

Title: Bioarchaeology and the Biocultural Synthesis: Current Perspectives and Applications

Keywords: Bioarchaeology, Biocultural, Theory

Abstract:

Bioarchaeologists have employed biocultural models that blend social theory with cultural, environmental, and biological interactions for the last twenty years (see for example Goodman and Leatherman 1998 or Steckel and Rose 2002), yet there is still a prevailing notion that the sub-discipline does not engage with this level of theory. This session seeks to highlight researchers whose work encompasses issues that were relevant in the past just as today (e.g. migration and immigration, gender and sexuality, race and ancestry, privilege, economics, and health). Bioarchaeologists routinely investigate these issues within the context of the past using creative and innovative methods drawn from many disciplines, some far outside of anthropology.

In response to the theme of this year's conference, "Anthropology Matters," this session seeks to invite conversation among scholars interested in sharing research-oriented projects or critical thought analyses that engage with the above-mentioned themes. This session is purposely unrestricted by geographic area, time period, and methodology so that engagement of social theory in varied bioarchaeological contexts may be highlighted. While there are limitations in applying biocultural theory to past populations, the contributions of bioarchaeological study to overarching themes affecting humans both today and in the past cannot be understated. We invite critical reviews of bioarchaeological method and theory, as well as original research utilizing innovative methods, to engage in a broader discussion about the place of bioarchaeology in the biocultural anthropological canon.