SSSP

Society for the Study of Social Problems
Teaching Social Problems

The Badass Sociologist

Summer 2013

In this Issue:

A Note from the Chair

What's in a Name?

Here is our "better late than never" Summer Issue of the Teaching Social Problems Division newsletter. As I type this out I realize that this bi-annual missive needs a name. Most things do. Some people may need no introduction and some things may never be forgotten, but everything and everyone needs a name. Even the artist "formally known as Prince" eventually went back to being called Prince. So, what should we call it?

In trying to name a newsletter about "what we do" it seems we must first and foremost recognize that we are workers. I am reminded of a few lines from a song I wrote (or re-wrote) years ago for a graduate student teachers union organizing effort at the University of Michigan. The song was the *Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues* and the original song had a wonderful stanza:

*When I die don't you bury me at all; Hang me up on the spool room wall
Place a bobbin in my hand so I can keep on workin' in the Promised Land*

Which I revised for the cause to:

*When I die, don't bury me at all; Hang me up on the classroom wall
Put a Blue Book in my hand so I can keep on gradin' in the Promised Land*

First we must recognize that, despite our love of subject matter and research, our desire to write and publish, and a joy in teaching our discipline to young people who are first encountering serious intellectual and political inquiry, the relations of production we work in and under require a "consciousness of our class position." In other words, when we talk about pedagogy and practices; when we discuss tools and techniques; when we produce scholarship of teaching and learning or undergo tenure and promotion, we are always workers navigating and negotiating the labor process. Professionals don't always react positively to being reminded that we are part of the working class majority, but with relatively few exceptions, we are!

A Note from the Chair: What's In a Name? (Continued form page 1)

(*Continued from previous page*)

Thousands and thousands of teachers around the country have begun a movement for better education by fighting against recent efforts at job degradation and class warfare. Known as the Badass Teachers Association and co-Founded by Mark Naison and Priscilla Sanstead https://www.facebook.com/groups/140244172840677#!/groups/140244172840677/ this group of almost 15,000 teachers and supporters have called for the removal of Arne Duncan as Secretary of Education, an end to high stakes testing and new Common Core plicies, and a host of other pro-teacher, pro-student policy initiatives. In their honor and for our own good, we must stay vigilant and let me suggest we all become Badass Sociologists. Can't wait to hear your thoughts.

We have a lot of good stuff in this issue, including information on the upcoming SSSP conference. Let me also ask you all who might be interested to contact me or look for me in New York if you are interested in working on a new research committee on teaching and learning for the International Sociological Association. More to come on this effort. See you in the Big Apple!
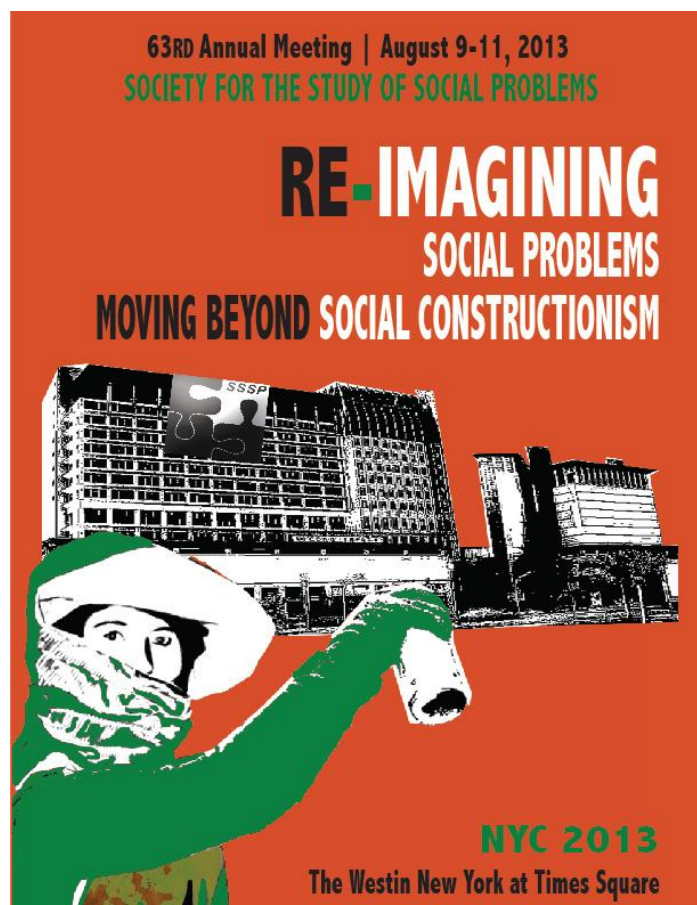
SSSP 2013 Annual Meeting

The Society for the   Study of Social Problems (SSSP)   63rd Annual Meeting

August 9-11, 2013

The Westin New York

at Times Square

New York City, NY

Friday, August 9th, 8:30 AM - 10:10 AM

Session 4:	**Teaching the Sociology of Crime & Delinquency**
	Room: Palace
Sponsors:	Crime and Juvenile Delinquency & Teaching Social Problems
Organizer &	
Presider:	Rebecca Maniglia, Northern Arizona University
Papers:	

- o "Alienating Students…On purpose.," Megan T. Thiele, University of California Merced
- o "Can Teaching Delinquency Prepare Students for the Real World of Juvenile Justice?" Rebecca Maniglia, Northern Arizona University
- o "Learning Outcomes in an Online vs. Traditional Criminological Theory Course," Steven Stack, Wayne State University
- o "Decommodification and Homicide: A Partial Test of Institutional Anomie Theory," Amanda Marie Smith, Western Michigan University

Session 11:	**Community-Based Social Justice Activism, Education, and Social Change**
	Room: Ambassador III
Sponsors:	Community Research and Development; Conflict, Social Action, and Change; & Teaching Social Problems
Organizer:	Debbie Perkins, Coastal Carolina University
Presider:	Maralee Mayberry, University of South Florida
Papers:	

- o "Advocacy Strategies for LGBT Youth: Queering School Practices," Maralee Mayberry, University of South Florida
- o "Changing Harlem: Reactions and Resistance to the Gentrification Process," Miles E. Y. Gamble, Fordham University
- o "Expanding Political Space in Contemporary China: A Comparative Study of the Advocacy Strategies of Women's and Lesbian Groups," Weiting Wu, The City University of New York
- o "In pursuit of social justice? Paradoxes and problems in international service-learning programs," Chrissie Arnold, The University of British Columbia
- o "Studying the Bedbug Problem: The Evolution of a Problem and a Community," Sara Smits Keeney, Saint Anselm College

Friday, August 9th 10:30 AM - 12:10 PM

Session 13:	**Teaching Theory in Social Problems**
	Room: Nederlander
Sponsors:	Social Problems Theory & Teaching Social Problems
Organizer, Presider &	
Discussant:	Kathleen S. Lowney, Valdosta State University
Papers:	

- o "Talking about the Revolution? The Place of Marxist Theory in the Core Course Curriculum of US Undergraduate Degree-Granting Women's Studies Programs," Jacque Daugherty, Miami University
- o "Teaching Theory in Social Problems: Video Pedagogy," Lester Andrist and Valerie Chepp, University of Maryland and Paul Dean, Ohio Wesleyan University
- o "The Commodification of Weather: A Reflection on Media, Technology and Social Change," Joseph Trainor, University of Delaware and Brian Monahan, Marywood University
- o "The Media, Culture, Policy Link Through the Lens of Newspaper Construction of K-12 Teachers and Schools," Johanna S. Quinn, University of Wisconsin-Madison

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Friday, August 9th 2:30 PM - 4:10 PM

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THEMATIC
Session 34: **Teaching the World that isn't: Envisioning Social Change in the Classroom**
Room: Palace
Sponsor: Teaching Social Problems
Organizer &
Presider: Kathleen Odell Korgen, William Paterson University
Papers:

- o "Changing the Course of the Coursework: Dialogue Based Diversity & Social Justice Curriculum at the University of Illinois at Chicago," Charu Thakral, Associate Director, Diversity Educational and Research Initiatives, Stephanie Hicks, PhD Student, University of Illinois at Chicago, Steve Whitley, Undergraduate Program Development Specialist, University of Illinois at Chicago and Philip Vasquez, Associate Director, Student Development Services
- o "Developing the Civic-minded Citizen: An Analysis of Curriculum Implemented Civic Engagement," Cameron Thomas Whitley, Michigan State University
- o "Radical Visioning: Teaching Futuring Techniques in the Undergraduate Sociology Classroom," Erica Yeager and Gina M. Finelli, Anne Arundel Community College
- o "Using the Core Commitments of Sociology to Help Students Gain a Sense of Their Own Power to Change Society," Kathleen Odell Korgen, William Paterson University
- o "Elitism among Sociology Educators," Mary Scherer, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

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Friday, August 9th 4:30 PM - 6:10 PM

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Session 42: **Teaching About Race and Ethnicity**
Room: Palace
Sponsors: Racial and Ethnic Minorities & Teaching Social Problems
Organizer &
Presider: Corey Dolgon, Stonehill College
Discussant: David G. Embrick, Loyola University-Chicago
Papers:

- o "Co-Teaching Intersections: A Graduate Seminar on Feminist and Multicultural Theories," Kathleen J. Ferraro and Michelle Harris, Northern Arizona University
- o "Debating what is real: Teaching the social construction of race," Hephzibah V. Strmic-Pawl, Coastal Carolina University
- o "Race, Class and Gender and the Social Construction of Crime," Rodney D. Coates, Miami University
- o "Missed by Mills: Auguste Comte, W.E.B Du Bois, Carter Woodson, the Liberal and Biracial Readjusters, the Conservative Debt Payers, and a 'new deal' during Reconstruction," Barbara Darelle Wyche, Fort Valley State University

Saturday, August 10th 10:30 AM - 12:10 PM

THEMATIC

Session 56:	**CRITICAL DIALOGUE: New Trends in Teaching Social Problems: Content, Technology, Engagement and More**
	Room: Imperial
Sponsor:	Teaching Social Problems
Organizer:	Carrie L. Smith, Millersville University
Presider:	Corey Dolgon, Stonehill College
Papers:	

- o "Our Table Factory: Encouraging Student Engagement with Inequality, Capitalism, and Marx," Clayton Childress, Princeton University/University of Toronto, Carlos Alamo, Vassar College and Neda Maghbouleh, University of Toronto
- o "Social Problems through the Lens of Good Times, Temporary Layoffs," Natasha Christina Pratt-Harris, Lea Uradu, Benedict Paye and Shenika McPherson, Morgan State University
- o "Teaching Social Problems Through Experiential Learning Assignments," Orsolya Kolozsvari, College of Coastal Georgia
- o "Teaching Social Problems Through Multimodal Projects," Lynn Verduzco-Baker, Albion College
- o "Teaching Social Problems in Cross-Cultural Settings: Moving Beyond 'Community Service' in International Travel Courses," Martha A. Easton, Elmira College

Session 59:	**Teaching Sexuality: Challenges, Rewards, and Innovations**
	Room: Broadway II
Sponsors:	Sexual Behavior, Politics, and Communities & Teaching Social Problems
Organizer &	
Presider:	Amanda M. Jungels, Georgia State University
Papers:	

- o "Challenges in working with educators around sexual ethics," Moira Carmody, University of Western Sydney Australia
- o "Choosing to Abort, Alter, Adopt, or Accept: Teaching about Abortion in the Undergraduate Classroom," Elroi J. Windsor, Salem College
- o "De-glorifying Pimps and Hoes: Teaching Domestic Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of American Girls," Laura Ann Martin, The New School/Manhattan College
- o "Intentional Disclosure: Transforming Transformative Teaching OR 'just don't get too close and personal!'," Dana Atwood, University of Wisconsin Colleges--Sheboygan and Sandra E. Schroer, Muskingum University
- o "The Benefits and Dangers of Teaching from Identity Politics," Shawn Trivette, Louisiana Tech University and Kristy A. Watkins, University of Massachusetts-Amherst

Saturday, August 10th 2:30 PM - 4:10 PM

Session 86: **Graduate Student Teaching: Work and Workers**
Room: Gramercy
Sponsors: Labor Studies
Teaching Social Problems
Organizer: Reuben N. Roth, Laurentian University
Presider &
Discussant: Corey Dolgon, Stonehill College
Papers:

- o "Rites of Pedagogical Passage: How Graduate-Student Instructors Negotiate the Challenges of First-Time Teaching," Leandra Mae Smollin and Arnold Arluke, Northeastern University
- o "The Coordinated Work of Graduate Teaching Assistants and Their Employers," Christina Skorobohacz, Brock University
- o "'We're like Visitors': Moral Identity Work among Foreign- and Native-Born Teachers," Emily Cabaniss, North Carolina State University
- o "So What?! I'm White! The Importance of Managing Emotion in Teaching about Race and Racism," Karyn Loscocco, University at Albany

Announcing Joint Session: **Saturday, August 10th 4:30 PM - 6:10 PM**

Session 85: CRITICAL DIALOGUE: Teaching about Human Rights and Social Justice
Room: Gershwin II

ASA Section on Human Rights and the SSSP Division on Teaching Social Problems announce a joint session on teaching about Human Rights and Social Justice. It is one of SSSP's new "critical dialogues" and will feature short 5-7 minute presentations and encourage serious discussions among panelists and the audience. We encourage anyone interested in how we communicate to students the integration of scholarship and social action to join us for what should be an engaging and passionate conversation.

Organizer: Corey Dolgon, Stonehill College   **Presider:** Andrea Miller, Webster University

Papers:
- o "Defending Our City: Unintended Consequences of Service Learning," Jungyun Gill, Nicole E. Paul and Angelina T. Daversa, Stonehill College
- o "It's Our School Too: Youth Activism as Educational Reform, 1960–1979," Kelechi Ajunwa, Delaware County Community College
- o "Lessons on Stigma: Teaching about HIV/AIDS in the U.S. Deep South," Bronwen Lichtenstein, University of Alabama and Jamie DeCoster, University of Virginia
- o "Service, Ideology, and Social Change: How Do Volunteers Attach Meaning to Their Work?" Dave Harker, Boston College
- o "'May the Odds Be Ever in Your Favor!': Using The Hunger Games as a Simulation in Racial Inequality," Kendra H. Barber, University of Maryland, College Park
- o "Grappling with Structure, Social Construction, and Morality: Towards a Human Rights Approach to Social Problems Instruction," Eric Bonds, University of Mary Washington

Teaching Labor, Immigration and Organizing Through Comics:
An Interview with Jeff Korgen

Editor's note: Sometimes integrating community and classroom means the kind of popular education that brings new ways of educating people on their rights and their ability to protect or demand their rights. This interview with Jeff Korgen, author of Wage Theft, suggests these kinds of materials not only provide community-based education for workers, but could be an integral part of community based learning for college students as well.

Question 1: What is your own background in working on issues involving day laborers, organizing, etc.?

I've been concerned about workers issues since college--poverty is bad enough, but when people are working full-time plus AND living in poverty, that's an affront to human dignity! About ten years ago I was invited onto the board of Interfaith Worker Justice, which gave me an opportunity to learn more about how other faiths approach workers issues. I also have enjoyed working with several "labor priests" over the years--think of Karl Malden's character in On the Waterfront.
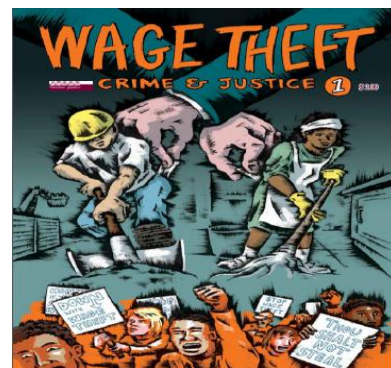
Question 2: According to the piece in *Crain's*, you were inspired to create this publication "to tell the stories of workers who were cheated out of wages owed to them under state and federal laws." But who was your intended audience and what impact did you hope to have?

We want to reach two main groups--victims of wage theft, particularly Latino workers, youth workers, and young adult workers, and then also potential allies--people concerned about social justice who would enjoy the novel format.

Question 3: This comic reminds me of the IWW broadsides and Hoe Hill's Mr. Block and the work that Paul Buhle has done in collecting political comic books and strips throughout american history all the way up to contemporary zines such as Temp Slave. Did you have any inspiration or did you find any examples from this history?

I'm a comic book guy from way back. When I was in 9th grade, I read Leonard Rifas' All-Atomic Comics and Denis Kitchen's Corporate Crime Comics. I learned a lot of stuff they did not teach me in Civics class back in Slidell, Louisiana! So I've always wanted to do docucomics on social justice issues. When I read Paul Buhle's adaptation of Studs Terkel's Working, it suggested the notion that workers' stories could be told well through comics. Artist Kevin Pyle's skills with infographics have proved a big plus too.

Question 3: Do you have new stories of how this docucomic is being received, used, and playing a role in organizing a movement for workers'rights?

So far, I know of two workers centers that have held events for workers on wage theft where they distributed the comic. It's received good reviews from workers. I'm sure the Wage and Hour Division of the Department of Labor means well in its materials on wage theft, but they read like they were written by lawyers. Just translating that material into Spanish is not going to make it more accessible. So the role of this comic is to make information about wage theft and how to fight it more accessible to workers.

Question 4: For professors of history, sociology, political science, art and society, or people teaching globalization and work issues, what suggestions or ideas do you have for teachers who might want to use this publication for their students? In other words, what might teachers want to give students as context for reading this and then what might thy hope their students to leave such a lesson with?

This comic book would be a great supplemental text to courses in any of these fields. Students reading the landmark study Broken Laws, Unprotected Workers would find their understanding enhanced by the stories in our comic. Students also might discover that they themselves are victims of wage theft. When I present on this topic in classrooms, more students see themselves as experiencing wage theft coming out than going in. (And people can contact Jeff at e-mail below to present in their classrooms.)

Question 5: What's next?

There are many issues that lend themselves to this kind of treatment. I'd like to work on climate change and broad-based organizing with low-income people next. This work does require patrons, however, so if anyone out there is interested in funding such projects, please contact me at jkorgen@gmail.com!

Helping Students Tune-in: Why I Don't Allow the Use of Personal Technological Devices in my Classroom

By Julie Whitaker, Associate Professor of Sociology, Edgewood College, Madison, Wisconsin

It's ubiquitous on every campus: texting while navigating between classes, Facebooking at bus stops and Angry Birds playing while eating lunch with friends. I cringe as I witness these distractions invade my classroom. However, I try not to take it too personally, since I know it is but a tiny slice of an insidious, social epidemic of disengagement from the here and now facilitated by the rapid spread of Personal Technological Devices (PTDs).

Flipping through recent issues of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* one may see that, while I'm not alone in my concern, not everyone is as perturbed as I am by their students' addictions to PTDs. Although some universities have instituted campus-wide policies to restrict their use in the classroom, others have handed out I-pads at the door.

My small, Liberal Arts College has no campus wide policy; we are only beginning to have a serious conversation about the matter. Faced with the need for a better strategy for my own classroom, I recently sent an email query to the faculty at my college to see how others have handled the rising use of PTDs in their classrooms. My message provoked more discussion than any other topic in recent history. More than 30 of my colleagues, facing similar challenges in their own classrooms, chimed in to share their experiences and strategies.

The responses fell into three basic camps:

1) The prohibitionists: These colleagues saw PTDs as "electronic clutter" and a significant disruption to the learning environment. Except under limited circumstances, most in this group disallowed the use of these devices in the classroom, with clear, and in some cases, serious repercussions for violations.

2) The laissez-faire group: These faculty members recognized PTDs as distractions, but treated their inappropriate use in the classroom as the student's choice and ultimate responsibility to self-monitor. They reasoned that any problems arising from the misuse of PTDs in the classroom would naturally result in negative repercussions for the student in the form of missed content and poor performance in the class.

And, finally…

3) The join 'em camp: Rather than attempting to beat 'em, this group saw the use of these devices as both inevitable and exciting. The join 'em crowd attempts to, as one of my colleagues put it, "teach students how to use their toys as tools." They've adapted their pedagogy to accommodate their students' comfort, expertise and reliance on the devices: arranging for students to act as "Google jockeys" during class, using their laptops or Smartphones to find relevant information or encouraging students to send them text messages outside of class with questions or observations related to class content. The join 'em faculty view PTDs as resources for democratizing, energizing and promoting full participation.

I have to admit: some of the join 'em's ideas appeal to me. I appreciate that this group is trying to heighten student engagement by trying to make their technology useful and relevant. I'm sure that by embracing personal technologies they've eliminated the "us versus them" dynamic that can arise from an outright ban. The prohibitionists require a surveillance and punishment plan for offenders. They have them: all across

Continued on next page.

…campus cell phones are confiscated and students are stared down, called out, pulled aside and even marked absent for the day.   Being on constant guard for electronic distractions can be distracting in-and-of-itself.

It's a hassle to monitor students' use of PTDs. However, I am convinced that setting strict limits with clear consequences on their use is preferable for my classes to either of the other approaches. I like the idea of engaging students on their own terms, but it's not worth the possibility of a full fledge invasion of multitasking into my classroom in an attempt to accommodate Smartphone addictions. I want my students to absorb, process and react to the information I've asked them to read and listen to in class, without piling on content overload. Students can look up information on the internet – even if it's related to my class - on their own time. I'm also not a fan of the laissez-faire approach. As a sociologist, I am hyperaware of the fact that individual choice is never purely individual. As several of my colleagues pointed out, a student's choice to obsess over a Smart Phone during class, rather than engage in dialogue, disrupts the classroom community. It serves as a signal to others that the lecture, class discussion and, ultimately, emotional and intellectual engagement are optional. It can be demoralizing to those who are trying to pay attention or make their own perspectives heard.

These aren't just my own reflections. Students confirmed this position for me when I asked for their opinion on the issue. After conducting my unscientific survey of faculty, I asked approximately 60 students in three classes to read and react to summaries of research and a book review on the negative effects of the use of electronic clutter and multi-tasking on mental health and learning and to reflect on how these findings relate to them. (http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-professor-blog/multitasking-confronting-students-with-the facts/?utm_source=cheetah&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=2012.09.26%20 %20Faculty%20Focus%20Update   and   http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/13/business/in-idisorder-a-look-at-mobile-device-addiction-review.html?_r=1&)

The students' responses gave me hope. Most were not surprised by the research findings, since they resonated with their own personal experiences of feeling unproductive, addicted and distracted.   Many saw themselves as victims of technology, describing personal struggles with setting texting and internet limits for themselves. A handful of students felt in control of their own use, but were annoyed by other students' continuous texting and internet surfing inside and outside of the classroom. Several described even the temptations to use PTDs as "overwhelming," and "distracting." More than half mentioned the use of PTDs as a problematic trend affecting their generation; several expressed concern about the effects on future generations, especially their younger siblings.

As sociologists, we want students to learn to become, as Michael Schwalbe puts it, more "sociologically mindful," learning to pay attention, "tuning-in to how the social world works…learning to see it for what it is. " (2008, p. 3). How can students do this if they aren't even practicing the art of paying attention during the brief time we spend together?   Much to my surprise, the overwhelming message I received from students on the matter was that they valued and were working hard to be tuned in and appreciated my use of professorial authority to set limits on PTDs in the classroom.

Reference: Schwalbe, Michael. 2008. *The Sociologically Examined Life: Pieces of the Conversation*.   Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Now's The Time: Committing Sociology in the New World

by Corey Dolgon, Stonehill College

In the United States, we have grown accustomed to the anti-intellectualism of the right-wing. Rick Santorum's claims that expanding access to higher education smacks of "elitism"; to Texas's attempts to rid public school curricula of "critical thinking"; to Kansas's educational ban on anything that smacks of monkeys and climate change are only the most recent skirmishes in the conservative political struggle to obscure the root causes of social problems and strap scientific inquiry solely to the military and corporate efforts of a capitalist oligarchy.

More disappointing has been the way in which the economic functions of education have led even moderate and liberal politicians to propose corporatizing schools and universities, promote high stakes testing, and support anti-teacher and anti-union measures throughout the country. While most K-12 schools lay like wounded fawns awaiting the sharp teeth of private sector takeover or the slightly more rounded gnawing of no child left behind, the triumph of neo-liberalism in higher-education has helped universities fully realize their status as equal partners in what Senator William Fullbright once called the American Military-Industrial-Academic complex.[1]

But most of us think better of Canada (I hear my Canadian colleagues, Karen Robert and Reuben Roth, chuckling). Afterall, Canada boasts a highly robust PUBLIC university system with institutions that rival many of the best private, Research 1 institutions in the United States. And even when the public system threatens neo-liberal "corrections" in price and product, students and faculty organize and protest, eventually bringing many officials to their knees. While Canada is no Socialist paradise (or nightmare—depending on your political disposition) it is still a country that takes education as a critical and universal public mission and maintains a decent social contract for the public's welfare.

Thus, it came as a big surprise to us in the United States to hear Canada's prime minister doing an impeccable impersonation of our own Tea Party talking points by declaring that terrorist acts should not inspire us to think *sociologically*. Following the Boston Marathon bombing and attempts by terrorists to attack a Canadian passenger train, Prime Minster Harper said: "I think, though, this is not a time to commit sociology, if I can use an expression…these things are serious threats… to all the values our society stands for." An odd expression indeed. Thus, it was left to Conservative MP Pierre Poilievre, to explain that, while there is nothing necessarily wrong with trying to understand why terrorism happens, "The root causes of terrorism is terrorists," he said. "That's how we respond."

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[1] Henry Giroux. 2007. *The University in Chains: Confronting the Military-Industrial-Academic Complex*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers. Noam Chomsky, et. al., 1998. *The Cold War & the University: Toward an Intellectual History of the Postwar Year*s. New York: The New Press. I would also recommend folks check out Public Historian and activist, Mark Naison's blog for insightful critique and inspiring activist stories related to saving public education. http://withabrooklynaccent.blogspot.com/

Now's The Time: Committing Sociology in the New World (continued)

Even Canada may succumb to an American style of dumbing down politics where an avoidance of intellectual curiosity is only part of problem. Anti-terrorism and anti-crime policies divorced from research only feeds military and prison industrial complexes. But Harper's comments are less anti-intellectual than they are part of a concerted effort by conservative politicians everywhere to destabilize and dismantle radical ideology and progressive educational policy.

For those of us who commit sociology on a daily basis, by profession, it should be seen as a chilling declaration. Some of us will simply be amused by this, perhaps being reminded of the Doonesbury comic strip where, in response to both budgetary crises and political upheavals on campus a college president ruminates on whether he can get away with cutting the entire sociology department.
http://www.asanet.org/footnotes/1982/ASA.02.1982.pdf But simple bemusement without a sophisticated political and institutional analysis of the context for this comment would be a mistake. We have to think sociologically about the movement against committing sociology.

Teaching sociology, especially a sociology focused on social problems, will and perhaps should be a dangerous act. We challenge students and communities and institutions and societies to peel back the veneer of common sense and simple platitudes. We could no longer stop terrorism by killing all the terrorists than we could stop crime by locking up all the "criminals," understand poverty by blaming poor people, or solve environmental degradation by killing the grass and trees. While teaching sociology is an exercise that focuses on educating particular sets of students in particular ways of thinking about and understanding the world, we ultimately hope that our teaching will enhance the ways students then act in the world. Increasingly engaged pedagogies try to bridge the gap between thought and action even more directly and with greater impact. But regardless of pedagogical strategies, our shared goal is always, always, always a broader and more sophisticated examination of the root causes of social phenomena—especially those phenomena we call social problems. Thus, while we may revel in the magic of a child's birth or marvel at the beauty of a sunset, sociologists by nature, by profession, and by action must claim that now is EXACTLY the time to be committing sociology.

Teaching Tools: Teaching Urban Documentaries

By Jerome Krase, Sociology, Brooklyn College CUNY

Being a visual sociologist I am often asked to review videos for classroom use. Given the increasing practice of substituting video screens for flesh and blood professors, it is critical to think about both the contexts as well as the contents of these pedagogic practices. A cautionary message was provided by Rachel Emma Silverman, who wrote "In John Eastwood's subterranean lab at York University in Ontario, Canada, young adults sit watching video clips: They are part of a test to see just how deeply bored they can get." (2013)

In grade school (1947-55) I was on the "AV Squad," operating and maintaining the 16 mm projector, and splicing films together. Old celluloid film frequently cracked and split, and public schools had limited budgets. After a few years of too frequent service, and poor storage, a 45-minute reel ran only 30 minutes; causing problems for assembly periods where films were shown to keep us busy while teachers took a well-deserved break. As today, AV then served both custodial as well as educational purposes.

The most memorable film was *Duck and Cover* (1952) that taught us how to protect ourselves from atomic bomb attacks. It began with a cartoon turtle ducking into his shell when a monkey lit a firecracker. It proceeded to kids crawling under desks, picnickers covering themselves with tablecloths, and a farmer lying alongside his tractor to survive the blast. Other, fear-inducing "instructional" films displayed the concentric zones of relative destruction from ground zero if an A-bomb hit, as it always did, in the center of Manhattan (as though Brooklyn, where I lived, wasn't worth the effort of the godless Russian communists).

The Army training films I sat through (1963-66) warned us about venereal diseases, showing what happens to our private parts when we aren't careful. Most of us closed our eyes and hoped for the best. Soldiers had their own version of *Duck and Cover*, and I was especially grateful for learning how to protect myself against mustard gas, as well as radiation, with a rubberized rain poncho (olive drab). The most exciting pre-Vietnam War training films gloriously portrayed our own historical heroism and the equivalent cowardice of our enemies. The bombardment of subliminal messages reminded me of *The Manchurian Candidate*.

Like changes in how we "write" from pen and pencil to manual and electric typewriters, to dedicated word processors, to computers with voice recognition software, AV technology has radically changed, but not the logic of knowledge transmission and the purpose of "showing" films. As a professor (1969-2013), I have survived "mobile" televisions (on barely moveable carts), classroom CCT, "mobile" computers and projectors (on carts). Today it's classrooms smarter than we are and wifi everywhere. Yet, most departments still show "films" when the professor is absent. When the professor is present, s/he too often uses them as a substitute for a lecture.

Although "instructional" films can stand alone, in my opinion, their educational value must be part of a well-planned curriculum such as the PBS *Eyes on the Prize* series for classes on the African-American Experience where they serve as "text" to be studied and discussed. We must consider the strengths and weaknesses not only of the medium but the individual products. This includes the complex relationship between the film, instructor, and students. Documentaries are not objective facts or unbiased recounting of events, but presentations of points of view which students must interpret and evaluate them. They should look at films as advertisements and ask, "What are they trying to sell me?"

Richard Broadman's *Brownsville Black and White* is a good case in point as even his "unflinching probe of how people really live, and why" (Crockett 2012) can be misinterpreted. This classic documentary shows how Brownsville (Brooklyn) changed "from a poor but racially harmonious area made up largely of Jews and blacks…

…to a community made up almost entirely of people of color." As "sociologists teach *through* film to better understand the society." (Sutherland and Feltry 2013 4), for 10% of their grade, my Visual Sociology students watched it "as ethnographers trained to observe social groups and situations," and wrote short (250 -500 words) reviews about "the sociological concepts that are visualized."

Educators show films for different reasons and assess student learning in different ways. Various audiences also learn different things. Like Brownsville, Brooklyn College has changed since the 1930s when it was almost totally white and predominately Jewish. Today, like my class, it is about 30% white and Jews are a small minority. As a result, Broadman's documentary evoked intense (instructor-moderated) exchanges about objectivity as well as the more or less laudable points of view the filmmaker extracted from the main characters. My students "learned" Brownsville's history but their sense of that history is different than students on other campuses. Their social and geographic closeness to the subject prevented a neutral absorption of facts that was enhanced by selective in/attention. All saw a community torn apart by outside forces, but as to the Black-Jewish conflict over community control of public schools, the designation of victim and victimizer varied by their ethnicity. However, only a few students wrote that they were "bored."

Finally, for teaching and learning, the educators' own relationship to the visual subject matter is critical. I knew one character, Irving Levine (who later became the American Jewish Committee's Executive Director) from my interethnic relations work in the 1970s. This made it possible for me to explain both who he was then and what he was to become. Over the decades I worked with many Black and community organizations and I have written extensively on Brooklyn's ethnic dynamics, so I could point out how the film conflated distinct issues such as Black-White versus Black-Jewish relations, and Urban Renewal and "White Flight" that warrant their own documentary. In other words, even for the best documentaries, like Richard Broadman's *Brownsville Black and White* you can't simply turn it on and leave the room.

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Haiku Deck and Sociology

By Charles Piscitello, Brown Mackie College North Canton

Technology is growing at a rapid pace. Since the time I graduated from college, we've seen great advances in computer technology, specifically, the ability to make technology mobile. In college, I was the only student with a laptop computer, taking notes, cross referencing what my professors taught on the web and maybe, some less productive activities when class seemed boring and endless.

Now, technology is everywhere and can take you anywhere. And students have a variety of hardware and software options from laptop to tablet to smart phone, from e-mail to twitter to Facebook, to Google chat. This article will examine the use of the Apple iPad in an Introduction to Sociology classroom. In particular, I am interested in discussing the ways in which the mobile application Haiku Deck, an intuitive presentation application, helped support a learner-centered environment and initiate creativity, group discussion and interpersonal communication skills in learning and brainstorming complex sociological concepts in a learner centered environment.

In the classroom, teachers must compete with new advancements in technology. We can either ban the use of smart phones, tablets, and computers from being used in the classroom, or we can find interesting and productive ways to employ these new forms of technology and actually improve learning in the classroom. Many school systems, colleges and universities are beginning to realize the potential opportunity in integrating technology into the classroom, allowing students the chance to learn using their mobile devices as opposed to banning their use altogether. Many of us would prefer having a classroom of students learning, taking notes, researching ideas and collaborating with peers, as opposed to playing games.

As stated above, there are many options for both teachers and students when deciding on what technology fits an individual's specific teaching or learning needs. I have chosen the iPad and Haiku Deck since my specific college has fully integrated iPad technology into the classroom, each student and teacher has access to and uses the iPad for pedagogical and personal reasons. It is important to understand that this is only one example of the use of technology in the classroom, and that there are many options to consider when integrating technology. In terms of choosing a best practice of what works best in the classroom, an educator must assess the needs of the students. But, as mobile technology becomes more prevalent, more options will be available to both Apple and Android users.

Haiku Deck is a free iPad app that allows users to create visually stunning presentations quickly and easily (haikudeck.com). The biggest attraction to using this software in a classroom is the built-in picture database that allows the user to search pictures that are mentioned in the presentation text, creating an aesthetically pleasing slide with very little time searching the Internet for pictures.

In introduction to sociology, an elective class popular in many colleges and universities, the information can become dry for many students who choose not to continue as sociology majors. It is important for a sociology instructor to initiate class discussion and collaboration to ensure that the complex theory can be applied to everyday life. A student centered approach can be utilized to ensure that the students are the focus, applying the importance of the content to each student with hands on approach brought to life with the use of mobile technology in the classroom (Brown & Green, 2005).

The specific assignment in my own classroom is given in two parts. First, the students are given a homework assignment to research a specific sociological topic to be covered in the class, "How popular culture defines American culture," "How social control oversteps our freedoms," or "How do you define family and how has it changed in your lifetime." The students are instructed to break into small groups, and share their findings with each other, and to collaborate on a short Haiku Deck presentation that they will share with the class. The students quickly compile the presentation and share with the rest of their peers.

The use of mobile technology and the right applications allow students to utilize technology already familiar to them. As educators we can stifle their abilities by demanding that they "turn off their toys," or we can create a student centered learning environment where they can learn from not only the teacher, but they can learn from each other. The iPad is a wonderful tool if used correctly, teachers must keep up with the fast paced world of technology to stay connected to our students.

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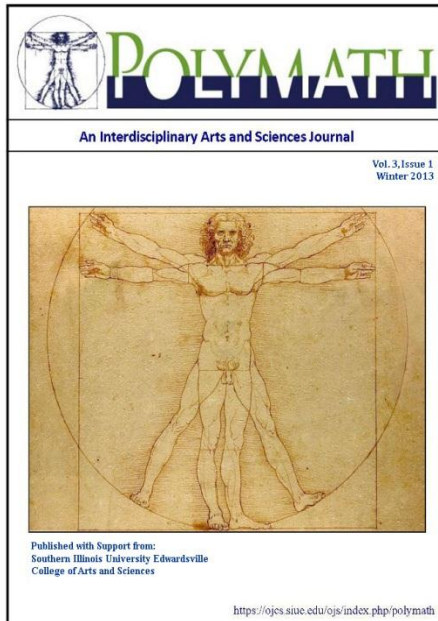
New England Regional Conference on Teaching Sociology

By Amanda Akanian and Whitney Gecker

On April 13th, the Department of Sociology and Criminology at Stonehill College, in collaboration with the Association for Humanist Sociology and the Society for the Study of Social Problems' Teaching Social Problems Division, hosted the first New England Regional Teaching Sociology Conference. The event was organized by Conference Chair, Corey Dolgon (Stonehill College), and a diverse Planning Committee of local educators and graduate students. Planning Committee Members included: Amanda Aykanian (UMass Boston), Whitney Gecker (UMass Boston), Daina Harvey (Holy Cross), Shirley Jackson (Southern Conn. State Univ.), and Thomas Pineros Shields (Brandies Univ.). The Conference, held at Stonehill College in Easton, MA, featured traditional paper and poster presentations, a lunchtime question and answer panel, and an afternoon of issue-oriented group discussions. Over forty educators, undergraduate, and graduate students were in attendance.

There were a total of fifteen presentations during the morning session. Presenters from local colleges (Bristol Community College, Eastern Conn. State Univ., Fitchburg State, Holy Cross, Keene State, Rivier College, New England College, Quinnipiac Univ., Stonehill College, Suffolk Univ., UMass Boston, and UMass Lowell) came to share their research and teaching experiences. While there was not a pre-determined conference theme, many of the presentations and posters covered topics related to community-based and service learning experiences. Other presentations included: teaching about race and social justice; incorporating music, video games, and the New York Times into curriculum development; and expanding honors, capstone, and research experiences in undergraduate classrooms.

The lunchtime question and answer panel featured a selection of experienced educators who fielded audience questions on pedagogical decisions and classroom experiences. The session was moderated by Woody Doane (Univ. of Hartford), and featured David Embrick (Loyola Univ.), Shirley Jackson (Southern Conn. State Univ.), Saher Selod (Simmons College), Kathleen Odell Korgen (William Patterson University), and Melissa Weiner (Holy Cross). The afternoon was dedicated to small group discussions organized around emerging conference themes – community-based education, integrating local and global issues, and racial and ethnic diversity in the classroom. These café-style sessions gave attendees an opportunity to reflect on ideas and themes that emerged from presentations, and discuss them with peers.

The Conference was a success and enjoyed by all, and attendees expressed a high interest in attending future iterations. When asked to complete a conference evaluation form, the majority of attendees indicated that the conference was well organized. Additionally, they felt that the topics covered were relevant, and that the conference was very engaging and thought provoking. One professor said, "Very thought provoking, and great ideas for teaching." And, a student attendee said, "This was awesome. I'm an undergrad student and it was great to hear how much the professors care for their students' welfare." The 2014 Conference is expected to be held at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA .

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Call for Papers – A Special Issue of *Polymath*: On Being a Professor

This special issue of *Polymath* invites scholars from across the academy, regardless of discipline, rank or employment status, to contribute to our knowledge concerning the experience of being a professor. Of special interest are articles and book reviews on the lived experiences of academics across disciplines, employment status, race, class background, gender, ability, age, and difference.

Areas of interest include, but certainly are not limited to:

- o   Addressing the work/life balance
- o   Intersections of gender, class and race-ethnicity
- o   Navigating homophobia, religious intolerance and other bigotries
- o   Glass ceilings and brick walls
- o   Teaching successes and challenges at minority serving and/or majority white institutions
- o   Unemployment, underemployment and poverty
- o   Hostile workplaces

As an online, peer-reviewed journal, *Polymath* is accessible world-wide. The electronic format allows you to include multimedia, live web links and a range of other materials. More than access to this free journal, contributors will find that this medium allows for a quicker route to publishing.

For author guidelines and to submit your full-length manuscript, please visit https:ojcs.siue.edu/ojs/index.php/polymath/about/submissions#onlineSubmissions no later than October 18th, 2013.

In addition to academic papers, those interested in writing a book review (books published in 2012 or 2013) related to the theme, *On Being a Professor*, are welcome as well.

Questions regarding article content or proposed book reviews should be directed to the special guest editor, Dr. Sandra E. Weissinger (email: sweissi@siue.edu). Questions regarding the submission process should be directed to Polymath editor, Dr. Susan Hume (email: shume@siue.edu).

URBAN Events at the American Sociological Association

2013 Meeting

The ASA (sociology) node of the Urban Research Based Action Network (URBAN) has planned a series of activities to advance collaborative, community-based research at the upcoming ASA meeting in August. Please join us!

Organizational meeting

Saturday, August 10th 6:30-7:30pm Conference Room D Sheraton Hotel & Towers

Please join colleagues for a discussion of how to promote and support community-based research among sociologists. This will be a chance to meet and connect with like-minded colleagues and plan concrete activities that the ASA URBAN node can do in the coming year.

Section on Political Sociology Session: Interactive Workshop on Media and Politics in the School Reform Movement

Monday August 12th 2:30-4:10pm (please check online system for room location)

Across the U.S., parents, community leaders, students, and teachers are strategizing how to ensure high quality public education in the face of corporate-driven school reform campaigns. This session will engage sociologists with invited parents, students and community leaders; it will practice an alliance-building method from the Grassroots Roots Policy. More information from gamson@bc.edu or charlotte_ryan@uml.edu

Pre-session reading packet will be posted on the Movement and Media Research Action Project website after July 1st. www.mrap.info.

Section on Sociological Practice and Public Sociology Roundtables

Tuesday August 13th 2:30-3:30pm (please check online system for room location)

Please attend one of five roundtables we have organized with the section to bring sociologists together around issue areas for facilitated conversation about ongoing and potential collaborative research:

- o Educational Leadership, Research, Policy and Change. Chair: John Diamond
- o Community Based Research as a Teaching Tool. Chair; Susan Ambler
- o Cities and the Environment. Chair: Daina Cheyenne Harvey
- o Immigration Policy, Undocumented Immigrants, and Local/National Action: Documenting the Undocumented. Chair: Tom Pineros Shields

Note: these are NOT paper presentation roundtables. They are spaces to discuss ongoing research and possibilities for supporting collaborative research going forward.

ASA URBAN planning team:

Mark R. Warren, University of Mass. Boston & Jose Calderon, Pitzer College, Co-chairs

John Diamond, Univ of Wisconsin Madison	Kerry Strand, Hood College
Philip Nyden, Loyola University Chicago	Dave Overfelt, Rochester Inst. of Tech.
Gregory Squires, GWU	Susan Ambler, Maryville College
Tom Pineros Shields, Brandeis University	Deirdre Tyler, Salt Lake Comm College
Rogelio Saenz, UT San Antonio	William Gamson, Boston College
Hilario Molina, Earlham College	Tiffany Chenault, Salem State University
Eric Tesdahl, Vanderbilt University	Patricia Herzog, Rice University

About URBAN

URBAN is an emerging multidisciplinary network of scholars and community activists created to foster collaborative, community-based research that is relevant to pressing issues facing communities and that can support action initiatives. URBAN seeks to support and advance this type of engaged scholarship within academia. It has local nodes in Boston, New York, Los Angeles and Northern California. It has national, disciplinary nodes in sociology, among education researchers and an emerging node among community psychologists.

More information on URBAN at: http://web.mit.edu/colab/work-project-urban.html

To sign up for the ASA URBAN email list: please email: urban_ASA@lists.brandeis.edu