



# Newsletter

of the Department of Sociology & Anthropology

## Students engaged in Fieldwork

*Students participated in research and service during the second UT Sociology and Anthropology Field School course*

This spring Professors Karie Peralta and Shahna Arps taught a semester-long course, “Fieldwork in the Dominican Republic”, that included a trip abroad from March 1-9, 2019. The purpose of the course was to help students develop research skills and learn about the culture and history of the Dominican Republic. The seven students (6 undergraduate and 1 graduate) who participated in the course spent the first half of the semester reading about, watching documentaries, and discussing the history of Hispaniola and contemporary political, economic, and social issues on the island. They prepared for carrying out research in the country by learning about qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques; and students also developed



Students working on data analysis

organizational and teamwork skills in order accomplish service activities planned for the trip.

The research project involved taking anthropometric measures of children who attend the school operated by the UT group’s local partner organization, which serves primarily Haitian immigrant children. The measurements included height, weight, arm circumference and skinfolds and were analyzed to determine growth patterns. The purpose was to identify children experiencing growth stunting and who were underweight, overweight, or obese. The project also involved capacity training. The faculty and students taught 18 local teachers and school staff how to take measurements, calculate Body Mass Index, and determine growth issues, so that they would have the knowledge and skills to track the growth of their students. During the second half of the semester, the group

The group in Puerto Plata's central park..



## University of Toledo

analyzed the data they collected and spent time discussing and reflecting on their experiences. Based on the research findings, they provided the partner organization with recommendations for interventions. This project built on the results from a household survey that Professors Arps and Peralta conducted with their previous student group in 2017, which showed that a problem with food security existed in the communities.

While they worked in the schools, UT students also facilitated educational activities intended to develop the math and measuring skills of local Haitian immigrant youth who were students at their partner organization's school. In total, the group worked with approximately 150 students across grades ranging from pre-kindergarten to eighth. Given this opportunity, UT students gained experience working with children and developed skills in leadership and cross-cultural communication. They also learned about the educational obstacles that students and teachers face, due to the marginalization of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in the Dominican Republic.

During fieldwork in the Dominican Republic, they visited community-based



cacao and coffee projects, including farms and factories. They learned about how the projects aim to generate local income and educate the public on the agricultural and economic challenges that rural communities have encountered, as well as to raise awareness about coffee and cacao-producing traditions local leaders hope to maintain. The group also visited a fort dating back to the period of Spanish colonization and a Cathedral in the town square. The trip provided the opportunity for students to explore their personal research interests such as traditional medicine and disability. For example, a local expert taught the group about medicinal plants and they also had the opportunity to visit a center for children with disabilities. To celebrate International Women's Day, they attended a local event at the Ministry of Culture, which was particularly special for the group members who happened to be all women. Dr. Peralta commented that "being an all-women research team was incredibly special, because the entire group was able to share a perspective on our work and experience. There was a unique dynamic that helped to create the conditions for challenging one another in a supportive way."

Katie Raczkowski and Sarah Bayes instructing students how to use a ruler.



In their co-authored opinion piece about the course for the UT News, anthropology majors Sarah Bayes and Theresa McCario wrote “studying abroad offers students an opportunity to see the world through a different lens and get outside of their comfort zones.” Yisra Omran, a math education major, added that “these experiences really help you grow as a student and as a person”. According to Dr. Arps, “the students learned the importance of being open-minded, flexible, and adaptable during field research. I’m proud of how much they accomplished this semester!” The group plans to continue data analysis and will present their findings at conferences in the future.

## Scholarship In Focus:

### North Central Sociological Association 2019 Annual Conference

Sociology undergraduate Joshua Williams presented his research at the North Central Sociological Association conference in Cincinnati. Joshua presented his talk entitled "The Use of Online Social Networking Sites (SNS) to Nurture and Cultivate Bonding Social Capital." Joshua will continue his scholarly endeavors this fall when he start his path toward a Masters degree in Sociology at UT.

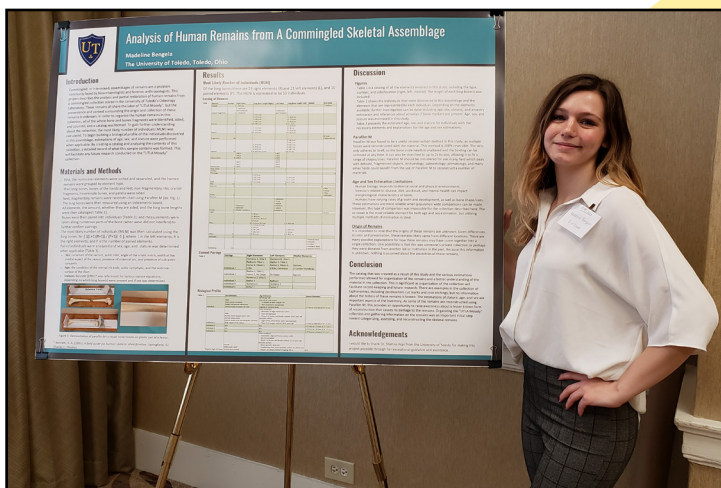


### Central States Anthropological Society 2019 Annual Conference

Anthropology Undergraduates Jennifer Moeltner (right) and Madeline Bengala (below) presented their respective departmental thesis work at the CSAS conference this past April. Madeline, who graduated in December 2018 reported on her analysis of an assemblage of commingled skeletal remains curated at the University of Toledo.



Jennifer presented her research covering the latest data and ongoing research pertaining to the peopling of the Americas. Both Graduated this academic year with departmental Honors and as member of the Lambda Alpha National Anthropology Honors Society (Beta of Ohio chapter).



# Academic Success and Service Recognized

Several members of our department, including students and professors were honored for their achievements this past May at the College of Arts and Letters 2019 Honors & Awards Recognition Ceremony.



Ms. Myriah Rodriguez has been recognized as this year's Outstanding Student in Anthropology. Myriah combined her Japanese language skills developed from her work towards a Minor in Japanese with an anthropological framework for her departmental honors thesis. Her novel research focuses on the use of Josiego, Japanese women's language, across different modern media platforms and analyzes how changes in this speech pattern relate to the ongoing structuring and de-structuring of gendered norms among Japanese-speaking communities.

Myriah Rodriguez, pictured here with her advising professor Thomas Zych.

Jennifer Moeltner (center) pictured with two of her professors, Dr. Melissa Baltus (left) and Dr. Ally Day (right) from the Department of Disability Studies

Jennifer Moeltner, a major in Anthropology with a minor in Disability Studies, was the recipient of the 2019 Dean's Essay Prize in Creative Writing. Her winning essay, "Shedding Light on Darkness: My Heroic Disorder" stems from her work in Disability Studies here at UT, which she strives to engage with her interests in Archaeology when she heads to graduate school in the coming year.



Professor Monita Mungo (left) pictured with Dean Charlene Gilbert was recognized at this year's CAL awards Night with the 2019 Outstanding Service award. This accolade highlights the out-of-the classroom effort Dr. Mungo brings to the UT community and beyond.

Professor Melissa Baltus (right), also pictured with Dean Charlene Gilbert, was honored with this year's Outstanding Teacher award, underscoring her success with engaging students in anthropology, and in particular her restart of UT's archaeology program.



## *Where are they Now? A Check-in With Some Recent Graduates*

### **A Former Undergraduate's Reflection On Her Academic Pathway Paved at U Toledo**

Jessica Hanf, class of 2018, is currently enrolled in the Master of Science in Criminal Justice Program, with a focus in Forensic Investigations, at Bowling Green State University. She has been taking courses that largely focus on death investigation, crime scene recovery, court proceedings, and a large array of criminal profile studies. Her favorite courses in the program are death investigations and forensic science disciplines, learning about different types of murders and what to examine when a body is found at a crime scene. She is scheduled to graduate with her M.S. in August 2019, and will be seeking career opportunities in forensic investigations, preferably in a laboratory setting.

As Jessica neared the end of her undergraduate career at UT, she considered her particular situation unique. She wanted to be involved in the field of forensics and initially sought a career as a forensic anthropologist. Forensic anthropologists are usually professors who will, not very often, assist law enforcement in investigations when called upon (typically when skeletal remains are found). Independent research projects with and advice from Drs. Arps, Metress, and Baltus helped Jessica realize that she wanted to

be more involved in investigative work and forensic laboratory analysis than a career as a forensic anthropologist would provide. She considered her specific future career goals to be outside the realm of her undergraduate program and recognized that a Master's Degree would be necessary to achieve her future goals. She then began to focus on researching the types of careers she had in mind, finding professionals in the field to talk to, and narrowing down graduate school options based on those more specific career goals.

Taking the Osteology Laboratory class at UT followed by volunteering in the Osteology Lab better prepared Jessica for her future plan. She realizes now that forensic laboratories look for experience in fields such as osteology, as well as anatomy, which provide a better working knowledge of the human body. Independent studies with Dr. Arps and Dr. Baltus, focusing on Bioarchaeology and Pathology, in her senior year also guided her in knowledge of forensic disciplines that she applies in her graduate program. Jessica says that “bones and dead bodies are kinda her thing”, and advises students who are looking to be based more heavily in forensic laboratories to “focus on natural sciences and forensic sciences” in addition to social sciences and criminal justice courses.

### **Harmony with Nature Program of the United Nations**

Former Undergraduate Markie Miller, highlighted in our Fall 2018 newsletter, again made headlines this spring after she was invited to speak in front of

the United Nations General Assembly in April. Markie has been recognized as a “force behind the Lake Erie Charter Initiative” passed by Toledo voters in February of 2019, recognizing a Lake Erie Bill of Rights (LEBOR).

Markie, who went on to receive a Master's degree in Environmental Science from the University of Idaho, is with Toledoans for

Safe Water. She is also on the Board of Directors for the Ohio Community Rights Network and the National Community Rights Network. Upon graduation from UT, she was recognized as the Outstanding Anthropology Student – Outstanding Foreign Language Student (German) – and – Outstanding Graduate of the College of Arts and Letters.



Markie Miller speaking at the UN General Assembly, April 22nd. Photo Credits: NBC 24 News (nbc24.com)

# Faculty in the Spotlight

## A Dream Undeferred

**Jill M. Humphries, Ph.D., Adjunct Professor in UT's Africana Studies shares her experience as an Ambassador Distinguished Scholar to Ethiopia**

As a non-traditional academic, I have sought an alternative career path as a Professor of Practice and as such have dedicated my professional career to applied research, practice, and activism. Scholar Activists like myself, are usually not offered the same professional development opportunities as our tenure track colleagues. UT's Africana Studies program and mission offers a unique and supportive environment for interdisciplinary scholars like me to accomplish both my scholarly, professional and commitment to global social justice for African and people of African descent. As an adjunct assistant professor, I have also been able to take advantage of some of the professional development opportunities offered to tenured track UT faculty. My latest accomplishment is having been selected from a national pool of scholars to represent the United States' government as a 2018 Ambassador's Distinguished Scholar for Ethiopia. According to the Institute of International Education,

This program offers a unique opportunity for a diverse set of qualified academics to advance scholarship in Ethiopia as full-time teaching faculty member at Ethiopian institutions of higher education. The aim of the program is to strengthen Ethiopian universities' capacity to teach and manage undergraduate and graduate programs and enhance research capacity within Ethiopian universities (<https://www.iie.org/Programs/Ambassadors-Distinguished-Scholars-Program>).



Ethiopia, located in the Horn of Africa.

Furthermore, this partnership among the U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia, the Institute for International Education, and the Universities of Bahir Dar and Gondar, is to build the capacity of Ethiopia's higher learning institutes to meet the increased demand for tertiary education.

### *Ethiopia – The Cradle of Civilization*

The People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is located in Eastern Africa otherwise known as the Horn of Africa. It is landlocked and surrounded by the countries of Kenya, Somalia, Djibouti, Eritrea, South Sudan, and the Sudan. It is the second most populated (105 million people) African nation next to Nigeria (190 million). It has over 80 plus ethnic groups and nationalities some of which are the Afar, Amhara, Gamo, Omo, and subsequent languages spoken e.g., Semitic, Cushitic, Omotic, Nilo-Saharan. The country is composed of 9 ethnic national regional states, Afar, Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambela, Harari, Oromia, Somali, Southern Nations Nationalities, & Peoples' Region (SNNPR), Tigray and two special administrative districts, Addis Ababa city administration and the capitol and Dire Dawa city council. Finally, Ethiopia is known

for its' high central plateaus that vary from 1,290 to 3,000 m (4,232 to 9,843 ft) above sea level, with the highest mountain reaching 4,533 m (14,872 ft).

Most importantly, it is a 3000-year old civilization and one of the major theological centers for Orthodox Christianity. Historically, Ethiopia or Abyssinia hosted the three major world religions peacefully, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. And at one point in time its' kingdom spanned as far north west to Egypt and east to Arabia.

### *Ethiopia – A Beacon of Pan Africanism*

Ethiopia holds special significance in the Black radical imagination as the only African nation to have never have been colonized by European nations. As a monarchy, and sovereign nation, Ethiopia was the only African country to be recognized as a member of the League of Nations and engaged equally by other European monarchs and U.S. presidents. As such, Emperor Haile Salassie had the vision to situate Ethiopia as the center of Pan African ideological thought and institutions such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) founded in 1963 and replaced by the African Union (AU) in 2001, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) founded in 1958, and other very important regional institutions.

### *Dr. Jill at Work, Play, Eat*

I was appointed to the College of Business and Economics at Bahir Dar University where I taught two post-graduate courses to first year public administration master students and advanced qualitative research methods to management doctorate students. For many of my male students, I was their first African American and female professor they've encountered. As the only doctorate degree holding female professor in my college, I felt a tremendous honor and pressure to represent the Black Female Internationalist tradition. As such, I engaged my all "male beehive" I lovingly referred to them as in conversations about the gendered nature of public administration and notions of masculinity and femininity in their research and societal change occurring throughout Ethiopia. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has championed gender equality by appointing half of his minister's cabinet to women. Moreso, Ethiopia is undergoing rapid political democratic and economic liberalization after over sixty years of monarchical, military rule and autocratic regimes.

"the course was quite interesting and your method of teaching and the way you approaching student was really interesting. keep it up."  
Arba Minch Management Doctorate Student.



Dr. Jill seminar presentation, visiting local communities in Bahir Dar, and with public administration master students. Bahir Dar, Ethiopia, 2018-2019.

These major political and economic shifts occurring both in the global and domestic environment has prompted the Ministry of Education to reexamine their strategic needs in higher education to build a more creative and innovative workforce as a nation. As such, they are exploring how to model their tertiary educational system after the U.S. educational model. Ethiopian



Bahir Dar University, Public Administration Master Students engaged in active learning activities. Photo credit: Dr. Jill M. Humphries, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia 2018.

Universities are still primarily disciplined based with the mode of instruction as lecture and instructor focused, relying on rote memorization, non-interactive and test oriented. My job was to introduce interdisciplinary approaches, facilitative, student centered, active learning, varied assessment and blended face-to-face and online course design. I accomplished my task, after 12-16 hour days, by applying the principles and strategies I learned from being a UT Master Online Instructor and Quality Matter’s Master Reviewer.

Finally, I could write a book about the invaluable experiences I’ve had living and teaching in Ethiopia. My colleagues and doctorate students have passed my name along to their fellow colleagues which has enabled me to be a guest presenter at Ethiopian private sector firms, a guest professor at various Ethiopian universities teaching my advanced qualitative research methods course and presenting skills based workshops at the American Corner,

U.S. Embassy local community hubs.

As a result of my commitment to the people of Ethiopia, the Consulate General for Ethiopia Los Angeles issued me a letter of recommendation stating,

The Consulate General of Ethiopia in Los Angeles believes that continued teaching of Dr. Jill in Ethiopian Universities in different parts of the country is meaningful helpful to share vast knowledge and experiences to Ethiopian students and further contribute to the people to people relationship of the two countries. In addition to this Dr. Jill is working in collaboration with the Consulate General of Ethiopia in Los Angeles to promote Ethiopian tourism and investment potentials to the American public. As an African American female scholar, her continued intellectual presence in Ethiopian higher education institutions can contribute greatly as a source of inspiration to Ethiopian women and girls.

I encourage both UT faculty, staff and students to explore the range of educational abroad programs offered by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Most recently, I was just accepted to join the Fulbright Specialist roster. Yet another opportunity to work abroad and apply my professional expertise as a learning management specialist.

If you want to learn more about the Ambassador’s Distinguished Scholar for Ethiopia Program or how to become a Fulbright Specialist you can contact me at [jhumphries2012@gmail.com](mailto:jhumphries2012@gmail.com) or watch my US International Teaching & Work Opportunities for African American Scholars and Midlevel Career Professionals YouTube video.

Ciao,

Dr. Jill

Minister Counselor, Muktar Mohamed Ware and Dr. Jill M. Humphries, Consulate General Ethiopia Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California, 2019.

