



# Sociology Newsletter

Fall 2007

## **SOCIOLOGY WEEK HIGHLIGHTS**

November 12-16, 2007

Each academic year, departments hold a week-long series of events to highlight their field of study. This year's Sociology Week was especially successful.

On Monday, November 12, Sociology students Meggan Patty (right) and Kristina Ramos (left)



each presented on their summer internships. Meggan interned at the RiverBend Cancer services in South Bend. RiverBend is a non-profit organization in downtown South Bend, Indiana, which

provides cancer patients in the local community with financial assistance, medical supplies, wigs, education and counseling about cancer.

Meggan's job included managing the data base and website, assisting with fund raising, and special events planning. Kristina interned at the Purdue Extension of the Learning Network of Clinton County in Frankfort, IN. Much of her work was with Plaza Comunitaria where clients were provided with online education (*primaria, ecundaria, bachillerato*) through Mexican Government and ESL courses. She also served as a medical interpreter for Spanish speaking people and she provided nutrition education interpreting at the local WIC office.

Tuesday, November 13, a talk by Prof. Mary Cocoran, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, National University of Ireland, Maynooth. Her research and teaching interests lie primarily in the fields of urban sociology,

migration, and media cultures. Corcoran is the co-editor of *Uncertain Ireland* (2006); *Place and Non-place: The Reconfiguration of Ireland* (2004); and *Ireland Unbound: A Turn of the Century Chronicle* (2002), all published by the Institute of Public Administration. She is also the co-editor (with Mark O'Brien) of *Political Censorship and the Democratic State*, published in 2005 by Four Courts Press, Dublin. Corcoran's earlier seminal book, *Irish Illegals: Transients Between Two Societies* (1993) charted the labor market and socio-ethnic experiences of undocumented Irish people in New York City during the 1980s.



Wednesday, November 14, was "Wear your Sociology Club shirt day!" Sociology Club T-shirts are available for sale (see p. 4 of Newsletter). In the evening students held "Sociology Movie Night" featuring the powerful film *Hotel Rwanda*.

Thursday, November 15, featured a talk by Dr. Jacqueline Hogan, Bradley University, titled "Touring the Nation: Gender, Race and Nation in Travel Brochures."



Jackie focused on how travel brochures constructed national identity for tourists, both internal and external audiences, traveling in Japan, Australia, and Great Britain. The analysis included how ethnicity and gender factor into the imagining of a nation.

# Sociology Alumnae on Active Duty



## Tabitha Rand (SMC 05)

Unless you've been an Air Force Aircraft Maintenance Officer, you might think it sounds crazy that my Sociology degree is actually more useful in my job than an engineering degree! In order to get a better picture of how important a background in Sociology is, I'll briefly explain what I do every day.

I work on the C-17 Globemaster, a cargo plane that is used around the world to land in austere locations, out of Charleston AFB, Charleston SC. My main duty every day is to manage the launch, recovery, and minor repair of my aircraft. That means planes have to be inspected before they fly, fueled, tires checked, loose screws tightened, etc, and done all over again when they land. I supervise

about 380 people who assist in this some times daunting task, and that is why I use my SOC degree every day.

Working in a chaotic and stressful environment with 380 people to administer and several colonels to whom I report can be hard to balance. I find that having learned about so many different groups of people and what influences them plays an intricate part in how I handle situations. For instance, I have to listen to what an 18 yr old technician is telling me is wrong with an airplane and translate that so my colonel gets the full picture of the problem. Conversely, I have to take rules and policies that the colonel sets in place and translate them so my troops understand the importance of following the procedures.

I also have to identify with my troops' personal lives outside of work. On a daily basis I deal with topics ranging from discipline issues, divorce, financial issues, health issues, to their own education. A large part of my job is making sure that my troops are taken care of by not putting themselves or anyone else in danger while they are working on my airplanes. To be successful, I must know the whole person and not just how they perform at work.

My troops work long hours launching airplanes that will bring relief to disaster victims or soldiers home from around the world. Reinforcing this significance of their contribution is only one reason my job is extremely rewarding. The part that makes me smile every day is when I can relate to an experience or situation that looms in front of one of my guys and help steer them in the right direction. Sociology taught me to be open-minded to different situations and a critical thinker, and that has gotten me farther in my job than ever knowing more parts of my airplane! I truly use my "sociological imagination" more frequently on my job than my mechanical training.

## Stephanie Lutz (SMC 06)

Sociology by definition is the study of society and human behavior. How does this apply to my job? Well, I fight against what individuals in American society have been socialized to believe regarding gender inequality, specifically beliefs about sexual assault. I am a Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force employed as a personnel officer, and I am currently the Deputy Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, MS.

Every day I educate military and civilian personnel about sexual assault prevention and response. I try to accomplish my objectives while simultaneously fighting the gender stereotypes people have been socialized to believe. I teach against the ideas of men being superior to women. I teach against the factors that support and foster a "Rape Culture" in our nation. I teach against the masculine gender socialization in which young men come to believe that they are entitled to the sexual access of women's bodies simply because they are male. And all of this education about gender stereotypes is taking place on an Air Force base surrounded by a coastline still recovering from the worst natural disaster in U.S. history, Hurricane Katrina. Keesler Air Force Base alone sustained \$1 billion worth of damage.

# Sociology Alumnae on Active Duty

Lutz cont.

In my job as the Deputy SARC, I use my Sociology background on a daily basis. I have to understand how Americans are socialized to believe particular gender norms and stereotypes, and how these beliefs can impact social phenomena such as sexual assault. The dynamics of how to address sexual offenders and victims of sexual assault is also an aspect of my job that draws upon my Sociology background. Using research skills developed in my Sociology courses, I have discovered the complex social factors of trauma that follow any sexual assault. Furthermore, I have the job of educating military personnel that their response to a victim can make or break the victim's recovery process. Sociology applies to my military students because they have to be re-socialized in order to let go of harmful gender stereotypes and embrace a new and "radical" way of thinking about gender-related issues. In my course, military personnel must examine themselves as part of the larger society and assess whether they are part of the problem or, more hopefully, part of the solution. My job allows me to use Sociology every day, and I love it!



## Laura Frechette (SMC 07)

"Sociology? What are you going to do with that?" This was the usual response when I told people my college major. Well, here I am, sitting at the lead IED (Improvised Explosive Device) intelligence agency using my Sociology background everyday. Currently, I am an active duty Second Lieutenant in the United States Army serving as a Military Intelligence Analyst. At my job, having a strong understanding of sociological concepts, methodologies, and theories is an invaluable commodity. The analysis required to complete military intelligence products demands an extensive focus. Culture, religion, media, politics, economics, and government are all significant factors in military intelligence, especially today when we are trying to accurately comprehend all the social factors leading to the war on terrorism. Military intelligence officers must step outside of the Western Culture and into an unfamiliar world; therefore, a conscious effort must be made to understand the peoples and societies of the regions like the Middle East.

This war is something we have never experienced before. Although there are similarities between this war and other military conflicts in the past, what is significantly different about this war is the evolution of irregular warfare. Irregular warfare utilizes unconventional methods and tactics thus creating opportunities for seemingly smaller and weaker organizations to flourish. In irregular warfare, no true battle lines are drawn, which is very advantageous to insurgents. Insurgents do not have uniforms, do not have military bases, and are not publicly funded. For these reasons and more, insurgents are incredibly difficult to identify and target. This creates a dilemma for the intelligence community attempting to identify the enemy as well as identify the type of techniques, tactics, and procedures insurgents employ against our armed forces over seas. This energetic, demanding, and interesting job demands a sociological lens in order to comprehend the complex nature of our mission and the war itself.

I feel that my Saint Mary's Sociology degree has given me skills for success in this field, and I am very fortunate to have received such a great education. The knowledge and skill set that the Saint Mary's Sociology Department provided me makes me a confident and professional Military Intelligence Analyst.

## WANTED ALUMNAE BUSINESS CARDS

We'd love to hear from you!!  
Email Sociology Department  
chair Susan Alexander @  
salexand@saintmarys.edu  
or send your business card!

# Sociology Department News



## SUPPORT THE SOCIOLOGY CLUB!

Each year the students in the Sociology Club design and produce a unique Sociology Club T-shirt. The Sociology students this year created a T-shirt that reflects their commitment to diversity. Thus, the front of the dark blue T-shirt reads: "Saint Mary's Sociology" and the back reads "Laundry: The only thing that should be separated by color."

We hope you will consider adding one of these T-shirts to your collection or giving one away as a gift. If you would like to purchase one, the costs are \$12 for self-pickup at SMC and \$15 for T-shirt and shipping. Email Meggan Patty if you would like to have one shipped ([mpatty01@saintmarys.edu](mailto:mpatty01@saintmarys.edu)).

Also look for the newest version of the Sociology Club sweatpants in the spring. All proceeds for these go to the CommUnity Fund to help Saint Mary's College employees during financial hardships.

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS

From:  
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and Kathy Hammond

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