

# Sociology Update

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## From the Department Chair, Chikako Usui

As we end the 2007-08 academic year, I wish to thank all of you for supporting our programs and new initiatives. With generous gifts from the alumni and friends of sociology, we were able to increase the number of scholarships and awards to sociology students this year.

The mission of the Department of Sociology is to enhance the critical understanding of social behavior and rapidly changing society. We teach the significance of sociological perspectives and skills that are essential in research, policy analysis, and countless other social science endeavors. The well-educated UMSL sociology graduates have a keen sense of the interconnectedness of social life, the impact of a larger social context on individual behaviors and group life, and different frameworks of thought. The graduates have a sophisticated knowledge of social science research and are savvy users of the latest technological tools.

We promote research and support students to achieve excellence. We are committed to playing our part in Chancellor's vision of making UMSL the finest university in the St. Louis region.

## The Sociology of Catastrophe: An Update by Dr. Larry Irons

Research on disaster is a longstanding concern in the social sciences. Sociology in particular provides a tradition of research into the way disasters affect communities and the patterns of social relationships within them. More recently, since the catastrophic experience with Hurricane Katrina, social research focuses on disasters involving entire regions and highlights the importance of preparedness for communities. Preparing to prevent, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the harmful impact of natural, accidental, and intentional forces requires understanding the risks and vulnerabilities of individual communities, their resilience, as well as their connections to other communities across states and regions. Doing so effectively involves taking into account the patterns of social relationships that pre-exist, endure the effects, and provide the basis for recovery from catastrophic disaster.

The fact that existing social relationships between colleagues, families, friends, and neighbors survive disasters, even catastrophic ones, provides an abiding lesson from sociological research. It also provides a resource for preparedness professions (law enforcement, fire service, emergency management, public health) to use as they engage in the process of preventing or mitigating catastrophic disasters.

**Sociology 4380** provides students with an overview of the key concepts and research issues involved in the study of social relationships in disastrous events, including events involving catastrophic results with regional or national impact. The course design reinforces learning with multimodal techniques. It uses traditional lecture and readings from the disaster research literature to convey key concepts and issues, supplemented by hands-on group activities, video, and an online interactive simulation of a disaster scenario.

The course uses key concepts such as class, social capital, reciprocity, improvisation, emergent organization, and collaboration to convey a prevention framework for students to conceptualize the political, organizational, and cultural challenges involved in managing the risks posed by natural, accidental, or intentional catastrophic threats. The last half of the course focuses on how these concepts are relevant to the practical issues faced by preparedness professionals who assess threat and vulnerability in communities, develop emergency plans and organize emergency response, develop mutual aid agreements, and manage risk.

The Office of Domestic Preparedness in the Department of Homeland Security funded development of the interactive simulation used in Sociology 4380. The Institute for Preventive Strategies hosts the simulation. The interactive simulation uses video, text, and audio to convey a scenario in which each student plays the role of a police lieutenant in a fictional city, San Luis Rey. The students face an intentional threat, challenging them to organize a collaborative network to uncover the threat using social networking techniques to gather information from a range of preparedness organizations within San Luis Rey.

The simulation consists of an initial game playing exercise and five advanced exercises designed to develop each student's ability to think

**continued on Page 2...**



# CONGRATULATIONS!

## Sociology Student Awards 2008

### Ray Collins Alumni Award

Leslie Echterhoff

### Outstanding Junior

John Lueke

### Outstanding Senior

Todd Bakula

Kendall Mossman Canfield

### Outstanding Minor

Eva-Sophia Clark

Marta Petrinelli

Sandra Warren

### Alumni Agent Scholarship

Randall Lynn

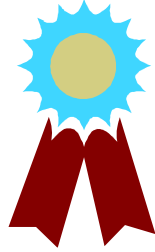
### Sociology Alumni Scholarship

John Durlas

Michael Gibson

### Sociology Department Scholarship

Susan Fox



### Words from a Winner:

*My first experience with UMSL's sociology department was in 2004, when I impulsively took a few undergraduate courses to distract myself during a tedious summer. Never expecting to return, even as recently as a year ago, I've been fortunate to work toward a M.A. in an excellent program that fits my interests and career ambitions. In my four years of working at the high school level, I've developed a passion for teaching, and abiding interests in the sociology of youth, education, technology, and social control. The skills and credentials I am acquiring here will be an immeasurable help when I embark on the long, treacherous road to obtaining a PhD.*

*In addition to Professor Keel, whose classes nearly five years ago so piqued my interest, there are many other talented, dedicated faculty members I've enjoyed working with. I've particularly appreciated the many opportunities I've received to engage in the practice of sociology outside of a typical classroom environment: as a teaching assistant to Dr. Usui and others, a participant in Dr. Shield's practicum on community violence, and an apprentice in Dr. McCall's proseminar. In ten years (when I will undoubtedly be a brilliant, suave professor of sociology on the verge of my first groundbreaking publication), I will have many people at UMSL to thank.*

– Randall Lynn, Alumni Agent Scholarship

## Student News

**Tina Hansen**, first year graduate student, made a presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Sociological Society, which was held in St. Louis on March 27-30, 2008. Her paper entitled "We have Come A Long Way Baby...Maybe?" examined how gender roles are portrayed in television advertising by comparing commercials from different periods. Commercials from periods after the various "waves" of the feminist movement portrayed women as more independent and career oriented, but present day advertising seems to have reverted back to the wife/mother gender roles for women. Even though there is solid evidence that today's women work longer hours, provide more of the household income, and make more purchasing decisions, these roles are not being reflected in present day advertising. Her paper makes recommendations for more research into how women view themselves and how those views should be translated through advertising.



**Ashley Walsh** has been officially admitted to our 2+3 combined BA/MA program for Winter 2008. The combined program runs on an accelerated pace so that the students will be awarded both the baccalaureate and master's degrees in less than five years. The program requires 3.0 GPA throughout the process. Ashley is our 4<sup>th</sup> student entering the 2+3 combined program since it was developed in 2002.

**Carlie Fieseler** (2007-08), **Clifton Glore** (Winter 2008), and **Katy Till** (Fall 2007) received teaching assistantships from the Graduate School.

**Randy Lynn** (Winter 2008) received an assistantship funded jointly by the Instructional Technology Support and the Sociology Department.

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critically about their choices in designing a collaborative network. The text accompanying the interactive simulation part of the course, Catastrophe Preparedness and Prevention for Law Enforcement Professionals (McGraw-Hill, 2008), provides a foundation for lectures to familiarize the students with the practical relevance of key concepts before they engage the interactive exercises. The text provides an overview of key concepts used in the scenario, including collaboration, social capital, trust, information sharing, threat recognition, risk management and decisions to intervene. I am a coauthor of the text with Craig Baldwin and Philip Palin.

My coauthors and I also recently published Catastrophe Preparedness and Prevention for Fire Service Professionals (McGraw-Hill, 2008) which uses the same prevention framework in the context of the fire service profession, rather than law enforcement. The interactive simulation for the fire service text challenges students to play the role of a fire captain facing an intentional threat.

Students who complete the introductory and advanced exercises in the simulation receive a certificate of completion. The certificate recognizes that the student completed the course of study offered in cooperation with the Institute for Preventive Strategies and the Center for Homeland Defense and Security at the Naval Postgraduate School.

## Faculty Research: The Development of Sociology in China

by Chikako Usui



Chinese sociology was born out of the rapid transformation of society at the end of the 19th century. Yu Fu, the first president of Peking University, translated the work of Herbert Spencer into Chinese in 1897. St. Johns University in Shanghai offered the first sociology course in 1914. The first sociology department was created at Yanching University (merged with Peking University in 1922).

Sociology developed quickly in terms of infrastructure, professional body, and volumes of publication, in part because of collaboration between Chinese and Western scholars. The Chinese Sociological Association was established in 1930. Sociology grew faster in China than anywhere else in the world outside North America and Europe. By the end of 1930, 11 universities offered sociology curricula. By 1947, 19 universities had full-fledged sociology departments, and there were 143 academic sociologists and 1,500 students majoring in sociology. Sociology (taught by Chinese and foreign scholars) flourished and produced large-scale community studies, many of which were published abroad in English. Sociologists contributed to the development of the social policy of the Kuomintang government (1911-48).

Chinese sociology was banned after the Communist Revolution of 1949. Marxism became the guardian of the communist political order and the sole legitimate national ideology. All social sciences were seen with suspicion, particularly sociology. Sociology was suspended in 1952 and no sociology degree was given until 1982.

China set a course of pragmatic changes toward economic reform after Deng Xiaoping's rise to power in 1977. The revival of sociology took place in 1979 when Deng Xiaoping declared, "We have ignored the study of sociology and world politics for many years. Now we need to restart." Sociology became indispensable for China's modernization and received government priority and research funding in areas of economic reform, social development, and social change.

The *rehabilitation of sociology* was led by a number of prominent pre-1949 Chinese sociologists. American and Japanese sociologists were invited to lecture, and Chinese sociological associations were revived in 1979. Sociology departments were re-established in leading universities, including Peking University, Zhongshan University, Renmin University, and Fudan University. During the 1980s government control of higher education relaxed as China attempted to model the Yugoslavian and Romanian experiences of melding socialist and capitalist systems. Some 30,000 students were sent to 14 countries between 1978 to 1984.

Since the Communist Revolution of 1949 China has implemented a series of five-year plans to guide its development. In these plans, the government articulated national objectives and policies. The sixth five-year plan (1980-84) identified three major areas for sociological study: social theory and methods; rural and urban studies; and problems relating to population, labor, and family. In the seventh five-year plan (1985-89), 12 sociological areas were articulated as priorities, including rural families, social welfare and assistance, stratification, aging, and lifestyle.

The Tiananmen Massacre of 1989 led to criticisms of sociology by conservatives. Sociology was once again denounced because it teaches Western democratic ideas critical of the socialist regime. Except at Renmin University and Shanghai University, sociology departments were not allowed to enroll students. However, the discipline remained intact as new stimuli came from different directions, including the end of the Cold War and the diplomatic normalization between China and the United States. These changes led to a surge in international research collaboration and exchange of scholars.

The complex changes in the 1980s and 1990s gave rise to numerous research publications. More recent sociological inquiry in China includes the consequences of market reforms and social problems of dislocation, including the issues of inequality, a new middle class, democratization, civil society, migration, and unemployment. Chinese sociologists are in a unique position to study social change and societal transformation, the social consequences of a hybrid socialist and capitalist economy, and demographic issues of monumental proportions.

(Editor's notes: This article is taken from "Asian Sociology" by Chikako Usui published in [21st Century Sociology](#) (edited by Bryant & Peck) by Sage Publications in 2007. To receive a copy of her full article, please contact the Department of Sociology.)

## Faculty News

The Midwest Sociological Society held its Annual Meeting in St. Louis on March 27-30, 2008 and **Dr. Teresa Guess, Associate Professor of Sociology**, and **Dr. George J. McCall, Professor Emeritus of Sociology**, participated in the meeting. Guess served as the State Director for the MSS for 2007-08 and reported to the Board of Directors on the year's activities of MSS scholars in Missouri. She also organized and presided over a paper session entitled, "Critical Sociology: Exploring Whiteness" and presented a paper entitled, "The Fuzzy Logic of the Racial Worldview: Challenging the Legitimacy of Whiteness as a Social Category." McCall presented a paper entitled, "Violence against Women in South African Townships: Domestic and Community Violence Compared." This paper was coauthored with B. Ann Dinan at Xavier University and Diana Gibson at University of the Western Cape.

**Dr. Nancy Shields, Associate Professor of Sociology**, has published "Examining the evidence from small scale societies and early prehistory: Implications of violence in early prehistory for modern theories of violence" in *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 13(1): 1-9, 2008.

## Alumni News

**Tyson Abbott** completed her MA in 2006 and took a position at L'Ecole Cuisine in St. Louis as a general-studies instructor. She has been accepted to the Ph.D. in sociology program at South Dakota State University for fall semester 2008. Congratulations Tyson!



University Missouri-St. Louis  
Department of Sociology-707 Tower  
One University Blvd  
St. Louis, MO 63121-4400  
(314) 516-6366; e-mail: porterfielda@umsl.edu

Come visit us on the web!

[www.umsl.edu/divisions/artscience/sociology](http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/artscience/sociology)

Department Chair: Chikako Usui  
Managing Editor: Amanda Porterfield

*The next Sociology Update will feature:*

**Professor Robert Keel**

**Winner of the 2008 Non-Tenure Track  
Outstanding Faculty Award**

**Herman Smith**, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, died April 5, 2008, from esophageal cancer. He was 65.

Smith received his bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland in 1965, and worked as a statistician at the U.S. Census Bureau while completing his master's degree in 1967 at the American University in Washington, D.C. In 1971, he received his doctorate from Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill. Smith spent the next 32 years at UMSL, rising through the ranks in the Department of Sociology. He served two terms as presiding officer of the Faculty Council. He retired in 2002, but continued researching and mentoring as professor emeritus.

Smith published more than 40 articles in a variety of scholarly journals, including *American Sociological Review*, *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, *Human Relations*, *Journal of Mathematical Sociology*, *Qualitative Sociology*, *Small Group Behavior*, *Social Forces*, *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *Sociological Theory and Research*, and *Symbolic Interaction*. Some of his articles were written and published in Japanese. Smith's books include textbooks on social psychology and methodology, plus a research monograph on Japanese homogeneity.

He was proud of becoming the first self-taught member of the Affect Control Theory research group. The group fit his expertise as a mathematical sociologist, statistician and research methodologist interested in the cross-cultural study of emotions. In 1984, he went to Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan, as a research visiting professor, where he started his cross-culture studies of affect and emotion. Over the next 20 years, he became fluent in Japanese, and Smith's second area of pride was being awarded two Fulbright Teaching Scholarships to Japan. The first was in 1989 at Tohoku University in Sendai and the second in 1995 in Tokyo, at both Kyoritsu Women's University and Japan Women's University. Additionally, he was Distinguished Visiting Professor at Fudan University in Shanghai, China, in 2000.

Smith was an avid canoeist, kayaker and paddle-sport instructor for over 40 years. He was a founding member of StreamTeach Inc., a nonprofit business with the goal of establishing a whitewater park in St. Louis for economic development and community revitalization of north St. Louis. This was his avocational passion, apart from running whitewater rapids all over the world.

Smith is survived by his wife of 30 years, Mary Burrows, sons Craig (Mary) and Erik (Neetu), granddaughters Chloe, Sophie and Mira, sister Carol, stepmother Rosemary and cousins Sheila and Karen. He will be missed by his family, friends, colleagues, and fellow paddlers.

