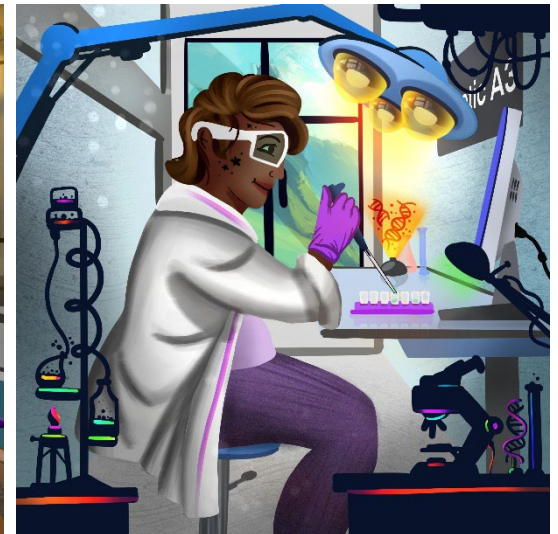
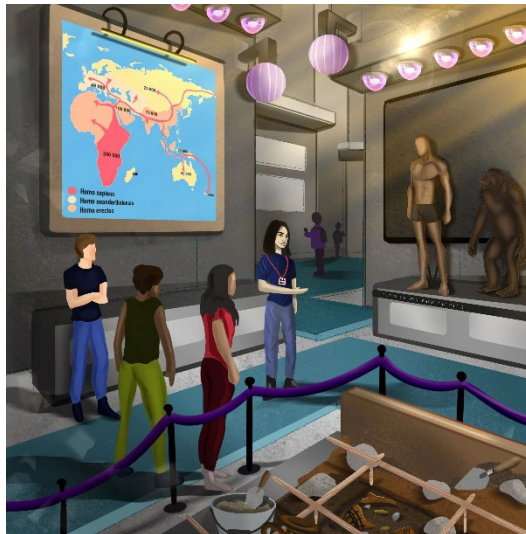


# Introduction to Anthropology: Biological Anthropology and Anthropological Archaeology

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**ANTH B101**

**Fall 2026**



# Course instructors

**Prof. Maja Šešelj**  
(she/her)

- Email:  
[msejelj@brynmawr.edu](mailto:msejelj@brynmawr.edu)
- Office: Dalton 310
- Student hours:
  - Thursdays 2:30-4:30 PM
  - or email for appt.

**Prof. Casey Barrier**  
(he/him)

- Email:  
[cbarrier@brynmawr.edu](mailto:cbarrier@brynmawr.edu)
- Office: Dalton 306
- Student Hours:
  - Fridays 12:00-1:00 PM
  - or email for Zoom appt.

# Labs - Dalton 315 (other end of hall)

## **Profs Šešelj & Barrier**

\*Student TAs for labs – to be announced

(A) – Tues 2:40-4:00

(B) – Tues 4:10-5:30

(C) – Wed 2:40-4:00

(D) – Wed 1:10-2:30

# Course objectives

- Gain understanding of human biocultural evolution
- Gain familiarity with major fossil and archaeological finds
- Learn how anthropologists reconstruct patterns of biological evolution, culture, and cultural change
- Have hands-on experiences with a variety of human fossils and archaeological artifacts
- Become familiar with debates concerning evolution, culture change, sources of biological variation, and the concept of race from a biocultural perspective (among many other things)
- Engage in critical analyses of past and present interpretations (both academic and popular) of humans and societies

# What is anthropology?

- The field of study that studies human **culture, culture change, human's cultural past** and **evolutionary** aspects of human **biology**
- Etymology:  
from the Greek: *anthropos* (human) + *logos* (study of)

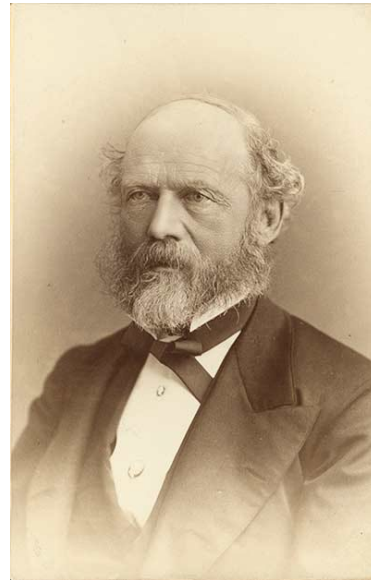


# History of Anthropology

late 19<sup>th</sup> century (1800s)



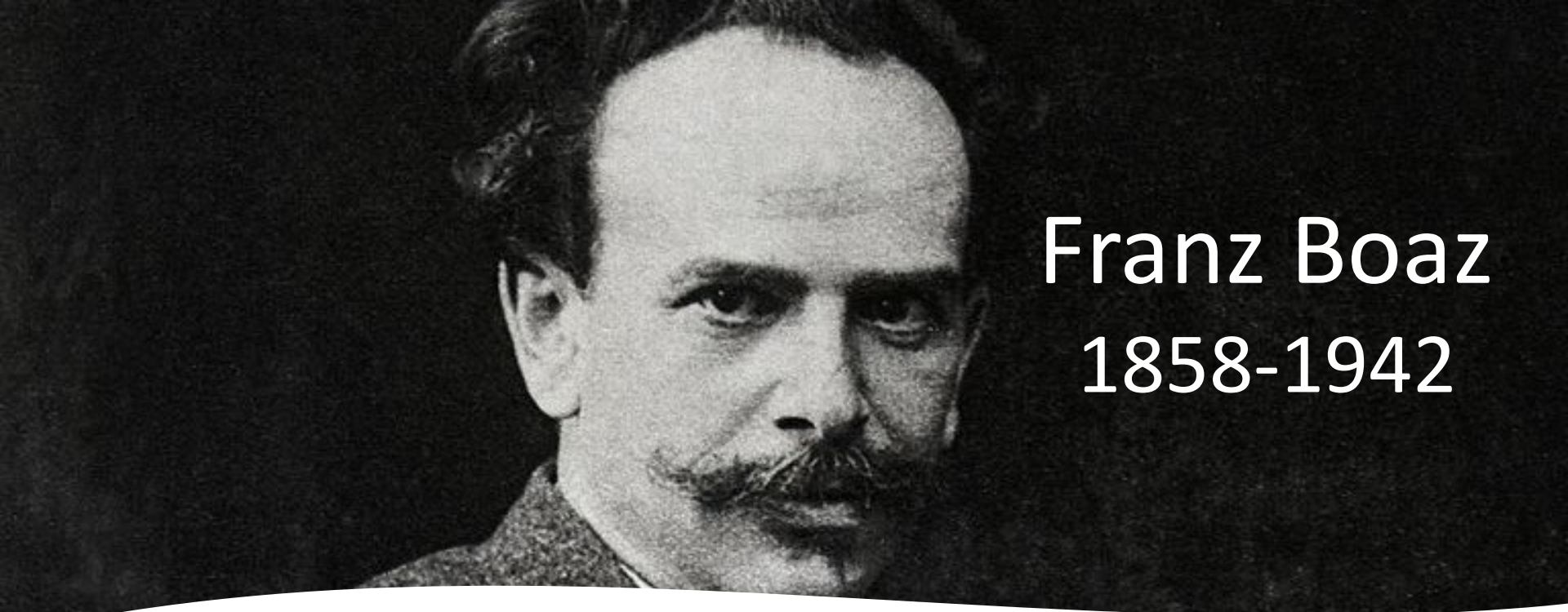
E. B. Tylor  
1832-1917  
British



Lewis Henry Morgan  
1818-1881  
USA



Anténor Firmin  
1850-1911  
Haitian



# Franz Boaz

## 1858-1942

- taught at Columbia University, starting in 1896 as Lecturer in Physical Anthropology, and founded first Anthropology Department in 1902
- denied claims that biological evolution supported then current theories of racial and cultural superiority
- instead, he envisioned differences as historical consequence of local adaptations and social interactions – i.e., particular histories and environments

# Franz Boas

- envisioned Anthropology as a discipline that studies all aspects of life, from language to arts, history to economy and politics, and even aspects of biology
- worked as an ethnographer and linguist, but also as a biological anthropologist and archaeologist
- “Cultural Particularism”
- emphasized the concept of **cultural relativism** at the expense of ethnocentric views



**Ethnocentrism:**

**Cultural Relativism:**



**Ethnocentrism:** the practice of using one's own cultural values as the standard to measure all other cultures and a belief in the inherent superiority of one's own culture



**Cultural Relativism:** the position that there is no universal standard to measure cultures, that all cultures are equally valid and must be understood in their own terms

# A subject with four subfields

Holistic study of humankind with four subdisciplines or fields (in North America especially, at Bryn Mawr explicitly!)

- **Holistic:** approach that studies many aspects of a multifaceted human system

## Anthropology

Cultural  
anthropology

Archaeology

Linguistic  
anthropology

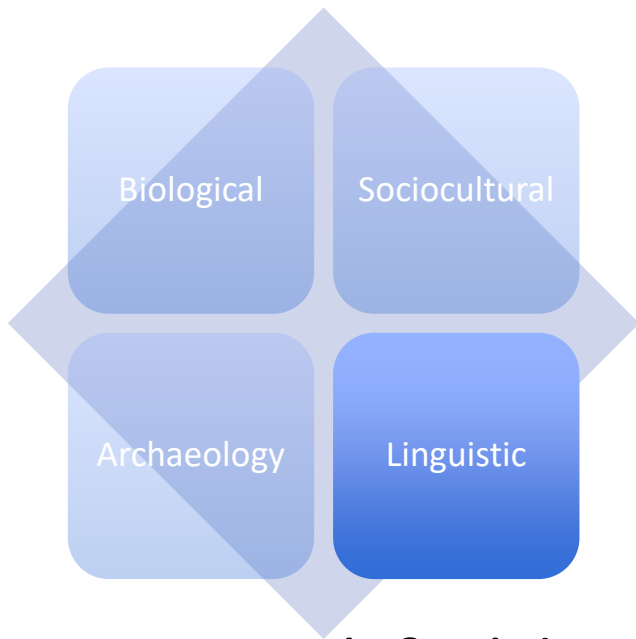
Biological  
(Physical)  
anthropology



# Four subfields of anthropology

- **Cultural anthropology:** the study of living people, their social groups, and their cultural behaviors.
  - **Culture:** all aspects of human adaptation, including identity, technology, traditions, language, religion, and social roles; culture is a set of learned behaviors, transmitted from one generation to the next through learning.
  - Also known as sociocultural, social anthropology, ethnography (a method), or ethnology (synthesis of ethnographies, comparative).

# Linguistic Anthropology



Four subfields  
of anthropology

- Historical linguistics
  - Language change over time (evolve); how languages are historically related
- Structural linguistics
  - How contemporary languages differ in terms of their formal structure
- Sociolinguistics\*
  - How we use language in cultural settings; Relationships among social variation, social context, and linguistic variation (inc. nonverbal communication)

An aerial view of an archaeological excavation site. Several workers in blue and white clothing are visible, using tools like brooms and buckets to clear debris from a large, rectangular pit. The ground is dark brown soil, and some white plastic sheeting is visible on the left. The workers are positioned around a central area where they are clearing the site.

## Four subfields of anthropology

- **Archaeology:** The study of the human cultural past using specific methods to examine the material culture left behind by past groups.

**Archaeologists  
Don't Dig Dinosaurs.**



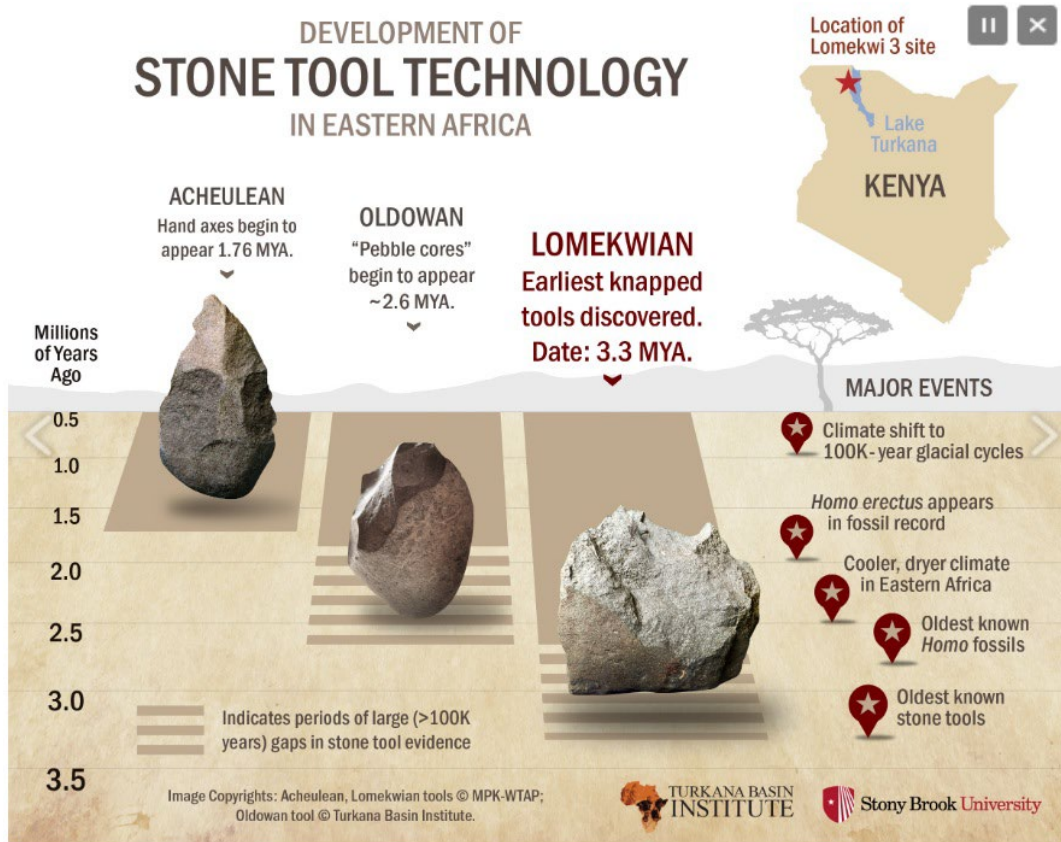
[Shovelbume.org](http://Shovelbume.org)



## Four fields of anthropology

- **Anthropological archaeologists** work all over the world, and study all time periods, from our earliest human ancestors to the most recent past. Like other anthropologists, they study all aspects of culture, from technology and economy, to religion, ideology, and politics.

# DEVELOPMENT OF STONE TOOL TECHNOLOGY IN EASTERN AFRICA



Our earliest stone tools/technology,  
3+ million years ago

Anthropological  
archaeologists... study  
the deep past

Replica of a prehistoric cave painting  
from Lascaux, France





Anthropological  
archaeologists... study  
the very recent past

- Pictured here: the South Jersey Project is exploring a region in New Jersey and its 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century past.

# Anthropological Archaeology - Prof Barrier's work on early agriculture and urbanism in Native North America

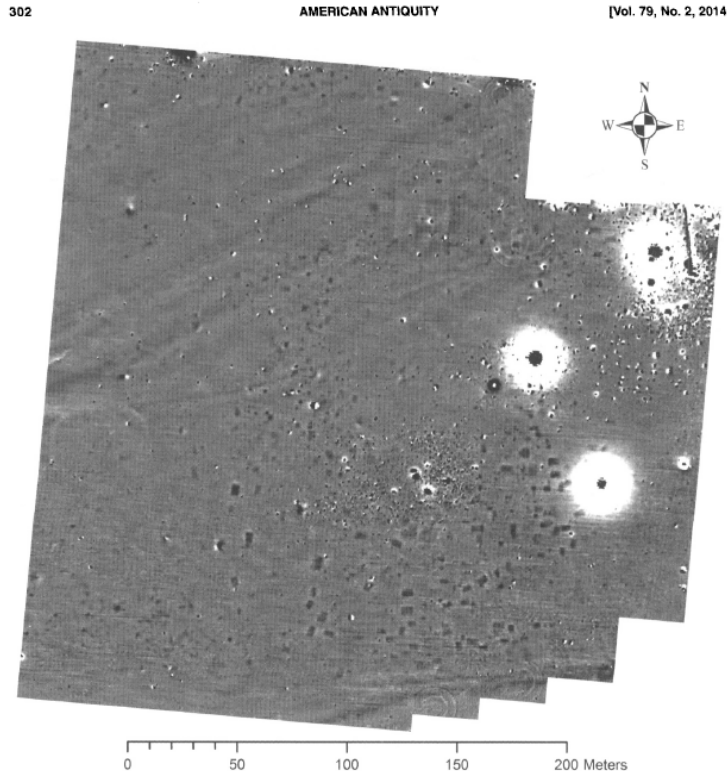
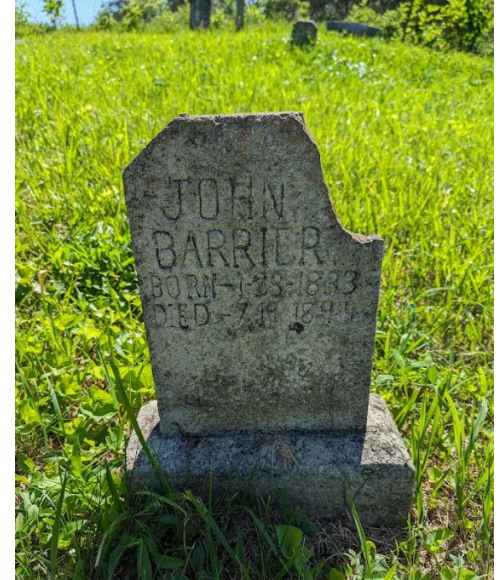


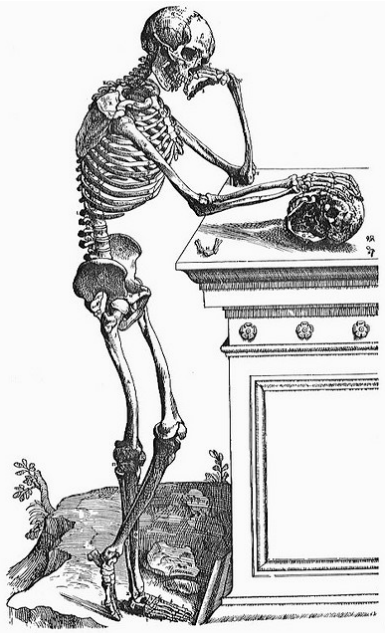
Figure 3. Gray scale of processed magnetometer data, plotted from  $-3.5$  nT (white) to  $+3.5$  nT (black) (from the 2011 Washhausen geophysical survey).



# Anthropological Archaeology - Prof Barrier's work on the 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century spread of Capitalism and wage labor in Southern Appalachia



# Four fields of anthropology



## Biological (physical) anthropology:

- The study of human biology within the framework of evolution with an emphasis on the interactions between biology and culture.

# Biological anthropologists are... paleoanthropologists

Dr. Lauren Schroeder,  
University of Toronto

- Research on australopith – *Homo* transition, as well as hybridization



Dr. Sheela Athreya, Texas  
A&M

- Studies variation in fossils from the Middle and Late Pleistocene



# Biological anthropologists are... primatologists

Dr. Michelle Rodrigues,  
Marquette University

- Researches primate social behavior, endocrinology and conservation



Dr. Jane Goodall, The  
Jane Goodall Institute

- A pioneer in the field, studied chimpanzees in Gombe, Tanzania
- First to document apes using tools



# Biological anthropologists are... geneticists & genomicists

Dr. Keolu Fox, UCSD

- Research on genome editing, as well as Indigenous data sovereignty



Dr. Jada Benn-Torres,  
Vanderbilt University

- genetic ancestry and population history of African and Indigenous Caribbean peoples

