



# SOCIAL PROBLEMS THEORY NEWS

Division of the Society for the Study of Social Problems

*AUTUMN / WINTER 2014 NEWSLETTER*



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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings all!

Although the 2014 meeting is behind us and the 2015 meeting is still months away, this is a busy time for the Division. This newsletter reflects that. It includes information on two initiatives that, I think, will help increase the Division's online presence. The Division has developed a Facebook page (p. 3) and we are also developing a Wikipedia entry on social problems theory. All members are encouraged to get involved by liking the Facebook page, sharing information about news or publications on it, and contributing to the development of the Wiki entry.



This newsletter also includes information to help you plan your 2015 submission to the SSSP's annual meeting. You will find a list of sessions, with descriptions, on pages 8 & 9. I'm excited by this year's selection of sole and co-sponsored sessions. All seem to be timely and relevant, and I believe they will attract interesting and important papers. Thank you, session organizers, for your work on behalf of the Division! The deadline for submitting a paper for the 2015 meeting is January 31, 2015.

I've also included information about our 2015 awards. We'll be considering outstanding student papers that contribute to social problems theory. We're also considering published articles for this year's outstanding scholarship award. You can read more about both awards and find submission information on page 2.

As always, feel free to be in touch by email with questions about or ideas for the division. You can reach me at [jared.delrosso@du.edu](mailto:jared.delrosso@du.edu).

**Jared Del Rosso**  
University of Denver  
Social Problems Theory Division Chair (2014-2016)

**THEORY DIVISION CHAIR**  
2014 - 2016

**JARED DEL ROSSO**  
Sociology & Criminology  
University of Denver  
Denver, CO  
[jared.delrosso@du.edu](mailto:jared.delrosso@du.edu)

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

**Recent Publications of  
Note**

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**WIKIPEDIA**  
The Free Encyclopedia

## CONTRIBUTE TO THE DIVISION'S WIKI ENTRY

The Social Problems Theory Division is developing a Wiki entry for submission to Wikipedia. This page will provide background on the social construction of social problems, as well as discussion of some of the core controversies, developments, and terms of the debate. You can contribute to the entry's development [by developing the draft entry](#). You do not need to have a Wikipedia account to edit the entry, nor do you need to submit your contributions to me for review.



# CALL FOR PAPERS

## SOCIAL PROBLEM THEORY DIVISION'S 2015 AWARDS

### OUTSTANDING STUDENT PAPER AWARD

**Deadline: 1/31/15**

The Social Problems Theory Division invites papers for its annual Graduate Student Paper Award Competition. To be eligible, papers must (a) be authored or co-authored by students, (b) have relevance to constructionist social problems theory, and (c) cannot have been accepted for publication. Papers co-authored with faculty are not eligible. Self-nominations are welcome. Manuscripts should be limited to fewer than 10,000 words (not including references). The winner will receive membership dues, annual meeting registration fees, a plaque, and, subject to budgetary approval, a cash prize. The winner will also be invited to present her or his paper at the 2015 SSSP meetings. Thus, all papers submitted for consideration for the Social Problems Theory Division Award must also be submitted through the annual meeting Call for Papers process as a condition for consideration of the award, preferably to a Social Problems Theory Division session. Please also note that students may only submit a paper for consideration to a single SSSP division. A paper submitted to multiple divisions may not receive consideration for the Social Problems Theory Division Award. Please send submission as an e-mail attachment to the Student Paper Competition Committee Chair: Brian Monahan, Marywood University, [monahan@marywood.edu](mailto:monahan@marywood.edu).

### OUTSTANDING ARTICLE AWARD

**Deadline: 2/15/15**

The Social Problems Theory Division requests nominations for its Outstanding Article Award. The Division welcomes papers that critique or advance the ongoing scholarly dialogue about the constructionist approach to social problems theorizing. Eligible articles must have been published between August 1, 2012 and February 15, 2015. Single or multiple-authored articles will be accepted. Authors are encouraged to nominate their own work. Nominees must be members of SSSP. Please send a brief nomination letter and arrange to have a copy of the article sent to the Committee Chair: David C. Lane, University of South Dakota, [dave.lane@usd.edu](mailto:dave.lane@usd.edu).

## CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEWSLETTER

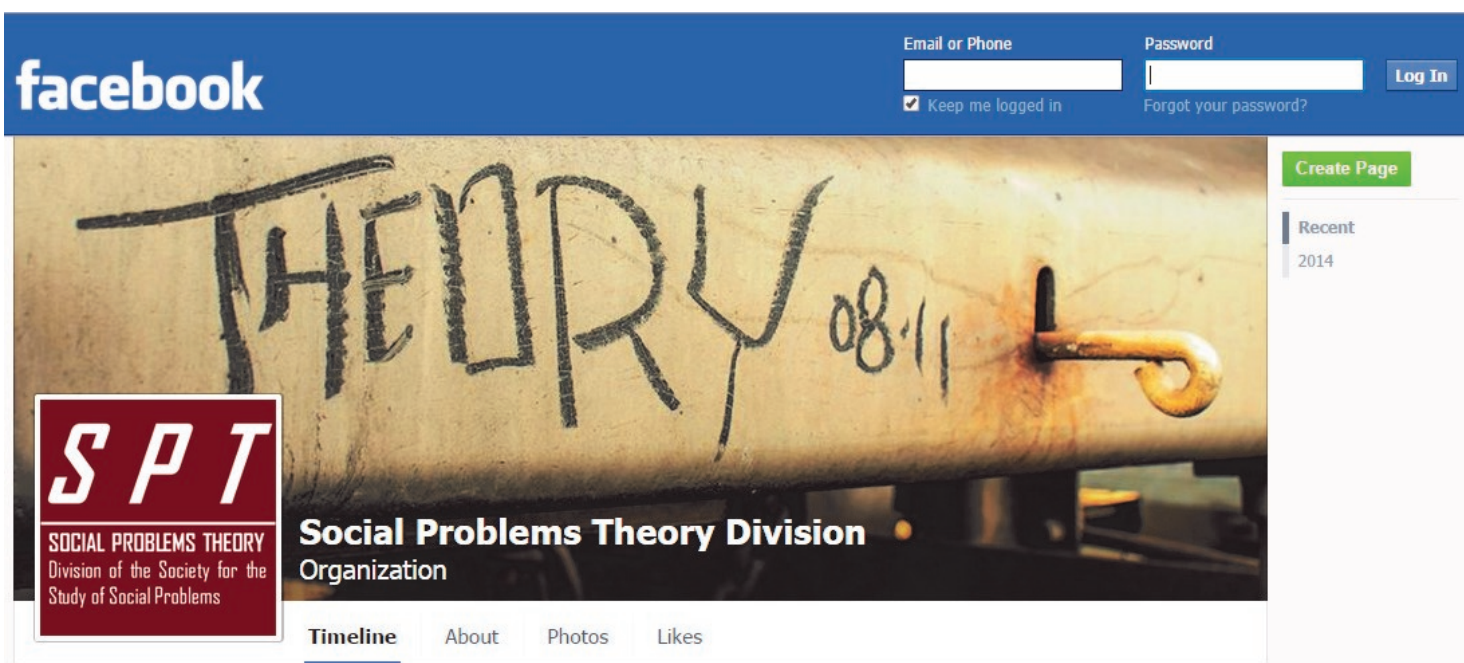


The Social Problems Theory Division is always looking for content to feature in the newsletter. If you have ideas for a brief essay or commentary that you would like to contribute, announcements about new publications that you would like to share with the division, a call for papers, or if you are working with a student whose research you think should be highlighted here, let me know by emailing me at [jar-ed.delrosso@du.edu](mailto:jar-ed.delrosso@du.edu). The deadline for submissions to the next issue is February 15, 2015.

## SSSP WEBSITE UPDATES

The SSSP has updated several pages on its website, including:

- ⇒ 2015 SSSP Annual Meeting
- ⇒ Call for SSSP Submissions
- ⇒ Current Job Opportunities
- ⇒ SSSP Awards
- ⇒ SSSP Scholarships
- ⇒ SSSP Student Paper Competitions & Outstanding Scholarship Awards
- ⇒ Affiliated Fellowships & Scholarships
- ⇒ Affiliated Calls for Submissions & Conferences



## INTRODUCING THE DIVISION'S FACEBOOK PAGE

The SSSP has encouraged divisions to develop a social media presence. We've begun that work for the Theory Division by developing a Facebook page. You don't need a Facebook account to view the page, but only Facebook users are able to "like" the page or post to it.

My vision for the Facebook page is that it will serve as something like a hub for division information between the release of newsletters. I will publicize the release of new work by division members on it, calls for papers, and the like. It's also a great place to highlight media coverage of member work—so feel free to drop me an email at any time if you've been featured in the media and I'll link to that coverage on our Facebook page. Division members are also encourage to post relevant news or share relevant links on the page themselves.

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## MEMBER BLOG



Jim Kemeny, a longtime division member and Emeritus Professor of Housing and Urban Sociology at Uppsala University, has recently started a blog, *My Symbolic Interaction*. On it, Jim details his experiences over the past 50 years working as a symbolic interactionist and shares his thoughts on related issues of social constructionism and qualitative research, particularly in the areas of urban sociology and housing studies. You can read Jim's blog at <http://socialconstr.wordpress.com/>. If you'd like to email Jim, you can do so at [jim.kemeny@gmail.com](mailto:jim.kemeny@gmail.com).

## RECENT MEMBER PUBLICATIONS



### Is There Life After Football: Surviving the NFL

**JAMES A. HOLSTEIN, RICHARD S. JONES, AND GEORGE E. KOONCE, JR.**

In January 2014, President Barack Obama made headlines when he confided to New Yorker reporter Davis Remnick that, if he had a son, he would discourage him from playing in the NFL. “I would not let my son play pro football,” he told the writer. Obama’s words came on the heels of a year of heightened awareness of the life-long consequences of a professional football career. In August 2013, the NFL agreed to a \$765 million settlement with over 4,500 retired players seeking damages for head injuries sustained during play. Thousands of others are seeking disability benefits in the State of California for on-field injuries. But the possibility of lifelong disability is not the only problem facing professional football players after their playing careers—often brief to begin with—come to an end. Many players, having spent years focusing on football, find themselves at sea when they either leave or are forced out of the NFL, without any alternate life plans or even the resources to make them.

*Is There Life After Football?* draws upon the experiences of hundreds of former players as they describe their lives after their football days are over. It also incorporates stories about their playing careers, even before entering the NFL, to provide context for understanding their current situations. The authors begin with an analysis of the “bubble”-like conditions of privilege that NFL players experience while playing, conditions that often leave players unprepared for the real world once they retire and must manage their own lives. The book also examines the key issues affecting former NFL players in retirement: social isolation, financial concerns, inadequate career planning, psychological challenges, and physical injuries. From players who make reckless and unsustainable financial investments during their very few high-earning years, to players who struggle to form personal and professional relationships outside of football, the stories in the book put a very human face on the realities of the world of professional football. George Koonce Jr., a former NFL player himself, weaves in his own story throughout, explaining the challenges and setbacks he encountered and decisions that helped him succeed as an NFL Director of Player Development, PhD student, and university administrator after leaving the sport.

Ultimately, *Is There Life After Football?* concludes that, despite the challenges players face, it is possible for players to find success after leaving the NFL if they have the right support, education, and awareness of what might await them. But players themselves must also resist being totally engulfed by the NFL culture in which they live. A fascinating study with unprecedented insider access, this book is essential reading for anyone interested in the world of professional football.

Dec. 2014 | NYU Press | 336 pp.

Available in Cloth & E-book  
9781479862863

[website](#)

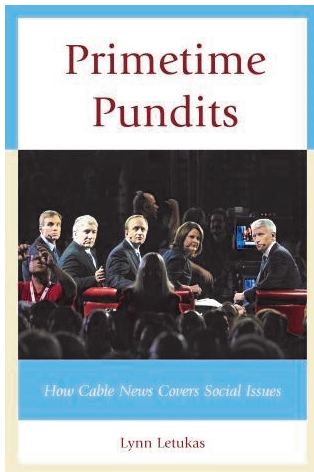
**JAMES A. HOLSTEIN** is Professor of Sociology in the Department of Social and Cultural Sciences at Marquette University. He is the author, with Jaber F. Gubrium, of *The Self We Live By: Narrative Identity in the Postmodern World*.

**RICHARD S. JONES** is Professor of Sociology and Faculty Athletics Representative at Marquette University.

**GEORGE E. KOONCE, JR.** played professional football for a decade, the majority of those years with the Green Bay Packers. Currently he serves as Director of Development at Marquette University and teaches a class in Marquette’s Law School.



## RECENT MEMBER PUBLICATIONS



2014 | Lexington | 182 pp.  
Available in Hardcover & E-book  
978-0-7391-8752-4  
[website](#)

**LYNN LETUKAS** is assistant research scientist at the College Board and independent research scholar.

### Primetime Pundits: How Cable News Covers Social Issues

**LYNN LETUKAS**

Despite the central role of punditry in our contemporary media environment, research has been slow to examine punditry on cable news. Deregulation, the advent of cable television, and the rise of a twenty-four hour news cycle have dramatically transformed the structure and content of news, paving the way for political pundits to come to the forefront. Cable news networks, in particular, have played a critical role in challenging the neutrality of traditional media through the development of opinion programs that made highly politicized and entertaining content central to their primetime coverage. Over the past three decades, these opinionated programs have become increasingly popular as a programming strategy for cable news producers seeking to develop novel programming to target niche audiences. The pundits who pontificate on these programs have come to dominate our national political dialogue, and play a significant role in setting the public agenda and influencing public opinion in the United States. Punditry and pundits lie at the heart of programming and network changes that have evolved over the past thirty years. *Primetime Pundits: How Cable News Covers Social Issues* explores the ascent of punditry and offers new models for understanding how social issues are covered—not just by pundits, but also in the larger changing media landscape.

*Primetime Pundits provides a careful, scholarly, and generally reliable guide to the confusing world of political punditry in the early twenty-first century.*

— **Eric Alterman, Brooklyn College, City University of New York**

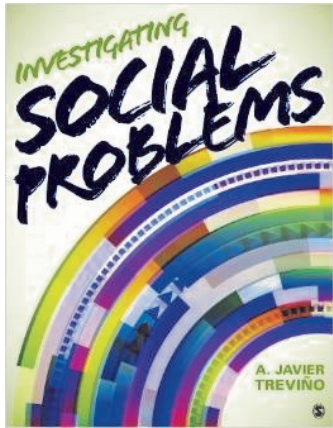
*Millions of people regularly watch cable news pundits, yet little attention has been paid to their rising influence. Primetime Pundits, an original and thought-provoking book, remedies this gap. Expertly placing the claimsmaking of pundits in their social, political, and historical context, this fascinating and timely book is a must-read for anyone interested in the politicization of information through the media.*

— **Rebecca Tiger, Middlebury College**

*Primetime Pundits deftly explores how opinion, outrage, and provocative moralizing have become accepted—expected, even—components of the modern news cycle and what this means for how news gets made and received by audiences. Letukas' analysis should resonate with anyone who harbors an interest in cable news, and is a must read for media scholars who study the social construction of news and how media content influences popular rhetoric about political and social issues.*

— **Brian Monahan, Marywood University**

## RECENT MEMBER PUBLICATIONS



### Investigating Social Problems

EDITED BY A. JAVIER TREVIÑO

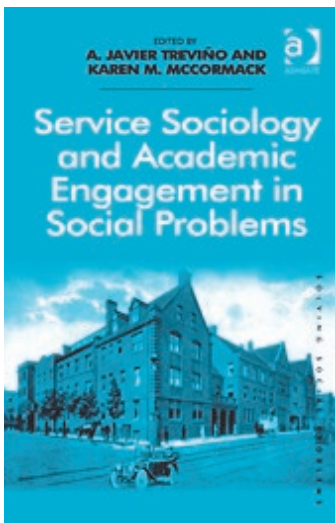
In this groundbreaking new text, general editor A. Javier Treviño, working with a panel of experts, thoroughly examines all aspects of social problems, providing a contemporary and authoritative introduction to the field. Each chapter is written by a specialist on that particular topic. This unique, contributed format ensures that the research and examples provided are the most current and relevant in the field. The chapters carefully follow a model framework to ensure consistency across the entire text and provide continuity for the reader. The text is framed around three major themes: intersectionality (the interplay of race, ethnicity, class, and gender), the global scope of many problems, and how researchers take an evidence-based approach to studying problems.

2014 | SAGE | 576 pp.

Available in Paperback

978-1452242033

[website](#)



### Service Sociology and Academic Engagement in Social Problems

EDITED BY A. JAVIER TREVIÑO AND KAREN M. MCCORMACK

This book challenges sociologists and sociology students to think beyond the construction of social problems to tackle a central question: What do sociologists do with the analytic tools and academic skills afforded by their discipline to respond to social problems? *Service Sociology* posits that a central role of sociology is not simply to analyse and interpret social problems, but to act in the world in an informed manner to ameliorate suffering and address the structural causes of these problems. This volume provides a unique contribution to this approach to sociology, exploring the intersection between its role as an academic discipline and its practice in the service of communities and people. With both contemporary and historical analyses, the book traces the legacy, characteristics, contours, and goals of the sociology of service, shedding light on its roots in early American sociology and its deep connections to activism, before examining the social context that underlies the call for volunteerism, community involvement and non-profit organisations, as well as the strategies that have promise in remedying contemporary social problems.

2014 | Ashgate | 262 pp.

Available in Hardcover

& E-book

978-1472421951

[website](#)

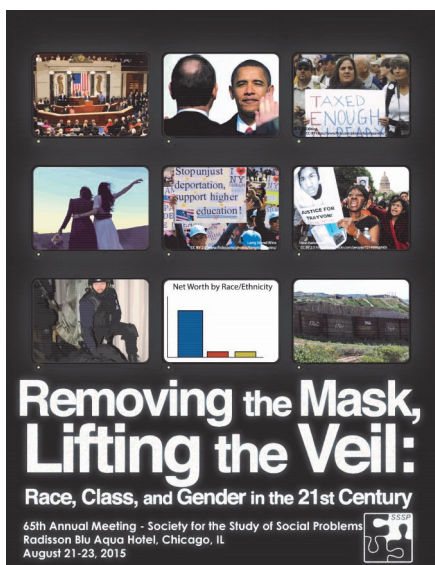
"I have been searching for this book for years. Treviño and McCormack, along with their contributors, elucidate the activities of service sociology in order to respond to serious questions about its effectiveness to ameliorate social ills and inspire students to become change agents." - Airín Denise Martínez, Arizona State University.

**A. JAVIER TREVIÑO** is Jane Oxford Keiter Professor of Sociology at Wheaton College, USA. He is the author of *The Social Thought of C. Wright Mills*, *The Sociology of Law: Classical and Contemporary Perspectives* and *The Sociology of Law: A Bibliography of Theoretical Literature*. He is also the editor of *Talcott Parsons Today: His Theory and Legacy in Contemporary Sociology* and *Goffman's Legacy*.



## 2013-14 ARTICLES & CHAPTERS OF INTEREST

- Adorjan, Michael. 2013. "[Igniting Constructionist Imaginations: Social Constructionism's Absence and Potential Contribution to Public Sociology](#)." *The American Sociologist* 44(1):1-22.
- Adorjan, Michael and Wing Hong Chui. 2013. "[Colonial Responses to Youth Crime in Hong Kong: Penal Elitism, Legitimacy and Citizenship](#)." *Theoretical Criminology* 17(2):159-77.
- Berard, Tim. 2013. "Under the Shadow of *The Authoritarian Personality*: Elias, Fromm, and Alternative Social Psychologies of Authoritarianism." In [Norbert Elias and Social Theory](#), edited by Francois Depelteau and Tatiana Landini. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan.
- Berard, Tim. 2014. "[The Study of Deviant Subcultures as a Longstanding and Evolving Site of Intersecting Membership Categorizations](#)." *Human Studies* 37(3):317-334.
- Creek, S.J. and Jennifer L. Dunn. 2014. "Intersectionality and the Study of Sex, Gender, and Crime." Pp. 40-58 in [The Oxford Handbook of Gender, Sex, and Crime](#), edited by Bill McCarthy and Rosemary Gartner. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Del Rosso, Jared. 2014. "[Textuality and the Social Organization of Denial: Abu Ghraib, Guantánamo, and the Meanings of U.S. Interrogation Policies](#)." *Sociological Forum* 29(1): 52-74.
- Del Rosso, Jared. 2014. "[The Toxicity of Torture: The Cultural Structure of U.S. Political Discourse of Waterboarding](#)." *Social Forces* 93(1): 383-404.
- Lane, David C. 2014. "[Tat's All Folks: An Analysis of Tattoo Literature](#)." *Sociology Compass* 8(4):398-410.
- Lane, David C. 2014. "Explaining Body Deviance with Stigma and Carnival of the Grotesque." Pp. 290– 299 in [Understanding Deviance: Connecting Classical and Contemporary Perspectives](#), edited by Tammy L. Anderson. New York: Routledge.
- Maratea, R.J. and Brian Monahan. 2013. "[Crime Control as Mediated Spectacle: The Institutionalization of Gonzo Rhetoric in Modern Media and Politics](#)." *Symbolic Interaction* 36(3): 261-74.
- Thibodeaux, Jarrett. 2014. "[Three Versions of Constructionism and their Reliance on Social Conditions in Social Problems Research](#)." *Sociology* 48(4): 829-37.
- Vardi, Itai. 2014. "[Quantifying Accidents: Cars, Statistics, and Unintended Consequences in the Construction of Social Problems Over Time](#)." *Qualitative Sociology* 37(3): 345-67.



## 2015 ANNUAL MEETING SESSIONS

## SOLE SPONSORED SESSIONS

## Knowledge, Power, and the Politics of Reality

Thematic Session

Organizer: Jared Del Rosso ([Jared.DelRosso@du.edu](mailto:Jared.DelRosso@du.edu))

Our everyday experiences are shaped by—and frequently collide with—relations of power and ruling. This session seeks papers that critically explore these relations and the intersection of knowledge and power in everyday life. Priority consideration will be given to papers inspired by this year's theme, "Removing the Mask, Lifting the Veil," but all papers that offer a critical assessment of knowledge, power, and the politics of reality will be considered.

## New Work in Social Problems Theory & Research

Organizer: R.J. Maratea ([RJM@NMSU.EDU](mailto:RJM@NMSU.EDU))

This session will showcase new scholarship in social problems theory and research. We welcome papers that develop the constructionist approach to social problems, as well as those that seek to advance social problems theory by bringing new and alternative theories to bear on empirical research and theory building.

## CO-SPONSORED SESSIONS

## Critical Scholarship on Contemporary Racism

## Thematic Session

Organizer: Tim Berard ([tberard@kent.edu](mailto:tberard@kent.edu))

Sponsored with the Racial and Ethnic Minorities Division

This session will showcase current scholarship offering critical perspectives on contemporary racism and is open as well to scholarship on how contemporary racism is conceptualized or challenged. Contemporary racism can simply refer to racism in contemporary society, or it can refer to specific forms of racism that have arisen or become more prevalent in the post-Civil Rights era.

## Militarization & State Violence

Organizer: Brian Monahan ([monahan@marywood.edu](mailto:monahan@marywood.edu))

Sponsored with the Law and Society Division

The SSSP's 2014 annual meeting occurred in the shadow of Ferguson, MO, where protests over the killing of Michael Brown, an unarmed African-American teenager shot by a police officer, were met with excessive and, frequently, spectacular police force. The protests and ensuing public commentary drew attention to the ways that U.S. policing had been militarized. This session, inspired by those public concerns, seeks papers that explore the ways that contemporary society, from policing and private security to politics, media, and citizenries, has been militarized and the consequences of that militarization.

*Continued on next page.*





# Co-Sponsored Sessions

## **Educational Problems & Debates**

Organizer: Lynn Letukas ([lynn.letukas@gmail.com](mailto:lynn.letukas@gmail.com))

Sponsored with the Educational Problems Division

Over the last decade, numerous political and social changes have caused significant transformations to our educational landscape. Some of these changes include the adoption of new core curriculum, changes in college admission policies, and shifts in education funding. Social problems theorizing provides a unique opportunity to examine claimsmaking activities around these social and policy shifts. This session welcomes papers that provide new insights and directions into social problems theorizing by linking the approach to claimsmaking activities in the educational arena and/or offering policy implications related to social problems theorizing in the field of education.

## **Immigration: Representations, Institutions, & Identities**

Organizer: Fatima Sattar ([sattarf@bc.edu](mailto:sattarf@bc.edu))

Sponsored with the Institutional Ethnography Division

Contemporary conflicts, changes in the global political economy and global relations have contributed to diverse patterns of migrant movement. This session will examine representations and identities of immigrants and refugees and/or the institutions that contribute to classed, gendered, racialized or other-ed identities of immigrants. What macro or micro forces influence representations? How do representations enter into the societal discourse of host or sending nations or global institutions, and how does this affect native and immigrant relations? We are open to papers that explore a diverse range of immigrant groups.

## **Matters of Concern: Environmental Problems & Debates**

Organizer: Monique Ouimette ([ouimette@bc.edu](mailto:ouimette@bc.edu))

Sponsored with the Environment and Technology Division

Humans are surrounded by and dependent upon the environment, which means that environmental problems are some of the most important social problems that we must address. This session welcomes papers that make theoretical and/or empirical contributions to knowledge on identifying, defining, challenging, and resolving environmental issues. Potential topical areas include, but are not limited to: toxics, pollution, climate change, energy, environmental health, environmental justice, and social-environmental systems.

## **Problematized Urban Communities and the Legacy of the Chicago School**

Organizer: Courtney Waid-Lindberg <[c.waidlindberg@northern.edu](mailto:c.waidlindberg@northern.edu)>

Sponsored with the Community Research and Development & Crime and Juvenile Delinquency Divisions

Studies of the urban community draw heavily upon the work of the early Chicago School theorists. Since the early 20th century, both qualitative and quantitative methods have been utilized to examine various social problems in urban communities such as crime/delinquency, alcoholism, teen pregnancy, illiteracy, and housing decline. While policy related to these urban social problems has been developed, the evaluation and the reworking of programs is ongoing. This session welcomes papers that analyze both historical and contemporary attempts to understand social problems in urban communities through the lens of the Chicago School.



# CREDITS

## **PROGRAM ARTWORK FOR 2015 ANNUAL MEETING (P. 1 [CROPPED] & P. 8)**

Designed by Justin Anthony Lini, Program Coordinator, Governance and Information Systems, American Sociological Association, in collaboration with Marlese Durr.

## **PHOTOGRAPH, "FACEBOOK'S INFECTION" (P. 1)**

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## **Layout of Book Announcements (P. 9-12)**

Based on Temple University Press's flier for *Contemporary Social Constructionism*