



M. Elizabeth Grávalos

Assistant Professor of Anthropology

Bio

BIO

Dr. Grávalos is an anthropological archaeologist that studies Indigenous Andean communities in the deep past, for whom we have no written records. She looks at Andean ways of making things—like ceramics, textiles, and cordage—to understand the sociopolitics that undergirded these making practices, including engagements with specific substances and landscapes. With theoretical foci on materiality, ontology, and social practice, this research asks: what are the political affordances of specific materials? How did materials bridge possibilities for political action? How did people's engagements with specific landscapes and materials impact power dynamics, economies, and social identities? To think through these questions, her work bridges humanities and science perspectives, blending insights from anthropological theory and cultural geography with material science techniques.

Dr. Grávalos's research is based in the Ancash Region of northern Peru, where her ongoing investigation into political geologies considers how geologic resources are culturally made and valued, and how categorizations and use of these geomaterials foment political dynamics among pre-Hispanic and present-day Andean communities.

Dr. Grávalos is trained as a field archaeologist and materials analysis specialist. Since 2009, she has participated in and directed research projects in Peru, the Bahamas, and the city of Chicago (USA). She is committed to collaboration with descendant communities and centers community-based methodologies in her research. Dr. Grávalos is also an expert in ceramic compositional analysis (LA-ICP-MS and thin section petrography) as well as textile analysis.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Assistant Professor, Anthropology

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Workshop Grant for "Political Geologies Past and Present: Ontology, Knowledge, and Affect", Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research (2023)
- Junior Fellowship in Pre-Columbian Studies, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection (2020-2021)
- Dissertation Fellowship (Honorable Mention), Ford Foundation (2020)
- Women-in-Science Graduate Fellowship, Field Museum of Natural History (2019-2020)
- Doctoral Dissertation Fieldwork Grant, Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research (2018)
- Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Award (#1830719), National Science Foundation (2018)
- Archaeology Research Grant, Rust Family Foundation (2017)

- Field Dreams Program Award, Field Museum Women's Board (2017)
- Collections Study Grant, American Museum of Natural History (2016)

Teaching

COURSES

2025-26

- Proposal Writing Seminar in Archaeology: ANTHRO 308A (Spr)
- Theory and Method in Ceramic Analysis: ANTHRO 159, ARCHLGY 159, ARCHLGY 259 (Spr)

2024-25

- Theory and Method in Ceramic Analysis: ANTHRO 159W, ANTHRO 259W, ARCHLGY 159, ARCHLGY 259 (Aut)

2023-24

- Archaeological Methods: ANTHRO 91A, ARCHLGY 102 (Win)

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **Hegemony without Sovereignty? Potters as Materially Mediating Casma Statecraft (Ancash, Peru, ca. 1000-1400 CE)** *JOURNAL OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARCHAEOLOGY*
Grávalos, M.
2025; 80
- **The geopower of kaolin clay: Toward a political geology of archaeological ceramics** *AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST*
Grávalos, M.
2024
- **Wari across the Andes: Modeling the radiocarbon evidence** *Quaternary International*
Williams, P. R., Reid, D. A., Grávalos, M. E., Marsh, E., Bélisle, V., Conlee, C. A., Kerchusky, S., McEwan, G.
2024
- **Examining the Nasca religious network on the south coast of Peru: LA-ICP-MS of Early Nasca ceramics from the Upper Ica Valley (AD 250-450)** *JOURNAL OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCIENCE-REPORTS*
Gorman, A., Grávalos, M., Vaughn, K. J.
2023; 49
- **Inka and Local ceramic production and distribution networks: A view from the Chinchaysuyo and Colesuyo** *JOURNAL OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCIENCE-REPORTS*
Chacaltana-Cortez, S., Marroquin, E., Garavito, C., Norman, S. M., Grávalos, M.
2023; 48
- **Crafting cosmopolitanism: Ceramic production and exchange during Wari imperialism (600–1000 CE)** *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports*
Grávalos, M. E., et al
2023; 50
- **An examination of Recuay kaolin pottery production and exchange through petrography and LA-ICP-MS (100-700 CE; Ancash, Peru)** *ARCHAEOLOGY*
Grávalos, M., Bria, R. E., Lau, G. F.
2022; 64 (6): 1340-1358
- **Memory Work and Place-Making over the Longue Durée at Jecosh, Peru (340 b.c.-a.d. 1630)** *JOURNAL OF FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY*
Grávalos, M., Sharp, E. A.
2022; 47 (3): 175-195

- **Changing to remain the same: everyday animal use at ancient Jecosh, north-central Peru** *WORLD ARCHAEOLOGY*
Tomczyk, W., Gravalos, M.
2022
- **Prehispanic Highland Textile Technologies: A View from the First Millennium AD at Hualcayan, Ancash, Peru** *LATIN AMERICAN ANTIQUITY*
Gravalos, M., Bria, R. E.
2021; 32 (4): 781-799