

# Communique

Spring 2004

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI - COLUMBIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

## Where We've Been, Where We're Going

By Jay Gubrium  
Department Chair

The Department of Sociology has undergone significant changes in the past few years. We hope this newsletter conveys the semblance of those changes and highlights valued and continuing traditions. Many of the changes relate to the need to rethink who we are, what we can do and how we can do it, in the face of reductions in public funding for higher education, something taking place across the nation. University departments everywhere have had to focus on what they do best as they strive to maintain robust, general coverage of their disciplines.

MU sociology has experienced a sea change in who we are as a department. Some of this has been the result of the retirement of longstanding faculty members. Just five years ago, the department had 16 full-time faculty members, many of whom were full professors. The University responded in part to decreased public funding by offering its faculty a voluntary early retirement incentive program. For sociology, this resulted in the recent voluntary retirements of six full professors, all active contributors to the department: Barbara Bank, Bruce Biddle, Don Granberg, Peter Hall, Andrew Twaddle and Ed Vaughan.

Professor Jim McCartney, former depart-

ment chair, left full-time teaching to direct the University's International Center. In 2001, I left the University of Florida to join MU's department as chair, with the goal of rebuilding the faculty. Two junior searches are underway, one in the area of race and ethnicity, jointly with the Black Studies Program, and the other in social inequalities. The department expects to continue to recruit at the junior level, hoping to quickly return to its former complement of full-time faculty. It will be a signif-



*New department Chair Jay Gubrium presents an update on MU sociology that includes announcements of faculty retirements and books published, news of curriculum changes and a physical move to new offices in Middlebush Hall. Gubrium left a position at the University of Florida to join the department and work with faculty in reshaping the unit.*



icantly younger department and one whose range of research interests will be more focused than before.

What we will be doing as a department will of course reflect changes in faculty composition as well as the concerted effort the faculty made the past two years to center its course listing on what it can do best. Capitalizing on existing strengths, we have consolidated graduate offerings into four broad substantive areas: Culture and Identity; Political and Economic Institutions and Social Movements; Social Control and Deviance; and Social Inequalities. Cutting across these program areas is the department's heritage of interest in Theory, Knowledge and Critical Inquiry. Those developments will guide future faculty recruitment and the research and dissertations of graduate students.

These changes have extended to the undergraduate level. A task force on undergraduate education comprised of Barbara Bank, Wayne Brekhus, Joan Hermesen, Victoria Johnson and Dick Hessler has formulated a plan for special career-oriented emphases beginning with the introductory course. The emphasis areas are Law, Justice and Society; Power, Inequalities and Social Change; Sexuality, Health and the Life Course; Culture, Identity and the Media; and Organizations, Work, Technology and the Economy. The aim is to expose undergraduates to career possibilities early on by providing classroom experiences of what they can do in the future as sociology graduates. These emphases reflect the programmatic strengths being developed at the graduate level, providing a coherent educational and research mission from beginning to end.

The changes are supported by a new vibrancy in research and educational activity in the department. Ed Brent continues to develop qualitative research software. Dick Hessler and I have been active in grant and contract development in health care and quality of life research. Ken Benson and Ed Brent have helped establish a Pew Foundation Center for Religion and the Professions on

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#### **Editorial Board**

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Amy Lane  
Nancy Moen  
Dan Glover

The department welcomes news from alumni and friends. Send announcements or milestones to the address listed above.

# Let's Hear From You!

To stay in contact with our alumni and to include alumni news in future newsletters or on the department Web site, we are seeking information from our former students. Let us know what you have been up to. Write us a note or visit "Alumni & Friends" to complete the alumni surveys on our Web site, [www.missouri.edu/~socwww](http://www.missouri.edu/~socwww). Send all mail to Department of Sociology, 312 Middlebush Hall, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211-6100. Use the form on page 7 and please include permission to use this information in the newsletter and on the Web site.

campus and are conducting a national survey on the interplay between religion and the professions. To learn about recently published books, read Parade of Books in this newsletter or visit our redesigned Web site at [www.missouri.edu/~socwww](http://www.missouri.edu/~socwww).

Our director of Undergraduate Studies, Joan Hermesen, is doing wonders stimulating interest in the sociology major, while our director of Graduate Studies, Tola Pearce, encourages entering graduate students to move into interesting research directions. Peter Hall, Clarence Lo, Victoria Johnson and Mary Jo Neitz have further developed existing, as well as launched new, colloquium and symposium series, which have added enormously to our intellectual environment. Especially promising is an annual, nationally focused symposium series on the social implications of genetics technologies, which the department expects will contribute to MU's initiative in the life sciences.

Where the department has been has clearly stimulated where it is going and what it will be in the future. We invite our alumni and friends to continue to participate in these challenging times with us. We see great opportunity to reshape our department to address the social issues and problems ahead.

# Symposium Honors Bank's Career

When Professor Barbara Bank came to MU in 1969, there were no courses on women's issues or a women's center, and the first A&S committee on the status of women had just been appointed.

Bank retires from her faculty position at a campus that has a Women's and Gender Studies Program, a

**"I have tried to take seriously the triple goals of doing good research, teaching well and being of helpful service to MU. I think I've compiled a solid record in all three areas."**

—Barbara Bank

*Careerism and Community at a Single-Sex College*, published by Teacher's College Press. Presenters spoke on such issues in education that have been central to Bank's work, especially gender equality.

Presenters were Barbara Townsend, MU professor of education and an authority on women in higher education, who spoke on "Contradictions in Women's Education"; Susan S. Semel, professor of education at the City College of New York and CUNY Graduate Center,

Womens Center and campuswide Status of Women Committees. "I am pleased and proud of the work I did with others in my first decade at MU to get all three," she says.

The faculty honored Bank for her many contributions to the department with a symposium, "Pursuing Gender Equality in Education," on Oct. 4. The proceedings centered on Bank's recent book *Contradictions in Women's Education: Traditionalism,*



*Barbara Bank is retiring after 35 years of teaching at MU. She plans to write, travel and work with a few students.*

speaking on "Single-Sex and Coeducation: Lessons from Wheaton College"; and Rosemary Salomone, professor of Law at St. John's University, who spoke on "Single-Sex Schooling: Exploring the Deep Divide in Feminist Ranks."

In retirement, Bank plans to do some professional writing. She has agreed to organize and edit an encyclopedia focused on gender and education for Greenwood Press. Bank estimates the project will take about two years to complete.

She also plans to work with a few students. One of those is Candace Korasick, who is pursuing a doctoral degree with emphases in gender issues and reproductive politics. Korasick intends to keep "pestering" Bank.

"I feel very fortunate that she agreed to be my adviser," Korasick says. "She is strict but not stuffy. She encourages me and helps me hone my research. She has been an incredible resource for helping me figure out how to be an academic."



*Symposium speakers, from left, are Professor Barbara K. Townsend, MU College of Education; Professor Susan Semel, CCNY and CUNY Graduate Center; Professor Barbara Bank; Professor Rosemary Salomone, Kenneth Wang Professor of Law at St. John's University; and MU Professor Mary Jo Neitz, symposium organizer.*

# Sociology Majors Double in 5 Years

By Joan Hermsen, Director of Undergraduate Studies

It's an exciting time for the undergraduate program in sociology as we experience a period of substantial change and growth. Course offerings are expanding, student-initiated research is increasing and faculty are adopting an array of innovative teaching methods. Also, the number of sociology majors has nearly doubled in the last five years.

Last year, the department undertook a substantial review of the

undergraduate program that led to several changes in the major. First, courses are now clustered into specialty tracks of Law, Justice and Society; Culture, Identity and the Media; Power, Inequalities and Social Change; Sexuality, Health and the Life Course; and Organizations, Work, Technology and the Economy. The tracks provide students the opportunity to concentrate their coursework in specific areas, with a view to possible career interests. We have added new courses to the curriculum to enhance these tracks, Self and Society and The Politics of the Media.

Second, there is a renewed emphasis on practical experience, especially internships and service learning. Students have expressed substantial interest in these opportunities, and the department has responded. In the past year, students have interned with the Missouri Department of Health and Human Services, the Missouri Department of Corrections, Procter & Gamble and the Regional AIDS Interfaith Network. Students' responses are very positive. Some have said that the experience of seeing sociological principles at work has been immensely important to them.

Finally, independent research is now more strongly encouraged, especially of students planning to attend graduate school. The high quality of our undergraduates' research has been recognized on campus. Recently, three students received College of Arts and Science research scholarships in recognition of their outstanding projects. One of our students is a McNair Scholar, a highly com-



PHOTO BY JUSTIN KELLEY

*Winners of the Hans O. Mauksch Paper Competition are Elizabeth Philips, left, who took first prize, and Courtney Mussatt, far right, who won honorable mention. Associate Professor Joan Hermsen, center, presented the awards during Arts and Science Week.*

petitive program designed to prepare academically talented first-generation college students for graduate school through intensive research with a faculty mentor.

Faculty and graduate student instructors continue to provide high quality, innovative instruction. Our courses fill quickly and receive positive evaluations from students. Some of the most popular course offerings include

Organizations and

Institutions, Collective Behavior, and Social Deviance. Writing across the curriculum is a central component of MU's general education plan. The department contributes substantially to these efforts by teaching several courses with a writing-intensive designation. Also, several innovative components are incorporated into our courses, including photography, field observation, content analysis, computer simulation and educational technologies such as the Internet and cdroms.

The department also is engaged in campuswide initiatives to enhance student learning. MU is a recognized national leader in efforts to enhance student learning outside of the classroom, most notably through learning communities and Freshman Interest Groups (FIGs). The sociology department is active in these campus efforts.

In the coming year, we will continue to strengthen the undergraduate program by focusing on two areas. One is to continue to improve the advising process to include career planning. A second area is our continuing effort to build a stronger community among our undergraduates by resurrecting the sociology club and AKD, the sociology honor society.

Recent graduates have followed many paths. Some are pursuing law degrees or are in graduate school. Others are working in human services or business. Conversations with our graduates tell us that they share a sociological imagination that was fostered at MU and that now informs their everyday lives.

# Graduate Student Accomplishments

**David Elliott** and **Kevin McElmurry**, with Professor Peter M. Hall, reviewed sociology alumnus David R. Maine's latest book, *The Faultline of Consciousness: A View of Interactionism in Sociology* (2001), in the August 2003 issue of the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. The review was titled "Interactionism and the Construction of Sociology."

**Matt Lammers** presented " 'Reel' Life Behind Bars: The Image of Prison in Motion Pictures" at the 2003 annual meeting of the Midwest Sociological Society. This paper argues that although few persons will be incarcerated, the understanding of the prison experience is most informed — or reformed — through films depicting life on the "inside." Drawing upon popular films such as *American Me*, *An Innocent Man*, *Escape From Alcatraz* and *The Shawshank Redemption*, Lammers suggests that these films present similar images and themes that reinforce perceptions of what it must be like behind bars.

**Amy Lane** presented "Political Process and the Organized Blind: The National Federation of the Blind (NFB)" at the 2003 Midwest Sociological Society's annual meeting. Lane's paper focuses on the NFB during the late 1950s when it underwent an internal power struggle and attempted to enact civil rights legislation for the blind. This paper places the organized blind movement within the greater context of the civil rights movement and challenges the notion that few disabled groups were politically active prior to the 1970s.

**Mike Lenza** received first place in the 2003 University of Missouri Graduate Student Research Competition, Social Sciences Division, for his paper, "Perspectives on the Politics of Death: a Statistical, Theoretical and Historical Examination of the Death Penalty in Missouri." Lenza gave several presentations during 2003, including these: "Convict Sociologist Michael Lenza Presents: The Death Penalty In Missouri, An Insider's View" and "Ozark Folk Music and Collective Memory" at Southwest Missouri State University; "The Missouri Death Penalty Project: The Realities of Class, Politics & Capital Punishment" at Plattsburgh State University of New York; and "The Prevailing Injustices in the Application of the Death Penalty in Missouri (1978-1996)" for a Kansas City press conference on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Also, he testified before the Missouri Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing on Abolition of the Death Penalty.

**Patrick McGinty** accepted an appointment to a three-year term beginning January 2003 on the American Sociological Association's Honors Program Advisory Board. The Honors Program provides advanced undergraduate students with a rich introduction to the professional life of the discipline at ASA annual meetings.

**Brent Myer** began teaching at Central Methodist College in Fayette, Mo., as a visiting assistant professor of sociology in fall 2003.

**Diane Rodgers** published "The Stigmatizers and the Stigmatized: Enacting the Social Construction of Difference and Discrimination" in *Teaching Sociology* 31(3) in 2003 and "Women's Movement" and "Civil Rights Movement" in the *Encyclopedia of Leadership* in February 2004. She presented "Interpretation of Text: The Talmud as Methodological Technique for Presenting Qualitative Work" at the 2003 Society for the Study of Symbolic Interactionism conference and "Children as Social Movement Participants" at the 2003 Midwest Sociological Society conference.

**Christie Sennott** presented "Lifetime Felony Disenfranchisement Legislation: A Comparative Study" and research focused on the history of LFD legislation in Iowa at the 2003 Society for the Study of Social Problems conference. The paper argues this legislation seems to be largely symbolic because very few individuals are incarcerated in Iowa, thereby affecting only a few. Sennott also presented "Women Drug Users and their Means of Purchase" at the 2003 Midwest Sociological Society conference. This paper is a quantitative analysis of a national sample of incarcerated women drug users.

**Kuo-Yang Tang** received first prize in the Oliver C. Cox Graduate Student Paper Competition sponsored by the Missouri Sociological Association in 2003. Tang presented a paper titled "The Formation and Division of the Taiwan Independence Organization in the USA: A Study of the Social Organization of Resistance" this past spring at the Midwest Sociological Society's conference. His research focused on the formation and decline of Taiwan Independence Organizations in the United States.

# Parade of Books

Publishers' notes on recent books by department faculty members

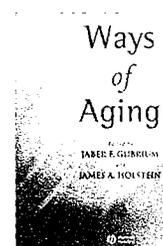
**Barbara J. Bank and Harriet M. Yelon. *Contradictions in Women's Education: Traditionalism, Careerism and Community at a Single-Sex College.* Teacher's College Press, Columbia University, 2003.**

This volume provides a fresh lens for viewing single-sex colleges by examining a different setting, a non-elite women's college in the Midwest. This is the story of how a group of undergraduate women experienced and coped with the contradictions of gender traditionalism, careerism and community that formed the context in which they received their college education.

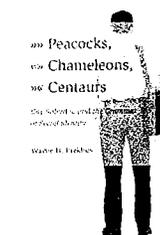


**Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein, editors. *Ways of Aging.* Blackwell Publishers, 2003.**

This book reveals that much, if not most, of the triumphs and trials experienced in later years are not unlike those confronted at other points in life. Like younger people, the elderly experience change and stability, shedding old roles and entering new ones. The process takes place in varied spheres of life: the worlds of home and family, work, and friendship. This engaging text presents 10 essays by leading researchers in social gerontology that explore the everyday aspects of aging.

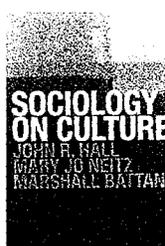


**Wayne Brekhus. *Peacocks, Chameleons, Centaurs: Gay Suburbia and the Grammar of Social Identity.* University of Chicago Press, 2003.**



Brekhus has written a first-ever ethnography of American gay suburbanites. For many urban gay men, being homosexual is key to their identity because they live, work and socialize in almost exclusively gay circles. Brekhus calls such men "lifestylers" or peacocks. Chameleons, or "commuters," live and work in conventional suburban settings but lead intense gay social and sexual lives outside the suburbs. Centaurs, or "integrators," mix typical suburban jobs and homes with low-key gay social and sexual activities.

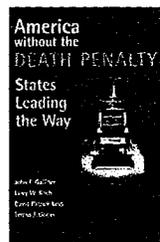
**John R. Hall, Mary Jo Neitz and Marshall Battani. *Sociology on Culture.* Routledge, 2003.**



Because the sociology of culture has grown so much and cultural studies have proliferated over the past quarter-century, there has been no easy way to obtain an informed introduction to the myriad issues at stake. *Sociology on Culture* offers an overview of sociological approaches to culture, their major arguments and their findings. The book's discussions of topics ranging from medieval theater to the Internet, across a variety of societies, are informed by approaches from interpretive sociology and symbolic interactionism, to the Frankfurt school and Foucault.

**John F. Galliher, Larry W. Koch, Teresa J. Guess and David Patrick Keys. *America Without the Death Penalty.* Northeastern University Press, 2002.**

Nationwide surveys indicate that the number of Americans who favor the death penalty is declining. As the struggle over state-sponsored homicide rages on, 12 states and the District of Columbia have taken measures to eliminate the practice. This landmark study is the first to examine the history and motivations of those jurisdictions that abolished capital punishment and resisted the move to reinstate death penalty statutes.



# Faculty Kudos

**Jay Gubrium**, professor and chair, recently published a chapter in *Aging Bodies: Images and Everyday Experience*, edited by Christopher A. Faircloth, with James A. Holstein, titled "The Everyday Visibility of the Aging Body" and "Benchmarking as Everyday Functional Assessment in Stroke Recovery" with M. Rittman, C. Williams, M.E. Young and C. Boylstein in the *Journal of Gerontology*. In 2002, Gubrium published "Going Concerns and Their Bodies" in *Cultural Gerontology*, edited by Lars Andersson. In 2003, Gubrium gave the Abbott Memorial Lecture in the Social Sciences at Colorado College, delivered the keynote address at the Conference on Philosophy of the Health Sciences, Odense University, Denmark, the plenary lecture at the 4th International Symposium on Cultural Gerontology, Tampere, Finland, and gave an invited lecture at Waseda University, Department of Sociology and Council on Family Relations, Tokyo, Japan. Gubrium continues to analyze data from his Veterans Administration sponsored stroke-recovery study and is working with Professor Eileen Porter, MU School of Nursing, on a study of safety issues among frail elderly, funded by the National Institute of Aging. In progress is a collaborative grant application for studying end-of-life perceptions.

**Joan Hermsen**, associate professor and director of Undergraduate Studies, has an article, "Systems of Gender, Race and Class Inequality: Multilevel

Analyses," forthcoming in *Social Forces* with David A. Cotter and Reeve Vanneman.

**Richard M. Hessler**, professor, received a grant from the Cardiovascular Health Program, Missouri Department of Health. This grant has made it possible to support the fieldwork of 10 undergraduate students who have conducted ethnographies in five small Missouri towns. The purposes of the research are to do the ethnographies and to learn how community coalitions form and function in designing and implementing community-based cardiovascular health projects.

**Ibitola O. Pearce**, associate professor and director of Graduate Studies, published "Cultural Production and Reproductive Issues: The Significance of the Charismatic Movement in Nigeria" in *Religion and Sexuality in Cross Cultural Perspective*, edited by S. Ellingson and C. Green in 2002.

**Andrew Twaddle**, professor emeritus, lectured at Otago University School of Medicine in Christchurch, New Zealand; Chiang Mai University School of Nursing in Thailand; Hat Yai University School of Nursing in Thailand; Qingdao University in Peoples Republic of China; Wuhan University in PRC; and Ewan Women's University in Korea in summer and fall 2002. These lectures were on health care reform around the world following the publication of *Health Care Reform Around the World*, edited by Twaddle for Greenwood Press. In 2003, he published a chapter, "How Medical Care Systems Become Social Problems," in George Ritzer's *Handbook of Social Problems*.

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### **Symposium Series**

## **Exploring the Social and Cultural Implications of Human Genetics**

Two prominent sociologists, Troy Duster, president-elect of the American Sociological Association, and Peter Conrad, past-president of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, opened the department's first symposium of a new series on March 8 and 9. The symposium, Life Sciences and Society, centered on the sociocultural consequences of recent developments in human genetics.

Presenters Jonathan Marks, Bonnie LeRoy and Susannah Baruch are distinguished scholars and practitioners in their fields. Miriam Golomb, associate professor of biological sciences at MU, has been working with public school teachers for several years to integrate new knowledge into high school science curricula.

"The department established the symposium series because of the heavy investment in and influence of the life sciences on academia, government, public

health and the economy," says Professor Emeritus Peter Hall. "Too little attention has been paid to how this knowledge will be used, what the effects will be and how the costs and benefits will be allocated. It is in keeping with our departmental history that we raised these kinds of issues."

The symposium, which was open to the public, drew widespread support across campus. The Office of the Provost, Office of Research, College of Arts and Science, Truman School of Public Affairs, School of Medicine, Biotechnology and Society Program, Center for Family Policy and Research Honors College, Science Education faculty, Agricultural Economics and Environmental Rural Sociology faculty all contributed to the event.

Direct questions about the event to Peter Hall by e-mail or phone at HallPM@Missouri.edu and (573) 882-9178.