

# LECTURER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## Events

- In Spring 2025, A&S expanded the course relief and pedagogical leave program for lecturers. The past and current LAC has been working very hard towards this goal. We want to thank everyone who has helped to make this possible.
- We want to thank our community for nominating the candidates for the five LAC open seats. By now, the LAC ballot has been delivered to your inbox; voting will end on **April 30**. We invite you to cast your vote and choose your representatives at the LAC.
- The LAC Spring Semester Town Hall is happening on **April 25**. The Town Hall is where the LAC shares updates with the community on key issues affecting lecturers. More importantly, the LAC wants to hear what YOU have in mind, so that LAC can better represent you.

### The LAC Town Hall

Time: April 25, 2025 3:30-4:30 pm

Zoom: [https://columbiauniversity.zoom.us/j/4659301183?  
omn=97834572162](https://columbiauniversity.zoom.us/j/4659301183?omn=97834572162)



**SPRING IS HERE!**

*In this issue:*

**EVENTS**

**CELEBRATIONS**

**FEATURED LECTURER**

# Celebrations

## OFFICE OF THE PROVOST TEACHING AND LEARNING GRANTS IN 2024

### *for Large Scale Teaching and Learning*

- Larry Jackson, Lecturer in Philosophy
- Peter Susser, Senior Lecturer in Music

### *for Interdisciplinary Teaching Initiatives (ITIs)*

- Sarah Hansen, Senior Lecturer in Chemistry
- Caroline Marvin, Lecturer in Psychology

### *for the Science of Learning Research Initiative (SOLER) Seed Grant*

- Christopher Eckdahl, Lecturer in Chemistry
- Seyhan Erden, Senior Lecturer in Economics
- Talha Siddiqui, Lecturer in Chemistry

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE LECTURER AWARDEES!**

## Featured Lecturer

**DR. BRIAN BOYD**  
SENIOR LECTURER IN ANTHROPOLOGY

### *Tell us your story. How did you get to Columbia University?*

I was a musician in Scotland, so I actually didn't go to university until I was 25. I went to the University of Glasgow studying Archaeology, Social Anthropology, Medieval History, and French Language & Literature. I came out with an MA in Archaeology and Social Anthropology in the early 90s, and my advisor asked, "Have you thought about a PhD?" So I applied and went to Cambridge, earning a PhD in Archaeology. Since I had done my undergrad fieldwork in Palestine, on prehistoric sites, I continued with that topic for my PhD. After a postdoc in Cambridge, a job came up at the University of Wales, Lampeter. It was the most radical and cutting edge place in terms of Archaeology, so it was an exciting place to teach. It was also close to the ocean, in a beautiful rural setting.

However, in 2006, my partner got a position at Columbia. So we moved to New York. Being a musician, after three weeks here, I decided I never wanted to leave! I started teaching as an Adjunct Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology, courses such as Archaeology of the Middle East, and Human-Animal Relations. That's the study of the place of the non-human animal in human life and imagination, from prehistory to today. As a prehistorian, I specialize in the era just before domestication, when we started to see, for example, dogs being placed in human burials. However, it is also contemporary, with topics such as animal welfare, horse therapy, and even rats and pigeons in New York City!

In 2012 I was appointed as Lecturer, and was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 2022. Besides teaching, I've continued my research fieldwork in Palestine. Our Museum Anthropology students work closely with the American Museum of Natural History here in the city. Our students do their first museum exhibition there; it's a semi-professional program and exhibit; it's remarkable really. I'm involved in other activities as well; I'm Co-Director of the Center for Palestine Studies, and Co-Chair of the University Seminar on Human-Animal Relations.



### *What is the best part of being a Lecturer at Columbia University?*

I would say it's being able to engage with different scholars, the interdisciplinary nature of our work. But it's also the teaching; when I first came to Columbia, the Chair said, "You can teach what you like, as long as it is research driven." As a researcher, it was great to come in and teach on the subjects of my research, to be given a free hand. And the students! Entering into that dialogue with both undergrads and grads, there is an immediate dialogue and critique. I help students engage with the latest research on a topic. The students are so sharp and sparking with ideas. They've always done the reading! It makes the job interesting and exciting. I also have amazing PhD students. One is in Alaska working on the symbolism of insects. Another is working on prehistory in Southwest Asia, another works in Turkey. So I love that teaching and research inform each other in my work.

### *What advice would you give to lecturers new at Columbia?*

I guess my advice would be to relish the opportunity to teach these students — they are extraordinary. Treat teaching as a discussion, a dialogue, apart from just imparting information. Also, although Columbia can seem daunting, just teach to the best of your ability, do your research. My department treats the lecturers as full members of the faculty in terms of teaching, administration, and research. Get onto committees, and you'll learn a lot.