Spring 2022 Newsletter

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Message From The Chair

Dear Students, Parents, Alumni, Faculty, and Staff,

First, I’d like to congratulate the LMU Class of 2022 sociology majors and minors! You’ve made it through this challenging year with persistence and grace and we cheer you on as you depart LMU to achieve new goals.

This year, we made our masked return to campus and learned how to navigate our altered learning and living environments as the Coronavirus pandemic continued. Some students experienced their first semesters on campus at LMU after having been an LMU student for over two years. Some reconnected with people they had primarily seen on screen for months. Throughout, we used our sociological imaginations to understand how our individual struggles connected to systemic roots despite the large-scale collective experience of the pandemic.

I hope that the best parts of our pandemic experience, like new hobbies, remote meetings, and animal companions’ guest appearances in Zoom class, will somehow be integrated into our transformed campus reality. As we end this academic year, I’m especially grateful for the students, faculty, and staff of LMU sociology who have kept us engaged and inspired.

- Professor Muraco
DEPARTMENT EVENTS
2021-2022

Criminal Justice or Punishment?
A panel featuring
Baba Akili
Dignity and Power Now
Justice LA

April 5, 2022
6-8 PM
UHall 1000

LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY
SOCIOLOGY ALUMNI PANEL

WEDNESDAY (3/9) FROM 4:20-5:45PM ON ZOOM
Join us in welcoming:

Mark Ballinger (LMU Sociology & Philosophy ’18), will graduate from Santa Clara University School of Law in June 2022, has interned for the Innocence Project and Santa Clara County Public Defender’s Office

Nicole Baxley (LMU Sociology ’22), currently works at Center for Council, a nonprofit organization that helps incarcerated and system-impacted individuals

Megan Coulter (LMU Sociology ’10, LMU Community Mental Health and Catholic School Counseling ’13), works as a mental health counselor for Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services

Michelle Nader (LMU Sociology ’15) has a master’s degree in International Relations from University of San Francisco, works at Air B & B as a Senior Employee Engagement Specialist

Saron Shiferaw (LMU Sociology ’14) has a has a master’s degree in social work from University of Pittsburgh, works as a Program Coordinator at CSU Long Beach for the Office of Undergraduate Research Services.

Join at: https://lmula.zoom.us/my/bclaf16

Screenshot from the spring 2022 alumni panel: Michelle Nader, Mark Ballinger, Saron Shiferaw, Megan Coulter, and Marianna Hernandez, with current LMU students: Lara Ullrich, Ambar Garcia Guerrero and Emi Iribarren
This semester, the Department of Sociology launched a new course in Applied Community Sociology.

Taught by Clinical Assistant Professor, Dr. Nathan Sessoms, the course matches students with community-based organizations in South Los Angeles as they embark on their anti-racist missions. Additionally, students build upon their existing knowledge of social inequalities and urban community dynamics while learning about the various anti-racist strategies that partnering organizations employ to create more equitable conditions. Students are also exposed to many of the common challenges associated with providing critical services and resources to community members and community institutions.

This semester, nine students participated in the course and were matched with one of five participating organizations:

*Jenesse Center*
*Media & Repertoire*
*Community Health Councils*
*A New Way of Life Reentry Project*
*The Social Justice Learning Institute*

During the final class meeting of the semester, participants shared about their various experiences:

**Junior Veronica Gomez** shared, “I really enjoyed interacting with the kids (at one of Jenesse Center’s) shelters. I learned so much about the organization and the valuable resources and services they provide by connecting with and listening to them! We led arts and crafts activities with them, but it was so much more than that. I plan to re-connect with them after Finals.”

**Senior Camille Dervieux** explained, “Engaging with film makers and screening films for (A New Way Of Life Reentry Project’s) Justice on Trial Film Festival was a lot of responsibility, but, while learning about various aspects of the organization’s approach to reduce recidivism, I was supported the entire time by my Supervisor. It was a great experience!”

**Senior Esme Bruce-Romo** stated, “Curating positive images of Black and Latinx families for social media messaging was a good way to learn more about their (Media & Repertoire’s) strategy to change commonly held perceptions beyond South LA that are demeaning and hurtful.”

The course is now accepting registrants for the Fall, and relationships with additional partner organizations are being established. “I’m pleased, thus far, with the progress of the course, but even more pleased with the relationships being built with community-based organizations and the impact of the course on our students”, said Dr. Sessoms.
This year, Dr. Rachel Washburn, Associate Professor of Sociology and Director of the Health and Society minor, directed the Bellarmine Forum on Climate Change, Justice, and Health. Washburn proposed the Forum to provoke a dialogue on how bodies, human and nonhuman alike, are imperiled by systemic arrangements that are unjust and unsustainable. An additional goal of the Forum was to shine light on how the climate crisis is prompting new understandings of responsibility and relationality across time and place.

“I have been deeply affected by stories about the devastating impacts of climate change on people, animals, and habitats around the world,” Washburn said. “Living in California, it’s very hard to ignore the clear impacts of climate change, whether it’s scorching hot summer days, mega fires, drought, or suffering forests, the markers are all around us. In directing this year’s Forum, I really hoped to bring a justice lens to thinking about climate change and the ways in which historic and contemporary practices of extraction and exploitation got us into this mess. While we know that all of us will be affected by climate change in some way, we also know that the impacts are being disproportionately felt by those who are socially and economically marginalized and/or vulnerable.”

The Forum featured 12 talks by renowned scholars and activists across the 2021-2022 academic year attended by students from five classes as well as faculty, students, and staff from across campus.
The Department of Sociology has an active chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta, the International Sociological Honor Society, which was founded in 1920. Its stated purpose is to promote interest in the study of sociology, research of social problems, and other social and intellectual activities leading to the improvement of the human condition.

Each spring the Department recognizes those students who meet the academic requirements for membership in Alpha Kappa Delta. Over the years we have had a number of distinguished guest speakers for the occasion, including Dr. Laurence Bobo (LMU Sociology ’79)—who has recently been appointed Dean of Social Science at Harvard University—and Judge Frederick Lower, former Dean of the Loyola School of Law. The evening is a special recognition of the dedication and accomplishments of our students and the support of their families.

Please Contact Dr. Eric Magnuson for more info!
BEST STUDENT PAPER

Each year, the Best Student Paper is awarded to one of the papers accepted to be published in the Sociological Eye. The student author of the Best Paper award will receive a cash prize of $100 and a plaque honoring their work. We look forward to receiving future submissions for the 2022 edition of the Sociological Eye!

Winner!
Judith Chavez-Cardenas
“Understanding Communities of Color, COVID-19 Vaccination Concerns, and Vaccine Advertisement Strategies”

Honorable Mention
Julia Koo
"Female Gamers and Social Media: How Gender Norms are Perpetuated Online”

Congratulations to Lizbeth Ramales Arango!

Lizbeth received multiple university awards, including the Presidential Citation, an Arrupe DEI Award, and the Donald P. Merrifield Award for intercultural leadership.

Student Honors at Graduation

Summa Cum Laude
Cameron A. Cummings
Lillianna Marie Slaughter

Magna Cum Laude
Melisa Aylin Akvardar
Daria Elizabeth Young
Emma Banda
Carisa Aguilera-Dupnik
Jordyn K. Patterson
Lara Ullrich
Julia Koo
Samantha Lee Vasquez
Lizbeth Ramales Arango

Cum Laude
Jon Michael Cedar
Moeen Hribod
Katherine G. Kautzman
Gianna Mack
Allyson Trinity Campbell
Nicole Hidemi Baxley
Athena A. Muro
Judith Chavez-Cardenas
Maryam M. Sudzhyan
Dina Cristina Gaitan
Mirian Elizabeth Melendez

Other Student Awards

Mirian Melendez won the Raymunde McKay RSHM Award for outstanding student leadership during her four years at LMU.

Lillian Slaughter was recognized as the SOCL Outstanding Scholar of 2022.
• **Denise Espinoza** (’23) will be interning with the Orange County District Attorney at the West Justice Center this summer.

• **Laura Ullrich** will be attending Columbia University in the Master of Social Work Program.

• **Jordyn Patterson** will be starting the Ph.D. program in Sociology at USC.

• **Veronica Gomez** (’23) was accepted into the American Political Science Association Ralph Bunche Summer Institute at the University of North Carolina.

• **Allyson Campbell** will be completing the 4+1 Management program at LMU.

• **Lizbeth Ramales Arango** has accepted a position with Teach for America in Chicago.

• **Emma Balda** successfully completed a curatorial internship at the Wende Museum.

• **Daria Young** will be attending the M.A. program in Urban Planning at UCLA in the fall.

• **Kyle Friedler** will be attending the M.A. program in Public Policy at the University of Illinois Chicago.

• **Kate Kautzman** was accepted into Gonzaga University School of Law.

• **Diego de la Torre** is a member of Tau Sigma Delta, the honor society for transfer students.
JOIN US IN CONGRATULATING ALL SOCIOLOGY STUDENTS WHO PRESENTED AT THIS YEAR’S SYMPOSIUM!

Denise Espinoza, “Women and LGBTQ Military/Veteran IPV Perpetration”
Mentor: Dr. Min Yoo

Mirian Melendez, “Life Inside Juvenile Detention: The Impact of Educational, Rehabilitative, and Trauma-Focused Programs for Incarcerated Youth”
Mentor: Dr. Anna Muraco
Lizbeth Ramales Arango, “Undocumented Students in Higher Education”
Mentor: Dr. Anna Muraco and Dr. Juan Mah y Busch

Veronica Gomez, "Analyzing Family Dynamics and Student's Duration in the Upward Bound Program"
Mentor: Dr. Stephanie Limoncelli
Jordyn Patterson, a senior Sociology major and McNair Scholar, presented her paper, "Underfunded Schools and Their Impact on Students' Education" at the undergraduate roundtable.

Judith Chavez-Cardenas, a senior Sociology major and McNair Scholar, also presented her research her poster, "Understanding Communities of Color, COVID-19 Vaccination Concerns, and Vaccine Advertisement Strategies" at the undergraduate poster session.

The Pacific Sociological Association Conference took place at the Sheraton Grand in Sacramento, CA on April 8th, 2022.
LMU Class of 2011 graduate, Claire Ramirez, is currently working as a Program Specialist with the Orange County Department of Education. Her role as a school administrator is working with students that struggle with chronic absenteeism and/or mental health-related challenges that impact their academic achievement. She provides training to school staff to improve trauma-informed care interventions, integrates restorative practices to reduce prison-to-pipeline patterns within school districts, and serves as a School Site Council board member to advocate for equitable learning opportunities for students while being at the forefront of evaluating and changing school policy.

Claire received her Master’s in Social Work from USC, with a concentration in Mental Health: Military and Veteran Family Services. She also holds a Pupil Personnel Services Credential (PPSC). Her professional training ranges from working with individuals and families at the U.S. Veteran Affairs Hospital, juvenile correction institutions, and within school-based mental health settings as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Her passion for social justice, mental health, and wellness influenced her to open a private practice office where quality and affordable mental health services are provided primarily in Southern California.

Claire attributes her degree in Sociology as laying the foundation for the rest of her personal and professional growth. “To work with families goes beyond relationship building- you have to understand the power of systems, cultural influence, poverty gaps, prejudice, discrimination, social movements, policy, and law. Sociology teaches you to be a critical thinker & now more than ever we need those who are trained to think critically, to understand differences amongst societies, & how to evaluate the world to bring about positive change.” Siempre adelante!

What's next?

Claire is entering her 2nd year in LMU’s Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership for Social Justice (Ed.D.) and has been recognized as a Jackson Scholar by the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA). She hopes to fill research gaps to better understand the impact of intergenerational trauma on indigenous youth’s academic performance while also focusing on inherited cultural wisdom and practices that serve as protective factors for indigenous communities.

Advice for current sociology majors?

“Go where your gut guides you, identify your passion and don’t be afraid to be unconventional in finding your career path.”
My graduate research was primarily centered around showing that critical pedagogical frameworks rooted in social justice fosters positive academic identities in historically disenfranchised students of color. I completed my graduate degree from Syracuse University’s School of Education in Cultural Foundations of Education which is a macro education program that has a Critical Race Theory (CRT) emphasis. As a male of color with a nontraditional upbringing, I have dedicated my personal, educational, and professional career to understanding what equity means and exploring ways to operationalize it to improve outcomes for disenfranchised communities. I am fortunate to have extensive experience in various capacities developing programs, policies and initiatives in Santa Monica, Boyle Heights and Syracuse, New York. From working in the nonprofit sector, to being a school administrator to working within government; equity and social justice has always at the root of what I do and who I am. This is my first year here at Loyola Marymount University and I could not be happier to be part of such a rigorous and upstanding institution! I hope to continue being a Lecturer here for years to come and expand on the already robust course catalogue within our Sociology department.

Although I am a Sociologist, I geek over Quantum Theory in my spare time and am fascinated by experiments that prove that energy is the true core mechanic of the universe.

"Education either condition the younger generation into acceptance of society’s status quo or becomes the practice of freedom through which people deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to transform their worlds.”

-Paulo Freire
Lizzie Copulsky ’14 chose LMU as a transfer student because she liked the small class sizes and the tight-knit community. It wasn’t until she was pursuing her master’s degree at a large institution that Copulsky realized just how deep a commitment LMU faculty have for their students’ success. For Lizzie, it was Rachel Washburn, Ph.D., associate professor of sociology and director of the Health and Society Program who would encourage her career trajectory, and later, inspire a meaningful gift to LMU’s Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts in honor of her late mother. Dr. Washburn was a large influence in my decision to go into public health,” said Copulsky. “Although I did not know her well at the time, looking back, she committed a lot of her time and care into helping me pursue my career path, whether she was suggesting graduate schools, reviewing graduate entrance essays, or helping me consider employment paths after I completed my M.P.H. (master’s in public health),” she said.

The Ellen Barreto Fellowship has already been awarded to two outstanding students undertaking research projects in the recently established Health and Society Program. For Washburn, the scholarship amplifies the program. ‘My hope is that the scholarship continues to attract students to the health and society minor,” said Washburn. “It’s important that we foster these types of high-impact learning opportunities for students so they can work closely with a faculty mentor and ultimately have a little bit of a leg up in whatever their next step is in their career. We are grateful and honored to further Ellen’s legacy through student-initiated research projects.”
Congratulations to **Professor Sylvia Zamora** for publishing her first book, *Racial Baggage: Mexican Immigrants and Race at the Border* (Stanford University Press, July 2022)! Drawing on interviews with Mexicans in Los Angeles and Guadalajara, Dr. Zamora illustrates how racialization is a transnational process that not only changes immigrants themselves, but also everyday understandings of race and racism within the United States and Mexico. Within their communities and networks that span an international border, Zamora argues, immigrants come to define “race” in a way distinct from both the color-conscious hierarchy of Mexican society and the Black-White binary prevalent within the United States. In the process, their stories demonstrate how race is not static, but rather an evolving social phenomenon forever altered by immigration. *Racial Baggage* is now available for pre-order where books are sold!

Congratulations to **Professor Stacy Burns**, for publishing her book, *Social Problems and Social Control in Criminal Justice* (June 2022, Lynne Rienner Publishers). Burns’ book focuses on government efforts to address social problems related to the criminal justice system. As a researcher, Professor Burns’ role is to “identify the mechanisms and pivotal moments where change does, or at least potentially can occur.” She hopes that readers of this book will continue to think critically about how the criminal justice system has developed and operates; the changes and shifts in social control effects; and how those efforts sometimes exacerbate the very problems they try to alleviate. On a more immediate level, Professor Burns wants readers to consider the meaning of justice in their own lives, and the role that everyone can play in re-envisioning public safety and the relationship between communities and the criminal justice system: “Keeping communities safe doesn’t just involve individual interactions, such as those between police officers and the public, it is also about ensuring that the institutions of government are serving all the people.”


Stephanie Limoncelli, Chair of the Thomas C. Hood Social Action Award Committee of the Society for the Study of Social Problems.

Andrea Plate, part-time faculty member, was elected Board Member of U.S. Vets, the largest non-profit for unhoused veterans in the United States (2021).

Sylvia Zamora was elected Council Member of the American Sociological Association Latino Sociology Section for a three-year term (2021-2024).

Sylvia Zamora was elected to the LMU BCLA Grievance Committee for a three-year term (2022-2025).
IN THE NEWS, MEDIA, & PUBLIC TALKS


CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS


Mathew Fox, Ravaris Moore, & Xi Song. “Entwined Embedded Events: The Effect of Parental Incarceration Timing on Children’s Academic Achievement”
  ◦ Population Association of America Annual Meetings 2021

Anna Muraco, Sarah Trainer & Jodi O’Brien (2021) "I Know My Problems Aren’t As Serious": Faculty Stress and Inequity in Higher Education pre-and during Covid-19, Pacific Sociological Association

Min Yoo (2021) How Definitions and the Student Body Composition Shape Asian American Students’ Perception of Sense of Belonging at a Diverse University.


FAREWELL TO DR. MOORE!

Professor Moore is on leave serving as a Presidential Postdoctoral Research Fellowship at Princeton University. After his fellowship, Dr. Moore will join the NYU Department of Sociology as a Visiting Assistant Professor. This appointment will transition into a tenure track Assistant Professorship in the NYU Department of Sociology. Dr. Moore will remain on faculty with LMU sociology through January 2023. We wish Dr. Moore the best!