Return of the Newsletter

The departmental newsletter is back! This is the place to find all the information you need about what is new and exciting in Sociology. We will run a newsletter every fall and spring term. In this Fall 2011 issue, we have stories about faculty awards, faculty and graduate student publications, and graduate student community contributions. We also have a special focus on Dr. Zheng Wu’s achievements as Chair. As always, if you have any feedback, do not hesitate to be in communication.

HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

Thanks to Zheng

PG 2

Thanks to Zheng for his many contributions as Chair of the department. Turn ahead for more details…

PD Seminars

PG 3

We are running several professional development seminars this year for graduate students…turn the page to learn more!

Bill at the CSA

PG 4

Bill received the CSA’s outstanding contribution award this year, a very significant accomplishment. Please see the full story on pg. 4…

Chair’s Column

I wish to extend a warm welcome to our new colleagues and students, and to welcome back returning members of the department. I hope everyone had a relaxing and productive summer.

There are many exciting things happening this fall. For instance, on 22 September, the Faculty is hosting a celebration of the Cornett Building to commemorate our new and much improved workspace. I am happy to announce the near-completion of our website overhaul (thanks to Dan Lett for all his hard work). The department has a set of guest speakers lined up this fall. The Graduate Committee is spearheading a sequence of much anticipated professional development seminars. The Governance Committee is preparing a five-year strategic plan to steer planning and priorities. And last but not least, we see the return of the departmental newsletter after a multi-year absence.

On behalf of the department, I wish everyone a prosperous and rewarding year. Sean Hier
Thank you, Zheng

Dr. Zheng Wu was Chair of our department for five years. Thanks to Zheng for his stewardship and leadership. Here is what colleagues have to say…

From Dr. Thomas Burch…

“When I first visited the department in the fall of 1992, it was in rough shape. What a difference 20 years can make! I would say that the turnaround began with the appointment of Doug Baer as chair around 2001 (coincidentally the year I became an adjunct professor, but I take no credit). Zheng Wu has carried on magnificently, and it appears that Sean Hier inherits a healthy department, both academically and socially. As sociologists, we know that most social phenomena of interest are the result of multiple causes. But in this case leadership has been crucial. Most important, Zheng ’played it straight’ instead of playing games. He pushed for what he thought was best for the department, but with respect for democratic procedure and for members of the department with whom he disagreed – business-like, grown-up,

From Dr. Neena Chappell…

“As chair, he believed he should support all members in a fair and honest manner, irrespective of professional or personal perspective, and that everyone who met the criteria agreed upon by the department deserved his support even when he himself disagreed. This fairness and transparency characterized his leadership. He enacted this philosophy without fanfare, with a typical modesty. It is said that when someone does something well, it often looks easy; Zheng made an often difficult job look easy. When he began his term as chair, he inherited a department with numerous challenges; he left us on a path towards collegiality. Thankyou Zheng.”

From Zheng…

“I was pleasantly surprised and humbled by the “farewell lunch” the day before I stepped down as chair of the department. Over the last five years, the department has continued to be one of the most productive sociology departments in the country. During my tenure as chair, three faculty members retired or left us, but we were able to recruit five new faculty members. Five colleagues were tenured or promoted to a higher rank. Both our undergraduate and graduate programs have been strong. Above all, the renewal of the teaching and research facilities in Cornett building is almost complete. I want to thank everyone in the department, particularly Carole, Zoe and Ronna, for your support, patience, and understanding. I wish everyone well in the coming year and Sean a smooth transition as new chair.”
Professional Development Seminars for Graduate Students in Sociology

The Department will be hosting four professional development seminars, led by Dr. Kevin Walby, in the Fall 2011 term. Further seminars will take place in Spring 2012 term (topics to be determined). The schedule for the Fall seminars is as follows:

*Tuesday September 13th, 9:00am-10:30am in COR B145
  - Negotiating Graduate School
*Tuesday September 20th, 9:00am-10:30am in COR B145
  - Grant/Scholarship Preparation
*Tuesday October 11th, 9:00am-10:30am in COR B145
  - Thesis Preparation
*Friday October 21st, 9:30am-12:30pm in DSB C122
  - Writing for Graduate Students (led by Dr. Lisa Surridge, English Department)

…students (and faculty) must register in advance for the writing seminar!

Cornett turns 50!

The Cornett Building officially opened in 1967 and has been home to the social sciences for over 40 years. Originally named the Social Sciences Complex, it was renamed the Cornett Building in honour of Thomas Warren Cornett, an outstanding history professor who drowned in 1924 in Shawnigan Lake. Over the years the faculty of social sciences expanded and a second building, Social Sciences & Mathematics Building, was officially opened June 23, 2008. The departments of political science, geography and the school of environmental studies moved into the new space the same year. Today, Cornett is home to the departments of psychology, sociology and anthropology.
Congratulations to Bill Carroll, winner of the CSA Outstanding Contribution Award…

Congratulations to Bill Carroll, the 2011 recipient of the Canadian Sociological Association’s (CSA) Outstanding Contribution to the Field of Sociology Award. CSA President J.S. Frideres’ awarding remarks pay tribute to Dr. Carroll’s dedication, and the "depth and comprehensiveness and sometimes the ingenuity of research dealing with the topics he has chosen to focus upon. Readers of his work will find that it is enlightening and informative and he has made an extraordinarily brilliant and valuable contribution to Sociology. Dr. Carroll is a sociologist of internationally recognized stature who also has made a sustained and life long contribution to the discipline through service to the Association by his scholarly leadership on editorial boards of sociology journals both at home and internationally. In addition his collaboration with international scholars has made him a well known scholar in Canada and also in the international arena."

BOSS – Bureau Of Sociology Students

We are an exciting organization governed by the UVSS (University of Victoria Students Society) and continuously work to ensure that students enjoy a fulfilling and rewarding university experience. Working to build community and an extensive sociology student network we are committed to making every sociology student feel welcome and accepted in their classes and the sociology department. We invite all students either majoring in sociology or taking a class as an elective to attend our events, both socially and academically focused, and which frequently offer free food / beverages. This semester look for movie nights featuring a popular thought provoking film followed by discussion facilitated by one of our amazing faculty members. We will also host social gatherings, facilitate study groups, and plan a celebration fundraiser near the end of the semester. We encourage all sociology students and faculty to attend our events and get involved with our student run course union. We just might be the best BOSS you ever had. boss.uvic@gmail.com
UVic’s Research Data Centre

By Dr. Doug Baer: Over the course of the past two decades, Statistics Canada has made efforts to make the various surveys it conducts, and to some extent other forms of data it collects, readily available to university researchers for analysis. One initiative, called the “Data Liberation Initiative,” releases “public use” datasets to researchers. Various sociology graduate and undergraduate students have made use of these datasets in their course work at UVic in the quantitative courses offered at each level.

One major problem with “data liberation” datasets is that information which is important for some researchers has been stripped from the data to preserve confidentiality. Statistics Canada worries that it might be possible to identify individuals in datasets so it pre-emptively deletes a lot of information from public use files. City of residence, actual personal income, country of birth – these are typically “censored”. If a longitudinal survey (one in which people are interviewed at successive points in time over months or years) is used, the entire survey is withheld from release.

To provide researchers with access to information that would not normally be released to the university community, a national Research Data Centre program was established over a decade ago. Initially confined to a small number of very large universities in Canada, this program allowed researchers to enter a “data centre” (some might use the term “data fort”) to analyse data under supervision of a Statistics Canada employee, who would then “vet” any research results that the researcher wished to take out of the centre to make sure these results did not contain any “disclosure concerns” (i.e., potential confidentiality issues).

Data Centres are expensive to operate. While the federal grant agencies, CIHR and SSHRC, provide multi-million dollar assistance, universities still must come up with substantial operating budgets, not to mention big capital costs associated with setting up high-security sites. For over five years, UVic researchers had to go to the University of British Columbia to do work, and most found the travel time burden to be daunting (there was, thus, relatively little use). While UVic remains part of the BC Inter-University Research Data Centre consortium (with UBC, UNBC and Simon Fraser), it now runs a part-time “branch” right on campus, having been the first English-Canadian branch to have been established (in 2006). Since its inception, the Data Centre has hosted Sociology graduate students doing thesis work and Sociology faculty completing grant projects, as well as being a source of supplementary part-time employment for some of our grad students who have been trained as Statistical Assistants (site supervisors).

The Data Centre is located on the ground floor of the McPherson Library and is currently open 16 hours a week. There are six workstations with a full array of statistical software, with room for expansion should this be necessary in the future. It is linked to other Canadian data centres through a high-speed, high-security “intranet” for fast file transfer. The centre is currently in the early planning stages of a technology upgrade, with funding provided by the Canada Foundation for Innovation. I was founding director when the centre opened five years ago after organizing its physical construction and the campus funding necessary to complete it. And I am currently finishing a two year term on the National RDC Network Executive.

Data Centre researchers have been saddened by the decision of Prime Minister Stephen Harper to kill the long-form Census. The impact of this decision is twofold. While municipalities and provincial governments will probably suffer the most (due to the lack of accurate information regarding the demographic composition of neighbourhoods and communities), researchers specializing in the study of “social context” (so-called “multilevel studies”) will have greater difficulty conducting their work. A second impact lies in the fact that the replacement “voluntary Census” championed as an alternative in fact costs much more to implement, meaning in turn that important Statistics Canada surveys will now be scrapped in order to meet harsh Conservative government budget cuts and the additional burden imposed by the directive that the long-form Census is to be replaced by a larger voluntary survey. While Statistics Canada will continue to provide valuable data for researchers through the Data Centre program, in key areas there will be research gaps in Canadian social science.
Making food, making sociology

By Dr. Martha McMahon: Robin Tunnicliffe, the well-known Saanich Peninsula Organic farmer and local food activist, recently completed her interdisciplinary MA with sociology as her home department. Sociologists indeed do ‘field work’. Robin is one of five MA students in the department who will have completed MA theses in the area of food and agriculture in 2011.

Robin’s MA research on survival strategies among local organic farmers represents a valuable community-academia partnership. This is particularly the case because of Robin’s local-global connections in the areas of food and agriculture. Robin is, for example, on the boards of USC Canada (and active in their international projects of agricultural seed-saving), and of the Moss Street Market and the Islands Organic Producers’ Association.

Robin has earned many awards and recognition for her contribution to build more local food systems and to organic farming including a 2011 Saanich Environmental Award for her commitment to sustainability in the region, and an award from the CRD for Outstanding Contribution to Food Security. Robin is regularly asked to speak at conferences and community events, and she writes for several farmer journals.

Robin is pleased that her research adds to scholarly knowledge but, more important to her, it provided local groups with valuable information. It gives them the kinds of empirical data they need to help them inform regulatory bodies, land use policy and other agri-food policy decision makers. Robin’s work explored how local farmers manage to ‘make it’ economically in what is increasingly a global market for food. But it also looked at some of the ecological and social benefits that farming bring to the local community. She worked with Martha McMahon and Ken Hatt in the Sociology Department, Christine St Peter (English) and Ana Maria Peredo (Business and Centre for Study of Cooperatives and Community Based Economics). Robin with two other organic farmers owns and runs the successful cooperative venture called Saanich Organics. Many in the department who have eaten out or have shopped at Moss St. Market will have eaten Saanich Organics leafy greens. Hopefully Robin’s work will help foster the social and policy environment in which a lot more people can eat ecologically grown local food.
NEW RESEARCH GRANTS...
(alphabetical order)...


Chappell, N. $116,000 has been added to the Alzheimer’s Drug Therapy Initiative, a program of 5 research studies funded by the provincial Ministry of Health Services, bringing to total to $2,916,000, with a deadline extension to Sept. Aug. 2013.


Wu, Z. (Dongmei Zuo, PI, National Natural Science Foundation of China (Operating Grant). 2009-11. “For study of age and intergenerational support among older persons in rural China: A life course perspective”.

PUBLICATIONS...
(−three per faculty member…)


THANK YOU!!!!!

THANKS TO CAROLE, ZOE, AND RONNA
FOR ALL OF THEIR HARD WORK!


R. Adler, A. Devor, et al. forthcoming. ‘Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender-Variant People (7th Version)’. World Professional Association for Transgender Health


NEW WEBSITE!!!

SPECIAL THANKS TO DAN LETT FOR ALL HIS HARD WORK ON OUR WONDERFUL NEW DEPARTMENTAL WEBSITE!!!!! PLEASE LET HIM KNOW THAT YOU APPRECIATE HIS EFFORTS.


Walby, Kevin and Justin Piché. 2011. ‘Dark Tourism and Ontario’s Penal History Museums’. Forthcoming in *Punishment & Society*


Alanna MacLellan-Mansell (MA) - July 2011
Katelin Bowes (MA) - August 2011
Diane Barlee (MA) - August 2011
Nicolas Graham (MA) - August 2011
Esther Lee (MA) - August 2011
Lisa Poole (MA) - August 2011
Ashley Pullman (MA) - August 2011
Rachel Philips (PhD) – completed June 2010
Michelle Bass (PhD) – completed May 2011
Ana Curocin (MA) – completed April 2010
Matthew Reed (MA) – completed August 2010
Amy Cox (MA) – completed August 2010
Stephanie Cram (MA) – completed August 2010
Christopher Nichols (MA) – completed August 2010
Andrew Ivsins (MA) – completed August 2010
Kelsie Lang (MA) – completed August 2010
Anna Rozwwadowska (MA) – completed December 2010
Kathryn Hughes (MA) – completed December 2010
Kate Martin (MA) – completed December 2010
Karol O’Leary (MA) – completed December 2010
Christopher Dodge (MA) – completed April 2011
Robin Tunnicliffe (MA/INTD) – completed April 2011
NEW Graduate Students!

BRENDAN HARRY: I was born in Toronto to a Scottish mother and Jamaican father and spent a few of my childhood years in Saudi Arabia and at boarding school in Scotland. These factors (amongst many others) set the foundation for (my current) interests in: the symbiotic relationship between industrial capitalism, the State, and colonialism; this symbiosis' ongoing devastation of the living Earth; the legacy of slavery; the role of state education as a mechanism for assimilation of peoples; and horizontal, anti-oppressive anti-capitalist social movements. Moreover, as a long-term visitor to unceded Coast and Straits Salish territories, I am also interested in de-colonisation and indigenous solidarity.

MICHAEL LANG: I earned a BA in Sociology and Geography at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. During the course of my study I spent periods of time in South East Asia as an English instructor and Latin America as a volunteer. These combined educational experiences are what inspire me to continue my studies. From the vantage point of a privileged, white, western male I have grown aware of the disparities that exist globally, particularly at the intersection of capitalism and social inequality. My academic interests are wide-reaching and always evolving though they primarily originate from this binary. My research interests include neoliberalism, corporatization, work and labour relations, and hegemony. I am intrigued by the ideological pervasiveness of capitalism and its ability to mask the destructive effects it has on humanity and nature. Associated with this is an interest in the ‘neoliberal natures’ debate and privatization, particularly in relation to water governance. Then again, I am open to influence- and excited to be a formal student again!

DOMENICO CERISANO: I am a first year student in the CSPT program through the Sociology department. I graduated from York University with a Honours BA in Law and Society. I began my BA interested in law, but soon found myself gravitating towards theory and sociology. My interests include continental philosophy, the construction of the self and the sociology of knowledge.

DENISE MAHON: During my undergrad, I completed an honours thesis titled ""Managing" the Homeless: Examining Structural Policing and Victoria's Homeless Population" under the supervision of Dr. Sean Hier. After my BA, I worked for a year at the London School of Economics and Political Science on two research programs, "Human Security" and "Global Civil Society" at the Centre for Global Governance. My research interests are focused on issues of social control, governance techniques and processes, deviance and inequality. Specifically I am interested in social problems construction, maintenance and outcomes, especially concerning disadvantaged and marginalized populations.
GRAD STUDENTS at WORK


NEXT ISSUE

Please let us know if you have recommendations for the next issue of the newsletter…have a good term!