Akiko is back!

After spending two years on academic leave, Akiko Takeyama returned to the KU campus this August in time for the fall semester. Akiko took her leave in the fall of 2010 in order to spend time working on an upcoming book. She was supported by a Wenner-Gren Hunt Post-Doctoral Fellowship, which is a fellowship that supports recent PhDs, and gives them time and resources to develop their research for publication. In fall of 2011, Takeyama received an SSRC fellowship – the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) Fellowship, which she used to conduct follow-up interviews for her book in Tokyo.

Akiko’s book is based on her doctoral dissertation, and centers on Japanese host clubs. Host clubs are establishments in which young, working class men beautify their appearance and “host” female clients. Host clubs are a more recent incarnation of Japanese hostess clubs, in which women “host” male clients. Akiko describes the male hosts as “selling dreams to women.”

In her book, Akiko unfolds this socioeconomic and cultural phenomenon in which women pursue romantic relationships in commercial settings. Women are often tied with the domestic sphere, are expected to be self-sacrificing housewives and mothers, and are associated with the qualities of chastity and faithfulness. The phenomenon of host clubs is challenging to this “traditional” norm of women.

These host clubs and their inversion of gender roles reflect the sociocultural transformation of the Japanese economy and gendered relationships. This kind of commercial relationship, Akiko states, points toward new forms of labor and lifestyle consumption patterns: “this phenomenon of people selling companionship and flirtation is more pervasive in post-industrial societies. I’m looking at this new form of labor in relation to post-industrial consumer capitalism and neoliberal globalization.” These new forms of flexible labor stand in contrast to “traditional” gendered labor in corporate Japan, in which men are supposed to be loyal to their jobs and work extended hours.

Akiko’s book manuscript, Affect Economy: Neoliberal Class Struggle and Gender Politics in a Tokyo Host Club, is now under review. If everything goes well, Akiko says, she will have a book contract by Spring 2013, and the book would be released in about two years.

Akiko’s other current research interests concern human trafficking in Japan. She notes that the “case of human trafficking in East Asia is not often times so much about forced replacement, but more enticement…women in Southeast Asia who are dreaming of economic influence, these women are tricked to go to Japan and work as models, entertainers, nurses, but end up in the sex industry and as brides.”

This semester, Akiko taught two courses: ANTH/WGSS 389: Anthropology of Gender, and ANTH 108/308: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology. Next semester Takeyama will be teaching ANTH 108/308: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology.
We are off to a busy start of the Spring 2013 semester after a lovely winter break. Now we are rested and ready to take full advantage of the opportunities and challenges ahead. The calendar is already filling up with interesting activities, and we look forward to renewed engagement with our undergraduate and graduate students. Happy New Year!
Nearly half of the world’s languages are in danger of being extinct by the year 2100. With the loss of each language comes the loss of a culture, knowledge, and a unique means of human expression. Language documentation and preservation are imperative to prevent endangered languages from becoming extinct. Beyond the work of recording, revitalization projects within the community breathe new life into a dying language. At the Co-Lang Institute hosted at KU this summer, linguists, students, and activists joined forces to improve their ability to be part of this task.

Co-Lang occurs in a different location every two years, alternating with the Linguistic Society of America’s Summer Institute. The two programs complement each other as the LSA program focuses more on structuralism and Co-Lang concentrates on the practical aspects of language documentation. The summer 2012 program was organized by Dr. Arienne Dwyer and Dr. Carlos Nash. It began with a two-week training course, which was followed by a four-week practicum during which participants could apply what they had learned. Nearly 100 participants took part in researching Amazigh (Berber), Uda, and Cherokee. To equip those in the program, three different tracks of study were offered. Depending on the interests of participants, they could choose to focus on technology, language revitalization, or language acquisition.

Professionals, students, and activists worked together, each bringing unique skills and viewpoints to the program. Collaboration between individuals from varied backgrounds is an integral part of what makes Co-Lang so impactful. The organic, holistic nature of training offered at Co-Lang creates a level learning environment where the synergy produces amazing results. One participant remarked, “This has changed my life.” As people passionate about language preservation interact in a highly focused setting, the passion for this work spreads.

Through participating in the institute, language becomes more than an object of study; it comes alive. Language is much more than words in a dictionary and learning the culture of those who speak the language is invaluable in language revitalization work. Native speaker consultants for the three languages engaged the audience in actually speaking the languages studied. The audience was led to participate in an Uda call and response song, allowing them to experience the interplay of language and culture first hand. Cherokee instructors took advantage of collaboration with the Spencer Art Museum to give a tour in Cherokee. Cherokee students researched colors at the museum, then used the language to explain color symbolism. Expanding speaking domains is extremely important when working to revitalize an endangered language and the Cherokee students enjoyed the opportunity to organically participate in this process. The Amazigh instructor was both a native speaker and a linguist. Because of her work this summer, a language acquisition school will take place in Morocco next summer for students to continue studying Amazigh.

Hosting the institute in Kansas provided a unique opportunity to introduce people from many varied locations to prairie culture. There was a large Native American presence at Co-Lang and many participants went to a pow-wow. Tours of the countryside exposed guests to the beauty and wildlife of this area. Seeing baby bison was a highlight many will not soon forget. Likewise, the bonds formed between participants will last years beyond the end of this summer’s institute.

The impact of Co-Lang on participants, the University of Kansas, and the field of language preservation has already been notable, and time will reveal even more how far reaching this program was. Co-Lang has only continued to grow since the first summer institute in 2008. The hope is that the program will result in many more similar projects, spreading passion for language preservation far beyond the realm of professionals and making it real for anyone interested in language.
Rebecca’s almost done!

With the support of an IGERT (Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship) fellowship through NSF, Rebecca Crosthwait recently completed another long stint in the field. Her research continues with itinerant, migrant workers, particularly in the oil industry. The people with whom Rebecca works occupy positions with multiple levels uncertainty and precarity. They are impacted by industry, global markets, international politics (in the United States and Mexico), immigration laws and enforcement, extreme weather and climate change.

While the migrant oil workers are often highly skilled and well-paid, their work is inconsistent, sporadic, and can be physically dangerous. Hailing from a society that values masculinity and full of machismo, these are men are often required to endure congregating in a plaza in a prominent coastal city that functions as a staging area for the industry, to await employers to hire them. They can be effectively on call for weeks or even months, carrying with them their C.V., course certificates and current health tests so they can leave for work at a moment’s notice. Those who cannot wait in person are dependent upon social networks to keep them informed of employment demand. Despite their skill and training, they are subject to fluctuations of global markets (oil supply and demand), immigration (stringency ebbs and flows), and climate change, especially as experienced in and extreme weather events like hurricanes.

The latter two aspects are focuses of Rebecca’s research in her IGERT work. Her preliminary observations are that industry places tremendous faith in technology, including weather prediction. And while weather models are accurately predicting that more extreme weather events will occur, they are not able to predict when, where, and of what intensity. The following two observations explain this in greater detail: 1) the models are predicting greater intensity in the future, and 2) they are acting differently than expected (as we saw with Hurricane Sandy). A paradox of this problem is that the oil industry, so highly technological, is grounded in the earth, where the oil is. Indeed, a central aspect of the paradox is that the Gulf of Mexico, also known as “hurricane alley,” is quite directly lined up with what is also known as “offshore alley” by the oil industry. To date, the industry’s faith in technology has not brought solutions critical to its operation, such predicting the weather, and, on a more human level, addressing the precarity that the oil workers must cope with on a daily basis.
Allan’s latest research

The latest edition in the Allan Hanson collection will be titled Cultural Tectonics. It deals with the significant shifts in culture that come about through changes in the lives of concrete individuals with benign motivations due to their interaction with advancing technology.

Part of the book focuses particularly on the effects of biomedical innovations including in vitro fertilization procedures, sperm donation, surrogacy, prenatal testing, genetic testing, and life prolonging techniques on society and the individual. These technological advances in biomedicine have the effect of shifting people’s experience of time. If we consider the three divisions of time (past, present, and future), present is the only one of the three to which we have direct access (albeit fleeting, ephemeral). It that aspect in which our immediate experience occurs. Certain of the aforementioned innovations alter our experience of these divisions of time. In particular, future is often made present by moving the realities of genetic disorders from a probabilistic uncertainty, to a present immediacy.

The motivation to undergo these tests is standard in our general array of cultural values and preferences. But there are unanticipated consequences to these technologies – and herein lies the notion of tectonics and massive shifts due to the use of technology. The minute vibrations which lead to cultural tremors, and ultimately shifts that this book addresses, start from basic, individual items of concern and the actions taken to address them.

The chapter on DNA addresses this in two ways – first, for the identification of people who are going to come down with a disease (Huntington’s) but they don’t know when. Second, there are other genetic tests for breast cancer, colon cancer, Alzheimer’s in which a strong likelihood of incidence can be identified. This has a major impact on these individuals and their concept of time.

To restate the divisions of time – the past is over and done with; the present is when we can act; and the future is not here and we don’t know what it is. But with these tests, we can bring the future into the present. Ruth Hubbard has called this new group that has been created by technology “the healthy ill.” They may consider themselves ill, or may be considered by others to be ill because of what is going to happen, not what is happening. For instance, an identification of the genetic presence of Huntington’s can influence choices on marriage, career, and retirement. It impacts the way the diagnosed live in the present. This is an instance of the concept of shifting time.

Third, the reverse case can occur through the use of DNA in criminal investigations and the use of indictments. Criminal cases generally have statutes of limitations to deal with, basically meaning that after a period of time after commission or discovery of a criminal act, it is no longer prosecutable. However, the statute is tolled (extended, sometimes indefinitely) by issuing an arrest warrant. This pushes the present into the future for the government, the suspect/s, and those who care about or are interested in either group. This “messes with” the concept of time.

DNA also has an impact on identity. Who you are is a fairly public thing – based on behavior, personality, relationships. Whether we think about others or ourselves, this is mostly what we conceive of identity. But with DNA, the identity marker itself is meaningless. By identifying eight different positions on the DNA, a person can be known by these DNA markers – and with incredible precision. Yet it is completely meaningless in an interactive sense. We don’t know this part of our identity, and yet it is there. This reveals emptiness as an aspect of identity.

Emptiness is another focus in the book. Single women, lesbian couples, or married women with infertile husbands may conceive with sperm purchased from a commercial sperm bank. Sometimes up to seventy children have been conceived with sperm from the same donor. Their mothers may get in contact with each other and often like to get these kids together. This creates a new kind of kinship group: the donor sibling family. The really interesting part of this is that the focal figure here, the sperm donor, is not present, or even necessarily aware. He is anonymous, an empty center.

In sum, the focus of the book is not on the immediate and standard implications of decisions, thoughts, values, and actions, but rather on the unforeseen consequences of highly personal, benign decisions (especially involving biomedical technology) that are of seismic importance to shifts in culture.
Serbian Archaeology II

Ivana Radovanovic directed archaeological field survey and test excavations in Serbia as a part of her project “Settlement and coastal/inland interaction in the Iron Gates Mesolithic - Phase I”. It was the second season of research that took place from May 18 to June 27 2012, funded by NSF and KU GRF in collaboration with University of Belgrade, University of Leiden/Netherlands, National Museum Belgrade and Regional Museum Negotin/Serbia.

Frayer on PBS

David Frayer made a guest appearance on the ScienceNow PBS program, What makes us human? Filmed in Berkeley in August, the program is hosted by David Pogue and Frayer covered evidence for language origins from bones and tools. Frayer says: “It was really pleasure interacting with David Pogue, who is an animated host with a real understanding and enthusiasm of issues well outside his intellectual training.” The program is available at: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/evolution/what-makes-us-human-pro.html
A five-year National Science Foundation (NSF) grant funded four projects and about sixty researchers at four Kansas universities. Prof. Jane Gibson is in her third year as co-PI, and BJ Gray is completing his second year as GRA (preceded by KU Anthropology alum Adam Benfer) on an interdisciplinary study of farmers’ land and water use decisions under conditions of climate change.

Gibson and Gray are a part of the interview team for the project. They interviewed 151 Kansas farmers from all regions of the state to discuss their perceptions and practices relative to land and water utilization. They were particularly interested in farmers’ perceptions about what works and what does not regarding adaptations to Kansas’ volatile weather, views of climate change and experiences of changes in their communities.

Encouraging interdisciplinary research is a current area of emphasis for organizations such as the NSF and now the University of Kansas. Being a part of such a major study with considerable funding is a tremendous opportunity for the KU Anthropology Department. Gibson and Gray represented us recently at the Governor’s Conference on the Future of Water in Kansas. The conference was attended by over 500 people, including prominent politicians, engineers, academics, professionals and farmers. Gray’s presentation of an analysis of farmers’ views of water and strategies to cope with anticipated shortages provided the attendees with a glimpse into the human side of issues that were left largely unaddressed by presentations featuring economic data, yield curves and other statistical analyses. Gray’s and Gibson’s findings (informed by Actor-Network-Theory) helped to contextualize the numbers that other disciplines amply covered, situating them in the farmers’ lived experience. As a complement to quantitative data, the anthropological approach gives the data meaning, situates them within concrete lives of individuals and brings data to life.

Both Gibson and Gray are quick to point out that this is a two-way street between our more quantitatively oriented colleagues and (generally, but not exclusively) qualitatively-inclined anthropologists. The quantitative findings of other disciplines involved in the project have provided data to direct specific future qualitative anthropological studies, some of which are in the works, and more qualitative research has been stimulated as well.

My ongoing interest in contemporary mythology about ancient cultures of Latin America and the “2012 phenomenon” is reaching a crescendo as we draw closer to December 21, 2012, a date mistakenly asserted to be the object of ancient Maya prophecy about the end of the world and the end of the Long Count calendar. Media buzz has created a prolonged “teaching moment” for public education as well as an opportunity for scholarship. In May, I was a featured speaker for the annual Maya Weekend at the University of Pennsylvania Museum in conjunction with the opening of the exhibition “2012: Maya Lords of Time.” In June, I traveled to Chichen Itza, Yucatan, Mexico for a National Geographic Television documentary about human skeletal remains and associated artifacts discovered in a previously unexplored cenote. In early November, I was a featured presenter at the Greenbrier Resort in West Virginia—the location of a massive bunker designed to protect the U.S. Congress in the event of a nuclear holocaust—for a NGC media weekend to promote the second season of the series “Doomsday Preppers.” I also presented a paper at the 111th Annual Meeting of the AAA in San Francisco on the influence of Western esoterica on academic interpretations of Maya religion and cosmology. In December, I will be a featured speaker at the 17th European Maya Conference in Helsinki, Finland. My research on the 2012 phenomenon has appeared in 2012: Decoding the Countercultural Apocalypse, edited by Joseph Gelfer, the Fortean Times, and the latest issues of Archaeoastronomy and the Zeitschrift für Anomalistik. I will be featured in two documentaries, Maya Apocalypse 2012 and Maya Underworld, both premiering on the National Geographic Channel (NGC) on Monday, December 3 at 9 pm.
At the Meetings

**Paper presenters and discussants at American Anthropological Association, San Francisco**

Torang Asadi. Charisma, identity, and Falun Gong’s material religion.


Rebecca J Crosthwait. Pervasive precarity? Migrant contingent workers in the Gulf of Mexico oil industry.

Sandra J Gray. Between rocks and hard places: Maternal investment in Karamoja, Uganda.

Peter C Haney. Genre, heteroglossia, and audience participation in a Mexican immigrant nightclub floorshow.


Teruo Koike. Grazing grass, shunning sex?: Japan’s herbivorous men.

Anne E Kraemer Diaz. Negotiating global health policy and indigenous rights: The changing roles of Maya midwives in Guatemala.


Jeremy William Meerkreebs. The economics of vomiting blood: bodily risk and surveillance among over-the-road truck drivers.

Lauren Renée Moore. From biomedical diagnosis to popular diet: blurring epistemological borders in the gluten-free diet boom.

Elizabeth A Spreng. Changing places: Anthropological journeys into the great unknown.

Donald D Stull. Cows, pigs, corporations and anthropologists.

Donald D Stull. (discussant) Edible anthropology: Maximizing borders of the anthropology of food.

Akiko Takeyama. The Art of seduction in and of the fieldwork.

Meghan Farley Webb. ¡No me digas!: Gendered transnational gossip and surveillance among the families of Kaqchikel migrants.

**Session Chair/Organizer**

Ben Chappell. Reconfiguring the American dream: Imaginaries, affect, politics.


**Presenter at the Plains Anthropological Society, Saskatoon**

Mary J. Adair, Neil Duncan, Robert Luseck, Mary Malaine and Linda Perry. Paleodietary Implications from starch, lipid and phytolith analysis: A case from the Kansas City Hopewell.
The KU Undergraduate Anthropology Club offers its members an opportunity to connect with Anthropology majors outside of class in the recreational Frasier 633 setting every Tuesday evening. While the KU Undergraduate Anthropology Club saw a stark decline in membership Spring 2012, the club’s membership witnessed a surprising boom this past fall. In fact, the club grew so large Club President Brandon Wiggins even pondered relocating club meetings to a new and larger room in order to accommodate the drastic increase. Alongside holding regular meetings, the club also organized several events over the course of the semester and has already begun plotting out prospective events for next semester.

Meetings usually run from 6:00-7:00 every Tuesday. During this time, members socialize, discuss anthropology related events, plan club events, or attend anthropology presentations. At the beginning of the semester, the club hosted three graduate students. Each student gave her personal experience applying to graduate school, which helped chart the different paths to graduate school from undergraduate. Furthermore, each explained the different job possibilities with graduate school degrees in the four sub-disciplines of anthropology (or two, if you prefer). Under the informal tone of the evening, club members also asked the graduate students questions on the process of applying to graduate school.

Early in the semester, many club members also participated in a club sponsored trip to the annual Kansas City Renaissance Festival. Additionally, the club also encouraged members to ask fair participants questions and report their discussions and findings during the next meeting. In another effort to help break the ice and socialize outside of the university setting, members dressed in ghoulish attire and drenched themselves in fake blood to participate in the annual Lawrence Zombie walk down Mass St.

The club also dabbled in experimental archaeology. After obtaining charcoal and ochre, club members attempted to recreate Paleolithic artwork at Lonestar Park outside of Lawrence. The mixing of ochre pigment proved to be more difficult than members expected, but after determining that the mixtures do not stain, club members decided that this experiment is worth pursuing again in future semesters on the KU Campus. Be on the lookout for simulated Upper Paleolithic artwork adorning university sidewalks Spring 2013.

Club Vice-President Josie Harmon led a decoration committee for the annual Department Halloween party. This year, Dr. Brent Metz of the Anthropology Department hosted the party at his house. Since Halloween fell on a Wednesday, the party was pushed to Day of the Dead. Decorations included usual Halloween decorations of webs and spooky posters hand drawn by the club’s more artistic members, but also incorporated Day of the Dead decorations and a Day of the Dead altar. Undergraduates, graduate students, and department faculty attended the party and enjoyed great food, party games, and ping pong.
We are grateful for the continuing support of our donors. Please consider a donation or a bequest to the Department of Anthropology to support students and help strengthen the unique educational benefits that the department offers.

Checks may be made out to “KUEA—Anthropology Dept”. Write on the memo “For Anthropology Dept. programs” and send to: Jane Gibson, Chair, Dept. of Anthropology, University of Kansas, Fraser Hall - Room 622, 1415 Jayhawk Blvd., Lawrence, KS 66045-7556. If you would like to discuss setting up a fund in honor of a special person or for a particular purpose, please call Jane at (785) 864-2635 or write her at jwgc@ku.edu or the mailing address above.

**Send us your news**

We are always interested to hear from alumni and learn what you are doing. We want to include more alumni news in *KU Anthropologist*. So, please keep us informed, stay in touch, and send your news to either Le-Thu Erazmus at lerazmus@ku.edu or David Frayer frayer@ku.edu. Be sure to include your phone number so we can contact you.

You can also snail mail us at:

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