

ALISON HELLER
CURRICULUM VITAE – SUMMER 2018

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Ph.D. Medical Anthropologist and Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Maryland. Expertise in mixed-methods social research. Accomplished ethnographer, grant-writer, data analyst, and team-leader.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Publication of book [Fistula Politics: Birthing Injuries and the Quest for Continence in Niger](#). (Rutgers University Press, publication date 10/15/18)
- Research funded by the National Science Foundation, the Fulbright Hays, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, University of Maryland, Washington University in St. Louis, PEO International, the Olin Fellowship for Women, and the Worldwide Fistula Fund
- 2016 -2017 School for Advanced Research Campbell Fellow for Transformative Research on Women in the Developing World
- Received the Society for Medical Anthropology Dissertation Award for dissertations written between 2013-2015

EDUCATION

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, ANTHROPOLOGY	2015
WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS Cultural Anthropology, focus on medical anthropology Dissertation: <i>“Interrogating the Superlative Sufferer: Experiencing Obstetric Fistula and Treatment Seeking in Niger”</i>	
MASTER OF ARTS, ANTHROPOLOGY	2011
WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS Cultural Anthropology	
BACHELOR OF ARTS, INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES	2005
UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA, TUCSON	

RESEARCH GRANTS

University of Maryland Division of Research Tier 1 Faculty Grant	2018-2019
National Science Foundation, Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant Award #1243775	2013-2014
Fulbright Hays, Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship Award #P022A120012-002	2013-2014
Wenner-Gren Foundation, Dissertation Fieldwork Grant & Osmundsen Initiative Grant: Award #8567	2013-2014
Worldwide Fistula Fund, Research Grant	2013-2014

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2017 - present; **Assistant Professor**, University of Maryland College Park Department of Anthropology.
- 2015–2016; **Professor of Global Health**, World Learning International Honors Program.
- 2009–2015; **Teaching Assistant**, University of Washington in St. Louis

BOOKS

- Heller, Alison. *Fistula Politics: Birthing Injuries and the Quest for Continence in Niger*. Rutgers University Press. (Expected 10/18).

PUBLICATIONS

- Heller, Alison. 2018. Concealment and the Art of Passing: The Search for Dignity Among Women with Birthing Injuries in Niger. *Human Organization* 77(3).
- Ouedraogo, Itengre, Regina McConley, Christopher Payne, *Alison Heller*, and L. Lewis Wall. 2018. Gurya Cutting and Female Genital Fistulas in Niger: Ten Cases. *International Urogynecology Journal* 29(3): 363-368.
- Heller, Alison. 2018. [The Hidden Harm of Surgery: How the Data Obfuscates Surgical Outcomes for Obstetric Fistula](#). *Anthropology News* 59(1): 6-10.
- Heller, Alison. 2017. Demographic Profile and Treatment Outcomes of 100 Women with Obstetric Fistula in Niger. *Proceedings in Obstetrics and Gynecology in Press* 7(2): 1-15.
- Heller, Alison and Anita Hannig. 2017. Unsettling the Fistula Narrative: Cultural Pathology, Biomedical Redemption, and Inequities of Health Access in Niger and Ethiopia. *Anthropology & Medicine* 24(1): 81-95.
- Heller, Alison. 2016. [Spaces of Waiting](#). *Sapiens*, 5 May.
- Heller, Alison. 2016. [Exigencies in the Field: Shifting Social, Political, and Theoretical Realities of Health Research in Niger](#). *Medicine Anthropology Theory* 24 March.
- Heller, Alison. 2014. Bedside Manner and the Invisible Patient: The Silence Surrounding Women's Gynaecological Health in Niger. *Anthropology Today* 30(1): 20-23.

RESEARCH & FIELD EXPERIENCE

- 2018; **Ethnographic research** for a randomized control trial on the effectiveness and acceptability of a novel medical device to manage chronic female urinary incontinence in Uganda
- 2018; **Mixed-methods research**, qualitative research lead on PfSPZ pediatric malaria vaccine trial in Bougoula Hameau, Mali
- 2018; **Ethnographic research** on the barriers to healthcare and the use of technology in Niger
- 2017-2018; **Health disparities research** in Baltimore, MD
- 2014; **Ethnographic Filmmaking**, ethnographic documentary about obstetric fistula in Niger
- 2013-2014; **Doctoral Dissertation Research**, examination of the social dynamics and marital relationships, barriers to care, negotiation of treatment seeking, and social stigma of 100 women and their kin living with obstetric fistula in Danja and Niamey, Niger.
- 2011; **Exploratory Research** on the social consequences of obstetric fistula, Danja, Niger.
- 2010; **Pilot Study** on maternal mortality and morbidity in Saraya, Senegal, and Keniba, Mali.
- 2009; **Reproductive Health Educator**, Population Services International with Peace Corps Togo, Lomé, Togo.
- 2006-2009; **Peace Corps Volunteer**, Peace Corps Togo. Worked and lived in three rural villages; organized village-based health and nutrition programs and reproductive health courses.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Qualitative Research Methods: University of Maryland, Instructor of Record	FALL 2018
Anthropology of Global Health: University of Maryland, Instructor of Record	SPRING 2018
Women's Health:	FALL 2017
Ethnographic Approaches to the Politics of Reproduction University of Maryland, Instructor of Record	FALL 2015 & SPRING 2016
Health, Culture, and Community World Learning International Honors Program, Instructor of Record	
Community Health Research Methods World Learning International Honors Program, Instructor of Record	
Anthropological Perspectives on Women's Health Washington University in Saint Louis, Instructor of Record	SPRING 2015
Transnational Reproductive Health Issues Washington University in Saint Louis, Guest Lecturer	
Capitalism and Culture Washington University in Saint Louis, Teaching Assistant, Lecturer	SPRING 2012
Health, Healing and Ethics Washington University in Saint Louis, Teaching Assistant, Lecturer	FALL 2011
Anthropology of Medicalization Washington University in Saint Louis, Guest Lecturer	
Transnational Reproductive Health Issues Washington University in Saint Louis, Teaching Assistant	SPRING 2010
Peoples and Cultures of Africa Washington University in Saint Louis, Teaching Assistant	FALL 2010

SELECT AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

School for Advanced Research Campbell Fellowship	2016-2017
Society for Medical Anthropology Dissertation Award	2015
American Anthropological Association 2016 & 2017 Photo Contest	2015 & 2016
P.E.O. International, Scholar Award, Dissertation Completion Fellowship	2014-2015
Mr. & Mrs. Spencer T. Olin Fellowship for Women	2009-2015
Judith Tytel Catalano Scholarship in Arts and Sciences, Washington University in St. Louis	2011-12
Politics, Pluralism, and Religion Graduate Fellow, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes	2011
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, Honorable Mention	2010
National Science Foundation Summer Institute for Research Design Fellow	2010

POPULAR PRESS RECOGNITION

- Meikle, Glendora. 2013. [Poverty Porn: Is Sensationalism Justified if it Helps Those in Need](#). The Guardian, July 5.
- Stoller, Paul. 2013. [Media Myopia and the Image of Africa](#). The Huffington Post, August 8.
- Windsor, Morgan. 2013. [A Fate Worse Than Death For Scores of African Women](#). CNN, May 23.

INVITED TALKS

- 2016 "Women with Fistula in Niger: Resilience and Self-Regulation," **Tulane University**; New Orleans, Louisiana.

- 2016 “Bad Births, Bad Bodies: Obstetric Fistula and Treatment Seeking in Niger,” **University of Maryland**; College Park, MD.
- 2016 “Bad Births, Bad Bodies: Obstetric Fistula and Treatment Seeking in Niger,” **University of New Hampshire**; Durham, NH.
- 2016 “Bad Births, Bad Bodies: Obstetric Fistula and Treatment Seeking in Niger,” **Grand Valley State University**; Allendale, MI.
- 2015 “Presentation of Findings from Eighteen Months of Qualitative Ethnographic Research in Four Fistula Centers in Niger,” **Worldwide Fistula Fund Board Meeting**; Chicago, Illinois.
- 2015 “Why Anthropology Matters: Understanding Culture to Improve Global Health,” **PEO Chapter Meeting**; Alton, Illinois.
- 2015 “Obstetric Fistula in Niger: Deconstructing Global Narratives,” Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, **Washington University**; Saint Louis, Missouri.
- 2015 “Medical Anthropology, Research, and Contributions to Health,” Pre-Med Society, Non-traditional Careers in Health **Washington University**; Saint Louis, Missouri.
- 2014 “The Importance of Culture in Constructing Global Health Interventions,” **Marian University**; Indianapolis, Indiana.

SELECT CONFERENCE PAPERS

- 2017 “‘The Worst Place in the World to be a Mother’: Clinical Harm and Obstetric Consequence in Niger,” **American Anthropological Association Meetings**, Washington D.C.
- 2017 “A Complicated Calculus: The Hope for Health & The Risk of Social Harm,” **Society for Applied Anthropology Meetings**, Santa Fe, NM.
- 2016 “The Quest for Continence and the Indeterminable Wait,” **American Anthropological Association Meetings**, Minneapolis, MN.
- 2015 “Obstetric Fistula, Surgical Repair, and Tricky Math,” **American Anthropological Association Meetings**, Denver, CO. PANEL CHAIR.
- 2015 “The Social Life of Data: Interrogating the Numbers of Obstetric Fistula Surgical Success in Niger,” **European Association of Social Anthropologists**, Sussex, UK.
- 2014 “Desexing the Fistula Body: From Dangerous African Sexuality to the Brown-Bodies Madonna,” **American Anthropological Association Meetings**, Washington D.C. PANEL CHAIR.
- 2014 “Obstetric Fistula and Aid,” **African Studies Association Meetings**, Indianapolis, Indiana;
- 2014 “De-Branding Obstetric Fistula: Using Film to Construct New Narratives,” **African Media Center Conference**, Westminster, England.
- 2013 “Fistula Stigma and the Clinical Encounter,” **Encounters and Engagements: Creating New Agendas for Medical Anthropology**, Tarragona, Spain. PANEL CHAIR.

SERVICE

- 2018, 2017, 2016 - National Science Foundation Cultural Anthropology Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant Advisory Panelist
- 2017 & 2016 – International Honors Program/ School for International Training Traveling Faculty Hiring Committee/ Interviewer
- 2017 – School for Advanced Research Vera Campbell Advanced Seminar, Women and Development in the Global South, Selection Committee Member
- 2017 & 2016 – Reviewer for Journals Medical Anthropology and Anthropological Quarterly