



Sociology Major Mia Milne Receives Multiple Awards for Research and Academic Excellence



An Honors College student, double majoring in Sociology and Psychology with a minor in Women's and Gender Studies, Mia Milne graduated this spring with multiple awards for research and academic excellence.

Milne was honored as the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences 2018 Outstanding Student,

as well as the Outstanding Sociology Major. She also won second place in the Research Horizons Day competition for undergraduate research.

Milne was accepted to the PhD Sociology Program at Georgia State University (GSU) with a fully-funded fellowship for the next five years.

"Other cultures have always fascinated me," Milne said, "but my interest in social sciences really developed during my first year at UAH. I took my first sociology class and became more involved with URGE (Unite for Reproductive and Gender Equity). Both of these experiences taught me so much about inequalities throughout history and today."

She continued, "Sociology taught me the theory while URGE showed me direct actions individuals can take. I believe theory and activism are important. It's easy to get discouraged if you only focus on large, systemic issues that almost seem too complex to fix, but if you only focus on what you can do as an individual then you can miss the big picture that's needed to make lasting change."

Born and raised in Mobile, AL, Milne attended W.P. Davidson

High School. While she and her mother were visiting relatives in Huntsville, they decided to visit UAH. "I toured the school and was impressed by the campus and the programs offered. I was especially impressed by all the undergraduate research opportunities. I began attending UAH during the fall semester of 2015."

The thought of going to classes and getting the opportunity to work on research projects solidified her decision to attend UAH. She said, "All throughout high school I was enrolled in an Engineering curriculum called, EPIC. I stayed in the program until I graduated but dropped down to the less intense path. Engineering is a great field for some people but not for me."

Milne said her UAH classes were "challenging and stressful at times"

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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

My Career as a Sociologist | By UAH Alumnus Tom Dial ('75)

I grew up in Alabama, mostly in northern Jefferson County. After graduating from high school in 1967, I enlisted in the Army for four years. I married while in the Army, and when I returned to civilian life in 1971, my wife and I enrolled at UAH. I initially enrolled as an English major, but I changed to sociology in my sophomore year. My wife and I graduated in 1975, she with a BSN and I with a BA.

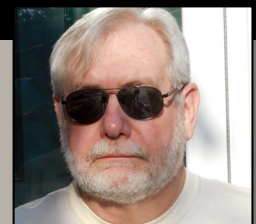
In 1975 I entered the graduate program in Social Relations (as the department was called back then)

at Johns Hopkins University (JHU) with a fellowship funded by NIMH. When I entered graduate school, my main topics of interest were social stratification and deviant behavior.

At that time the JHU Social Relations program strongly emphasized quantitative methods. All first-year graduate students were required to take two semesters of statistics in the Math Sciences Department and pass with at least a B. I became more interested in the field and made advanced quantitative

methods one of my three areas of concentration.

I also gained a lot of experience working with computers at JHU. In those days, this mostly meant running "batch jobs" on a mainframe, which involved typing commands by hand on a "dumb" terminal – nothing but a keyboard and monitor – which were connected to a computer in a separate building. The software we used the most was SPSS. No point-and-click interfaces, word processors, web browsers, or spreadsheet software



in those days. Quantitative methods and familiarity with computers would become the main foundations of my research career.

An important graduate school experience was working part-time as a research assistant at a small research center in Baltimore. I worked on a study of heroin addicts, and my duties included

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PHOTO GALLERY



From the top: Students and alumni visit Morton Hall before the move, collecting classics from the sociology library book giveaway. The department has settled into its new temporary location, welcoming students back with a "meet and greet" the first week of fall classes. We designed sociology-themed stickers for the occasion. Come get your own!

Inset in text: Students and alumni responded to the invitation to leave their mark on the walls of Morton Hall.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings from UAH Sociology

We had an extremely productive year, and I am proud to highlight some of the achievements of our students and faculty in this newsletter.

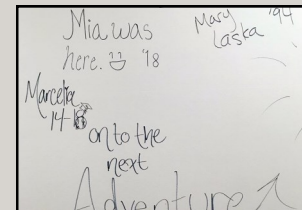
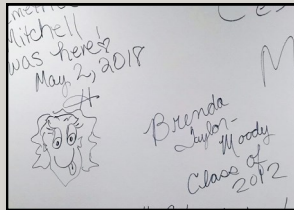
Two faculty members, Christina Steidl and Kyle Knight, received tenure and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor. Mia Milne, a sociology graduate, was recognized as the Outstanding Student in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. Mia and another outstanding graduate, Roxie Brookshire, also received full funding to pursue graduate studies in sociology.

In responding to the changing needs of a diverse student body, the department has increased its online presence in introductory sociology and anthropology courses, and additional online/hybrid courses (Social Problems, Deviance and Social Control) are offered in 2018-2019.

We are also developing two new programs to expand our curriculum and meet the needs of current and future students. One of these programs is a *Certificate in Social Science Analytics*, a credential program that aims to provide professional training in social science research and data analysis. A second program in *Criminology and Justice Studies* is in the early stages of planning, pending recruitment of faculty with appropriate expertise.

Together these programs will equip students with marketable skills for employment while maintaining the rigorous intellectual development that provides the crucial value-added to those skills.

Each year, as I reach out to alumni, I look forward to discovering meaningful and impressive achievements in their



Bhavani Sitaraman
Associate Professor and Chair

lives and careers. This newsletter features a detailed profile of Tom Dial's career as a successful applied sociologist. Other noteworthy alumni profiled in brief in this newsletter are pursuing meaningful careers within non-profits. It is always a pleasure to hear about the experiences and accomplishments of our alumni and friends.

Keep in touch and drop us a note at sociology@uah.edu or come and visit us if you are in town.

Please note that we have temporarily relocated to the Conference Training Center (CTC), room 203, as we await the completion of major renovations to Morton Hall during the coming year.

DEPARTMENT

Updates from the Sociology Department

New Office Space in Conference Training Center

As Morton Hall undergoes a major renovation, the department has temporarily moved our offices to Conference Training Center (CTC) 203. Our suite of offices is located on the second floor in space which used to house the student clinic. Sociology majors will continue to have access to the department library and computer lab within our suite of offices.

You can find faculty and staff in these new locations: Erin Reid,

Senior Staff Assistant (203); Dr. Bhavani Sitaraman, Chair (203C); Dr. Mitch Berbrier (203E); Dr. Christina Steidl (203F); Dr. Kyle Knight (203G); and Dr. Jennifer Sims (203H). We look forward to seeing you in our new location.

New Online/Hybrid Courses in Sociology

The department continues to develop more online courses. Two new courses developed by Dr. Mitch Berbrier are online this year: SOC 319 Deviance and Social Control will be offered in Fall 2018

as a hybrid course and SOC 102 Analysis of Social Problems will be taught fully online in Spring 2019.

National Children's Advocacy Center Training

The National Children's Advocacy Center in Huntsville conducted a workshop to provide child sexual abuse prevention training to students on October 20, 2017. The *Stewards of Children* training workshop was attended by more than 25 psychology and sociology majors who received certificates of completion for their participation.

FACULTY

Steidl Receives NSF Grant for Research

Dr. Christina Steidl has received a collaborative grant of \$228,600 from the National Science Foundation to study veterans' educational and career outcomes.

The research team, headed by Steidl, Dr. Regina Werum (University of Nebraska-Lincoln) and Major Jacob Absalon (United States Military Academy-West Point) is using U.S. Census Data to analyze whether veterans are more likely than civilians to pursue degrees in science, technology,

engineering, and math (STEM) and to work in STEM fields after graduation.

The team presented their first set of analyses at the American Sociological Association meeting in Philadelphia in August. They found that veterans are more likely than civilians to complete a degree in a STEM field (versus a non-STEM field), but that this increase is gendered. Specifically, while male veterans and civilians have roughly equal rates of STEM degree earn-

ing, female veterans are substantially more likely than female civilians to earn a STEM degree.

These findings suggest that the military may be helping to diversify the STEM workforce.

This fall, sociology major Maria Cunningham, is joining the research team to assist with analyses evaluating differences in the use of G.I. Bill benefits over time and variation in educational/career trajectories across military branches.



Department of Sociology

The University of Alabama
in Huntsville
Conference Training Center 203
Huntsville, Alabama 35899
Phone: 256.824.6190
Fax: 256.824.2387

Email: sociology@uah.edu

www.uah.edu/sociology

[@uahsociology](https://twitter.com/uahsociology)

[@UAH_SOC](https://twitter.com/UAH_SOC)

Sociology Faculty and Staff

Bhavani Sitaraman, Chair

sitarab@uah.edu

Mitch Berbrier

mitch.berbrier@uah.edu

Kyle Knight

kyle.knight@uah.edu

Jennifer Sims

jennifer.sims@uah.edu

Christina Steidl

christina.steidl@uah.edu

Erin Reid, Senior Staff

erin.reid@uah.edu

UAH Sociology News

is a publication of the Department of Sociology at The University of Alabama in Huntsville. It is published at least once a year and sent via email and USPS to departmental alumni, current sociology majors and minors, and other friends of the department. Content is developed by Bhavani Sitaraman with editing and design by Erin Reid. Visit us at www.uah.edu/sociology.

Sims Offers New Course: Qualitative Methods

Dr. Jennifer Sims will introduce a new sociology course this spring.

Qualitative Research Methods will teach the theory behind and technical skills to conduct qualitative social science research. The course will cover focus group

research, interviewing, content analysis, and ethnography (participant observation research).

With funding from a UAH Collaborative Learning Grant, students will participate in multiple hands-on learning activities and a data anal-

ysis practicum. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to identify, collect, organize, and analyze qualitative data as well as effectively communicate results to academic and professional audiences.

FACULTY UPDATES



Kyle W. Knight presented "Explaining Cross-National Variation in the Climate Change Concern Gender Gap" at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Sociological Society in March. He also co-authored an article with Juliet B. Schor, and Andrew K. Jorgenson titled "Wealth Inequality and Carbon Emissions in High-Income Countries" that was published in *Social Currents*. Knight was tenured and promoted to the rank of Associate Professor.



Jennifer Sims presented "As I've gotten older, I've kind of kept it real: Theorizing about mixed-race identity change over the life course" at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Sociological Society in March. Her co-authored paper "We were all just the black kids: Black mixed-race men and the importance of adolescent peer groups for identity development" is forthcoming in *Social Currents*. Sims was named a 2018 UAH Collaborative Learning Fellow.

Mitch Berbrier has returned to his full-time faculty position in the department after serving as Dean of the College.



Christina R. Steidl and Aislinn Roxanne Brookshire presented "Just One of the Guys Until Show-er Time: Gender Performance and Symbolic Embodiment in the U.S. Military" at the Mid-South Sociological Association meetings in Chattanooga, TN. Steidl was tenured and promoted to the rank of Associate Professor.



RECENT GRADUATES

Congratulations 2017-2018 Grads!

The department congratulates another great cohort of graduates! Christian Bailey, Lauren Black, Laria Bone, Roxie Brookshire, Lisa Burns, Matthew Byrne, Sydney Cotton, Keaira Crowson, Isabella Rundini, Jasmine Lucious, Robert Martin, Lillian Mendoza, Mia Milne, Jared Royster, Kelsey Smith, Caitlin Smoker, Taylor Yeazitzis.



Top: (left to right) Dr. Jennifer Sims, Christian Bailey, Dr. Christina Steidl, Lauren Black. Bottom: Jared Royster, Cole Martin.

INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Hospice Family Care

Angel Parrish completed her Capstone Internship Project at Hospice of North Alabama.

The Cottages

Lisa Burns completed her Capstone Internship Project at The Cottages Senior Living.

Internships are a great way to prepare for a career in human services. If you are interested in earning credit for an internship, plan early and discuss this option with the Chair of the Sociology Department at least a semester before you graduate.

STUDENTS

Sociology Student Achievements

Sociology Majors Receive Fellowship to Doctoral Programs

Mia Milne and Roxie Brookshire received full funding to pursue a doctoral degree in sociology. Brookshire begins her studies at Florida State University, Tallahassee, and Milne begins at Georgia State University starting fall 2018.

Honors College Graduates

Two sociology majors graduated from the Honors College, completing an undergraduate thesis.

Mia Milne BA Sociology and Psychology. Thesis: "Romantic and Sexual Relationships of College Students by Sexuality."

Matthew Byrne BA English and Sociology. Thesis: "Morbid Curiosity in Actuality: Exploring the Con-

nection between Interest in Death-Related Imagery and Age."

Sociology Scholar- ship Recipient

Allison Middleton is the winner of the Sociology Scholarship Award for the 2018-2019 academic year.



Sociology Capstone Presentations

Seven sociology majors completed their capstone academic or internship projects this past May.

Jared Royster – "Screen to Show: The Influence of Style and Trends

from Media to the Modified Car Community"

Mia Milne – "Sexual Relationship Preferences and Experiences of College Students by Sexuality"

Maria Cunningham – "The Debate Continues: Does Class Size Affect Academic Achievement?"

Matthew Byrne – "Morbid Curiosity in Actuality: Exploring the Relationship between Interest in Death-Related Imagery and Age"

Brandon Hann – "The Impact of Local Property Taxes on School Nutrition"

Lisa Burns – "The Cottages: Framing of Services to Customers"

Angel Parrish – "The Emotional Work within Hospice: Managing Emotional Labor"

Sociology Major Receives Awards (continued)

(from page 1) but the interesting subjects made it easier to get the work done. "I have been inspired by multiple faculty members. Dr. Richard Simon (Assistant Professor, Sociology) and Dr. Sandra Carpenter (Professor, Psychology) both gave me opportunities to help with their research. Dr. Christina Steidl (Associate Professor, Sociology) was my advisor, and she was an essential help with the graduate school application process. Dr. Suzy Friedman (Lecturer, English) used to meet with two other students and me at a coffee shop to discuss foundational feminist texts. Dr. Nicole Pacino (Assistant Professor, History) was the advisor for URGE and is passionate about encouraging critical thinking in her students. All of these professors have given me great advice and opportunities I might not have had at other universities."

Milne's undergraduate research projects included collaboration with Simon and design of an original Sociology Capstone research project. The assignments explored the salience and impact of sexual orientation in the lives of college students. Results from her research were presented at two Southern Sociological Society meetings in 2017 and 2018, and will be published in an article she has co-authored with Simon.

"Mia's research explores sexual identity and experiences of college students," said Dr. Bhavani Sitaraman, Associate Professor and Chair of Sociology. "She designed a survey for this purpose, gathered original data and analyzed the results using sophisticated multivariate statistical methods. I am impressed with Mia's passion for sociological research, and her ability to connect her academic

interests with active engagement in organizations that advocate for these issues."

Milne won second place in the Kathryn L. Harris Women's and Gender Studies Writing Competition two years in a row. She also served as a tutor for sociology and psychology courses at the Student Success Center.

Milne plans to conduct graduate research in sexuality with a focus on identity, gender, and health. She added, "I have lots of friends and family in the Huntsville area... I'll definitely visit. I also really want to know what the new Morton Hall will look like."

Adapted from UAH News:
<https://www.uah.edu/news/campus/mia-milne-uah-sociology-senior-recipient-of-georgia-state-university-fellowship>

ALUMNI

Sociology Alumni Notes

Amanda Browne Bisset (2007) attended graduate school at Howard University in Washington DC where she received an MA in Social Work. She is a clinical social worker with Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS) in New Haven, CT, where she provides supportive therapy to refugees. She has also led the agency's wellness programs, including yoga, sewing, gardening, and art. This year, and after 14 years of marriage, she and her husband Caleb welcomed their first child, Vaill Reynolds Bisset.

Brandi Mason (2005) serves as Director of Social Services at Regency Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center in Huntsville, AL.

Delilah Pettitt (2009) has worked at the Alabama Career Center in Huntsville as an Employment Security Supervisor for the past eight years. She and her husband have two children, Mila, eight years old, and Max, five.

Sharrian Taylor (2012) works as a Research and Data Analyst for Orange County Department of

Social Services in North Carolina. After graduating from UAH, she obtained her post-baccalaureate certificate in Nonprofit Management from the University of North Carolina in Greensboro and Masters in Public Administration from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in the fall of 2016.

Ben Walker (2010) lives in Greenville, SC, with his wife and three daughters. He works full-time in Christian ministry preaching, teaching, and counseling those in need.



From the top: Amanda Browne Bisset (2007), Brandi Mason (2005), Delilah Pettitt (2009), Sharrian Taylor (2012), Ben Walker (2010).

My Career as a Sociologist (continued)

(from page 1) interviewing subjects in the office or in the field. That took me to some interesting places, such as the Maryland State Penitentiary and some really depressing housing projects. Later on, I used data from that study in my dissertation.

By 1979 I was ABD, my fellowship was soon to expire, and I had two small children to support, so I went looking for a job. I was hired by a consulting company in Annandale, VA, and worked there for about three years, crunching numbers and writing proposals and reports for federal contracts. Later I took a cut in salary for better job security at the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC).

In 1987 I moved to the American Psychiatric Association (APA), in 1992 to the Health Insurance Association of America (HIAA), and in 1993 to the American Association of Health Plans (AAHP). All of those positions involved conducting surveys and analyzing survey data. Early in 1998 I was hired by the National Education Association (NEA), where I would stay until I retired in 2012. NEA was my favorite workplace: interesting work, good managers, good pay and benefits, and coworkers who

really believed in the NEA's mission.

The most interesting thing I studied at NEA was international comparisons of student performance on standardized tests. In 1995, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) launched the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) with standardized testing in 50 countries. When the results of the first TIMSS exams were published, they caused a political stir because American students did not test as well as those in several other industrialized nations. NEA naturally had a strong interest in those developments, and assigned me to study the TIMSS data and investigate differences between the American education system and other countries. Among the highlights of that assignment were trips to Paris, Brussels, and Helsinki to meet with education experts from all over the world.

Some common themes ran through all the jobs I had in Washington. First, *everything* in Washington is political, and lobbying is a top-priority endeavor for many of the organizations. At every association job I had, to a greater or lesser degree, government rela-

tions and public relations staff looked over researchers' shoulders, checking for anything that didn't support their "message." I found some independence by doing research on my own time, in collaboration with partners that included former grad school classmates and university faculty, among others. My collaborators and I published about 20 articles in peer-reviewed journals, as well as a few book chapters, in addition to the many reports and presentations I did for my employers.

Despite the highly politicized environment, the Washington area is in many ways an agreeable place to live and work. It's an opportunity-rich environment for social and behavioral scientists. Government agencies, research institutes, consulting companies, trade and professional associations, and other organizations employ social scientists to do policy-relevant research on a seemingly endless variety of issues. Issues that I was studying were often covered by national news media, so I felt that perhaps, in some small way, I was making a difference in the world.

Tom Dial is a graduate of the UAH sociology program. We appreciate his continued interest and support.



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