



CUA A NEWSLETTER

Fall 2025 / September

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From the President

Greetings to Members of the Critical Urban Anthropology Association!

This issue of the CUA A Newsletter brings you time-sensitive and cutting-edge information about the attractions in CUA A's program at the AAA Annual Meeting in New Orleans this November and how you can participate in them. For those of you who can't go to New Orleans, we describe other services CUA A provides to its members that we invite you to take advantage of!

Before continuing, I want to personally ask for your help. CUA A is facing a membership crisis. We now have approximately 200 members.

In order to continue existing as a section of the AAA, maintain our activities as an organization, and publish our stellar journal *City & Society*, we have a little more than a year to get our membership up to 225.

Learn more on how to help below!

-Don Nonini, CUA A President



CUAA MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

CUAA needs your help to recruit more CUAA members! If you have colleagues or students (graduate or undergrads) who might be interested in CUAA but aren't members, please ask them to join CUAA today. And whether or not you are going to New Orleans this November, we ask you to renew your membership in CUAA when it comes time for renewal this year, if you haven't already.

Join or renew your membership [HERE](https://americananthro.org/membership/), or copy this link: <https://americananthro.org/membership/>

CUAA as you will see below has been active not only in organizing the CUAA Program for New Orleans, but also in other ways set out in this Newsletter that offers value to all members. The CUAA Board and President are looking for new ways to be of service to you as members.

If you have concerns or suggestions - or offers to help! - feel free to write Don Nonini at dnonini@email.unc.edu.

CUAA Oral Presentations and Roundtables – Preview our CUAA Program at the AAA in New Orleans, November 20-23

We at CUAA are happy to provide you with an early look at the very exciting Program sessions from your submissions that CUAA has put together for the AAA Annual Meeting in New Orleans!

What's in our program?

The topics addressed in these oral presentation sessions of individual papers and in roundtables are wonderfully varied and at the cutting edge of our understanding of urban life and cultural production across the world. Such new subdisciplines and theoretical interests as urban political ecology (e.g., politics of habitable air); the power and practices of infrastructures (e.g., flows of food and people); new approaches to urban materialities (e.g. concrete); illiberal political orders and the violence they foster (almost everywhere!); urban social movements and their potential (incredible); failed futuristic urban utopias associated with neoliberalism's decline (e.g., Forest City in Malaysia (unbelievable). And, throughout many sessions, the AAA Conference theme of Ghosts is brought out in reflections about the phantasms and hauntings through which the urban past lives in the present. [Click here for the CUAA Program](#).

Please bear in mind that these sessions are provisional because participants have to register and show up! **Reminder: you have to register and complete information about your session by September 26th. Register [HERE](#)!**

Follow CUAA on our Socials!

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As if our CUAA Program weren't enough, why else go to the AAA in New Orleans?

Two CUAA Special Events will culminate our CUAA program:

Our Distinguished Speaker lecture by Professor Desiree Fields, Geography Department, University of California at Berkeley, intriguingly entitled "California Forever? Speculating on 'New Cities In the Wild Frontier'" will be held on **Saturday, November 22, from 7:30 PM-9 PM**, at the Marriott, room TBA.

We will also have a happy and boisterous **Reception** in honor of our Distinguished Speaker, our Leeds Book Prize and other prizewinners, and above all of you, the members of CUAA, which will be held on **Saturday, November 22, starting at 9 PM immediately after the conclusion of our Distinguished Lecture, and going to 11 PM**. Clearly, we will have a lot to celebrate! The reception will be held off-site in lovely downtown New Orleans, and will have **FREE FOOD AND DRINKS for all CUAA members and select invited friends**! The Reception's location will be announced at our Annual Business Meeting.

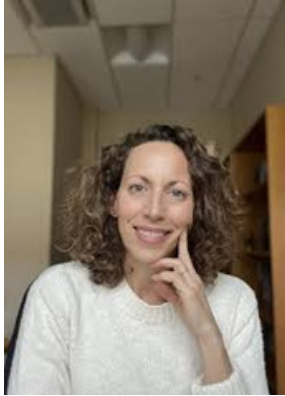
Now aren't our CUAA Program and these two events enough to entice you to New Orleans?

And Don't Forget to Join Us at CUAA's Annual Business Meeting!

CUAA's face-to-face Annual Business Meeting at the AAA will be held on Friday, November 21, 11:45 AM-12:45 PM, Marriott, room TBA. This is where CUAA does its essential work, and where you can meet CUAA Board members, and find out what's going on at CUAA. You can also suggest new ways for CUAA to grow in numbers and capacity as your own organization of fellow urban anthropologists from throughout the US and around the world.

This is the right time to draw together to help one another through our professional organizations. The institutional threats to academic freedom in anthropological teaching and research about cities have never been greater. Residents in our cities face unprovoked attacks by paramilitaries, while their democratic freedoms of speech, assembly and the press are under threat. Our international students are in danger. In this situation, the urgent ethnography of precarious city life is imperative for bearing witness. Come to the Annual Business meeting to help us address the challenges we face and work together to build our numbers and strength!

Celebrating One Year On: CUAA's Mentoring Program



Claire Panetta, Sewanee,
University of the South, CUAA
First Councilor (2022-2025)

Finishing one's PhD and entering the academic job market can be an overwhelming and isolating transition—all the more so given the turmoil embroiling academia today. Many emerging scholars and recent graduates are anxious about navigating the market, and they seek support and guidance as they do so. Recognizing this need, one of our CUAA board members, **Claire Panetta**, initiated a year-long mentoring program for an international cohort of early-career and precarious scholars.

The CUAA mentoring initiative of 2024-2025 aimed to cultivate a sense of community and mutual support among the nine mentees while also emphasizing longer-term relationship building. To that end, the program included not only professionalization workshops but small group mentoring as well, in which participants were paired for the year with “seasoned” anthropologists. This mentoring program was made possible by financial support by CUAA and the AAA.

Although the current cohort of mentees will wrap up their participation at the AAA meeting in November 2025, the need to continue this mentoring program in its current form is critical. CUAA gives it the highest priority, and plans to continue its mentoring initiative during the 2025-2026 academic year beyond.

If you are a CUAA member who is a PhD student or a precarious PhD scholar, and are interested in this program, please write to Don Nonini, CUAA President: dnonini@email.unc.edu

Informal Social Gathering for CUA A Members who are ABDs or PhD Precarious Scholars at AAA New Orleans: Getting Acquainted, Networking, Mentoring

If you are a CUA A member who is a PhD ABD grad student or are a post-PhD precarious scholar without stable academic employment, and are going to the AAA in New Orleans, CUA A cordially invites you to participate in an informal social occasion to get acquainted with other such CUA A members at an off-site restaurant in New Orleans during the AAA week (November 20-23). Your meal will be paid for by CUA A.



Julio Gutierrez, CUA A Board member and recent PhD, UNC Chapel Hill, will be the point person, and you can contact him for details at jgutierrez2084@gmail.com

CUA A Distinguished Speaker's Lecture at AAA 2025: Professor Desiree Fields, "California Forever? Speculating on 'New Cities in The Wild Frontier'"

CUA A continues its tradition from prior years of honoring a distinguished interlocutor from outside anthropology to share their insights with our annual CUA A Distinguished Speaker lecture, which this year features Prof. Desiree Fields, Geography, UC Berkeley, who will deliver her lecture, "California Forever? Speculating on 'New Cities in The Wild Frontier'", on **Saturday, November 22, from 7:30 PM-8:30 PM**, Marriot Hotel, Room (TBA) in AAA 2025 Program.

Desiree Fields, Geography, University of California, Berkeley

Professor Fields is a prominent and highly cited critical geographer who has examined both the relationships of financial capitalists to housing and housing crises, and how tenant unions and fair housing activists have sought to resist landlords' oppression. The new rack-renting corporate landlords who benefited from the post 2008 housing market crash in the urban US employ new digital technologies to surveil and govern prospective renters and tenants, while renters and tenants are learning to resist these technologies. Recent interests include how new information capitalists in California have turned toward a "techno feudal" and rightwing libertarian model which now takes a utopian form of extreme private urban capitalist governance into new experimental spaces. After she delivers her lecture, Professor Fields will engage in discussion with members asking questions from the floor. Please join us!



Let the Good Times Roll!!

**Join Us at our Reception at the AAA in New Orleans on
November 22, Saturday Evening from 9 PM-11 PM, for FREE
Food and Drinks for Members!**



After the Distinguished Lecture by Prof. Fields, join us at our CUAA Reception for members, a short walk from the lecture site for free food and drink from 9 PM-11 PM on Saturday November 22! Location of the Reception will be announced at our Annual Business Meeting (Friday, November 21, 11:45 AM-12:45 PM, at the Marriott, room TBA).

Let it never be said that CUAA members can't talk urban theory or ethnography and walk a straight line at the same time! Let the good times roll!

We hope to see you in New Orleans!



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CUAA NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Join or renew your membership:

<https://americananthro.org/membership/>

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Some Final Thoughts, Late-Breaking News, and Reminders

Our CUAA Listserv URBANTH-L – A Work in Progress – A Platform for our Members!
CUAA is reviving URBANTH-L, our listserv. Once we get it operational later this fall, all CUAA members will automatically be invited to join it. URBANTH-L will be reserved for members only, and will be your place to let other CUAA members know of your new publications, conferences you've organized, calls for papers you need to circulate, and more. CUAA is eager to make this essential service available to its members. Stay tuned for details soon!

Until Then... Do You Have A New Book Published, A Conference You've Organized, A Journal Article That's Just Come Out?

CUAA invites you to publicize your achievements by boosting them through its social media accounts with Instagram and BlueSky. Send your posts (300 characters with spaces max, and 1-2 hi-res color photos) to Moriah James, CUAA Communications Coordinator, mojames1@live.unc.edu (allow 2-3 days for posting). If you already have an Instagram or BlueSky account, you can tag CUAA to raise your profile (Instagram: @critical_urban_anth. BlueSky: @criticalurbananth.bsky.social).

Late-breaking news: The Deadline for CUAA Competitions for Best Graduate Student Paper and for Best Graduate Student/Precarious Scholar Panel Extended to October 24th!

The deadline for 2025 CUAA Competitions for Best Graduate Student Paper and for Best Graduate Student/Precarious Scholar Panel have both been EXTENDED to 12 midnight on October 24, 2025. If you are a graduate student and have had your paper accepted for the CUAA Program in New Orleans, or if you are the organizer(s) of a session made up of papers by graduate students and/or precarious scholars accepted for the CUAA Program, you are eligible, respectively, to submit your proposals for these awards. The Best Paper award winner will receive **\$300**, and the Best Panel award winner(s) **\$1,000** to share among presenters. See the links above for details!

We Need You! Ask your colleagues and students to join CUAA!

See you in New Orleans at our Business Meeting on November 21! Invite your friends to join you! Come up and introduce yourself to Don and the other CUAA Board members after the meeting. And if you're not going to New Orleans and want to contact me: dnonini@email.unc.edu



-- Don Nonini, President, Critical Urban Anthropology Association