

Field Notes

A newsletter of the Sociology and Anthropology Department, Middlebury College
Summer 2011

Number 7

Editor: Michael Sheridan



SOAN grads at Commencement 2011, left to right:

Front row, kneeling l-r: Courtney Mazzei, Julie Tschirhart, Amanda Lee

Back row, standing, l-r: Hannah Meier, Lark Nierenberg, Daniella Figueroa-Downing, Rafael Velez, Jaimie Park, Viveka Ray-Mazumder, Kate Olen, Devin Curren, Veronica Muoio, Kristen Haas

Letter from the Chair

By **Peggy Nelson**

This has been a good year in the sociology/anthropology department. As we do every year, we gave prizes to two of our seniors. **Kristen Haas** received the **Blum & Company,**

Inc. Award which is awarded to a graduating senior in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology for high academic achievement or leadership in student and community activities. **Juliana Tschirhart** received the **Lank Prize in Sociology and Anthropology** which is awarded to a graduating senior in the

Department of Sociology and Anthropology for academic excellence and, where appropriate, contributions to international understanding.

As it is often, it was very hard to choose among our extraordinary seniors to award these two prizes. Many of our seniors had high GPAs; many wrote wonderful one- and multi-semester projects; and all were a pleasure to teach. We congratulate each and every one as they venture out into the “real world.”

The faculty were no slouches either. **Laurie Essig** received tenure and thus secured her membership in our department for as long as she shall wish. In addition both **Svea Closser** and **Rebecca Tiger** passed significant reviews which secured their positions for years to come. Success was also to be found in the realm of scholarship. **Svea Closser, Laurie Essig, Ellen Oxfeld, James Fitzgerald** and **Peggy Nelson** were all recognized at the annual reception for faculty who had published books in 2010/2011. **Michael Sheridan, James Fitzsimmons, and Linus Owens** all received significant grants.

Among our important achievements as a department is our hiring of two new faculty members who will join us next fall. **Jamie McCallum**, who will be receiving his PhD from the Graduate Center, CUNY, Department of Sociology, has expertise in the areas of the sociology of work, labor and social movements, global and transnational sociology, inequality, political sociology, political economy, ethnography and historical sociology. Next fall he will be teaching two courses – Globalization and Its Discontents; and Sociology of Labor and Labor Movements. In the spring he will teach two additional courses – Political Sociology and Society and the Individual (SOAN0105).



Marcos Lopez, who will be receiving his PhD from the department of sociology at the University of California, Santa Cruz has expertise in the areas of comparative/historical



sociology; work, labor markets and immigration; Latin American and Latino studies; race and ethnicity;

and ethnography, and qualitative methods. He will be teaching one course in the fall – Latina/os in the United States – and one course in the spring – Research Methods (SOAN0301).

As I write about our achievements of both students and faculty. I am acutely aware of the degree to which those achievements rest on the cheerful competence of our administrative assistant **Charlene Barrett**. For years Charlene has kept us on schedule and freed us to turn our attention to our scholarly endeavors. We will miss her enormously as she moves on to an opportunity to work in Old Chapel. At the same time, we welcome **Mari Price** to SOAN and look forward to her keeping us coordinated (which is a feat slightly akin to herding cats).



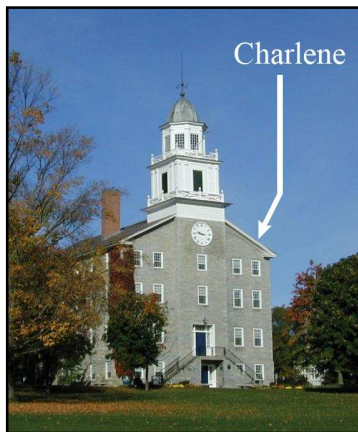
Another transition in the making is that of **Burke Rochford**, who has been a stalwart (albeit half-time) member of the Sociology/Anthropology Department and who will, as of next year, be exclusively in the Department of Religion. Many of his courses will still give SOAN credit and he'll still be around for us. Even so, we're going to miss him at departmental events.

Finally, I note my own transition. Next year (and for the following four) I will be teaching only during the Fall term only. In the Winter/Spring I will be working on my research, visiting my children and grandchildren, and, I hope, learning how to live a less harried life.

Faculty and Staff Updates

Charlene Barrett

It was with mixed emotions that I decided to accept a new position in Academic Administration. Leaving my office home as your Department Coordinator was by far the hardest career decision I have ever made! One part I loved, and will miss, was the daily interactions with each and every one of you. Please stay in touch, whether it's a phone call, a face to face visit, or an email.



No excuses allowed, as I am never too busy to see or hear from my Munroe family. My new office number is easy to remember, as I was in Munroe 201 for almost 14 years, I am now in Old Chapel 201.

Thank you for making it fun and easy to enjoy being your Department Coordinator! Take Care, Charlene.

Svea Closser

I'm writing from Pakistan, where I'm interviewing health workers about their job satisfaction and pay. Because I'm working with UNICEF, and because I managed to break my foot on the stairs in Munroe in May, I'm getting around in a combination of Land Cruisers, crutches, armored vehicles, and business class flights. That part is ridiculously fun, as long as I don't think too hard about it. The interviews I'm doing with ground level global health workers, most of whom struggle very hard to

feed their families, are often heartbreaking. Although having the inequalities within the project so much a part of my life on a daily basis has been a challenge, I feel incredibly lucky to have a job where I get to sit down with amazing people and listen while they tell me about their lives.

Laurie Essig

I have had some interesting fieldwork experiences. When writing my first book, I spent a lot of time at gay discos in Soviet Russia. After that, I hung out at the Coney Island Freak Show for years to write a few articles. My second book, *American Plastic*, saw me at conferences of cosmetic surgeons. But this year, while researching my third book, *Love, Inc.*, I went to London to be part of the "wedding of a century." That's right, I was one of the million people milling about as Kate and Wills tied the knot and created the "perfect" wedding for us to watch, consume, and even try to emulate. Kate's gown will now be knocked off and reproduced for decades, just as Diana's was. In addition to the dress, we'll be able to buy the ring (which was actually Princess Di's),



Will and Kate tee shirts, hand bags, tea cups, paper dolls, comic books and so much more. Their wedding was not just perfect, but perfectly represents the marriage of love and capitalism and what a marriage it is.

James Fitzsimmons

I have been on leave this year, and have been splitting my time between Middlebury, Guatemala, and Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections in Washington, D.C. During this time I've been writing my second book, *The Archaeology of Death in Ancient Mesoamerica*. It is under contract from the University of Texas Press, and looks at how different cultures and social strata approached – in both a practical and religious sense –

ancestors, mortuary ritual and (of course) the dead. I also published an edited volume, in many ways a preface to this book, entitled *Living with the Dead* (co-edited with Izumi Shimada), which came out in May 2011, and have been helping with the upcoming exhibit on the Maya at the Middlebury College Museum of Art, which debuts this September. I have also been involved with the conservation of monuments at a field site in Guatemala, Zapote Bobal, and was there in March-April to lift and transport sculpture—which would otherwise have been looted or damaged—to the national museum in Guatemala City. One of our majors, Ashley Higgins, was in the field with me to help with this endeavor in March,



and we were able to move two well-preserved stelae. We even discovered a new, rather long text which describes the exploits of a king named Janaab Ti' O', who lived in the mid-7th century and appears to have been knee-deep in the (rather nasty) politics of that time. Needless to say, it was a good field season and has been a productive year overall. See you in September!

Chong-Suk Han

This summer, I am in Philadelphia doing research on my current project that examines how gay black men construct identity through the Ballroom Community while also trying to avoid being outside when the mercury reaches 100+ degrees. In doing this project, I've been fortunate to meet some wonderful people who are active in the community in a number of different ways, politically, socially, and

economically. I have met folks who are working in a number of different arenas to address larger social inequalities along race, sexuality, and gender. For fun, I have been hanging out with friends and eating all the types of food that are a bit more difficult to find in Middlebury. Ironically, even as I eat all this food, I really miss Magic Wok.

Peggy Nelson

I experienced more public attention for my new book (*Parenting Out of Control*) than I ever had before for any of my scholarship. The best moment (among many bad ones) was when I found a comment to an article about my ideas in *USA Today* online that read, "Hey, That's my professor!"

Linus Owens

Linus Owens will be on sabbatical in 2011-12, and has received a grant for research in Monterrey and Berlin.



Ellen Oxfeld

My book, based on ethnographic research in a Chinese village from the 1990s through the 2000s came out last fall (*Drink Water, But Remember the Source*). It is a study of how ordinary people in a village in southeast China (Guangdong Province, Meizhou) sort out their obligations to family and kin, fellow villagers, and people in the world beyond the village, in the wake of the huge economic, social and political transformations of rural China over the last half century. I argue that although some have suggested that the reform period in China has been characterized by moral cynicism, villagers appeal to a vibrant array of moral discourses when choosing a path of personal action or evaluating the behavior of others. I'm also happily working on my new project based on fieldwork in the same village, which I have been visiting periodically since the mid-1990s. This project is a study of changes in the local food culture and involves everything from transformations in agriculture, to the social roles and symbolic meanings of food. I went to a very exciting conference this

past May at School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London entitled “Ethical Foods and Food Movements in Post-socialist Settings” and presented a paper entitled “Food as Moral Discourse in Reform Era Rural China.” It was really exciting to meet other anthropologists, all of whom are engaged in some aspect of studying food and food culture in various post-socialist settings (Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam, and Cuba). We hope to publish the proceedings after much revising and reworking our papers. Outside of school and scholarship, I’m celebrating the passage of Act 48 in Vermont. This law lays out the groundwork for establishing a universal single payer health care system in our state, and it would make us the first state in the country to create a publicly funded health care system for all. As an extracurricular activity, I have worked as an advocate for such a system for the last 15 years, so I was happy to see this first step! However, the act only lays out the framework, and implementing this system in



Vermont will take several more years, and will entail hearings, more legislative votes and public participation. So, there are still more years of public education and legislative advocacy ahead in my free time!

Michael Sheridan

I write this on my way out the door. I’m going to the eastern Caribbean for some ethnobotanical research on African agricultural practices on smallholder farms near former slave plantations. My other news of the year is much less tropical – I’m now the chair of the

College’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). This means that I supervise the process of checking that research with human subjects is ethically sound. I also have the key to Midd’s warehouse of red tape, but I haven’t had to use it yet. Finally, I’ll be going to Sweden again in September for a conference on the concept of “landesque capital,” which refers to the ecological value of labor invested in a landscape (such as terraces and irrigation systems). I’m going to argue that sites like sacred groves and megaliths constitute forms of “symbolic capital” because they shape and reflect social organization in small-scale societies.



David Stoll

No, I haven’t finished my book about how undocumented migration to the U.S. sinks Guatemalans into debt. But I do have six chapters in readable form. Just three more have to be shaped up and I can submit to a publisher. My visit to Guatemala went well, after the Midd graduation in May, and I have some good news to report. After more than a year of inaction, the judicial system finally indicted, and the police finally arrested, Cotzal’s killer-mayor. I won’t tell you what he did, it’s too ridiculous to believe, but at least the arrest shows that there are limits even in Guatemala. In other Cotzal news, village leaders are negotiating with a hydroelectric company for long-term benefits for the local population. In Nebaj, remittances from the U.S. have bounced back faster than expected; loan institutions are going slow on seizing foreclosed properties; and the Grameen Bank has arrived from

Bangladesh in order to educate women on the proper use of credit.

Rebecca Tiger

This past year I finished edits (finally!) on my book *Force is the Best Medicine*. I've also started working on my new project, *Rock Bottom: Celebrity and the Moral Order of Addiction*; I'm examining celebrity gossip blogs and reality television shows as sites where the 'problem' of addiction is constructed. I've presented this new project at a few meetings including in London at the Moral Panics in the Contemporary World conference. I'm also watching a lot of *Celebrity Rehab*, *Intervention* and *My Strange Addiction* for the new project. I've written a short piece about celebrity gossip blog coverage of Lindsay



Lohan that will appear in *Contexts* (August 2011). My article "Drug Courts and Logic of Coerced Treatment" was published in the March issue of *Sociological Forum*. I taught a new course this semester on Bad Kids;

this coming year I'll be teaching two new ones: The Spectacle of Crime and Punishment (J-term) and Celebrity (spring 2012). Besides spending a lot of time on blogs, watching television, etc., I've learned how to cross-country ski (I am starting to kind of enjoy Vermont in the winter). I still don't drive so have also mastered Vermont's public transportation 'system.'

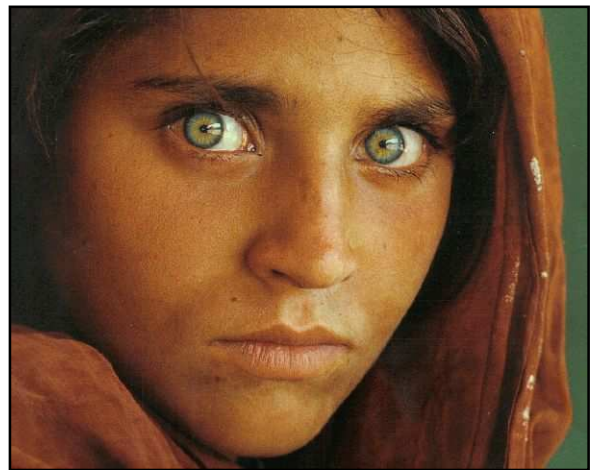
Senior Project Abstracts

Basij-Rasikh, Shabana

"Reclaiming Aisha, Revisioning Agency: Afghan Shelters and Discourses of Victimization"

One of the purported reasons that the United States went to war in Afghanistan was to "liberate" Afghan women from the Taliban. Nine years after the fall of the Taliban regime, Afghan women continue to suffer violence and abuse. The idea that getting rid of the Taliban would liberate Afghan women proves to be

false; the oppression of women is more deeply rooted in Afghan culture than in the promulgations of a fundamentalist government. The growing trend of self-immolation among young Afghan women, especially in western Afghanistan, speaks to their lack of rights and their inability to access other means of reconciliation for their "domestic" problems. However, shelters—a western phenomenon, limited to operating within cities—attract women from all over Afghanistan. My thesis explores the reasons for familial violence, highlighting the socio-cultural environment that makes it possible. I also bring to light Afghan



women's agency as they negotiate their rights within a patriarchal society. Additionally, I discuss how shelters fit within the Afghan context and examine alternative indigenous solutions that might address the issue of female oppression more effectively.

Devin Curran

"Towards an Ecology of Grief: A Phenomenological Approach to Loss and Place"

Death makes us uncomfortable. Grief makes a mockery of our antiquated notion that mind and body are in any way separate. Researching grief, one is struck by the disconnect between the medico-scientific language – a product of disciplines which have always viewed reason and emotion, body and mind, as distinctly separate domains – and the actual experience of grief. A phenomenological approach to grief reveals the ways in which grieving dislocates

space and time, as grievers find themselves in a new, strange geography. As the destructive results of the last two hundred years of industrialization and the ideology of domination over nature become clearer, it also becomes more and more apparent that, in many ways, we are all losing our mother, the living entity which once nurtured us. We need to recognize that we are in a state of ecological bereavement. We need to acknowledge and accept our feelings of grief. And we also need to mourn collectively and individually for the loss of the nurturing presence in our life, for the loss of our mother. We should be skeptical of the idea that there can be genuine and enduring ecological renewal without a full exploration and expression of our grief for all that has been, and continues to be, lost.

Molly Catherine Drane

“Los Muertos-vivos: ¿Hay otra Esperanza para los Paqueros en la Sociedad Argentina? (The Living Dead: Is There Any Hope for Paco-Addicts in Argentine Society?)”

This project focuses on the stigmatization of the drug *paco* in contemporary Argentine society in conjunction with the popular social



and cultural discourse of the drug and its addiction. I explore the history of *paco* use in order to understand how this particular substance came to be so highly vilified and why its social reputation surpasses the traditional taboos attached to the more common illicit drugs. The project also evaluates the detrimental physical consequences of regular *paco* use and how these tie into society's understanding of the drug. Most importantly, I show how the social construction compares to the reality of its use, i.e. who is a *paco* user, is he an addict, where does he live, what his is socioeconomic background. Specifically, this

study focuses on a population of so-called *paco* addicts who live in the villa Bajo Flores in Buenos Aires, Argentina. These users are part of the rehabilitation program *Hay Otra Esperanza*, run by the social group *las Madres Contra el Paco*. I ultimately aim to explain both how and why the stigmatization of *paco* and the *paquero* was born and why the dominant social discourse continues to promote this identification despite the changing reality of the situation.

Daniella Figueroa-Downing

“Healthcare Barriers for Mexican Migrant Workers in Addison County, Vermont”

There are about 2,500 migrant farm workers, mostly from Mexico, working on dairy farms throughout the state of Vermont. Addison County has one of the greatest concentrations of these workers. The health status and medical utilization patterns of these workers, however, are mostly unexplored. This



research explores the most important perceived barriers to access within the Mexican migrant worker population in Addison County within the frameworks of public health and medical anthropology. Despite copious research stressing the importance of structural factors in limiting access to health care for this vulnerable population, Addison County proved to be a distinct case. Structural barriers have been minimized in this part of Vermont, but influential cultural barriers still exist that contribute to two major patterns of utilization that are detrimental to the health status of this population: (1) tendency to delay care and (2) low expectation of health providers. These barriers to health care access arise out of high tolerance for discomfort, farm culture's emphasis on masculinity, *machismo* as a result of immigration, acceptance of language barriers and favorable comparisons to other areas.

Kristin A. Haas

“Neighborly Relations: The Production of Positive and Negative Social Capital in a Low-Income Housing Community”

In this paper, I explore the impact of neighborhood characteristics on social interaction among neighbors, using the framework of social capital and social network theory. Research for the paper was conducted

in a low-income housing development in Vermont and consisted of a survey and in-depth

interviews with residents. My findings revealed that



the relatively high density of the development, combined with its spatial layout and design, ensured frequent interaction among residents. For many people, this frequent interaction facilitated the exchanging of much-needed goods and services; in some cases, it even fostered friendship. The material and emotional support that many residents provided for one another assisted them in making ends meet, generated “positive social capital,” and contributed to the community’s collective efficacy. Nevertheless, not all interaction with neighbors was welcomed, and residents often complained about the lack of privacy in the development. Living in close proximity placed burdensome expectations on residents and strained their relationships with one another. This resulted in the production of “negative social capital,” a tendency among some residents toward alienation, and a weakened sense of community. Based on these findings, I propose the idea that positive social capital and negative social capital are interdependent within certain intimate, non-voluntary groups, such as high-density neighborhoods. It is possible that the greater and more imperative the support gained from such group

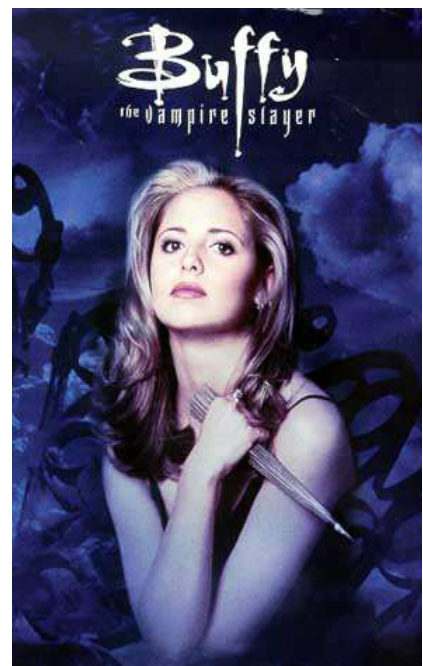
membership, the more privacy group members must sacrifice.

Amanda Lee

“A Symbolic and Feminist Analysis of Vampire Slaying”

My senior project examines *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, an American television series that ran for seven seasons from 1997 to 2003, as a cultural artifact that reveals an ongoing social drama about gender and power. Stories about vampires have been around for centuries in a wide variety of cultures. Each story reflects the issues at play in its cultural context. *Buffy* reframes high school life, and in particular American adolescents’ struggles to negotiate new gender roles and social abilities, as a drama of good and evil. The story tells how Buffy was chosen at the age of 15 to pursue a career as a vampire slayer, but at a deeper level this narrative exemplifies key aspects of third wave feminism. She is a strong confident woman who stands in opposition to the androcentric bias of the dominant culture. A Levi-Straussian analysis of the series also reveals the symbolic aspects of how power and resistance are conceptualized among American youth. These themes emerge from a series of binary oppositions such as living and undead, sexual

power and political power, and personal desire and social destiny. In the end, Buffy mediates these symbolic oppositions of life, gender, and power in American adolescence.



Courtney Mazzei

“Drinking in College: An Investigation into the Attitudes and Behaviors of the Middlebury College Drinking Culture”

Drinking in college is a pervasive phenomenon that takes place on virtually all campuses across the nation, suggesting its inherent importance



in the lives of American college students. This project analyzes and documents some of the drinking practices, patterns, and related behaviors that take place at

Middlebury College. Each of these contributes to the drinking culture on campus and has a significant impact on social life and student interaction. In particular, I examine shared motivations for drinking as well as the role of social constructions (i.e. deviance, moral panics, and subcultures) in portraying a distasteful image of college drinking culture. I also look at the many ways in which students are socialized to drink on campus and the ways in which they conceptualize and think about the role of alcohol in college life. A comparison between the significance of recent media releases discussing college drinking and the reflections and outlooks of Middlebury students is made. Through an analysis of published literature on drinking, personal interviews, and fieldwork, I synthesize my findings and utilize sociological theories in order to discover and explain the habits, norms, and opinions of students who participate in the drinking culture at Middlebury College.

Veronica Muoio

“Making a Difference, Making Difference: Strategies of Othering and Perceptions of Cultural Difference in the Blogs of Peace Corps Volunteers”

Drawing on the work of Victor Turner, I analyze the blogs of 12 Peace Corps Volunteers living in Africa as unique expressions of particular experiences. I specifically examine

how volunteers perceive cultural difference, and what strategies they use to craft and assimilate Otherness during their two-year term of service abroad. In the first portion of this essay I claim that PCVs’ process of cross-cultural “understanding” follows a pattern. In the subsequent sections, I examine the different stages of this process. First, I discuss PCVs’ motivation to join the Peace Corps, a statement anticipating encountering the Other. Next, I address PCVs’ perception of Otherness through reduced consumption and reduced resources. Then I discuss different strategies of assimilation, in which PCVs attempt to understand and integrate themselves into their host communities. Throughout, I also examine the role the Peace Corps’ official cultural competency training modules may have had on these volunteers’ perceptions of Otherness. Finally, I examine attitudes towards cultural relativism among the volunteers in my sample.

Megan Nesbeth

“RANK: A Special Report on U.S. News and World Report’s America’s Best Colleges”

Rankings are ubiquitous in late modern society. Though it is doubtful that college rankings were the first rankings ever produced, college rankings are some of the longest-running and relatively consistent, codified rankings that Western post-moderns experience. This essay traces the history of the college rankings published by the magazine *U.S. News & World Report* from their 1983 birth at the height of neoliberalism through their persistence in the present era of ontological insecurity. The development of the U.S. News rankings is a case study in the production of knowledge and rationalization in society. By capitalizing on our fear of inadequacy rankings have become popular as a project of subjectivity management achieved through internalized discipline.

Rankings are a relatively silent way through which our freedoms to live as individuals are encroached upon.



Lark Endean Nierenberg

“Beyond Boxes: Queering a Linear ‘Sexual and Gender Minority Youth’ Narrative”

Queer youth occupy historically situated and often disempowered social categories, and they constantly reclaim and affirm personhood in multiple and intentional ways in order to survive. This research roots such radical lives in theoretical texts in order to question and



queer modernist linear narratives and sculpted trajectories prescribed to bodies occupying the social category, “queer youth.” Social differences such as age, gender, sexuality, class, race, ethnicity, dis/ability and geography fundamentally influence the invention, claiming, negotiation, oppression and experience of queer youth identities by both the self and institutions. Four months of participant observation and multiple interviews were conducted at a queer youth resource center in the urban Pacific Northwest in order to ask: In what ways are these youth surviving via modernist conceptions of identity, and in what ways are they subverting notions of true and stable selves? Moreover, what role does the Center play in such enactment of personhood? This research concludes that the Center is a foundation for both modernist and post-modern landscapes and lives. Funding streams, institutionalized fixidity of identity, the organizational construction of age, and assimilative future-oriented goals among the youth uphold a modernist discourse. However, queer political movements, cultures, and spaces allow for resistance and escape: identity is not only fixed at the Center, but fluid; modernist

notions of age and sexuality are upended; and the very existence of the Center as a built space intended to empower those who have historically been marginalized is itself a queering of transitional space and modernist narratives of power.

Kate Olen

“Gift Giving and Reciprocity in Addison County Agriculture: The Gleaners and I”

Gleaning is the act of harvesting surplus or unmarketable produce from a farm as a way to reduce food waste, re-localize the food economy, and fight hunger. This project examines gleaning in Addison County using Robert Putnam’s concept of a “civic community,” which is characterized by collaboration, mutual assistance, and civic obligation. I evaluate how trust and reciprocity are produced within Addison County social groups and rates of social problems decline because gleaning increases the level of local social capital. Using theoretical perspectives from Marcel Mauss (on gift-giving) and Pierre Bourdieu (on economic and cultural capital) I argue that gleaning should be based more on reciprocal obligations and gift exchange rather than one-way donations.



Jaimie Park

“America’s Sex Addiction”

This project traces the timeline of the “sex addiction” phenomenon in the U.S. through its construction on interactive social media. By analyzing the coverage of celebrity “sex addicts” on Perez Hilton’s gossip blog, I show

how bloggers and their readers interactively construct social problems. Through this interaction, the concept of the sex addict is created and transformed by input from bloggers and readers who frame sex addiction as a “real disease” in part by relating celebrity sexual behavior to their own personal lives. I conclude that social media serves as an important avenue for social interaction, which underscores the interactive and visual component to social problem construction.

Rachel Pentecost
“Framing and Town Planning in Middlebury, Vermont”



This essay considers the political implications of discursive frames operating within Middlebury’s current town planning process by analyzing recent planning meetings, documents

and surveys. Frames produce understandings of Middlebury’s economy and community that disregard political conflict, complexity and diversity. This “depoliticization” allows town planning to appear responsive to the entire Middlebury population even when it mostly serves the interests of specific segments of the town community. Moreover, the actors empowered through the planning process are generally those most likely to perpetuate the continued functioning of the planning process itself and related dominant frames.

Ray-Mazumder, Viveka
“For Radical Revolutionaries: Transformative Justice Approaches to Restructuring Campus Restrooms”

This paper contextualizes Middlebury College’s “Restroom Project” – an institutional effort to restructure the system of gender-designated bathrooms into “All Gender Spaces” – as



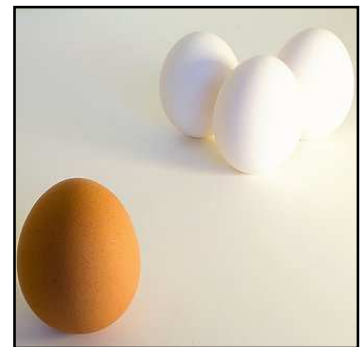
part of greater American struggles over urinary space across lines of color, disability, and gender. In doing so, I critique the re/production of modernist narratives of identity and progress at play in this project. I propose alternate solutions to the College’s control over the reorganization of these spaces that shifts from institutional control to community-based empowerment.

Naomi Shafer
“Performing Grief: Managing Bereavement at Middlebury College”

As an institution, Middlebury strives to produce highly productive, responsible citizens, qualified for leading positions in society. Upon enrolling at Middlebury, students agree to the college’s academic and social expectations of excellence. However, students who suffer the loss of a loved one while at college experience a conflict between the need to express their grief and the pressure to meet the academic, emotional, and social demands of the college. Bereaved students often compensate for their sense of isolation by banishing their grief in favor of performing academic enthusiasm and social integration. In their struggle to navigate their dual roles as mourners and college students, bereaved students reframe their expectations of themselves and Middlebury.

Kristian Shaw
“Whites in the Face of Discrimination: The Effects of White Racial Slurs on the Maintenance of White Identity and Power”

This research investigates the effects of white racial slurs on the construction and maintenance of white identity and power. Specifically, I examine which particular racial and ethnic groups use these terms and to what ends, how whites respond to being called by these names, and how the boundaries of whiteness are formed and



maintained based on those reactions. Race studies generally investigate how the issues and plights of people of color relate to white power and identities. My research responds to this literature by illuminating the other end of this power dynamic and the discrimination that whites face as part of the dominant group by looking at the pejorative terms used to define them and structure their experience. My research therefore examines not only the construction and maintenance of identity boundaries and social conflicts, but also shows how language is used as an instrument for oppression and how whites respond to that challenge. Finally, I demonstrate that the historical and current social circumstances of whites show that a different social reality is emerging in America, and that this change can be observed in language.

Julie Tschirhart

“Our Laboratory of Social Change: Detroit and the Evolving Significance of the American City”

Known as America’s “Arsenal of Democracy,” its “Most Dangerous City,” and more recently, as a “Laboratory for Saving the American City,” Detroit, Michigan has functioned as a model city and symbol in American popular culture since the early 20th century. This research explores the significance of Detroit’s role as a representative city through a content analysis of national news publications and other media in the last century. Relying on theories of the narrative construction of social events and actors in public discourse, this case demonstrates the evolving signification of Detroit in American culture. The emergent narrative of Detroit as a model for reimagining the American city in the 21st century relies on previous labeling of Detroit as a symbol of both American ascendancy and decline. The story of Detroit as a laboratory for reforming America’s cities demonstrates a reclamation of Detroit as a positive American symbol and a reinvigoration of the discourse of civil society through the democratic production of knowledge about the city. Detroit offers American society a new framework through

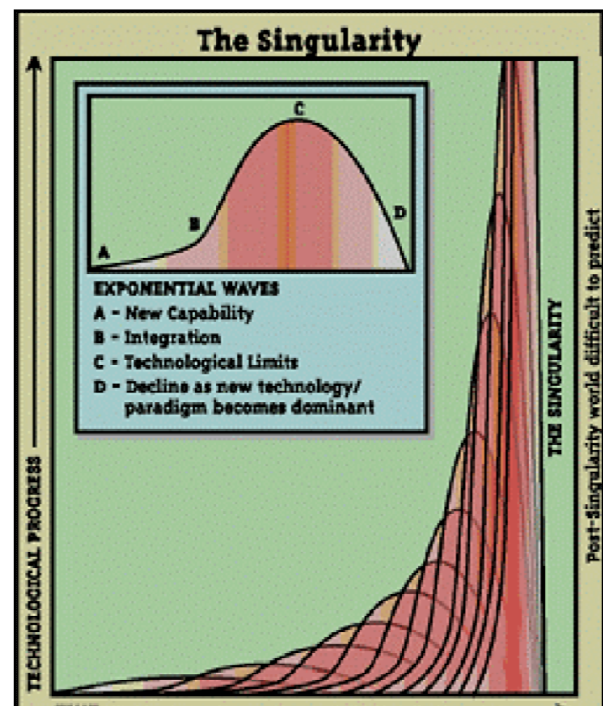


which to think of economic shrinkage, community organization, and place-based social identities.

Rafael Velez

“All Hail The Machine God: Why the Technological Singularity Will Not Be the Egalitarian Utopia it Claims to Be”

The Technological Singularity is a point in the future at which the distinction between what is human and what is technology will become non-existent, extrapolated from current ways in which technology is embedded in our daily

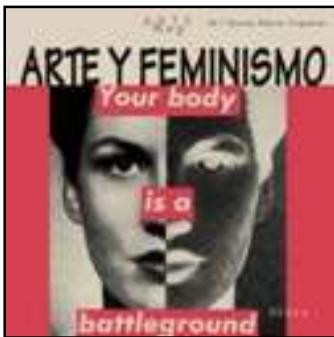


lives. The technocratic movement which is working toward making the Singularity a

reality believes that it will provide a secular salvation for humanity by effectively ending scarcity, suffering, and death through technology. In this essay I apply a sociological critique to the idea of the Singularity. I demonstrate that technology is used as a totem that is held up as sacred due to its seemingly magical ability to transcend our normal abilities. I then critique the idea that technology becoming embedded into our lives is nothing new, and that we have been cyborgs since before we became genetically modern humans. Then I present evidence that the movers of the Singularity are uniquely socially located to be able purchase and develop Singularity technologies. The movement seeks an egalitarian solution using inegalitarian means; since the movement is grounded within a capitalistic paradigm, it will not be the utopia that it promises.

Rachel Wold

“No soy muy Amiga de las Etiquetas: Feminist and Occupational Identity in Contemporary Spanish Female Visual Artists”



This work is concerned with how Spanish female artists working with gender-related content relate to the various identities associated with the

labels “Spanish,” “feminist,” and “artist.” Through semi-structured personal interviews and a review of the existing academic research, this study examines how three female visual artists living in Spain both identify with and simultaneously contest the categories of “Spanish,” “feminist,” and “artist.” A discussion of feminist aesthetics, the social function and identity of the artist, Spanish socio-political history, and the dynamics of both Spanish and third wave feminism are essential for situating the discussion of the fieldwork results.

The SOAN Dept. Review of Books

By David Stoll

Various books that I’ve just caught up with and tell it like it is:

Howard Karger’s *Shortchanged: Life and Debt in the Fringe Economy* (2005) on predatory practices, by a wide range of business interests, that were originally directed against low-income Americans but are now being mainstreamed to middle-income Americans with bad credit ratings.

Thomas Dichter & Malcolm Harper’s *What’s Wrong with Microfinance?* (2007), for the next time you hear microcredit extolled as a panacea. The basic problem is the premise that poor people are potential entrepreneurs. Most are not. So the majority put their loans into medical emergencies, school expenses and other forms of consumption that will not generate the return needed to pay back the principal and interest. Hence the usual result of these programs is a permanent indebtedness and, too often, the loss of assets.

Timothy T. Schwartz’s *Fewer Men, More Babies: Sex, Family and Fertility in Haiti* (2009) on why Haitians persist in having large numbers of children—basically because of children’s value as labor.

Charles Piot’s *Nostalgia for the Future* (2010) on the country of Togo and all the different ways that Togolese are scheming to get out of there.

James H. Maroney’s *The Political Economy of Milk: Reinvigorating Vermont’s Family Dairy Farms* (2008), on how current policy encourages dairy operators to expand their capacity, worsen oversupply, and sink deeper into debt, as well as increase runoff into Lake Champlain. As an alternative, Maroney suggests using the allure of the Vermont

marketing label to transition all but the largest dairy farms into organic production.





Standing, left-right: David Stoll, Linus Owens, Rebecca Tiger, Peggy Nelson, Mike Sheridan, Charlene Barrett, Burke Rochford, Svea Closser. Kneeling: Laurie Essig, Ellen Oxfeld, James Fitzsimmons. Not pictured: Chong-suk Han.

Faculty Publications, 2010-2011

Svea Closser

2010 "Culture, status and context in community health worker pay: Pitfalls and opportunities for policy research," with K.C. Maes and B.A. Kohrt, *Social Science and Medicine* 71(8):1375-1378.

Laurie Essig

2010 *American Plastic: Boob Jobs, Credit Cards, and our Quest for Perfection*. Boston: Beacon Press.

James Fitzsimmons

2011 "Perspectives on death and transformation in ancient Maya society: Human remains as a means to an end," in *Living with the Dead: Mortuary Ritual in Mesoamerica*, J.L. Fitzsimmons and I. Shimada, eds., pp. 53-77. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

2011 *Living with the Dead: Mortuary Ritual in Mesoamerica*. Co-edited with Izumi Shimada. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

2011 "Bobal y otros centros Mayas Clásicos, Guatemala: Perspectivas sobre el centro-oeste de Péten desde La Joyanca, Zapote," with M.C. Arnauld, M. Forné, L. Gamez, E. Barrios, E. Lemonnier, E. Ponciano, E. Arredondo, and V.

Breuil-Martinez, in *XXV Simposio de Investigaciones Arqueológicas en Guatemala 2011*, C. de Suasnavar and B. Arroyo, eds. Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología de Guatemala.

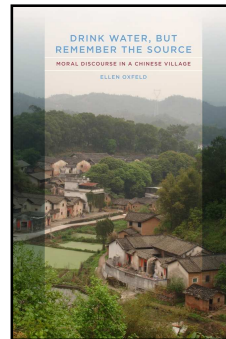
Chong-suk Han

2011 "If I was infected with HIV, I would be letting my family down: Family influences on risk and protective factors for unsafe sex among gay API men," with D. Operario and K.-H. Choi, *Health, Risk & Society* 13(4):373-388.

2011 "Strategies for managing racism and homophobia among U.S. ethnic minority men who have sex with men," with K-H. Choi, J. Paul, and G. Ayala, *AIDS Education and Prevention* 23(2):145-158.

2010 "Assessing linguistic and cultural equivalency of two Chinese-version sexual health instruments among Chinese immigrant youth," with A. Chen and D. Morrison-Beedy, *Journal of Pediatric Nursing* 25(3):194-201.

Ellen Oxfeld



2010 "Drink Water, but Remember the Source:" *Moral Discourse in a Chinese Village*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

David Stoll

2011 "The obligatory Indian," *Dialectical Anthropology* 35(2):135-146.

2011 "A Mayan financial crash: The case of Nebaj," *ReVista: Harvard Review of Latin America* Fall/Winter 2010/2011, pp. 72-73.

Rebecca Tiger

2011 "Drug Courts and the Logic of Coerced Treatment," *Sociological Forum* 26(1):169-182.

Alumni News

Margot Bennett '05
(margot.bennett@gmail.com) is getting her master's degree in Textiles and Clothing from the University of California Davis where she is also starting a materials recycling program set to launch on campus this fall.

Lauren Armstrong '07
(lauren.kehau@gmail.com) is finishing a master's degree in environmental planning at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. This fall she will be in northeastern India studying tribal communities with a professor at Sikkim University.

Tina Coll '07 (christine.l.coll@gmail.com) taught in Dalian, China for a year and then interned on JPMorgan's equity derivatives trading floor in Hong Kong. Currently she is program director for Princeton in Asia's China, India, and Taiwan program.

Julia Davidson '04.5
(juliaedavidson@gmail.com) is development director for the Southside Family Nurturing Center in Minneapolis. She also keeps busy gardening and working on the house that she and her fiancé Jared have bought. They plan to get married in the fall.

Kelly George '08 is living in Delaware and working for a criminal justice public policy NGO.



Lisa A. Gerstenberger '07.5 married Luke Strauss in Golden, Colorado, in June 2011.

Padma Govindan '05 (padma.shakticenter@gmail.com) spent four years in Chennai, India where she cofounded the Shakti Center for Gender and Sexuality Advocacy. Currently she is in the PhD anthropology program at the University of California, Irvine, and is starting fieldwork on the American anti-trafficking movement in South

Asia. Her Routledge anthology on the subject is scheduled for publication in 2012.

Andrea Hamre '05
(ahamre@gmail.com)

recently finished a master's degree in agricultural and applied economics at Virginia Tech. She worked at the U.S. Department of Transportation over the past year and has been an active bike advocate in the Washington, D.C. metro area. She will begin a doctoral program in applied economics at the University of Minnesota in the fall.



Angela Head '07 (anghead@gmail.com) became a Chicago Teaching Fellow and teaches Mandarin Chinese at George Washington Elementary school on the south side. She has just spent the summer in the city of Changchun in northeastern China.

Kelly Hines '04 is in Fiji studying integrated water resource management and community development for her master's degree from University of Queensland, Australia.

Katie Hunsberger '05
(hunsbergerster@gmail.com) lives in New York City and gardens in a community plot in the East Village. She spent several years at Organicworks PR and recently moved to the independent book publisher Rodale Inc., where she works on digital platforms and sustainability initiatives.

Dana Isaac '08 writes, "I am in my last year of law school, and will graduate in May. I have been doing a lot of work on sentencing in criminal law, especially around trying to get rid of juvenile life without parole here. I was recently selected for the International Human Rights law clinic, and in March I got to go to the United Nations in Geneva and present on Juvenile Justice issues! Although mine focused on targeting US delegates, I still got to compare laws in the US to foreign law. Who would have thought 4 years ago when I was writing my senior thesis about the UN that I would get to go and present to the Commission on Human Rights about an issue that I feel strongly about! I guess it really does all come



back to SOAN, I really think working on ideas of international development pushed me to international law!”

Justin Knox '02 served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Swaziland, then did a master’s degree in medical anthropology at University College London. He has published an article in *Anthropology & Medicine* on traditional healers and HIV prevention. Currently he is at Columbia University, where he works as a research project coordinator and is earning a PhD in epidemiology. His wife, **Justina Ngo '04**, is a chiropractor in Manhattan.

Louis Lobel '08.5 (louisleelobel@gmail.com) spent a year with the Peace Corps in Tonga. While teaching classes, devising curricula and running workshops, he came across a third gender. Currently he is teaching English in Madrid but plans to enroll in law school at the University of Texas in 2012.

Izzy Marshall '07.5 (izzy.marshall@gmail.com) spent two years in Vietnam and Cambodia, working in community development and nutrition, before spending another year completing premedical requirements at Goucher College in Baltimore. Currently she is starting medical school at Brown.

Danielle Naugle '06.5 finished three years of service as a Community Health and AIDS Prevention Peace Corps Volunteer in Togo, West Africa, in August 2010. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Health Communication at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. She hopes to work designing, implementing and evaluating health communication campaigns in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

Andrew (Anj) Petto '72 is currently Senior Lecturer in Anatomy and Physiology at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. His latest book is *Scientists Confront Creationism* and he serves as editor of *Reports of the National Center for Science Education*. He is active in student outreach programs and professional development

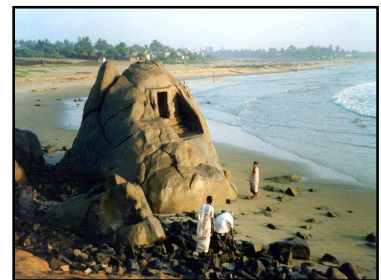
programs for teachers in grades K–12. Two of his projects are currently featured in the National Science Teachers Association’s *Exemplary Science* series.

Michael Rimoin '05.5 (mike.rimoin@gmail.com) finished an MBA in sustainable marketing at the University of British Columbia. Now he’s working for Commute Seattle in the struggle against drive-alone commuting. He is also urban homesteading with a biogas digester, a bucky-dome greenhouse and a flock of chickens.

Anne Kolodziejczyk Tracy '03.5 and **Ian Tracy '03.5** (ianptracys@gmail.com) live in New York City and stay in touch with Jamaica. They have multiplied to include Lillian Fay Tracy, Ian Perkins Tracy, Jr. (“Perk”), and Lark Virginia Tracy.

Amber Trotter '06 (amber.trotter@gmail.com) has been involved in the local foods movement in Mendocino County, California, and runs an organic catering and produce business. She is now beginning a program in clinical psychology at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. She has particular interest in health psychology and collective consciousness.

Martin Whyte '03.5 (colorinwhyte@yahoo.ca) is living in a village on the coast of southern India. The people gave him a plot of land in the corner of a palm grove and showed him how to build a stone house, where he lives with his library, instruments, and recording studio.



(Not Martin’s actual house- Ed.)

Future Issues

Got a story to tell about how you’re applying SOAN in the so-called post-graduate “real life”? Wedding photos? Just saying hi? Send us material at msherida@middlebury.edu. We’d love to hear from you.

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