



COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
& SOCIAL SCIENCES
Department of Anthropology

Applied Anthropology EXPO

ABOUT THE PRESENTERS





Alé Barrientos has a BAS in community health and education from Seattle Central College and an MS in applied anthropology from the University of North Texas. Alé is currently an MPH student at the University of Washington and is studying global health and epidemiology. He works at Seattle Children's Hospital as a regional social service specialist. In addition to these responsibilities, Alé also works as a research assistant at UW Behavioral Research Center for HIV on a multi-site NIH funded RCT for STI reduction in Kenya.

In his academic work, he wants to bring the injustices and realities represented by historically marginalized groups to the forefront of public consciousness. He plans to produce anthropologically-oriented documentaries with every research project that he undertakes so his findings can be disseminated beyond academic communities. By engaging the public, he wants to encourage better stewardship of economic and community resources, change policy, and inspire a deeper appreciation for communities that might be misrepresented or misunderstood. In his work, he leans heavily on critical medical anthropology and liberation theology, and I'm especially interested in social hierarchies, health inequalities, semiotic resistance, and embodiment.



Aneka Eastman graduated from UNT in the Spring of 2024 with a BA in Anthropology. She is currently working on her MS in Emergency Management and Disaster Science at UNT. While earning her bachelor's degree, she served as a Cultural Orientation Intern at Refugee Services of Texas as well as a Resettlement & Placement Case Manager and Community Engagement Aide at Church World Service. Now, in her master's studies Aneka has

had the opportunity to work as a research assistant, completing tasks such as interview transcription and qualitative coding. Her research interests include social cohesion and Communitas after disasters, housing displacement, and post-disaster insurance claims.



Morgan Kainu is an applied anthropologist, veteran analog astronaut, and aerospace professional specializing in human factors and habitat development for deep-space exploration. Her work focuses on the cultural, social, and behavioral variables affecting human performance, adaptation, and sustainability in isolated, confined, and extreme (ICE) environments. As Operations Coordinator at Radian Aerospace, Morgan advances aerospace initiatives by optimizing processes, implementing tools, and coordinating high-visibility projects with internal and external stakeholders. Her interdisciplinary background makes her a vital asset in aerospace operations.

As Mission Development Director at Space Nation, she led the design and development of simulated space habitats, integrating human-centered systems, environmental constraints, and operational needs for astronaut training and mission preparedness. Her expertise includes adapting terrestrial analog sites, developing habitat infrastructure, and testing life support and mission operations protocols. Morgan has participated in multiple analog missions, contributing to data collection and systems validation for long-duration spaceflight. Her research examines biopsychosocial adaptation, physiological stressors, sociocultural influences, and mission-critical decision-making to enhance crew performance in high-risk environments. Committed to advancing human spaceflight, Morgan continually expands her expertise in space medicine, bioastronautics, and habitat engineering. She actively engages with the aerospace and research community, seeking collaborations in space systems design, astronaut performance, and planetary surface operations.



With a BSc in Anthropology from the University of Calgary, **Natalie Muyres** embarked on a career managing organizational change projects and leading teams as an “undercover anthropologist.” During her undergrad, the options for a career as an applied anthropologist were mostly unknown to her. Over time, Natalie discovered anthropology being applied in a variety of non-academic settings, which contributed to years of self-directed study. Natalie completed her MS at UNT in 2023 and in 2024 was awarded the Washington Association of Professional Anthropologists (WAPA) Praxis

Award for her work in the anti-human trafficking sector in Alberta. As an independent consultant, Natalie works in the private and public sectors as an Organization and Design Anthropologist leading culture-informed change. Passionate about the value of anthropology, Natalie is actively building a practicing and applied anthropology community in Canada.



Rendi Nutt graduated with a BA in Anthropology from the University of North Texas in 2006. Her love of travel led her to the Marshall Islands, where she taught high school English for a year before returning to Austin, Texas. With her anthropological background and passion for human development, Rendi began working as a Montessori guide, where she integrated cultural studies into her curriculum and emphasized cultural sensitivity, anti-bias, and anti-racism in the classroom.

After 15 years of teaching, Rendi pursued a graduate degree in social work at Texas State University, using her anthropology background to deepen her understanding of cultural sensitivities and social justice. This helped shape her approach to addressing barriers that diverse populations face when accessing services. Now a Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW), Rendi continues to work with children and families in a variety of settings. She is currently working toward her clinical license and plans to specialize in trauma-focused play therapy. Rendi remains deeply inspired by her undergraduate studies, believing they laid the foundation for her work and continue to guide her approach to social work.



Briana Payne is a primary school teacher who recently returned to the US after teaching at international schools in China. Throughout her 5 years in China, she traveled around the country gaining cultural insights by spending time with locals, learning Mandarin, and connecting personally with students, families, and coworkers. Known mainly by her social media handle, [brianalennet](#), she combines her passion for photography and video by sharing her expat experience through vlogs and posts.

Briana holds a bachelor's degree in anthropology from Baylor University. She also holds a master's degree in applied anthropology from the University of North Texas, where she graduated in 2015.



Hannah Rafferty (She/Her/Ella) is an Employment Case Aide at the International Rescue Committee in Dallas. She works with refugees resettling in Dallas to aid them with economic empowerment through resume building, job training, and job applications. In 2024, she graduated from the University of North Texas with degrees in Anthropology and Psychology with certifications in Applied Anthropology and Social Justice. She is expecting to attend the University of Texas in Austin this fall to continue her education in a Master of Social Work. Her main interests are in immigration, culture, mental health, trauma, and social justice.



Sarah Richardson (she/her) is an Arts and Culture Administrator who takes a holistic approach to nonprofit management. She has worked with small and large nonprofit arts organizations, from a neighborhood house museum to a nationally renowned children's museum, throughout the Texas Triangle region. Sarah holds a BA in Anthropology, with a minor in Nonprofit Leadership Studies and a certificate in Applied Anthropology, from the University of North Texas and an MA in Arts Leadership from the University of Houston.

Currently, she works as a Development Associate at Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA). As the oldest of the six regional arts organizations in the United States, M-AAA empowers artists and arts organizations to enrich the cultural and creative life in its region of Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, and beyond. Sarah organizes and implements M-AAA's fundraising efforts toward a vision of more art for all people.



John Sarmiento (he/him) enjoys playing board games, working at coffee shops, and taking long walks in the city. His favorite experience as a graduate student was being exposed to various disciplines and research methods. He received a masters in applied anthropology and a masters in public health in 2017 at UNT and UNT Health Science Center, respectively.

For his thesis practicum, John worked for a community health non-profit in Austin, where he led a pilot for their digital health education app for Title I preschools. After graduate school, John worked at a digital software agency in Dallas as a UX researcher for 3 years. He conducted studies across various industries like healthcare, travel, finance, and retail. Today, John is the lead UX researcher for a digital caregiving support company Cariloop, where he regularly applies his multidisciplinary background with a team of talented product designers and developers. His work involves investigating the lived experiences of unpaid family caregivers, social determinants of health, and the usability of products and services.



Brynn Torres has a BA in Anthropology from Texas Tech University, a MS in Applied Anthropology from UNT, and an MPH from UNT Health Sciences Center. During his time at UNT, his work explored the lived experience of those living with HIV in Tarrant County and how these experiences influenced where medical care was received. He also held an internship with Tarrant County Health Department where he aided the sexual health clinic in planning their participation in the “Ending the HIV Epidemic” initiative that was introduced in 2020. Upon graduating from UNT, he went on to develop a strong background in education and research, including full-time experience in infectious disease

research specializing in HIV, STIs, substance use, and working with formerly incarcerated populations. The various studies he is currently on include developing and implementing a predictive model to detect individuals who are at high risk for HIV, a RCT to determine the effectiveness of patient navigation versus a mobile health unit for those who have recently been released from an incarcerated setting and have a history of substance use, and recruiting and collecting biological samples for a study looking at exploring the body’s immune response for the Human Herpesvirus-8 and its relation to Kaposi Sarcoma. In his day-to-day life, he helps to recruit participants, facilitates research visits, interviews participants, code and analyzes qualitative data, assists in manuscript writing/planning, and handles the administrative duties of various studies.



Whitney Williams holds a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Anthropology, as well as a Master of Education, all from The University of North Texas. She is in her 23rd year of teaching English at McKinney North High School.

Her undergraduate research focused on the impact of tourism on local cultures in Belize, while her graduate research evaluated the Read 180 program at McKinney North High School. She has also worked with the Teach With Jamaica program, helping to educate young teachers in best classroom practices.

Currently, Whitney teaches Gifted and Talented and Advanced English for freshmen and sponsors the Key Club, a student service organization. Over the years, she has taught all levels of high school English, including AP Literature and Language, ESL, and reading programs. She designs her lessons to incorporate diverse perspectives, exploring literature through the lenses of history, art, politics, and more. Drawing from her anthropology background, she fosters an appreciation for cultures and literature, sharing her passion with her students.



Isabelle Clérié, our Alumni Making a Difference Award Recipient, is a Haitian anthropologist whose work is focused on claiming local narratives by leveraging the power of communities in Haiti. She holds a double bachelor's in literature and anthropology, a Master's in nonprofit management from Florida Atlantic University, and a Master's in Applied Anthropology at UNT. Isabelle has worked with all kinds of stakeholders such as community-based organizations and agricultural co-ops, impact investors and global corporations such as Meta, as well as large multi and bi-lateral institutions, most notably the United Nations, where she led a civil society led process to design a national strategy for addressing past crimes and impunity. Her work has been across diverse fields such as small business development and microfinance, climate justice and food security, and transitional justice and human rights. Most recently, she designed a national dialogue process based on how Haitians naturally have difficult conversations.

Isabelle's approach is always rooted in principles of anthropology. With a fellow anthropologist, she co-founded Haiti Impact Group to reshape the narrative surrounding Haiti. They achieve this by creating inclusive, locally-designed data collection networks that showcase communities' capabilities and challenges. Isabelle passionately advocates for broader anthropological training within international development, believing a greater presence of anthropologists globally would be beneficial.

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