

Saira A. Mehmood, Ph.D.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

EDUCATION: DEGREES

- 2019 Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas
Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology (May 2019)
Dissertation Title: “*I Am Not My Illness!*”: *Navigating the Mental Healthcare System in New Orleans*
M.A. in Anthropology (May 2012)
- 2009 Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana
M.A. in Anthropology
- 2008 Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana
B.S. in Anthropology; minor in Business, graduated *magna cum laude*

EDUCATION: OTHER

- Summer 2008 Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, Maryland
Summer Institute in Anatomy, Center for Functional Anatomy & Evolution
- Fall 2005 Rice University, Houston, Texas
Visiting Student [Hurricane Katrina Semester]
- Summer 2003 University of Mississippi, University, Mississippi
Summer Program for High School Students

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Medical Anthropology, Mental Health, Stigma, Chronicity, Health Disparities, Race and Racism, Human Rights, Muslims in America, Urban Anthropology

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Visiting Assistant Professor, Spelman College, Department of Sociology and Anthropology [August 2019-Present]
- Visiting Scholar, Tulane University, Department of Anthropology, New Orleans, Louisiana [June 2015-June 2019]

COURSES PREVIOUSLY TAUGHT

- Adjunct Lecturer, SMU-in-Taos, Rancho de Taos, New Mexico [intersession terms]
 - January 2015: Health, Healing, & Ethics
 - August 2015: Health as a Human Right
 - January 2016: Health, Healing, & Ethics
 - August 2016: Health, Healing, & Ethics
 - January 2017: Health as a Human Right

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Summer 2017 HEAT (Health Equity Alliance of Tallahassee) Ethnographic Field School Participant [research conducted on race, racism, and whiteness through Community-Based Participatory Research], Tallahassee, Florida

March 2017 Workshops on “Person Centered Interviewing” and “Public Policy Relevant Research in Psychological Anthropology,” SPA biennial meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana

Nov. 2013 Workshop on “Teaching Gender and Sexuality III: Social Media and Teaching Feminist Activism,” AAA Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois

Summer 2013 Summer Institute in Research Design (SIRD), National Science Foundation, Duke University Marine Lab, Beaufort, North Carolina

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, & SCHOLARSHIPS

- Student Diversity Travel Grant, American Ethnological Society (2019)
- Graduate Student Travel Grant, SMU (2019)
- AAA Minority Dissertation Fellowship, American Anthropological Association (2018-2019)
- Yolanda Moses Scholarship, American Anthropological Association (2018)
- Graduate Student Development Grant, SMU (2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018)
- Graduate Student Assembly Grant, SMU (2011, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2019)
- Paul Steed Travel Award, SMU (2014, 2015, 2016: declined, 2017: declined, 2018; 2019)
- Mary Moore Pre-Dissertation Fund, SMU (2013)
- Robert Kemper Summer Research Fund, SMU (2012)
- Ford Foundation Pre-Doctoral Fellowship, Honorable Mention (2010)
- Mayoral Fellow, City of New Orleans (2009-2010)
- Kenneth J. Opat Grant for Undergraduate Research, Tulane University (2007)

- Valedictorian, Legislative, Florence R. Kerwin, & Qatar Scholarships, Tulane University (2004-2008)

AWARDS & HONORS

- NAPA (National Association for the Practice of Anthropology) Student Achievement Award, First Place Paper Prize for “Synergistic Activism: Solutions to Mental Healthcare Challenges in New Orleans” (2018)
- Newcomb Scholar, Tulane University (2008)
- Oak Wreath Award, Newcomb College, Tulane University (2008)
- Robert Wauchope Award for Excellence in Anthropology, Tulane University (2008)
- Senior Scholar in Anthropology, Tulane University (2008)

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed:

- 2019 Mehmoor, Saira. “Using Ethnographic Methods to Determine Capacity to Consent amongst Individuals Diagnosed with Chronic Mental Illnesses.” In *Research Involving Participants with Impaired Cognition: Ethics, Autonomy, Inclusion, and Innovation*. Ariel Cascio and Eric Racine, editors. Oxford University Press.
- 2014 Mehmoor, Saira. Book Review: *Markets of Sorrow, Labors of Faith: New Orleans in the Wake of Katrina* by Vincanne Adams. *Student Anthropologist* 4(1):73-74.

News Column/Blog:

- 2018 Mehmoor, Saira. “The Fallacy of Equating Mental Illness with Gun Violence.” *Anthropology News*. June 25: <http://www.anthropology-news.org/index.php/2018/06/25/the-fallacy-of-equating-gun-violence-with-mental-illness/>
- 2017 Mehmoor, Saira. “#Unapologetically Muslim.” Blog post for American Anthropological Association’s Anthropology Day. February 15: <https://blog.americananthro.org/2017/02/14/anthropology-a-love-story/>
- 2015 Mehmoor, Saira. “Producing Rape-Free Campus Cultures.” *Anthropology News*, March/April Print Issue.

Technical Reports:

- 2010 Mehmoor, Saira. “An Assessment of Inpatient Psychiatric Beds in the New Orleans Metropolitan Area.” Report prepared for the City of New Orleans.
- 2010 Mehmoor, Saira. “Senior Citizens Living in New Orleans.” Report prepared for the City of New Orleans.

2010 Tran, My-Huyen and Mehmood, Saira. "Building the Future: A Proposed Nursing Home Complex in New Orleans East." Report prepared for the City of New Orleans.

Other:

2008 Mehmood, Saira. "Alternative Health Care in New Orleans." Tulane University, Department of Anthropology. Senior Honors Thesis.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS/TALKS

2019 *[Session Chair] "Ethnographies of/on Whiteness: Race and Racism, Collaborative Research, and Knowledge Production In and Beyond Anthropological Practice." Session accepted for the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association/CASCA, Vancouver, British Columbia, November 23.

2019 **"SMA-RUSH roundtable: Addressing access and barriers to health in the U.S.: What Can Anthropologists Do about It?" Roundtable accepted for the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association/CASCA, Vancouver, British Columbia, November 20.

2019 "'My Hands Are Tied': The Challenges of Caregiving for Individuals Diagnosed with Chronic Mental Illnesses." Paper presented for the Annual Society for Applied Anthropology Meeting, Portland, Oregon, March 22.

2019 *[Co-Chair with Erin Tooher] "'Let's Get It Done!': Creating Equitable Policies in Turbulent Times through Community-Based Participatory Research." Roundtable presented for the Annual Society for Applied Anthropology Meeting, Portland, Oregon, March 22.

2019 "'I'm Not Racist, but...': Reflections on What Researcher Positionalities Tell Us about Whiteness." Paper accepted for AES/ALLA/ABA Joint Conference, St. Louis, Missouri, March 14-16. [co-authors: Erin Tooher, and Judith Williams]

2018 **"Let's Talk about Race, For Real: Lived Experiences of Whiteness, Community-Based Participatory Research, and the Road to Sustainable Discourse." Roundtable participant for the Annual Society for Applied Anthropology Meeting, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, April 7.

2018 [Session Chair] "Counting Culture?: Mental Health Care Challenges, Practices, and Sustainability in New Orleans." Paper presented for the Annual Society for Applied Anthropology Meeting, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, April 5.

2017 *[Co-organizer with Pamela Runestad] "'Studying In': Towards a Critically Reflexive, More Equitable Anthropology." Roundtable moderator for the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington, D.C., November 30.

- 2017 **"I Am Not My Illness": Navigating the Mental Health Care System in New Orleans.*" Talk presented at Tulane University, Department of Anthropology as part of TASA (Tulane Anthropology Student Association) Colloquium Series. New Orleans, Louisiana, April 7.
- 2017 *"Examining Recovery: An Exploration of How Individuals Diagnosed with Serious Mental Illnesses Access Community Mental Health Services in New Orleans."* Poster presented for the Annual Society for Applied Anthropology Meeting, Santa Fe, New Mexico, March 30.
- 2017 *[Co-Chair with Carina Heckert] *"Anthropological Writing: Engaging Various Audiences."* Roundtable moderator for the Annual Society for Applied Anthropology Meeting, Santa Fe, New Mexico, March 30.
- 2016 *"Play Therapy: Using Games to Determine Capacity to Consent amongst Individuals with Serious Mental Illness."* Poster presented at the Annual Society for Applied Anthropology Meeting, Vancouver, Canada, March 31.
- 2015 *"Zones of Social Abandonment: Mental Illness, Homelessness, and Citizenship in New Orleans."* Paper presented at the Annual Society for Applied Anthropology Meeting, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, March 25.
- 2014 *"Coping with Mental Illness: Stigma, Biopower, and Resistance among Users of Community Mental Health Services in New Orleans."* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington, D.C., December 3.
- 2014 **"(In Memoriam) Unfinished Destinations: The Legacy of Dr. Robert Van Kemper."* Invited Roundtable Participant at the Annual Society for Applied Anthropology Meeting, Albuquerque, New Mexico, March 20.
- 2012 *"Criminalization of Mental Illness in Post-Katrina New Orleans."* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, San Francisco, California, November 15.
- 2011 *"Embodying Rock Climbing: An Interdisciplinary Perspective."* Poster presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Montréal, Canada, November 19 [with Laura Jarvis and Lauren O'Brien].
- 2010 **"Notions of Citizenship and Community-Based Clinics in New Orleans."* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, November 18.
- 2009 *"Community-Based Clinics: An Alternative Source of Health Care in New Orleans."* Paper presented at the Annual Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association Conference in Medical Humanities: Health and Disease area, New Orleans, Louisiana, April 9.

2008 “Infant Baptism in Early Christianity.” Paper presented at The Second Annual Student Religious Studies Conference hosted by the Midwest Region Society of Biblical Literature, Bourbonnais, Illinois, February 15.

*Invited Presentations/Talks

COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS/OUTREACH/MENTORSHIP

- 2019 [With Tabitha Mustafa] Interview with Elizabeth Simon for documentary on R-18-5 (human rights resolution) on behalf of New Orleans Palestinian Solidarity Committee, New Orleans, Louisiana, July 15.
- 2019 Panelist for CACTUS Academy on community organizing on behalf of New Orleans Palestinian Solidarity Committee, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana, March 27.
- 2019 Presentation of “Synergistic Activism: Solutions to Mental Healthcare Challenges in New Orleans” at Dryades Public Market, New Orleans, Louisiana, January 3.
- 2018 Mentoring Tahrir Fellows (Palestinian undergraduate students) on behalf of New Orleans Palestinian Solidarity Committee on advocacy and legislative skills [July 2018-December 2018].
- 2018 [With Tabitha Mustafa] Presented workshop on campaign building for “Freedom Cities: Shifting Power & Policy with Cross-Movement Municipal Campaigns” session at the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights meeting, St. Paul, Minnesota, September 29.
- 2018 [With Marco Saah] Interview with New Orleans Abortion Fund (NOAF) on behalf of New Orleans Palestinian Solidarity Committee, New Orleans, Louisiana, September 16.
- 2018 Panelist for #AbolishALEC Teach-In on behalf of New Orleans Palestinian Solidarity Committee at First Unitarian Universalist Church, New Orleans, Louisiana, August 6.
- 2017 [With HEAT Ethnographic Field School Collaborators] Presentation “On Race, Racism, and Whiteness in Tallahassee” at Leon Public Library, Tallahassee, Florida, August 10.
- 2016 Moderator for panel after the film *Jews Step Forward* at the 2nd Annual New Orleans Palestinian Film Festival at the Zeitgeist Multi-Disciplinary Arts Center, New Orleans, Louisiana, December 3.

RESEARCH/FIELD EXPERIENCE

- Research on mental illness, stigma, and disclosure, New Orleans, LA (Summer 2012, Summer 2013, January 2015-December 2017)
- Research on race, racism, and whiteness, Tallahassee, FL (Summer 2017)

- Research on rock climbing and embodiment, Dallas, TX (2011-2012)
- Research on mental health services and needs of senior citizens, New Orleans, LA (2009-2010)
- Research on the movement towards community-based health clinics post-Katrina in New Orleans, LA (2007-2008)

WORK EXPERIENCE

Digital Communications Manager, Society for Medical Anthropology (November 2016-present)

- Manage the social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter) for the Society for Medical Anthropology (SMA)
- Edit and publish the SMA newsletter, *Second Opinion*, three times yearly
- Work with the SMA communications committee to best decide where submissions from SMA members can be published (the SMA newsletter, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* blogs, *Anthropology News*, etc.)

Grader, Department of Anthropology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX (Spring 2018)

- Gender, Sex, and Sexuality: Global Perspectives [under Dr. Nia Parson]

Adjunct Lecturer, SMU-in-Taos, Ranchos de Taos, NM (January 2015-January 2017)

- Taught anthropology, sociology, and human rights courses to undergraduates during intersession terms in January and August

Research Assistant, Cermes3 (Center for Research on Medicine, Science, Health, Mental Health and Society), CNRS - University of Paris Descartes, France (August 2014-December 2014)

- Conducted research for Dr. Anne Lovell
 - Collected documents and conducted interviews in New Orleans with hospital clinicians and administrators on evacuation policies and evacuation experiences with psychiatric patients
 - Interviewed parish coroners about processes of establishing mortality data related to disaster

Teaching Assistant, Department of Anthropology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX (August 2010-December 2013)

- Graded papers/tests and held office hours for undergraduate students for the following courses:
 - Health, Healing, & Ethics [under Dr. Sarah Willen and Dr. Diane Hardgrave]
 - Introductory Cultural Anthropology [under Dr. Caroline Brettell; *led discussion sections]
 - Magic, Myth, & Religion [under Dr. James Kennell]

Library Assistant, ISEM, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX (January 2013-December 2013)

- Worked front desk, assisted undergraduate students in finding research materials, and provided tours to prospective students

Mayoral Fellow, City of New Orleans (August 2009-June 2010)

- Began compilation of a database of Hurricane Katrina related research/projects from professors at local universities in New Orleans

- Researched and completed reports on mental health and needs of senior citizens in New Orleans through fieldwork and interviews
- Edited reports/press releases for Communications Department
- Assisted in 2010 U.S. Census outreach

Program Coordinator, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA (August 2007-May 2008)

- Programmed campus events and coordinated cultural/religious programs with student housing office in residence halls
- Supervised and advised student ambassadors in peer-mentoring program

SERVICE: SMU

- Social Media Committee Member, SMU Department of Anthropology (October 2014-October 2015)
- Student committee member for new hire in Anthropology Department (October 2013-February 2014)
- Co-creator and co-manager of SMU Department of Anthropology Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/SMUanthro> (September 2013-October 2014)
- Graduate Student Representative to Anthropology Department faculty meetings (January 2013-December 2013)
- Graduate Student Counsel to Anthropology Club (August 2012-December 2013)

SERVICE: EXTERNAL

- Medical Anthropology Students Association (MASA)
 - Blog committee member, January 2015-December 2015
 - MASA Mentorship Award Committee, 2015

LEADERSHIP

- American Anthropological Association (AAA)
 - Executive Board Member, Student Seat [elected position], 2015-2018
 - Communications Committee, 2015-2018
 - AAA Membership Dues Working Group member (2018)
 - Advisory Group member for AAA's publishing partnership (2016)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- American Anthropological Association (AAA), Lifetime Member
 - Society for Medical Anthropology (SMA)
 - Society for the Anthropology of North America (SANA)
 - Society for Urban, National and Transnational/Global Anthropology (SUNTA)
 - National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (NAPA)
- Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA)