



Michael Ian Borer
Sociology
Department
Chair

Department Chair Statement:

If you're reading this, you probably know at least a little bit about the "sociological imagination." Such a "quality of mind," as C. Wright Mills called it, recognizes the links between history and biography in hopes to uncover the ways that personal troubles are connected to social problems. This disposition is important for the civically engaged citizen.

Our collective goal is to both enact that imagination and to teach it. As a department, we are committed to the promise of the sociological imagination as we remain focused on award-winning teaching and research, public sociology and civic engagement, and providing our students with the means to think critically about the world(s) they live in, with, or hope to build someday.

In my first year as Department Chair, I am pleased to report that our department is stronger than ever. We have grown in regard to our faculty numbers and in regard to our place in the college, university, and discipline at large. Throughout this newsletter, you'll get a chance to read about all of the amazing work that our department does. Our faculty, staff, part-time instructors, graduate students, and undergraduates have helped foster a department culture that reinforces that best of what sociology can do and sociologists can be. We wouldn't have been able to get here without the

strong leadership of **Dr. Robert Futrell**. For a decade—a decade!—Robert stewarded our ship across the bumpy waters of budget cuts, civic strife, and a global pandemic. He gave himself to the department in ways that go well beyond the job description and was awarded for it when he won the university-wide Outstanding Chair award in 2019. I know I have big shoes to fill in my role now, and I thank Robert for being so gracious with his time and wisdom. And I know that gratitude is felt well beyond my experience.

We have some new folks added to our faculty. We were very fortunate to be able to hire three new incredibly talented and hard-working professors: **Dr. Jacob Erickson** (PhD, Iowa State University), **Dr. Annaliese Grant** (PhD, University of Wisconsin, Madison), and **Dr. Adrianna Munson** (PhD, Columbia University). You can read more about them in their individual profiles in these pages. Collectively, however, they add some new perspectives and research interests that both bring new topics to light as well as strengthen some of our core specialty areas.

Along with all of our great gains, we've also suffered some losses. The foremost was the passing of our dear friend and long-time colleague **Dr. David Dickens**. His unexpected death sent shockwaves down the hallway he walked through for so many years. A renowned critical theorist and staunch

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believer in speaking truth to power, his presence and his voice are sorely missed by many at UNLV and across the discipline. You can read more about him in these pages; his memory will last well beyond what is covered here.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention our office staff **Caitlin Moscato** and **Lauren Markey**. They have been so important in making my transition into this position smooth and easy. This is only their second year with us, but their knowledge, skills, and kindness would have you think otherwise. So, I thank them and I thank my colleagues for entrusting me with the proverbial keys to the department. I promise to do my best and do what I can to help everyone achieve their personal and collective goals. Fortunately, for me, and as the information in this newsletter will attest, we have a really good group here doing really good things on campus and in the communities we serve.

Sincerely,

Michael Ian Borer

New Faculty Profiles



Adrianna Munson is an Assistant Professor of Sociology. She completed her doctoral degree at Columbia University in the City of New York in 2021.

During the pandemic, she worked as a Faculty Consultant for online pedagogy at Princeton University where she worked to develop resources for inclusive and equitable teaching. She joins UNLV from Sarah Lawrence College, where she was a Visiting Assistant Professor (2021-2023). Dr. Munson specializes in medical sociology, science studies, and qualitative methods. Her current research explores how young people with intellectual disabilities navigate adulthood, especially their rights to autonomy and independence. Her book project (in progress), *Put to the Test: Autonomy and the Construction of Adulthood*, turns an ethnomethodological eye on disabled adulthood to uncover the universal project of producing and maintaining adult identities. Dr. Munson's research is published in *Theory and Society*, *Social Science and Medicine*, and *Qualitative Sociology* and has been funded by both the National Science Foundation and Social Security Administration. As a first-generation undergraduate student, Dr. Munson is especially excited to join UNLV's vibrant and diverse educational community.



Annaliese Grant (she/they) joined the Sociology Department at UNLV in Fall 2023, after receiving her PhD from the University of Wisconsin - Madison. Her work focuses on social

class, gender, media, and family, and she relies on both qualitative and quantitative methods in her research. One strand of her research explores the classed and gendered dynamics of children's major family responsibilities, specifically exploring classed differences in approaches to care in family life. Another strand investigates a long-standing difference in child and family media use in the US: media time. For decades, low-income families have spent more time on average watching television than middle- and upper-class peers, and this pattern has now expanded to all forms of digital media. Dr. Grant's research on this topic explores

the nuanced ways television and media fit within daily life for lower- and middle-class families, how this fits within family relationships, changes over the life course and based on class mobility, and how discourses about "screen time" gets imbued with classed, gendered, and racialized meanings. Her work has been published in the *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *Children & Society*, and *Currents* and has been supported by the American Sociological Association, The Institute for Research on Poverty, and the Social Science Research Council.



Jacob Erickson is an Assistant Professor of Sociology. He earned undergraduate and graduate degrees at Wichita State University before completing his Ph.D.

at Iowa State University. At Iowa State he received university and departmental awards for research and teaching. He was previously an Assistant Professor at Georgia Southern University (2020-2023) before joining the department at UNLV. Dr. Erickson's work considers identity and decision-making processes of those involved in deviant and criminal behavior and pays special attention to drug involvement and violent crime. He has forthcoming work related to psychedelic drug use, methamphetamine use and production, and the influence of racialized identification on criminogenic dispositions like the "code of the street." He uses both quantitative and qualitative methods in his scholarship. Dr. Erickson was the winner of the 2022 MacNamara Award from the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) for his article "Meth Cooking as a Job: Identity and Dirty Work" and has published articles in various scholarly outlets such as *Justice Quarterly*, *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, *Deviant Behavior*, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, and *Education and Urban Society*. Additionally, Dr. Erickson has helped secure over \$1.2 million dollars of external funding to increase access and efficacy of drug treatment and rehabilitation programming in the past three years.

Faculty Activities

Christie Batson

Dr. Batson participated in the production of two documentary films in 2023. In an effort to see that important scientific work reaches a public audience, she partnered with the UNLV Department of Film and Professor Brett Levner to have sociology capstone students and documentary film students collaborate to create a documentary film called *Marble Manor: Erased and Displaced*. The film explores the pending demolition and displacement of 700 residents who live in the Marble Manor public housing community in the Historic Westside. The film will debut to residents in Marble Manor in December 2023. Additionally, Dr. Batson helped contribute to another UNLV film production using an NSF-funded project between the College of Engineering and Sociology that explored the impacts of water contamination and health risks on the Las Vegas unhoused and unsheltered population. Dr. Batson and her research team of Sociology graduate student Celene Fuller and Social Work graduate student Ashley Bunn partnered with two local homeless outreach agencies to survey the unhoused and unsheltered populations who navigate the underground tunnels, the washes, and other encampment sites to explore their daily risk to water contamination.

In October 2023, Dr. Batson was selected to present her research at Boston University in the company of the world's leading experts on gentrification. The international conference focused on policy solutions to gentrification and displacement in cities all around the world. She presented her research on gentrification taking place in the Historic Westside and the history of residential segregation, dispossession, and displacement of Las Vegas' African American community. She is currently working on several papers and a book proposal on the impacts of state-sponsored urban trauma on the

dispossession to investment strategies used to justify the current gentrification of the Historic Westside.

Tirth Bhatta

My sole-authored article ("Intersecting Early-Life Selection Mechanisms: Socio-Historical Changes in Racially Stratified Effects of Education on Functional Limitations in the United States") in the *Journal of Aging and Health* made a novel contribution to existing scholarship by focusing on the role of sociohistorical changes in shaping intersecting early-life selection mechanisms and their impacts on racially stratified effects of education on health across cohorts. I co-authored two other research articles, one in the *Issues in Mental Health Nursing* and the other in the *Journal of Gerontological Nursing* on the role of contemplative practices in enhancing positive emotions such as compassionate love, as well as the subsequent effects on loneliness and psychological well-being.

Michael Borer

Michael Ian Borer recently published a co-edited book with PhD Alumnus Dr. Tyler Schafer (Associate Professor of Sociology, CSU-Stanislas) entitled *Researching City Life: An Urban Field Methods Text-Reader* (SAGE, 2023). The book includes both seminal pieces from urban ethnographers and new "reflections essays" from some of the top scholars in the field.

Dr. Borer also appeared on KNPR's State of Nevada as part of the segment "Nonalcoholic booze market explodes as more Las Vegans choose not to drink."

Barb Brents

In 2023, Barb is co-authoring two books, published two chapters, delivered four conference presentations, attended an invited workshop, had a hip replacement, and supported three kids in college. Her upcoming 2024 co-authored book with New York University Press, "*Sex Work Now*," offers data-driven essays by academics and sex workers that highlight the changing sex industries. Another co-edited book, contracted with Palgrave, titled "*The Context of Consent*

in Sex Work", reports our international research on how varying legal contexts affect sex workers. Barb discussed her 2020 book, "*Paying for Sex in the Digital Age*", at the National Women's Studies Association Conference. She collaborated on a project on sex work and financial exclusion, presented at the Law and Society Conference. She published a book chapter on the Sex Worker Rights movement with UNLV Soc Alumnus Crystal Jackson in Ronald Weitzer's book *Sex for Sale*. Along with Sociology Department graduate students, Victoria McMahan, Mary Underwood Hood, Rachel Howard, Foster Kamanga, Drue B. Sahuc, Roen Sagun, and Antonio Ball, their chapter on "The Political Economy of Pleasure" in the *Routledge Handbook on Sexuality, Gender, Health and Rights* will be coming out in 2024. Barb also participated in a book workshop at UC Santa Cruz and is collaborating to launch a new special library archive collection chronicling Las Vegas' sexual entertainment history, Sexual Entertainment and Sexual Economies of Las Vegas. And she co-heads the Nevada chapter of the Scholars Strategy Network. scholars.org/chapter/nevada

Barb's public sociology included :

- "Debate about uniform rules for prostitution: What can a ban on commercial sex achieve? Legal brothels offer a good safe space" *Tagespiegel*, German newspaper addressing the debate in EU Parliament about criminalizing sex buyers. Oct 13, 2023 www.tagesspiegel.de/internationales/debatte-um-kaufflichen-sex-was-kann-ein-verbot-bewirken-10574119.html
- "Why Doesn't Clark County Have Brothels?" City Cast Las Vegas podcast interview, August 14, 2023. lasvegas.citycast.fm/podcasts/why-doesnt-clark-county-have-brothels
- Quoted in Carly Sauvageau, "Misconceptions, debates about legalization surround sex work in Nevada" April 30, 2023. thenevadaindependent.com/article/misconceptions-debates-about-legalization-surround-sex-work-in-nevada
- Filmed interview for an episode of Vice series, *Sex Before the Internet* about the Nevada brothels and Dennis Hof, July 27, 2023

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Robert Futrell

I handed off the Department Chair position to Dr. Borer on July 1. Big thanks to him for taking on this important role. And many thanks to my colleagues, office staff, graduate students, and undergrads for all the support over the years. An academic department is truly a collective effort and our folks are the best!

During 2023, I finalized two book projects and three articles on far-right extremism that are accepted and forthcoming early next year. I gave the opening keynote talk on one of these projects at the *Mobilization* conference on protest, resistance, and democratic retreat, June 2023 in San Diego. I also gave several interviews on far-right extremism and one on an older project – international chemical weapons disposal – which concluded in the U.S. this year. I'll be developing a couple of new projects while I'm on sabbatical during spring 2024.

Simon Gottschalk

Emeritus Professor Simon Gottschalk published the chapter "Psychological Errors and Digital Rumors: Revisiting two of Shibusaki's Contributions." in *Deconstructing the Margins: Neglected Social Theorists of Color*.

Annaliese Grant

Dr. Grant collaborated with researchers in the UK to write a public report on television-watching in the UK: Johnson, Catherine, Cornel Sandvoss, and Annaliese Grant. (2023). *Ways of Watching: Categorising Television Viewers in an Age of Streaming*. Screen Industries Growth Network (SIGN). ahc.leeds.ac.uk/downloads/download/318/ways-of-watching-report-final. She also wrote a public-facing summary piece about some of her work on children's responsibilities titled – "Featured Piece: Children have Responsibilities. Is that "Normal," and How do Lower-Class White Daughters Talk about It?" – in the ASA's *Children & Youth* Newsletter. childrenandyouth.weebly.com/uploads/4/7/8/0/4780801/newsletter_c_y_summer23.pdf

Liz Lawrence

My most significant accomplishment in the last year was achieving tenure and promotion (and the peace of mind that came along with it). I also published a few articles, attended some conferences, taught some classes, and served on student committees. I wrapped up a small pilot grant on rural and urban differences in cognitive functioning, and am now working with the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health) on the collection and dissemination of Mortality Outcomes Surveillance Data. The peace of mind from tenure was short-lived as I am now taking on the important and rewarding role of Graduate Coordinator.

Bob Parker

Dr. Parker. Completed a book chapter—"Confirmed conspiracies in contemporary society" for Chris Connor and Nicholas MacMurray's *Extremism and Conspiracy Movements: From the Alt Right to QAnon*. (Forthcoming, 2024). He was also a featured guest in September on Nevada Public Radio's *State of Nevada* program discussing trends on remote work.

Cassandra Rodriguez

In 2023, Dr. Rodriguez published her first book *Contested Americans: Mixed-Status Families in Anti-Immigrant Times* with New York University Press. Professor Rodriguez also published two book chapters including one featured in the latest edition of *Families as They Really Are* on how mixed-status families negotiate visits to see ill or dying family members abroad. Another chapter written with Dr. Celine Ayala (Assistant Professor, Georgia State University) is on mariachi scenes in Las Vegas and published in *The Possibility Machine: Music and Myth in Las Vegas*.

Dr. Rodriguez was especially thrilled to be awarded a Council of American Overseas Research Centers – Americas Research Network (CAORC-ARENET) Faculty Development Seminar Award. This award allowed Dr. Rodriguez to participate in a fully-funded two-week trip to Mexico (Mexico City, Puebla, and Tlaxcala) to learn about indigenous languages and

cultures with colleagues from across the United States. From this experience, Professor Rodriguez has submitted a blog based on her trip and plans to implement a new course section in her SOC 472 course *Latinos in America*.

As for service, Dr. Rodriguez was invited again to serve on the *Journal of Marriage and Family* Editorial Board and continues to serve as the Co-Faculty Advisor to UNLV's Mariachi Rebelde.

Dmitri Shalin

Dr. Shalin published several pieces during 2023.

- Erving Goffman: The Social Science Maverick. Assessing the Interdisciplinary Impact of the Most Cited American Sociologist. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*.
- War in Ukraine and the Ethics of Pragmatism. *On the Vanishing Point in History: Critical Perspectives on the Russian-Ukraine War: Bloomsbury*.
- Annotated Letters of Grigory Kononov. 2022. *Avtobiografija. Journal on Life Writing and the Representation of the Self in Russian Culture*.
- Viktor Sheinis and Alla Nazimova. 'Settling scores and apportioning blame is not a constructive undertaking'. *Monitoring of Public Opinion*.

Chenghui Zhang

During the past year, Dr. Zhang has led a research collaboration with the Center for Research on Violence Against Women at the University of Kentucky and published a peer-reviewed article in the *Journal of School Violence*. She was invited as a panelist at the National Institute of Justice (2023) National Research Conference and a speaker for the Racial and Racism Speaker Series at the University of Washington, Seattle. In addition, Dr. Zhang has been selected as a Fellow of Culturally Relevant and Responsive Teaching under an NSF funding program TRANSCeND. Service-wise, she was elected to serve as a board member at the Association of Chinese Criminology and Criminal Justice. Dr. Zhang's professional service and involvement at the international association has also led to an advisory role at the mentorship and database program.



Dr. Simon Gottschalk Retires

We spent 2023 without our longtime colleague, Dr. Simon Gottschalk, who decided to retire. Dr. Gottschalk was a vital department member for three decades. He joined UNLV Sociology in 1992 and during his career became a nationally and internationally recognized expert in critical Symbolic Interactionism, the social and psychological impacts of computer technologies, and qualitative methods. He wrote articles and books on phenomena as varied as youth cultures, the mass media, mental disorders, terrorism, the senses, social acceleration, and interactions in virtual, urban, and natural spaces. From 1996 to 2000, he directed the interdisciplinary Cultural Studies program at UNLV. After serving as editor of the journal *Symbolic Interaction* from 2004 to 2007, he was elected president of the Society for the Study of

Symbolic Interaction in 2011. He is also an Associate with the *Centre International de Recherche sur l'Individu et la Societe Hypermodernes* in Paris, France. Dr. Gottschalk continued to publish, direct graduate students, and will continue as Emeritus Professor with UNLV Sociology.

His parting letter to us all touched us deeply. He wrote:

Words cannot begin to describe my experience in our department. I have spent the majority of my career here and will remain eternally grateful for all the opportunities, encouragement, and support I have received at the department, college, and university levels. I feel fortunate to have worked with so many talented and wonderful colleagues and students, with whom I have grown both personally and professionally over the last thirty years. I hope that, in my own modest way, I have contributed positively to the department's academic reputation, intellectual distinctiveness, and cultural sensibility.

While I am looking forward to retirement, I will greatly miss the UNLV community. I have no doubt that UNLV will continue to grow, accomplish amazing feats in all its branches and disciplines, and make trailblazing contributions to scientific knowledge, the community, and broader environments.

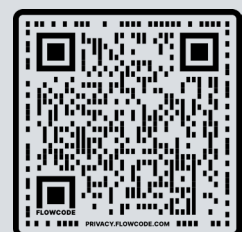
Simon lives in Santa Barbara, California with his wife Krystyna, where they blissfully breathe the cool ocean air everyday, travel, and volunteer in various community organizations.

Give to UNLV Sociology

The UNLV Department of Sociology combines innovative research with teaching and community service to address questions of social change, diversity, social justice, and sustainability in urban environments. Our research, teaching, and PhD training emphasize public sociology and civic engagement. Our faculty investigate individual and group experiences social problems such as intersectional stratification, health disparities, sexuality, crime and deviance, sexual economies, education, work, social protest, gambling and addictions, and environmental sustainability. Our award-winning teaching integrates students' learning experiences with scholarly investigation and civic engagement.

Your support for UNLV Sociology helps us succeed as a dynamic department vital to UNLV's R1 mission to produce innovative, useable knowledge, and enrich the cultural vitality of the communities we serve.

engage.unlv.edu/sociology





Sociology Rocks the UNLV GPSA Research Forum

Sociology graduate students participated in the 25th Annual GPSA Research Forum, April 15th, 2023. From more than 210 UNLV graduate students, representing 35 disciplines around campus, five UNLV Sociology Ph.D. students earned top awards for their research presentations. From left to right:

- ✿ **Dante Miller**, 1st place, podium session: “From Slavery to Platinum Plans as Told by Donald Trump and Black Republicans”
- ✿ **Jared Weissman**, 2nd place, podium session: “Gender, Racial Attitudes, and Firearm Ownership”
- ✿ **Maria Hermosillo**, 2nd place, podium session: “Not Dead Yet: Maintaining Community in a Live Stream”
- ✿ **Jeannette Hernandez**, 1st place, podium session: “Leveling the Playing Field: An Ethnography of Youth Soccer Leagues in Las Vegas”
- ✿ **Torisha Khonach**, 2nd place, podium session: “Looking Fatter and Not Pregnant: Shaping the Parenting Body”

Several sociology faculty members, including Dr. Suarez and Dr. Zhang, along with graduate student Celene Fuller, were on hand to support our students.



Torisha Khonach wins the **2023 Beth B. Hess Memorial Scholarship** from **Sociologists for Women in Society**

PhD Candidate Torisha Khonach was selected for the SWS Beth B. Hess Memorial Scholarship Award. The award was established in 2005 to support first generation college students who began their academic careers in a community college, have faced significant obstacles, are committed to teaching, and mentoring other less privileged students, and exemplify Beth Hess’ commitment to professional service and social justice work through activism.

Torisha’s research and activism centers on bodies, examining the ways bodies are central sites for technologies of power and control. She explores topics such as sexualized violence and sports, and the embodiment of parenthood.

At UNLV Torisha has earned several teaching and research awards and fellowships, including first place for the UNLV Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Award. She works hard to ensure that students feel “seen” in the classroom, carefully constructing her syllabi with diverse authors and content. She wants all students to feel like they belong in academia, that their voices and experiences matter.



PhD Alum Spotlight

Dr. Chris Wakefield, UNLV Sociology PhD Alum

Can you describe your new position at Whitman College?

I am a tenure-track Assistant Professor of Sociology filling specialization gaps around crime and statistical methods. I teach two classes per semester and advise our year-long undergraduate thesis experience, which involves students conducting original sociological research. My primary teaching responsibilities include Sociology of Crime and Delinquency, Introduction to Sociology, and Social Statistics. I am also getting involved in community work around reentry education and support for the formerly incarcerated.

How has the transition from PhD candidate to Asst. Professor been for you? Has anything surprised you?

Whitman College is a very different educational context from UNLV (small, residential liberal arts college vs large R1 research university). People have been absurdly supportive at my institution, helping to connect me rapidly with community members. In only a few months, I have met the chief of police, the superintendent of the local prison, and the two most important components of prisoner reentry in the community thanks to connections people offered me. Whitman places a strong emphasis on the quality of education, where there is a culture of observing each other to provide constructive feedback. In my first few months, I have sat in on multiple classes and had faculty sit in on mine. It made me nervous to have colleagues watch me teach, but I am now excited to learn what ideas people have for me!

What advice would you give to PhD candidates stepping into the job market?

Give institutions the chance to surprise you. I ended up at a small liberal arts college-- the sort of school I never expected to go to. And I am so grateful that I was open to these sorts of schools. They value research, but they know that your teaching is what most of your time is about and they weigh it accordingly. The culture is so supportive and the students are so engaged. You can only know whether the job is a good fit for you when you get there!



What fun non-academic things have you found to do in Walla Walla?

Walla Walla is weird place, a collision of wine tourism and country life. The first semester has kept me very busy, but we have made time to go the country fair (I discovered that I think sheep are pretty cute!), gone to a horse show, seen a few World War II aircraft at the local airfield, and got a nice sunburn at the regional classic car event, which shuts down all of the main drag with over 400 cars! I've also had the pleasure of visiting expensive wine bars with a few amazing sociological visiting scholars, Meda Chesney-Lind (who spoke in my class about feminist criminology) and Jennifer Carlson (sociologist of gun culture and MacArthur Fellow).

spotlight



Undergraduate Alumni Spotlight

Alan Morales, B.A. Sociology, 2023

Alan graduated in 2023 and secured a position with the Culinary Workers Union Local 226, which represents more than 60,000 workers in Las Vegas.

What were your favorite experiences as a UNLV Sociology major?

Some of my favorite experiences as a sociology major was how close knit the sociology community is. When I transferred to UNLV in Fall 2021, I didn't know anyone and it was hard to make friends. However, that changed when I enrolled in my sociology classes.

Everyone in the sociology department is super friendly & the staff genuinely care for the success of students. To this day, I'm still close friends with many of my sociology major friends & I have been able to establish friendly and professional relationships with my professors after graduation.

I also enjoyed the diversity of classes that were available to students. Some of my favorite classes were reproductive politics with Dr. Francis and society and health with Dr. Lawrence.

How do you think you grew intellectually and personally during your undergraduate studies?

I definitely grew intellectually and personally during my undergraduate studies. Before transferring to UNLV, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do career wise. During my time at UNLV, I grew to be more responsible, develop leadership skills and take my studies more seriously. During this time, I become more curious of our social environment and I started speaking more in class. This also helped me

build the courage to take tougher classes and be more active on campus.

What aspects of your sociology degree helped you land your position at the Culinary Union?

One aspect of my degree that helped me land my position at the culinary union was being involved in the social justice movement and understanding the labor movement. At UNLV, I was the former chapter President of Student United for Reproductive Justice (SURJ)- an affiliate of Planned Parenthood and I grew up in a family that was involved in the labor movement. Being passionate for social justice and change is an important aspect of the union.

Another aspect that helped me land my job was having a background on research skills. This includes: citing sources correctly, picking the most accurate sources and being able to digest hard reading material.

What has your work experience been like after graduating?

It's been a great experience! My first few weeks in my job was getting to know the history of the Culinary Union and shadowing different departments. There's been times where it's been really stressful at work but my team and I work really well together and look out for each other. It's been really fun learning the history of the union and help create change for the hospitality workers of Las Vegas.

Undergraduate Major Spotlight

Chloe Bombara

What have been your favorite experiences as a UNLV Sociology (and Psychology) major?

I have had a lot of great experiences as a UNLV Sociology and Psychology major. Some of my favorite have been centered around my time participating in research projects. Learning about the process first had was really fun, and it really added to what I learned about research methods in my classes. Through these experiences, I also got to meet faculty and graduate students from departments outside the College of Liberal Arts. Being on an interdisciplinary team taught me a lot and was a great experience.

It sounds simple, but some of my favorite memories have also just been having good discussions in my classes. I really enjoy being around peers who are passionate and care about what we are learning. I also have many great memories of getting to know my professors and learning about their interests and background.

How have you grown intellectually and personally since coming to UNLV? (Could be through your courses, participation in research, or other academic involvement)

I have grown vastly intellectually and personally since coming to UNLV. To start, I have learned so, so much through my courses! I have particularly enjoyed learning about modern and classical sociological theory, sociology of health, and the sociology of religion. Taking classes in sociology has generally opened my eyes to so much information about our world.

I have also been extremely fortunate to be a part of a couple research projects during my time so far at UNLV. In particular, a project I was a part of with UNLV Sociology and the School of Public Health taught me a lot about

the research process. I learned how to conduct a literature review, how to recruit participants in a medical setting, how to collaborate with professors and graduate students, and how to write research papers.

Being a “sociologist in training” has not only left me with more knowledge but has also allowed me to simply be a better person. Learning about our social world continues to make me more compassionate as well as eager to make a difference with my future path as a sociologist.

What was attending the NextGenPop program at Cornell University like?

Attending the NextGenPop program at Cornell was absolutely wonderful. I had the privilege of attending lectures, participating in discussions and activities, and presenting a final project to a large group of professors, graduate students, and peers. My favorite part of the experience was definitely the amazing relationships I developed during the program. I got to meet great faculty from Cornell and other universities, and other students who share the same passion for sociology and academia that I do. The content that we learned was also fascinating, with topics ranging from demography of the criminal/legal system, to developing surveys that were inclusive to the LGBT community, to the history of health inequality and residential segregation.

For my final project, I presented a research proposal for my future undergraduate thesis project. The project taught me a lot about researching my topic and consolidating a lot of information into a short and easy to understand presentation. Doing the actual presenting was great practice for my public speaking and communication skills. I also got a lot of valuable feedback from professors and peers



that will help me as I develop my thesis proposal into an actual study.

What are your plans after graduation? How will your experiences at UNLV support your personal and professional goals?

My plans after graduation are to go on to a Ph.D. in a top Sociology program. My experiences at UNLV will support my goals in many ways. For one, the research experience I gained will give me a head start in understanding research for my doctoral degree. The experience will also help me get into a good program. Additionally, all of my sociology classes will prepare me to learn sociology at a higher level. The study skills I have gained along the way will definitely be put to use during grad school. Additionally, the relationships I have developed with my professors will provide me with lots of support and resources as I navigate my future in academia and my career.

On a personal level, my experience at UNLV has led to a lot of growth and skills I use in all areas of life. UNLV has instilled determination, research skills, critical thinking, time management, optimism, self-confidence, public speaking, interdisciplinary collaboration, and countless more life skills into me. These allow me to thrive in my personal life as well as my academic one.

Sociology Snapshots

Sociology students, faculty, and staff connected in many ways during 2023.

We gathered at our annual Fall Open House event, research talks, graduations and awards ceremonies, community volunteering, and to cheer on the UNLV Rebels!





In Memoriam

Dr. David Dickens

UNLV Sociology did many great things in 2023, but we also struggled with the great loss of a beloved friend, mentor, and colleague. Dr. David Dickens passed away suddenly Saturday morning, October 8, 2022, at his home in Las Vegas. David joined UNLV in 1984 and was an enormously positive influence on everyone who passed through our program during his 38 years here. His outstanding teaching anchored our department's theory emphasis and drew both undergraduate and Ph.D. students to our program. His innovative scholarship offered important insights on critical and postmodern theory, commodity culture, international development, and qualitative methodologies. David especially embraced his role as a graduate student mentor and served on an extraordinary number of advisory committees in the department and around the university. And, he used his deep institutional and professional knowledge to dispense sage advice in his service contributions to the department, college, university, and our discipline.

After earning his BA in philosophy at the University of Kansas, David moved over to sociology for his MA and PhD. It was a practical decision, he'd always say, due to "the almost complete absence of jobs in philosophy. My philosophy advisor told me that I could switch to sociology and call myself a theorist!" He co-authored several books, including *Las Vegas: The Social Production of an All-American City*, and *Postmodernism and Social Inquiry*, which has been translated into several languages, including Chinese and Korean. He also wrote dozens of theoretical and empirical articles and book chapters for top-tier journals and edited volumes, many that he co-authored with his students. In September 2022, he completed his pioneering book *Neglected Social Theorists of Color: Deconstructing the Margins* (with Korey Tillman and C.C. Herbison), which explores work by ten neglected social theorists of color who provide valuable insights into contemporary society and culture. And, his book *Electronic Dance Music: From Deviant Subculture to Culture Industry*, with Dr. Chris Conner, came out in February 2023.

While a top-notch scholar, David drew as much or more satisfaction in his teaching. His students always commented on the infectious energy, excitement, curiosity, and passion that he brought into his classes. He was there to help his students learn, but also wanted to learn from them. He treated his students with care and respect, while also challenging them to push beyond their limits. Dr. Dickens' students praised him for his deep knowledge, clear expectations and his "ability to relate...complex ideas down to

understandable terms." They called his courses "eye opening," "enlightening," "transparent," and "extremely intelligent." As one student observed, "Dr. Dickens truly wants his students to have a solid understanding of the material. He's always available, has vast knowledge, and keeps class fun and interesting." He reflected in a 2018 interview that "what I especially love about teaching sociology at UNLV is that it provides me the opportunity to work with students, like myself and my old high school buddies, who are first generation college students and who come from a broad diversity of racial and ethnic backgrounds."

David has given so much to so many people who've passed through UNLV Sociology - students, colleagues, and staff. We all marveled at both the breadth and depth of his knowledge. He was truly an interdisciplinary thinker who remained deeply curious to his last day. As one student recently remarked, "He knew so much about so many things." But, while we admired his intellect, we loved him for his selflessness and interest in others' success. Everyone that spent time with David carries a bit of him away with them. He gave his time, energy, and ideas to others in a truly unique way. It's almost impossible for us to imagine a world without David in it. He's an irreplaceable force and truly good person. We will miss him deeply and do our best to carry his legacy forward.

David is survived by his wife Angela, his two children, and his brother. And, of course, by his UNLV Sociology family, scholars, and friends worldwide.



College of Liberal Arts Sociology Distinguished Alumni Award

Dr. Tim Delaney

Tim Delaney was selected as our first College of Liberal Arts Department Distinguished Alumni Award for Sociology. Dr. Delaney is Professor of Sociology and Director of the Sport Studies at SUNY Oswego. He completed his PhD in Sociology at UNLV in 1994 as our second ever doctoral graduate. Since then, he has carved out a long and very productive scholarly career with significant contributions to academic literature, classroom instruction, university and professional service and community service. He has authored, co-authored or edited 28 books on topics ranging from deviance, crime, and street gangs, to sport, friendship and happiness, pop culture, environmental sustainability, and democracy and human rights. He extends his scholarly work through numerous book chapters and journal

articles. He teaches wide-ranging courses and has been involved in many capacities throughout our profession.

Dr. Jim Frey, former COLA Dean, Sociology Department Chair and Professor, was Dr. Delaney’s doctoral advisor. He reflected that:

Tim was an outstanding student while in the doctoral program in sociology at UNLV. I was his dissertation committee chairperson and advisor. He graduated in 1994 and after a few brief and temporary academic positions he settled in at SUNY Oswego where he rose through the academic ranks and put in a term as department chairperson. Over his academic career, he emerged as a prolific scholar with 28 books on a myriad of topics with established publishers. He has also authored many refereed articles, book chapters, book reviews and conference presentations. One only has to review the variety of topics covered in these publications to realize that Tim is an eclectic scholar versed in many of the “Liberal Arts” fields of study and commentary. When a student leaves a program with a graduate degree you are not always sure how successful they will be. I knew Tim would do well but his scholarly productivity far exceeded my expectations. we should be very proud of what he has accomplished. He is a well-deserved recipient of this award. www.oswego.edu/news/story/suny-oswego-sociology-professor-writes-new-book-about-dark-side-societal-behaviors



Classified Staff of the Month

MAY 2023

Caitlin Moscato

Our Office Manager, Caitlin Moscato was chosen as the Classified Employee of the Month for May 2023. This university-wide award signals to all what we in the department already know - she’s a special person, amazing colleague, and immensely important to us. We’re all very happy for her. She and Lauren Markey make a great front office team!