

ANTHROPOLOGY

NEWSLETTER



Faculty and Graduating Class Photo (Kington Plaza)

(Back, Left to Right) Ezra Turner, Jayson Kunkel, Prof. Owen Kohl, James Snyder, Prof. John Andelson, Prof. Monty Roper, Nicole Mlynski, Mallory Engelmann, (Middle, Left to Right) Parikshit Roychowdhury, Molly Wilcoxson, Sophia Mason, Prof. Maria Tapias, Prof. Tess Kulstad, Claire Giannosa, (Front, Left to Right) Noah Biniam, Clara Chatput, Sasha Laugen, William Pitchford, Prof. Hanna Erftenbeck, Meilynn Smith, Zoe Kirn, Prof. Laura Ng.

Not Pictured:

Prof. Brigittine French, Prof. Cynthia Hanson, Prof. John Whittaker, Prof. Kathy Kamp, Prof. Lily Demars, Aubrie Connell, Jorge Salinas, Ashleigh Cannon



2026 GRADUATES



Clara Chaput

Clara is sad to say goodbye to the anthropology lounge . During my three years spent at Grinnell and my year abroad, I have learned just how valuable humanistic understanding is, especially during historical times like these. I would like to thank my anthro friends and advisors Jon Andelson and Tess Kulstad, for making my Grinnell experience so wonderful. I will be returning home to Minneapolis to work and will be applying to anthropology PhD programs for the 2027-2028 academic year.

Aubrie Connell

After graduation, I will be returning to my home state of Texas to intern at the Dallas Museum of Art as a summer art camp intern! While I'm not entirely sure of what I'll be doing after this summer, I hope to pursue a career in museum outreach/non-profit arts organizations, sort of bridging art history and anthropology, before I move on to graduate school.



Mallory Engelmann

After graduation, I plan to return home to Cedar Rapids to work before pursuing a Master's Degree in Library and Information Science next year. One day I hope to work as an archivist.



2026 GRADUATES



Claire Giannosa

After graduation, I will move back home to New York City. Over the summer, I'll work as a teaching assistant in a third/fourth grade classroom for the GO Project, a nonprofit providing free summer school programming for students! After that, I hope to continue work in the nonprofit sector focused on education, and I'm excited to continue exploring and discovering new experiences.

Jayson Kunkel

This summer I don't have anything set up yet. I'll be at home in Des Moines enjoying my time! I'll be working towards my Iowa coaching license so I can coach soccer. I'll also be job searching, likely for positions related to GIS and mapping. And of course looking for bugs



Sasha Laugen

This fall, I will be moving to a rural village in Ecuadorian Amazon to work for a non-profit called Manna Project International. In the meantime, I am returning home to Boulder, Colorado, working with a youth development program leading high schoolers doing trail maintenance in the mountains.



2026 GRADUATES



Sophia Mason

I'm staying in Grinnell for the summer, doing an Americorps GEP program with the Grinnell College Museum of Art. My goal is to move to the Twin Cities within a year of graduating, working either in nature conservation or at an art-based nonprofit.

William Pitchford

After graduating, I hope to take advantage of my background in CS and Anthropology to pursue a career that utilizes both skill sets. My primary interest is in UI/UX design as well as Human-Computer interaction, but I'm also interested in working with drones and lidar at archaeological sites. More immediately though, I plan to do some traveling this summer to spend time with family and friends I haven't seen in a few years before getting set into the grind.



Parikshit Roychowdhury



2026 GRADUATES



Jorge Salinas

It has been minute since I've been home, so I will be making my way out to the Rio Grande Valley for a little while. I hope to get out to Chicago and find work though. I can't say exactly what I aim to do but I hope to continue doing film on the side.

James Synder

I am headed to upstate New York to begin a 1-year master's program in Advanced Media Management at Syracuse University's Newhouse School of Public Communications! The Advanced Media Management program focuses on the intersections of business, marketing, and emerging technologies. After that, I hope to begin a career in marketing and brand strategy, using my cultural anthropology studies at Grinnell as the foundation for new knowledge.



Ezra Turner

I am hoping to use my anthropology degree to find work in the nonprofit sector, specifically work that involves assisting the homeless and the formerly incarcerated. Eventually, I intend to apply for graduate study in the social sciences.



2026 GRADUATES



Molly Wilcoxson

This summer after graduating from Grinnell, I'll continue my work as a research assistant at the University of Chicago's Inclusive Economy Lab, where I've spent the last two years studying financial stability among residents experiencing housing insecurity in the Chicago area. Then, this fall, I'll begin a Master's degree in Urban Planning and Policy at the University of Illinois - Chicago! I'm currently on the lookout for full-time roles focused on affordable housing, socioeconomic justice, and urban policy to financially support my studies at UIC.

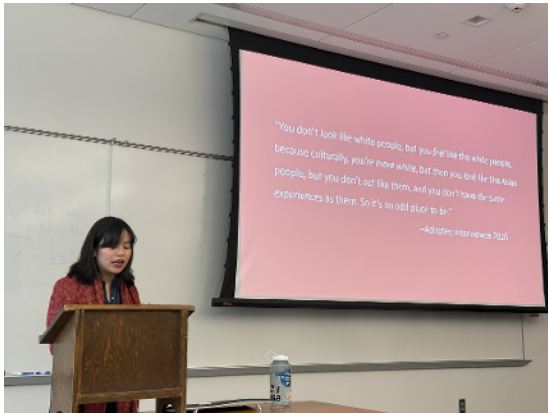
No photos or updates available: Noah Biniam, Ashleigh Cannon, Zoe Kirn, Nicole Mlynski, Meilynn Smith



SENIOR THESIS PRESENTATIONS

Clara Chaput

Kinship Across Cultures: Perspectives on Family Formation and Its Impact on Cultural Identity in the Chinese American Adoptee Community



This semi-autobiographical ethnography is an undergraduate senior thesis project and is part of a larger endeavor to have more adoptee representation in adoption scholarship. Conducted through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, reflexive writing, and archival research, I seek to describe and deconstruct common American conceptions of relatedness. In doing so, I hope to understand A) what processes of kinship formation parents undergo to integrate their adopted Chinese child into a Westernized American family structure, and B) how these different upbringings impact the way Chinese adoptees identify both culturally, and racially.

Sasha Laugen

“¿Por qué tanto miedo de educar al pueblo?”: Contemporary University Student Resistance in Argentina



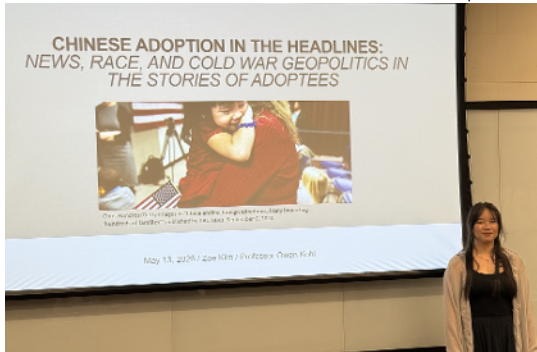
My thesis looks at the university student movement resisting current President Milei in Argentina, focusing on the University of Buenos Aires school of Philosophy and Humanities. I outline how the public university in Argentina has been historically established as a unique institution which is democratic, autonomous, and accessible, yet several attempts have been made to limit this public institution. Current President Javier Milei is fiercely underfunding and attacking the public university in an attempt to privatize the institution and create a Neoliberal university model that serves the economy. I claim contemporary students resist this new model and continue to fight to maintain and transform the public university's democratic and accessible principles. Additionally, I analyze the current challenges of university student activism against Milei which I categorize into two sections: challenges of having national politics within university politics and challenges to activism in a Neoliberal world.



SENIOR THESIS PRESENTATIONS

Zoe Kirn

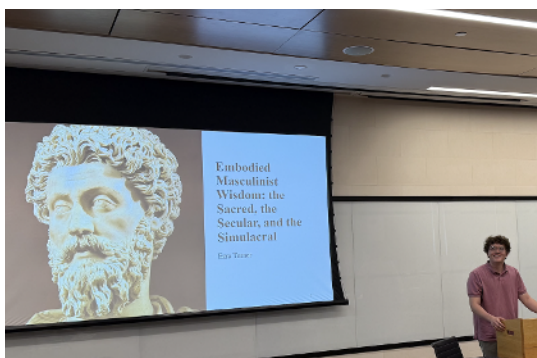
Headlining Chinese Adoption: News, Race, and Geopolitics in the Story of Chinese International Adoption



Zoe's project examined how Western news media – particularly the New York Times – narrated the end of China's international adoption program and what Chinese adoptees think of those narratives and how their narratives and experiences differ. The project included discourse analysis of coverage in The New York Times and semi-structured interviews with Chinese adoptees and adoptive parents. It showed how media accounts often framed adoption through stories of rescue, belonging, moral responsibility, and geopolitical tension, while adoptee responses revealed more complex and situated understandings of identity, family, loss, and representation. By comparing the dominant media narrative to adoptees' lived experience and their voices, the project offers an adoptee-centered account of Chinese international adoption's post-adoption era. (written by editors based on thesis proposal)

Ezra Turner

Embodied Masculinist Wisdom: the Sacred, the Secular, and the Simulacral



My thesis, *Embodied Masculinist Wisdom: the Sacred, the Secular, and the Simulacral* is about how contemporary masculinities relate to narratives of the semi-mythological West and motivational 'wisdom' that tells men how they ought to live. I looked at three sites: an evangelical men's group (sacred), a Stoic message board (secular), and the AI-powered masculinist hybridization of Christianity and Stoicism on Instagram (simulacral). I argued that the experience of the self is inseparable from the historical narrative it exists embedded in, and that the reproduction of violent and masculinist historical narratives has proliferated exponentially in the age of AI-assisted production.



2025 SUMMER RESEARCH

Natalie Ng '27 Summer Research at the Koobi Fora Field School in Kenya and Ethiopia

I attended the 2025 season of the Koobi Fora Field School (KFFS) with 19 other students from the U.S., Kenya, and Ethiopia. The program combined lectures with intensive field exercises taught by faculty from institutions around the world, each specializing in different areas of paleoanthropology. Because we came from varied academic backgrounds, we began with a series of “crash courses” on core concepts and methods we would need for fieldwork. These included archaeological excavation techniques, Plio-Pleistocene lithic analysis, the geology and geochronology of Koobi Fora, stratigraphic and radiometric dating, paleoenvironmental reconstruction, and the identification of mammalian and aquatic fossils. We also learned about human health and medical anthropology, and completed a midterm and final quiz on these topics.



Natalie '27 and field school peers excavating

After our training, we were assigned to faculty mentors and placed on research teams. I joined the Pliocene Archaeology team, which focused on excavations and experiments related to the spread of stone tool technology. My individual project, however, explored an earlier question: whether very early hominins might have used wooden percussive tools similar to the ones used by extant primates. To investigate this, we searched for hotspots of fossil wood in ancient sediment, which might indicate where early tool use occurred.

My work was primarily computational. We surveyed several regions of interest (ROIs) in the Koobi Fora area to record surface-level fossil wood and collect GPS coordinates. Using QGIS and R, I manipulated raster and vector files to map out the distribution of fossil wood across each ROI. I then built random forest models using six topographic predictors, slope, elevation, topographic ruggedness, topographic position index, topographic wetness, and stream power, to estimate where new fossil wood concentrations might be found. Finally, I compared model predictions to the results of surveys in a new area.



2025 SUMMER RESEARCH



Natalie '27 holding a small piece of fossilized wood from survey of Area 40

(Natalie Ng Continued) The random forest models ultimately did not predict fossil wood presence very effectively. None of the six topographic variables showed a significant influence on the probability of finding surface-level fossil wood. This suggested that topography alone cannot account for where fossil wood appears today; preservation and transport are shaped by more complex factors. Some predictors, such as wetness and stream power, likely influence preservation, waterlogged conditions favor fossilization, while strong flow can break and move wood, but not in ways that were strong enough for the model to detect patterns.

Beyond my individual project, I spent significant time assisting the Pliocene team with a large excavation elsewhere in the region. After digging several shovel test pits, we selected a site and opened 1m x 1m excavation units. Over the season, I rotated through all major roles: excavator, sieve, total station operator, and recorder. I helped recover in-situ artifacts, take x-, y-, and z-coordinates of finds and grid squares, and update sketch maps documenting excavation progress. Participating in each role gave me a deeper appreciation for the teamwork, communication, and technical precision required for a successful excavation.

KFFS was an incredibly rewarding experience that pushed me beyond the classroom and immersed me in real paleoanthropological research. I left the field school more confident in my ability to read scientific literature, formulate research questions, and engage in conversations about major topics in the discipline. I also discovered new research interests, especially fieldwork, that I did not expect to enjoy as much as I did. Working alongside talented peers from around the world inspired me to continue striving toward my academic and professional goals. I am very grateful to the Anthropology Department at Grinnell for supporting this opportunity.

Natalie's research was funded by the Paul Simmons '79 and Michele Clark International Research and Learning Fund.



Natalie '27 holding baboon remains she found



2025 SUMMER RESEARCH

Adella Catanzaro '27 Summer Research at the Koobi Fora Field School in Kenya and Ethiopia

This summer, as a result of the generosity of the Grinnell Anthropology department, I was able to attend the Koobi Fora Field School. I spent 6 weeks in Northern Kenya being trained in the field of paleoanthropology through lectures, field exercises, and ultimately a four week mentored research project. I pursued a paleoecology project titled “Functional Diversity and Niche Partitioning in Fossil Bovids: Implications for Hominin Meat Access”.

Through this research, I assessed whether functional traits in co-existing early Pleistocene bovid communities can be used to predict meat procurement opportunities for early hominins. To do this, I determined whether bovid communities offered better opportunities for hominin passive scavenging, cursorial hunting, or ambush hunting using a collected fossil sample from Northern Kenya and comparing this to published data on modern

African bovids from three diverse habitats: Serengeti National Park in Tanzania, Kruger National Park in South Africa, and Etosha National Park in Namibia.

We collected bovid molars, premolars, and horn-cores from the Tulu Bor (~ 3.35-2.6 Ma.) and Upper Burgi geologic Members (~ 2.0-1.89 Ma.). The fossil bovid teeth and horn-cores were identified to tribe level and a set of ecological traits were assigned to them using the data from the modern African bovids. The traits chosen included diet, locomotion, habitat, social structure, body size, and water dependence. These traits were chosen based on their likelihood to impact scavenging and hunting success, which allowed for functional diversity calculations as well as niche partitioning analysis.

Myself and a team of researchers surveyed a variety of areas across the Koobi Fora Formation of Northern Kenya, and collected fossils from the surface. This data was supplemented by a wider breadth of data from the Turkana Public Database, also collected from the Koobi Fora Formation.



Adella '27 holding a bovine skull



2025 SUMMER RESEARCH

(Adella Catanzaro Continued) I analyzed this data with Community Weighted Means Analysis, as well as Principal Component Analysis, and a variety of functional diversity metrics including Functional Richness, Functional Evenness, Functional Dispersion, and Rao's Q analysis. Overall, the results predicted that both the Upper Burgi and Tulu Bor ecosystems would have most strongly supported passive scavenging. Cursorial hunting, particularly for water-dependent prey with predictable movements would have also been supported. Open habitats and cursorial prey in these ecosystems would have made them least suited to ambush hunting. It was a blast to be so immersed in a field-site and make lasting relationships with the other researchers, as well as the local community.

Adella's research was funded in part through generous annual donations to the department.



Adella '27 screening dirt



Sasha Laugen '26 Senior Thesis Summer Research: Student Resistance at University of Buenos Aires school of Philosophy and Humanities

As I walked into the University of Buenos Aires School of Philosophy and Humanities in October of 2024, one of my professors came up to me: “class is in the street. Grab a desk and bring it outside.” Confused, I grabbed a desk and carried it into the street, where my professor proceeded to lead class as normal. This would be my first of many classes in the street in protest of the lack of funding for public universities from the current government of President Javier Milei. My experiences of the Argentine student movement as an exchange student, inspired me to further investigate the contemporary student resistance against Milei and the challenges of student activism.

Public universities in Argentina have historically been autonomous, democratic, and accessible, as they are free for all to attend and of very high quality. Yet this right to public higher education for all has become contested by President Milei, as he aims to reduce inflation and debt by slashing social and public services. University students have a deep history of resistance against attacks to public education, and my interviews revealed that current students continue this legacy by resisting these financial attacks and defending the public university model. Yet as I interviewed students, I also learned that the current student movement faced many challenges to their resistance including fragmentation, loss of faith in traditional political systems, and internal identity struggle.

During my ten day research trip to Argentina, I interviewed several students at the University of Buenos Aires school of Humanities and Philosophy, as well as some graduates, students at other faculties or universities, and other Argentines.



Sasha '26 at the Obelisco in Buenos Aires



2025-26 WINTER RESEARCH

(Sasha Laugen Continued) Unfortunately because of Grinnell's schedule, my trip fell during summer vacations for Argentinean universities, and I was unable to observe many student events or even enter the school building. Despite these challenges, I continued to investigate anything available to me, as any individual such as my Uber driver, my host mom, and my customs agent could give me valuable perspectives. I even had the opportunity to observe a protest demanding better conditions for firefighters and policies for climate change that many students attended, as my visit was during large forest fires in the South of the country.

These experiences allowed me to deeply investigate themes related to the public university and the student movement, while also growing as a researcher and anthropology student. How to conduct ethnographic research in my second language as a foreigner, and how to remain unbiased when my own political perspectives are evident was something I grappled with, failed at times, and adapted to throughout my research. I am grateful to have this opportunity to combine everything I have learned in my anthropology classes at Grinnell, and I am eager to turn my data into a senior thesis this spring. The current reality of the Argentine university student is challenging and bleak at times, like the reality of many youth in our current world, yet I hope to shed light on the students' continued resistance and inspire positive change at Grinnell and beyond.

Sasha's research was funded by the Paul Simmons '79 and Michele Clark International Research and Learning Fund.

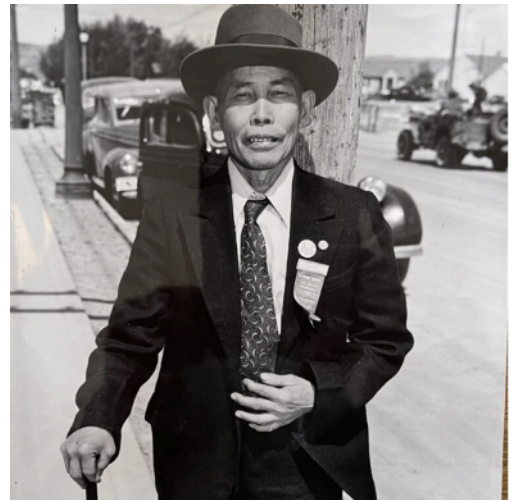


One of Sasha's classes in the street from November 2024.



Avajane Lei '28 Oral History with Descendant of Rock Springs Chinatown

In early January, after completing a training in oral history interviewing, I received funding from the Grinnell College Anthropology Department to travel to New York City to continue my research on Chinese immigrants who lived in Rock Springs. This past summer, for my mentored advanced project, I created an ArcGIS StoryMap about the life and legacy of Leo Yee Litt, a coal miner who lived in the post-massacre Rock Springs Chinatown. My research was pieced together through oral histories from Leo Yee Litt's descendants, his immigration and census records, archival and family photographs, and newspaper articles.



Leo Yee Litt



Arvin Chin and Avajane '28

The purpose of my visit to NYC was to interview one of his grandsons, Arvin Chin, who might share stories that may have slipped through the cracks of the written record regarding two of Yee Litt's children — Mabel and George — who moved from Rock Springs to New York City, and the military service of the Yee Litt brothers. Arvin himself is an Air Force veteran. Accompanied by my mom, I arrived in NYC on January 4th, where I would get to know Arvin over the next few days. Shortly after settling in, we

were invited to join him and his friends from the

American Legion Lt. Kimlau Chinese Memorial Post to share a Toisanese family-style dinner at the Sun Hong Wong restaurant in Chinatown. The members of the American Legion were curious about my research and asked about the Rock Springs Chinatown; in turn, they shared their Chinese families' similar early experiences in America. The dinner was a warm welcome to New York City.



Arvin Chin, Avajane '28, and member of the American Legion at Sun Hon Wong Restaurant



2025-26 WINTER RESEARCH

(Avajane Lei Continued) My interview with Arvin took place the following day at the American Legion Post 1291 building on Canal Street. Over nearly four hours, he dove deep into the lives of Leo Yee Litt's seven children, including his mother, Mabel Chin. I learned that Arvin's most memorable interaction with his maternal grandfather was as a four-year-old during one of his mother's occasional trips to California to visit family who had moved to the Bay Area by 1951. He likely met his maternal grandparents in Rock Springs in 1950 or 1951, as there is a photo of them holding him and his twin as babies/toddlers. He also sometimes accompanied his mother to her high school reunions in Rock Springs. The Yee Litts clearly maintained their closeness with each other despite their slow trickle out of Rock Springs into the east and west coasts over the decades.



Interview set up for Arvin at the American Legion Post

The following day, I visited Arvin in the Upper West Side at the yarn store he owns, Knitty City. He opened the store in 2006 with his late wife, Pearl Chin. As Arvin showed me around the store, he slipped in anecdotes about its beginnings and how Pearl had loved the idea of owning a mom-and-pop shop together. In the back of the store hung a tapestry in her memory, surrounded by photos of their family. There is even a newspaper clipping of Arvin and his twin, Alvin, as kids on their first day of school back in 1953. In the photo is his mother, Mabel, the second of the seven Yee Litt children.



Newspaper clip depicting Arvin, Al, and Mabel Chin

I would like to thank Arvin for his kindness and willingness to share his family's story in and beyond Rock Springs. I would also like to thank Professor Ng for her guidance in approaching this oral history project and the Anthropology Department for providing the funding, which made this trip possible.



YEAR ROUND RESEARCH

Julia Ghorai '27, Avajane Lei '28, Luis Lopez '27, and Jorge Salinas '26 Archaeological Research on the Wyoming Chinatowns Projects

We started our on this project during the Summer 2025 Wyoming Chinatowns MAP with Professor Laura Ng. We began our MAP with 5 weeks of lab work. During this time we were trained on historical artifact identification and cataloging, the history of our site, and began conducting archival research on residents of Rock Springs Chinatown.

In July, we road tripped through the Southwest thanks to the generosity of the Four Corners Fund. We stopped in Omaha to connect with a descendant of Rock Springs Chinatown, Chuck Leo, who told us about his families experience living at the site. We also made a stop in Denver to learn about their historic Chinatown and a stop in Moab, Utah where we learned about Japanese incarceration as part of Asian American Archaeology.

We ended our road trip in Rock Springs where we began our excavation under the leadership of Laura Ng and Dudley Gardner. We learned how to conduct unit excavation, screen for artifacts, and fill out our own paperwork. To learn more about our excavation, see Professor Ng's faculty update! The most meaningful part of the excavation was working with the descendant and local community. We were so lucky to be joined by Ricky and Grace Leo, who both grew up in Rock Springs and are descendants of historic Chinatown residents. We were also joined by Lian Lew, a college-aged Rock Springs Chinatown descendant who also studies anthropology! Lian was so helpful during our excavation because she was able to identify all of the animal bones that we had never seen before. The local community was also interested and we got to speak to many members of the media about our experience excavating, including a reporter who sold the story to NPR!

Our last week we returned to Grinnell and immediately began the process of cleaning and drying the many artifacts we collected during excavation and finished up our ArcGIS Storymaps on historical residents of our site. Avajane, Julia, and Luis continued lab work during the school year. We cataloged the artifacts from the area around the Burn Feature that we found during our excavation and from a 19th century trash pit found in another part of the site. Read more about our work in the Students at Conferences section!



STUDENTS AT CONFERENCES

Julia Smith '26 at Society for Applied Anthropology Annual Meeting



Julia Smith '26 at the SfAA entrance



Professor Roper, Julia '26, and the other panel presenters at the SfAA Conference

From March 18 to 21, I had the opportunity to attend the annual meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA) in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Alongside Professor Roper, I presented the culmination of my MAP research in Costa Rica on a panel presentation titled “The Everyday Practice of Community Dynamics In The Face of Tourism”. My research presentation, “Social Exchange, Attachment, and the Shaping of Tourism Expectation in El Silencio, Costa Rica”, explored the role of community-based tourism in the rural agricultural community of El Silencio. I’m grateful for the experience to share my research and engage in meaningful conversations with anthropologists on the relationship between tourism and development. While at the SfAA conference, I also had the opportunity to connect with Grinnell alumni, explore the town of Albuquerque, and attend panel presentations that pertain to my interest in sustainable development and environmental anthropology. Thank you to Professor Roper and the Department of Anthropology for this opportunity!

Iowa Human Rights Conference

This April, Grinnell College hosted the Iowa Human Rights Conference for the Iowa Network of Human Rights Academics. Students and faculty from around the state gathered at Grinnell to present and discuss papers, posters, or creative works relating to human rights. Professor Monty Roper of the Anthropology Department was the host and local coordinator of the event. Professor Roper and President Anne Harris gave opening remarks. Grinnell Anthropology students gave three presentations at the conference.



STUDENTS AT CONFERENCES

Hannah Roth '27: "Contested Memory: State and Subaltern Narratives of Genocide." Iowa Human Rights Conference

Hannah Roth '27 presented her research, "Contested Memory: State and Subaltern Narratives of Genocide" that she did during summer 2025 as the 2025 Charles E. Scheidt Summer Undergraduate Research Fellow at USC. Hannah focused on three case studies: the Rwandan genocide in 1994, the Guatemalan Genocide, and the 2017 violence against the Rohingya to investigate state sanctioned narratives around genocide and accounts that contradict those narratives. Hannah presented on a panel with three other researchers who also focused on state sanctioned narratives and justice around the world.



Hannah Roth '27 alongside other panelists in HSSC S1325 presenting to conference attendees.

Ezra Turner '26: "Contemporary Stoicism and Stoic Resistance." Iowa Human Rights Conference

Ezra Turner '26 presented his senior thesis research, "Contemporary Stoicism and Stoic Resistance". He argued that, in the contemporary West, the experience of the self is inseparable from the historical narrative it exists embedded in, and that the reproduction of violent and masculinist historical narratives has proliferated exponentially in the age of AI-assisted production. Ezra presented on a panel that focused on state power, social labels, and civil social mobilization in the western hemisphere.



Ezra Turner '26 (second to left) with the other presenters on his panel from colleges around Iowa



STUDENTS AT CONFERENCES

Julia Ghorai '27 and Avajane Lei '28: "Examining the Burn Layer: The Depositional History of the Rock Springs Chinatown & 1885 Chinese Massacre." Iowa Human Rights Conference

Julia Ghorai '27 and Avajane Lei '28 presented a poster about their research on the Wyoming Chinatowns Project that they conducted with Jorge Salinas '26 and Luis Lopez '27 under the guidance of Professor Laura Ng. Their poster focused on a feature of their Rock Springs Chinatown site they excavated last summer: the Burn Layer from the 1885 Chinese Massacre. Their poster focused on the formation of the feature, the artifacts found within, and the archaeological methods used to draw their conclusions. Within the Burn Layer, they found evidence of transnationalism and resistance to racial discrimination. The entire research group presented a similar poster at the Society for American Archaeology.



Julia '27 and Avajane '28 presenting their poster to participants and discussants in the HSSC atrium

Society for American Archaeology Annual Meeting



Luis Lopez '27, Jorge Salinas '26, Professor Laura Ng, Avajane Lei '28, and Julia Ghorai '27 in front of the poster of the SAAs

The 91st Annual Meeting for the Society for American Archaeology was held in San Francisco, California this year and dozens of Grinnellians traveled to present and participate in the conference. Professor Laura Ng and her research team, Julia Ghorai '27, Avajane Lei '28, Luis Lopez '27, and Jorge Salinas, presented their poster "Examining the Burn Layer: The Depositional History of the Rock Springs Chinatown & 1885 Chinese Massacre" as part of the Mobility, Migration, and Settlement Patterns Poster Session.



STUDENTS AT CONFERENCES

Professors at SAA

In addition to Professor Ng and her students,

- Professor **Hanna Erfttenbeck** presented a poster she coauthored with Dr. Natalia Handziuk (University of Notre Dame. She presented her poster, "Renewed Work at Early Bronze Age Tall al-Handaquq South, Jordan" at the Let's Rock! Lithic Analysis poster session (although their poster did not focus on lithics).
- Former professor **John Seebach** presented "Stones but No Bones: Competing Measures of Folsom Peripherality in Far West Texas" during the Folsom on the Edge: Exploring Interaction, Adaptation, and Biogeography in North American's Late Pleistocene session.
- Emeritus professors **Kathryn Kamp** and **John Whittaker** presented "Breathing Life into the Past through the Arts" during the For the Love of Teaching Archaeology session.

Alumni at SAA

- **Michael Neeley '84** — "The Application of Whole Assemblage Behavioral Indicators to the Natufian of the Southern Levant". Mike is a Professor in the Montana State University Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Bozeman
- **Steve Nash '86**, — Discussant for the SAA Fundraising Forum: A Conversation on Investing in the Future of Archaeology. Steve is the President and CEO of Archaeology Southwest, a public education NGO.
- **Carl Drexler '02** — "Unraveling Nakuukuwidish: Finding Patterns in a Caddo and Settler Saltpetre Site". Carl is Professor and Station Archeologist for the Arkansas Archaeological Survey at the U of Arkansas, Magnolia
- **Courtney Birkett '99**. Courtney is Archaeologist with the Fort Eustis Cultural Resources Management, Virginia





CLASS ACTIVITIES

Professor Erftenbeck's Archaeology of Death and Burial seminar visited the Smith Family Funeral Home where they received a tour spoke with funeral director, Jeffrey Smith. During this visit students learned about the history of funeral practices in Grinnell and the consideration that go into caring for the dead and their families in the modern world. The class also conducted two field trips to Hazelwood Cemetery to conduct field survey of the graves there as part of their final project researching people buried in the cemetery. These visits were made possible by the generous cooperation of the Smith Family and Julie Lascol, Associate Director of Community-Engaged Learning.



In early October, **Professor DeMars' Primate Behavior, Ecology, and Evolution** class visited the Ape Initiative which is located just outside of Des Moines and is



home to a group of bonobos who often participate in research, especially related to cognition and language. The purpose of the visit was to be able to see and interact with some of the primates we had been discussing in class and to explore and observe how this type of facility operates, including how the primates are cared for and how they participate in research.



EVENTS

Research Talk: Dr. Irma Alicia Velasquez Nimatuj : "The Criminalization of Indigenous Leaders and Democratic Erosion in Guatemala: An Analysis of State Repression Under the Arévalo Administration"



Dr. Irma Alicia Velasquez Nimatuj

In partnership with with the Center for Humanities and the GWSS Program, the Department of Anthropology brought Dr. Irma Alicia Velasquez Nimatuj to Grinnell on September 24th, 2025. She presented her research on the systematic criminalization of Indigenous leaders in Guatemala under President Bernardo Arévalo's administration. Dr. Velasquez Nimatuj is a Maya-K'iche journalist, activist, and social anthropologist who has been at the forefront of the struggles for respect for indigenous rights and culture in Guatemala and in other countries in the region.

Dr. Velasquez Nimatuj analyzed the paradoxical relationship between a government that owes its democratic legitimacy to Indigenous mobilization and the continued persecution of these same leaders by the justice system, especially the Public Ministry.



Faculty and students gathered in HSSC S1325 listening to Dr. Velasquez Nimatuj's presentation



EVENTS

Archaeometry Talk: Dr. Jeff Ferguson: "The Next Stage of Archaeometry in Southwestern Archaeology: New Ways to Explore Old Data"

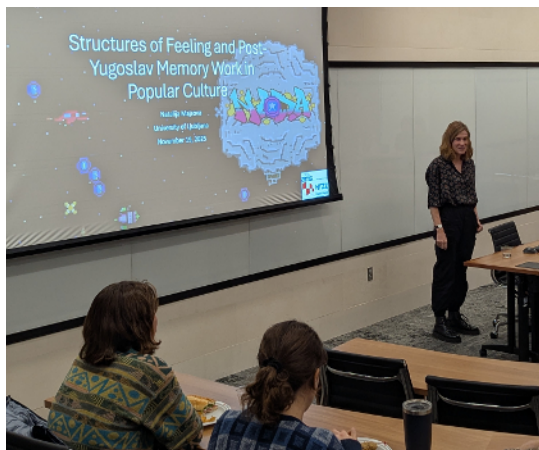


Dr. Jeff Ferguson, an Assistant Professor of Anthropology in the College of Arts and Science at the University of Missouri, came to Grinnell on September 11th. In his presentation he explained that the application of analytical chemistry and other scientific techniques to Southwestern Archaeology can reveal detailed information about ancient behavior from trade and exchange to large-scale social interaction. He presented the three main analytical techniques employed at the Archaeometry Laboratory at the

University of Missouri Research Reactor Center (MURR) with a focus on what we can learn about people in the past. These techniques have been in use for decades and, at MURR, they are looking at ways to synthesize the accumulated data at much larger scales. He also presented some new research on site identification using drone-based LiDAR in west-central New Mexico.

Research Talk: Dr. Natalija Majsova: "Structures of feeling and post-Yugoslav memory work in popular culture"

The Departments of Anthropology and English, the Rosenfield Program, the Instructional Support Committee, and the Humanities Center brought Dr. Natalija Masjova to campus to



present her research on the relationship between memory and contemporary popular culture, engaging with the mediatized afterlives of former socialist Yugoslavia. Dr. Masjova is an Associate Professor of Cultural Studies at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. Her research cuts across the field of memory studies, film studies, heritage interpretation, and (post-)socialist popular cultures. Focusing on post-Yugoslav spaces and drawing on examples from films, music, and video games that engage with the recent past in an interrogative and open-ended way,

her talk proposed to re-evaluate the significance of memory work to popular culture. Additionally, her lecture presented a comparison of this popular-cultural imaginary of the "post-Yugoslav condition" with insights from a large corpus of oral history interviews.



EVENTS

Department Event: Anthropology Welcome Session



Students and faculty gathered in the Intro Room for the Welcome Event

During the Anthropology Welcome Session, the department faculty provided students with a brief overview of anthropology as a field, the major at Grinnell, choosing an advisor, and post graduate opportunities. Students had the opportunity to meet the faculty and ask questions.

SEPC Event: Anthro Picnic



Students attending picnic in HSSC rock garden

The Anthro Picnic allowed underclassman and undeclared anthropology majors to learn about the majors. It was also a meet and greet with the new SEPC for the 2025-2026 school year.

SEPC Event: Tea & "Tea"



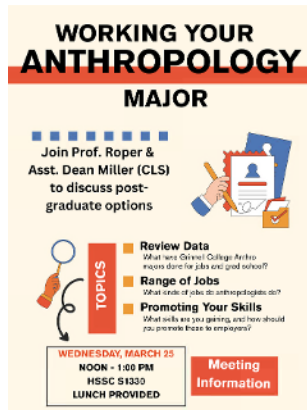
Students chatting around a table in the Intro Room

The SEPC's favorite tradition, Tea & "Tea" was held both this fall and spring. The SEPC and other anthropology students gathered in the evening for snacks and informal chatting. Tea & "Tea" is both an opportunity for students to ask questions about the department, major, and opportunities, and to chat socially with peers.



EVENTS

Department Event: Working Your Anthropology Major



Professor Roper and Assistant Dean Miller partnered to discuss post-graduate options for Anthropology majors. They discussed the range of jobs anthropologists can do, how to promote skills gained in the major, and reviewed the data showing strong post-grad outcomes for anthropology majors.

Department Funded Research Presentations



Anthropology students and faculty gathered over lunch to hear about two summer research projects that were funded by the department. Adella Catanzaro '27 shared her experience doing research on early hominin subsistence at Koobi Fora Field School and Julia Ghorai '27, Avajane Lei '28, Luis Lopez '27, and Jorge Salinas '26 talked about their summer and ongoing research for the Wyoming Chinatowns Project

SEPC and Archaeology Club Collaboration: Ancient Ceramics Workshop



Archaeology Club and Anthro SEPC teamed up in April for the Ancient Ceramics Workshop run by Avajane Lei '28. Students practiced making pots using the coil and pinch techniques, texturing with corn husks, and also just had fun talking and hanging out in the student ceramics studio!



EVENTS

Archaeology Club

The Archaeology Club aims to enrich student experiences by offering opportunities to explore archaeology outside the classroom. This semester, Archaeology Club worked with Professor Whittaker to help run Flintknapping Fridays and continue the tradition after his retirement. Flintknapping Fridays give students the opportunity to learn and practice the art of making stone tools. In October, with the help of Anthropology Department, the Archaeology Club brought students to the Midwest Archaeological Conference in Iowa City.

In the spring, Archaeology Club brought a group of students to the Natural History Museum at the University of Iowa. After viewing the exhibits, the group reflected on their visit and discussed the portrayal of Indigenous Iowans at the museum.

Additionally, Archaeology Club launched the Grinnell Young Archaeologists Club, in partnership with Drake Community Library and Archaeology in the Community (AIRC), a nonprofit in Washington DC. Archaeology Club adapted existing curriculum from AIRC into an afternoon Introduction to Archaeology Program for students at the Grinnell Middle School. Volunteers from the club guided students through an activity to figure out what kind of archaeologists they are and an Ancient Egyptian "Murder Mystery". The program was very successful and the club hopes to bring more programs to the library in the future.



Archaeology Club at the Natural History Museum at the University of Iowa led by copresidents, Avajane Lei '28 and Julia Ghorai '27



Archaeology Club volunteers and students from the local middle school laying out their units for the "Murder Mystery"



SEPC NOTES



SEPC Members (left to right) Avajane Lei, Clara Chaput, Natalie Ng, Jorge Salinas
(Not Pictured: Julia Ghorai, Molly Wilcoxson, Nicole Mlynsky)

Ask the SEPC: What was your favorite thing you did or participated in while on SEPC this year?

Molly: My favorite thing was doing the focus groups for the departmental self-study and hearing about other people's experience in the anthro department!

Clara: My favorite thing was organizing all of our events and playing Cards Against Anthropology at Tea & "Tea" :)

Avajane: My favorite thing we did this year was being about to talk to all of the tenure track candidates during our lunches with them! I also loved the SEPC picnic where a bunch of majors and students came out during the warm weather!

Julia: My favorite thing I did as a member of SEPC this year was host Tea and "Tea". It was so nice to connect with anthropology majors in every class year, hear about everyone's experiences, and try to convince everyone to take my favorite classes!

SEPC election

Welcome to our newly elected 2025-26 members: Adella Catanzaro '26.5, Sarah Travis '26.5, Elsa Nielson '27, Zach Roberts '28, and Jackson Scheer '28! Continuing members: Avajane Lei '28, Natalie Ng '27, Julia Ghorai '27.



Marisa Ruiz-Trejo

During the Fall 2025 semester, the Department of Anthropology welcomed Dr. Marisa Ruiz-Trejo as a Visiting Health Professor. A feminist anthropologist and full professor at the Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas in Mexico, Dr. Ruiz-Trejo taught two courses at Grinnell College—Anthropology of Gender and Sexuality and Feminist and Decolonial Thought—that encouraged students to critically examine questions of power, identity, and knowledge production within the field of anthropology.



Her current research focuses on recovering the life stories and intellectual contributions of women and LGBT+ communities in anthropology, particularly those from Chiapas and Central America. Through this work, she highlights the often-overlooked contributions of researchers, activists, writers, poets, and thinkers whose voices have reshaped the discipline in transformative ways. Ruiz-Trejo has published five books as an author, editor, and co-editor.

One of Dr. Ruiz Trejo's major achievements during her time at Grinnell was co-creating safe and reflective classroom spaces, where students could share their perspectives and vulnerabilities openly. She also played a key role in organizing the visit of Dr. Irma Alicia Velásquez Nimatuj, a Maya-K'iche' journalist, activist, and internationally recognized advocate for Indigenous rights in Central America. Marisa also organised the online visit of Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, an Aymara and Sefardi descent sociologist and activist, and one of the most influential thinkers in contemporary Latin American decolonial and feminist theory. While at Grinnell, Dr. Ruiz Trejo continued her research on academic freedom from a feminist perspective, a line of inquiry that is both timely and essential in the current moment. She also worked on the manuscript of a book titled *Pioneering Women in Anthropology*.



Hanna Erftenbeck

I published a paper in the *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*. The title is "Complicated endings: Household-based foodways and the demise of Early Bronze Age urban society in the southern Levant", (DOI: 10.1016/j.jaa.2025.101687).

Last summer I conducted the first season of my new field work at the site of Tall al-Handaquq South in Jordan. My co-PI Natalia Handziuk (University of Toronto) and I surveyed the site and recorded the Early Bronze Age occupation, as well as threats to the cultural heritage and preservation, such as erosion and looting.



Since the fall, I have presented research from the Zeighan Ancient Landscapes Project at the American Society for Overseas Research Annual Meeting in Boston and I gave a lecture as part of the American Center of Research in Jordan 2026 Spring Lecture Series. I also received a Committee for Support of Faculty Scholarship Competitive Grant and a Franklin Research Grant from the American Philosophical Society to conduct research at Tall Abu ez-Zeighan in Jordan this year.

Lily DeMars

In terms of my research, a paper I'm on was just accepted in the *Journal of Anatomy*, so that will be published soon. The citation for the paper is:

Turcotte CM, Raghunath A, Ryan TM, DeMars LJD, Siracusa E, Patterson SK, Cayo Biobank Research Unity, Platt ML, Brent LJN, Snyder-Mackler N, Bauman SE, Montague MJ, Martinez MI, Williams SA, Antón SC, Higham JP, Kuo S. Variation in trabecular bone microarchitecture across Rhesus Macaque (*Macaca mulatta*) load-bearing joints. *Journal of Anatomy*.





Jon Andelson

Although I joined the ranks of emeritus faculty in June 2025, I actually am still on a (small) contract with the college this year that covers me continuing to advise my remaining advisees, supervising a 2-credit guided reading project in the fall on alternatives to industrial agriculture, and advising a senior thesis in the spring. It's nice to still have a toe in the water.



“What else are you doing with your time?” I am often asked. I am co-chairing the Program Planning Committee for my own 55th Grinnell College Reunion cluster. We have decided to sponsor at Reunion a number of discussion sessions for interested alumni dealing with current issues: threats to the natural environment, journalism and media, the U.S. role in the world, law and the courts, and others. Each session will be led by a cluster member with some expertise in the field. We expect lively discussions.

Also, I am co-president of Poweshiek CARES, a community grassroots organization advocating for sustainable agriculture. As I write this, tonight we are sponsoring a showing of the new documentary film, “The Jungle,” about the meat industry in the U.S.

I have also gotten involved in helping to create a major exhibit for the community's new Grinnell Historical Museum. The exhibit, the first of two, is on “Farming in Poweshiek County Before World War II.” I am delighted to be working with other committed volunteers to help tell this story, which begins with the first farmers in the county, Indigenous peoples dating back nearly 4,000 years. The second exhibit will be on farming since World War II. The key to a healthy and happy retirement, I think, is remaining active!



Laura Ng

Rock Springs Chinatown Archaeology Project

This summer, a team of archaeologists (Dr. Laura W. Ng, Dr. A. Dudley Gardner, and Paul Hoornbeek), Grinnell College MAP students (Jorge Salinas '26, Luis Lopez '27, Julia Ghorai '27, Avajane Lei '28), and several Wyoming Chinese descendants, worked on excavating the former Rock Springs Chinatown. A Chinese community lived there between the 1870s and 1920s and it was the scene of anti-Chinese violence 140 years ago. The goal of this year's excavation was to find evidence of the 1885 Chinese massacre via traces of an arson fire to understand the community before, during, and after racially-motivated violence. We located a burn layer that we believe



(L-R) Jorge Salinas '26, Dudley Gardner, Luis Lopez '27, Julia Ghorai '27, Avajane Lei '28, Lian Lew (UNR), Laura Ng excavating the Rock Springs Chinatown, WY.

is the basement of a pre-massacre structure measuring approximately 8'x8' in size. In this layer, the excavation team found shelves dug out of sterile clay where boxes made of burnt shingles and veneer laid. We also found charred wooden beams, tin cans, tools such as an axe head and a file, and fragments of Chinese ceramics and Euroamerican bottles. Fieldwork funding came from the University of Wyoming Frison Institute Fund and subsequent artifact cataloging by Luis and Avajane is funded by a Harris Faculty Fellowship. Read about media coverage of our work in Wyoming Public Media, NPR Weekend Edition, and follow our research at <https://buriedchinatowns.sites.grinnell.edu/> (linked in the QR code to the right) and subscribe via email to receive updates.





(Laura Ng Continued)

Summer & Fall Talks

I gave several presentations at the 140th Anniversary Commemoration of the 1885 Rock Springs Chinese Massacre August 28-September 2, which was organized by Chinese American descendants Ricky and Grace Leo. In the Fall, I gave talks on preliminary results from the 2025 Rock Springs Chinatown excavation at the Museum of Chinese in America in NYC and for the Santa Cruz Archaeological Society (virtual). I then traveled to conferences held in Memphis, TN and West Texas to present on archaeological research on 1882 Chinese railroad camps in West Texas and the development of the San Antonio Chinese community in the early 20th century. Jorge Salinas '26 co-presented the paper in Alpine, TX, which was titled "Migration Palimpsests in West Texas: The Archaeology of Nineteenth Century Chinese Railroad Camps at the US-Mexico Border." My conference attendance and fieldwork in Texas was made possible by the Skiles Family.



(L-R) Laura Ng, Raymond Skiles, and Jorge Salinas '26 at the Center for Big Bend Studies Conference in Alpine, TX.

Spring Talks

In the spring, I gave several talks including talks at the Field Museum in Chicago and Indiana University. I also gave a talk at San Bernardino County Museum in Redlands, CA. The presentation was in conjunction with an exhibit titled "Chinese Pioneers: Power and Politics in Exclusion Era Photographs" (On view March 21 – July 26, 2026).

Grants

I received a \$10,000 research grant from the Far Western Foundation. This will allow us to continue archaeological research on the Evanston and Rock Springs Chinatown and investigate transnational connections between these Chinatowns and home villages in the Pearl River Delta Region of China.



Cabins in El Silencio during downpour (it's rainy season)



Interior of cabin



Savegre river, heading up into the mountains.

Monty Roper

Over the summer, I returned to El Silencio, Costa Rica, for the first time since Covid. It was great to reconnect with friends. The community has changed over the years since I first visited in 2006. The cooperative (COOPESILENCIO), which owns the land, now focuses almost exclusively on African palm production. The dairy project, organic garden, poultry production, animal rescue center, and the voluntourism that depended on these projects are all gone. The community has more than doubled in size, with many new homes extending along the road that runs along the Savegre River and into the mountains. An ever smaller portion of the community are members of the cooperative. Juan Carlos (who some of you may remember if you participated in my seminar that visited the community) is no longer a member of the cooperative, but now leads ecotours at one of the many private reserves located just off the Panamerican Highway, south of the road that brings you to El Silencio. I traveled to El Silencio with Julia Smith '25, whose MAP project focused on local perceptions of tourism in the region and the degree of interest in more tourism in the community, fitting within my broader longitudinal research in the community and cooperative. Relatively few people currently work in tourism. The lodge and cabins from the old voluntourism projects have seen better days. They are now being leased to a family from outside the community to manage. They continue to serve the multiple busloads of rafters that come past each day heading upstream to raft the Savegre River, providing drinks and lunch. The cabins are used mostly by workers in the region.



(Monty Roper Continued) We conducted 16 interviews with persons connected to the cooperative, community development, and tourism (past and present) and 48 household surveys (about 25% of all households). We found significant nostalgia for the days when the community had a vibrant voluntourist program. Currently only around 3.5% of adults work in tourism, mostly in nearby hubs like Manuel Antonio. Yet 87.4% of those surveyed supported expanding tourism in the community, often pointing to the past voluntourism project. Past cooperative-led tourism created opportunities, particularly for women. Residents recall, and hope to bring back, the jobs, cultural pride, and youth motivation that came with tourism. In addition to assessing interest in tourism, we explored perceptions of key barriers for the community, assets and opportunities identified in the community, and perspectives on the role of the cooperative. I wrote the results up as a community-based policy report, translated it into Spanish, and delivered it to key decision makers. Julia and I are also working on an article this fall for publication.



Rafting truck parked in front of cabin



Inside of lodge/restaurant

Cynthia Hansen

Was in Budapest at The 10th International Dance Science Conference presenting on a workshop that she co-designed as part of a GLP class last spring called Language Lost and Found Through Co-creative Dancing! The Conference explores how dance supports health, rehabilitation, mental well-being, and education, bringing together experts from a range of fields. For more information visit the conference website:

<https://mte.eu/en/the-10th-international-dance-science-conference-to-offer-exciting-programmes/>





Owen Kohl

Professor Kohl continued his research on hip hop, transnational solidarity, and multimodality in post-Yugoslav spaces. He presented at multiple conferences since spring 2025, delivering papers at the University of Rijeka, Croatia; at the Muisti Center of War and Peace in Mikkeli, Finland ("Memory, War, and Social Coherence"); and at the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies annual meeting in Washington D.C. His collaborations continue with MEMPOP, a transnational research project funded by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency and the Croatian Science Foundation. In November 2025, Professor Natalija Majsova joined Kohl and Professor Shuchi Kapila's classes at Grinnell to discuss her work on the intersections between memory, history, and contemporary politics in both (post-)Soviet science fiction and post-Yugoslav popular culture. This follows on Professor Vjeran Pavlaković's visit to Grinnell in 2024, who serves as the other Principal Investigator for MEMPOP. In relation to these timely themes, Kohl has now also submitted multiple new publications for review.



Since December 2025, Professor Kohl's ongoing research on media politics and hip hop in post-Yugoslav spaces has continued apace, tying in multiple rich ways to his teaching in Grinnell. He has amplified collaborations with MEMPOP, a transnational research project funded by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency and the Croatian Science Foundation. Two publications in the editorial pipeline accompany a newly released interview with Frenkie, one of Bosnia-Herzegovina's most prominent hip hop artists, who thematizes anti-nationalist reconciliation in his lyrics.



(Owen Kohl Continued) In late April, Kohl participated in a major international conference hosted by MEMPOP and the Association for Cultural Studies that was held in Ljubljana. While there, he presented his research findings on a roundtable with prominent regional colleagues, collaborated on a workshop concerning the semiotics of graffiti, and served as chair for a keynote address by Madina Tlostanova, a renowned scholar of decoloniality and post-socialism. The conference provided ample opportunity to reconnect with artists and coordinate guest lectures, including for Kohl's upcoming course-embedded travel seminar (tentatively entitled: "New Balkan Studies at Empire's Edge: Beyond Beaches, Dragons, and Powder Kegs"). 15 students will have a chance to experience a rich regional itinerary. With continued support from Grinnell College, Kohl hopes to make the CET seminar a regular occurrence, one that illuminates the diversities and histories of the region for generations of students to come.





Kathy Kamp and John Whittaker: Farewell to Grinnell

We arrived, fresh out of grad school at the U of Arizona, for the Fall semester, 1982, when Kathy was hired to fill the archaeologist position in the Dept of Anthropology. John finished his dissertation and was 'stay at home Dad' to our new daughter April. Eventually we became a shared appointment, and we spent our entire careers at Grinnell.

Jon Andelson asked John W if I had any regrets about my Grinnell career, and I really have none. We could have been at a larger school with more professional connections and more emphasis on our research, but we wanted to be somewhere that cared about teaching. Grinnell students are great, and we made and continue personal and professional relations with many of them. We continued Ralph Luebben's tradition of archaeological field schools in the Southwest, working many summers near Flagstaff, AZ. This was important research for us, and also the best teaching experiences we had – living with a dozen students



The excavation team for our summer field school at New Caves in Flagstaff, AZ, 2006

for six weeks, working long hours in the hot and dusty field and labs there and back home, and sharing the southwest with them. A few went on to be colleagues, some in the SW, and we have fond memories of all. We were allowed to use the tuition for the field school class to support us all (on a tight budget) for the summer. It sounds crass, but because Grinnell became a very wealthy college, support for students and for faculty development and research has been very good, and made possible for us and for students experiences that other institutions can't always provide. Over our years here, we did Grinnell-in-London semesters four times, and led a semester with students from Grinnell and other colleges in Turkey. We took students for summer internships in Cyprus, and to excavate at a Maya site in Belize.



FACULTY NEWS

(Kamp & Whittaker Continued)

In the classroom, the College and Department always supported individual ideas about topics and pedagogy, so we had great freedom to develop our teaching skills and classes that interested us. We had to meet the needs of a small institution where a single archaeology position had to teach broadly, and cover many parts of the world, rather than focusing on our specialties, but we liked that aspect. We both taught four-field Intro to Anthro classes, and had to develop our knowledge of unfamiliar topics, such as the Industrial Revolution for History of Technology (John) and Mesoamerican archaeology for the Aztecs, Incas, and Maya class (Kathy), and new developments in method and theory for our regular Archaeological Field Methods class (both of us). We felt this kept us fresh and interested, and more broadly trained than some colleagues elsewhere. We occasionally got to teach together, and often to collaborate with others at the College. As the College prospered, shabby classrooms in ARH, and a makeshift archaeology lab in a Park Street house became first a small but pleasant home in Goodnow for years, and finally the world-class facilities Anthro now has in the HSSC. The College increasingly supported field hands-on experimental teaching, student internships, MAPs and other independent projects, all of which made teaching productive and personal, and sometimes led to published work from and with students.



Kathy teaching our final short course on Making and Understanding Stone Tool, Fall 2026, in the HSSC archaeology lab.



(Kamp & Whittaker Continued)

The town of Grinnell seems insular to some who are used to big-city resources, but we rarely felt deprived, and now that we live in a bigger city, we miss the intimate knowledge of the place, and the certainty that walking to campus or stopping in the coffee shop we will inevitably encounter a friend or two. Our daughter grew up with the stability of a safe and pleasant place 'where everyone's your neighbor' but enlarged by the ability to get out of town and travel with us.

We arrived while the first generation of Anthropology profs at Grinnell were still teaching: Ralph Luebben, our predecessor in archaeology, Ron Kurtz, and Doug Caulkins, with Jon Andelson essentially bridging the gap. The department was generally harmonious and supportive, and our colleagues there and in the wider college were one good reason for staying.

Anthropology at Grinnell has changed since we arrived; people come and go, and that is the nature of things. We miss some aspects of teaching at Grinnell, but we know that the reasons we were happy here will continue for the next generations.



John with students and alumni hosting the Raging Cow atlatl event on campus, 2011



ALUMNI UPDATES

Dan Reboussin '83

After graduating from Grinnell, I continued my education at the University of Florida. I conducted ethnographic field research in Senegal (West Africa) in 1989 and earned my doctorate in 1995. I worked at the UF Libraries during my graduate work and chose to continue working in the library after graduating, so I've now been working here professionally for over 30 years in support of African Studies research and teaching. I was the Anthropology Librarian for about 5 years too, during which I served on the HRAF board of directors with some amazing anthropology colleagues! This weekend, I attended a colleague's birthday party and spoke with several Grinnell grads who I've known for years, R. Hunt Davis ('61) and Jeanne Davis (also '61?). They're going back for the first time to Cape Town this week where Hunt did his history research in 1965-'66.

I'm planning to retire from my job as African Studies Collections curator next year, so I'm busy tying up loose ends with the accessioned but unprocessed unique materials I put much of my time into arranging and describing for research access. I've done a lot of work with a variety of research materials by African wildlife conservation practitioners including Bob Campbell's photographs at Karisoke (Rwanda), where he documented Dian Fossey's early work with Mountain Gorillas for National Geographic Magazine.



Dan Reboussin '83 holding a slaughtered chicken at the village shrine in Affiniam-Boutem, Senegal

Another of my long term projects has been with the Congolese (Kinshasa, D.R.C.) street comic book creator, Papa Mfumu'Eto 1er, whose manuscript drawings and original production materials I collected in collaboration with a history professor colleague. Many of the collections I work with are at least partly digitized and available freely online for research and teaching, which I frequently promote as part of my library work. This is the village shrine in Affiniam-Boutem (Lower Casamance, Senegal), where I did an important part of my ethnographic fieldwork in 1988-'89. The shrine is at the base of a huge Baobab tree. I'm carrying a recently slaughtered chicken wrapped in banana leaves, which was given to me and Antoine Badji (my research assistant/informant) at a moment when we were low on provisions. Antoine took the photo as I was standing next to one of the village wells (I wouldn't have taken a photo of the shrine, but he insisted it was ok).

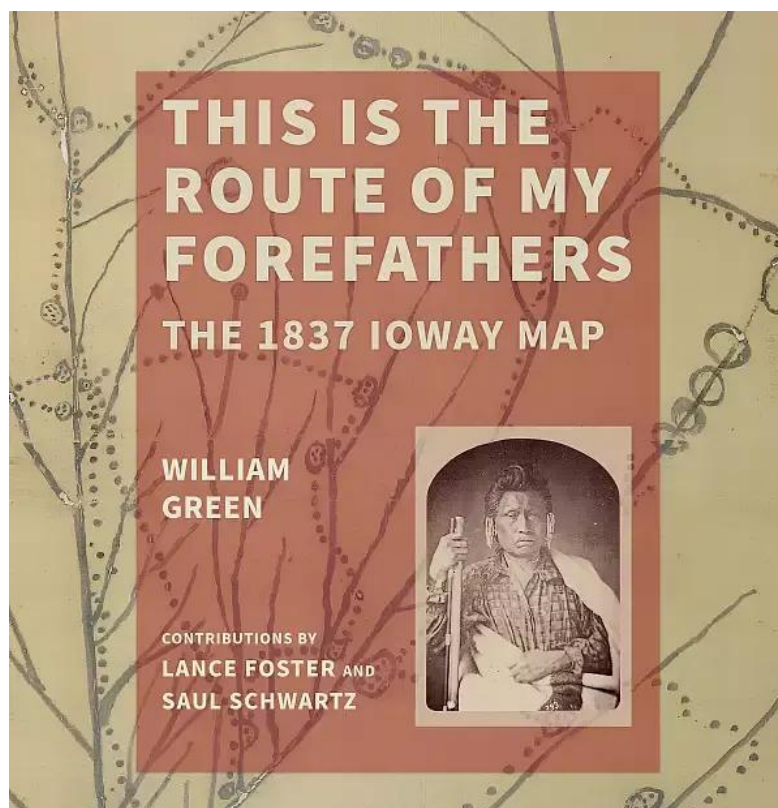


ALUMNI UPDATES

Book Talk with Bill Green '74

The state of Iowa is named for the Ioway people, yet most Iowans—and most Americans—know little about them. *This Is the Route of My Forefathers* elevates an understudied history as Bill Green synthesizes oral traditions, written records, and archaeological evidence to decode the 1837 map created by Ioway leaders. Spanning Indigenous homelands from Missouri to Wisconsin, the map was drawn to depict tribal history and defend land claims during the height of the Indian Removal era.

Illustrating nearly 200 years of Ioway history, the 1837 map offers insight into the tribe's political and diplomatic strategies, relationships with neighboring nations, and the ways they resisted and negotiated amid dispossession. Through an interdisciplinary approach, *This Is the Route of My Forefathers* reveals how group histories may fade over time, while accounts of origin—legendary histories—remain enduring, rich, and vibrant.



Poster for Bill Green Book Reading



2026 SUMMER RESEARCH FUND RECIPIENTS

Julia Ghorai '27

Julia was awarded funding from the Paul Simmons '79 and Michele Clark International Research and Learning Fund to conduct research on Chinese Ceramics at the University of Idaho Asian American Comparative Collection in preparation for her senior thesis on ceramics and foodways at Rock Springs Chinatown. She also received funding through The Ralph A. Luebben Anthropology Prize and the Rachel M. Asrelsky '89 Memorial Prize in Anthropology to participate in Montpelier Field School.

Sarah Travis '27

Sarah was awarded funding through the Paul Simmons '79 and Michele Clark International Research and Learning Fund to conduct ethnographic research on the French Way, the most famous and popular pilgrimage route of the El Camino de Santiago in Spain. This research will contribute to her senior thesis on modern pilgrimages and the Catholic Church in Spain.

Anuva Yonzon '27

Anuva was awarded funding from Paul Simmons '79 and Michele Clark International Research and Learning Fund to support ethnographic research on Nepali diaspora communities in New Jersey for her senior thesis focusing on Nepali immigrant parenting and the construction of cultural heritage in suburban New Jersey.

Coming in the next newsletter: details and photos from all our fund recipients.

Thank you to all our donors who make these experiences possible!



END OF YEAR AWARDS

The Rachael M. Asrelsky '89 Anthropology Paper Prize, for outstanding papers written in Anthropology

Excellent papers written in the introductory course, Anthropological Inquiries

- ▶ Jeremy Lim (The Colosseum as the Heart of Rome)
- ▶ Miyuki Kusakabe (Mini Proposal Relating to the British Museum's retention of Benin Bronzes)
- ▶ Runner up: Josh Emrys Payong (Hominin Haiku and Essay on Tools and Human Evolution)
- ▶ Honorable mentions: Jun Hee Lee, Jingzheng (Philip) Lu

Rachel M. Asrelsky '89 Memorial Paper Prize in Anthropology

- ▶ Claire Giannosa (Objectivity, Crisis, Celebrity: How Left-Leaning News Outlets Cover the Recent Trump Administration's Changes to the Federal Government)
- ▶ Joelle Snoland (Borderlands in Me)
- ▶ Ezra Turner (Grief and Grieving Behavior: A Great Ape Understanding of Death)
- ▶ Honorable Mentions: Daanyal Ahmed, Arsal Shaikh, Parikshit Roychowdhury, Jack Searby

The Ralph Luebben Prize in Anthropology

Awarded to the graduating senior(s) who best exemplifies the ideal anthropology student including meritorious scholarly work, breadth in the discipline, field experience, and an anthropological viewpoint on life.

Jorge Salinas & Clara Chaput

Honors in Anthropology

Noah M. Biniam
Ashleigh A. Cannon
Clara G. Chaput
Colleen A. Connell
Mallory A. Engelmann
Claire W. Giannosa

Zoe M. Kirn
Jayson T. Kunkel
Sasha A. Laugen
Sophia M. Mason
Nicole C. Mlynski
William A. Pitchford

Parikshit Roychowdhury
Jorge A. Salinas
James L. Snyder
Ezra H. Turner
Molly G. Wilcoxson



DONORS

April 2025 through April 2026

- ▶ Ms. Colleen T. Mahar-Piersma '91
- ▶ Ms. Anna Marie Campbell '82 (designated for student research projects)
- ▶ Dr. Curtis L. Scribner '73 (in honor of Ralph A. Luebben)
- ▶ Anonymous (in honor of Tammy J. Zywicki '93)
- ▶ Harriet Phinney and Adam Berger
- ▶ Dave and Donna Kinskey (for the Rock Springs Chinatown Archaeology Project)
- ▶ Dr. Stuart C. Gilman M.D. '80
- ▶ Ms. Lara E. Szent-Gyorgyi (recurring Gift to the Rachel M. Asrelsky '89 Memorial Fund)
- ▶ Ms. Susan Hyatt (designated for the Buried Chinatowns Project)
- ▶ Ms. Hannah K. Ney
- ▶ Mr. Karl G. Van Orsdol
- ▶ Sallee Garst Haerr (The James M. Garst '79 Memorial Endowed Fund for Anthropology)
- ▶ Paul Simmons and Michele Clark (Paul Simmons '79 and Michele Clark International Research and Learning Fund)

**A huge THANK YOU to all our donors.
Your generosity and support enable us to provide many of
the experiences we share in our newsletter.**

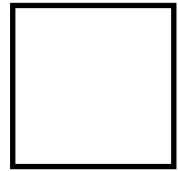


Many thanks to our Anthropology Department assistants and newsletter editors
Elsa Nielsen '27, Jorge Salinas '26, and Julia Ghorai '27.



Grinnell College

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ANTHROPOLOGY

NEWSLETTER