

# SOCIONEWS

THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY - ALPHA KAPPA DELTA - SPRING 2014



## Welcome to SocioNews!

Welcome to the Spring 2014 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, post graduate planning, and the importance of learning outside of the conventional classroom, as well as the inner workings of AKD. We sincerely hope you find our newsletter both enlightening and enjoyable!

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# The Inside Scoop on AKD

AKD, these three letters in conjunction are mentioned throughout the Sociology Department but few may actually know what they mean. Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD) is the International Sociology Honor Society founded in 1920. The Honor Society is a network of the country's highest achieving scholars in the field of sociology including undergraduates, graduates, and faculty. Here at TCNJ, the Xi chapter is under the advisement of Dr. Diane Bates. AKD is run by an executive board of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Service Coordinator. The E-Board is voted on by its members each year. New cohorts are inducted into the honor society each Spring at an Induction Ceremony. To be invited to join AKD, students must be majoring in sociology, hold a 3.3 GPA overall, 3.3 GPA in sociology classes, and complete 4 units of sociology at TCNJ. In addition to these standards, the chapter also requires members to participate in two department service activities such as Accepted Students' Day, Lions Days, Welcome Week, and other programming events

sponsored by the department. Participation in a community service project is also a requirement that members of the first AKD cohort created. This tradition has continued over the years and builds connections between AKD and the people served. Two of the most recent service projects have been holding a clothing drive for the Rescue Mission in Trenton and helping first year students move into their dorm rooms during Welcome Week. AKD inductees must finally contribute to SocioNews and pay the lifetime membership fee to be inducted as well. Participation in Alpha Kappa Delta is a great way to become more involved in our department and serves as a great resource. The society offers the opportunity for its members to apply for scholarships yearly, sends out a sociology journal to all of its members and sponsors paper competitions. The Xi chapter of AKD at TCNJ is an important addition to the Sociology Department and is continuing to grow each and every year.

*Brianna Anthony*

## Welcome to our 2014 Inductees!





## The Real “Orange is the New Black”

Carly Hann

Not many students can say they have taken a course that has changed their lives. However, I am one of the lucky few that can. I was selected to be a part of Dr. Michele Tarter’s literature course at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility in Clinton, New Jersey; Edna Mahan is a maximum-security women’s prison. Every week we are able to experience the prison system by attending class in the prison and not just by watching “Orange is the New Black” on Netflix.

Every Tuesday, nine TCNJ students travel with Dr. Tarter to Edna Mahan where we take her “Women’s Autobiographies” literature course with sixteen female inmates. The inmates are working to earn their bachelor degrees and receive college credit for the course. The inmates or “wise women” as Dr. Tarter calls them are intelligent, thoughtful, inspirational, and poetic. They offer a very

“The women inmates offer a very distinct perspective that is not available in a classroom with only TCNJ students”

distinct perspective that is not available in a classroom with only TCNJ students.

As a Sociology student, I have found the class to be absolutely fascinating. Besides the wise women’s amazing thoughts and contributions to the class, I find the things I learn from them about the prison system to be most interesting. Prisons offer a distinctive culture that is very different from the “real world.” Through these women, I am learning how they navigate the prison system, culture and how they view life on the outside.

I can already say with confidence that this course has changed my perspective on poverty, crime, and gender. I have become increasingly interested in possibly working in the corrections system in the future as a social worker and hope to continue to be an advocate for female inmates!

## Deciding to Study Abroad for a Full Year

Holly Malerba

When I left to study abroad for a semester in Lima, Peru, I was very nervous to be so far away from home for five months. To my surprise, I adjusted very quickly and after only six weeks, I was calling my parents to tell them I wanted to stay a full year. Due to logistical reasons, I ended up deciding to study the following semester in Granada, Spain and came home for a month for winter break in-between semesters.

I thought Spain would be different than Peru, but I did not expect it to be as different as it was. I expected more cultural similarities due to the fact that the two countries share a language. Even within Spain, there are so many distinct cultures and languages. Granada is in southern Spain and there is a strong Arabic influence. The architecture in Granada is what you would expect to see in Morocco and many will agree the best meal you can get in Granada is a chicken shawarma, which is similar to a gyro with a Middle Eastern twist.

After returning to the United States, I am craving to go abroad again, to work, to live and to travel. Studying abroad taught me a lot about myself, and increased my sense of self-reliance and independence. Since coming back to TCNJ, I am more confident in my classes and I have a clearer plan for the future. Becoming more fluent in Spanish has opened many more opportunities for me. Following graduation, I plan to return to South America to teach English for a year or two. I ultimately would like to work with Hispanic immigrants in the U.S. or in international education.



source: <http://oge.pages.tcnj.edu/>

# FOR THOSE WHO NEED MOTIVATING

EVEN THE MOST  
INQUISITIVE OF  
STUDENTS NEED  
SOME MOTIVATION  
EVERY ONCE IN A  
WHILE

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Sociology is fun. I like to think that most of us have declared this major because there's something about sociology – about studying groups of people and structures of society – that gets something pumping in our blood, excites something in our soul. Be it positive information or negative information, learning about the world is interesting. But even the most inquisitive of students need some motivation every once in a while. Even the most passionate learners have moments of stillness, monotonous feelings that make us want to escape the world of academia for something more exciting – something less school-y. I know people who have been pointing their finger at “Senioritis” since the first class of Senior year, I know others who have been playing the “Senioritis” card since they were Freshmen. Put it back in the deck.

As Sociology students, we tend to write a

lot of essays. Many of us fall victim to the blank page and irritating, blinking cursor. Don't think of it like it's an essay; don't even think of it like it's an assignment. Think of it like it's an adventure – a new opportunity to sit with yourself and hear what you have to say. Now I realize the word “adventure” might have thrown you off. “An essay is not an adventure. Shut up.” But what is a paper if not an adventure in self-discovery? How often are we forced to have conversations where we are not able to speak? Where we cannot get all of our ideas out for the sake of respecting and considering the position of the other? This is your chance to monopolize a conversation. This is your 1500-word, 6-page chance to show your professor everything you know – more importantly, to show yourself everything you know. Make it about you – make it for you. Think of your professor as someone who just happens to have the opportunity to read your intellectual journey once you are



WRITING  
IS AN ADVENTURE  
-WINSTON CHURCHILL

source: <http://writania.com/writing-is-an-adventure/>

through. It is your experience to have. And if you treat it as such, that will be made clear in the writing. It will be your heart and soul in document-form. If you treat it as such, it will crossover from assignment to adventure. It will not be something you have to escape from, but something you can escape to.

For those who need motivating, here's to you.

Jenna Benjamin



## **SOCIOLOGISTS FOR HIRE**

**Laura Magaw**

As many of the seniors look forward to graduation, I believe it is important to remember how versatile the Sociology major truly is. Sociology teaches individuals to look critically at the world around them in order to analyze our social interactions. These core concepts are applicable to any job out there! When I first started looking at job descriptions, I wondered how my Sociology major fit into a future teaching job. I was nervous that other core content majors such as history or math would be favored during the hiring process. Thankfully I was wrong! When employers asked me tough questions that were made to stump me, I was able to pull in many things I had learned within the major. For example, one question asked what I would do with a student in crisis. I immediately brought up the social work class I took and my knowledge of how to connect individuals to services. Another employer asked me what I believe drives future instruction. I almost jumped out of my seat explaining how much I like working with statistical data and how I could use simple cross tabulations to compare how successful my lessons were by gender. Turns out the interviewer did his entire masters thesis using SPSS! We bonded over remembering kind nights in the lab over linear regression models.

In the hectic hiring process it is easy to feel intimidated. When I was interviewing for jobs, I had to stop and remind myself how much I truly do know. We have worked hard over these last four years for this moment and we are prepared. More importantly, we have chosen a major that gives us the tools to succeed in whatever profession we choose! I am happy to say I've accepted a job I am very excited about and my Sociology major helped get me there.

## **The Benefit of Community Based Learning in Sociology**

As sociologists, we are trained to examine society on a daily basis, both in the classroom and in our interactions with the world. The reason most of us are drawn to the discipline is because of its practical applications that can be utilized to improve society. One of the best ways to practice this is by pairing a sociology course with an appropriate field experience. Some classes build it into the program, such as Intro to Social Work and Intro to Applied Sociology. Others encourage it, but do not explicitly provide the framework to do so.

Having taken Intro to Social Work, I can say from experience that being in the field richly enhances one's learning experience. The information I learned in class was invaluable. However, it was working at a preschool for underprivileged children that truly allowed me to see how the information I was gleaning from the course related to "the real world." By completing the required thirty hours of field experience, I gained a deeper understanding of what social work actually looks like.

Although there are limited sociology courses that directly incorporate this type of experience, it is certainly not beyond the realm of possibility to plan your own project. While this may not appeal to everyone, I strongly encourage volunteering at some point during your college careers. Our proximity to Trenton puts us in a unique location, as there are countless needs in our neighboring community. And you don't have to go to Trenton to volunteer; there are opportunities to do so right on campus. Not only will you be able to enhance your sociological knowledge, but you will touch lives in ways you may not even realize. That, at the end of the day, is what being a sociologist is all about.

*Stephanie Mallinas*

# Study Abroad in Beer Sheva, Israel

*Alexis Jaffe*



**Photo taken by Alexis Jaffe**

Last year, I was lucky enough to spend spring semester studying in Beer Sheva, Israel. I was able to emerge in their culture, learn the norms of the people, find out different values, and discover the various roles among their society. During my time, I was able to experience a few holidays and how the meaning in Israel is so different compared to America. In America, Memorial Day is in May and Independence Day is in July, and both are excuses to have off from work or school and to spend time with family and friends at barbecues. Rarely do people sit and actually think about the true significance of these holidays. Currently in Israel, all 18 year olds are required to join the Israeli Defense Forces. Men and women are assigned different roles in various sectors, but all service is important. Because of the mandatory service, almost everyone knows an individual who has lost their life to serving their country. Memorial Day, Yom HaZikaron is a holiday to actively commemorate those who have fallen. The names of soldiers who have passed are continuously displayed throughout the country and there are ceremonies held at major cemeteries. This is truly a time of reflection for the Israeli citizens. Immediately following Yom HaZikaron is Yom HaAtzmaut, Independence Day. The two holidays are intentionally placed on consecutive days because they are supposed to build upon each other. Memorial Day is a time for reflection which then builds into hope and freedom. Many have fallen for Israel to exist, but the fact is that it does. Through the many battles and wars, Israel has not been defeated, and that is truly something to celebrate.



## Applying Sociology Outside the Classroom

I took my first sociology class the second semester of my freshmen year. It was SOC101 and my advisor said that it would be a good class to take if I was ever interested in becoming a sociology major. I didn't know what sociology even was, so why would I even want to make it my major? As the semester flew by and I finished the class, I was hooked and wanted to become a sociology major. Now, it's my

second semester of my junior year and I've taken a lot of great classes



source: <http://oavi.pages.tcnj.edu/green-dot/>

since then. But, more importantly, I've seen how sociology is not only inside the classroom.

I am currently interning at our Anti-Violence Initiatives office on campus. Even though the office provides counseling and other resources on an individual level, as an intern I have made efforts that I have seen impact the whole student population. Right now, I am working on a Green Dot campaign. A Green Dot is any choice, behavior, attitude, or words that actively contribute to a culture of safety. Essentially, we want to rid the campus of violence, one Green Dot at a time. In order to spread the word, a part of my internship has been to post

hundreds of Green Dots cut-outs around campus to get people's attention. Since posting the dots, I have noticed a difference about how students act on campus. People have been talking about the Green Dot and asking questions. As a sociology major, I see how this campaign has affected a community and how it's challenging norms. It's crazy to think that during my freshmen year, sociology was just what I read in a textbook. But now, it's something I notice in everyday life.

Sara von Bartheld

## Studying Abroad in the Miraculous Kingdom of Morocco

Studying abroad in the miraculous Kingdom of Morocco has touched my life in ways that I could have never otherwise imagined. It was the day that I picked up a brochure and decided, in that moment, that I was going to Morocco. I applied to the program, and the next thing I knew, I was at Mohammed V Airport in Casablanca. It was not only the quickest decision that I had ever made, but it was also the most transformative. I was fortunate enough to travel all around the country and everywhere I went, I felt welcomed as if I was a native. Morocco has a way of conjuring feelings inside of you that you never knew existed. When you look around, everything is so picturesque that it almost seems unreal. It is not only the mesmerizing architecture, the entrancing call to prayer, or the

fusion of traditionalism and modernism. It's not just about crowded souqs, the sight of donkeys, camels, and sheep everywhere; it is not only the Sahara Desert. It is not just the sight of mind-blowing waterfalls, streams, lakes, or rivers. *It is about beautiful people. Beautiful people are what make Morocco...Morocco.* I

thought I knew what the meaning of peace was going into this journey, but I was so wrong. Living in a different country, with a different culture, different religion, different language, essentially different everything, yet still feeling like you are exactly where you are meant to be is embodying peace. I will forever be indebted to the country of Morocco and most importantly, to all the Moroccans who have made me feel more at home there than I have ever felt in America. No matter how far I am from you Morocco, you are never too far from me because I carry your essence within me.

Lauren Kaplan

# Post-Graduate Planning for Sociology Majors

Dominique Pierre

*The scope of Sociology is expansive; the real world application of the field is also wide-ranging and growing in importance. As a Sociology student, going for a post-graduate degree may open up many opportunities. By taking the right steps and planning ahead, you can make sure you complete the application process as thoroughly and as stress free as possible.*

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First and foremost you should identify your potential career interests and goals in order to decide if going on to higher education will be beneficial to you in the future. Once you have made your decision, it will be useful to start looking to gain some experience through research, internships, or volunteer work in whatever it is that you are trying to pursue. Not only will it make your application stronger, it will help you decide whether

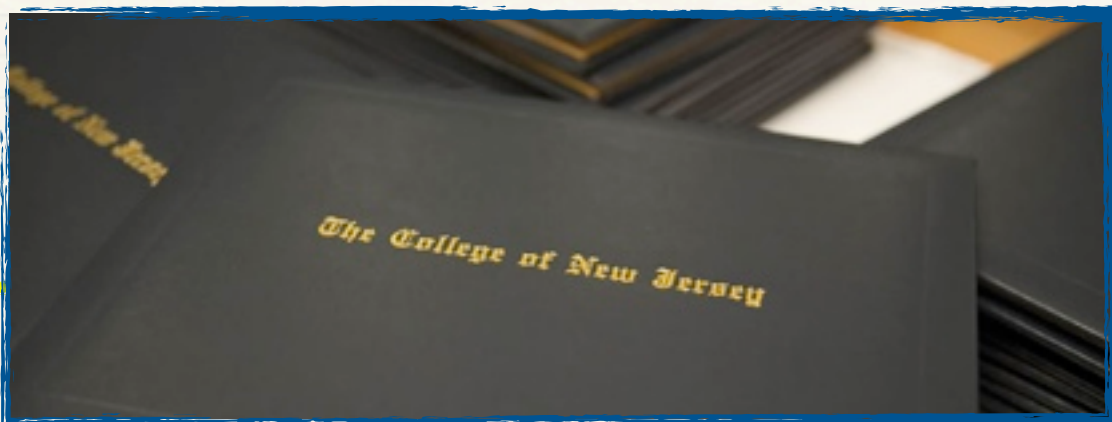
or not you enjoy the field you are pursuing to enter.

Next, to give yourself adequate time to do research on graduate programs begin to make a timeline. Put in all application and financial aid materials and study for any required exams such as the GRE or GMAT. During this process, make sure to reach out to professors, advisers and fellow classmates for questions and advice. Have someone look over your resume, and statement of purpose.

Graduate school applications will require letters of recommendation, usually between two and four. Thus, it is important to establish relationships with your professors, advisers and employees as they will be the ones in the best position to

speak to your academic and professional abilities. When asking for a letter of recommendation, be sure to give your letter writer enough time to complete the letter; the standard is about 3 weeks. Also be sure to be specific and provide them with all the information they need to write your letter.

After doing your research, studying for exams, getting your letters of recommendation and working on the application, it will finally be time to apply! The only thing for you to do then is wait to hear back. Remember to investigate all programs and curriculums thoroughly and contact the Admissions office of the schools you are applying to so you can receive all the answers to your questions and make the best decision for you and your goals.



source: <http://commencement.pages.tcnj.edu/>



# INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL WORK: HOW IT OPENED MY EYES

MARY BURNS

It's very common for a college student to have no idea what they want to do when they graduate. When I came into the College, I was sure I wanted to go onto medical school and become a plastic surgeon. After fighting my way through Chemistry and realizing I spent most of my free time researching graduate programs in sociology rather than medical schools, I realized that maybe being a doctor wasn't the life I really wanted. Now, almost halfway through SOC 205, Introduction to Social Work, I couldn't be surer.

Even though I have only been in the class since January, every piece of information I've learned has changed my life. However, the most shocking thing I've learned is America's poverty threshold formula. Developed in 1964 and not updated since, this "economy food plan" for designating poverty fails to account for the actual cost of living. For a family of 4, this means that if their income threshold is about \$23,550, they are legally not considered to be in poverty. This dollar amount was developed to cover the cost of food, not other necessities required for

living a successful comfortable life. So, even though the official poverty rate in 2012 was 15 percent, it became clear that is statistic is probably way, way off.

After learning this information, I realized that there are so many people living in poverty not receiving the help they so desperately need. This made me change the way I look at myself and the world. Because of this class, I realized that I want to dedicate my life to helping people in a way only a social

*"Because of [SOC 205], I realized that I want to dedicate my life to helping people in a way only a social worker can."*

worker can. Not only do I want to spend a good part of my life doing individual counseling for struggling children, since the poverty rate in 2011 for children under the age of 18 was 21.9 percent, but I also want to work on social policy. I want to improve social institutions and change the way America defines and views poverty because I believe that people have a right to all services fundamental to the preservation of society.



## Poverty Rate

for children under the  
age of 18  
2011

21.9%

source: newyorker.com - Courtesy Brenda Ann Kenneally



# SOCIOLOGY IN DUBLIN: LEARNING CULTURE THROUGH FOOD

Sara Manzon

This semester I am studying abroad in Dublin, Ireland, so naturally I expected to learn all about the Irish culture. I did not expect, however, to learn about other parts of the world as well. I live in an international house with people from Venezuela, France, Indonesia,

India, and America. Some of my housemates are here studying abroad, while other are here to learn the English language. At first the language barrier was a struggle, but we learned we all had one thing in common: a love for food. We

decided that each week we would have food from a different country. The Venezuelans served arepas, the French treated us to quiche and crepes, and the Indonesians introduced us to tempeh and meat with Bali spices. In return, the Americans made them hamburgers, macaroni and cheese, and green bean casserole.

Every week we all learned a little more about each other and the countries we come from. I learned about each country and their culture, all of them very interesting and unique. I was

shown the struggle the Venezuelans are going through because of the protests across the country, and was told by my Indian friend how difficult it is to get approved for an American visa. What I have found especially interesting is how present American culture is in every country. All of my housemates watch American movies and listen to American music, which also helps them learn English. I came to Dublin to study sociology at Trinity College, but I find that the most valuable learning is done at home through my interactions with my international friends.



Photos Courtesy of Sara Manzon



# Alpha Kappa Delta

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