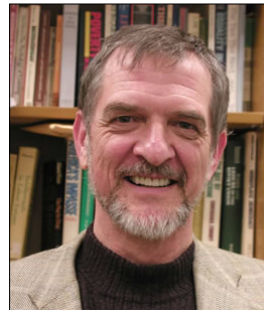


Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

In the last issue of *Sociology News*, I began by describing our ongoing faculty search process. In this issue, I am happy to report that our search efforts have started to bear wonderful fruit. I am very proud to announce the appointment of Jennifer Karas Montez as assistant professor of Sociology. Jennifer received her PhD from the University of Texas last May and is currently a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholar at Harvard University. She will join us next year (Fall 2013), after she completes her postdoctoral work (see p. 4). And soon we will be sharing yet more exciting news on the hiring front.



Dale Dannefer, Chair

It has also been a notable year of accomplishment and recognition for our faculty and graduate students. Congratulations to Eva Kahana, who received the Distinguished Career Contribution in Gerontology Award from the Gerontological Society of America in November. Those of us familiar with Eva's work and her contributions know well that it is apt recognition for her extraordinary record of accomplishment. As a number of the stories in this issue make clear, other faculty members are also having an impact with their research and are developing new lines of inquiry. Many graduate students are integrally involved in these efforts, often with significant responsibilities of their own. I especially want to welcome Susan Hinze back from her sabbatical, during which she launched some intriguing new research initiatives (p. 9). We look forward to seeing her new projects take shape.

As I noted in our last issue, we are continuing our efforts to expand our connections to and interactions with alumni of the Department of Sociology. Please let us hear from you about your activities. We also encourage you to keep us informed of any job openings that you and your colleagues may have or know of that may be of interest to our recent graduates and graduate students. And if you are in the area, please feel welcome to stop by and visit the Department of Sociology!

Dale Dannefer
Chair

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Kahana Receives GSA's Distinguished Career Contribution Award

By Dale Dannefer and Gary Deimling

In November, Eva Kahana received the Distinguished Career Contribution to Gerontology Award from the Gerontological Society of America at the GSA's 64th Annual Meeting in Boston. The Distinguished Career Contribution Award recognizes "an individual whose theoretical contributions have helped bring about a new synthesis and perspective or have yielded original and elegant research designs addressing a significant problem in the literature."

Photo courtesy of The Gerontological Society of America



2011 Gerontological Society of America Annual Meeting

As members of our department know well, this recognition is more than well-deserved. Eva's pioneering contributions to the field of social gerontology span four decades, and are responsible for the introduction or elaboration of many key concepts, from ageism to successful aging, from PE (person-environment) fit to her recent work on preventive and corrective proactivity.

Her pioneering contributions are responsible for the introduction or elaboration of many key concepts.

The GSA also noted Eva's accomplishments in teaching and her longstanding practice of offering collaborative opportunities to others, especially students. Many CWRU faculty, students and alumni have experienced the benefits of the department's long-running NIH Predoctoral Training Program in gerontology and the research opportunities provided through the Elderly Care Research Center.

Equally important for us, her colleagues and students, are the many contributions Eva has made to the Department of Sociology. Her 20 years of leadership as chair were instrumental in building a department with an international reputation for excellence in scholarship and teaching. In multiple aspects of leadership—recruiting faculty, spearheading the NIH training grant, and mentoring dozens of students who have gone on to successful careers—her influence has been extraordinary.

Eva credited her record of sustained accomplishment to her recognition of important and unanswered questions that make the process of scientific discovery engaging and fascinating.

Photo courtesy of The Gerontological Society of America



Eva Kahana receiving award from Keith Whitfield

In presenting the award in the large ballroom packed for the lunchtime meeting of the Behavioral and Social Sciences (BSS) section, BSS Chair Keith Whitfield of Duke University noted that Eva is continuing to elaborate established concepts even as she explores new areas of intellectual inquiry. Such areas include Health Web Science, which examines the use of the Internet for health information and decision-making, and the relationship between disability and aging. Upon receiving the award, Eva credited her record of sustained accomplishment, in part, to her recognition of important and unanswered questions that make the process of scientific discovery engaging and fascinating.

She concluded her brief, impromptu remarks by eloquently challenging researchers and professionals alike to persevere in their pursuit of ideas even if they encounter criticism or rejection. She noted that reworking a grant proposal or an article can be a great learning experience and ultimately become a building block of success. Please join us in extending heartfelt congratulations to Eva on receiving this well-deserved award!

Jennifer Karas Montez joins Case Western Reserve Faculty

We are very happy to announce that Jennifer Karas Montez, a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Health & Society Scholar, is joining the faculty of the Department of Sociology as assistant professor. Jennifer received her PhD from the University of Texas at Austin in August 2011.

Broadly, Jennifer's research focuses on gender and socioeconomic disparities in health among older adults. She has examined why longevity benefits of education are different for men than for women and ways in which the interactive influence of marriage and SES can shape health and well-being. She is also interested in the potential long-term consequences of early life contexts (e.g., parents' socioeconomic status, family structure) on later-life health and longevity. Her dissertation, *Gender Differences in the Life Course Origins of Later Life Health*, captures both of these streams of inquiry. Some of her recent work has appeared in *Demography* and *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*.



Jennifer Karas Montez

Jennifer's interests in gender and socioeconomic status will enhance our department's strengths in the sociology of health and the study of age and the life course. The recipient of many honors and awards during her doctoral studies at Texas, she is currently at Harvard University for her two-year RWJF postdoctoral fellowship, building on her dissertation to explore in more detail the dynamics underlying the inequality/health relationship.

"The RWJF postdoc experience has been invaluable," Jennifer says. "I've been immersed in other disciplinary perspectives—epidemiology, medicine, policy, psychology—about the determinants of adult health disparities, and my research on the social determinants of these disparities has already greatly benefited. I'm excited about joining the department next year and collaborating with faculty and students."

We are all greatly looking forward to Jennifer's arrival on campus next year (Fall 2013). Meanwhile, you can soon read more about her interests on the Department of Sociology's website.

Support the Department of Sociology

Please consider supporting the Department of Sociology as we continue building on our achievements. You can contribute to our success by making a gift to the department. Your gift allows us to continue to offer opportunities for our students to excel academically and to conduct important research. You can give online at giving.case.edu.

CSRP Project update

By Gary Deimling

The staff at the Cancer Survivors Research Program (CSRP) continues to present findings and publish papers from the longitudinal data collected during the NCI-funded *Quality of Life of Older-Adult, Long-Term Cancer Survivors* grant (1998-2010), funded by the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Many of the results from this study are the focus of our most recent chapter, “Adaptation and adjustment to cancer in later life: a conceptual model,” in *Cancer and Aging* (Keith M. Bellizzi and Margot Gosney, eds., Wiley-Blackwell, [2011/2012]). Since the last newsletter, we have been invited to present our findings on cancer and aging at the National Cancer Institute in Washington and at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle. Additional presentations by Sherri Brown, Cory Cronin and Holly Renzhofer are listed below. These are currently being revised for publication.

Research has identified the transition from cancer patient to survivor as a critical juncture in the course to recovery. This is especially true of older and minority survivors who are likely to face additional health challenges. Last year, we conducted a feasibility study for an intervention to support older cancer survivors, funded by a P-30 grant through the NCI-funded Case Comprehensive Cancer Center. This study clearly identifies the key issues survivors face in transition and their preferences for specific types of support from the health care community.

Preliminary analysis identified survivors’ preferences for specific types of support services, including communication with health care providers. About half of the survivors continue to have health concerns, and more than a third indicated that they would have been likely to use a support intervention to address them. Among our other findings of interest, over half of our survivors indicated that they had emotional issues for which they were likely to use a support intervention. While telephone or in-home consultations were desired by most survivors, about a third indicated they would use web—or email—based support. A synopsis of our findings will be presented at the NCI’s Biennial Cancer Survivorship Research Conference in Washington in June, and we will be working to develop a proposal for an intervention program to respond to these needs.

Recent presentations by CSRP staff at the 64th Annual Meeting of The Gerontological Society of America in Boston

Brown, Sherri P., Gary T. Deimling, Cory E. Cronin, and Holly T. Renzhofer. “Family Dynamics, Involvement in Health Care, and Health of Older Adult Survivors of Cancer.”

Cronin, Cory E., Gary T. Deimling, Sherri P. Brown, and Holly T. Renzhofer. “Decision-making and Involvement in Older Adult Cancer Survivors: Race and Psycho-Social Factors.”

Deimling, Gary T., Sherri P. Brown, Cory E. Cronin, and Holly T. Renzhofer. “The Impact of Cancer on Identity-Relevant Factors and the Social Self.”

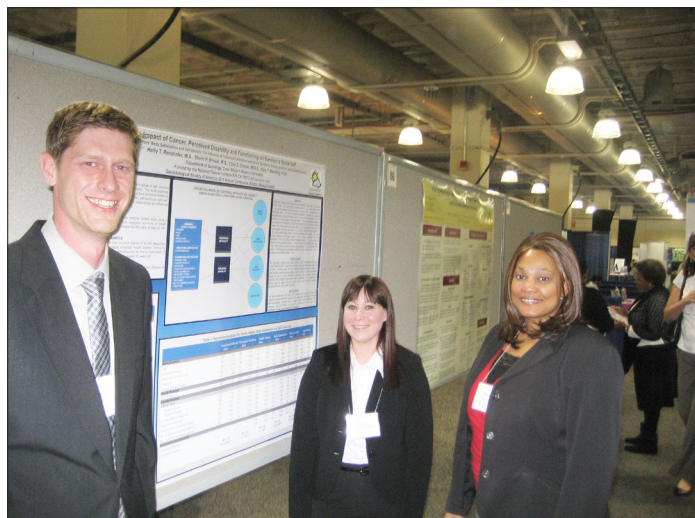


Sherri Brown and Professor Gary Deimling

Renzhofer, Holly T., Sherri P. Brown, Cory E. Cronin, Gary T. Deimling. "Survivors' Body Satisfaction and Self-Esteem: The Influence of Functional Limitations and Cancer Symptoms Among Long-Term Adult Cancer Survivors."

Presentations at other recent meetings

Cronin Cory E., Sherri P. Brown, Holly T. Renzhofer, and Gary T. Deimling. "Physician-Patient Communication Regarding Remission Status, Identity, and Psychological Well-being." Presentation at the Ohio Association for Gerontology and Education, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, April 2011.



2011 Gerontological Society of America Annual Meeting

Renzhofer, Holly T., Sherri P. Brown, Cory E. Cronin, and Gary T. Deimling. "How Self-Reported Disability and Functional Limitations Influence Older, Adult Long-term Cancer Survivors' Body Satisfaction and Continuity of Self." Presentation at the Ohio Association for Gerontology and Education, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, April 2011.

Deimling, Gary T., Sherri P. Brown, Cory Cronin, and Holly Renzhofer. "The Impact of Cancer on Cancer-related Identity Factors and the Self." Presentation at the Annual Meeting of the North Central Sociological Association, Cleveland, Ohio, March 2011.

CSRP RESEARCH TEAM:

Project Coordinator: Sherri P. Brown, MS Research Staff: Cory Cronin, MHA; Holly Renzhofer, MA

Affiliated Faculty: Karen F. Bowman, PhD, Boaz Kahana, PhD, Julia Rose, PhD.

Dannefer delivers keynote address to ESA Meeting

In September, Dale Dannefer was invited to Geneva, Switzerland, to deliver a keynote address at the annual meeting of the European Sociological Association (ESA). He spoke during the Special Plenary Session on *Life Trajectories in Turbulent Times*, a topic derived from the meeting's overall theme, *Social Relations in Turbulent Times*. Dannefer's lecture, "Vulnerabilities of the Life Course: Knowledge and the Sociological Imagination," dealt with the intersection of two paradigms of cumulative dis/advantage: one that sees it as a life-course process, and one that sees it as a historical process. His talk also explored the role of ideology and the potentials even of scientific work to serve an ideological function in legitimating existing and increasing inequalities.

While in Geneva, Dannefer also delivered a lecture to members of the *LIVES* research group and met with other groups at the Universities of Geneva and Lausanne. *LIVES*, a partnership between the two universities, is a multi-faceted five-year program of research funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation.

FreshLink Project update

What's in a Name? Classifying Community Gardens in Cleveland

By Christine Schneider

Increasingly in the popular media, community gardens are promoted as part of the solution to the urban healthy food gap. In an address to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Michelle Obama stated, “I’m a big believer in community gardens, both because of their beauty and because they provide access to fresh fruits and vegetables to so many communities across this nation and the world.” The American Community Garden Association lists among the benefits of community gardens the production of nutritious foods and reductions in family food budgets. FreshLink, the neighborhood-level intervention study conducted by Jessica Kelley-Moore and her team, is designed to increase access to healthy foods in four disadvantaged neighborhoods in Cleveland: Central, Buckeye-Shaker, Hough, and East Cleveland. FreshLink is the core research project of the CDC-funded Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods at Case Western Reserve University.

Organizational partners and neighborhood residents themselves identified community gardens as an important resources. With more than 225 community gardens in Cuyahoga County, the second-highest number in the nation, these gardens seemed like an ideal venue for increasing access to fresh produce for local residents. All that was left was to count the number of gardens in each neighborhood and inventory their yield and capacity. Or so we thought.

As FreshLink’s data manager, and as an avid lifetime gardener, this task held significant appeal for me. As long as I can remember, the first thing my dad and I did every spring was get our garden plot ready for planting. I enjoyed everything about it—even the endless weeding. We tried new seeds every year and always had salad from the garden with dinner. Those years gardening with my dad are some of my most cherished memories. Even when I was in the military, I would plant vegetables in pots and enjoy the fruits (so to speak) of my labor.

A significant challenge we faced is that there is no clear definition of a community garden. To the American Community Garden Association, a community garden is simply “any piece of land gardened by a group of people.” Ohio State University Extension and the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition use a narrower definition: gardened space where there is at least one non-family member and where produce harvested is not sold.



Figure 1. When we asked if they would like to expand their church garden, the minister said, “No. These vegetables are for the church, and we do not need a lot.”



Figure 2. When we asked why this garden was not situated in an area with sun, the reply was, “This is not a garden that we expect to produce quality vegetables; rather, it is a learning garden for the kids [ages 3-5].”

We could find no definition specifying size, number of gardeners, or type of yield. Thus, we had to count a 6-foot by 6-foot plot gardened by two unrelated people as well as a one-acre demonstration garden sponsored by the Cleveland Botanical Garden.

As you can see from the photos and the captions on page 7, we decided to recognize the variety of plots of land dedicated to growing food. In doing so, the FreshLink team developed a six-category classification system for community gardens—the most specific in the nation—which provided a methodology to collect the information needed to classify gardens. This work will help us monitor the impact of community gardening on public health and identify key areas for intervention. Our technical report will soon be available at our project website: www.prchn.org/freshlink.



Figure 3.

FreshLink gave me the chance to visit gardens in the community and talk with the gardeners about their experiences. It was not unusual for me to sit and chat, sometimes up to an hour, after my survey was completed. I was invited to share dinner, or have a drink, and I never left empty handed—whether it was a new tomato to try, a garlic clove to plant at my house, or most importantly, a new understanding of how these gardens are perceived by the people who work in them.

One barrier to starting or increasing the number of community gardens is the perception that land is not available. According to the Land Bank Program, there are numerous plots available to use for community gardens in each of our neighborhoods. For example, the garden in Fig. 3 is in an abandoned lot adjacent to a garden that is on record. Unfortunately, the ground is rock hard and the plants are situated between huge boulders, cinder, and other miscellaneous items. The soil has never been tested for lead. When I asked the garden leader if he was concerned about these issues, he said, “I am 90 years old and haven’t been killed off yet. If I am going to meet my maker, I want to go with a fresh tomato and some greens.”

While the two gardens reported having more than enough gardeners to plant crops, the garden leaders both said they needed young, healthy volunteers to help during fall/spring clean-up, building plots, mulching and weeding. The garden in Fig. 4 welcomed volunteers from the university during Case Community Day last fall. If all gardens had access to resources such as labor and knowledge of productive growing techniques, crop yields could be increased.



Figure 4.



Notes from a sabbatical semester

By Susan Hinze

Those outside of the academy hear about faculty on sabbatical and think, “Wow. A whole semester off! Must be rough.” My response is usually something like, “I WISH!” Faculty members are eligible for a one-semester sabbatical every seven years, during which we are on leave from all of our formal departmental, college and university obligations. In my case, besides not having teaching duties, I rolled off five major committees and stepped down as director of Women’s and Gender Studies. However, we are expected to produce research in the form of presentations, articles, books or grants. In our sabbatical applications, we detail plans for what we hope will be unprecedented productivity.

As a member of the executive committee at the college for six years, I’ve read lots of sabbatical plans. I always wanted to find someone with a sense of humor (or perhaps some raw honesty?) about what they *really* wanted to do. I wanted someone to write that during their sabbatical they planned to perfect warrior pose, bowl a perfect game, become an expert gardener, read novels, sleep, and spend time with family and friends who think they’ve disappeared for good inside the ivory tower.

But what was the real value of my sabbatical? I was reminded of why I entered academia. I love to read broadly, play with ideas, and write. I like to sit and stare out the window for long stretches of time thinking deep thoughts.

Alas, most of us write overly ambitious research plans that would require 24/7 schedules to execute. What have I accomplished on my sabbatical? I wrapped up one article, and wrote a book chapter. I began a new research project, one that involved conducting a content analysis of websites, learning how to do ethnography, immersing myself in the field, tackling IRB, and beginning interviews. I’ve submitted three abstracts to two different conferences. Finally, I’ve made major headway on a biographical project that has involved travel, trips to archives, and hours and hours spent playing historian and searching for clues to forgotten lives. I have not worked in isolation; co-authors include a former graduate student (now associate professor at Bates), four current graduate students and one faculty member from another department.

On a substantive level, my research cuts across methodologies and subfields. I’ve written conceptually about health, health care and medical sovereignty as human rights; I’ve used quantitative methods and an intersectionality framework to examine health outcomes for older black women; I’m using qualitative methods to study the rise of workplace coaching services, and am beginning to understand this emerging profession. Finally, I’m learning historical methodologies to explore the lives of five remarkable brothers who were born into slavery, but became successful and influential professional men.

All of this means I can check most (not all!) of the productivity boxes on my to-do list. But what was the real value of my sabbatical? I was reminded of why I entered academia. I love to read broadly, play with ideas, and write. I like to sit and stare out the window for long stretches of time thinking deep thoughts. There is great value in feeling rested, refreshed, and renewed.

As students in my Work & Family class know, jobs are increasingly over-sized, and academia is no exception. Most of us probably clock 40-50 hours per week just on prepping for classes, teaching, spending time with students, supervising graduate students, attending committee meetings, running academic programs, and being involved with our disciplinary organizations. In other words, teaching and service, two important

components of our jobs, take up much of our work week. But add research responsibilities and the hours clocked can skyrocket way past 50 hours per week. I am grateful for the opportunity to put research and writing first. As my sabbatical semester winds down, I realize how much I've missed being in the classroom, and I look forward to seeing students again on a daily basis. I had a couple of meetings to attend this week, and was delighted to feel warmly welcomed everywhere I went, including the halls of Mather Memorial. Several people commented on how happy and relaxed I seemed. Perhaps the real value of a sabbatical is in finding balance, allowing for a more genuine appreciation of life in academia.



Professor Hinze acquires new skills on sabbatical

Faculty Updates

In addition to the ESA keynote address he delivered in Geneva (see p. 6), **Dale Dannefer** delivered a lecture at the Behavioral and Social Science Section Presidential Symposium, “Lifestyle in Social Context”, during the Gerontological Society of America’s Annual Meeting, which was held in Boston last November. Dale recently published “The Life Course, Aging, and the Sociological Imagination: New Prospects for Theory,” in *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences*, 7th edition, edited by Robert Binstock and Linda George. He also published “Long Time Coming, Not Here Yet: Implications of Social Theory for the Life Course”, in *Handbook of Sociology of Aging*, edited by Jacqui Angel and Rick Settersten and published by Springer.

Gary Deimling, in addition to articles both submitted and in progress, has been busy advancing the research initiatives of CSRP (see p. 5).

Brian Gran’s research on global children’s rights continues to move forward. His most recent publication, “An independent voice for children’s rights in Europe? The role of independent children’s rights institutions in the EU” (Brian Gran, Nigel Thomas and Karl Hanson), appeared in *The International Journal of Children’s Rights*. Brian has research databases under development and grant proposals under way, and he has completed a book manuscript titled “*The Champion of Children’s Rights: Children’s Ombudspersons Enforcing Children’s Rights*.” Over the past year, he was an invited panelist on the U.S. Health System Panel on “The Impact of Health Systems on People” and was named both a 2011 Swiss National Science Foundation Visiting Fellow and a 2011 University Center for Innovation in Teaching and Education (UCITE) Mentor Fellow.

Susan Hinze, along with Jielu Lin and Tanetta Andersson, has a chapter forthcoming in *Women's Health Issues* titled "Can We Capture the Intersections? Older Black Women, Education and Health." She also has a forthcoming chapter with co-author Heidi Taylor, "Resituating Human Rights and Sociology: Medical Sociology," in the new *Handbook of Sociology and Human Rights*, edited by David Brunnsma, our own Brian Gran, and Kerri Iyall Smith. (Heidi earned her PhD in our department in 2002 and is currently associate professor of sociology at Bates College in Maine.) Sue gave a lecture in late July to the incoming medical school class of 2015, titled "Gender and Health: What a Difference a Chromosome Makes. Not." She also received the 2011 Inclusion and Diversity Achievement Award for excellence in leadership and continued commitment to inclusion, diversity, social justice, research and scholarship at Case Western Reserve University.

Eva Kahana has published multiple articles over the past year, including "Health Care Consumerism and Access to Health Care: Educating Elders to Improve both Preventive and End of Life Care" (E. Kahana, B. Kahana, L. Kahana, J. Brown, & D. Kulle) in *Research in the Sociology of Health Care*, 2011. She also has several articles that are currently in press, in revision and in preparation. During 2011, Eva traveled to Vienna, Koblenz, London, Las Vegas, and Boston, delivering conference papers and presentations. Among these was an invited presentation titled "Active Roles for the Elderly as Health Care Consumers" at the University of Cologne in Germany. In print media, you can find Eva quoted and published in "Teach Your Tech-Challenged Parents, Grandparents Well" in *USA TODAY* and "Deciding Where to Retire: He says Maine. She Says Florida" in *The Wall Street Journal*. With these accomplishments and those in the works, in addition to receiving the Distinguished Career Contribution Award at the 2011 GSA Annual Meeting (see p. 2), she has had a very exciting and fulfilling year.

Jessica Kelley-Moore and the FreshLink team, core project of the Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods, was recently awarded a pilot grant from the new CWRU Urban Health Initiative. The six-month project, which will fund the development and validation of a cooking curriculum to complement an existing nutrition curriculum for low-literacy populations, is the result of a community-identified need to build cooking skills into nutrition education. Some of Jessica's other works in progress include "Life Course Theories of Race Disparities: A Comparison of Cumulative Dis/Advantage Perspective and the Weathering Hypothesis" (Roland J. Thorpe and Jessica Kelley-Moore), "Proactive Aging: A Longitudinal Study of Stress, Resources, Agency and Well Being in Late Life" (Eva Kahana, Jessica Kelley-Moore, and Boaz Kahana), and "Loneliness Among Disabled Married Older Adults: Does Marital Quality Matter?" (David Warner and Jessica Kelley-Moore). She made two presentations at the Annual Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America in Boston, Massachusetts. The first, with Jielu Lin, Dale Dannefer and Tirth Bhatta, was titled "Does Childhood Really Have a 'Long Arm'? Accumulative Life Course Processes in Late-Life Functional Limitations," and the second, with Melinda Laroco Boehm and Timothy Goler, was titled "Not Just Surviving but Thriving: Seniors in Public Housing Navigating their Food Environment."

Emilia McGucken gave a presentation titled "Some Interesting Facts about the Japanese Police: Can We Adopt their Korean System?" at the 2011 Faculty Seminar. She is conducting two research studies: one on the prevalence of bullying among school youth, and one on physicians' attitudes toward substance-abusing persons.

David Warner recently published an article in *Social Science and Medicine* titled “Understanding How Race/Ethnicity and Gender Define Age-Trajectories of Disability: An Intersectionality Approach” (David Warner and Tyson Brown). David presented at the Annual Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America in Boston, Massachusetts, the Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America in Washington, D.C., and the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Sociological Society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. One of these presentations, “Racial/Ethnic and Gender Trajectories of Functional Impairment: Exploring Between-and Within-Group Heterogeneity,” in which Warner collaborated with Jielu Lin and Tyson Brown, was a Blue Ribbon Award Winner.

Sociology Seniors present capstone research projects

By Jessica Kelley-Moore

As part of the university’s SAGES curriculum, each senior student must conduct a capstone project. During the Fall 2011 semester, eight of our senior majors participated in our Sociology Senior Capstone experience. In this seminar-based course, the students designed an original research study, collected data, and prepared a final empirical paper.

Sociology Seniors Capstone Research Projects



Back row, left to right: Brittany Castle, Avonlea Yu, Curt Priest, Jeanne Li
Front row, left to right: Isaac Dukes, Alexander Petraglia,
Alexa Fiffick, Nancy Gulas

In addition, we focused on tasks typically performed by professional sociologists, including peer review of science, development of effective PowerPoint and poster presentations, and responsible conduct of research involving human subjects. On December 15, 2011, the department sponsored Senior Capstone Day, a public forum for the student research. More than 35 faculty, students, and family members heard five oral presentations and viewed three poster presentations.

Like our students, the projects were diverse and creative. Topics ranged from the function of pro-Cleveland blogs in strengthening regional identity and pride, to sexuality themes in Disney tween programming, to the social influences on midlife remarriage. Students used many different research designs, including content analysis, semi-structured interviews, and online surveys.

I am extremely pleased to report that more than half of the students are using their capstone projects as a writing sample in graduate school applications. The Sociology Senior Capstone Experience course is offered each fall and is open to all senior majors.

Oral Presentations

Alexa Fiffick

“Physicians’ Gender: A Modern Look into How Physician Gender May Affect Patient Opinions”

Jeanne Li

“The Heart and Soul of the City: A Study of Cleveland Bloggers”

Curt Priest

“Operationalizing and Assessing the Food Desert Phenomenon as it Applies to Cleveland”

Alexander Petraglia

“A Mouseketeer’s First Kiss: A Content Analysis of Sexuality Themes in Disney Tween Programming”

Nancy Gulas

“Midlife Pairing: Life-Changing Decisions for Those Age 40 to 60”

Poster Presentations

Avonlea Yu

“Themes of Individualism in American Magazine Advertisements”

Brittany Castle

“Feeding the Hungry and Healing the Broken Spirited: The Relationship between Religious Affiliation and Missions of Non-Governmental Organizations”

Isaac Dukes

“Opinions on Environmental Health: Public versus Scientific”

**Congratulations to all who
presented!**