Click on the links below to explore recent news from UNT’s Sociology Department

**Departmental News**
Find out more about the G*STEP Program and Sociology Department Scholarships

**Research News**
Get a quick overview of Dr. Ami Moore’s research on Togolese and Ghanaian male sexual behaviors.

**Faculty News**
Hear about Dr. George Yancey’s new book.

**Student News**
Learn more about two of our Fall graduating doctoral students, Drs. Sebahattin Ziyank and Shikha Batra.

**Donate**
Learn how you can make a direct impact on the UNT Sociology Department.
Dr. Dale Yeatts Elected to the Executive Committee of the UNT Provost’s China Advisory Council (CAC)

Although he was invited to join the council last summer, this Fall Dr. Yeatts was elected as a member of the CAC’s Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will lead the Council’s 25 UNT faculty members in making strategic recommendations to the university at-large for developing, refining and achieving UNT’s goals in China. They hope to create instrumental links between UNT and Chinese universities.

Graduate Students Lindsey Johnson & Jacquelyn Cheun graduate from G*STEP

The Graduate Student Teaching Excellence Program (G*STEP) exists to train graduate students to effectively teach or support those who teach university courses. Participants learn to articulate their role, manage their resources, organize and explain materials, establish and maintain an effective learning environment, and promote self-regulated learning. G*STEP is sponsored by the Toulouse Graduate School and the Center for Learning Enhancement, Assessment, and Redesign (CLEAR).

Congratulations to Lindsey Johnson and Jacquelyn Cheun for recently graduating from G*STEP! Current students participating in the program are Reza Amini, Chao-Lun Huang, and Swati Singh.
62 Undergraduate and 5 Graduate Students Walk in December

The Department of Sociology continues to have one of the largest groups of graduates at UNT. On December 13th and 14th, a total of 67 students graduated with degrees from the Department. Of these students, 62 completed a sociology Bachelor of Arts degree. A total of 5 completed a graduate degree, one with a Master of Science, and four with a Ph.D. in Sociology.

The five graduate students are listed below:

**Rodney Alan Bales, Ph.D.**
Major Professor: Dr. Nicole Dash
Dissertation: American Indian Worldviews, Risk Perceptions and Disaster Planning: An Exploratory Study

**Shikha Batra, Ph.D.** (also featured in the Student News section)
Major Professor: Dr. Gabriel Ignatow

**Alicia L. Brunson, Ph.D.**
Major Professor: Dr. George Yancey
Dissertation: Light, Bright, and Out of Sight: Hollywood’s Representation of the Tragic Mulatto

**Sebahattin Ziyanak, Ph.D.** (also featured in the Student News section)
Major Professor: Dr. Daniel G. Rodeheaver
Dissertation: Analyzing Delinquency among Kurdish Adolescents: A Test of Hirschi’s Social Bonding Theory

**Michael Mansour Khoury, M.S.**
Major Professor: Dr. Milan Zafirofski
Featured Scholarship: Alvin C. Dorse Scholarship

This scholarship was established in 1987, in honor of Dr. Alvin C. Dorse, a 25-year faculty member and graduate advisor to the Sociology Department.

Sponsored by Sociology alumni, students, faculty, and colleagues from the University of North Texas, the scholarship is available to graduate sociology majors at UNT. Entering students must be admitted unconditionally to a graduate Sociology degree program. Continuing students must have at least a 3.5 GPA on all completed graduate sociology course work.

One annual award of no less than $500 will be credited to the recipient's account to help cover tuition and fees at UNT (subject to the availability of funds). The amount will be split equally between the Fall ($250) and Spring ($250) semesters following the awarding of the scholarship.

Application: Each applicant must complete and submit an application form including official transcripts before April 15. The Student Award Committee of the Department of Sociology will present the qualified candidates to the Sociology faculty who will determine the recipient. The winner will be announced by April 30. Contact Dr. Milan Zafirofski for more information.

Sociology Department Offers New Bachelor’s Degree and All Core Courses Online

The Sociology Department received approval in Fall 2013 to add a Bachelor of Science degree to its undergraduate program. The new degree will be available for students beginning in Fall 2014.

In addition, beginning in Summer 2014, all core courses for the undergraduate Sociology major will now be available completely online.
UNT Faculty & Students Participate as Organizers and Reviewers for ISA 2014 Conference

Dr. Rudy Seward is currently serving as the Programme Coordinator for the International Sociological Association’s Committee on Family Research (RC06) for ISA 2014 XVIII World Congress of Sociology in Yokohama, Japan, July 13-19. Throughout Summer and Fall of 2013, Dr. Seward organized and selected proposals for 27 conference sessions with co-coordinators, Rita Smit, University of Johannesburg, South Africa, and Barbara Barbosa Neves, Technical University of Lisbon, Portugal.

Dr. Cynthia Cready is Co-Organizer and Co-Chair (along with Jacobus Hoffman, Oxford Institute of Ageing) of “Family and Elder Care,” a joint paper session of the Research Committee on Family Research (RC06) and the Research Committee on Sociology of Aging (RC11).

UNT Sociology graduate students Reza Amini, Jacob Huang, Ron Wade, and Ann Wilder, among others, served as abstract submission reviewers for the session.
Dr. Ami Moore Researches Sexual Behaviors in men in Togo and Ghana

Dr. Ami Moore, a native Togolese, examines the unique realities experienced by young, adult men who have sex with other men (MSM) in resource-poor countries such as Togo.

Moore has spent many hours interviewing and documenting the sexual histories of Togolese MSM for her research on sexual risk behaviors linked to AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis and hepatitis, and other physical and social health repercussions, such as beatings, ridicule and ostracism from peers and family. Togo has one of the highest rates for HIV/AIDS in West Africa, affecting 3.6 percent of the population, Moore said. For some of these young men, trading sex for cash from tourists or others in order to put food on the table or pay the bills outweighs the risks; it comes down to survival.

A 2012-13 Fulbright research grant award supported Moore’s travel residency to Togo in the fall of 2012. She has extended this research to include Ghana, a West African nation bordering Togo, using a 2013 grant received from the College of Public Affairs and Community Service. For this study, Moore conducted phone interviews with subjects and recruited participants with on-the-ground help from a sociology colleague at the University of Ghana in Legon.

In both Togo and Ghana, Moore examines a range of contributing risk factors, including sex exchanged for money or goods, having multiple sex partners and inconsistent use of condoms. The two countries present nearly identical risk profiles. She said the situation is made dire due to a lack of free or low-cost sexual health services available to MSM and HIV/AIDS patients, in general. Many health non-governmental organizations that had provided free contraception and sexual health and family planning counseling closed or withdrew services during the last decade due to budget cuts and waning financial aid from foreign countries such as the United States.

(Continued on following page…)
Dr. Moore Continued...

Religion more exacerbates the problem. Togo and Ghana are predominantly Christian and Muslim countries, and sexual health services — especially those geared to help MSM — are often viewed as endorsing promiscuity and perversion. Neighbors and family members commonly reject MSM as sinners. Public health officers, sociologists such as Moore and other MSM are often the only support network for these men. In Ghana the stigma is so great that clinics may offer services but not advertise them. Consequently, MSM might not know that resources are available, or they might fear reprisal for seeking help.

Shame gives rise to secrecy, and the problem spreads. MSM is a reality that affects every sector of society. Moore explained that many MSM will have sex with heterosexual women, for example, to avert family members’ suspicions, or they might sleep with heterosexual male partners who have girlfriends or wives. The situation is a health and also a human rights issue.

“The prevailing attitude among community members and leaders is that these risks are confined to deviants and not the dominant society,” said Moore. “This denial is part of the problem. Studies show that sexual health services are critical for raising awareness and curtailing spread of HIV/AIDS and related sexual diseases.”

Lindsey Johnson, PhD Student, Invited to Speak for TAMS students

On October 21, Lindsey Johnson (UNT Sociology PhD student) was invited by the Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science program (TAMS) to participate in a panel discussion, along with Dr. Dale Tampke, and Dr. Jordan Frith, Assistant Professor in the Department of Linguistics and Technical Communication, to discuss the question: “Why do we expect more from technology and less from each other?” The event was inspired by MIT professor, Dr. Sherry Turkle’s book, Alone Together. As a part of the event, TAMS students also shared their experiences participating in a social experiment in which they fasted from technology. This activity was part of a series of education programs sponsored by the Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science program.
PhD Student Ronald Wade Organizes Colloquium for ARNOVA

Ronald L. Wade, Sociology PhD candidate, organized and moderated a Think Tank colloquium at the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) in Hartford Connecticut November 22. The topic “Downturn survival: Are We Learning or Reacting?” was opened with Norman Dolch, PhD Senior Lecturer in Nonprofit Studies at the University of North Texas Denton and Dennis Young, PhD professor in the department of Public Management and Policy at Georgia State University.

Session discussants included Susan Cruise, PhD candidate at TWU; Regan Harwell Schaffer, PhD Associate Professor Pepperdine University; Stephanie Loudermilk Krick, Ph.D University of Central Florida; Julianne Gassman, PhD Cedar Falls, IA; Ann Marie Kinnell PhD University of Southern Mississippi.

Sociology Capstone Students Accepted to Present at the 2014 SSSA Conference

During the Fall semester, Dr. Michael Thompson along with PhD student, Michael Niño, mentored the undergraduate Senior Capstone class as they developed their own original research projects. As part of their coursework, the students submitted an abstract of their final project to the 2014 Southwestern Social Science Association Annual Meeting. All 14 students were accepted as presenters to the meeting, which takes place April 16-19, 2014 in San Antonio, Texas.
Conference Presentations

Dr. Cynthia Cready attended the annual meeting of the Gerontological Society of America in New Orleans, Louisiana November 20-24, 2013. Her work with two graduates of UNT’s doctoral degree program in applied gerontology was presented: “Family Caregiver Perceptions of Wandering in the ADRD Patient (with Patricia Dickson) and “Using the Korean-American Church to Connect Korean Seniors to Services Offered by Outside Agencies” (with Eunkyung Kim).

Dr. Cready was also invited to participate in panel “Self-Directed Teams; Team Building” at the Texas Culture Change Coalition and DADS Conference in Fort Worth, September 24, 2013. She presented “Sharing Decision-Making with Nurse Aides: Effects on Nurses,” using data from a larger study conducted with Dr. Dale Yeatts.

PhD student, Ann Wilder participated in a roundtable discussion titled, “Survey Effecting Homeless Elderly in Central Arkansas; Transforming Data into Community Development” at the Council on Social Work Education’s 2013 Annual Program Meeting on October 31-November 3, 2013 in Dallas, Texas. Ann also presented “Seniors, Sex, and Elder Care” at the Dallas Area Gerontological Society (DAGS) Fall Forum on October 17, 2013.

Recent Faculty & Student Publications


Thompson, Michael F. 2013. "State Revenue Collection through the Great Recession." Indiana Business Review 88 (3)


To see other publications by UNT sociologists, visit unt.edu/soci.
Dr. George Yancey Publishes a New Book *Dehumanizing Christians: Cultural Competition in a Multicultural World*

Right-wing authoritarianism has emerged as a social psychological theory to explain conservative political religious movements. Such authoritarianism is said to be rooted in the willingness of individuals to support authority figures who seek to restrict civil and human rights. **Dr. George Yancey** investigates the effectiveness of right-wing authoritarianism and the social phenomenon it represents. He analyzes how authoritarians on both the right and the left sides of the sociopolitical spectrum dehumanize their opponents.

Yancey details earlier research on the phenomena of right-wing authoritarianism, asking whether its characteristics are inherently linked to religious and political conservatives. He presents his Christian dehumanization scale, and shows that those high in right-wing authoritarianism differ from those high in Christian dehumanization in one key aspect: they did support authoritarian measures against conservative Christians.

Yancey argues that authoritarianism is a tool of a larger phenomenon on dehumanization. He notes that dehumanization is sometimes used by conservatives who wish to use authoritarian measures against conservative Christians. Yancey paints a bold picture with troubling implications about our understanding of society; he also considers the possible public policy dimensions of his work.

Dr. Yancey has published numerous books including *What Motivates Cultural Progressives? Understanding Opposition to the Political and Christian Right* and *Comprising Scholarship: Religions and Political Bias in American Higher Education*. 
interacting with colleagues, and doing administrative work due to their culture, race/ethnicity, and gender. Yet, there has not been much systematic effort to address these unique needs, and they rarely draw concerned attention from a mentoring perspective. Thus, there is a critical need to provide mentorship to foreign born women in academics, specifically tenure/tenured-track faculty at UNT.

The faculty mentoring team will participate in discussions where senior faculty members can share guidance, advice, and best practices with junior faculty members to support their teaching and research efforts. They also plan to invite external speakers from outside of UNT who are successful, foreign-born female full professors who can to give invite external successful foreign-born female faculty full professors (ideally, one from a STEM discipline) to give workshops on both teaching and research strategies as well as moving through the ranks.

Dr. Ami Moore recently received a faculty mentoring team grant ($4000) to address the unique needs of foreign-born female faculty at UNT. The idea for this program came from Moore’s research on foreign-born female academics. She serves as the team leader and will host workshops to discuss issues that affect foreign-born faculty at UNT.

The number of foreign-born faculty in US higher education has been steadily increasing as well as the number of foreign-born doctoral students, many of whom choose to remain in the United States for their academic careers. However, the realities of these foreign-born faculty members are different compared to those of their native-born counterparts.

Evidence suggests that foreign-born academics experience several disadvantages, including lower than average salaries and work satisfaction levels. They also often experience social isolation and challenges with teaching,
Dr. Zafirofsky Involved in Four Economic and Political Sociology Projects

Currently, Dr. Milan Zafirofsky is working on a variety of research projects, all based around economic and political sociology. First, he is analyzing elements of economic sociology in contemporary economics in relation to those in modern sociology. In addition, he plans to examine the crisis of the rational choice model in contemporary economics and implications for its extension into sociology. He is also currently working on a comparative-historical study of the social origins of Calvinism and its relationship to capitalism. Finally, he aims to publish a historical and empirical analysis of the impact of a type of ideology and political system on social stratification in the US.

Dr. Cready Named UNT Leadership Fellow

Dr. Cynthia Cready is a 2013-2014 UNT Leadership Fellow. She is one of 10 faculty members across campus selected for the program sponsored by the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Leadership Fellows receive support to attend workshops, conferences, seminars and other career development training. As part of the program, she will be attending the 31st Annual Academic Chairpersons Conference to be held February 12-14, 2014 in Jacksonville, FL.

Drs. Yancey & Williamson Discuss Atheism on KERA Public Radio

In December 2013, Drs. George Yancey and David Williamson were featured on THINK, a daily interview and call-in radio program provided by KERA, a public media company in North Texas. During the hour-long program, the authors discussed their book, There is No God: Atheists in America, as well as the increasing political and social influence of atheists in the U.S. Download the podcast here.
Dr. Michael F. Thompson is an economic and political sociologist who is interested in studying labor, state policy and economic development. His current research focuses on the popular topic of the minimum wage, as states across the United States decide whether or not to increase this level beyond the federal standard of $7.25 per hour. He explores whether the passage of bills to increase the minimum wage are due to partisan politics or institutional features such as legislative professionalism and the availability of ballot initiatives. He also examines the effectiveness of minimum wage increases in reducing income inequality and poverty without reducing employment.

Additionally, Dr. Thompson is conducting collaborative studies that examine differences in employment for U.S.-born and foreign-born workers during the recent recession and is part of an Economic Development Administration study measuring the impact of factors of innovation for economic development in counties across the United States. Starting in January, he will also be selecting papers for the Labor and Labor Movement research sessions on behalf of the American Sociological Association meetings to be held in San Francisco next summer.

Dr. Thompson is grateful for all the support from faculty, staff and graduate students to ensure he had a successful first semester at UNT. In particular, he has been highly impressed by the high quality of the students he had in the Sociology Capstone and the honors section of Introduction to Sociology – courses he looks forward to teaching again in the spring semester.
Fall Graduate, Dr. Ziyanak, Analyzes Delinquency and Social Bonding among Kurdish Teens

This December, under the direction of Dr. Dan Rodeheaver, Dr. Sebahattin Ziyanak graduated from the Sociology Doctoral Program and “walked” at the December 2013 ceremony. Born in Istanbul, Dr. Ziyanak received his B.S. in sociology in 1999 from the Mimar Sinan University and his M.A. in sociology in 2007 from University of Houston, Texas.

His current research tests the mediating effect of Hirschi’s social bonding theory on delinquent behavior among Kurdish teens. The data was collected from Kurdish teenagers attending Private Caglayan Murat Anatolian Science High School in Sanliurfa, Turkey and Kurdish teenagers attending a public school (The Public School in Diyarbakir, Turkey). The elements of social bonding attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief were used as independent variables. He posts that the association between the social bonding components and delinquency should be stronger in the case of Kurdish adolescents. Results demonstrate that in the absence of bonding, Kurdish adolescents tend to involve in major and minor delinquent activities.

Dr. Ziyanak’s major areas of interest are the subjects of delinquency, deviance, social organization, race/ethnicity, and sociology of religion. In his future career, he hopes to work in academia and continue cross-sectional and comparative studies.
Fall Graduate, Dr. Batra, Studies Immigrant Philanthropic Donations to India

Under the direction of Dr. Gabe Ignatow, Dr. Shikha Batra also graduated this December from the Sociology PhD program. Her dissertation titled: “Diaspora Philanthropy: Identity and Obligation among Indian Engineers in the United States” deals with the factors that motivate immigrant Indians in the United States to make philanthropic donations in India. Her study specifically focuses on the role of identity and obligation in influencing their decision. She conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with Indian engineer immigrants in San Diego, California to investigate how different socio-cultural identities that make up an immigrant’s self such as age, gender, religion, nation, region, caste, sub-caste, level of assimilation, level of participation in the transnational political movement, etc. engender greater trust, understanding and belief in the cause of donation. She also explored the extent to which their decisions are motivated by certain obligations deriving from guilt, shame, pride or indebtedness among the Indian immigrant community towards their home country.
Doctoral Students, Jacquie Cheun and Myrna Papadouka, Serve on the Graduate Student Council

Sociology Doctoral Students, **Jacquie Cheun** and **Myrna Papadouka** represent the unique needs of the Sociology Graduate students in their positions on the UNT Graduate Student Council (GSC).

Myrna is currently serving as a Graduate Senator for the 2013-2014 academic year, where she acts as a liaison between the GSC and the Sociology department. In this position, she works to improve the graduate experience for our department as well as the entire graduate student population.

Jacquie serves in a leadership role as the Programming Director for the GSC. She plans many of the events and social hours that take place on and off-campus for graduate students.

This Fall the GSC participated in a number of graduate school improvement activities, including a national campaign with “Grads Have Debt 2.” This campaign is committed to informing Congress about the implications of now allowing subsidized graduate loans. This limitation will cost graduate students and their families $18.1 billion more over the next 10 years.

The GSC is also working with the Toulouse Graduate School to host the Graduate Exhibition on March 1, 2014 at the Gateway Center. Thousands of dollars in prizes will be awarded to outstanding presentations. Entry forms and abstracts are due January 31, 2014.

The Graduate Student Council meets every 2nd Thursday of the month in BLB 255. All graduate students are encouraged to attend.
During the Fall semester, Sociology Graduate student, Alex Bush along with Sociology Undergraduate student, Ryan Mozingo collaborated with Dr. Michael Thompson to revitalize the UNT Sociology chapter of the international honor society Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD). AKD seeks to acknowledge and promote excellence in the scholarship in the study of sociology and the research of social problems. Similar to AKD, the UNT Sociology Club, is an opportunity for all students to be involved in the department’s academic community, regardless of eligibility for AKD.

The two organizations collaborated this semester to host a Graduate School Workshop, where Drs. Cynthia Cready and Gabe Ignatow answered undergraduate students’ questions about what to expect when applying to and attending graduate school.

On December 10, 2013, AKD initiated four new members: Joseph Lee Crane, Undergraduate, Major in Sociology, Minors in English and History, Victoria Nava, Undergraduate, Major in Sociology, Minors in Psychology, Spanish and Women’s Studies, Stephen Mansfield Ware, Undergraduate, Major in Sociology, Minor in Anthropology, and Dr. Michael Franklin Thompson, Faculty Member in Sociology.

Next semester, AKD and the Sociology Club have more events planned, including an undergraduate-graduate student mentorship initiative, and SPSS workshop, a panel discussion on sustainability, as well as student social events. For more information on AKD and the Sociology Club, visit us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/UNTAKD
Alumni Spotlight: Dr. Deborah Cosimo Serves as a Senior Program Analyst for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services


Currently, Dr. Cosimo is a Senior Program Analyst for the Office of Inspector General (OIG) in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Her office conducts national evaluations, offering practical recommendations to HHS programs and focusing on preventing waste, fraud and abuse. During her tenure with OIG, Dr. Cosimo has participated in evaluations covering a broad range of topics such as Medicare Advantage plans’ Website compliance with Federal accessibility standards, adverse events in hospitals, and nursing home emergency preparedness. Dr. Cosimo and her team were recently awarded the 2013 Inspector General’s Exceptional Achievement Award “in recognition of pivotal work in exposing weaknesses in nursing home emergency preparedness planning.” She is currently evaluating State compliance with section 6501 of the Affordable Care Act, which requires that State Medicaid programs terminate health care providers that are terminated by other Medicaid programs or by Medicare. Building on her prior work related to nursing home emergency preparedness, Dr. Cosimo is also co-leading an evaluation of hospital emergency preparedness and response during Superstorm Sandy and recently traveled to New York to visit hospitals impacted by the storm.
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. Thank you!

Make a Donation
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 Dan Rodeheaver, 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.