PROGRAM

12:00 WELCOME

12:05 - 12:20 MARGOT MAI ADVISORS: ARTHUR KLEINMAN AND VERENA CONLEY (ROMANCE LANG. AND LIT.) STREET HURT: INJURY AND CARE IN NIGERIAN SEX WORK MIGRATION

12:20 - 12:35 NICK SEYMOUR ADVISOR: ARTHUR KLEINMAN A STATE OF SICKNESS: YOUNG MEXICAN DOCTORS ON THE PERIPHERY

12:35 - 12:50 AMANDA FANG ADVISORS: ARTHUR KLEINMAN AND MARTY ALEXANDER (EAST ASIAN LANG. AND CIV.) 剩 ("LEFTOVER") OR 盛 (FLOURISHING): RETHINKING STIGMA IN THE LIVES OF UNMARRIED WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA

12:50 - 1:05 MARYANNE CHEGE ADVISORS: JEAN COMAROFF, GEORGE MEIU, DARJA DJORDJEVIC (AAAS) CONTINGENCY, COMPROMISE, COMPASSION: ETHNOGRAPHY OF A CANCER WARD IN KENYA

1:05 - 1:20 SOPHIA KAUFMAN ADVISORS: ARTHUR KLEINMAN AND OMAR SULTAN HAQUE STORIES OF SUFFERING: THE ROLE OF SOCIETY, CULTURE, AND HISTORY IN THE MAKING OF WEST VIRGINIA’S OPIOID EPIDEMIC

1:20 - 1:30 BREAK

1:30 - 1:45 SAMUEL SHAPIRO ADVISORS: STEVEN CATON AND BENJAMIN BUCHLOH (HISTORY OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE) MICHAEL ASHER’S MUSEOLOGY

1:45 - 2:00 HANAA MASELMEH ADVISOR: STEVEN CATON A COMPLICATED WELCOME: POLICY CHALLENGES OF SYRIAN REFUGEE INTEGRATION IN THE GERMAN STATE OF BAVARIA

2:00 - 2:15 AMANDA FLORES ADVISOR: MICHAEL HERZFELD THE LAND AND THE LAW IN THE LLAJTA: CHALLENGES IN HOUSING RIGHTS ADVOCACY IN BOLIVIA

2:15 - 2:30 AILIE KERR ADVISORS: DIANA LOREN AND STEPHEN MITCHELL (FOLKLORE AND MYTHOLOGY) KNOWING YOUR PLACE: KALKMALERIER AND CHURCH SPACE

2:30 - 2:40 BREAK


2:55 - 3:10 KUMERI BANDARA ADVISORS: MICHAEL HERZFELD AND ELVIRA DIFABIO (ROMANCE LANG. AND LIT.) HERITAGE HUSBANDRY: AN ITALIAN FARMER’S RECLAMATION OF AGENCY THROUGH ‘SITUATED HERITAGE’

3:10 - 3:25 CENGIZ CEMALOĞLU ADVISORS: MICHAEL PUETT AND MICHAEL SANDEL (GOVERNMENT) CAPITALIST ETHICS OF THE HALAL ECONOMY: ISLAMIC FINANCE IN MALAYSIA

3:25 - 3:40 SILVANO D’AGOSTINO ADVISORS: MICHAEL HERZFELD AND ALFRED GUZZETTI (VIS. AND ENVIRON. STUDIES) THAT’S WHY YOU ALWAYS DREAM OF COMING HOME: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC BIOGRAPHY OF EUROPEAN TRANSLOCAL BELONGING

3:40 - 3:55 ANGELA LEOCATA ADVISOR: ARTHUR KLEINMAN RECONSIDERING CARE: SUBJECTIVITIES, TECHNOLOGIES, AND CAREGIVING AMONG LAY-COUNSELORS IN GOA, INDIA

3:55 CLOSING REMARKS
I first got to know Mario Gala as an acclaimed producer of the cheese tuma di pecora, in the northwestern hillside of Italy. Given his affiliation with a food activist movement called Slow Food—one of whose objectives is to conserve local food heritage—I had assumed that Mario was a local bent on preserving the heritage of his community. In reality, he was a migrant from southern Italy who followed his personal objective to create a farm that brought together the perks of a bygone Italian pastoral life, and the comforts of modern life. His farm was a result of his conscious attempt to evade dominant society's hold over individuals. In my thesis, I study Mario’s understanding of heritage and its conservation, by drawing from fieldwork I conducted in the summer of 2017 while working for him as a farmhand. I explore how Mario subverts institutional power and reclaims agency over his own life, while symbolically associating himself with acclaimed establishments in order to evade scrutiny and challenge. I then discuss a framework to study heritage as a resource that newcomers can utilize to integrate into a community without submitting to the dominant societal imperative. To facilitate analysis, I coin the term “situated heritage,” which refers to the form of receiving and transmitting heritage that exists in situ an individual’s personal history and motives, and the historical and current sociocultural contexts of a given locality. Finally, I discuss the symbiotic relationship between situated heritage and institutions’ portrayal of heritage, to illustrate the importance of the former for the continued existence of the latter.

Kumeri Bandara grew up in the suburbs of Kandy, Sri Lanka. As a child, she questioned the origin and meaning of the many traditions and rituals by which she was surrounded. Once in college, she combined her interests in sociocultural processes and languages through her joint concentration in Social Anthropology and Romance Languages and Literatures. She has since conducted anthropological research in Italy and Sri Lanka on topics such as heritage, resistance, women’s empowerment, and alternate forms of power. After graduation, she will do a master’s in Visual, Material, and Museum Anthropology at Oxford University, after which she plans to do a PhD in Social Anthropology. In her spare time, Kumeri enjoys cooking, traveling, learning new languages, and chatting about anything and everything.
This thesis explores the relationship between the Boston Catholic Church and its Spanish-speaking members. Within the Catholic Church, three actors and their roles will be examined: the Archdiocese of Boston, local activists, and local politicians. A close historical examination will provide a foundation for which the ethnographic work of this thesis, observing the interactions between these same three forces in one heavily Latino community in the Archdiocese. Through these times and spaces, the thesis will trace the role of liberation theology and the political implications and associations of it. Themes explored will include how the embrace of liberation theology affects historically and present-day incorporation of low-income Catholics and women into the Church.

Catherine Brennan studies Social Anthropology with a citation in Spanish. From a small town outside of Boston, her time at Harvard has taken her intellectually and physically across the world. She has spent summers and a semester traveling, studying, and working throughout Latin America, Asia, and Europe. Coursework in anthropology has supplemented these experiences bringing intellectual themes into life. This thesis has brought what Catherine has learned, seen, and lived through these four years home and explored how history and culture, within the context of the Catholic Church, can coexist and influence one another in an immigrant community near Boston. After graduation, Catherine will join Harvard Teacher Fellows, a program in which she will conduct graduate education work at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and work in a high need urban public school.
Islamic finance prohibits charging interest, requires every investment to be based on a concrete vehicle, and mandates that one’s profits cannot be gained through others’ financial losses. In this medium, Malaysia turned itself into the premier Islamic finance hub of Asia with an Islamic finance industry of $142 billion. Although more than 20 countries have established Islamic banks, Malaysia stands out as the only country that centrally regulates Islamic and conventional branches side-by-side through the Bank Negara, its Central Bank. Data collected through more than 180 hours of participant observation in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; para-ethnography conducted in retail banking, shariah-advisory and business development departments of two Malaysian Islamic banks, and more than 35 expert interviews conducted with managing directors of Islamic banks, policymakers, and professors were analyzed to draw conclusions from. My research concludes that Islamic banking in Malaysia engineers a new conception of clean and dirty across religious and practical realms, as the Islamic banks are perceived to be cleansing any impurities associated with the source of the capital deposited to the bank.

Cengiz Cemaloğlu is a senior in Currier House, pursuing a joint concentration in Social Anthropology and Government, with a secondary in Philosophy, and a citation in Mandarin Chinese. As his interest lays at the applications of anthropology on business, philosophy, and global affairs, Cengiz conducted research projects on irredentism and pan-Turkism in Central Asia, sovereign wealth funds of China, display of Europeanness and soft-power through the Eurovision Song Contest, public expenditure in Turkey, and fortunetelling in Boston. He is a senior intern at the Harvard Foundation for Intercultural and Race Relations, Williams/Lodge International Government and Public Affairs Fellow at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, and a director at the board of directors of the Harvard/MIT COOP. Upon graduation, Cengizwill be moving to Copenhagen, Denmark to work at ReD Associates, an anthropology-based management consulting firm, as an entry-level consultant.
Cancer is a present reality in the lives of many Kenyans, perhaps now more than ever before. With more than 40,000 new cases and 28,000 deaths annually, it is the third leading cause of morbidity and mortality in Kenya. However, owing to its elusive nature and expensive, ever-evolving therapies globally, cancer care remains an undelivered promise of biomedicine to many patients in low and middle-income countries. How do patients and caregivers in Kenyatta National Hospital, the largest public hospital in Kenya, deal with the daily contradictions of these undelivered promises? This thesis emerges from a desire to account for the lived experiences of the large number of patients with life-threatening disease, who are forced to deal with the rollercoaster of hope and despair: the contradictions arising when one seeks life-extending care in a public facility. It underscores, through ethnographic accounts, the structure of cancer care in research and medical training. My thesis focuses on the tragic gap between the need for cutting-edge treatment and the realities of a resource-limited, postcolonial setting for public oncology care at various levels—resources, care, and knowledge. I demonstrate how this gap paves the way for new forms of care such as support, comfort, and knowledge offered by various actors, lay and professional, at Kenyatta. Ultimately, my thesis seeks to give an account of how people make do with what they have and make meaning in the face of scarcity and the failed promises of biomedicine.

Maryanne Chege, a senior in Currier House, was born and raised in Nairobi, Kenya. She is interested in the intersection of medicine and global health, particularly with regards to resource-poor settings. Given this interest, her studies in medical anthropology and African studies, and her professional aspirations in medicine, she conducted a senior thesis project on cancer in Nairobi, her hometown. The project allowed her to engage with issues of life and death, pain and suffering, and meaning making in a developing public oncology facility. Outside anthropology, Maryanne likes reading poetry, cooking, baking, dancing and exploring Boston.
As a joint concentrator in Visual and Environmental Studies (Filmmaking) and Anthropology, my thesis project consists of a written ethnography and a nonfiction film about my father’s history of migration, moving from a tiny village in south Italy to a city in north Germany. Tracing my father’s life, I use his stories as ethnographic evidence in my exploration of his sense of belonging to his home village and my German hometown. Crucially, this sense of belonging lacks any sense of national or supranational identification and is instead locally focused. As I retell his stories of success and failure, of leaving his first home and building a second one, of becoming an acclaimed restaurateur and going bankrupt, I analyze my father’s sense of belonging along four domains, the social, the economic, the cultural, and the political.

Silvano D’Agostino came to anthropology through ethnographic filmmaking. With an additional background in social psychology, he has employed various methods of inquiry but is fundamentally interested in the study of human behavior and its many puzzles. His most recent anthropological projects have revolved around migration and belonging, resulting in a short film about refugees in Germany and this thesis. Outside his academic work, you will probably find Silvano enjoying food, conversations, or media—the other kind of “culture”. In an ideal future, Silvano will continue to draw interdisciplinary connections in academia and beyond.
There is a special term reserved for unmarried women over the age of 27 in China: “leftover” women. Recently, the “leftover” woman social category and its associated negative traits have increasingly dominated the Chinese public imaginary. This thesis seeks to reconsider the relationship between the lived experience of China’s “leftover” women and the stigma that is associated with the “leftover” woman social category. Presenting ethnographic evidence, I bring to the fore the personal lived experiences of “leftover” women and examine the ways these experiences resist, reshape, and revalue the “leftover” social category. Ultimately, I open up the possibility for an alternative understanding of “leftover” women as a subject position through which gender norms linking the social value of women to heterosexual marriage are both internalized and resisted in contemporary China.

Amanda Fang is a joint Social Anthropology and East Asian Studies concentrator living in Quincy House. She was born in the US but was raised in Hong Kong, Beijing and the UK. She has known since high school that she wants to pursue her passion for Anthropology and China Studies in higher education and has combined the two for her senior thesis research conducted in Beijing. After a summer study abroad in South Africa with Professors John and Jean Comaroff, Amanda became interested in legal anthropology and will be attending law school next fall.
“The Land and the Law in the Llajta: Challenges in Housing Rights Advocacy in Bolivia” is an anthropological exploration of humanitarian aid and community initiatives in poor communities in the city of Cochabamba. It aims to elaborate on complicating factors that can confront those who wish to work on humanitarian projects among marginalized indigenous migrants on behalf of “human rights,” with a focus on the right to adequate housing. Such factors include experiences of marginalization, relationships between aid recipients and aid providers, and relationships between organizations that propose to provide this aid. Alongside these actors and the varying roles they play, another challenge that my thesis explores is perceptions of land and property among the community members who live in these barrios in Cochabamba. In the barrios, land conflicts between barrio leaders and purported “landowners” from beyond the barrios are rife because the people settling on them do not have state-defined “legal” ownership of their lots; due to neglect from the municipal government as a result and reason of this, it is up to the migrants to find their own sense of community and homeownership within the city. Where resources from the state fall short, NGOs from outside Bolivia intervene, but not without consequences that affect relationships between all the actors involved.

Amanda Flores is a senior in Cabot House concentrating in Social Anthropology with a secondary in Ethnicity, Migration, and Rights. Born and raised on the island of Cebu, Philippines, she and her family immigrated to Oregon in 2007. With a perpetual thirst for adventure and a passion for learning others’ languages and cultures, she spent a year in France as a high schooler then continued traveling as a Harvard student. Apart from Bolivia (a country that has fascinated her thanks to how culturally similar yet geographically different it is to her homeland), she has also spent time in Rwanda, Poland, and Austria as part of her academic career. In the future, she hopes to attend law school and pursue a career in international human rights, particularly in areas concerning access to justice for underprivileged populations.
The opioid epidemic is overtaking communities and wiping out generations in America. West Virginia has the highest rate of death due to overdose, of any state, in the country. My thesis attempts to uncover the complexities of pain and suffering within the opioid epidemic, in West Virginia. By expanding a bio-medical framework to include social, cultural, and historical factors the causes of and treatments for the opioid epidemic can be better understood. This thesis explores the historical background and social contextual environment of West Virginia which reveals much regarding how pain and suffering is complex and varying; for example, how factors like hopelessness and stigma play a large role in this epidemic. Through ethnographic fieldwork and interviews conducted in West Virginia I analyze how the socio-cultural world in West Virginia has played an integral part in the creation of pain and suffering. The opioid epidemic is the result of covering pain, not treating it. We cannot afford to add another Band-Aid solution to a compound problem that requires innovative interventions and structural change.

Sophia concentrates in Social Anthropology with a secondary in Global Health and Health Policy. Originally from West Virginia, Sophia has been inspired to work on health projects that are deeply connected to home, like her thesis focus on the opioid epidemic. In addition to her work related to the opioid epidemic, she has interests in minority population health, tropical medicine, and epidemiology and has produced long-term research projects in these areas for the Global Fund and Fort Peck Native American Reservation’s Health Promotion and Disease Prevention unit. Sophia is active in Harvard’s Reproductive Justice Action and Dialogue Collective and in prison education, working as a teacher at Suffolk Prison. In the future, Sophia plans to continue her work in global health and disease prevention.
Kalkmalerier are present in over 700 churches in Denmark from 1100-1775. This thesis considers these paintings not as individual motifs, but in their whole church context, concentrating on their interaction with church architecture. The door and the chancel are focused on particularly in this work, both because their position is difficult to change and because of their religious significance. Drawing from works on medieval drama, performance, and embodiment, this thesis shows how an awareness of movement through the church alters the contexts of the paintings by visually connecting paintings in different vaults that may have different biblical or narrative contexts. This thesis argues that visual connections between the paintings, many of which had no textual relationship, were intended as theological commentaries and dramatic tools for directed emotional responses to the church. Eve is examined in the context of wider European trends and her role as a mother is examined in the context of the Church’s changing position on the importance of the nuclear family and its movement towards the inclusion of mothers as holy figures. This thesis connects this change to the end of concubinage and morganatic marriage in late medieval Denmark.

Ailie Kerr is a joint concentrator in Folklore and Mythology and Archaeology, focusing mainly on medieval Scandinavia and especially Denmark. She is particularly interested in concepts of motherhood, and the interaction between physical and spiritual space. Her thesis advisors were Stephen Mitchell in the Folklore department, and Diana Loren in the Archaeology department.
My thesis focuses on the experiences of lay-counselors in a public health trial in Goa, India. The Healthy Behaviors Program trains mothers to deliver cognitive-based therapy to mothers with perinatal depression. I explore questions of caregiving, subjectivities, and technologies of care as they unfold in this public health setting. In shifting away from a public health framework of program-efficiency and the recent anthropological interest of bureaucratic forces, this thesis lends attention to lay-counselors as caregivers. Building from Kleinman’s (2012) theory of caregiving as “transformative” to “both the caregiver and the person receiving care,” my project considers the impact of counseling on the lay-counselors. In particular, I ask: How has providing care impacted community health workers? How has being a mother and processing her own events of motherhood deepened the theoretical exchange of caregiving? How has the program impacted the delivery agents themselves?

Angela Leocata is a senior studying Social Anthropology with a secondary field in Global Health and Healthy Policy. She is driven by questions of subjectivity, suffering, and care as they are experienced in daily life. Beyond her work in Goa, she has conducted fieldwork in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, where she looked at pasung, or restraint, for patients with psychosis, and Kunming, China, in which she studied mother-daughter care within the Traditional Chinese Medical practice of zuò yuè zi. Next fall Angela will begin a PhD in Anthropology focused on postpartum depression for mothers in the United States.
The mass migration of disenfranchised minority migrants to wealthier countries poses one of the great ethical dilemmas of our time. Nigerian sex worker migrants have come to Europe in the name of a better future for decades, but enter a thorny intercontinental politics of migration, development, and sexuality as they become human components of trafficking routes and sex industries along their journeys. I demonstrate the unique experience of arrival, remembrance, and survival among Nigerian sex worker migrants in France through a chronological metaphor of injury and healing. Guided by the same principles, the anthropological endeavor constitutes an act of care tasked with delineating and attending to social need. In ethnographic commitment, I eschew the violent reduction of mosaic perspectives and situations into a single legitimate stance, and instead seek to represent multiplicity as it is: unresolved and difficult to champion. My research advocates that although care is imperfect and some distances can never be breached, the need to go towards and care for those in vulnerable circumstances is a moral imperative and must be institutionalized in an effective, compassionate, and better manner.

Beyond long-standing infatuations with Foucault, Butler, and ethnography, Margot Mai likes to practice martial arts, reach rhapsody through music, and make messes in the kitchen. While the Boston climate has translated to an epic four-year battle between me and the elements, Margot otherwise love hikes and sunshine, particularly in California with my family. Medical anthropology has guided her an undergraduate, and will continue to inspire her intellectually and morally as she applies to MD/PhD programs this coming summer.
The Syrian Refugee Crisis is one of the world’s most pressing humanitarian challenges. The UNHCR estimates that at least 5 million Syrian refugees have left Syria, with around 2 million in Europe. In 2015, German Chancellor Angela Merkel promised to accept 1 million of these Syrian refugees. Germany quickly mobilized a series of integration policies, many of which I argue are based on Germany’s failed integration of Turkish ‘guest-workers’ in the 1950s and 60s. Interestingly, these integration policies are written on a federal level, with each German state responsible for implementing these policies in its own way. In this paper, I focus on the case of Bavaria, which is unique among German states for its large volunteer base. These volunteers, mostly women ages 35-55, receive little state guidance for helping Syrians navigate confusing and often contradictory integration policies.

Hanaa Masalmeh is a senior in Mather House concentrating in Anthropology. Her research centers on German integration of Syrian refugees in Bavaria, with a focus on the implementation of national policy on the state and local levels. By applying the ethnographic method to controversial policies, Masalmeh hopes to illuminate realities that are often overlooked in national and international debates about integration. Masalmeh speaks five languages fluently, and conducted her fieldwork entirely in German and Arabic.
Since 1936, a year of social service has been required of all students graduating Mexican medical schools. During this final year of pre-degree training, physician interns, or pasantes, traditionally have been called to serve as the highest trained health professional in rural clinics, including areas that have historically had tenuous relationships with the Mexican state. This thesis uses ethnography as well as historical and theoretical materials to explore how medical pasantes influence state-society relations in the Sierra Madre region of Chiapas, Mexico. It also examines how an international NGO supporting a small number of pasantes influences these relations. Findings include: a) the Mexican government fails to provide essential resources to support the work of pasantes in rural communities b) Compañeros En Salud, as a non-governmental actor, assumes the role of the state, insofar as it relates to primary health care, and c) pasantes affiliated with CES are not viewed as agents or affiliates of the state conglomerate and therefore have minimal impact on relations between the Mexican state and rural society. Findings have significance for understandings of the agency of peripheral bureaucratic agents and the nature of NGO-state relations.

Nicholas Seymour concentrates in Social Anthropology with a secondary in Global Health & Health Policy. He is interested in global health and illness. His coursework and research have focused primarily on medical anthropology. Outside of the classroom, Nicholas has supported organizing and research efforts toward global health financing as well as health care and housing for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in Boston. Ultimately, he hopes to apply his background in anthropology to contribute to social movements, organizational strategy, and clinical work advancing the health of disenfranchised populations.
This thesis discusses the work of American artist Michael Asher in relation to the museological processes his work engages, seeking to understand not only how his projects inform our conception of what museums do, but also to understand how technical and historical knowledge of those museological processes can inform our conceptions of what Asher’s work does. It takes an expanded view of artistic production, considering the institutional knowledge and processes upon which Asher’s works rely not just as his content, but also as his mediums. In order to understand the consequences of Asher’s peculiar mode of artistic production, I present my own fieldwork at the Michael Asher Archive and other art museums in relation to the art historical narratives within which Asher’s work is embedded. Ultimately, this thesis proposes that the methodological cross-pollination of the disciplines of art history and anthropology can generate a more precise discussion of the role of art institutions in the production of art, spectatorial experience, and scholarship than either discipline could alone.

Samuel Shapiro is a joint concentrator in History of Art and Architecture and Social Anthropology. Particularly interested in the role of institutions in the reception of artworks and the construction of historical narratives, Samuel hopes to continue studying and working in art museums. He is a Student Guide at the Harvard Art Museums and a member of the Student Board of the Harvard Museums of Science and Culture.