A Message from the Chair

Why should they hire/accept me? Regardless of your class, your senior year will arrive sooner than you expect and you will find yourself searching for a job or applying to graduate school. An excellent way to enhance your application is to take advantage of some of the many extra-curricular opportunities offered by the Department and the College of Arts and Sciences. An internship is a great way to obtain some “real life” work experience and secure references from someone outside academia. It also gives you a chance to “test drive” a career to see if it is right for you. This issue features an article written by a student who has completed an internship. Service Learning courses are another way to gain some experiential learning. Some of our students are currently serving as literacy tutors in a maximum security correctional facility.

Another excellent experience is presenting your research at a conference. Approximately 40 students have done so over the past two years. There are three benefits from doing this. It is a wonderful addition to your resume and it is a way to distinguish you from many graduates. Most importantly, however, is the fact that it is an excellent learning experience. The following are quotes from emails I have received over the past couple of years from students who have presented their work at these conferences. “Presenting my research at the conference was the best experience I had. I am so glad my first presentation was in front of students and professors. It was great practice for my presentations in the business world.” “It has been so helpful for graduate school.”

Experiences like the above provide an opportunity to shape your education. It also sends a clear message to a prospective employer (or the graduate school admission committee) that you have initiative and that you made the most of your educational experience. It is never too early to start thinking about the above question.

- Dr. Arvanites

Special points of interest:

Leadership for Social Change Lecture
“Behind the Swoosh”
Tuesday, November 8th
Villanova Room
Connelly Center
4:00—5:30 p.m.

Careers in Washington, D.C.-- A day trip from Villanova to D.C.
Monday, November 7th
8:00 a.m.—9:00 p.m.

Inside this issue:

- The Chair’s Message
- Internships
- Senior Capstone Research Profiles
- Fritz Nova Lecture with Robert J. Sampson, Harvard University
- My Internship Experience at the ACLU-CT
- New Faculty Research on Gender
- Department Faculty News

Interested in an Internship?

Did you know that you can select an internship as an elective course for your major (Sociology or Criminal Justice)?

The following are examples of the types of internships appropriate to Sociology and Criminal Justice majors.

1. Social Services and Social Administration: public assistance agencies, child welfare agencies, private social service agencies, and private or voluntary social agencies

2. Criminal Justice: law enforcement agencies, prosecutor’s offices, or correctional agencies

3. Pre-Professional: employee counseling programs, legal research, health care, or government agencies

In recent years, our interns have worked at such locations as the New York State Supreme Court, U.S. Pretrial Services, the Office of Attorney General in Philadelphia, the Legal-Aid Society, Children’s Law Center, and American Civil Liberties of Connecticut.

A three-credit internship requires a minimum of eight hours per week. In order for an internship to count towards credit, a student must obtain written approval of their supervisor. Sociology and Criminal Justice majors should see Dr. Arvanites (SAC 204). At the end of the semester, students must submit to the department an analytical paper (15-20 pages in length) focusing on some aspect of the work setting.

For more information on internships, contact the Internship Office located in the Office for Undergraduate Students (SAC 107).
Senior Capstone Research Profiles

Criminalization of Homelessness By Kristen Valosky

“Within an individual’s biography and within society’s history, the social task of reason is to formulate choices, to enlarge the scope of human decisions in the making of history.” C. Wright Mills’ assertion from *The Sociological Imagination* represents the core of true sociology. In fact, I experienced the most valuable transformation through my sociology education in my ability to understand the world through a critical lens and from the perspective of the alienated who lack the ability to participate fully in society.

As we discuss threats to reason and freedom in my Senior Seminar, I have gained an even greater recognition of the necessity of engaging in meaningful research that addresses true social problems that inhibit the influence of the public. Senior Seminar reminds me of why I chose sociology as my major in the first place: in order to wrestle with issues affecting those whose society often ignores rather than serving the interests of the privileged. Two years after I made that decision, I now have the opportunity through my Senior Seminar research project to do just that: delve into an important social issue where I can apply my skills in order to influence change in at least some small way.

For my senior research project, I intend to analyze the forces and ideology behind criminalization of homelessness in the United States, especially anti-homelessness legislation that punishes the status of being homeless. I approach this topic with the ultimate goal of understanding the implications of this reality for the lived experiences of individuals and communities experiencing homelessness. I plan to engage in qualitative research methods such as field work in Chester, PA involving interviewing people experiencing homelessness or who have experienced homelessness and social service workers in that area as well. This will allow me to understand how these groups perceive the criminalization of homelessness and what factors they perceive as contributing most significantly to the problem.

Hierarchies and Race By Weddy Worjroh

Studying sociology has completely opened my eyes to how different people experience life and are affected by various social structures. Throughout the many courses that I have taken, starting with my Intro course as a freshman, I have been encouraged to critically examine and question how our society works in ways that benefit some and oppress others. Now, four years later, the Senior Capstone course is allowing me to take all of my sociological wisdom and use it to explore a topic of my own, using whatever theories and methods I believe will help me in this project. I am trying to use my sociological imagination for interesting and meaningful work that addresses certain significant problems in our society, while also suggesting possible ways to address these problems.

For my senior research project I have chosen to examine how hierarchies may exist within so-called races, instead of just happening between allegedly homogenous groups. The concept of race fascinates me due to the fluidity of how it is defined and applied in varying social contexts. To search this topic, I am doing qualitative research at a local Philadelphia high school that has experienced a divide between “Black American” students and students who recently emigrated from Africa. On the surface, both of these groups are considered “black.” However, within this supposed monolithic group are a host of hierarchies that have nothing to do with skin color and everything to do with power and privilege. I will be using naturalistic and participant observation, interviews, and ethnography to investigate this issue.

It is very exciting to create my own personal research project. The Capstone course has given me the opportunity to culminate my sociology major by researching a topic that I am passionate about.
My Internship Experience at the ACLU-CT

By Emily Several

This summer I planned on being an intern with the American Civil Liberties of Connecticut’s Outreach and Development Office. I was really looking for a legal internship, but had difficulty finding any legal internship that was willing to have an undergraduate intern. When I was offered the ACLU Outreach and Development internship, I figured this position would be the next best thing; I have a great interest in civil liberties and in this office I would be exposed to the legal side of the ACLU-CT, since both departments are housed in the same office and are intricately linked to each other. However, it turns out that taking this internship position in the Outreach and Development Office was the best option I could have picked for being interested in law.

I made sure when I began at the ACLU-CT that I related that my true interest was in law and I would like to help with any current legal project in any way. Fortunately, my supervisor wanted me to get the most out of my summer at the ACLU as possible, so she spoke with the legal side one week into my internship regarding possible involvement. The legal department was extremely accommodating and open to me helping with their ongoing projects. I began analyzing and summarizing documents from the Connecticut Department of Correction for our “Northern Prison Project.” The ACLU partnered with Yale Law School’s Detention and Human Right’s Clinic for this project to try and prohibit mistreatment of mentally ill inmates at Northern Prison and advocate for inmates’ civil rights. After proving my analytical and research skills to the legal team, and discovering my interest in doing this type of preparation work, it became my sole responsibility to find any incriminating evidence in the many requested items that were sent from the CDoC to the ACLU. I then presented the evidence I found to the professor in charge of Yale’s Clinic at a meeting down at Yale.

Not only did this opportunity allow me to gain a depth of general professional experience and exposure to the legal profession, I was also a main player in a civil right legal project—my original hope for a summer internship. Being submerged in a project to do with civil rights of mentally ill inmates all summer definitely made me reflect upon the previous introductory sociology and criminal justice classes I have taken at Villanova, along with the upcoming experience I would have in my “Punishment and Society” class with Dr. Jill McCorkel. I knew coming back to school that this class would also allow for a first hand glimpse of incarceration, and the things I had been reading about all summer, during a tutoring position through the Prison Literacy Program at Graterford Prison. While I feel very lucky that my co-workers really cared about my interests and wishes, and trusted that an undergraduate was capable enough to participate, I also was shown an area of our society that is brushed under the rug and needs major reform. I will never forget the things I learned this summer regarding the conditions for the mentally ill at Northern Correctional maximum security prison in Somers, CT. This project definitely opened up my eyes to areas of prison reform and showed me this is a definite possibility of an area I would like to work on in my future legal career.

Because of my continued interest in prison reform, and my dedication to the Northern Project this summer, the ACLU-CT has asked for me to continue analyzing documents they send over to me while I am at Villanova. Today, I am continuing my analysis work in order to help the ACLU and Yale Clinic’s case against Northern. I owe my amazing internship experience this summer, and now the experience continuing today, to my amazing coworkers who only wanted the best and most meaningful practice for their interns. My best advice to fellow students who are hoping to gain an amazing internship experience is to speak up in the very beginning about what you are looking for during your time. If your supervisor or coworkers are not willing to accommodate your wishes, it is not the right place to spend your time.
New Faculty Research on Gender

By Dr. Emmanuel David

In the past decade, the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry has radically altered the social, cultural, and economic landscape of the Philippines, transforming the lives of hundreds of thousands of Filipino employees who engage in call center work and other labor delegated to third-party service providers. By 2010, amid high unemployment rates in the United States, the Philippines surpassed India as the nation employing the largest number of overseas call center workers, and this outsourcing of labor shows little sign of letting up.

While there is a growing understanding of the economic dimensions of such industries, very little is known about how sociological factors like gender shape the interactions, structures, and cultures of call center work in a Philippine context. In my research, I’ve set out to conduct multi-level gender analysis of call centers in the Philippines to examine how women and men are situated differently in these work sites and to uncover the subjective experiences of those who perform this transnational labor.

In summer 2011, I traveled to the Philippines (with the assistance of a Villanova University Office of Research and Sponsored Projects “Research Support Grant” and a College of Liberal Arts and Sciences “Faculty Development Grant”) to interview call center employees in Metro Manila about their work lives. I spent time in the mini-cities constructed around these massive call centers and interviewed BPO employees in an effort to understand their everyday experiences at work. As I analyze the in-depth interviews, I’m focusing on broad sociological issues such as gender, identity, and globalization, including the ways in which employees perform emotional labor, cope with the pressures of working night shifts and the demands of routinized tasks, and construct both local and global gender identities through their customer service interactions with customers abroad.

I’m looking forward to locating more emergent themes in the data and to crafting a rich description of the social relations performed in these settings, and I hope to conduct another round of onsite interviews in the near future.

Department Faculty News

Dr. Bernard Gallagher published his new book Sociology of Mental Illness (Sloan Publishing, 2012). Additionally, Dr. Gallagher is publishing an article with Dr. Brian Jones (Sociology) in an upcoming edition of Clinical Schizophrenia and Related Psychoses.

Dr. Emmanuel David recently published his article “Displacement, Climate Change, and Gender” in the book Migration and Climate Change (Cambridge University Press).

Dr. Jill McCorkel published an article with Sarah Becker (Louisiana State University) this past spring. Her article, entitled, “The Gender of Criminal Opportunity: The Impact of Male Co-Offenders on Women’s Crime” was featured in Feminist Criminology.

Dr. Robert H. Defina was featured in the Journal Sentinel in an article entitled, “Faith Leaders Voice Support for Unions.”

Drs. Kelly Welch and Allison Payne recently published an article in Social Science Research, entitled “The Typification of Hispanics as Criminals and Support for Punitive Crime Control Policies.” Drs. Welch and Payne will also be featured contributors in the upcoming book The Columbine Effect: Fear and the Expansion of School Antiviolence Policy.

In October, Dr. Donna Shai will be presenting her paper, “Race and Relationship as Predictors of Newspaper Coverage of Female Homicide Victims: The Public Health Implications” at the 2011 Annual Meeting of the Southern Demographic Society in Tallahassee, Florida.

www.villanova.edu/artsci/sociology