You will note that the Mid-Atlantic Undergraduate Social Research Conference will be held at Cheyney University on April 16th. I encourage all students who have completed a Theory or Methods class, or who are currently taking one, to present their findings at this conference.

This is a wonderful experience and a great addition to an employment or graduate school application. Most students will seek recommendation letters from one or more of their professors at some point. A presentation at this conference provides your reference with the opportunity to say something unique about your writing and communication skills. This is not extra work—if you completed your research last fall, your work is done. Students currently in Dr. Jones’ and Pattnayak’s classes are completing this project now. I encourage you to speak with me or your Theory or Methods professor about the Mid-Atlantic Conference. Cheyney is only a thirty-five minute ride from campus. The Department will arrange transportation and dinner.

I congratulate the students presenting their research at the Eastern Sociological Society meetings in Baltimore this month. These include: Patricia Christie, Jacqueline Diana, Gianella Domdom, Jacquelin Giacobbe, Megan Johnson, Damian Kelley, Jaclyn McNamee, Francis Prior, and Matthew Schoene.

I would like to thank Dr. Brian Jones for his time and effort in making this activity possible.

I look forward to seeing the sophomores and juniors at registration in March and the seniors at graduation. My colleagues and I wish you the best of luck. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can help in the future. We are also very interested in what you will be doing after graduation, so please stay in touch with your favorite professor(s).

—Dr. Thomas Arvanites
Upcoming Conferences for Undergraduate Students

The 29th Annual Mid-Atlantic Undergraduate Social Research Conference is being hosted this year by Cheyney University in Cheyney, PA, on Thursday, April 16th (11:30 - 5:00 p.m.). The conference provides a forum for undergraduate students to report the results of research projects and internship experiences. Both empirical and theoretical papers are welcome. Papers and reports are invited from but not limited to sociology and criminal justice; social work, global studies, women's studies, and other pertinent areas of research are welcome also. All sociology and criminal justice students are encouraged to attend whether or not they are making a presentation. Students who would like to present their research should submit a title and a typed abstract of their research project by Thursday, April 9, 2009 to umiles@cheyney.edu. This is an excellent opportunity for students to put a professional presentation on their resume, and also to work on their public speaking and writing skills as well. Transportation will be provided by the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice so interested students should contact their Theory/Methods professor or the Chair, Dr. Arvanites, at Thomas.arvanites@villanova.edu.

The 79th Annual Eastern Sociology Society Conference is being held this year at Baltimore’s Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel from March 19th to the 22nd, and several students from Dr. Knapp’s and Dr. Jones’ classes will be presenting research findings in a poster session on Friday, March 20th. In addition, our adjunct faculty member and former Villanova alumna, Professor Joelle Sano, will also be giving a talk titled “Making the Grade: The Catholic Teachers Union of New Jersey” on the same day at 1:45 p.m.

In addition to these two events, Villanova is hosting a variety of other conferences this spring that are open to Villanova students and faculty. Please see our notices on pages 3 and 4 of this newsletter regarding the conferences being sponsored by Arab & Islamic Studies and Gender & Women’s Studies Departments; both are free and open to Villanova students, staff and faculty.

Graduate School Acceptances

Congratulations is due to several undergraduate and graduate students for their Ph.D. program acceptances! * As of February 23rd, Sociology major and upcoming Class of 2009 graduate Matthew Schoene has received Ph.D. acceptances from the Loyola University of Chicago, the University of Notre Dame, and Ohio State University’s Sociology programs. In addition, several of the Criminology, Law and Society Master’s students have also heard from several outstanding doctoral programs. Katie Farina has been accepted to the University of Delaware’s Ph.D. program in Sociology and Criminal Justice, Florida State University’s Ph.D. program in Criminology, and University of Maryland at College Park’s Ph.D. program in Criminal Justice and Criminal Justice. Ron Eckert has been accepted to Temple University’s Ph.D. program in Criminal Justice, Florida State University’s Ph.D. program in Criminology, and University of Maryland at College Park’s Ph.D. program in Criminology and Criminal Justice. Erin Kerrison, also of the M.A. program, has been accepted into the Sociology and Criminal Justice Ph.D. program at the University of Delaware.

Please note that this notice is not an exhaustive or complete list, as these and many other students are still waiting to hear back from graduate programs (and about funding), law schools and job offers. We want to hear about your future endeavors and successes, so please keep us informed about all your many accomplishments! (See page 4 for contact information.)

*This notice was printed with the permission of the students.
Congratulations to our Recent and Prospective Graduates

Candidates for the Master's of Arts Degree in Criminology, Law & Society

- Shereda P. Coleman
- Ronald Joseph Eckert
- Katie Ann Farina
- Erin Michelle Turner Kerrison
- Sue Ann Schlossman

Double Majors in Sociology & Criminal Justice

- Paul Caporaso (CRJ/SOC)
- James Klein (SOC/CRJ)
- Carla Palomar-Nebot (CRJ/SOC)

Majors in Sociology

- Dwayne Anderson
- Wesley Borden
- Kathryn M. Brown***
- Kimberley Degnan
- Jacqueline Diana
- Gianella Domdom
- Alexander Eng
- Nancy Gajewski
- Jacquelin Giacobbe
- Brian Giacobetti
- Megan Johnson
- Damian Kelley
- Daniel Mason**
- Christine McElaney**
- Jaclyn McNamee
- Karen Olinchak (HIS/SOC)
- Jefferson Piniero
- Matthew Schoene
- Danielle Soucier (SOC/BIO)
- Patrick Sutton
- Coreen Wainscott (HIS/SOC)

Majors in Criminal Justice

- Robert Ahern
- Laura Beierschmitt (CHM/CRJ)
- Anthony Canci
- Whitney Chestnut
- Edward DiDonato
- James Dolbier***
- Josh DuFore
- Brett Gallagher
- Andrew Gottilla
- Kelly Kreider
- Gabriela B. Ledesma-Rubio***
- Elvis Lewis
- Daniel Manning
- Joseph E. Marcoux
- Keshia Pershand
- Stephen J. Pimm
- Craig Restrepo
- John Shields
- Steven Stiriti
- Jillian Zadie

* This list is not official and is subject to change.
** Date of graduation was December 2008.
*** Date of graduation was September 2008.

More events to look for...

This year’s annual Social Science Forum presents:

Dr. Karen Parker
Professor of Sociology and Criminology
University of Delaware


Tuesday, April 21st
7:30 - 9:30 pm

Connelly Center Cinema
All are welcome

The 20th Annual Elizabeth Cady Stanton Conference presents:

Linda Greenhouse, an award-winning Supreme Court reporter for The New York Times, giving her keynote address:

"What Judges Know (Or Don't Know) About Sex Discrimination (Or Anything Else)"

Thursday, March 19th
4:00 - 6:00 pm
Connelly Center Cinema

Free and open to the public

Please keep us appraised of your future endeavors and successes by dropping the Chair, Dr. Arvanites, a line at Thomas.arvanites@villanova.edu.
An Interview with Dr. Robert DeFina

(continued from page 1)

In addition, Dr. Lance Hannon and I have a forthcoming article in Social Forces that discusses the relationship between housing segregation and race. We wanted to determine if increasing diversity in any given metropolitan statistical area (MSA) reduces segregation or not.

Wouldn’t increasing diversity in a given area necessarily reduce segregation?

Not necessarily, because having diversity in a given MSA does not mean that people live together and are integrated within the same neighborhoods; on the contrary, they could be completely separated. Some people, such as Putnam (a Harvard sociologist), say that greater diversity can cause mistrust among people of different races; we have found the opposite, meaning that greater diversity in a given MSA leads to less segregation. Racism often operates at the meta-level, but it seems that when people of different races actually get to know each other through neighborhood contact, they are more likely to integrate voluntarily. This is called the "contact hypothesis"—it’s all about gaining exposure.

We also just published an article discussing some effects of mass incarceration on poverty. As you may know, the U.S. prison population has recently tripled, and is the second highest in the world next to Russia. We’re looking broadly at community-level effects. For example, when huge numbers of males are incarcerated in minority neighborhoods, this is most likely to affect poor families who lose their breadwinner. Incarceration fractures families and creates more community disorganization. When inmates are released from prison, they are less likely to be able to find a job, which increases poverty; in addition, disrupting the crime in a given area creates a power vacuum which leads to more violence, not less, in a given neighborhood.

As exemplified in shows like The Wire, where gangs have to reorganize and reassert themselves when there is a power vacuum, which leads to increased shootings and the like?

Exactly. The impact over the last twenty-five to thirty years on poverty has been significant. Although the economy has grown on average, overall gains have been very unequal, and one of the reasons for this has been mass incarceration in Black communities. As Bruce Western has written about, sixty percent of Black men ages thirty to thirty-four are in or have been in prison. It is a major life-course event, and has a massive impact on poverty.

Another recent thing I’ve been studying with Dr. Hannon is the impact of mass incarceration on crime. The standard view is that mass incarceration reduces crime through deterrence, but this overlooks the criminogenic effect, i.e., that incarcerating someone makes them more criminal. It decreases the possibility that they can secure a good job, and it introduces them to criminal networks that they may not have previously had exposure to. Mass imprisonment creates a great deal of turbulence that significantly increases poverty and violent crime.

So why is this research important to you?

What motivates me beyond intellectual curiosity is a concern about the impact of the social, economic and political structure on the poor, and also how people are controlled through segregation, either through housing or imprisonment. I think it’s important to examine the obstacles that the poor face, and how these obstacles have changed and transformed over time.

Come learn more about Dr. DeFina’s fascinating research in his 2008 Outstanding Faculty Research Award Lecture on the impact of mass incarceration on poverty: Falvey Memorial Library (First Floor Lounge) on March 26, 2009 at 2:30 p.m.