



Dr. Jennifer Schlegel | Anthropology Faculty Highlight

“Anthropology is the study of what it means to be human,” says Dr. Jennifer Schlegel, professor of anthropology and Director of the Honors Program at Kutztown University. “We can look at material remains and artifacts through archeology. We can look at bones. We can look at rituals. And we can look at language, which is my area of anthropology.” To her, there is no greater need right now than to understand the human condition, as the world is so divided. Much of that division is caused by hate, something that Dr. Schlegel has focused much of her research on. Through the study of anthropology, people can understand the way relationships between individuals help to reduce hate.

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Dr. Schlegel helps students understand the importance of relationship building when it comes to addressing hate. Human connection, she says, is at the heart of anthropology. She emphasizes this idea by discussing the concept of the gift with her classes, which examines power dynamics in relational exchanges. “It’s not the thing that’s exchanged that’s most important,” she says, “it’s that the exchange is between people, builds relationships, and can demonstrate the strength and weakness of a relationship.” Dr. Schlegel uses the example of two people in a relationship and how, when exchanging physical gifts with one another on an anniversary, if the gifts aren’t equally meaningful, it can reveal the weakness of their connection.

The gift is one way of understanding relationship dynamics, and other interactions can similarly be understood by examining the deeper context of those interactions and the imbalance of power represented in them. Dr. Schlegel gives the example of English speakers becoming

angry with the way people from different cultural backgrounds speak English. The angry comments about people’s dialect aren’t criticizing the dialect at all, but rather the culture the person speaking comes from. When people fail to notice the deeper context of their criticisms of others, their thoughts and feelings can turn hateful toward the groups they criticize.

Dr. Schlegel discusses the different ways to understand relationship dynamics when teaching about hate, which is at the core of one of the most popular classes on campus, ANT 262: Hate Across Cultures. “[It’s] a difficult class to teach,” she says, “and it’s a difficult class for students to take...I don’t approach hate as an emotion as much as a practice, as a thing people do. We’re all born with the capacity to hate.” Students learn not only how hate starts, but also how it can end. Dr. Schlegel says the key to individuals desisting from hate is through having conversations with people who hold anti-hate viewpoints, as well as people from the communities which they hate. Conversations lead to building connections, and it’s through connection that individuals can begin to see the humanity in those they hate.

In speaking on how people can work toward addressing hate when they see it, she says, “Know your audience. Know where it is safe to talk...find the places where you’re safe to exercise your voice.” Depending on the situation, an individual can address and challenge another’s hateful rhetoric, whether it be a family member, a friend, or a classmate. Dr. Schlegel says that finding the common ground with individuals participating in hate helps them to listen more to reason. “If we recognize the humanity in each other, it’s much more difficult for us to hate other people.”



Dr. Schlegel says the only thing that shouldn’t be done is remaining silent. “If you remain silent, you are doing something by doing nothing.” She says that when recruiters for hate groups visit new towns, they often display some form of hateful graffiti in a part of town where everyone can see it. “If the town doesn’t respond, then they know that’s a good place to set up shop because the town didn’t care enough to say anything about it.”

Addressing hate and advocating for social issues is not limited to those in power, says Dr. Schlegel, because “Every student has [their own] power to exercise, to influence.” She’s known students who have gone to borough council meetings to address hateful graffiti, students who have gone to business owners to address racist products, and students who have asked disc jockeys at dance halls to not play certain inappropriate songs. “Students recognize that they can influence someone on that journey away from hate.”

Dr. Schlegel will be taking sabbatical leave during the upcoming academic year. “I will be spending one semester writing up some of the research I’ve collected over the years,” she says, “and some with Bill Donner on Pennsylvania German language, culture, and identity...and one semester I’ll be writing up some of my research on hate.” While she says she will miss being on campus, she’s excited to continue her research and to help shed light on hateful practices. She reminds her students to never stop “having conversations, listening to each other, and developing relationships” when combatting hate.



Lauren Pash | German Studies & History Student Highlight

Kutztown University has been integral in senior Lauren Pash's journey to finding what she wanted to study, as well as what she wanted to do beyond school. Lauren, originally a chemistry major, became a double major in German studies and history, which was more attuned to her interests. After transferring to KU from Lehigh Carbon Community College, she discovered a new interest in Pennsylvania German culture and language.



Lauren says her choice to switch majors has opened doors to new education opportunities. She started taking classes that interested her more and involved her in

activities that encouraged her to continue learning. "In my linguistics course," she says, "we talked about the Pennsylvania German [language], and I knew that Kutztown offered a Pennsylvania German studies minor. I [realized that] maybe I want to pursue that because it's really interesting to me." As a part of the minor program, Lauren held an internship at the Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center on campus. There, she learned about KU's roots in Pennsylvania German culture.

The internship at the Cultural Heritage Center allowed Lauren to explore her passions further with the help of Patrick Dunmoyer, the Director of the center. "Being able to work there under his advisement, being able to [recognize] the things that I'm interested in...he presented me with a lot of projects that allowed me to realize that this is the path I want to go on." Under Patrick's advisement, she gained an understanding of the field of public history and soon discovered there might be a career path for her there. With the additional guidance of her professors and her peers, she set her sights on a career in the field, specifically archives management.

In an effort to gain more experience in the field, Lauren reached out to the Kutztown Historical Society and ended up assisting Maxatawny Township with piecing together a map of local historical sites. During the course of the project, Lauren took the addresses of many preserved areas in the township and input them into the Berks County Parcel Search, an online tool that helps users visually see the geographic area of specific addresses in the county. "I would enter different addresses [of historical sites and] mark them on the map." The map is to alert organizations looking for construction locations to sites with historical and sacred value so they don't disrupt them.

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Lauren's work with Maxatawny township fulfilled her with a sense of purpose and responsibility. Through her experience, she better understands the importance of preserving historical sites. "Preserving these buildings, or even just artifacts in general, is really important because your history is a part of your culture, and if you get rid of that, you're losing part of your identity."

Lauren plans to combine all her academic interests by attending Simmons University, where she will earn a dual degree: an M.A. in History and an M.S. in Library and Information Science with a Specialization in Archives Management. Beyond serving her career goal of working in archives management, Lauren says, "It's more of an interest thing with me, but also, [if] I want to teach, I could teach library science courses or history courses because I have this degree." She also believes that having a background in history will give her a competitive edge when searching for a job in archives management.

To prospective KU students unsure of what they want to do, Lauren says, "Do not stay in something that you know you dislike because you feel like you have to finish something that you started. Try different things and figure out your passions because if you're happy with what you're doing, that makes all the difference in the world."

CLAS CELEBRATES DEAN'S SCHOLARS AT RECEPTION

The College of Liberal Arts and Science Dean's Office will host the 2022 Dean's Scholars' Reception on April 28 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. behind Schaeffer Auditorium. The event recognizes students whose dedication and hard work has resulted in noteworthy accomplishments. This is an opportunity as well for these stand-out students to acknowledge their successful working relationships with the mentor faculty that they invite to accompany them to this event. In addition, one faculty member in the college will receive the Dean's Outstanding Faculty Award in acknowledgement of their passion for teaching and guiding students on their paths of success. To our Dean's Scholars and our award-winning faculty member, congratulations and thank you. We're proud of you and what you've accomplished through your hard work and dedication.

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