

## Anthropology Lecture Series

# UNDERSTANDING NONMARITAL PARTNERSHIPS: INSIGHTS FROM HIMBA PASTORALISTS IN NORTHWEST NAMIBIA

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Research on human mate preferences has been conducted mainly in industrialized societies, where multiple mating and concurrent partnerships are heavily stigmatized. However, cross-culturally, extra-pair partnerships are more common, and there is significant variation in the acceptance of such relationships, particularly for women. Using demographic, genetic, and ethnographic data from 10 years of fieldwork with Himba pastoralists living in northwest Namibia, I will assess how a system of nonmarital partnerships can become both common and normatively sanctioned. I will begin by presenting data on concurrency and paternity in this population. Next, I will use ethnographic data to illuminate how the system of concurrency among Himba functions, how it might benefit both women and men, and how informal relationships compare with formal, marital ones. Finally, I will discuss how a confluence of social, historical and political factors can help us to understand why concurrency remains important in this population.



**Friday,**

**January 19th**

**2:00PM**

**Tate 110**

*For ADA accommodations, please contact [muasanthropology@missouri.edu](mailto:muasanthropology@missouri.edu).*

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