

Name: Christine B. Avenarius

STAC Member Since: December 2013

Title: Associate Professor

Department: Anthropology

Organization: East Carolina University

Education: PhD Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Cologne, Germany (2003)

MA Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Cologne, Germany (1995)

Primary Focus Area: climate change adaptation, local perceptions of environmental change

Secondary Focus Area(s): development of data collection and data analysis tools to facilitate community engagement

Career Experiences: I am a sociocultural anthropologist interested in the processes of social and cultural change. My work combines the tools of social network analysis with the study of human cognition to understand the interrelation between perceptions and social relationships that facilitate and stimulate political processes. Prior to shifting my research program to the study of perceptions about environmental change among residents in Eastern North Carolina, I applied this approach to the study of social change in reference to legal reforms in China and the migration of Chinese traders to Southwest Africa. I am currently involved in two funded community engagement projects in Eastern North Carolina. One project focused on a single neighborhood and collected local voices and best practice about storm water and septic tank management. The other project is ongoing and compiles the observations and opinions of residents along the Inner and Outer Banks of North Carolina on climate change and sea level rise and their anticipated relationship to economic sustainability. The goal is to engage the local population in the conversations about adjustments to coastal management processes based on their own contributions. I also serve as the director of graduate studies in anthropology at East Carolina University. As an educator I am interested to involve undergraduate and graduate students in the social sciences to focus on the needs of local communities. In particular I encourage a mixed methods research approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and data analysis that can showcase not only the local opinions and suggestions, but also their distribution among community members.