

# **Pennsylvania Sociological Society**



***You must be the change you wish to see in  
the world.***

Mohandas Karamachand Gandhi (1869 - 1948)

# Pennsylvania Sociological Society

## Message from the President



Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to the 61<sup>st</sup> annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Sociological Society. Amidst the challenges of the last few years, due to the political, social, and economic difficulties in our country, we continue with our commitment to serving the students, faculty, and retired professionals in our field. Perhaps more than ever our communities need our expertise and commitment to social change that is so integral to the spirit and essence of sociology.

In *An Invitation to Sociology* Peter Berger reminds us that sociologists are people who are “intensively, endlessly, shamelessly interested in the doings of [people]” and that our “natural habitat is all the human gathering places of the world.” This year we explore how we work for social change through community dialogue in various “human gathering places.” We look at gathering places such as businesses, classrooms, and social service organizations just to name a few.

Please help us continue our efforts to strengthen and improve our very important organization by nominating yourself or a colleague for one of our board member positions. If you are unable to take on a position on the board your participation through suggestions to the board and participation in meetings are most welcome and essential to maintaining a strong organization.

I hope that all of you have wonderful and rewarding experience at the conference this year. Welcome to our campus!

Susan E. Eichenberger, Ph.D.  
2011 PSS President

## “We’re All in this Together”: From Diverse Experiences to a Common Humanity

Saturday’s Plenary address to be given at the 61<sup>st</sup> annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Sociological Society

Saturday, October 1, 2011



*Amir M. Marvasti*  
*Associate Professor of Sociology*  
*Penn State Altoona*  
*Abm11@psu.edu*

This presentation considers how qualitative research can be used to build a broad notion of community founded the commonality of human experience. Borrowing from works of W.I. Thomas on social disorganization and personality development in early 20<sup>th</sup> century, I argue that the yearning for belonging and community is a central and perennial concern for sociology; and that this wish can best be fulfilled by encouraging diverse groups to focus on the commonality of their human experiences. Using qualitative interviews, field observations, and personal experience, I show how two seemingly distinct groups (i.e. the homeless and Middle Eastern Americans) share similar experiences regarding: 1) self-other relations in the context of egregious stereotypes; 2) awareness of mortality and time; 3) desire for belonging (i.e., having a home); and 4) the wish for new experiences. In essence, I argue that qualitative research can be used to encourage people to locate their selves in the experiences of others (i.e., identify with others). I conclude by suggesting that it is possible, if not necessary, to move beyond simplistic approaches that pit one group against another or simply encourage dominant groups to have “empathy for the less fortunate.” Instead, we need to recognize, in the words of a homeless white man, that “We’re all in this together”—that we are united by our common woes, anxieties, and desires. Qualitative research with its emphasis on lived experience is particularly useful in showing how certain universal themes transcend social divisions and unify people from diverse backgrounds.

## CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Friday, October 22, 2010

5:00 - 7:30 Registration - Administration, Second Floor Hallway

6:30 - 8:00 Dinner - Second Floor Parlors, Administration  
**Welcome**  
Jan Purk , *PSS President Elect*  
Mansfield University

8:00 Friday Night Event:

**Seton Hill Ghost Tour and Tales**  
**William Black, Seton Hill University Archivist**

Saturday, October 1, 2011

8:00 - 12:00 Registration and Continental Breakfast - Administration, Second Floor Hallway

9:00 - 10:15 a.m.

**SESSION ONE-A Administration 206**  
**“Student Paper Competition”**

Session Convener and Moderator: **Janice Purk**, Mansfield University

“When is Mommy Coming Home?: A Content Analysis of Spillover in Parenthood”  
**Barbara Prince**, Elizabethtown College

“Impact of Stay-At-Home Mothers on High School GPA”  
**Hannah Pace**, Grove City

“ The Effect of Tattoos on People Perceptions”  
**Sofiya V. Arnaudova**, Seton Hill

“ A New Place for Women at the Border: The Drug War”  
**Kaitlin Latimer**, West Chester

“Evidence-based Administration in Higher Education: English 202A Project”  
**Stephen R. McFall**, Penn State Altoona

SESSION ONE—B Administration 407

“STAR: Social Transformation Through Awareness and Resolve: A Conversation”

Session Organizer, Convener and Moderator: **Susan Eichenberger, Seton Hill University**  
**Susan Eichenberger, Sarah Livsey, Marilyn Sullivan-Cosetti, Seton Hill University and**  
**Ann Emmerling, Executive Director, Blackburn Center**

SESSION ONE—C Maura 333

“Issues in Contemporary American Godlessness”

Session Organizer, Convener and Discussant: **Nicholas Rowland, Penn State Altoona**

“How PeopleSoft Took Over Higher Education: The University of Michigan Decision”  
**Alex Kinney, Penn State Altoona**

“Evidence-based Administration: A Case Study in Curricular Alignment”  
**Stephen McFall, Penn State Altoona**

“Theists and Non-theists Do Not Differ In Terms of Moral Decision Making”  
**Justin Didyoung, Penn State Altoona**

10:30 – 11:45 a.m.

SESSION TWO—A Administration 206

Graduate and Undergraduate Student Poster Competition (Set up in Hallway)

Winner to be announced at lunch

Organizer and Convener: **Barbara Jones Denison, Shippensburg University**

*The Status of the American Bride*  
Kristin Kemmerer, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

*Globalization and Higher Education*  
Natalie Bombatch, Shippensburg University

*The Benefits of Study Abroad*  
Katelin Jaworskyj, Shippensburg University

*Understanding the Relevance of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Modern America*

**Brandais Gary**, Shippensburg University

“Quality of Student Life Study: Results of Preliminary Findings”

**Tyler Mentzer**, University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown

“Is it Earth Day Yet?: Measuring Knowledge and Interest of Environmental Topics”

**Michael Shields**, Elizabethtown College

“Big News”

**Hannah Riley and Courtney Josselyn**, Seton Hill University

## SESSION TWO—B Administration 407

### “Gender and Identity”

Session Convener and Moderator: **Elizabeth Larsen**, California University of PA

“Islamic Women’s Attire and Identity Politics”

**Vinay Bahl**, Pennsylvania College of Technology

“Social Awkwardness, Nerdism, and Mandhood Acts in Campus LARPing Group”

**James S. Martin** and **Christian Vaccaro**, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

“Gendered Embodiment Cycles in Mixed Martial Arts”

**Christian Vaccaro**, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

“American Attitudes About Gay Marriage: The Impact of Attitudes Toward Familial Gender Roles and Religiosity”

**Dottie Craig**, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

## SESSION TWO—C Maura 333

### “Applied Settings: Changing Dynamics of Small Businesses and Organizations”

Session Convener and Moderator: **Bill Murphy**, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Retired, University of Pittsburgh and Antioch Village College)

“Purposefully Controlling Organizational Culture Through the Art of Leadership: Exploring the Problems Associated with a Modernist Interpretation of Organizational Culture”

**Travis A. Berger**, Alvernia University

“A New Look at Asian American Owned Small Business”

**Ying Yang**, Shippensburg University

“From Massage to Beauty Parlors: The Changing Urban Landscape of Central China”

**Timothy Madigan**, Mansfield University

“Secondary Analysis of Existing Data”

**Bill Murphy**, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Retired, University of Pittsburgh and Antioch College)

12:00 – 1:45 p.m. Greensburg Room

Welcome – **Dr. Mary Ann Gawelek**  
Provost and Dean of the Faculty, Seton Hill University

SATURDAY KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Introduction of speaker: **Susan Eichenberger**, PSS President

“We’re All in this Together”: From Diverse Experiences to a  
Common Humanity

Keynote Address “We’re All in this Together”: From Diverse  
Experiences to a Common Humanity

**Dr. Amir Marvasti**  
Penn State Altoona

2:00 – 3:15 p.m.

SESSION THREE—A Administration 206

“Building Bridges and Creating Positive Change”

Session Convener and Moderator: **Susan Eichenberger**, Seton Hill University

“Testing the Effects of Bullying and Cyber-bullying on Delinquency Using the Pennsylvania Youth Survey”

**Lindsay L. Kahle** and **Christian Vaccaro**, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

“Community Dialogue and the Sociology of the Enemy”

**Richard W. Moodey**, Gannon University

“Academic Success in College: The Effects of Alcohol and Marijuana Use on Grade Point Average”

**Andrea Ryan**, University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown

### SESSION THREE—B Administration 407

#### “Cultural and Attitudinal Changes in the U.S.”

Session Convener and Moderator: **Janice Purk**, Mansfield University

“The Precarious Existence of Academic Tenure Today and the Rise of Neo-facism”

**Richard Sahn**, The Pennsylvania College of Technology

“The Decline in Confidence, the Erosion of Community Life, and Possible Remedies: Analysis of Longitudinal Trends in the U.S. Using the GSS”

**Ivan Chompalov**, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania

“Holy Equality Batman!: Social Change Through the Media Heroes of the 60s”

**Michael W. Young**, La Roche College

### SESSION THREE—C Maura 333

#### “Tips and Best Practices for Preparing Top Students for the New GREs”

Session Organizers and Presenters: **Barbara Jones Denison**, Shippensburg University and **Ellen Gunther**, Domestic Violence Adult Advocate, Norwich, CT

**GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING: 3:30 p.m.**

**PSS Business Meeting: The business meeting will be held at 3:30 p.m. in Administration 206. All are welcome to attend.**

#### **Islamic Women’s Attire and Identity Politics**

Vinay Bahl

Pennsylvania College of Technology

For last two decades, Islamic women’s attire has been under constant attack in both, North Americas and European countries. In the USA, these attacks increased after 9/11. European countries have gone further by instituting a ban on Islamic women’s attire in the name of saving

democratic values. There are no dearth of scholars who have written on this burning issue of Islamic women's attire. Supporting the ban against veil, one set of scholars views veils as an oppression against Muslim women. Those who are against the ban, view it as an attack on the rights of Muslim women to wear their attire based on their beliefs. Both these views are focusing on the identity politics that has not helped in our understanding of Islamic women's choices about their attire within their societies of origin as well as in the European context. This paper locates the issue of Muslim women's attire in a larger context, both as an issue within the context of migrant situation and a woman's issue within their own specific society (that includes both Islamic and non Islamic societies like India). The purpose of this paper is to provide a critique of the prevailing ideas of identity politics while highlighting the contradictions between different traditions and their conflicts in different historical contexts. To change those conditions that create and maintain different hierarchies, both in reality and mind, the identity politics approach is not very useful even when it provides subalterns a voice through decontextualized individual stories.

### **Purposefully Controlling Organizational Culture through the Art of Leadership: Exploring the Problems Associated with a Modernist Interpretation of Organizational Culture**

Travis A. Berger

Alvernia University

This paper presentation will focus on some of the problems associated with a modernist interpretation of organizational culture. A modernist perspective of organizational culture posits that individuals and/or organizations can effectively use organizational culture as a mechanism of control. Viewed through this paradigm, organizational culture is just another instrument to be manipulated in order achieve organizational goals. Some postmodernists agree that organizational culture can be used for control, however they question the ethics involved in manipulating organizational culture in this manner. Dennis Mumby advocates the deconstruction of organizational stories in order to expose their real intent. A symbolic-interpretive approach to organizational culture suggests that the organizational stories that are told can hold different meanings for different people, as can various artifacts and symbols. The notion that an executive can effectively adopt a specific leadership style to manipulate the organizational culture assumes that everyone inside the organization shares the same assumptions, values, and norms and therefore share the same meaning related to artifacts and symbols. Hatch's cultural dynamics model, based on Schein's theory of culture, is introduced because of the emphasis that it places on understanding the complexities involved in the processes of organizational culture. The problems associated with a modernist interpretation of organizational culture will be explored through the social institution of sport.

### **The Decline in Confidence, The Erosion of Community Life, and Possible Remedies: Analysis of Longitudinal Trends in the U. S. Using the GSS**

Dr. Ivan Chompalov

Edinboro University

A number of studies have observed that in the past four decades a variety of trends had indicated the weakening of community life, the shrinking of close ties, greater individualism, increased isolation, and greater willingness to act selfishly to get ahead. While these trends have been fairly well documented, we still lack a comprehensive longitudinal trend analysis of a large set of indicators that tap the multitude of dimensions measuring these concepts. The current paper attempts to fill this gap by tracing a series of changes in attitudes and reported behaviors of Americans between 1972 and 2010 using the GSS. Indeed, the findings demonstrate a number of negative trends: drop in confidence over time in all the major institutions with the exception of the military and partially organized labor; the deterioration in trust in other people and their motives; less time spent attending religious services or on volunteer activities; less time spent with parents, siblings, or neighbors; decreased happiness and satisfaction with life. The paper argues that the observed longitudinal trends are a reflection of several larger social problems that have developed in our recent history: rampant individualism and preference for the laissez faire form of capitalism; the fusion of big money and big politics that results in undermining democracy; the “wilding of America;” the switch to a short-term focus instead of long-term policy; the strong belief in American exceptionalism; the “closing of the American mind” and growing anti-intellectualism; hardening of ideological positions and intolerance for other viewpoints; extreme consumerism and preoccupation with material things. Finally, recommendations are offered on how sociologists can become more actively engaged in bucking these trends.

### **American Attitudes About Gay Marriage: The Impact of Attitudes Toward Familial Gender Roles and Religiosity**

Dottie Craig

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

In this paper, I present findings from a study, which examined attitudes about gay marriage related to attitudes toward familial gender roles and religiosity. Using data collected from the 2006 General Social Survey of 1,977 adults living in the United States, I discuss the impact of attitudes toward gender and family roles and attitudes about gay marriage. In addition, I discuss several measures of religiosity related to attitudes about gay marriage. The sociodemographics included in this study were sex, age, marital status, race/ethnicity, and highest degree earned. Results of this study found people with traditional attitudes toward familial gender roles have more negative attitudes about gay marriage. Also, people with strong religious affiliation and more frequent attendance at religious services have more negative attitudes about gay marriage. Furthermore, people who were very religious and belonged to specific religious affiliations (Southern Baptists, Other Baptists, members of the Lutheran Missouri Synod, non-denominational Protestants, and Other Protestants) have more negative attitudes about gay marriage. Conversely, this study found people who were slightly religious, not religious, and very spiritual have more positive attitudes about gay marriage and people who belonged to specific religious affiliations (Interdenominational non-Protestants, Reform Jews and Other Jews) have more positive attitudes about gay marriage. Similar to other studies on attitudes about gay marriage, women, never married, divorced or separated, and more educated respondents have more positive attitudes about gay marriage while, respondents who were older, non-Hispanic black, and less educated tended to have more negative attitudes about gay marriage.

## **Theists and Non-theists Do Not Differ In Terms of Moral Decision Making**

Justin Didyoung

Penn State Altoona

Individuals who are unaffiliated with any religious sect are stigmatized in America (Edgell, Gerteis, & Hartmann, 2006). Non-theists are seen as morally immature and the stereotypes against them are based off of behavioral and cognitive fallacies. Traditionally non-theists are thought to act in a less moral manner than theists. This study makes observations and comparisons between religious identity levels and moral decision making abilities from situational dilemmas to test this commonplace assumption (Colby, Kohlberg, 1983). Identity levels are determined from results of surveys about their commitment levels and upbringing. Examining the stereotypes was done by using the method of situational dilemmas and scoring them for the reasoning the participants used when deciding what the main character of the dilemma should do (or what they themselves should do) (Colby, Kohlberg, 1983). The scoring for reasoning allowed us not to put weight on the actual answers the participants contributed but to develop an understanding of where they are coming from and why the participants think they should do what they said they should. This allowed us to measure moral reasoning and not just what they said they would do, which provided a more accurate and honest answer. This study is done with the hope of addressing the public stereotype and stigma that affect the reputation of non-theists.

## **Testing the Effects of Bullying and Cyber-bullying on Delinquency Using the Pennsylvania Youth Survey**

Lindsay L Kahle and Christian Vaccaro

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

I investigated the sociological issue of bullying among students in the education system through the analysis of the Pennsylvania Youth Survey Data of 2009. In particular, the research focuses on bullying among secondary education students. I add a second dimension of analysis by analyzing and comparing the phenomenon of cyber bullying with instances of face-to-face bullying. Previous literature has provided significant evidence that the negative effects of bullying increase the symptoms of depression, as well as decrease the feelings of global self-esteem. In turn, low self-concept appraisals increase the likelihood for the occurrence of delinquent behavior. Using these data I test seven hypotheses: First, I hypothesize that a positive relationship exists between the family life of a child (i.e. protective factors) and the child's self-concept. Second, I hypothesize an inverse relationship also exists between school bullying and a child's self-concept. Third, a child's self-concept inversely relates to the occurrence of the child's delinquent behavior. Fourth, I hypothesize the School type of the child has an inverse relationship to the prevalence of school bullying and a positive relationship to the prevalence of cyber bullying. Sixth, I hypothesize a positive relationship exists between the prevalence of school bullying and the prevalence of cyber bullying. Seventh, I hypothesize that because cyber bullying breeches the protective factor walls that a child's family provides (by directly entering the child's home or bed room); cyber bullying will diminish the protective effects of the family on a child's self-concept.

### **How PeopleSoft Took Over Higher Education: The University of Michigan Decision**

Alex Kinney

Penn State Altoona

Prior research suggests that formal documents play an important role in the procurement process of software packages in higher education. However, few researchers have shown concrete evidence of these documents or conceptualized their utility. In this study, we examine these formal documents, mainly, those related to gap-analysis, by showing them, and interpreting how they are used. Gap-analysis takes complex, potentially confusing topics such as software configurations and simplifies them. Gap-analysis allows non-technical experts a birds-eye view of how, in this case, new software squares with current business operations. Some scholars suggest formal documents like gap-analysis are useless, as they simplify too much. Instead, they claim adoption decisions are driven by the use of persuasion. We challenge this perspective by showing how gap-analysis is a flexible resource, which can be used to promote or reject the adoption of an innovation. We show a case where the software being purchased is based not on what is the best product, but on what may be in the best interest of the individuals making the selection. This shows that formal documents, not just persuasion and alliance-building, are very influential in making decisions regarding acquiring Packaging Software Solutions. Our data come from the University of Michigan's Bentley Historical Library's "M-Pathways Project." To our knowledge, this data has never been used for research purposes. We then expand on this to consider the role of gap analysis during implementation.

### **From Massage to Beauty Parlors: The Changing Urban Landscape of Central China**

Timothy Madigan

Mansfield University

Mainland China's rapidly growing economy has recently surpassed Japan's to become the second largest in the world. Economic growth has been spreading from large eastern coastal cities to provincial capital cities located in the heart of China. Along its path, vast changes have been occurring to society. Social theorists living in Europe a hundred years or so ago illuminated the impact capitalism and urbanization was having on the lives of individuals and society. They created concepts such as division of labor, *gesellschaft*, *survivals*, conspicuous consumption, exploitation, alienation, predatory class, creative destruction etc. to make sense of the transformations going on around them. These concepts and others from urban geography are utilized to examine changes occurring to shop keepers and urbanites in a large central China city. Since society is complex, investigating changes at the street level necessitated a multiple methods approach to collecting data. Hence, observational research efforts, conversations with city residents, before and after photographs, analysis of public documents were employed by the author to capture ongoing change. The results suggest several trends. New business establishments such as motorcycle, leather handbag, beauty and pharmaceutical shops, high-rise hotels, upscale department stores, fast-food franchises and fine restaurants serving international cuisine are emerging to satisfy the demands of richer, more sophisticated and fashion minded consumers. Old business establishments are disappearing or going through change-over from grimy dumpling shops and seedy massage parlors to Sichuan restaurants, hardware stores, flower

shops and electronics vendors. Government and private planning, urbanization, migration, infrastructure development, market socialism, international investment all seem to be playing a part in fueling the grand social change occurring today in cities in central China.

### **Social Awkwardness, Nerdism, and Manhood Acts in a Campus LARPing Group**

James S Martin and Christian Vaccaro

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

The purpose of this study is to understand how social groups impact “nerdism”, a form of social awkwardness which can be defined by problematic social interactions that leads to the stigmatizing label “nerd” and its accompanying low status. I will focus my research on a nearly all male campus group of “Live Action Role Players” that enact a type of game and theatre performance where members take on roles as historical or fictional characters. This group is identified by outsiders and also self-identify as “nerds” or as being “nerdy.” This study asks the question of whether group interactional processes (a) increase or decrease problematic interactional behaviors, (b) influence members’ perception of these behaviors as positive or negative, (c) shape interaction with other outsiders who could stigmatize them, and (d) are implicated in the interactional construction of manhood. I intend to use a symbolic interactionist (SI) framework to answer these questions. We predict that problematic interactions as “manhood acts” could be used for two purposes. First, group members may use problematic interactions for asserting control over each other, in service of creating and maintaining group membership statuses and roles. If gender is salient here, as I expect, then members possessing revered group status may be viewed by others and identify themselves as more “manly.” Second, nerd group members may use problematic interactions for boundary policing and dismissing others’ stigmatization. If gender is salient here, as I expect, then men in the group may preserve their masculine sense of selfhood, despite their membership to a marginalized group, through such enactments.

### **Evidence-based Administration in Higher Education: English 202A Project**

Stephen R. McFall

Penn State Altoona

Social Science majors at the Pennsylvania State University are required to take English 202A, which is a writing course named, “Effective Writing: Writing in the Social Sciences” (University Bulletin, 2011). The purpose of 202A is meant to transition students from one hundred level courses to three and four hundred level courses. In this thesis I ask, “How is English 202A preparing students to write effectively in their three and four hundred level courses?” In order to test if it is, in practice and perception, we are going to answer this question with the use of Evidence-Based Administration, a model of evidence-based assessment and decision making for higher education, adapted from Evidence-Based Management (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006). To assess the curricular viability of 202A this thesis analyzes student surveys from 202A classes and compared syllabi from 202A courses, with those from three and four hundred level courses taught at Penn State Altoona, coding syllabi for types of writing assignments. These data collected was then used to create a gap analysis, which shows where the “gaps” between 202A assignments and

the three and four hundred level course writing assignments lie. Qualitative interviews were also conducted with upper level division professors, which provided insight in to their perceptions of 202A. After the surveys, syllabi, and interviews were analyzed obvious gaps emerged between 202A perceptions and practices and the practices of the upper level social science courses that must be addressed by faculty and administrators before 202A can prepare students to write effectively.

### **Community Dialogue and the Sociology of the Enemy**

Richard W. Moodey

Allegheny College/Gannon University

In *This Thing of Darkness: A Sociology of the Enemy*, Aho (1994) argues that enemies are socially constructed, and can be socially deconstructed. In a diverse community, dialogue can contribute both to the social construction of enemies, and to the social deconstruction of enemies. It is likely to contribute to the construction of enemies when the participants are all members of the same category within a diverse community. It can transform a loosely connected category of persons into an integrated interest group, the members of which have a sharpened awareness of having enemies who obstruct or work against their interests. It is more likely to contribute to the deconstruction of enemies when the participants are members of different categories or interest groups. Such boundary-crossing conversations must begin with tolerance and civility, and move in the direction of the mutual respect necessary for genuine dialogue. Participants in cross-boundary dialogue are likely to experience criticism or even active hostility from people in their own categories or interest groups. Highly authoritarian persons are the most likely to say that a participant in a cross-boundary conversation is betraying her own people by “conorting with the enemy.” Those who seek to foster or participate in cross-boundary dialogues must be able and willing to endure criticism, and sometimes even active hostility. The history of the Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations illustrates the process of the deconstruction of enemies.

### **Secondary Analysis of Existing Data**

Bill Murphy

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Retired, Pennsylvania State University and Antioch College)

Secondary analysis is often tacked on to the end of the usual methods courses; however this area can provide research opportunities that are otherwise unavailable. There are many publicly available datasets in which the sampling procedures, questionnaire design, and other methodologies are already part of the design. There only remains the task of understanding that methodology and utilizing SPSS or SAS in order to describe and then demonstrate relationships within the data. Moreover, the sponsors actively recruit and train researchers for that purpose. Two such programs are the National Center for Educational Statistics and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. On significant feature of these programs is that they offer comparisons over time and longitudinal surveys that allow more detailed cause and effect relationships. Privacy concerns have placed limits on the available data to be released; however institutions can apply for and receive restricted licenses to attain some of these data. Many significant research studies have been published using data from these programs.

## Academic Success in College: The Effects of Alcohol and Marijuana Use on Grade Point Average

Andrea Ryan

University of Pitt at Johnstown

Prior research on the extent of the influence of substance use on college GPA is inconclusive. This study aimed to determine the importance of substance use to variation in college GPA by assessing the effects of seven measures of substance use over and above the effects of other important predictors. **Method:** A three-step multivariate correlation-regression analysis was performed on survey data collected in spring semester 2011 from a random sample ( $n = 421$ ) of male and female college students at a small university ( $N \approx 3,000$ ). **Results:** The control variables accounted for 30% of the variation in GPA regardless of the inclusion of substance use in the model. All the measures of substance use were negatively related to GPA and all the coefficients were statistically significant but none met the standard for substantive significance. Calculated regression equations predicting GPA at three levels of alcohol use and at three levels of marijuana use suggested that, while the net coefficient sizes were not large, the qualitative differences in average GPA at different levels of substance use were important. Although gender and student status differences in GPA and substance use were statistically significant, the effects of substance use on GPA were not different by gender or by student status. **Conclusions:** The results suggest that attitudes and skills students bring to college are more important to academic success than their substance use behaviors while in college. Different measures of substance use, while not comprising a single factor, had similar effects on GPA.

## The Precarious Existence of Academic Tenure Today and the Rise of Neo-fascism

Dr. Richard Sahn

The Pennsylvania College of Technology

The presentation will explore how and why tenure at colleges and universities is under attack. After discussing situations and examples where tenure does not apply to faculty behavior and the, apparently, not so obvious virtues of tenure I will show the connection between the inclination to abolish tenure with the extreme right wing agenda. Sociologists in particular are vulnerable. More than our colleagues in other departments and academic fields we are constantly persuading our students to engage in critical thinking when it comes the policies, laws, and behaviors of the political, economic, and media establishment. Public and quasi-public college and universities, especially, are undoubtedly under pressure, not only from funding resources and state governments to cut back budgetary expenditures by reducing the numbers of full-time faculty but also to weed out professors whose “patriotism” is deemed questionable. (Dr. Norman Finkelstein, formerly a professor who was denied tenure at DePaul University in 2007 for criticizing Israeli government policies in Gaza and the West Bank is a good example.) The general public, perhaps more than ever before regards tenure for faculty as, at best, obsolete and at worst, maintaining professors who propagandize their students, who encourage students to disregard and denigrate traditional American values, norms, beliefs. The abolition of tenure, however, will invariably destroy academic freedom and significantly increase the level of anxiety in and outside the classroom. Without tenure those of us who teach sociology in this post 9/11 world political

science, even psychology can be dismissed for promoting terrorism—a goal of a neo-fascist agenda—simply because we encourage our students to question the reasons for wars, invasions, economic globalization, government subsidies to major corporations, etc.

### **Gendered Embodiment Cycles in Mixed Martial Arts**

Christian Vaccaro

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Through an analysis of mixed martial arts (MMA) gym members' training, I examine how embodiment can be both a cyclical process and gendered. I forward the concept of "gendered embodiment cycles," which are a repeated sequence of interactions intended to shape bodies so they align with culturally ideal gender standards and is accompanied by related subjective experience. Specifically, I show how MMA gym members' embodiment was an interpersonally constructed cycle sequenced as (1) skilling, (2) aggrandizing, (3) specializing, (4) advantaging, and (5) testing and resting; and how it was tied to both signifying the status of manhood and the positive emotions accompanying feeling like a "real man." Whereas previous research on gender and embodiment has typically conceived the process as linear, static, or contextually achieved, I show how it can also be cyclical. I end by drawing out implications for research on gendered socialization of bodies and gendered identity, as well as the literature on embodiment more generally.

### **A New Look at Asian American Owned Small Business**

Ying Yang

Shippensburg University

The 2007 Survey of Business Owners (SBO) shows an increase of 40.7% in Asian owned non-farm businesses in the US from 2002 to 2007. Given the Obama Administration's emphasis on the indispensable roles of entrepreneurs and small businesses in economic recovery, such increase draws attention to the opportunities and challenges Asian entrepreneurs face under this administration. Firstly, with data from the 2007 SBO, this paper highlights the new characteristics and trends found among Asian entrepreneurs. Secondly, based on the 2009 American Community Survey data, it explores how Asian entrepreneurs might benefit from the new legislation incentivizing small business growth. Finally, as a large proportion of Asian Americans are foreign-born, this paper will discuss the particular experiences of Asian immigrant entrepreneurs during the Obama era.

### **Holy Equality, Batman! Social Change Through the Media Heroes of the 60s**

Michael W. Young, Ph. D.

La Roche College

This conference's goal is to examine "how sociologists engage with their communities in order to effect positive social change". We can do that many ways, including by discerning how a community's popular culture exists within it - and so creates. The era of Civil Rights in the 1950s

through early 1970s was more than the marches of Rev. King; it can also be traced through, and is indebted to, the cinematic/television artifacts of the time.

In films like *Heat of the Night*, Virgil Tibbs is not only a black man who refuses to bow to deep hierarchical racism but also an intelligent detective who unwinds the threads of a baffling murder. TV series like *Julia* and *Mannix* showed Black women who, while they worked for white men, were trusted professionals and colleagues. We should also consider the famous moment in *Star Trek* when Captain Kirk kisses his African American officer, Uhura – and the amazing story of its filming told by Nichelle Nichlos – redrew boundaries. Simply the presence of a black officer, along with an Asian and a Russian, on the bridge of the proud Starship was, even in Dr. King's eyes, the promise of a new social reality. In the feature film *Batman*, spun off from the classically camp TV series, the happy ending was not just the arrest of dastardly criminals but a meeting of the “United World Security Council”, the version of a group usually shown full of Cold War tension (Aldai Stevenson's presentation, for example, during the Cuban Missile Crisis), but with leaders from all over the world, including the US and USSR, suddenly speaking in each other languages and with each others' passions. The Media is both a reflection of and a stimulus for the actions within Society. In fact, during this period, we can see it subverting the status quo towards a changed future.