

SOCIONEWS

THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY— SPRING 2015



WELCOME TO SOCIONEWS!

Welcome to the Spring 2015 edition of the sociology department's SocioNews! Written and produced by the College of New Jersey's chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta - the national sociology honor's society - this biannual newsletter calls attention to student experiences inside and outside of the classroom, and even across the globe. Inside you will find students' reflections on study abroad experiences around the world, internship experiences, and the sociological side of New Jersey's capital, as well as a new look at one of the department's most difficult courses! We hope that you find our newsletter both educational and enjoyable!

"EDUCATION AND SOCIOLOGY:
HOW SOCIOLOGY 375 SHOWED ME THE
WAY"

Meghan Finnegan

"VISUAL SOCIOLOGY: A NEW LOOK AT
TRENTON"

Chris Felton

"LA VITA E' BELLA: LIVING LIKE A FLOR-
ENTINE"

Cara Bronander

"SHAKESPEARE MEETS THE HAKA:
STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE IN THE
LAND OF THE LONG WHITE CLOUD"

Gabrielle Lauda

Pages 2-3

"INTRODUCTION TO URBAN
PLANNING: GAINING A NEW
INSIGHT ON HOW COMMUNITIES
WORK "

Ruby Bertola

"EXPLORING ANTROPOLOGY 373"

Genesis Arteta

"SAME SEX ATTRACTION: INNATE,
ACQUIRED, OR BOTH?"

Catherina Morgan

"TERRACYLE: FOR A MORE SUS-
TAINABLE FUTURE"

Andrew Wilson

Pages 4-6

"SOCIOLOGY AND BUSINESS:
THE PERFECT COMBINATION"

Camille Cruz

"SOCIOLOGICAL INTEREST IN
THE CAPITAL CITY"

Cindy Cortez

"THE ONE SHOT COUNTRY"

Kerrie Hannen

"THE OTHER SIDE OF 302"

Alyssa Scull

Pages 7-8

EDUCATION AND SOCIOLOGY: HOW SOCIOLOGY 375 SHOWED ME THE WAY

When I decided to pursue a degree in Elementary Education, I constantly thought about methods and “interactive learning.” I was petrified that I wouldn’t be able to teach my future students to read, to add double digits or explain to them the difference between eye level view and bird’s eye view (it’s much more difficult than you think). So I studied and I applied my learning—all of course while considering the new Common Core Standards. I took my liberal learnings and diligently completed my child study’s. And yet my work in the sociology department has taught me just as much, if not more, about education.

It began at first with a religion class, Sociology 375. As a class, we talked about what made up society—class, culture, religion, social interactions and how a person was raised. Religion and theory were a key component, but social interaction and the importance of social factors became even more important.

It is because of this that my classroom focus has become more sociologically centered. In my current classroom in Trenton, I see students who come to school without breakfast or their homework finished; I stop and think about what might be the reason behind this? There are students who pronounce “ask” as “ax”. Instead of an Ebonics debate, I want to figure out why this is considered a symbol of illiteracy. It’s not an indication of race that I’ve seen, because “ax” is a general pronunciation in this diverse classroom. Nevertheless, these are now the questions that form instead of the general “So how do I teach them to read?” TCNJ has given me the necessary tools to teach, while considering the social factors that can impact learning.

- Meghan Finnegan

VISUAL SOCIOLOGY: A NEW LOOK AT TRENTON

As part of Dr. Borland’s research seminar on visual sociology, four other students and I went to the Trentoniana photo archive to look for images that show the Old Trenton neighborhood during the period from 1945 to 1965. We found over a hundred photos that fit these criteria. Some photos show parades and celebrations; some show the snow-covered streets following the Great Snow of 1960; and still others show the enormous billboards and bright neon signs that used to hang in the Old Trenton neighborhood.

I found that I am especially interested in the photos that show construction and road paving. What I find particularly striking about these photos is that the machines, vehicles, and materials used in construction are found in more images than the workers themselves. The persons who actually labored to build these vital elements of Trenton’s infrastructure are relegated to the backgrounds of these photos, their faces obscured, their backs often turned toward the camera. Rather, it is cranes,

trucks, and paving vehicles that tend to be the foci of the images.

Of course, it’s difficult to tease out any precise sociological implications of this tendency. I don’t know whether the patterns I observed in these photos are present in other images of construction sites. It’s unclear why workers are considered less photoworthy than the machines and vehicles that a small fraction of them operate, and it’s unclear what effects these sorts of portrayals of workers have on persons who view them. However, it seems to me that there must be some sociological significance to this pattern: that either the pattern itself is significant or the pattern is indicative or representative of some deeper sociological phenomenon (or both). I look forward to continuing this project in Dr. Borland’s research seminar, and I hope that I eventually arrive at something interesting and insightful to say about these photos.

- Chris Felton

La Vita e' Bella: Living like a Florentine

As any other student preparing to study abroad in Italy, I imagined my days full of pizza and gelato, casually strolling through the beautiful historical city I would soon be living in. I quickly learned what an adjustment it would be to live in a new city in a foreign country, but I feel my sociological perspective has allowed me to always approach new places with thoughtfulness and enthusiasm. As much as I felt I was prepared for the trip, having toured Florence once before and brushing up on my high school Italian skills, I was not prepared for how different I would feel following a different schedule of social life.

In the mornings, breakfast is scarce but people are awake and active early in the day; "it's too early" is never an excuse here. "It's too late" isn't either, as Italians are known for eating dinner later in the evening, and spending a long time sitting together. This type of mentality on the use of a day is far different from the American lifestyle, as there is a bigger emphasis on enjoying your day as a whole rather than celebrating parts. While Americans can't wait to finish working 9 to 5 and later get home to dinner and watch TV, Italians take their time

with the day, and I've learned to embrace their slow moving day.

The most striking thing to me is a much larger emphasis on individual responsibility for the collective good. Everyone is content with following the rules and courtesies that daily life require because they know that's how their society best functions. You stamp your ticket before getting on the train, but nobody checks it; you wait for the green to cross the street, even with no cars coming; you take your trash to the bins located every two blocks. Everyone does their part to make everyone else's lives easier, and I believe that's a key factor to the way Italians, especially Florentines, enjoy life. It's not about yourself and getting ahead, it's about slowing down and enjoying everything you do.

While these are not dramatic changes to my lifestyle, they have made me more thoughtful about my own experiences nonetheless. The schedule of daily life in Florence is forcing me to make the most out of every day, go out of my way to talk to people (in Italian), and explore places and cultures I've never experienced... and if that's not the point of studying abroad, what is?

- Cara Bronander

"It's not about yourself and getting ahead, it's about slowing down and enjoying everything you do."



**SHAKESPEARE MEETS THE HAKA:
STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE IN THE LAND OF THE LONG WHITE CLOUD**

When people talk about New Zealand, they often speak of beautiful landscapes or sports like rugby and cricket. Yes, the rumors are true. The rolling hills on the countryside leave you breathless, the deserted beaches with rugged coastlines are beautiful, and as New Zealand hosts the world cup for Cricket, the Black Caps continue to win and make their nation proud. With that said, New Zealand is exciting place to be! However one thing people tend not to mention much when they speak of New Zealand is the ancestry that makes up New Zealand's population. One in Seven people usually living in New Zealand belong to the Maori ethnic group (New Zealand Census, 2013). Given that almost 15% of the population is of Maori decent cultural traditions of Maori people are woven throughout aspects of New Zealand society. One of these traditions that I find most intriguing is the Haka. You may be familiar with it, if you have ever watched an All Black Rugby game (New Zealand's National Team). The team performs the Haka Ka Mate before matches and it can be quite intimidating if you are an opponent of theirs. The Haka is a war chant. Essentially the All Black Rugby team is declaring war on their opponent before every match. A famous chief, Te Rauparaha, composed the Haka Ka Mate during a period of conflict with an adversary Tribe in the Taupo lake region. When the time came to fight the chief muttered:

Ka mate, ka mate! ka ora! ka ora!
Will I die, Will I die
Ka mate! ka mate! ka ora! ka ora!
Will I live, Will I live
Tēnei te tangata pūhuru
This is the hairy man
Nāna nei i tiki mai whakawhiti te rā
Who brought the sun and caused it to shine
Ā, upane! ka upane!
A step upward, another step upward!
Ā, upane, ka upane, whiti te ra
A step upward, another... the Sun shines!

Essentially the Haka can be compared to a speech given to a fleet of soldiers before they engage in battle. When I heard the lyrics to the Haka I quickly compared it the

Shakespeare's famous Henry V's speech. King Henry incites his much-disadvantaged army to fight the French in the Battle at Agincourt and states:

**We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me Shall be my
brother; be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition;
And gentlemen in England now-a-bed
Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles
any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint
Crispin's day.**



Both the Chief and King Henry contemplate the possibility of death in their speech. However both men decide that they will fight for their nation or tribe, outnumbered until the "Sun Shines" in victory. Although the speech style of the Haka and King Henry's speech would be portrayed in contrasting ways I think it is interesting to note the similarities of values between the two different Social Groups. In Maori culture the men consider it their duty to risk their lives to protect their wives and children. In fact, the chief mentions "the hairy man", meaning a woman, in his chant before battle as a means of motivation in himself to fight. Shakespeare similarly writes speeches with kings evoking their soldiers to take on the spirit of a tiger in war-time in order to keep England safe. A deep sense of Nationalism and manhood can be found between both; various types of the Haka and Shakespeare's war speeches. The Haka not only makes interesting connections to New Zealand contemporary culture but can also be linked with other cultural values, as we see a link between Maori and English Nationalism. Other cultural experience incites discovery in the values of American society itself. Even half way across the world we can be linked through cultural traditions of our Ancestors and community.

-Gabrielle Lauda

INTRODUCTION TO URBAN PLANNING: GAINING A NEW INSIGHT ON HOW COMMUNITIES WORK

When I enrolled in Introduction to Urban Planning, I had no idea what to expect from the course. I figured we simply would learn the history of how different cities were planned and who planned them, but I've gotten much more than this. Dr. Candice Dias takes the course to a new level using the fourth hour as a way for the students to immerse themselves in communities to truly see how they work. I get to take what I've learned about the set-up of cities and neighborhoods and observe how they change not only the environment, but also how people interact within it. Our first paper assignment required us to observe for forty-five minutes in a busy area of a city, or in my case a suburb, looking at how people interact with each other, determining if there is a feeling of safety, and observing the overall feel of the environment. I chose to sit in the downtown of my suburban hometown and got the chance to look at Ridgewood, New Jersey in a whole new light. I was able to see how the length of the blocks and the mix of businesses worked together to create a safe and social

environment, as well as how this safe environment gives my town a friendly neighborhood feel.

This class is so much more than a history lesson on how cities are planned, as we get to apply what we learn to our environments and see how the planning affects the people within it. Another exciting aspect to the course is the second paper requiring all the students to attend a city or town planning meeting open to the public. There is a planning meeting in my town over spring break that I intend on going to and it is going to be interesting to see the problems in my town that are going to be discussed and the plans to solve them. Overall this course has offered me a new outlook on my surroundings and experiences that I would not have considered or accomplished on my own. I am looking forward to what Dr. Dias has in store for us with this rest of the semester!

- Ruby Bertola

EXPLORING ANTHROPOLOGY 373

At The College of New Jersey, there are few times a year more stressful than the enrollment period. Students spend hours and sometimes days relentlessly planning their schedules for the upcoming semesters, only to sometimes end up in classes where they never expected to be. Hours upon hours refreshing your shopping cart on PAWS, desperately hoping that hopeful green "spots open" symbol does not change to the somber, despondent blue box indicating that your class has closed. Plenty of times we might find ourselves sitting in a class wondering why our first choices of classes in our shopping cart were closed before our enrollment. Other times we think about how lucky we were to end up in a class that catches our full attention each time. I am lucky to say that this is what happened this semester. I am currently taking Anthropology 373: Public Health and Social Policy instructed by Professor Prassas. Not only is this course informative, but very relevant to our everyday lives despite our different backgrounds or career aspirations. In this course you will learn about the Affordable Care Act, Health Insurance History, and how you can directly be impacted by new health policies based

on your social economic status, employment, ethnicity, and age. The popularity of this course has also led for Professor Prassas to open a new class next semester regarding health disparities. This will be a topic course for sociology and anthropology open to all students. There is much to be said about taking the time to explore the ways our society and societies across the globe are impacted by the politics and regulations regarding health, so I encourage every student, regardless of major or future plans, to take this class and expand their views on such an important topic.

- Genesis Arteta

"There is much to be said about taking the time to explore the ways our society and societies across the globe are impacted by the politics and regulations regarding health"

SAME SEX ATTRACTION: INNATE, ACQUIRED, OR BOTH?

The nature vs. nurture debate bothered me for a long time. I always wanted to know the proportion of how much is predisposed by biology and how much is learned from developing within a certain society. I've discussed the topic with friends and professors, trying to reach a conclusion that I could accept. I've come to realize that there is no way to determine where nature stops and nurture begins. The two forces act on us together at the same time to shape who we are and who we choose to be. Dr. Girard once told me that trying to separate the two would be like trying to separate water from water: it doesn't make any sense to try.

When traits are considered to be biological, we see them as unchangeable. For example, I'm white. My biological truth is that I have pale skin, so I fall under the white race category. That won't change. My ethnicity is Spanish because my mom's family emigrated from Spain and kept their culture alive. My ethnicity is less about what genes lined up to encode for my appearance and more about what type of social environment I was raised in. If I was adopted and raised by a completely different family, my ethnicity would be completely different as well.

Most gay rights activists defend homosexuality as a biological truth. Most gay people I know don't think that being gay is something that developed due to some external, societal factor. They feel a certain attraction inside and consider it to be biological. Opposition to homosexuality is often grounded in the belief that it is both unnatural and a choice – a wrong choice. Certain religious groups even believe that you can “pray the gay away” and promote counseling to “cure” homosexuality. Gay people respond exactly how one would expect: “I was born this way.” They assert that being gay is biological, and thus, an unchangeable fact. However, at this point in time, we don't know if biology or the environment we live in causes different types of attraction. There's a good chance that it's both.

These two groups are trying to do what I used to do when pondering the nature vs. nurture debate. They are trying to label homosexuality as either innate or acquired, without attempting to see that maybe same-sex attraction is caused by a little bit of both. Regardless, whether being gay is a choice or a biological truth, it should not matter. It is what you are. People should have the freedom to love whomever they want, irrespective of whether the attraction they feel is derived from their biology or an external factor.

- Catherine Morgan

TERRACYCLE: FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

As a Sociology major at TCNJ I have taken a wide range of classes that focus on different cultural issues and more recently my classes have focused on current environmental and planning issues. Through our discussions in these classes I have realized the multitude of cultural dynamics that play into magnifying issues of limited sustainability and environmental health and I began to worry that many of these issues were too deeply ingrained in our culture to be solved by students such as myself just coming out of college. However, my view began to change when I started my job search and began my internship with TerraCycle, an international recycling company with a mission to increase environmental education and awareness and reduce the world's environmental impact.

My internship at TerraCycle put me in contact with city officials, schools, and other companies from

all over the country who were willing to become more environmentally conscious but just didn't know how. I was amazed how interested and excited people were to recycle and be a part of the change, even when it often meant more involved work for their organization. I then realized how vital companies like TerraCycle are, not just for their ability to recycle non-recyclable goods, but to provide a means for change for those who are willing but just don't know how. A quote from one of my favorite movies *Field of Dreams* is especially relevant, “if you build it, they will come”. Perhaps the arrival of companies that recycle, behave sustainably, and promote holistic well-being will provide the necessary framework that will bring people together to change these problems so deeply ingrained in our culture.

- Andrew Wilson

SOCIOLOGY AND BUSINESS: THE PERFECT COMBINATION

Coming to TCNJ, I knew I wanted to combine my passion for sociology and my passion for business into a career that would be both rewarding and successful. I wasn't sure if I would be able to find this perfect combination until I came across the Human Resources Minor. Human Resources is a pivotal part of any company, as it pertains to the interactions and relationships between employees. I am able to experience first hand how Sociology and Business are a perfect fit, as I am currently working as a human resources intern where I use my knowledge of sociology on a daily basis. Sociology provides me with the background needed to understand employee and customer needs, which is key in human resources. Having this background also allows me to understand the cultural and social aspects that shape an individual, and with this knowledge I can help the company avoid alienating employees due to their differences.

"ONE OF THE MANY THINGS THAT I LOVE ABOUT SOCIOLOGY IS JUST HOW ADAPTABLE AND APPLICABLE THE INFORMATION IS TO EVERYTHING."

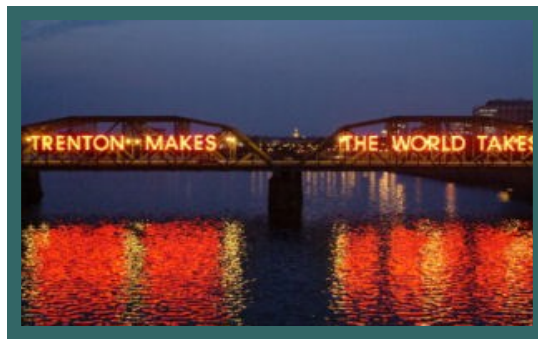
One of the many things that I love about sociology is just how adaptable and applicable the information is to everything. Just because you are Sociology major, it doesn't mean that you are forced into a certain career field and you can only have a certain career; the lessons and information taught in Sociology can be used for anything. Through my experiences, I find that Sociology and Business are a perfect match, as they both compliment each other in a way that allows me to find my internship both rewarding and insightful. I'm glad that I was able to find an area that allowed me to combine both of my passions, and I couldn't be happier in finding this field of study.

- Camille Cruz

SOCIOLOGICAL INTEREST IN THE CAPITAL CITY

As a third-year Sociology and Spanish double major at the College of New Jersey, I had the opportunity to be a research assistant for Dr. Diane Bates during the fall semester of 2014. Our research topic was to investigate on the history of Trenton, New Jersey. Due to my previous work through the Bonner Institute for Civic and Community Engagement and as a native of Trenton, I was interested in researching the history of the Latino immigrants that now make up more than half of the city's population.

At the end of the semester, I had completed five research projects, which ranged in topics but still held some tie to the Latino community. I first researched the history of Central Americans in Trenton and that raised my interest in the numerous Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids that began in the spring of 2004 and was particularly interested in what effects these raids had. Unfortunately, I came to the clear realization of the deeply rooted fear instilled in the Latino community that experienced racial profiling and disturbing treatment by ICE officials claiming to be police officers. I was then able to link this occurrence in 2004 to the lack of Latino political involve-



ment. Currently, I am an intern at the Department of Housing and Economic Development and am conducting a gap analysis for Trenton City Hall. My research will address ways in which City Hall can improve relations with the ever-growing Latino population in the capital city. Findings will be reported in the next edition of SocioNews... so stay tuned!

- Cindy Cortez

THE ONE SHOT COUNTRY

In South Korea, social mobility is the only purpose of education. Families and communities rely on education to elevate their status and bring honor to their homes. However, it is not the accumulation of degrees or the culmination of 10 compulsory years of education that determines whether you will be moving up the social ladder. Instead, your status is determined by a single day when your entire education can be reduced to a number. The South Korean graduation exam represents how a student's life will be; a good number means a good future. On this day, police cars roam the streets to keep distractions away from the school building, air traffic is re-directed so that the classrooms are as quiet as possible, parents line up outside of church doors to pray endlessly, and communities rally around the doors to cheer students on as they enter the school. Only two percent of students who take this exam will be admitted to the three prestigious universities in South Korea, with this

“INSTEAD, YOUR STATUS IS DETERMINED BY A SINGLE DAY WHEN YOUR ENTIRE EDUCATION CAN BE REDUCED TO A NUMBER.”

admission will come a good job, a nice house, and a lifetime of ease.

However, in order to reach this point, South Korean students must spend endless hours studying years before the exam. In fact, in order to prepare for this exam, students are enrolled in hagwons, exam tutoring, from elementary school. Between school and tutoring hours, students spend more than 12 hours a day in the classroom. It is no surprise then, when you enter a South Korean classroom, you will find students napping on specially designed arm pillows. Late night studying even persists to the extent that the government had to enact a police force to break up studying groups and tutoring centers after 11 PM. Midnight police raids bust hagwons and require students to go home and sleep. Although America shares the same goal of education as South Korea, social mobility, it is manifested quite differently. When examining these “one-shot countries” it is easy to see that we are not as entrenched in a culture of testing as many believe.

THE OTHER SIDE OF 302

SOC 302. Hearing those words sends a shiver down the spine of every TCNJ Sociology major, whether they have already taken the class or not. As a Sophomore I battled through it, spending hours in the windowless basement trying to pick variables and figure out how to use SPSS properly. When the semester ended, I was both proud and relieved that I had completed one of the hardest courses in the major. But my time with 302 had not yet come to an end.

The next semester, I was faced with the course again. This time, I had to understand the material even more thoroughly, because I was the TA. I actually have to teach people how to do this? I thought before I got there on the first day, nervous about what would happen if I did not remember how to do something or told someone the wrong information. If people think that trying to keep their own grade up is a lot of pressure, imagine helping 20 different students do it, and that was my mindset.

Luckily I was eased into it, with a few people coming at a time. They asked about the beginning functions of SPSS, and I surprised myself with how quickly the instructions came back to me. I guess after recoding every variable I used the process stuck with me. As I answered people's questions or helped them understand why they were using certain functions, my confidence level increased. Having this experience gave me a new perspective on the class and deepened my knowledge of the subject, which has proven useful in other courses as well. And a word of advice to 302 students from my time as a TA: if you want to make sure you understand something, explain it to another student. Or even to your computer screen. Talking through what you did will help you see where you made a mistake, the exact steps in the process, or even what it is all supposed to mean.

- Alyssa Scull

ALPHA KAPPA DELTA

SOCIONEWS SPRING 2015 CONTRIBUTORS

Genesis Arteta
Ruby Bertola
Cara Bronander
Cindy Cortez
Camille Cruz
Chris Felton
Meghan Finnegan
Kerrie Hannen
Catherine Morgan
Gabrielle Lauda
Alyssa Scull
Andrew Wilson



**SOCIOLOGY & ANTHROPOLOGY DEPARTMENT
THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
PO Box 7718
EWING, NJ 08628-0718
ALPHAKAPPADELTA.PAGES.TCNJ.EDU**