

ANTHROPHILES

Winter
2014

Ashford University Anthropology Newsletter

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Letter from the Chair

Welcome to the first 2014 edition of the departmental newsletter. Looking back at 2013, it has been a transformative year for both Ashford University in general, and for the anthropology department in particular. The most significant event of the year was likely Ashford University earning WASC accreditation, accompanied by a very positive review of our institution. For faculty and staff, this is a recognition of our efforts to support students and assure a rigorous and relevant curriculum. For students, this is a further

assurance of the value and quality of their education.



Several members of the anthropology department, students and faculty, participated in the annual meeting of American Anthropological Association, held in Chicago, Nov. 20th-24th. It was enjoyable to meet the Ashford participants, and to attend the research presentations given by faculty members. I sincerely hope we will have more

opportunities to meet in the future, and I encourage reaching out if and when you participate in an anthropology event; you may have the pleasure of being able to meet with other members of Ashford's anthropology department.

At an online institution, we can feel dispersed and not as connected as we would like to be. Meeting at conferences is one way of connecting. Another way is our online forums. In the fall of 2013, we launched new ways of connecting and networking. A group for anthropology majors was established using LinkedIn as a platform. It is wonderful to see, and participate in, the discussion and networking taking place. I hope its use for support, networking, and sharing ideas will just keep expanding in the future.

For faculty, a program page hosted under *Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning* was created. I hope it will be used to network, share teaching material, post updates regarding conferences, and discuss developments in the discipline. It will also be used to share information regarding professional development opportunities in the department and college.

The anthropology department used much of 2013 to develop exciting curriculum and improving assessment tools. Examples of these efforts will be seen in January, when revised versions of anthropology 347, *Urban Anthropology*, and anthropology 348, *Native American Anthropology*, will be taught. We start the year 2014 with the assessment tool *Waypoint* now enabled in the majority of anthropology courses, an implementation that is for the benefit of students, faculty, and the department's collection of data for assessment efforts. At the beginning of 2013, we did not yet have any anthropology courses using *Waypoint* yet.

The anthropology department, and Ashford University, is at a very different place today than in the beginning of 2013. I hope 2014 will be a year of continuous efforts of creating a challenging, engaging, and relevant educational experience.

**Dr. Janni Pedersen, Program Chair of Cultural Anthropology,
Ashford University**

Faculty Spotlight



Dr. Emma Bate is an Assistant Professor of Cultural Anthropology in the College of Liberal Arts. She holds an MA and a PhD in Anthropology from Indiana University, Bloomington and a BA in Anthropology from Wake Forest University. An archaeologist by training, she has done research on sites in Greece, the Dominican Republic, The Bahamas, Indiana, and North Carolina. In her current research project, she is studying a Christopher Columbus-era site on San Salvador Island, The Bahamas. Her other areas of interest include the history and archaeology of the Classical world, heritage management, and the social construction of gender. Before coming to Ashford in 2012, Dr. Bate taught classes in physical anthropology and archaeology at Indiana University, Butler University, and Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI).

We asked Dr. Bate a few questions so that you can get to know her better! Here's what she had to say:

What drew you to the study of anthropology?

I loved reading about mythology and history from the time I was in elementary school, so when I was getting ready to go to college, I figured that I would be a history major. When I had my scholarship interview at Wake Forest University, however, by chance it was with the Director of the Museum

of Anthropology, Dr. Mary Jane Berman. After we finished the interview, she showed me around the museum. I'd never heard of anthropology before, but it seemed to incorporate all of the topics that were the most interesting to me. I went on her archaeological field school in The Bahamas the summer after my freshman year, and I was hooked on archaeology. Then, during my graduate studies at Indiana University, I got involved with what we call the "Archaeology in Social Context" program, which is all about understanding the cultural context of archaeology—so, basically, the anthropology of archaeology—so I've been pulled into cultural anthropology, as well.

What do you enjoy most about teaching?

My favorite thing about teaching is that I know that I'm making a difference in students' lives and helping them learn skills and ideas that will help them succeed not only in school, but in life. Anthropology is such an important subject today because it teaches tolerance and understanding of people who are different than you and how to interact with people who may have beliefs and values that are completely foreign. These skills are crucial to succeeding in today's globalized and multi-cultural world.

Tell me about one of your favorite teachers. What did you learn from him/her and what do you incorporate in your own teaching style that can be traced back to that teacher?

The most engaging professor I had as a graduate student was Dr. Peter Guardino, in the history department. Before him, I had had a bunch of seminar courses that just didn't go very smoothly, mostly because the professors didn't really know how to facilitate a good discussion. Dr. Guardino, on the other hand, seemed to know exactly how much to talk, when to ask an important question, and when to let the silence stretch out. Though the silence technique doesn't work as well online, Dr. Guardino taught me how important asking questions, as opposed to lecturing, was, and I try to remember that in the discussion boards.

Who is your favorite anthropologist?

This actually changes pretty frequently, but lately I have been into Cornelius Holtorf, who studies representations of archaeology and archaeological materials in contemporary popular culture, and Paul Mullins, who writes about consumer culture from an archaeological perspective. It helps that both of these guys are great writers! I also really like Philippe Bourgois, whose urban ethnographies were very useful when I was putting together the new Urban Anthropology course.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

When I have free time, I like to watch football (go Colts!), play board games, go hiking, or chase my cats around the house. I also like reading for pleasure—my favorite author is Neil Gaiman—but this doesn't happen nearly as often as I'd like.

Faculty Spotlight



Dr. Katie Bojakowski is an Assistant Professor of Cultural Anthropology in the College of Liberal Arts. She holds an MA and a PhD in Anthropology from Texas A and M University and a BA in Anthropology from Eastern Washington University. She became an associate online faculty for Ashford University in 2010 and became a full-time Assistant Professor in the College of Liberal Arts in May 2013. Her primary research interest is nautical archaeology, focusing on 15th and 16th century Iberian seafaring empires, and Dr. Bojakowski has participated on several shipwreck excavations throughout the world. She is also currently the co-director of the *Warwick* Project, which is a collaborative effort between the Institute of Nautical Archaeology, the Bermuda Maritime Museum, the Vasa Museum of Sweden, and the University of South-Hampton in England.

What is your favorite thing about teaching in general, and about Ashford in particular?

When I first began graduate student teaching at Texas A&M University, I adopted a teaching model that highlighted current or controversial issues that were relevant to the course material. It was during one of the undergraduate cultural anthropology classes in which I was trying to draw attention to voices that are often marginalized, that I learned how to measure my success as an instructor and realized the passion that I have for teaching. In the spring of 2005, the government of Texas passed Proposition 2 effectively banning same-sex marriages. The day after this legislation passed, I was giving my standard lecture on the anthropological perspective of marriages. Knowing that the student body is also largely opposed to same-sex marriages, I attempted to reach my students by discussing basic human rights and portraying relationships as an issue of humanity and not politics. I often use this technique to help students relate to the marriages described in the cultural

anthropology textbook by discussing how people around the world are united by common concerns and love for their families. Instead of viewing these relationships as strange and different, they are left with a picture of mothers and fathers trying to provide a good life for their family and worrying about the health and safety of their children. One of my students used the basic components of my lecture to write an opinion piece for the next issue of the Texas A&M University student newspaper, *The Battalion*. He ran into class shortly after its publication, glowing with the youthful pride that comes with one's first realization of independent thinking and ambition, and thanked me for inspiring him to write the article. I have never been more proud of a student; it was also the moment that I realized I was a professor and the responsibilities and joy that come with the position.

My passion for teaching has only increased since joining the Ashford team. It is always challenging to share your knowledge and experience with traditional college students. I find teaching at Ashford both extremely rewarding and continually challenging, because I have to relate the same information to a student body that comes from diverse backgrounds and life experiences.

How have your professional and educational experiences informed your teaching style/philosophy?

The college experience is often defined by introducing students to critical thinking and self-reflection. As an instructor I take pleasure in being part of the process of teaching students that the world is a much bigger place than they ever imagined. One of my primary teaching goals is to help students critically analyze the world around them and to question their understandings and beliefs of the world in ways that make them want to enact change.

A second major teaching goal is to empower students to take ownership of their education. My classes became more than just a chance to cover specific material. I now focus on developing a learning community in which students can build analytical and practical skills that extend beyond the scope of my classroom. When teaching an anthropology course, I prepare students for analytical thinking by giving them a base of knowledge from which to draw and by discussing meaningful concepts in multiple contexts.

In many ways my approach to student learning is also traditional. I have high expectations of my students and myself and what can be accomplished during a course. I expect students to understand the essential content and to analyze and question concepts and ideas. I expect students to study hard while giving them every opportunity to succeed.

What is the number one tip you give your students? How about advice for prospective or incoming students?

My best advice for students is to be curious about the world around them.

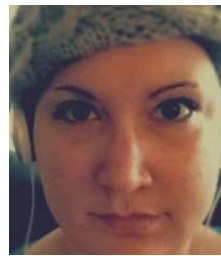
Please include any personal info you'd like added regarding where you live,

marriage/children, hobbies, etc.

I live in Washington State and am most happy on a sailboat or underneath it scuba diving. I am lucky that my career allows me to spend most of my summers working on boats, scuba diving, and traveling to wonderful places. I spend most of my free time hiking, camping, and going on backpacking expeditions with my husband and two children.

Ashford Anthropology Student Volunteers at AAA

Future Public, Current Engagements: A Student's View of the 112th Annual AAA Meeting



By Margaret Powell

To admit it, I was petrified. I have never been to a conference in my life, but I realized that if I wanted to be an anthropologist, I had to go. No matter what, I needed to attend. I received an email from my department chair about volunteering for the 112th conference in Chicago, I about jumped for the information. It allowed me to attend the entire meeting for a measly six hours of my time. It was totally doable for me, and the opportunity was too good to pass up. I left for Chicago, leaving miles between my husband, kids, and me for a week full of paper presentations and mingling with other anthros. Sounds good to me! I left on the first plane to Chicago.

I was a little apprehensive. I have never been alone in a city, and Chicago is a BIG city. The night I arrived, I was stunned. The city was absolutely gorgeous. The bright lights, the fresh cool air, and the giant buildings were quite a stunner for me. I come from a small town in Southeast Texas, and we are lucky to live next to one such big city, Houston. Of course, it could not

compare to Chicago, at least for me at that moment. I got to my hotel (Hostel International-Chicago), and I got myself ready for the beginning of the conference.

I arrived at the Hilton-Chicago wide-eyed and bushy-tailed. I have never seen so many people in one place! The entire hotel was packed to the rafters with anthropologists from all concentrations. There were anthropologists who specialized in Medical Anthropology, Applied Anthropology, and Osteology. I met professors, graduate students, and department heads from numerous colleges and universities all over the entire United States. It was so wonderful to speak to people who were interested in the same topics I was interested in. The Hilton was highly equipped for all the needs of so many people, and there were several places in and around the Hilton to continue your conversation while eating. It was overwhelming, but it was a wonderful feeling. Being able to have that one conversation over many topics, ranging from homosexuality in

Russia to online learning in Cultural Anthropology, made me feel accepted. I was so scared to voice anything because I am an undergraduate. I did not feel like I was qualified to voice my opinions, but I was soon set straight. In fact, I found myself asking questions and making the presenters add information to their thoughts. At no time during the conference did I feel inferior. I felt at home, away from home.

I finally went to my first paper presentation. I decided to listen in on the paper presentation on “The Global Gay and Its Discontents” (2-0625). It was wonderful! The papers were well presented, and I learned about how different cultures dealt with gender issues. I asked questions (Yes, Mr. Tan, I’m talking to you!), and I learned to look past what they were saying aloud to really grasp their thought processes. After this, I gained new friends and raised my courage to go to many more presentations over the next several days. I learned about khat, mortuary traditions in the UK during the Iron Age, and immigrant help for integration. I couldn’t stop! Of course, I had work to



do as well.

The whole reason I was able to do all these things was due to volunteering. It seemed that I could do two things at once, attend and help. That is just what I did. I helped at the door of the Annual Meeting (which became standing room only!). The information gleaned from this meeting did everything they could to promote the main figure of the entire conference: The Anthropologist. Also, I worked the entrance of the Career Fair, counting and talking to everyone who entered the doors. I counted around four hundred people in my area of the room, and people were coming and going out the other side of the room as well. I was hoarse afterwards, that was for sure!



I found the conference to be the best thing I have ever done! It was a wonderful addition to my Vitae, and I have never met so many nice people in one place. This is a definite do-again for me. See you in DC, AAA2014!!



Emma Bate, Margaret Powell, Katie Bojakowski, Piotr Bojakowski, Sanaa Riaz, and Jet Kaehn

Faculty Papers and Presentations

Ever wonder what kind of research our faculty members are doing? Here's a list of some of the papers and presentations that will give you an idea of what a diverse group of anthropologists we are!

Presentations:

Pedersen, J., & Riaz, S. (2013, November). *Making time for the students: Class size and student success. Effect of lower size in Anthropology 101*. American Anthropological Association, Chicago, IL.

Abstract: Class size effects student outcome in terms of learning and retention. This may be particularly important in entry level classes where individual attention may make the difference between completion and failure. However, the many variables found between class formats make general statements and guidelines hard to apply. As class formats are changing, often moving towards the online modality and being directed towards non-traditional students, more knowledge is needed to know how classes are best designed for the future public of academia. This study looked at the influence of class size in an *Introduction to Cultural Anthropology* course (ANT101) in an online, accelerated classroom format. Out of 20 randomly selected ANT 101 sections, 10 had reduced class size (20 students) and 10 had regular class size (30 students). The two groups were matched for instructor experience and performance ratings and for student preparedness based on prior grades. Our preliminary analyses on the first week of classes indicate a trend towards small classes increasing both student and instructor activity in the classroom. Students from small classes spent on average 48 minutes more per week in the classroom, posting 0.5 threads more in the discussion forums compared to the control group. Smaller classes also saw a trend towards decreased drop-out rate.

No systematic study has been conducted on online introductory anthropology courses without teaching assistants. This research could help online educators make decisions on how to design online classes to promote student learning.

Sorensen, K., Matthews, J.P., & Heidelberg, K. (2013, November). *The utility of low impact archaeology at the ancient Maya site of T'isil on the spatial analysis of patio groups*. South Central Mesoamerican Conference, University of Houston, Houston, TX.

Abstract: The site of T'isil is a densely populated, household level site occupied primarily during the Late Preclassic in northern Quintana Roo, Mexico. Mapping at T'isil was carried out during field seasons from 1999 to 2007, and because of a change in ownership research at the site has been suspended for an indefinite period of time. Research at T'isil has been conducted in a low impact manner, and we are interested in how much we can learn about an ancient Maya site without putting a shovel into architecture. This paper will examine how the use of a low impact investigation and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can be used to identify the location of patio groups at the site, and what other potential spatial patterns can be determined using this type of analysis.

Zarpour, M.T. (2013, November). *Practicing and Learning Democracy: Policy Implications for an Emerging Immigrant Civil Society*. American Anthropological Association, Chicago, IL.

Zarpour, M.T. (2013, March). *Practicing and Learning Democracy: The Formation of an Immigrant Civil Society*. Society for Applied Anthropology, Denver, CO.

Publications:

Thompson, J. (2012). The allegory of the hammer and the nail gun and other unstable orthodoxies of 'modernity': possible pitfalls of 'behavioural modernity'. *The Newsletter of the Australian Rock Art Research Association*, 29(2), 3-12.

Thompson, J. (in press). Archaic modernity vs. the high priesthood: On the nature of unstable archaeological/paleoanthropological orthodoxies. *Rock Art Research*, 31(2), 1-11.

Thompson, J. (in press). *Views to the Past: Faunal and Geophysical Analysis of the Open-Air Upper Paleolithic Site of Verberie*. British Archaeological Reviews/Archaeopress.

Zarpour, M.T. (2013). 'Learning and Practicing Democracy': Policy Implications for an Emerging Immigrant Civil Society. *Practicing Anthropology*, 35 (4), 31-35.

Zarpour, M.T. (forthcoming). Digital Diasporas and Negotiating a Transnational Civil Society. In S. Schiltermandl and M. Friedman (Eds.), *Click and Kin: Transnational Identity and Quick Media*.

Outstanding Instructor

Outstanding Instructor:

In this issue, we're featuring Kristie Martin as our Outstanding Instructor. Kristie's extensive knowledge of anthropology and her enthusiasm for teaching are clearly visible in her guidances, which provide clarification of the weekly readings and link to additional videos, articles, and other resources to allow students to pursue additional material. She does a great job of establishing rapport with her students on the discussion boards and through her course announcements. On both written assignments and the discussion boards, she provides in-depth comments, suggestions, and additional resources to help students improve their knowledge and to become more fluent in college-level research and writing skills. In short, she does an excellent job of providing a caring, challenging academic environment. Her students are lucky to have her!



What do you enjoy most about teaching?

I think people in general vastly underappreciate the ability to consider other perspectives. So, I most enjoy having students tell me about their surprise to discover how useful anthropology turned out to be for them and that they now look at the world differently than before class.

Tell me about one of your favorite teachers. What did you learn from him/her and what do you incorporate in your own teaching style that can be traced back to that teacher?

I've had some great teachers. Some of my favorites were those everyone else hated to take because they didn't want to deal with the teachers' high expectations (not that I necessarily lived up to them either). One was my Writing and Literature professor affectionately known as Dr. Death (Day) at Richard Bland College in Virginia.

Dr. Day graded brutally, but she cold-forged us into better writers and constantly encouraged us to think critically. Every situation had more layers, more questions to ask and answer. While I go out of my way not to invoke the Death part of Dr. Day, I try to foster the same kind of encouragement she put between the lines and help students pick up at least a few skills to take beyond their classes with me (especially the critical thinking part).

What drew you to the study of anthropology?

Aside from thinking Indiana Jones was the height of awesome as a kid? My mom and the popular science magazines she subscribed to--like Discover, OMNI, and Scientific American--had the greatest influence on my later decision to pursue anthropology. I grew up in a blue collar family less than two generations removed from subsistence farming. We never had much in the way of disposable income during my childhood and college degrees didn't exactly ping on anyone's radar. Yet, she thought it important for us to have regular exposure to new ideas. The slick magazine layouts showcasing excavations and collections from Bronze Age Europe, dynastic Egypt, and the civilizations of Mesoamerica drew me like a moth to a flame. They had me

hooked by the second grade.

Who is your favorite anthropologist?

Since my husband's a fellow archaeologist, I choose him. But considering my fascination with the interaction between people and their natural and social environments, if I have to pick a classic anthropologist, I'd say Julian Steward. We can also thank him for the likes of Eric Wolf (always a fun read) and Marvin Harris, too.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

Free time? Hahahah. Well, when left to my own devices, I like to geek out at home with my husband, watching movies, reading, or playing video games. I also enjoy outdoorsy pursuits and alternate between running, mountain biking, and hiking when I can. But right now, I'd like to just sit around on a nice, warm beach far from the cold—Hawaii, perhaps.

Featured Research

Anthropology in the News

By Bethany Heywood

Recently, I saw an article in the news about Mindy Budgor, who volunteered in Kenya to build schools and hospitals in the Maasai Mara (Glamour, 2013). When she was told that women couldn't become warriors in Maasai culture, she insisted on being tested. Her intent was to empower herself and other women by becoming a Maasai warrior. She refused to take "no" for an answer and was allowed to undergo training. One month and a book deal later, she's a warrior who's ready to share her story with the world. In her own words, "Only the combination of cultural curiosity, passion, fearlessness, and a set of Jewish parents breathing fire down her neck could lead a sane human being to buy a one-way ticket to Nairobi and face probable death in an effort to become the world's first female Maasai warrior" (Budgor, 2013). Budgor's website states that women are now pushing for change in the tribal laws to allow more women to become warriors (Budgor, 2013).

On the surface, there's a lot of feel-good press about this book, but beneath the surface, this appears to be a very insidious form of ethnocentrism. I'm sure Budgor had all the best intentions in the world and feels that she has accomplished something noteworthy. After all, in America we value equal opportunity and the freedom to accomplish whatever you put your mind to. How can it be wrong to spread some of our "can-do" spirit to others? I'm sure this was Budgor's mindset, along with the desire for a challenge, and a platform from which to share her story. Underlying this intention is the

pervasive and unexamined viewpoint that, of course, our culture is better and our values should be adopted by others. Budgor just wanted to help Maasai women, whom she saw as oppressed. Every culture faces its own issues in terms of inequality, issues which have a deep historical and cultural context. For an outsider to come in and claim a major victory after such a short period of time (one month!) smacks of ignorance.

Maasai woman Rarin Ole Sein has written a response to Budgor's book (retrieved from Ruge, 2013) in which she says:

I have expressed how I feel about this piece elsewhere but I have to add my 2 cts to this discussion as a Kenyan Maasai Woman. What I find disturbing about it;

1. Of course the obvious 'white savior' aspect – she came, she did and now we all should be able to follow suit. Like we needed her to come show us the way. Who told her we want to be 'warriors'? Who told her we need to be 'warriors' to make a 'difference'?
2. The culture insensitiveness of it all – that she can just trot into the wilderness and claim to be a 'warrior' after a month WTF it takes about 15 years to be a Moran and even then some don't make it – so what is she saying – the Maasai morans are slackers?
3. Insulting to the many Maasai women and Maasai Culture in general. Especially all the brilliant women working towards equality for themselves and girls. As far as I know Maasai women don't become warriors and don't want to be warriors But if they want to and choose to...they don't need an 'outsider' to come fight their fight for them. We can fight our own battles ourselves thank you! and ps: we are and continue to in ways that are respectful to our culture and our traditions. How would Native Americans feel if someone showed up did a few sun dances, slept in a tee pee and then claims to be a navajo warrior or something! idiocy!
4. That she is making money off of this! That hurts! No difference between her and the colonialist or the slave traders...in my view she just came to take period! I would like to know if any of her book proceeds go back to the any of the people she used.
5. Lastly we have to look on our side as well. Why is it so easy for us to sell ourselves like this? I mean i understand the money aspect but how do we prevent/educate our own folks from disgracefully selling themselves like this? If this woman was not a 'mzungu' she would never have had this experience let alone write about it. Are we still enslaved in our minds or what?

These are just my views and i don't speak for my entire community, am sure there are some that will differ.

Ole Sein compares her to colonialists and slave traders, and I'm sure Budgor never considered that she would leave this impression. Again, I think this is due to ignorance more than malice, but the press surrounding Budgor's book largely shows that we buy her side of the story and forget to consider the

Maasai perspective. Ole Sein also asks whether the Maasai are still enslaved in their minds, which is an interesting question. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) notes the necessity of "decolonizing" the minds of those in former colonies who have been pushed to think that the dominant culture's worldview was the only correct perspective.

These may be interesting issues to raise in anthropology classes, especially ANT101, where most students are aware that explicit prejudice is wrong, but may still fall into the trap of expressing implicit ethnocentric biases.

Budgor, M. (2013). Mindy Budgor: Warrior Princess. Retrieved from:
<http://mindybudgor.com/book-warrior-princess/>

Glamour. (2013). Meet Mindy Budgor, the world's first female Maasai warrior. Retrieved from: <http://www.glamour.com/inspired/2013/09/meet-mindy-budgor-the-worlds-first-female-maasai-warrior?currentPage=1>

Ruge, T.M.S. (2013). Voices from Maasai women: Thoughts on Mindy Budgor's 'Warrior Princess.' Retrieved from: <http://tmsruge.com/voices-from-maasai-women-thoughts-on-mindy-bugdors-warrior-princess/>

Tuhiwai Smith, L. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. New York: Zed Books Ltd.

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Cover photographs:

Excavations at Hitcham 2 (case study). Author: Portable Antiquities Scheme from London, England. Retrieved on June 7, 2013

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Homo models. Author: Israel Krul. Retrieved on June 7, 2013

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