Spring 2009

The Socializer - Spring 2009

Department of Sociology

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As the daily news attests, times are tough all over. People have lost their homes, retirement accounts have dwindled, and jobs have disappeared. Of course, this is not news to people with roots in Michigan as the pain of economic restructuring has been a companion to us for many years. Coupled with the longstanding political decision to redefine higher education as a private benefit rather than a public good, thereby justifying the slashing of appropriations to universities and colleges, the ongoing economic doldrums in Michigan have left WMU’s budget in a sorry state.

Unfortunately, as further cuts to the university budget are on the horizon, the Department of Sociology has been advised that there will be significantly fewer funds available next year to support our most promising and gifted graduate students as they progress toward their degrees.

The work and accomplishments of many of our graduate students are impressive. They are progressing beautifully through their courses, and they are preparing informed and creative papers which they are presenting at national and regional professional conferences. In many instances, our graduate students are publishing with faculty mentors or on their own initiative. Most importantly, they are acquiring the skills and discipline to complete compelling theses and dissertations which will position them well to make vital contributions to our common sociological project.

For instance, we are pursuing more external funding for research projects as a means of sustaining our graduate students, and we will be redirecting money that has formerly been used to support faculty travel for research and conferences to graduate student funding. We are committed to finding long-term solutions in order to remedy the graduate student funding crisis, but in the short-term we could use your help.

Would you please consider making a donation to the Department of Sociology that we could place in a fund devoted explicitly to providing assistance to our most promising graduate students? We would use these graciously donated funds to help graduate students with the cost of tuition and subsistence.

We know that the recent economic downturn has caused widespread pain and uncertainty. We hope that the degree that you have earned through studies in our department has helped to shelter you from the worst of the economic suffering. If you value the degree that you earned from our department, and you would like to assist us in our efforts to sustain the graduate studies of our most accomplished students, please consider making a donation to our graduate student relief fund. See page 12 for giving information.

Greg Howard,  
Associate Professor  
Director of Graduate Studies
Sociologists, perhaps more than most other people, are aware of rules. We study social organizations, from families to systems of nations and including everything in between - voluntary associations, workplaces, schools, churches, and even (for comic relief) sociology departments – all of which depend to some extent on formal and informal rules. At more mysterious levels, the rules we study blend into and may arise out of supposedly deeper rules – those of culture, biology, and cognition.

The practice of sociology is also rule-based – the rules of sociological method, to borrow a famous title, are either at the core of what we do in common or are that about which we most fundamentally disagree. And on top of all this, we now have to worry about the rules of a post-rule world. There are no grand narratives worthy of our allegiance, we are solemnly told. Okay and fine – no rules except “anything goes.” No core, no center, no code or coda, perhaps even no rationality that is not ultimately self-referential. Rules in science attempted for centuries to establish something called “objectivity” operationalized as “the view from nowhere.” What we have supposedly learned from this effort is only that no such view is possible – all is context, history, politics, and value. In a word, two words actually, all is local rather than universal.

The question, of course, is whether that is something to be upset with, to worry about – or if local and piecemeal is good enough for we “limited beings” in Bill Wimsatt’s wonderful phrase. I guess my answer is obvious already – let me express it in another favorite phrase – “It’s too deep for me.” My grandfather, when drawn into conversations about politics or poverty or fairness or education or change - he lived in Chicago after all - he lived in Chicago after all where such topics were readily available and often discussed – made tremendous sense on all these problems but always accompanied his sense by a self-deprecating, “It’s too deep for me.” And of course there was precisely nothing that was being said or thought or proposed that was too deep for him. He was not only a very smart guy, he was what we used to call “streetwise.” He knew what was what and how to get from A to B. I think that when we are really on our game as sociologists, we aspire to what came so naturally to him; It has taken us a long time as a discipline to realize that our path lies not in the accumulation of terminology, procedures and facts but in recognizing a problem and getting through it; to the next one.

What rules are followed? That is for the bookkeepers and scribes, the intellectual historians, to figure out or invent – my grandfather and I (when I’m really, really good) are already on to the next localized problem and piecemeal solution.

So here’s to a streetwise sociology – may we be confident enough and committed enough to produce it – to think clearly and speak plainly so that we may be part of important conversations and so that we may be accountable for what we think and say. And long may this streetwise sociology humbly go about the business of a better world – a business that is necessarily laden with values, politics, and exceptions to rules and therefore perfectly well suited to our localized political value-laden science.

And now, since I write this on opening day of the baseball season, here’s the pitch: I hope you find the accomplishments of your department, described herein, interesting, and their continuation worth supporting. Resources for student support, in particular, are stretched very thin right now. Please help if you can.

-David Hartmann, Chair

A letter from the chair

Outstanding Graduate Student Instructors.

Staff appreciation award recipient AnnaLee Miller.

Outstanding Graduate Student Instructors.
Kathleen Tiemann, professor of Sociology and chair of the Sociology Department at the University of Denver (UND), was honored as a Chester Fritz Distinguished Scholar at Spring Commencement on May 16.

The Chester Fritz Distinguished Professorships were established with an endowment gift from the late UND benefactor Chester Fritz, 1892-1983. Revenue from the endowment provides for cash stipends to one or more full-time UND faculty members honored each year. Criteria for the Chester Fritz Distinguished Professorship are: demonstrated achievement across research, teaching, and service with significant national or regional recognition in any one of these missions; as well as significant professional contributions throughout his/her career. There must also be recognition for the full-time faculty member who has made a valuable contribution to the quality of UND’s academic programs.

Tiemann earned a B.A. in Sociology from Grand Valley State University and her M.A. and Ph.D. from Western Michigan University. Her areas of substantive expertise include gender and sexualities; social problems; teaching sociology and applied sociology. She has two anthologies to her credit- “Intersections: Readings in Sociology,” (co-edited with Ralph McNeal) and “Crossroads: Readings in Social Problems,” and she is managing editor for “Inequalities: Readings in Diversity and Social Life.” She has published over 30 articles in journals including “Social Forces,” “Teaching Sociology,” “Journal of Homosexuality,” “Applied Behavioral Science Review” and “Humanity & Society” and has made over 50 presentations at professional meetings.

Dawn Rothe (Ph.D. ’07) assistant professor of Sociology received the prestigious Young Scholar Award from the American Society of Criminology (ASC), the Division of Critical Criminology at ASC Conference in November 2008. Rothe authored a book publishing in 2009 by Lexington Press, “State Criminality: The Crime of All Crimes.”

Presenting our new Sociology Ph.D. grads

Dr. Daniel White was hooded by his mentor, Dr. Charles Crawford at the Commencement Exercise in December 2009. His dissertation was “Financialism in Pretrial Release and Criminal Case Outcomes: A Relative Comparison of Financial Ability, Race, and Gender.”


Dr. Flora Myamba completed her Ph.D. program in April 2009. Her dissertation was titled, “Domestic Violence Rights Movement in Tanzania: An Exploration.”
Carrie Buist and Jackie Doyon were the Mistresses of Ceremonies. Dinner was followed by the presentation of awards by Dr. David Hartmann and Dr. Greg Howard. The Sociology Graduate Student Organization kicked off the evening by presenting Certificates of Appreciation and Recognition to the following people. Pictures of these individuals are here and throughout the pages of this newsletter.

**GSA Awards for Outstanding...**

*Faculty Mentor:* Dr. Susan Carlson
*Graduate Student Mentor:* (M.A.) Shannon Vacek
*Graduate Student Mentor:* (Ph.D.) Liz Bradshaw
*Graduate Student Instructor:* Michael Gillespie
*Graduate Student Mentor:* (M.A.) David Barry
*Researcher:* (Ph.D.) Michael Gillespie

Certificates of Appreciation were given to Ann Browning, AnnaLee Miller and Susan Standish

**Departmental Awards:**

Presented by Dr. Greg Howard and Dr. David Hartmann

*Graduate Student Teaching Effectiveness Award:* Lisa Kruse
*All-University Graduate Student Teaching Effectiveness:* Kelly Faust
*Graduate Research & Creative Scholar Award:* (Ph.D.) Michael Gillespie
*Graduate Research & Creative Scholar Award:* (M.A.) David Barry
*All-University Graduate Research & Creative Scholar Award:* (Ph.D.) Jessica Edel
*All-University Graduate Research & Creative Scholar Award:* (M.A.) Lori Verspoor

**Awards for Outstanding Graduate Scholars:**

Presented to: David Barry, Elizabeth Bradshaw, Sara Brightman, Nicholas Budimir, Carrie Buist, Carolina Calvillo, Jacquelynn Doyon, Jessica Edel, Kelly Faust, Michael Gillespie, Lisa Kruse, Ladel Lewis, Flora Myamba, David Piacenti, Angela Simon, Andrew Verheek, Lori Verspoor.

**Ph.D. Graduates 2008-2009:**

Dr. Flora Myamba
Dr. Daniel White

**Chair’s Excellence Award:**

Awarded to: Sam King for his years of service to the Department of Sociology.

**Ph.D. Graduates 2008-2009:**

Dr. Flora Myamba
Dr. Daniel White

**Newest M.A. Graduate:**

David Barry.

**Undergraduate Teaching Assistant:**

Justin Brophy.

**Presidental Scholar:**

Lucas Patton.

**Awards for Outstanding Graduate Teachers:**

Presented to: Jacob Armstrong, David Barry, Elizabeth Bradshaw, Darrick Brake, Sara Brightman, Nicholas Budimir, Carrie Buist, Jacquelynn Doyon, Jessica Edel, Kelly Faust, Michelle Fether-Samtouni, Tamica Frison, Michael Gillespie, Lisa Kruse, Adrienne Trier-Bieniek, Cynthia Visscher.
Accolades to our Undergrads

The Spring 2009 Undergraduate Honors Award Ceremony was held April 8, 2009. Students, faculty, family and friends were invited to honor undergraduate scholars.

President Scholar
Lucas Patton, Morenci, Mich.

Sociology Scholar
Amanda Vig, Fenton, Mich.

Criminal Justice Scholar
Brandon Neidlinger, Vicksburg, Mich.

Leonard C. Kercher Award
Kristyn Reid, North Street, Mich.

Undergraduate Teaching Assistants

Sociology Work Study Students
Melonie Seifferlein, Dowagiac, Mich.
Safferlein has worked for the Department for the last three years, and is a criminal justice major who graduated in April 2009.

Lanny Wilde Scholarship
- Fall semester 2008
Nicholas Peters, criminal justice major, $500 to attend the Police Training Academy at Kalamazoo Valley Community College.
- Spring semester 2008
Asa Jay, criminal justice major, received $500 to attend the Police Training Academy at Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

Stanley S. and Helenann S. Robin Scholarship
Amanda Vig, Fenton, Mich.

Alpha Phi Sigma —The National Criminal Justice Honor Society Inductees

The faculty and graduate students continue to uphold their reputation for outstanding and numerous publications and presentations.

Midwest Sociological Society

“Re-presenting Feminism,” Kelly L. Faust, and Lisa M. Kruse.

“Casing the Joint: An Exploration of Visual Methodology,” Elizabeth Bradshaw.


The American Society of Criminology

“Keeping the Peace: Gendered Violence in U.N. Refugee Camps,” Sara Brightman.


“Moving Comparative and International Research into the Future,” Gregory Howard.


Graduate Student Association members, from left, Michael Gillespie, Cody Wedge, Lisa Kruse, Lori Verspoor, Liz Bradshaw, Carrie Buist, Emily Badger, Jacquelynn Doyan. Not pictured: Shannon Vacek.
Graduate Student Activities

2009 M.A. Graduates, all of whom are continuing their Ph.D. studies at WMU. Left to right: David Barry, Jacob Armstrong, Liz Bradshaw, Jackie Doyon

- Area Examinations in Criminology were successfully completed by Kelly L. Faust, Elizabeth Bradshaw and Jackie Doyon during the spring semester.

- Ladell Lewis, Ph.D. candidate, successfully completed her first area exam last June in Race and Ethnic Relations.


- Ladell Lewis recently was hired by Michigan State University as a research assistant for its African American Men Sleeping with Men (MSM) study. The study is sponsored through a State of Michigan grant to conduct a needs assessment for this unique population. The top five counties (Kent, Berrien, Wayne, Ingham, Washtenaw) with the highest HIV rates among African American males ages 13-24 years old were chosen for this study.

David J. Piacenti had an article published, “For Love of Family and Family Values: How Immigrant Motivations Can Inform Public Policy,” in the Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy, V. 21, 2009. Piacenti also received the Patricia Lee Thompson Award for research travel to San Francisco. He was given a Graduate Student Research and Travel Grant from the departmental fund. David says, “I cannot overstate how critical the economic support has been in the completion of the dissertation, and in the completion of the Ph.D. program in the Department of Sociology. I am very grateful to see that international research is valued by Western Michigan University, as it continues to engage the critical concerns of our increasingly globalized world.”
The Kalamazoo Wraps Evaluation Team presented “Ensuring an Equitable Representation of African Americans in Evaluation” at the University of South Florida Research and Training Center for Children’s Mental Health. This presentation talked about the barriers researchers may encounter when doing research in the African American community and solutions to reduce attrition. The team was led by Dr. Carolyn Sullins.

Dr. Susan Caringella was invited by Princeton University to present, “Addressing Rape Reform in Law and Practice” on April 20, 2009. This was a presentation based on her book of the same title published by Columbia University Press.

She was also selected as a national expert for The Rapid Response Project team by the National Office in Violence Against Women and the Minnesota Center against Violence and Abuse, to shape media and policy on violence against women.

Dr. Barry Goetz presented a paper during the summer, “Arrest Diversion or Therapeutic Jurisprudence? The Decline of Reintegrative Community Policing as a Drug Policy Reform,” at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association in Boston.

Dr. Caringella also presented at the 2009 International Conference on Sociology, in Athens, Greece, May 11-14, 2009. “International Considerations on Rape Reforms”. She received a $1,000 International Travel Award from the Haenicke IEFD Fund.

Moe Awarded Grants

Dr. Angela M. Moe has received two grants to assist in her research:

- A Midwest Sociological Society, Endowment Award ($1,500) to support research for project titled, “Bellydancing Mommas: Pregnancy, Postpartum and Resistance to Cultural Discourse”

- A University Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award ($5,908) to support research for her project titled, “Holistic Healing Through Middle Eastern Dance.”
Faculty News


Snyder’s “Keeping Families Together: The Importance of Maintaining Mother-Child Contact for Incarcerated Women” was published in “Women & Criminal Justice,” 19:37-59, 2009.”

Dr. Barry Goetz is completing a book manuscript entitled “Fire Control, Policing & The Limits of Social Outreach: On the Selectiveness of Local State Institutions,” which is concerned with the limitations of public safety agencies to respond to social problems.

Goetz’s chapter “Arson” will be published in the “Handbook of Deviant Behavior,” edited by Clifton Bryant, to be published by Routledge.

Sarah Musham Deward & Dr. Angela M. Moe (Forthcoming 2010). “Like a prison!”: Homeless Women’s Narratives of Surviving Shelter” in “Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare.” (Musham Deward received her B.A. from WMU’s Department of Sociology.)


Later this year Moe will have a chapter published, “Reclaiming the Feminine: Bellydancing as a Feminist Project” in Congress on Research in Dance 2008 Conference Proceedings, University of Chicago Press.

Moe has two articles that have recently been accepted and are forthcoming:

Moe. (Forthcoming 2009). “I’m not going to have it!: The Role of Children in Battered Women’s Decisions to Leave,” in “Affilia: Journal of Women & Social Work.”
WMU/Malta criminal justice degree possible

Officials at Western Michigan University and the University of Malta are preparing to launch a collaborative degree program that will tap the resources of both institutions to provide a master's level criminology program to be taught at that Mediterranean nation's flagship university.

WMU President John M. Dunn and University of Malta Rector Juanito Camilleri met May 5 at WMU to sign a memorandum of understanding outlining a new dual Master of Arts in Criminology, Law and Public Policy. The collaboration is designed as a novel international and interdisciplinary venture—a dual master's degree program based on contributions from two universities, one in North America and the other in the Mediterranean region of the European Union.

“Now we’ll be working to make this agreement come to life,” said Dunn during the signing ceremony. “We’ll take what’s on paper and make it a reality. This will be a world-class opportunity for students at both institutions ready to take advantage of a program that will give them a unique set of credentials.”

Camilleri pointed out that the agreement will offer an opportunity for the two schools to create a research and instructional environment based on differing cultural perspectives.

“The topic will be criminology with a Mediterranean focus,” Camilleri said. “It will provide a melting pot of ideologies and perspectives.”

Partnering with the University of Malta to offer an M.A. in Criminology, Law, and Public Policy will provide rigorous criminological training at the graduate level that will increase the University's international engagement.

“By locating the graduate program at the Valletta campus of the University of Malta and recruiting students through the University of Malta’s reputation in the European Union and the Mediterranean region, WMU will reach a new international constituency,” says Dr. Ashlyn Kuersten, associate professor of the WMU Department of Political Science.

The University of Malta traces its origins to a direct papal intervention in 1592. One of the oldest universities in the Mediterranean, it is a blend of the ancient and the modern and is influenced by many cultures and civilizations. Today, the university has some 10,000 students, 750 of whom are foreign students from nearly 80 different countries.

For more information on the new WMU/Malta connection, contact Dr. Greg Howard at gregory.howard@wmich.edu.

Academic Coursework

The program’s classes, which could begin in fall 2010, will be taught at the University of Malta by WMU faculty from the departments of Sociology and Political Science as well as faculty from the University of Malta’s Institute of Criminology.

The program will include theory, research methods and data analysis as well as Mediterranean-based case studies on:
- Gender, crime and justice
- Environmental crime and justice
- Surveillance and security
- State and corporate crime

“The curriculum under development reflects the combined strengths of American and European graduate programs. It brings together the broad-based theoretical inquiry and literary emphases common to European programs along with the training in statistical techniques, spatial analysis and qualitative research strategies common within American programs,” says Dr. Gregory J. Howard, associate professor of Sociology, Criminal Justice Program.
Georgia E. Doles-Walker Emergency Student Grant

With the passing of Georgia E. Doles-Walker, her husband, Dr. Lewis Walker, chair and professor emeritus, joined with the Kalamazoo area Dulcet Club and the WMU Department of Sociology to acknowledge her dedication and commitment to the students at Western Michigan University.

She was both an officer and member of the Dulcet Club, an African-American woman’s group that, among other things, raises funds for worthwhile causes. Helping students is among the initiatives that the Dulcet Club can point to with enormous pride.

Georgia E. Doles-Walker was the first lady of sociology during her husband’s 10 years of service as chair of the department. She thoroughly enjoyed hosting receptions for various affairs sponsored by the department, which often included students. During this same time, she was passionate about the recruitment and retention of students until degree completion. In addition to supporting sociology students, she also was an ardent fan and supporter of student athletes who played on the various intercollegiate teams at Western.

Georgia E. Doles-Walker worked as a volunteer for a number of organizations, including the local Democratic Party, and home-show events. She worked for several years at Planned Parenthood of South Central Michigan, and worked for 15 years at the Family Independence Agency, where she retired in 2002. Her hobbies included cooking, reading, shopping for antique jewelry, and traveling. She loved to travel and took numerous trips with her husband throughout the United States as well as to Mexico, Canada, the Netherlands, and South Africa.

To Give:
WMU Foundation
Georgia E. Doles-Walker Emergency Student Grant
117 West Walwood Hall
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5403

For additional information, please contact: Dorilee Schieble, Director of Development
telephone: (269) 387-4399
e-mail: dorilee.schieble@wmich.edu
Yes, I want to support the WMU Department of Sociology!

As our student numbers continue to grow, in a time when state funding is increasingly restricted, the support we receive from friends and alumni is vitally important. Such funds are used to take advantage of new or unbudgeted opportunities in order to enhance the teaching or the research of the department.

Thank you for considering a gift to the WMU Department of Sociology.

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- $25

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