

# COURTNEY NELSON

## PSYCHOCULTURAL MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY PHD STUDENT

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My research lies at the intersection of psychological and medical anthropology, the anthropology of religion, and phenomenology, with a focus on extraordinary experiences such as hearing voices and seeing visions. Drawing from both scholarly inquiry and lived experience, I explore how Vietnamese culture differentiate between magic, religion, and madness —particularly through frameworks of spirit possession, shamanism, and psychosis.

### AREAS OF EXPERTISE

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Medical Anthropology, Psychological Anthropology, Anthropology of Religion, Phenomenology, Schizophrenia, Psychosis, Madness, Voices, Visions, Magic, Spirit Possession, Shamanism, Hauntology, Healing, Vietnam

### EDUCATION

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#### Doctor of Philosophy, Psychocultural Medical Anthropology

*University of California, Los Angeles – Los Angeles, California*

**September 2024 — Present**

**Advisors:** Ippolytos Kalofonos, Philippe Bourgois

#### Bachelor of Arts, Anthropology and Religion, Minor in Video

*Bennington College – Bennington, Vermont*

**February 2021 — June 2023**

*Appalachian State University – Boone, North Carolina*

**August 2017 — December 2019**

### RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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#### Research Health Systems Specialist

**October 2025 — Present**

#### *West Los Angeles Veteran Affairs Medical Center*

Supervisor: Ippolytos Kalofonos, MD, PhD

- Assisted research and systems analysis for Veteran, Voices, Visions, a participatory study exploring voice-hearing experiences among Veterans through the lens of the Hearing Voices Approach
- Conducted in-depth qualitative interviews and focus groups with voice-hearing Veterans to document diverse meanings, coping strategies, and recovery narratives

#### Associate Editor

**June 2023 — September 2024**

#### *The Association for the Anthropology of Consciousness, Remote Work*

- Proficient in utilizing ScholarOne Manuscripts for manuscript submission, peer review coordination, and tracking, ensuring efficient workflow management and adherence to publication guidelines
- Identified and selected appropriate reviewers based on expertise and the subject matter of the academic articles
- Evaluated reviewer feedback and contributed to decision-making process for article acceptance or revisions

#### Research Assistantships

**May 2018 — March 2022**

#### *Various Departments, Appalachian State University; Bennington College*

Supervisors: Diane P. Mines, PhD; Christina Sornito, PhD; Randall Reed, PhD; He Xi, PhD; Scott Relyea, PhD

- Conducted qualitative and ethnographic research across diverse projects in anthropology and religious studies, including topics such as spirit possession, traditional medicine, and phenomenology in India, shamanism, sorcery and haunting in the Philippines, the intersection of artificial intelligence and religion, and Tibetan Buddhism in China
- Conducted literature reviews, fieldwork, participant interviews, transcription, data management, and the creation of mixed-methods research tutorials using Dedoose

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teacher AssistantSeptember 2025 — Present

University of California, Los Angeles Anthropology Department, Los Angeles, CA

Professor: Jason Throop, PhD

Class: Society & Culture

- Managed a classroom section, facilitating student engagement through leading discussions, clarifying course material, and supporting diverse learning styles.
- Designed discussion guides, activities, and resources that reinforced course concepts and encouraged critical thinking.

Vietnamese Culture & Language TeacherOctober 2022 — January 2023

Village School of North Bennington, Bennington, VT

- Managed a diverse classroom of first-grade students, fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment
- Developed and implemented lesson plans to promote active learning and participation
- Utilized various instructional techniques, including hands-on activities, and visual aids

Teacher AssistantAugust 2019 — January 2020

Appalachian State University Anthropology Department, Boone, NC

Professor: Diane P. Mines, PhD

Class: Magic, Witchcraft & Religion

- Prepared instructional materials and resources and promoted a positive classroom environment
- Assessed student progress and provided one-on-one and small group support to reinforce learning concepts

ORGANIZATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Communications/Social Media CoordinatorJune 2023 — September 2024

Various Organizations, The Anthropology of Consciousness; The International Society for Psychological and Social Approaches to Psychosis

- Orchestrated and executed social media campaigns to promote academic journal articles, facilitating wider dissemination of research findings, increasing the journal's online presence, and engaging with the scholarly community, resulting in enhanced visibility and engagement across social platforms
- Developed and scheduled engaging content across social media platforms to promote the organizations' events, publications, and initiatives

PUBLICATIONS

- Nelson, Courtney, Timbrook, G. Co-Edited Special Issue: “Hauntological Anthropology: Ghosts, Structures & Affects”. Manuscript in Progress.

PRESENTATIONS

Hauntology & Traditional HealingApril 2025

The Society for Psychological Anthropology

Magic, Modernity & MedicineMay 2023

Bennington College Society, Culture & Thought Senior Thesis, Bennington, VT

Trần Hưng Đạo & the Vietnamese StateDecember 2019

Appalachian State University Religious Studies Club, Boone, NC

Yin Illness in Lân ĐồngJuly 2019

2019 Southeast Asian Studies Summer Institute Conference, Madison, WI

The Ruse of MedusaMarch 2019

Black Mountain College, Black Mountain, NC

**AWARDS**

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- Institute of American Cultures at UCLA Research Grant 2025
- John Dewey Scholarship at Bennington College 2021 — 2023
- Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship at University of Wisconsin—Madison 2022
- Wisconsin Intensive Summer Language Institutes Tuition Full Scholarship 2019
- ASU Office of International Education and Development Scholarship 2018

**CERTIFICATES**

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- Hearing Voices Facilitator February 2025  
*Wildflower Alliance*
- Peer Support Specialist April 2025  
*National Alliance on Mental Illness*

**CLUBS/ORGANIZATIONS**

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- Project Inspire at UCLA* October 2024 — Present
- The Society for Psychological Anthropology* November 2024 — Present
- The American Anthropological Association* June 2023 — Present
- The Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness* June 2023 — September 2024
- The Arete Project* June 2018 — July 2020
- Appalachian State University Religious Studies Club* August 2018 — April 2020