

SUMMER

Volume 5, No 1, 2011

ÉTÉ

## MOT DE LA PRÉSIDENTE

## LA MOBILISATION CASCA-DIENNE, L'INTÉGRATION ET LA COOPÉRATION

C'est un honneur pour moi de devenir présidente de CASCA cette année et par ce fait de redevenir active au sein de l'exécutif de l'association après un bref passage à la trésorerie en début de carrière. Depuis mes années d'étudiante au Canada et en Grande-Bretagne, je participe à CASCA à divers titres et j'ai toujours apprécié le caractère convivial de cette association. C'est avec plaisir que je saisis l'opportunité de travailler et de pouvoir discuter avec mes collègues anthropologues à travers le Canada. Avec tous les défis que comportent le fait d'être une association bilingue qui recouvre un vaste territoire, CASCA a su rester mobilisatrice et fédératrice pour les anthropologues canadiens d'horizons très divers. Depuis 2010, l'association fait un effort concerté de travailler à l'intégration d'anthropologues canadiens qui oeuvrent hors des cadres de l'enseignement supérieur, de participer à divers débats à l'échelle internationale et de répondre aux désirs de liaison de ses membres. Le sondage mis sur pied l'an dernier ainsi que le maintien continu du site internet de l'association se sont avérés être des outils indispensables à ces fins, permettant aux officiers de l'exécutif d'être d'avantage à l'écoute des membres de l'association. J'espère donc au cours de ma présidence pouvoir perpétuer cette tradition « CASCA-dienne » de mobilisation, de rassemblement et de débat.

Au cours de mon mandat, avec le soutien indéfectible de mes collègues de l'exécutif, je compte donner suite aux dossiers ouverts par mes prédécesseurs, incluant la construction de répertoires accessibles en ligne sur le site de l'association, dont ceux des départements d'anthropologie au Canada et des anthropologues canadiens, ainsi que de maintenir à jour et de développer l'accessibilité de la banque d'emplois mise sur pied. Afin de donner suite au travail effectué quant à la capacité de l'association à faire du lobbying, malgré

son statut d'organisme sans but lucratif, le comité exécutif s'est donné comme mandat d'élaborer, en concertation avec le comité des résolutions, une procédure consultative efficace dans le but de pouvoir réagir rapidement sur des questions d'intérêt pour les anthropologues. Au cours de l'été, nous avons répondu positivement à la demande de support de la part de l'Association canadienne des professeures et

novembre 2011. Finalement, je voudrai aussi encourager la poursuite de certaines discussions chères aux membres de l'association, notamment en ce qui a trait aux enjeux de la transformation et des coupures qui affectent le financement de nos terrains ethnographiques, ainsi que les questions d'éthique qui sont de plus en plus pressantes dans le contexte de la financiarisation accrue des savoirs et des rapports sociaux. Ces sujets à débat, et divers autres d'intérêt pour les membres de l'association, sont régulièrement effleurés dans le cadre des assemblées générales de l'association, mais sans la possibilité de les aborder en profondeur. À cette fin, je compte avec les autres officiers de l'exécutif instituer des « séances de l'exécutif » à la prochaine conférence annuelle qui nous permettront de réfléchir plus en profondeur sur certaines de ces questions et sur les actions communes qui pourraient être mises de l'avant.

Je veux aussi profiter de cette opportunité pour souhaiter la bienvenue aux trois nouveaux officiers de l'exécutif de CASCA : Ellen Judd qui est présidente désignée, Lorne Holyoak qui est trésorier et Nathalie Boucher qui est membre active francophone. Ellen Judd est professeure distinguée au Département d'anthropologie de l'Université du Manitoba. Spécialiste de la Chine, elle travaille depuis 2003 sur les implications de la migration et de l'urbanisation dans l'ouest du pays. Elle s'est aussi penchée sur les conséquences des réformes économiques en milieux ruraux sur les constructions genrées des rôles sociaux. À travers les perspectives de l'anthropologie symbolique et la production culturelle, elle a aussi étudié les opéras populaires. Lorne Holyoak, pour sa part, travaille sur le chamanisme chez les Mandchous du nord-est de la Chine. Après quelques années à la direction de l'ethnographie et de l'histoire

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Photo: Michel Bouchard

professeurs d'université dans sa campagne contre la « modernisation » annoncée en 2010 par le gouvernement Harper de Bibliothèques et archives Canada, qui menace la pérennité et la préservation de cet héritage documentaire. De plus, avec ma nouvelle collègue Ellen Judd, nous maintenons activement la participation de CASCA au sein du World Council of Anthropological Associations, qui se réunira à Montréal en

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# MOT DE LA PRÉSIDENTE

## LA MOBILISATION CASCA-DIENNE, L'INTÉGRATION ET LA COOPÉRATION

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orale du ministère de la Communauté et des Affaires culturelles de la République des Palaos, et comme professeur adjoint d'anthropologie au département d'études religieuses et d'anthropologie de l'Université de Saskatchewan, il est présentement analyste sénior des politiques et de la recherche auprès de Condition féminine Canada, et professeur auxiliaire à l'Université Carleton. Finalement, Nathalie Boucher est doctorante en Études urbaines à l'Institut national de la recherche scientifique à Montréal. Elle s'intéresse à l'analyse anthropologique des interactions verbales et non-verbales. Ses recherches actuelles portent sur la ville de Los Angeles où, à travers les pratiques communicatives, elle aborde les thématiques urbaines de la diversité sociale, la fragmentation et l'espace public. Ces intérêts de recherche sont sous-jacents à ses travaux au Canada, en Inde, au Mexique et au Nicaragua.

Par ailleurs, il importe de souhaiter la bienvenue à la nouvelle rédactrice de la revue *Anthropologica*, Naomi McPherson (University of British Columbia Okanagan). J'en profite aussi pour remercier les officiers sortants de

l'exécutif: Deirdre Meintel (présidente 2009-2010, Université de Montréal) et Robert Adlam (trésorier, Mount Allison University). Les autres membres de l'exécutif qui poursuivent leur mandat cette année sont Janice Graham (présidente 2010-2011, Dalhousie University), Craig Proulx (secrétaire, St-Thomas University), Michel Bouchard (webmestre et agent d'information, University of Northern British Columbia), Christopher Fletcher (membre actif anglophone, Université Laval) et Craig Candler (représentant de l'anthropologie pratique et appliquée, Firelight Group). Robert Hancock remplace Julia Harrison à la direction du projet archive, alors que Nathalie Boucher se joint à Christopher Fletcher et Michel Bouchard à la rédaction de Culture.

Finalement, je veux vous convier à deux événements futurs organisés par CASCA. Dans un premier temps, dans le cadre du congrès annuel du American Anthropological Association à Montréal en novembre 2011, l'exécutif de CASCA compte mettre de l'avant la présence de l'association sur la scène internationale de l'anthropologie. Les trois dernières

présidentes de CASCA, Deirdre Meintel (2009-2010), Janice Graham (2010-2011) et moi-même avons organisé une double séance plénière sur les spécificités des approches anthropologiques au Canada, intitulée : *Sleeping With An Elephant : Traces, Tidesmarks and Legacies of an Engaged Canadian Anthropology*, qui rassemble des figures marquantes de l'anthropologie engagée canadienne ainsi que des anthropologues plus jeunes dont les travaux capturent certaines tendances de l'anthropologie contemporaine au Canada. CASCA tiendra aussi une réception à ne pas manquer pour ses membres au Musée de Pointe-à-Callières vendredi 18 novembre. Et, elle opérera un étale dans la salle d'exposition de la conférence. En second lieu, c'est avec anticipation que je vous invite à vous joindre à nous pour le colloque à venir de CASCA, organisé par le Département d'anthropologie de l'Université d'Alberta, qui aura lieu à Edmonton du 9 au 12 mai 2012. Le thème de la conférence : *L'inattendu*, invite à considérer certains aspects fortuits de notre métier et de notre vie d'anthropologue. J'espère vous y voir nombreux et avoir l'occasion de poursuivre avec vous les discussions amorcées aux cours des dernières années.

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

## CASCA-DIAN MOBILIZATION: INTEGRATION AND COLLABORATION

It is an honor to serve as President of CASCA this year and thus return as an active member of the CASCA Executive after a brief stint as treasurer at the very start of my career. First as a student in Canada and then Great Britain, I have participated in CASCA in different ways and I have always appreciated the convivial nature of the association. It is with great pleasure that I am seizing this opportunity to work and engage with my anthropological colleagues across the country. In spite of all the challenges facing a bilingual association stretching over a vast territory, CASCA remained a cooperative and united force for all Canadian anthropologists from a diversity of backgrounds. Since 2010, the association has made a concerted effort to integrate Canadian anthropologists working outside the framework of higher education, and has participated in various debates in the international arena, while responding to the members' requests to promote greater networking. The survey

that was conducted as well as the continued maintenance of the web site have proven to be indispensable tools to achieve this, allowing the executive to be even more responsive to members of the association. So I hope during my presidency to continue this "CASCA-dian" tradition of mobilization, concerting and debate.

During my tenure, with the unwavering support of my colleagues in the Executive, I intend to continue working on project initiated by my predecessors, including the development of an online directory that would include Canadian departments of anthropology and anthropologists, as well as enhancing the established online job bank. The Executive Committee will continue to study the question as to how to lobby to promote and protect the interests of our members and anthropologists globally, while not overstepping the boundaries set by government on the political activities

of non-profit organizations. During the summer we have responded positively to the request for support from the Canadian Association of University Teachers in his campaign against "modernization" announced by the Harper government in 2010 for Libraries and Archives Canada, threatening the survival and the preservation of our documentary heritage. And, with my new colleague Ellen Judd, we maintain an active participation of CASCA within the World Council of Anthropological Associations. The WCAA will meet in Montreal in November 2011. Finally, I would also encourage further discussion of a number of topics dear to members of the association, particularly in regard to the changes and cutbacks that affect the funding of our ethnographic fieldwork and the ethical issues that are becoming more pressing in the context of the commercialization of knowledge and social relations. These potential topics of

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

## CASCA-DIAN MOBILIZATION: INTEGRATION AND COLLABORATION

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debate, and various others, that interest the members of the association are regularly brought up in the general meetings of the association, but we do not have the means to address them in any depth. To this end, I along with the other officers of the executive committee, plan on instituting "executive sessions" at the next annual conference that will allow us to discuss and explore some of these issues in greater depth and put forward actions that could be undertaken to address the concerns raised.

I also want to take this opportunity to welcome CASCA's three new executive officers: Ellen Judd is president-elect, Lorne Holyoak is treasurer and Nathalie Boucher is the member-at-large francophone. Ellen Judd is Distinguished Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Manitoba, and as an expert on China, she has worked since 2003 on the implications of migration and

urbanization in this country. Her research also examined the effects of economic reforms in the rural areas of China on the gendered construction of social roles. Through the perspective of symbolic anthropology and cultural production, she has also studied popular opera. Lorne Holyoak, meanwhile, works on shamanism among the Manchus of northeastern China. After several years directing the ethnography and oral history department of the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs of the Republic of Palau, and as Assistant Professor of Anthropology in the Department of Religious Studies and Anthropology at the University of Saskatchewan, he is currently a senior policy analyst and researcher for Status of Women Canada, and Adjunct Professor at Carleton

University. Finally, Nathalie Boucher is a PhD candidate in Urban Studies at the National Institute of Scientific Research in Montreal. She is interested in the anthropological analysis of verbal and non-verbal interactions. Her current research focuses on the city of Los Angeles. Through the observation of communicative practices, it addresses urban themes of social diversity, fragmentation and public space. These research interests underly her work in Canada, India, Mexico and Nicaragua.

Moreover, it is important to welcome the new editor of the journal *Anthropologica*,



Photo: Michel Bouchard

Naomi McPherson (Okanagan University of British Columbia). I would also like to thank the outgoing officers of the executive: Deirdre Meintel (President 2009-2010, University of Montreal) and Robert Adlam (Treasurer, Mount Allison University). Other continuing executive members this year are Janice Graham (President 2010-2011, Dalhousie University), Craig Proulx (Secretary, St. Thomas University), Michel Bouchard (Webmaster and Information Officer, University of Northern British Columbia), Christopher Fletcher (Member-at-Large Anglophone, Université Laval) and Craig Candler (representing practicing and applied anthropology, Firelight Group). Robert Hancock replaces Julia Harrison in the management of the project archive, while

Nathalie Boucher joins Christopher Fletcher and allowing the executive officers to be more responsive to members of the association.

Finally, I want to invite you to two upcoming events being organized by CASCA. The first being the annual conference of the American Anthropological Association that will be held in Montreal in November 2011, where the CASCA Executive has put forward events that will ensure CASCA's presence at meetings organized by this international association of anthropology. The two past presidents of CASCA,

Deirdre Meintel (2009-2010) and Janice Graham (2010-2011), and I are organizing a double session plenary examining the particularity of anthropology in Canada entitled *Sleeping With An Elephant: Traces, Tidesmarks and Legacies of an Engaged Canadian Anthropology*. This plenary will bring together leading figures in Canadian engaged anthropology as well as younger anthropologists whose work captures some of

the trends in contemporary anthropology in Canada. CASCA will also hold a not to be missed reception for its members at the Museum of Pointe-à-Callières on Friday, November 18, and it will operate a booth in the exhibition hall of the AAA conference. Second, it is with great anticipation that I invite you to join us for the upcoming CASCA conference organized by the Department of Anthropology at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, to be held from May 9 to 12, 2012. The theme of the conference: *The Unexpected*, which invites you to consider certain aspects of our chosen profession and lives as anthropologists. I hope to see you all there so we may have an opportunity to continue ongoing discussions initiated the past years.

# CASCA EXECUTIVE 2010-2011 COMITÉ EXÉCUTIVE DE LA CASCA



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Here to serve!  
Ici pour vous!

# HEALTH: CIHR AND SSHRC RESPONDS

In the last issue of Culture (Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 5-6) we published THE END OF MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY? CLEAVING 'HEALTH' FROM THE FUNDING PRIORITIES OF SSHRC. WILL CIHR FUND SOCIAL SCIENTISTS IN CANADA? This piece was a letter authored by the CASCA President and some of the leading medical anthropologists in Canada. Below is the reply from SSHRC and CIHR.

Dans le dernier numéro de Culture (vol. 4, n. 2, p. 5-6), nous avons publié un article intitulé THE END OF MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY? CLEAVING 'HEALTH' FROM THE FUNDING PRIORITIES OF SSHRC. WILL CIHR FUND SOCIAL SCIENTISTS IN CANADA? Il s'agissait d'une lettre écrite par le président de la CASCA et plusieurs anthropologues médicaux du Canada. Nous publions aujourd'hui la réponse du CRHS et de l'IRSC.



Instituts de recherche en  
Santé du Canada

Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada

Canadian Institutes of  
Health Research

Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada

February 4, 2011

Dr. Janice Graham, PhD  
Canada Research Chair in Bioethics  
President, Canadian Anthropology Society  
Professor of Bioethics and of Pediatrics (Infectious Diseases), Faculty of Medicine  
Professor of Sociology & Sociology Anthropology, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences  
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Dear Dr. Graham and colleagues:

Thank you for your letter of December 1, 2010, and the report prepared by members of your Society following the meeting in Montreal in June 2010 during the Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities.

Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) staff appreciated the opportunity to interact with members of your Society in June. We viewed this meeting as an important opportunity to engage in a substantive discussion on the changes in subject matter eligibility that began with the transition of MRC into CIHR, and that now affect the ways in which anthropologists can interact productively with both CIHR and SSHRC.

Over the course of last summer - and in part as a result of conversations like the one in Montreal - several important changes have been made to assist the research community in managing this transition. This includes a further elaboration of guidelines for subject matter eligibility at SSHRC; ongoing efforts by CIHR to recruit qualified social science and humanities scholars to take part in its peer review committees; and, efforts by both agencies to explain the changes and assist researchers and research administrators in framing proposals for the appropriate funding agency.

We are keenly aware that the transition from "medicine" to "health" has not always been smooth, and we are committed to ongoing analysis and consultation to improve our management of the change, including dispelling myths about what can and cannot be funded.

For example, a review of projects funded in recent years confirms that anthropological research in international settings can indeed be funded at CIHR, as can research that analyzes "the historical, social, cultural and political dimensions of the production of biomedical knowledge and its associated technologies and practices." The requirement that researchers demonstrate relevance to CIHR's mandate should not be a barrier to particular disciplines or academic traditions. The kinds of specific research topics mentioned in your letter should be able to receive support from either SSHRC or CIHR, depending on the way in which a full proposal is framed and the extent to which improving health is a direct or indirect objective of the research.

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Canada

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# HEALTH: CIHR AND SSHRC RESPONDS

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Your letter concludes with a series of recommendations, and we would like to respond to these as presented:

- 1) SSHRC has already taken actions to clarify the types of health research it can fund, updating the guidelines available on its web site. While it is not within our control to revisit decisions made as part of the federal government's strategic review process, we will continue to analyze the implementation of these changes to ensure that guidelines are clear and processes are fair and transparent.
- 2) We would welcome the opportunity to interact once again with the medical anthropology community, perhaps as part of the 2011 Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities in Fredericton. We understand that preliminary discussions have already been held in this regard.
- 3) Issuing a specific request for applications focused on a particular discipline (in this case medical anthropology) would run counter to the principles of CIHR's new "roadmap" for its programs. We remain open to considering special RFAs on particular topics, which would engage researchers from a range of disciplines and backgrounds.
- 4) We are committed to a fair and inclusive peer review process. CIHR and SSHRC are already working together to share names of potential committee members, and we would welcome recommendations from your Society to sit on CIHR review committees.
- 5) An initiative targeted at specific fields of graduate education would run counter to the new CIHR roadmap. We are, however, aware that the transition to new subject matter eligibility guidelines may be particularly difficult for graduate students and postdoctoral candidates, and will be looking into this issue in more detail over the coming months.

We appreciate that managing this transition poses challenges to members of the research community. We are committed to working with organizations like yours, based on the best possible evidence about the effects of the change in funding guidelines. To that end, we will be happy to share additional information as it becomes available, and will be examining the possibility of a more thorough review of issues related to funding for social sciences and humanities research on health in the future. As always, any advice or suggestions that members of your Society may have in this regard will be appreciated.

Sincerely,



Chad Gafffield, PhD, FRSC  
President  
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council



Alain Beaudet, PhD, MD  
President  
Canadian Institutes of Health Research

## 2011 WEAVER - TREMBLAY AWARD WINNER

Dr. Pam Downe is one of the most highly regarded Canadian scholars in the broad areas of violence in the lives of girls and young women, HIV/AIDS, and motherhood and one of the few scholars in Canada to examine the challenges faced by girls who have been involved in the sex trade.

Professor Downe's work has been used to inform the development of policies and programs designed to meet the needs of this population. Professor Downe possesses all the best characteristics of a caring and committed scholar whose thinking is, at once, fierce, focused, and courageous.

Dr. Downe has crafted sophisticated theoretical analyses and innovative methodological strategies in research that addresses a range of key issues including: discourses of disease in relation to social contexts; theorizing the shifting terrain of motherhood; the sexual exploitation and trafficking of women and girls; girls and prostitution; migration and health; addictions and drug use; harm reduction; public health and health policy and, more recently, maternal health and HIV/AIDS. Dr. Downe's complex framing of health and well-being has been her signature contribution not only to medical anthropology but to women's and gender studies as well.

As a feminist scholar and activist, Dr. Downe has made an important contribution to the scholarship examining questions of power and the politics of health for women's and girls' lives in postcolonial, transnational and global contexts.

Professor Downe has shaped her professional trajectory according to the pressing needs of marginalized groups and people for whom she has sought practical solutions to ameliorate the suffering in their lives and to fight against social inequities within Canada, the Caribbean and Central America.

## RÉCIPIENDAIRE 2011 DU PRIX WEAVER - TREMBLAY

Pamela Downe est parmi les intellectuelles canadiennes les plus renommées en ce qui a trait à l'étude de la violence vécue par les filles et jeunes femmes, du VIH/sida et de la maternité. Elle est l'un des rares chercheurs du pays à s'intéresser aux défis que doivent relever les filles ayant fait partie du commerce du sexe.

Les travaux de la professeure Downe ont été utilisés dans l'élaboration de politiques et de programmes conçus pour répondre aux besoins de cette population. La professeure Downe possède toutes les caractéristiques qui font d'elle une savante humaine et dévouée dont la pensée est à la fois vive, concentrée et courageuse.

Mme Downe a échafaudé des analyses théoriques sophistiquées et des stratégies méthodologiques innovatrices en recherche, afin de s'attaquer à diverses questions clés dont: le discours de la maladie selon le contexte social; la théorisation du sujet changeant qu'est la maternité; l'exploitation sexuelle et le trafic de femmes et de filles; la prostitution des jeunes filles; l'immigration et la santé; la toxicomanie et la consommation de drogues; la réduction des dommages; la santé publique, les politiques de la santé et, plus récemment, la santé maternelle et le VIH/sida. Les formulations complexes de la santé et du bien-être représentent la contribution phare de la professeure Downe, non seulement pour l'anthropologie médicale, mais aussi pour les études féministes et de genre.



*Photo: Michel Bouchard*

En tant qu'intellectuelle et militante féministe, la professeure Downe a contribué de façon importante au savoir relatif aux questions de pouvoir et aux politiques de la santé des femmes et des filles en contexte postcolonial, transnational et global.

La professeure Downe a ajusté sa trajectoire professionnelle en fonction des besoins pressants des groupes marginalisés et des gens pour qui elle a cherché des solutions pratiques. Elle visait ainsi à atténuer la souffrance vécue par ces personnes et à lutter contre les injustices sociales, tant au Canada que dans les Caraïbes ou en Amérique centrale.

# CASCA WOMEN'S NETWORK AWARDS

The CASCA Women's Network is very pleased to announce the recipients of the CASCA Women's Network Award for Student Paper in Feminist Anthropology - Prix du Réseau des femmes de la CASCA récompensant l'article d'un étudiant en anthropologie féministe (\$100.00).

The recipient for the 2010 award is Catherine Bryan (LEFT), an M.A. student in Social Anthropology at Dalhousie University for her paper "Ambivalent Transnationalism and the Negotiation of Migrant Identities."

For 2011 the prize has been awarded to Merin Oleschuk (RIGHT), an M.A. student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Alberta, for her paper "Engendering Transnational Foodways: A Case of Southern Sudanese Women in Brooks, Alberta." Congratulations!



## CULTURE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The newsletter aims to publishing interesting and relevant submissions, while aiming to ensure an visually attractive presentation of the content with excellent design and carefully selected images and photos.

Articles and discussion pieces:

- Recommended length: 500 to 1000 words;
- Photos and images: we encourage you to submit with your piece some photos or images that we can include in the design. If there are no photos available, we reserve the right to include appropriate images that fit the theme and content of the piece;
- Only current paid-up members of CASCA can publish articles in Culture.

Book notes:

- We will only accept book note submissions from current CASCA members;
- Recommended length: 150 words either submitted by e-mail or as either a TXT, DOC or RTF attachment. We reserve the right to edit the text to fit available space;
- Photo: we ask that you submit an image of the book cover as a GIF, JPEG or TIFF file.

## CULTURE : PROTOCOLE DE RÉDACTION

L'infolettre publie des soumissions intéressantes et pertinentes, présentées de façon attrayante visuellement avec un design, des images et des photos de qualité.

Protocole:

Articles et discussion:

- Longueur recommandée: de 500 à 1000 mots;
- Photos et images: nous vous encourageons à soumettre avec votre article des photos ou images que nous pouvons inclure dans notre mise en page. Si vous ne fournissez pas d'image, nous nous réservons le droit d'inclure des éléments visuels qui conviennent au thème et contenu de l'article;
- La publication d'articles dans Culture est réservée aux membres ayant payé leur cotisation.

Livres en Bref:

- Nous n'acceptons les comptes rendus que des membres de la CASCA;
- Longueur recommandée: 150 mots, envoyés par courriel ou en fichier joint TXT, DOC ou RTF. Nous nous réservons le droit de modifier le texte en fonction de l'espace disponible;
- Photo: nous vous demandons de fournir la couverture du livre au format GIF, JPEG ou TIFF.



# FINDING A HOME IN ANTHROPOLOGY

Martha Radice & Cheryl Watts,  
Dalhousie University

The secret goal of many introductory-level instructors is to inspire their students to 'find a home' in anthropology – to choose it for their major. Here, we present a writing assignment on 'space, place and home' that we designed with this goal in mind, to give students room to try out anthropological fieldwork for the first time.

We chose the topic to draw on the instructor's specialization and to tie in with Rae Bridgman's *StreetCities* (2006), an ethnography about alternative housing projects for chronically homeless people in Toronto, assigned in the winter term of this full-year, 200-student class. Other materials we use building up to the assignment are Delaney's (2004) textbook chapter on spatial locations, and a chapter from Miller (2008), which shows how social relationships are sustained through contemporary material culture – in this excerpt, the little plastic toys you get in McDonald's happy meals. Class lectures focus on concepts such as place-making and the social production and social construction of space. Students also have a tutorial in which objects they bring from home – wherever that is – stimulate discussion on the ways that society and culture shape where and how people feel at home.

The assignment itself gives students two options: either they interview

someone they know about where they live and what home means to them, or they keep a 'time-space diary', recording observations of all the places they move through during a 48-hour period. To facilitate this fieldwork, they create their own research instrument – the interview questions or observation guidelines – sometimes with a focus on course themes that have already intrigued them (e.g. gender, kinship, or economics). Giving students a choice here is important because it helps engage their interest, and incidentally sustains ours with more variety to read when grading!

instrument and their observation or interview notes just before spring break.

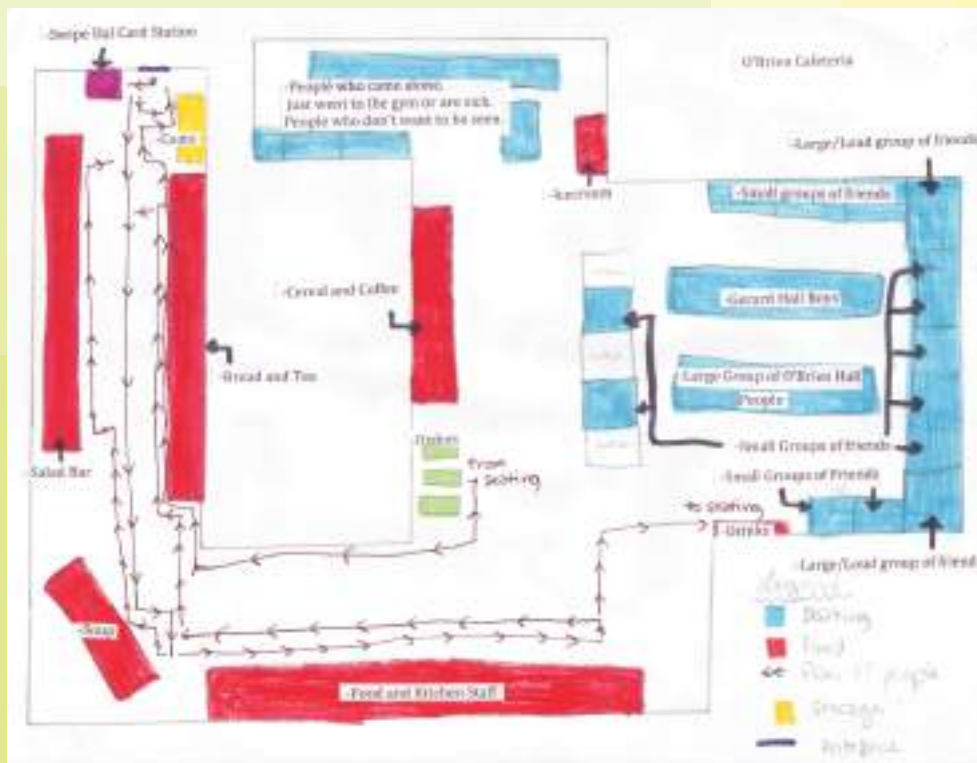
As one might imagine, the assignment requires detailed instructions (running to four pages) and goes through departmental ethics review. It's also a collective creation, greatly inspired by an assignment on food designed by Liesl Gambold, who previously taught the course, and greatly improved by Brian Campbell and Conrad Fox, the other course TAs.

Our desire to offer a meaningful learning experience does not come without challenges. In spite of the detailed instructions, the assignment has plenty of room for creativity. Students are not required to test a hypothesis nor construct their essay around a strong thesis statement. We encourage them to write in the first person, like the anthropologists they read. So some students

find the assignment too

vague or open-ended. Others have a hard time figuring out how to weave together their initial themes and assumptions with what they learn from fieldwork. We offer, and students take advantage of, tutorial sessions, office hours, and discussions on the course website to work through their ideas about what questions to ask, how to present their findings, and how to frame their discussions.

Since the assignment is such a



Faith Kara's assignment included this map made from observations of her hall of residence cafeteria. Reproduced with permission

Students draw on this mini set of fieldwork data to write a 4-5 page essay, and also make a map providing information that would be hard to convey with words. *StreetCities* stimulates debates about methods, since it uses life stories, a reconstituted 'script' of a meeting, photographs and handwritten fieldnotes to experiment with alternative ethnographic representation. Students hand in the essay, the map, the research

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# FINDING A HOME IN ANTHROPOLOGY

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personal project, it can feel too close to home. While students are getting used to making the strange familiar—for instance, understanding experiences of homelessness through Bridgman's ethnography—they sometimes find the reverse process—making the familiar strange—is easier said than done. That said, we received some stellar work this year. We had some very creative maps, including a 3D pop-up one, several with photo inserts, and one with extra layers on transparencies that showed where sentimental objects were placed and how much time was spent in different parts of an interviewee's room. Students made astute observations of the use of space in buses, churches, athletics competitions, a navy reserve base, and, of course, their residences. They gave sensitive accounts of people's perspectives on home; especially rich cases included interviews with international students and one with someone

whose family had their own special word to mean cosy or homey ("woob"). Moreover, many students gave careful reflexive consideration in their essays to the challenges of practicing anthropology at home.

From a teaching perspective, the most difficult task is to ensure the four of us evaluate the assignment fairly and consistently. To facilitate grading, we developed a rubric that is heavily weighted towards engagement with the ethnographic process and completing all stages of the assignment. We also calibrate our standards by sitting down together to each grade the same few assignments, tweaking the rubric as needed.

There are many benefits of using this type of project in an introductory anthropology course, even if it can be time-consuming for us and a little disorienting, at first, for the students. While most of the course is geared towards teaching students to think

like anthropologists, this assignment allows them to see themselves as fledgling anthropologists. Students get to use the tools they learn about in class to examine their everyday worlds through ethnographic eyes. For many students, the experience helps bring subjects like homelessness to life. Not only do students apply urban anthropology to study their own lives, they focus on the ways in which people orient themselves in terms of space, place and feelings of being at home in the world. Most importantly, this learning experience enables students to find a home in anthropology, even if they later move to major in other subjects.

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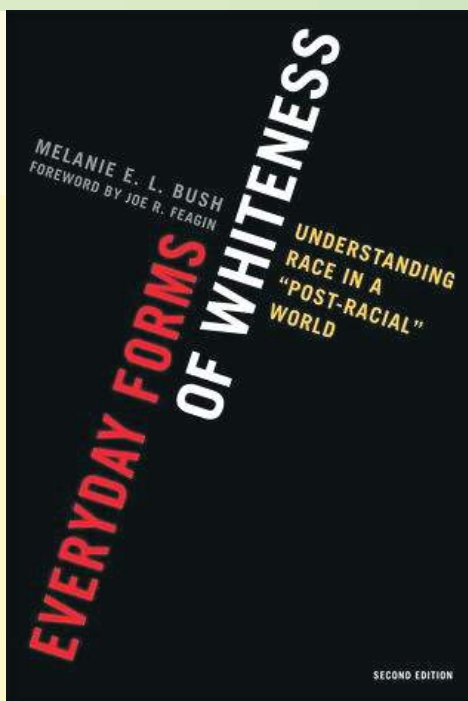


Halifax Seaport Farmers' Market, one of the places some students observed. Photo: Liz Radice

## Book Notes

## Livres en bref

## Everyday Forms of Whiteness: Understanding Race in a 'Post-Racial' World. Second Edition



Melanie E. L. Bush, Foreword by Joe R. Feagin  
Rowman & Littlefield © 2011, 330 pp.

The second edition incorporates new data and interviews to show how the everyday thinking of ordinary people contributes to the perpetuation of systemic racialized inequality. The book introduces key terms for the study of race and ethnicity, reveals the mechanisms that support the racial hierarchy in U.S. society, then outlines ways we can challenge long-standing patterns of racial inequality.

The second edition of Melanie Bush's acclaimed *Everyday Forms of Whiteness* looks at the often-unseen ways racism impacts our lives. The author reveals that even though we talk as though we live in a "post-racial" world after the election of Barack Obama, racism is still very much a factor in everyday life.

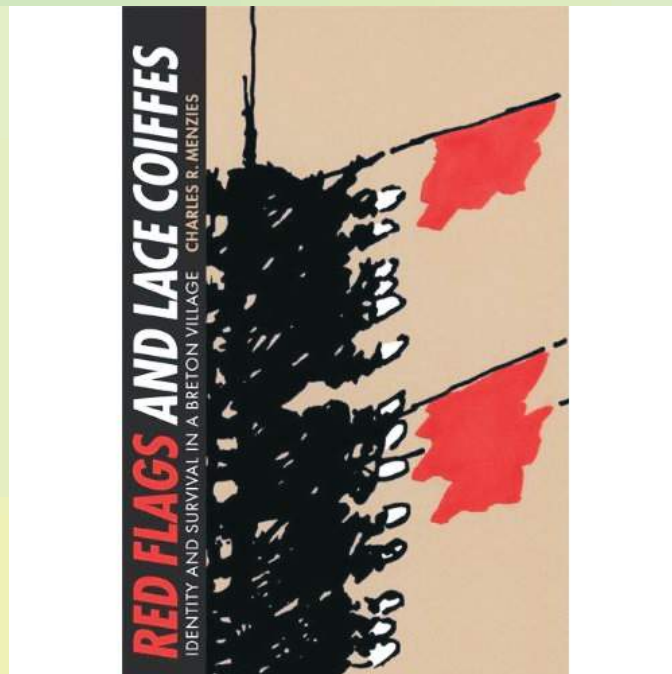
This edition incorporates new data and shows how the everyday thinking of ordinary people contributes to the perpetuation of systemic racialized inequality. The book reveals the mechanisms that support the racial hierarchy in U.S. society, identifies "cracks in the wall of whiteness," or opportunities to challenge this hierarchy.

## Red Flags and Lace Coiffes: Identity and Survival in a Breton Village

Charles R. Menzies  
University of Toronto Press © 2011, 160 pp.

Small-scale, family fishing enterprises manage to persist despite a range of difficult economic and ecological changes and disruptions. *Red Flags and Lace Coiffes* is an accessibly written and engaging ethnography that explores how and why family-based fishing enterprises continue in the face of what seem to be overwhelming odds.

Using historical ethnography as a lens through which to understand how the fishers and their families of the Bigouden region in France have situated themselves over time, Charles R. Menzies argues that local identity plays an important role as global capitalist pressures force these fishing communities to reorganize or disappear entirely. Throughout, the book touches on key concepts such as identity, culture, globalization, kinship, work, the environment, and the economy.



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