

FRIDAY SEMINAR

Fall
2025

DENTAL ANTHROPOLOGY: THE TEETH AND THEIR SECRETS



Department of Anthropology
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
香港中文大學人類學系



Nov 14

1:00 – 2:30PM
NAH 114

What is the one bone that directly interacts with your environment throughout your life? The teeth! Your teeth contain snapshots of your behaviours such as oral hygiene habits, dietary choices and even parafunctional behaviours. Dental anthropology is the subfield that concerns itself with studying these individual attributes and I do my part by using macroscopic and biochemical techniques. Against a lens of the historic relationship between The Netherlands and South Africa, I will present the capabilities (and limitations) of using the teeth to infer on human pasts.

Dr Judyta Olszewski (goes by Jude) is a biological anthropologist/archaeologist who has conducted research and taught students on four continents. She tends to focus on the teeth but she has experience working with the rest of the human body as well as ceramics and lithics from archaeological sites. She received her PhD from the University of Cape Town in South Africa, her Masters from Leiden University in The Netherlands and her Honours Bachelor from Wilfrid Laurier University in Canada. She is a firm believer in integrating herself in the cultures of which she researches to reconstruct past behaviours against the relevant landscape, hence her global movements. She currently teaches at The Chinese University of Hong Kong.