

Sociologically Speaking

Department of Sociology, Trent University

Volume 3, Issue 1

Important Dates

- January 22, final date to change or add Winter half-courses on myTrent
- January 29, final date to add Winter half-courses with instructor permission
- January 29, final date to submit applications for Winter term bursaries
- February 9, Final date for withdrawal from full-year courses
- February 15-21, residential reading week
- March 5, **“Sociology Day”** 11-3 p.m. Alumni House
- March 12, final date to withdraw from Winter half courses

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Professor Stephen Katz Receives Trent’s Distinguished Research Award

Professor Stephen Katz

I was very honoured this past year to be the recipient of Trent's Distinguished Research Award at Convocation, an exciting event that followed a sabbatical year devoted largely to research on aging, the body and cognition.

During the year I was invited to present keynote addresses at the '(Re)Constructing the Aging Body' symposium in Mainz, Germany and The Ageing, Body and Society Study Group Conference in Reading (UK).

While visiting BIOS: Centre for the Study of Bioscience, Biomedicine, Biotechnology and Society at The London School of Economics,

I presented a discussion paper about my research on cognitive enhancement technologies.

Out of the several publications I have been working on, a new one is about falling bodies, entitled, 'Hold On! Falling, Embodiment and the Materiality of Old Age' (forthcoming in *Bodies of Knowledge: Interdisciplinary Studies*, eds. Monica J. Casper and Paisley Currah. University of Minnesota Press).

The irony is that while at a cottage in France, I accidentally fell and tore a ligament in my knee that immobilized me for a while and from which I am still recovering. All to show that there are no

limits to which a sociologist will go to experience their research!



Prof. Stephen Katz joins previous Distinguished Research Award recipients, Prof. Barb Marshall (2005) and Prof. Alena Heitlinger (1999). A 'hat trick' for the Sociology Department!

Message from the Chair

The Sociology program has recently gone through an external review. We engaged in a year-long process of reflection, discussion, and analysis. We surveyed our current students and graduates. Finally, an external assessor, Dr. Sandra Kirby from the University of Winnipeg, visited March 2009 to observe the program and speak with faculty, staff and students.

Dr. Kirby concluded that we should be very proud of our pro-

gram! She reported that “the faculty in the Department are enthusiastic about their teaching and value their students, the program and their relationship with Trent.” She also confirmed what we had already found in our survey: that Trent Sociology students “enjoy their experience” and feel that it “prepares them very well for life after graduation”.

However, we are always looking for ways to do things better. Over the next few years, we plan

to enrich our student advising program, introduce some new courses and renovate others. When we move to new space next year, we will have a Sociology ‘common room’ for faculty, staff and student use.

Let us know what you think of any new initiatives, or if you have ideas for others.

Professor Barb Marshall

Sociologically Speaking

Sociological Impacts: Gay Muslims and the ‘Clash of Civilisations’



Professor Momin Rahman

Professor Momin Rahman

In the summer, I attended a conference on International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights held in Copenhagen, Denmark. I delivered a paper based on current research, “Muslims and Sexual Diversity in North America”, which looks at the emergence of gay Muslim organisations in Canada and the United States and the response from mainstream Muslim groups.

What emerged was that there are huge difficulties for those in Mus-

lim countries who are trying to legitimise and advance rights for diverse sexualities. However, the problems they face are not simply because of the traditional cultural values of Islam, but also because much of the support and help they receive from Western NGOs, human rights groups and organisations such as the UN and EU only understand sexuality in a ‘Western’ way – as specific and exclusive ‘types’ of people. Sexual behaviour and identities in non-Western countries are much more complex, creating a ‘clash of

civilisations’ around how sexual identities and rights can exist in the West and non-Western countries.

My research studies gay Muslims who live in the West as a social location that challenges this oppositional understanding given that they belong both to a traditional Islamic cultural identity and a Western gay identity. This contemporary issue impacts upon our understandings of multiculturalism, immigrant integration and also how we conceive of gay rights.

“There has been little systematic study of the poverty of injured workers in Ontario or elsewhere.”

Poverty, Health and Injured Workers

Professor Peri Ballantyne

I have been working on a study with Fergal O’Hagan who is doing a post-doctorate at Trent. We’re working to publish a report on the relationship between poverty and health using the data from the Injured Worker Health Survey.

Recent national and provincial reports documenting the relationship between poverty and health

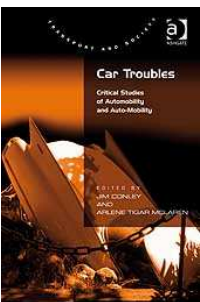
are alarming. Poverty is associated with poor health, and sometimes with problems around health care access.

Furthermore, these reports note that poverty and health influence one another, such that poor health influences the continuing risk of living in economic insecurity and poverty; and economic (in)security influences opportunities for health.

There has been little systematic study of the poverty of injured workers in Ontario or elsewhere. The RAACWI health survey, samples 494 injured workers with permanent impairments.

The survey will provide a unique opportunity to begin to document the risk of poverty that many more injured workers across Canada and elsewhere may face.

Car Troubles



Car Troubles: Critical Studies of Automobility (2009), Edited by Jim Conley and Arlene Tigar McLaren

Car Troubles, a volume edited by Jim Conley in collaboration with Arlene Tigar McLaren at Simon Fraser University was published in August by Ashgate.

The book’s central premise is that the car as the dominant mode of travel needs to be problematized. It examines a wide range of issues that are central to automobility, situating it within social, economic,

and political contexts. It combines social theory, specific case studies and policy-oriented analysis.

With an international team of contributors the book provides a coherent and comprehensive analysis of the global phenomenon of automobility from the Anglo world to China and Chile.

In addition to co-editing the book, and co-authoring the introduction,

Prof. Conley contributed a chapter, “Automobile Advertisements: The Magical and the Mundane.” He continues to work on automobility as a social problem.

Welcome to Professor Susan Apostle-Clark

Professor Susan Apostle-Clark completed her BA (Hons) in Social Science at Liverpool University in the UK (and yes the Beatles did come back to their home town and she attended one of their concerts). She completed her MA in Sociology at McMaster and her PhD in Sociology at UBC.

She then went on to teach at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax where she and two colleagues taught one of the very early courses in Women's Studies.

Next, Professor Apostle-Clark

moved into academic administration as a Dean responsible for the social sciences, business, education, human ecology, and various other programs. She then moved to Brock University as VP Academic and then to the Nova Scotia government as Executive Director of the Higher Education Council and to overseeing the post-secondary system in Nova Scotia. Next she moved to Peterborough to take the position at Trent University as VP Academic.

Professor Apostle-Clark's research has focussed on women's unpaid work and family policies, and changing work patterns. Most notably, part of the time budget studies that took place in Halifax which were part of a series of multi-national studies. Additionally, she led the team which took up the second wave of a longitudinal study of single mothers in N.S.

She now looks forward to returning to the class room and being an active member of the Sociology Department.



Professor Susan Apostle-Clark

Why Does Everybody Pick on the Fat Kid?

Prof. Alana Hermiston and Marisa Barnhart presented a paper at the Social Work National Conference 2008, entitled "Why Does Everybody Pick on The Fat Kid? Moral Regulation and the Construction of At-Risk Subjects."

Long considered deserving of teasing by peers, the "fat kid" has recently become the target of a much broader gaze. This paper investigates the construction of

"obese" children as at-risk subjects, with particular focus upon the perceived threats to their emotional health.

While there has been much attention paid to the often damaging relationship between body weight and self image, this paper examines the uncritical acceptance of the concepts of obesity, self-esteem, and risk. Where much larger problems of economic and

health inequities may exist, neo-liberalism locates "solutions" in individual bodies and subjects.

These solutions are played out in various contexts, including alarming reports of child apprehensions in the UK. In a society that espouses the value of diversity, this trend of squashing difference through the imposition of subjective medical standards and norms is disturbing.

"Long considered deserving of teasing by peers, the "fat kid" has recently become the target of a much broader gaze. "

Casino State: Legalized Gambling in Canada

Jim Cosgrave's book "Casino State: Legalized Gambling in Canada," came out in February, and immediately got a significant amount of media attention. He did a number of radio interviews pertaining to topics such as "Is there too much gambling in Canada?" and "Should government be the owners and promoters of gambling in Canada?". His book was given coverage in several newspa-

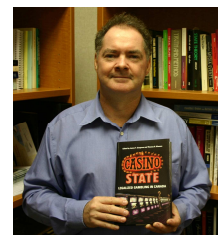
pers, and his co-editor Thomas Klassen was interviewed in The Toronto Star.

Jim continues to examine state-run gambling in Canada, and has finished an article that looks at the production of knowledge generated to deal with the existence of the "problem gambler."

He is also interested in examining the particular ways in which gam-

bling is a form of taxation, and how governments are getting "creative" at coming up with new forms of taxation.

In the US, many states are facing major budget shortfalls, so there is talk of legalizing sports betting and internet gambling. Such issues are pertinent to Jim's "Crime, Deviance, and Social Control" course, which he is presently teaching in Oshawa.



Professor Jim Cosgrave

Photograph by Geoffrey Gooden

Some Quick Facts on Sociology

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Dr. Jen Tarr,

**Methodology Institute,
The London School of
Economics and Politics**

The source

Brym, R., J. Lie, and S. Rytina. 2010. *Sociology: Your compass for a new world*. 3rd ed. Toronto: Nelson

The report

Allen, Robert C. 1999. *Education and Technological Revolutions: The Role of the Social Sciences and the Humanities in the Knowledge Based Economy*. Ottawa: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

The facts

"The unemployment rate among social science graduates was lower than among graduates from math, physics, engineering, agriculture, and biology

Between 1991 and 1996, there were more new jobs for people with social science degrees than for people with degrees in other fields

Although women earned less than men in all fields in 1996, the discrepancy between men's and women's income was smallest among social science graduates "

The jobs

Public Service Commission of Canada: Staffing of federal departments and agencies, such as Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. Occupations in the private, public, and non-profit sector including, but not limited to, social researcher, policy analyst, program evaluator, performance auditor, field researcher, communications officer, youth worker, human rights officer, and media analyst. A stepping stone to degrees required for work in, for example, corrections, teaching, justice, human resources, public relations, social work, and public administration.

For more information about what you can do with a Sociology Degree and information about the fourth year sociology program, think about attending "**Sociology Day**" on March 5, 2010 at Alumni House, Symons Campus. A full itinerary will be published in the Spring 2010 newsletter.

Featured Alumnus - Dr. Jen Tarr

Trent Sociology alumnus and founding member of the Trent University Sociology Undergraduate Collective, Dr. Jen Tarr is Lecturer in Research Methodology in the Methodology Institute at the London School of Economics and Politics.

She holds a PhD in Sociology from Goldsmiths College, University of London.

She was previously a lecturer in Sociology at Trinity College Dublin, and has also taught at Goldsmiths College and the University of Sussex and been a Research Fellow at the London College of Fashion.

Her research interests include: qualitative research methods; sociology of health and medicine; visual imaging technologies; somatic and movement practices, including Alexander Technique, Pilates and dance.

Her current research projects are centred around the cultural context of pain and injury.

Recent Publications:

Thomas, H. and Tarr, J. (2009) 'Dancers' Experiences of Pain and Injury: Positive and Negative Effects.' *Journal for Dance Medicine and Science*, 13(2): 51-59.

Tarr, J. (2008) 'Habit and Conscious Control: Ethnography and Embodiment in the Alexander Technique,' *Ethnography* 9(4) 477-497.

Tarr, J. (2004) 'Embodiment, Reflexivity, and Movement Re-education: An Ethnographic Case Study'. In Seale, C. (ed), *Researching Society and Culture*. 2nd Ed. London: Sage Publications.