

**Ethics Committee, 2020 Report to the AAPA membership**  
**Prepared by Robert L. Anemone, Chair of the Committee**

The 2019-20 Ethics Committee was chaired by Robert L. Anemone and consisted of the following members: Elizabeth DiGangi, Michele Goldsmith, Nina Jablonski, Heather Norton, Julienne Rutherford, David Strait, Jen Wagner, and Rachel Watkins. Two Ethics Fellows joined our committee this year: Nikki Burt (Cleveland Museum of Natural History) and Alyson Caine (University of California at Merced). Cara Hirst (University College London) remained for a second year as an Ethics Fellow.

Over the course of the 2019-20 year, the Ethics Committee worked on various items, including:

1. We began to collect information, reading lists, topics of concern, and pre-existing syllabi for courses on Ethics in Biological Anthropology. We hope to be able to provide resources and guidance for those seeking to include modules or entire courses on ethical issues in our field.
2. We corresponded and spoke with several colleagues who were concerned with the situation that occurred at the 2019 SAA meetings concerning sexual harassment and appropriate behavior at professional conferences.
3. Organization of a professional ethics workshop (*How Do We Go from Discussing Ethics to Taking Action? Collaborative Workshop on Ethical practice*) for the 2020 AAPAs. The workshop was designed by our three Ethics Fellows (Burt, Caine, and Hirst). The entire committee is very enthusiastic about this workshop and looking forward to taking part in it on Wednesday in LA.
4. We received information from and communicated with a student member (Ms. Jerika Heinze) who has been developing planning materials for a workshop designed for inexperienced researchers with the goal of reducing the incidence of sexual harassment in the field.
5. We solicited applications and selected a single Fellow to work with us during the 2020-2021 Academic Year: Maya Szafraniec, graduate student at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Maya's mentor and plans for her year as an Ethics Fellow are to be determined.
6. The Ethics Committee will continue its very successful Ethics Fellow Program in 2020-21. The purposes of the program are (1) to provide interested members—particularly those early in their careers—an opportunity to engage actively with the Ethics Committee and gain experience with ethics educational and research projects and (2) to help raise ethics literacy across the association.
7. We held two Virtual Committee Meetings during the 2019-2020 Academic year with the help of Brett Burk and the GoToMeeting software platform, as well as our annual face-to-face meeting in LA on Friday afternoon (12:15pm).
8. The terms of two members are ending this year: Michele Goldsmith, and Nina Jablonski. Robert Anemone will chair the committee next year for the third year of a three-year term. Returning members and their remaining term years are as follows: Heather Norton (1 years), Julienne Rutherford (1 years), David Strait (1 years), Jen Wagner (1 years), Rachel Watkins (2 years), and Elizabeth DiGangi (2 years). We will need to recruit 2 new members for 3-year terms to replace Goldsmith and Jablonski beginning in the Fall 2020. We will be discussing potential new members and building a list of colleagues with an interest in ethics at our meeting in LA.
9. As part of its usual duties, the Committee will be available as a non-adjudicative body to promote ethics literacy among AAPA members and to serve as a resource for AAPA members to discuss ethical challenges. After our regularly scheduled Face-to-Face Committee meeting on Friday at 12:15PM in LA, we will hold an ethics consultations drop-in session (beginning at 1:15pm) for AAPA members with ethical issues to discuss in complete confidentiality.

# FISST Training



## Fieldwork Initiative to Stop Sexualized Trauma

[www.fieldworkinitiative.org](http://www.fieldworkinitiative.org)

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### Student Seminar Agenda

*Duration: 105 minutes*

#### **Overhead Training Outcomes:**

- ❖ Students will have a reinforced understanding that they should never have to endure sexual trauma as part of their fieldwork or as a rite of passage as a researcher.
- ❖ Students will learn how to make a bilateral plan with their research advisors about how to report gendered violence.
- ❖ Students will be given a corpus of various strategies on how to minimize potentially dangerous situations, stressing that violence in the field is never their fault.
- ❖ Students will learn that they will be supported in their decisions to leave or pause future fieldwork in the event that dangerous conditions arise.
- ❖ Students will be connected with various resources which seek to protect them, as well as larger networks for fieldwork researchers.
- ❖ Students will be guided in considering the unique dynamics of their own field sites and will be encouraged to research local politics, power dynamics, and safety contacts prior to arriving in the locations and community where they plan to work. Students will be given the opportunity of connecting with others doing work in the same locale through the 'Women in the Field' networking group.



## **SESSION AGENDA:**

### **I. Introduction [5 minutes]**

The speaker introduces themselves and gives background information on the Fieldwork Initiative and the FISST Training. The audience will be guided through the trainings aforementioned objectives and outcomes.

### **II. Addressing Misconceptions [10 min]**

The speaker guides students in outlining the current beliefs regarding research and fieldwork as they exist in the public status quo and within academia. Students will trace the history of dominant beliefs within their domain and be lead into our new framework of subjective reflexivity which considers not only how we impact the outcome of our research but also how the research experience comes to impact the individual. In debunking the common myths and misconceptions, students will be given the tools to separate realistic concerns with those which contribute to misplaced blame, guilt, and imposter syndrome.

### **III. Problems Doing Fieldwork [20 min]**

Students will explore the difficulties of fieldwork and learn the difference between productive struggles and destructive struggles. They will learn to identify the three main hazards affecting researchers in the field (as outlined by Sociologists Rebecca Hanson and Patricia Richard): solitude, danger, & intimacy.

- a) *Solitude*: Student will come to understand the social, geographical, and linguistic barriers that researchers may face in new, unfamiliar environments- including but not limited to isolation, racial/ethnic/political/religious discrimination, linguistic loneliness, otherization, imposter syndrome and anxiety/depression.
- b) *Danger*: Students will learn about dangerous or hazardous situations that can occur- including but not limited to natural disasters, crime, the violation of local taboos, hazing, war, illness, and other happenings which can cause first or second-hand trauma.
- c) *Intimacy*: Students will examine the realities of gendered/sexualized violence which have occurred during the fieldwork experience- including but not limited to fraught local power dynamics and gender roles, body policing, bullying, transphobia, sexual harassment/assault, breached comfort boundaries, and LGBTQ issues amidst oppressive heteronormative/ patriarchal settings.

*\*All aforementioned issues will be showcased through real world accounts, statistics, or hypothetical scenario examples.*

#### **IV. Problems Reporting Violence and Seeking Help [15 min]**

Students will come to understand the logistical, mental, and emotional barriers researchers face in reporting problematic or traumatic fieldwork situations. Through this, they will learn that doing fieldwork in no ways requires one to endure uncomfortable, dangerous, or damaging situations as a “necessary evil”; and also be given a corpus of resources and avenues for which to report problems, seek advice, request further support, or find emergency intervention.

#### **V. The Self Advocacy Toolkit [20 min]**

Students will learn tips on how to avoid potentially dangerous situations, and be given methods on how to approach potentially problematic situations safely. Dedicated time will spent addressing strategies for street/sexual harassment and bystander intervention, as well as tools in how to navigate problematic relationships with research interlocutors. Specific conversational scripts will be given to help students who may struggle to initiate difficult conversations with a perpetrator or with their own advisor. Students will be given a copy of the MeToo Fieldwork Safety Handbook, and will be invited to join the ‘Women in the Field’ networking community to connect with other researchers in their region for further support. Students will be encouraged to demarcate a safe person within their department, community, or social circle who they can talk to (apart from the previous support resources provided).

#### **VI. Discussion Section and Q&A [30 min]**

Students will be invited to answer stimulating questions about their own fieldwork designed to encourage pre-emptive consideration and foresight about the unique problems that may arise once they reach their destination and begin to engage with the local community. The floor will then open up for questions regarding any of the aforementioned topics, or about the general practice of doing fieldwork.

#### **VII. Closing Statements [5 min]**

The speaker restates the main overarching takeaways of the FISST training, and shows students how to access and navigate the Fieldwork Initiative website in the event they need future help or support. Students will be reminded that fieldwork can pose problems, but is also an extremely positive, transformative, and joyful experience as well. The speaker will thank the audience and host for their attention and thereby call the session to a close.

# FISST TRAINING: Fieldwork Initiative to Stop Sexualized Trauma

Breaking open the blackbox; shedding light on  
gendered violence in the field

a training module by Jerika L. Heinze

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## Abstract:

Despite the realities of gendered violence in the domain of research fieldwork which has been well documented since as early as the 1970's (Easterday et al., 1977), little has been done to mitigate these encounters or provide institutional support for victims. Although great strides have been made against on-campus sexual harassment and assault, Universities often take the stance that since fieldwork exists in real world settings, students experiences there qualify as outside of their control and beyond their purview. Thus, despite the fact that research fieldwork is an integral component of various degrees, issues of gendered violence fall under the category of a researcher's own personal problems meant to be handled privately (Kloss, 2016). While fieldwork is often defined as an already arduous liminal stage, the traditional regard for the difficulty as a 'rite of passage' overlooks the gender specific dangers that exist, normalizes male field experiences as a benchmark norm (Kloss, 2016), and encourages female field researchers to keep silent about their experiences, further exacerbating existing trauma. In short, the lack of proper fieldwork training assumes the researchers historical default position as a heteronormative white male. Given this current need, the FISST Training seeks to hold institutional conversations, provide support, teach strategies, and awaken University faculty advisors to the realities that may await students in the field. FISST Training aims to step in and break apart the black box of sexually charged research experiences; shedding light on gendered violence in the field in a preventative approach.

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## In 2019, I conducted a random survey of 50 female/non binary fieldwork researchers; Study results showed:

“During your fieldwork, did you experience any form of gendered violence, sexual harassment, sexual assault, or unwanted advances?”

Response	Percentage
Yes, frequently	~18%
Yes, a few times	~37%
Yes, once	~10%
Almost	~2%
No, never	~33%

\*Of the 37% who never faced any form of gendered violence, 18% stated they worked exclusively with women as research participants.

Of those **60%** who experienced some form of gendered violence, sexual harassment, sexual assault, or unwanted advances, **only 2%** stated that they told University staff about it. Shame, embarrassment, difficulty addressing the subject, fear of blame, and fear of being removed from their research project were cited as the main reasons. **75%** stated that they had to put themselves in situations they weren't comfortable with to get the data they needed for their research. **95%** of participants stated that more pre-fieldwork training is needed.

Participants cited the need for:

- Awareness training for all supervisors about the realities that women/non-binary people face in the field.
- A guided conversation on fieldwork scenarios held with students before going into the field.
- Support networks with practical advice from peers and specialists
- Psychological assistance.
- A toolbox with coping strategies and emergency procedures

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## Some excerpts from participant's fieldwork experiences:

"I was constantly asked 'Are you gay!?' 'Are you really a girl?'"

"I was touched on intimate places of my body. It happened at night by a group of young men. I was alone."

"There were days when I did not leave my apartment because I just couldn't deal with the harassment. On my monthly review, my adviser wrote 'looks like you've been wasting a lot of time instead of collecting the data we expected you to have by now.'"

*"I couldn't walk down the street without being cat-called multiple times. Once a man attempted to grab me while I was walking with a friend, then as we ran away he followed us several blocks."*

"I started to think I deserved it."

He said "If you tell anyone, I'll fire you"

*"As a single female researcher it was implied that this is a reality that will happen regularly. They told me I just needed to accept that's how it is"*

**I'VE ONLY BEEN IN THE FIELD FOR A MONTH BUT MEN ALWAYS ASK IF I'M SINGLE. IN THE BEGINNING I USED TO ANSWER TRUTHFULLY BUT NOW I LIE. I AM ALWAYS AFRAID OF RAPE**

"Every day, catcalling, getting hit on, once a research participant said he was taking me to buy coffee but instead drove me his house without my consent, and tried to kiss me."

"He said 'It's only illegal for Professors to have sex with students if they are minors'... When I said no, he was no longer interested in my work or research."

"They held me down and ripped my shirt. Some other women walking by helped me get up. When I told my adviser I was scared to go back, he said 'None of this would have happened if you were smart enough to know to go home early once they started drinking. Now the research project is ruined!'"

"Almost every man I met while trying to collect data attempted to have sex with me. I finally had a breakdown and tried to leave my fieldwork but my department head said I wouldn't be paid if I did"

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## In summary, explicit problems are...

- Researchers are financially and/or methodologically bound to finish their fieldwork which becomes a double edged sword when they face dangerous situations that make them want to flee unsafe places.
- Female/non binary researchers regularly endure uncomfortable situations as a necessity for conducting their work.
- The fieldwork experience is inherently marked by gender, as male experiences in the field are different than female or non-binary experiences, given local power dynamics and gender roles.
- When researchers do come forward about sexual trauma in the field, they are advised to seek private counseling, which is an out of pocket expense they often cannot afford, and further enforces the notion that gendered problems in the field are their own personal responsibilities.
- Universities project the benchmark male experience when training students, which does not include an awareness of the prolific occurrence of sexual harassment, or other non-normative experiences.
- Female/non-binary researchers fear that admitting sexual trauma in the field will demarcate them as subpar researchers, lacking street smarts, or somehow negligent for their experiences.

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## These findings are nothing new or out of the norm...

In a 2016 publication, Dr. Sinah Terres Kloss states that:

- Although sexual harassment during fieldwork is a common experience for female researchers, "it continues to be marginalized in methodological discussions and anthropological training."
- "Silence regarding harassment and rape consolidates tropes of 'good' fieldwork and recreates male fieldwork experience as normative. Consequently, female researchers may feel inadequate for having encountered sexual(ized) harassment – incidents characterized as 'unremarkable' yet personally traumatizing, which may lead promising scholars to abandon fieldwork."
- "Reflected accounts of sexual(ized) harassment help to raise awareness of a topic that is often neglected in preparations for fieldwork. Thus, negative gendered interactions in the field are not a personal problem, but instead a gap in academic education."

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## In response to this gap in training....

**The FISST training was born.** Guided by fieldworkers needs, this preparation module aims to...

- Explore possible scenarios that might exist in the field, depending on individual field sites and research projects.
- Educate University staff on how to best provide support to students in the field.
- Open up a conversation between students and their advisors about how to discuss problems that might arise during fieldwork.
- Connect students with safety resources, as well as emotional support networks which they can lean on for further support. All students will be given a copy of the MeTooAnthro Supporting Students in the Field Guide.
- Empower students to report violence, and feel secure in halting their work if their comfort boundaries are breached, or they no longer feel safe.
- Train students on how to respond to sexual harassment or gendered violence.
- Provide mental health connections to all students before they depart on their fieldwork journey.

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## By the end of the training...

- Students will have a bilateral plan with their research advisors about how to report gendered violence.
- Students will have a reinforced understanding that they should ever have to endure sexual trauma as part of their fieldwork or as a *rite of passage* as a researcher.
- Students will be given a corpus of various strategies on how to minimize potentially dangerous situations, stressing that violence in the field is never their fault.
- Students will learn that they will be supported in their decisions to leave or pause future fieldwork in the event that dangerous conditions arise.
- Students will be connected with various resources which seek to protect women and non-binary researchers in academia, as well as larger networks for fieldwork researchers. A round table discussion will be held for students to discuss their own concerns and problems they may anticipate in their own unique fieldwork situations.
- (In a best case scenario) Students will be given mental health support by providing them with access to counselors and therapists, be it through the university or outside services reserved on retainer. Monthly check-in sessions will be recommended.

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## The FISST Training...

- Was directly guided by researchers self-proclaimed unmet needs while in the field.
- Was informed by various other works on the subject, including the seminal "Me Too Anthro" logistical pre-fieldwork check list and resource list crafted by Dr. Holly Waters and Dr. Amy Hanes.
- Does not regard sexual harassment or gendered violence as a problem of any one culture, of any one global region, of any country, of any language, of any religion, etc. It is instead defined as a human problem which occurs across all time, space, and cultural settings.
- Is not exclusively for women. Although the majority of cases depict men as perpetrators and women as victims, men are also victims of gendered violence, "especially if they are considered 'effeminate' or if they express a 'non-normative' sexual identity ([Berdahl et al., 1996](#)). Sexual(ized) harassment is thus often applied to discriminate against people who claim a 'non-normative' ethnic, racial, and/or sexual identity, hence racial or homophobic harassment is often expressed in terms of sexual(ized) harassment ([Sharp and Kremer, 2006](#))."

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## Efforts made; work still left to be done...

- In July 2019, a FISST virtual community called "Women in the Field" was made where women and non-binary researchers can connect with each other, have a platform to vent or share their struggles, and create a presence to mitigate isolation. The community currently has 1,400 members. I have also created a feature where members can automatically share their location if they are in danger or feel unsafe while doing fieldwork.
- The FISST training is currently in need of funding to materialize and begin the groundbreaking, first-of-its-kind intervention work to help prevent the legacy of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and gendered violence in the field from further perpetuating.

**We ask you to help us raise a fist against sexual trauma and support the FISST Training Project- a long overdue educational module to support the safety of female and non-binary fieldwork researchers.**

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## About the Creator: Jerika L. Heinze

"I am a Cultural Anthropology Ph.D student who proudly stands to be the first former foster youth with a Ph.D in my field. During my self-funded doctoral fieldwork in Greece, I experienced severe sexual harassment and one sexual assault from a local research mentor. When I went to report the crime to local police, I was threatened with arrest. I silently continued the rest of my fieldwork under great fear and intimidation, however these experiences were extremely traumatic and detrimental to my wellbeing and my research. I soon learned that many women and non binary students researching in the Balkans had experienced similar injustices. As conversations progressed, I realized it was a global phenomenon. It became clear to me that something had to be done to address this elephant in the room and prevent future violence against women and non binary students in academia. As such, I have created the FISST on-campus training program to help inform students before they go into the field, prepare them for the possible emotional realities that exist in this vulnerable stage, and open up a conversation about resources, scenarios, and prevention."



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## Work Cited

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