



SOCIETY FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

2025 BIENNIAL MEETING

April 3-6, 2025

Tamaya Resort, Santa Ana Pueblo New Mexico

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Acknowledgments:

Thank you to everyone who generously contributed their time and effort to make this conference a success:

Planning Committee: Janis H. Jenkins, Bridget Haas, Ellen Kozelka, Whitney Duncan, Angela Leocata, AJ Jones

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Internet Access

- Connect to the wireless network (SSID) called **@Hyatt_Meeting**
- Launch your Internet browser and follow the log-on instructions on the portal page and enter the following access code: **SPA25**

Accessibility

Presenters may enable live captioning of their presentations in Power Point. On the **Slide Show** ribbon tab, select **Subtitle Settings** and proceed to select language and position of captions.

For detailed instructions regarding this feature in Windows and Mac, please visit:

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/present-with-real-time-automatic-captions-or-subtitles-in-powerpoint-68d20e49-aec3-456a-939d-34a79e8ddd5f>

Welcome to the 2025 Biennial Meeting of the Society for Psychological Anthropology!

As President of the Society for Psychological Anthropology, I extend a warm welcome to our 2025 SPA Biennial! We have an extensive set of truly outstanding events including two Presidential plenary sessions, 30 paper sessions, 10 roundtables, two workshops, a poster session, awards ceremonies, and a special film screening in visual psychological anthropology.

As an interdisciplinary field, we have long embraced a diversity of theories and methods that emphasize the inseparability of culture, body/mind, and the sociopolitical structures of society. As an anthropological field, our continued strength is the conviction that ethnographic approaches to human experience are powerful starting points for investigation and action. Given the currently charged political ethos we inhabit, it is a particularly important time to convene within the field of psychological anthropology. We are keenly aware of the complex ways in which psychological and political processes are interwoven and have profound effects in shaping persons and collectivities within local communities, nation-states, and globally. We are also aware that the flourishing of human development requires a creative dynamism of social conditions that foster and nourish possible selves, lives, and worlds. The current threats to our multiple lifeworlds and our singular planet are palpable and loom large; finding multiple ways to actively counter these threats is a challenge for everyone. From my vantage as President, I can affirm and attest that there is much vital energy in psychological anthropology to engage this challenge.

We are happy to be convening at the Tamaya Hyatt on the beautiful lands of the Santa Ana Pueblo. At the Thursday evening Welcome Reception, I will be honored to introduce an elder of the Pueblo, Mr. Emmett Garcia, who will offer a blessing for the success of our meeting. Warmest wishes for an engaging and enjoyable meeting!

Janis H Jenkins,
SPA President

SPA 2025 Biennial Schedule

Thursday April 3

10:00 am – 12:00 pm Pre-Conference Workshops

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| Thursday, April 3 10:00am- 12:00pm | Workshop 1: Using Ethnographic Methods to Develop Measurement Tools <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bonnie Kaiser, University of California, San Diego• Jo Weaver, University of Oregon | Badger A |
| Thursday, April 3 10:00am- 12:00pm | Workshop 2: Writing for Publication in Psychological Anthropology <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Julia Cassaniti, University of Virginia• Jacob Hickman, Brigham Young University• Yehuda Goodman, Hebrew University of Jerusalem• Neely Myers, Southern Methodist University• Elizabeth Carpenter-Song, Dartmouth College | Badger BC |

12 pm – 1:00 pm: Break – Lunch on your own

1:00 pm – 2:45 pm Sessions

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| Thursday, April 3 1:00pm – 2:45pm | Suffering and the Remaking of Possibilities (Panel) Organizer: SPA Program Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On Madness and Mutability: Psychogenic Illness, Revulsion, and the Clinical Good Life (Daisy Couture, Princeton University)• Navigating Chronic Experience under the Good Prognosis Diagnosis (Brittany Franck, University of Arizona)• Cervical Dysplasia and Psychosexual Distress: Thinking Anthropologically about an Apparent Coincidence (Kelly Mulvaney, University of Chicago)• “Never pitied myself, never experienced traumatic effects”: Gendered and Spiritual | Badger A |
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| | <p>Negotiations of Agency and Victimhood in Neoliberal Turkey (Melis Gemalmaz, University of Notre Dame)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Disease of Medical Progress: Delirium and the Re-making of Life in Intensive Care (Ross Perfetti, University of Pennsylvania) • Under the Spell of Memory Loss: Centering Dementia as a Mode of Perception, a Method, and a Form of Knowing (Cynthia Lazzaroni, McGill University) | |
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| Thursday, April 3 1:00pm – 2:45pm | <p>Psychic Symptoms in Times of Crisis: Working-Through the Personal and the Political (Roundtable)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> How can psychological anthropology help us to better understand the entanglement of culture, the formations of the unconscious, and a historical moment increasingly defined by shared experiences of crisis and precarity? This roundtable interrogates the location, impact, and epistemological framings of the “symptoms” that reveal such collective and personal distress. We are particularly concerned with the status of the public and the public “good,” each variously defined, vis-à-vis those forms of constitutive but disavowed knowledge that might be called “unconscious.” If, as many classic accounts in psychological anthropology have maintained, the unconscious is made operative by culture, how does one analytically gain purchase and step outside that collective symbolic and moral world in order to make change possible? To use Obeyesekere’s (1981) canonical framing: what is the relation between the public and the personal symbol, and how might that relation be ritually, politically, and clinically activated to better apprehend and analyze community responses to distress? Further, following Obeyesekere, how should anthropologists consider the singularity of those maladaptive but nevertheless revelatory symbols that might be called “symptoms”—made manifest in various forms of speech, acts of protest, and (inter)embodiment—as a site of ethnographic investigation? Across a variety of ethnographic sites, we consider the unconscious and its diffuse symptomology as a way to access alignments and departures between the subject and the collective, with an eye towards broader implications for (shared yet</p> | Badger BC |
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| | <p>always uneven) political struggle. The roundtable will present cases from the United States, Turkey, and Ireland and invite audience participation as to the broader theoretical and methodological implications of thinking with the unconscious to work through political and psychic crisis.</p> <p>Organizer 1: Jess Cooper, University of Edinburgh Organizer 2: Michael D’Arcy, Haverford College Chair 1: Jess Cooper, University of Edinburgh Chair 2: Michael D’Arcy, Haverford College</p> <p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erin Moore, Ohio State University • Melina Salvador • Serra Hakyemez, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities • Michael D’Arcy, Haverford College • Jess Cooper, University of Edinburgh | |
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3:00 – 4:45pm Sessions

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| Thursday, April 3 3:00pm – 4:45pm | <p>Writing About Difficult Subjects (Roundtable)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> This roundtable explores the practice and imperative of writing about difficult subjects. Why are we drawn to write about things that are hard to write about? To topics that upset and annoy other people? To domains that by their nature distress our readers? The participants in this panel have all found themselves grappling with material that troubles our readers. It is not an uncommon challenge for medical anthropologists, and yet few of us likely imagined that it would be our future when we were young scholars. The panel invites its participants to explore the craft and topic of writing about things that are hard to write about. First, how does a writer go about the task of writing about the unbearable, the indescribable, the more-than-manageable? What, specifically, have we learned about writing about pain—and how can we write in ways that seem participatory and helpful rather than exploitative? Second, how do we understand why and how we have each been drawn to these topics, and what has it taught us about</p> | Badger A |
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| | <p>anthropology and life? What are the limits of representation and knowability, and what have we learned about straddling those limits?</p> <p>Organizer 1: Tanya Luhmann, Stanford University Organizer 2: Angela Garcia, Stanford University Chair 1: Neely Myers, Southern Methodist University</p> <p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jarrett Zigon, University of Virginia • Discussant: Lisa Stevenson, McGill University • Discussant: Rebecca Lester, Washington University in St. Louis | |
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| <p>Thursday, April 3 3:00pm – 4:45pm</p> | <p>Simultaneous Engagement: Collaborative Research to Explore Causes and Possible Ways to Reduce Mental Health Suffering (Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> Psychological anthropologists increasingly are partnering with patients, health care providers, psychologists, therapists, and public officials in designing research that ultimately contributes both to scholarly conversations and to the practical concerns of our partners. Anthropologists have always consulted with and worked closely with community members; this more recent collaborative work takes this to the next level. Using a partner-to-research design process, psychological anthropologists are partnering with others from the beginning to design research that examines partner’s pragmatic concerns holistically, while simultaneously contributing to the pressing scholarly conversations on the cultural and biocultural processes resulting in invisible pain, trauma and mental illness. Papers in this panel explore the ways in which partnerships can lead to work that simultaneously engages with what matters most to our research participants while contributing insights into the various ways societal ignorance, neglect or inadvertent harm has profound impact on mental health wellbeing.</p> <p>Organizer and Chair: Organizer: Cameron Hay, Miami University</p> | <p>Badger BC</p> |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hidden Zebras: Isolating experiences managing pain, depression, and anxiety in Hypermobile Ehlers Danlos Syndrome (Ella Boate, Miami University) • Reimagining Care: Arts- Based Research on the Medical Trauma of Sexual Assault Survivors with BPD (Sophia Shieh, Duquesne University) • Resilience and Vulnerabilities in Mental Health: A Bio- Cultural Exploration of Psychological Issues in India (Naorem Kiranmala Devi, University of Delhi) • Creating shared realities in psychosis treatment: An ethnographic study of the psychiatrist- patient relationship (Melissa Uehling, Emory University) • Dancing with silence above the tree line: towards decolonizing clinical practice in Nunavik (Ana Gomez-Carrillo, McGill University) • Limbo, scarcity and the limits of professional benevolence: an ethnography of ecosocial interventions for asylum- seeking families (Rachel Kronick, McGill University) • Discussant Thomas Weisner, University of California, Los Angeles | |
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| Thursday, April 3 3:00pm – 4:45pm | <p>Problems in Living: Psychosocial Reflections on Contemporary Life (Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> Harry Stack Sullivan, an early twentieth century psychiatrist and psychoanalyst famously proposed that experiences of mental suffering have an interpersonal origin and can be understood only with reference to an individual’s social environment. He used the phrase “problems in living” to describe the difficulties individuals encounter in relating to themselves and others and he argued that “personality can never be isolated from the complex interpersonal relationships in which a person lives.” Much psychic suffering, Sullivan argued, is caused by problems with living and adjusting to society.</p> <p>Inspired by Sullivan’s work, this panel explores some of the key problems in living that permeate contemporary life. Drawing upon a range of ethnographic contexts and theoretical problematics the panel asks: What are some of the major problems that</p> | Wolf AB |
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| | <p>generate individual and collective experiences of psychic suffering? How do individuals and societies manage these problems and understand their causes? What psychological effects do these problems have on individuals and collectivities? How are these psychological problems refracted in social and political life? How do problems in living provide an opportunity to study the various ways different cultures and societies articulate notions of well-being, resilience, and health? Finally, what can all of this teach us about the way society comes to imprint itself on the human psyche?</p> <p>Organizer: Jenny Huberman, University of Missouri, Kansas City Chair: Jeff Bennett, University of Missouri, Kansas City</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection between Loneliness, “Problem of Living” and Nakama (camaraderie) (Chikako Ozawa-de Silva, Emory University) • “I can make me love you.” Individual Solutions to Social Problems in Living: An Analysis of Frientimacy (Jenny Huberman, University of Missouri, Kansas City) • Problems in Living: Estrangement and Belonging (Jeff Bennett, University of Missouri, Kansas City) • For the Love of Teacher: Upward mobility and the guru phenomenon in India (Parvis Ghassem-Fachandi, Rutgers University) • I am the one who digs the bones: Uncovering the future among the fragments of the past (Chris Nelson, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) • "Critical Placemaking": counteracting displacement among persons experiencing homelessness and severe mental illness in Los Angeles (Yanina Gori, University of California, Los Angeles) | |
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| <p>Thursday, April 3 3:00pm – 4:45pm</p> | <p>Reimagining Care and Community: Approaches from India, Peru, Russia, and the United States (Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> This panel examines how notions of care and community are enacted and challenged across different countries: India, Peru, Russia, and the United States. Anthropological scholarship has pushed researchers to conceive care in its multiple and often contradictory facets and to detach it from notions of protection or generosity. Further, anthropologists have encountered how the notion of community is often taken for granted - as an unequivocal good in conversations about politics and the economy. Our panel extends the analysis of care and community by offering ethnographic explorations of countries going through crucial events such as urbanization, community mental health, migration, and militarized conflict. Collectively, we further the problematization and retheorization of care and community and show how these notions are re-created, questioned, imagined, and enacted locally across different countries and contexts.</p> <p>Organizer: Sugandh Gupta, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Chair: Julio Villa-Palomino, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Community amid Suspicion: Madness and Mental Health in Peru (Julio Villa-Palomino, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor) • Chemical Dreamstates: Antimalarial Toxicity, Martial Sociality, and Military Dreaming in the Global War on Terror (Jocelyn Chua, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) • Fear of Social Death: Youth Suicidal Distress and 'Love Problems' in Rural India (Varnica Arora, City University of New York) • “There Is No Zolof in Tbilisi Anymore”: Virtual Ethnography of Mental Health Communities among Russian Migrants on Telegram (Arvid Kachurin, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) • Koi nahin samajhta hamein. No one understands us: De- addiction as recovery from injecting drug | <p>Eagle</p> |
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| | <p>use in Jammu City, Jammu & Kashmir, India (Sugandh Gupta, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Excess: Black magic and the limits of intercultural healthcare in Chile (Randall Burson, University of Pennsylvania) • Discussant Zhiying Ma, University of Chicago | |
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4:45- 6:00 – Break

6:00 – 8:00 pm Special Event: Welcome Reception

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| Thursday, April 3 6:00pm – 8:00 pm | <p>Welcome Reception</p> <p>SPA President Welcome by Janis H. Jenkins</p> <p>Santa Ana Pueblo Blessing by Mr. Emmett Garcia</p> <p>Announcement of SPA/ Robert Lemelson Foundation Fellowship Awards</p> | Cottonwood Pavilion |
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Friday, April 4

8:00 am- 9:45 am: Sessions

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| Friday, April 4 8:00am – 9:45am | Senses, Bodies, Politics Part I (Double Panel) <u>Abstract:</u> In a rapidly changing and degrading planet transformed by digitalization, war, and climate crises, what place does the thinking-feeling-sensing body hold? How do bodies register the impacts of these massive changes, but through practices of embodiment, also digest, expel, and transform them? This panel seeks to investigate feeling bodies: the sensations within individual bodies, the emotions exchanged between bodies, and the ways bodies respond to each other and to their environments. While Western phenomenology has historically not attended to the political and colonial dimensions of bodily experience, we are inspired by Indigenous and other epistemologies that emphasize the body as a site of awareness and knowledge. This helps us theorize embodiment as a profoundly relational process. How do bodies and embodied practices hold space for, and navigate through, the current crises and traumas unfolding around us? How do we analytically attend to bodies and bodily experiences beyond physiological, biological, or genetic expressions of the major crises of our time (i.e. beyond the biology of trauma)? What are the potentials for the body and embodied practices to remake selves, relations and communities in the midst or aftermath of social and political disruption? Contributors are invited to draw on empirical, ethnographic material to discuss how feeling and sensing bodies interplay with political and social spheres. Organizers: Tuva Broch, Norwegian Institute for Nature Research and Saiba Varma, University of California, San Diego Chair: Saiba Varma, University of California, San Diego <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skin Hunger: From exalting being alone together, to longing to be together alone (Tuva Broch, NINA) | Badger A |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The body as other in psychoanalytic sense (Marisa Berwald, University of California, Los Angeles) • The digital hand – theorizing embodied news work in the digital era (Gudrun Rudningen) • Submerged Stories: Reconfiguring Senses, Bodies, Communities, and Ecologies in Underwater Breath-Hold Diving (Suraiya Luecke, University of California, Los Angeles) • Controlled Heterotopias and the Architecture of Chance: A Sensory Ethnography of Situations in Off-Strip Las Vegas Casinos (Noa Vana, Tel Aviv University) | |
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| Friday, April 4 8:00am – 9:45am | <p>The anthropology of belonging and loneliness (Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> In recent years concerns about an “epidemic” of loneliness have grown in the popular press and academic scholarship. Anthropologists have expanded the conceptualization of loneliness from a lack of close social relationships to a multidimensional phenomenon implicating political economy, environment, public places, exchange, subjectivity, spirituality, and biological embodiment. Studies suggest belonging and loneliness are culturally specific and relational. This expansion has implications for how we think about, measure, and intervene to address loneliness and foster belonging. This panel aims to further explore the dimensions and particularities of experiences of belonging and loneliness in different contexts, and to theorize ethnographic approaches for studying loneliness and promoting belonging. Larger questions that may arise across papers: Is belonging the opposite of loneliness? How is belonging done? Is loneliness one thing or many? What is the particular character of loneliness and belonging in anthropology, for researchers, our research communities, and the academy at large?</p> <p>Organizers: Michelle Parsons, Northern Arizona University and Chikako Ozawa-de Silva, Emory University Chair: Michelle Parsons, Northern Arizona University</p> | Badger BC |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to Navigate Sadness as a Community: Suicide Loss Survivors and Grief Groups in South Korea (Yoon Wan Chang, Emory University) • “Hard to form connections when you feel less of a person”: Being Unneeded and the Political Economy of Loneliness in Later Life (Ad Maulod, Duke NUS Medical School) • Young Adults' Perceptions of Human Connection in a Digital Age (Rea Antoniou, Northern Arizona University) • Homelessness and Connection (Asantewaa Mensah, Northern Arizona University) • Women Alone: Shame in Aging (Liesl Gambold, Dalhousie University) • PCOS and the (Un)Making of Kinship and Belonging in India (Manjari Sahay, Emory University) • Discussant AJ Jones, Washington University in St. Louis | |
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| Friday, April 4 8:00am – 9:45am | <p>Morality and Personhood in Contexts of Existential Threat and Dramatic Social Change Part I (Double Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> Rapid social change can engender existential threats that force groups to adapt their ethical frameworks or at least to bring them into greater focus. Personhood stands in a particular relationship to moral and ethical frameworks because of the way that ontologies of personhood philosophically ground ideas about the good, without requiring moral abstraction per se. One need not be a moral philosopher to have a strong sense of moral reality, precisely because of the deontological entailments of models of personhood. Dramatic social change can challenge these models, such as forcing a person to take on the identity of a refugee or migrant, relocating from a rural to an urban sphere, or feeling like the world has left you behind. These papers query the particular relationship between models of personhood and moral frameworks, with an emphasis on how dramatic social change reconfigures personhood, morality, and the relationships between them. In some</p> | Wolf AB |
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| | <p>cases, this social change is experienced as an existential threat to the community itself, while in others change may be experienced as less dramatic or sudden, but nonetheless forces a reworking of both models of personhood and the moral frameworks that extend from these models. This panel thus queries the relationship between lived experience and moral thought, cultural models and mundane discourse, embodied engagement and rational process. How do models of personhood and morality shape how people deal with existential threat? How does personhood shape moral discourse and practice? What happens when models of personhood themselves are called into question? How do perceptions of and divisions in people's social worlds shape ideas of the good? The person-centered approaches underpinning these papers advance debates about everyday ethical practice and moral realism by elucidating how models of personhood and morality play out in high relief, given the contexts in which our ethnographic interlocutors are living their lives.</p> <p>Organizers and Chairs: Jacob Hickman, Brigham Young University and Elise Berman, University of North Carolina at Charlotte</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Disordered Worlds to Disordered Minds: Burnout in Post-socialist Slovenia (Jasmina Polovic, University of Oklahoma) • Deepening Distrust, Deepening Faith: U.S. Evangelicals' Rejection of Public Knowledge and Embrace of Biblical Epistemology in the wake of Covid-19 (Johanna Richlin, University of Maine) • Care, Violence, and the American Dream: Professionals' experiences of double binds and moral injury within immigration detention (Lauren Medina, University of California, San Diego) • "Going to Hell Fast": Protestant apocalypticism in Northern Ireland (Soren Pearce) • Imaginativity, Self- Possession, and the Ritual Production of Identities: A Chinese Template (P. Steven Sangren, Cornell University) • Discussant Greg Thompson, Brigham Young University | |
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| <p>Friday, April 4 8:00am – 9:45am</p> | <p>Grappling with Moral Ambiguity: Lived Experiences of Health Workers in Contemporary Institutions (Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> This panel examines the moral complexity and affective challenges that health professionals encounter as they navigate tensions between institutional mandates and personal values across various healthcare and public health settings. While these challenges have often been examined within medical anthropology, which focuses on institutional and structural factors, psychological anthropology offers a key perspective by centering the affective human experience, selfhood, and identity. Drawing on ethnographic research, the panel explores how these individuals strive to sustain a sense of purpose, contend with ethical tensions, and adapt to resource constraints in a wide range of global contexts. Building on foundational concepts from psychological anthropology, such as moral decision-making, narrative practice and moral imagination, the clinical gaze, ethics of care and moral suffering, the moral economy, this panel illuminates how health workers manage the emotional and moral labor inherent in their roles. Papers explore settings where professionals work to address racial health disparities, support recovery from substance use disorder, uphold moral agency for youth facing psychosis, manage intergenerational trauma in cross-cultural therapy, navigate ethical dilemmas in maternal-fetal interventions, and mediate cultural tensions in mental health care. Psychological anthropology’s attention to affective experience and the internal complexities of moral ambiguity deepens our understanding of how professionals make sense of their identities and purpose in challenging contexts. The panel provides insight into the affective and moral dimensions of healthcare, underscoring the potential for psychological anthropology to engage in solution-oriented approaches that address the real-world challenges health professionals face.</p> <p>Organizers Sarah Rubin, Ohio University and Elizabeth Carpenter-Song, Dartmouth College Chair: Sarah Rubin, Ohio University</p> | <p>Eagle</p> |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Breaking Points to Turning Points: Promoting Moral Agency for Youth in Crisis and/or How We All Can Help (Neely Myers, Southern Methodist University) • Commitment and Constraint on the Frontlines of Care in Rural New England (Elizabeth Carpenter-Song, Dartmouth College and Ramsey Ash, Dartmouth College) • A Difference that Makes a Difference: Building Structural Resilience for People with Substance Use Disorder (M. Cameron Hay, Miami University) • “Just a lot of mixed feelings:” challenges for public health professionals working to reduce racial disparities in sleep-related infant mortality (Sarah Rubin, Ohio University) • Intergenerational difference/ trauma: Moral breakdowns and the psy-disciplines in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (Allen Tran, Bucknell University) • “This is really going off script”: Prioritizing ethnographic information and dealing with moral dissonance and personal discomfort amongst prenatal clinical-researchers (Julia Brown, University of California, San Francisco) • Discussant Neil Aggarwal, Columbia University | |
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10:00 am – 11:45 am Special Event: Presidential Plenary I

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| Friday, April 4 10:00am – 11:45am | <p>Subjectivity and Security: Critical Issues in Psychological Anthropology</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> This presidential plenary session examines contemporary issues within psychological anthropology relevant to understanding security as a function of political subjectivity. Security from the standpoint of political subjectivity is not based on a distinction between micro-level personal, family or community security/safety and macro-level national or international security. It is instead based on a distinction between political ethos as the cultural orientation of feeling, sentiment, and atmosphere that constitutes a sense of security and the political conditions of power and interest in terms of which people must orient themselves, along with their</p> | Tamaya Ballroom |
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| | <p>capacities for engaging those conditions. In other words, the lived experience of these social/political/historical conditions is marked by and intertwined with particular atmospheres or emotional tonalities. The five contributors each address this problematic from within a specific ethnographic context. In Japan the lived experience of loneliness is reframed from an individual semi-pathology to a function of a lonely society that reflects the valuation of productivity over inherent value. In the cases of Salvadoran refugees and Mexican descent adolescents, political subjectivity is formed by separation in place and identity conditioned by racialization of everyday life. In unregulated Mexican drug treatment centers in the context of increasing addiction and desperation among low-income families, political subjectivity is constructed through paradoxical interrelations of violence, kin, and care. The climate catastrophe in North America and elsewhere is characterized by moods and atmospheres in embodied experience that constitute an ethos of vulnerability intertwined with conditions of unpredictability. African refugees in the United States experience waiting for immigration status as both anticipation and inertia, with an ethos of motivation to thrive under conditions of institutional constraint.</p> <p>Organizer and Chair: Janis H. Jenkins (University of California, San Diego)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Empathy, Political Subjectivity and the Ethics of Anthropology (Chikako Ozawa-de Silva, Emory University) • Political Subjectivity as Orientation and Atmosphere (Janis H. Jenkins, UCSD) • The Violence of Care (Angela Garcia, Stanford University) • Atmospheric Insecurities (Jason Throop, University of California, Los Angeles) • Suspended Lives: The Exertion of Waiting (Bridget Haas, Case Western Reserve University) • Discussant Byron Good (Harvard University) | |
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12:00 pm – 1:00 pm: Break - Lunch on your own

Note: The Ethos Editorial Board will meet 12:00 – 12:45 pm in the Eagle Room.

1:00 pm – 2:45 pm Sessions

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| <p>Friday, April 4 1:00pm – 2:45pm</p> | <p>Senses, Bodies, Politics Part II (Double Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> In a rapidly changing and degrading planet transformed by digitalization, war, and climate crises, what place does the thinking-feeling-sensing body hold? How do bodies register the impacts of these massive changes, but through practices of embodiment, also digest, expel, and transform them? This panel seeks to investigate feeling bodies: the sensations within individual bodies, the emotions exchanged between bodies, and the ways bodies respond to each other and to their environments. While Western phenomenology has historically not attended to the political and colonial dimensions of bodily experience, we are inspired by Indigenous and other epistemologies that emphasize the body as a site of awareness and knowledge. This helps us theorize embodiment as a profoundly relational process. How do bodies and embodied practices hold space for, and navigate through, the current crises and traumas unfolding around us? How do we analytically attend to bodies and bodily experiences beyond physiological, biological, or genetic expressions of the major crises of our time (i.e. beyond the biology of trauma)? What are the potentials for the body and embodied practices to remake selves, relations and communities in the midst or aftermath of social and political disruption? Contributors are invited to draw on empirical, ethnographic material to discuss how feeling and sensing bodies interplay with political and social spheres.</p> <p>Organizers: Tuva Broch, Norwegian Institute for Nature Research and Saiba Varma, UCSD Chair: Tuva Broch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embodied Ambiguity & the Potential for Remaking Selves (Eva Melstrom, University of Chicago) • Sense and Insensibility: Environmental Toxicity and the Paranoid Style in Kashmir (Saiba Varma, University of California, San Diego) | <p>Badger A</p> |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sensory and Embodied Politics of Home and Homemaking Among Syrian Migrants in Turkey (Begüm Ergun, Boston University) • The Embodied Politics of Dreaming (Matthew Newsom, Southern Utah University) • Embodied Intimacies: Violence, Care and Biopolitical Governance in Everyday Life among Women at Domestic Violence Shelters in Copenhagen, Denmark (Marie Leine, Copenhagen University) • Bodies of Pain: Reflecting on the Transformative Effects of Demonstrators' Sensorial Experiences (Yehuda Goodman, Hebrew University of Jerusalem) | |
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| Friday, April 4 1:00pm – 2:45pm | <p>Morality and Personhood in Contexts of Existential Threat and Dramatic Social Change Part II (Double Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> Rapid social change can engender existential threats that force groups to adapt their ethical frameworks or at least to bring them into greater focus. Personhood stands in a particular relationship to moral and ethical frameworks because of the way that ontologies of personhood philosophically ground ideas about the good, without requiring moral abstraction per se. One need not be a moral philosopher to have a strong sense of moral reality, precisely because of the deontological entailments of models of personhood. Dramatic social change can challenge these models, such as forcing a person to take on the identity of a refugee or migrant, relocating from a rural to an urban sphere, or feeling like the world has left you behind. These papers query the particular relationship between models of personhood and moral frameworks, with an emphasis on how dramatic social change reconfigures personhood, morality, and the relationships between them. In some cases, this social change is experienced as an existential threat to the community itself, while in others change may be experienced as less dramatic or sudden, but nonetheless forces a reworking of both models of personhood and the moral frameworks that extend from these models. This panel thus queries the relationship between lived experience and moral thought, cultural</p> | Wolf AB |
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| | <p>models and mundane discourse, embodied engagement and rational process. How do models of personhood and morality shape how people deal with existential threat? How does personhood shape moral discourse and practice? What happens when models of personhood themselves are called into question? How do perceptions of and divisions in people’s social worlds shape ideas of the good? The person-centered approaches underpinning these papers advance debates about everyday ethical practice and moral realism by elucidating how models of personhood and morality play out in high relief, given the contexts in which our ethnographic interlocutors are living their lives.</p> <p>Organizers and Chairs: Jacob Hickman, Brigham Young University and Elise Berman, University of North Carolina at Charlotte</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Our street used to have a Karen too”: Moral positioning in race talk among Marshallese children in the United States (Elise Berman, University of North Carolina at Charlotte) • Morality and the Self: The "Big Three" Alternatives (Autonomy, Community, Divinity) (Rick Shweder, University of Chicago) • Ancestral Futures: Hmong cosmologies of personhood, moral practice, and social change in the diaspora (Jacob Hickman, Brigham Young University) • Changing Moral Goods in a Changing World: Tracking the Moral Values of Thai Adolescents From 2012– 2023 (Jess McKenzie, California State University, Fresno) • From Discontent to Collective Dream: Chinese Urbanites Building Rural Utopias (Xueyan Shao, University of Chicago) • Discussant Julia Cassaniti, University of Virginia | |
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| Friday, April 4 1:00pm – 2:45pm | <p>Hauntology and the Political Subject Part I (Double Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> Although “hauntology” is rooted in Derridean philosophy and has been elaborated by cultural and literary theorists, its conceptual framing has deep links to</p> | Badger BC |
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| | <p>psychoanalytic theory and has increasingly been incorporated within psychological anthropology. Ghosts and haunting, unlike other figurations of psychological experience, represent not the self but an Other – another subject, another time, another place. This panel will examine how hauntology, when brought into conversation with psychoanalytic theory, illuminates the ways in which political subjects are shaped by that which is simultaneously present and absent, visible and yet invisible, current and historical. Members of this panel trace theoretical framings that link hauntological and psychoanalytic understandings of subjectivity. Such conceptual frameworks allow us to examine how past traumatic experience and unresolved histories manifest in the present tense, not as mere memories but as active forces shaping contemporary political subjects and their desire. The papers in this panel illustrate diverse ways in which hauntology has found its place within psychological anthropology, with a particular focus on its relevance for providing new insights into contemporary political issues and theorizing the political subject. This discussion will contribute to broader conversations about temporality, presence/absence, and the relationship between psychological and political processes in contemporary life, while maintaining a fundamental interest in how experience is processed and how it produces traces that manifest in ways that can only be described in terms of ghosts and haunting.</p> <p>Organizers: Sadeq Rahimi, Harvard University and Byron Good, Harvard University Chair: Andrea Chiovenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the Subject of Hauntology (Byron Good, Harvard University) • Hauntological Justice (Sadeq Rahimi, Harvard University) • When the specter is rageful (Andrea Chiovenda) • Toward a Hauntology of the 1947 Partition of India: A Contrast in Biomedical and Popular Media Constructions of Subjectivity (Neil Aggarwal, Columbia University) • Discussant Alasdair Donald, Harvard University • Discussant Noha Sadek, Brown University | |
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| <p>Friday, April 4 1:00pm – 2:45pm</p> | <p>Critical Cognitive Anthropology: Past, Present, and Future (Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> Critical approaches are now common in psychological anthropology, mirroring trends in the larger discipline. By “critical approaches,” we mean ones that center social justice concerns with power relations, inequality, and discrimination. However, mainstream cognitive anthropology, i.e., studies of the interaction of culture with mental categories, explicit and implicit beliefs, memories, reasoning, and perception, has seemed an exception to the critical turn given its roots in the cognitive sciences and origins with formal models. Yet, from its inception, cognitive anthropologists have embraced a de-essentializing (Mukhopadhyay 2011), “radically emic” (Monocello, Henderson, Xia 2024) approach, beyond the norm in earlier anthropology because cognitive anthropologists’ person-centered methods often revealed the inadequacy of overly homogenized dominant cultural depictions, as well as limitations of the anthropologist’s own constructs. There is also a rich, although hidden, body of work in cognitive anthropology uncovering beliefs that uphold dominant power structures as well as beliefs that challenge those structures. Cognitive anthropologists have the tools to provide a better understanding of the extent to which power rests on unquestioned acceptance of dominant ideologies, the differing ways ideologies and power structures shape people’s understandings, and how people internalize conflicting understandings and draw upon them in practice (Garro 2003). The papers in this session highlight some of this earlier work and illustrate its current applications to gender and family in the US and Hindu India, US racial constructs, South Korean body ideals, illness in an Anishinaabe community, and multicultural clients’ perceptions of trauma. Several papers assert the critical value of mixed quantitative and qualitative methods for de-colonizing research and practice (Bennett 2021).</p> <p>Organizers and Chairs: Claudia Strauss, Pitzer College and Mohaddeseh Ziyachi, Durham University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hidden Work and Future Directions in Critical Cognitive Anthropology (Mohaddeseh Ziyachi, | <p>Eagle</p> |
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| | <p>Durham University and Claudia Strauss, Pitzer College)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing Critical Cognitive Anthropology: Examples from India and the United States (Carol Mukhopadhyay, San Jose State University and Susan Seymour, Pitzer College) • Cultural Consensus and Cultural Consonance as Critical Cognitive Anthropological Methods (Lawrence Monocello, Washington University in St. Louis) • Going Deeper: Cognitive Anthropology's Contributions to Moving Beyond Cultural Competency in Mental Health Practices (Michael Bennett) • Steps toward a critically- informed cognitive medical anthropology (Linda Garro, University of California, Los Angeles) | |
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3:00 pm– 4:45pm Sessions

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| Friday, April 4 3:00pm – 4:45pm | <p>Hauntology and the Political Subject Part II (Double Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> Hauntology examines how unresolved and suppressed pasts and traumas continue to affect people's experiences in the present, politically, socially and psychologically (Freud, 1917, 1919, Derrida, 1993, Gordon, 1997). Ghosts and hauntings in this sense are not literal, but signal toward injustice, trauma, loss, and repression that may invoke feelings of discomfort, grief, dread, and or fear within a group or individual's subjectivity.</p> <p>Hauntology has often made ghosts and haunting a metaphor — but what about ghosts with an ontological status? What ontological politics are at play when we exclude these ghosts? How do these hauntological politics relate to colonization, and what does this mean for traditional healing?</p> <p>Traditional healing opens up the realms of ghosts – actual ghosts, what is considered a “primary haunting”. “Secondary hauntings”, however, i.e ghosts and haunting as a metaphor (Lincoln & Lincoln, 2015), are often hard to divorce from primary hauntings — as those who may</p> | Badger BC |
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| | <p>be haunted by actual ghosts may also be experiencing a secondary haunting (Good, Chioyenda, & Rahimi, 2022). This, however, remains an important distinction in that it helps answer the question – “who is haunted by whom, under what circumstances, and for what reasons?” (Hollan, 2019). Therefore how do we differentiate yet not fully disentangle these two modes of haunting? In cases where people do experience both, how do they interact with each other?</p> <p>In engaging with ghosts through traditional healing, we will explore the affective states of haunting and healing and the experience of time. We will explore the embodiment and disembodiment of ghosts in ritual. We will then explore what this all tells us about the nature of hauntology.</p> <p>Finally, how can hauntology be used as a framework within psychological anthropology? Can ghosts possibly be seen as agents pushing us toward healing? How should we or shouldn't we engage with ghosts, and what are the ethics when engaging with them?</p> <p>Organizers: Courtney Nelson, Bennington College and Alfred Pach III, Henry Ford Health Chair: Courtney Nelson, Bennington College</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dancing in Fire: A Hauntological Exploration of Suffering and Renewal in a Hindu Village in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal (Alfred Pach III, Henry Ford Health) • The Unbecoming Ghost: Postcolonial Spectrality in the Rise and Stall of BHU's 'Bhoot Vidya' Ayurveda Certificate Program (Thomas Seibel, Concordia University) • Spooking the Self: Ayahuasca Ceremonies and Transpersonal Hauntings (S. Jo O'Donnell, University of West Georgia) • Discussant Douglas Hollan, University of California, Los Angeles • Discussant Sadeq Rahimi, Harvard University | |
| Friday, April 4 3:00pm – 4:45pm | N=1: Remaking the Case for Lived Experience as Key to Anthropology (Panel) | Wolf AB |

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| | <p><u>Abstract:</u></p> <p>Where do we locate lived experience in a world where structures shape and constrain, human and more-than-human relations are entangled, and enduring inequalities collapse on “the very possibility of having a life” (Jenkins and Csordas 2020)? How do we conceptualize evidence in our work as anthropologists? Positioning lived experience as evidence, this panel explores the value of one. Whether we mean one comparison of gendered therapeutics (Kozelka), one narrative of embodied labor (Leocata), one developmental trajectory of insecurity (Sanchez), one intersubjective experience (Jones), or one person’s struggles towards recovery (Schlosser), we seek to explore the value that closely engaging with individual cases hold. In remaking the case for lived experience, we reach, (re)visit, and reckon with a single case across our scholarship to practice deep attention and listening. Through our analytical explorations here, we seek to demonstrate how engaged listening (e.g., Jenkins and Kozelka 2017) allows the space for understanding the complexities of everyday experience from first-person perspectives without imposing external emotional/ethical responses or theoretical expectations in our fieldwork, analyses, and writing. By centering the person across the lifecourse of our work, we highlight the moral commitment to understand the real and enduring effects that structures, institutions, ideologies, and wider dynamics of power have on individual lives and lifeworlds.</p> <p>Organizer: Ellen Kozelka, University of Vermont Chair: Angela Leocata, Stanford University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Shadow of Servitude: A Phenomenology of Subemplego (Angela Leocata, Stanford University) • “They Need to Get a New Program:” Examining Gender and Structures of Power in Women’s 12 Step Addiction Treatment Experience (Ellen Kozelka, University of Vermont) • “I Feel Like I’ve Created New Neural Pathways”: Lived Experience in a Care- Oriented Anthropology (AJ Jones, Washington University in St. Louis) • “We’re Living in Hell:” Adolescent Lived Experience of Insecurity in the U.S. Mexico- | |
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| | <p>Border Zone (Giselle Sanchez, University of California, San Diego)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I don’t want you to be next”: Life in the Shadow of Death the U.S. Drug Overdose Crisis (Allison Schlosser, University of Nebraska, Omaha) • Discussant Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good, Harvard University • Discussant Elizabeth Carpenter-Song, Dartmouth College | |
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| <p>Friday, April 4 3:00pm – 4:45pm</p> | <p>Spiritual Emergencies (Roundtable)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> As psychedelics have returned to the forefront of American public life and discourse, people are increasingly seeking out non-ordinary states of consciousness through the use of substances that had previously been stigmatized and criminalized (Patrick et al. 2024). However, it is well known that while psychedelic medicine can be used for healing and self-transformation, the radical changes it may elicit in one’s understanding of self, others, and world can be destabilizing (Carhart-Harris and Friston 2019; Evans and Read 2020; Timmermann et al. 2022). In the 1980s, psychedelic researchers Stanislav and Christina Grof coined the term “spiritual emergency” to describe what happens when self-transformation leads to a crisis, a breakdown, or a psychotic state (Grof and Grof 1989). Such emergencies were common in their world of transpersonal psychology, which harnessed altered states for healing through practices of meditation, breathwork, and psychedelic-assisted therapy. Influenced by the antipsychiatry movement of the 1960s, the Grofs questioned the psychiatric assumption that psychosis is a purely negative experience that must be controlled and suppressed through medication. From the perspective of religious mysticism, they argued, psychosis may be evidence of spiritual awakening. For the Grofs, spiritual emergencies were dangerous experiences which held the potential for personal evolution, if handled correctly. Here breakdown was understood not as a pathology to be cured, but as a disorienting process of healing guided by one’s own “inner healing intelligence.” By re-conceptualizing psychosis as spiritual emergency, the Grofs emphasized the positive role of crisis in growth</p> | <p>Badger A</p> |
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| | <p>and healing. This roundtable brings together an interdisciplinary group of scholars from anthropology, psychiatry, and religious studies to consider the idea of “spiritual emergencies”—as critique, concept, experience, and ethical responsibility—in contemporary psychedelic medicine and beyond.</p> <p>Organizer: Aidan Seale-Feldman, University of Notre Dame</p> <p>Chairs: Aidan Seale-Feldman, University of Notre Dame and Brian Anderson, UCSF</p> <p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aidan Seale-Feldman, University of Notre Dame • Brian Anderson, UCSF • Sara Lewis, Naropa University • Sam Shonkoff, Graduate Theological Union • Discussant: Tanya Luhrmann, Stanford University | |
| <p>Friday, April 4 3:00pm – 4:45pm</p> | <p>Mental health and higher education: epistemology, politics, and ethics Part I (Double Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> If one examines social media, the news, or explore university programs, it becomes clear that college students across various higher education institutions in the US, Canada, the UK, and beyond appear to be facing a widespread mental health crisis. The term "mental health" has also grown more prevalent, acting as both an explanatory framework and a unifying concept for students, faculty, administrators, healthcare professionals, families, and other stakeholders. This panel brings together several empirical perspectives on mental health in the space of higher education and builds upon longstanding psychological anthropology interests in youth, personhood, and wellbeing, to focus on wide-ranging questions of politics, ethics, and epistemology. While “mental health” operates as a kind of “boundary object” in higher education, students, faculty members, counselors, and administrators employ it with a wide range of sometimes-conflicting assumptions and objectives. We are interested in a number of issues including: the effects of the “college mental health crisis” as a framing narrative, the vernacularization of</p> | Eagle |

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| | <p>diagnostic categories and therapeutic language, peer mental health education, the effects of an institutional focus on risk reduction, and others.</p> <p>Organizer and Chair: Eugene Raikhel, University of Chicago</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Madness’ as Threat: A Historical Analysis of College care (Gabriella Huff, University of California, San Diego) • Promoting the (Un)well Student: Peer Education in College Mental Health (Gracie Wilson, University of Chicago) • Negotiating connection and care among students in higher education with severe and persistent mental health diagnoses (Gerpha Gerlin, Northwestern University) • Reframing mental health in higher education: a view from Brazilian collective health (Dominique Béhague, Vanderbilt University and Ana Paula Jacob, Federal University of Pelotas) • Discussant Nev Jones, University of Pittsburgh | |
| <p>Friday, April 4 3:00pm – 4:45pm</p> | <p>SPA Poster Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role-Playing Games, Self-Concept, and Well-Being: Rejuvenating a Psychological Anthropology of Play (Seth Sagstetter, Choeeta Chakrabarti, Matilde Catanese, Owen Stoker, Aimee Wagner, Audrey Yarish, Julia Branstrator, Katya Xinyi Zhao, H.J. François Dengah II, Jeffrey G. Snodgrass) • Finding Kinship and Healing in Recovery Treatment in the Texas’s Non-profit and For-Profit System (Simon Gonzales) • Insulin Before Smores: The management and embodiment of diabetes at a summer camp for diabetic adolescents (Kelsey Shearer) • “But I want it!” A case study of parent-child desire conflict in a British middle-class family as a vehicle for moral development in early childhood (Michal Miąskiewicz) • Maternal Ecodistress as Catalyst for Posttraumatic Growth Amidst Climate Change (Lisa Sholomon, Maya Sikora, Danni | <p>Wolf C</p> |

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| | <p>Xue, Xuecheng Yu, Regan Moss, Birce Murtezaoglu, Aurelie Athan)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restorying Maternal Ecodistress: Narrative Therapy and Ecomaternal Identity Development (Allison Davis, Aurelie Athan, Lisa Sholomon) | |
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5:00 pm – 6:45 pm Sessions

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| Friday, April 4 5:00pm – 6:45pm | <p>Mental Health and Higher Education: Epistemology, Politics, and Ethics Part II (Double Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> If one examines social media, the news, or explore university programs, it becomes clear that college students across various higher education institutions in the US, Canada, the UK, and beyond appear to be facing a widespread mental health crisis. The term "mental health" has also grown more prevalent, acting as both an explanatory framework and a unifying concept for students, faculty, administrators, healthcare professionals, families, and other stakeholders. This panel brings together several empirical perspectives on mental health in the space of higher education and builds upon longstanding psychological anthropology interests in youth, personhood, and wellbeing, to focus on wide-ranging questions of politics, ethics, and epistemology. While “mental health” operates as a kind of “boundary object” in higher education, students, faculty members, counselors, and administrators employ it with a wide range of sometimes-conflicting assumptions and objectives. We are interested in a number of issues including: the effects of the “college mental health crisis” as a framing narrative, the vernacularization of diagnostic categories and therapeutic language, peer mental health education, the effects of an institutional focus on risk reduction, and others.</p> <p>Organizers and Chairs: Gracie Wilson, University of Chicago and Gabriella Huff, UCSD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degrees of Distress: College and the Transformation of Mental Health (Eugene Raikhel, University of Chicago) | Eagle |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “They’re struggling and they might need help”: young New Zealanders, therapy speak, and ethical subjectivity (Imogen Spray, University of Auckland) • “The operating room is my therapy”: mental health in medical residency (Joshua Franklin, University of Pennsylvania) • Competing narratives of campus distress: The role of student self-management in expert patient skepticism (Loa Gordon, McMaster University) • Discussant Neely Myers, Southern Methodist University | |
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| Friday, April 4 5:00pm – 6:45pm | <p>Ethnographic Objects: An Experimental Workshop (Roundtable)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> What is an object of ethnographic inquiry? How are emotions, sentiments, knowledge, and memory, among other affective planes, at once embodiments, evidence, and themselves devices of anthropological analysis and representation? In this workshop, we examine and experiment with the objects of ethnography and consider what is rendered researchable. In doing so, we seek to generate an open and open-ended discussion of what constitutes an ethnographic source of investigation.</p> <p>Drawing on our fieldwork experiences across a variety of sites—from New York immigration courtrooms, emigrant houses in Brazil, rehabilitation centers in Tijuana, to clinicians’ offices in the US—we ponder on embodied memory, fragmented personhood, feelings in translation, speculative practices, gendered recovery, and disability justice, among other ethnographic objects. Intentionally informal, this breakout session aspires to be collaborative, in which we invite participants as active discussants. It is a space to think together about the limits and possibilities of what we come to see as objects of research and frameworks of inquiry. After offering initial thoughts about what has come up for us in our fieldwork, writing, and collaborative work, we invite participants to engage in a facilitated exercise and open-ended conversation, aimed at catalyzing new directions and multimodal avenues in our personal and shared scholarship.</p> | Badger A |
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| | <p>Organizers: Angela Leocata, Stanford University and Valentina Ramia, Stanford University Chair: Valentina Ramia, Stanford University</p> <p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephanie Keeney Parks • Angela Leocata, Stanford University • Zaith López, Stanford University • Valentina Ramia, Stanford University • Discussant: Bridget Haas, Case Western Reserve University | |
| <p>Friday, April 4 5:00pm – 6:45pm</p> | <p>Improvisational Practice and Embodied Ethics: An Experiential Roundtable (Roundtable)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> This roundtable of artist-scholars draws on care ethics, critical improvisation studies, affective neuroscience, science and technology studies (STS), and clinical and psychoanalytic ethnography to highlight cross-cultural resonances between three different collective improvisation practices. Drawing on our individual ethnographic work and experience as practitioners in improvised movement, role-play, and jazz and experimental music communities, each located in various parts of the United States, panelists will hold an experiential roundtable where each mode of improvising is facilitated for those in attendance and then discussed. Drawing on insights from Gananath Obeyesekere, we are asking what “work of culture” might take place in settings characterized by both improvisational practice and attention to fostering ethical forms of solidarity and egalitarian sociality.</p> <p>Our goal with this roundtable is to collaboratively explore the following questions: How can improvisational activity facilitate collective attunement and deep listening, reflexive meaning-making, behavioral flexibility and play? How might such experiences contribute to the cultivation of an ethics grounded in embodiment? How might these practices make space for solidarity around social and political change-making? What kinds of practices contribute to imagining and maintaining more egalitarian social</p> | <p>Badger BC</p> |

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| | <p>structures, across a variety of social and cultural contexts?</p> <p>Organizers: Elizabeth Fein, Duquesne University and Eli Namay, University of Pittsburgh Chair: Karen Huang, Georgetown University</p> <p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elizabeth Fein, Duquesne University • Eli Namay, University of Pittsburgh • Karen Huang, Georgetown University | |
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| Friday, April 4 5:00pm – 6:45pm | <p>Challenging Narratives of Certainty (Panel) Organizer: SPA Program Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denial as a Cultural System in the Disinformation Age (Steve Parish, University of California, San Diego) • The Perils and Possibilities of “Speaking Freely” in the People’s Republic (Nicholas Bartlett, Barnard College) • Death Drive Redux, or an Ambivalent Theory of Addiction’s Otherwise (Eli Oda Sheiner, McGill University) • Biopositionality: Incorporating Embodied Differences in Subjectivities into Ethnographic Analysis (Timothy Hall, University of California, Los Angeles) • “I know nothing with any certainty, but the sight of the stars makes me dream”: Potential Impacts of Cosmic Vistas on Spacefaring Culture (Deana Weibel, Grand Valley State University) | Wolf AB |
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6:45 pm – 7:30 pm Break - Dinner on your own

7:30 pm- 9:30 pm Special Event: Film Screening with Dr. Robert Lemelson – “The Sacrifice”

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| Friday, April 4 7:30 – 9:30 pm | <p>Film Screening: “The Sacrifice” Introduction: Janis H. Jenkins, UCSD, SPA President Film screening, followed by Q&A with Dr. Robert Lemelson</p> | Tamaya Ballroom AB |
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Saturday, April 5

8:00 am- 9:45 am Sessions

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| Saturday, April 5 8:00am – 9:45am | Why Have Children? Person-centered Considerations of Global Population Decline (Panel) | Badger A |
| | <p><u>Abstract:</u></p> <p>There has been much speculation and concern about the fall in reproductive rates in populations around the world. The Lancet reported this spring that “by 2050, over three-quarters (155 of 204) of countries will not have high enough fertility rates to sustain population size over time; this will increase to 97% of countries (198 of 204) by 2100” (https://www.healthdata.org/news-events/newsroom/news-releases/lancet-dramatic-declines-global-fertility-rates-set-transform). Underlying these dramatic population-level shifts are intimate decisions about whether and when to have children that people are making in particular contexts. This panel brings together papers that offer close examinations of some of the ways that people are making these decisions, using person-centered ethnography and psychodynamic perspectives to explore why it is that people – young people and mothers in particular – do or don’t want to have children. How are these desires and actions shaped by their economic prospects, global shifts and climate change, and the expectations placed on parents, along with their imaginings about the future and their experiences of being parented? Across these analyses drawn from South Korea, China, Sri Lanka, and the U.S., cross-cutting themes emerge around the intense demands and high expectations for mothering in particular. These papers also explore potential parents’ assessment of resources, the influence and limits of policies aimed at shaping reproductive choices, popular discourses about parenting, ambivalence, and relational longings. In doing so, we examine potential parents' desires for their own futures, the people they want to be, and the lives they want to have.</p> <p>Organizers: Bambi Chapin, University of Maryland, Baltimore County and Christine El Ouardani, California State University, Long Beach Chair: Bambi Chapin, University of Maryland, Baltimore County</p> | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A “National Emergency”: South Korea’s remarkably low birthrate” (Greg Thompson, Brigham Young University) • The birth(rates) of the nation: Ambition and sacrifice during China’s demographic transition (Claudia Huang, California State University, Long Beach) • What can perinatal depression tell us about the birthrate decline in mainland China? An ethnographic study in Shanghai (Yang Liu, Southern Methodist University) • Reproducing Sinhala families: Young people’s desires for marriage and children in Sri Lanka (Bambi Chapin, University of Maryland, Baltimore County) • Reimagining parenthood: Social media discourses on family, trauma, and reproduction in the context of economic and climate insecurity (Christine El Ouardani, California State University, Long Beach) • Discussant Richard Shweder, University of Chicago | |
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| Saturday, April 5 8:00am – 9:45am | <p>Sideshadowing Death: Living Along with Foreclosed Futures (Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> This panel extends psychological anthropology’s interest in the phenomenology of time and political subjectivity (e.g., Garcia 2010; Mattingly 2010; Stevenson 2014; Zigon 2024) by exploring the variety of temporalities in which the end of life comes to be experienced, troubling epistemological traditions in which death is a definitive endpoint, the limit toward which all life is oriented. In the face of apocalyptic conditions, what does finitude feel or look like? How might foreclosure be challenged or, alternatively, reinforced? How do people orient toward or away from a looming end of physical or social life? What might this tell us about ideologies and practices of care and ethical cultivation? Drawing on (auto)ethnographic experience, our papers explore these questions and theorize how different genres of narrative and reverberating silences (Dragojlovic and Samuels 2023; Ochs and Capps 2001; Shohet and Samuels 2024)</p> | Badger BC |
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| | <p>may figure in the work of living near or beyond death. We begin with the issue of shelter, and how forced migrants in Ecuador, Inuit in Northern Canada, and older adults in Israel grapple with existential challenges of finding psychic and material shelter, or an inhabitable space-time to be that is “the not-elsewhere” when nearing what feels like the end of life – of one’s own person or community. We then examine how narrative navigates the a/political subjectivities of those whose lives were punctuated by and are ending with wars or exile, and the toll this takes on one’s moral world and life commitments to justice. We ask how alienation from a nation that abandoned its moral compass might foster possibilities for an otherwise, to end dehumanization and indifference. We end by illuminating the un/certainties of terminal illness and the work of narrative in reframing finitude to accord with religious beliefs that question life-death dichotomies. Together, the papers raise further questions about what it means to live after death or to be dead alive.</p> <p>Organizers: Merav Shohet, Boston University and Annemarie Samuels, Leiden University Chair: Yael Assor, University of California, Los Angeles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The not-elsewhere (Lisa Stevenson, McGill University) • “Everywhere I go, there’s war”: Narrating and nearing the end of life at a border kibbutz (Merav Shohet, Boston University) • Our country, as we knew it, had died. Now what? (Yael Assor, University of California, Los Angeles) • Caring beyond death: Narrative reorientation and the ethics of recognizing dying in Indonesia (Annemarie Samuels, Leiden University) • Discussant Cheryl Mattingly, University of Southern California | |
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| Saturday, April 5 8:00am – 9:45am | <p>Ecologies of psy-expertise: space, place and therapeutic practice (Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> This panel explores the social and spatial ecologies of psy-expertise. The context of practice – its location,</p> | Wolf AB |
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| | <p>institutional surroundings, even the architecture of treatment space – deeply affects the core work of psychiatrists, psychologists and other professionals. The tasks of discerning others’ subjectivity and responding to mental disorder unfold against a literal and relational background. This panel asks how that background shapes the enactment of therapeutic expertise (Carr 2010) and local notions of selfhood, illness, and the obligation to intervene. The built environment can exaggerate or lessen hierarchies between the healthy and the sick. It can structure the moral dynamics of care, that is, the possibilities of seeing and being recognized, listening and being heard (Taylor 2008). The immediate relational environment involves many people with rival claims to expertise and competing professional visions (Goodwin 1994). Clinicians must navigate clashing accounts of disordered experience and the possibilities of amelioration and care. The shape and place of practice are almost inseparable; therefore, the meaning of therapeutic efficacy depend on where, and with whom, clinicians work.</p> <p>Via ethnographic evidence, papers limn the ecology of practice in a mental health court (Brodwin), a psychiatric clinic inside a homeless shelter (LaLiberte), a peer-led community center in the VA system (Fletcher), a peer support group for veterans who hear voices (Kalofonos), and guardianship programs for dementia in 3 nation-states (Taylor). Papers ask if the very model of provider-patient dyads is anachronistic when clinical agency is distributed among other classes of psy-workers (case managers and family caregivers). They show how ideals of treatment, cure and care evolve or radically shift in novel relational spaces. Ecologies of expertise are in flux, so the panel explores the shifting stakes for professional practice and models of healthy and disordered selves.</p> <p>Organizer: Paul Brodwin, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee Chair: Vincent Laliberté, McGill University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The psychiatric gaze in the emergency room and in a shelter-based clinic (Vincent Laliberté, McGill University) | |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining “dangerousness” in a judicial/therapeutic space (Paul Brodwin, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee) • Dementia and the place of the state (Janelle Taylor, University of Toronto) • Epistemic pluralism within a space of biomedical hegemony: Hearing Voices in the clinic (Ippolytos Kalofonos, University of California, Los Angeles) • Crafting a peer space at a VA campus (Erica Fletcher, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs) • Thinking Care and Social Cognition, Together (Christopher Stephan, University of Copenhagen) • Discussant Jessica Cooper, University of Edinburgh | |
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| Saturday, April 5 8:00am – 9:45am | <p>Theorizing Emotions as Atmospheres Part I (Double Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> There is a long-standing debate in the social sciences about how best to understand the place of emotions in human life. Psychologists have tended to see emotions as internal psychological phenomena. Anthropologists counter this view by showing how emotions are also external, social, cultural, and historical. But while anthropologists have been effective in highlighting the discursive and political aspects of emotion, they have tended to downplay the role of emotion in subjective experience.</p> <p>In recent years, phenomenologists have offered a fresh perspective on whether emotions are to be located 'between the ears' or somewhere outside. Here, emotions are seen as qualities of "atmospheres," an in-between space that permeates bodies as they become present in experience. The German phenomenologist Hermann Schmitz originally proposed the notion of an atmosphere as emotions "poured out into space". In his view, every situation has an atmosphere, an overall tonality that is experienced collectively and individually. Feeling, then, is not so much an active framing of the world by subjects through emotions (or moods) but an experience of being enveloped by an atmosphere. Building on Schmitz, Gernot Böhme has developed a constellationalist perspective on atmospheres, defining them as the</p> | Eagle |
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| | <p>affectivity that forms when bodies radiate into space through their ecstasies as experienced by those who become present in a particular place.</p> <p>Most current research on atmospheres, however, is not only theoretically derived from Europe, but also uses empirical cases from the North to illustrate it. Against this background, a central question we seek to address is whether and to what extent ethnographic cases from a wide range of world regions (including the North) support a conceptualization of emotions as atmospheres that are largely external and that emotions are a response to experiencing them.</p> <p>Organizer: Michael Schnegg, University of Hamburg Chair: Edward Lowe, Soka University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something in the air. The Topology of Atmospheres (Thomas Schwarz Wentzer, Aarhus University) • Collective Loneliness (Michael Schnegg, University of Hamburg) • Time Poetics: Exploring the temporality of Atmospheres and Emotional Resonance (Lotte Meinert, Aarhus University) • The latency of atmospheres: Shi'i ritual performance and the right to the city in Mumbai (Patrick Eisenlohr, University of Göttingen) • Discussant Jason Throop, University of California, Los Angeles | |
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10:00 am – 11:45 am Special Event: Presidential Plenary II

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| <p>Saturday, April 5 10:00am – 11:45am</p> | <p>Eruptions of Liveliness: Native American Health in the 21st Century</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> Discussions of Native American health and well-being have tended to focus on problems such as alcoholism, suicide, poverty, and historical trauma caused by effects of colonialism including loss of land and culture. Recently there has been a trend to reverse the well-meaning negativity of this approach and to emphasize the continuing strength and vitality of Indian nations and communities. “Eruptions of liveliness” are evident, for</p> | <p>Tamaya Ballroom</p> |
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| | <p>example, in the recent creation of the Chumash Heritage national Marine Sanctuary, Cherokee Nation’s ongoing investment to provide housing for its citizens, the revitalization of Traditional Ecological Knowledge such as in forest and fire management, work to promote indigenous language and ceremonial life, and the energy of pan-tribal activities. This session brings together leading Native American scholars and partakes of a movement toward recognizing occasions and practices of generating, promoting, and coming to terms with eruptions of liveliness. The presentations include an example from the Navajo Nation in which Traditional Native Practitioners work in collaboration with allopathic healthcare providers in a facility of the federal Indian Health Service. Another is an example from the Cherokee Nation of the relationship between culture and health in the context cultural projects in the form of interventions in the domains of Cherokee language, history, ecological knowledge, and community building. Our third example examines the appropriation and inversion of self-making practices on the part of “ethnic frauds” or so-called “pretendians” who deploy a trauma narrative to spuriously claim the liveliness and vitality of indigenous identity. In sum, the papers promote consideration what it means to be healthy and thrive as a Native person in the contemporary cultural milieu.</p> <p>Organizers: Thomas J. Csordas (UCSD) Joseph P. Gone (Harvard University)</p> <p>Chair: Thomas J. Csordas, (UCSD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enriching Culturally Appropriate Patient Centered Care in Clinics and Hospitals for Navajo Patients (Jennie R. Joe, University of Arizona) • Promoting Health through Indigenous Culture (Melissa Lewis, University of Missouri) • Occupying Selves: Claims of Trauma, Claims of Indigeneity, “Pretendians” in the 21st Century (Audra Simpson, Columbia University) • Discussant Joseph P. Gone, Harvard University | |
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12:00 – 1:00 pm Special Event: Awards Ceremony

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| Saturday, April 5 12:00pm – 1:00pm | <p>Presentation of the Stirling Prize and Boyer Prize</p> <p>Organizer: SPA Secretary Bridget Haas</p> <p>Chair: SPA President Janis H. Jenkins</p> | Tamaya Ballroom |
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1:00 pm – 2:45 pm Sessions

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| <p>Saturday, April 5 1:00pm – 2:45pm</p> | <p>Theorizing Emotions as Atmospheres Part II (Double Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> There is a long-standing debate in the social sciences about how best to understand the place of emotions in human life. Psychologists have tended to see emotions as internal psychological phenomena. Anthropologists counter this view by showing how emotions are also external, social, cultural, and historical. But while anthropologists have been effective in highlighting the discursive and political aspects of emotion, they have tended to downplay the role of emotion in subjective experience.</p> <p>In recent years, phenomenologists have offered a fresh perspective on whether emotions are to be located 'between the ears' or somewhere outside. Here, emotions are seen as qualities of "atmospheres," an in-between space that permeates bodies as they become present in experience. The German phenomenologist Hermann Schmitz originally proposed the notion of an atmosphere as emotions "poured out into space". In his view, every situation has an atmosphere, an overall tonality that is experienced collectively and individually. Feeling, then, is not so much an active framing of the world by subjects through emotions (or moods) but an experience of being enveloped by an atmosphere. Building on Schmitz, Gernot Böhme has developed a constellationalist perspective on atmospheres, defining them as the affectivity that forms when bodies radiate into space through their ecstasies as experienced by those who become present in a particular place.</p> <p>Most current research on atmospheres, however, is not only theoretically derived from Europe, but also uses empirical cases from the North to illustrate it. Against this background, a central question we seek to address is whether and to what extent ethnographic cases from a wide range of world regions (including the North) support a conceptualization of emotions as atmospheres that are largely external and that emotions are a response to experiencing them.</p> | <p>Eagle</p> |
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| | <p>Organizer: Edward Lowe, Soka University Chair: Thomas Wentzer, Aarhus University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atmospheres and Objects (and Subjects): A Phenomenological- Anthropological Approach to Possession and Other Modes of Affectivity (Bernhard Leistle, Carleton University) • Containment and the Morality of Atmospheres in Urban Pakistan (Timothy Cooper, University of Cambridge) • Atmospheric Skins. Conceptualizing Haptic Atmospheres through Spirit Possession in Nicaragua (Maddalena Canna, Washington University in St. Louis) • Atmospheric Inversions: Reflections on the Affective Affordances in Neighborhood Halloween Festivals (Edward Lowe, Soka University) • Discussant Michael Schnegg, University of Hamburg | |
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| <p>Saturday, April 5 1:00pm – 2:45pm</p> | <p>Children’s interactions with peers and others in learning environments (Panel)</p> <p>Abstract: Anthropologists are making up for lost time in documenting the dynamics of children’s learning and development. Scholars are finding that indigenous alternatives to WEIRD models are worthy of investigation and description. Our first speaker, Tom Weisner, offers a capsule history of early and continuing attempts to do this. Camilla Morelli, has, for many years studied Matsigenka children as they mastered the Amazonian environment and developed mental models of the environment, later shared with peers. Our third speaker, Akira Takada, continues his long-term studies of San forager children in southern Africa. Takada is particularly interested in how children’s evolving understanding of the environment is mediated by changing social relationships. Xiaojie Tian has studied Maasai pastoralist communities where children balance school, bush and herding work and family obligations. She finds that learning flows in two directions as Maasai children are granted discretion to learn and invent</p> | <p>Badger A</p> |
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| | <p>independently transmitting their own discoveries to their older peers. Francesca Mezzenzana and Jan Hauck report on their fieldwork with children from Indigenous communities in rural Ecuador and Paraguay. As with several of our speakers, in the recording of children's learning processes, Mezzenzana and Hauck treat children as potential informants, eliciting novel language that emerges to aid in interpreting change and innovation. Our Discussant is Suzanne Gaskins.</p> <p>Organizers: David Lancy, Utah State University; Xiaojie Tian, University of Tsukuba, Japan; Camilla Morelli, University of Bristol</p> <p>Chair: David Lancy, Utah State University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquiring knowledge through activity settings and cultural models: Children's learning and development in context (Tom Weisner, University of California, Los Angeles) • Eater, taker, food: A visual analysis of children's ecologies and shared learning in Amazonia (Camilla Morelli, University of Bristol) • Re-generating environmental perception and social relationships: Analysis of child peer interactions among the G ui/G ana in Botswana (Akira Takada, Kyoto University) • The independence phenomenon in peer group socialization and ethnoknowledge co-learning of children in pastoralist Maasai society (Xiaojie Tian, University of Tsukuba, Japan) • What's (in) a Forest? Experiences of Environments in Indigenous Children's Interactions in Ecuador and Paraguay (Francesca Mezzenzana, Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich and Jan Hauck, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich) • Discussant Suzanne Gaskins, Northeastern Illinois University (Emerita) | |
| <p>Saturday, April 5 1:00pm – 2:45pm</p> | <p>Complex Embodiments: Reciprocal Bodies and Social Worlds (Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> This panel explores the dynamic and reciprocal interactions between bodies and their social worlds by</p> | <p>Badger BC</p> |

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| | <p>engaging what disability studies scholar Tobin Siebers' (2008) calls "complex embodiment," a framework that examines how bodily experiences are not only shaped by, but also shape, socio-cultural and semiotic contexts. Integrating the notion of complex embodiment with other anthropological approaches to embodiment, the papers in the panel explore how bodies are situated, interpreted, and influenced within and by systems of meaning, belief, and experience, and how, in turn, these contexts affect ways that people experience and understand themselves and their social environments. A central tenet of this discussion is the recognition that embodiment is inherently heterogeneous— experiences of the body and modes of knowing are culturally and socially mediated, yet remain contingent upon material, physiological processes that are subject to continuous or intermittent transformation across time and space. By critically engaging with these "mutual transformations" between bodies and their environments, we emphasize the feedback loops between the lived, sensory-somatic experiences of the body and the broader socio-cultural, ecological, and semiotic systems that constitute their matrix.</p> <p>Grounded in ethnographic methods, the papers on this panel explore diverse affective and physical attachments—both natural and prescribed—that intertwine with bodies and their environments through embedded identities and social experiences. We draw on themes of emotional metaphors, loneliness, social stigma, racialization, gendered social roles, various forms of social “stuckness,” and belonging to foreground widely heterogeneous interactions among humans, their bodies, and the non-human world, while attending to the simultaneous constructedness and materiality of diverse complex embodiments.</p> <p>Organizers: Keegan Krause, Northwestern University and Rebecca Seligman, Northwestern University Chair: Rebecca Seligman, Northwestern University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Symptoms and Medical Meanings: Processes of Embodiment in a Functional Illness (Rebecca Seligman, Northwestern University) • Loneliness Following Montreal’s Horse-Carriage Ban: An Ecological Approach to Psychic Distress (Vincent Laliberté, McGill University) | |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out there/in here: hysteria, madness, and embodiment (Daisy Couture, Princeton University) • Looping the Body into Stereotype Embodiment Theory (Silvio Ernesto Mirabal Torres, Harvard University) • Biosocial Belonging and Embodiment Through the Life Course (Keegan Krause, Northwestern University) • The Divinely Created Body: Embodied Dispositions of Christianity and Body Image (Hope Sharp) | |
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| Saturday, April 5 1:00pm – 2:45pm | <p>Critical Empathy as a Tool for Ethical Ethnography: Part Two (Roundtable)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> Two years ago at the SPA Biennial we asked if empathy could be a useful methodological tool for anthropology, especially ethical ethnography, and what it means to frame our research approaches as “tools.” That rich conversation gave us courage to pursue this avenue of thought and informed the establishment of the Social Empathy Lab at Emory University. This roundtable continues the conversation, asking not “if” but “how” critical empathy can be practiced in anthropological research, with participants drawing from their own ethnographic work with people affected by loneliness, Turner syndrome, grief, suicide, and eating disorders. More than just feeling and perspective taking (cognitive and affective empathy), critical empathy as a methodological tool for anthropology means relating to interlocutors not merely as informants but as collaborators working jointly towards shared goals, such as the creation of knowledge and understanding, the elimination of stigma and social suffering, or the opening of new possible ways of knowing and being. Empathizing with the subjectivities of our interlocutors is not merely a tool for research, but a process that allows the intersubjective identification of how and where our values and those of people we work with intersect, or are in conflict, and what shared goals we can pursue for mutual or reciprocal benefit. As such, it constitutes a key aspect of ethical ethnography. Orienting towards joint action towards shared goals is the field of</p> | Wolf AB |
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| | <p>empathy; undertaking this with critical awareness, collaborative deliberation, and ethical reflection and discernment is “critical empathy.”</p> <p>Organizer: AJ Jones, Washington University in St. Louis Chairs: Chikako Ozawa-de Silva, Emory University and Rebecca Lester, Washington University in St. Louis</p> <p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brendan Ozawa-de Silva, Emory University • Chikako Ozawa-de Silva, Emory University • Rebecca Lester, Washington University in St. Louis • Doug Hollan, University of California, Los Angeles • Yoon Wan Chang, Emory University • AJ Jones, Washington University in St. Louis • Discussant: Jarrett Zigon, University of Virginia | |
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3:00 pm– 4:45pm Special Event: Lifetime Achievement Awards Ceremony

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| Saturday, April 5 3:00pm – 4:45pm | <p>SPA Lifetime Achievement Awards Organizer: SPA Secretary Bridget Haas Chair: SPA President Janis H. Jenkins</p> <p>Lifetime Achievement Award Recipients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Douglas Hollan, UCLA (2024) • Claudia Strauss, Pitzer College (2025) | Tamaya Ballroom |
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5:00- 6:45pm Sessions

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| Saturday, April 5 5:00pm – 6:45pm | <p>Storytelling as political engagement and politicized healing (Roundtable)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> This roundtable examines narrative and storytelling as political and potentially healing acts. Bringing together psychological anthropologists working across a range of contexts, we ask: what sociopolitical work does storytelling do? How can stories told to oneself or others at particular moments in space and time act as a means to</p> | Badger A |
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| | <p>resist oppression, reclaim moral agency, and cultivate embodied capacities that afford a sense of belonging, dignity, and/or safety? What potential do relationally situated narrative practices have as vehicles for healing, allowing individuals to transform personal and historical suffering into shared meaning while also acting as forms of relational and embodied activism? Our conversation will engage storytelling as a multiscalar, multimodal, relational, and embodied process that bridges the personal and political realms. We thus draw attention to the potential of storytelling—in language, in visual form, and in public modes of engagement and activism—to foster collective understanding, address social injustices, orient us in the present, and situate us on paths that are simultaneously shaped by the past and pointed toward the future. At the same time, we will discuss the risk for narratives to be depoliticized and/or co-opted by larger institutional and political forces. How, then, do our interlocutors—and we, as ethnographers—negotiate these tensions between the emancipatory and restrictive potential of storytelling, or between the possibilities of storytelling to both enable and constrain forms of (political) subjectivity and placemaking? Bringing theoretical attention to the risks and potentials of narration as political praxis, as well as to the multiscalar, spatial, and temporal dimensions of storytelling, roundtable participants will grapple with these questions as they unfold in an array of settings, from post-conflict transitional justice settings to immigration hearings to situations of legal and economic precarity.</p> <p>Organizers: Bridget Haas, Case Western Reserve University and Whitney Duncan, University of Northern Colorado Chair: Whitney Duncan, University of Northern Colorado</p> <p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elizabeth Carpenter-Song, Dartmouth College • Whitney Duncan, University of Northern Colorado • Bridget Haas, Case Western Reserve University • Elena Lesley, University of South Florida • Sonya Pritzker, University of Alabama • Charles Watters, University of Sussex • Sarah Willen, University of Connecticut | |
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| <p>Saturday, April 5 5:00pm – 6:45pm</p> | <p>Changing Mental Health Concepts, Practices, and Experiences (Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> In this panel, we look at several different cases in which concepts about mental health and mental health practices and/or experiences are changing over time. The papers hope to explore how “mental health” gets affected, redefined, and reconstituted with new circumstances and new conceptualizations. Tooker looks at how Akha “soul loss” ceremonies index ethnic identity in Thailand and Burma and what happens to that indexing (and concepts of “soul”) as ethnic identity gets redefined with Akha assimilation into lowland Thai society. Ongaro looks at new performative forms of Akha shamanic healing influenced by government pressures in Laos. Buhrow looks at the psychological effects of Chinese dance in the United States as it moves to cross-ethnic practice. Lei looks at the changing experience of “mental health” among Chinese-Americans after the COVID-19 pandemic. Cassaniti suggests a changing view of mental illness based on her work among schizophrenics in Thailand.</p> <p>Organizer and Chair: Deborah Tooker, Le Moyne College</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuity in Akha “Soul Wellness” Rituals in the Context of Changing Ethnic Identity (Deborah Tooker, Le Moyne College) • “More Myself... More of a Person”: Cross-Ethnic Artistic Performance, Counter Identification, and Disidentification in Chinese Dance (Kristin Buhrow, Emory University) • Mental Illness as Structural Suffering among Chinese American Youth (Jing Lei, State University of New York, Oswego) • The Wilderness of the Mind: Schizophrenia and the framing of hallucinations in Thailand (Julia Cassaniti, University of Virginia) • Building a Community-Based “Mundo- Psi”: Ethical and Epistemological Debates in the Movement for Community Mental Health in Río Negro, Argentina (Faith Cole, University of California, Los Angeles) | <p>Badger BC</p> |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussant Felicity Aulino, University of Massachusetts, Amherst | |
| <p>Saturday, April 5 5:00pm – 6:45pm</p> | <p>Caregiving and Becoming: Engagements with Youth and Families (Panel) Organizer: SPA Program Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I want to take care of myself for them”: The Lived Experiences of Caregivers of Autistic Individuals (Stephanie Studer, McMaster University) • Neuropsychiatric Disorders: Expanding Anthropological Explorations into Mental Health Discourse (Anuoluwapo Ajibade, Case Western Reserve University) • Borderline Conjunctures: Parents’ Experiences of Their Distressed Adolescents (Maureen O’Dougherty, Metropolitan State University) • Playing with Ethics: Modified Games as Moral Laboratories (Adriano De Francesco, University of Auckland) • Zinacantec Maya Children’s Psychology of the Dead and Its Relationship to Theory of Mind (Kristy Bowen, University of Hawaii and Ashley Maynard, University of Hawaii) • Discussant: Ashley Maynard, University of Hawaii | <p>Wolf AB</p> |

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| <p>Saturday, April 5 5:00pm – 6:45pm</p> | <p>Higher Powers: Alcohol and After in Uganda’s Capital City, A Roundtable Discussion with China Scherz, George Mpanga, and Sarah Namirembe (Roundtable)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> In their new work, Higher Powers, China Scherz, George Mpanga, and Sarah Namirembe’s collaborative ethnography offers a sweeping account of how people in Uganda address and reconstruct their lives after problematic alcohol use. The authors offer us an incredible example of the power of collaborative ethnographic research as they trace narratives of addiction and recovery through a broad range of therapeutic technologies and interventions, including herbal emetic therapies, engagements with spirit mediumship, and forms of deliverance and spiritual warfare as they are practiced in Pentecostal churches. Scherz, Mpanga, and Namirembe offer an incisive intervention in the anthropological theories of ethical transformation that takes seriously how interactions with more-than-human others inform and shape how people make sense of difficult life experiences and find a path forward.</p> <p>Organizer 1: Abby Mack, Weber State University Chairs: Abby Mack, Weber State University and China Scherz, University of Notre Dame</p> <p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eugene Raikhel, University of Chicago • Cheryl Mattingly, University of Southern California • Elizabeth Roberts, University of Michigan • Abby Mack, Weber State University • Discussant: Sarah Namirembe, Case Western Reserve University • Discussant: George Mpanga | <p>Eagle</p> |
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| <p>Saturday, April 5 5:00pm – 6:45pm</p> | <p>Radical Heterotopias and Policy Reform: Pathways to Re-envisioning Community (and) Mental Health (Roundtable)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> This double session roundtable discussion will grapple with questions regarding how we might meaningfully arrive at an otherwise (Povinelli 2002, 2011; Crawley 2016) to our broken systems of psychiatric representation and mental healthcare. Looking, first, at our ethnographic encounters with diverse spaces and moments – from furry conventions to Trieste's social cooperatives – in which such radical heterotopias seem to emerge, we ask: What forms of subjectivity, relationships, cultural practices, and aesthetics comprise and are produced in these scenes? What kind of language and knowledge do they contain and support? Then, in dialogue with voices from the Disability Studies, Mad Pride, and Neuroqueer movements, we turn to the perennial question of the extent to which lessons learned from these glimpses into an otherwise can be translated into reforms from within our existing mental healthcare systems.</p> <p>Organizers: Talia Weiner, University of West Georgia and Nev Jones, University of Pittsburgh Chairs: Talia Weiner, University of West Georgia and Elizabeth Fein, Duquesne University</p> <p>Paul Brodwin, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee India MacWeeney, University of West Georgia Murphy Halliburton, City University of New York, Queens College Silver McKie, Washington University in St. Louis Erica Fletcher, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Nev Jones, University of Pittsburgh Yanina Gori, University of California, Los Angeles Zhiying Ma, University of Chicago Hazel Ali Zaman, Pacific Lutheran University Loa Gordon, McMaster University Yehuda Goodman, Hebrew University of Jerusalem Discussant: Nev Jones, University of Pittsburgh Discussant: Talia Weiner, University of West Georgia</p> | <p>Tamaya Ballroom</p> |
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7:00 pm– 9:00 pm Special Event: SPA Biennial 2025 Reception

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| Saturday, April 5 7:00pm – 9:00pm | SPA Biennial 2025 Reception | Veranda |
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Sunday, April 6

8:00 am- 9:45 am Sessions

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| Sunday, April 6 8:00am – 9:45am | <p>Dark Sides of Care: Tracing the Potentials for Violence within Regimes of State Care (Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> Power and precarity are experienced not only through explicit exclusion but also – and perhaps more perniciously – through practices of care. Increasing anthropological attention to the potential for violence within regimes of state care (Biehl 2005, 2012; Garcia 2010; Stevenson 2014) has revealed how biopolitical pursuits of preserving life also work as a kind of power that leaves certain people as expendable in distinct ways: racial health inequalities during the Covid-19 pandemic (Rouse 2021), the humanitarian governance of homeless women (Lopez 2020), and systematic exclusion of transgender bodies (Padilla & Rodriguez-Madera 2021), for example, all exemplify how already precarious lives can be further subjugated to the power of death. This panel seeks to further scholarship of how forms of state care can function as forms of—at times lethal—violence. Connecting insights from psychological–, medical–, and phenomenological anthropology to bio- and necropolitical questions (Foucault 1979; Agamben 1998; Mbembe 2003), this panel offers rich ethnographic case studies addressing the unruly, the harmful, and the fatal consequences of state-based care. What role do competing political ideologies and shared conditions of (post)coloniality play in the emergence of new forms of expendability? How is this expendability institutionally, bureaucratically, and practically constituted? How is this expendability experienced and perceived by those living it – and those living it with them?</p> <p>Organizers: Devin Flaherty, University of Texas, San Antonio and Sylvia Tidey, University of Virginia Chair: Jarrett Zigon, University of Virginia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Necropolitics of Hospice Care: The Social Production of Terminal Prognoses in an American (Post)Colony (Devin Flaherty, University of Texas, San Antonio) | Badger A |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of Emergency: Progressive Coercion and Control in Crisis Care for Psychiatric and Substance Use Disorders (Abigail Mack, Weber State University) • The Religious Capacity to Aspire and the Politics of Hope under Medical Authoritarianism in North China (Ray Qu, University of Rochester) • Caring for Some: State Care, Death, and Moral Illegitimacy in Indonesian HIV Interventions (Sylvia Tidey, University of Virginia) • Lovingly Caring for the Dead. Affect, Autopsies, Decomposition, and extreme violence in Colombia (Julia Morales Fontanilla, University of Virginia) • How Child Advocates Harm Vulnerable Children in the US and How Psychological Anthropology Can Help: The Case of Guardians ad Litem in Ohio (Eileen Anderson, Case Western Reserve University) | |
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| Sunday, April 6 8:00am – 9:45am | Perspectives and Practices of Professionals (Panel) Organizer: SPA Program Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Making of ‘Multicultural’ Moral Futures Among Psychotherapeutic Trainees in India (Meghna Roy, University of Oslo) • Where does crisis stop? Temporalities of Crisis and Recovery in the American Mental Health Crisis (Jacob Harris, University of Notre Dame) • Public Service in a Polarized State: The Everyday Politics of Civil Servants in Turkey (Izem Aral, University of California, Los Angeles) • When Fear Doesn’t Make Sense: Narrative Expectations in US Asylum Courts (Valentina Ramia, Stanford University) • On the Ungratefulness of Others: Homing, Corporeal Generosity, and the Subversion of Desire in Migrant Women’s Asylum Geographies in Chile (Pablo Seward Delaporte, Saint Louis University) • Navigating Uncertainty: The Role of Mental Health Care Professionals as Experts in US Immigration (Anna Prior, University of Oxford) | Badger BC |
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| Sunday, April 6 8:00am – 9:45am | Pushing the Boundaries of Practice (Panel) Organizer: SPA Program Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Dependencies: Negotiating Internet and Smartphone Addiction in Clinical Practice (Suzana Jovicic, University of Vienna) • Psychedelics and Subjectivity: Lived Psilocybin Experience Among Clinical Trial Participants with Terminal Illness (Sara Fragione, University of California, San Diego) • “Is it okay that this isn’t what really happened?” EDMR as Healing Ritual and Learning to Embody Fantasy (Lainie Goldwert, The New School) • How to Merge with a Plant Spirit: Plant-Human Hybrids in the Peruvian Amazon (Lorna Hadlock, University of Chicago) • Anxiety in Session: COVID-19 as Cosmological Disruption (Jasmina Polovic, University of Oklahoma) | Wolf AB |
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| Sunday, April 6 8:00am – 9:45am | Perception, Presence, and Interaction: New Analytical Approaches to Often-Overlooked Experiences (Roundtable) <u>Abstract:</u> Anthropologists, psychologists, and philosophers have argued that perception arises through interaction (Gibson 1979; Varela, Thompson & Rosch E, 1991, Corwin & Erickson-Davis 2020). This work has established that experience is not merely a matter of perceiving something “out there” and bringing it “in here” but rather, is itself intra-action (Barad 2006; Corwin & Erickson-Davis 2020). In this roundtable, scholars working in a range of disciplines will speak to how sensory perception as interaction emerges in practice including: how play can open up the possibility for co-presence; how both the mystical and erotic trouble the boundary between the self and other; how brain machine interface devices reveal perception as a constitutive process that spans the individual and milieu; and how neurological disorders such as autism, hearing loss, and aphasia can help us reconceptualize personhood. The panel will explore how a model of perception and presence as interactionally emergent affords the | Eagle |
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| | <p>examination for experiences that are often analytically overlooked or dismissed.</p> <p>Organizers: Cordelia Erickson-Davis, Stanford University and Anna Corwin, The California Institute of Integral Studies Chair: Cordelia Erickson-Davis, Stanford University</p> <p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anna Corwin, CIIS • Keziah Conrad, Northern Arizona University • Matthew Wolf-Meyer, Rensselaer Polytechnic University • Cordelia Erickson-Davis, Stanford University | |
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| <p>Sunday, April 6 8:00am – 9:45am</p> | <p>Rural Change and Identity (Panel)</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> This session highlights processes of cultural change within rural contexts, focusing on how selfhood and identity shift alongside rurality. How do we define “rural?” This label is attached to a wide variety of locales and cultural contexts worldwide, and ethnographic conceptions of the rural often intersect with localized framings such as old and new, traditional and modern, developed and undeveloped, and so on. This session explores how the opposing forces often present in rural locations come to impact and shape human lives. Bringing together seven papers, we explore case studies from Southern Utah and the Toledo District of Belize to examine how rurality shapes familial, economic, religious, and other social identities. As elsewhere, shifting dynamics of self and identity in these regions carry implications for practiced realities such as healthcare access, religious worldviews, and economic endeavors. Our session aims to address several questions: In what ways does “rurality” serve as a sociopolitical feature of the environment as well as a component of the self? How do current, localized discourses of the “traditional” and “modern” among small, indigenous communities act as imaginative resources in postcolonial contexts? How do people navigate and address the contradictions between cultural expectations and social experiences—both socially and intrapsychically? By engaging these and</p> | <p>Tamaya Ballroom</p> |
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| | <p>related questions of identity, this session foregrounds rurality as a dynamic component of great cultural and psychological importance.</p> <p>Organizers and Chairs: Chantél Villegas and Stephon Gilbert-Ouahib</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corn, Cacao and Frozen Chicken: Evolving Identities & Foodways Among the Kekchi Maya (Annie Weight) • Resistance and Redefinition: Navigating Identity Among Young Maya Women in Belize (Chantél Villegas) • Negotiating Value and Identity: How Economic and Neocolonial Pressures Shape the Self in Belize (Stephon Gilbert-Ouahib) • "Religion is Political, Belief is Personal": Religious Identity Among the Kekchi Maya in Aguacate, Belize (Sydney Newell) • "We Are Not a Culture Anymore": Social Memory and Identity Politics Among the Kekchi and Mopan Maya of Aguacate, Belize (Chloe Crandall) • "Embodiment of Community": Rural Identity as a Pathway for Healing in the Aftermath of Crisis in Southern Utah (Sam Webster, Southern Utah University) | |
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12:00 pm Conference Ends

Area Attractions

We invite you to explore the many activities and resources near the Tamaya Resort during your stay in New Mexico.

- Tamaya Cultural Learning Center
- The Stables at Tamaya for horseback riding
- 5 miles of nature trails
- Tamaya Mist Spa
- Hyatt fitness center
- Camp Hyatt activities for kids
- Twin Warriors Golf Club

Resort Map

