

Anthropology

The MIT Anthropology Program is dedicated to advanced research and publication in cultural anthropology; to undergraduate teaching that introduces students to the fundamentals of cross-cultural understanding and social thought; and to graduate teaching in the history and anthropology of science and technology. Our undergraduate subjects cover a wide range, with special strengths in the study of the contemporary world and the social context of technology. The Anthropology faculty maintains strong ties with programs in the School of Engineering, and with other programs in the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (SHASS), including Women's Studies, Latin American Studies, Comparative Media Studies (CMS), the History faculty, and the Program in Science, Technology, and Society (STS). The Anthropology Program is one of three academic units participating in the History, Anthropology and Science, Technology and Society doctoral program (HASTS).

Personnel and Administrative Changes

Professor Jean Jackson served as head of the Anthropology Program. Rosemary Hegg continued as administrative officer, and Amberly Steward continued as administrative assistant. Associate professors Christine Walley and Stefan Helmreich were promoted to associate professors with tenure.

Program Contributions to MIT and Outside Communities

Anthropology Program faculty members served on various committees, boards, and task forces at MIT, including the Women's Studies steering and program committees; the advisory board for the Program in Human Rights and Justice; the editorial board of the MIT Faculty Newsletter; faculty board of the Boston Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies (now at MIT); the CMS curriculum committee; the admissions, curriculum, and steering committees of the HASTS doctoral program; the steering committee of the Technology and Culture Forum; the Committee on the Use of Humans as Experimental Subjects; the Siegel Prize committee; and the equal opportunity committee of SHASS. The extended Anthropology Program community enthusiastically participated in our monthly research-in-progress lunch meetings.

Outside MIT, Susan Slyomovics, the Geneviève McMillan-Reba Stewart professor of the study of women in the developing world, served as associate editor of the *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, and on the editorial committee of *MERIP: Middle East Report*. She is also a member of the American Anthropological Association Committee on Human Rights. Professor Jackson served on the advisory boards of the *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, and *Tipiti: Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America*. Professors Jackson and James Howe both served on the program council and board of directors of Cultural Survival. Professor Howe, who is a trustee of the Pilgrim Hall Museum (Plymouth, Massachusetts), also served on the board of the Center for the Preservation of Native Lands. Assistant professor Erica James is on the advisory board for the Haitian Multi-Service Center in Boston. Associate professor Hugh Gusterson served as treasurer of the American Ethnological Society. Professor Michael Fischer served on the editorial boards of *Cultural Politics*, *Cultural Anthropology*,

and *Public Culture*. Professor Susan Silbey served on the publications committee of the Law and Society Association; the program committee of the Sociology of Law section of the American Sociological Association; the editorial boards of the Cambridge Studies in Law and Society, the Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology, and *Regulation and Governance*; and on the Merton Prize Committee of the Science, Knowledge and Technology section of the American Sociological Association.

Educational Activities

Anthropology classes continued to be popular among undergraduates. Three were enrolled as anthropology majors and one as a joint anthropology/engineering major. Nineteen students in the class of 2006 completed HASS concentrations in anthropology, three students completed a minor in anthropology, and one student completed a major. Two new subjects were introduced during the year, Professor James's undergraduate class "Culture, Embodiment and the Senses" and Professor Silbey's graduate class on qualitative research methods. Professors Gusterson, Helmreich, Silbey, Fischer, and Walley served on HASTS graduate student committees, and Professor Silbey also served on four Sloan graduate student committees. Seven undergraduate classes were published for the first time in OpenCourseWare by Anthropology faculty during the 2005–2006 academic year: 21A.216J Dilemmas in Bio-Medical Ethics: Playing God or Doing Good; 21A.217 Anthropology of War and Peace; 21A.245J Power: Interpersonal, Organizational and Global Dimensions; 21A.260 Culture, Embodiment and the Senses; 21A.344J Drugs, Politics and Culture; 21A.348 Photography and Truth; and 21A.460J Medicine, Religion and Politics in Africa and the African Diaspora.

Professors Silbey, Fischer, Jackson, Walley, Helmreich, and Gusterson all play active roles in teaching, advising, and administration of the HASTS doctoral program. Professor Silbey continued to teach the writing workshop for HASTS graduate students.

Presentations

The presentations given by members of the Anthropology Program faculty during 2005–2006 provide a sense of the wide range of research interests among program faculty and the diverse fora in which they made presentations during the past year.

—Professor Walley spoke on "'What We Women Want': An Ethnographic Look at Transnational Feminism" at Columbia University.

—Professor Jackson spoke on "The Evolution of Colombian National Media Portrayals of Amazon Indigenous Development and Organizing, 1980–2002" at Latin American Studies Association meetings, San Juan, Puerto Rico, and "Rights to Indigenous Culture in Colombia" at the American Anthropological Association annual meetings, Washington, DC.

—Professor Howe spoke at the San Diego Museum of Man on "Ethnography as Self Defense".

—Professor Gusterson spoke on "Deconstructing Colin Powell" at Stanford University; "What Happened to Nuclear Weapons?" and "The Ethics of Applied Ethnographic

Critique—or, How to Talk to a Conservative (if you must)” at the University of British Columbia; “Truth, Proof and War: Colin Powell Goes to the UN” at the City University of New York; “The Pseudoscience of Colin Powell” and “Who Owns the Bomb?” at George Mason University; “Colin Powell, Truth and Proof” at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Pomona College; “The Second Nuclear Age” at the University of Notre Dame; “Nuclear Nightmares” at Salve Regina University; “America’s Double Standard on Nuclear Weapons” and “Ethnographic Methods” at Syracuse University; “Strategic Culture” at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey; and “Whole World on Fire” at the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association.

—Professor Fischer gave papers on “Emergent Forms of (Un)Natural Life” at the University of Chicago Divinity School, “Children in Iranian Cinema and Society” at Johns Hopkins University, “Geneologies of the Anthropology of Science and Technology” at the Social Anthropology meetings; and participated in panels in the Van Leer Institute, Jerusalem; the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University; and the annual meetings of the Canadian Anthropological Association and the AAA.

—Professor Silbey gave papers on “Gaming the Law” at the Law and Society Association annual meeting, Las Vegas; “After Legal Consciousness” at the meeting of the Research Committee on the Sociology of Law, Paris; “Governing Green Laboratories” at the University of Bielefeld, in Germany, and the University of California, Irvine); “After Legal Consciousness” at Northeastern University Law School; “Legal Consciousness and the Sociology of Justice” at Harvard University; and “What We Think About When We Think About Law: Contested and Conventional Legality” at DePaul University Law School.

—Professor Slyomovics gave papers on “Narrative and Morocco’s Public Hearings” at the Rockefeller Conference Center, Bellagio; “Money, Reparations and Human Rights Testimony” at Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin; “Reparations and Witness Testimony: Morocco and Algeria” at Yale University; “History, Human Rights Fieldwork, and Witness Testimony” at the University of Michigan; and “Testimony and Morocco’s Justice and Reconciliation Commission” at the AAA meetings in Washington, DC.

—Professor Helmreich presented papers on “James Cameron’s Aliens of the Deep” at Mount Holyoke College, and “An Anthropologist Underwater: Deep-sea Soundscapes, Submarine Cyborgs, and the Idea of Immersion” at Rice University, and “Varieties of Scientific Experience” at AAA meetings, Washington, DC.

—Lecturer Heather Paxson gave talks on “Microbiopolitics of Artisanal Cheese: Starter Cultures, Risk Cultures, Taste, and Terroir,” at Rice University; “Democratizing Maternal Citizenship by Medicalizing Reproductive ‘Choice’,” at AAA meetings; “Cultivating Terroir in American Artisanal Cheese Production” at the joint annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Food and Society and the Agriculture, Food and Human Values Society; and “Sheep, Goats, and Cows: An Animal Anthropology of Artisanal Cheeses and their Landscapes” at the annual meeting of the Agricultural History Society.

Publications

—Professor Slyomovics published an article, “The Argument from Silence: Morocco’s Truth Commission and Women Political Prisoners,” and a book chapter, “Morocco: Self-Definition as Self-Determination.”

—Professor Jackson published an article on “Stigma, Liminality, and Chronic Pain: Mind-body Borderlands.”

—Professor Gusterson published a book chapter on “Decoding the Debate on Frankenfood,” in *Making Threats: Biofears and Environmental Anxieties* (ed. Subramaniam, Hartmann and Zerner), and shorter pieces in *Boston Review*, *Anthropology News*, and *Anthropology Today*.

—Professor Helmreich published an article on “The Signature of Life: Designing the Astrobiological Imagination.”

—Professor Fischer published book chapters on “Culture and Cultural Analysis,” “Sciences, Technology and Society,” “Persian Poesis,” and “Deep Play, Violence, and Social Reconstruction.” Articles included “Changing Palestine-Israel Ecologies: Narratives of Water, Land, Conflict and Political Economy, Then, Now and Life to Come”; “Culture and Cultural Analysis”; “Persian Poesis”; “Science, Technology and Society”; and “Technoscientific Infrastructures and Emergent Forms of Life: A Commentary.”

—Professor Silbey authored book chapters on “After Legal Consciousness” and “Everyday Life and the Constitution of Legality” and coauthored a book chapter, “The Common Place of Law: Transforming Matters of Concern into the Objects of Everyday life.”

Grants, Honors, Awards

Professor Silbey was awarded an honorary doctorate from the École Normale Supérieure, Cachan, and received the best article prize in Sociology of Law from the American Sociological Association. She also was awarded two NSF research grants, one for “Governing Green Laboratories: Trust and Surveillance in the Cultures of Science” and the other for “Safe Science: An Experiment in Group Ethnography.” Professor Helmreich was awarded the James Levitan Prize in the Humanities. Professor Slyomovics finished her ethnographic research in Casablanca and Paris, funded by the Marion and Jasper Whiting Foundation Fellowship.

Jean Jackson,
Program Head
Professor of Anthropology

More information on the Anthropology Program can be found at <http://web.mit.edu/anthropology/>.