

A world map with a blue and green color scheme, showing ocean currents. The text "CURRENTS IN ANTHROPOLOGY" is overlaid in white, bold, uppercase letters.

# **CURRENTS IN ANTHROPOLOGY**

## **9<sup>th</sup> Annual STUDENT RESEARCH CONFERENCE**

**March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026**

Department of Anthropology  
University of Victoria

## Welcome to *Currents in Anthropology*:

### A Student Research Conference

*We acknowledge and respect the Lək'wəŋən (Songhees and Xwsepsem/Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Lək'wəŋən and WSÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.*

The Department of Anthropology at the University of Victoria is hosting this conference as an annual celebration of the research efforts of our undergraduate and graduate students.

The podium and poster presentations represent research completed for class projects, Honour's theses, directed studies, JCURA and VKURA research, and Master's and doctoral research.

#### **SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE (times are approximate)**

<b>10:00 am – 3:30 pm</b>	<b><i>Posters (Cornett B250, B237 &amp; hallway)</i></b>
<b>11:00 am – 3:00 pm</b>	<b><i>Podium Presentations (Cornett B235)</i></b>
10:00 am – 11:00 am	Mix, mingle, munch and view posters
11:00 am – 12:15 pm	Welcome and Territory Acknowledgement & Morning Research Presentations
12:15 pm – 1:30 pm	Mix, mingle, munch and view posters
1:30 am – 3:00 pm	Afternoon Research Presentations
3:00 pm – 3:30 pm	Mix, mingle, munch and view posters

#### **ADDITIONAL CLASS POSTERS/EXHIBITS**

**ANTH 350: Primate behaviour and conservation - COR B-wing 3<sup>rd</sup> floor**

**ANTH 333: Indigenous visions on sustainability - COR B243**

**ANTH 483: Ethno-graphic novels - COR B243**

## PODIUM PRESENTATIONS

11:00 am – 12:15 pm, CORNETT B235

### *Morning Presentations: (times are approximate)*

11:00 **Welcome and Territory Acknowledgement by Indigenous Elders**

11:15 **Dakota Farenholtz:** The Ross Bay Monument Project: Digitization and Experiential Learning at Ross Bay Cemetery

11:25 **Alexandra Lee:** On Wednesdays We Get Abortions: How Abortion Doulas are Increasing Access to Abortion Care on Vancouver Island

11:35 **Jonas Kobrc:** The Archaeology of UVic Campus Lands

11:45 **Lily Collins:** *shenKee-yAp* (coyote) or *shkAkha* (dog)? Faunal Analysis of a Pre-contact Canid Assemblage from near Lytton in the Mid-Fraser Region of BC

11:55 *Question period*

12:15   

### *Afternoon Presentations:*

1:30 **Catherine Davison:** “It’s Just What We Do in Washabuck”: Community Music Fostering Cultural Identity in Rural Communities of Cape Breton

1:40 **Beth Dow:** Demystifying Death: The Necessarily Expansive Role of the End-of-Life Doula

1:50 **Finola Reed:** The Influence of Hormonal Contraceptive Use on the Relationship Between Mechanical Loading and Trabecular Bone Mineral Density

2:00 *Question period*

2:15 **Logan Hudson:** Where Mountaintops are Found Below the Earth, an Archaeological and GIS Analysis of the Andean Megalithic Fortress Sacsayhuaman, Peru

2:25 **Kaitlyn Ashdown:** An Investigation into the Applicability of a Seven-Stage Scoring System in Epiphyseal Age Estimation Methods

2:35 **Aberdeen Roy:** The impact of community-building initiatives on senses of community & home within the YWCA Metro Vancouver’s long-term social housing program for single mothers & their dependent children

2:44 *Question period*

## POSTER PRESENTATIONS

10:00 am- 3:30 pm, CORNETT B250 & hallways

- **Saleen Burnett:** Colonial Transformations and Ecological Inheritance: Land, Labor, & Inequality in the Andes
- **Lily Collins:** C-Spring Revisited: Insights from the 2025 Field Season and New Dating Evidence for Late Lower Palaeolithic Occupation in Eastern Jordan
- **Lily Collins:** *shenKee-yAp* (coyote) or *shkAkha* (dog)? Faunal Analysis of a Pre-contact Canid Assemblage from near Lytton in the Mid-Fraser Region of BC
- **Catherine Davison:** "It's Just What We Do in Washabuck": Community Music Fostering Cultural Identity in Rural Communities of Cape Breton
- **Cooper Foxall, Batkhuyag Nasanchimeg, Serdamba Batsukh, Battogtoh Tumur:** Ninja Mining in the Ulaan Taiga: The Lasting Effects of Illegal Gold Mining on Mongolian Archaeology
- **Logan Hudson:** Where Mountaintops are Found Below the Earth, an Archaeological and GIS analysis of Unesco World Heritage Site, Sacsayhuaman, Peru.
- **Matt Johnson:** Moving Beyond Unidirectional Evolutionary Theory: The Potential for Objects Made from Bone, Antler, and Shell on the Interior Plateau
- **Kali Jones:** Seeing Museums Differently: A Visual and Relational Approach to Learning
- **Jamie Krafchik:** Beyond Kinship: Surrogate Family Structures in a University Residence
- **Evelynn O'Hara:** Degradation of Marble Monuments in the Jewish Cemetery of Victoria
- **Finola Reed:** The Influence of Hormonal Contraceptive Use on the Relationship Between Mechanical Loading and Trabecular Bone Mineral Density
- **Ella Stolk-Iachetti & India Edwards:** More than Statistics: Antepartum Anemia as a Factor in Black Canadian Maternal Mortality Rates
- **Grace Taylor:** The Myths of Milk
- **Hailey Vanderhaeghe:** Madness, Medicine, Misogyny: The History and Legacy of Hysteria in WEIRD Societies (1603-2026)

- **Jocelyn Wansbrough, Aleah Tettolowski:** Exploring Sexual Health Behind Bars: Reproductive Care Disparities for Incarcerated Canadian Women

### **CORNETT B237 (ANTH 482: Ecology and Evolution)**

- **Evelyn Boorman:** e Protein Craze in Context: Evolutionary Ecology and the Limits of High-Protein Diets
- **Lucy Bryden:** Man the Hunter, Woman the Gatherer: Examining Researcher Bias in Palaeolithic Gender Roles
- **Kennedy Derksen:** The Evolution of Aquaculture and the Ecological Transformation of Wild Salmon in British Columbia
- **Ruby Gorham:** Life Etched in Stone: Paleolithic, Neolithic, and Modern Cave Living
- **Lucy Griffiths:** When Monkeys Become Mirrors: Power, Science, and Human Difference
- **Aimee Kushniruk:** To Save a Species: The Ecological Place of Humans in the Conservation of Orangutans (Pongo)
- **Jaden Lawrence:** Wild Yeasts to Controlled Cultures: Brewing up Civilization
- **Carter Lindstrom:** Thundering Plains to Silent Winds: The Story of the Impacts of Colonialism upon Bison Ecology within Elk Island National Park
- **Kwiadda McEvoy:** Fractured Pathways: Reconstruction of Colonial Disruption and the Enclosure of Sovereignty: Colonial Ecology, Forced Sedentarization.
- **Eugene Pan:** Cultural Evolution of Hierarchy: Alien Narratives and the Construction of Racism
- **Jaime Slocomb:** Boldness in the Suburbs: Black-tail deer Adaptations and Coexistence in Human-Dominated Landscapes
- **Preston Spratt:** Experimental Archaeology, Preservation Bias, and the Invisibility of Past Technologies
- **Ashley Zimmer:** Weeds Aren't the Enemy: Reconsidering Agricultural Narratives in Archaeobotany

## PODIUM PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

(alphabetical order by first author)

### **Kaitlyn Ashdown:** An Investigation into the Applicability of a Seven-Stage Scoring System in Epiphyseal Age Estimation Methods

The process of long bone development - epiphyseal maturation - is a canalized process that progresses through distinct developmental stages at relatively consistent ages across juveniles. Because of this consistency, epiphyseal maturation is a common proxy for chronological age in skeletal age estimation methods. Ages at which epiphyses are expected to appear, undergo fusion to the diaphysis (active fusion), and completely fuse to the diaphysis, are well established. However, how individuals progress through active fusion remains understudied; this is largely because epiphyseal fusion studies commonly combine individuals at all degrees of active fusion into one 'partial fusion' stage. As a result, age ranges produced for active fusion are broad, which can impact the precision of age estimations made from them. This study investigates the applicability of a precise, seven-stage epiphyseal scoring system developed by Dr. Kyra Stull and Dr. Louise Corron in refining age estimation methods. To do so, this study utilizes a known age-at-death sample of Americans 5-20 years old and raises the following question: How might Stull and Corron's (2022) seven-stage scoring system be used to refine age estimation methods? Quantitative descriptive analysis via relative frequency distribution revealed consistent patterns in how individuals progress through active fusion of humeral and femoral epiphyses. These patterns indicate that narrower, more precise expected age ranges can potentially be produced for use in age estimation methods based on degree of fusion for slower fusing epiphyses. Results of this study can be used to inform further development of precise age estimation methods for American populations.

### **Lily Collins:** *shenKee-yAp* (coyote) or *shkAkha* (dog)? Faunal Analysis of a Pre-contact Canid Assemblage from near Lytton in the Mid-Fraser Region of BC

This Honours research involves the analysis of pre-contact canid faunal remains recovered during archaeological monitoring near Lytton BC, within the

Nlaka'pamux Homeland. Using current osteometric analytical techniques for canid identification in North America, and in reference to available ethnographical data, this research aims to determine the burial context of the canid assemblage, identify the species of the canids as either coyote (*Canis latrans*) or domestic dog (*Canis familiaris*), and better understand human-dog relationships in the Mid-Fraser region of BC. A total of 457 pieces of canid faunal material were recovered, along with coprolites, fish bones, and several lithic flakes. A large broken dacite bifacial point, characteristic of the Plateau Horizon culture type (ca. 1,200 to 2,400 years BP), was recovered adjacent to several articulated vertebrae. Comprehensive faunal analysis of the assemblage revealed nearly two complete canids: a) an elderly male who may have died of old age, and b) a mature female who may have died due to injuries sustained from point impact. However, species identification was inconclusive due to the fragmentation of the skeletal remains, the limited research on canid identification in North America, and the strong skeletal similarities between coyotes and dogs in the region. Definitively identifying the species of the individuals recovered and understanding the context of the burial will require the use of more advanced zooarchaeological or scientific methods. Future research could include aDNA analysis to confirm the species of the individuals and Carbon-14 dating to confirm the age of the assemblage.

**Catherine Davison:** “It’s Just What We Do in Washabuck”: Community Music Fostering Cultural Identity in Rural Communities of Cape Breton

This research explores what is being done in the community of Washabuck, Cape Breton to support the creation of cultural identity through music. The main issue discussed is how Community Music will be maintained in Cape Breton when it is unique to the island, many of the towns are rural, and populations are in decline. This research was conducted through interviews in person and over zoom, as well as through secondary resources such as literature, archives, archival footage and online academic publishings. The main results drawn from this research are that community members are making efforts to try and conserve this music through foundations such as Treasures of Youth and by creating venues for Community Music to occur. The youth of the island are the future of Community Music and its livelihood, and

young musicians need to continue having opportunities to perform, and to have spaces they feel supported in learning Cape Breton cultural music. This research is significant due to its emphasis on the importance of supporting cultures in rural areas as well as the preservation of inclusive, local, community led opportunities promoting Community Music. This research will be disseminated through a short film and an accompanying paper.

**Beth Dow:** Demystifying Death: The Necessarily Expansive Role of the End-of-Life Doula

This thesis explores the diverse role of the contemporary End-of-Life-Doula (EOLD) that can be understood as necessarily multifaceted. The increased medicalization of death in the past 50 years has led to an increased need for emotional, mental, spiritual and educational support in end-of-life-care; this gap is being filled by EOLDs throughout the last decade. Unstructured interviews conducted with three EOLDs from Southern B.C. confirmed the necessity of this work in supporting people and communities ethically, and emphasized the need for flexibility in role enactment to make fulfill this work. EOLD work spans from bedside vigiling to educational roles based in increasing community death literacy and end-of-care planning, yet all facets of care can be understood as ethically and morally driven. The current structure of this work allows for the production of a moral economy of exchange between EOLDs and their communities, with notable exchanges occurring outside of a monetary economy. While some EOLDs seek a standardization of the role in the hopes of decreasing ambiguity and increasing legitimacy in professional fields, many others argue that this standardization risks a loss in the role's necessary diversity in practice. This thesis seeks to explain how the moral economy of death care collapses without this diversity, as the legal boundaries of the practice inevitably disconnect the ethical basis from this extensive role.

**Dakota Farenholtz:** The Ross Bay Monument Project: Digitization and Experiential Learning at Ross Bay Cemetery

In the fall of 2025, I undertook a self-directed study in partnership with the Old Cemeteries Society focused on developing and implementing a digitization

procedure for an archive of monument records at Ross Bay Cemetery. The project involved designing a clear, sustainable workflow for digitizing historical records, testing the procedure with volunteers, and refining it through collaboration, trial and error.

While I initially thought of this project as a mainly technical one, centered around the preservation of archaeological records, the process revealed how digitization work with volunteers and a community-based organization can involve both social and interpretive practice, complete with its own challenges of navigating positionally as a student and facilitator. The project also exposed the complicated process of addressing differences in digital literacy among volunteers and balancing the relationship between quality and accessibility within preservation practices. In this way, the digitization procedure I created became a site of shared learning, raising questions about who shapes archival systems and how expertise is understood in community settings.

My presentation will explore this experience, looking at how digitization can be understood as a kind of fieldwork, and how engagement with the digitized records informed the development of a related research proposal on gender and commemoration, touching on the relationship between archival practices and historical inquiry. Ultimately, this project highlighted how important experiential learning in a community-based setting can be, and demonstrates how digitization can function not only as preservation, but also as a catalyst for research, collaboration, and professional growth!

**Logan Hudson:** Where Mountaintops are Found Below the Earth, an Archaeological and GIS Analysis of the Andean Megalithic Fortress Sacsayhuaman, Peru

Sacsayhuaman is a UNESCO world heritage site and an archaeological park that watches over the Inka city of Cusco, Peru, atop a small mountain to the north. In this research, a geographic information system (GIS) analysis was built using potsherd archaeological excavation data from 2001 provided by the Instituto Nacional de Cultura Cusco (Silva Hurtado, 2001). There is still much to be understood by the Inkan site after its destruction and dismantling from colonialism in the 16th and 7th century (Dean, 1998). Today all that remains of

Sacsayhuaman are the megalithic boulders that form its structures and the ever spanning architecture as a reminder of the power held by the Inka. This GIS analysis aims to contribute to the understanding of humans' use to space and how certain areas of Sacsayhuaman were used through mapping the potsherd assemblages. The purpose of this research is to determine if there are spatial patterns in different potsherd classes based on density and location to discern possible sectional uses of the site from different types of pottery. The significance of this research is to bring understanding to how Sacsayhuaman was used during its occupation by the Inka, by broadening the archaeological and cultural understanding of the site through GIS. Through creating a visual map of the Inka's relationship to space and place, this work revitalizes the understanding of Sacsayhuaman and contributes to what is known about the history of Cusco and Andean culture.

### **Jonas Kobrc:** The Archaeology of UVic Campus Lands

Since the recognition of archaeology as a formal discipline in British Columbia, the management and protection of so-called cultural resources has been a central aspect of any associated practice, whether academic or professional (in the form of CRM). Despite this focus, and BC's reputation as a leader in heritage legislation on the global scale, the regulatory system the province has established has been characterized by repeated structural and ethical failures. These have not only been failures to recognize Indigenous peoples as stakeholders in their own traditions and culture, and failures to protect important village and ancestral sites, but in general, an inability to adhere to Indigenous laws, systems of values and international agreements (e.g. UNDRIP). This thesis examines the destruction of archaeological site DcRt-32 within the broader socio-political landscapes of archaeological practice and heritage management throughout BC's history. Examining the history of this site through ethnographic accounts provided by UVic Anthropology Department faculty, research of archival record, critical analysis of heritage legislation, and scholarly literature, this study aims to reconstruct the circumstances surrounding DcRt-32's destruction in 1964. By contextualizing these events through the lenses of heritage management, BC's evolving systems of archaeological legislation, and a decolonial approach to

archaeological practice centred on Indigenous governance, this research posits that the loss of this site was not isolated event, but rather the predictable outcome of a regulatory system built by colonial forces that have long marginalized Indigenous archaeological heritage in the province.

**Alexandra Lee:** On Wednesdays We Get Abortions: How Abortion Doulas are Increasing Access to Abortion Care on Vancouver Island

Despite the legalization of abortion in Canada, many barriers still exist for patients accessing abortion care. Here on Vancouver Island, there is only one abortion clinic offering medication abortion care, and one hospital offering surgical abortion procedures, meaning that financial limitations, familial responsibilities, and transportation access can all make abortion care access more challenging for patients navigating an already difficult process. This qualitative research project aims to investigate the specific role of the Abortion Support Collective, a collective of abortion doulas, in making abortion care more accessible on Vancouver Island, through emotional support, resource navigation, and transportation accompaniment. Through semi-structured interviews with abortion doulas and inductive analysis of social media usage, this honours thesis demonstrates the significance that abortion doulas can have in supporting abortion patients, educating the public about abortion care, and increasing and improving access to abortion care in the unique geographical area of Vancouver Island. While abortion access is well-researched within feminist anthropology, there is an absence of research dedicated specifically to the role of abortion doulas, and even less regarding the specific geographical area of British Columbia or Vancouver Island. This research seeks to supplement that gap and add to the available literature on the barriers faced by patients seeking legal abortion care.

**Finola Reed:** The Influence of Hormonal Contraceptive Use on the Relationship Between Mechanical Loading and Trabecular Bone Mineral Density

Mechanical loading through sport, particularly high-impact activity, and estrogen exposure both promote bone mineral density (BMD). However, excessive training combined with insufficient energy availability can disrupt

endocrine function, leading to amenorrhea, low bone mass, and increased fracture risk. Estrogen and mechanical loading influence bone through distinct but complementary biological pathways. Hormonal contraceptives containing exogenous estrogen are sometimes considered protective for bone health in athletes experiencing menstrual dysfunction, though evidence of their effects on bone adaptation to mechanical loading remains mixed. Exogenous estrogen may alter bone's adaptive response to mechanical strain, yet few studies have examined how estrogen-containing contraceptive use influences trabecular bone adaptation across different loading regimes. Improving understanding of this relationship is important for understanding how hormonal contraceptive use may influence skeletal health in physically active women, particularly those experiencing menstrual dysfunction. This study assesses whether the benefit of mechanical loading to trabecular BMD among young females is mediated by estrogen supplementation in those with and without a history of amenorrhea. Athletes participating in high-impact (soccer and running) and low-impact (rowing) sports were compared with recreationally active controls. Secondary data from peripheral quantitative computed tomography (pQCT) scans were used to assess trabecular BMD at the distal tibia. Significant differences in trabecular BMD between athletes and controls were observed only among women with a history of estrogen-containing contraceptive use, with the effect primarily driven by lower BMD in controls. These findings have important implications for biological anthropology and for advancing understanding of bone health in physically active women.

**Aberdeen Roy:** The Impact of Community-building Initiatives on Senses of Community & Home within the YWCA Metro Vancouver's Long-term Social Housing Program for Single Mothers & their Dependent Children.

In British Columbia, Canada, single-mother-led households are at a higher risk of experiencing social exclusion, homelessness, housing insecurity, and marginalization, including being excluded from housing and social communities. There is a growing need for not just stable, safe, subsidized housing, but places of community and home. The YWCA BC is a non-profit organization that currently operates sixteen long-term housing communities across the Lower Mainland for women and single mothers and their

dependent children. Each building has its own Community Development Coordinator, a YWCA BC staff member responsible for managing and facilitating community-building initiatives, which creates a collaborative relationship between housing provider and tenant. Using qualitative research methods, an inductive analysis, and semi-structured interviews with YWCA BC staff members, this paper explores the impact of community-building initiatives on co-productions of home and community between YWCA BC staff and formerly housing-insecure tenants.

## POSTER PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS - CORNETT B250 & hallways

(alphabetical order by first author)

**Saleen Burnett:** Colonial Transformations and Ecological Inheritance: Land, Labor, & Inequality in the Andes

The Andes have experienced profound ecological transformations driven by colonial land use, Spanish policies, and agricultural practices which continue to shape interactions between Indigenous Peruvians and land. Before Spanish colonization in the 16th century, Peru was dominated by the Inca Empire which established a sophisticated state with extensive agricultural and cultural networks. The arrival of Spanish forces disrupted these systems through conquest which resulted in, forced labor, the introduction of European crops and mining enterprises. This poster examines how shifts in labour, and subsistence in early colonial Peru created ecological legacies that continue to influence contemporary agricultural landscapes and reinforce social inequality. including elevated biological stress, increasing morbidity, and shifts in the ownership of cultivable land and assumes political significance and social conflict. The agricultural reorganization remains deeply entangled with expanding extractive economies. Large scale mining was devastating to indigenous populations with its exploitative labor practices but left a legacy of mercury pollution. These formerly lush but now toxic landscapes remain centers of renewed large-scale mining, where Indigenous and rural communities disproportionately bear the burdens of contamination, economic displacement, and ongoing socioecological stress. Colonial extraction emerges not as a closed historical episode but as an ongoing (and negative) ecological inheritance, structuring modern pressures and patterns of adaptability. This reframes contemporary mining conflicts, agrarian inequality, and contamination as outcomes of historical processes rather than isolated modern crises. I argue this contemporary issue extends into the colonial historical past as landscape changes and social inequality continue to impact Indigenous Andean peoples.

**Lily Collins:** C-Spring Revisited: Insights from the 2025 Field Season and New Dating Evidence for Late Lower Palaeolithic Occupation in Eastern Jordan

C-Spring, situated in the Azraq Basin of eastern Jordan, is a key site for understanding Lower Palaeolithic occupation in the eastern Levant. First identified in the 1950s during hydrogeological investigations, the site yielded a biface-dominated artifact assemblage embedded in a deeply buried green gravel deposit. Based on artifact typology and the presence of extinct Pleistocene fauna, C-Spring was interpreted as an Acheulean occupation within a savannah-like palaeoenvironment. Increased construction disturbance in the early 1980s, including excavation of a fishpond that overlapped the original C-Spring find location, prompted an archaeological excavation by Andrew Garrard in 1985. Placed approximately 30 m to the east of the original C-Spring site, Garrard's excavation recovered nearly 3,000 stone artifacts overlying a green gravel matching the 1950s descriptions and was interpreted as an in-situ Acheulean knapping floor and an extension of the original C-Spring open-air site. In 2025, the Azraq Marshes Archaeological and Palaeoecological Project (AMAPP) attempted to relocate Garrard's 1985 excavation in hopes of dating the Acheulean occupation by single-grain optically stimulated luminescence (OSL). This presentation details the findings of this investigation, encompassing new stratigraphic, technological, and chronometric data, contributing to a deeper understanding of the late Lower Palaeolithic period in eastern Jordan.

**Lily Collins:** *shenKee-yAp* (coyote) or *shkAkha* (dog)? Faunal Analysis of a Pre-contact Canid Assemblage from near Lytton in the Mid-Fraser Region of BC

This Honours research involves the analysis of pre-contact canid faunal remains recovered during archaeological monitoring near Lytton BC, within the Nlaka'pamux Homeland. Using current osteometric analytical techniques for canid identification in North America, and in reference to available ethnographical data, this research aims to determine the burial context of the canid assemblage, identify the species of the canids as either coyote (*Canis latrans*) or domestic dog (*Canis familiaris*), and better understand human-dog relationships in the Mid-Fraser region of BC. A total of 457 pieces of canid faunal material were recovered, along with coprolites, fish bones, and several

lithic flakes. A large broken dacite bifacial point, characteristic of the Plateau Horizon culture type (ca. 1,200 to 2,400 years BP), was recovered adjacent to several articulated vertebrae. Comprehensive faunal analysis of the assemblage revealed nearly two complete canids: a) an elderly male who may have died of old age, and b) a mature female who may have died due to injuries sustained from point impact. However, species identification was inconclusive due to the fragmentation of the skeletal remains, the limited research on canid identification in North America, and the strong skeletal similarities between coyotes and dogs in the region. Definitively identifying the species of the individuals recovered and understanding the context of the burial will require the use of more advanced zooarchaeological or scientific methods. Future research could include aDNA analysis to confirm the species of the individuals and Carbon-14 dating to confirm the age of the assemblage.

**Catherine Davison:** "It's Just What We Do in Washabuck": Community Music Fostering Cultural Identity in Rural Communities of Cape Breton

"It's Just What We Do in Washabuck": Community Music Fostering Cultural Identity in Rural Communities of Cape Breton is Undergraduate Honours Research which explores what is being done in the community of Washabuck, Cape Breton to support the creation of cultural identity through music. The main issue discussed is how Community Music will be maintained in Cape Breton when it is unique to the island, many of the towns are rural, and populations are in decline. This research was conducted through interviews in person and over zoom, as well as through secondary resources such as literature, archives, archival footage and online academic publishings. The main results drawn from this research are that community members are making efforts to try and conserve this music through foundations such as Treasures of Youth and by creating venues for Community Music to occur. The youth of the island are the future of Community Music and its livelihood, and young musicians need to continue having opportunities to perform, and to have spaces they feel supported in learning Cape Breton cultural music. This research is significant due to its emphasis on the importance of supporting cultures in rural areas as well as the preservation of inclusive, local, community led opportunities promoting Community Music.

**Cooper Foxall, Batkhuyag Nasanchimeg, Serdamba Batsukh, Battogtoh Tumur:** Ninja Mining in the Ulaan Taiga: The Lasting Effects of Illegal Gold Mining on Mongolian Archaeology

This project explores archaeology in the Ulaan Taiga Special Protected Area in Khovsgol, Mongolia. Recent archaeological work conducted by NOMAD Science has revealed the region could contain important archaeology. However, in the 2000's Mongolia and Khovsgol were home to a large-scale illegal gold rush bringing residents from all over the country into the Aimag in search of riches. The techniques used by the miners were dangerous and destructive leaving behind areas of clear cut forests, unstable pits, garbage and an overall significant footprint of their presence. Through the hard work of the Ulaan Taiga Special Protected Area park rangers the majority of the destruction has been restored. However, scars such as stumps, litter and mining pits are still visible. This project intended to explore the possible damage to archaeology in the Ulaan Taiga Special Protected Area. Through local knowledge, surveying techniques and mapping we aimed to explore some of the extent of the destruction to the environment and cultural material in the region. While gold mining in the area has steadily decreased due to improved regulations and the patrol of local park rangers, damage has already been done. Understanding what might have been lost during this period is important in building a comprehensive holistic understanding of the region for future archaeological work.

**Logan Hudson:** Where Mountaintops are Found Below the Earth, an Archaeological and GIS analysis of Unesco World Heritage Site, Sacsayhuaman, Peru.

Sacsayhuaman is a UNESCO world heritage site and an archaeological park that watches over the Inka city of Cusco, Peru, atop a small mountain to the north. In this research, a geographic information system (GIS) analysis was built using potsherd archaeological excavation data from 2001 provided by the Instituto Nacional de Cultura Cusco (Silva Hurtado, 2001). There is still much to be understood by the Inkan site after its destruction and dismantling from colonialism in the 16th and 7th century (Dean, 1998). Today all that remains of Sacsayhuaman are the megalithic boulders that form its structures and the ever spanning architecture as a reminder of the power held by the Inka. This

GIS analysis aims to contribute to the understanding of humans' use to space and how certain areas of Sacsayhuaman were used through mapping the potsherd assemblages. The purpose of this research is to determine if there are spatial patterns in different potsherd classes based on density and location to discern possible sectional uses of the site from different types of pottery. The significance of this research is to bring understanding to how Sacsayhuaman was used during its occupation by the Inka, by broadening the archaeological and cultural understanding of the site through GIS. Through creating a visual map of the Inka's relationship to space and place, this work revitalizes the understanding of Sacsayhuaman and contributes to what is known about the history of Cusco and Andean culture.

**Matt Johnson:** Moving Beyond Unidirectional Evolutionary Theory: The Potential for Objects Made from Bone, Antler, and Shell on the Interior Plateau

For the Interior Plateau of Northwestern North America, archaeologists often frame changes in past lifeways as evolutionary shifts in demography, mobility, environment, subsistence, and egalitarianism, among others. These shifts are mostly presented as unidirectional (i.e. low to high population, forager to collector, mobile to sedentary, egalitarian to hierarchical), and frequently utilize similar lines of evidence, such as the temporal distributions of stone toolkits, radiocarbon dates, house features, and zooarchaeological remains. Less understood are objects made from antler, bone, and shell. This poster illustrates how unidirectional evolutionary approaches are pervasive in cultural historical sequences in the Interior Plateau, how they have changed, and what consideration has been given to the incorporation of faunal artifact data. I argue that faunal artifacts are persistently absent in understandings of past Plateau lifeways. While archaeological realities might explain part of this research dearth (e.g. rarity due to difficulty in creation, preservation biases), here I explore compounding biases stemming from the nature of archaeological work on the Plateau itself (culture history construction, evolutionary theory, and androcentrism). While incipient, this research highlights the need for consideration of bone, antler, and shell objects and illustrates the potential of these items to bring forward new ways of thinking about ancient lifeways on the Plateau. When and where do these objects

occur? What insights into past activities relating to nuances of gender, prestige, or kinship might be gained by the inclusion of these objects which have been missed in broad systems focused approaches? What patterns of landscape interaction might emerge?

**Kali Jones:** Seeing Museums Differently: A Visual and Relational Approach to Learning

This project demonstrates my interpretation of the core themes explored in ANTH 373: Museums and Anthropology, a course centered on decolonial museology, Indigenous heritage practices, and the role of museums in processes of truth, reconciliation, and repatriation. Across the term, I created a scrapbook that reimagines each course assignment through two visual strategies: photographs of my observations and lived experiences related to the weekly topics, and word clouds that capture my emotions and thoughts on the topics. Together, these elements turn written reflections into a visual story that showcases the connections between course content, my personal learning, and present-day museum practice in Canada.

The second part of the project, a Squamish longhouse made for the Shoebox Exhibition Project, extends my reflection through material storytelling. The longhouse holds objects that tell a story of my cultural journey. By placing my important belongings within this model of the home of my people, the principles of exhibition curation we explored in class (contextualization, relationality, and the responsibilities in representing Indigenous knowledge and experience) can be seen.

Together, these two projects show alternative ways to engage with the ethics, histories, and responsibilities that shape museum work today. This project demonstrates how visual and material expression can support decolonial learning, encourage self-location, and bridge academic content with lived experience. This presentation invites viewers to consider how personal storytelling, visual reflection, and small-scale exhibition practices can contribute to broader conversations around representation, belonging, and the future of Indigenous–museum relationships.

**Jamie Krafchik:** Beyond Kinship: Surrogate Family Structures in a University Residence

This autoethnographic study examines how university housemates attending UVic cultivate a sense of familial belonging and emotional intimacy through shared rental experiences on Vancouver Island. Drawing on observant participation and semi-structured interviews with housemates, this research analyzes how everyday routines, crises, and collective labor transform a rental property into a meaningful home.

The findings demonstrate that surrogate family bonds are constructed through patterned practices of care, emotional reciprocity, and shared responsibility. During periods of housing insecurity, including flooding, landlord negligence, and eventual eviction, differentiated caregiving roles emerged that mirrored traditional family structures. Rather than fragmenting the household, instability intensified cohesion by reinforcing trust and psychological safety through processes of mutual accountability. Shared rituals and emotional buffering functioned as mechanisms of “householding,” enabling members to sustain belonging despite structural precarity.

This study contributes to scholarship on home, place-making, and non-kin kinship by demonstrating how university households actively redefine traditional notions of family through relational practices rather than biological ties. It highlights the importance of chosen families in providing emotional stability during formative life stages and situates student homemaking within broader conversations about housing insecurity and youth identity. Ultimately, the research underscores how belonging is socially produced through everyday care, particularly under conditions of instability.

**Evelynn O'Hara:** Degradation of Marble Monuments in the Jewish Cemetery of Victoria

Congregation Emanu-El's Jewish Cemetery of Victoria is home to numerous marble headstones, many of which are severely degrading due to environmental and human factors. Remembering the names of the dead is very important in Judaism, therefore this project aims to identify the environmental threats marble markers are facing within the cemetery. This

was done through surveying 44 of the marble monuments and noting signs of degradation, and evaluating their surroundings in order to try and explain what factors could be contributing to the weathering. It was found that biological growths, spatial factors, and orientation of the gravestones all played a role in rates of deterioration. Recognizing the threats historic monuments face is an important early step in conservation, enabling mitigation strategies to be identified. Preserving grave stones helps to remember the names of those who are buried in the cemetery, allowing their memory to live on.

### **Finola Reed:** The Influence of Hormonal Contraceptive Use on the Relationship Between Mechanical Loading and Trabecular Bone Mineral Density

Mechanical loading through sport, particularly high-impact activity, and estrogen exposure both promote bone mineral density (BMD). However, excessive training combined with insufficient energy availability can disrupt endocrine function, leading to amenorrhea, low bone mass, and increased fracture risk. Estrogen and mechanical loading influence bone through distinct but complementary biological pathways. Hormonal contraceptives containing exogenous estrogen are sometimes considered protective for bone health in athletes experiencing menstrual dysfunction, though evidence of their effects on bone adaptation to mechanical loading remains mixed. Exogenous estrogen may alter bone's adaptive response to mechanical strain, yet few studies have examined how estrogen-containing contraceptive use influences trabecular bone adaptation across different loading regimes. Improving understanding of this relationship is important for understanding how hormonal contraceptive use may influence skeletal health in physically active women, particularly those experiencing menstrual dysfunction. This study assesses whether the benefit of mechanical loading to trabecular BMD among young females is mediated by estrogen supplementation in those with and without a history of amenorrhea. Athletes participating in high-impact (soccer and running) and low-impact (rowing) sports were compared with recreationally active controls. Secondary data from peripheral quantitative computed tomography (pQCT) scans were used to assess trabecular BMD at the distal tibia. Significant differences in trabecular BMD between athletes and controls were observed only among women with a history of estrogen-containing contraceptive use, with the effect

primarily driven by lower BMD in controls. These findings have important implications for biological anthropology and for advancing understanding of bone health in physically active women.

### **Ella Stolk-Iachetti & India Edwards:** More than Statistics: Antepartum Anemia as a Factor in Black Canadian Maternal Mortality Rates

Globally, Black women face far higher rates of adverse antepartum and postpartum health outcomes, including maternal mortality - in the US, UK and Brazil, maternal mortality rates are 2.5-3% higher for Black women. In Canada, these specific statistics are difficult to find due to “color-blind” health statistics, however, a recent scoping review of Canada’s medical system indicates the number is likely similar. Additionally, they found that Black women in Canada experience far higher rates of pre-term births, low infant Apgar scores, preeclampsia and spontaneous infant loss.

What is unexplored in Canada are the factors which influence Black severe maternal mortality (SMM) rates. For women of African/Caribbean descent in Canada, a key aspect increasing SMM may be anemia. A 2019 study looking at a cohort of women from British Columbia with anemia identified a link between antepartum/postpartum anemia and maternal morbidity/mortality with specific increases in preeclampsia, preterm births, low infant Apgar scores, and infant loss. This study did not include ethnicity or racial information. While Canadian race-based anemia statistics do not exist, studies have found that 21.5% of Black pregnant patients in California had/have anemia, compared to only 9.6% of white pregnant patients. Additionally, antepartum anemia increased 100% in Black patients between 2013 and 2023.

This severe dearth of research on Black Canadian mothers’ health and risk factors only allows adverse health outcomes to continue. Antepartum anemia may be an aspect that helps to unravel the picture of the continued crisis that is Black mother and infant mortality

## **Grace Taylor:** The Myths of Milk

In recent years, the selected evolutionary adaptation and gene-culture coevolution of lactase persistence is being used as a marker for superior biological advancements and has shown up in Alt-Right discourse. Lactase persistence is described as the continued production of the enzyme lactase into adulthood that allows the body to process lactose, which is present in dairy products. This is an evolutionary adaptation that has an evolutionary history in Europe where lactase persistence occurs. Mistakenly and unfortunately however, white supremacists have invoked this as a sign of 'racial purity' and 'racial superiority' perpetuating the long-debunked history of scientific racism or how toxic sociobiological worldviews that persist today (Kaufman & Tan, 2022). An aspect of this deeply racist and flawed argument is that lactase persistence is not just seen in Europe, but in many other populations around the world such as east Africa, Middle East and Asia (Lala, 2024). Here, I draw on the archaeological evidence of pastoralism around the world to identify the global geography of lactase persistence which represented in far more areas than northern Europe. I show ties between agriculture and European varieties of cheese being a problematically celebrated aspect of 'high civilization' and argue that certain pastoralists get discussed and celebrated in contrast to others pastoralist regions such as Mongolia and Kenya. These examples show how important it is for anthropologists to confront racist white supremacy and scientific racism which co-ops evolutionary discourses. Rather than being relegated to the past, these narratives have powerful implications and relevance today.

## **Hailey Vanderhaeghe:** Madness, Medicine, Misogyny: The History and Legacy of Hysteria in WEIRD Societies (1603-2026)

The wording and treatment of female hysteria has evolved from the 1600s to the 2020s in Western Educated Industrialized Rich Democratic (WEIRD) cultures. This once common medical diagnosis of female restlessness and distress was often thrust upon those whom society considered troublesome women, with a common cure being marriage and childbirth or face estrangement from society. This was thought to benefit the household unit by removing the burden of an unruly daughter/woman from the father/husband

and subsequently turn her into the cultural ideal of Mother and Wife. Following the 1980 removal of the presumed condition from western psychological manuals (the DSM-III) women are no longer diagnosed with female hysteria. However, the language still persists and its gendered assumptions influence how women's mental health is perceived and addressed in WEIRD contexts. This poster presents for consideration an overview of WEIRD responses to female distress and contrasts it against Okinawan (Indigenous to Japan) and Umbanda houses (a collection of similar Brazilian syncretic religions') belief of female discomfort as a condition of the spirit. Literature searches have yielded that current literature is not publicly accessible, nor does it identify emic comparisons of women's experiences with hysteria diagnoses over time, Here I showcase popular perceptions, alongside myth, might reduce stigma and sexism and shift treatment plans (or lack thereof).

**Jocelyn Wansbrough, Aleah Tettolowski: Exploring Sexual Health Behind Bars: Reproductive Care Disparities for Incarcerated Canadian Women**

Incarcerated individuals in Canada are heavily marginalized by the penal system. The discrimination is exemplified in the failure to provide timely, confidential and safe healthcare for inmates. Women make up only 5.8% of people incarcerated in Canada (Correctional Service Canada, 2025) but report inadequate access to healthcare and facing systemic barriers like discrimination. Much of the research and popular culture discussion about prisons and the corrections system is about and in relation to men. Women and gender diverse people are often an afterthought, if they are thought of at all. This research centers women and their specific and distinct needs in reproductive healthcare while incarcerated. Failure to provide adequate and timely care for inmates could contribute to declining health conditions. Lack of sexual care access can exacerbate broader issues of stigma and prevent people from disclosing illnesses and receiving care. This scoping review is intended to identify the available research on sexual health disparities for incarcerated women in Canada and how lack of access to sexual and reproductive healthcare relates to outcomes and stigma. 64 abstracts and papers were reviewed using Covidence software and 11 met the criteria for data extraction.

Articles reported poor conditions and discrimination that prevented inmates from accessing healthcare. Incarcerated women were found to lack adequate routine gynaecological and breast health screening, as well as STI testing. Limitations of the literature were found including small sample sizes, invisibility of gender diverse individuals, lack of information about abortion while incarcerated and exclusion of federally incarcerated individuals.

## **POSTER PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS – Cornett B237**

### **ANTH 482: Ecology and Evolution**

(alphabetical order by first author)

#### **Evelyn Boorman:** e Protein Craze in Context: Evolutionary Ecology and the Limits of High-Protein Diets

Protein is essential for human survival, yet in contemporary Western culture it has been elevated from a basic nutrient to a near-limitless path to health optimization. Popular fitness narratives commonly promote intake levels as high as 2.2 g/kg/day, framing high-protein diets as evolutionarily “natural” and biologically superior, often invoking hunter–gatherers as justification. Anthropological and nutritional research complicates these claims. While many foraging societies obtained substantial energy from animal foods, protein intake likely remained within physiologically tolerable ranges rather than at extreme levels. Archaeological and ethnographic evidence also demonstrates significant dietary variation across ecologies, seasons, and social contexts, undermining the idea of a single ancestral “ideal” diet. Modern high-protein trends that regularly exceed 1.5–2 g/kg/day overlook these constraints, as well as major differences in activity levels, life expectancy, and environmental pressures between past and present populations. Beyond physiology, the protein craze carries ecological and sociocultural implications. Intensified livestock production increases environmental strain, while cultural narratives continue to equate meat with strength, health, and status. The reduction of diet to isolated macronutrients further obscures broader patterns of balance, diversity, and sustainability. This study argues that the contemporary protein trend selectively draws on evolutionary rhetoric while exceeding likely ancestral norms and ignoring

dietary variability. By situating high-protein diets within evolutionary, ecological, and sociocultural contexts, this analysis challenges claims of biological inevitability and highlights the importance of evaluating dietary advice within broader systems of health and sustainability.

**Lucy Bryden:** *Man the Hunter, Woman the Gatherer: Examining Researcher Bias in Palaeolithic Gender Roles*

Popular anthropological ideas of Palaeolithic hunter-gatherer gender roles have spread through Western society, functioning as ideological scaffolding, maintaining patriarchal models of gendered work. The construction of man the hunter and woman the gatherer has significantly shaped contemporary ideas of the past and the natural roles of gender. The way in which we perceive the past is shaped by human values that are in turn not universal but influenced by economic drivers (Gowdy, 2021). Tracing the roots of these ideas can paint a more comprehensive picture of truth. Anthropological research of gender roles requires a critical examination of the researcher's positionality; only then can these ideas and findings be properly contextualized. The analysis of Western anthropological literature and archaeological research spanning from around 1960 to today is the primary focus of this work, beginning with Lee and DeVore's 1968 *Man the Hunter* and incrementally drawing on work from ten-year periods, sourcing a total of ten studies. Evaluation primarily focuses on the researcher's positionality in relation to their work, explored through rhetorical analysis, temporal orientation of each study, and the theoretical frameworks the research is based upon to understand how assumptions of past gender from within contemporary systems are addressed. The evolution of research on gender roles is widely applicable to the origins and explanations of female subordination; this work targets bias contributing to an inaccurate portrait of the past.

**Kennedy Derksen:** *The Evolution of Aquaculture and the Ecological Transformation of Wild Salmon in British Columbia*

Salmon are a vital resource for both natural ecosystems and human societies. As a keystone species, their presence in the wild is very influential to the biodiversity of marine ecosystems. Along the Northwest Coast in British Columbia, salmon are a common and accessible resource. The market for salmon has grown exponentially in the past few decades. To accommodate the increasing demands of colonial expansion and population growth, fishing practices have shifted towards commercial salmon production through farming. A common argument regarding evolution is that the depletion of natural resources is a product of human nature and therefore inevitable. I anticipate this research will challenge the validity of this claim by analyzing the intentions that coincide with salmon management, technological change, and ecological impacts. This poster will assess salmon farming from an evolutionary perspective, focusing on how aquaculture affects human subsistence, Indigenous cultural practices, and wild salmon populations and genetic variability. Humans' relationships with salmon will be analyzed using archaeological records, historical analyses, as well as current case studies and reports. The complex interspecies relationship will be represented through four central themes of colonialism, predation, extinction, and conservation. This research uses qualitative data to create a timeline of salmon fishing and farming, highlighting how these practices have progressed, and the resulting ecological and cultural effects.

### **Ruby Gorham:** Life Etched in Stone: Paleolithic, Neolithic, and Modern Cave Living

People have been transforming their environments to make safe spaces for themselves for millions of years. Evidence of this can be seen in caves around the world, from Paleolithic cave art to Neolithic burials to modern-day interpretations. These domestic spaces hold key meanings for cultures over time, showing how they lived everyday life. By examining the evolution of a commonly used domestic space, further insights into human evolution can come to light. Cave art from the Paleolithic period can show what animals were available, which may have been hunted, as well as show evidence for fire from the use of charcoal. The Neolithic shows funeral caves with diverse art and motifs. While cave use today integrates modern technology into these

spaces to make energy-efficient homes. These spaces allow for social interaction and safety, which play an important role in the evolution of culture. Tracking this cultural evolution throughout time can give helpful insights into cognition, invention, migration, and the use of the environment. This paper gives a detailed timeline of how caves have been used as domestic spaces in three different timelines in Europe. It focuses on the cultural and evolutionary changes, as well as what these caves can tell archeologists about the people who lived in them.

### **Lucy Griffiths:** When Monkeys Become Mirrors: Power, Science, and Human Difference

Primatology, the scientific study of non-human primates, has played a central role in shaping what it means to be human. Anthropologists have sought to find the biological, social, and evolutionary nature of humans. Since the 18th century, comparative anatomy, taxonomy and behavioural work have positioned humans as primates, beginning with Linnaeus's classification of humans through Huxley's anatomical comparisons and Darwin's sexual selection theories. Such Foundational biological theory established humans within the primate order, while also naturalizing hierarchical narratives aligned with colonial ideologies. As anthropology refined comparative frameworks for primate species, this continued to reinforce harmful conceptions around sexual selection and sociobiology, entrenching assumptions about male aggression, female passivity and racialized comparisons of non-human primates and non-European presenting human beings. Here, I synthesize historically influential texts alongside contemporary critiques by Haraway, Miliam, and others to demonstrate how evolutionary narratives in primatology influence social norms in human societies through bodies of non-human primates. I use NGram to identify spikes in word usage across select disciplines and trends in gendered association of females as 'inherently coy' and males as 'naturally aggressive', along with depictions of certain ethnicities as evolutionarily closer to apes. These illustrate how scientific comparison are often mobilized to support problematic social and political ideologies , revealing that primatology remains intertwined with broader discourses. I argue anthropologists must demonstrate greater

reflexivity about narratives, power dynamics, and the production of knowledge, particularly what is deemed 'normal' and biologically determined, to more critically engage definitions of human nature.

**Aimee Kushniruk:** To save a species: The ecological place of humans in the conservation of orangutans (*Pongo*)

Orangutans (*Pongo*) inhabit the island of Borneo and Sumatra where anthropogenic intervention has diminished populations of the three subspecies of orangutan. The Bornean orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus*), Sumatran orangutan (*Pongo abelii*) and Tapanuli orangutan (*Pongo tapanuliensis*) are all listed as critically endangered on the IUCN Red List. With orangutan populations experiencing endangerment for over half a century, it is crucial to implement conservation efforts. The role of humans as aiding in ecological functions is often overshadowed by the negative impact of colonial and capitalist efforts that harm environments and indigenous communities. As orangutan conservation develops new approaches, I asked the question of can humans serve ecological functions to aid in the conservation of orangutans? Humans have been evolving alongside orangutans for 70,000 years since the middle paleolithic. Orangutan habitats will continue to face anthropogenic influence meaning conservation efforts must recognize this relationship. In order to investigate this, I composed a research project by compiling and analyzing works done regarding the topic of orangutan conservation and the ecological function of people. The focus of my secondary data analysis is finding potential approaches to orangutan conservation that recognizes the co-evolutionary relationship of orangutans and humans.

**Jaden Lawrence:** Wild Yeasts to Controlled Cultures: Brewing up Civilization

The presence of fermented beverages in human communities is estimated to have begun in significance around 10,000 years ago. Since then, fermented beverages have become a dietary staple in numerous different societies globally, contributing to being a stable source of calories, relatively bacteria free hydration, and a culturally important social enhancer. Mixing knowledge

of the importance of social interaction and the usage of domestic spaces for accelerated social reproduction, fermented beverages would have been present in these same cultures as mechanisms for a safe and communal cultural peer to peer drinking activity. The potential effects in which fermented beverages have had on human culture and evolution need to be studied further. Here it is shown that there has been a measurable positive effect on historic human populations that have partaken in the production of fermented beverages that would otherwise not have been present. What is evident is that without the usage of fermented beverages as a dietary staple, significant portions of participant populations would be at a substantial risk for waterborne diseases and malnutrition. Alongside that, significant positive social effects are inferred in the cases of hospitality and working relationships for those who partake in a communal event where fermented beverages were available. These results demonstrate the overall positive effects that the fermentation of beverages had in historic human populations, contributing to evolutions in society and culture.

**Carter Lindstrom:** Thundering Plains to Silent Winds: The Story of the Impacts of Colonialism upon Bison Ecology within Elk Island National Park

Bison have roamed the plains and woodlands of North America for thousands of years, living in relation to the land and its inhabitants. Prior to the arrival of European settlers and colonial expansion, the bison and Indigenous nations of the plains lived in relation and moved across the territory as one. With the arrival of settlers and colonialism, the few surviving populations of bison were fenced off and displaced from their traditional territories, drastically affecting their biogeography and ecology. Focusing on the population of woodland bison forcefully located within the borders of Elk Island National Park, Alberta, Canada on Treaty 6 Territory. Also known as the traditional territory of the Plains Cree, Stoney Nakota, Blackfoot, and Métis Nations. This investigation highlights the evolution of bison ecology since colonial impacts to Indigenous peoples and bison populations. I show how forced depopulation and dispossession of the bison herds dramatically changed the ecology and environment as the bison act as a keystone species of the plains and woodland environments. The evolution of settler-colonialism across North

America has limited bison recovery and the traditional Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies. By investigating this relationship, the evolution of bison ecology over the past approximately 300 years is evident in relation to settler-colonialism and the lasting effects it has had on the bison, the Indigenous Nations, and the ecosystems.

**Kwiadda McEvoy:** Fractured Pathways: Reconstruction of Colonial Disruption and the Enclosure of Sovereignty: Colonial Ecology, Forced Sedentarization.

The transition from pre-contact resource management to colonial extraction represents one of the most abrupt ecological shifts in the Holocene. Across Canada, this "ongoing war" involves the deliberate destruction of mobility and subsistence tools, ranging from the slaughter of the Bison and the state-led killing of Inuit sled dogs to forced sedentarization and restricted land access. These disruptions are reinforced by the Indian Act and a lack of accreditation for Indigenous Nations as the primary stewards of their territories. On Haida Gwaii, colonial ecology is physically visible in the forest and sea. Sitka black-tailed deer, introduced over 80 years ago, have decimated the understory and changed the trajectory of tree growth, while industrial logging has pushed the goshawk toward extinction. These ecological crises are compounded by over-harvested razor clam fisheries and infrastructural barriers: BC Hydro's failed attempts to partner with remote Nations have forced a continued, harmful reliance on diesel fuel instead of sovereign energy, as most Nations are making a transition to energy sovereignty. This demonstrates that these impacts are biologically structural. Analyzing data from deer enclosures provides physical proof of ecosystem recovery; inside these spaces, salal, salmonberries, and ferns flourish when removed from colonial ecological pressure. Indigenous-Led Sustainability is a reclamation of an evolutionary niche. By moving from diesel dependency to energy sovereignty and restoring food systems, the Haida Nation offers a template for global resilience. These results suggest that long-term ecological health requires recognizing Indigenous Nations as the primary architects of their own geography, shifting the narrative from "loss" to "persistence and restoration".

**Eugene Pan:** Cultural Evolution of Hierarchy: Alien Narratives and the Construction of Racism

Egalitarian societies lasted for most of human history. As population density grows and resource pressure rises, hierarchy emerges not as a biological requirement but as a social strategy to gain power and normalize inequality. Today, “alien” narratives in pseudo-archaeology and politics function as cultural niche construction strategies that justify racial hierarchy. Pseudo-archaeologists claim that aliens, not Native American ancestors, built monuments like Cahokia. Based on biological determinism and the “primitive null,” these narratives portray Indigenous cultures as simple and incapable of building complex monumental architecture, erasing Indigenous achievements to protect a white supremacist cultural niche—a modern form of polygenism. I see a similar move in today’s politics: Donald Trump weaponizes “alien” to frame immigrants as invaders, while using talk of “alien files” to effectively mask a racist and colonial agenda. I employ a mixed-method approach. Quantitatively, I map public interest in aliens (Google Trends; UFO sightings) against hate-group density and hate-crime reports to see whether “alien” obsession overlaps with prejudice in the USA. Qualitatively, I analyze how these myths imply that Indigenous societies lack the intellectual basis for innovation and dismiss their achievements to justify modern racial hierarchies. I anticipate a positive correlation between alien narratives and measures of racism. These alien and apocalyptic narratives stir up fear and anxiety about migration and displacement. Seemingly harmless alien rhetoric reproduces hierarchy and racial bias, making xenophobia feel natural. Identifying such rhetoric-based tactics is a crucial step in challenging the apocalyptic ideas that hide and rationalize racism.

**Jaime Slocomb:** Boldness in the Suburbs: Black-tail deer Adaptations and Coexistence in Human-Dominated Landscapes

Urbanization is transforming ecological communities across the Pacific Northwest and it is reshaping how wildlife navigates increasing human-dominated landscapes. Black-tailed deer which are usually associated with coastal forests from California to British Columbia, have become especially prominent urban adaptors. Their steadily growing presence in cities like Victoria, Nanaimo, and Seattle help to offer a powerful lens for understanding how these large mammals respond to rapid anthropogenic

change. Building on foundational work by researchers like Chris Darimont, Jason Fisher, and Sophie Gilbert whose studies show that urban environments alter aspects such as predation risk, foraging availability, and behavioral strategies —this study examines how concepts like behavioral plasticity, ecological traps, and human/wildlife coexistence shape Black-tail deer responses to urbanization. To investigate these patterns, we will use google maps to show migration patterns of Black-tail deer and their population density within urban spaces versus non-urban spaces. This could be upgraded to a story map that takes the viewer through this information as well on a smaller scale. Here we show, through migration patterns and population congregation that urbanized black-tailed deer usually stick closely to small green spaces and rely heavily on landscaped plants and other human-provided food sources, and are far less skittish than “wild” deer. These results indicate that behavioral plasticity is not just habituation; it helps drive deer success in cities. In a broader ecological context understanding black-tailed deer urbanization will help inform future strategies for coexistence in expanding urban areas, and it emphasizes the need for interdisciplinary approaches in order to integrate landscape ecology, Indigenous governance, urban planning, and community engagement to manage the growing deer populations. It also offers much needed insight into wildlife resilience in an increasingly urban world.

### **Preston Spratt:** Experimental Archaeology, Preservation Bias, and the Invisibility of Past Technologies

Archaeological explanations of human evolution and ecology have long been structured by what preserves rather than what was central to past cultures. Drawing on ecological works of Julian Steward (1955) and the processual archaeology of Lewis Binford (1980), anthropologists have long tried to explain cultural evolution through material remains. Yet the archaeological record is largely shaped by preservation bias, with stone tools and faunal bones mainly dominating interpretations, while materials like fibre, wooden tools, baskets, and clothing rarely survive. Drawing on ethnoarchaeological and experimental research among forager societies such as the Hadza, Mbuti, and Gana, (Stibbard-Hawks, 2025) this project combines existing knowledge

on the production, use, and discard of perishable technologies. It highlights how practices like net-making, basketry, and wooden tool manufacturing structures societies but leaves very faint archaeological traces. By integrating middle-range theory, introduced by Lewis Binford (1968), with experimental replication and comparative ethnography, this project aims to bring to light the gaps between lived, material cultures and their excavated assemblages. This poster will demonstrate how preservation bias in the archaeological record can distort interpretations of forager ecology and the social complexities of past cultures. Experimental archaeology further strengthens this approach by physically replicating perishable technologies to observe how they are produced, used, broken, and ultimately decomposed. By remodeling these processes, it can give insight into how organic materials might appear, or fail to appear, in the archaeological record; this further helps bridge the gap between past lived realities and the material traces that survive.

### **Ashley Zimmer:** Weeds Aren't the Enemy: Reconsidering Agricultural Narratives in Archaeobotany

Archaeobotany is the subfield of archaeology that examines preserved plant remains (such as seeds, charcoal, pollen, and phytoliths) to reconstruct past human-plant relationships. The field benefits greatly from understandings of past agricultural practices, cultivation techniques, and native ecosystems prior to human colonization. Research in the field focuses on agricultural origins, domestication, crop intensification, and subsistence strategies. Processual archaeology (prominent in the 1950's and 1960's) not only heavily influenced the methods used in archaeobotany, but the underlying worldviews of the subject as well. Through this framework, "weeds" have been defined negatively, situating them as plants out of place in relation to cultivation. Colonial agricultural frameworks have influenced this botanical categorization, taxonomically separating plants based on economic functions. Through the lens of processualism, research in cultivation and agriculture has had an over emphasis on efficiency, domestication, and intensification. By shifting our focus in the discipline from weeds as agricultural waste, new research instead places plants as agents within shared ecologies.

Archaeobotanical research on agricultural practices is supported by advances in methods such as functional weed ecology, and posthumanistic/multispecies approaches. While processualistic narratives have placed weeds in negatively regarded categories, Indigenous plant knowledge systems and land management practices often complicate the crop/weed binary and redefine more colonially shaped agricultural landscapes. Allowing space for weeds to be viewed as ecological collaborators is not only important in understanding cultivation techniques, but also for exploring questions about long term effects of agricultural systems, especially in the context of climate change.

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