

# Chelsea Fisher

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Department of Anthropology  
University of South Carolina

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## RESEARCH INTERESTS

Environmental archaeology and anthropology; histories of environmental and climate justice; Indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge; community-engaged research; food and agriculture; mining; environmental humanities

## EDUCATION

- 2019 Ph.D., Anthropology, University of Michigan  
Dissertation: *Maya Farming Communities and the Long View of Sustainability at Tzacauil*
- 2014 M.A., Anthropology, University of Michigan
- 2011 B.A., Archaeology, The College of Wooster

## PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

- 2023- Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology  
University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC
- 2019-2023 Assistant Professor, Environmental Studies Program  
Washington and Lee University, Lexington, VA

## PUBLICATIONS

### Book

2023. Fisher, Chelsea. [\*Rooting in a Useless Land: Ancient Farmers, Celebrity Chefs, and Environmental Justice in Yucatán\*](#). University of California Press, Oakland.

### Articles, book chapters, and essays

- 2023 Fisher, Chelsea and Clara Albacete. [Ancient greenwashing: On food justice and civilizations in the supermarket](#). *Gastronomica* 23(3): 46-64.
- 2023 Fisher, Chelsea. [Monumentality as traditional ecological knowledge in the northern Maya lowlands](#). *Antiquity* 97(392): 386-402.
- 2022 Dine, Harper, Traci Ardren, and Chelsea Fisher. Vegetative agency and social memory in houselots of the ancient Maya. In Smith, M.L. (Ed.). [The Power of Nature: Agency and the Archaeology of Human-Environmental Dynamics](#). Louisville, CO: University Press of Colorado.

- 2022 Fisher, Chelsea. [Walking rural in Tzacauil, Yucatán, Mexico](#). *Ancient Mesoamerica* 33(1): 148-161.
- 2022 Fisher, Chelsea. [Traces of industry in the trees of Jefferson National Forest](#). *Edge Effects* Unpure Imagination series, edited by Ben Iuliano, Kuhelika Ghosh, and Richelle Wilson.
- 2021 Fisher, Chelsea and Arlen F. Chase. [Leaving the quiet jungle path: Introduction to Maya anthropological archaeology](#). Introductory editorial to *Maya Anthropological Archaeology*, special issue of *Heritage*, edited by Chelsea Fisher and Arlen F. Chase.
- 2020 Fisher, Chelsea. [Archaeology for sustainable agriculture](#). *Journal of Archaeological Research* 28: 393-441.
- 2020 Fisher, Chelsea and Arlen F. Chase, eds. [Maya Anthropological Archaeology](#), special issue of *Heritage* 3(2).
- 2020 Fisher, Chelsea and Traci Ardren. [Partaking in culinary heritage at Yaxunah, Yucatán during the 2017 Noma Mexico pop-up](#). *Maya Anthropological Archaeology*, special issue of *Heritage*, edited by C. Fisher and A.F. Chase 3(2): 474-492.
- 2020 Fisher, Chelsea. [Maize politics and Maya farmers' traditional ecological knowledge in Yucatán, 1450-1600](#). *Human Ecology* 48(1): 33-45.
- 2018 Fisher, Chelsea. [Towards a dialogue of sustainable agriculture and end-times theology in the United States: Insights from the historical ecology of nineteenth century millennial communes](#). *Agriculture and Human Values* 35: 791-807.
- 2014 Fisher, Chelsea. [The role of infield agriculture in Maya cities](#). *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 36: 196-210.
- 2013 Fauvelle, M., C. Fisher, and G.E. Braswell. Return to the Kingdom of the Eagle: Archaeological investigations at Nim li Punit, Belize. *Research Reports in Belizean Archaeology* 10: 241-251.

#### GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

##### External grants and fellowships

- 2016 National Science Foundation, Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Award.
- 2016 Wenner-Gren Foundation Dissertation Fieldwork Grant.
- 2016 U.S. Department of Education Fulbright-Hays Program Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship.
- 2011 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship.

### Internal grants and fellowships

- 2023 College of Arts and Sciences Research and Creative Scholarship Grant, University of South Carolina.
- 2023 College of Arts and Sciences Conference Travel Grant, University of South Carolina.
- 2022 Conference Travel Grant, Washington and Lee University.
- 2022 Lenfest Summer Research Grant, Washington and Lee University.
- 2021 Lenfest Summer Research Grant, Washington and Lee University.
- 2020 Leyburn Scholars Program in Anthropology, Washington and Lee University.
- 2020 Lenfest Summer Research Grant, Washington and Lee University.
- 2019 Rackham Dissertation Fellowship, University of Michigan.
- 2018 Richard I. Ford Award for Anthropological Research on Humans and the Environment, University of Michigan Museum of Anthropological Archaeology.
- 2018 Titiev Fellowship, Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan.
- 2016 Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant, University of Michigan.
- 2015 Rackham International Research Award, University of Michigan.
- 2015 James B. Griffin Scholarship, University of Michigan Museum of Anthropological Archaeology.
- 2014 Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant, University of Michigan.
- 2013 Tinker Foundation Field Research Grant, University of Michigan Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies.
- 2013 Summer Research Grant, Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan.
- 2011 Rackham Merit Fellowship, University of Michigan.
- 2011 Copeland Funding for Independent Study, College of Wooster.
- 2009 Kendall-Rives Latin American Research Grant, College of Wooster.

### AWARDS AND HONORS

- 2020 Louise Ann Williams Anthropology Distinguished Dissertation Award, Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan.
- 2017 Rackham Graduate School Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award.
- 2016 University of Michigan Department of Anthropology Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award, *Aztec, Maya, Inca Civilizations*.
- 2015 University of Michigan Department of Anthropology Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award, *Aztec, Maya, Inca Civilizations*.
- 2013 University of Michigan Department of Anthropology Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award, *Aztec, Maya, Inca Civilizations*.
- 2011 The College of Wooster Campus Council Leadership Award.
- 2010 Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society.

2010            Lambda Alpha Anthropology Honor Society.

#### CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

##### Organized symposia

- 2019            *Advancing Public Perceptions of Sustainability Through Archaeology*. Chair and organizer. Electronic symposium at the 84<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Albuquerque, New Mexico.
- 2018            *#MeToo in Archaeology*. Co-chair and co-organizer with Jason De León. Late-breaking roundtable session at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, San Jose, California.
- 2017            *Integrating and Disintegrating in Central Yucatán: Archaeological Approaches to Social Change at Multiple Scales*. Co-chair and co-organizer with Ryan Collins. Session at the 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Vancouver, British Columbia.

##### Conference presentations (\*invited)

- 2023            Environmental justice legacies of colonial cattle ranching in Yucatán, Mexico. Poster presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Toronto, Ontario.
- 2023\*           Visual storytelling and community-based research in archaeology. Discussant in forum held at the 88<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Portland, Oregon.
- 2022\*           How the archaeology of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) can counter “unused land” narratives and support Indigenous Maya food sovereignty. Paper presented in the electronic symposium *Decolonizing Diet: Supporting Indigenous Food Sovereignty through Archaeology* at the 87<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Chicago, Illinois.
- 2022\*           Monumentality and temporalities of space at Tzacauil (second author with Harper Dine). Paper presented in the session *Monumentality in the Preclassic Northern Maya Lowlands* at the 87<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Chicago, Illinois.
- 2021\*           Food justice, celebrity chefs, and the archaeology of farming communities in the Yaxunah ejido, Yucatán. Paper presented at the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Maya at the Playa Conference (virtual).
- 2021\*           Land grabs and the archaeology of food sovereignty in Yucatán, Mexico. Paper presented in the session *Archaeology for Food Justice: From Inequality*

*to Food Sovereignty* at the Theoretical Archaeology Group Annual Meeting (virtual).

- 2020\* Maya food justice and the memory of meals. Paper presented at the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Tulane Maya Symposium, *Understanding Maya Fare: Beyond Tamales and Cacao*, New Orleans, Louisiana.
- 2019 Celebrity chefs and the long view of sustainable agriculture in Yaxunah, Yucatán. Paper presented in the session *Advancing Public Perceptions of Sustainability Through Archaeology* at the 84<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Albuquerque, New Mexico.
- 2019 Discussant in the forum *#MeToo in Archaeology* presented at the 84<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Albuquerque, New Mexico.
- 2018 Two millennia of Maya agrarian change: Archaeological, ethnographic, and historical approaches to landscape at Tzacauil, Yucatán, Mexico. Paper presented in the session *Time and Power in Agrarian Environments* at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, San Jose, California.
- 2018\* Three walks through Tzacauil: Engaging the rural landscape of central Yucatán 2000 years ago, 1000 years ago, and today. Paper presented in the session *Reconceptualizing Rurality: Current Research in the Ancient Maya Hinterlands* at the 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Washington, DC.
- 2018 Vegetative agency and social memory in houselots of ancient Cobá. Paper presented in the session *Things with a Mind of Their Own: Agentive Approaches to Non-Human Agency* at the 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Washington, D.C. (H. Dine, T. Ardren, and C. Fisher).
- 2017 Integrating generations on the Formative Maya landscape: Households and communities at Tzacauil. Paper presented in the session *Integrating and Disintegrating in Central Yucatán: Archaeological Approaches to Social Change at Multiple Scales* at the 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.
- 2016 Sacbes, cenotes, and the permanence of movement in Tzacauil, Yucatán. Paper presented at the University of Michigan Collaborative Archaeology Workgroup Conference, Ann Arbor, Michigan.
- 2016 Landscape and Formative households at Tzacauil and Yaxuná, Yucatán. Paper presented at the 81<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Orlando, Florida.

- 2015 Water management and city founding at Yaxuná, Yucatán. Poster presented at the 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, San Francisco, California.
- 2014 “The poorness of the soil takes away hope”: Resolving ethnohistoric and archaeological evidence for food security in the northern Maya lowlands. Paper presented at the 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Austin, Texas.
- 2012 Return to the Kingdom of the Eagle: Archaeological investigations at Nim li Punit, Belize. Paper presented at the Belize Archaeology & Anthropology Symposium: Time and the Maya, San Ignacio Cayo, Belize (M. Fauvelle, C. Fisher, and G.E. Braswell).
- 2012 Discordance as data: Calling the bluff on Mesoamerican texts. Paper presented at the University of Michigan Collaborative Archaeology Workgroup Conference, Ann Arbor, Michigan (C. Fisher and L. Carpenter).
- 2011 Landscapes of ambition: Understanding Classic Maya ceremonial centers as political history. Poster presented at the 76<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Sacramento, California.
- 2010\* Resorting to the resort: A museum’s relationship with the archaeology of Roatán Island, Honduras. Poster presented in the session *The Use, Abuse, and Lack of Archaeology in Heritage Tourism and Development in the Bay Islands of Honduras* at the 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Saint Louis, Missouri.

#### Workshops

- 2023 Bread Loaf Environmental Writers’ Conference, Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont.
- 2022 Colby Summer Institute in Environmental Humanities, Colby College, Waterville, Maine.

#### CAMPUS LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

- 2022 Practicing land acknowledgement at W&L. Workshop co-facilitated by Chelsea Fisher, Kelly Fujiwara, Andrea LePage, and Jessica Wager. Fall Academy, Washington and Lee University.
- 2022 Sustainable agriculture in the long view. Sustainability: Challenges, Technology, and Strategies Webinar Series. Office of Lifelong Learning, Washington and Lee University.

- 2021 The traditional ecological knowledge of Maya agriculture. Department of Anthropology, Appalachian State University.
- 2021 New insights into history. Beyond the Classroom: New Frontiers of Faculty Research Lecture Series. Office of Lifelong Learning, Washington and Lee University.
- 2021 Archaeology and agricultural sustainability. Department of Anthropology, Northern Illinois University.
- 2021 Climate migration and environmental justice in rural Mexico. Hostile Terrain 94 Lecture Series, Washington and Lee University.
- 2021 Cyrus McCormick and the roots of globalized industrial food systems. Lenfest Faculty Research Colloquium, Washington and Lee University.
- 2020 Environmental humanities and climate change. Introduction to Environmental Studies Evening Lectures, Fall 2020, Washington and Lee University.
- 2020 Environmental humanities and climate change. Introduction to Environmental Studies Evening Lectures, Winter 2020, Washington and Lee University.
- 2019 Food for thought... and action. Panel discussion, Washington and Lee University.
- 2019 Environmental humanities and climate change. Introduction to Environmental Studies Evening Lectures, Fall 2019, Washington and Lee University.
- 2019 Sustainable food systems: A conversation with Samina Raja and Mahadev Bhat. Bates Memorial Lecture, Washington and Lee University.
- 2019 The future of the Amazon rainforest. Panel discussion, Washington and Lee University.
- 2018 Beyond the classroom: Transforming frustration into civic engagement. Presentation at the Engaged Pedagogy Initiative Symposium, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
- 2015 Water and the Formative homesteaders of Yucatán. Brown Bag Lecture Series, University of Michigan Museum of Anthropological Archaeology.
- 2013 Garden cities of the northern Maya lowlands. Four Field Graduate Talks, Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan.
- 2013 The Formative Maya downtown: Excavations at Yaxuná, Yucatán. Brown Bag Lecture Series, University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology.

- 2013 “Unruining” ruins: Consolidation of archaeological sites. Four Field Graduate Talks, Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan.
- 2012 Ancestor worship at Nim li Punit, Belize. Brown Bag Lecture Series, University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology.
- 2011 Portrait stelae and competition at two Classic Maya sites. Brown Bag Lecture Series, University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology.
- 2011 A survey of regional studies of Classic Maya sites in the Toledo District, Belize. Impacts of Research in a Diverse Society Research Symposium, Rackham Graduate School, University of Michigan.

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

### Courses taught at the University of South Carolina

- Primates, People, and Prehistory - Introductory course to anthropological archaeology and biological anthropology (Fall 2023)
- Principles of Archaeology (Fall 2023)

### Courses taught at Washington and Lee University:

- Environmental Archaeology (Spring 2021, Spring 2023)
- Environmental Humanities (Fall 2020, Winter 2020, Winter 2021, Winter 2022, Fall 2022, Winter 2023)
- Introduction to Environmental Studies (Fall 2020, Fall 2019, Winter 2021, Winter 2022, Fall 2023)
- Food and the Environment (Winter 2021, Winter 2023)
- Capstone Seminar in Environmental Studies (AY 2020-21, AY 2019-20)
- Visualizing the Native American Landscape at W&L (Independent Directed Study, Winter 2022)
- Food, Drink, and the Holocene (Fall 2019)

### Courses taught at the University of Michigan:

- Cities Growing Food: The Archaeology of Urban Agriculture and Sustainability (Instructor of Record; Spring 2018)
- Aztec, Maya, and Inca Civilizations (Graduate Student Instructor; Winter 2013-2016)

### Pedagogical development

- 2019-20 Shepherd Community-Engaged Teaching and Learning Cohort, Washington and Lee University.
- 2018 Engaged Pedagogy Initiative Fellow, University of Michigan.
- 2018 Implementing Inclusive Teaching Principles in Courses. Workshop at the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, University of Michigan.



2018 Leading Discussions in the Social Sciences and Humanities. Workshop at the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, University of Michigan.

#### RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2022-23 Preliminary research on cattle haciendas in Yaxunah, Yucatán, Mexico  
2021 Faculty research supervisor, Ancient Greenwashing and Food Justice.  
2020 Faculty research supervisor, Cyrus McCormick and the Roots of Globalized Industrial Food Systems  
2015-17 Field director, Doctoral fieldwork at Tzacauil, Yucatán, Mexico.  
2015 Field archaeologist, Proyecto de Interacción Política del Centro de Yucatán, Yaxuná, Yucatán, Mexico.  
2014 Field archaeologist, University of Michigan Project at El Mogote, Oaxaca.  
2014 Field archaeologist, University of Michigan Pecica Santul Mare Project, Romania.  
2014 Field archaeologist, Proyecto de Interacción Política del Centro de Yucatán, Yaxuná, Yucatán, Mexico.  
2013 Field archaeologist, Proyecto de Interacción Política del Centro de Yucatán, Yaxuná, Yucatán, Mexico.  
2013 Field archaeologist, Investigations at the Gault Site, Central Texas.  
2012 Field archaeologist, Toledo Regional Interaction Project, Nim li Punit, Belize.  
2012 Laboratory assistant, American Museum of Natural History San Martín Tilcajete Project, Oaxaca, Mexico.  
2011 Field archaeologist, American Museum of Natural History San Martín Tilcajete Project, Oaxaca, Mexico.  
2010 Field archaeologist, Vermilion Cliffs National Monument Archaeological Field School, Arizona.  
2009 Field school student, Project Roatán Mesoamerican Archaeology Field School, Roatán Island, Honduras.  
2009-11 Research assistant, College of Wooster Archaeology Laboratory.  
2008 Research assistant, Arch2 Cultural Resource Management and The Thomas Edison Center at Menlo Park, Metuchen, New Jersey.  
2008 Research assistant, College of Wooster English Department.

#### REPORTS

##### Technical reports

2020 Excavaciones en Tzacauil. *Proyecto de Interacción Política del Centro de Yucatán (PIPCY): Informe Técnico de la Novena Temporada (2017)*. Prepared for the Consejo de Arqueología del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico. Edited by Travis Stanton.

- 2017 Investigaciones sobre vida doméstica y comunidad durante el Formativo en Tzacauil. *Proyecto de Interacción Política del Centro de Yucatán (PIPCY): Informe Técnico de la Octava Temporada (2016)*. Prepared for the Consejo de Arqueología del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico. Edited by Chelsea Fisher.
- 2016 Arqueología doméstica en Tzacauil y Yaxuná. *Proyecto de Interacción Política del Centro de Yucatán (PIPCY): Informe Técnico de la Séptima Temporada (2015)*. Prepared for the Consejo de Arqueología del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico. Edited by Travis Stanton.
- 2014 Capítulo 2: Mapeo y recolección de superficie en Yaxuná. In *Proyecto de Interacción Política del Centro de Yucatán (PIPCY): Informe Técnico de la Sexta Temporada (2014)*. Prepared for the Consejo de Arqueología del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico, pp. 7-29. Edited by Travis Stanton and Aline Magnoni.
- 2012 Excavations of Structure 7, South Group, Nim li Punit. In *Toledo Regional Interaction Project Annual Report, University of California – San Diego Mesoamerican Archaeology Laboratory Occasional Paper No. 6*. Prepared for the Institute of Archaeology, National Institute of Culture and History, Belize, pp. 13-64. Edited by Geoffrey Braswell.

#### Community reports

- 2022 Investigaciones en el sitio arqueológico de Tzacauil (Xnooj Muul), Ejido de Yaxunah, Yucatán, 2015-2017. Report presented to the community of Yaxunah, Yucatán, Mexico.

#### SELECTED SERVICE

- 2022-23 Faculty Representative, University Sustainability Committee, Washington and Lee University.
- 2022-23 Harte Center for Teaching and Learning Advisory Committee, Washington and Lee University.
- 2021-23 Faculty Advisor, Native American Student Organization, Washington and Lee University.
- 2020-23 Native American and Indigenous Cohort member, Washington and Lee University.
- 2020-23 Historic Preservation and Archaeological Conservation Advisory Board, Washington and Lee University.
- 2018-19 Student representative, University of Michigan Museum of Anthropological Archaeology Curator of Asian Archaeology search committee.
- 2013-14 Assistant Chair, University of Michigan Collaborative Archaeology Workgroup.
- 2012-14 Co-Organizer, University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology Brown

2010-11 Bag Series.  
President, College of Wooster Archaeology Student Colloquium.

Contributed peer reviewer to academic journals including: *Human Ecology*, *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*, *Geoderma*, *Agriculture and Human Values*, *Journal of Archaeological Research*, *Nature Scientific Reports*

#### PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 2023 Heritage Radio Network. "Chelsea Fisher and Clara Albacete on superfoods and green capitalism." *Gastronomica Podcast*, Episode 34, October 22, 2023, <https://heritageradionetwork.org/episode/chelsea-fisher-and-clara-albacete-superfoods-and-green-capitalism>.
- 2023 Cattle and the deep history of Maya ecological knowledge in Yaxunah, Yucatán, Mexico. Asheville Sister Cities and Boundary End Research Center's Special Program on Mesoamerican History and Culture. Boundary End Archaeological Research Center.
- 2020-23 Native American and Indigenous Cohort member, Washington and Lee University.
- 2019 Sustainable food systems: A conversation with Samina Raja and Mahadev Bhat. Bates Memorial Lecture, Washington and Lee University. (Open to the public.)
- 2019 The future of the Amazon rainforest. Panel discussion, Washington and Lee University. (Open to the public.)
- 2016 Urban Growers Boot Camp, Truly Living Well Center for Natural Urban Agriculture, Atlanta, Georgia.
- 2016 Science Communication Fellow, University of Michigan Museum of Natural History.
- 2016 Public outreach ("What happened in ancient backyards?") at *Time Discovery Day*, University of Michigan Museum of Natural History.
- 2016 Science Communications Fellows Workshop ("Prototyping Activities"), University of Michigan Museum of Natural History.
- 2016 Science Communications Fellows Workshop ("How People Learn"), University of Michigan Museum of Natural History.
- 2015 Volunteer, University of Michigan Museum of Natural History World History Through Archaeology Day.
- 2015 Investigación de las Viviendas Antiguas en Yaxuná. Public talk given in Yaxunah, Yucatán.
- 2014 The Relative Importance of Infield vs. Outfield Agriculture in Ancient Maya Cities. Meeting of the Michigan Archaeology Society, Huron Valley Chapter.
- 2013 Volunteer, University of Michigan Museum of Natural History World History Through Archaeology Day.

## LANGUAGES

Spanish (proficient)  
English (native)

## REFERENCES

*Provided upon request.*