



Department of Anthropology
34th Annual Colloquium

Friday, March 1st, 2024
10:00 am–3:00 pm
Special Events Room
McKeldin Library

Program

9:30-10:00

Meet and Greet Breakfast

10:00-10:15

Opening Remarks

Dr. Paul Shackel, Interim Chair

Dr. Christina Getrich,

Director of Graduate Studies

10:15-11:15

*Racialized Landscapes of the Past, Present, and
Future*

Moderator: Dr. Miguel Vilar

London Booker

Ushna Saeed

Keirra Coleman

Discussion

11:15-11:45

Lunch

11:45-12:45

Alumni Panel

12:45-1:00

Break

1:00-2:00

Anthropological Geographies

Moderator: Dr. Kathryn Lafrenz Samuels

Katie Gill

Keeli Otto

Jessica Staggs

Discussion

2:00-2:15

Closing Remarks

Dr. Christina Getrich,
Interim Director of Graduate Studies

2:15-3:00

Celebration!

Keeli Otto

Tornado Communications: Meteorologists Perceptions and Experiences

This qualitative research project explores how meteorologists communicate and modify forecast recommendations based on personal experiences, personal geographies, and their perceptions of local resident responses and concerns. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten meteorologists in the greater DMV region (District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia). Initial results suggest that meteorologists value creating inclusive recommendations on responding to tornadoes, and they are aware of the diverse challenges that their audiences face in accessing safe locations during tornadoes. Additionally, the data suggests that meteorologists have a desire to create a better understanding of other severe weather events, most notably straight-line winds, due to their impact on the greater DMV region.

Ushna Saeed

'Cracking' the Stigma: Racialized Legacies of Drug Use & the Road to Equitable Harm Reduction

Washington DC often called the “political capital of the world” hosts some of the most influential and powerful politicians, organizations, and societies. Despite its power and wealth, the city has one of the highest numbers of opioid overdose deaths in the country. In a collaborative effort, funded by UMD BSOS, I joined a study to evaluate the novel implementation of Harm Reduction Vending Machines (HRVM) in DC. Simultaneously, I conducted an independent sub-study delving into the removal of safer smoking kits from HRVMs, particularly impacting LGBTQ+ drug users. By conducting interviews and using discourse analysis, I explored the legacy of DC's racialized history and landscape, the crack epidemic, and racialized forms of drug use, shedding light on the stigma prompting the removal of smoking kits. This research embodies solidarity anthropology, community collaboration with structurally vulnerable populations, and negotiating politically charged issues.

Keirra Coleman***Court Support: Mutual Aid efforts from a DC Prison Abolitionist Organization***

The prevalence of mass incarceration brings attention to the cumulative social disparity impacting Black and Brown communities within the Washington Metropolitan Area of DC. I volunteered with a community-based abolitionist collective, whose main focus was engaging and supporting individuals facing criminal charges. Drawing on participant observation in courtroom settings and semi-structured interviews with staff members, I seek to illuminate the narratives and initiatives of a particular non-profit organization and their efforts to construct and establish a care-centered approach to criminal justice that does not involve traditional punitive practices. I also present raw data captured by courtwatch volunteers to track racial disparities in arraignment outcomes. The products herein explore abolition frameworks that include transformative justice, participatory defense and somatic solidarity.

Jessica Staggs***Mapping Market Conditions at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission***

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is charged with regulating the transmission of electricity, natural gas, and oil in the United States. Within the agency, the Division of Analytics and Surveillance monitors US energy markets for any signs of market manipulation, including developing data analysis tools that can alert agency staff to manipulation and fraud. Over the summer, I worked to develop an automated mapping protocol to better integrate maps with the work of the Division and to evaluate the efficacy of using maps as a tool for gauging manipulation in power markets.

Katie Gill

Archaeology and Archives : Interpreting Maryland History through the West Ashcom Site

The archaeology site West Ashcom is located in St. Mary's County on the Patuxent River. This site has been studied by researchers through field schools, involving students in the research process. This site has been studied using traditional archaeological techniques and evolving methods including 3D documentation and chemical analysis. The West Ashcom property, with a land grant from the 1650s, represents an early wave of European colonization of the Maryland landscape. Using current archaeological and archival methods this work intends to further interpret this early site and the ways it can be used to illustrate layers of Maryland's past.

London Booker

Remembering Reno City: Memorializing Extinguished Towns through Archaeology

Fort Reno Park is within an NPS unit that contains the invisible remains of a diverse community once known as “Reno City” (ca. 1870-1950). Built on a former Civil War fort site, the community thrived until pressure from nearby segregated/red-lined neighborhoods lobbied for its demolition and conversion into parkland. Archaeological investigations demonstrated that intact deposits are present suggesting that Reno City is potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The deposits contain significant information that could inform on topics such as post-Civil War development of a free Black and multiethnic community, and the use by the federal government of eminent domain to displace minorities and erase their well-established communities. This research sheds light on this forgotten town and demonstrates the power of archaeology to yield information unavailable in traditional historic documents—specifically; on the expulsion and destruction of a whole community of Black homes.

