

# Anthropology

## Personnel and Administrative Changes

During academic year 2012–2013, Leon and Anne Goldberg professor Susan Silbey continued to serve as head of the [Anthropology Program](#). Associate professor Erica James received tenure. A successful promotion case was conducted for assistant professor Graham Jones, who will become an associate professor on July 1, 2013. Jones was presented the Edgerton Award for his outstanding research and teaching and named the Lister Brothers career development associate professor. Rosie Hegg retired after 29 years working at MIT, 12 as Anthropology's administrative officer. Amberly Steward was promoted to become our new administrative officer.

## Highlights of the Year

Professors Jones and Silbey received funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for their project “MOOCs and the Ethnography of Media Socialization.” Professor Silbey was also awarded funds from the University of California, Los Angeles, for her project “Tracking the Signs and Consequences of a Changing Safety Culture” and from the Simons Center for the Social Brain for her collaborative project on “The Role of Physician Peer Learning in Autism Screening and Diagnosis.” Professor Christine Walley received a Moving Image Fund grant from the LEF Foundation for her *Exit Zero* documentary. Rough-cut screenings of her documentary were shown at the Chicago Field Museum, the Chicago Public Library, the Cambridge Science Festival, and at several universities.

Several of our faculty members won book prizes this year: Stefan Helmreich received the 2012 Rachel Carson Book Prize from the Society for Social Studies of Science for *Alien Ocean*, Professor James' book *Democratic Insecurities* won the 2013 Gordon K. and Sybille Lewis Award from the Caribbean Studies Association, and Heather Paxson's book *The Life of Cheese* received the 2013 Diana Forsythe Prize awarded by the Society for the Anthropology of Work and the Committee on the Anthropology of Science, Technology, and Computing.

This year Anthropology was pleased to once again host several visiting scholars, students, and postdocs. Dr. Yehuda Goodman from the University of Tel Aviv was with us as a visiting scholar for a second year; professor Heather MacIndoe from the University of Massachusetts and Özgür Raşan Çetrez from the Sabanci University School of Management (Turkey) also joined us as visiting scholars. Michele Freidner was reappointed as a postdoctoral fellow and Dr. Beth Hennessey from Wellesley College had a visiting professorship with our program. For the second consecutive year, we hosted visitors from the École normale supérieure de Cachan (Paris, France): Aude Lejeune and Liliane Umubeyi. We also helped mentor a visitor from the Singapore University of Technology and Design, Yow Wei Quin.

## Teaching and Curriculum

Plans to develop the materials, skill-building exercises, and interactivity of the fieldwork workshop as an online module are under way. It is intended that this work will contribute to the MITx project. In addition, two members of Anthropology have been active in MITx committees: Professors Jones and Silbey serve on the research task force, and Silbey chairs the MITx subcommittee of the Faculty Policy Committee. Professor Walley is chair of the Subcommittee on the HASS (Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences) Requirement.

Faculty participation in the doctoral program in History, Anthropology, and Science, Technology, and Society (HASTS), as well as PhD programs in the Sloan School of Management and the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, continues to be in evidence, with several faculty members serving as graduate student advisors and on dissertation committees. Professor Paxson has agreed to be the HASTS director of graduate studies for the forthcoming academic year.

## Publications

Professor Helmreich authored the articles “Extraterrestrial Relativism” in *Anthropological Quarterly* and “Sound Studies Meets Deaf Studies” (with M. Friedner) in *The Senses & Society*.

Professor James’ article “Witchcraft, Bureaucraft, and the Social Life of (US)AID in Haiti” appeared in *Cultural Anthropology*.

Professor Jones published an article, “Magic with a Message: The Poetics of Christian Conjuring,” in *Cultural Anthropology*.

Professor Paxson published the book “*The Life of Cheese: Crafting Food and Value in America*” (University of California Press), which has garnered a book prize and much press. She also published the article “Nicknames and Trademarks: Establishing American Originals” as part of a collection of essays in *Food, Culture and Society*.

Professor Silbey published “Invocations of Law on Snowy Streets” in the *Journal of Comparative Law*. The article was reprinted in “*Using Legal Culture*” (D. Nelken, ed., Wildy, Simmons and Hill).

Professor Walley published the book “*Exit Zero: An Anthropologist’s Account of Family and Class in Chicago*” (University of Chicago Press).

## Presentations

Professor Manduhai Buyandelger gave a talk on the “Impossibility of Knowing the Past: The Politics of Silencing after Socialism in Mongolia” at the meeting of the American Association for Asian Studies in Toronto. She also presented “Journey on High Heels: Migrant Female Shamans in a City” at the American Anthropological Association (AAA) annual meeting in San Francisco.

Professors Helmreich and Paxson participated in 2012's spring term "Semester at Sea" program, and both gave several presentations as part of the program. Professor Helmreich spoke on "Thinking against the Law in Singapore," "A History of Hawai'i," and "Touring Ethnic Pasts," while Professor Paxson spoke on "Fair Trade Production and Marketing," "Food Insecurity in the US," and "The Life of Cheese: Artisans and Agriculture in Contemporary America."

In addition to his "Semester at Sea" talks, Professor Helmreich presented "Lateral Waves" at the meeting of the Society for Social Studies of Science in Copenhagen, Denmark; "Electromagnetic Life" at the AAA annual meeting in San Francisco; and "Listening through Alien Ears to the Voyager Interstellar Record" at the Freie Universität Berlin.

Professor Paxson, in addition to her "Semester at Sea" talks, presented her research on artisanal cheese making at various conferences and meetings both in the United States and abroad. In the US, she gave talks at the University of Michigan, Cornell University, the AAA meeting in San Francisco, and the joint annual meetings of the Agriculture, Food and Human Values Society and the Association for the Study of Food and Society in New York. Abroad, she presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Social Studies of Science in Denmark, the "Science of Artisan Cheese" conference in the United Kingdom, and the annual meeting of the European Association of Social Anthropologists in France.

Professor Jean Jackson gave a talk on "The Political Life of Culture: Isolating Indigeneity in Neoliberal Governance and Human Rights Activism in South America" at the AAA meeting in San Francisco.

Professor James gave presentations on her research involving trauma, violence, humanitarianism, and the politics of aid in Haiti at several universities, including Vanderbilt University, the University of Notre Dame, the University of Michigan, the University of Virginia, Bowdoin College, and the City University of New York. In addition, she presented "Policing Philanthropy and Criminalizing Charity in the 'War on Terror'" at the AAA meeting in San Francisco. She also organized and chaired the panel on "Faith-Based Charity and the Security State" at the AAA meeting.

Professor Jones spoke on "Magical Metaphors in Political Satire" at the University of Göttingen in Germany, "Debating Ethnic and Professional Identity in an Online Magicians' Forum" at Indiana University, and "Structures of Identity Talk in an Online Magicians' Forum" at the University of California, Irvine, and the AAA meeting in San Francisco.

Professor Silbey gave talks on topics related to law and society at the Eastern Sociological Society annual meeting in New York, the Academy of Management annual meeting in Boston, the Society for Social Studies of Science annual meeting in Copenhagen, the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences' "Organizational Challenges to Regulatory Enforcement and Compliance" workshop, and the annual meeting of the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics. Silbey spoke at the

University of Pennsylvania Law School on “Governing the Gap: Forging Safe Science Through Relational Regulation” and was the plenary speaker at the University of Illinois’ Ethics Awareness Week event.

Professor Walley gave several talks preceding rough-cut screenings of her documentary *Exit Zero*, which focuses on the effects of deindustrialization on the inhabitants of southeast Chicago. Talks and screenings took place at Hampshire College, Louisiana State University, Harvard University Summer School, Wellesley College, New York University, and the State University of New York at Stony Brook. In addition, Professor Walley presented “Rethinking People and Parks (Once Again): Reflections on Ocean Environments from Tanzania’s Mafia Island Marine Park” at Williams College and “Making Movies, Making Science” at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

### **Contributions to MIT and Outside Communities**

Anthropology faculty members served on a wide range of committees and boards at MIT. Professor Buyandelger served as the minor advisor for Anthropology and as the concentration advisor for Asian and Asian Diaspora Studies. She was also a member of the Women’s and Gender Studies programming and curriculum committees’. Professor Helmreich served on the Kelly-Douglas Prize Committee, the Levitan Prize Committee, the Committee on Animal Care, and the Visiting Artists Committee. Professor Jackson served on the Faculty Newsletter Editorial Board. Professor James served as the Anthropology undergraduate officer during the spring term and was a member of the Community Service Fund Board and the Community Giving at MIT steering committee. Professor Jones served as the concentration advisor for Religious Studies. Professor Paxson served as a freshman advisor, was the Anthropology undergraduate officer during the fall term, and was a member of the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences Educational Advisory Committee and the Commencement Committee. Professor Silbey served on the Energy Minor Oversight Committee, the Energy Education Task Force, the Energy and Environment Board, the MIT–Singapore University of Technology and Design exchange, the HASTS steering committee, and the Presidential Search Committee, as well as on the faculty committees for the Institute for Work and Employment Research, the Economic Sociology Program, and the Organization Studies Group at MIT Sloan. Professor Walley was the Anthropology concentration advisor and the faculty advisor for the Program on Environmental Governance and Sustainability. As noted, she also served as the chair of the Subcommittee on the HASS Requirement.

Outside MIT, Professor Buyandelger was a consultant for the “Oral History of 20th Century Mongolia” project at Cambridge University and a member of the Graduate Student Essay Prize committee of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies. She was also a reviewer for *American Ethnologist*. Professor Helmreich served on the editorial boards of *Environmental Humanities* and *American Ethnologist* and on the advisory board for *Culture, Theory and Critique*. He served on AAA’s David M. Schneider Award committee and on the American Ethnological Society’s Senior Book Prize Committee. Professor Jackson served on the editorial boards of *Antipoda: Revista de Antropología y Arqueológica Universidad de los Andes* and the *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*. She was also a member of the international advisory board of

*Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* and the steering committee of the Network of Concerned Anthropologists. Professor Jones served on the executive programming committee for AAA's 2012 annual meeting and on the advisory panel for NSF's Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grants in Cultural Anthropology. He also served on the editorial committee for *Ateliers d'Anthropologie* and was a manuscript reviewer for *American Anthropologist*. Professor Paxson was a manuscript reviewer for the University of California Press. Professor Silbey served as chair of the Law and Society Association's Kalven Prize committee and as a proposal reviewer for NSF. In addition, she served as an editor for Cambridge University Press and was on the editorial boards of the *Annual Review for Law & Social Science*, the *American Political Science Review*, and *Regulation and Governance*. Professor Walley was an elected delegate of AAA's Labor Committee.

**Susan S. Silbey**

**Program Head**

**Professor of Sociology and Anthropology**

**Leon and Anne Goldberg Professor of Humanities**