

# ANTHROPOLOGY

**Western Washington University, Bellingham** Vol. 6 Issue 1

## Letter From the Chair

*Todd Koetje, Chair, Anthropology Department*

It's been a difficult and frustrating year, for everyone I'm sure. I'm glad to see it end, and am hopeful for the new year. As teachers, we first had to shift to an all on-line modality at the end of last winter quarter, as the pandemic first hit strongly here. Then migrate spring quarter classes completely as it became clear that we would not be able to return to face to face instruction. This also put many research and other activities on hold. No travel, no conferences, getting used to socializing on Zoom and other platforms. Perhaps most frustrating, no or much reduced, in person interaction with students and colleagues. We were in relatively good shape over the summer, or at least familiar ground, since most of our summer classes have been on line for several years now, but the fall presented new challenges, as do the upcoming winter and spring quarters.

I'd like to thank and congratulate our students for hanging in there, and putting up with all the transitions that have been necessary. I know it has been frustrating from your side as guidance, rules, and procedures have shifted to cope with the new contexts. I'm hopeful that with vaccine roll outs, we can look forward to a return to face to face instruction and research in the fall.

Our efforts to creatively assess the department's teaching program, and to decolonize our curriculum continue. In many ways, not least for me personally, shifting classes to a new modality has given me the incentive and opportunity to rethink and re approach class content and goals.

We also had to learn to cope without Viva Barnes, our office manager for so long that I feel old just thinking about it. Congratulations on many years of excellent service Viva, and we hope you enjoy your retirement! Drs. James Loucky, and Joyce Hammond also retired this last year. Both had long productive careers as Teachers and Scholars, both taught key classes in the Socio-Cultural curriculum, and will be badly missed. We also wish you well in your future endeavors!

Lauren Townshend took over for Viva at the beginning of summer quarter, and she is to be commended for her hard work in adapting to a new job and such novel challenges.

In other news from the Faculty, Tesla Monson will return from maternity leave for winter quarter, she now has twin girls to inspire her, they have already been stars of some faculty zoom meetings! Sean Bruna has been on professional leave, and will return in the fall, now newly married. Congratulations Sean and Heather !

Here is wishing you peace and health in the New Year!

-Sincerely, Todd Koetje



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# Thank You!

## to our Generous 2020 Donors

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# Faculty News

## Josh Fisher

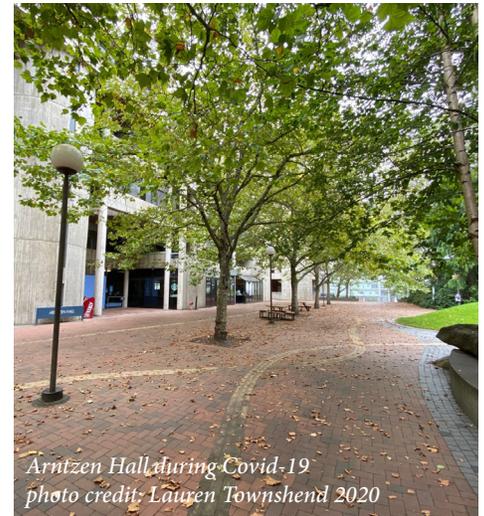
It's been a long year these last six weeks! Seriously, where to begin? It started out so promising with an awesome workshop on the new materialisms at Cambridge, an energy studies symposium in Eindhoven in the Netherlands, and a conference panel in Bonn, Germany. I was all set to wrap up research in Nicaragua, too, when COVID-19 hit Washington. No worries, I said, I'll just pick up some hand sanitizer at the Vancouver airport before I head out.

How quickly things change! Now, it's hard to imagine sitting on a plane, when a trip to Fred Meyer's is hard enough and you'd rather just stay home with your cats. This has been a hard year for everyone, particularly those who have been good pandemic-citizens from the beginning and wore a mask, social distanced, and whenever possible stayed at home. (Remember when we counted the lockdown as Day Number such-and-such?). It's been a hard year for students, too. We know that learning online is less than ideal, and more than a little difficult to keep the energy and enthusiasm up. Nevertheless, many of our students have really stepped up and demonstrated more grit and discipline than certainly any of us have seen on a national level. I'm proud of them.

I'm continuing to edit the Anthropology of Work Review with my colleagues at Simon Fraser and San Jose State University. Last year about this time, I was reporting that the journal had built online arm for public-facing scholarship, called [Exertions](#) something that could respond quickly to emerging events without the normal academic delays. This year gave us a chance to test that platform. I put together a series of interventions on various sorts of "essential labor." More than a dozen authors contributed some incredible pieces of scholarship from the field, ranging from everything from the history of essential labor as a legal status, to infrastructural and carework, to telework and work-life balance. When the



Photo credit: Maan Barua - Monkey Highway.  
From the Ecologizing Infrastructure Series.



Arntzen Hall during Covid-19  
photo credit: Lauren Townshend 2020

# The Anthropology Club

The Anthropology Club welcomes anyone who is interested, to join them at their weekly meetings, special events, or field trips held throughout the year.

**Meetings:  
Fridays @ 4pm  
Via Zoom**

**Website:**  
<https://chss.wwu.edu/anthropology/anthropology-club>

**Facebook:**  
[www.facebook.com/WWUAnthropologyClub](https://www.facebook.com/WWUAnthropologyClub)



**Josh Fisher, cont...**

normal patterns of life are so upset, sometimes it's helpful to dig in and really understand why — why things happen the way they do, and why they were the way they were in the first place.

It's also been important to do some non-pandemic thinking. To that end, my colleagues Maan Barua and Lisa Krieg put together an interesting collection of essays titled "Ecologizing Infrastructures: Infrastructural Ecologies" for [Society & Space Magazine](#). The idea was to start thinking about how human-built infrastructures are creating new ecological niches for nonhuman life, as well as how nonhuman forms of life are being used for a number of speculative biopolitical processes around the

world today. As we write, "The question of what natures we witness, live with and wish to conserve, is never outside what infrastructures do, and what future worlds they might herald."

As 2020 comes to a close, it's clear that we're not out of the woods yet. Just as the choices we've made over the past few months have brought us to where we are now, the choices we make now will powerfully shape how 2021 turns out. For my part, I'm more grateful now than ever to have the opportunity to work with the faculty, students, and staff in Anthropology at WWU. We will see one another again, hopefully soon, but I won't soon be taking you all for granted!

**Yeon Yu**

It's been quite a difficult year for everyone, but our community members have been staying productive by working close together. With strong support from the Anthropology Club, administrators, and the faculty, our department successfully hosted the annual events of Compass to Campus and Virtual Scholars Week. This past year, I published three open-source articles and made conference presentations for the 2019 American Anthropological Association Annual (AAA) Meeting and the 2020 Law and Society Association (LSA) Annual Meeting.

Like many other faculty members, I've had a busy year transferring my courses into an online format, developing new courses, and working on various collaborative projects. This year, Dr. Sean Bruna and I tried a new approach to teaching research methods. Coupled with Dr. Bruna's advanced qualitative methods course, our students participated in a collective project that examined recreational drug use among WWU students. Through the hands-on experience of professional research, our students



learned how to design a social science research, choose appropriate research methods, and understand strengths and weaknesses of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Thanks to a WWU Summer Grant, Dr. Bruna and I have continued to carry out the project. As an effort to standardize and improve teaching materials for our gender studies class ("Sex and Gender in Culture"), Prof. Dominique Coulet du Gard and I edited a textbook ("Anthropological Perspectives on Sex and Gender: Reader") that better fits our quarter system.

I'm happy to share that the "WWU Applied Anthropology Lab (AAL)" has been reorganized with several new members this year: Emily Hill, Ashton Eyer, Jill Ringoen, Zarea Lavalais, Nick Parker, and Alison Keller. These brilliant lab members have worked on on-going research via virtual lab meetings and professional training sessions. Most of the lab members have participated in a collaborative sub-lab ("WWU-UNLV Human Sexualities, Love & Intimacy"), which has been expanded with the additions of a new researcher

**Yeon Yu, cont...**

from the University of British Columbia (Dr. Bronwyn Bronwyn) and two scholars from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (Drs. Alex Nelson and Kate Korgan). Our current project examines the extent of racial and ethnic inequalities in webcamming, a legal form of virtual sex work. I'm proud to share that our undergraduate members earned an authorship for the 2020 LSA annual meetings oral presentation.

This year, I established the "WWU-Manchester Infectious Diseases and Equity Lab" with two MD/professors at the University of Manchester (Dr. Jiho Cha) and University College London/Haverford College (Dr. Young Su Park). This project examines people's experiences of COVID-19 in South Korea. Ms. Alison Keller in our

department has joined this sub-lab and has already earned an authorship for an upcoming professional meeting oral presentation as well as a peer-reviewed journal article. Despite various challenges, I expect this upcoming year to be a productive one for our lab members, from experiencing a variety of training, to collaboration with international scholars, to getting authorships for their contribution to various research projects. It has also been rewarding to witness mentored lab members grow, develop their skills, and achieve success, and I'm excited to see another productive year for lab members. Cheers to all of the students, staff, and faculty who continue to make this difficult time a productive and memorable one!

**Tesla Monson**

As I write this, the United States is in quite a state of turmoil – from the hundreds of thousands of COVID-19 deaths, to the election, to the Black Lives Matter protests – these issues and many others have consumed our thoughts this year. But I am comforted by the community that we have built up here in Western's Anthropology Department. And I greatly appreciate the offerings that Anthropology as a discipline has to help us understand the human experience in this moment. Since starting at Western last fall (2019), I have taught several different classes, including those that had to be rapidly redesigned for an online format. This online learning has frustrated students and faculty alike, but our perseverance, our ability to strike forward, and our recognition that education continues to play an indispensable role in reformation of our society has hopefully given us all the strength to forge ahead. I am also preparing new and revised classes for the coming year, and I look forward to expanding the offerings of biological anthropology to our undergraduates and MA students. I am particularly interested in showcasing the intersection between biological and social sciences and improving our students' awareness of the racism and oppression that has shaped science and the academy over the last several hundred years. As I teach my students, there is no such as thing as complete objectivity in science. And so we must be aware of our history, our biases, and the effect of our actions on others in order to work towards more just and antiracist



**Tesla Monson's Research Sheds New Light on the Evolution of Vision in Primates and Humans**



*Tesla's work featured in Western Today (April, 2020)*

science in the future. We are now swept up in a movement for change, and we can make a difference. Beyond our efforts to fight racism in the United States, we sit on the teetering brink of a climate disaster from which there may be no return. But I do not say these things to cultivate despair. In fact, quite the opposite. Now, more than ever, we as individuals -- as educators and students -- as conscientious members of society -- we have the ability to make a far-reaching impact. One by one, we

## Tesla Monson, *cont...*

have the power to spread the science and critical thinking that can change the way our society works. Letting reasoned thinking and compassionate science go ‘viral’ has never been so possible. And so we must continue to work through education to improve our community and make it a better place for all.

Even with everything that has been going on, I have also managed to get a fair amount of research completed, and I am proud to announce that I published papers in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS; ranked 3rd in the world, across all scientific disciplines), and The Anatomical Record, among others. With my publication in PNAS, I even ventured for an October swim in Lake Whatcom, an act that was both refreshing and revitalizing. I am continually grateful to my strong international collaborative network, and I look forward to generating more scientific insights with all of them. In particular, we continue our work describing a sizeable sample of new monkey fossils from Ethiopia (dated to ~100,000 years ago), and we hope that these papers will be published shortly. I am also working to build up new projects in the areas of primate vision, and reproductive ecology, through grants submitted and in progress. I am happy to report that some of this work on the evolution of vision was featured in Western Today last spring, and I hope to bring more campus-wide awareness of the impactful science that is being conducted in our Department. My lab space has been ready for a few months now, and once it is safe to resume work in the building, I will be buying new equipment to process and analyze 3D scans for student projects. I anticipate strong cohorts of MA students over the next several years, and I envision many interesting scientific projects resulting.

On a personal note, I have been enjoying my leave over the last several months. We welcomed twins into our lives



*Tesla's husband Andrew pushes the twins through a stream on a hike by the Nooksack*

this summer. It has been a strange time to grow our family, but we could not be happier with the results, and we look forward to a time when they can meet the WWU Anthropology community. We have also managed to get in a few “walks through the wilderness”, pushing the newborn stroller to its limits with some off-roading trails.

I also want to congratulate Professor Joyce Hammond and Professor James Loucky, as well as Viva Barnes, on their retirements. Viva, in particular, was indispensable in getting me settled here in the Department, and I never would have made it through my first year without her. All in all, I have had quite a satisfying first year at Western, and I appreciate how quickly and resoundingly the Anthropology community has welcomed me.

We may be sitting in the storm, but the future is bright. Black Lives Matter, every Vote counts, and there is no Planet B. Here's to another year of working together to make the world a better place.



*Tesla takes an October swim in Lake Whatcom to celebrate the publication of her paper in PNAS*

## Tesla Monson, *cont...*

Some Last Minute Good News! I received a grant from the Leakey Foundation for \$23,265 to support a research project entitled "Evolution of the primate cranium: Craniofacial modularity in extant colobines." The three-year project will look at variation in the skulls of Asian and African monkeys with the goal of better understanding the evolution of the primate cranium. In addition to funds for research, the grant includes funding for two undergraduate researchers to work in the Primate Evolution Lab at Western and learn about 3D data imaging and analysis.



*Tesla Monson on WWU campus*

*Tofino Sunset, photo credit: Lauren Townshend 2019*



## Kathleen Young

I was teaching the Anthropology 456 class, Death and Dying, when my 88-year-old mother, who did not have the coronavirus, was admitted to the hospital with age-related symptoms on Friday, May 1st. Family was not allowed in; my father worried she would die alone. In the middle of the night, the hospital called and told him to come in; his wife of 69 years was dying. He called me and told me to get my daughter and join him in the death watch, a gathering in prayer at the bedside of the dying. We were met by security guards at the hospital entrance, hospital work-

ers checked our names, took our temperature, gave us masks, and let us go to her room. My mother told us she loved us. "I'm dying," she said, "It's over."

The hospital was temporarily lifting its lock-down for family members of dying patients, but there were coronavirus patients in the hospital. The doctor said it was not safe for my father at his age, but I would be allowed to stay with my mother until she died.

I spent three nights on a reclining chair next to her bed. Hearing me recite the Rosary seemed to calm her, and the nurse whom I came to

admire, also prayed with her. My father joined us on Sunday. While she slept, he told me that just a few days before, they had take-out fish & chips and she had a good appetite.

On the second night in the hospital, I woke to yelling. It was my mother yelling, "I want fish & chips! I want fish and chips!" over and over. "Mom, it's the middle of the night!" She kept yelling about fish & chips. I opened the room door and the staff asked if we needed help before they heard my mother yelling. Yes, I said, either that or fish and chips. They laughed.

**KZY, cont...**

My mother had rallied. My father arrived and I took a walk outside, met my daughter, and returned to the hospital, but they would not let us in. New rules; only one person in the room and only for nineteen minutes. I got them to allow me to tell my father the new rules. While I was gone, the guard kicked everyone out of the waiting room. Everybody was wound-up. There was young Black man standing outside with my daughter. He had been there for two hours waiting to find out about his wife who had been brought in earlier. He joined my daughter in demanding to see a supervisor. I don't know how much longer he waited because the supervisor arrived to tell me my father would be forcibly escorted out of the hospital. "If you try to remove my elderly father from the bedside of his dying wife, he will cause an incident, and you will be responsible," I warned. The supervisor called an administrator; I could spend the night again, but only one person in the room at a time.

On the morning of Cinco de Mayo, my father took over for me and I went to his house to shower. He was holding my mother's hand when she died. She had been privileged to receive the best care in the world and died peacefully in her sleep.

We arranged the burial. I had a question about flowers on the casket and called my father saying I could not call my mother anymore to ask her these kinds of questions. "No," he said, "That would be long-distance."

Six weeks later, my father fell down a neighbor's steps, hit his head, and lost consciousness. I was called back to Providence Hospital in Everett and had to make the decision to remove him from life-support, as had been his previous directive. He died within hours.

We were in the middle of the pandemic shut-down as I sorted through there lifetime accumulations. The lessons from the 456 class, Death and Dying, helped me understand the grieving process. Lessons in practicing resilience from the 490 class, Trauma and Recovery, helped me cope with the loneliness and isolation. Their house is within walking distance of Mukilteo and so I visited the monument to the Treaty of Point Elliott and marveled that such an important historic event was so non-descript, a lesson in erasure I learned about from the Anthropology 462 class, Critical Issues in Indigenous Northwest Studies.

I was not confident in my ability to teach all online courses in the fall but was blessed with great students in both the 301 class, Theory, and 456, War and Human Rights. I already knew anthropology students are just the best, but I also know it helps to engage the mind during challenging times. I have always thought of anthropology as practical, useful, applicable to everyday life and 2020 confirmed it.

That's my story and I'm sticking to it with deep gratitude for all the anthropology students who have been my teachers all these years. I carry you with me.

-KZY.



*Tofino Sunset, photo credit: Lauren Townshend 2019*

## Sean Bruna

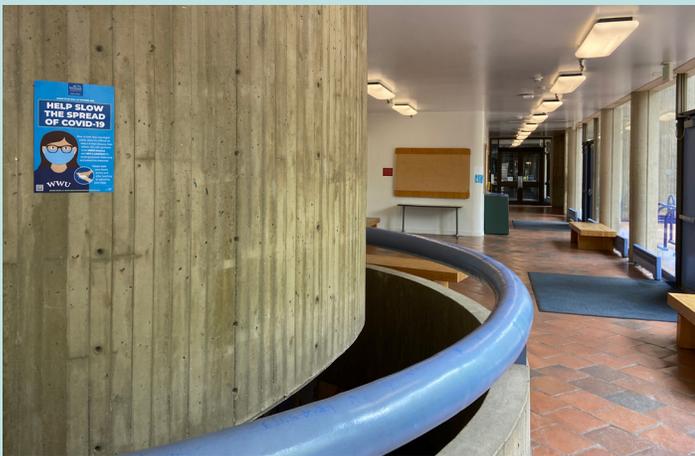
### WWU Medical Anthropology Group Update Sean Bruna, PhD.

COVID-19 pandemic has brought so many challenges to our personal and academic lives. This 2020-2021 academic year I was planning to get married in Bellingham, live in Charleston, SC, where my wife is a biology professor, and travel to El Paso, Texas for research on my first book examining diabetes prevention practices on the US-Mexico border. But like so many others, I find myself homebound in Charleston (with weddings changed to elopements) and meetings held with community collaborators over Zoom.

Despite the many challenges this pandemic brings, my spirits have been lifted by the support and care from the faculty and staff in the department. Our faculty shifted

to “check-in around the table” to support one another in an online format until that time when we can again meet in person.

Below I highlight some of the achievements from the group in the prior year. But I would first like to welcome some of our new and returning scholars. Dulce Facundo-Rodriguez (Senior, Archaeology Major) joined last spring to conduct online research and is now assisting Dr. Campbell with archaeological collections housed by the department. Bassma Al-Nighashi (4th Year, Sociology Major) and Awa Njie (1st Year, Undeclared), joined as research assistants working on two COVID-19 research projects, including one with departmental colleague, Dr. Yeon Yu. Tori Bianchi (BS, 2018, MSc, 2019) and Giselle Király (BA, 2018, MSc, 2020), returned to the group to assist with a research that critically examines the gender of editorial boards of anthropology journals.



*Dr. Bruna's last look as he walked out of AH in Spring 2020.*



*Before the start of the 2020 school year, Dr. Bruna sent each of his students a mask, hand sanitizer, and a Starbucks gift-card. The masks were embroidered by a research partner at Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, Texas.*

courses online, our staff updated mentoring materials to new modalities, and our students adjusted to new ways of learning and researching. Though we have a long way to go before we can return to campus, I am encouraged by the efforts in our department.

I am particularly humbled by the ongoing commitment to timely and meaningful research, care and support shown by the students and scholars that are part of the WWU Medical Anthropology Group. As I prepared for my research leave this summer, I asked the group if they wanted to continue meeting or take a break for the year. The group unanimously agreed that meeting regularly was important for research and care. And so we continue

Dr. G McGrew (Lecturer, Chemistry, WWU), joined as a collaborator on mentoring research, as did Dr. Cori Knight (Lecturer, University of California, Riverside). We anticipate that Dr. Knight will transition to a new role with the group in the coming year.

Cecilia Martin (MA, 2019) successfully defended her thesis, “The Amukura Water Project: Utilization of Photovoice to Examine Water Use and Needs in Western Kenya.” Ms. Martin was also awarded the WWU Outstanding Graduate Award. As an underrepresented minority (URM) scholar and parent, Ms. Cecilia Martin exemplifies the current generation of scholars that seeks to examine research with and for diverse communities.

**Sean Bruna, cont...**

Ms. Martin’s research examined limited water access in the daily lives of members of the Teso tribe (Iteso) living in Amukura, a small rural village located in Busia County in western Kenya. Her participatory action research was critical of international NGO practices and worked in partnership with members of the village to create local solutions to water access.

Matia Jones (MA, 2020) successfully defended their thesis, “An Ethnography of Urban Food Policy: Increasing Food Sovereignty in Bellingham, Washington”. In addition to their thesis, Ms. Jones assisted with research and writing of the 2017 Whatcom Community Food Assessment. The food assessment sought to illuminate the current challenges and opportunities in Whatcom County’s food system, while also providing recommendations for increasing

communication, coordination, and collaboration among the many organizations that provide food.

Peter Miterko (MA, 2017), with Dr. Bruna, published “Resident identified strengths and challenges of project-based permanent supportive housing program implementation in a small metropolitan county” (2020) in the journal of Housing and Society. Utilizing a collaborative approach founded in the principles of



*Drs. Bruna and Fullerton make a Covid-safe house visit and talk to a friend through the door.*



*Dr. Bruna took a selfie during a hike to the top of Pinnacle Mountain, the tallest mountain in South Carolina.*

participatory action research (PAR) to orientate research processes, the research critically examined resident-identified strengths and challenges of living at St. Mary’s House, a Project-Based PSH program in Whatcom County, Washington.

L.C. Osadchuk (MA, Candidate) was awarded the Graduate Research & Creative Opportunities Grant (\$1,500) for their research “Care strategies in the disabled community during times of social isolation.” We look forward to learning more about

this research later this spring. Hoku Rivera (BA, 2020; AmeriCorps VISTA) graduated and received several awards in the previous year, including Outstanding Graduate in Creative Writing; Outstanding Graduate of the Anthropology Department; the R. D. Brown Memorial Scholarship; the Associate Students Academic Scholar Award; and the Dr. Elena Pereyra Peace Award. Hoku also published poetry in Jeopardy #56 and in CEDAR for their Honors Capstone “H(u)ina”;

Published poetry in Bamboo Ridge Press #118.

Congratulations to all of the scholars in the WWU Medical Anthropology Group! And thank you for the care and support you give to each other!

## Dominique Coulet du Gard

Dominique recently submitted a book review to be printed in the African Studies Review this Spring 2021, The book, *Modernist Art in Ethiopia* (2019) is by Elizabeth Georgis. The African Studies Review is run by the African Studies Association and currently published through Cambridge University, UK.

She has been working with Western Economic Empowerment Initiative (WEEI) for a number of NGOs in Myanmar. Dominique was successful in writing a grant to the US State Department for Rainmaker NGO in Mons State, Myanmar. The NGO received funding to create their Women's Center, where they are carrying out training programs and free workshops in literacy, voting rights, gender equality issues, computer and sewing training, and housing a computer cafe for daily local use.

The goal is to have women begin and thrive in their own small businesses. Since Dominique has been involved beginning in 2015, more than twenty each year have succeeded.



## Judy Pine

I write this as 2020 draws to a close. I have, in previous years, gone back and forth between the 1st and 3rd person in this essay, which is intended to catch folks up on the doings of the faculty over the past year. This is a writing assignment I do not look forward to – I would much rather hear about what all of our former students have been up to out in the world (yes, this is a hint, contact your old but never aging profs and catch us up every once in awhile, we love that!) than talk about myself. As a result, I have often produced an awkward semi-formal, impersonal essay. This just does not seem like the right genre for 2020 so I have decided that I am going to give you a more epistolary essay from an advisor instead.

I have been very fortunate in that I was able to pivot to an on-line-only model in mid-Spring quarter when things shut down and have taught all-online since that time. I count myself fortunate, as well, to be in a state and working at a university where this decision was not



simply accepted but encouraged. It distresses me that my students have not been as fortunate, many needing to work at jobs which are both risky and inadequately paid. I have been a supporter of organized labor since early adolescence and a member of one or another union through much of my working life. As shop steward for the Anthropology Dept at Western I am proud of the United Faculty of Western Washington for its support of it membership and of our union siblings. I hope that one result of the current cacophony of intersectional crises will be the emergence of a diverse, inclusive, and reinvigorated labor movement and I intend to be right there supporting it. I hope you all will, too.

I am also fortunate to be a linguistic anthropologist in a time when linguistic anthropology is taking on significant issues in real time. I am including Janet McIntosh and Norma Mendoza-Denton's (eds) 2020 book *Language in the Trump Era: Scandals and Emergencies* (Oxford U. Press) in the course reading for Semiotic Anthropology this Winter quarter and in the 2019-20 academic year I had the great pleasure of teaching from both Jonathan Rosa's (2019) *Looking Like a Language, Sounding Like a Race: Raciolinguistic Ideologies and the Learning of Latinidad* (Oxford U. Press) and H. Samy Alim, John R. Rickford & Arnetta F. Ball's (eds) 2016 volume *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes Our Ideas About Race*. I encourage anyone with an interest to look into purchasing these books through their local independent bookseller. Village Books here in Bellingham takes orders online and ships books, so that is of course an option.

I have spent more time reading and thinking and given less time to writing than I had intended this past year.

There are a couple of books in which I have chapters which may come out in 2021 – we shall see. I will be presenting a paper (probably virtually) at the International Pragmatics Association meeting in Winterthur, Switzerland in June 2021. The second ever Society for Linguistic Anthropology conference, with the apt theme "Future Imperfect: Language in Times of Crisis and Hope" was planned for April 2020 and is now in a "pending" status as we have decided we would prefer to meet in Boulder, CO in person even if we must wait a bit. I am a co-organizer of that meeting whenever it takes

place, and will very likely be writing something for or about it as well.

I remain very pleased to be a part of the Anthropology Department at Western and look forward to getting back into Arntzen Hall with other folks. In the meantime, emails and Zoom visits are lovely. I am also learning to use Discord and welcome opportunities to practice, so feel free to hit me up about that. Meanwhile, I am hopeful for a 2021 with more hope than crisis, and raise a toast to resilience and community in trying times.

# Student & Alumni News



## Elizabeth Ramos Miller

After graduating from Western I started a nursing program at the University of Utah and about a year ago began working in the Pediatric ICU at Primary Children's Hospital in Salt Lake City. I get to work with the sickest, youngest patients and collaborate with a brilliant medical team, a transition that's been challenging but rewarding. Thank you for the letters and references that made this happen! While I love the critical nature of the work I do, I hope that I can eventually use my nursing degree in a broader context to effect change within communities and populations. What this actually looks like remains to be seen! (Grad school on the horizon?)

## Bruce Miller

*MA Anthropology 1982*

Bruce Miller is the 2020 recipient of the Weaver-Tremblay Award for Applied Anthropology, given by the Canadian Anthropology Society/ La Société Canadienne d'Anthropologie (CASCA). The award is the highest honor for anthropology in Canada. Portions of the award citation read:

“Dr. Miller’s work with Indigenous communities has demonstrated the value of oral history as evidence in trials involving Indigenous communities in Canada, the United States, and Brazil. His work is grounded in community and driven by community interests. In today’s bitterly divided world, scholars like Bruce Miller serve



**Bruce Miller**

as needed reminders of how important it is to design and conduct research in ways that will build capacity within Indigenous communities and contribute to expanding understanding about Indigenous culture within settler society.” Miller is a professor of anthropology at the University of British Columbia-Vancouver, and author or editor of eight books, among them *Oral History on Trial* and *The Problem of Justice: Tradition and Law in the Coast Salish World*.

## Marissa Bell

I recently graduated from WWU (winter 2020) with a Major in Sociology and a Minor in Anthro-



**Marissa Bell**

pology. I have been talking to Sean Bruna, who wrote me a letter of recommendation for a grad program at California State University San Marcos. This is a Masters in Public Health, education and promotion emphasis. I am happy to announce that I have accepted admission into this program and will start Fall 2020!!

## Kaija Colburn

*BA Anthropology/Biology 2017*

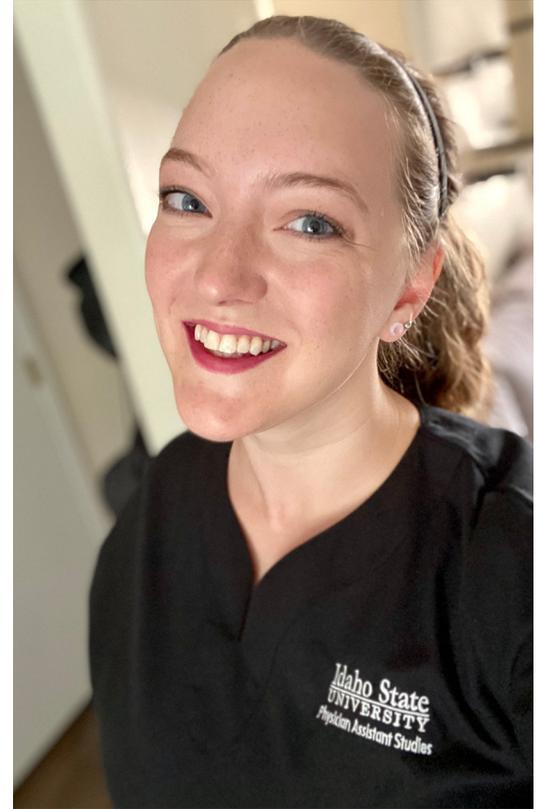
What is it like to study to become a physician assistant? Similar to inner tubing, you hold on for dear life while getting dragged along at high speeds. I'm now halfway through my first semester in the Master of Physician Assistant Studies program at Idaho State University. The wakes of this ride are certainly intense (30 graduate level credits per semester is no joke!) yet every day is filled with curiosity and enthusiasm.

I was recently awarded a scholarship through the National

## Kaija Colburn, cont...

Health Service Corps that will pay for the entirety of my tuition (\$128,000 over two years) plus a monthly stipend (approximately \$1400). In exchange, I'll be working as a physician assistant for two years in a rural area. While I'm thrilled to not be saddled with enormous out-of-state grad school debt, I'm mostly looking forward to building relationships with small, underserved communities and collaborating to dismantle some of their barriers in medicine. When I started at Western, I knew my career goals, but it was through my anthropology coursework that I realized how important social factors are to wellness and morbidity.

And so I want to thank the WWU Anthropology Department, particularly Dr. Sean Bruna's medical anthropology class, for providing a stellar education. Sean, thank you for writing copious letters of recommendation that were paramount in admission to my program (the competition for applicants was unreal), and without which I could not have obtained an unthinkable generous scholarship. There aren't enough words to express gratitude for your development of my cultural competency as a healthcare professional. You've put fuel in the boat and started the engine, now let's see how far across the lake I can make it.



## Peter Miterko

*MA Anthropology, 2017*

I wanted to share that with help and support from Sean I've been published as lead author in my first peer reviewed publication! The title of the article is Resident identified strengths and challenges of project-based permanent supportive housing program implementation in a small metropolitan county and it's featured in the journal *Housing and Society*. The entire manuscript was drawn from my 2015-2017 grad research and I just want to thank you both again for being on my committee and supporting and guiding me through the completion of my thesis. I may try and put together another manuscript based on the Photovoice portion of my thesis, who knows. I'm still working with Northwest Youth Services in town but I remain interested in doing research and staying up on the literature.

**Claire Nitsche**

*BA Anthropology 2015*

Claire shared the exciting news that her first article was published in [CleanUp News](#). The article titled, [Trash and Tourism: The Situation at the Top of the World](#), can be found by following the link.



*Left:* The top of the pass at Khardung La, 18,380ft. It's the highest motorable pass in the world, and is in the Ladakh Range. Behind me in the distance is the Karakoram Mountains, home of K2. *Right:* This was a side trip while I was in Ladakh, India with another WWU Anth Alum, Steven Stillwell, who took this photo while we were riding camels through the Great Indian Desert near Jaisalmere, Rajasthan, India.



*Wilson Library - photo credit: Lauren Townshend 2019*

# Annual Anthropology Award for Outstanding Student Research

*The Annual Anthropology Award for Outstanding Student Research recognizes excellent undergraduate research. Faculty nominated papers, posters, presentations or other scholarly endeavors completed the previous Spring quarter through Winter quarter of the current year are eligible. Three selected awardees present their research during Scholars Week each year. We are proud to announce this year's recipients:*

## Alexandra Ritter

The Vertebral Column in Humans

*-nominated by Tesla Monson*

The vertebral column of humans is a segmentally articulated, serially homologous component to the skeletal system that has vast potential in demonstrating the evolution of humans, bipedal locomotive mechanics, comparison to nonhuman closely related species, and information about unidentified individuals in forensic contexts. Its use in these subjects is often overshadowed by other skeletal elements with more developed osteological methods in forensics and evolutionary studies. The purpose of this review is to identify the importance of the vertebral column in these examinations and advocate for its further use in future studies.

## Cooper Grove

An Industry Going Under: What to Consider about Tidal Energy in the Gulf of Kutch

## Ezekial Hocking

Female Sex Workers' Influences on Economic, Family, and Gender Structures

*-nominated by Yeon Yu*

Drawing upon the latest and important readings in the field, Mr. Hocking engages in one of the most important debates in sex work literature. Dealing with a tricky research question, he makes a clear argument that, as empowered agents, female sex workers' everyday actions exert dynamic and transformative influences on the larger society through their impacts upon the key areas of

economic, family, and gender structures. It is impressive that he creatively approached the difficult question and supported his argument with enough evidence from recent ethnographies in a clear and elegant prose. The high quality of this paper – the best undergraduate paper I have seen so far – also indicates Mr. Hocking's thorough reading of substantial amount of anthropological work and proactive participation in the seminar.

## Elwha Dam, before and after the Elwha River restoration.



*Photo credit: Lauren Townshend 2015*

The largest dam removal in U.S. history began when congress passed the Elwha River Ecosystem and Fisheries Restoration Act in 1992. <https://www.nps.gov/olym/learn/nature/elwha-ecosystem-restoration.htm>