

MORRISSEY COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



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Seminar Archives

SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Wednesday, April 27, 2016

Frederick Wherry, Yale University

Family, Tradition, & Financial Citizenship: What Lending Circles Mean for Families

What do Lending Circles mean for low-income families? The Mission Asset Fund, founded in 2007, pioneered Lending Circles in order to formalize informal cultural practices, rendering visible creditworthy behaviors that were being missed and enabling individuals to establish (or improve) their credit score, build assets and credit. It combines the traditional features of a ROSCA with a unique innovation: the loans and payments that members of the lending circle make to one another are recorded as formal financial transactions, and the information on payments is reported to credit bureaus. Moreover, the payments are made electronically, so participants are required to have bank accounts and to utilize direct deposit for their lump sum. In our interviews with 58 individuals in San Francisco and the East Bay, we find that people are engaged in relational accounting, whereby their financial decisions honor traditions, manage meaningful family relationships, and allow them to become visible actors in the financial system and able to practice financial citizenship. We also explore the downsides of financial citizenship and how concerns for autonomy and respect motivate people to participate in "good" programs like the Lending Circles as well as in "bad" ones like payday loans. The research is supported by a grant from The Behavioral Economics Program of The Russell Sage Foundation and is co-authored with Kristin Seefelt (University of Michigan) and Anthony Alvarez (California State University at Fullerton). The research assistant for this project was Marlene Orozco (PhD student, Stanford).

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Gustavo Morello, Boston College

Catholicisms and State Terror in Argentina's Seventies

I will discuss the complex relationship between the church and the military government that took control of Argentina and was responsible for many severe human rights abuses during the so-called dirty war during the 1970s and 1980s.

Wednesday, March 2, 2016

Leah Schmalzbauer, Amherst College

The Last Best Place? Gender, Migration and "Illegality" in the New American West

The Last Best Place? asks us to consider the multiple social and geographic barriers that Mexican migrants must negotiate in the unique context of Montana's rural gentrification. These daily life struggles and inter-group power dynamics are deftly examined through extensive interviews and ethnography. This talk will highlight how Montana's rurality intersects with gender and illegality to affect migrants' well-being and aspirations. Though the New West is just one among many new immigrant destinations, it forces us to recognize that the geographic subjectivities and intricacies of these destinations must be taken into account to understand the full complexity of migrant life.

Wednesday, February 17, 2016

William Attwood-Charles, Boston College

Engineering Medicine: The Deployment of Lean Production in Healthcare

Lean production is a management philosophy originally developed by the Japanese automobile firm Toyota to reorient all organizational activity around continuous improvement and the elimination of waste. We use the case of lean production in two healthcare organizations to explore the process of transplanting a management model from its site of origin to a new and alien context. How do actors attempt to overcome barriers to model implementation, and what insights might this provide regarding processes of institutional transformation? Recent institutionalist literature has highlighted how skilled agents of change, or “institutional entrepreneurs,” promote profound transformations through the artful and strategic manipulation of symbols. In contrast, our research highlights the barriers institutional entrepreneurs face in attempting to bring about institutional change. In both cases, the model encountered considerable obstacles to implementation, but the nature of these obstacles was somewhat different in each case. We use these cases to illustrate how actors operate within institutionally specific material and discursive opportunity structures that impose a collective logic of action that is both enabling and constraining.

Wednesday, February 10, 2016

Saida Grundy, Boston University

Manhood Within the Margins: The Institutionalization of Class and Masculinity at the Historically Black College for Men

Both classic and recent studies of the Black middle class have principally examined educational attainment, work, and neighborhood choice as sites of class-acculturation for this group. Too often, however, studies of the Black middle class have overlooked gender as a vehicle of class mobility. In order to explore this overlooked path towards middle class attainment, this study explores the experiences of men at Morehouse College, the nation's only historically Black college for men. While most of the literature on young Black males has emphasized the bleak conditions facing Black men at the social margins, this work hones in upon the understudied experiences of Black men who are poised to enter the middle class. At Morehouse, men experience a process of gender and class institutionalization that seeks to “make” them into culturally mainstreamed professional class Black men. Through multiple interviews with graduates, this work uncovers how the college experience was not merely a coming of age process, but an assiduously crafted race and gender project orchestrated by an institution with a distinct social and ideological mission. Where both the sociological literature and national discourse have repeatedly pointed to a cohort of young Black males as a national problem, this study, asks, simply, how men experience an institution that seeks to make them into middle class “solutions” to that problem.

Wednesday, February 3, 2016

Dawn Dow, Syracuse University

From difficult to deadly: African American middle-class mothers navigating gendered racism in the lives of their children

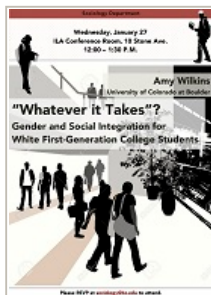
Recent events have underscored the harsh and, at times, tragic consequences of gendered racism for African American children in the U.S. How do African American mothers address these challenges? Through sixty in-depth interviews with African American middle- and upper-middle-class mothers, I examine how gendered racism influences these mothers' concerns for their sons and daughters and how they parent their children in light of those concerns. For their sons, participants were principally concerned with preventing perceptions of them as criminals or “thugs” and protecting their physical safety. Participants described using four strategies to navigate the challenges they believed their sons would face. Two of these strategies — experience and environment management — were directed at managing characteristics of their sons' regular social interactions and two — image and emotion management — were directed at managing their sons' appearance. By contrast, participants were principally concerned with protecting and building their daughters' self-esteem and self-value. Participants described using three strategies to navigate these challenges. One of these strategies — peer group management — focused on managing their daughters' social interactions and two — toy and media management — focused on managing their daughters' exposures to entertainment. By examining parenting practices, this research illuminates the strategies these mothers use to prepare their children for the different societal reception

they believe they will encounter. This research also sheds light on how these mothers prepare their children to address gendered racism through managing the expression of their gender, racial identity and class status.

Wednesday, January 27, 2016

Amy Wilkins, University of Colorado at Boulder

Whatever It Takes?: Gender and Social Integration for White First-Generation College Students



In this talk, I use interview data with students attending a predominantly white four-year research university to investigate the integration experiences of first-generation white men and women. First-generation white men reported having positive social experiences in high school, and were able to transport their identity strategies to college, where their identity strategies supported their collegiate goals. First-generation white women, in contrast, forged pathways to college by working hard, but reported feeling different from their high school peers. The women anticipated positive collegiate social identities, but were unable to achieve them. I argue that gendered processes in both high school and college shape the experience of (raced) class for first-generation white students in ways that fundamentally alter processes of social integration. My findings underscore the relationship between precollegiate and collegiate identities, and the ways intersectionality complicates identity processes.

December 2, 2015

Saher Selod, Simmons College

Racialized Surveillance in the War on Terror: Flying While Muslim in US Airports



On September 11th, 2001 America experienced the largest-ever terrorist attack on its own soil, which not only leveled the Twin Towers and portions of the Pentagon, but drastically and irrevocably altered the nation's political, cultural and economic landscape. The resulting declaration of the "War in Terror" in the aftermath of the attacks brought on sweeping changes to the United States government's domestic and foreign policy with regards to criminal justice and national security. The passing of the USA PATRIOT Act after 9/11 increased the state's investment in surveillance. In this talk I explore how surveillance is not colorblind, but unfairly targets Muslim bodies. I show how Muslim Americans are subjected to racialized surveillance, which is the monitoring of certain bodies by relying on racialized cues such as Islamic religious signifiers, in both an institutional context by the state and a social context by their neighbors and co-workers. For this talk, I show how Muslim American men and women are surveilled by the state in US airports because of their religious identities. Muslim American men were on a Transportation and Security Administration (TSA) list and Muslim American women who wear the hijab were subjected to routine stops and searches at the security gate. The public display of surveillance in airports racializes Muslim Americans as terrorists in front of their fellow citizen. Consequently Muslim Americans are denied privileges associated with citizenship, such as being viewed and treated as a loyal member of society, when they are routinely subjected to hyper surveillance because of their religious identity.

October 7, 2015

Paolo Parigi, Stanford University

Trust in the Sharing Economy: Evidence from an Online Experiment

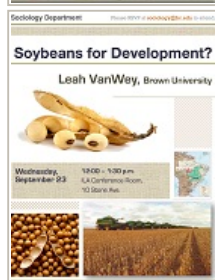
In this talk, I present the results from an online experiment that targeted participants of several sites active in the sharing economy. The goal of the experiment was to measure changes in the amount of trust participants placed on strangers produced by experiences mediated by the websites. We used a longitudinal approach and asked participants to play a variation of an investment game in two sessions, eight weeks apart. We related reported changes in the investment decisions to self-reported changes in the level of satisfaction



between the two sessions. Preliminary analysis is showing different results for positive and negative changes in level of satisfaction. Decreases in levels of satisfaction reduce the amount of trust participants placed in general others.

September 23, 2015

Leah VanWey, Brown University
Soybeans for Development?



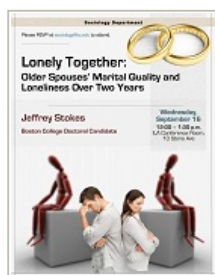
Among the pathways to socioeconomic development is one strategy pursued by Brazil in the last 15 years. The country invested heavily through credit, subsidies, and other mechanisms in commodity agriculture, resulting in Brazil's soybean (among other commodities) production rapidly increasing to make Brazil a key player in global agriculture. This was achieved through the expansion of mechanized agriculture in key productive regions. Approximately 1/3 of soy production is in the single state of Mato Grosso, which spans the environmentally sensitive cerrado (savannah) and Amazon forest

biomes. This presentation will detail the expansion of soy and soy-corn agricultural systems across the state of Mato Grosso from 2001 to 2013, and its social and environmental correlates and consequences. Mechanized agricultural area expanded from 3 million to 6 million hectares in this period, with double-cropping rising from ~15% of agricultural area to over 65%. We use a series of econometric models to show the biophysical and economic drivers of this expansion. Results show the expected importance of preexisting road infrastructure and land suitability, as well as interesting (and unexpected) dynamic expansion and abandonment as a result of year-to-year variation in climate. We round out our consideration of this system with estimates of the impacts of agricultural expansion on a series of indicators of local urban economic and population growth. We show that a substantial portion of the growth in population, urban non-agricultural employment and incomes, and urban economic activity is attributable to the expansion of row crop agriculture around cities in Mato Grosso. Thus, the expansion of this intensive agricultural system provides important lessons for meeting global goals of increased food production and economic growth while limiting deforestation.

September 16, 2015

Jeffrey Stokes, Boston College

Lonely Together: Older Spouses' Marital Quality and Loneliness Over Two Years



This study examines dyadic reports of marital quality and loneliness over a two-year period among 932 older married couples resident in Ireland. Data are from the first two waves of The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA), 2009-2013. Two-wave lagged analysis of dyadic data tested the cognitive perspective on loneliness, the induction hypothesis, and actor-partner interdependence. Results indicated that perceptions of negative marital quality at baseline were related with greater loneliness two years later. Further, both spouses' reports of loneliness at baseline were related with loneliness two years later. Partners' reports of marital quality were not related with future loneliness. Findings offer support for both the cognitive perspective on loneliness and the induction hypothesis, implying causal associations. I discuss the implications of these findings for theory and future research concerning married adults' intimate relationship quality and loneliness in later life.

April 22, 2015

Jennifer Carlson, University of Toronto

Race, Masculinity & Moral Politics in Contemporary American Gun Culture

Less than two years after the Sandy Hook massacre, Pew Research found in fall 2014 that for the first time, broad cross-sections of Americans – white and African American, men and women – believed in the majority that gun ownership makes people safer, rather than less safe. This presentation, based on my book *Citizen-Protectors: The Everyday Politics of Guns*



in an Age of Decline (Oxford, 2015), interrogates this dramatic reversal in public opinion by examining the spread of gun carry within the US from the perspective of men who turn to guns for protection.

Focusing on Michigan, particularly Metro Detroit, the book draws on 60 interviews with male gun carriers as well as ethnographic observations in firearms training, shooting ranges, activist events, and Internet gun forums. While scholars emphasize fear of crime, status anxiety, and cultural worldviews in analyzing American gun politics, these frameworks cannot explain how men of diverse socio-economic and racial backgrounds come to view guns as a solution to the threat of crime. Synthesizing and extending these approaches, this presentation brings in the missing dimension of socio-economic context and men's position within it.

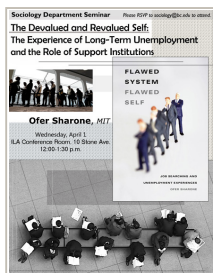
Responding to the structural erosion of breadwinning masculinity, guns provide an opportunity for men to assert themselves as "citizen-protectors" willing to use lethal force against (criminal) others in order to protect (innocent) life. While gun carriers turn to firearms amid localized concerns regarding socioeconomic insecurity, crime and police inefficacy, they are encouraged to embrace this kind of citizenship through firearms training, developed by the National Rifle Association (NRA), required to obtain a concealed pistol license.

Emphasizing the embodied politics of gun carry, this presentation explores how a particular set of civic rights, duties and responsibilities (that is, a model of citizenship) becomes attached to the lawful carrying of guns – reshaping gun culture from the ground up and with profound consequences for crime, policing and governance.

April 1, 2015

Ofer Sharone, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

The Devalued and Revalued Self: The Experience of Long-Term Unemployment and the Role of Support Institutions



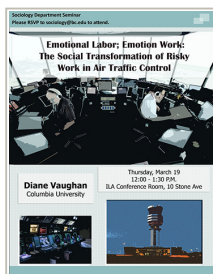
Long-term unemployed job seekers, by definition, experience a string of negative labor market outcomes. Yet, how such outcomes are interpreted, and the degree to which they shape one's sense of self, depends in part on the intermediation of support institutions. Dominant self-help career support institutions activate individualistic narratives that obscure shared and structural determinants of career challenges, which in turn intensifies workers' self-blame and emotional turmoil.

This paper explores the effects of varied forms of career support for long-term unemployed professionals, including alternative forms of support offering a more sociologically-informed perspective. Drawing on in-depth interviews of Boston-area long-term unemployed professionals we investigate how varied support-practices shape the experience of unemployment with particular attention to self-blame and emotional wellbeing.

March 19, 2015

Diane Vaughan, Columbia University

Emotional Labor; Emotion Work: The Social Transformation of Risky Work in Air Traffic Control



Based on interviews and ethnography in four air traffic control facilities in the New England Region, I examine controllers' experiences on the job and the meanings of those experiences to them. Trained to suppress emotions so they can do the work, my observations revealed little about what they are feeling.

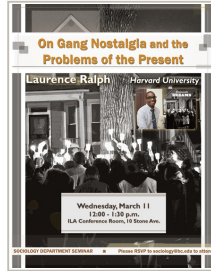
However, interviews in which they describe their experiences with mistake, error, and accident reveal deep and lasting memories and resurgent emotions as they recall the details. Then, when next asked about their general experience of working air traffic as (first) risky, and (second) stressful,

their responses contradict their experiences of mistake error and accident as described by them. This paper presents the contradiction, and then explains it, describing the social transformation of risky work as a cooperative endeavor between institution, culture, and controller that allows them to do the job.

March 11, 2015

Laurence Ralph, Harvard University

On Gang Nostalgia and the Problems of the Present



This talk explores how various generations of young gang members develop their worldview, while clinging to the memory of a gang structure that has ceased to exist. Ever since a generation of gang members was incarcerated due to the “war on drugs” in the 1980s, the Divine Knights have been devoid of central leadership. This absence has caused the Divine Knights to splinter into increasingly violent subsets. Decades of gang fracture has had dire consequences for the Divine Knights’ youngest constituency—members, who gang leaders call “renegades” because they supposedly disregard the aspirations of the collective in favor of their own individual pursuits.

The paper shows that each older generation of the gang sees their juniors through the lens of their own “coming-of-age” era. Their nostalgic view of the past blinds them to the problems of the present.

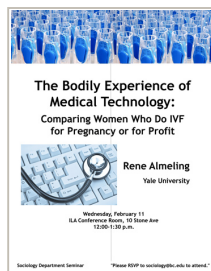
Professor Laurence Ralph is Assistant Professor of African and African American Studies and Anthropology at Harvard University. His recently published ethnography, *Renegade Dreams: Living Through Injury in Gangland Chicago*, explores the networks of commerce, criminality, and affiliation that congeal in the figure of the disabled gang affiliate.

Disabled gang members, he argues, are one of several kinds of urban residents who are especially susceptible to “injury,” a concept he uses to theorize several related genres of debility. Laurence’s research interests include: Gang Formations; Urban Anthropology; Disability; Medical Anthropology; Masculinity; Race; Theories of Violence; Popular Culture and Hip Hop. Laurence’s work has been published in *The Anthropology Exchange* (2006), *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* (2010), *Transition and Anthropological Theory*.

February 11, 2015

Rene Almeling, Yale University

The Bodily Experience of Medical Technology: Comparing Women Who Do IVF for Pregnancy or for Profit



Women who do in vitro fertilization (IVF) with the hopes of having a child describe their bodily experience of this technology as all-encompassing, painful, and emotionally draining. Egg donors, who use the same technology to produce eggs for another woman, often in exchange for several thousand dollars, describe IVF as quick and relatively painless.

Social scientific and clinical research on medical technology typically examines variation in individual’s bodily experiences by demographic variables such as age, health, gender, and race. In this paper, we use IVF as a case to examine whether and how an individual’s reason for using a medical technology affects their bodily experiences. We developed an original survey that consists of questions drawn from sociology, psychology, and medicine to compare women’s bodily experiences of IVF based on their reason for doing it: to become pregnant oneself or to provide eggs to another woman in exchange for compensation.

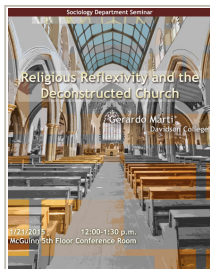
We find that infertile women and egg donors quantify their physical experiences of pain and side effects in similar ways, but they diverge when reporting on the emotional and cognitive aspects of IVF. These results suggest that people who use the same medical technology for

different reasons may have different bodily experiences. We conclude by discussing the implications for social scientific debates about embodiment and for clinical research on bodily experience.

January 21, 2015

Gerardo Marti, Davidson College

Religious Reflexivity and the Deconstructed Church

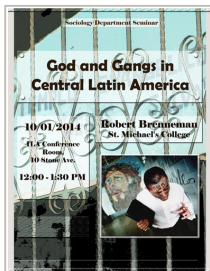


The most interesting development in the subjectivity of religious experience today is how individuals are being released from religious action based on a deep treasure trove of stable identity packages and secure programmatic responses. Drawing on recent scholarship by Margaret Archer, Ulrich Beck, and Peter Berger, I suggest that "religious reflexivity" summarizes a deliberative and problem-solving dynamic that is a distinctive and unavoidable element of contemporary religious selves. Religious reflexivity is a sustained mode of human action necessitated by encounter with novel situations that arise in our segmented and pluralistic societies. Overall, this concept helps account for our observing new imperatives for proper or desired religiosity and new ways of legitimizing religious thoughts, practices, and even larger orientations, which result in new sources for self-formation, self-promotion, and self-assurance for new forms of religious self-construction. As an empirical reference, observations reported in Marti and Ganiel's (2014) recent work, *The Deconstructed Church: Understanding Emerging Christianity*, provide evidence from the Emerging Church Movement—a religious orientation that is almost entirely oriented toward the ongoing practice of religious reflexivity.

October 1, 2014

Robert Brenneman, St. Michael's College

God and Gangs in Central Latin America: When Homies become Hermanos: Pentecostal Conversion in the Central American Gangs



In the 1990s, a surge in deportations of Central American youth helped spawn the growth and evolution of Central America's transnational youth gangs. By the early 2000s, gang violence had become a central concern for urban voters in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, and this concern allowed politicians to ride promises of "zero tolerance" and "iron fist" anti-gang policies into office. But while national governments took a "tough-on-crime" approach meant to intimidate gang members into abandoning the gang, some local religious leaders promoted outreach programs aimed at reforming individual gang members through a combination of religious and social projects. Such efforts were instrumental in helping hundreds of gang youth leave the gang.

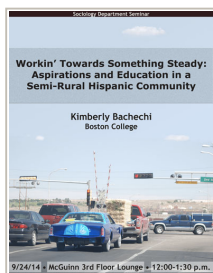
This presentation will draw from interviews conducted with former gang members in 2007 and 2008 in order to understand how and why former members of the gang put Pentecostal religion to work in in order to overhaul a spoiled identity. Follow-up interviews conducted in 2013 explore the durability of such overhauled identities. The presentation will close with a brief discussion of the current status of the Central American gangs and the extent to which gang violence may be contributing to the "surge" in migration among Central American youth.

September 24, 2014

Kimberly Bachechi, Boston College

Workin' Towards Something Steady: Aspirations and Education in a Semi-Rural Hispanic Community

Recent work on Hispanic immigrants has consistently shown a decline in educational attainment over generations-since-immigration despite the fact that advanced education is currently presented in the public arena as the foundation for economic mobility (Telles and Ortiz). This talk emerges from a larger study based on in-depth interviews, focus groups,



and ethnographic data collected during an 18 month stay in a small, semi-rural, largely Hispanic, community in New Mexico, where the local high school has a graduation rate of 55%. I focus on how young people decide what their next steps will be after completing high school. The findings of this study indicate that young people's decisions are based largely on the advice that they are given regarding the economic utility of post-secondary schooling. Lacking this advice these young people determined it was not worth the risk of time out of the labor market, money, and effort that advanced schooling required. One of the key reasons students disengage from school stems from the failure of the schools to make it clear to students how educational credentials connect to occupational opportunities. Thus, a number of young people who have had some success at school still choose to leave because they are unconvinced that educational credentials are actually economically useful.

September 15, 2014

Mindy Fried, Arbor Consulting Partners

Evaluation Research: Taking Sociology Out of the Academy and Into Organizations



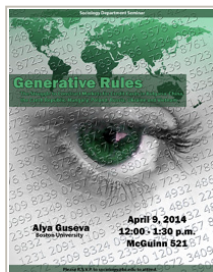
There are many ways we can "do sociology". We start by "living sociology" in our daily lives, as we examine how social and economic forces affect everything from daily life to broader political and social realities. But what are the options for "doing sociology" in our careers? Traditionally, there has been an implicit, if not explicit, assumption within Sociology graduate schools that the ultimate goal is to work within the academy. But increasingly, applied sociology is being framed as an equally viable choice. In the end, the choice to pursue applied or academic sociology is prompted by one's career goals and interests, as well as the job market.

Evaluation research is one way to do sociology in the applied world. It is the practice of applying basic research skills in service of helping organizations to strengthen their programs and policies, as well as secure funding to continue their good work. Part science/part art, evaluation research is driven by the question: Who needs to know what and for what purpose? Funders want data regarding whether their investments are well-spent; organizations want to know if their program goals are being met, and if not, how they can improve. In this seminar, I will provide an overview of evaluation research, presenting examples from my evaluation research practice. Following the presentation, there will be time for open dialogue, so students can explore their own interests and questions about evaluation research.

April 9, 2014

Alya Guseva, Boston University

Generative Rules: The Struggle of Construct Markets for Credit Cards in Bulgaria, China, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Russia, Ukraine, and Vietnam



In the United States, we now take our ability to pay with plastic for granted. Yes, building credit card markets requires solutions to difficult puzzles. In countries without a history of economic stability, how can banks learn to select reliable cardholders? How do markets convince people to pay with cards and make card acceptance appealing to retailers? How are shared standards (including technological ones) established? What is the role of the state in market-building?

This is a story of how banks overcame these and other quandaries as they constructed markets for credit cards in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Russian, Ukraine, China and Vietnam in the two decades following the fall of communism. We know a lot about how markets work once they are built; what we have generally ignored is the generative rules that explain how markets are engineered from the ground up—by selecting key players, ensuring cooperation, and providing conditions for the valuation of a product. Drawing on extensive interviews and fieldwork, my work chronicles how banks

overcame these hurdles and constructed markets on the ruins (or with the ruins) of communism. The talk will outline all of the problems these nascent markets for credit cards faced, and discuss solutions and implications of several of them.

March 19, 2014

Claudio Benzecry, University of Connecticut

Follow the shoe. The everyday work of producing globalization



This paper examines the relationship between creativity and globalization by following the process of fashion design in the shoe industry. Two questions guide this research: How is it that fashion objects are produced and circulated on a global scale? Who coordinates the apparently seamless work that goes from thinking of a product to its finalized production? Based on a shadow ethnography in NY, LA, Dongguan, Miami and European capitols of design, interviews with insiders and digital archival work, this article follows a group of designers from a US shoe company in order to show the taken for granted work of deciding when, how and where fashion patterns are generated and produced.

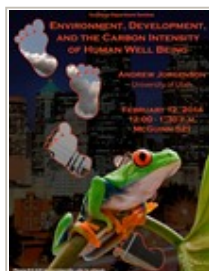
Instead of viewing the commodity chain as a geographic and practical division of labor, I point at how the coordination of design is a simultaneous process; it takes place through a negotiation of interlocking practical competencies of shaping ideas into materials. In each step, I show how different parts of the globe are connected through imagination, execution, decision-making, and production itself. In doing this, we also show how the firm mediates production and consumption relationships.

Rather than focusing on the meso and macro levels of networks, regional states, or TNCs, I emphasize how globalization is a practical accomplishment of interlocking agents, dependent on other components--both near and distant--to shape a material outcome. To a certain extent, this paper shows the everyday work of producing globalization. In doing this I aim to show the myriad of micro and meso relationships established in each step along the way (design, production, circulation); as well as the different nodes of the global network that are activated for each phase of the commodity chain.

February 12, 2014

Andrew Jorgenson, University of Utah

Environment, Development, And The Carbon Intensity Of Human Well-Being



I engage foundational perspectives in environmental sociology to assess the extent to which the relationship between the environment and development changes through time. Ecological modernization theory posits that even though economic development harms the environment, the magnitude of the harmful link decreases over the course of development, leading to the environment decoupling from economic development. In contrast, treadmill of production theory argues that the strong relationship between environmental harms and economic

development will remain constant or possibly increase through time, and this should hold for both developed and less-developed countries. Findings for panel analyses of national-level anthropogenic carbon emissions provide modest support for treadmill of production theory. The effect of development on carbon emissions remains large and stable through time for a sample of developed nations, but increases from low to moderate levels through time for a sample of less-developed nations. I briefly discuss how world economic factors and processes partially shape these unsustainable environment and development relationships. I then draw from other bodies of sociological theory, most notably world society theory, to better identify situations in which a decoupling between carbon emissions and economic development is more likely to occur. Tentative panel analyses suggest that nations more integrated in world society are more likely to experience a reduction in the environmental impacts of economic development through time. The results highlight the potential for future theoretical integrations and research that more effectively pinpoints the mechanisms that lead to such environmentally beneficial outcomes. I conclude by introducing a new approach

that bridges environment and development and human well-being and development traditions. This work, which initially focuses on economic development and the carbon intensity of human well-being, is an important step in advancing research that takes a more holistic approach to the study of sustainability.

January 15, 2014

Amahl Bishara, Tufts University

Back Stories: U.S. News and the Struggle for Expression in Palestine



What does U.S. journalism look like from the occupied Palestinian territories? American and Palestinian journalists collaborate to produce U.S. news, and their work together has an impact on Palestinian politics and society, too. Palestinian journalists take photographs and video, translate, and do other production work for U.S. journalists. They tend to take the most risks to make the news we consume every day, but they do not usually have a say in how the published images and narratives will take shape. In this talk I examine the important role Palestinian journalists play in producing U.S. news. Their role suggests that while Americans often think of themselves as exporters of

democracy and human rights like freedom of expression, in fact Americans rely on others for the vitality of the information about the world. I analyze the factors that limit Palestinians' ability to express themselves in U.S. news, and finally I present an example in which these barriers to expression can be at least temporarily broken down.

October 23, 2013

Pawan Dhingra, Tufts University

Hire a White Woman: Race and Gender Calculations For Business Owners

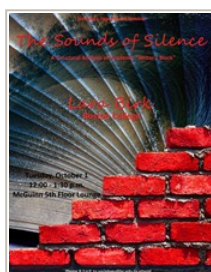


Asian Indian Americans have come to own almost half of the nation's motels - this is probably the largest ethnic enterprise in the nation's history. Unlike ethnic enclaves these businesses cater to the mainstream population. Indian Americans' success is a testament to their ability to get along well with customers rather than be engaged in perpetual conflict. Yet, conflictual relations are always possible, according to owners. Indian Americans' prolific representation in these businesses does not mean a lack of inter-group tensions but instead signals their ability to get around tensions through a careful deployment of labor and cultural symbols. I analyze this deployment in the "front stage" of the motel (i.e. the check-in encounter and lobby) that the guest encounters. The lobby appears as an assimilated, Anglo-normative space. In accomplishing this appearance, owners accept some degree of racial, cultural, and gender subjugation relative to white employees and (for female owners also to men). It is by working within possible conflictual relations, rather than their absence, that lets Indian American owners get along with customers. Owners' achievements do not indicate the declining significance of race or gender but instead show how these social hierarchies operate alongside economic mobility. With that in mind, these findings bridge competing theories of immigrant adaptation.

October 1, 2013

Lara Birk, Boston College

The Sounds of Silence: A Structural Analysis of Academic "Writer's Block"



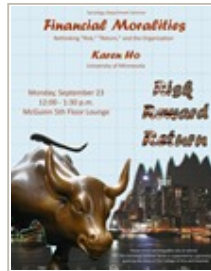
Academic "writer's block" is a poorly understood, rarely studied phenomenon (Hjortshoj 2001). Nonetheless, it is a pervasive problem which can have negative consequences for the individuals who struggle with it (Rose 1985; Boice 1993). For undergraduates, such block can result in poor academic performance and even, when taken to its logical extreme, failure to complete one's college degree. When it has been the subject of scholarly attention, writing block has largely been viewed from a purely psychological perspective (Cayton 1991). My talk, which is based on my qualitative dissertation of the same title, represents a structural analysis of

academic writing block. I focus in particular on the role of social class and race in individuals' experiences with block, and I examine how what we often assume is a "private trouble" can also be viewed as a "public issue."

September 23, 2013

Karen Ho, University of Minnesota

Financial Moralities: Rethinking "Risk," "Return," and the Organization



My talk is an examination of the importance of interrogating and unpacking financial moralities, especially in the context of understanding massive socio-economic inequalities and transformations. It argues that through an exploration of financial subjectivities and the cultural milieu in which privileged financial actors are embedded, we can better explain the financialization of organizations writ large in American culture. The paper will tentatively trace, analyze, and unpack how the very concepts of "risk," "reward," and "return" have been utilized to fundamentally transform the very nature and purpose of socio-economic organization in the US today.

September 9, 2013

Betsy Leondar-Wright, Boston College

Missing Class: Strengthening Social Movement Groups by Seeing Class Cultures



As a long-time social justice activist, Betsy Leondar-Wright noticed that many progressive groups and coalitions split along class lines, limiting their effectiveness. She began to suspect that class culture differences explained some of these rifts. Her mixed-methods dissertation research tested this hypothesis by studying 25 voluntary groups in five states, in the community organizing, labor-initiated, nonprofit progressive and anarchist traditions, applying Bourdieu's concept of misrecognized cultural capital. She found that as activists faced common group problems, they did indeed have different approaches depending on their own and their parents' education and occupation levels. In fact, such class culture traits cut across race, gender, age and movement tradition to a surprising degree. In this seminar, Leondar-Wright will give highlights of her forthcoming book, *Missing Class* (Cornell University Press, 2014), by describing how activists of different classes talked differently, had different concepts of leadership, and resolved conflicts differently — findings with hopeful implications for building stronger progressive movements.

April 23, 2013

Patricia Ticineto Clough, Queens College and the Graduate School of the City University of New York

War By Other Means: What Difference Do(es) the Graphic(s) Make?

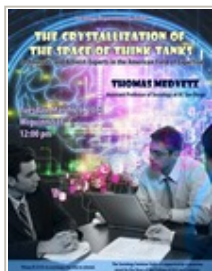


In my presentation, I will focus on *I Live Here*, a boxed set of four books produced by 22 artists and writers. The four books are made up of journal entries, stories, images and graphic novellas about the war in Chechnya, the ethnic cleansing at the Burmese border, the disappearance and death of women around the Maquiladoras, near the Mexican border and the aids epidemic in Malawi Africa. Taking the four books as my focus, I will treat the affects that the graphics elicit as a way of politically branding war and the humanitarian responses to it. Overall I will explore the relation of the graphics to biopolitical governance and "aesthetic capitalism."

March 26, 2013

Thomas Medvetz, University of California, San Diego

The Crystallization of the Space of Think Tanks: Technocrats and Activist-Experts in the American Field of Expertise



While the academic discussion on think tanks has deepened in the last decade, the origins of the organizational category itself remain murky. In this paper, I show that the think tank category formed in the United States as a once disparate array of organizations cohered into a relatively distinct institutional niche with its own interior dynamic. What caused the formation of this space of think tanks? I argue that the process began in the late 1960s through a structural convergence between two sets of experts in the American field of expertise. The first was a set of "non-state" technocrats who had come to play a growing role in political affairs since the Progressive Era. The second set of experts was an emerging breed of largely conservative "activist-experts" who put forward a major challenge to technocratic authority starting in the 1960s and 1970s. As the technocrats "opened" up their knowledge in response to the challenges posed by the activist-experts, and the latter engaged in closure processes to certify their knowledge, the two groups became more oriented to one another in their judgments and practices. Over the next two decades, they formed network ties, entered into more routine forms of competition and collaboration, and collectively established Intellectual products distinct from those of academia.

March 14, 2013

Avery Gordon, University of California, Santa Barbara

work: a view from the utopian margins

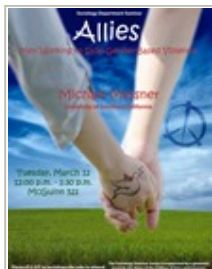


Gordon discussed *The Workhouse: Room 2*, a collaboration with Berlin artist Ines Schaber produced for documenta(13). Room 2 of The Workhouse engages with the history of the former monastery, workhouse, and prison Breitenau. Over time, Breitenau has confined many persons considered extraneous and disposable subjecting them to a regime of punishment and "correction." Consisting of photographs, curtain, text, and audio files, Room 2 of The Workhouse presented glimpses of fugitive knowledge that emerge in and around this prison in order to conjure historical alternatives that could have been taken but were not and to contribute to an ongoing archive of re-memory whose aims are not correction.

March 12, 2013

Michael Messner, University of California, Los Angeles

Allies: Men Working to Stop Gender-Based Violence



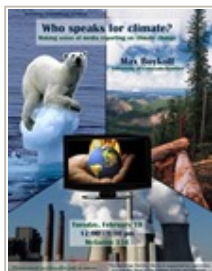
Since the 1970s, some men have sought to ally themselves with feminist anti-rape and anti-domestic violence organizing, focusing especially on violence prevention work with boys and men. This presentation, based on life history interviews with activists, will focus on how different historical moments of engagement with feminism and anti-violence work, from the late 1970s to the present, created both opportunities and constraints for men's work as allies. This presentation will focus on two central points of tension: First, how the historical shift from a grassroots social movement to professionally institutionalized feminism shifts the ground for anti-violence prevention; second, how men as pro-feminist allies navigate contexts characterized by both heightened levels of critical scrutiny, as well as a tendency to be given premature public credit or adulation for doing this sort of work.

February 19, 2013

Max Boykoff, University of Colorado-Boulder

"Who speaks for climate? Making sense of media reporting on climate change"

In this talk, I will touch on salient and swirling contextual factors as well as competing journalistic pressures and norms that contribute to how issues, events and information have often become climate 'news'. I will focus my attention on how particular problems and snags in the web of interaction between science, media, policy and the public have contributed to critical misperceptions, misleading debates, distractions and divergent understandings – that are detrimental to efforts that seek to enlarge rather than constrict the spectrum of



possibility for responses to climate challenges. Mass media serve vital roles in communication processes between science, policy and the public, and often stitch together perceptions, intentions, considerations, and actions regarding climate change. Many dynamic, contested and complex factors contribute to how media outlets portray various facets of climate change science, politics and policy. To make this more concrete, at part of this discussion I will discuss factors and features that shape amplified media treatment of outlier perspectives on climate science-policy, particularly attending to traction gained by 'climate contrarians'. Overall, I will situate issues like these in the wider context of a 'cultural politics of climate change', where formal climate science and governance link with people's everyday activities in the public sphere.

February 5, 2013

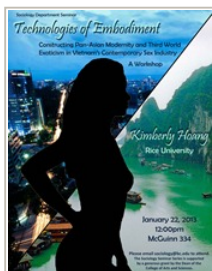
Lisa Stevens, Boston College Lynch School of Education
"Immigrant youth, borders, and the politics of inclusion"



Undocumented. Illegal. Adolescent. English Language Learners. At-risk. These are many of the labels used to shorthand describe immigrant youth in America. In this talk, I will share narratives and analysis of the various borders encountered by recently immigrated youth as they seek to gain footing in the United States.

January 22, 2013

Kimberly Hoang, Rice University
"Technologies of Embodiment: Constructing Pan-Asian Modernity and Third World Exoticism in Vietnam's Contemporary Sex Industry"



Turning to Vietnam's segmented sex industry that caters to local elite Vietnamese men and Western businessmen, I illustrate how sex workers who cater to different clientele engage in different technologies of embodiment. In Vietnam's uneasy emergence as a strong nation in the global economy, sex workers in a high-end niche market that cater to local elite Vietnamese businessmen work to construct new a pan-Asian modernity that follow distinctly non-Western ideals of beauty in representing their nations progress towards becoming a modern nation; women who cater to Western businessmen, on the other hand, embody Third World exoticism and perform poverty. By comparing markets that cater to local Vietnamese elites and Western men. I examine how changes in the macropolitical economy shape relations on the ground. Concurrently, I illustrate how individual agents, particularly those living in the developing world, not only react to, but also actively participate in nation building processes through their embodied practices.

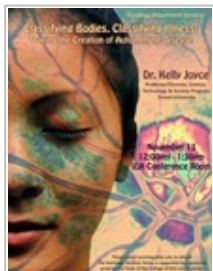
November 27, 2012

Ashley Mears, Boston University
"High-End Ethnic: The Circulation and Reproduction of Cultural Schemas in Fashion"



The fashion modeling industry is perennially critiqued for valuing white, thin, and young women's bodies to the exclusion of most others. How do valuation packages such as these emerge, endure, and travel? This paper traces examines how ideas about beauty, race, sexuality and class couple with routines and practical tasks in organizations to yield stable repertoires of value across markets globally.

November 13, 2012

Kelley Joyce, Drexel University*"Classifying Bodies, Classifying Illness: Tracing the Creation of Autoimmune Disease"*

Autoimmune disease has become a salient way of categorizing a range of diseases in the United States. Over 80 illnesses are now considered autoimmune or autoimmune related. The category affects how people experience their bodies and relationships, while scientific research, medical publications, and popular books use the term to describe seemingly disparate illnesses such as Lupus, Multiple Sclerosis, Type 1 Diabetes, and Crohn's disease. But, where did the categories autoimmune and autoimmunity come from? How did they come to shape our bodies, medical practice, and popular culture? Contributing to the sociology of science and the sociology of medicine, Dr. Joyce will investigate the actors and social contexts that inform both the creation of the category autoimmune and its use to classify disease and bodies. This talk will show how the prevalence of this category is the result of decades of effort, collaboration, and negotiation. Scientists, advocacy organizations, popular science writers, pharmaceutical companies, and journalists all contributed to the rise of this way of categorizing bodies and lives.

October 2, 2012

Daniel Levine, University of Michigan*"Religion, Violence, and Rights in Latin America"*

Long assumed to be an unquestioned and unchanging bulwark of established power and privilege, religion in Latin America has diversified and flourished while taking on a new social and political presence in more open and competitive societies. The last half century has also been a period of great violence in Latin America. Violence of all kinds affected the churches and was central to how and why religious actors engaged issues of rights, and of peacemaking and reconciliation in the wake of war and dictatorship. How did the churches experience and understand violence? Why did they take up new ideas about rights, sponsor social movements, and become advocates for democracy? Why at this time, in this way, and with what implications for the future? All these issues have been contested terrain in the churches, with positions evolving notably over time and often leading to divisions with fatal consequences for many. Understanding these changes requires analysis to reach beyond conventional categories like "church and state" to include the impact of violence and new ideas about rights, the realities of pluralism and competition, the relation between change at the grass roots and institutions, the changing encounter of religion with democracy and social movements, and the creation of new forms of power.

September 12, 2012

Emilie Dubois, Luka Carfagna, Juliet Schor, Boston College*"Mapping the New Economy: Cultural Capital, Digital Habitués, and Social Capital in a Boston Timebank."*

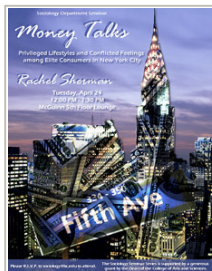
The 2008 economic downturn has undermined economic security for many, bringing in its wake increased levels of unemployment and under-employment; reductions in wealth; and heightened economic fear and insecurity. As a result, a "new economy" of alternative forms of consumption, production, and financing has emerged. New economy initiatives include peer to peer innovations such as freecycle, Zipcar and RelayRides, which allow people to swap, share, and barter as substitutes for normative practices such as ownership, purchase and discard. From its online origins in file sharing and open source software, this peer-driven "sharing economy" has expanded rapidly in areas such as accommodations (Couchsurfing, AirBnB), transport, secondary markets for used goods (ThredUp), and finance (Kickstarter). In this paper we investigate one such alternative—the Boston Time Trade Circle, a "time bank"

which organizes peer to peer trades in services. The TTC is an egalitarian sharing initiative in which each member's time is valued equally. This makes it a sociologically interesting case to study issues of inequality and its reproduction. On the basis of 30 interviews with time bank participants aged 18-35, participation in 20 trades and interviews with leaders in the time bank movement, we explore a number of questions. What are the ideological commitments of time bank members and how do they align with the TTC's own ideological stance? How does the time bank affect social relations and the social capital of its members? How does participation in the time bank relate to members' work lives? Finally, how is cultural capital deployed in the time bank?

April 24, 2012

Rachel Sherman

"Money Talks: Privileged Lifestyles and Conflicted Feelings among Elite Consumers in New York City."

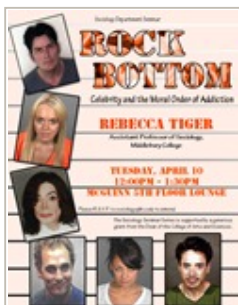


This ongoing project looks at how elites experience and talk about their privilege, particularly in terms of their consumption decisions. It is based primarily on in-depth interviews with two populations: elite consumers in New York City, and providers of elite lifestyle services, including financial planners, interior decorators, and personal assistants, who serve as brokers between consumers and markets. These interviews address elites' lifestyle choices and the emotions surrounding them, particularly the conflicts they express and the justifications they use for their own entitlements. The project engages with broader theoretical questions about the cultural and sentimental foundations of legitimate inequality under capitalism, particularly how habitus and subjectivity relate to resource distribution and consumption.

April 10, 2012

Rebecca Tiger

"Rock Bottom: Celebrity and the Moral Order of Addiction"



While addiction scientists try to convince the public, via documentaries and newspaper articles, that habitual substance use is a chronic relapsing disease requiring treatment, celebrity gossip blogs visually construct the rock bottom moments that make addiction "real" to millions of readers. Pictures of celebrities' mugshots for drug-related arrests or photos of them wearing alcohol monitoring anklets are often accompanied by stories steeped in the language of addiction and disease. Many readers post comments in response to these stories; they often relate celebrity addiction to their own experiences and contribute to the bloggers' dominant narratives of habitual substance use as a form of badness and sickness requiring punishment and treatment. The visual text of celebrity, then, becomes the vehicle to connect the social problems and afflictions of the extraordinary with the ordinary.

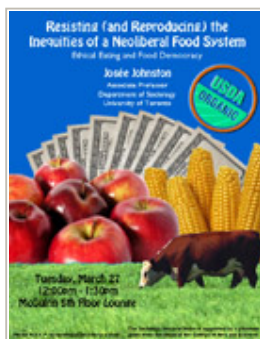
In this talk, Rebecca Tiger will examine (1) the role that celebrity gossip blogs and visual images play in the social construction of addiction as a form of badness and sickness, (2) the interactive nature of social problem construction through celebrity gossip blogs and other media sites where readers and viewers respond to stories about celebrity drug use, and (3) the implication of these constructions for a society increasingly apt to view itself within the framework of disease and pathology.

March 27, 2012

Josée Johnston

"Resisting (and Reproducing) the Inequities of a Neoliberal Food System: Ethical Eating and Food Democracy"

Ethical consumption is understood by scholars as a key way that individuals can address social and ecological problems. While a hopeful trend, it raises the question of whether ethical consumption is primarily an elite social practice, especially since niche markets for



ethical food products (e.g., organics, fair-trade) are thought to attract wealthy, educated consumers. Scholars do not fully understand the extent to which privileged populations think about food ethics in everyday shopping, or how groups with limited resources conceptualize ethical consumption. To address these knowledge gaps, this talk will address how consumers from different class backgrounds and geographic contexts understand ethical eating, and work these ideas into everyday food practices. While the discourse of ethical eating is enmeshed with privileged eating practices, I will also address current challenges to the neo-liberal food system, and discuss ways to conceptualize these transformative possibilities.

March 13, 2012

Sara Damaske

"For the Family? How Class and Gender Shape Women's Work"



In the contentious debate about women and work, conventional wisdom holds that middle-class women can decide if they work, while working-class women need to work. Yet, even after the recent economic crisis, middle-class women are more likely to work than working-class women. Sarah Damaske deflates the myth that financial needs dictate if women work, revealing that financial resources make it easier for women to remain at work and not easier to leave it. Departing from mainstream research, Damaske finds three main employment patterns: steady, pulled back, and interrupted. She discovers that middle-class women are more likely

to remain steadily at work and working-class women more likely to experience multiple bouts of unemployment. She argues that the public debate is wrongly centered on need because women respond to pressure to be selfless mothers and emphasize family need as the reason for their work choices. Whether the decision is to stay home or go to work, women from all classes say work decisions are made for their families.

February 21, 2012

Danielle Egan

"Touched by the 'Skank Fairy'?: Sexualization and Middle Class Displacement"



In this presentation, I will analyze the classist assumptions at work in the recent discourse on the sexualization of girls. I contend that the epistemological assumptions underpinning the popular literature rely upon and reproduce longstanding cultural anxieties regarding the eroticism of the poor in the Anglophone west. Analyzing the use of language, affect and hyperbole illuminates how the discourse on sexualization is plagued by an enduring middle class fantasy regarding the poor and is part and parcel of a much longer history of sexual protection movements which have a dubious legacy. The class coded

nature of this discourse is particularly evident in discussions of clothing, comportment and in the use of the word "skank." Clothing functions in a metonymic fashion whereby particular items get equated with action and later subjectivity (thong=sexualized action=sexualized girlhood). As a result, "skanky" pieces come to signify or predict a middle class girl's descent down a slippery slope toward sexualized activities (oral sex for pay, intergenerational sex, sex games, low self esteem, cognitive delay, etc), tainted subjectivity and a "lonely and desperate" future. However, the prolific nature of this discourse, its problematic epistemological legacy, the level of affect deployed and the lack of solid empirical grounding raise another sociologically pertinent question—is this discourse only about sexualization? I will make the case that the problem of sexualization is not simply a girl's problem, but rather that it is a displacement for something else—middle class instability in an increasingly precarious economic condition. To this end, the sexualized girl may be read metaphorically—

I argue that she is an emblem of a porous, defiled and corroded social status. This presentation will draw on data from the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia produced since 2005 and will make use of historical materials, literature on the sociology of taste and affect as well as psychoanalytic theory as an explanatory framework.

February 7, 2012

Sharlene Hesse-Biber, Boston College

"Waiting for Cancer to Come: Genetic Testing and Women's Medical Decision Making"



Sitting with BRCA is like being a character in Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*, Being in a place where time becomes waiting. Waiting for cancer to come. "Not if I get cancer, but when I get cancer." Wanting to act, yet feeling immobilized, unable to move forward. Feeling like "my breasts are ticking time bombs." "Waiting for cancer to come."

--excerpt from Sharlene Hesse-Biber's book, *Waiting For Cancer to Come*. The cacophony of women's voices that swirl around one another in the opening stanza of this poem captures the genetic testing experience and the myriad ways women come to terms with

their genetic news.

When a young woman loses a mother and sister to breast cancer and finds out her risk of cancer is high as well, what should she do? *Waiting for Cancer to Come* explores the struggles women like this face every day to address their genetic risk of breast and ovarian cancer. A multi-billion dollar genetic testing industry is growing every year, and companies going pink for breast cancer awareness is more common than not, but few research studies have explored the dynamics involved when these cultural phenomena meet – from the perspectives of women who live this reality every day.

This research seminar talk will explore the complicated emotional, social, economic, and psychological factors at play in the lives of women who are tested positive for the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutations that indicate a high risk of breast and ovarian cancer. Genetic testing upends the lives of women across the country and *Waiting for Cancer to Come* walks through their journeys of despair, challenges, victories over their cancer risk, and ever-changing family dynamics.

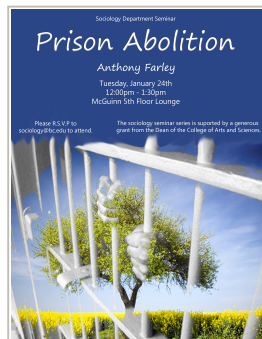
Based on intensive interviews and on line surveys with sixty-five women who tested positive for the BRCA genetic mutation, this research seminar specifically explores women's medical decision making post-testing. The in-depth interviews reveal a decision-making process by which BRCA positive women frame their statistical medical risk for getting cancer and their decisions about the type of treatment to pursue post-testing within a broad socio-cultural context of engagement including their social networks of family, friends and increasingly online relationships. The extent to which women feel "ready" in their treatment decision-making makes their choice of surveillance or surgery an empowering or disempowering experience.

Women's social networks form a "nexus of decision making" that does not, for the most part, mirror the medical assessment of statistical odds of their cancer risk or the specific treatment protocol framed by the medical establishment. Some important findings from the in-depth interviews are explored, elaborated and followed up through the use of on line survey that is linked to the in-depth interviews. I explore some of the policy implications of my research findings that provides strategies to better serve and empower BRCA positive women that will allow them to assess their genetic risk and navigate their treatment options to reduce their risk of developing cancer.

January 24, 2012

Anthony Farley, Albany University

"Prison Abolition"

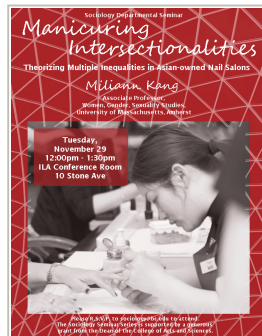


Anthony Farley is the James Campbell Matthews Distinguished Professor of Jurisprudence at Albany University School of Law. A renowned author and critical legal theorist, Professor Farley's presentation brought the lens of critical race theory to bear upon the question of "prison abolition" in a historical social context.

November 29, 2011

Miliann Kang, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

"Intersectionalities: Theorizing Multiple Inequalities in Asian-owned Nail Salons"

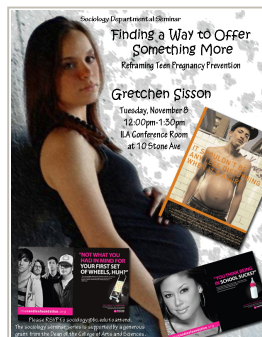


Ethnographic research in Asian-owned nail salons reveals the multiple inequalities and contestations which shape intimate relations between diverse women in these sites. Kang explores the dynamics of emotional and body labor in the provision of manicures to expand the theoretical framework of intersectionality. Drawing on empirical cases varying by race, class and immigrant status of the clientele and neighborhood contexts, Kang develops the concepts of intersectional reproduction, disruption, rearticulation, and finally, forms of intersectional resistance.

November 8, 2011

Gretchen Sisson

"Finding a Way to Offer Something More: Reframing Teen Pregnancy Prevention"



Advocacy organizations have consistently framed adolescent pregnancy as profoundly and enduringly detrimental for young women, their families, and their communities, despite equivocal evidence about the causal relationship between young maternal age and poor outcomes. Without this attribution, logic mandates that such organizations find more evidence-based justifications for teen pregnancy prevention that still address the lived experiences of populations most at risk for early parenthood. If such evidence-based justifications continue to be lacking, it is unlikely that these well-intentioned efforts will truly have a beneficial impact on the communities with which they are concerned. This paper presents such justifications, including recognition of the challenges inherent in parenting and protection of adolescence as a developmental stage, the need to make pregnancy prevention more accessible for those who chose it, and overall investment in adolescent sexual health. From this new paradigm, sexual health advocates can build a class-conscious model of sexual health that recognizes the necessity of providing more options for at-risk youth, the appeal of models of conjoint agency, and the necessity of comprehensive health resources and sexuality education. By adopting a new framework for teen pregnancy prevention, the promise of prevention within a social justice movement can begin to be discussed.

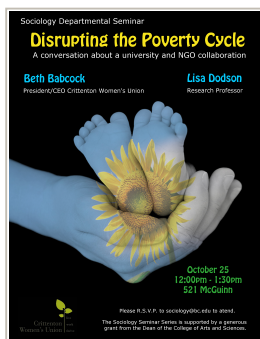
October 25, 2011

Lisa Dodson, Boston College

Beth Babcock, President/CEO Crittenton Women's Union

"Disrupting the Poverty Cycle: A conversation about a university and NGO collaboration"

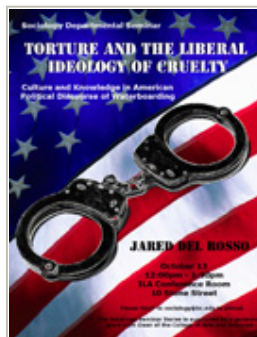
Lisa Dodson and Beth Babcock led a panel discussion on [Disrupting the Poverty Cycle: A conversation about a university and NGO collaboration](#) at the department seminar on Tuesday, October 25.



October 13, 2011

Jared Del Rosso, Boston College

"Torture and the Liberal Ideology of Cruelty"



In 2007, Michael Hayden, the Director of the CIA, disclosed that the Agency had destroyed videotapes of its interrogations, including those that involved the use of waterboarding. The absence of the video recordings provoked a political debate about what, in fact, the recordings showed. In this paper, I draw on a discourse analysis of congressional hearings to document how proponents and critics of

the Bush administration's "enhanced interrogation" program competed to fill the representational lacuna created by the destruction of the tapes. Proponents of the practice drew on the CIA's own account of its interrogations to construe waterboarding as a well regulated, professionally administered, and instrumentally organized practice. Critics, on the other hand, emphasized the use of water torture by non-democratic states to situate waterboarding within a counter-democratic discourse. I argue that both portrayals conform to a liberal ideology of state violence that disavows torture as excessive and ferocious cruelty while permitting expressions of state violence that may be credibly construed as callous, clinical, and instrumental.

September 29, 2011

Margaret Morganroth Gullette, Brandeis University

"Ageism: the New Ageism in America"



Margaret Morganroth Gullette spoke on "Ageism: the New Ageism in America" at the department seminar on Thursday, 9/29. Dr. Gullette has an international reputation as a cultural critic, feminist, and activist.

March 15, 2011

Rachel Schurman, University of Minnesota

"Fighting for the Future of Food: The Concept of 'Lifeworlds' and the Dynamics of Contention in the Struggle over Biotechnology"



Although social movement scholars have utilized a variety of concepts to explain the dynamics of social movement struggles (e.g., resource mobilization, movement-counter-movement dynamics, political opportunities, etc.), one of the major challenges this literature still faces is to take the adequate account of the cultural and social worlds that motivate and shape the interactions between activists and their adversaries. In this talk, I suggest that an understanding of the dynamics of contention surrounding social movements and their adversaries can be significantly advanced by the reconstructing and adapting of the sociological concept of "lifeworlds." Focusing on the controversy over genetically modified food, I show the utility of this

concept for understanding the dynamics of contention in the thirty-year battle over biotechnology. I argue that viewing social movements and their opponents through the lens of life worlds allows us to better grasp these respective actors' ways of seeing and acting upon the world and their strengths, weaknesses, and points of vulnerability vis-a-vis one another.

March 1, 2011

Zine Magubane, Boston College

"Booker T. Washington—'Father' of Transnational Sociology?: Booker T. Washington, Robert Park, Tuskegee Institute and the Birth of 'Global' Sociology"



In "Why is Classical Theory Classical," her account of how sociology became "an international more strictly, inter-metropolitan, cultural formation," Connell (1997:1528) points to institutions like Rene Worms's Institut International de Sociologie, journals, and scholarly visits across the North Atlantic. One important institution she fails to mention, however, are historically Black colleges and universities. Even though they are rarely characterized as such, during the 19th century segregated industrial and agricultural institutions like Hampton Institute (located in Virginia) and Tuskegee Institute (founded in Alabama by Hampton alum Booker T. Washington) were

key sites for intellectuals from across the globe to gather, discuss, debate, and exchange sociological knowledge — particularly around race.

February 8, 2011

Elizabeth Ferry, Brandeis

"Making Scientific Value: A Twice-Told Tale of the Mineral Species 'Aguilarite'"



In 1891 the mineral species "aguilarite" was discovered, described and named by a scientist from the Field Museum in Chicago, after Ponciano Aguilar, a mining engineer and mineral collector. With this event aguilarite emerged as a new kind of object, one that formerly did not exist as such. In this paper, I want to explore two different ways of telling the story of how aguilarite came to be and what happened next: one influenced by Actor Network Theory (ANT) and the other coming from world systems theory and structured by the description of commodity chains. Each of these methods builds on a series of metaphysical and methodological principles and each has

strengths and weaknesses that follow from these premises. In this article, I explore what it means to tell the story of aguilarite from the perspective of Actor Network Theory and commodity chain analysis, particularly as part of the political economy tradition in anthropology. What does each type of account conceal and reveal about the discovery of aguilarite and what came next? What can the two accounts together tell us about aguilarite, Aguilar, 19th-century science, Mexican-US relations, and so on, that each one on its own cannot?

January 25, 2011

Lisa Dodson, Boston College

"Facing Untenable Choices: Taking Care of Low-income Families"

This seminar will discuss effects of profound inequality in family life, from the perspective of low-wage mothers and children. Today, 42% of all children in the US are low income — most of them living in working families. Beyond unsustainable earnings, low-wage occupations often have schedules that disrupt child/family care strategies. Across recent scholarship on low-income families, as well as in original field research, mothers and children describe untenable choices trying to meet the demands of the labor market, fulfill the terms of contemporary schooling, and care for each other. They also describe social stigma when unable to replicate the current norms of intensified parenting and devotion to personal success at work and in school. In fact, major social institutions (employment and education) are described as operating according to rules and expectations that, particularly in the

expanding world of low-income America, pit mothers and children against each other. This sharp angle on work/family conflict tends to be ignored or, if highlighted, used as evidence of "personal irresponsibility" and failed families, thereby undermining common cause on a critical social issue.

November 9, 2010

Teresa Gowan, University of Minnesota

"Homeless in San Francisco: Discourse, Space, and Social Control"



In her ethnography of street homelessness in San Francisco, Teresa Gowan shows how contrasting ways of "doing homelessness" are not only elicited within different poverty management institutions but ultimately reworked, embodied, and ultimately spatialized across the more autonomous zones of homeless life. Asking how the very poor process the symbolic violence and social suffering of street life, this kind of discourse analysis offers one path through the representational minefield of contemporary poverty studies, demonstrating the intimate relationship between the ideas and behavior of the very poor and the concrete fantasies represented by

neoliberal social projects of mass incarceration, "urbanoid" development, and responsabilization without resources.

October 19, 2010

Hilary Levey, Harvard University

"Playing to Win: Raising Girls in a Competitive Culture"



What motivates parents to get their daughters involved in competitive activities? I analyze the roots and effects of participation in competitive children's activities using data from sixteen months of fieldwork spent in the worlds of competitive children's chess, dance, and soccer, including 43 interviews with parents of elementary school-age girls and 17 interviews with their daughters. I show that the extensive time devoted to participation in activities is driven by parents' demand for credentials for their children, which they see as a necessary and often sufficient condition for entry into the middle and upper-middle classes. Others

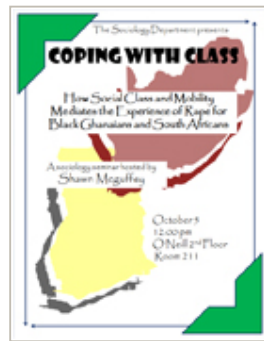
have noted that an increasing number of children spend their time in these organized activities, but what is rarely discussed is their competitive nature. This competitive element is key, as parents worry that if their children do not participate in childhood tournaments they will fall behind in the tournament of life. Upper-middle and lower-middle class parents encourage their daughters to be competitive in particular ways in different after-school activities. These decisions result in different classed forms of femininity for young girls who learn to be either graceful girls, aggressive girls, or "pink" girls. I argue that such classed lessons in competitive after-school activities are an unexplored way in which class and gender reproduction occurs and, by training the sociological lens on this segment of life, we can explore how parents raise daughters to move up or sustain their current position in the hierarchy. Ultimately these activities seem to reinforce a less-than-level playing field.

October 5, 2010

Shawn McGuffey, Boston College

"Coping with Class: How Social Class and Mobility Mediate the Experience of Rape for Black Ghanaians and South Africans"

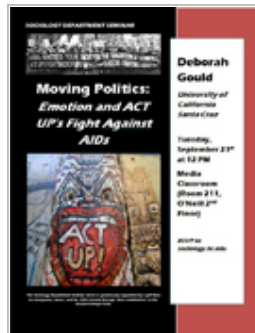
Noon, Media classroom, Room 211, O'Neill 2nd floor



September 21, 2010

Deborah Gould, University of California Santa Cruz

"Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight Against AIDS"



April 13, 2010

Karen McCormak

Foreclosing Home: Rethinking the Meaning and Loss of Home in the Foreclosure Process

February of 2010 marked the 12th consecutive month in which more than 300,000 properties in the United States received foreclosure filings. The families residing in these properties are at risk not only for home loss but also health effects and family stress related to their housing insecurity. This talk explores the various meanings of home as a source of security, control, and freedom from surveillance, and the consequent risks to identity and security for those self-defined as at-risk of foreclosure.

March 23, 2010

Ana Villalobos

I Need Baby, Baby Needs the Boot: How the Perception of a Scary World Can Turn Mother-Child Attachment on its Head

The psychological attachment literature focuses on infants' attachment to their primary caregivers, with infants' attachment behavior displayed most prominently during moments of perceived threat. In this talk, I investigate mothers' perception of threat in the social world (be it divorce anxiety, fear of layoff, or concern over terrorism) as a mediating influence on mothers' own attachment patterns with their children. Specifically, I examine two opposing maternal responses to perceived threat—drawing children closer, and endeavoring to toughen children up through independence training—and the maternal predicament when a woman has both of these responses.

March 10, 2010

Saskia Sassen

A Savage Sorting of Winners and Losers: A Contemporary Version of Primitive Accumulation

February 25, 2010

Michael Hardt

Foucault and Kant on Enlightenment

Michel Foucault was obsessed with Kant's brief text on the Enlightenment and analyzed it in numerous lectures and courses during the final years of his life. I am interested in exploring not only Kant's and Foucault's notions of modernity but also how they view the vocation of the theorist and what they think theory can do. Specifically I would like to explore what they see as the limits of critique and the possibilities of theory beyond critique.

February 5, 2010

David Harvey

Dialectics of Social Change: Exit strategies for Capitalism in Crisis

November 10, 2009

Stephen Pfohl***Digital Magic, Cybernetic Sorcery: on the Cultural Politics of Fascination and Fear***

Beginning with a somewhat magical image of the human body transubstantiating into a fleshless cybernetic machine, this presentation explores the fascinations and fears of magic in relation to contemporary information-based forms of power. Magic is today a common metaphor in the realms of advertising, mass entertainment, and politics. Think, for instance, of the magic of Disney, the magic of Macy's, or the magic of this or that new technological innovation, fashion, or virtual battlefield. Drawing upon historical, anthropological, and theological discussions of the relationship between magic and technology, and also between digital and analogical forms of communication, "Digital Magic, Cybernetic Sorcery" attempts a sociological theorization of magic and its relationship to technology at three distinct moments of Northwestern history—(1) the fascinations and fears of "natural magic" during the European "witch craze" and Renaissance, (2) the suggestive mesmeric magic of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and (3) the hypnotic techno-magic of contemporary digital culture.

Once associated with streaming analogical flows of energetic-material connection between humans and our natural-historical environments, magical spiritual rituals were targeted for repression during the emergence of modern Northwestern society. Today, however, magic is making a big-time comeback with the onset of high-speed digital technologies of cybernetic command and control. In what ways do contemporary technologies of image management, sensory fascination, political persuasion, and the conduct of war operate as a kind of simulated return of repressed magical communications? "Digital Magic, Cybernetic Sorcery" concludes with a critical sociological mediation on the mesmerizing effects of being awash in the fascinations and fears of dense televisionary loops of communicative feedback. Here we find suggestive evidence of both the technological amplification of earlier modern modalities of social power and an unprecedented opportunity for future social and cultural change.

October 30, 2009

Dorothy Roberts***Is Race-based Medicine Good for Us?: A Scientific and Political Question***

Public discourse on race-specific medicine typically erects a wall between the scientific use of race as a biological category and the ideological battle over race as a social identity. But "Is race-based medicine good for us?" is at once a medical and political question. I place the scientific debate over race-based medicine in the context of an equally heated battle over approaches to racial equality as well as the emergence of a new biological citizenship.

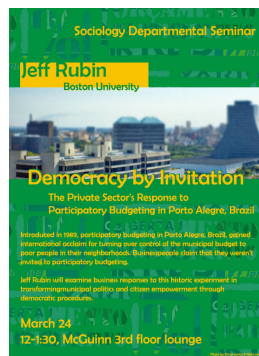
October 13, 2009

Rosanna Hertz***Donor Siblings or Genetic Strangers: The Internet and the New Networked Family***

Following up on earlier work I will talk about findings from a web-based survey of women who became pregnant using anonymous donors. The Internet now enables anonymous donor parents and children to search for donor-siblings (others who purchased gametes from the same donor.) Some families wonder if biology roots family. Other families are using this information to make new kin claims and they expand their boundaries to include other children (and their parents). However, most relationships remain in virtual space; surprisingly few families meet in person. I am interested in discussing how the internet is producing new emotional ties. And the ways in which some families are developing guidelines for embracing their genetic kin who fall outside traditional reproductive narratives.

March 24, 2009

Jeffrey Rubin***Democracy by Invitation: The Private Sector's Response to Participatory Budgeting in Porto***

Alegre, Brazil

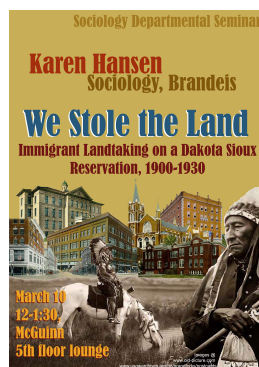
Participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil, gained international acclaim for turning over control of the municipal budget to poor people in their neighborhoods. Since 1989, through a series of meetings run by formalized procedures of debate and voting, ordinary people have made decisions about how the budget for municipal services in their neighborhoods should be spent. What preoccupies businesspeople in Porto Alegre is another set of concerns, a very different telling of the story of participatory budgeting and their own place in it. Businesspeople claim that they weren't invited to participatory budgeting; what they mean is that they can be outvoted there. My talk will examine business responses

to this historic experiment in transforming municipal politics and citizen empowerment through democratic procedures.

March 10, 2009

Karen Hansen

'We Stole the Land: Immigrant Landtaking on a Dakota Sioux Reservation, 1900-1930



An elder of the Dakota nation, Grace Lambert, spoke with bitterness about land-taking on the reservation where she was born and raised. After a family tragedy, her father sold their farm, "...and then some white man got it." Helene Ivarsdottir Lynghaugen told the same history through a different lens, reflecting on the journey with her widowed mother and two sisters from a rocky mountainside farm in Norway to North Dakota. She matter-of-factly stated: "We stole the land from the Indians." In fact, her mother's acquisition of land followed the letter of the law. However, her reflection captures how it felt to the dispossessed Dakota, and reflects the sense of culpability experience by many Scandinavian homesteaders.

At the urging of the U.S. government and under an agreement by the tribe, hundreds of impoverished Scandinavians homesteaded Dakota Indian Reservation land in the early twentieth century. This talk explores the process of Native American dispossession, the high levels of Dakota and Scandinavian women's land ownership, and the diverse and gendered forms of conflict and cooperation that ensued in the complex multicultural community that unfolded.

February 24, 2009

Gay Seidman

Citizens, Markets, and Transnational Activism: Monitoring sweatshops in South Africa, India, and Guatemala



Over the past decade, scholars and policy-makers alike have sought new approaches to protecting labor rights in developing countries, often looking to consumer boycotts and independent monitors to assure compliance with codes of conduct. This paper explores the dynamics of 'stateless regulation' through empirical research in South Africa, India, and Guatemala, and concludes that there are pitfalls, as well as promise, in turning to market forces to protect citizenship rights.

January 27, 2008

Charlotte Ryan

The Invisible Elbow and the Invisible Cold Shoulder: Reviewing public sociology from a fractal, movement-building lens

For the last two decades, the Movement and Media Research Action Project (MRAP) has operated with support from Boston College's Sociology Program. From this experience, Charlotte Ryan presents a conceptual model of movement-building distilled in collaboration with one of MRAP's long-standing community partners.

The model suggests that pre-figurative political practices (Breines; Belenky; Baker) are critical for movement growth, that learning is circular and collective, and prefigurative (we have to change ourselves). The model has implications for reimagining the public role of sociology. Format: Short presentation followed by a conversation based on questions posed.

November 11, 2008

Julian Go

Global Fields and Imperial Forms: the British and American Empires Compared

One of the many differences between the British and US empires is that the British empire largely relied upon formal imperialism entailing direct colonial control, while the US empire has tended towards informal (or indirect) imperialism. To explain this difference, existing narratives would point to America's presumably "exceptional" political culture. Alternatively, this presentation argues that the difference lies in the different global fields in which the two states were embedded.

October 28, 2008

Leslie Salzinger

Structures and Subjects in the Global Economy: What Gender Helps Us See

There is a long history of looking at the differential impact of economics on women and men. In this talk I want to flip that question and investigate the impact of gendered meaning structures on the way political economic processes unfold. Working with data from my earlier work on gender in the maquila sector and with data from my current work on peso/dollar exchange markets, I will trace the processes that a gendered lens make visible and discuss the implications of that shifting optic on how we understand the economy.

October 7, 2008

Amy Finnegan, Jonathan Christiansen, Mike Cermak, Aideen Gleeson, Shelley White

Displacing Activism? The Impact of International Service Trips on Understandings of Social Change

Prior studies of civic engagement either conflate or isolate service and activism. In this study we examined the relationship between the two by interviewing students returning from international service trips. We show that far from being complementary, service and activism are competing identities with service being preferred. This had repercussions as students returned from abroad with a desire to be more engaged yet lacked the skills to do so. Our findings suggest that service-learning programs can incorporate and model a broader range of civic engagement activities to help students better understand the different approaches taken to enacting social change.

September 16, 2008

Charles Derber

The Making of a Public Sociologist: Invitation to a Conversation"

Charlie Derber offered some reflections on how to study, teach, write, and act as a public sociologist. He discussed modes of publishing and teaching, relations to media, collaboration with activists, and professional risks. When he was president of the ASA, Michael Burawoy identified the Boston College Sociology department as exemplifying public sociology. This session led to a conversation about how one educates or trains a public sociologist, what kind of impact public sociology can have, and how we can do the job better.

April 22, 2008

Dr. Starr

Social Movement Strategy in Alternative Consumption Projects

This paper analyzes the development of urban-rural "local food" institutions from a social movements perspective. Over the last decade, institutions that "shorten the links" between producer and consumer have developed through a diverse collaboration of many social sectors (farmers, agronomic experts, retailers, chefs, food writers, and a variety of consumers). Some agronomists and rural sociologists critical of the globalization and industrialization of agriculture have recognized this development as heralding a Polanyian "reembedding" of market exchanges in social relations. Some academic critics have questioned its politics. This paper uses social movements theory to analyze whether "local food" is a social movement. Drawing on 17 years of participant observation, 11 years of discourse analysis, and 2 years of participant action research, this paper analyzes whether and how local food "creates a 'we'" [Melucci 1989], its "new idea" and technologies of dissemination [Eyerman & Jamison 1991], and the politics of its activity [Melucci 1996]. For these social movement theorists, protests, membership organizations, and campaigns tell us little about social movements. They require us to enter the empirically challenging world of culture, meaning, and identity.

April 8, 2008

Donatella Della Porta

"Europeanization from Below: Social Movements and Multilevel Governance"

March 25, 2008

Esteban Calvo, Boston College

Work to Retirement Transitions and Happiness: Linking Public Policies, Social Structures, and Private Troubles

This study classifies work to retirement transitions according to their mode (gradual/abrupt) and perceived control (wanted/forced), and asks what type of transition makes people happier. Recent studies find that workers often view the idea of gradual retirement as a more attractive alternative than a "cold turkey" or abrupt retirement. Many policymakers also favor gradual retirement, as it may increase retirement income. Theory and conventional wisdom predict greater happiness for gradual retirees and people who report sense of control over their retirement. However, there is very little evidence as to whether phasing or cold turkey makes for a happier retirement. Using longitudinal data from the Health and Retirement Study, this study explores what shapes the change in happiness during the transition and once the transition has been completed. Results suggest that what matters is not the mode of the transition (gradual/abrupt), but the sense of control workers have over their retirement. Conceptualizing 'sense of control' as the result of the interplay of opportunities and choices helps to understand happiness in connection to public policies and social structures.

March 11, 2008

Juliet Schor, Boston College

The New Consumer Movement: co-optation or challenge?

February 19, 2008

Lisa Dodson

Like a Family: Caring, exploitation, and race in paid carework



Professor Dodson will speak about her recent research on careworkers in long-term care to examine larger issues of gender, class, race, and carework in the current economy. The development of a family ideology promotes good care of residents and thus benefits nursing homes.

Careworkers value fictive kin relationships with residents, yet the family model may be used to exploit these low-income careworkers.

February 5, 2008

Prasannan Parthasarathi

"Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not"

January 22, 2008

Ulrike Boehmer, BU School of Public Health*Sexual Orientation and Health Disparities*

November 6, 2007

Donald Tomaskovic-Devey, University of Massachusetts/Amherst*Documenting Desegregation: Equal Opportunity in Private Sector Employment Since the Civil Rights Act of 1964*

Numerous commentators have concluded that the Civil Rights Act was effective in promoting increased access to good quality jobs for racial minorities. Many have worried as well that the pace of change has been too slow or stalled, particularly after 1980. Few have directly discussed under what conditions we might expect equal employment opportunity (EEO) to flourish. Explanations of status inequalities in the workplace have primarily relied on theories of social conflict and discrimination. Organizational perspectives on stratification, while not completely absent from previous research, remain a road less traveled. In this paper we present trends in race-sex inequality in U.S. workplaces since the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and describe the organizational practices and discrimination processes that are likely to maintain status inequalities in the workplace and those which might be catalysts of change.

September 27, 2007

Sharlene Hesse-Biber*Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis: A Panel Discussion on Current Perspectives on the Theory and Practice of Feminist Research*

Feminist research challenges traditional researchers to dynamically engage with gender as a category of inquiry in the research process. Feminist researchers utilize all types of research methods –qualitative and quantitative and sometimes a combination of methods. What makes research “feminist” lies in the particular set of theoretical perspectives and research questions that places women’s issues, concerns and lived experiences at the center of research inquiry. Feminist research stresses the importance of taking into account how gender intersects with other forms of women’s oppression based on their race, ethnicity, class, nationality and so on. A primary goal of feminist research is the promotion of social justice and social transformation of women’s lives. Feminist research praxis emphasizes issues of power and authority between the researcher and researched, off setting these issues through the practice of reflexivity throughout the research process.

September 11, 2007

Shawn McGuffey

April 10, 2007

Charles Morris*Hard Evidence: The Vexations of Lincoln's Queer Corpus*

C. A. Tripp's posthumously published *The Intimate World of Abraham Lincoln* (2005) sparked the latest battle in an ongoing cold war over Abraham Lincoln's sexuality. Unlike Larry Kramer's 1999 controversial "outing" of Lincoln, Tripp emerged wearing a mantle of academic ethos, disavowed political motive, and made clear from the outset that a convincing historical case rests on compelling evidence. However, as revealed in the copious response to Tripp's book by defenders and detractors, gay and straight alike an evidentiary struggle over Lincoln's sexuality is illusory, one that masks the heteronormative presumption undergirding and protected by the rhetorically constructed material status of evidence itself. As such, the vexations of Lincoln's corpus provide the ground for a queer refiguring of our understanding of public memory as a mirror and/or lamp, and in keeping with Gavin Butt's project of queering the evidential, offer a displacement of so-called verifiable truths from their positivistic frames of reference to render them instead . . . as projections of interpretive desire and curiosity. What I seek through this interrogation of the evidentiary battle over Lincoln's body is a queer critical politics of revelatory inducement, not historical adducement, and to consider desire as a material force in rhetorical productions of the past.

March 27, 2007

Zine Magubane

Movies, Madonna, and Malawi: Africa and the New Cult of Celebrity



Boston College Sociology Professor Zine Magubane discussed the recent upswing in interest about Africa and Africans in popular culture. Her talk addressed how Africa has historically been represented in popular culture, and compared it to what is happening today.

March 13, 2007

David Swarts (Boston University)

The Political Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu



Pierre Bourdieu has inspired much work in the sociology of culture and cultural studies, education, theory, and stratification, but received very little attention in political sociology and practically none in political science. Yet the analysis of power represents the core objective of Bourdieu's sociology. He proposes a theory of symbolic power, violence, and capital that stresses the active role that symbolic forms play as resources that both constitute and maintain social hierarchies. Moreover, he identifies a wide variety of valued resources beyond sheer economic interests that function as power resources and that he calls forms of capital, such as social capital and cultural capital. Furthermore, individuals and groups struggle over the very definition and distribution of these capitals in distinct power arenas Bourdieu calls fields. His sociology sensitizes us to the more subtle and influential forms of power that operate particularly through the cultural resources and symbolic categories and classifications that interweave everyday life with prevailing institutional arrangements. Finally, Bourdieu offers not only a sociology of politics but also a politics of sociology. There is a political project in his sociology that for the most part goes overlooked in its reception outside of France. Swarts' presentation proposed a reading of Bourdieu as a political sociologist who offers both a sociology of politics and a politics of sociology.

February 20, 2007

Nazli Kibria (Boston University)

'Muslim American' and 'British Bengali': Identities of Bangladeshi Youth in Britain and the U.S.

In recent times, the unitary category of Muslim youth has marked media depictions of young Muslims of varied national, racial and class background. Drawing on her cross-national research on the Bangladeshi diaspora, Professor Kibria explored the impact of national context on Muslim migrant youth, specifically on their experiences of integration and Muslim identification.

February 6, 2007

Darcy Leach

The Way is the Goal: Ideology and Practice in the German Autonomous Movement

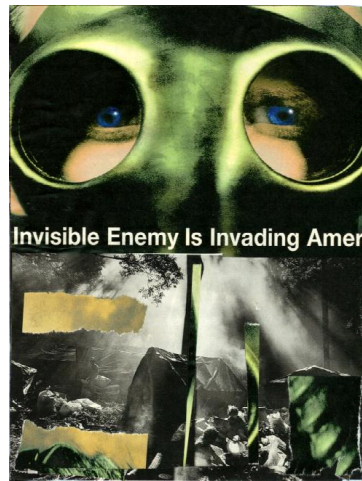
Over the last thirty years, extraparliamentary activism in Germany has given rise to two divergent democratic countercultures, both deeply committed to a non-hierarchical, 'collectivist-democratic' style of politics, but each embracing a distinct pattern of self-organization. One has roots in the Gandhian tradition of radical non-violence; the other in the Western European 'autonomous' movement (known in Germany as the Autonomen).

These two movement countercultures have developed contrasting forms of collectivist democracy, marked by different ways of dividing labor and running meetings as well as different decision-making processes and tactical orientations. Given that both movements exist within the same political system, have the same class base and face the same opportunity structures, my work explores the role of ideology to explain their divergent organizational practices through a comparative analysis of twelve collectivist groups drawn on an equal basis from each counterculture. Darcy argues that the practices of the Autonomes and non-violence groups grew out of competing understandings within each movement of their own core concepts of autonomy and non-violence. The seminar focused on the effects of this ideological contradiction among the Autonomes and its implications for the movement.

January 23, 2007

Stephen Pfohl

Feedback, Fear, and Fascination: Cybernetic Social Control and Global Capitalist Power



This plenary presentation examined the global politics of cybernetic forms of social control in the realms of culture, economy, and war. It provided a critical sociological history of information-driven rituals of power and resistance in an era characterized by high-speed telematic communications, electronic surveillance, and ultramodern technologies aimed at colonizing the social imagination and body.

December 5, 2006

Ted Gaiser and Jared Del Rosso

Online Research: A Practical Approach

This seminar approached the topic of online research by introducing a number of topics followed by practical application of research techniques. The types of topics covered included recruitment, participant safety, and managing the research process in online environments. Using research experience from a study of penisanity.com, an online environment in which men explore meaning and masculinity in the context of their penis, they offered practical examples and experiences that aimed to assist attendees in developing their own online research strategies.

November 21, 2006

Juliet Schor

The Social Death of Stuff: Accumulation and Discard in the Global Economy

Recent consumer research has stressed consumers' tendency to singularize, sacralize, and sentimentalize products. While this line of inquiry has been productive, this paper argues that in recent years disposability and commodification have been more pervasive and quantitatively important trends, and that there has been a speed-up of the cycle of product acquisition and discard. This cycle involves the acquisition and discard of items on the basis of their social utility, i.e., fashionable-ness, rather than their functional product benefits. The paper presents the case of apparel in some detail using data on purchases of new apparel items and discards of used apparel, and also looks at acquisition data for a number of other products. It ends with a discussion of the theoretical context for understanding these trends, namely the relation between what it terms symbolic and utilitarian value, and argues that in advanced consumer societies such as the US, the salience of the former is rising relative to the latter.

October 24, 2006

Jackie Orr

daddy does cybernetics: Diary of a Mental Patient



Jackie Orr performed a historical, somewhat hysterical, story of U.S. Cold War culture caught between the threat of contagious panic and the government sponsored imperative to Keep Calm! Part social history, part political theory, part schizophrenic poetry, this piece of performance theory attempts to evoke the reasoned madness of an era from which we perhaps have yet to fully emerge.

Jackie Orr is an associate professor of sociology at Syracuse University, where she teaches and writes in the fields of feminist and contemporary theory, cultural politics, and critical studies of science, technology, and psychiatry. She received her M.A. in sociology from Boston College in 1990, and her Ph.D. from UC Berkeley in 1999. Her book, *Panic Diaries: A Genealogy of Panic Disorder* (Duke University Press, 2006), looks at the entanglements of bombs, bodies, computers, pills, cybernetics, mass media, and (social) science in the management and control of panic.

October 10, 2006

John Williamson

Recent Social Security Reforms In China

By the year 2025, one quarter of the world's population over age 60 will be living in China, a nation in the process of partially privatizing its social security system. Professor Williamson presented a brief history of social security policy in China, described the current scheme, presented an analysis of the pros and cons of this scheme, and asked why China is currently on the road to adopting policy changes that are so strongly influenced by the neo-liberal social security model being advanced by the World Bank. Social security policy in China is being driven largely by demographic considerations, but it is also being influenced by factors linked to globalization. Williamson asked who stands to gain and who is being put at risk by current plans to privatize the Chinese social security system. He argued that the current trend will put at risk many vulnerable categories of the population, particularly women, low-wage workers, those in the informal sector, and recent immigrants from rural areas.

September 26, 2006

Sarah Babb

The Banks and the Beltway: Three Decades of Washington Politics and Multilateral Development Institutions



The World Bank and other multilateral development banks have a large influence on dominant ideas about "what is to be done" in developing countries. These ideas change over time: for example, the "Washington Consensus" of the late 1980s has become obsolete. But where do these ideas come from? Babb argues that they come partly out of the accumulation of expert knowledge, and partly out of economic circumstances. However, they also respond to American politics.

September 22, 2006

Colloquium on David Karp's latest book

Is It Me or My Meds?: Living with Antidepressants

By the millennium Americans were spending more than 12 billion dollars yearly on antidepressant medications. Currently, millions of people in the U.S. routinely use these pills.

Are these miracle drugs, quickly curing depression? Or is their popularity a sign that we now inappropriately redefine normal life problems as diseases? Are they prescribed too often or too seldom? How do they affect self-images?

David Karp approaches these questions from the inside, having suffered from clinical depression for most of his adult life. In this book he explores the relationship between pills and personhood by listening to a group of experts who rarely get the chance to speak on the matter—those who are taking the medications. Their voices, extracted from interviews Karp conducted, color the pages with their experiences and reactions—humor, gratitude, frustration, hope, and puzzlement. Here, the patients themselves articulate their impressions of what drugs do to them and for them. They reflect on difficult issues, such as the process of becoming committed to medication, quandaries about personal authenticity, and relations with family and friends.

The stories are honest and vivid, from a distraught teenager who shuns antidepressants while regularly using street drugs to a woman who still yearns for a spiritual solution to depression even after telling intimates "I'm on Prozac and it's saving me." The book provides unflinching portraits of people attempting to make sense of a process far more complex and mysterious than doctors or pharmaceutical companies generally admit.

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