



New Faculty Joins Sociology Department

Please welcome our newest faculty member, Richard Simon. Richard was hired primarily for his expertise in Sociology of Science and Technology and he will be teaching courses in this area (SOC 150 Sociological Perspectives on Science and Technology and SOC 480 Sociology of Science and Technology) and contributing to the new cognate on Science, Technology, and Society. Richard will also be teaching SOC 100 Introduction to Sociology, SOC 206 Sociology of Marriage and Family, and SOC 306 Sociology of Gender. Here, Richard introduces himself:



teaching classes at UAH in Fall 2013. I earned my B.A. in Sociology at Oakland University (that's Oakland County, Michigan) in 2006, and received my Ph.D. in Sociology from Pennsylvania State University in 2011. I taught sociology at Rice for the 2011-2012 academic year and spent the

2012-2013 academic year as an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Jacksonville State University (that's Jacksonville, Alabama) before being hired by UAH.

My areas of interest in sociology include: social dimensions of science and technology, gender, social theory, quantitative methods, and political sociology—particularly anarchism and social movement analysis. My research consists primarily of two programs. The first program examines the ways that gender roles shape

attitudes toward science and technology. This research program largely consists of using secondary data sources, such as the Eurobarometer and the National Survey of Fertility Barriers, to generate a theory of why men and women evaluate science and technology in such different ways. The other project I am currently involved in is establishing a theoretical synthesis between anarchist political philosophy, conflict sociology, and symbolic interactionism. Because conflict sociology is the study of social inequalities, anarchism has much to offer conflict sociology because of its focus on how to dismantle social inequalities, and its philosophical justifications for why they ought to be dismantled. And symbolic interactionism has much to offer anarchist political philosophy, because of its emphasis on how hierarchical macro-structures are products of individual-level interactions.

I am convinced that being an academic is among the best jobs a person can have. Learning, teach-

ing, and writing are deeply satisfying for me. I recognize that I have been privileged to have the opportunities that have brought me to UAH. My students can expect to be challenged in my classes: challenged by the level of literacy I expect from them, by our class discussions, and by my expectation that they learn to see the world from an unfamiliar—at times uncomfortable—point of view. My greatest strengths are leading class discussions and teaching critical thinking skills. Teaching and learning should be fun, interesting, and above all creative. If you are genuinely interested in sociology, and are in the classroom to learn all you possibly can, then you will love my classes.

When I'm not working, I spend almost all of my time with my wife and three children. I enjoy making my own beer and writing/playing songs on my guitar. I have a sense of humor and try not to take myself too seriously. I love stand-up comedy, music, and movies, and often incorporate these into my teaching.

Community Service Internship Established

In the past year, **Dr. Teresa Terrell**, Adjunct Associate Professor of Sociology has administered our first group of interns in conjunction with a new course she developed, SOC 395 Community Services Internship. The goal here is to offer a structured opportunity for sociology majors to learn about how non-profit organizations and/or social service agencies operate, while developing some insight and anal-



ysis by which they mold that experience into a three-credit course—for example, through readings or a course paper related to their internship. After one year, the following students have completed internships or are registered and about to start:

Maggie Sierras-Trotts—Girl Scouts of North Central Alabama
www.girlscoutsnca.org

Regina Bauer—National Children's Advocacy Center
www.nationalcac.org

Desni Scaife (pictured top right)—Madison County District Attorney's office
www.districtattorney.org

Sue McCoy (pictured bottom right)—Madison County Department of Human Resources
hdr.alabama.gov

Christie Romandine—Operation Making a Difference (forthcoming, Fall 2013)
www.operationmad.org

For more information, during fall semester contact Dr. Teresa Terrell at teresa.terrell@uah.edu. Thereafter, contact Dr. Mitch Berbrier at mitch.berbrier@uah.edu.



Recent Grads

In the past year (Summer 2012 through Spring 2013) the following individuals graduated from UAH with a major in sociology:

Danielle Pesto
Rashida Brown
Jimi Sitko
Derek Greer
Brenda Taylor-Moody
Danyelle Smith
Kelsey Thacker
Jessie Phillips
Emily Mitchell
Lauren Patrick
Benjamin Cavanaugh

New AKD Members

Alpha Kappa Delta is the Sociology Honor Society. Students are eligible for membership in AKD if they meet the following criteria: GPA is in top 35% of their class (Junior or Senior), they have completed four sociology courses at UAH, and their GPA in sociology is greater than 3.0. This year, we inducted six individuals:

Benjamin M. Cavanaugh
Morgan C. Justice
Jessica Olivia Perry
Jessica Lynn Phillips
Daniela Sanchez
Jonathan Blane Washington

Chair's Message: Assembled

Greetings Students, Alumni, and Friends,

The past year was a good one for sociology. Our program has begun to grow again. Although the university has continued to see declining enrollments, we were the only program in the College of Liberal Arts and one of only two in the entire university to grow. While this makes us look relatively good, this is not a sustainable situation. Fortunately, President Altenkirch's strategic plan for the university includes a significant focus on student retention and recruitment, and this plan is now being implemented.

Within the department our two new faculty, Drs. Christina Steidl and Kyle Knight, brought great enthusiasm and skill to their courses and our students responded well. Both Drs. Steidl and Knight also made significant contributions to the discipline of sociology with multiple research publications. In fact, over the summer, Dr. Steidl's article, "Remembering May 4, 1970: Integrating the Commemorative Field at Kent State," was accepted for publication in *American Sociological Review*.

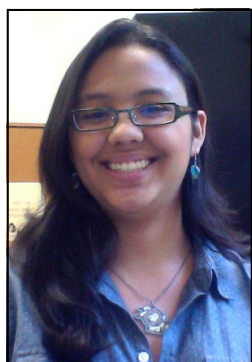
This year saw the retirement of Dr. Nancy Finley after 28 years of service. No doubt most of our alumni, as well as current students, took courses with Dr. Finley, and no doubt almost all of you remember those courses fondly as some of the best you took at UAH. I do not have the words to express how much this department benefitted from Dr. Finley's presence, nor how much I personally benefitted from both her spirit and her wisdom. She will be missed, but fortunately she will stay in the area and has promised to visit us regularly.

Dr. Richard Simon has the task of filling Dr. Finley's shoes. Dr. Simon comes to us most recently from nearby Jacksonville State University, where he was an Assistant Professor. He was hired specifically to teach sociology of science (for our program as well as the college's new cognate on Science, Technology, and Society) as well as gender. Along with Drs. Steidl and Knight, Dr. Simon becomes the third new faculty member hired in two years, and we are looking to these faculty as the future leaders of our department.

The department is also working, very slowly, toward creating a "survey research center." President Altenkirch invited Professor Art Cosby, Director of the Social Science Research Center, to campus in January, and we have had several discussions with folks all over campus about the need and potential for such a center. While we have, thus far, been unable to procure the resources to pursue this endeavor, we are convinced that it would be beneficial to the Department, the College of Liberal Arts, and to UAH as a whole—in other words a win-win-win. Therefore, it is something we will continue to pursue.

Finally I would add that our Department now offers four informal tracks for our undergraduate program: Community Services, Law and Justice, Global Structures, and Environmental Sociology. We also offer a Community Services internship, known affectionately here as SOC 395. You can learn more about these tracks on our website, www.uah.edu/sociology.

Mitch Berrier
Professor and Chair
Faculty Senate President



Sociology Scholarship and Honor Recipients

The Sociology Department Scholarship was established in 2007 thanks to numerous gifts to our scholarship fund over many years, from students, faculty, Dean Sue Kirkpatrick, and other friends, including one large gift from an anonymous donor.

The Sociology Scholarship is awarded only to full-time undergraduate students for their junior or senior year(s), who are pursuing a major in Sociology and who have maintained a grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, with preference given to students who demonstrate financial need in order to be able to pursue a degree.

Scholarships are awarded by the University's Financial Aid Committee based upon recommendations of a committee composed of the Chair of the Department of Sociol-

ogy and at least one tenured faculty member in the Department.

Daniela Sanchez (pictured top left) is our continuing UAH Sociology Scholar this year. This is Daniela's second and last year of eligibility, so we expect a new scholar to be selected in the upcoming year. Current sociology majors are invited to apply through the UAH Financial Aid office.

There have been only two UAH Sociology Scholars before Daniela: **Delilah Pettitt (B.A. '09)** and **Shermete Brown (B.A. '10)**.

Each year, the Department of Sociology recognizes one student whose academic performance and/or recognizable potential for future performance is exemplary. This year that honor went to **Morgan Justice** (pictured bottom left).

Morgan is a senior who expects to graduate in December 2013 with

a degree in Sociology and a minor in Women's Studies. After studying biology and math at UAB and Northeast Alabama Community College, Morgan joined us here at UAH and quickly became one of our most active students on campus and a familiar and comforting presence in our office suite. She has been active in several student groups—POWER, the Student Sociological Association, and the Gay-Straight Alliance.

Morgan has worked on numerous events and was one of President Altenkirch's appointees as a student representative to American Association for University Women. She has done all this while earning excellent grades and working between 20 and 40 hours at jobs both on and off campus. After graduating, she plans to pursue graduate study in sociology.

Life Is an Alumnus Journey

Henry "Trip" Eddinton III graduated from UAH in the spring of 2008 with a double-major in Sociology and Psychology. Trip worked full-time throughout his degree and was the first from his working-class family to graduate. Upon graduation, he decided to fulfill his life-long dream of traveling to exotic places, a dream that he says we deepened by his study of Sociology at UAH.



Trip could afford this because he joined the U.S. Peace Corps and was assigned as part of a team heading to Mongolia, a sparsely populated country landlocked just north of China and south of Siberia. For three months he lived with a host family in order to learn the language and culture. In part because of his background in sociology he was assigned to work in Community and Youth Development and was sent to "the smallest, furthest, poorest district of the capital city" to work in the Social Policy Department of the Governor's Office. Trip's job was to teach Life Skills to local youth and to

train social workers and peer educators how to give those lessons after he was gone. Life skills were defined as things like money management, relationship management, nutrition, and alcohol and drug awareness. He lived in an old Soviet-era apartment he describes with "electricity that might go out at anytime, water that could come or go, and was only ever cold, and old radia-

tor-style heaters that never got above 58 degrees.... In the winter, I used two 25-degree sleeping bags to keep warm at night and wore four layers of clothes whenever I went outside. Mongolia has an almost eight-month winter, so it seemed like I was always cold." It took about a year for the locals to become comfortable having Trip around, but once accepted, he was invited to do all kinds of things and made many

new friends. He traveled into the city on crowded and dangerous buses for additional tutoring in the Mongolian language. "After two years of studying, I tested at the Advanced level, which would go on to help me meet my wife."

Today, Trip and Munguntuya live in Huntsville with their two-and-a-half-year-old son, Sanchir. Since returning to the U.S. in 2010, Trip has been employed as Facilities Coordinator and Supervisor at the Huntsville office of Maynard, Cooper & Gale, P.C. But he plans



to return to Mongolia in a few years. He wants to work for the preservation of the Mongolian language, further study Mongolian culture, and start a business. "It's a simpler way of life that I often find myself longing for."

****Note:** This is an abridged version of the story Trip told us. For more details on his experiences in Mongolia, visit us at www.uah.edu/sociology.**

Past Honorees

Past Sociology Department honor recipients include Morgan Justice (2013), Alyson Thompson (2012), Kelsey Thacker (2011), Veronica Ferreira (2010), Shauna Floyd (2009), Amanda Browne Bisset (2008), Kristen Ruccio (2007), Katie Knop (2006), Elaine Pruett (2005), Richard Pfister (2004), Mary Catherine Cates (2003), Koren Hunt (2002), Matthew William Foster (2001), Linda Kay Stauffer (2000), Staci Barker Wood (1999), Staci Leigh Barker (1998), Vrushali Patil (1997), Patricia Strength (1996), Paula W. Tullis (1995), Norma DeYoung Stanger (1993), Cathy Marlene Mills (1992), Helga Thompson (1991), Joannie Diane Miller (1989), and Todd Chambers (1986). **If you have any information on these years—1994, 1990, 1988, 1987—share it with us!**

A Few Tidbits

- **Dr. Vrushali Patil, B.A. '97**, received her Ph.D. in Sociology from University of Maryland in 2006 and is currently Assistant Professor of Sociology at Florida International University.
- **Sarah Ragan, B.A. '08**, completed her M.A. in Public Affairs at UAH and now works at Redstone Arsenal.
- **Heather Harwell, B.A. '09**, completed her M.A. in Public Affairs at UAH and now works at Redstone Arsenal.
- **Quinn Ottaway, B.A. '06** – Ordinarily we do not report on the same alumnus two years in a row but we wish to highlight Quinn Ottaway. While living in Puget



Sound, Washington, and contemplating completing his M.A. thesis in Sociology, Quinn decided to become a living organ donor last year. Anonymously, he donated a kidney to Seattle Children's Hospital, only to be discovered by the recipient's aunt on an internet dating site later that year. (Kendahl and Quinn are pictured here.) Quinn's extraordinary act of humanity and the odd coincidence that followed were noted in *Time Magazine*, and on a television show *Evening Magazine* (you will have to wait through one minute of commercials: <http://www.king5.com/on-tv/evening-magazine/Discovering-the-perfect-match-twice-201294981.html>).



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UAH Sociology News

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