Find out more about the students who completed their Sociology degree in the Spring and Summer of 2017. We are very proud of their hard work and dedication!

Check out the conferences that our faculty & students attended this Spring and Summer and learn what they presented.

Learn about what faculty are doing in the Sociology Department.

Stories in this section recognize our undergraduate and graduate students!

Where are they now? Learn about the recent activities of our impressive alumni in their academic, non-profit, and private sector careers.

Learn how you can make a direct impact on the UNT Sociology Department through your contribution.

This newsletter is published two times annually, during the fall and spring/summer semesters.
I am delighted to have joined the Department of Sociology at the University of North Texas as its new Chair. I earned my Bachelor’s degree from Louisiana State University and my Master’s and Ph.D degrees from the University of Texas at Austin. I have held tenure-track/tenured jobs at several universities, including the University of Southern Mississippi, Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Colorado State University, and the University of Wyoming where I chaired the Sociology department for the past nine years. It is great to return to Texas!

My primary teaching interests are in the areas of social stratification and social movements. In both of these areas I combine my love of history and sociology, exploring how stratification has changed in the U.S. over time. I have studied a wide array of social movements and enjoy varying the particular movements that I cover in my social movement courses. While I always cover certain movements, such as the modern civil rights movement and the women’s movement, I like periodically to change which case studies of other movements are covered, such as farmer protest movements, the abolitionist movement, the environmental justice movement, the white supremacist movement, the Tea Party movement, the anti-immigration movement, and the Living Wage/Campaign for $15 movement. For each movement covered, the focus is on using sociological theories of social movement emergence and development to probe movement dynamics.

My research is focused primarily on social movements. I have published two books, as well as articles, book chapters, and handbook/encyclopedia essays, on the largest agrarian protest movement in U.S. history, known as the Populist movement, during the nineteenth century.
My research questions focused on explaining the timing of movement emergence, as well as the factors affecting movement success and decline or demise. Currently I am working on two projects, a study of an anti-draft movement that arose in the Heart Mountain Japanese-American internment camp during World War II and a study of the Texas Farmworkers Union in the 1960s and 1970s, which was much less successful than the United Farm Workers Union in California.

Regarding department initiatives that I plan to launch this academic year, I have one that involves you. I want to connect with alumni of our programs. I would love to hear from you! I would like to build alumni profiles on our department website so that when students inquire about what they can do with a degree in Sociology, we can tell them to look at the alumni profiles on our website and see the widely diverse career paths our alumni have taken. It is one thing to talk about careers for sociology majors in the abstract. Another, more powerful, approach is to inform students about the career accomplishments of sociology alumni who have gone through the same program here at UNT.

Finally, I hope that you might consider supporting the department’s scholarship fund as part of your tax-deductible donations this year. Scholarship funds allow us to assist students in earning an education without taking on significant debt. Students are always appreciative of financial assistance. Even a small scholarship can help them cover the cost of their books.

Best regards,

Donna Barnes.
38 Students Earn Sociology Degrees at Spring and Summer Graduations

At the Spring and Summer 2017 graduations in May and August, a total of 38 students walked with a degree in Sociology, including 34 Bachelors and 4 Ph.D. students.

PhD graduates include:

Jacquelyn Cheun
Elizabeth Gabhart
John Malek-Ahmadi
Rollins Short

Bachelor of Arts and Science graduates include:

Ian Ambrose
Brittany Blackwell
James Brumley
Alejandra Contreras
Heather Davis
Dakota Denton
Giovina Draghi
Maria Dominguez
Ryan Doss
Jadyn Drake
Morialtha Dukuly
Tiara Edwards
Chelsea Godin
Stephanie Hernandez
Justice Houston
Rashun Lockhart
Brett McCoy
Jazmine McGill
Nyasha McKe
Chance McMillan
Sarah Miller
Emily Million
David Montalvo
Jamize Olawale
Jon Patty
Norma Perez
Sierra Poole
Candice Reilly
Nadia Rosales
Brian Saavedra
Lali Stanley
Autumn Tyler
Shawna Vasquez
Rayna Walthall
Faculty and Students Present at the 2017 Southwestern Social Science Association

Every year, the SSSA hosts a conference dedicated to academics involved in social scientific research. This year, the 97th Annual Southwestern Social Science Association meeting took place from April 12th to April 15th, 2017 at the Hyatt Regency in Austin, Texas. The topic of 2017 was “The Social Sciences and Social Change”. Many students and faculty members presented original research at the conference this year. Graduate student Alex Bush won first place in the photo essay contest with her work, “Secret Suffering: A Photo Essay”. The following faculty and students presented at the conference this April:

Alex Vaselka-Bush, Dr. Cynthia Cready, Mehmet Celebi, Tracy Dietz, Deborah Fessenden, Elizabeth Gabhart, Gilyana Gotcher, Giselle Greenidge, Nikolitsa Girgoropoulou, Cassie Hudson, Jennifer Knudsen, Dr. Helen Potts, and Dr. Michael Thompson.

Faculty and Students Present at the 2017 American Sociological Association

The Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association was held at the Palais des Congrès de Montréal in Montréal, Québec from August 12th to August 15th, 2017. This conference provides the opportunity for professionals involved in the scientific study of society to share knowledge, and contribute to the body of research and practice. Every year, around 600 program sessions are convened during the four-day meeting held every August to provide participation venues and networking outlets for nearly 3,000 research papers and over 4,600 presenters. This year, students and faculty members from the UNT Sociology department presented at the American Sociological Association in Montréal. Presenters included: Dr. Gul Seckin, Mehmet Celebi, Giselle Greenidge, Jackuelyn Cheun, Cassie Hudson, and Susan Hughes.
Other Recent Presentations & Publications


**Ignatow, G.** 2017. “Digital Social Science: Entering a New Era of Challenges and Opportunities.” Invited keynote address to the Annual Western Departments of Anthropology and Sociology Undergraduate Research Conference, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA.

Mhaka-Mutepfa, Magen, Mpofu, E., **Moore, Ami,** & Ingman, Stan. (2017). “Foster to be fostered”: Career grandparents of sub-Saharan Africa In Schwalb and Hossain, Z (Eds.) Grandparents in cultural context. Routledge/Taylor and Francis Group, LLC. (pp. 40-56).


Other Recent Presentations & Publications


The Department of Sociology wishes the new Department Chair, Donna Barnes, a warm welcome to the University of North Texas! The department is excited for Dr. Barnes to be a part of our community, and we look forward to the experience, expertise and opportunities Dr. Barnes offers to the Sociology Department to expand the department with leaps and bounds!

Cynthia Cready Elected Vice President and Receives Award from Major Research Associations

Dr. Cynthia Cready was recently elected as 2018 Vice President of the Southwestern Social Science Association (SSSA). She will rotate to President-Elect in 2019 and President in 2020, SSSA’s Centennial Year. The Southwestern Social Science Association is home for nine academic and professional affiliates and nearly 1,000 members. She also received the Southwestern Sociological Association’s (SSA) Norma Williams Distinguished Service Award at the SSA annual meeting. This award is given annually for outstanding service to SSA and mentorship of junior faculty and students.

Dale Yeatts Collaborates with Computer Science and Engineering Department on Grant

Dr. Dale Yeatts joined Dr. Mohanty of the Computer Science and Engineering Department as co-Principal Investigator of a one million dollar grant proposal submitted to the National Science Foundation (NSF). This proposal would develop a device to be worn by persons with heart conditions, to warn doctors via wireless internet if a heart problem occurs. The NSF initiative requires a social component. Drs. Yeatts and Ingman would satisfy this requirement by presenting the devise to the community.
Graduate Students Receive Awards at Honors Day

Since the start of 1950, Honor’s Day has traditionally celebrated the most ambitious and successful students, faculty, and staff at The University of North Texas. This event is intended to highlight the achievements of scholars across disciplines. This year, members of the Sociology department were recognized for their outstanding deeds.

Elizabeth Gabhart was awarded the Hiram J. Friedsam Award for the Outstanding Doctoral Student in Sociology. This annual award is given to an exceptional, high-performing Ph.D student in the department. Jennifer Knudsen won the Rudy Ray Seward Award for the Outstanding Sociology Master’s Student which is awarded to a full-time graduate student in sociology who exceeded remarkable performance standards in the department.

Nadia Ala’l Rosales was awarded The Leonard G. Benson Award for the Outstanding Sociology Undergraduate Major for completing 6 hours of sociology coursework, with at least a 3.0 GPA on all undergraduate coursework. Giselle Greenidge won the Outstanding International Student award. This award recognizes an excellent student who has promoted the international presence on campus, and encourages others to sustain a culturally rich environment.

Students present at Scholar’s Day

Scholars Day is an annual event which recognizes the work of undergraduate researchers at UNT. Undergraduate students engaged in research work under the guidance of a faculty mentor at UNT, and are encouraged to submit abstracts based upon their original research. Earlier this year in April, students De’Amber Bullard, Autumn Tyler, and Zoriliz Rivera presented their research at Scholar’s Day.
Recent PhD Graduates Accept Positions

Starting in August, Elizabeth Gabhart has accepted a position as an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at Tarrant County Community College, Northwest Campus. She is currently thriving in a community atmosphere and working one-on-one with students on campus. Dr. Gabhart enjoys teaching a variety of non-traditional college students, and working with students more closely. She will be teaching Introduction to Sociology this Fall and will have the opportunity to offer courses of her choice next semester, affording her the freedom to create her own courses! These factors make the campus a perfect fit for Dr. Gabhart, and she looks forward to the years to come.

Jacquie Cheun, has accepted a position at Nevada Rural Hospital Partners (NRHP) in Reno, NV. She is now the Director of Health Economic Analysis for NRHP! Her duties involve the formation of reports used to interpret operational, economic, and health environments for members of NRHP. Through her leadership of the Rural Health Network Development Grant, Dr. Cheun will strive to develop statewide initiatives for the improvement of company performance and for the application of more efficient practices.

Department Congratulates Scott and Joanna on the Birth of their Baby Boy

Jude Hamilton was born on June 13th, 2017 at 9lbs 8oz and 22 inches long. The family is doing well and the Department is excited about the new addition to the sociology community!

Back to School Celebration

At the beginning of the Fall semester, Dr. Dale Yeatts invited graduate students and faculty over his house for a potluck dinner. The department’s new chair, Donna Barnes and her husband, attended the event which provided the opportunity for students and faculty to become acquainted with each other. About 35 guests attended the gathering, and everyone enjoyed themselves throughout the night. Dr. Yeatts hosted a fun evening for all ages, and invited guests to swim, play games, try interesting foods, and to connect with fellow sociologists.
UNT Alumni to work with the Singapore Ministry of National Development

Dr. Corinne Ong, graduated from the University of North Texas in the Spring of 2014 with her PhD in Sociology and a minor in Anthropology. Sociology PhDs focus on an ‘area of concentration’ when working on their studies, Dr. Ong focused on two of the three areas that Sociology Department of UNT offers: Stratification and Global and Comparative Sociology.

Dr. Corinne Ong’s dissertation was Energy Paths and Political Commitment: Their roles in Environmental Inequality. Her dissertation chair was Dr. Rodeheaver with the committee members: Drs. Cynthia Cready, Doug Henry, and James Williams. Dr. Ong is very grateful to the committee members who spent so much time and effort to mentor and guide her with her dissertation, but also for their help with recommendations and references for jobs.

Dr. Corinne Ong will soon be starting a new job as a Senior Social Researcher at the Singapore Ministry of National Development. She will be engaged with applied research for the ministry which deals with a plethora of environmental, urban planning, and social issues. Dr. Ong expects to be able to bring sociological insights to these issues and to conduct evidence based research that would influence policy making. As she is from Singapore, Dr. Ong is appreciative of the opportunity to apply sociology across a wide range of social issues and problems in Singapore.

Dr. Corinne Ong has been able to use her sociology degree in many ways since her graduation as an educator and researcher in a think tank. Dr. Ong has also used her sociology degree in other past applied research jobs, enabling her to offer deep perspectives on transport related travel behavior, people’s use of the environment, and their engagement in environmentally sustainable behavior.

“Sociology,” says Dr. Ong, “has such an enduring presence as a discipline around government and research intuitions around the world because of its direct relevance to our real world and its happenings.”
There are many ways to support the UNT Sociology department. Financial contributions are most welcome, but we also appreciate our alumni who give their time to speak to our current students and new graduates by providing advice about careers in specific areas.

The Department of Sociology appreciates your financial support. Every dollar contributed to the department has a direct impact on our students. Your gift helps support critical opportunities for students, including scholarships, lectures, travel support, and any number of educational events that augment the classroom experience. For more information about additional ways you can help, please contact Donna Barnes, Chair of the Department, or Fonda Gaynier, Administrative Coordinator, at (940) 565-2296. Read more about Sociology scholarships in the Departmental News section of this newsletter. To donate now, click the icon below.

Thank you all. You helped make UNT one of the best 115 doctoral research institutions in the nation!