

MILLSAPS COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

WORLD DISPATCH

FALL 2010
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MILLSAPS
COLLEGE

We're building a bigger, better alumni community. E-mail your updates to sandeet@millsaps.edu. Include your name, graduation year and everything what you've been up to and you'll be included in the next edition of the newsletter. Become a part of the alumni network at the Millsaps Sociology Anthropology group on Facebook and connect directly with your former classmates and professors.

Major Receives Fulbright

Millsaps graduate and Sociology-Anthropology major Nadia Al-Hashimi was recently awarded a Fulbright scholarship. The Fulbright program is a very prestigious exchange program funded by the United States government that provides participants with the opportunity to study and conduct research abroad. Established in 1946 by Senator J. William Fulbright, the program was designed to promote understanding between the peoples of the U.S. and other countries through the exchange of persons, skills, and knowledge.

Nadia, who graduated in May 2010 and will begin travel to Jordan in September, plans to spend six months



Nadia Al Hashimi

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Summer Program in Tanzania



Julian and students in Tanzania 2009

Dr. Julian Murchison will be taking students to Tanzania again in the summer of 2011. Dr. Murchison has been conducting ethnographic research in Tanzania for the past decade. This will be the third time that he has led the Millsaps summer program in Tanzania with Millsaps students.

The program is designed to give students an ethnographic look at everyday Tanzanian life. In preparation for the trip, students will have the opportunity to take a four-hour class on the ethnography of East Africa in the spring and to take two hours of 'Survival Swahili'. Students participating

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in Amman, the capital of Jordan, at the Qasid Institute in an intense language program. After completing the language program, she intends to work with Bedouin women in their daily household activities. She will study changing family structures and politics in varying tribal networks.

"It's actually a lot like my work in the northern Albanian mountains, where I discovered the politics of power among swiftly changing family structures," she says, describing her upcoming research in Jordan.

Nadia describes the process of applying for the Fulbright as "a reflection of my entire Millsaps experience. It wasn't all that unusual except that the page limit was much smaller, and I had two professors to make my paper bleed instead of just one. In the end, I was left with a lot of great advice and the tools that my professors had given to me to assess myself, my goals, and my story." Upon returning to the U.S. in February of 2012, Nadia will be finishing preparations for grad school in the fall.

Nadia is the second student in the sociology and anthropology department to win a Fulbright in the last three years. Two years ago, Chelsi West was awarded a Fulbright to study music and folklore in Albania.

We'd love to hear from you!

Send your updates to sandeet@millsaps.edu to be included in the next edition of the newsletter!

Be sure to check out our online alumni community at www.facebook.com, too! Just search for the Millsaps Sociology Anthropology Alumni group.

Dr. Bey Featured in USA Today



Dr. Bey with Maya pottery

Dr. George Bey, Associate Dean of International Education and anthropology professor at Millsaps, was recently featured in USA Today for his research in Kiuic. Dr. Bey has been working in Kiuic since 2000, and recently he and his colleagues have found evidence suggesting that the Maya people left their homes in a hurry. USA Today went to Kiuic to speak with Dr. Bey and his colleagues about the recent finds.

In the interview with USA Today, Dr. Bey says, "The main thing that is important about our discoveries at Kiuic are that we are finding the actual remains of people's households indicating that they left in a hurry but not so fast they just dropped everything and ran. Thus it suggests that whatever caused them to leave was pressing but not so much they left in terror. Also, the evidence suggests that whatever caused them to leave was such that they thought they would be able to return."

Dr. Bey addresses many more questions about Kiuic and the rapid departure from the site in the interview. He goes on to explain the possible causes of the Maya withdraw as well as where the people went and why they did not return. But "Kiuic is just one of many sites," says Bey. "What's important is the research there. What we are learning at Kiuic is crucial for a rethinking about the rise and fall of the Maya civilization in this part of the world."

As there are still some questions that remain unanswered, Dr. Bey and his team plan to continue research and excavation in the area for many years.

Semester Study in Yucatán

In the Spring of 2011, Millsaps will offer its first semester-long abroad program. Students participating in the program will spend the semester doing field-based learning and research in the Yucatán. This program was created and designed by Dr. Eric Griffin (Director of the Latin American Studies and English Department Chair) and Dr. George Bey (Associate Dean of International Education and Anthropology Professor). The school's ability to offer this opportunity has "grown out of our department's efforts in the Yucatán," says Dr. Bey.

Dr. Jessica Piekielek, ACS Mellon postdoctoral fellow in environmental anthropology, will teach two courses as part of the program. Her course on culture and environment in the Yucatán will have three major foci (food, culture and agriculture; cultivation and communities; and globalization in the Yucatán). The class will routinely combine readings and seminar style classes with experience based lessons. She plans to take students to local farms and possibly even a cooking class to learn about food and agriculture in the Yucatán. At the end of the semester students will travel with Dr. Piekielek to the Caribbean coast to visit ecotourism sites and enjoy the beaches. She describes this semester as "the first step in expanding long-term study abroad programs at Millsaps."

The program costs the same as a semester at Millsaps and covers sixteen semester hours plus a two-hour Spanish course. Students will stay at the three Millsaps facilities in Mérida, Oxcutzkub, and the bio-culture reserve at Kaxil Kiuc. There will also be daytrips to the surrounding areas, such as the Caribbean, and an extended spring break for personal travel.

Courses will be offered on a block schedule with each course lasting about three weeks. The courses will include ENGL 3750 South of the Border: Visions of Mexico in Anglo-American Literature, Film, and Popular Song, HIST 4750 Colonial Yucatán and the Atlantic World, SOAN 3110 Reading the Maya Ruins: Building Form, Function, and Meaning, and SOAN 3120 Contemporary Culture and Environment in the Yucatán. All courses can apply as either Anthropology or Latin American studies credit.

Dr. Griffin, who will be teaching the English and history courses, describes the semester as a comprehensive interdisciplinary immersion experience. Students will study how American and English fiction portrays Mexico in the 20th century in South of the Border, and take a trip to the past in Colonial Yucatán. Dr. Griffin says, "study abroad is the single coolest thing you



Top: Biocultural Reserve in -----; bottom: students at lecture

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in the program will spend close to four weeks in Tanzania. Time will be split between coastal Tanzania and the Southern Highlands with the bulk of the time spent in the southern region, where students will experience home stays in Tanzanian households.

Home stays are clearly a highlight of the program. Students have the opportunity to practice their Swahili and learn about various facets of Tanzanian culture firsthand. When asked about her experience in Tanzania in 2009, Lauren Porter, a junior and anthropology major, said, "Doing everyday chores and being outside everyday was the best. Being allowed into a family's life was very special to me."

The total price of this trip, excluding airfare and personal expenses, is \$3,850 and students are encouraged to apply for a Robinson Scholarship to help with this cost. Contact Dr. Julian Murchison for more information.

Honors 2011

Each year Millsaps students who meet certain academic criteria have the opportunity to pursue independent research as participants in the College's honors program. Honors students in our department typically base their honors theses around original field research. This fall, four seniors -- Erin Jordan, Ben McNair, Evan Parker, and Maria Underwood -- are nearing completion of four exciting honors projects in the department.

Evan Parker



Evan photographing pottery he reassembled in Yucatan

Evan Parker's project, "Descending the Stairway to Heaven: The Rapid Abandonment of a Terminal Classic Puuc Hilltop Site" is an archaeological analysis of artifact assemblages from the small site of Escalera al Cielo (EAC) in the Yucatán Peninsula. He is analyzing the artifact assemblages of five different structures on EAC. "My goal is to determine the rate of abandonment for the site, as well as discuss the broader nature of site abandonment. To do this, I have reconstructed smashed whole pots that were left on the floors of the structures. These broken pots, called de facto refuse, indicate that EAC was abandoned fairly rapidly during the Terminal Classic period." Evan has worked on the Bolonchen Regional Archaeological Project under Dr. George Bey before and said, "I was already familiar with the site, and Dr. Bey recommended that I investigate the period of abandonment. In other words, this project basically fell into my lap!" He will be presenting the results of my research with Dr. Bey and another graduate student in the form of a paper at the next Society for American Archaeology meeting.

Maria Underwood

Maria Underwood is a Religious Studies major and Anthropology minor. Her project is titled "Buying Jesus: A Contemporary Study of Sacred Consumerism" and examines the religious marketplace in our culture and why that leads to a rise in sacred space. "Basically I am testing the theory that many sacred spaces have developed gift shops, paraphernalia, admission prices, etc. as a way to keep up with the capitalist American economy," Maria explains. Traditionally anthropologists have argued that an object can never be both sacred and profane, but must be one or the other. Maria argues that the traditional classification of the sacred and the profane must be revisited and redefined, because many sacred spaces function with a foot in each of these worlds. Her field research was conducted at the Ave Maria Grotto in Cullman, AL. "I first became interested in this project when I visited the Middle East last year, because I noticed all of the religious items being sold on the streets like fake handbags in Chinatown. I began to wonder if putting a price on an item took away its sanctity and made it a commodity, or whether this transaction gave the object some sacred power."



Ave Maria Grotto, where Maria conducted her field research

Erin Jordan

Erin Jordan's project, fabulous title in the works, focuses mainly on support systems surrounding grief in Peramiho, Tanzania. She examines mourning rituals, family structures, and community involvement to see how each affects individuals throughout the grieving process. A large part of her project also deals with the craft of ethnography: writing about anthropology in ways that make it meaningful and accessible to those outside the discipline. "I chose the topic because I really loved Tanzania when I went there two summers ago (and I kind of just wanted a reason to go back), and also because I'm interested in how people deal with difficult issues like death and where they look to heal or to receive help," she said when asked about why she chose her topic. Erin is also a Ford Fellow with Dr. Julian Murchison as her mentor.



Erin's homestay family in Tanzania

Ben McNair

Ben McNair, whose project is titled "The War of Words: Argentina's Media Struggle, Democracy, and the Free Press," is studying the relationship between multimedia news sources and politics in Argentina. While studying in Buenos Aires in the Spring of 2010, he became enthralled with an intriguing conflict between one of the largest multimedia news outlets in the world, Grupo Clarín, and the nation's current President, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. In addition to synthesizing a chronology of the conflict, which heated up in 2008, he is studying styles of communication and interaction, cultural narratives, and the role of the free press in democracy.

Swedish Student Calls Millsaps Home

Millsaps is pleased to welcome Nicole Gylemo, who hails from Stockholm, Sweden. Nicole is currently working on attaining her Master's in Gender Studies from Södertörn College, which is just outside of Stockholm. She received her B.A. from Södertörn in 2009, and this is her third semester of graduate school.

Nicole was encouraged by counselors at her school to study abroad and chose to come to America for her study abroad experience. Though she had been to the country before, she had never been to the South. So, once she decided to attend a school in the south it was simply a matter of finding a small liberal arts college. This is where Millsaps comes into the picture.

Nervous about college life in a different country, Nicole wanted a smaller school so she wouldn't get lost in the crowd. But Nicole has managed to fit in like any other student: she lives on campus, takes sixteen credit hours, and has made plenty of friends. Anyone who's met Nicole knows that she had nothing to be nervous about.

When asked how life at Millsaps compares to her experience at Södertörn, Nicole said, "It's like rehab. You can't live on campus at Södertörn, so it's like a job. But here the only stress in your life is school. My only focus is school, and I like that." Though the class schedule here is quite different from that in Sweden (with four classes at once for a semester instead of just one at a time for five weeks), Nicole is enjoying her time here. "The people were very nice and welcoming," she said.

Though it was Nicole's original plan to remain at Millsaps for only one semester, she is now contemplating staying for the rest of the academic year. She would continue as a full-time student as well as conduct field research for her thesis on domestic violence at the women's shelter in Mid-Town.

Where Are They Now?

Want to know what SOAN alumni have been up to? Read on to find out what previous graduates have been doing since their time at Millsaps.

DOC M. BILLINGSLEY

'05 An ABD in anthropology at Washington University in St. Louis and just received a grant from Wenner-Gren to extend his dissertation research in Guatemala for another nine months (until December 2011). He is researching Maya activist networks and the effects of Mayan-language literacy on historical memory and citizenship practices.

ALAN BURROW

'02 Currently living in Jackson, MS and is the Director of Service Retirement for the Public Employees' Retirement System of Mississippi.

ANNE ROBERSON CHAPMAN

'00 She is married with one child and received a nursing degree from UMC and a Master's in Nursing from Delta State University. She is working as a nurse practitioner specializing in orthopedic and neurosurgery.

ELIZABETH DURDEN

'94 Professor of Sociology at Bucknell University. Her classes include the Sociology of Stratification, Remaking America: Latin American Immigration and Hispanic Ethnicity, Quantitative Methods, and Sociology of Latin America. She continues to work in the Yucatán with Dr. George Bey as her research centers around indigenous Mexican immigration from the Yucatán to the U.S.

JOAN FABBRI

'96 Currently a high school educator in English, Reading, and ACT Prep, she has been teaching in Mississippi since 1996. She is licensed in multiple areas and is also a child advocate and mentor. She volunteers educating young people about the dangers of an unhealthy lifestyle with the help of the Diabetes Foundation of MS. She served on the Board of Directors for the Mississippi Professional Educators and writes in her spare time.

DONNA SIMMONS GERMANY

'96 She is living in Natchez, MS and has three loving grandchildren.

JOHN GRAYSON

'66 Graduated with a BA in Sociology. He went on to complete a Masters in Social Work at LSU and worked for many agencies and programs. He has just retired and plans to get involved in multiple volunteer activities in Wimberley, Texas. "I can say I enjoyed every job I held because I was working with those wondrous and interesting creatures -people!"

HANNAH GUTHRIE

'05 She is a PhD student at the College of Information at the University of North Texas and is working as a Medical Librarian at the Children's Medical Center in Dallas, Texas.

JENNIFER JASSO HILTON

'05 A First Lieutenant in the United States Air Force, currently stationed at Robins Air Force Base in Warner Robins, Georgia. She is in the process of working on her Master's of Arts in Child and Family Study at Syracuse University.

ANNAH JOSEPH

'01 After earning an M.S.W at the University of Alabama, she worked as a Clinical Social worker for four years. She is now a stay-at-home mom with her daughter Claire and husband John in Birmingham, AL.

CHRISTIE KOKEL

'09 Currently a PhD student at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

ACE F. MADJESI

'08 Joined the anthropology department at the University of Memphis in January where she is pursuing an MA in Applied Medical Anthropology with a focus on infant and maternal health, infectious disease, and disability. Last year she worked as a research assistant for the Center for Research On Women, studying the impact of transportation on medical adherence in patients with HIV/AIDS and assisting with an infant mortality prevention program evaluation. She is currently serving as one of Memphis City's housing and community development research fellows through the Memphis Center for Independent Living.

MICHAEL MCKENZIE

'99 Currently the Principal of Ryan Middle School of the Houston Independent School District.

JEFFREY MITCHELL

'01 In his fifth year as Assistant Athletic Director at Santa Clara University. He oversees the Division I athletic department's legal affairs office and academic/student services staff and is the sport administrator for the Broncos' baseball team. He is a member of the athletic department's senior staff and serves on the Academics, Legislation, and Compliance Cabinet of the West Coast Conference. The former "voice of the Majors" also serves as the public address announcer for Santa Clara men's basketball. Jeff lives in San Jose with his wife April and two year-old daughter Harper. Be sure to follow Jeff on Twitter @JeffMitchellSCU

MAGGIE MORGAN-SMITH

'07 A doctoral student in the Department of Anthropology at UNC- Chapel Hill.

JON-MARK OLIVIER

'07 He has been quite busy since leaving the U.S. to return to South Africa in 2008. He taught high school geography and Biology in Johannesburg from July of 2008 to December of 2009. "I enjoyed the part involving kids –the adults rather ruined the job!" He graduated from the University of South Africa with a Bachelor's in Education in 2009 and is at the end of his first year in the Sociology Master's Program at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The title of his thesis is "Diversity and Attachment in high school: The influence of school composition on students' sense of belonging," and he recently had his research proposal approved. He supports himself through lecturing and assistant teaching and often misses Millsaps –especially the folks in the SOAN department, he says.

PORTIA SMITH

'72 Currently a Special Education Program Specialist with the Houston Independent School District. She completed the requirements for Mississippi teacher certification while at Millsaps which proved helpful when she decided to switch from being Special Education Social Worker. She graduated from the University of Illinois at Chicago with an Master's of Social Work in 1978. She is considering retiring and returning to Vicksburg, MS.

SHANE TOWNSEND

'00 The Director of the Philippines and Assistant Regional Director for U.S. Wheat Associates South Asia Region –which includes Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Pakistan, Thailand, and many others –in Manila with his wife. The U.S. Wheat Associates is a non-profit trade organization supporting the international trade of wheat produced by American Farmers.

MATTHEW WARD

'05 He attended Millsaps on a theatre scholarship and is currently working as a professional actor. His focus was in Cultural Anthropology.

CHELSEI WEST

'08 A second-year graduate student at the University of Texas, Austin. Her research focuses on Albanian identity, in particular the concepts of difference and processes of othering. She plans to complete her Master's in the spring and continue to attain her PhD.

TIM PARSONS

'03 JUST PRESENTED HIS DISSERTATION AND IS WORKING FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE SOUTHEAST ARCHEOLOGICAL CENTER IN TALLAHASSEE. HE IS LOOKING FOR OF VISITING SCHOLAR POSITIONS NOW THAT HE'S FINISHED WITH HIS DISSERTATION, AND THE NEXT STEPS ARE TO MOVE ON TO A TEACHING POSITION AT A COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY, AND CONTINUE HIS RESEARCH IN HUNGARY. TO SEE THE FULL ARTICLE AND FIND OUT MORE ABOUT WHAT TIM HAS BEEN UP TO, VISIT [HTTP://WWW.MILLSAPS.EDU/ACADEMICS/SOCIOLOGY_ANTHROPOLOGY_NEWS.PHP](http://www.millsaps.edu/academics/sociology_anthropology_news.php)

A Look Inside the Keck Lab

The W.M. Keck Center for Instrumental and Biochemical Comparative Archaeology is up and running. The lab is a collaborative effort between the chemistry and SOAN departments. Dr. Bey and Dr. Galaty of the SOAN department work in conjunction with Dr. Ward of the chemistry department on various projects throughout the year. Kailey Rocker and Brandi Buckler are current Keck Fellows who worked in the field with Dr. Galaty in Albania. Dr. Jiyan Gu, a post-doctoral fellow, and Erin Redman, a chemistry major who graduated from Millsaps in 2010, work as lab technicians alongside the Keck Fellows and professors.

The lab has analyzed three different sets of artifacts from Albania. The first set of artifacts are bitumen-lined pot sherds from central Albania. They were analyzed by Redman and Rocker using liquid and gas chromatography-mass spectroscopy to see whether they were used to store wine or olive oil. The bitumen lining, however, prevented the pots from absorbing any residues of what they once contained and the results were inconclusive. The second set of artifacts were marble samples from a ruined cathedral in Elbasan, Albania. They were analyzed by Gu and Buckler using ICP mass spectroscopy to determine their place of origin. Finally, Gu and Rocker have analyzed an unusual Late Roman ceramic artifact from Byllis, Albania. Analysis by ICP-MS and by x-ray diffraction indicates that it was used in the production of glaze.

The other recent project involves pot sherds from Sweden. The Swedish government allowed Buckler to bring back four pottery samples from the archive there to determine how they were used. It was previously thought that the pots were used to cook fish stew. Redman and Buckler used LCMS and GCMS to look for the fatty acids that would be present if fish had been cooked in the pots. Instead, the results indicate that the pottery was used to cook some kind of meat stew.

Next, the lab will turn to analysis supporting Dr. Bey's research in the Yucatán. Dr. Gu will be using the ICP-MS to find characteristic metals in pottery and soil samples. That information will then be used to track the trade routes. Redman will also be analyzing pots from the Yucatán using the LCMS and GCMS to look for traces of caffeine and theobromine, which would indicate that the pots were used to hold chocolate.

The lab is a great asset to the school that aids professors in their studies and allows students to get hands on experience. Redman sees a direct connection between her work in the lab and her plans for the future: "It will contribute to my success in grad school as well as being accepted because not many students –grad or undergrad –get this opportunity."

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Did you know?

We've moved from Ning to Facebook! Due to some technical difficulties with Ning, we've created the Millsaps Sociology Anthropology Alumni group on Facebook. It's a great place to keep in touch with your classmates and professors and stay updated on what's happening in the department. We invite all alumni to join the group and share pictures and stories. Hope to see you all there!

The department would like to extend a Thank You to everyone who provided information and/or pictures for this edition. To be included in the Spring 2011 edition, email your updates to Erin Sanders at sandeet@millsaps.edu

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