This is shaping up to be a very busy semester for students and faculty members in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice. For example, over the past month, Dr. Eckstein helped to organize a presentation on Gender and Sports featuring acclaimed sportswriter Dave Zirin (page 2), and Dr. McCorkel and Randy Restrepo (2009 graduate and current Master’s student) spoke at the opening of the St. Thomas of Villanovans celebration about their work at Graterford prison (page 3). In addition, students in Dr. Jones’ Data Analysis class are preparing to present their research at the Annual Pennsylvania Sociological Society meeting in Shippensburg later this month.

Importantly, we also have several notable speakers coming to campus this semester. As you will read about below, Dr. Jacob S. Hacker, Yale University Professor and renowned expert on public policy and health care in America, will be giving the keynote address of the Fritz Nova Lecture. His talk should be highly informative as to why health care costs make up the majority of personal bankruptcy cases in the United States, most especially among middle class Americans with health insurance. In addition, Dr. Ted Goertzel of Rutgers University will be speaking about trends of violent crime in Brazil (page 2). We greatly appreciate the efforts of Drs. Knapp and Pattnayak in bringing Drs. Hacker and Goertzel to campus. In addition, our department’s own Dr. Juliani will discuss his decades-long research project on the Italian experience in America and the future of the discipline (page 2).

Shortly after you return from Fall break, you will receive a letter from me regarding advisement for Spring 2010 class registration. Make an appointment as soon as possible to insure that you and I meet prior to your scheduled registration time. Please keep in mind that this process involves more than simply getting a PIN number.

Attention Junior Criminal Justice majors: you should register for CRJ 5100 Criminological Theory.

The faculty and staff wish you an enjoyable Fall Break.

—Dr. Thomas Arvanites
Politics and Violent Crime in Brazil: Ted G. Goertzel, Ph.D.

If you have ever seen the acclaimed film “City of God,” which portrays slum life in Rio de Janeiro in the 1960s and 70s, you probably remember the film’s dramatic depiction of gangs, drugs, and corrupt cops. This film based its story on the real lives of gang leaders and youths from this era of inequity. However, the severity of violent crime in Brazil is changing, and Dr. Ted Goertzel, Professor of Sociology at Rutgers University, will be coming to Villanova to explain why. His presentation, titled "Violent Crime in Brazil: Recent Trends,” will discuss stereotypes about violence in Brazil and how data for urban areas is showing dramatic trends in crime and violence. He will also discuss the effects of state policies on crime in Brazil.

Dr. Goertzel is an expert on a variety of Latin American issues, particularly Brazilian politics. His works include the 1999 book <em>Fernando Henrique Cardoso: Reinventing Democracy in Brazil</em>, which is a political biography about the first professional sociologist to become president of a nation. Dr. Goertzel also has an article forthcoming in the journal <em>Homicide Studies</em> titled “The Great Sao Paulo Homicide Drop,” and several publications on the Brazil.com website, including “What the U.S. and Europe Can Learn from Brazilian Socialism” (5/5/09) and “Making Capitalism Work: The Brazilian Model” (10/29/08).

Dr. Goertzel’s talk is kicking off a new initiative by the Latin American Studies program to bring Brazilian studies into the Villanova Arts and Sciences curriculum. This presentation will take place on Tuesday, November 10th from 4:30-6:30 in the Health Services Building, Room 200, with a reception to follow. This event is co-sponsored by a Title VI Grant from the U.S. Department of Education and the Sociology Department.

All are welcome!

Gender and Sports: Dave Zirin Comes to Campus by Alissa Ricci, Class of 2011

On September 23rd, the Department of Sociology co-hosted an event entitled “Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: Gender and Sports in the U.S.,” featuring guest speaker Dave Zirin. Zirin’s insightful observations of sports as a social institution have led to his success as a commentator on ESPN and MSNBC and as a writer of a weekly column, “The Edge of Sports.” Zirin is also the author of four books, one of which is a required text for Dr. Rick Eckstein’s Sociology of Sports class: <em>A People’s History of Sports in the United States: From Bull-Baiting to Barry Bonds . . . 250 Years of Politics, Protest, People, and Play</em> (2008).

Dr. Eckstein introduced the guest of honor. “Dave is either a sports journalist who really understands sociology, or a sports sociologist who can write more than three sentences without using the term ‘post-modern.’ Dave rejects the conventional wisdom that organized sports are somehow immune from the exercise of social power. He rejects the idea that sports are a respite from social injustices such as racism and sexism.”

Zirin’s talk began with a brief history of sports, and he emphasized the often-ignored role of women in athletics. He also identified sexism and homophobia as two social problems that sports brings to light, especially in controversies involving female athletes. Zirin pointed to the recent question over South African runner Mokgadi Caster Semenya’s sex as a prime example.

“At this very moment, as we sit in this room, Semenya is under 24-hour suicide watch. Why? Because there are objections she might not be ‘fully female.’ She is under examination by endocrinologists, psychologists, and gynecologists to determine her gender. Gender testing only applies to female athletes. It should be (continued on page 4)
caused unprecedented public interest and heated protests over health care reform, social scientists and researchers of socio-economic issues have been noting the disparities in American health care for decades. For example, a 2007 study of bankruptcy filings found that nearly two-thirds of bankruptcy cases were caused by medical bills, even though the majority of the medical debtors were well-educated, owned homes and had middle-class occupations. More surprisingly, three-quarters of the debtors had health insurance (American Journal of Medicine, cited in the New York Times, 9/13/09).

In addition, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) recently published a report in 2008 titled Unequal Treatment, citing the racial and ethnic gaps in treatment and access to health care. As stated in the report, at least one in three nonelderly Latinos and American Natives are uninsured, compared with 22% of African Americans and 13% of Whites. African American children also have a four to five times higher rate of hospitalization for asthma than do White children. Unfortunately, such inequalities are only getting worse. For example, the disparity between Whites and all other racial and ethnic minority groups regarding the percent covered by health insurance and the quality of care received has stayed the same or worsened over the past ten years.

Conversely, as reported in The Los Angeles Times on August 27, 2008, “Thanks mostly to expanded government health coverage for children, the number of people without health insurance fell in 2007... In all, the number of people without health insurance dropped last year to 45.7 million, from 47 million in 2006, according to the Census Bureau's annual report on income, poverty and health insurance. That's a drop to 15.3% of Americans from 15.8%.” This type of government sponsorship of health care will be a focal point of Dr. Hacker’s discussion.

The event is free and open to the public and we hope to see you there.

Prisoner Education, Villanova Students & Catholic Social Teaching

On September 18th, Dr. Jill McCorkel and Criminology, Law and Society graduate student Randy Restrepo participated in the Academic Symposium on Restorative Justice, which kicked off the annual St. Thomas of Villanova celebration. They presented their views on Catholic Social Teaching, prisoner education, and their volunteer work at the State Correctional Institution at Graterford, PA. Opening the symposium was keynote speaker Most Rev. Ricardo Ramirez, C.S.B., D.D., Bishop of Las Cruces, New Mexico. In his talk entitled “Restorative Justice: A Catholic Response to Crime and Punishment,” Bishop Ramirez spoke of the important role that restorative justice plays in healing the victim, offender and community. Rehabilitation and reintegration are one of many themes in the U.S. Catholic Bishops’ Statement on Crime and Punishment.

Dr. McCorkel spoke about the role that prison education plays in prisoner rehabilitation. She noted that volumes of research demonstrate the positive impact of education on incarcerated offenders and their families. Prisoner education has been a statistically significant factor in increasing the chances that an inmate will successfully transition back into their community following their release from prison.

Working closely with Ms. Noreen Cameron, Director of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences’ Service Learning Program, Dr. McCorkel’s (continued on page 4)
Gender and Sports
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abolished. Gender variance and hormonal differences in people are part of human nature.”

He then explained how gender testing not only implies a gender binary (that one is either male or female), but posits that men are the standard measure by which women’s athletic abilities are compared. Women who play sports are portrayed by the media as “masculine” or “hypersexual,” stereotypes that overshadow the accomplishments and talents of female athletes.

“The stereotype of female athletes insists they are women first, jocks second. This is the same box women have always been in,” said Zirin.

Zirin also spoke about the booming sports industry, which influences how society perceives the value of sports. Commodification, commercialization and corporatization are the hallmarks of an evolving social institution that prioritizes profit over the “fun” aspects of sports.

“Sports and play are becoming a means of production and consumption rather than some inherently wondrous expression of humanity,” said Dr. Eckstein. Junior sociology major Jenn Maez concurred.

“Messages of teamwork, communication, sportsmanship, work ethic, and determination are all great qualities that can be achieved in the form of athletics. However, as I would argue, sports and athletic organizations influence society in negative ways and mirrors social problems. [This situation] requires sports to be looked at with scrutiny.”

Dr. Eckstein counted the event as successful and thought-provoking. “Dave’s thinking and writing is at the forefront of a rather small genre which refuses to mindlessly genuflect before the people and organizations that engage in high-level amateur and professional sports,” he said. Those interested in learning more from Dave Zirin should visit www.edgeofsports.com.

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students can volunteer their time as literacy tutors at Graterford. Dr. McCorkel illustrated how this experience has transformed the educational experiences of her students, who have participated in essay-exchanges and service learning activities at the prison. She emphasized that “without exception, all the students who have participated in the service learning course describe it as ‘transformative,’ ‘life changing,’ and ‘rewarding.’”

There is no better example of this than Randy Restrepo’s experience, who also spoke at the symposium. Randy described how serving as a literacy tutor at Graterford through Dr. McCorkel’s Penology and Corrections class transformed his outlook on social justice. Even after the semester ended, he chose to continue volunteering at the prison. (Other students have also continued their tutoring after completing the course). His experiences at SCI-Graterford have directly shaped his graduate trajectory as well, since, as a M.A. student in the department’s graduate program, Randy is researching issues relating to prisoner education and rehabilitation.

Also participating in the discussion was Joyce A. Zavarich, D. Min., Associate Director of Campus Ministry, and Emily Felsenthal. Emily was a student in Dr. Zavarich’s Beyond Forgiveness class. Students in this class met four times during the semester with inmates in the educational program at Graterford to discuss common readings. Emily also described this as a meaningful and valuable educational experience.

If you are interested in learning more about Dr. McCorkel’s service learning Penology and Corrections class or in enrolling in the course, you are welcome to contact her or the Chair, Dr. Arvanites. Penology and Corrections will be offered again in the fall of 2010.