



# NEAA NEWSLETTER

## Health and Community, International Honors Program

Spring 2007, Janneli F. Miller, Visiting  
Professor of Anthropology, Northern Arizona  
University

In the spring of 2007, I had the opportunity to travel to India, China and South Africa as a professor in the Health and Community component of the International Honors Program ([www.ihp.edu](http://www.ihp.edu)). Although not specifically designed for anthropology students, IHP presents an excellent opportunity for undergraduates interested in medical anthropology. The comparative and interdisciplinary design of IHP allows students to gain a close-up perspective on issues related to global health problems, the political-economy of health, the cultural construction of illness and medical pluralism in three different cultures. In addition to attending classes, guest lectures and site visits, students participate in case studies where they work in teams to conduct field research on a topic of their choosing. The faculty teaching the Health and Community curriculum last spring included a

physician, an occupational health and policy specialist, and myself, a medical anthropologist and midwife. Working in combination with other disciplines positions anthropology as a key perspective in the study of international health and also highlights the benefits of cross-disciplinary collaboration.

The semester began with a two-week orientation at IHP headquarters at Boston University. The orientation allowed the thirty-one students from northeast colleges and universities to learn basic concepts related to health and community and to form a community of their own. These bonds would provide a buffer from the inevitable encounters with culture shock and homesickness over the next three months traveling in Asia and Africa.

IHP functions overseas thanks to the competence and leadership of local coordinators who arrange everything from academic lectures and site visits, to housing and entertainment. This partnership enhances the learning experience for students by organizing the programming around local issues and concerns. For example, in

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## Message from the Editor

Going into the field...whatever area you study is so different now: technology has changed and with it so has the way we do our research. Do you stay a purist—field notebook and pen in hand? Or do you buy all the cool new gadgets? That is the dilemma I have been facing for the last few months as I start my sabbatical year. Digital cameras, digital recorders, camcorders, blackberries...the list is endless. How do I know which one I should get and what features are a must? How many times can I go back to the cell phone store to debate whether I really need a Blackberry or not? How connected and how much do I really need to have? Luckily, I will never be that far away from a Best Buy or a Circuit City so I can figure it out as I go along. I would, however, be interested in hearing other people's thoughts, ideas and expertise on the technology they bring into the field.

I hope you find Janneli F. Miller's article interesting. We thought it fit particularly well with the theme of the NEAA's 2008 meetings, *Anthropology Comes Home: The Enduring Promise of a Holistic Discipline*, and we hope to continue this theme in upcoming issues of the newsletter. Also, as in some years in the past, I included Beliot College's Mindset List® because I get a real kick out of it. I think it offers a great (and comic!) perspective on the first-year students we will be teaching. How things change...

As many of you will have noticed already, the Newsletter has finally gone electronic. We've been working with Matt Smith at St. Lawrence University and are pleased to inaugurate the e-version with this newsletter. If you have received this paper copy but not your electronic copy – or if you have any comments on the e-version – please contact Alan Hersker at SUNY Potsdam, who will be filling in for me as editor during my sabbatical.

I hope you have a wonderful fall and a productive winter! I'll see you all in the spring,

Jessica Skolnikoff

**NEAA ANNUAL MEETING**  
March 7-9, 2008  
University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA  
See Winter Newsletter for details

## Beloit College's Mindset List® for the Class of 2001

Most of the students entering College this fall, members of the Class of 2011, were born in 1989. For them, Alvin Ailey, Andrei Sakharov, Huey Newton, Emperor Hirohito, Ted Bundy, Abbie Hoffman, and Don the Beachcomber have always been dead.

1. What Berlin wall?
2. Humvees, minus the artillery, have always been available to the public.
3. Rush Limbaugh and the "Dittoheads" have always been lambasting liberals.
4. They have never "rolled down" a car window.
5. Michael Moore has always been angry and funny.
6. They may confuse the Keating Five with a rock group.
7. They have grown up with bottled water.
8. General Motors has always been working on an electric car.
9. Nelson Mandela has always been free and a force in South Africa.
10. Pete Rose has never played baseball.
11. Rap music has always been mainstream.
12. Religious leaders have always been telling politicians what to do, or else!
13. "Off the hook" has never had anything to do with a telephone.
14. Music has always been "unplugged."
15. Russia has always had a multi-party political system.
16. Women have always been police chiefs in major cities.
17. They were born the year Harvard Law Review Editor Barack Obama announced he might run for office some day.
18. The NBA season has always gone on and on and on and on.
19. Classmates could include Michelle Wie, Jordin Sparks, and Bart Simpson.
20. Half of them may have been members of the Baby-sitters Club.
21. Eastern Airlines has never "earned their wings" in their lifetime.
22. No one has ever been able to sit down comfortably to a meal of "liver with some fava beans and a nice Chianti."
23. Wal-Mart has always been a larger retailer than Sears and has always employed more workers than GM.
24. Being "lame" has to do with being dumb or inarticulate, not disabled.
25. Wolf Blitzer has always been serving up the news on CNN.
26. Katie Couric has always had screen cred.
27. Al Gore has always been running for president or thinking about it.
28. They never found a prize in a Coca-Cola "MagiCan."
29. They were too young to understand Judas Priest's subliminal messages.
30. When all else fails, the Prozac defense has always been a possibility.
31. Multigrain chips have always provided healthful junk food.
32. They grew up in Wayne's World.
33. U2 has always been more than a spy plane.

34. They were introduced to Jack Nicholson as “The Joker.”
35. Stadiums, rock tours and sporting events have always had corporate names.
36. American rock groups have always appeared in Moscow.
37. Commercial product placements have been the norm in films and on TV.
38. On Parents’ Day on campus, their folks could be mixing it up with Lisa Bonet and Lenny Kravitz with daughter Zöe, or Kathie Lee and Frank Gifford with son Cody.
39. Fox has always been a major network.
40. They drove their parents crazy with the Beavis and Butt-Head laugh.
41. The “Blue Man Group” has always been everywhere.
42. Women’s studies majors have always been offered on campus.
43. Being a latchkey kid has never been a big deal.
44. Thanks to MySpace and Facebook, autobiography can happen in real time.
45. They learned about JFK from Oliver Stone and Malcolm X from Spike Lee.
46. Most phone calls have never been private.
47. High definition television has always been available.
48. Microbreweries have always been ubiquitous.
49. Virtual reality has always been available when the real thing failed.
50. Smoking has never been allowed in public spaces in France.
51. China has always been more interested in making money than in reeducation.
52. Time has always worked with Warner.
53. Tiananmen Square is a 2008 Olympics venue, not the scene of a massacre.
54. The purchase of ivory has always been banned.
55. MTV has never featured music videos.
56. The space program has never really caught their attention except in disasters.
57. Jerry Springer has always been lowering the level of discourse on TV.
58. They get much more information from Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert than from the newspaper.
59. They’re always texting 1 n other.
60. They will encounter roughly equal numbers of female and male professors in the classroom.
61. They never saw Johnny Carson live on television.
62. They have no idea who Rusty Jones was or why he said “goodbye to rusty cars.”
63. Avatars have nothing to do with Hindu deities.
64. Chavez has nothing to do with iceberg lettuce and everything to do with oil.
65. Illinois has been trying to ban smoking since the year they were born.
66. The World Wide Web has been an online tool since they were born.
67. Chronic fatigue syndrome has always been debilitating and controversial.
68. Burma has always been Myanmar.
69. Dilbert has always been ridiculing cubicle culture.
70. Food packaging has always included nutritional labeling.

NEAA 48th Annual Meeting  
March 7-9, 2008  
University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA

*Anthropology Comes Home: The Enduring  
Promise of a Holistic Discipline*

***Abstract and Session submission deadline is February 4th, 2008***

The Northeast Anthropological Association invites participants to discuss their research within the holistic science of anthropology at the 48th Annual Meeting March 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. *Anthropology Comes Home: The Enduring Promise of a Holistic Discipline*, Abstract and Session submission deadline is February 4th, 2008.

The Department of Anthropology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst is pleased to be hosting the NEAA Annual Meeting and would like offer a warm invitation to students and professionals to attend what we are certain will be a vibrant and intellectually stimulating conference. Participants are encouraged to propose session topics and papers early.

The organizers strongly urge that you book rooms as soon as possible. There are 80 rooms reserved at the University of Massachusetts Amherst Campus Center Hotel (<http://www.aux.umass.edu/hotel/>) for conference participants and there are several hotels near the University (<http://www.hampshirehospitality.com/>). For additional information please contact Dr. Ventura R. Pérez at [vrperez@anthro.umass.edu](mailto:vrperez@anthro.umass.edu).

***Forms and Registration:*** [www.neaa.org](http://www.neaa.org)

**Network with Professionals in Your Field! Build Your Resume!**

We are currently looking for Contributing Editors for Cultural Anthropology and Archaeology for the NEAA. If you are interested, please contact Alan Hersker, SUNY Potsdam, [herskeal@potsdam.edu](mailto:herskeal@potsdam.edu)

Bangalore, India our coordinators were the directors of an environmental activist NGO and they brought the group to the Plachimada site where local families, led by women, have stopped the Coca Cola plant from polluting their wells. Our exploration of the relationship between environment and health continued when we traveled to Beijing, China where problems with air pollution, crowding and poverty demonstrated how social and cultural forces contribute to illness and disease. In Cape Town, South Africa our attention shifted to the relationship between poverty and health. The coordinator, an anthropologist who works with male HIV support groups arranged for our students to spend a week in a township north of Cape Town. The impact of social disparities on health was blatant even thirteen years post-apartheid. The pre-med students who began the program thinking germs caused disease now developed a far deeper appreciation of the social determinants of health.

Another theme we explored over the course of the semester was the interaction between ancient medical systems and modern medicine. In India, we were surprised to hear from a panel of residents (a laundry worker, a barber and a vegetable seller) that even though Ayurvedic Unani medicine was widely available and inexpensive, they preferred to use biomedicine, even if it meant they had to borrow the money or go without food to pay for the care. In Beijing, doctors at the Chinese Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine explained how they had helped to cure the avian flu during the epidemic. A visit to the Tong Ren Tang manufacturing plant revealed that even the traditional medicines themselves were taking on aspects of biomedicine. Sarah Richardson, a senior anthropology major at Wellesley, explains this in a journal entry:

**Ancient Secrets Now in Pill Form!**

Through glass windows, we saw women cutting pills with sterile bare hands and paste traveling through tubes with honey. Each room contained metal machinery and workers in plastic jumpsuits. Our guide informed us that Traditional Chinese medicines are now manufactured as pills and gels - modern forms that attract more customers. The quality control lab was interplay between new and old: test tubes, beakers, black counters ... and large jars of semen celosiae and flos chrysanthemi. Each herb is carefully analyzed for its content and strength, using reliable scientific methods. Our tour concluded with a video that touted the company's impressive evolution. Hundreds of years ago they served the royal Emperor's court. Now they have a place in the international stock market.

By the end of the semester in Cape Town, as we turned our discussions and lectures to the practicalities of problem solving, the boundaries between biomedicine and "folk" medicine as well as natural and social science started breaking down and blending together. Although at times overwhelmed, the students began to see the interdisciplinary linkages and transformed their understanding of health and community. The three of us faculty members, who had accompanied our students in this literal and cognitive journey, noted that our students really "got it." In addition to gaining a practical understanding of academic perspectives on international health, they also became acutely aware of how their choices as US students and future health care practitioners affect people around the world.

## 2007 Survey of the Departments

### *2007 Survey of the Departments*

At the annual meeting of the Northeastern Anthropological Association at Ithaca College last spring, several members expressed their concern with declining participation in the organization, particularly at the annual conference. This follows several years of difficulty in recruiting an anthropology department to host the conference each spring. Many members offered their opinions, but the membership and executive board agreed that the NEAA needed to address these questions in a systematic way.

This fall, Alan Hersker, Abbey Mastin and Natisha Romain of the SUNY Potsdam Department of Anthropology will be conducting telephone interviews and an online survey of faculty, students and professionals. Their goal is to collect recommendations, ideas and strategies to increase participation in the NEAA and its annual meetings. They will prepare a formal report that will be presented to the membership at the 2008 meeting at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

If you're contacted by telephone or email, please take a moment to respond to the questions. The NEAA is a great organization and with your help we can make it even better! If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Alan Hersker, Department of Anthropology, SUNY Potsdam, Potsdam, NY 13676, [herskeal@potsteam.edu](mailto:herskeal@potsteam.edu)

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*MEMBERS RECEIVE 3 ISSUES OF THE NEAA NEWSLETTER PER YEAR AND A REDUCTION ON FEES TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE*