

FALL 2024 NEWSLETTER

EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS



Society for the Study
of Social Problems
In Pursuit of Social Justice

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[Join us for the 2025 meeting!](#)

**75th Annual Meeting
August 8-10, 2025
Palmer House Hilton
Chicago, IL**

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Letter from the Division Chair

Written by Kyla Walters, PhD

Allow me to dedicate my letter to the 2025 annual meeting.

Due to personal and life circumstances, I haven't attended a conference *for real* since 2018. You already know I'm thrilled to be in my initial planning stages of attending the next meeting in Chicago.

I hope many of you will also have the opportunity and desire to attend. Let's connect over ideas and actions and hopes.

If you're definitely going, or toying with the idea, take a minute to scroll through the [Call for Papers](#). Submit your work (in progress). Please consider our division's sessions as venues for your work:

- 27 - Problems in Schools (roundtable)
- 28 - Protest on College Campuses-THEMATIC
- 29 - Doing the Work of Education (roundtable)
- 30 - Collaborative Approaches: Schools, Families, and Community Mental Health

Take good care.

”

*Let's connect over
ideas and actions
and hopes.*

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Division Chair Nominees Needed

Please consider nominating yourself for the Division Chair role. The next two-year term will start after the annual meeting in August. We cannot run an election until we have two nominees.

Email kyla.walters@sonoma.edu for more information or to nominate yourself or someone else.

2025 Division Awards

Student Paper Competition (due 1/31/25)

Contribution to the Discipline Award (due 2/15/25)

Outstanding Book Award (due 3/1/25)

Email kyla.walters@sonoma.edu with the nomination materials.

For more information about submission requirements, visit:

<https://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/pageid/1708/>

Volunteers Needed for Division Award Committees

Please consider serving on an award committee.

Email kyla.walters@sonoma.edu and note on which committee(s) you would like to serve.

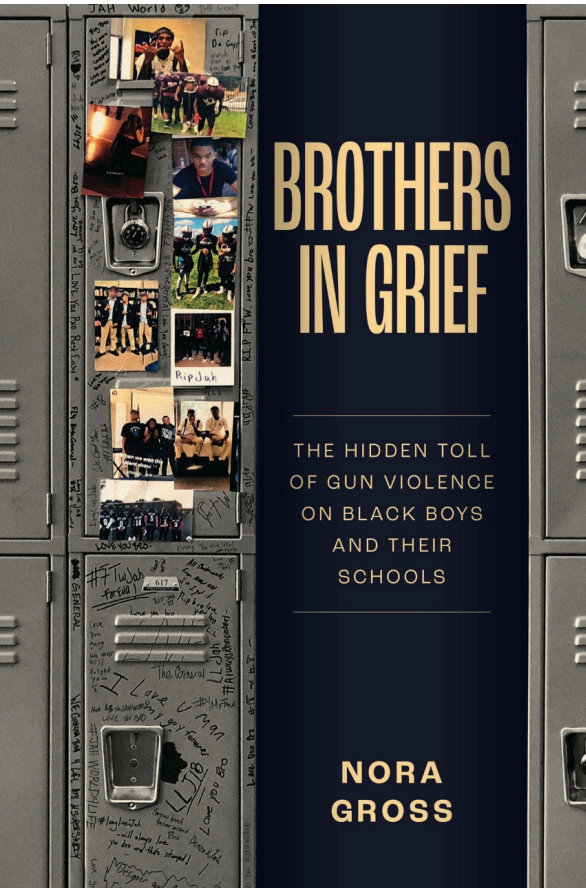
Award committee work can be a great, time-limited way to stay current in the field, engage with SSSP, and perform professional service.

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New Book from Division Member



Nora Gross'

Brothers in Grief: The Hidden Toll of Gun Violence on Black Boys and Their Schools **(University of Chicago Press, 2024)**

For 30% off, visit www.press.uchicago.edu and enter code UCPNEW at checkout.

Brothers in Grief spotlights the neglected aftermath of neighborhood gun violence and its consequences for racial and educational equity. Drawing on two years of school-based ethnography and more than five years of digital ethnography at a single-sex charter school in Philadelphia, sociologist Nora Gross examines how Black teen boys manage their grief after losing friends to gun violence and how school leaders and teachers balance their educational mission with often incomplete understandings of students' emotions. The book conceptualizes the progression of institutional responses to student grief as a set of stages: the easy hard, hard hard, and hidden hard. In the aftermath of multiple student murders, the school initially recognizes the need for communal outlets for student grief, but soon the urgency of educating Black boys deemed 'already behind' takes priority. Relying on myths of Black resilience and male stoicism, the school ushers students back to 'business as usual.' Despite the adults' best intentions, these decisions fail to mitigate the effects of peer loss on students' social and educational trajectories. Although students' persistent, unacknowledged grief is narrated constantly in online peer-driven social media spaces, it remains hidden from the adults making decisions about their education. Forcing students' grief into hiding produces long-term social injuries for some students. *Brothers in Grief* concludes with a discussion of what can be learned from other youth and school responses to gun violence and proposes that schools could play a role in helping youth translate their collective grief into productive forms of grievance and action.

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Recent Publications from Division Members

Julio A. Alicea published two articles.

Alicea, Julio A. 2024. "Predatory DEI: How Racialized Organizations Exacerbate Workplace Racial Stratification through Exploitative Diversity Work." *Social Problems*.



In the wake of the so-called racial reckoning of 2020, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) grew rapidly as an industry and organizational logic. This study examines how DEI work in organizations is not simply performative, but exploitative. Drawing on observations and in-depth interviews from a four-year ethnographic project, this study traces the rollout and racial problematics of DEI programming at a public high school serving Black and Latinx students. It finds that the organization tasked Black women educators with the unsupported role of implementing the school's vision to become "Pro-Black." In doing so, it facilitated a process that is termed "predatory DEI." Building on work theorizing predatory inclusion, "predatory DEI" refers to the organizational approaches to DEI work that purport to empower racially minoritized groups in racialized organizations while exploiting their personal and professional resources, all under the guise of an antiracist alibi that renders the predation opaque. In conceptualizing predatory DEI, three facets are discussed in detail: goal perversion, time theft, and role ambiguity/role conflict. These findings cast a critical eye on the pernicious forms of racism within social justice organizations.

Alicea, Julio A. 2024. "Toward a Du Boisian Pedagogy for the Teaching of Sociology." *Teaching Sociology*, 1-13.

This article contributes to the reclamation of W.E.B. Du Bois's many contributions to social science practice. In particular, it offers an original quadripartite pedagogical framework grounded in the practices and ideas of Du Bois and more contemporary Du Boisian scholars. In doing so, it utilizes a combination of archival materials, Du Bois's publications, and secondary literature. This article then intervenes by (1) offering a concise review of the trajectory and main developments of Du Bois's educational thought, (2) analyzing and synthesizing the secondary educational literature on Du Bois's philosophy and sociology of education, and (3) outlining an original framework for pedagogical practice grounded in Du Boisian principles. It argues that a Du Boisian framework for pedagogy will be crucial in the Du Bois-inspired efforts to decolonize the sociological imagination.

TEACHING SOCIOLOGY

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EDITORIAL

Editorial Comment: Considering Assessment Results
Monica Lee-Hansen and Barbara Kivimä

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Neoliberalism, Gender, and the State: How Does the
Neoliberal Model of Governance Affect Gender Equity?
Jennifer A. Gidycz, J. David Gelles, and J. David Gelles
Using Technology to Enhance Student Experiences and Learning with
Virtual Simulations in Large Introductory Sociology Courses
Eric F. Wright, Amy Wang, Michael Gelles, and J. David Gelles
Cultivating Quantitative Literacy in the Introductory Course: A Mathematics
Education Collaborative to Teach the First Cohort
Daniel J. Cooper and J. David Gelles
Shifting the Teaching Paradigm: Indigenous Content in Introductory
Sociology Courses and the Role of the Instructor

TEACHING NOTES

Teaching Family Care/Work Policy in Selected Family Courses in Canada's
Postsecondary Institutions
Aimee P. Hester, Lindsay White, and Eric McIsaac
Black Lives Matter and the Changing Sociological Canon: An Analysis of
Syllabi from 2012 to 2022
Cory A. Braxton

CONVERSATIONS

On the Meaning of Pedagogy: M. E. & D. B. Davis, David P. Thelen, and
Patricia A. Thelen
Toward a Du Boisian Pedagogy for the
Teaching of Sociology
Julio A. Alicea

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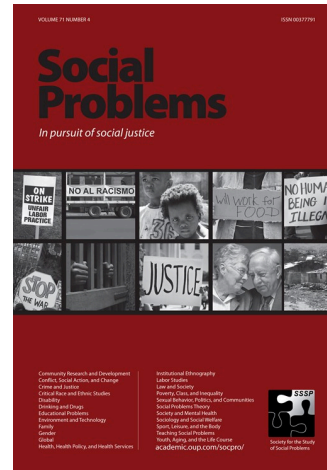
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Recent Publications from Division Members

Joyce J. Kim published an article in *Social Problems*.

A version of this paper won our division's graduate paper award this spring!

Kim, Joyce J. 2024. "A Moral Dilemma of “Selling Out”: Race, Class, and Career Considerations among Elite College Students." *Social Problems*.



Research on occupational choice focuses on individualistic work values and emphasizes economic returns. Drawing from 62 in-depth interviews with Asian, Black, and White first-generation, low-income (FGLI), and middle-class students at an elite university, I argue that students' career decisions comprise a moral dimension. How students contended with this dimension varied based on the intersection of their racial and class backgrounds. Specifically, patterns broadly align with two categories: contingent objections to certain high-prestige, high-paying careers arising from individual priorities or concern for social good, and linked obligations to broader collectivities, such as ethnoracial groups or families. While students across all racial and class backgrounds raised objections based on different individual priorities, FGLI students primarily mentioned objections based on the value of social good. Across class backgrounds, Asian and Black students more often cited obligations based on ethnoracial uplift compared to their White peers. Asian and Black FGLI students prioritized family contributions more strongly than their White FGLI counterparts. Paradoxically, some students used these evaluative logics to justify “selling out” in pursuit of high-prestige, high-paying jobs, whereas others used these justifications to reject them. This study furthers understanding of the cultural processes behind social inequalities and highlights how the intersection of race and class shapes moral understandings.

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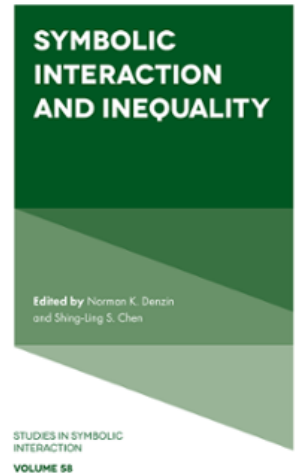


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Recent News from Division Members

Linda M. Waldron published in *Symbolic Interaction and Inequality*.

Waldron, Linda M., Danielle Docka-Filipek, Carlie Carter, Rachel Thornton. 2024. "First-Generation Students' Identity Construction, Concealment, and COVID-Driven Reckonings: Reconciling Self-Definitions Amid Institutional Contradiction." *Symbolic Interaction and Inequality* 58:109-147. eISBN: 978-1-83797-689-8.



First-generation college students in the United States are a unique demographic that is often characterized by the institutions that serve them with a risk-laden and deficit-based model. However, our analysis of the transcripts of open-ended, semi-structured interviews with 22 “first-gen” respondents suggests they are actively deft, agentic, self-determining parties to processes of identity construction that are both externally imposed and potentially stigmatizing, as well as exemplars of survivance and determination. We deploy a grounded theory approach to an open-coding process, modeled after the extended case method, while viewing our data through a novel synthesis of the dual theoretical lenses of structural and radical/structural symbolic interactionism and intersectional/standpoint feminist traditions, in order to reveal the complex, unfolding, active strategies students used to make sense of their obstacles, successes, co-created identities, and distinctive institutional encounters. We find that contrary to the dictates of prevailing paradigms, identity-building among first-gens is an incremental and bidirectional process through which students actively perceive and engage existing power structures to persist and even thrive amid incredibly trying, challenging, distressing, and even traumatic circumstances. Our findings suggest that successful institutional interventional strategies designed to serve this functionally unique student population (and particularly those tailored to the COVID-moment) would do well to listen deeply to their voices, consider the secondary consequences of “protectionary” policies as potentially more harmful than helpful, and fundamentally, to reexamine the presumption that such students present just institutional risk and vulnerability, but also present a valuable addition to university environments, due to the unique perspective and broader scale of vision their experiences afford them.