

**SOCIETY FOR
CULTURAL
ANTHROPOLOGY**

SCA 2025 Biennial

Restorative Relations: An Unconference

Communications: Please consider joining the [SCA Biennial Channel](#) via Whatsapp. We will use [this](#) WhatsApp group to share information, live updates, highlights, and basic communications during the unconference. Please feel free to share images, moments and reflections here!

Schedule & Program

Thursday, May 8

Arrival	Check-in from 3pm
4:30-6:00 PM	Open Time 1*
6:30-8:00 PM	Dinner + Unconference Welcome

Friday, May 9

7:30-9:00 AM	Breakfast / Open Time 2
9:00-9:30 AM	Unconference Welcome Ritual
9:45-11:45 AM	Morning Session
12:00-1:30 PM	Lunch / Open Time 3
1:45-3:45 PM	Afternoon Session 1
4:15-6:15 PM	Afternoon Session 2
6:30-8:00 PM	Dinner / Open Time 4

Murmurs II, or the Pain of Nature: Poetic and Sonic Fragments of Colombia's War (Evening Event)

Saturday, May 10

7:30-9:00 AM	Breakfast / Open Time 5
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9:30-11:30 AM	Morning Session
12:00-1:30 PM	Lunch / Open Time 2
1:45-3:45 PM	Afternoon Session 6
4:15-6:15 PM	Afternoon Session 7
6:30-8:00 PM	Dinner / Open Time 3
	The Afters (Evening Event)

Sunday, May 11

7:30-9:00 AM	Breakfast / Open Time 8
Departure	Check-out of accommodation room by 9:00AM Meeting Rooms Available until 2:00PM

*The designation "Open Time" is an invitation/reminder that we have generous time blocks around each meal that can be used for spontaneously organized activities. We invite those who are interested in offering a skill, practice, or presence that aligns with the spirit of the biennial to share this with the conference. Examples might include:

- Offering a guided meditation or mindfulness session
- Leading gentle, accessible somatic practices
- Facilitating tarot card readings or similar reflective activities
- Creating spaces for drawing, simple crafts, or collaborative art
- Hosting informal walks, storytelling circles, or music sessions
- Or any other offering that nurtures restoration, deep listening, and connection

If you feel moved to contribute by offering an informal engagement for other participants during the open time slots, usually occurring before and after meals, please share what you'd like to do [via this sheet](#).

Provisional Program

Guidelines: This is the provisional program of the SCA 2025 Biennial, which means it is subject to change; check back periodically for updates! Listed below are six curated sessions of concurrent events which will take place on the 9th and 10th of May, as well as a few other events that fall outside of these sessions. These sessions are organized as two-hour time slots, although the events listed within them may not last that long. A biennial schedule precedes the program.

Each event contains a title, the name(s) and contact information of the event organizer(s), event abstract, the target number of participants, and a status (closed, limited, or open). If you have read the description of our “unconference” then you know we are trying something different. One of those things is to rethink how we gather, and what we accomplish together when we do. There are almost no traditional panels, and most of the events have specific, active participant roles; some have more passive roles. There are different formats. A few will require preparation before the meeting, and this will be something to check with the event organizer(s). Many events will be limited in the number of participants they can accommodate (whether be design or by space), a few are closed, and those designated “open” can accommodate as many people as space allows with little or no preparation. For most of the events, we will have a separate sign-up sheet that will become visible and available once participants have paid the registration fees. There you will be encouraged to sign up for one event per concurrent session.

As you read through the list, we hope you will become as excited as we are by the amazing program that has emerged. And please remember, this is not only a new way of thinking about how we gather, it is also a new way to organize, so we ask for your understanding and patience as the process unfolds.

2025 SCA Biennial Organizing Collective

Joella Bitter, Aimee Cox, Noha Fikry, Andrew Gilbert, Anand Pandian, and Marina Peterson

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Friday May 9 Morning Session

1-01 Grief, Loss, and Fieldwork: Commemorating Loss through Collage Making

(Evergreen Breakout Room 2 +3)

Organizers: Mona Bhan (mobhan@syr.edu), Lauren Woodard (lwoodar@syr.edu)

Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic, deepening authoritarianism, and wars and genocide have posed challenges to conducting ethnographic fieldwork for anthropologists in recent years. We have lost loved ones and colleagues and places that we have deep connections to, including for some, our homes. As anthropologists with deep commitments to place, the loss of a field site is both practical (What do I do next? How do I pivot, and how does this

vary at different stages of one's career?) and existential (who am I as a scholar, community member, and, for some, family member without the community & place I've committed to?).

Yet, in traditional academic knowledge production, there isn't always a space to come together to discuss the challenges of losing access to places anthropologists return to for fieldwork, advocacy, community building, and for sharing the life stories, joys, and trials of people we consider to be our "kin." In other words, how do we, as anthropologists, process our inability to sustain relations of care and community that ethnographic fieldwork inevitably fosters? Faced with deepening political challenges that make traditional fieldwork impossible, how do we cope with the loss of expertise within the context of a neoliberal academia?

While such concerns can have a debilitating effect, beginning with this workshop, we aim to explore how such challenges might compel us to think through creative ways to do anthropology amidst ongoing and deepening political and climactic crises. Before we address this question though, in this workshop, we will build a collaborative and commemorative collage to process our multiple and often conflicting emotions related to losing our field sites and homes. We intend to build a space where we can gather to reckon with the social, political, and professional implications of our loss and at the same time restore connections with our fieldsites/interlocutors through objects, materials, fragments that most resonate with our experiences and emotions. Building a restorative anthropological praxis through a close engagement with "materials from the field" we hope will foster a collective space for reflection, healing, and deliberation.

Target #: 12 additional participants

Status: Limited

1-02 The liveness of connection: theorising ways of being together through performance

(Maple Lodge Conference Room A)

Organizers: Meghan Rose Donnelly (meghanrose.donnelly@manchester.ac.uk),
Valentina Zagaria (valentina.zagaria@manchester.ac.uk)

Abstract: When do we cease being strangers? How do we come to be with one another, to keep company? What relations emerge through protracted or fleeting moments? Who are we to each other? Much like ethnography, theatre and live performance are ways of being together and of paying attention in the moment, often among strangers. During this session, participants are invited to devise performance from their works in progress focusing on different ways of relating – for instance through keeping company, conviviality, or solidarity. Beyond more theorised spheres of togetherness – kinship, friendship, camaraderie, neighbourliness, workplace relations – we wish to mobilise performance as a tool to think deeper about other significant ways people find and form connections, however fleeting or quotidian. One of our aims is to move away from viewing performance solely as a method for carrying out ethnography: we wish to foreground the ways in which creative methods are ways of thinking and theorising, taking performance as a way of knowing. How can exercises

involving embodiment, improvisation, and representation of diverse types of connections help us theorise them? We encourage participants to bring along the ethnographic material they are working on (in whatever format – visual, written, oral, drawn, etc.) and be open to workshop it through theatrical exercises. By engaging with one another and with our analyses via games and improvisations, we will consider different ways of keeping company, as well as more heightened moments where encounters might have a different urgency, when more might be at stake. We will imagine different scenarios to approach the vignettes and issues from the participants' works in progress. We will let ourselves dwell on stage together with our research questions as we try and find grounds for connection in ways spoken and unspoken. This workshop is an experiment, an exploration of why, in addition to notions of community and intersubjectivity, both keeping company and short-lived connections might also matter--extraordinarily--to who we are as people.

Target #: 15 additional participants

Status: Limited

1-03 Gender, Climate Change, and Agrarian Capitalism: Creating a Collaborative Syllabus

(Gilmor Sloan Large Dining Room)

Organizer: Amiel Bize (abm252@cornell.edu)

Abstract: We conceive this session as a community-building event for an emergent network of scholars working across feminist political economy and climate change. Building on prior conversations and a generative panel at the AAA, this group of scholars is interested in forming a loose network that allows us to be in ongoing conversation and to meet others with related interests. We have a multi-pronged goal rooted in feminist epistemologies and pedagogies: to support one another's writing and teaching, to work toward a shared scholarly agenda, and to think critically about our academic obligations in the face of climate emergency, deepening global inequalities, slashed public budgets, and militarism.

With these larger goals in mind, we propose a collaborative syllabus-building session modeled on other examples of collective bibliography work (e.g., the Society for Cultural Anthropology's [Teaching Tools](#) reading list for a [Progressive Environmental Anthropology](#) and Sophie Sapp Moore and Aida Arosoaie's [Plantation Worlds syllabus](#)). Bringing together scholars focused on the intersecting themes of gender, climate, and agrarian capitalism, this event will provide a more dialogical and collaborative space that extends beyond the format of a traditional academic panel. It will also have a concrete outcome: gathering citations and generating conversations that will form the starting point of an open-source syllabus centered on these themes. This syllabus will not only be of pedagogical value to our colleagues and students, but will also lay the foundations for a proposed special issue in the coming years.

Our emergent network focuses on contemporary agrarian capitalism in the context of climate change. Much contemporary scholarship is devoted to understanding the differentiated impacts of climate change on agrarian social and economic life, and particularly women's

disproportionate vulnerability to climate-related insecurity. We build on such observations to consider how climate volatility becomes entangled in economies of rural social reproduction, not only as a source of new risks, but also as the ground for new forms of capitalist accumulation. Across different regions, our work shows how climate change intersects with financialized capitalism to create gendered effects at the household level. We consider contemporary agrarian capitalism with a keen attention to how it reshapes gendered social and multispecies relations—in the household, in the fields, and in financial and agroecological technologies. At a time of climate volatility, we ask: how do different manifestations of agricultural capital—loans, contracts, weather derivatives, financial forecasting—create new temporalities, and transform attachments between human and non-human agrarian lives? How does climate become the ground of capitalist accumulation via financial tools and biotechnical innovations, such as genomic technologies? How is gender produced and reproduced in agrarian contexts through the labors of social reproduction? And how does the gendered violence of agrarian capital intersect with other forms of everyday institutional violence and the various expressions of armed conflict?

This event will require a small amount of preparatory work in the form of a bio and reading suggestions. Contact the event organizer for more information.

Target #: 12

Status: Limited.

1-04 Working Toward the Multispecies: A Works in Progress Session

(Evergreen Flex Space)

Organizers: Amanda Daniela Cortez (acortez@illinois.edu), Emily de Wet (dewetemi@grinnell.edu)

Abstract: This session is a works-in-progress roundtable dedicated to scholars working broadly in multispecies anthropology. The goal of this session is to provide a supportive space for early career scholars to advance their scholarship and connect with others working beyond the human. Six panelists will come together to share their works in progress, briefly present their work, and provide feedback to their peers. Contributors will each circulate a paper in advance of the session and prepare feedback for the other participants. During the session, participants will present their work for five minutes, discuss connections between the papers, and offer suggestions to their peers. This is an open session and audience members will be invited to ask questions and provide feedback based on the presentations and discussions. Contributors address a range of topics across multispecies anthropology, including religion and multispecies relations, multispecies architecture, eating animals, animal sanctuaries, and conservation across the USA, India, South Africa, and Perú. Together, the panel considers how species are brought into relation across questions of politics, religion, capitalism, Indigeneity and racialization.

Target #: Unlimited

Status: Open

1-05 Methods for an Anthropology of Future Time

Organizers: Katy Lindquist (kl2245@cornell.edu), Himani Rathore (himani.rathore@emory.edu), Heyu Zhang (heyu.zhang@emory.edu)

(Maple Lodge Conference Room B)

Abstract: In recent years, there has been an emerging interest in forging an anthropology of the future. From studying the technocratic practice of predicting the future to tracing the spectacular futures of infrastructure projects to representing the ways in which people live life in the midst of futures-lost, anthropologists have increasingly taken up the task of studying future time.

But how do you actually study future time ethnographically? What does future time look like? How do you recognize it in space? How do you read it in an archive? How do you feel it in different contexts? How do you ask about it in interviews? How do you write about it in prose? This methods workshop takes up these questions and more through a series of creative facilitated activities, followed by an open conversation about the importance and new directions of the ethnographic study of the future.

Operating from the premise that future time is varied and appears in different registers, the workshop will use a number of experimental approaches to foster a collective brainstorm on different methods for studying future time. The workshop will include a combination of independent brainstorming exercises, role-playing activities, and group case studies. For example, one activity will feature a number of different objects of the future such as sea-level projection graphs, housing development plans, and seed banks where participants will work together to develop different anthropological approaches to engaging with each object. Centering play, participants will have the opportunity to draw from diverse creative registers throughout the workshop including forms of visual brainstorming such as drawing and concept mapping, responding to personal reflection prompts, role-playing interviews and other scenarios, sampling different primary documents and media, and meditating on the affective and sensual elements of future time. Participants will have the opportunity to bring their own ethnographic fieldnotes, future objects, questions, and challenges to the workshop for collective reflection.

The workshop will conclude in an unstructured conversation about the role of anthropologists and ethnography in the study of the future. What is at stake? What new ways of thinking and doing anthropology are opened up through the study of future time? Participants should expect to leave the workshop with some tangible ideas of how to incorporate specific methods, questions, approaches, and analytical lenses for the study of future time in their own work.

Target #: 22

Status: Limited

1-06 Walkie Talkie

Organizers: Annie Claus (claus@american.edu), Jessie Barnes (JEBARNES@mailbox.sc.edu)

Abstract: This walking seminar is a structured opportunity for participants to share and brainstorm ideas while walking. We suggest that participants bring their ideas (e.g. for new projects, book chapters, or articles) that they will talk out during paired walking sessions. The setting for the seminar is the stunning and inspirational grounds of Storm King Art Center, an expansive sculpture garden located about 30 minutes from Stony Point. **Tickets for Storm King cost \$20, which can be paid on the day. For carpool planning, those who register for the event should email the organizers as soon as possible to let them know whether they will be able to drive or will need transportation. All sign-up must be completed by Thursday.** (**This event will last 3 hours to accommodate travel time).

Target #: 26

Status: Limited.

1-07 Demarcation

(Gilmor Sloan Small Dining Room)

Organizer: Meghan Morris (mlmorris@temple.edu)

Abstract: This session is a workshop of ongoing collective writing related to demarcation. Participants will workshop several initial chapter drafts for an edited volume currently titled Demarcation: The Making of Property's Subjects and Objects. The chapters ethnographically examine the figuring of subjects and objects via processes of demarcation to reconsider how we understand and theorize property relations. Demarcation differentially marks objects and subjects in a way that does not foreclose the study of property but opens it up, revealing relations that extend beyond property's colonial, capitalist, and individualist iterations. We neither relativize property entirely nor contend that it is universal. Rather, we suggest that thinking with property as an analytic may illuminate the production of particular subject-object relations – and with them racial, environmental, gendered, sexual, and political imaginaries – that shape the contradictory politics of the moment both within and beyond the Western world, from authoritarian regimes to decolonial movements. At a time in which the lines that create and divide people, land, oceans, inheritances, and finances are being radically tested and contested, we consider how processes of marking (and de-marking) can change the way we theorize property relations.

Participants: LaShandra Sullivan, Duff Morton, Ali Feser, Malini Sur, Michael Ralph

Status: Closed.

1-08 Rewriting “Violence”

(Evergreen Auditorium)

Organizer: Samuel Mark Anderson (samuel.mark.anderson@nyu.edu)

Abstract: “Violence” and related words like “non-violence,” “peace,” and “trauma” have proven valuable semiotic tools for both activism and academia. Yet the overuse of such terms risks the dilution of their meaning, and their importation into other linguistic contexts risks the loss of alternative conceptualizations of harm. Building on our work in Argentina, India, Sierra Leone, and the US, we propose a series of collective activities that interrogate the language of “violence” and its translation.

Samuel Mark Anderson offers a case study of election campaigns in Sierra Leone, in which the government and NGOs translate warnings against “violence” across a range of local languages. In Mende, for example, “violence” is figured as “sole” or “noise,” suggesting complex relationships with speech and sensation. Building on work Anderson has done with his international cohort of students, participants will be invited to write and reflect on translations of “violence” into other languages and on English synonyms such as “force” or “injury” and all their potential affordances.

Ram Natarajan offers a letter he wrote three years ago to Vice President Kamala Harris—from one grandchild of a freedom fighter in India to another—as an exercise in collectively translating and editing the concept of violence. The US withdrawal in Afghanistan was a prelude to the atrocities in Gaza and Ram’s presentation will offer a collective editing and translation of the letter on violence he wrote to the Vice President, based on his scholarship and experiences in Argentina and Arkansas.

Moyukh Chatterjee considers the limits of using the concept of violence to understand the modes of self-fashioning used by far-right Hindu nationalists in India. For example, the images and soundscapes that embed far-right Hindu supremacy in India are sung and performed as forms of joy, liberation, and devotion rather than injury and harm. By using visual and sound theory, we will try to rewrite the violence of far-right regimes when they become part of mainstream public cultures across the global north and south.

Part co-writing community, part work in progress, and part collaborative research workshop, this session offers a moment to grapple with the language we use to diagnose crises and pursue restoration.

Target #: 30

Status: Limited

1-09 Fact and Fabulation in the Era of Post Truth

(Meditation Space)

Organizer: Noelle Molé Liston (noellemole@nyu.edu)

Abstract: Selected by the Oxford Dictionaries as the word of the year, "post-truth" made a dramatic entrance into the public, political, and scholarly fields in 2016, to denote "circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief" (Wang 2016). Since then, it has become the topic of multiple forums in anthropology, including the 2019 American Anthropologist Forum on "What Happened to Social Facts?" (Ho et.al., 2019) and the 2021 American Anthropological Association meetings that were organized around the theme "Truth and Responsibility." The salience of these debates continues to grow with the ongoing wars in Ukraine and Gaza, the most recent parliamentary elections in the European Union, as well as the presidential election in the US, all of which feature an intense battleground over facts, as well as over what constitutes falsehood and truth.

The manipulation of facts has long been integral to settler colonies, imperialist policies, nationalist projects, and liberal capitalist regimes (Estes 2019, Ho 2018, Mamigonian 2015, Stahl & Hansen 2016, Trouillot 1995). Our own disciplinary legacy in anthropology likewise displays sustained inquiry regarding the politics of truth, knowledge, and evidence via engagement with historical materialism, historiography, science and technology studies, critical race theory, literary studies, and feminist studies, expanding from anthropological political economy's engagement with Marxist theory (Godelier 1977, Roseberry 1988, Turner 2008, Wolf 1982) to postmodernist-inspired embrace of "partial truths" and "situated knowledges" (Clifford 1986, Engelke 2009, Geertz 1983,

Haraway 1988, Hastrup 2004, Strathern 1987), all the way to recent debates on "post-critique" (Anker & Felski 2017, Fassin 2017, Fassin & Harcourt 2019) and "anthropological realism" (Bråten 2022, Herzfeld 2018, Lederman 2024).

This event has its origins in an ongoing project in which we (Noelle Molé Liston, Elisabeth Davis, Ayse Parla, and Elif Babul) situate our work within these ongoing debates to trace the contours of the current post-truth phenomenon, in order to inquire into its novelty and to discuss the shape that anthropological knowledge production can take in the midst of it. Whilst being careful not to "romanticize a time when truth was truth" (Ho & Cavanaugh 2019), we ponder how, and to what extent, we can continue to gather and interpret data that remains committed to the empirical, while being mindful of how data is constantly created and crafted—by interlocutors, ideologues, and anthropologists alike. We call for:

- 1) A careful parsing of related categories, such as "strong facts" (Harding 1987), "rational facts" (Arendt 1967), "hard truths" (Reyna 2010), "make-believe" (Navaro 2012), "bullshitting" (Frankfurt 2005), "systematic disinformation" (Cheyfitz 2017), "fakes" (Copeman & Col 2018, Hornberger 2019), "refusal" (Simpson 2007), and "indigenous hyperrealism" (Biddle & Lea 2018).

- 2) Balancing, on the one hand, a commitment to recognizing the epistemological fragility of all truth claims, and, on the other hand, honoring the value of being arbiters of fact—especially given the ruinous consequences of dismissing evidence as partisan in a global political landscape increasingly characterized by both spectacular and everyday "fascism at eye-level" (Holmes 2019).

Our event will begin with short inputs by the four panelists that seek to offer a nuanced response to post-truth by situating it within the discipline's core concerns with knowledge production and the politics of representation, and by pushing the boundaries of how anthropologists engage with empirical data, narrative, and methodology. We will then open up for a discussion with members of the audience.

Target #: As many as the room will hold.

Status: Open.

Friday May 9 Afternoon Session 1

2-01 An Ethnographic Moment: Poetry for Anthropologists

(Gilmor Sloan Large Dining Room)

Organizer: Emma Jahoda-Brown (jahodabr@usc.edu)

Abstract: This workshop will broadly focus on ethnographic engagements with time. How can playing with poetry disrupt routine ways of thinking and writing with time ethnographically? This session is for people who consider themselves poetry averse, poetically inclined, poetically curious and everything in between. We will read, write and share with each other generously.

Target #: 22

Status: Limited

2-02 Stitching Together: Collaborative Fiber Arts as Method, Wellness, and Thinking Work for Scholars of Reproduction OR Stitching and Bitching our way to Restorative Relations

(Maple Lodge Conference Room A)

Organizer: Sarah Williams (sarah.a.williams@uconn.edu)

Abstract: Few things are more quotidian than fibers and the artistic expression, touches, and labor that shape them into the materials that envelope our bodies, shield our private spaces from outside eyes, provide comfort and warmth at work and rest, and allow for the visual and tactile expression of our identities. The acts of transmutation that manifest a substance into thread, then cloth, then structure and form and utility, which are traditionally in so many contexts gendered acts of creation undertaken in community, are load-bearing. They create spaces for whisper networks, the sharing of wisdoms, anger and organizing, subjugated knowledges, and grieving. From Indigenous beading and traditional embroidery circles, to lesbian feminists' reclaiming of the textile arts in the 1970s and 80s, to yarn-bombing in protest against war, to the AIDS quilt, to the Millennial and GenX wave of crafting circles, to drag performers' creation of gender-subverting clothing and accessories,

communally-practiced fiber arts offer respite, protection, inspiration, and resistance to hegemonic structures, often through a subversion of patriarchal and gendered framings of fiber work. In this multi-modal, gender-inclusive communal session developed with scholars of reproduction in mind (although all are welcome!), we invite participants to join us in resting, talking, and creating in the wake of years that have been particularly challenging for our work and values. At the end of this two-hour session, we will have made a collaborative textile piece that speaks to our being in this present moment and the near future.

The Stitching:

If you already have a fiber-arts practice, please feel free to select your favourite method that can create or decorate a 10x10 square to be stitched together into a quilt piece. If you do not currently have a fiber-arts practice, materials and instruction will be provided for you during the workshop. Suggested methods: Knitting, Crochet, Embroidery, Paper piece quilting, Textile painting, Cross stitch

The Bitching:

During the workshop, we will move between guided discussion in smaller stitching circles, and free conversation as a larger group. The guided discussion pieces will be focused on reflections and sharing around the guiding questions listed above, reflections on our art, and exercises to focus on restoring a sense of joy and possibility in our work.

If you're interested in helping to facilitate this session, as either or both a circle leader or a fiber arts guide, please contact Sarah.a.williams@uconn.edu

Target #: 40

Status: Open

2-03 "Resting the Others"

(Evergreen Breakout Room 2 +3)

Organizers: Ross Perfetti (perfetti@sas.upenn.edu), Rachel Niehuus (rachel.niehuus@gmail.com)

Abstract: As anthropologists, our fieldwork always contains more than can be (immediately) fixed to our scholarship; these are the 'Others.' Beyond the instrumental necessity of editorial choice, subjects escape our description (Meyers 2022), images affect us (Barthes 1981), and spirits haunt our ethnography (Beliso-De Jesus 2024). Thinking with the theme of the "un-conference," we explore a wellness and sustainability practice based in the "un-writable" Others. How do challenging subjects, images, and spirits find rest? This session will contain a short group reading, individual reflection activity, and discussion that supports participants in identifying nagging presences and methods of engagement with them.

Target #: 22

Status: Limited

2-04 Restorative History and Justice: De-Colonizing Our Narratives

(Meditation Space)

Organizer: Tabitha Morgan (tabitha.a.morgan@gmail.com)

Abstract: While we are often busy deconstructing traditional colonialist narratives in our classrooms, we can simultaneously decolonize our own. As educators and researchers, we are not exempt from absorbing oppressive stories and histories and the trauma they carry. In this Method & Practice workshop, we will confront history, decolonize our minds, and center our narratives in equity and restorative justice. Beginning with a guided meditation, participants will be led through a clearing of old narratives, then practice writing prompts to stimulate new ideas, and end with an affirmative commitment to a restorative mindset for self and scholarship.

Target # of Participants: 22

Status: Limited

2-05 River Soundings and Groundings: Restorative Relations and Transformational Ecologies

(Evergreen Auditorium)

Organizer: Kristina Wirtz (kristina.wirtz@wmich.edu)

Abstract: To engage with environmental and social justice in the Anthropocene is to experience and witness grief and trauma. There is much cause for alarm for those focused on water issues, such as healthy rivers. And yet, as Eve Tuck (2009) has argued, there are important reasons to shift from damage- to desire-centered research. Despite widespread calls (across many disciplines) to disengage from toxic colonial (racist, sexist, homo-, and transphobic...) legacies and explore Indigenous and other decolonial, liberatory frameworks, some anthropologists struggle to make the shift while others struggle to be heard. If an important goal of the Unconference is to "practice being with rather than performing for one another," how might we also apply this restorative frame not only to our relationships with one another, but also with research subjects, encompassing the human, extrahuman, and more-than-human? This method and practice workshop will assemble a group of scholars who are exploring diverse modes of sounding and grounding our relationship with water in their work on and with rivers. Sounding is directed toward methods of broadening our modes of listening as what Steven Feld (2015) calls "acoustemology" and engaging with the histories of aurality through which we learn these modes of listening (Ochoa Gautier 2014). Grounding is intended to describe the life-worlds we enter in engaging with (our own and other) communities' relationships with rivers as, variously, ethnographic subjects (Scaramelli 2013), "hyper-objects" (Edgeworth and Benjamin 2018), and more-than-human kin (De la

Cadena 2015; Todd 2017), in re-imagining what Vaughn, Guarasci, and Moore (2021) call "intersectional ecologies."

There are 2-4 spaces open to participate as members of the roundtable, otherwise participants will be in the audience and participate in more general discussion. If interested in being a roundtable member, contact the organizer after signing up.

Target #: Unlimited

Status: Open

2-06 An Imaginarium for future laws (that create hope instead of despair)

(Evergreen Breakout Room 1)

Organizer: Nicole van Zyl (Nicole.vz42@gmail.com)

Abstract: This session will bring anthropologists together to imagine laws of the future that are responsive to pressing issues faced in their fieldwork sites or personal communities. Starting from the assumption that law is a fiction we must live inside of, this co-writing session will begin with 'dreaming the impossible law' that would tackle the issue the author has selected. This would be followed by an extended period in which the participant could imagine the fieldnotes that would emerge when observing the community or society as it complies with and navigates the meaning of the new law, as well as the external challenges that may arise. These fieldnote imaginations could take the form of poetry, prose, script, or even in news article format. Participants will be asked to share their imagined law, and the lives of people living it as a practice of cross-border collaboration/eradication.

Target #: 25

Status: Limited

2-07 Dim Sum Theorizing on Movements and Education

(Evergreen Flex Space)

Organizer: Roseann Liu (rliu4@swarthmore.edu) and Karishma Desai (karishma.desai@gse.rutgers.edu)

With Amelia Herbert, Diaa Rodriguez Gomez, Priscilla Pinto Ferreira

Abstract: We propose an interactive session focusing on the theme of "movements and education." We will ask audience members to do some bite-sized theorizing with us. As the call for proposals states, "After leaving large traditional conferences, we are usually depleted and more intellectually drained than inspired." For some of us, the exhaustion has to do with being shovel-fed dense theories in the form of numerous 15-minute papers. Instead, we propose "dim-sum theorizing"— a sampling of different bite-sized theories in a convivial, collaborative, and lively (perhaps even rowdy and raucous!) atmosphere, like in a dim sum house. Each of the four session panelists will take no more than 5 bite-sized minutes to

introduce how their work relates to the overarching theme of movements and education. We will then invite the audience to help us make connections through creating a collaborative mind map. We will have post-its of all sizes, wikki stix, markers, crayons and various other materials to help us build our mind map. The connections can cut across different presentations or only focus on one presentation; it can be an idea/word/phrase; it can be a citation; it can be an image. After the mind mapping, each person will have a chance to explain their bite-sized contribution. When it comes to doing dim sum, individuals make a food selection, but everyone is invited to partake. In a similar way, we hope that each individual can contribute an idea, theory, or connection, but that everyone will be nourished through this. By proposing this session, we intend to create time and space for serendipity to occur and for the kinds of “informal gatherings and unexpected conversations” that are so energizing. To add to the conviviality, we will have music, drinks, and bite-sized treats!

Target #: 30 participants

Status: Limited

2-08 The Arrival Scene: Preparing for a First Fieldwork Experience

(Gilmor Sloan Small Dining Room)

Organizer: Liam Greenwell (lrg87@cornell.edu), Hindolee Datta (hindolee@uchicago.edu)

Abstract: The arrival scene is a trope of classical ethnography. Even as the genre has transformed and the distance between the ethnographer and the field has become slimmer, the “arrival scene” maintains its singular place in the first fieldwork experience of an anthropologist, whether or not it ends up described at the beginning of a monograph. First-year PhD students are anxious—both excited and nervous—about their own upcoming arrival scenes. To that end, we propose a capacious and creative workshop that seeks to destabilize our assumptions about the arrival scene while also creating a community where graduate students can workshop their ideas and gain feedback from both peers and those who can reflect on their own arrivals. We envision bringing together a group of ten first-year PhD students from various universities, two advanced PhD students, and Professor Noah Tamarkin (Cornell University) to help navigate initial anxieties and potential challenges surrounding preliminary fieldwork through a multimodal, collaborative workshop.

Our panel has both theoretical and methodological goals, and one outcome will be the co-creation of a toolkit for our first ethnographic experiences. This will take place alongside our working through the idea that most of us have had entanglements with our respective fields for longer, hold various positionalities in relation to it, and recognize that the “field” is hardly stable.

Target #: 15

Status: Limited

2-09 Dissimulation, Open Secrets, Lies: Ethnographies of Gaslighting

(Maple Lodge Conference Room C)

Organizer: Jerry Zee (zeej@princeton.edu)

Abstract: Gaslighting, an idea with (sigh) renewed currency, indicates those strategies through which a person is told that they don't know what they know. It shares a practical and political universe with a wide array of strategies for shaping irreality as the material-semiotic condition of an un-commoned existence. How do worlds take shape in the strategies through which worlds are strategically undone? How does reality lose its claim to itself? And how does ethnography think the barrage of confusions, smiling lies, and lethal partial truths through which gaslighting makes its effective irrealities? You think you know? Are you sure?

In this closed research workshop, we draw together five ongoing projects that explore gaslighting as an ethnographic problem and the chimeric shadow of ethnographic knowledge-making. Gaslighting recurs across diverse scenes and projects - as a technique of social movements, as an institutional and interpersonal manipulation, as state policy, as technological formation, as the ordinary surrounds of bureaucratic life. These are works in progress that, in the productive alter-context of the unconference, reflect on conditions of contemporary politics while also interrogating the institutional conditions of academic anthropological knowledge production: that's not what I meant; of course it was a joke; you're fine with that aren't you; I'm sorry you misinterpreted; do more of what you were never asked to do. Open secrets, dissimulation, and lies: forms of truth-unmaking that circulate around one's ability to say, with certainty, what one is already certain about. We request that access to the workshop be vetted by its participants in recognition of the potentially dangerous ethnographic contexts in play. We will move from a discussion of pre-circulated papers to a strategy sharing session for holding onto experience and making it matter. What social forms can be tactical counter-gaslighting platforms?

Target #: None.

Status: Closed.

Friday May 9 Afternoon Session 2

3-01 Ethnographic Bibliomancy: A Divinatory Play Session

(Evergreen Auditorium)

Organizer: Alessandro Angelini (angelini@jhu.edu)

Abstract: To us anthropologists, perhaps no books are more imbued with mana than the ones we've brought to or from the field with us. Some titles were stuffed into the suitcase as one of myriad last-minute packing decisions. We've acquired books as gifts or by recommendation from others we encounter in the course of fieldwork: interlocutors, local scholars, activists. We may cherish a certain novel that accompanied us through the inevitable downtimes of fieldwork. Or there's the book we thumbed through while browsing a

bookstore that has perhaps since closed, and which looked useful enough to purchase, but whose spine has never been cracked since.

This session asks participants to bring a book--any book--that formed a part--any part, however central or marginal--of their fieldwork experience to our SCA Biennial un-conference. We will play a game, or perform a ritual, depending on one's perspective, based on the practice of bibliomancy. Within ancient traditions, bibliomancy has entailed divinatory fortune-telling using aleatory methods for receiving messages from sacred books. Here, as a game mechanic in a storytelling modality, we will open our books to random words and passages and connect narratives across these selections. To close the session, this combinatory practice will stir discussion of ways of thinking creatively with books that transect and subvert the ascendancy of algorithmic LLM models.

Target #: Whatever the assigned meeting space allows

Status: Open

3-02 CANCELLED Speculative Worldbuilding through Collaborative Storytelling

Organizers: Wesley Brunson (wesbrunson@gmail.com) Elliott Tillczek (elliott.tilleczek@mail.utoronto.ca)

Abstract: The aim of this session is to explore the potential of multi-authored writing for speculative worldbuilding. Specifically, we will draw on participants' fieldwork experiences to gather inspiration for a collectively written short story, or a series of short stories that are set in the same fictional world. Our story/ies will integrate aspects of participants' ethnographic work, fictionalized, and meld them into a cohesive world. We will work to craft the world of the story with rich details, such as characterization, landscape description, and descriptions of the social and cultural world where the story takes place. To do so, participants will engage in activities designed to explore the connections between ethnographic fieldwork and techniques of fiction writing and worldbuilding.

Target #: 20 (including organizers)

Status: Limited

3-03 Anthrohistory: A Future Genealogy

(Evergreen Breakout Room 2 +3)

Organizer: Paul Eiss (pke@andrew.cmu.edu)

Abstract: This co-reading community is focused on three works: "Anthrohistory: Unsettling Knowledge, Questioning Discipline;" and two works of speculative fiction, Emily St. John Mandel's "Sea of Tranquility" and M. E. O'Brien and Eman Abdelhadi's "Everything for Everyone." "Anthrohistory" is a 2011 collection of essays in which the participants in this "community"—mostly onetime students or faculty in Michigan's doctoral program in

anthropology and history—explored the possibilities of anthrohistory as a way of posing broader questions of transdisciplinarity, representation, epistemology, social commitment, and political imagination. “Sea” and “Everything,” on the other hand, are works of post-apocalyptic speculative fiction. In the former the peregrinations of time-traveling characters provide a context for pondering post-pandemic survival, ever-recurring crisis, and human bonding across vast distances in space and time; in the latter, participants in the overthrowal of global capitalism in mid-21st century New York City reflect on the collapse of life as they knew it and the emergence of a collective alternative. In placing these works in conversation, and keenly aware of the dire prospects of this political moment, we mean this event as an invitation to think creatively not just about the conjoined past of our personal, political, and intellectual formations, but about their possible futures. How might we reactivate or reimagine longstanding bonds, insights and commitments, in terms of what is, or might be, to come: how can we imagine a future genealogy of anthrohistory?

Target #: Chandra Bhimull, David William Cohen, Paul Eiss, Mandana Limbert, Ed Murphy, Monica Patterson, David Pedersen, Julie Skurski, Genese Sodikoff + 15

Status: Limited.

3-04 Cooking Together: Sensuous Methodologies

(Upper Stone House Kitchen and Living Room)

Organizer: Yamuna Sangarasivam (ysangar7@naz.edu)

Abstract: This session allows us to experiment with the intersectionalities of wellness and sustainable methodological practices through the modality of cooking. From curating a menu to choreographing a meal together in community, cooking can be a sensuous practice of creating, meditating, learning, and sharing. Cooking becomes a portal to enter into another way of knowing and being together, into another way of learning a grammar of the past, present, and future, into calling forth our ancestors, human and more than human, and listening to and with their stories. In this two hour interactive session, we will cook together, eat together, cleanup together, and find creative pathways to relax into the work of becoming the field.

Target #: We could possibly include an additional 5 or 6 people in this session. A maximum of 10 people cooking together is good (depending on how large the kitchen is). We could have additional people involved in curating activities while taking a turn in each aspect of preparing the meal and co-producing artefacts that can be shared in the various SCA sites.

Status: Limited.

3-05 Creative/Critical Autoethnographies of Displacement and Refuge, Part I

(Maple Lodge Conference Room A)

Organizer: Saida Hodzic (saida.hodzic@gmail.com), Anu Sharma (asharma@wesleyan.edu), Milad Odabaei (milad.odabaei@gmail.com)

Abstract: This co-writing and workshopping community would bring together faculty and students in and beyond anthropology who work auto/ethnographically on questions of displacement and refuge, engaging with creative and critical refugee epistemologies, critical border studies, abolition, anticolonial studies, queer and feminist theory and more. We met at a symposium Displaced. Detained. Undeterred in 2023, and appreciated coming together and having informal conversations as much as engaging with each other's work. Restorative Relations is an opportunity to come together again, have both structured and informal time together, and to invite others to join us in this work.

In the spirit of the SCA webinar proposal to allow conversations to unfold over time, we propose two structured times for coming together on different days. For this Friday Session, we will do a creative, autotheoretical writing workshop led by Neelika Jayawardane. Participants will be expected to read some short pieces in advance.

Core participants: Saida Hodzic, Milad Odabaei, Anu Sharma, Amir Husak, Hannah Ali, Neelika Jayawardane, George Bajalia

Target #: 15 additional participants (please contact organizer for readings after signing up)

Status: Limited.

3-06 Multimodal Evaluation

(Maple Lodge Conference Room B)

Organizer: Andrew Gilbert (andrew.gilbert@pm.me) & Digital Curatorial Collective

Abstract: The past decade has witnessed a remarkable flourishing of experimental forms and formats of anthropological research: from games, comics, podcasts, and performance to smell walks, film, sound installations and multimedia web platforms, there is an increasing recognition that such multimodal forms and formats offer unique and compelling ways to capture and communicate research results, to build new collaborations, as well as animate new audiences.

And yet such forms remain marginal within the discipline, often seen as "fun," "one-off" experiments, rather than as normal or routine as a text. One key obstacle to the institutionalization of such multimodal research is the problem of valuation and evaluation: nearly all scholars are socialized into the values of text-based research, and thus feel confident to evaluate them. This is not the case for multimodal, more-than-textual forms and formats, particularly in the core gatekeeping sites of academic knowledge production: publishers, research funding agencies, and degree-granting programs. Even those "gatekeepers" who are supportive of multimodal research do not feel capable of assessing whether a comic, or game, or performance is a valuable or relevant academic research

contribution or not. And the producers of such works are not often trained in articulating how such works ought to be assessed, compounding the problem.

In this workshop we offer participants—makers of multimodal works, or future evaluators of such works—a guided set of exercises that rehearse ways to identify and articulate the values of multimodal works, and related ways to evaluate/review multimodal works.

Target #: 30

Status: Open.

3-07 The Ceremonial Work of Biological Anthropology

(Evergreen Breakout Room 1)

Organizers: Rachel Watkins (rachel.watkins@sas.upenn.edu)

Abstract: Scientific conventions require biological anthropologists researching ancestral remains to separately acknowledge and express affectual elements that drive and result from this work. Feelings of reverence, belief systems and other aspects of self-identification have profound impacts on our work that we choose to express in the form of ritual and ceremony. However, these elements are not quantifiable and thus not accommodated as part of normative scientific practice. Despite that, expressive approaches change over time, and often accompany shifts in how we examine the lived experiences of people whose remains we study. This includes work that explores intersections with artistic forms and studies of lived experience in other disciplines.

The space created by the organizers of this session resists the compartmentalization of the creative, emotional and intellectual labor that drives our scientific research. A ceremonial space will be created that represents individual and collective practices of the organizers. We will also demonstrate current practices we employ in real time. Visitors will be invited to participate in the creation and maintenance of the ceremonial space through artistic expression, observation and dialogue.

Target #: 16 registrants. We'd like our session to be open to attendees so they can contribute to the creation and maintenance of the space.

Status: Open.

3-08 Enchantment and Improvisation in Community

(Meditation Space)

Organizers: Yana Stainova (stainovy@mcmaster.ca), Lauren Charman (charmanl@mcmaster.ca)

Abstract: What is lost when anthropologists sit and write at our desks, physically embodying a fixed state that is often solitary and in stark contrast to the dynamic relationality in the field? Using “performed ethnography” (Madison 2018) techniques aimed at integrating performance sensibilities into our ethnographic methods, participants in this workshop will collectively re-enchant their fieldnotes and rediscover moments of research that we may have left behind in search of a structured narrative. We understand enchantment as a momentary withholding of critique to emphasize, instead, wonder and flights of the imagination that open up a multiplicity of readings and directions for the research (Stainova 2021). This includes remaining open to being surprised by others and allowing their enchantment to touch and transform us. The workshop invites the collective holding of vulnerability through performance, listening to one another, and weaving connections between seemingly disparate field sites. This session invites a playful approach to our fieldwork with the goal of reconnecting with our fieldnotes in community with other scholars. In the first part of the workshop, Co-enchantment, Co-writing, each participant will be asked to bring a short fieldnote (~300 words) to share with the others and explain why the piece is meaningful to them. Workshop participants will then be divided into groups according to common themes that emerge in their materials. In the second part of the workshop, Improvisation, Movement, and Sound, each ensemble will then be guided through improvisation and devised theatre exercises to move through their fieldwork data together. This portion will begin with abstract, embodied exercises that emphasize movement, breath, and group trust. Participants will then use devised theatre techniques to generate gestures and themes from their fieldnotes. Each group will have the opportunity to perform their piece to get constructive feedback and discuss themes from the perspective of spectators. Our aim with these activities is to center emotions, bodies, and the collaborative dimensions of analysis in an academy that often prioritizes more cerebral and structured approaches (Kondo 2018). We make space, instead, for collective acts of spontaneity and play, treating ethnographic data analysis with the same ethics of relationality that drives our fieldwork encounters. We hope participants will then bring the improvisational energy of the workshop to their writing, teaching, fieldwork and future collaborations. No performance experience or expertise required. Beginners encouraged.

Target #: 30

Status: Limited.

Saturday May 10 Morning Session

4-01 From Bodies to Objects with/out Value (Gilmor Sloan Large Dining Room)

Organizer(s): Elif İrem Az (elifiremaz@fas.harvard.edu), Ping-hsiu Lin (pinghsiu_lin@fas.harvard.edu)

Abstract: In early anthropological collections, categories such as “tool,” “ritual,” and “weapon” came to define the relationships between humans, matter, and technology. However, the presumed boundaries between the social and technical dissipate as we delve further ethnographically and historically into the histories of bodies and earthly matter. We ask: How

do bodies and earthly matter traverse the boundary between subject and technical object, acquiring or losing value through processes of commodification and labor extraction? This question becomes increasingly urgent as we witness the abstraction of human capacities into technical functions, mirroring the historical processes of the commodification of enslaved persons into fungible objects. As two early-career anthropologists, we invite two other presenters who will precirculate and open for discussion their works-in-progress that trace these transformative processes—from the devaluation of bodies and (dis)abilities to the construction of value in matter and objects. We aim to collectively examine how different forms of matter become embedded/enlisted in regimes of value that blur traditional divisions between human subjects and objects.

To participate with your works-in-progress, please send a 250-300-word abstract to organizer-presenters Elif İrem Az and Ping-hsiu Lin. If you would like to attend the workshop as a listener-contributor and have any accommodation needs, please get in touch with the organizer-presenters.

Target # of participants: 2-3 (paper writers)

Status: Limited (maximum of 15 additional audience members)

4-02 Exploring our Inspirations

(Maple Lodge Conference Room A)

Organizers: Nicole Cox (nicoleashleyc@gmail.com)

Abstract: What are the passages, people, ideas, sounds, poems, clips, and images that shape the way you do anthropology? What ideas have changed your perspective on anthropological makings, or made your work what it is and what it aspires to be? From poems to dances to songs – many of us have scholarly and more-than-scholarly sources that inspire how we work with and communicate anthropological knowledge. In this session, we will share some of these inspirations with one another, making a collective multi-media resource and giving space to consider how a new perspective might shift the way participants are constructing a work-in-progress or new project. The session will begin with the sharing and assembling of resources. Participants will then have time to explore and sit with those collected resources and begin incorporating ideas that speak to them and their own work – whether by editing a work-in-progress or brainstorming something new. Participants may also find it useful to use the time to re-commit to the values brought about by their own offerings. We will end with a discussion of what these resources, brought together, make salient about the discipline we want to build.

Target # of participants: 30

Status: Limited

4-03 Building the Worlds We Want to Inhabit: Thinking from & Doing with Disability

Justice

(Evergreen Breakout Room 2 +3)

Organizers: Kim Fernandes (kim.fernandes@utoronto.ca), Maggie Mang (mamang@calpoly.edu)

Abstract: "Traditional academic conferences (and academia, more broadly) reproduce and actively rely upon ableist metrics of performance -- endurance, perfectionism, "articulation," and functionality. Institutionalized and internalized impulses toward productivity and work are deep-seated, even for sick and disabled academics and scholars (Chen, Khúc, and Kim 2023). We plan and propose this combined co-reading and co-writing session that begins from a question: what would it mean to actively gather around the lessons from disability justice -- originally started by QTBIPOC disabled, primarily non-academic organizers who were organizing for their material survival -- for the theme of an "unconference"?"

In this two-hour proposed session, we draw upon traditions of feminist consciousness raising, the power of complaint (Ahmed 2021), and organizing around shared goals and interests to offer a reading/writing session around the topic of disability justice as core to unconferencing. In doing so, we think with disability not only as theory, but as method and praxis. We will begin our time together by offering participants a selection of brief readings from *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice and Crip Kinship*, intended to collectively center those in the room together toward thinking about disability as orientation. We will then have time for participants to respond - in writing, or in other creative formats (for which we will make materials available) to a series of questions that connect experiences of disability and of disability justice with experiences in the academy. Some examples of these questions are: (a) What moments or experiences have shifted your ideas or beliefs about chronic illness, disability, mental illness and/or addiction? (b) How have your illness or disability experiences shaped (/disrupted) - or been shaped (/disrupted) by - your entry or access to schooling, workplace and other spaces?

Next, we will listen to a shared podcast on disability justice in academia. Participants will have the chance to spend time co-writing up new dream projects (or thinking about existing projects from a disability justice perspective), in response to the following questions: How do our respective institutions demand ableist expectations of productivity from us? How do we in turn demand these of ourselves -- and of each other? How can we unlearn and resist in ways that are specific to our differential contexts related to power, identity, institutional location, and differential precarity?

Finally, to close out our time together, we will discuss specific ways how disability justice -- as fundamentally anti-racist and anti-imperialist in nature -- offers lessons for tired, sick, and frequently overworked academics who are building the kinds of livable worlds that we hope to continue inhabiting.

Target #: Unlimited

Status: Open

4-04 Unwritten Experiences: Outtakes from the Field

(Evergreen Flex Space)

Organizer: Thalia Gigerenzer (thaliag@princeton.edu)

Abstract: This panel will take the form of a kind of sharing circle in which people share and reflect on “outtakes” from their fieldwork. Borrowing the term from the film world, these are the ethnographic “scraps” that didn’t make the “final cut” — they never made it into the dissertation, book or article. And yet, they continue to linger in your mind and haunt you in some way — you may find yourself returning to them again and again. These can be anything from stray conversation fragments, vignettes, objects — anything that seems to resist writing. It could be about the person who sat next to you on the bus ride to your field site everyday; a poignant event that happened during fieldwork that you felt couldn’t be analyzed academically; something that made you laugh; or a song that you heard repeatedly during fieldwork, for example. How might we train our “ethnographic eye” to be open to experiences that may not be immediately relevant to our topics? And how do we process these experiences later? What is it about these ephemeral moments—these unwritten fieldwork experiences—that makes them linger with us? Perhaps we wanted to preserve the rawness of these moments by not writing them down. In this sharing circle, we will share outtakes from the field orally — we encourage participants to create/bring in visual representations (photos, doodles, sketches, objects, items of clothing) — and reflect on why these outtakes continue to linger.

Target # of participants: 12

Status: Open

4-05 Queer and Trans Anthropology in Authoritarian Times ...a collaborative political and research workshop // network // generative thinking together

(Meditation Space)

Organizers: Margot Weiss (mdweiss@wesleyan.edu), Svati Shah (svatipshah@umass.edu)

Abstract: Attacks on queer and trans bodily autonomy, histories, and communities (and research, teaching, and learning) are central to nationalist, authoritarian, and fascist political projects and regimes around the globe. And yet queer or trans topics and projects are often treated as “marginal”: narrow, not central, or not as important as other topics. We envision this session as a 2-hour workshop/conversation/commiseration that will counter marginalization by building networks, making connections, and fomenting future collaborations. No prepared papers -- instead, we’ll be in open conversation with each other about what is happening in the world, our fieldsites, and on our campuses, and how we can build queer and trans anthropology relationships and networks for the future. We have invited a range of queer and trans anthropologists with relevant expertise in the intersections of race, Indigeneity, caste, and ethnicity; migration and asylum; authoritarianism and the

state; and environment/ecology to "seed" the conversation, but the session will involve the whole room. Ideally after the workshop, we will find space for folks to continue to connect informally.

With Joseph Hiller, Maya Mikdashi, Scott Morgensen, Gayatri Reddy, Svati Shah, Tamar Shirinian, Margot Weiss, and Asli Zengin

Target # of participants: Unlimited

Status: Open

4-06 - CANCELLED Paper, Panel, Poster: An Open Mic and Gallery for Stories, Sounds, Poetry, and Visual & Material Arts from the Field

Organizer: Berlin Loa (berlin@arizona.edu)

Abstract: In the field stories and expressions come in many forms — from the spoken word to visual art, from personal anecdotes to theoretical reflections, from material objects to the intangible. Paper, Panel, Poster is an open mic and pop-up gallery event designed to celebrate and amplify the diverse ways anthropologists and cultural practitioners engage with their research, communities, and the world around them. This interactive and inclusive event invites participants to share fieldwork experiences and insights through creative expressions including stories, sounds, poetry, and visual mediums. Participants are invited to exhibit artwork in the gallery, or perform poetry, storytelling, or music/sound in a multi-sensory immersive art space to create a playful and informal collaborative experience. Capacity: 20 art pieces; 15 performers, though all conference attendees are welcome to view the art exhibit and attend the open mic performances. Art to be submitted by registration via [this form](#) by May 1st. Performances are limited to 6 minutes. Sign up for open mic at the event. Rules: Be prepared, respectful, encouraging, and supportive. We ask that participants submit only one art piece or one performance piece. Artists are responsible for transportation of the art and materials to exhibit the art piece (such as easels or other stands). Tables and walls will be provided, and a small tabletop display will be available for smaller photo or art prints.

Target # of participants: 20 (art pieces) & 22 (open mic performers)

Status: Open

4-07 Multimodal Peer Exchange Workshop - Hosted by CoMMPCT

(Maple Lodge Conference Room B)

Organizers: Stephanie Sadre-Orafai (sadreose@ucmail.uc.edu), Matthew Raj Webb (matthew.webb@nyu.edu)

Abstract: Anthropologists working on multimodal projects often lack peers to offer feedback and insights. In an effort to support networking, CoMMPCT (The Collective for Multimodal Makers, Publishers, Collaborators, and Teachers) will host a two-hour workshop that will facilitate collaborative exchange among multimodal scholars at different career stages—senior graduate students, early career researchers, and established scholars. Participants will bring short written pieces / vignettes (2-5 pages) for reading/presentation, group discussion, and collective feedback. These may be in any stage of conceptualization, research, enactment, and analysis; and may be associated with research in any media/mode, e.g., filmmaking, photography, audio recording, sketching, novel writing, theater, exhibition designing, teaching, and more. Works may include writing about a multimodal project in-progress, or may include a speculative reimagining of a project in a different modality. Submitted works also need not be ‘polished.’ The aim is to create an intimate, generative space for mutually sharing, shaping, and refining research agendas and works in the making. The ultimate goal of the session is to build supportive networks across academic institutions and trajectories and generate a peer environment that honors the messy, emergent nature of fieldwork documentation capitalizing on media/modal diversity.

Target #: 30

Status: Limited

4-08 Ecologies of War - Anthropology’s Battlefields

Organizers: Eleana Kim (eleana.kim@uci.edu), Bridget Guarasci (bguarasc@fandm.edu)

Abstract: This co-reading and co-thinking fieldtrip panel revisits the mid-century origins of the “ecology” concept in American Anthropology, specifically, in relation to ecology’s conjuncture with U.S. military ascendance during and after WWII. We invite participants to read in advance texts that situate Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead’s role in the Macy Conferences. It is out of these conferences that Bateson formulated his “ecology” concept and early cybernetics, which informed US military strategy and theory. We invite participants to reflect upon the historical connections among cybernetics, network theory, warfare, and anthropology’s (somewhat naive) embrace of ecology in a period of forever wars. The workshop itself will be a field trip to the Stony Point Battlefield, dating from the Revolutionary War, where (weather permitting), we will use the battlefield grounds for staging a walking discussion of war and ecologies, landscapes and histories of conflict and violence, and convergences of war and ecologies in the history of anthropology and in organizers’ and participants’ own ethnographic research and writing. The battlefield is a 7-minute drive from the Stony Point Center, and workshop organizers will help to organize carpools to the location. The workshop’s thematic focus centers on problematizing and reflexively theorizing the entanglements of “war” and “ecology” and to investigate how these entanglements emerge (or remain submerged) in specific ethnographic methodologies and sensory attunements. The discussion will focus on the following topics:

1. How do we conceptualize the entanglements of war/militarization and ecology? What are the specific relations that each of our objects of study bring to the foreground?

2. How do the categories of war/militarization and/or ecology emerge through ethnographic analysis? How are the dominant framings of these categories reinforced or challenged through ethnography? What other methodologies or modes emerge as important to our analytics?

3. What epistemologies, affects, scales, and temporalities of violence are apparent from these cases? How do these articulate with larger scale processes or trouble master narratives about capitalism, the anthropocene/climate change, or US empire or internationalist liberalism?

Target # of audience: 9 (Registrants will need to arrange for their own transportation, which is a 17 minute drive from the retreat center)

Status: Limited

4-09 Beginning(s) at the End of Our World: Family and Pathology From an Africana Epistemology Toward a Black Cosmology

(Gilmor Sloan Small Dining Room)

Organizer: Brianna Doe (Breeze) (jzw5dx@virginia.edu)

Abstract: This session is a cross between a research presentation and an artist talk followed by a tactile participatory exercise. My project explores how alternative kinship formations are embodied, disseminated, and self-determined by Black women in the U.S who make and keep life as liberatory praxis in the lasting legacies of Antebellum racial formation. Together we will discuss opacity, refusal, and futurity as it relates to my audio-visual staging of a field encounter that will also become an experimental complement to the written dissertation. By chronologizing and captioning our family photos, I am creating an emergent family archive that continues a quotidian praxis initiated by my research interlocutors—the women in my own family whose shared experiences form a genealogy of routinized violence. I am interested in the telling and retelling of family secrets as (ritual?) epistemological and cosmological practices. I pay attention to how mothers born of and into family violences narrate such (his)stories to their daughters. For the ways they say, speak of and interpret family lore is also how they (re)produce themselves and their offspring. My art is a sought articulation of something and somewhere else, an alternative metric to track the story of a family for whom the worst has in many ways already happened, is happening, and is bound to happen again unless they stay anticipatory. For these women, family is counter-historical and alternatively made in the purposeful excommunication of men rather than in spite of them.

Target #: 15

Status: Limited

4-10 Co-Writing as a Feminist Praxis of Care and Dwelling

(Evergreen Auditorium)

Organizers: Sara Swenson (sara.a.swenson@dartmouth.edu) & Trishna Senapaty (tisenapaty@pugetsound.edu)

Abstract: The session co-organizers (Sara and Trishna) have practiced co-writing using both online and in-person formats for 18-months. We have supported one another through dissertation completions, job applications, journal articles submissions, book proposals, book editing, and creative writing. While we come from different fields and methodological backgrounds in scholarship, we have found that the act of co-writing enables cross-disciplinary insights and conversations precisely because of its unstructured togetherness. Being together through shared snacks, cozy blankets, cats jumping on the table, and snow-storms extending our planned writing sessions has opened our scholarly friendship to the powers of nature and serendipity, which queerly defy the demands of capitalist production and clock-time. Growls of frustration, tired sighs, exclamations of joy at a source recovered or problem solved are intrinsic to our collective writing process. This affective togetherness has helped us move beyond the myths of scientific objectivity, disembodied rationalism, and productivity for its own sake - often imposed as the rule of highest standards in PhD training. Instead, we critically counter the colonial and racial capitalist cosmologies of modern scholarship in our work and in our community by refusing to be atomized by the forces of hustle culture and competitive individualism in the precarious years of grad school and post-PhD academic life. We are with each other in the process of being crafters and makers, modeling a feminist praxis of care that becomes its own soteriology of dwelling together. For this workshop, we propose to open our circle to 10-15 additional participants to share writing goals, snacks, quiet working time, and a post-writing processing conversation about changing academic cultures by treating our own bodies and one another as beings worthy of comfort, rest, humor, complex feelings, and companionship. This ethic goes far beyond injunctions to chase the windmill of “work-life balance” or adopt an individualist consumer ethos of “self-care,” toward a deeply communal, coalitional, collectivized praxis of belonging and dwelling together.

Target #: 30

Status: Limited

Saturday May 10 Afternoon Session 1

5-01 Power, Knowledge, and Healing: A CBPR Approach for Black Communities

(Evergreen Flex Space)

Organizers: David Simmons (dsimmons@mailbox.sc.edu), Paul Richardson (paul@resonance-consulting-group.com)

Abstract: This session interrogates the epistemological foundations and methodological imperatives of knowledge co-production at the intersection of academic inquiry and Black community wisdom. Employing Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) as our

critical framework, we examine the complex dynamics of collaborative scholarship within contexts marked by historical power asymmetries and epistemological hierarchies.

Our investigation centers on several pressing theoretical and pragmatic questions: How might we reconceptualize knowledge production as a dialogic process that disrupts traditional academic hegemony while elevating community expertise to equal scholarly standing? What alternative forms of scholarly artifacts might emerge when authorship is radically redistributed? How do we navigate the complex terrain of authority regarding the creation, validation, and circulation of these hybrid knowledge forms, ensuring they remain simultaneously accessible to community stakeholders while meeting rigorous academic standards? Furthermore, how do we develop nuanced metrics of impact that transcend traditional academic measures to capture community-defined notions of value and transformation? These questions take on heightened urgency within our current political landscape, where knowledge production itself has become a contested terrain.

The session will integrate critical analyses of exemplary case studies alongside immersive performative exercises designed to excavate and challenge embedded power structures that often remain invisible in community research encounters. Participants are requested to engage with selected foundational texts prior to our gathering to establish shared theoretical groundwork and stimulate critical reflection. Additionally, participants should come prepared to engage in embodied critical practice through role-playing scenarios that reveal the often unacknowledged dynamics of privilege, authority, and epistemic justice in community-based scholarship.

Target #: 25

Status: Limited

5-02 Complicating Care: Collaborative Explorations of the Messiness of Caring Relations

(Gilmor Sloan Large Dining Room)

Organizers: Sienna Ruiz (siennaruiz@ucla.edu), Izem Aral (izemamaral18@ucla.edu), Faith Cole (faithco@ucla.edu)

Abstract: Within anthropological literature, care is often rendered as positive, familial acts of rehabilitation (Thelen 2015) despite the fact that care can inspire resentment and extreme overwork, inflict violence (García 2016), and sustain systems of power. Our field sites, which range from employment centers for disabled communities in Turkey, to community-based mental health centers in Argentina, and to refugee shelters in Mexico, have underscored how provisions of care at the state and interpersonal level can obscure grave forms of abuse or neglect, impressing the need for more visceral, contradictory means of writing on care. In this writing workshop, we propose creative exercises that explore different modes of writing care that draw inspiration from a wide range of genres and disciplines and experiment with cultivating complex relationships of care to other academics, people in our research and lives, and to ourselves. Prior to the workshop session, we will ask participants to bring a moment of care from their fieldwork or personal lives that are difficult to understand, morally ambiguous, or hard to place within romanticized frameworks.

These experiences will serve as the basis for the workshop exercises. At the start, we will ask participants to share these experiences and discuss the aspects of them that are difficult to write about. Then, the group will examine different readings and materials selected by the organizers that span both academic and non-academic genres (e.g. kamra sadia hakim's Care Manual, Jessica Marion Barr and Zorianna Zurba's zine "Motherlode," Premilla Nadasen's *Care: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, short stories by Elena Ferrante, and more traditional work by anthropologists). Following reflections on these pieces, the organizers will lead writing exercises that will prompt participants to depict the moment they brought with them and to imagine speculative forms of care based on these experiences. To conclude the workshop, the participants will then share the products of the exercises and collaborate to collage everyone's works together as a zine entitled "Curating Care," which will be distributed to participants following the conference and to other academic and public audiences. This zine will provide participants with a material, more-than-academic research product that brings participants together as co-authors and broadens the scope of what writing on care can look like as both an object of analysis and a phenomenon in our personal lives. Ultimately, this workshop will analyze the contradictory realities of care work within personal and academic contexts, speculate what this care work can look like in the future, and explore the necessarily messy roads to get there.

Target #: 13 (15 open slots)

Status: Limited

5-03 (Un)Becoming Academic Mothers

(Meditation Space)

Organizer: Jing Wang (jing.wang@wisc.edu)

Abstract: This two-hour session is a space for academic mothers to reflect on the interplay between motherhood, scholarly work, and wellness. We live in an increasingly hostile environment in which motherhood is often disciplined, undervalued, and even criminalized. Within academia, academic mothers tend to find "productivity" is valorized over "restoration." The demands of care work and academic work make wellness and sustainability vital for academic mothers. In alignment with Restorative Relations' ethos, this session fosters a communal space to reflect, restore, and reimagine what it means to thrive as both scholars and mothers.

The session will include three interconnected practices:

(1) Grounding Through Meditation: Short, guided meditations will anchor us in the present, cultivating a shared sense of calm and offering a pause from the often-overlapping demands of work and family life.

(2) Writing Letters to My Pre-Motherhood Self: Participants will write reflective letters to their pre-motherhood selves, exploring how becoming a mother has reshaped their personal and scholarly identities. This exercise honors the challenges and gifts of motherhood while making space for honest reflection, creativity, and self-discovery.

(3) Generative Sharing Circles: Small-group discussions will provide a supportive space to share insights, exchange strategies for sustaining academic careers while mothering, and build meaningful connections with others navigating similar journeys.

This session (hosting 6-12 people) is designed as both a restorative practice and a resource for academic mothers to nurture their dual roles. Participants will leave with a renewed sense of connection, practical tools for integrating wellness into their lives, and a community committed to imagining sustainable futures for academic mothers.

Target #: 18

Status: Limited

5-04 Provisioning Collaborative Research

(Gilmor Sloan Small Dining Room)

Organizer: Lily Chumley (chumley@nyu.edu)

Abstract: How do we provision research when traditional funding models fail? How do we support each other in the collaborative research that private and federal grants have not always supported? How do we provision intergenerationally across life stages, and sustain connections in and across disciplines? The fundamental structures of funding within the university are changing, and departments that have supported research on gender and social reproduction are currently being minimized, terminated, or folded into one another. Ironically, the political and economic organization of kinship, household, firms, and states are increasingly apparent and important.

In this session, we will draw on our decade of experience organizing an interdisciplinary working group called Oikos: Kinship Economies. We will discuss strategies for provisioning reading groups, workshops, and conferences with minimal resources. We will outline the strategies and approaches that we tried, what worked and what did not, and how the project has evolved over a decade-long life-cycle which includes various events that affect researchers in their own life cycles (child-rearing, care-giving, tenure and promotion processes), as well as world-historical events, such as COVID shutdowns. From looking for empty spaces and unused time, to finding funds in odd places, to building provisions together and distributing them according to need, this session will begin with a discussion of strategies and tactics for provisioning inside, outside, and across institutions. Participants can come to share strategies, tactics, and processes they've used, experiences conducting collaborative work over time, or come to share problems and look for solutions. We will gather the collective insights of the session participants into a guidebook after the event to be shared and distributed.

Target #: Unlimited.

Status: Open.

5-05 Writing with Objects

(Maple Lodge Conference Room A)

Organizer: Emily Sekine (emily@sapiens.org)

Abstract: In this generative writing session, led by an editor from SAPIENS Magazine, participants will be asked to bring a meaningful object to write with. (A material object is recommended, but working with an object from memory or imagination can work too). Through a series of guided prompts, participants will explore what they know or don't know about the object's physical presence, histories, functions, significance, and associations. The goal is to create an expansive, lively portrait of the object and its attachments. This open-ended exercise is intended to be energizing for writers at various stages of a creative or scholarly project.

Target #: None

Status: Open

5-06 Locating Expertise and Restoring the Sensuous: Aligning Ethnographic Processes and Products

(Maple Lodge Conference Room B)

Organizer: AJ Jones (jaudrey@wustl.edu)

Abstract: How might we begin to or continue restoring the relationships between our institutions and the communities in which they are embedded? How might we do so by better aligning the processes and products of our research to center interlocutor expertise and address community needs and desires? To begin addressing these questions, a group of us at Washington University in St. Louis, an institution currently working to repair longstanding harms to the St. Louis community, have established the Experiential Ethnography Studio (EES) to critically align our scholarly processes and products with the interests of our research communities through creative, sensory, embodied, and collaborative methodologies. The EES recognizes ethnography as a method, theory, and form and is organized under a studio model to promote accessibility, open exploration, dialogue, and community support. This workshop aims to foster an ephemeral EES for participants to brainstorm or deepen creative connections in their research. Participants will be asked to bring to the workshop an artifact from their research that they believe captures the embodied knowledges and/or creative practices of their interlocutors. Artifacts that are especially puzzling or wily are particularly encouraged. We will then work to imagine and test ways to incorporate the sensuous nature of these artifacts in our scholarly or public works through forms that remain true to the essence of the artifact--drawings, movements, sounds, creative writing, etc. We hope participants walk away with 1) a deeper appreciation for the intellectual works of their interlocutors and 2) a starting point for incorporating their workshop ideas into their research and community engagement to productively challenge the authority of the academy's forms and relations.

Target #: 18

Status: Limited

5-07 Interactive Ethnographic Theater-Creation Lab: Exploring Embodied Activation and Reparative Praxis

(Evergreen Auditorium)

Organizer: Debra Vidali (debra.vidali@emory.edu)

Abstract: This is an interactive ethnographic theater-creation lab where participants are guided through techniques of embodied activation of original ethnographic material. Drawing from Theater of the Oppressed (Boal) and other generative theater traditions, Debra Vidali, Director of the Anthropology Theater Lab (Emory University) will facilitate group creation-collaboration-activation exercises through embodiment, movement, play, and imagining. The aim is to create a safe, joyful, and restorative space where people are guided through movement activities that are playful, creative, and restorative. In so doing we hope to spark new forms of connection, empathy, and attunement among participants, as well as new ways of seeing how anthropological work can be embodied, collaborative, non-linear, and multi-sensorial. Following the use of movement activities as warm ups and ice-breakers, participants in the workshop will be guided to experience first-hand the alchemy of collaborative knowledge production and nonlinear theorizing in theater-making (Vidali 2020, 2023), as well the potentialities of theater making for reparative praxis which enacts political and affective redress (Blanks Jones 2018; Kondo 2018). During the ethnographic theater-creation lab, our shared and emergent collaborative ethnographic content will focus on specific themes of generational knowledge, elder wisdom, and ancestral voices. Participants will be asked to volunteer to share material on these themes from fieldwork, interviews, media sources, or personal stories. Simple prompts on these themes will be provided in advance and/or during the workshop to facilitate individual and group generation of material that can be activated during our theater-making activities. On the day after our workshop, we will share excerpts of our theater-creation lab with other unconference participants, in the form of a pop up performance (10-15 minutes – see other events below).

Target #: 25

Status: Open

5-08 On Smelling and Not Smelling

(Evergreen Breakout Room 2 +3)

Organizers: Elise Andaya (eandaya@albany.edu), Eleana Kim (eleana.kim@uci.edu)

Abstract: How might anthropological attention to experiences of smelling and not smelling enrich our understanding of bodily and social lives, from highly subjective and suggestible perceptions to collective experiences, shared values, and social discourses? How do smells and olfactory abilities reinforce social hierarchy and exclusions, and how do the multiple affordances of smelly things also offer creative interventions or resistance to dominant cultural norms? What are the practical and methodological challenges to studying smell and

olfaction in anthropology? Bring your smells and stories of smell to this panel where we will sample scents and discuss the under-appreciated and understudied sense of smell in anthropology.

Participants will discuss the role of smell in cultural heritage, social memory and narrative, and the lived experiences of people who live with olfactory disabilities and smell dysfunctions—anosmia, parosmia, and hyperosmia. We welcome broader discussion among participants about the role of the senses, qualia, embodiment, and the phenomenological aspects of fieldwork and ethnographic methods. Informal discussion will take place while we make smell containers out of sugar glass to house our smell stories.

Target #: 20

Status: Limited

Saturday May 10 Afternoon Session 2

6-01 CANCELLED Crafting your Dream Book Proposal - A Restorative Workshop

Organizer: Fulya Pinar (fpinar@middlebury.edu)

Abstract: This workshop provides a generative space for scholars to develop their book proposals while embracing creativity, play, and peer collaboration, rather than the rigid structures and high-pressure dynamics we often see in academic writing. Facilitated by Fulya Pinar, a fellow scholar who is currently navigating the book-writing process herself, the workshop is built on the premise that imagining one's book doesn't have to be a lonely, stressful endeavor – and sometimes, the best insights emerge in collaborative, low-stakes environments.

Drawing on her experience organizing creative, arts-based programs for adult refugee women, as well as public scholarship initiatives with museums and students, the facilitator will integrate imaginative approaches with practical goals. Starting with a grounding visualization, the workshop will invite participants to imagine their ideal audience, sketch or collage their dream book cover, and craft playful taglines and descriptions to distill their book's essence. Through guided, low-stakes writing prompts, participants will work on key proposal sections with a sense of curiosity and experimentation. Peer feedback, actionable next steps, and ideas for establishing accountability or feedback groups will be shared at the end of the session. By blending creativity, collaboration, and mindful engagement, this workshop reimagines the book proposal process as an inspiring, life-affirming practice. It will provide a supportive co-learning space where participants can experiment, refine ideas, and demystify the process together.

Target #: 15

Status: Limited

6-02 The Last Generation? Working together through and beyond the university

(Maple Lodge Conference Room B)

Organizers: Kaya Williams (kawillia@barnard.edu), Emily Bock (emily.bock25@gmail.com)

Abstract: It is not just the traditional academic conference that is exhausting, draining, and at times harmful to our health, it is the traditional and modern academy. We are a collective of (relatively) young and (mostly) nonwhite scholars realizing too late even though we knew all along that the university is not and has never been a place for us to thrive. Some of us are beginning to doubt that a tenure-track job is an attainable goal. Others of us are on the tenure track, perhaps even newly tenured, and beginning to doubt the ability of a tenured faculty job to provide the basic necessities of life -- food, shelter, healthcare -- to say nothing of the dwindling dream of an environment in which we might be able to do our work. What we share is a continued passion for the intellectual work we wish we were doing, a love for each other, a belief in the power of healing practices, a strong suspicion we are not alone in this, and a hope that we do not need the university's survival for our own. Fred Moten and Stefano Harney exhort us to, "Fuck the future of the university. Please stop worrying about that shit so we can worry (till, tease, turn over, chew over, chop up and fret) the practice of our presence." This session is just such a tilling, teasing, turning over, fretting, chewing, and chopping up. The question is the practice of our presence as anthropologists of color -- hopefully not the last generation.

We will be modeling and facilitating a mixed strategy session/skill share: facilitating an honest conversation across positionalities about the current conditions of our work and beginning to map out what it would look like to teach each other all the things we know but think don't count. In our initial brainstorm our group at first nervously and then more boldly offered up a diverse range of skills. Beadwork and nail art and poetry; navigating IRBs and medical leaves and mental health care amidst benefits cuts; eldercare, childcare, and ethical multispecies cohabitation; drinking alcohol and quitting alcohol; saying yes and saying no; bookbinding, transcription software, and not being afraid of ChatGPT. And through it all, our boundless love for one another. We see this session as a first foray into new ways of thinking and being with each other and with those others who find kinship in this cause.

Target #: 22

Status: Limited.

6-03 After the fall: Negotiating academic futures in the face of moratorium

(Gilmor Sloan Small Dining Room)

Organizers: Jennifer Schlegel (jschlege@kutztown.edu) Kim Shively (shively@kutztown.edu)

Abstract: This session will provide the opportunity to discuss strategies and best practices for anthropology programs going through the moratorium process. As many anthropology programs face closure or threats of closure, we aim to convene a group of ~~resentful~~ concerned anthropologists to share ideas to keep anthropology alive in universities,

especially as higher education moves away from liberal to vocationally-oriented education. This is especially important for regional publics, smaller privates, and community colleges. We intend to provide a space not just to commiserate but to do what anthropologists do best: ~~drink and cry~~ think holistically, discern patterns, and create alliances.

Target #: Unlimited

Status: Open.

6-04 Vulnerability and (Dis)comfort in Collaborative Research

(Evergreen Breakout Room 2 +3)

Organizers: Alex Blue V (alex.blue@mcgill.ca), Kyle DeCoste (kdecoste@tulane.edu)

Abstract: We've arrived in Franklin, North Carolina for the Country Rap Roots Festival. Gas tank freshly filled, we search on our phones for a liquor store - we need to find a bottle of whiskey for Vic as a token of appreciation, and a restaurant for lunch. Arriving at a strip mall, we pull our rented SUV into a parking space and look to the facade of Fat Buddies Ribs and BBQ. Next to the restaurant sign, Alex notices a thin blue line flag hung directly next to an American flag. "Well, at least this place loves the police?" he jokes. "Uhhhh...are you sure you want to eat here?" Kyle questions. "Well...it's data?" Apprehensively, but also a bit gleefully, we go forward with our lunch plans. Inside, we're confronted with a barrage of white conservative memorabilia, pig figurines, and second-amendment placards—"The second amendment is my gun permit!" boasts one particularly ostentatious metal sign of a gun-toting bald eagle. There are enough stock car pieces on the wall to reconstruct a whole one, with NASCAR legend Richard Petty (RIP) serving as Patron Saint. Despite our awareness that as the only Black person in the room, Alex sticks out like a sore thumb, we're greeted warmly by the front-of-house staff and ushered in to take a seat at a booth with a pair of menus featuring two fat pigs chumming about and a promise: "So Good It'l [sic] Make You Squeal!" Alex chooses to sit facing the door.

Vulnerability—the state of being vulnerable—refers to someone's susceptibility to harm, be it emotional, physical, or otherwise. Though coming from the Latin root *vulnerare*, meaning "to wound," the term contains numerous meanings, owing in part to its use in a wide range of fields from poetry to bioethics. Despite these associations with wounding and harm, vulnerability, as Audre Lorde (1984) reminds us, is also a strength. This workshop illuminates the necessity of vulnerability and intimacy in collaborative ethnographic methodologies through our ongoing book project on the musical genre of country rap. In particular, we examine the social constructions, lived experiences, and performances of race and gender in a variety of different relationships—between researchers and consultants, performers and audiences, writers and readers.

Country rap, sometimes known as "hick-hop," has a passionate fanbase on the ground and a large, and growing, online following. Performed primarily by white people in the Southern U.S., country rap encapsulates many discrepancies. It offers images and sounds associated with rural, (white) working-class identity while also drawing from a sonic vocabulary derivative of—and associated with—Black urban experience in the U.S. Country rap crafts an

aesthetic world wherein, according to the self-contained logics of the genre, a white woman twerking in a confederate flag bikini carries with it no contradictions. Country rap artists consistently negotiate race and gender through their media, but typically sidestep direct conversations about these topics in favor of abstractions that gesture towards them. In our co-authored ethnography of the genre, we explore the constant back-and-forth between whiteness and Blackness, the rural and the urban, performances of masculinity and femininity, and hip-hop and country musics. As a male-presenting, Black-white interracial research duo, our positionalities are critical in the navigation of the field. The success of our research hinges on our ability to be open and vulnerable with each other and to achieve a sense of openness and vulnerability with the people we write about.

In this workshop, we seek to harness the power of (dis)comfort in our work to open conversations about the strategies and methods of working together. We look to begin a dialogue with attendees that creates a space for discovery, intimacy, and vulnerability.

Possible Areas/Questions for discussion:

- Writing process, trust, and putting words in each others' mouths
- Cross-racial positionality in terms of interview strategy
- Can "identity politics" be useful in research?
- Frustrating the dynamic between researcher and subject
- Art as a stand-in for vulnerability and intimacy
- How can collaborative work demystify ethnography?
- Subjectivity and objectivity beyond the "reflexive turn"

Target #: As many as room will hold.

Status: Open.

6-05 Creative/Critical Autoethnographies of Displacement and Refuge, Part II

(Maple Lodge Conference Room A)

Organizer: Saida Hodzic (saida.hodzic@gmail.com), Anu Sharma (asharma@wesleyan.edu), Milad Odabaei (milad.odabaei@gmail.com)

Abstract: This co-writing and workshopping community would bring together faculty and students in and beyond anthropology who work auto/ethnographically on questions of displacement and refuge, engaging with creative and critical refugee epistemologies, critical border studies, abolition, anticolonial studies, queer and feminist theory and more. We met at a symposium Displaced. Detained. Undeterred in 2023, and appreciated coming together and having informal conversations as much as engaging with each other's work. Restorative Relations is an opportunity to come together again, have both structured and informal time together, and to invite others to join us in this work.

In the spirit of the SCA webinar proposal to allow conversations to unfold over time, we propose two structured times for coming together on different days. For this Saturday Session, we will discuss and offer mutual feedback to scholars writing

creatively/theoretically/autoethnographically on displacement. Texts will be precirculated in advance.

Core Participants: Saida Hodzic, Milad Odabaei, Anu Sharma, Amir Husak, Hannah Ali, Neelika Jayawardane, George Bajalia

Target #: 10 additional participants (please contact organizers after signing up for further instructions).

Status: Limited.

6-06 Towards speculative futures: Ethnographers re-enacting ambiguous encounters in authoritarian regimes and everyday securitization

(Gilmor Sloan Large Dining Room)

Organizers: Ziya Kaya (ziya.kaya@utrgv.edu), Izem Aral (izemmaral18@ucla.edu)

Abstract: How could we reenact a specific ethnographic moment we had lived in an authoritarian setting? What could we collaboratively speculate and find alternatives for ambiguous ethnographic encounters that stood with us, create further anxieties, misplaced reliefs, overwhelming suspicions and frustrating cynicism? This workshop seeks to collaboratively explore the implications of conducting ethnographic research within authoritarian regimes. Ethnographers face suspicion and cynicism in the contexts where state control, surveillance, everyday securitization, and repression both shape social dynamics and delay or necessitate significant changes to research designs, sometimes causing psychological stress. Accessing information may be difficult or even dangerous in authoritarian regimes (Brown, 2023). Some thus develop strategies, such as adopting an outsider role, to facilitate research in these environments (Stroup & Goode, 2023). While some scholars (Saluk, 2024; Glasius et al., 2018) and ethnographic method training address these issues, graduate students and early-career scholars might often feel isolated when confronting these challenges during fieldwork. This workshop aims to delve into these pressing issues in a collaborative fashion that conventional conference settings do not allow. We would like to propose speculating with participants of this workshop to address our data, challenging encounters and anxious moments of ourselves as researchers in constraining field sites, including authoritarian regimes. We welcome presenters to share excerpts from their ethnographic research where they faced suspicion and cynicism from participants and ethnographic settings. The research question and geography are open. Participants are welcome to use any kind of excerpt including but not limited to ethical, mental and emotional hurdles, and/or concrete approaches for managing access, funds or permission for research projects in constraining field sites.

Drawing on the previous ethnographic experiences, presenters and participants are invited to speculate alternative encounters going beyond these psychologically overwhelming feelings collaboratively with the participants, exploring questions such as: 1) How should ethnographers approach the cynicism, suspicion, or fear that often permeate relationships in field sites? 2) How could speculating collaboratively other scripts be helpful for ethnographers in preparing them for these challenges, both emotionally and intellectually? 3)

How can these challenges contribute to a deeper understanding of power, control, and compliance in authoritarian settings? 4) How do the processes of gaining access and securing permission in authoritarian regimes alter the ethnographic conversation itself? 5) How can we ensure the safety of both participants and researchers during fieldwork in authoritarian settings? We propose a 100-minute workshop with up to six presenters. Each presenter will share a five-minute excerpt from their research. Following the presentations, participants will engage in discussions as well as speculations using online discussion boards to explore the mentioned questions. These boards can facilitate ongoing interaction beyond the workshop. Ideally, this workshop will lead to collaborative outputs such as podcasts, blog posts, research papers, or a handbook accessible to students and early-career scholars navigating research challenges in authoritarian regimes.

Target #: Unlimited participants in the discussion.

Status: Open

6-07 Rest: How To Do Nothing

(Meditation Space)

Organizer: Carla Hung (chung@unca.edu)

Abstract: In this session we will endeavor to rest. The art of doing nothing is rooted in meditative practice. You don't need anything to do nothing. Just come as you are. We can immediately do nothing or we can spend the first few minutes talking through some of the dynamics that come up with trying to let go of the grip of all the impulses to constantly be doing. There will be pre-curated meditations and/or playlists to facilitate this experience that you can connect to using an internet accessible device if you would like to bring headphones. Drop in anytime. Bring any items that would facilitate your time to rest.

Target #: As many as the room will hold.

Status: Open.

6-08 Warp and Weft: Crafting Anthropology through Toddler Theatre

(Evergreen Auditorium)

Organizer: Subhashim Goswami (subhashim.goswami@snu.edu.in)

Abstract: I have been a theatre practitioner apart from being an anthropologist, making non-verbal sensorial theatre productions for toddlers, specifically for children under three years to watch. Toddler theatre relies on the world of senses to provide an artistic experience to a child and bring a toddler to an auditorium space for the first time in their lives. Toddlers may not have the faculty of verbal language, but they do see, hear, touch and smell the world, expressing joy, delight, anticipation and suspense in equal measure. In toddler theatre we achieve what becomes a narrative arc through the play of the tangible on stage. Toddlers may not know what a ball is unless they touch, spin and play with it. All kinds of tangible tactile material speak to them, and they create a world through the play of the tangible. In

creating what is known as toddler theatre we make a piece of theatre through a play of the tangible on stage while keeping a conceptual thread for us creators in mind which we do not expect to communicate to a child. This whole process of working with material and the play of tangible on stage, letting the play of material create a narrative arc not a spoken story, for me, is very similar to the way we as anthropologists create and carve our objects of inquiry, whether it be ethnographic or the archival object. Fieldwork is very much an act of collecting variable tactile elements and a subsequent assembly of it all to write what becomes our ethnography.

In this particular workshop for the SCA “unconference” I would like to invite all of us to work with one tangible material on the floor, following the logic of tactility and tangibility and play with it collectively using our hands, body and movement to create a narrative arc. This narrative arc would then be followed up by a subsequent act of writing, done individually but shared collectively. The material I propose to work with draws from my last toddler production, staged in Bangalore, India in December 2024 titled “Stories in Half” where we worked with looms on stage weaving threads into a pattern following the principle of a warp and a weft. This toddler play also had spoken words for the first time unlike my earlier toddler plays and most toddler plays in general. The material I propose to work with in this workshop would be thread or wool, knotting and unknotting, weaving and unweaving collectively with fellow anthropologists and engage in a subsequent act of writing to think through how we carve our objects of inquiry by bringing elements of the tactile and the sensorial together. We would essentially be working on rhythms and patterns, using wool or thread and create rhythms with our bodies in movement while I share parts of the play to reflect on the methodological underpinnings of our discipline – ethnography.

Target#: 22

Status: Open.

Other Events

Friday Evening Event: *Murmurs II, or the Pain of Nature: Poetic and Sonic Fragments of Colombia's War* (A reading of Colombia's Testimonial Tome of the Truth Commission's Final Report)

(Evergreen Auditorium)

Organizer: Alejandro Castillejo-Cuéllar (alecastillejo@gmail.com)

In this immersive experience I want to propose a sonic and collective *ritualized reading* of a selection of testimonies gathered by Colombia's Truth Commission, particularly the ones related to the “suffering of nature” and the more-than-human worlds. These readings, until very recently, were part of a broader moving, wandering pedagogy I call *itineraries of the senses* in which particular sonic atmospheres, voices-as-texts, and walking-wandering the territories of pain were integrated into a multilayered listening space in order to share stories of survival. The *readings* were not only the main polyphonic mechanism designed to “disseminate” its “voices”, but also an affective process that facilitated exchanges among people from the most diverse backgrounds, from local victims', indigenous and

Afro-Colombian organizations around the country to former combatants and students. Words and sounds worked together as a connective fabric, as well as a methodology for a renewed sense of deep listening. For this particular Reading I propose to assemble the sounds and stories from a section of the Final Report's Testimonial Tome *When Birds Did Not Sing: Stories of Colombia's Armed Conflict* (2022), under my direction, and entitled "Conversations with Nature", an exploration of "nature as subject of pain," a radical gesture for a truth commission model of remembering. One of the topics that I explored is the *conditions of audibility of non-human suffering*. If we are gathering testimonies of violence, shouldn't we also "listen" to the testimonies of "the rainforest"? The idea that "trees" could testify could also foster the possibility of new life-worlds and new questions. Some of them are what *Murmurs I, and the Wounds of Nature*, one of the sound pieces I will present during the Ritualized Reading, explores in the form of layers of sonic experience. Faced with obvious epistemological and ontological limitations, I decided to embark on a broader sound recording project. More than 70 hours of recordings were invested in this sound work.

All this work also reflects a personal journey that has taken me almost a decade: from the world of *graphism* (writing and inscription) to the universe of *phonism*, a perspective on *sound* as the building blocks of knowledge, or an area of research I will call "*ethnophonic*" rather than "*ethnographic*." Here is the invitation: what would happen to ethnographic knowledge if we situate it not in the realm of text but in the realm of sound, of aurality? Not in the sense of writing about sound, past and present, or exploring how ethnography sounds, but rather making sound, noise and silence constitute the grammar of knowledge. What would happen to the notion of "knowledge" in that case? What would be its languages, its modes of argumentation, its notion of "data," if such terms still had any meaning? Would the word "What happens to the idea of "dissemination of knowledge," "peer review" and "journal"? It is not a matter of translating certain "knowledge", about human rights for example, but rather how the "experience" of violence can be *articulated* in other reference systems, such as sound. What if we shift our vocabulary, for example, from studying "viewpoints" or "visions of the world" to exploring "listening planes" or "auditions of the world"?

Event CANCELLED: Writing/Finding Humor in Ethnography

Organizer: Ipsita Dey (idev02@uw.edu)

This session explores the role of humor in ethnographic writing, theory, and method. Panelists will present/read short works in progress that use humor to engage with ethnographic processes, from fieldwork to analysis. Whether through stand-up comedy, personal essays, podcasts, or other creative formats, panelists think with and use humor to creatively challenge conventional approaches to theorizing positionality and writing ethnography. These unique and diverse writing projects illuminate anthropological insights, critique ethnographic practices, and make complex ideas more accessible. This is an open session - conference attendees are welcome to come to the panel and listen to readings and participate in conversations about what humor adds to the ethnographic writing process.

Event: Welcome to the Anthropozine!

(Evergreen Conference Room A&B)

Organizer: Nick Kawa (nckawa@gmail.com)

For the SCA 2025 meeting, I intend to install a new iteration of “Welcome to the Anthropozine!” pop-up, this time as a DIY cube-shaped installation designed from PVC tubing. The installation will feature zines that I have collected from anthropologists over the past five years while also offering a workspace with guided prompts for participants to make either their own 8-page mini-zine or compose a single page entry that will later be compiled into a zine of its own: “Welcome to the Anthropozine: SCA 2025.”

Event: Expanded Publishing Room - hosted by the Bureau for Experimental Ethnography (UT Austin)

(Evergreen Conference Room A&B)

Organizers: Craig Campbell (craig.campbell@utexas.edu), Marina Peterson (marina.peterson@austin.utexas.edu)

Anthropologists are increasingly working with a range of forms of “expanded publishing,” from handmade zines to open access, non-profit journals. They also take seriously the capacity of multimodal forms of sound, image, experimental writing, design, graphic novels, and more. These projects explore what various forms allow for anthropological research and writing as well as for circulation and readership. The expanded publishing room will feature a book table for browsing work, a book making table, and a zine exchange. Participants should bring their own work to display (or arrange for sales on their own).

Event: Pop up performance (from Ethnographic Theater-Creation Lab session, B-07).

Organizer: Debra Vidali (debra.vidali@emory.edu)

Participants in the Ethnographic Theater Lab session will share excerpts of their work to unconference attendees.

Saturday Evening Event: The Afters

(Evergree Auditorium)

Organizers: Cam McDonald (camcdonald@gmail.com), Valentina Ramia (vramia@wesleyan.edu)

There are many reasons to avoid conferences: the expense, the time away from home, the performances of scholarly personhood, the transactional in all its forms, the comments-not-questions, the diva behavior, the slights large and small, the people we want and need to meet, the people we wish to avoid at all costs, the competing demands of

activities and the time management skills required to juggle them, not to mention the sensory overload that can be provoked by the density of social interactions of varying depth.

Yet, what keeps many of us coming back to conferences (aside from professional obligations), is what happens after the panel, the roundtable, the workshop, the business meeting, etc. Indeed, much of the carefully planned intellectual exchange on display during the day is possible because of the unplanned and impromptu social gatherings that happen at night, after the conference – on streetcorners; in taxis; at restaurants, bars, and clubs; and in hotel rooms. But we don't just meet up in pursuit of such outcomes. We are also after other ways of relating to ourselves and each other that perhaps exceed or ameliorate the injunction to secure our subjectivities through the production and consumption of knowledge. After the conference, we seek out and find all sorts of things: novelty, familiarity, pleasure, inebriation, serendipity, flirtation, or solidarity, to name a few. In these moments of co-presence, we may also enjoy what this year's Call for Contributions described as "the restorative effects of being in relationship as a communal investment in our creative and scholarly practices."

In the spirit of this call for "unprogrammed time and space," we invite you to join us at The Afters. This session is modeled on a particular kind of afterparty common in underground queer nightlife scenes around the globe. Away from the bar, the club, and the rave, these "Afters" usually take place in a private home, but they are not meant to feel like coming home, not yet. Afters are often hosted by people who are fixtures of the local underground scene: party promoters, DJs, audio engineers, lighting designers, dancers, drug dealers, and all manner of professional party people. Drawing on their talents, hosts might transform an ordinary apartment by outfitting it with temporary architectural elements, exceptionally comfortable seating, art installations, a less rigidly defined dancefloor, professional speakers, professional decks and mixers, and a DJ to operate them. The Afters promises a certain kind of continuation of the sensory experience and collective togetherness of the club or the rave. But this cocoon-like space is a refuge on the way home, a place to transition from night into morning and even afternoon. It is designed to loosely contain and channel those energies such that other forms of encountering and relating to each other that were unlikely or difficult earlier in the night become possible. The vibe is meant to be intimate, relaxed, and conversational. Think: chatting, lounging, idling as praxis. Some sloughing off of our more polished and public selves is expected and encouraged. Whereas the party is more structured by objectives, the Afters is aimless by design. It is a sort of seated *dérive*. But, like the ambulatory drifting championed by the Situationists, the Afters may facilitate dissolutions of the self and reconfigurations of their relation to the social.

For this session, we aim to conjure a material space and a durational experience that fuses these different kinds of Afters: why we gather after any conference; how we gather after certain kinds of nightlife parties; what it is that we don't yet have, but are after; and what might come after "the conference" as a form of gathering that too often takes more than it gives.

To do so, we propose the following:

-The Afters will occur at night and as late as reasonably possible, given the other scheduled activities for "Restorative Relations." One possible time slot would be from 10pm-12am.

-The Afters will repurpose either an existing space at Stony Point Center or a nearby dwelling, and will be fashioned with the kinds of sounds, lighting, decorations, and comfortable seating common at an afterparty.

-The Afters will be open to everyone as guests and participants, rather than as passive audience members focused on a “main event.”

-The Afters will be hosted, rather than empaneled. Each of our hosts will be responsible for developing a hosting experience or prompt meant to invite, excite, and activate guests so that they feel at home. Prompts could take many forms, including a poem, an artifact, a performance, a DJ set, or a photo or video presentation, among unknown others. For prompts, hosts are encouraged to draw on interests and activities that often don't fit in our scholarly lives, that we compartmentalize, or put aside altogether. These may relate to actual or fantasized scholarly projects, or they might be resolutely “personal.” We encourage hosts and guests to think about what it would mean to bring our other, neglected selves into this space that is usually reserved solely for our scholarly selves. Prompts will occur at staggered moments throughout the night. Hosts will encourage guests to pursue pleasure, spontaneity, conversation, and creative connection with each other without presuming what forms those may take. A certain uncertainty and openhandedness is necessary for this gathering to draw in others, solicit thoughts and feelings, and allow for a non-linear, experimental, and transference relation to ourselves and each other.

-The Afters work best with social lubrication and reduced inhibitions. Both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks could be sold to support the minimal costs of the installation and any remaining funds could be directed to SCA or perhaps a travel fund for graduate students and/or under-resourced scholars.

Hosts and Invitations

Margot Weiss (she/her) invites you to join her in herbalism magic, to share a queer tonic or tea for the times, and to discover what we might be or become when we draw relations through substances.

Marios Falaris (they/them) invites you into a series of soundscapes, which explore “queer Baltimore.” Shadowing select subjects in the Baltimore Queer Oral History collection, these are supplemental soundscapes from that collection, which feature the ambient, swirling sounds of queer sociality and place-making. How does this shifting audio find us, in our Afters? Do the soundscapes invite, transport, or attune us to a place; are they background to our conversations and encounters, introducing swirls of affect and interruptions; might they serve as a temporary refuge to sink into, to inhabit temporarily?

Milad Odabaei (he/him) invites you to participate in the poetics of queer refuge. Milad will introduce, read, and hand out two or three poems (in the original Persian and English translation) by queer Iranian refugees that reflect a journey of loss and hope from Iran through Turkey to Europe and North America. He will invite participants to respond to the poems in group or private conversations at the Afters, or later (via text message, e-mail, or social media messaging) as they journey home or reengage with the texts of the poems. These responses can take any form: free associations, other poems, images, or theoretical references.

Valentina Ramia (she/her) invites you to use your ethnographic writing—from a few keywords to a thick description or a scene you always come back to—and turn it into the base for a serialized, perhaps atonal musical composition. We will use our words (in any language!) as a musical sample. We will then add layers, creating a loop-based writing/musical piece. Languages will collide, translation will inhabit the senses, and authorship will be tossed out the window.

Nomi Stone (she/her) will invite the group to explore how to enact rather than explain concepts and phenomenological experience — within writing and/ or in the classroom. This happening might involve 1) sharing a graduate class final gallery 2) asking for input from the group on how they might use enactment themselves and 3) sharing a short writing exercise from Field Studio that invites participants to create an enactment of their own

Cam McDonald (he/him) invites you to experience a DJ set as an ethnographic dispatch, a sonic essay on and as fieldwork methods and situations. Tacking between audio and textual sources, we will dwell in a shared space of improvisation, curation, transition, sampling, sequencing, and fluctuating tempos. You are encouraged to pay attention to how you respond, what does or does not move you, what you find yourself thinking, wanting, perhaps even needing to share with those around you.