

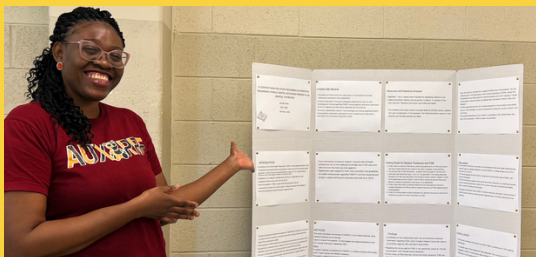
## The Department of Sociology & Anthropology welcomes Anthropologist Dr. William Gblerkpor

Dr. William Narteh Gblerkpor is an anthropological archaeologist and cultural heritage and museum studies expert. He holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology from The University of Texas at Austin and a Master of Philosophy in Archaeology from the University of Ghana. His research and writing explore the dynamic roles of material culture, landscapes, and the natural environment in the historical and contemporary construction and maintenance of social identities and livelihoods in West Africa. He is interested in the archaeology of identities; cultural resource management; digital archaeology; environmental archaeology; landscape archaeology; climate change, biocultural and biodiversity heritage



**William Narteh Gblerkpor, PhD**

conservation; conservation photography, and community development. Gblerkpor is the Director and Lead-Investigator of the West Africa Biocultural Heritage Conservation Program and two other heritage research initiatives: The Shai Hills Archaeological Research Project and The Krobo Mountain Archaeological Project. He is the founding Director and Curator of the Shai Hills Museum of Natural and Cultural Heritage at Shai Hills, Ghana. He is the subject-matter expert and coordinator of the 2023 Joint Worldwide Universities Network (WUN) and the University of Ghana summer school, which explores the intersections of Climate Change, Migration, and the Biocultural Heritage in West Africa. Gblerkpor uses his research, teaching, and community development experiences to design new academic and applied programs to highlight local and global opportunities and challenges best addressed through an integrated research environment. He is building a partnership to establish an Integrated Digital Social Laboratory for Applied Research and hopes to use his new appointment at Western Illinois University to achieve this vision.



**Top left** - Spring 2023 Sociology and Anthropology graduates attending Macomb undergraduate commencement ceremony.

**Bottom left** - Graduate student Jennifer Ofoe presents her project for Dr. Wallace's Sociology of Mental Health course.

**Above:** Students and faculty at the 2023 Department of Sociology and Anthropology Spring Recognition Reception.

## Sociology and Anthropology at Western Illinois University

# Department Notes

## CHAIR NOTES



**Department Chairperson,  
Dr. Tawnya Adkins Covert**

## "The Measure of a Mentor"

This spring, my longtime friend and co-author, Dr. Philo C. Wasburn, passed away. Philo was my mentor for nearly 30 years, beginning when I entered the MS in Sociology program at Purdue University in 1994. I came to the program with the intention of studying women and occupations. Then I met Philo, an influential political sociologist who studied news media and propaganda. It took only a few weeks of his Classical Theory course my first semester of graduate school to change my plans. I sought to take every course I could with him on political sociology, news and propaganda, and the mass media. His courses sparked a love for the study of media, politics and social inequality that would guide and feed my academic career. In fact, my first academic publication grew out of a collaborative project undertaken in his seminar on the Sociology of News.

Philo served as the faculty chairperson for both my master's project and doctoral dissertation. He was generous with both his time and encouragement. I spent hours in his office, pouring over government documents, magazine advertisements, and SPSS output files. He came to call the women in the ads I studied "nifty ladies" - women who served as role models during WWII for American women on the homefront eager to make a contribution to the war effort.

When I entered the job market, Philo wrote countless letters of recommendation. I recently found the letter he wrote for me for the position I took here at Western Illinois University in 2000. I was beyond touched to read his strong recommendation and to see myself through his eyes. Not yet finished with my dissertation, he also sent me a "tough love" letter that fall semester to motivate me to finish so I could take the next steps in my career: finish the dissertation or risk an unsatisfactory grade for your thesis hours. It worked - I graduated the next summer, after 700+ hours of data coding and multiple rewrites.

For many, this would be the end of their relationship with their former professor. But Philo and I continued to work together for two decades after I completed my degree. Together, we co-authored two books and three articles. Our final research project is still in process.

I traveled to Indiana many times over the years for our research. We worked at his kitchen table, generating ideas, writing and rewriting, and drinking bottomless mugs of instant coffee. We made an excellent team and the collaborative process made us both better scholars. I learned more in the years we worked together after I completed my graduate work than I did in the classroom. That says a lot, as his courses were some of the most engaging times I ever spent in the classroom as a student. Over time, we became colleagues, co-authors, and close friends, but he was always my mentor. As a first generation college student, I needed a mentor like Philo: one who continued to teach, nurture, and support their students beyond the classroom and after graduation. I think my students at WIU need that as well. Philo's mentorship and friendship are a model that I have aspired to follow.

I see these types of mentoring relationships throughout our department. I see faculty nurturing the development of future scholars and leaders. Each year, faculty members assist students in submitting and preparing presentations for state and regional conferences. They co-author publications with current and former graduate students. They supervise independent research projects and field work. They advise internships and capstone work. They also maintain connections with our alumni and watch their former students pursue academic and career goals and flourish and grow.

For many years, I have required that my students create a LinkedIn account for an assignment focused on marketing their sociological skills to the job market. Each student then links their account to mine, building their professional network and creating a space for continuing connections after graduation. I have written impassioned letters of recommendation for students who had more capacity than could be gleaned from a college transcript. I have shared in the joy of marriages, babies, career shifts, promotions, and also the sorrow of layoffs, failures, and restarts in their lives.

The measure of a mentor is in the students they impacted, the memories they have, and the lessons they carried forward and shared with others. Philo Wasburn had a profound effect on my life and career. He will be dearly missed but I find joy in being able to carry his legacy forward with the students I mentor at Western Illinois University.

# Sociology and Anthropology at Western Illinois University



# Anthropology Notes



**Dr. Christina Davis,**

**Anthropology  
Program  
Coordinator**

As the end of the semester draws to an end, we would like to congratulate all of our Spring 2023 graduates. This April I had the pleasure of spending time with two of our graduates, Aaron Summer Javadi and David Rash, and at our department's Student Recognition Reception. We are fortunate to have the chance to teach such talented, thoughtful, and dedicated students. Many of our anthropology students balance their studies with full-time jobs, family responsibilities, and service work to their communities. I am continually amazed by the creativity and insight they bring to their assignments and projects. They do not just apply concepts and theories to the phenomena they study but also critically consider the limits of the approaches. Their work is accurate, nuanced, and reflects their diverse life experiences. It has been a great pleasure to learn from our students.

This academic year, four of our students—Aaron Summer Javadi, Veselka Kostadinov, Mary Jo Napolitano, and David Pelo—helped recruit and retain anthropology students through their work as Anthropology Ambassadors. I would also like to recognize the Western Anthropology and Sociology club co-presidents, Nikee Stocker and David Pelo, who organized several academic talks, lectures, and Q&A sessions. They also enthusiastically helped us celebrate the American Anthropological Association's Anthro Day on February 16, 2023.

We wish the best of luck to all of our graduates and hope that they continue to stay in touch with us. Your achievements are impressive and I'm sure you will have great success in the future.

## Online Anthropology Program Celebrates Fifth Anniversary

The program was introduced in 2017, and is the fifth online Anthropology degree in the nation and the first online Anthropology degree in Illinois. The goal of the degree program is to bring the study of Anthropology to students who are physically unable to study on campus.

WIU's Anthropology program has grown significantly as a result of the online component, which is considered particularly convenient for those working 9-to-5 jobs, or for working parents. The program's faculty teach students within Illinois, as well as across the country.

## Anthropology Study Abroad in Austria for fall 2023

The Hills are Alive: Austrian Culture in Today's World  
ANTH 379/679, Study Abroad Fall 2023  
Led by Dr. Heather McIlvaine-Newsad



Dr. Heather McIlvaine-Newsad will host a study abroad trip to Austria during the Fall 2023 semester.

The trip, which will run from December 31 to January 10, will visit Vienna and Salzburg. The course gives students the opportunity to learn more about Austria's role in the history and culture of the Alps, and about life in the country.

# Sociology and Anthropology at Western Illinois University

# Spring 2023 Department Scholars

*By sheer coincidence, both of our department scholars this spring are named Leah Metcalf. Meet our Leahs.....*

## SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT SCHOLAR



*Leah Bozard Metcalf*

My name is Leah Bozard Metcalf and I was born and raised in the Macomb area. I recently got married and I have two wonderful children. I have enjoyed my time as a WIU student. All of the professors truly cared about making sure that all students were successful and tried however they could to help when needed.

After I graduate I will continue working full time at my current position as a closing agent for a title company.

I am undecided of how I want to use my sociology degree, but I know I want to do something to help people. There are so many possibilities for my degree I want to take my time and decide what is the best fit for me.

## ANTHROPOLOGY DEPARTMENT SCHOLAR

My name is Leah Metcalf, and I am a Senior at Western Illinois University majoring in Anthropology, with a minor in Women's Studies. In the fall I will begin my Masters Degree at Indiana University and hope to go on for a Ph.D.

What I love about Anthropology is that it is such a diverse field. I have learned about culture, linguistics, archaeology, and gender roles around the world in my classes. All of the Anthropology Professors at Western have unique backgrounds. Learning about the work they've done in the field has inspired me to continue pursuing Anthropology.

I hope to eventually participate in digs around the world and one day work in a museum or as a Professor myself. I have always loved to travel and learn about different regions and cultures. My time spent traveling, along with my time at Western, has helped me to realize that Anthropology is exactly the right path for me.



*Leah Metcalf*

# Sociology and Anthropology at Western Illinois University



# Sociology Graduate Award Recipients

## 2023 Sociology Masters Scholarship Award *Asia Billingslea*

My name is Asia Billingslea and I am from the south suburbs of Chicago. Last spring, I received my Bachelor's degree here at Western in Law Enforcement and Justice Administration with a minor in sociology.



I decided to pursue my Master's in sociology in hopes to work with non-profit organizations that cater to mentoring adolescent girls. With the knowledge gained from courses, I look forward to collecting data and evaluating the effectiveness of various programs striving to guide young girls in their transition to young adulthood.

Lastly, I would like to thank Dr. Lora Ebert Wallace for always being supportive and insightful throughout my academic career.



Left to right: Chris Adamski-Mietus, Dr. Lora Ebert Wallace, Asia Billingslea, and Dr. Kenneth Mietus.

*\*Chris Adamski and Ken Mietus created the Sociology Master's Scholarship Award to recognize the achievement of a high performing graduate student in the program. Recipients are selected on the basis of their academic performance as well as an essay on how they will use their sociology degree.*

## Dr. Won M. Hurh Award Memorial Graduate Thesis Award *Mahbub Alam*



I am a graduate student of Sociology at Western Illinois University (WIU). Recently, I have completed my thesis on "Mental Wellbeing of Aged People in the U.S Amid COVID-19" under the supervision of Dr. Lora Ebert Wallace while Dr. Davison Bideshi and Dr. Robert J. Hironimus-Wendt were on my thesis committee. The study finds out how gender, financially secure conditions, romantic relationships, social engagement, and emotional support influenced mental well-being of elderly people in the U.S. during COVID-19. As a student of sociology at WIU, I have intensively learned classical and contemporary sociological theories, sociological research methods, mental health, demography, and urban issues. I am working with Dr. Lora

Ebert Wallace and others on a research project titled "Halloween Stigma Assignment and Mental Health Beliefs among University Students." My paper on "Developing Self: Socialization Process, Power/Inequalities, and Agency" was presented at the Illinois Sociological Association (ISA) Conference on November 4, 2022. I also worked on "Theory on Class: Comparison of Karl Marx, Max Weber and Recent Theoretical Concepts" in 2021 under the supervision of Dr. Oswald Warner.

Prior to this, I studied Anthropology at Jahangirnagar University (Bangladesh) where I completed my Bachelor's (Hons) and Master's degrees. I studied anthropological theory, anthropological research methods, kinship, human rights, migration, gender issues, and so on. I completed a dissertation on "Gender-Based Violence in Local Justice System: An Ethnographic Fieldwork from a Village of Bangladesh" in 2009. Following my education, I worked in a few non-government organizations in Bangladesh, including BRAC Development Institute (BDI) - BRAC University, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Bandhu Social Welfare Society, and Ain o Salish Kendra in different positions, such as- research assistant, field research officer, advocacy officer, program specialist, and program manager. In my professional arena, I worked on different issues including food security for the ultra-poor, the impact of microcredit, gender equality, women's economic rights, transgender rights, child rights, and HIV/AIDS prevention. I was also involved in volunteerism and activism as a member of the Bangladesh National Cadet Core (BNCC) and the Environment Council Bangladesh (with their anti-tobacco campaign).

After my graduation from WIU, I intend to pursue a Ph.D. in sociology in order to gain additional expertise in sociological theories, and sociological research (especially quantitative methodologies). I plan to use my sociological knowledge and skills to conduct research on social inequalities, social stratification, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, gender inequalities, domestic violence, class-based inequalities, mental health, and so on. Furthermore, by studying sociology, I will also be able to conduct research on human rights violations and contemporary social movements in Bangladesh.

# Sociology and Anthropology at Western Illinois University

# 2023 Lindsey Scholarship Awardees

## Anthropology Mariah Brocar



I am a sophomore, majoring in Anthropology and minoring in History. I am a mom to four and a "DeeDee" to one. When I lost my 21-year-old daughter to gun violence, my life changed drastically. After the shock wore off, I decided to chase my dreams and live the life that my baby girl's death had taken from her. From a young age, I have been passionate about people and culture, always asking myself, Why do humans do what they do?

Becoming an anthropologist has been a dream of mine since childhood. The professors that I have had so far in my journey have been supportive and amazing. Each one of them has shown how important the students' well-being is and has made this journey rewarding. My educational goals are to be accepted into the anthropology integrated program at WIU and earn both my bachelor's and master's degrees. After that, I plan on applying to graduate school for my Ph.D.

Once my educational goals are met, my long-term goals include becoming an anthropology professor and starting a nonprofit (The Stormie Day Project) in honor of my daughter to keep her legacy of giving, helping, and teaching alive. The main goal of the nonprofit will be education, with an emphasis on young girls and women, as well as feeding the homeless.

I am a junior, majoring in sociology and minoring in psychology. I am born and raised in Davenport, Iowa, and I am a single mother of two awesome kids. I work in the financial Aid Office at Eastern Iowa Community College, which is also where I received my associate's degree in 2004. I started at Western as an online student in 2019.

My goal when I decided to earn my bachelor's degree was to graduate when my daughter graduates from high school and after the 2024 spring term, we will both graduate.

After struggling with another major, I changed my major to sociology, and as soon as I started my first classes, I knew I made the right choice. I have always enjoyed learning about different cultures and societies and with this degree, I have many opportunities to do so. In my current job, I serve on our Diversity Council and have a passion for LGBTQIA+ education.

Once I complete my degree, I plan to work in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, ideally in educating others.

## Sociology Kelly Maidlow



# Sociology and Anthropology at Western Illinois University



# 2023 Scholarship Recipients

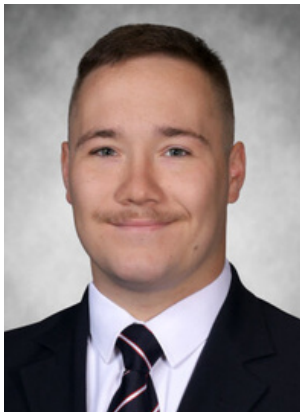
## Kara Leigh Broughton Memorial Scholarship *Theodore Bania*



I am a Junior studying at WIU's Macomb Campus. I am a Sociology major, minoring in Psychology and Philosophy. I am from the McKinley Park Neighborhood in Chicago. My aspirations after college are to utilize my degree to work as a labor organizer, helping to ensure the fair representation and safety of employees in their negotiations with corporate management.

It is my hope that through this I can assist in ensuring a more equitable and just society for everyone. My extracurriculars also currently include serving as the 2023-2024 President of AMPLIFY, a student organization aimed at creating a space for the discussion and debate of current social issues, and amplifying the voices and opinions of students to the wider community. Additionally, I will be serving as the 2023-2024 External Vice President of my fraternity, Alpha Psi Lambda National Inc., whose purpose is to promote the continued personal and collective growth of our membership, success, and unity through education, leadership, cultural awareness, and community service.

Receiving this scholarship award has been a gift I honestly could not have imagined. At risk of oversharing, I initially began my college career in the Fall of 2017, and recently returned to WIU after a battle with Hodgkin's Lymphoma (a type of cancer). Finding my way back to WIU has been a journey in itself. After taking time off for treatments and recovery, I began working in a management position for a large shipping company, and became a part-time student at schools in the city. I found that in that environment though, my academics struggled, and I missed the environment and community of my education at WIU. I am happy to say that I returned to WIU last Fall, and have been on an upward trajectory since. I am happier, doing better in my classes, and feel more connected to my community than I have in the last few years. Receiving this scholarship gives me the opportunity to continue on that upward trajectory, and to focus a little more on growing and learning, and a little less on the "How am I going to pay for this" aspect of being a college student - and for that I am extremely grateful.



## Harriet Stull Sociology Scholarship *Zander Doan*

I am a senior at Western Illinois University and I am double majoring in Law Enforcement Justice Administration and Sociology with an emphasis in criminology and deviance. I have always been someone that liked helping people while growing up so when I was looking at college the first major I thought of that I would be helping people is LEJA. I enjoy LEJA but I felt that I was lacking a side of learning that I seemed to get when I took a few different sociology classes as electives so I decided to double major in Sociology with an emphasis in criminology and deviance.

As my time at Western is coming to an end, I have made a lot of different choices in where I want to go next and right now, I have decided to pursue an education in law and politics. I plan on attending the University of Iowa to be a candidate for a Juris Doctorate degree program there and then hopefully transition into some kind of public office whether that be local, state, or federal.

I am going to use both of my degrees for a framework to help me with law school. LEJA has helped me with knowledge about criminal law, familiarity with legal terminology, and critical thinking. Sociology will help me with understanding social structures and inequalities, research skills, and knowledge of social policy. Both of these degrees will set me up very well for law school. After law school, I want to run for federal government, specifically the U.S. House of Representatives. I want to bring my knowledge that I learn from Western to law school and later to my career in politics. I want to be a spokesperson for my community and an advocate for social change. As a politician I want to specifically focus on the war on drugs and how much it affects rural communities. Growing up in a rural community I have seen the effect drugs have had on my community and I feel like I can relate to that on a personal level and try and make change. I will use my knowledge from WIU and law school to do these things and make a difference in the world to create more of a name for WIU.

# Sociology and Anthropology at Western Illinois University

# Faculty Notes and Accomplishments

## FACULTY PROMOTIONS

- **Dr. Gordon Chang** - promoted to Professor of Sociology.
- **Dr. Christina Davis** - promoted to Professor of Anthropology.

## AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS

- **Jacob Skousen, Heather McIlvaine-Newsad, Christina Davis, and Andrea Alveshere** each received Provost Travel Awards to present research at regional and national conferences.
- **Lora Wallace** was awarded a 2023 Summer Stipend from the WIU University Research Council.
- **Heather McIlvaine-Newsad** was awarded a sabbatical leave for the spring 2024 semester.
- **Andrea Alveshere** was awarded a sabbatical leave for the fall 2023 academic year.
- **Heather McIlvaine-Newsad** has been serving as reviewer for the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine for the Gulf Health and Resilience Gulf Research Program. In addition, she was a lead reviewer on two of the twelve submitted proposals, several of which have budgets well over \$1.5 million over a three year time frame.
- **Tawnya Adkins Covert** served as a panelist for a WID online panel discussion organized by the WID Committee discussing experiences and best practices in delivering WID courses online, March 23, 2023.
- **Jacob Skousen** was initiated into Lambda Alpha, the international Anthropology honor society, on April 23.

## RECENT FACULTY PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- **Chang, Gordon.** 2023 *Revolution and Witchcraft: The Code of Ideology in Unsettled Times*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-17682-1#affiliations>
- **Gordon C. Chang**, Professor of Sociology, and Tyler Leibnitz (MA student in Sociology) presented the paper "An Ethnomethodological View of Ideology: Situated Programming and Coding of Ideology." 116th Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association. 9 August 2022, Los Angeles, CA.
- **Davis, Christina.** 2023. "Language Policy and Ethnic Conflict." In *A New Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*, edited by Alessandro Duranti, Rachel George, and Robin Conley Riner, 479-493. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- **Davis, Christina** (with Chaise LaDousa). 2022. "South Asian Language Practices: Mother Tongue, Medium, and Media." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 51: 289-305.
- **Davis, Christina** (with Chaise LaDousa and Nishaant Choksi). 2022. "Postcolonial Language Ideologies: Indian Students Reflect on Mother Tongue and English." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 32(2): 607-628.
- **Porter, Rob** and **Heather McIlvaine-Newsad.** 2022. "If I get Corona, I get Corona": COVID-19 protocols and beach tourism in Pinellas County, Florida." *Leisure/Loisir* DOI: 10.1080/14927713.2022.2157320
- **Heather McIlvaine-Newsad**, Professor of Anthropology, presented her research "Kaleidoscope Vision: Shifting perspective on disaster research and care of applied researchers" at the American Anthropological Association meeting (November 9-13) in Seattle, WA
- **Jacob Skousen** presented four co-authored papers at the Midwest Archeological Conference in LaCrosse, WI (October 13-15).
  - "Introducing the Noble-Wieting Cultural Site" by B. Jacob Skousen, G. Logan Miller, Logan Pappenfort, Kaila Akina, and Elizabeth Watts Malouchos
  - "Beyond the Natural Community: Village Structure, Architecture, Temporality, and Community at Noble-Wieting" by B. Jacob Skousen, G. Logan Miller, and Robert G. McCullough
  - "Community Shaped by Diversity: A Comparative Ceramic Analysis from Recent Excavations at Noble-Wieting" by Georgia A. Abrams, Hannah Rucinski, Kjersti E. Emerson, and B. Jacob Skousen
  - "Microhistory from microstratigraphy? Geoarchaeological insights from the F49 pit feature at Noble-Wieting" by Michael Aiuvalasit, B. Jacob Skousen
- **Jacob Skousen**, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, "Consultation and Collaboration to Preserve Noble-Wieting, a Late Precontact Village in East-Central Illinois" Southeastern Archaeological Conference (SEAC), November 9-12, in Little Rock, AR.
- **Wallace, Lora** and Ejura Yetunde Salihu. 2022. "The Use and Attitudes Toward Complementary and Alternative Medicine Among University Students: The Role of Gender and Race." *Journal of American College Health*.

### Department of Sociology & Anthropology

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# Sociology and Anthropology at Western Illinois University