diet. This 397 was in lead up to a 499 MAP to be completed in the spring and consisted of conducting interviews with a variety of farmers in and around the Grinnell area.

Nick Alex (ANT 499) Env Impacts of Iowa Ag. (SP 20)

The agriculture industry in Iowa dominates the landscape both physically and culturally. As agriculture has steadily replaced Iowa's natural environments with row crops and pasture, the question of how to sustain the natural environment while appeasing the economic driver that is contemporary agriculture is being evaluated by multiple parties. This thesis aims to assess the various ways that contemporary Iowa agricultural practices impact the natural environment, and to highlight the spectrum of reasons and evidence that influence the farming practices of Iowa farmers. I reviewed the existing literature, recorded detailed observations on local farms, and conducted interviews with individuals from a variety of roles and organizations tied to the Iowa agricultural industry. The evidence I collected revealed that several spectra of agricultural practices exist, driven by unique circumstances, and impacting the environment in different ways. My results show that in today's agricultural scene in Iowa, it is inaccurate to describe agriculture in terms of a simple a binary between small-scale agrarian operations and large industrial operations. Every farm is run in a unique way based on many individual influences, therefore impacting the environment in a variety of ways. It is a gross oversimplification to suggest that industrial agriculture is entirely bad for the natural environment and agrarian agriculture is entirely good for it.

Nandita Banik (ANT 499) Ethnography of Rohingyas (SP 20)

No abstract has been submitted at this time.

LaAnna Farnelli (ANT 499) DHS DR Child Fosterage (SP 20)

A summary of LaAnna Farnelli and Tess Kulstad's work can be found in the Faculty News section of this newsletter.

Alumni news

Claire Branigan '11 Writes NACLA Report

Claire Branigan graduated from Grinnell College with a degree in anthropology in 2011. She is now a cultural anthropology PhD candidate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Recently she wrote an article for NACLA, the North American Congress on Latin America titled "Feminists Fight Covid on Buenos Aires' Urban Margins." Read Claire's article here <https://nacla.org/news/2020/06/16/feminists-covid-argentina>

New career for Cantor-Stone '07

Benjamin Cantor-Stone '07 will soon be embarking on a new career adventure as a Project Manager, although he will still be using the analytical and people skills he learned as an anthropology major. However, he will always have a special place in his heart for lithic, pottery, and faunal analysis, as well as ethnographic writing.

Alumni, please let us know what you are up to so we can share your news!

Faculty News

Professor Whittaker vs Bison

Last year John Whittaker participated in an experiment using atlatl darts on a bison carcass to study how effective atlatls were against big game, looking at penetration and damage to stone points. They recorded velocity, angle of impact, and other variables for over 60 projectile shots. Not surprisingly these early weapons were very effective. Penetration was deep and deadly unless the stone point struck bone. The bison was humanely killed, and eaten afterward, and the skeleton will be cleaned and mounted as well as having bone damage studied. This will be part of Devin Pettigrew's PhD project at the University of Colorado. More info at https://www.academia.edu/44864998/Atlatl_vs_Bison



John Whittaker using an atlatl

Professor Andelson and the Grinnell College Garden

Jon Andelson, supervisor of the Grinnell College Garden at its new location between East and Elm Streets north of Sixth Avenue, reports that the annual harvest total from the garden this year was 1,365 pounds of produce. The year began with a 60 pound harvest of Jerusalem artichokes, a native prairie perennial whose tubers are edible, and ended with a November 10 harvest of the last of the collard greens, chives, celery, and mint. Most of the year's harvest this year has gone to MICA (Mid-Iowa Community Action), which operates a food pantry for families in need. The garden staff this year included anthropology major Kate Smith '21.

Professor Kamp's Newest Publications

Kamp, Kathryn and John Whittaker 2020 *Weaponry and Children: Technological and Social Trajectories. In Ages and Abilities: The Stages of Childhood and their Social Recognition in Prehistoric Europe and Beyond*, edited by Katharina Rebay-Salisbury & Doris Pany-Kucera, pp 10-25. Archaeopress, Oxford.

Kamp, Kathryn 2020 Review of *The Archaeology of American Childhood and Adolescence* by Jane Eva Baxter *Journal of Anthropological Research* 76(2): 258-259.

Kamp, Kathryn 2020 Review of *Unearthing Childhood: Young Lives in Prehistory* by Robin Derricourt *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 13(1): 144-146.

Tess Kulstad promoted to tenure track

After six and a half years at Grinnell in term positions, the Anthropology Department is excited to welcome Professor Tess Kulstad to a tenure track position.

Born and raised in the Dominican Republic, Professor Kulstad got her B.A. in Business Administration from the Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. She then went on to earn an M.A. in Latin American Studies and a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Florida. She describes herself as "a Dominican cultural anthropologist specializing on the ways in which crises, such as disasters and epidemics, shape family life. My work focuses on the widespread practice of child fosterage, whereby parents place offspring with both relatives and non-relatives, in informal and mostly temporary adoption arrangements."

Tess Kulstad conducting interviews in Bangladesh



Recent months have offered a wealth of topics for anthropologists who observe disasters and crises, which is reflected in some of Kulstad's recent work. She is presently looking at how the Covid-19 pandemic and government-mandated public health measures are impacting childrearing, domestic labor, and gender norms in middle class households in the Dominican Republic.

She also is studying the long-term consequences of disasters. With LaAnna Farnelli '20, she is conducting analysis of changes to childrearing in the Dominican Republic 10 years after the earthquake that devastated the country and bordering Haiti (read more about this project below). She plans to return to the Haiti-Dominican Republic border to conduct more ethnographic research among communities displaced by the earthquake to learn how communities have changed since the earthquake and the following cholera epidemic, as well as the current Covid-19 pandemic.

Closer to Grinnell, Professor Kulstad and Nora Paul '22 are researching the effects of flood mitigation measures on lowans. Without serious action to combat climate change, disasters are projected to increase—a pattern already observed in Iowa. Kulstad and Paul aim to identify the long-term impacts on affected communities.

[Tess Kulstad and LaAnna Farnelli '20 research the impact of disasters](#)

By Tess Kulstad

LaAnna Farnelli, a 2020 Anthropology and Computer Science graduate, and I, Tess Kulstad-Gonzalez, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, collaborated on a project that examines how disasters and epidemics affect vulnerable families on the Haiti-Dominican Republic border. Specifically, this research focuses on the widespread practice of child fosterage, a childrearing arrangement in which low-income families place their children with relatives or non-relatives in informal and mostly temporary adoption arrangements. Receiving families, usually located in urban areas, provide the child with food, clothing, shelter, and most importantly, schooling. In exchange, the child provides labor in the household. These arrangements have caused much controversy. Child rights organizations like the International Labor Organization and UNICEF worry that this practice is more child labor than adoption. Moreover, there is concern that Haitian children are being trafficked to the Dominican Republic for domestic labor purposes veiled in kinship terms. Lastly, given the history of conflict between Haitians and the Dominicans, particularly in the border region, there is concern over the wellbeing of Haitian foster children living in Dominican homes.

The January 12, 2010 earthquake that destroyed Port-au-Prince added a layer of complexity to these arrangements. Many families turned to fosterage arrangements in the earthquake's aftermath. I have been conducting ethnographic research on fosterage practices since 2006. After the disaster, I shifted my focus to consider how the earthquake and cholera epidemic affected fosterage. In 2010, I conducted extensive ethnographic research in Comendador, a town on the Dominican side of the border. This research continues to this day. My general research questions are as follows: How do parents care for their children in the face of disaster? How do families rebuild their lives when they have lost everything,

including relatives, friends, homes, and livelihoods? In what ways can policy makers assist vulnerable families facing disaster?

These countrywide surveys, sponsored by the United States Agency of International Development (USAID), include multi-year representative data on households, health, reproduction, nutrition, and income from the 1980s until today. Since these surveys include fosterage-related data, we can use the datasets to conduct longitudinal analyses. We used pre- (2007) and post-earthquake (2013) survey data to test the research findings indicated below. LaAnna Farnelli's expertise in SPSS, database management, computer programming and statistical analysis have been crucial. Although I am trained in both qualitative and quantitative research methods, I am not as well versed in statistical analyses as Ms. Farnelli.

Ethnographic Research Findings:

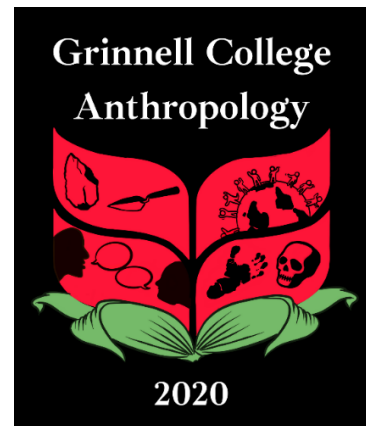
1. Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic increased after the earthquake and cholera epidemic. Currently, there are no reliable estimates of how many earthquake-displaced individuals crossed the border. General demographic information (gender, age) does not exist, either. Our analysis of the DHS data has the potential to provide this information.
2. Fosterage rates in the Dominican Republic and in Comendador, more specifically, increased after the earthquake. Earthquake-displaced families will participate in fosterage more often than non-earthquake families.
3. The number of Dominican families fostering Haitian children increased after the earthquake, particularly in the border region.
4. Thousands of Haitian and Dominican children circulate throughout the island due to child fosterage. Prior research identified the following patterns:
 - a. Most foster children come from low-income households and go to higher income ones.
 - b. Foster child mobility follows a west to east and/or a rural to urban pattern.
 - c. Most Dominican foster children live with relatives, mostly the maternal grandmother.
 - d. Most Haitian foster children in the Dominican Republic live with non-relatives.
 - e. The child most likely to be fostered is the first-born daughter of low-income single mothers without spousal support.

Initially, our goal was to submit the first of three articles for publication by the end of the summer. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic, and all of its consequences, delayed our progress. We also encountered unexpected problems in the databases that we had to address. For instance, we identified discrepancies in the variables to establish an individual's nationality. Consequently, our current goal is to submit an article for publication by the end of this year. The tentative title is "Childrearing Strategies in Disasters and Epidemic Contexts: The Case of the Haiti Earthquake and Cholera Epidemic". I will be first author; LaAnna will be the second. Our plan is to submit it to the Children, Youth and Environments journal. We hope that our analysis can assist policy makers in both countries address the long-term consequences of the earthquake. Additionally, we anticipate that it can help address the needs of undocumented Haitian families during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is also an excellent opportunity for LaAnna. Not only will she be able to learn about the publication process, but having an article will help her as she applies to graduate schools.

Creative Corner

2020 Anthro T-shirts

Despite graduating miles or even continents apart, Grinnell's class of 2020 still found a way to celebrate—in the form of a T-shirt! The selected, student-created designs are included below. The front, featuring two hands reaching towards each other with a bottle of hand sanitizer in front of Goodnow, was designed by Isaac Ferber '20. The back, featuring the Grinnell emblem and the four fields of anthropology, was created by Evelyn Berryhill '20 and LaAnna Farnelli '20.



Hominin Haikus

Professor Monty Roper had his Anthropological Inquiries class try their hand at writing haiku poems about Hominin evolution. The idea of the assignment was to get students to focus on some of the key elements and ideas of various aspects of human evolution. Condensing it to just 17 syllables forces one to reflect on what is important. It is also just fun to use different modes of expression in learning anthropology. In addition to preparing a haiku, each student had to write a brief essay explaining the haiku for a layperson. Several favorite haikus have been included below, as well as Monty's sample for the class.

Tools are not unique
But do not expect to find
Crows using Twitter

—Laura Kiely

Not just sharp rocks, fool
I see an exceptional
Adaptation: tools!

—Lucy Suchomel

Extensible knee
An efficient striding gait
Keeping man well-fed

—Michael Adrzejewski

can you Read this line?
why are we the most advanced,
you should Ask your cat.

—Simon Lane

molds do not define
what a human can become
we shift with the sun

—Emma Walsh

Hypoglossal nerve.
Freeing my tongue, I can speak.
Culture is unbound!

—Monty Roper

More Anthropology-Inspired Poetry

By John Whittaker

After sharing his classes' haikus with members of the department, John Whittaker, shared that many years ago he had reached the evolutionary stage of penning the following doggerel.

Mid-Paleolithic Crisis

The Neanderthal lamented with a brow-ridge creasing frown,
"The Pleistocene's a different scene since sapiens came to town.
It looks like I am losing out, I fear I can't compete
With an atlatl attitude and breath that smells of meat
When he swaggers with his breechcloth and dead muskrats on his feet."

He bared his teeth in speechless rage and sat upon a stone.
"Curse his CroMagnon modern ways – just leave us all alone.
Until he came Levallois flakes were everyone's best tool
But now if you can't make a blade he laughs and calls you fool.
And I guess we'll leave this valley with its pleasant glacial cool."

"With spear throwers and harpoons he has massacred the game
He's the terror of the tundra, life will never be the same.
And his modern paleodiet – eating fish! Of course he reeks.
To nice warm caves the new caveman prefers a tent that leaks.
The old handaxe sufficed for Dad – I hate these technogeeks."

As he visualized the future, he smote his brow with woe,
And scabbled in the gravel with a half-prehensile toe.
"He thinks he's so superior to us Neanderthals
He's just a new subspecies but he's got a lot of balls
Painting pornographic pictographs on other peoples' walls."

When it comes to courtship, comrades, a CroMagnon's bound to win
'Cause his brow ridges are gracile and he has a dimpled chin.
They have twenty different words for 'Give!' and not a one for 'Please.'
We can't eat'em or defeat'em, and they reproduce like fleas!"
Then Neanderthal, outmoded, shuffled off into the trees.

Thanks for donations

Our spring newsletter excluded a large part of our donors. We apologize for that oversight. Below, we are recognizing all donations received from December 2019 through December 2020. We deeply appreciate your support, which helps us to build community, provide exceptional opportunities to our students both in and out of the classroom, and reward student excellence.

Steve C. Alderson '84

Sondi and Loren Burnell

Toby R. Cain '12

Anna Marie Campbell '82

Sarah Casson '11 and Samuel Redlitz

Thomas C. Davis '10 & Grace R. Sanchez '10

Sallee Garst Haerr '74

Amy Johnston '93

Hannah K. Ney '11

Samuel A. and Michelle Rebelsky

Curtis L. Scribner '73

Paul Simmons '79 and Michele Clark

Lara E. Szent-Gyorgyi '89

Andrew J. Walter '94

Thank You!