Congratulations

Horner Award Recipients

Grace E. Bello
Karen L. Sargent

and

Graduating Seniors

Chelsey M. Bethea
Grace E. Bello*
Coady D. Egan*
Jessica L. Gagnon
Michael K. Gagnon
Conor Parsons*
Alison M. Payne*
Karen L. Sargent*
Andrew M. Seedholm
Pamela A. Sommer
Rachel L. Ward*
Amanda M. Zadok

* Lambda Alpha Honor Society Member

Anthropology Department

10th Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium

April 30, 2015
Conor Parsons

Examining the Origins of Modern Humans

While fossil evidence places the emergence of anatomically modern human beings close to 200,000 years ago, there is still debate as to when *Homo sapiens sapiens* became intellectually, or behaviorally, "fully modern." This study examined the transition periods between the predecessors of *Homo sapiens*, sometimes called "archaic *Homo sapiens*," who emerge in the archaeological record between 400,000 and 250,000 years ago, and anatomically modern human beings, who emerged around 200,000 years ago. The goal of the study was to create a timeline for when behaviorally or fully modern humans emerged, which archaeology places sometime within the last 100,000 to 50,000 years. During this transition period, populations of *Homo sapiens* also replaced or absorbed other members of their genus, such as *Homo neanderthalensis*, and *Homo denisovia*. Archaeological elements that indicate more modern behavior include the use of symbolism, evidence for religion, and indications of increasing social complexity.

Karen Sargent

Voices of Hijab-Wearing Muslim Women: Ethnography through Social Media

My research explores the complex relationship between the hijab and Muslim women both in literature and narrative articles, as well as through information collected through in-depth interviews conducted in person and open-ended surveys distributed through Facebook and email. The main conclusions of the project emphasized the rise of important dialogues about feminism, the hijab, and the agency that is asserted while wearing it. It also concluded that these dialogues are now often taking place through various forms of social media, and that websites such as Twitter, Tumblr, and Facebook have become mediums for individual expressions of personal belief about the hijab. Through social media, the non-Muslim public is being exposed to new and unique viewpoints through viral pictures, videos, and hashtag campaigns, and this may potentially contribute to more tolerant and understanding dialogue about the hijab, and hopefully an eventual elimination of Islamophobia.

Grace Bello

A Walk through Time with the Boats Archaeological Site of Dighton, Massachusetts

I am doing research on an archaeological site in Dighton in southeastern Massachusetts; this site is in a location that is part of a cluster of 6 sites within a few miles of one another along the Taunton River. My research has consisted of the analysis of the collection of 3602 artifacts from the Boats site, as well as analyzing the past archaeological records of the other sites in the area to gain a more well-rounded understanding of the culture of the people who had inhabited this area and created these artifacts. This past Fall, I classified these artifacts into lithic (stone) types as well as determining the typology for each artifact. Doing this told me more about the movement patterns of the cultures that made these artifacts and more about the concentration of different artifact types during different time periods when the site was occupied.

Amanda Zadok

Sephardic and Yemenite Judaism:
An Ethnographic Study of Local, Contemporary Communities

This presentation represents a segment of an ongoing research project that I hope to eventually be able to continue in graduate school. In this study I explore the Sephardic side of Judaism, which is a minority in North America. I then begin to take a closer look at Yemenite Jewry, as I have a connection to Yemen with my father being half Yemeni-Israeli. I attended two Shabbat services during Passover at an Orthodox Sephardic synagogue in Newton, MA, and I have interviewed a specialist in Yemenite studies, with a focus on Yemenite Jewry. During my participant observations, I was able to witness how an Orthodox synagogue is structured (i.e. separate seating for men and women), as well as observe small traditions such as touching the Torah with the prayer book and then kissing the book. My father attended with me and became an important key informant, especially by speaking with the rabbi and helping me gain a connection with him.

Emily Rux

Life through Bones: A Forensic Anthropological Analysis

The ability of a forensic anthropologist to examine a skeleton and provide age and other demographic information is a skill that takes many years and much practice to develop. This semester I was given the opportunity to take the next step in that direction. I was presented with a nearly complete human skeleton, from which I was able to determine its demographic identification including sex, an estimation of age and ancestry as well as possible pathologies. The skeleton presents evidence that this individual lived with a congenital defect as well as disease. In my presentation I will be discussing the results of my research, the conclusions that I have been able to draw from my investigation and the difficulties that present themselves during the research process.

Recognition of Horner Award Recipients and Graduating Seniors