From the chair, Dr. Robert Futrell

Throughout this newsletter, you will read about some truly outstanding and wide-ranging faculty, staff, and student accomplishments. You’ll also see in the myriad photos, the great people who make UNLV Sociology such a vibrant department. Our efforts continue to demonstrate our resolute commitment to top-notch teaching, important and innovative sociological research, and serving our communities. I’m very honored and grateful to work with such a smart, congenial, and conscientious group of people and remain deeply impressed, each day, with the intellectual seriousness, practical importance, and good will demonstrated in all we do.

In the following pages, you’ll see evidence of our department’s rich scholarship and stellar teaching. Some accomplishments highlight faculty books, articles, and research grants. Others demonstrate efforts that garnered some of our discipline’s highest awards and notable honors from UNLV and NSHE. You’ll also see the truly
expansive reach into local, national, and international circles through our scholarship and public sociology. Our graduate students continue to amass an impressive record on the awards front, garnering top university honors and research support for their outstanding work. Equally impressive is our faculty and graduate students’ prolific public sociology, which takes the form of media interviews, essays and blogs, report writing, consultations, and community-based research. These activities demonstrate our timely and insightful high-quality work on today’s major public issues.

We continue to build UNLV Sociology’s invigorating *esprit de corps*. Our many department activities, including brown bag lectures and University Forum speakers brings us together with scholars from around the university and around the world. Our Sociology Open House continues to draw more than 200 undergraduate students into our department each Fall semester for fun, food, and conversation. Similarly, our graduate student recruitment day, brings us together as we meet our new graduate student applicants and show them all we have to offer.

We drew on our departmental solidarity as we faced some personal challenges and losses in our ranks this year. We also welcomed new young lives into the department. Both our challenges and our new beginnings highlighted the many ways that our collective connections extend beyond just work and into meaningful relationships among colleagues and friends.

There’s so much important daily work needed to keep the department’s wheels turning. I’m continually amazed and appreciative of Pam Weiss and Connie Dye’s expertise in managing our office activities. I’m also indebted to our Executive Committee—Dr. Simon Gottschalk, Dr. Michael Borer, Dr. Andrew Spivak, and Dr. Christie Batson for their hard work and invaluable advice to me during the year. Likewise, our graduate representatives—Celine Ayala and Aiemie Pace—provided vital insights into graduate students’ perspectives.

We also extend best wishes to our own Dr. Jennifer Keene as she was recently named as the permanent College of Liberal Arts Dean. Likewise, we’re happy to see that another sociologist, Dr. Kate Korgan, was named permanent Graduate College Dean. We’re very excited to see our two colleagues in these vital leadership positions.

Finally, an enormous thanks to Dr. Georgiann Davis for producing our newsletter. She somehow continues to find the time to put this publication together in the midst of all her other important activities and we are all immensely grateful for it.

Happy reading!

Robert

[Editor's note: Congratulations to Dr. Robert Futrell who received the 2018-19 Outstanding Department Chair Award from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas!]
FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Ranita Ray** was selected for a National Academy of Education’s 2019 NAEd/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship. She also received the C. Wright Mills Award from the Society for the Study of Social Problems for her book, *The Making of a Teenage Service Class: Poverty and Mobility in an American City*, as well as honorable mention from the American Sociological Association’s Section on Race, Gender, and Class. She also received the distinguished article from ASA’s Section on Race, Gender, and Class for her *Social Problems* article “Identity of Distance.”

**David Dickens** (and co-authors Christopher Conner and Nicholas Baxter) published a new edited book entitled *Forgotten Founders and Other Neglected Theorists*.

**Cassaundra Rodriguez** received a UNLV University Libraries GIS Instructional Development Grant.

**Michael Ian Borer** was named the Director of Religious Studies and will oversee the new minor in Religious Studies that is now housed in the Department of Sociology. Nominated by a student-athlete, he was also recognized as “Professor of the Game” at a UNLV Men’s Basketball game.

**Robert Futrell** received the 2018-19 UNLV Outstanding Department Chair Award.

**Georgiann Davis** was elected chair-elect of the American Sociological Association’s Section on Body & Embodiment. She is also in the middle of a three year term as a general council member for the ASA’s Section on Sex and Gender. In August of 2019, Georgiann finished her three year term as Secretary/Treasurer of the ASA’s Section on Sexualities.

**Christie Batson** was recognized as “Professor of the Game” at a UNLV Men’s Basketball game. She is pictured here with her daughter, Hannah.

**Dmitri Shalin** published a new edited book entitled *Russian Intelligentsia in the Age of Counterperestroika: Political Agendas, Rhetorical Strategies, Personal Choices*. 
AFFILIATE FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Jennifer Keene, Sociologist, who has served as interim Dean of the UNLV College of Liberal Arts since August 2018, was named permanent Dean of the college in July 2019.

Kate Hausbeck Korgan, Sociologist, who has served as interim dean of the UNLV Graduate College since 2013, was named permanent dean of the College in January 2019.

SOCIOLOGY GUEST SPEAKERS

UNLV Sociology was excited to host the following guest speakers (from left to right): Dr. Margaret Hagerman, Dr. Nabamita Das, Dr. Rachel Allison, and Dr. Stefanie Mollborn.
THE 2018 UNLV SOCIOLOGY OPEN HOUSE
THE 2018 UNLV SOCIOLOGY OPEN HOUSE
A CONVERSATION WITH DR. CASSAUNDRÁ RODRÍGUEZ

Georgiann Davis sat down with Cassaundra Rodríguez to discuss her book project, her favorite things about Vegas, and her advice for sociology students. Enjoy!

GD: When did you join UNLV Sociology?

CR: I joined the department in August 2017.

GD: I'm so excited for your new book project! Would you tell us a little about it, who is publishing it, and when you anticipate it will be out for us to read?

CR: I would love to! My book looks at how Mexican mixed-status families make sense of their membership in the United States and how immigration status shapes family relationships. I focus on the adult citizen children who have undocumented parents partly because as researchers, we know so little about their lives and how they interpret anti-immigrant messages and political attacks against their U.S. citizenship. I find that these Americans push back on this rhetoric by highlighting the dignity of their families and pointing out that these debates are often rooted in racist and illogical thinking. I am excited that NYU Press will be publishing the manuscript. We might expect to see it in print in 2021.

GD: That's sounds incredible! Speaking of books, and I'm sure this is a difficult question, but what's your favorite sociology book?

CR: When I was in college, I was drawn to books about feminism and feminist politics. I could easily say that my favorite book then was Doméstica by Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo. During the transition to graduate school, I very much appreciated Mary Romero’s scholarship, including her book The Maid’s Daughter. These days I have many favorites!

GD: You’ve been in Vegas for about two years now, right? What are your favorite things about the area?

CR: I tell everyone that Vegas feels familiar to me. Sometimes the city reminds me of Los Angeles, but without the vast urban sprawl and extreme traffic. One of my favorite things about Las Vegas are the good eats. There are so many delicious options for breakfast. I also have my favorite Thai food and Korean BBQ spots so I am set!
GD: What courses do you typically teach for UNLV Sociology?

CR: I teach Sociology of Gender (Soc 453), Latinos in America (Soc 753), Marriage and Family (Soc 447), Introduction to Sociology (Soc 101) and Latinos and Racial Justice (Soc 753).

GD: What advice do you have for aspiring sociology students at either the undergraduate or graduate level?

CR: Keep asking questions! Ask research questions that you want answered. Conduct research that is meaningful to you. Also, ask questions about your chosen career. Research your options. In doing all this, you may find that cultivating relationships with mentors makes it easier to develop these questions and see a path that makes sense for you.

GD: What's one thing folks probably don't know about you that you are willing to share? Maybe a favorite movie, musician, etc.

CR: I used to be an avid runner. I completed the Los Angeles Marathon and a number of half marathons in Southern California. And truth be told, I was never fast. To me, the goal was always to simply complete the run. I would love to get back into this someday.

GD: Thank you so much for taking time out of your day for this interview! I look forward to reading your book!
SOCIOLOGY SNAPSHOTS

FORGOTTEN FOUNDERS AND OTHER NEGLECTED SOCIAL THEORISTS
EDITED BY
Christopher T. Gnoner,
Nicholas M. Barnett,
and David R. Dickens
GRADUATION CELEBRATIONS
GRADUATION CELEBRATIONS
GRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS

Nicole Jenkins received numerous awards (Graduate Student Summer Research Stipend/Award, Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award, and the Jean Nidetch Women’s Scholarship) and was accepted to present her research at five conferences (ASA, PSA, SWS, ABS, and SSSP). With her advisor Dr. Ray, Nicole was invited to submit an entry in the ABC-CLIO encyclopedia series on Teen Lives Around the World, discussing marginalized youth in the U.S. Nicole also published “Distant in Diaspora: Contested Blackness in Black Women’s Identity Making in Contemporary U.S.” in the Journal of Contemporary Ethnography.

Vanessa Núñez successfully passed her last comprehensive exam in the area of Race and Ethnicity in October 2018. She also successfully defended her dissertation prospectus entitled, “En La Lucha: How Institutional Actors Contribute to the Nested Context of Reception for Undocumented Students,” and advanced to Doctoral Candidacy in April 2019. She was also awarded a summer 2019 Doctoral Fellowship through the UNLV Graduate College. Most recently, her research with the UNLV UndocuNetwork was highlighted in an article in UNLV Today entitled, “Change from Within: Empowering the Undocumented.”

Jennifer J. Reed defended her dissertation entitled, “In Pursuit of Social Justice at the Postmodern Turn: Intersectional Activism through the Lens of the Ecosexual Movement.” She has accepted a one-year teaching and curriculum development position at Walton Foreign Language School in Taicang, China and is currently on the international job market.

Bridget Cowan Longoria passed her culture comprehensive exam and became ABD after successfully defending her dissertation proposal. Bridget also was awarded the Summer Doctoral Research Fellowship from the graduate college and the Graduate Student Teaching Award from the department.

Marta Soligo defended her dissertation proposal and received the GPSA 2019 Forum award (first place), Liberal Arts session. She was selected by the UNLV Graduate College to be one of the 2019-2020 Grad Rebel Ambassadors.

Jeannette Hernández, Nicole Jenkins, Christian Joy Lewis, Vanessa Núñez, and Karen Villa co-presented on a panel organized by Celine Ayala at the Sociologists for Women in Society 2019 Winter Meeting. Their panel was entitled “For Us By Us: Strategies for Maintaining POC Spaces in Academia and Why it is Important.”
GRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS

Neema Langa defended her master’s thesis entitled “Socioeconomic Determinants of Maternal Healthcare Utilization in Tanzania.”

Emily Coombes received the 2019 UNLV SOC Graduate Student Public Sociology Award. Emily also presented their research on survivor-led online anti-trafficking activism at the “Beyond Discourse: Critical and Empirical Approaches to Human Trafficking” conference.

Brian O'Hara defended his dissertation entitled, “Fighting For Fellowship: An Ethnographic Exploration of Mixed Martial Arts Culture in Las Vegas.” Dr. O'Hara accepted a Tenure-Track Assistant Professor position at Metropolitan State University of Denver.

Genevieve Minter defended her dissertation entitled,"From Deviant Symbol to Cultural Icon? Understanding Pit Bull Stigma.” She has accepted a full time lecturer position in the Department of Cultural and Behavioral Sciences at Perimeter College at Georgia State University.

Daniel Krystosek defended his dissertation entitled, “Attitudes Toward Marijuana Legalization: Temporal and Thematic Trends.” He has accepted a tenure track faculty position in the Department of Criminal Justice and Legal Studies at Culver-Stockton College.

Valarie Burke defended her dissertation entitled, “Email is Alive: How to Communicate with Graduate College Students.” She is currently the Executive Director of Graduate Student Services at UNLV.

Korey Tillman defended his Master’s entitled “Carceral Dissonance: The Contradictions of Ending Homelessness through Policing.” He also received the 2019 National Science Foundation’s Graduate Research Fellowship. He also receive the department’s Outstanding MA Student Award.

Jeannette Hernández received the 2019 COLA PhD Student Summer Faculty Research Award and the 2018-2019 Patricia Sastaunik Scholarship.
A CONVERSATION WITH NATIONAL RESEARCH AWARD WINNERS

Georgiann Davis sat down with Ranita Ray and Korey Tillman to discuss their research supported with prestigious and highly competitive national funding awards.

GD: Thank you both for your time! I’m beyond excited to let readers know about your research projects that have garnished national attention through competitive awards. Ranita, let’s start with you and your Spencer Foundation Fellowship. Would you tell me a little bit about the fellowship and the research it is supporting?

RR: It is a one year postdoctoral fellowship from the National Academy of Education. The fellowship, as per the organization, “encourage(s) outstanding researchers at the postdoctoral level...to pursue critical education research projects.” I have been conducting a longitudinal, multi-contextual ethnography in Las Vegas (over the last three years), combining it with interviews and archival research to write about public education, gender, and racial dominance in the US. The fellowship will allow me to devote all my time to this research including more fieldwork and writing. Although my desire is that I will continue fieldwork for at least 4-5 more years to come, I plan on getting started on my next book this year (along with some journal pieces) from this research. The fellowship will connect me to scholars from all disciplines who are engaged in critical research on education. I will be attending several National Academy of Education conferences, workshops etc., and connecting with, and learning from, scholars from a wide range of disciplines.

GD: And you are also supported with a National Science Foundation grant? Is that for a different project?

RR: Yes. The NSF project is a transdisciplinary project on water. I am undertaking the social science component on homelessness.

GD: Korey has been working with you on that project, right?

RR: Yes. Korey can tell you more about his work, but he is conducting some groundbreaking and brilliant research on homelessness, environment, and the carceral state for his dissertation. His fieldsite is in Las Vegas. Korey’s dissertation work is sure to have some heavy impact on the discipline. He has already received national accolades for his work. Given his dissertation research is on homelessness, it worked out well when we brought Korey on board for our NSF funded work on homelessness.

GD: So, Korey, you’ve been very busy! RAing on Ranita’s NSF supported project and working on your own project that you just received support from the National Science Foundation. Tell us more about your award and research.

KT: I have been fortunate to receive the National Science Foundation’s Graduate Research Fellowship. The fellowship comes with three years of support that covers research and school fees, in addition to providing access to a national network of scholars who have also received the award. My research that is funded by this award is aimed at understanding how policing extends beyond jails and prisons to create a police state that affects individuals and community institutions. In particular my work is centered at the intersection of homelessness and incarceration to examine the collateral consequences of what some may call, the era of mass incarceration--which I’m beginning to call, the era of mass supervision.
GD: I might be wrong, but I think this is the very first NSF Graduate Research Fellowship anyone in the history of UNLV Sociology has ever received! What an accomplishment! Congratulations, again!

RR: Yes! As far as I know, it is indeed the first time! It is a testament to Korey's groundbreaking work.

GD: Korey, how did you choose your research project? Did you join UNLV Sociology with this project in mind or did it emerge some other way?

KT: I spoke with Dr. Ray the summer before I entered the UNLV Sociology program and she recommended that I read two books: *Killing the Black Body* by Dorothy Roberts, and *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander. My biographical history guides my interest in policing but these texts and conversations with Dr. Ray provided me with a new perspective on how bodies are policed in various ways, outside of traditional law enforcement encounters. Thus, when I arrived at UNLV I was able to quickly find field sites that would assist me in my ethnographic case study of policing in the Vegas valley.

GD: That’s awesome. I see firsthand how Ranita mentors her students, and it truly is inspiring to me as a faculty member. And, of course, I see how exceptional you and the rest of her students are, too. You all are incredible. I can’t wait to see how your careers grow. Speaking of careers, you didn’t have a background in sociology when you entered our PhD program—is that right?

KT: Not at all! My background is in computer science. So when I see my classmates from undergrad who are working in the tech industry they are surprised to learn about the path that my career has taken. While working for a global company as an IT project manager, I lived in South Africa for roughly eight months and it afforded me the time to reflect and compare the experiences I had with poverty, race, and police officers in both countries—inspiring me to understand these experiences sociologically, and leading me to UNLV Sociology.

GD: Computer science!? That’s super cool. Sociology, as a discipline, is lucky to have you helping to shape the field.

GD: Ranita, you’ve had a busy year, and it certainly seems you (nor your students!) will be slowing down any time soon beginning with the research awards you’ve received at the American Sociological Association and The Society for the Study of Social Problems annual meetings this past August in NYC. Tell us about the awards!

RR: I am humbled to receive the C. Wright Mills Award for the *Making of a Teenage Service Class*. I am humbled and extremely grateful that esteemed scholars (some of my MOST favorite scholars) deemed the theoretical and policy message of *Making* to be worthy. I am also deeply humbled, and grateful, that ASA’s Race, Gender and Class section deemed Making worthy of an honorable mention for the best book award, and another piece I published in the *Social Problems* receive an article award from the section. Again, I am beyond thankful for all the scholars on the margins who have come before me and paved a path for the rest of us to continue to build radical knowledge systems.

GD: Don’t be humble! The C. Wright Mills Award is among the biggest book awards in our discipline! It has been given out annually since 1964 and past winners include some of the most well known sociologists including, Frances Fox Piven, Richard Cloward, Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Charles Tilly, William Julius Wilson, Douglas MacAdam, Patricia Hill Collins, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, Carla Shedd, and ..... RANITA RAY! Such an honor! Do you ever take a break?

RR: HA HA HA. I am in no way delusional. I am positive I have a LONG way to go before I can even imagine doing 0.000000000001 percent of what some of these folks have done for radical knowledge production. These folks are the reason I am a women-of-color feminist sociologist. But it is indeed deeply, deeply humbling. I have so much to learn and do. It is also humbling to receive the award from Dr. Shedd—one of my very favorite sociologists, and someone I look up to.
GD: OK, don’t use percentages...leave that to the stats folks. HA! Ranita, when did you join UNLV Sociology?

RR: I joined UNLV Sociology in 2013 after completing my graduate studies in the same year. Since arriving at UNLV, I have been extremely fortunate to work with five brilliant students, including Korey Tillman, Nicole Jenkins, Jonathan Jimenez, Jeannette Hernandez, and Andre Dixon (CHECK OUT ALL THEIR BRILLIANT WORK. e.g. Nickie just published a fabulous piece in the Journal of Contemporary Ethnography) who are training to become critical-feminist, radical ethnographers. I am fortunate to work alongside, and learn from, these brilliant next gen scholars and thinkers. It has made my time at UNLV rewarding as together we continue to think, suffer, and fight. LOL.

GD: What about you, Korey? What year did you join the UNLV Sociology grad program?

KT: I would like to believe that I joined the program after my initial Skype call with Dr. Ray during the fall of 2016, because that is when the mentorship from her and her students, Nickie and Jonathan began. But officially, I joined the program in the fall of 2017.

GD: I know we can go on and on, but instead, I will ask each of you one final question. If you had to choose one word to describe *your* vision for the future of sociology, what would it be?

RR: ABOLITIONIST. BURN IT ALL DOWN. Thanks for listening to us.

KT: To work ourselves out of a job. For those who study inequality, to not only pick up the pen, but to pick up the scholar activist mindset so we can work to eliminate the social problems we study. Abolitionist, reparations, and then burn it all down. Thank you for your time!

GD: Thank you both for taking time out of your day to speak with me for our newsletter. And, again, a huge congratulations to each of you on your remarkable year! I can’t wait to read all of the work you each will produce.

Thanks again!
WELCOME NEW GRAD STUDENTS!

Esmeralda C. Cruz Lopez, She/her/hers. (BA, Sociology, BA, WMSTS, UNLV)
My research interests include immigration, violence, radical feminist theory, social justice movements, and resistance. More specifically, I’m interested in researching the Joy and Resilience of undocumented immigrants during the hyper anti-immigrant state.

Camisha Fagan, she/her/hers. (AA, English, College of Southern Nevada; BA, English, UNLV; BA, SOC, UNLV)
My research interests include: poverty, environmental sociology, urban sociology, and race & ethnicity. Specifically, I’m interested in how climate change is impacting communities living in poverty in Las Vegas.

Katerina Fuller, They/Them or any gender-neutral pronouns, (BA, UNLV, Sociology) My research interests include gender & sexuality, social movements & politics, cultures, and subcultures, more specifically, internet subcultures. I am interested in topics relating to the manosphere and how the culture of masculinity influences social actions.

Maria Hermosillo, She/Her (BA, UNLV, Sociology)
My research interests include theory, race, social stratification, and reproductive health/rights. Currently, I am interested in how race and SES affect students.

Steph O. Landeros, They/Them (BA, Sociology, California State University Stanislaus; MA, SOC, University of Nevada Reno)
My research interests lie within gender, race, and sexualities. They include gender identity and expression through drag performance. They also include how varied gender expressions are affected within the context of certain spaces in towns and cities.

Dante Allen Miller, He/Him/His Or any gender neutral pronoun (BA, Sociology, University of Northern Iowa)
My research interest include the intersections between political and cultural sociology as well as social movements, specifically looking at the culture of black conservatives and the usage of boycotts as a form of protest.

Jared Weissman, he/him. (BA, Sociology, Cal State Long Beach; MA in progress, Sociology, Cal State Fullerton).
My research interests are in culture, more specifically popular culture and how it intersects with issues of race, politics, and activism.
THE SOCIOLOGY CLUB
Dmitri Shalin organized the *Fourth International Conference on Russian Culture* that was sponsored by the United States Russia Foundation, Center for Democratic Culture, College of Liberal Arts, Boyd School of Law, and Department of Sociology.

Cassandra Rodriguez wrote an opinion piece at Medium entitled, “Seven Things to Know About Mixed-Status Families.”

Nicole Jenkins was an invited speaker for the UNLV Sociology Club Movies that matter series. She discussed the film “Nappily Ever After” and its connection to aspects of her current research on racialized beauty and the politics of Black women’s hair.

Rachel Macfarlane, Celene Fuller, Chris Wakefield and Barbara G. Brents prepared a report entitled “The Sex Industry and Sex Workers in Nevada,” for the Center for Democratic Culture in The Social Health of Nevada: Leading Social Indicators in Nevada and Quality of Life in the Silver State.

Elizabeth Lawrence had her research featured in a Las Vegas Review Journal article entitled, “UNLV Researchers Tighten Link Between Lack of Education, Child Deaths.” She also wrote a blog post on the session she organized for the Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science annual meeting.

Kyle Rodgers was invited to speak on veterans entangled in the criminal justice system at the Veterans For Peace National Convention in Spokane, WA.

Marta Soligo was interviewed by the Italian radio Media Hotel Radio for her work in sociology of tourism.


Emily Coombes was interviewed by UNLV NewsCenter for their work on the anti-FOSTA/SESTA #LetUsSurvive campaign: “Social Media for Mobilization.” They also served as a Regional Correspondent to the NSWP (Global Network of Sex Work Projects) and published several news pieces including “Canadian Sex Worker Organisations Organise #JusticeforMoka campaign.”

Michael Ian Borer was interviewed and appeared in an NBC News segment about generational differences and categories entitled “Generation Who: Find Out Which Generation You Belong To.” He also was quoted in the Boston Globe after the Red Sox won the 2018 World Series in “The Curse of the Champions? Boston Takes in Another Title.” And, he was quoted in an article for Thrillist.com entitled “Nevada is the Most Underrated State for Craft Beer.”

Korey Tillman organized a monthly student of color research presentations and mixers for graduate and undergraduate students of color to exchange ideas and build a pipeline to graduate school.

Georgiann Davis wrote a blog for *Ms. Magazine* and *The Conversation*. She was also quoted in numerous local and national media outlets. You can read more about her media appearances on her website.

Simon Gottschalk wrote several pieces for The Conversation including “Coup des Gens,” “The Infantilization of Western Society,” and “In Praise of Doing Nothing.”
SOCIOLOGY SNAPSHOTS
PUBLICATIONS


Davis, Georgiann and Jonathan Jimenez. “Not Going to the Chapel? Intersex Youth and an Exploration of Marriage Desires and Expectations.” In Expanding the Rainbow: Exploring the Relationships of Bi, Ace, Poly, Kink, and Intersex People.


Jenkins, Nicole and Ranita Ray. “Racial and Class Inequalities Among Youth in the U.S.” Entry in Encyclopedia on Teen-lives around the world published by ABC-CLIO.


Shalin, Dmitri. “‘If in the early 1980’s I was permitted to travel abroad, I would have certainly not returned’: Interview with Igor Kon.” Monitoring of Public Opinion. 2019, No. 2.

Shalin, Dmitri. “You can publish this interview after my death’: Interview with Igor Kon.” Public Opinion Herald, 2019, No. 2.


ALPHA KAPPA DELTA
The International Sociology Honor Society

Inductees, Fall ’18

Danielle Puanani Paublina Rodriguez
Cristina Lynn Panks
Andrea Jean Raney
Annett D. Castro
Sara Ann Spreckelmeyer
Tanya S. Gonzales
Sally Jo Bisharat

Inductees, Spring ’19

Jeannette Hernández
Elsa C. Cano Rivera
Julianna M. Vernon
Sharon M. Williams
Dyanna L. Burnham
Vanessa Inez Olive
Faith J. Bashful
Karla A. Smith
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AWARD WINNERS

Itzel Alanis
Outstanding Research & Writing Award

Hazel Alejandro
Philip J. Cohen Scholarship and Sidney Green Scholarship

Eden Alem
International Studies Gen. Scholarship
Study Abroad Scholarship

Javier Briseno
Sidney Green Scholarship

Esmeralda Cruz Lopez
Smith/Thompson Scholarship
CSUN R&D Scholarship

Mercie Davis
Sociology Service Award

Apia Hickman
Engelstad Scholarship

Frank Lopez
Outstanding Junior Award

Nader Nabeh
Engelstad Scholarship

Gloria Nacoste
Osher Reentry Scholarship

Yaw Obeng
Osher Reentry Scholarship

Jose Osorio
Nevada Gear Up Junior Scholarship

Camille Reyes
C. Wright Mills Award

John Smith
Smith/Thompson Scholarship

Sarah Spreckelmeyer
Outstanding Senior Award

Carlos Verduzco
Wells Fargo NV 1st Gen. Scholarship

Sharon Williams
Outstanding Senior Award
SOCIOLOGY SNAPSHOTS
SOCIOLOGY SNAPSHOTS
SOCIeLOGY SNAPShOTS
LOVE, LIGHT, AND LOSS

**Peanut Lawrence** completed Agility Training 1.0 in May 2019.

**Jennifer Stevens** moved with her partner, Benjamin Antillon, and two dogs, Oscar and Rufus, to West Chester, Ohio.

********

Dear Sociology Family,

As many of you know, in August of 2018 I was diagnosed with Stage 2 Breast Cancer. The diagnosis was a difficult surprise to myself and my family. Over the next seven months, I endured surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation. I began a new life living with cancer. I lost a breast, but I am now cancer-free. I lost my memory and the ability to focus, but the body heals and both have returned. I lost my hair, but it is growing back. I lost the safety of feeling healthy, but I gained trust in doctors and medicine. I lost a year of work-related activities, but I added many years to make up for lost time. As I near the life-changing one-year anniversary of my diagnosis, I want to personally thank my Sociology family for your support and encouragement during the past year. The department rallied around me and my family during a very difficult time. The kindness and love you showed us was important in my recovery and well-being. From the bottom of my heart, I thank each of you for making breast cancer a little less scary and more manageable for us. In the United States, 1 in 8 women will get breast cancer in their lifetime. More than 41,000 women die each year from breast cancer. It is a disease that deserves far more attention than pink ribbons and October events. Before my diagnosis, I was relatively uninformed about the impact of breast cancer on women’s lives. I never thought it could happen to me. Please encourage the women in your lives to have mammograms and be tested early if you have additional risk factors. Breast cancer is not a death sentence if caught early. Again, thank you for your support.

As always, be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about.

With love,

Christie (Dr. Batson)

********

In late-September 2018, our friend and colleague **Dr. Matt LeClaire** (PhD, 2018, UNLV Sociology) passed away at his home in Baltimore, Maryland. We remember Matt for his infectious enthusiasm, sociological savvy, and hard working style. He impressed us all with his focus and drive that propelled him to award-winning teaching and ultimately to his PhD. He traveled the world and brought his global experiences to the classroom. So many of his students praised Matt for his sharp sociological mind, quirky style, and friendly, down-to-earth character. He had recently been hired as a tenure-track Assistant Professor at Coppin State University where he would teach in the criminology and sociology departments. A tragedy like this really put our smaller everyday struggles into perspective and reminded us all to support one another each day.
A CONVERSATION WITH DR. MICHAEL IAN BORER

Georgiann Davis sat down with Michael Ian Borer to discuss, among other things, his new book and other Las Vegas treats. Enjoy!

GD: Congratulations on the publication of your new book, Vegas Brews: Craft Beer and the Birth of a Local Scene! What a great cover! How did you come up with it?

MB: Thanks. The designers at NYU Press listened to my input and did a great job visualizing a few of the main themes of the book by planting a snifter—a symbol of craft beer—right onto of the Las Vegas Strip to represent the bold attempts of locals to foster a culture for themselves and by themselves.

GD: What do you hope readers of Vegas Brews learn about Las Vegas and urban life more generally?

MB: In some ways this is a book about craft beer as a cultural artifact and the ways that people care for its production, distribution, and consumption. People like to brew it, people like to serve it, people like to drink it. And there are over 7000 breweries now in the United States that are making all of that happen. In other ways, Vegas Brews is really about Las Vegas and how local culture is affected by the city’s reputation as a cultural wasteland, the pinnacle of mediocrity, and full of kitsch. Las Vegas isn’t only about what happens in Las Vegas. Nor is any contemporary city, for that matter. Ultimately, the book is an analysis, an interpretation, a story about the continual search for meaning and order, for creativity and comradery, and for the enlivening rather than the dulling of sensuous experiences.

GD: How was the process of writing Vegas Brews different than the process of writing your first book, Faithful to Fenway: Believing in Boston, Baseball, and America’s Most Beloved Ballpark?

MB: I’ve been fortunate to have had opportunities to co-author two other books in between these, Urban People and Places: The Sociology of Cities, Suburbs, and Towns and Sociology in Everyday Life, but Vegas Brews is my second solo-authored ethnography. And yes, it was a different process and experience than the last time around, even though I worked with the same incredible editor at the same press. Faithful to Fenway came from my dissertation, so there was a built-in support system. This one is mine!
alone, though the work benefited from a sabbatical leave followed by a fellowship with the Black Mountain Institute. Both allowed me to take a deep dive into the fieldwork and writing process. I do my best writing at night. That hasn’t changed. This time around, though, I had a wife and two kids sleeping upstairs while I pecked away on my keyboard, and still needed to get up in the morning to make breakfast.

GD: Do you have any book release events planned in, or around, Vegas? If so, when and where?

MB: There’s going to be a number of events around the valley at local breweries, bars, and bottle shops. I’ve also talked with some folks about making glassware to go with the book and may even brew a special release beer with a local brewery.

GD: Thinking about the Vegas Valley, what’s your favorite restaurant in town?

MB: Ha! Las Vegas is such an amazing city for food, on and off the Strip; it’s hard to pick just one. So, I’ll give you three. I’ve been a fan of Sparrow & Wolf in Chinatown since day one. French/Asian/American tapas where you can sit at the bar and watch Brian Howard and his crew prepare your food. More recently, I’ve fallen in love with Esther’s Kitchen. Their pasta is so fresh and their meatballs are so plump that they’ve quickly outdone a lot of the standard Italian restaurants. Both of these places have creative cocktails, affordable wine lists, and, of course, craft beer to pair with each meal. My third selection has become my almost weekly go-to for me and my family, 595 Craft & Kitchen. Just like the other two, its’ relatively new and doesn’t litter their bar with video poker machines or cigarette smoke. 595 has over twenty taps of some of the most interesting local and non-local craft beer, all great when eating one of their sumptuous bahn mi sandwiches. And it’s right around the corner from my house!

GD: When did you join UNLV Sociology and what are some of the courses you regularly teach for the department?

MB: I came here in 2008 to contribute to the department’s focus on urban studies. Besides urban related courses, I teach seminars on Culture and on Visual Sociology at the graduate level, and Religion, Popular Culture, and the Capstone in Sociology course for undergraduates. I enjoy teaching them all. I’ve been developing and teaching the Capstone for the department since 2014 (when the class was small enough for the students and I to work together on an ethnographic research project about, and with the help of, the Life in Beautiful festival in Downtown Las Vegas). Since then, I’ve created a course that helps graduating seniors reflect on who they were before they started college, what they’ve learned through their education, and how they might use their sociological knowledge and skills in the future.

GD: You mentioned your Sociology of Religion course. You were named as the inaugural Director of Religious Studies last year. Can you tell us a little about that?
MB: I’m really excited to be a part of this project and I appreciate the support and attention Dean Keene has given to it. There’s significant community interest in UNLV offering a Minor in Religious Studies, which is now housed in our department. Eventually, it may turn into a Major, but that’s still some time away. Over the past year, I’ve been talking to local community leaders and seeking out scholars across the College of Liberal Arts who are already teaching and doing research on religious and religious-related issues. Our goal is to help students acquire the necessary amount of “religious literacy” to act as responsible citizens in a world comprised of multiple worldviews and spiritual pursuits. From sacred rites to neon lights; it’s all fair game.

GD: Thanks so much for sitting down with me and answering my questions. I do have one last one. What is one thing readers would be surprised to know about you?

MB: Hmmmm. The year between graduating college and going to graduate school, I did two seemingly opposite things: 1) I worked on a tug boat in the Philadelphia harbor; and 2) I had an art exhibit in New York where I showed eight paintings I had done during breaks off the tug boat; it was all for fun, but I did sell one painting . . . to my best friend. For free. Does that count?

[Editor’s note: You can order Vegas Brews and Faithful to Fenway from NYU Press, Amazon, or your favorite bookstore.]
Dr. Camila Alvarez earned her BA (Magna Sum Laude) in Sociology and Mathematics at UNLV in 2012. She went on to earn her master’s degree in sociology from the University of Oregon in 2014, and just finished her PhD in sociology also at the University of Oregon. Her dissertation is entitled, “From Classical to Critical: Addressing Theoretical and Methodological Gaps within Environmental Justice Research.” In the fall of 2019, Dr. Alvarez will join UC Merced as a Tenure Track Assistant Professor of Sociology.

All of us at UNLV Sociology are so excited and proud for Dr. Alvarez. She tells us that, “UNLV Sociology was a place where I cultivated many skills to prepare me for graduate school. I did not know it at the time, but the final papers from classes and the discussions with my professors and classmates were introducing me to the academy of sociology. I felt empowered and supported throughout the process and gained confidence to make my career as a professional sociologist.”

Dr. Ray Macfarlane earned their PhD in Sociology at UNLV in 2018, including work in the areas of social inequality, family, work, gender and criminology. They continued on with research for the International Gaming Institute at UNLV through Spring of 2019, helping to evaluate problem gambling rehabilitation programs in Nevada. In February of this year they began as the Trans and Gender Diversity Program Manager at The Center, serving the LGBTQIA community of Southern Nevada. They, their new partners, and two children born and raised during their graduate program recently bought a new house downtown with their new puppy, a Newfoundland named FlowerPot.

We are all so excited for you, Dr. Macfarlane, and so happy you are staying in the area!

Dean Steiner graduated in 1992 with a BA in Sociology and also was a part of the Honors Program (before it became a College). Dean has been working for Clark County the last 25 years as part of Juvenile Justice Services. He is currently the Manager of the Probation Division.

He tell us, “UNLV Sociology developed my ability to think critically about the societal structures that contribute to the lack of mobility and access for the underprivileged and underserved within our community. My courses on power in America and women studies have refined my worldview and garnered special attention to our at-risk juvenile population. I am proud to be a UNLV graduate and I appreciate the ability it has given me to continue to serve the youth and families right here in Clark County, Nevada.”
GRADUATE STUDENT AWARD WINNERS

Emily Coombs
Public Sociology Award

Jeannette Hernández
Patricia J. Sastaunik Graduate Scholarship

Nicole Jenkins
Outstanding Grad Student Paper

Alessandra Lanti
James Frey Grad Research Scholarship

Bridget Longoria
Outstanding Student Teacher

Jason Scott
Patricia J. Sastaunik Graduate Scholarship

Marta Soligo
Outstanding PhD Student

Korey Tillman
Patricia J. Sastaunik Graduate Scholarship and Outstanding MA Student
[Editor's Note: Thank you so much to this year's Technology and Communications Committee for their editorial assistance: Dr. Cassaundra Rodriguez and Dr. Dmitri Shalin.]