

Isabella E. Arabia

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Master's student in Anthropology at UTSA studying primate behavior and evolution, with experience in tropical rainforest fieldwork, long-term behavioral datasets, and ecological monitoring. Passionate about primate research and conservation, and about communicating science through visual art. Portfolio: [\[link ↗\]](#)

Education

University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA)

San Antonio, TX

Master of Arts in Anthropology

EXPECTED May 2028

Concentration in Biological Anthropology, Thesis Track

- **Courses:** *Advanced Biological Anthropology, Theory in Cultural Anthropology, Ethnoprimatology*

Tufts University

Medford, MA

Master of Science in Biology

May 2026

Concentration in Ecology, Behavior, and Evolution

- **GPA:** 3.89 / 4.00
- **Courses:** *Independent Research in Biology* (Graduate Capstone), *Chimpanzee Behavioral Ecology, Seminar in Field Endocrinology, Primate Conservation, Darwinian Medicine, Endocrinology, Tropical Ecology and Conservation*

Bachelor of Science, Completed one year early combined with BFA

May 2025

Biopsychology, Summa Cum Laude

- **GPA:** 3.99 / 4.00
- **Courses:** *Independent Research in Biology* (Undergraduate Capstone), *Primate Social Behavior, Animal Behavior, Comparative Vertebrate Physiology, Statistics for Behavioral Sciences, Brain and Behavior, General Genetics, Experimental Psychology, Cells and Organisms*

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Completed one year early combined with BS

May 2025

Studio Art

- **Senior Thesis:** *Colony Subject X*
- **Courses:** *Senior Thesis, Interdisciplinary Practices, Flora and Fauna, Art and Ecology, Cultivating Ecologies: Art and the Environment, How the Brain Perceives Art*

Publications

- **IN PREP: Arabia, I.E.**, Lem, M., Muller, M.N., Thompson M.E., Wrangham, R.W., Kobusingye, M. Otali, E., Machanda, Z.P. Old Chimps Still Got It: Adaptive Social Strategies in Aging Subordinate Male Chimpanzees (*P. t. schweinfurthii*)
- **IN PREP: Arabia, I.E.**, Smith, E.J., Orians, C.M., Traniello, J.F.A., Is the leafcutter ant *Atta cephalotes* in competition with sympatric ant species for carbohydrate food resources?
- **Oct 2025:** Buza, L., **Arabia, I.E.**, Weaver, S.M. et al. The science funding crisis threatens the careers of future behavioral ecologists. *Behavioral Ecology Sociobiology* 79, 115 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00265-025-03656-7> [\[link ↗\]](#)

Fellowships, Grants, and Scholarships

- **Apr 2026:** National Science Foundation **Graduate Research Fellowship** Program [\[link ↗\]](#)
- **Dec 2025:** Tufts **MUSE Grant** for the Arts, Humanities, and Humanistic Social Sciences [\[link ↗\]](#)
- **May 2025:** Tufts Department of Biology **Research Grant**, La Selva Biological Station, Costa Rica [\[link ↗\]](#)
- **Apr 2025:** Tufts School of the Museum of Fine Arts **Materials Funding Award**, Senior Thesis support
- **Oct 2024:** Tufts University Undergraduate **Research Funding Award**, Course research
- **Aug 2024:** Tufts University Undergraduate **Research Funding Award**, Summer research
- **Jan 2024:** U.S. governmental **travel grant**, NHEC STEM Institute

Research Experience

UTSA Department of Anthropology

Campos Lab, Master's Researcher [\[link ↗\]](#)

Advisor: Dr. Fernando Campos, PhD

- **Project 1 (ONGOING) — Master's Thesis Research**

San Antonio, TX

Aug 2026 – PRESENT

Tufts Departments of Anthropology and Biology

Machanda Lab, Master's Researcher [\[link ↗\]](#)

Advisor: Dr. Zarin P. Machanda, PhD

- **Project 1 — Master's Capstone Research:** *Exploring the effects of Instability on male chimpanzee (Pan troglodytes schweinfurthii) Social Bonds*
- **Project 2 (ONGOING) — Master's Capstone Research:** *Old Chimps Still Got It! Adaptive social strategies in aging subordinate male chimpanzees (Pan troglodytes schweinfurthii) at Kanyawara*

Medford, MA

Jan 2025 – PRESENT

Boston University (BU) Department of Biology

Traniello Lab, Researcher [\[link ↗\]](#)

Advisor: Dr. James F. A. Traniello, PhD

- **Project 1 (ONGOING):** *Is the leafcutter ant Atta cephalotes in competition with sympatric ant species for carbohydrate food resources?*
- **Project 2 — Undergraduate Capstone Research:** *Workers with Sweet Teeth: Division of labor affects gustatory polyphenisms and ex vivo brain metabolic rate in response to sugars in the leafcutter ant Atta cephalotes*

Boston, MA

May 2024 – PRESENT

National Hispanic Environmental Council

9th Annual California STEM Institute, Scholar [\[link ↗\]](#)

- **Project:** *Investigating the effects of drought and wildfire on the CSUCI Calleguas Creek riparian ecosystem using transect sampling and spatiotemporal analysis*

Camarillo, CA

Jan 2024

Tambopata Research Center

Wired Amazon Program, Volunteer [\[link ↗\]](#)

- **Project 1:** *Discovering New Species* [\[link ↗\]](#)
- **Project 2:** *AmazonCam Tambopata* [\[link ↗\]](#)
- **Project 3:** *8 Primates* [\[link ↗\]](#)
- **Project 4:** *Aerobotany* [\[link ↗\]](#)
- **Project 5:** *Tambopata Macaw* [\[link ↗\]](#)

Madre de Dios, Perú

May 2022 – Jul 2023

Tufts University Department of Biology

Romero Lab, Research Assistant [\[link ↗\]](#)

Advisor: Dr. L. Michael Romero, PhD

Medford, MA

Mar 2023 – Apr 2023

- Analyzed infrared images to non-invasively measure climate change-induced stress in house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*)

Tufts University Department of Psychology

Miczek Lab, Research Assistant

Advisor: Dr. Klaus A. Miczek, PhD

Medford, MA

Sep 2022 – Dec 2022

- Studied the effects of variable microinjection of CP395376 (a CRFR1 antagonist) and AM6527 (an endocannabinoid agonist) on alcohol intake behavior in CFW lab mice

Presentations

- May 2026: Research talk**, Graduate **Capstone Defense**, Tufts University, Medford, MA
- Mar 2026: Podium presentation**, American Association of Biological Anthropologists **Conference**, Denver, CO [\[link ↗\]](#)
- Nov 2025: Poster presentation**, Northeastern Evolutionary Primatologists **Conference**, UPenn, PA [\[link ↗\]](#)
- Apr 2025: Research talk**, Spring Student **Anthropology Symposium**, Tufts University, Medford, MA
- Dec 2024: Research talk**, Undergraduate **Capstone Defense**, Tufts University, Medford, MA
- Jan 2024: Research talk** for members of the **USDA Forest Service**, NHEC STEM Institute, Camarillo, CA

Technical Skills

- Field Techniques: Behavioral observation** (ant behavioral assays, primate troop follows, vocalization recording); **Tropical fieldwork** (permit acquisition, collaborative and labor-intensive work under uncomfortable conditions); **Camera trapping** (identifying mammal trails and animal tracks); **Trail navigation** (GPS, machete); **Ecological surveying** (DBH calculation, point-intercept and quadrat percentage cover sampling); **Environmental parameter measurement** (soil and water sampling, testing for TDS, pH, temperature, conductivity, salinity, and pressure); **Entomological work** (keying ant species, light trap moth collection, insect sample prep for DNA barcoding)
- Lab Techniques: DNA and RNA work** (electrophoresis, PCR, and Western blot); **Lab ant colony and CFW lab mouse work** (ant brain dissection, animal husbandry); **Chemical handling and manipulation** (preparation, filtration, titration, centrifugation)
- Data Methods: Statistical modeling** (GLMM, logit, PCA, LDA); **hypothesis testing** (t-test, ANOVA); **power and post-hoc testing** (Tukey's HSD, Scheffé's); **visualization** (bar, line, and box plots); **geospatial analysis** (habitat mapping, temporal change detection, environmental overlays)
- Programming Languages:** Proficient in R, Competent in Python and JavaScript
- Computer Software:** RStudio, Jamovi, SPSS, Google Earth Engine, Adobe suite (Photoshop, Premiere Pro, Lightroom, Express, Audition, Illustrator); GarageBand, Final Cut Pro, Logic Pro
- Languages:** Fluent in **English** and **Spanish**, Proficient in Mandarin **Chinese**
- Studio Expertise: Graphic design; Drawing** (charcoal, graphite, ink); **Painting** (oil, acrylic, gouache, canvas stretching); **Camera work** (videography, photography); **Editing work** (photo, video, audio); **Sound work** (field recording, sound mixing, live multichannel audio mixing); **Lighting** (live event programming); **Gallery installation** (basic rigging and setup); **Woodworking** (sanding, cutting); **Fiber arts** (hand and machine sewing, beading)

Honors and Awards

- **Nov 2025: Best Student Poster**, Northeastern Evolutionary Primatologists Conference [\[link ↗\]](#)
- **May 2025: Dean's List**, all semesters
- **May 2025: Top 10**, Tufts Environmental Studies Department **Photography Contest** [\[link ↗\]](#)
- **May 2024: Student Organization of the Year**, Tufts Public Harmony [\[link ↗\]](#)
- **May 2024: First Prize**, Tufts Environmental Studies Department **Photography Contest** [\[link ↗\]](#)
- **May 2023: Top 10**, Tufts Environmental Studies Department **Photography Contest** [\[link ↗\]](#)

Art, Outreach, & Exhibitions

- **Aug 2026: Traniello et al. 2026, Figure 2: Worker kinaesthetic intelligence and task specialization** (**published scientific illustration**), *Animal Behavior* [\[link ↗\]](#)
- **May 2026: Colony Subject X** (five oil paintings), permanently acquired and exhibited by the **Tufts University Department of Biology**, Bacon Hall
- **May 2026: Research talk**, Cambridge Rindge & Latin **High School** Zoology Class, Cambridge, MA
- **May 2026: Invited art-science outreach talk**, University of Colorado Anthropology Department, Colorado Springs, CO
- **Nov 2025: TEDx science outreach talk**, Fall Speaker Event, Tufts University, Medford, MA [\[link ↗\]](#)
- **May 2025: Colony Subject X** (multimedia senior thesis installation), featured in *And Then There Is the Never-Ending Problem of Everything Else* (group exhibition), **Tufts University Art Galleries** [\[link ↗\]](#)
- **Jul 2023: Rarefaction Curves and Advanced Mathematics** (YouTube video feature; 114,000+ views), produced by *StandUpMaths*, filmed at the **Tambopata Research Center** [\[link ↗\]](#)

Service and Leadership

- **Aug 2026 – PRESENT: Peer Leader**, UTSA Anthropology Graduate Student Association
- **Aug 2022 – May 2026: Resident Assistant**, Tufts Office of Residential Life and Learning
- **Sep 2022 – May 2026: Senior Media Fellow**, Tufts Hillel Foundation
- **Sep 2022 – May 2026: Live Event Technician**, Tufts Cohen Auditorium
- **Jan 2022 – May 2024: Choreographer**, Tufts Encendido
- **Aug 2021 – May 2025: Vice President and Communications Director**, Tufts Public Harmony

Certifications

- **Sep 2023 – PRESENT: CITI** Social and Behavioral Research Training
- **Sep 2022 – PRESENT: IACUC** Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee Training
- **Jun 2016: PADI** Enriched Air and Open Water Diver Training