Stanford



Cari Costanzo

Undergraduate Advising Director, Academic Advising Operations

Bio

BIO

Cari Costanzo is a Cultural Anthropologist (Ph.D. Stanford 2005) who helps individuals unfold their stories. Integrating her work as an ethnographer and an Academic Director, Cari designs Body Map workshops that combine cultural awareness with artistic and contemplative practices to encourage the reframing and reclaiming of embodied experiences, enabling the ability to both reflect upon and creatively share one's life story.

Cari joined the Academic Advising team, part of the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, in 2009. Prior to that, Cari was a Teaching Fellow in the Introduction to the Humanities (IHUM) Program. From 2010-2015 Cari also served as a Resident Fellow, living in an all-freshman dormitory with her two children. As an RF, Cari worked to build community in a diverse residential environment, blending formal and informal learning to inspire intellectual curiosity and personal growth among first-year students.

Cari's research, writing, and teaching focus on ritual, embodiment, and identity formation in contemporary society, looking closely at the cultural construction of race, class, gender, and sexuality. She has conducted ethnographic fieldwork in India, Hawaii, and on the Stanford campus. As a lecturer in the Department of Anthropology and the Thinking Matters and LifeWorks Programs, Cari's current courses include Reading the Body and Body Mapping, both of which explore the way culture informs and distorts how we discern, accept, reject, and analyze our bodies. Engaging film, painting, sculpture, as well as literary, medical, ethical, and ethnographic texts, Cari encourages students to ask how representations of the body impact the ways we experience illness, embody our myriad identities, and understand our rights (or lack of rights) to control our own bodies.

Cari has also taught undergraduate and graduate students in the d.school's Life Design Lab, served on the steering committee that formed the Stanford Resilience Project, and is a founding member of the Teaching and Learning Initiative for Gender Inclusive Stanford (GIS). Cari's work with GIS highlights the ways that gender is experienced on a spectrum, and suggests that the disruption of gender as a binary is a critical step towards wider social acceptance and legal rights for transgender and gender non-conforming individuals. Cari has given talks on Understanding Transgender Identity for the Stanford Alumni Association and other organizations and institutions in the broader community.

In her role as Academic Director, Cari guides students as they choose courses and decide on majors, design independent research projects in the arts and social sciences, request exceptions to University policy, and manage academics in the context of complex and challenging situations. Through a process of narrative advising, Cari helps students find and re-frame their own stories of academic and personal resilience. Cari is a recipient of the Centennial Teaching Award for outstanding pedagogical innovations in the classroom. She earned a BA in Comparative Literature from USC, an MA in the MAPSS Program at the University of Chicago, and a Ph.D. in Social and Cultural Anthropology from Stanford University.

CURRENT ROLE AT STANFORD

Academic Advising Director; Lecturer, Department of Anthropology

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

- B.A., University of Southern California , Comparative Literature & Journalism (1991)
- M.A., University of Chicago , MAPSS (Master of Arts Program in the Social Sciences) (1997)
- Ph.D., Stanford University , Social & Cultural Anthropology (2005)

LINKS

- Reading the Body video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBI0EbITLOs&t=1s

Teaching

COURSES

2025-26

- Why College? Your Education and the Good Life: COLLEGE 101 (Aut)

2024-25

- Why College? Your Education and the Good Life: COLLEGE 101 (Aut)

2023-24

- Body Mapping: Tracing the Embodied Experiences of Your Life: LIFE 102A, WELLNESS 102A (Spr)
- Why College? Your Education and the Good Life: COLLEGE 101 (Aut)

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **Body Maps: Reframing Embodied Experiences Through Ethnography and Art** *Routledge Handbook of the Medical Humanities*
  edited by Bleakley, A.
  Routledge.2020: 300–307
- **The Physical Examination as Una tor Ritual Social Sciences and Embodiment in the Context of the Physical Examination** *MEDICAL CLINICS OF NORTH AMERICA*
  Costanzo, C., Verghese, A.
  2018; 102 (3): 425-+
- **The Bedside Evaluation: Ritual and Reason** *Annals of Internal Medicine*
  Verghese, A., Brady, E., Costanzo (Kapur), C., Horwitz, R.
  2011; 155 (8): 550-552
- **Rethinking Courtship, Marriage, and Divorce in and Indian Call Center** *Everyday Life in South Asia*
  edited by Mines, D. P., Lamb, S.
  Indiana University Press.2010: 50–61
- **Gender and Memory in the Pacific: Contemporary Hawaiian Nationalism and the Memorialization of Plantation Workers at the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i** *Amerasia Journal*
  Costanzo, C.
  2009; 35 (2): 168-190
- **Native Hawaiians** *A Companion to the Anthropology of American Indians*
  edited by Biolsi, T.
  Blackwell.2004: 412–431