

# STERLING LEE WRIGHT

GRADUATE STUDENT | DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY | PENN STATE UNIVERSITY

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University Park, PA 16802

## EDUCATION

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- PhD** Penn State University, Anthropology Anticipated May 2024  
Dissertation: “Open Wide and Dig in: Unveiling the Evolutionary and Ecological relationships in Ancient Landscapes through the microbiome”  
Committee: Laura Weyrich (chair), George Perry, Mary Shenk, Emily Davenport, Jake Nabel
- MA** Oklahoma University, Anthropology May 2019  
Thesis: “Biomolecular Preservation in Dental Calculus Across the Teotihuacan Ritual Landscape”  
Advisor: Courtney Hofman
- BA** University of Texas at Austin, Classical Archaeology May 2016  
Graduated with special honors
- BS** University of Texas at Austin, Psychology May 2016

## FUNDING TRACK RECORD - \$25,881.50

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2021 National Geographic Society Early Career Grant Recipient	\$5,000
2021 RGSO PSU Anthropology Department	\$400
2020 2 <sup>nd</sup> Place PSU Microbiome Center Video Contest	\$1,000
2020 Liberal Arts Teaching and Research Scholarship	\$1,000
2020 Summer Institute in Statistical Genetics Scholarship	\$600
2020 Pennsylvania Space Grant Consortium	\$5,000
2020 Hill Fellowship Training Award	\$1,220
2020 University Park Allocations Committee Grant	\$319
2020 PSU Microbiome Center Travel Grant	\$300
2019 PSU Anthropology Department Student Travel Award	\$400
2019 Opler and Opler Scholarship	\$500
2019 Opler Memorial Scholarship	\$650
2018 Robberson Student Travel Grant	\$1,180
2018 Robberson Research Grant	\$850
2018 Opler Memorial Scholarship	\$450
2018 Robberson Research Grant	\$500
2018 Graduate Senate Student Research Grant	\$687.50
2018 Graduate Senate Student Travel Grant	\$637.50

2017 Graduate Senate Student Research Grant	187.50
2015 Balkan Heritage Foundation Scholarship	\$1,000
2015 Masters McCarthy Scholarship	\$1,000
2014 Velma Box Scholarship	\$1,000
2012 Top-ten percent scholarship	\$2,000

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

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- Paleomicrobiology
- Ancient DNA
- Classical archaeology/bioarchaeology
- Bioinformatics

## PUBLICATIONS

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### *Peer-Reviewed Articles*

\* indicates corresponding author

Farrer, Andrew G., **Sterling L. Wright**, Emily Skelly, et al.

2021 “Effectiveness of Decontamination Protocols When Analyzing Ancient DNA Preserved in Dental Calculus.” *Scientific Reports* 11(1). Nature Publishing Group: 7456.  
<http://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-021-86100-w>

**Wright, Sterling L.\***, Keith Dobney, and Laura S. Weyrich

2021 “Advancing and Refining Archaeological Dental Calculus Research Using Multiomic Frameworks.” *STAR: Science & Technology of Archaeological Research* 7(1). Routledge: 13–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20548923.2021.1882122>

**Wright, S.\***, “The Long and Complicated Relationship between Humans and *Yersinia pestis*,” *Sapient: The Undergraduate Journal of Biological Anthropology*, vol. 5, 2017, pp. 4-9.

## PRESENTATIONS AND INVITED LECTURES

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**Poster**, “*Effectiveness of decontamination protocols when analyzing ancient DNA preserved in dental calculus*,” Ancient Biomolecules of Plants, Animals, and Microbes (virtual), 2021.

**Invited lecturer**, “*Listening to the dead in new ways: Investigating the biomolecular preservation at Histria*,” American Institute of Southeast European Studies (AISEES), 2021.

**Paper Presentation**, “*The integrity of biomolecules across the oral matrix at Histria, Romania*,” 86<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting for the Society for American Archaeology, 2021.

**Paper Presentation**, “*The integrity of biomolecules across the oral matrix at Histria, Romania*,” 85<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting for the Society for American Archaeology, 2020.

\*cancelled due to COVID19 pandemic

**Paper Presentation**, “*Biomolecular Preservation in Dental Calculus from the Teotihuacan Ritual Landscape*,” 84<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting for the Society for American Archaeology, 2019.

**Poster**, “*Biomolecular Preservation in Dental Calculus from the Teotihuacan Ritual Landscape*,” 8<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Biomolecular Archaeology, 2018.  
([https://www.shh.mpg.de/1070374/isba2018\\_programm.pdf](https://www.shh.mpg.de/1070374/isba2018_programm.pdf))

**Paper Presentation**, “*Exploring the biological heritage of enslaved people at James Madison’s Montpelier through ancient DNA analysis*,” 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting for the Society for American Archaeology, 2018.

**Poster**, “*Demystifying Teotihuacan Through the Microbiome*,” 1<sup>st</sup> Oklahoma Archaeology Conference, 2018.

**Paper Presentation**, “*The Long and Complicated Relationship between Humans and Infectious Diseases*,” 118<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting for the Archaeological Institute of America, 2017.

**Guest Speaker**, “*Socialist Archaeology? Is it Worth Saving?*,” University of Texas Antiquities Action Conference: Global Initiatives Towards Cultural Heritage Preservation: Who Owns the Past, 2016.

**Paper Presentation**, “*The Long and Complicated Relationship between Humans and Infectious Diseases*,” Eta Sigma Phi’s Undergraduate Research Symposium for the Classics Department at the University of Texas at Austin, 2016.

**Paper Presentation**, “*The Long and Complicated Relationship between Humans and Infectious Diseases*,” University of Texas at Austin’s Research Week, 2016.

**Paper Presentation**, “*Six Degrees of Cyrus: Applying Network Analysis to Herodotus*,” Texas Digital Humanities Consortium, 2014.

## REPORTS

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**Wright, S.**, R. Singleton, K. Hughes, K. Rayfield, T. Honap, N. Dagtas, C. Monroe, S. Wu, L. Huang, and C. Hofman. “Sequencing dental calculus and dentin from Histria: Genetic Analysis of Dental Calculus and Teeth from Roman Burial Contexts 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries CE” (2020).

Monroe, C., C. Hofman, R. Austin, and **S. Wright**. “Sequencing Mitochondrial Genomes from Montpelier, James Madison’s Plantation Home: Genetic Analysis of Teeth from Non-Burial 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century Archaeological Sites” (2018).

## WEB CONTENT

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- “Open Wide: The Oral Microbiome,” YouTube video for the Penn State Microbiome Center Video Contest (2020).  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HC5pv73SzWw&t=1s>

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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**Shoemaker High School**, Killeen, TX Jan 2017 to Jul 2017  
**Teacher**, Biology

- Public high school course teaching 180 students per semester, covering the following topics: genetics, evolution, anatomy
- Developed quizzes, exams, and homework
- Revised the syllabus to meet Texas Education Agency accreditation standards
- Coordinated grading and labs

**University Leadership Network**, Austin, TX Sep 2013 to May 2016  
**Peer Mentor**, Education

- Undergraduate course mentoring 50 students per semester, covering the following topics: job interviewing, resume writing, networking
- Organized weekly activities for one-hour sessions
- Relied on kinesthetic and game-based pedagogical techniques

## UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SUPERVISED

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**2021** Samantha Muller (Penn State University, microArch Research Group)  
**2021** Meghan Malloy (Penn State University, Department of Anthropology)  
**2018-2019** Karissa S. Hughes (University of Oklahoma, Department of Anthropology)

## PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

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**The Graduate Online Teaching Certificate**  
Penn State University, Online, Sept 2020

**Next-Generation Sequencing intern**  
Genomic Sequencing and Analysis Facility, Austin, TX, Sep-Dec 2016

**Cultural Resource Management Technician**  
Williams Self Associates, Round Rock, TX Aug 2016

**Archaeological Excavations**  
Archaeogeneticist, Histria Mapping Archaeology Project, Histria, Romania, 2018-present  
Archaeogeneticist, Plaza of the Columns Complex, Teotihuacan, Mexico August 2018  
Field and osteo lab participant, Archaeotek, Odorheiu, Romania Jun-Jul 2016  
Field worker, IFR/Balkan Heritage Foundation, Stobi, Macedonia Jun 2015

**Business Certificate**, McCombs Business at the University of Texas at Austin, June 2014

## PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

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- Social Chair, Anthropology Graduate Student Association at Penn State, 2020-Present
- Vice President, Anthropology Graduate Student Association at Oklahoma University, 2019-Present
- Member, Penn State Microbiome Center, 2019-Present
- Member, American Institute of Southeastern European Studies, 2019-Present
- Member, Society for American Archaeology, 2017-Present
- Member, Archaeological Institution of Archaeology, 2012-Present

## OUTREACH

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- Volunteer, **Community Education Extended Learning (CEEL) Program**, State College, PA 09/19-present
- Volunteer, **Harrisburg Career Day**, Harrisburg, PA 03/20
- Guest lecturer, **Skype a Scientist**, Online, 12/20-present
- Volunteer mentor, **Communities After-School Program (CASP)**, Norman, OK 08/17-05/19
- Session Chair, **Oklahoma University Undergraduate Research Day**, Norman, OK 04/19

## LANGUAGES

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**English:** Native Language  
**Romanian:** Novice reader

## RELEVANT SKILLS

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**Programming:** Linux, R, Python

**Applications:** Illustrator, Excel, MEGAN6CE, QIIME, QIIME2