

Elena Lesley

Assistant Professor
Department of Anthropology
University of South Florida
Email: eslesley@usf.edu

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

2023-present Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of South Florida

2023-2025 Affiliate, Program in Science, Technology and International Affairs, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University

2013-14 Senior Research Specialist, Princeton School of Public and International Affairs

2005-2008 Staff Writer, Tampa Bay Times/The St. Petersburg Times

2004-2005 Editor and Staff Writer, The Phnom Penh Post

EDUCATION

2022-2023 Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University

2022 PhD, Anthropology, Emory University

2015-16 Intermediate/Advanced Khmer, University of Wisconsin-Madison Southeast Asian Summer Studies Institute (non-degree)

2013 M.S., Global Affairs, Rutgers University

2004 B.A., Political Science, Brown University
Honors / *magna cum laude* graduate

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Journal articles

- Accepted* Lesley, Elena [with Alex Hinton]. "Rethinking Localization as Torque: Lessons from the Khmer Rouge Tribunal." *Global Studies Quarterly*.
- 2024 Lesley, Elena, Jessica Laure Bonumwezi, Sopheap Taing, Christina Marea, Su Balasubramanian, and Giorgi Minasovi. "Genocide as Communitarian Breakdown: Interventions for Relational Healing and Individual Wellbeing in Rwanda and Cambodia." *Social Science and Medicine — Mental Health*.
- 2024 Pich, Panha, Elena Lesley, Quynh-Anh Ngoc Nguyen, Craig Higson-Smith and Sokha Seang. "Adaptation of the Psychache Scale to the Cambodian Context." *Social Science and Medicine — Mental Health*.
- 2023 Lesley, Elena. "Therapeutic Improvisation in Cambodia: Moderated Exposure, the Tuol Sleng Museum of Genocidal Crimes and the Quest to Weave the 'World's Longest *Krama*.'" *Memory Studies* 16(3): 593-610.
- 2023 Lesley, Elena. "The Anthropologist as Audience: Engaged Listening among Khmer Rouge Survivors and Ukrainian War Refugees." *Medicine Anthropology Theory* 10(1): 1-12.
- 2021 Lesley, Elena. "Immaterial Alliances: Constructions of Self-Other Relations and Conceptions of Belonging in the Therapeutic Narratives of Muslim and Buddhist Cambodians." *Ethos: Journal for the Society of Psychological Anthropology* 48(3): 379-400.
- 2021 Lesley, Elena. "Lessons for the Future: Khmer Rouge Survivor Testimonies as Sites of Individual and Social Regeneration." *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 86(3): 570-591.
- 2019 Lesley, Elena. "Cultural Impairment and the Genocidal Potential of Intoxicants: Alcohol Use in Colonial North America." *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 13(1): 88-97.
- 2014 Lesley, Elena [Co-authored with Kosal Path]. "Post-Genocide Cambodia: The Politics of Justice and Truth Recovery." *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 8(2).

Book Chapters

- 2022 Lesley, Elena [Co-authored with Hoy Vathana]. "Reconstructing the 'Small Family' after Democratic Kampuchea: Forced Marriage, Ritual Renewal and Parent-Child Entanglement in Cambodia." In *Challenging Conceptions: Children Born of Wartime Rape and Sexual Exploitation*, Eds. Kimberly

Theidon and Dyan Mazurana. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- 2015 Lesley, Elena. "Death on Display: Bones and Bodies in Cambodia and Rwanda." In *Necropolitics: Mass Graves and Exhumations in the Age of Human Rights*, Eds. Francisco Ferrandiz and Antonius Robben, 213-239. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- 2014 Lesley, Elena. "Memory at the Site: Witnessing, Education and the Repurposing of Tuol Sleng and Choeung Ek in Cambodia." In *Remembering Genocide*, Eds. Nigel Eltringham and Pam Maclean, 131-151. London: Routledge.

Guest Editorship (Special Journal Issues)

Forthcoming "Mental Health in Transition/Translation: Emerging Voices from Southeast Asia," in preparation for *Social Science and Medicine — Mental Health* with Kathy Trang.

- 2014 "Post-Genocide Cambodia: The Politics of Justice and Truth Recovery," published in *Genocide Studies and Prevention* with Kosal Path.

Invited Book Reviews

- 2024 Review of "Anthropological Witness: Lessons from the Khmer Rouge Tribunal," for *Anthropos*.
- 2023 Review of "The Movement for Global Mental Health: Critical Views from South and Southeast Asia," for *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*.

Political Science case studies

- 2014 Lesley, Elena. "Improving Consultation and Cooperation to Create a National Strategy: Drafting Estonia 2020." Princeton University: Innovations for Successful Societies.
- 2014 Lesley, Elena. "Mapping a Transformation Journey: A Strategy for Malaysia's Future: 2009-2010." Princeton University: Innovations for Successful Societies.

SELECTED JOURNALISTIC PUBLICATIONS

NOTE: During the six years I worked fulltime as a professional journalist, I published roughly 1200 pieces in outlets such as *Granta*, *France24*, *The Tampa Bay Times/St. Petersburg Times*, *The Sacramento Bee*, *The Oregonian* and *The Phnom Penh Post*, among others. A small selection of

these publications is below.

- 2022 Multi-Generational Voices from the Wreckage of War-Torn Ukraine
Washington, DC: *Think Global Health*
(<https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/multigenerational-voices-wreckage-war-torn-ukraine>)
- 2017 ការរក្សាទុករបស់ពលរដ្ឋកម្ពុជា ដើរតួជាឯកអគ្គរាជទូតវប្បធម៌ សម្រាប់អ្នកចំណូលថ្មី
ដូចជាប្រជុំ (The Hospitality of Cambodians)
Phnom Penh: *The Phnom Penh Post-Khmer*
(Khmer-language article in one of Cambodia's major newspapers)
- 2009 Truth and Reconciliation: A Dispatch from the Khmer Rouge Trials
London: *Granta*
(Long-form article in leading U.K. literary magazine: <https://granta.com/truth-and-reconciliation/>)
- 2008 Dispatches: Anlong Veng. Seeking Reconciliation in Cambodia
London: *Granta*
(Long-form article in leading U.K. literary magazine: <https://granta.com/dispatches-anlong-veng/>)
- 2008 Democracy, Cambodian Style
New York: *The Huffington Post*
(https://www.huffpost.com/entry/democracy-cambodian-style_b_115393)
- 2006 The Forgotten, now Demoralized Solider: Veterans Injured in Iraq Suffer from Life-Changing Brain Injuries
Tampa Bay Times/St. Petersburg Times
- 2005 Public Land Deals Flaunt Intentions of Law
The Phnom Penh Post
- 2004 Perceptions of Government's Recent Rectangular Strategy Could Influence Donors at CG Meeting
The Phnom Penh Post
- 2004 New Study Finds Overwhelming Support for KR Trial
The Phnom Penh Post

FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANT FUNDING

External

2025	National Science Foundation, Cultural Anthropology Program Senior Research Award
2025	Center for Khmer Studies, Senior Research Fellowship
2025	Association for Asian Studies, Japan Distinguished Speaker Grant
2022	Culture, Mind, and Brain fellowship, Foundation for Psychocultural Research (Co-PI)
2020-21	Charlotte W. Newcombe Dissertation Fellowship, Institute for Citizens and Scholars (Formerly: The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation)
2018-19	Blakemore Freeman Fellowship, Blakemore Foundation
2017-18	Dissertation Fieldwork Grant, Wenner-Gren Foundation
2017-18	Senior Research Fellowship, Center for Khmer Studies
2016	Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (Advanced Khmer), University of Wisconsin-Madison
2015	Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (Intermediate Khmer), University of Wisconsin-Madison
2015	Khmer language fellowship, Center for Khmer Studies (Declined)
2014	Magistretti Graduate Fellowship, University of California-Berkeley (Declined)
2012	Research Fellow, Council of American Overseas Research Centers
2008-09	Fulbright IIE (Cambodia)
2004-05	Henry Luce Scholar (Cambodia), The Henry Luce Foundation

Internal

2024	University of South Florida Humanities Institute Summer Grant
2023	Georgetown University International Collaborative Grant [with Professor Emily Mendenhall]

2023	Georgetown University Sullivan STIA Innovation Grant [with Professor Emily Mendenhall]
2020-21	Emory University Dean's Teaching Fellowship
2020	Emory College Online Teaching Strategies Fellow
2016	Emory University Laney Graduate School Pilot Funds
2016	Emory Graduate Student Council
2015	Emory University Laney Graduate School Training Funds
2014	George W. Woodruff Fellowship, Emory's Laney Graduate School
2011	Raimondo Fellow, Rutgers' Eagleton Institute of Politics
2011	Master's Scholarship, Rutgers' Graduate School

AWARDS/HONORS

2022	Marjorie Shostak Award for Excellence and Humanity in Ethnography (Emory)
2021	George Armelagos Award for Excellence in Teaching by a Graduate Student (Emory)
2020	Martha and Bill Dobes Outstanding Graduate Teaching Fellow Award (Emory)
2020	Summer Residency, National Humanities Center
2019	Spicer Travel Award, Society for Applied Anthropology

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of South Florida, Department of Anthropology

2024	Anthropology and Mental Health (ANT 4930): College of Arts & Sciences
2024	Theory and Methods in Medical Anthropology (ANG 6469): College of Arts & Sciences

2024 Health, Illness, and Culture (ANT 4462): College of Arts & Sciences

2023 Health, Illness, and Culture (ANT 4462): College of Arts & Sciences

Hawaii Pacific University, College of Health and Society

2024 Environmental Health (PH 6260): College of Health and Society (*online*)

2023 Environmental Health (PH 6260): College of Health and Society (*online*)

2023 Public Health Research Methods (PH 6300): College of Health and Society (*online*)

2022 Public Health Program Planning (PH 6460): College of Health and Society (*online*)

2022 Health Policy, Law, and Advocacy (PH 6400): College of Health and Society (*online*)

Emory University, College of Arts and Sciences

2021 Instructor, Introduction to Cultural Anthropology: Concepts and Methods (ANT 202): College of Arts & Sciences (*online*)

2020 Facilitator, Emory Summer Teaching Intensive workshop

2020 Instructor, Emory Online Teaching Strategies training program

2020 Instructor, Religion, Health and Healing (ANT 337): College of Arts & Sciences

2016 Assistant Instructor, Cross-Cultural Issues in Mental Health (ANT 331): College of Arts & Sciences

2016 Teaching Assistant, Four-Field Introduction to Anthropology (ANT 101): College of Arts & Sciences

2015 Teaching Assistant, Introduction to Cultural Anthropology: Concepts and Methods (ANT 202): College of Arts & Sciences

Emory University, Rollins School of Public Health

2020 Teaching Assistant, Emory's Rollins School of Public Health (GH 525): Qualitative Data Analysis with MAXQDA software (*online*)

Brown University, Department of English

2011 Instructor, Brown University: Introduction to Journalism

INVITED PRESENTATIONS (Select)

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| December
2023 | "Agreeing to Forget: Social Healing and Transitional Justice-linked Psychotherapy for Survivors of the Cambodian Genocide," Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI. |
| November
2023 | "Testimony as Transformation: Remembering to Forget in Transitional Justice-Linked Psychotherapy for Khmer Rouge Survivors," Department of Anthropology, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL. |
| February
2023 | "New Frontiers in Tele-Mental Health," Program in Science, Technology, and International Affairs, Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Washington DC. |
| September
2022 | "Disruption, Health, and Technology," Program in Science, Technology, and International Affairs, Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Washington DC. |
| September
2022 | "Torque: Searching for Localization at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal." The Center for International Peace and Security Studies, McGill University, Montreal, QC. |
| April
2022 | "The Role of Spiritually-Adapted Mental Health Care Treatment in Cambodia's Transitional Justice and Peacebuilding Efforts." Mershon Center for International Security Studies, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH. |
| April
2022 | "Mental Health Treatment for Genocide Survivors in Cambodia." Emory University Department of Anthropology, Emory University, Atlanta, GA. |
| November
2021 | "Testimony as Transformation: Resilience and Regeneration through Therapeutic Adaptation of the Funerary <i>Bangsoko</i> Ritual." Council on Southeast Asia Studies, Yale University, New Haven, CT. |
| September
2021 | "Reconsidering Legacies of 'Justice' in the Context of Tribunal-Related Outreach." Center for Khmer Studies, Phnom Penh, Cambodia (Presentation held virtually). |
| October
2020 | "The Legacy of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia." University of Maryland – College Park, International Studies Department. (Presentation held virtually). |

- March 2020 "Therapeutic Assemblages in Cambodia: The Justice Mandate, Mental Health Improvisation and Moderated Exposure at the Toul Sleng Museum of Genocidal Crimes." Global Studies Institute, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA.
- February 2019 "Therapeutic Narratives among Khmer Rouge survivors in Cambodia." Pomona College, Department of Anthropology, Claremont, CA.
- October 2018 "Overcoming a Divisive History: The Individual and Communal Impact of Narrative Psychotherapy on Khmer Rouge Survivors." Center for Khmer Studies, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- April 2018 "An Anthropological Approach to Psychological Outreach." Royal University of Phnom Penh, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- December 2017 "First they Killed my Father." George Mason University School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, Washington DC.
- January 2016 "Material Traces of Atrocity in Cambodia and Rwanda." Portland State University, History and Anthropology Departments, Portland, OR.
- March 2014 "The Memory Mandate: The Use of Monuments in Post-Genocide State Building." Princeton School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton, NJ
- November 2013 "Tunisia after the Arab Spring." Defiance College, Defiance, OH.
- October 2013 "Local Responses to International Sites of Memory in Cambodia." Rutgers University, Division of Global Affairs, Newark, NJ.
- June 2013 "Approaches to Transitional Justice in Three Post-Conflict Settings." International Center for Transitional Justice, New York, NY.
- April 2011 "Justice and the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia." Rutgers University Law School, Newark, NJ.
- April 2011 "Cultural Impairment and the Genocidal Potential of Intoxicants," paper presented at the symposium "Critical Genocide Studies: Reflections from the Raphael Lemkin Archives," Rutgers University, Division of Global Affairs, Newark, NJ.

- October 2009 "After Pol Pot: Reporting the Khmer Rouge tribunal in Cambodia."
Rutgers University, Center for the Study of Genocide and Human Rights,
Newark, NJ.
- April 2009 "Reporting the Khmer Rouge tribunal."
Royal University of Phnom Penh,
Department of Media and Communication, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- February 2009 "Limited Culpability at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia."
Royal University of Law and Economics, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (Select)

- November 2024 "Textuality and Spiritual Potency: Ritual Innovation and Buddhist Legibility in Narrative Treatment for Cambodian Genocide Survivors." American Anthropological Association, Tampa, FL.
- March 2024 "Prescribing a Physical Antidote: Negotiating Treatment at Two Sites of Cultural Heritage and Memory in Cambodia." Society for Applied Anthropology Annual Meeting, Sante Fe, NM.
- March 2023 "Mining the Past for Meaning: Intergenerational Memory Transmission in the Context of Cambodian Mental Health Therapy." Association of Asian Studies Annual Conference, Boston, MA.
- November 2022 "From Patients to *pnieu* (Clients): The Increasing Marketization of the Transcultural Psychosocial Organization in Cambodia." American Anthropological Association, Seattle, WA.
- April 2022 "Rebuilding the 'small family' in post-Khmer Rouge Cambodia." Presenter for panel discussion, "Challenging Conceptions: Children Born of Wartime Rape and Sexual Exploitation." International Studies Association Annual Convention, Nashville, TN.
- November 2021 "Testimony as Merit Creation: Spiritual dissonance, consonance and improvisation in hybrid Testimonial Therapy among Khmer Rouge survivors." American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting: Baltimore, MD.
- April 2021 "A new way to 'Mien Brayoch' (Have Usefulness): Moral agency in the community dissemination of Khmer Rouge survivor narratives." Society for Psychological Anthropology Biennial Meeting (held virtually).

- November 2019 "From Envisioned Justice Cascades to Linguistic Transformation: The Multifaceted Legacy of the Khmer Rouge in Contemporary Cambodia." American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting: Vancouver, BC.
- June 2019 "Histories of Trauma and Post-Genocidal Justice in Cambodia." University of Wisconsin - Madison, Department of History: Wisconsin, Madison.
- April 2019 "Selfhood, divine agency and historical responsibility in the testimonial narratives Buddhist and Muslim Khmer Rouge survivors." Society for Psychological Anthropology Biennial Meeting: Santa Ana, New Mexico.
- November 2018 "Reconsidering Trauma, Resilience, Recovery, Rehabilitation." American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting: San Jose, CA.
- March 2017 "Closing the Life Story? The Examination of Cambodian Testimonies in the Context of the Buddhist Practice of Naikan." Society for Psychological Anthropology Biennial Meeting: New Orleans, LA.
- July 2016 "Mental Health Outreach at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal." Southeast Asian Summer Studies' Institute Joint Student Conference, University of Wisconsin-Madison: Madison, WI.
- November 2016 "Between Cultural Diversity and Clinical Exigencies: The Role of the Anthropologist in Global Mental Health." American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting: Minneapolis, MN.
- July 2015 "What Remains: The Politics of Memorialization in Cambodia." Southeast Asian Summer Studies' Institute Joint Student Conference, University of Wisconsin-Madison: Madison, WI.
- June 2013 "Records of Death on Display: Local Interpretations of Mass Graves in Cambodia and Rwanda." International Association of Genocide Scholars Biennial Conference. University of Siena: Siena, Italy.

SERVICE

Panel Organizer, Chair and Discussant Roles

- 2024 Organizer: "Buddhism, Mental Health/Wellbeing and Social Healing."

American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Tampa, FL.

- 2024 Chair: "Research as Pedagogical Practice: A Conversation with Bruce Knauff." American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Tampa, FL.
- 2024 Discussant: "Repair and its Limits: Anthropologies of Life in the Shadows of Mass Atrocity." American Ethnological Society and the Association for Political and Legal Anthropology, Pittsburg, PA.
- 2023 Organizer: "Global Mental Health on the Ground: Strengthening Community-Based Approaches across the Spectrum of 'Disaster' Contexts," two-day workshop at Georgetown University with domestic and international mental health scholars and practitioners.
- 2023 Organizer: "Reanimating the Past: Legacies of Violence and Disruption among Cambodian and Cambodian American Communities." Association of Asian Studies Annual Conference, Boston, MA.
- 2022 Co-Organizer: Inaugural "Southeast Asian Mental Health Conference." Virtual.
- New biennial conference organized with initiative co-founders. Over 850 people registered to attend the conference, and we hosted presentations from roughly 60 early-career scholars from Southeast Asia.
 - Served as coordinator of presentation mentorship program, connecting over 60 early-career scholars from SE Asia with senior academic mentors.
 - Spearheaded effort to have conference qualify for Continuing Education credits (ACCME, ANCC, APA, and ASWB).
 - Organized and led instructional webinars for scholars in SE Asia on topics such as how to write a conference abstract.
- 2022 Moderator: "Disruption and Recovery." Southeast Asian Mental Health Conference. Virtual.
- 2022 Moderator: "Adversity and Resilience." Southeast Asian Mental Health Conference. Virtual.
- 2022 Discussant: "Interventions." Southeast Asian Mental Health Conference. Virtual.
- 2021 Chair: "Ethical and Economic Change and the Nature of Social Transformation." American Anthropological Association Meeting in Baltimore, MD
- 2019 Organizer and Chair: "From Envisioned Justice Cascades to Linguistic Transformation: The Multifaceted Legacy of the Khmer Rouge in Contemporary Cambodia." American Anthropological Association Meeting, Vancouver, BC

- 2018 Organizer and Chair: "Reconsidering Trauma, Resilience, Recovery, Rehabilitation." American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, San Jose, CA
- 2016 Co-Organizer: "Emory Global Mental Health Symposium." Rollins School of Public Health and Emory Department of Anthropology, Atlanta, GA.
- 2011 Discussant: "Justice and the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia." Rutgers University Law School, Newark, NJ.
- 2011 Co-Organizer: "Critical Genocide Studies: Reflections from the Raphael Lemkin Archives," Rutgers University, Division of Global Affairs, Newark, NJ.

Reviewer/Editor

- 2024-present Peer reviewer for *American Ethnologist*
- 2024-present Peer reviewer for *Feminist Anthropology*
- 2023-present Peer reviewer for the *Journal of Interdisciplinary Sciences and Technology* (USF)
- 2021-present Peer reviewer for *Social Science and Medicine – Mental Health*
- 2020-present Peer reviewer for *Ethos: Journal of the Society for Psychological Anthropology*
- 2016-present External reviewer for Brown University Fellowships Office
- 2017 External reviewer for Graduate Women in Science fellowship
- 2015 Copy editor for book manuscript, *The Gebusi: Lives Transformed in a Rainforest World*, Bruce Knaft, Waveland Press.
- 2013 Guest Editor for "Justice in Cambodia" special issue of journal *Genocide Studies and Prevention*.
- 2010-2017 Publications Coordinator, Center for the Study of Genocide and Human Rights.
- 2011-2013 Rutgers Division of Global Affairs and *France24*, student blog editor

Other Professional Service

- 2024-present USF Department of Anthropology Representative, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, College of Arts and Sciences

- 2021-present Freelance Expert Witness for Refugee and Asylum Claims (trauma, psychiatric, mental health, and psychosocial-based claims)
- 2019-present Serve as freelance Khmer-English and English-Khmer translator for the Center for Victims of Torture
- 2021 Provost Distinguished Teaching Award Committee (Emory)
2020-21 Course design intern for Emory's Department of Anthropology
- 2017-18 Co-founder and interviewer for the Society for Psychological Anthropology's "Voices of Experience: An Engaged Psychological Anthropology Interview Series"
- 2016-2018 Core Team Member, Emory Global Mental Health Network, collaboration with Rollins School of Public Health

LANGUAGES

English (Native Speaker)
Khmer (Fluent)
French (Fluent)
Russian-Ukrainian Surzhyk (Heritage Speaker)