

# Melody R. Yeager

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## Education

**Master of Arts**, Anthropology California State University, Chico: Option in Museum Studies. Professional specialization: Education.

Master's Thesis: *Guidance for Growth: Visitor Studies and the Future of Learning in Museums*. Advisors: Dr. Stacey Schaefer and Dr. Georgia Fox. December 2006.

**Bachelor of Arts**, Anthropology California State University, Chico, May 2002.

## College Teaching Experience

### **California State University, Chico, Chico, Ca**

#### **Department of Anthropology, Lecturer:**

- Nature, Culture, Environment (ANTH 333) (Spring 2013-present)
- Nature, Culture, Environment (ANTH 333) Online course (Summer 2014-present)
- Anthropology of Food (ANTH 340) (Spring 2011-present)
- Anthropology of Food (ANTH 340) Online course (Fall 2013-present)
- Anthropology of Food (ANTH 340z) Writing Intensive, Capstone Course (Spring 2014-present)
- Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (ANTH 303) (Spring 2014)
- Human Cultural Diversity (ANTH 113) (Fall 2010)
- Museum Exhibit Research and Design (ANTH 466) (Spring 2009)
- Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion (ANTH 140) (Fall 2008, Fall 2013 \*Jumbo, Spring 2014 \*Jumbo)
- Survey of Physical Anthropology (Anth 111) (Spring 2008)

#### **Department of Social Sciences, Lecturer:**

- Cultural Concepts (SOSC 303) (Fall 2007-Fall 2011)

#### **Department of Physical Education Instructor:**

- Beginning Swimming (PE 154A) (Spring 2003-Spring 2010)
- Intermediate Swimming (PE 154B) (Spring 2003-Spring 2010)
- Beginning Water Polo (PE 164A) (Fall 2005-Spring 2010)
- Advanced Water Polo (KINE 164K) (Fall 2006-Spring 2010)

### **Butte Community College, Oroville, Ca**

#### **Department of Anthropology, Lecturer:**

- Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (Anth 4) (Fall 2004-present)
- Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (Anth 4 Chico Rural Teachers Pathway) (Spring 2013)
- Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion (Anth 13) (Spring 2005-present)
- Introduction to Physical Anthropology (Anth 2) (Fall 2007-present)

## Training and Continuing Education

### ***Technological Training***

- **Online teaching certification**, Butte College Technology Mediated Instruction. April 2011.
- **Blackboard trainings through the Butte College Technology Mediated Instruction (TMI).**
  - Orientation (January 2011, August 2014)
  - Management (January 2011, August 2014)
  - Training for Online Instructors (TOI) Capstone Workshop (April 2011)
  - Assignments (August 2012, August 2014)
  - Tests and Surveys (August 2012, August 2014)
  - Canvas system training (10 hours August 2016)
- **Technology training through CSU, Chico Technology Learning Program (TLP)**
  - Bb Collaborate training (July 2011)
  - iClicker training and orientation (August 2012, January 2015, 2016, 2017)
  - Camtasia orientation and training (June-July 2012)

### ***Continuing Education (Courses taken online through Coursera: host of Massive Open Online Courses)***

- “Gut Check: Exploring Your Microbiome” Colorado State University (Completed Fall 2014).
- “An Introduction to the U.S. Food System: Perspectives from Public Health” Johns Hopkins University (Completed Spring 2015).
- “Buddhism and Modern Psychology” Princeton University. Fall 2015 (Audited).
- “The Emergence of the Modern Middle East” Part 1 Tel Aviv University Fall 2015 (Audited)

### **Academic Interests**

My special interests in anthropology are primarily in cultural anthropology with a strong and important role in physical anthropology. By combining cultural and physical anthropology we can learn about biocultural evolution; a set of processes that have resulted in many of the changes that we have seen in human populations over time. Presently I am focusing my research on human food systems and interaction with the environment. The anthropology of food is a study of human interactions with the environment spanning through time and space. Humans and our early ancestors have always faced the challenge of obtaining the necessary nutrients to grow and power our bodies. These challenges have shaped cultures and the relationships that reside within them. Consequently, our bodies have also seen changes because of the habitual use of fire (dating back to Homo erectus) including our brain size, gut size and function, human skin color, and allergies and intolerances like lactose intolerance can all be traced to biocultural evolution. In our modern world it is an overabundance of cheap calories that is driving change in our bodies. Our growing populations and skewed governmental policies are creating pressures that we have never before seen on the environment. Current research is also connecting poverty, so called “food deserts”, and the suite of metabolic disorders that are plaguing low income and minority communities today.

In addition to food and the environment, my interest is in the changing family unit cross-culturally. Globalization, global migrations of people and seasonal transitory work in the agricultural field among many other influences are causing changes in family dynamics. Some of the most impacted of these groups are those who traditionally view the extended family, or the clan as the primary family focus, among those the Latino and Hmong families are seeing a stretching and fracturing of their once cohesive families. Studying and documenting these phenomena as they occur can inform us about

cultural changes that we will be seeing, as well as preserving some of the history that is no longer being passed from elder generations to younger more Westernized generations.

## **Other Professional Experience**

### ***Outreach and Education***

In the Fall of 2010 I developed and delivered an outreach program to rural schools in the k-12 system in Butte and Tehama Counties. I named the outreach program “Anthropology Afternoons” and taught classes to junior and senior GATE (Gifted And Talented Education) students from Orland High School and elementary students from Lassen View Elementary School in Dairyville (Tehama County). The high school students were given preparatory materials, which were incorporated into the curriculum of their classroom by their teacher. I delivered lectures and conducted discussions with the classes one Thursday per month, each day exploring one of the subfields of anthropology. The titles of those lectures were “Cultural Anthropology and Global Food Systems”, “Physical Anthropology: Raise your hand if you’re a primate!”, and “Which Witch is Which? A look at witchcraft around the world.” The elementary school program was more hands-on including an “archaeological dig”, primate relays and food quizzes, and a program about Inuit hunters from the arctic.

At the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, I served as research assistant to the Manager of Teacher Services in the education department in 2004 where I researched, compiled, and created Educator Resource Materials (traveling kits) intended to aid instructors in teaching evolution and biological anthropology in the classroom. In addition to my responsibilities as a research assistant, I aided with the student docent program. This program was informative for me because they employ only at-risk and adjudicated youth to serve as educational aids and docents in the museum. This program has become prestigious and in high demand for youth in San Francisco who desire opportunities to serve as educators, conduct scientific research, and work alongside some of the most prominent specialists in their fields. Many of these youths are first generation Americans, first time high school graduates in their families or products of the foster system. This program was a great reminder to me that empowerment through education can be transformational in the lives of youths who have not previously had many opportunities to thrive. I relate to this experience regularly while working with students who I identify as needing to be challenged academically.

### ***Mentoring***

I have served as the mentor to two resident advisors in dormitories on the CSU, Chico campus for the semesters of Fall 2014 and Spring 2015. Duties included planning curriculum and programs for residents, mentoring the advisor through social and professional predicaments, and taking personal time to shop for and plan programs for residents and the outreach programs that they conducted. One of these programs was crafting and creating personalized valentines for residents in a retirement home in Chico. Another program included developing a weeklong schedule confronting cultural images of women.

In the Spring of 2015 I served as the Honors Thesis Advisor to a student in the Food Studies Pathway. Her thesis was titled “Slow Food V. Fast Food: Opposing movements coming together to create a healthier America”. I assigned her reading materials, counseled her on direction and focus of her thesis in the realm of varying food movements, and read and provided feedback on numerous thesis drafts. As her advisor I was responsible for assigning her final grade on her thesis.

I am currently serving as the Honors Thesis Advisor to a student who is writing his thesis about the physiological changes in humans since plant domestication and the spread of agriculture. His focus is on dentition, life span, digestion, disease, and reproduction.

## **Research Experience**

### ***Previous Research***

Thesis research included the creation and implementation of a survey of potential visitors to the Northern California Natural History Museum (now Gateway Museum of CSU, Chico) intended to gauge visitor learning preferences and styles to guide exhibit design. Research included statistical synthesis of these data, which indicated learning preferences among the target audience for use by the design team for the museum's education committee. The results of the survey were that people desired interactive exhibits and exhibits that they could engage with, rather than passive observation only exhibits. This thesis research guided my understanding of varying learning styles, in particular the constructivist model of learning, and a more active and engaged classroom, which has been very influential in my classroom teaching style.

### ***Current Research***

In 2007 I began documenting gender roles, economic, and social changes occurring in a small town on the Pacific Coast of Mexico called La Cruz de Huanacastle in the state of Nayarit. Research interests include the changing economic climate and its effects on the local fishermen, and subsequently the shifting of traditional gender roles among families. Trends that are of interest to me are changes in women's roles based on the fluctuating income of their fishermen husbands and fathers (subsistence fishing to tourist-based fishing), entrepreneurship by women, attaining higher education, and learning new languages and skills that are typically men's roles, having fewer children and waiting longer to have children. The study is based on two prominent families in town; four generations of these families illustrate a transformation in traditional gender roles, economic responsibilities, and bilingual language use.

Fall 2015 joined an interdisciplinary research group at CSU, Chico who received a grant for funding to create a survey to be administered internationally in order to determine some of the motivations for travel to varying cultural locations around the globe. Study intends to track food-related travel decisions and the cultural implications of those decisions. My role in this group is to develop and revise the survey tool and to aid in some of the culturally sensitive questions.

## **Professional Associations**

- American Anthropological Society (AAA)
- Society for the Anthropology of Food and Nutrition (SAFN)

## **References**

- **Dr. Mike Findlay**

Former professor and department chair Butte Community College. findlaymi@butte.edu.

- **Dr. Antoinette Martinez**

Professor Department of Anthropology, CSU, Chico. 530-898-6192. amartinez@csuchico.edu

- **Dr. Frank Bayham**

Professor, Department of Anthropology, CSU, Chico. 530-898-6192. fbayham@csuchico.edu