

Department of Anthropology

Colloquium Series Autumn 2022

A Worldwide View of Matriliney:

Using cross-cultural analyses to shed light on human kinship systems

Friday, December 9th, 12-1PM, Young Library Auditorium

Although matriliney and matrilocality are relatively rare in contemporary human populations, these female-based descent and residence systems are present in different cultural contexts and across the globe. In this talk, I review a cross-cultural study on the evolution of descent systems at a worldwide scale, testing for significant associations between matriliney and numerous cultural traits that have been theoretically associated with its stability or loss, such as subsistence strategy, animal domestication, mating system, residence pattern, wealth transfer, and property succession. I show how natural science methods can be used to address anthropological questions. For example, does a change in subsistence strategy generally predict a shift in the rules of descent, or do these transitions happen independently? These analyses enable a worldwide perspective on the pattern and process of the evolution of matriliney and matrilocality.



Dr. Nicole Creanza, Vanderbilt University

Dr. Nicole Creanza is a broadly trained biologist with interests that range from cultural evolutionary theory to niche construction and the evolution of learned behaviors. Her research merges computational and theoretical approaches to the comparison of cultural and genetic evolution in multiple systems, particularly human language and birdsong. Currently an Assistant Professor at Vanderbilt University, Dr. Creanza earned a A.B. in Biology from Harvard University and a Ph.D. in Biological Sciences from Rockefeller University. In addition, she completed postdoctoral training at the Ecology and Evolution Group at Stanford University. Her research has been supported by the National Science Foundation and the John Templeton Foundation, among others. Dr. Creanza's work has been published in various journals, including *PNAS*, *Nature Communications*, *Theoretical Population Biology*, and *Bioarchaeology International*.

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