Letter from the Chair

Greetings friends of Sociology!

As I wrap up my first year as Department Chair, it has put me in a reflective mood about all of the recent changes and transitions we have experienced as a department. After 16 years, Dale stepped down from serving as Chair, allowing more time for scholarship and teaching, including a new 200-level course on Genes and Society, and co-taught Contemporary Theory (with Tim Black) for our doctoral students. Last spring, we wished Gary Deimling a warm launch into retirement but have been pleased that he has continued to join us for important department events and defenses. This past fall, we welcomed Danielle Czarnecki, as a Visiting Assistant Professor (see an article about her work on page 4!). Finally, following a very competitive faculty search, we are excited to announce that Dr. Haoming Song will be joining us this fall as an Assistant Professor! Watch for more information about Dr. Song after his arrival in Cleveland. Also, a belated welcome to Cheyenne Vazquez, our Department Assistant. They have already made wonderful contributions (including this newsletter!) and are settling in with our unique crowd.

Our department has many things to boast about, as you will see throughout the newsletter. Indeed, too many great things to try to list them all. From awards, to grants, to journal editorships, to national offices, we maintain high visibility in the university and the discipline. Speaking of excelling, congratulations to our newest doctoral graduates Casey Albitz, Kaitlin Langendorfer, and Danielle Sabo (see their picture at graduation on page 14)! We wish you well with the next chapter of your career! In December, we had Capstone Day for our majors with eight independent research studies. Three of those students went on to complete the two-semester Honors Thesis. In addition, Alessandra Sell was awarded first place in the NCSA President's Undergraduate Paper competition and Paola Van der Linden Costello was awarded second place in the Fall 2022 Intersections Poster Session. You can check out our list of all of our undergraduate and graduate student award winners on pages 8 and 10.

We enjoy hearing what our alumni are up to, so please drop us a line!

- Jessica Kelley, Chair
Professor Tim Black Chosen for North Central Sociological Association’s Scholarly Achievement Award

Professor Tim Black and co-author Sky Keyes’ book, *It’s a Setup: Fathering from the Social and Economic Margins*, was recently chosen for the North Central Sociological Association’s Scholarly Achievement Award. Examining the political and economic conditions faced by low-income fathers, Black and Keyes discuss the contradictory phenomenon that “as expectations of fatherhood and involvement have changed rapidly within a generation, labor force and state support for fathering on the margins has deteriorated.” Ranked highest among a plethora of nominated works by a three-member committee of judges, the award itself is a showcase of the hard work and dedication put towards his and co-author Sky Keyes’ sociological research.

*It’s a Setup* was honored during an awards ceremony at the NCSA’s meeting on March 24-25, 2023 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Congratulations, Tim!

Professor Mary Erdmans Presents on Polish Migration and Refugees

Mary Erdmans presented a paper “The Migration Projects of Late 20th Century Undocumented Polish Migrants in Chicago” at the American Historical Association/ Polish American Historical Association annual meetings in Philadelphia in January 2023. She also reviewed Polish Mother by Karen Walczyk Prescott for Polish American Studies, published in their Spring 2023 issue. In addition, her essay, “Choosing a Greek Island: Durkheim’s Dilemma” appeared in The Los Angeles Review in December 2022.

Mary continues to work on her project on returning refugees - - Poles who were opposition activists in the Solidarność movement in the 1980s who emigrated as political refugees and then returned to Poland after the fall of communism. In May, she was in Poland conducting interviews, meeting with faculty at the University of Wroclaw and the University of Lower Silesia, and doing fieldwork on the history of opposition in Wroclaw.

The Western Reserve Abolitionist Project Grows

The Western Reserve Abolitionist Project (WRAP) was launched in the spring semester of 2022. It emerged from Professor Black’s fall semester course, Racial Inequality and Mass Imprisonment in the U.S. Students were eager to apply what they were learning in the course and so at the end of the semester we invited Melekte Melaku, an organizer from the ACLU and a CWRU alum, to the class to strategize about creating an action
group. The group began meeting right away and that following April, WRAP held its first event: a panel discussion on prison reform and abolitionism that brought together representatives from activist groups and organizations across the state as panelists. It was the largest gathering of people in one room on campus since the start of the pandemic!

This past year, WRAP’s membership has grown to over 20 students. The group is multiracial and decision making is organized democratically and horizontally. In the past year, the group circulated its first newsletter, organized a poetry slam, showed a film on Rikker’s jail and facilitated discussion about the film, and began developing a Resource Allocation Project that will create a resource guide for citizens returning home from prison. Moreover, several members of the group have stayed in Cleveland this summer to advance its initiatives.

To date, WRAP has been supported by generous donations from the John and Janet Sharp Family Fund and by the group’s campus bake sales. Anyone wishing to contribute support can do so by contacting Professor Black at timothy.black@case.edu.

CWRU Hosts First U.S.-Based Meeting of Society for Longitudinal and Life Course Studies

In October 2022, Case Western Reserve University hosted the annual meeting of the Society for Longitudinal and Life Course Research. It was the first time that this international and interdisciplinary association has met in the U.S. Professors Jessica Kelley and Dale Dannefer co-hosted the meeting, which welcomed nearly 200 attendees from 23 countries.

SLLS has grown rapidly since its founding in 2010, and offers a forum in association for researchers across disciplines who share a commitment to the value of longitudinal research, to methodological rigor and a life course perspective (https://www.slls.org.uk).

The Society’s annual meeting brings together scholars from Europe, North America, Oceania, and other regions, ranging from Principal Investigators of major cohort and panel studies to junior scholars who are working with such data. Two distinctive characteristics of SLLS are (1) the year-round methods workshops that are delivered remotely and free for all members, (2) strong support and mentorship for Early Career Scholars.
The 2022 conference theme was “Growing Up and Growing Older Across Societies: Harnessing the Power of Comparative Life Course Research” and featured plenary talks from international leaders in longitudinal research, including Jinkook Lee (Gateway to Global Aging, University of Southern California, Elizabeth Cooksey of Ohio State University, and Morten Wahrendorf of University of Dusseldorf. Former CWRU Sociology faculty member Rick Settersten organized a panel on the history and future of life course research featuring Glen Elder, Dale Dannefer, Jeylan Mortimer, and Phyllis Moen.

The conference program had more than 80 scientific talks, including several by our doctoral students: Micah Bailey Arafah, Poshan Dahal, Chengming Han, and Anvitha Ravipati. Sociology alumni also joined us and presented their recent work, including Wenxuan Huang (’21), Jielu Lin (’17), and Jiao Yu (’21). The meeting’s success was made possible by a dedicated local team including Department Administrator Michelle Corcoran and Sociology graduate students Micah Arafah, Colleen Kavanagh, Anvitha Ravipati, and other volunteers. The event benefited from the local co-sponsorship of the Department of Sociology and the University Center for Aging and Health. The 2023 conference will be in Munich, Germany.

Q&A with Professor Danielle Czarnecki by Colleen Kavanagh

Danielle Czarnecki joined the department as a Visiting Assistant Professor in fall 2022. Professor Czarnecki received her PhD in Sociology from University of Michigan and was a postdoctoral fellow at McGill University and University of Cincinnati. Her work has been published in Social Science & Medicine, Gender & Society, Qualitative Sociology, and Health Expectations.

What is your current research focus?

My work focuses on assisted reproduction (e.g., IVF) and abortion. I’m currently working on two projects. One is collaborative research with the Ohio Policy Evaluation Network that explores how abortion restrictions impact patients and clinicians. I am also working on a new study exploring women’s experiences with multifetal pregnancy reduction, a procedure that reduces the number of fetuses with the hope of continuing a pregnancy.

How did you come to be interested in this topic?

Multifetal reduction bridges my interest in abortion and assisted reproductive technologies. Research has primarily studied these topics separately, yet embryo and
fetal loss can occur in both contexts. Embryo disposal is a routine part of IVF. There is also a higher risk for multifetal pregnancy with fertility treatments, which may result in a reduction. Yet, infertility patients and clinicians are currently less embroiled in abortion and embryo politics. In a society where abortion and the moral status of the embryo is so politicized, what accounts for these differences?

**What do you hope to learn? Any surprises or unexpected results so far?**

A common thread in my work is understanding moral life as a social process, not an abstract phenomenon. I hope to learn when and why something becomes an issue of moral concern or not. Are the ways that society differently values raced, classed, and gendered bodies part of the story? I was surprised to hear that what constitutes an abortion was not always clear. For some, it was less to do with the procedure itself than other factors.

**Why do you think it is important? Where do you see this work leading you in the future?**

With the fall of Roe, the study of reproduction is critically important. Abortion restrictions are affecting other aspects of reproductive healthcare. Fertility medicine and patients are concerned. Restrictions are impacting emergency medicine, miscarriage management, and other areas. It is important for research across these settings to be in conversation. We are also seeing the politicization of medicine expand, such as broadening restrictions on transgender medicine. Understanding the politicization of healthcare is arguably more important now than ever.

**Faculty Members Susan Hinze, Brian Gran, and Ph.D. Alumna Anne Bryden Conduct Research on Recent Spinal Cord Injury**

In their innovative research project, Professors Brian Gran and Susan Hinze are Co-PIs along with former sociology PhD student (and now Professor!) Anne Bryden, on a Department of Defense grant with PI Professor Kimberly Anderson titled: "Perspectives on Recovery and Interventions to Restore Function Across the First Year of Spinal Cord Injury." Their interdisciplinary team with expertise in the social sciences, law, occupational therapy, and biomedical research explores how *those with a SCI and their support persons* define and experience recovery and reintegration into the community.

In the blink of an eye, those with a newly acquired spinal cord injury (SCI) and their loved ones face a dizzying array of medical, social and financial decisions. Often the injured person is transported by ambulance to the hospital after injury. Some have emergency surgery, and others require medical stabilization. Once conscious, still experiencing pain and frequently in shock, they awaken to the new embodied reality of paralysis and a sudden dependence on others. Acute care is generally followed by time spent in a rehabilitation center although pathways post-rehabilitation can vary. Those pathways might include time in a Skilled Nursing Facility, multiple
hospitalizations due to medical complications, and finally, a return to a home environment with home-based assistance and outpatient therapy. During their first year of recovery, the injured person must focus on physical healing, psychological adjustments and regaining function. Their loved ones provide comfort and support but are also entering a new reality, one that requires a great deal of “beneficiary work” to navigate multiple bureaucratic systems to harness assistance and resources.

The team has conducted semi-structured interviews during the initial inpatient stay, at 6 months post-injury, and at 12 months post-injury. The research sites were an academic hospital, and a Veteran’s Affairs hospital. At present, interviews and line-by-line coding are complete with a final N of 122 interviews. The research team has presented findings at several conferences and have manuscripts in progress for publication. Some of these are listed at the end of this newsletter. In addition, the team has designed a workshop for the 62nd ISCOS Annual Scientific Meeting 2023 in Scotland on “Lived Experiences of People with SCI and their Caregivers.”

2023 North Central Sociological Association Presentations


In addition to these presentations, Dr. Tim Black was awarded the Scholarly Achievement Award in Book Division for his book, “It’s A Setup: Fathering from the Social and Economic Margins”, and undergraduate student Alessandra Sell placed first in the Undergraduate Student Paper division for her paper, “Fear the Migrant: Examining Anti-Immigrant Sentiment on Fox News, 2014-2020”.

- “Temporal Debt: At the Crossroads of Neoliberal Reason and Social Control” – Casey Albitz and Tim Black
- “Threat: Marginalization on the Outskirts of Gentrification” – Lacey Caporale
- “Class Location and Family Political Background of Social Movement Activists” – Kaylee Boney and Mary Erdmans
- “Prevalence and Correlates of Food Insecurity at a Private, Midwestern University” – Zach Milko
- “Cumulative Dis/Advantage, Status, and Allostatic Load” – Micah Bailey-Arafah
• “An Expansion of Inclusivity: The Future of Life Course Research” – Micah Bailey-Arafah and Anvitha Ravipati

• “Besides Me, My Mother Has No One: Only Daughters Caring for Their Aging Mothers in Ufa, Russia” – Polina Ermoshkina

• “Chronic Pain Disparities by Sex: The Role of Economic Worry” – Colleen Kavanagh

Cassi Pittman Claytor Receives 2022 Faculty Innovator Award and HILLS Fellowship by Amber Byrd Ndukwe

In the Fall of 2022 Professor Cassi Pittman Claytor was awarded the HILLS (the Humanities in Leadership Learning Series) Faculty Fellowship. Funded by a $2 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the HILLS program at CWRU promotes cultivates academic leaders among scholars in the humanities and arts. The HILLS program aims to enhance fellows’ leadership capacity by providing them with opportunities to nurture the unique perspective and insight that humanities and arts disciplines provide. In addition to learning about university governance and finances, HILLS Fellows engage with senior academic administrators. For example, Pittman Claytor shadowed Provost Vinson, a PI for the program. Vinson serves as a model of an academic administrator from a humanities background. He and Pittman Claytor share another connection to Mellon Foundation, as they are both Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellows (MMUF), a program designed to diversify the academy by cultivating undergraduates interested in original research and supporting their pursuit a doctorate (another notable MMUF Alicia Smith Tran). The HILLS program also sponsors a graduate symposium held in December, of which Amber Byrd Ndukwe, Collette Ngana, and Abolade Oladimeji participated.

This past September CWRU held its first ever Innovation week where our very own Cassi Pittman Claytor was identified as one of the University’s top faculty innovators. The week’s program culminated in the Innovation Awards, an event honoring faculty across the university and highlighting academic research that has an impact on the world beyond the academy. Pittman Claytor, whose impact on the retail industry was evident by her collaborative research and advisory role with Sephora (a leading beauty retailer), received the 2022 Faculty Innovator Award. As she walked across stage to receive her metal, her definition of innovation flashed across the screen. For Pittman Claytor, "Innovation means moving society forward, always uplifting and advancing."

Please join us in congratulating and recognizing Dr. Pittman Claytor’s most deserved awards and honors!
Congratulations to Sociology’s Graduate Student Award Winners!

Each spring, faculty and staff from each department nominate students for awards offered through the School of Graduate Studies. The Graduate Dean’s Instructional Excellence Award is presented to graduate student assistants who demonstrate outstanding achievement in undergraduate instruction and recognizes their exceptional skill and dedication. The Ruth Barber Moon Award is presented to one graduate student per department for demonstrating academic promise and leadership ability. The Marie Haug Award is presented annually to graduate students who have shown exemplary performance in gerontological studies.

Poshan Dahal received the Ruth Barber Moon Award for Academic Excellence, Abolade Oladimeji received the Marie Haug Award, Colette Ngana received the Richard Zdanis Research Scholarship Award, Amber Byrd received the Graduate Student Appreciation Award, Polina Ermoshkina received the Graduate Instructor Excellence Award, and Reema Sen received the Global Citizen Award.

Sociology Senior Capstone Presentations

On December 12, 8 sociology majors presented their Senior Capstone Experience (SOCI 392). Each of these independent projects reflected the student’s emerging intellectual interests and strengths. The topics presented address a diversity of sociological issues, such as controlling images of Black women, sexual and gender minorities, anti-immigrant narratives, Jamaican migrant communities, student perception of campus safety, college transitions for disadvantaged students, and the growth of the prison population.
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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<td>“Bad Ass Black Women: Is Viola Davis Dismantling Controlling Images of Black Women in US Film?”</td>
<td>Rochelle Stephens</td>
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<td>“Pockets of Inclusion: Finding Spaces to Perform Gender-Nonconformity in CWRU Greek Life”</td>
<td>Nicholas Shaffer</td>
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<td>“Fear the Migrant: Examining Anti-Immigrant Sentiment on Fox News, 2014-2020”</td>
<td>Alessandra Sell</td>
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<td>“Majority, Minority, Mistrust: Perceptions of Black Sexual and Gender Minorities Towards the U.S. Healthcare System”</td>
<td>Cielle Brady</td>
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<td>“I Hate the Yankees: Generational and Racial Conflicts in Jamaican Migrant Communities in the US and Definitions and Markers of Success”</td>
<td>Mya-Ariel Blake</td>
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<td>“The Blame Game: University Emergency Messaging and Student Perception of Campus Safety”</td>
<td>Olivia Condon</td>
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<td>“Building Better Bridges: The High School Experiences of East Cleveland College-bound Students”</td>
<td>Maranda Priah</td>
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<td>“Covering the Spread: Unmasking Communication Strategies in College Responses to COVID”</td>
<td>Joey O’Donnell</td>
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<td>“The Prison Boom: The Impact of Nixon’s Criminal Reform on the Prison Population”</td>
<td>Paola van der Linden Costello</td>
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2023 AKD Initiates and Undergraduate Award Recipients Recognized

On April 21, 2023, fourteen students were initiated into the Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD) International Sociology Honor Society and 10 students were recipients of Undergraduate Awards.

This year’s AKD initiates were Catherine Buhrow, Lacey Caporale, Olivia Condon, Polina Ermoshkina, Ashley Hawkins, Colleen Kavanagh, Dalene Mendoza, Amber Ndukwe, Maranda Priah, Anvitha Ravipati, Cameryn Scott, Alessandra Sell, Rochelle Stephens, and Max Wild.

The Schermerhorn Award for an outstanding student in sociology went to Alessandra Sell. The Mark Lefton Award for excellence in sociological studies went to Max Brown, Mikaela Elliott, Dalene Mendoza, Sierra Williams, and Paola van der Linden Costello. The Stella Berkeley-Friedman Award to seniors for the highest academic achievement in the study of sociology went to Ashley Hawkins. The Robert C. Davis Award for demonstrated commitment to sociological studies went to Cielle Brady, Miranda Priah, and Rochelle Stephens. On behalf of the Department of Sociology, congratulations on all of your outstanding accomplishments!

Journal Updates

Journal of Elder Policy
Eva Kahana, Editor-in-Chief

Journal of Elder Policy, with inaugural Editor Eva Kahana, continues to grow and expand its reach. The overarching goal of JEP is to publish innovative articles that can inform policy and enhance the quality of life and well-being of older adults. The journal has generated considerable interest and plans are under way to increase its circulation to additional libraries. Recent graduate, Dr. Kaitlyn Barnes Langendoerfer is Managing Editor and doctoral candidates Polina Ermoshkina, and Poshan Dahal, are editorial assistants.

A unique feature of journals published by Policy Studies Organization, the journal’s sponsoring organization, is that all editorials and article abstracts are translated into Chinese and Spanish. We are now in the third year of publishing and the journal has recently focused on topical issues. The current issue forthcoming in August is focused on technology as an underutilized resource in late life. The next issue is concerned with
autonomy and aging. All manuscripts are peer-reviewed and interdisciplinary. Authors are asked to conclude their articles with innovative policy recommendations.

Recent issues of JEP can be viewed on our website here.

Journal of Gerontology Social Sciences
Jessica Kelley, Editor-in-Chief

JGSS, sponsored by the Gerontological Society of America and published by Oxford University Press, continues to be home to high-quality studies on social factors related to age and the life course. JGSS achieved a five-year Impact Factor of 5.36, and is now exceeding 600 new submissions annually.

In November 2022, JGSS published a special issue titled “Psychological and Social Dynamics of the Aging Experience among Racial and Ethnic Minorities.” The issue featured qualitative and quantitative studies on older adults from a wide range of race/ethnic groups, including older Chinese immigrants in the US, Black Caribbeans, and Puerto Rican older adults. The emphasis of the special issue was to expand inquiry on aging among race and ethnic minorities, examining cultural, social, and economic factors within these groups rather than simply comparing them to White older adults. Topics included social convoys, intersectionality, discrimination, skin tone and colorism and immigrating in later life. You can view the issue here: https://academic.oup.com/psychsocgerontology/issue/77/11 Another special issue on immigration and aging will be published later this year.

Department Publications and Faculty Updates

Publications


* Posthumus publication of Ph.D. Alum Gregory Graham's dissertation.


Awards, Recognition, and Honors

Gran, Brian. Global Citizen Award, Case Western Reserve University. 2023
Pittman Claytor, Cassi. Guest on the Tavis Smiley Show, December 6, 2022, discussing *Black Privilege*.

Pittman Claytor, Cassi. Gave the Black History Address for the National Retail Federation in February 2023. NRF is the largest trade organization of retailers in the country (including Target).

**Presentations**

Black, Timothy. 2023  Special Panel Presentation, Ethnographic Cafe, UCAL-Berkeley (May)


Congratulations to our three PhD graduates, Kaitlyn Langendoerfer, Danielle Sabo, and Casey Albitz!