

Katilyn F. Gerstner, PhD

Department of Anthropology

University of Michigan

kfgerst@umich.edu

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/katie-gerstner-749023134

Summary

I am a biological anthropologist who studies the ecological causes and evolutionary consequences of health and behavior. My field and laboratory research focuses on a wild population of critically endangered chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes verus*) in Senegal. My primary academic and professional work integrates One-Health approaches with ecological, behavioral, physiological, life history, and statistical data to broadly understand the evolution of the primate-hominin lineage, and more specifically, understand how people and primates cope with extreme heat and sharing space in savanna landscapes of the Anthropocene.

Education

2026	Ph.D., Texas State University, Applied Anthropology
2021	M.A., Wayne State University, Anthropology
2014	B.S., Illinois State University, Organismal Biology and Public Outreach Minor in Environmental Science

Employment and Academic Positions

2026-2027	Lecturer Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan
2026	Research Associate Temp Department of Anthropology, Texas State University Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency
2021-2026	Teaching and Research Associate Pruetz Lab, Department of Anthropology, Texas State University
2025	Educational Appointment MD Anderson Cancer Center, University of Texas Michael E. Keeling Center for Comparative Chimpanzee Research

Teaching

Lecturer I, University of Michigan

2026	Primate Behavior (ANTHRBIO 368 / PSYCH 338)
2026	First-year Seminar in Primate Field Studies (ANTHRBIO 168)
2026	Fundamentals of Scientific Computing in R (COMPFOR 133 / ANTHR BIO 133)

Instructor of Record/Doctoral Teaching Assistant, Texas State University

2025	Biological Anthropology (ANTH 2301)
2025	Biological Anthropology Lab (ANTH 2101)
2023-2025	Primate Behavior (ANTH 3342)
2024	Career Development in Anthropology (ANTH 3201)
2024	Writing in Anthropology (ANTH (3101)

Doctoral Instructional Assistant, Texas State University

2026	Primate Conservation (ANTH 3348)
2023	Masters Seminar in Biological Theory (ANTH 5312)
2022-2023	Biological Anthropology (ANTH 2301)
2022	Primate Behavior (ANTH 3342)
2022	Medical Anthropology (ANTH 3325)
2021-2022	Career Development in Anthropology (ANTH 3201)
2021-2022	Writing in Anthropology (ANTH 3101)

Fellowships, Awards, and Grants

External

2025	International Primatological Society Small Research Grant (\$1,500)
2025-2026	P.E.O. International Scholar Award (\$25,000)
2024	Primate Society of Great Britian Small Research Grant (\$1,590)
2024	Primate Conservation, Incorporated Small Research Grant (\$1,100)
2024	Animal Behavior Collective Microgrant (\$400)
2023	The Honors Society of Phi Kappa Phi Love of Learning Award (\$1,000)

Internal

2025	College of Liberal Arts Outstanding Doctoral Student Award, Texas State University
2025	Outstanding Doctoral Student Award, Department of Anthropology, Texas State University
2023-2024	Doctoral Retention Scholarship, The Graduate College of Texas State University (\$3,216/year)
2023	Dissertation Research Support Fellowship, The Graduate College of Texas State University (\$5,000)
2023	John Michael Kilby Anthropology Fellowship, Department of Anthropology, Texas State University (\$1,433)
2023	The Graduate College Scholarship, The Graduate College of Texas State University (\$1,500)
2022-2023	Student Government Scholarship, Texas State University (\$800/year)
2022	Doctoral Merit Fellowship, The Graduate College of Texas State University (\$6,000)
2022	Inductee of the Honors Society of Phi Kappa Phi, Texas State University

Travel Grants

2025	William S. Pollitzer Student Travel Award, American Association of Biological Anthropologists (\$495)
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Publications

- 2024 Dobson, K.D., **Gerstner, K.F.**, Oktavani, R., Shaffer, C., & Pruett, J.D. (2024). Working and impacting local communities as establishing the start of a conservation initiative: American Society of Primatology conservation committee webinar. *American Journal of Primatology*, <http://doi.org/10.1002/ajp.23628>.
- 2022 **Gerstner, K.F.** & Pruett, J.D. (2022). Wild chimpanzee welfare: a focus on nutrition, foraging and health to inform great ape welfare in the wild and in captivity. *Animals*, *12*, 3370. <http://doi.org/10.3390/ani12233370>.
- 2019 Samson, D.R., Loudon, L.A., **Gerstner, K.F.**, Wylie, S., Lake, B., White, B.J., Nunn, C.N. & Hunt, K.D. (2019). Group sleeping wild chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes schweinfurthii*) reduce risk of insect exposure: support for the encounter-dilution effect. *International Journal of Primatology*, *40*, 647-659. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s10764-019-00111-z>.

Publications in review

- 2025 De Cree, T., Giacomello, E.M., Moore, R., **Gerstner, K.F.**, & Hamilton, M.. Patterns of antemortem trauma in the Texas State University donated skeletal collection. In review for *Forensic Anthropology*.

Publications in prep

- [1] **Gerstner, K.F.**, Wilkinson, A., Furchak, H., Kante, D., Sadiakho, M., & Pruett, J.D.. Rare but revealing: Drinking behavior patterns in wild savanna chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes verus*) in Senegal. Intended for *Animal Behavior*.
- [2] **Gerstner, K.F.**, Black, C., E., Sadiakho, M., Bozang, N., Lindshield, S., Ndiaye, P. I., Carlos-Shanley, C., & Pruett, J.D.. Seasonality shifts in west African savanna chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*) microbiomes. Intended for *American Journal of Biological Anthropology*.
- [3] **Gerstner, K.F.**, Sadiakho, M., Bozang, N., Lindshield, S., Ndiaye, P. I., Carlos-Shanley, C., & Pruett, J.D.. Anthropogenic effects on west African savanna chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*) microbiomes. Intended for *American Journal of Primatology*.
- [4] **Gerstner, K.F.**, Erhart, E., & Pruett, J.D.. The revolutionary role of microbiome research in primatology. Intended for *Evolutionary Anthropology*.
- [5] **Gerstner, K.F.**, Hopkins, W.C., & Pruett, J.D.. Are aging patterns in gut microbiomes similar for captive and wild geriatric chimpanzees? Intended for *Microbial Ecology*.
- [6] Dobson, K.D., Black, C.E., **Gerstner, K.F.**, Carlos-Shanley, C., & Pruett, J.D.. Microbiomes in critically endangered chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes verus*) living in a savanna landscape at Fongoli, Senegal. Intended for *American Journal of Primatology*.

Invited Talks, Symposiums, and Panels

2025	Texas State University, Department of Anthropology. November 2025. Invited guest lecturer. <i>"Primateology career experiences and insight."</i>
2024	Stillmeadow Elementary School, Stamford, CT Public Schools. October 2024. Invited guest lecturer. <i>"Meet a Primatologist."</i>
2024	Texas State University, Department of Biology. October 2024. Invited guest lecturer. <i>"Microbiome sampling of critically endangered West African apes."</i>
2024	Texas State University Student Organization: Biological Anthropology Band. October 2024. Invited guest lecturer. <i>"Primateology fieldwork and graduate school."</i>
2023	Purdue University, Department of Anthropology. November 2023. Invited guest lecturer. <i>"Great ape evolution and gut microbiomes."</i>
2023	Texas State University Student Organization: The Wildlife Biology Society Student Organization. October 2023. Invited panelist. <i>"Professional development series: The imposture syndrome panel."</i>
2022	American Society of Primatology, Webinar organizer and panel co-host. November 2022. <i>"Working and impacting local communities as establishing the start of a conservation initiative."</i>
2022	City College of New York, Queensborough Community College, Department of Anthropology. October 2022. Invited guest lecturer. <i>"Introduction to Primatology."</i>
2022	Texas State University, Department of Anthropology. Invited guest lecturer. <i>"Ecological and Evolutionary Anthropology."</i>
2021	Texas State University, Department of Anthropology. Invited guest lecturer. <i>"Student Involvement in Academic Societies."</i>
2019	Troy Early College and Career High School. Invited guest lecturer. <i>"Entomophagy 101."</i>
2019	Troy Athens High School. MI Public Schools. Invited guest lecturer. <i>"Entomophagy and Anthropology."</i>

- 2018 Troy Early College and Career High School. Invited guest lecturer. “*Edible insects: Past, present, and future.*”
- 2014 Illinois Wesleyan University, Department of Education. Invited guest lecturer. “*Science experiments in the classroom using lubber grasshoppers.*”
- 2014 Douglas MacArthur Elementary School. IN Public Schools. Invited guest lecturer. “*Making observations and predictions.*”

Conference Participation

- 2026 **Gerstner, K.F.**, Pruetz, J.D., Lindshield, S., Ndiaye, P. I., Sadiakho, M., E. Erhart., & Carlos-Shanley, C. Seasonality Patterns in the Gut Microbiome of wild savanna Chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes verus*) in southeastern Senegal. 48th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Primatologists, Arlington, VA. June 17 – 20, 2026.
- 2026 **Gerstner, K.F.**, Pruetz, J.D., Lindshield, S., Sadiakho, M., E. Erhart., & Carlos-Shanley, C. Seasonality Patterns in the Gut Microbiome of Fongoli Chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes verus*). Anthropology Student Research Conference, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX. April 10, 2026.
- 2026 **Gerstner, K.F.**, Sadiakho, M., Lindshield, S., Ndiaye, P. I., Carlos-Shanley, C. & Pruetz, J.D. Preliminary results of the gut microbiota of wild Savanna chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes verus*) in Senegal. 95th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Biological Anthropologists, Denver, CO. March 18 – 21, 2026.
- 2025 **Gerstner, K.F.**, Wilkinson, A., & Pruetz, J.D.. Rare but revealing: A multi-correspondence analysis of savanna chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*) drinking behavior. 19th Annual meeting of the Texas Association of Biological Anthropologists, Edinburg, TX. Nov. 8, 2025.
- 2025 **Gerstner, K.F.**. Diet and Ecology Podium Session Chair. 47th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Primatologists, Northbrook, IL. Sept. 19, 2025.
- 2025 **Gerstner, K.F.**, Wilkinson, A., & Pruetz, J.D.. Rare but revealing: A multi-correspondence analysis of savanna chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*) drinking behavior. 47th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Primatologists, Northbrook, IL. Sept. 17 – 20, 2025.
- 2025 Pruetz, J.D., **Gerstner, K.F.**, & Sadiakho, M.. Savanna chimpanzees at Fongoli, Senegal expand home range in light of anthropogenic changes. 94th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Biological Anthropologists, Baltimore, MD. March 12 – 15, 2025.
- 2024 **Gerstner, K.F.**, Black, C.E., & Pruetz, J.D.. Insights into wild chimpanzee gut microbiome composition: Methodological approaches and implications for understanding primate-environment interactions. 18th Annual Meeting of the Texas Association of Biological Anthropologists, San Marcos, TX. Nov. 7, 2024.

- 2024 **Gerstner, K.F.**, Black, C.E., & Pruett, J.D.. Insights into wild chimpanzee gut microbiome composition: Methodological approaches and implications for understanding primate-environment interactions. 46th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Primatologists, Rivera Maya, MEX. Sept. 8 – 11, 2024.
- 2024 De Cree, T., Giacomello, E., Hamilton, M., Moore, E., & **Gerstner, K.** Antemortem trauma and trauma reporting in the Texas State donated skeletal collection. 47th Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences. Denver, Co. Feb. 19 – 24, 2024.
- 2023 Dobson, K.D., Black, C.E., **Gerstner, K.F.**, Carlos-Shanley, C., & Pruett, J.D.. Pilot study: Gut microbiome of western chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes verus*) at Fongoli, Senegal. Texas State University Spring STEM Conference, March 13, 2023.
- 2022 **Gerstner, K.F.**. Diet and Ecology Podium Session Chair. 44th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Primatologists, Denver, CO. Aug. 27, 2022.
- 2022 **Gerstner, K.F.** & Pruett, J.D.. Using feeding and foraging behavior to inform captive chimpanzee care. 44th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Primatologists, Denver, CO. Aug. 25 - 28, 2022.
- 2021 **Gerstner, K.F.** & Ross, S. J.. Publication rates for abstracts presented at the American Society of Primatologists annual meeting: A 10-year review. 43rd Annual Meeting of the American Society of Primatologists, Oklahoma City, OK. Nov. 17 – 20, 2021.
- 2020 **Gerstner, K.F.**, Samson, D., Nunn, C., & Hunt, K.D.. Group sleeping wild chimpanzees reduce risk of insect exposure: support for the encounter-dilution effect. Accepted for Indiana University Animal Behavior Conference, Bloomington, IN. March 27, 2020 [Meeting cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions].
- 2018 **Gerstner, K.F.** & O'Malley, R.C.. Maternal influences on offspring tool use: investigating why female chimpanzees are faster learners. 87th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, Austin, TX. April 11 – 14, 2018.
- 2018 **Gerstner, K.F.** & O'Malley, R.C.. Gesturing, displacement, and active watching: investigating maternal influence on young chimpanzee tool rates at Gombe. Midwest Primate Interest Group 15th Annual Meeting, Bloomington, IN. Oct. 27, 2018.
- 2017 **Gerstner, K. F.** & O'Malley, R.C.. Investigating nonverbal communication of chimpanzee mothers. American Anthropological Association 116th Annual Meeting, Washington D.C.. Nov 29 – Dec 3, 2017.

- 2017 **Gerstner, K.F.** & O'Malley, R.C.. Investigating nonverbal communication of chimpanzee mothers. Midwest Primate Interest Group 14th Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL. Oct. 17, 2017.
- 2017 **Gerstner, K. F.** Opportunity teaching style differences between chimpanzee mothers. Transformations Anthropology Graduate Student Conference, Detroit, MI. March 4, 2017.
- 2013 **Gerstner, K. F.**, Osterman, M., & Whitman, D. W.. Does motivation influence intraspecific competition of *Romalea microptera* (Lubber grasshoppers)? 11th International Conference of Orthopterology, Kunming, China. Aug. 8 – 13, 2013.
- 2011 **Gerstner, K. F.** History of technology in the classroom. Illinois State University Technology Symposium, Normal, IL. April 14, 2011.

Professional Service

- 2024-Present Publication reviewer, American Journal of Primatology
- 2022-Present Executive board member, American Society of Primatologists
- 2022-Present Chair, Media and Public Engagement Committee, American Society of Primatologists
- 2022-Present Committee member and grant reviewer, Conservation Committee, American Society of Primatologists
- 2021-2024 Grant reviewer, Graduate Women in Science National Fellowship Program
- 2018-2023 Volunteer, American Association of Biological Anthropologists
- 2018-2020 Co-chair, Student Committee, American Society of Primatologists
- 2018-2019 Brown bag coordinator, Anthropology Graduate Student Organization, Wayne State University
- 2017-2018 Secretary, Anthropology Graduate Student Organization, Wayne State University
- 2012-2013 Vice President, Women's Rugby Club, Illinois State University

Research training

- 2026 Fieldwork for the RDZ lab, Department of Biology, Texas State University
Conducting field research and working with amphibians in Texas. Capture and release methods, data collection on disease (Bd) and parasite presence, microbial sampling (skin swabbing)
- 2022-2025 Lab training and work in the RDZ lab and Carlos-Shanley lab, Department of Biology, Texas State University
Ph.D. Dissertation: DNA extractions and PCR sequencing to assess bacteria in chimpanzee fecal samples and water samples under the supervision of PIs Dr. Camila Carlos-Shanley and Dr. David Rodriguez. Training in bioinformatics in collaboration with Dr. Wesley Neely
- 2025 Data collection and project design, MD Anderson Cancer Center, University of Texas, Michael E. Keeling Center for Comparative Chimpanzee Research

	Ph.D. Dissertation: Collected fecal samples from captive geriatric chimpanzees for microbiome research under the supervision of PI Dr. William Hopkins.
2023	French language training, Baobab Center International, Dakar, Senegal Ph.D. Dissertation: completed a French language beginners course (40 hours) with a Senegalese instructor prior to independent travel in Senegal for fieldwork
2022-2024	Fieldwork at Fongoli, Senegal and Nikolo-Koba National Park, Senegal Ph.D. Dissertation: 6 months of behavior, microbial, and ecological data collection on chimpanzees under the supervision of PIs Dr. Jill Pruetz, Dr. Stacy Lindshield, and Dr. Camila Carlos-Shanley Research assistant, chimpanzee food sampling and feeding behavior data collection for Dr. Stacy Lindshield
2019-2020	Volunteer lab training, Davee Center for Epidemiology and Endocrinology, Lincoln Park Zoo. Hormone research, sample preparation techniques and data entry supervised by Dr. Katie Fowler
2017-2020	Research internship, Lester E. Fisher Center for the Study and Conservation of Apes, Lincoln Park Zoo. Behavior and space use data collection on Japanese macaques, video coding of camera trap footage of gorillas, manage manuscript citation and edits, survey research administrator, supervised by Director Dr. Steven Ross and A.D. Dr. Lydia Hopper
2014-2015	Fieldwork at Semliki Wildlife Reserve, Semliki Chimpanzee Project, Uganda. Assistant Project Director: 6 months of habituating chimpanzees, behavior, and ecological data collection, project and camp team manager. PI: Dr. Kevin Hunt
2013	Fieldwork, La Selva Rainforest Ecology field school, Puerto Viejo, Costa Rica
2012-2013	Laboratory assistant, Department of Biology, Illinois State University Animal caretaker for entomology research lab studying grasshopper behavior supervised by Dr. Douglas Whitman. Animal caretaker for neuroscience research lab studying Alzheimer's research with rats supervised by Dr. Paul Garriss.
2012	Animal husbandry internship, Miller Park Zoo, Bloomington, IL. (400 hours).

Professional memberships

2024-Present	The Primate Society of Great Britain
2022-Present	Texas Association for Biological Anthropologists
2018-Present	American Association of Biological Anthropologists
2017-Present	American Society of Primatologists
2024-2025	Sigma Xi Research Honors Society
2022-2025	The Honors Society of Phi Kappa Phi
2017-2019	Anthropology Graduate Student Organization of Wayne State University
2010-2014	Illinois State Women's Rugby Club

Press

- 2025 “5 Texas State students honored with P.E.O. Scholar Awards.” Blaschke, J.. Texas State University NewsRoom. May 30, 2025. <http://news.txst.edu/student-experience/2025/texas-state-students-peo-scholar-awards.html>.
- 2025 “TXST doctoral student receives prestigious grant for primate research.” San Marcos Daily Record. March 2, 2025. <http://www.sanmarcosrecord.com/article/29478,txst-doctoral-student-receives-presigious-grant-for-primate-research>.
- 2025 “TXST doctoral student receives prestigious grant for primate research.” Malazonia, K.. Texas State University NewsRoom. Feb. 7, 2025. <http://news.txst.edu/student-experience/2025/doctoral-student-recieves-grant-primate-research.html>.
- 2023 “Member spotlight – Katilyn Gerstner.” Chapman, J.. The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi. Sept. 27, 2023. <http://www.phikappaphi.org/about/news-landing/2023/09/27/member-spotlight-katilyn-gerstner>.
- 2013 “Researcher hops to China to Present Grasshopper Research.” The Northwest Indiana Times,
https://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/illinois/lansing/article_4e8228fa-b5c2-5a47-b89f-7194bf8e1aad.html