Kristina Baines (Guttman Community College, CUNY)
“The Best Intentions: reflections on “helpful” NGOs and the role of the anthropologist”

Like indigenous communities throughout the world, Maya people have negotiated their relationship with changing land use possibilities as government policies are formed and changed. Using examples of two Maya communities, one in Belize and one in southeast Florida, this paper examines how two site-specific NGOs enlisted the help of an anthropologist to better assist the communities negotiate changes in their access and usage of land. In southeast Florida, the community faced increased risk of chronic disease as a result of changing diets and lack of access to land to grow foods. In Belize, the community faced pressure to change farming practices in the face of decreased access to land. In both cases, the anthropologist was tasked with uncovering the reasons behind the lack of efficacy in previous programs, negotiating her responsibilities to the communities and the well-meaning staff at the NGOs. This paper documents both the research conducted and the personal journey of the anthropologist as she applied that research in the context of the NGO programs.

Boyd, Brian (Columbia)
“Multispecies Domestication & the Anthropocene: a view from prehistory”

In archaeology, research questions have often simplified or translated evidence for past ecological developments into major periods of social transition, where significant historical changes in the course of history emphasize the uniqueness of the human species. For example, a focus on the origins of art, language, and culture are often bundled together as the "human revolution", a phrase still popular in paleoanthropology today. Gordon Childe's (1936) "Neolithic Revolution" in Old World archaeology still looms large as a major research focus, as if there is something essential to understanding ourselves emergent in what is regarded as a major period of social transformation. In fact, the phenomena of a "domesticated" agricultural lifestyle has had lasting impact not only on human societies but also in ecological networks and environmental systems, visible in our globalized present. This paper considers yet another "revolution": the large-scale human manipulation of terrestrial (and extra-terrestrial) systems, the Anthropocene, as emerging from multispecies interactions within deep historical-ecological conditions.

Burnside, Bruce & Daniel Souleles (Teachers College, Columbia University)
“Living myth, silent paper”

Founding myths and origin stories are two things that anthropologists both hold dear and study incessantly. The department of anthropology at Columbia University has one of the best known in all of the discipline. Boas arrives in 1896 from Germany by way of research on Baffin Island and the Northwest coast, unites the four fields, and founds the first program of anthropology in the United States. This program’s graduates go on to shape departments everywhere, the field changed for good. Never mind that the idea and impetus for anthropology at Columbia started with President Barnard nearly two decades before Boas arrives. And never mind that people studied ethnology and did fieldwork at
Columbia before Boas. Though less well known, the joint GSAS, Teachers College PhD program in Applied Anthropology has its own mythical apparition. Sometime after the 1968 occupation and uprising at the university, students called for an academic program more relevant to their lives and applicable to the world they hoped to change. The result of this outcry, and with the approving nod of Margaret Mead, was a program for and the offering of a PhD in applied anthropology. The problem with this programmatic origin story is that the university’s archives betray it. We know applied anthropology was taught at Columbia prior to 1968, and in fact there were also a number of anthropologists running around TC. What is more, the most basic founding documents—a joint agreement, a statement of purpose, even a birth certificate for the program—are nowhere to be found. Just the simple acknowledgment in the listings of the New York State Office of Higher Education, that yes, this program exists. This paper will compare these two origin stories of anthropology at Columbia, pondering why an applied program showed up when it did. This paper will also see what archival silence has to say about applying anthropology at Columbia University.

Terence D'Altroy (Columbia)
"Serving too many masters: cultural patrimony and tourism in Inka Peru."
The archaeological patrimony of the Andean nations, especially Peru, is simultaneously a source of regional pride, national identity, and revenue generation for the government and private sector alike. But the reconstruction of and promotion of access to the archaeological record is threatening the very basis of our understanding of the past. How to reconcile the multiple interests is a source of constant negotiation and friction among the various interests parties.

Freeman, Scott (Visiting Scholar, George Washington University)
“Revisions of soil: Generations of applied anthropology in Haiti”
Haiti's environment has long been the target of development interventions. Beginning in the 1950s, such plans have often been facilitated by 'applied anthropology'. Working in an instrumental capacity with the UN or USAID, a cadre of applied anthropologists and social scientists have in fact produced the majority of environmental research on Haiti. Such research has been called on to conceptualize and evaluate the potential of soil conservation and reforestation programs. But contemporary applied research arguably plays a different role in understanding the scope of so-called social problems. Unlike early applied research, contemporary anthropology must critically engage with the knowledge produced by NGOs and development funding agencies, and therefore with the very research produced by previous applied anthropological efforts. This presentation illustrates and analyzes the way in which multiple anthropologies come into contact, and how a contemporary applied venture must critically analyze a broad spectrum of development actors, both past and present.

Hudson, Laura (Teachers College, Columbia University)
“The Contributions of Applied Anthropology to the Study of New Media Technologies and
Future Possibilities for Research

The field of anthropology has long generated data that drives human innovation, technological change and allows for scholars to understand the ways in which people engage adaptive strategies for utilizing new media technology. This article, explains why applied anthropological methods for conducting ethnographies, participant observation and embedding practitioners into a given social field to discover the 'real time' uses of new media is an essential component of research in developing and innovating these technologies. Ethnographies not only allow for in-depth interviewing but also allow observers to analyze how small group dynamics interact with new technologies. To demonstrate this point, the most interesting case studies in applied anthropology and new media technologies will be reviewed. Then, a discussion of how applied anthropology can continue to serve the academic community by informing our understanding of how people utilize new media technology while simultaneously highlighting how to glean this high quality research using the best practices or methods available to our discipline. Finally, the article, will explore where gaps in current research exist, and discuss the possibilities for future research in applied anthropology and new media technology.

Oliveira, Gabrielle (Teachers College, Columbia University)  
“Transnational Care Constellations: Mexican Immigrant Mothers and their Children in Mexico and in New York City”

The feminization of Mexican migration to the United States is increasing, and more mothers who migrate leave their children behind for long periods to be cared for by grandparents or relatives in Mexico. Women also form new families when they arrive in the United States, but continue to “care” for the children who stayed in Mexico. We know little about how transnational familial ties across the U.S. -Mexico border influence the educational trajectories of children who stay behind, are born here and are brought over from Mexico. This study asks how Mexican maternal migration has influenced care arrangements and education trajectories of the children in Mexico, comparing these to their siblings who were brought over to America or who were born in the United States.

Scroggins, Michael (Teachers College, Columbia University)  
“"Bluntly, it was none of our business”: Tracing the Intellectual Roots of, and Reactions to, Applied Anthropology”

The commonsense definition of applied anthropology, as determined through the Google search "What is Applied Anthropology?", is a riff on John Van Willigen's zinger that applied anthropology is anthropology "put to use." However, a close reading of the opening editorial in the journal Applied Anthropology reveals that Arensberg and Chapple's primary concern in founding the SFAA and the accompanying journal was not with practical problems outside academia that anthropology might improve, but rather with the field of human relations and how the application of anthropological theory to then-burgeoning discipline might broaden the narrow intellectual underpinnings of the
field by providing "a unifying center around which a science of human relations can grow."

Through a close reading of two documents, the 1941 Applied Anthropology editorial statement and Conrad Arensberg's 1980 AAA presidential address, this paper reappraises the common sense of applied anthropology.

Wortham, Stanton (U. of Pennsylvania)
"The gap between research and practice"