



Wisconsin Update

Department of Sociology • Fall 2019

For Sociology Alumni and Friends of the University of Wisconsin–Madison

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Go Green!

Prefer to receive your annual Wisconsin Update via email? Contact Tina Hunter (thunter@ssc.wisc.edu) to opt in and Go Green!

Congratulations to Rose Lavelle (BA '17)!

UW Sociology alumna and current member of the US Women's Soccer Team, Rose became an international sensation by scoring the winning goal in July's World Cup against the Netherlands. Four of the US team's players hold sociology degrees, including Megan Rapinoe, though Rose is the only Badger among them.



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Erik Olin Wright Tribute

The UW and the academic world in general suffered a great loss with the death of **Erik Olin Wright** on January 23, 2019. A towering intellectual figure of tremendous international stature, Erik was a driving force in our department for over four decades, contributing to making it one of the premier graduate programs in the world. Author of more than a dozen books and nearly 100 articles, and mentor to hundreds of students, many of whom went on to have very successful careers of their own, Erik had a profound impact on the study of sociology. His influence extended beyond the academy, particularly among social movement activists, who drew great inspiration from his steadfast and rigorous commitment to advancing social justice and human flourishing. During his illness, Erik wrote an astounding blog, in which he not only chronicled his struggle with leukemia but also demonstrated his extraordinary spirit and capacity for love. The blog will be published as a book by Haymarket. As further evidence of his unmatched energy, during his illness, he also completed his last book, *How to be an Anti-Capitalist in the 21st Century*, which will be released by Verso this fall.

Erik leaves behind a powerful legacy, reflected by the flood of tributes from around the world following his death. On April 5, the Department of Sociology held a memorial for Erik, which was attended by more than 100 of his friends, colleagues, current and former students, admirers, and family members. One of several memorials, conferences, and symposia held in Erik's honor in different parts of the world, it was an outpouring of love by a fraction of the people on whose lives Erik left a deep and lasting impact—above all, his wife Marcia, their two daughters Jenny and Becky, and their three grandchildren, Safira, Vernon, and Ida.

The department is also memorializing Erik with the creation of a reading room in his name. Fittingly, the Havens Center, which Erik founded and directed since the fall of 1984, was renamed the Havens Wright Center for Social Justice in Erik's honor. On November 1–2, 2019, roughly coinciding with its 35th anniversary, the Center



hosted a *festschrift* for Erik, bringing together a stellar lineup of academics to explore Erik's contributions to social science, organized along the following themes: Marxism and Sociology; Class Analysis; Real Utopias; and Analytical Marxism. The participants included such leading scholars as Julia Adams, Harry Brighouse, Michael Burawoy, Vivek Chibber, Jane L. Collins, Rachel Dwyer, Ivan Ermakoff, Nancy Folbre, William Jones, Greta Krippner, Leo Panitch, Dylan Riley, John Roemer, Joel Rogers, Debra Satz, Juliet Schor, and Göran Therborn. Finally, in collaboration with the September Group (formerly known as the Analytical Marxism Group), the Center has established the Erik Olin Wright prize.

Erik's blog and tributes can be found at **thelifeandworkofarikolinwright.wordpress.com**

To donate to the Erik Olin Wright Prize Fund, go to **sociology.wisc.edu** and choose Make a Gift. Created posthumously to honor Wright's memory, the prize will be awarded annually for a paper by an undergraduate or graduate student that best exemplifies the concerns that animated Wright's work.

From the Chair



As the first weeks of my term as Department Chair pass and the warm winds of summer give way to the cooler breezes of fall, I have a moment to reflect from my office nestled in Muir Woods. In our world where changes seem to come more rapidly than ever, there are other things that remain the same. Our award-winning faculty and graduate students populate offices and classrooms throughout the Social

Science Building, our undergraduates arrived full of curiosity and determination, and our devoted staff keep everything running smoothly.

Our department continues to thrive as we add new faculty,

graduate students, and staff who bring energy and ideas, yet we miss and mourn those who have moved on to other opportunities, retired, or passed away. We remain proud to be among the top-ranked sociology departments in the world, reflecting our broad training and career preparation of undergraduates, rigorous graduate training, and cutting-edge research.

We rely on our alumni and friends for support in a myriad of ways that help our students to learn, and our faculty to conduct meaningful research. To learn more, I invite you to explore our exciting and supportive community of scholarship by visiting our new website at sociology.wisc.edu, following us on Twitter, and joining our LinkedIn alumni group.

On behalf of the department, I would like to express our collective gratitude to you for helping us to remain strong while pursuing new initiatives. Thank you for your continued support!

On, Wisconsin!

Christine Schwartz, Professor and Chair

The annual *Wisconsin Update* is prepared by the Department of Sociology publications committee:

Tina Hunter (editor), with contributions from Ted Babcock, Patrick Barrett, Patrick Brenzel, Michelle Bright, Jordan Conwell, Michael Engelman, Charlotte Frasca, Kim Gonzalez, Ellen Jacobson, Alice Justice, Dana Rasmussen, Toni Schulze, Erin Skarivoda, and Susan Vial.

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Department of Sociology Welcomes New Members



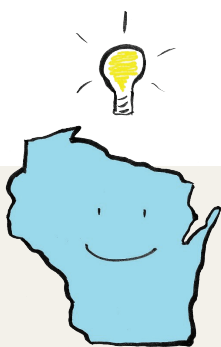
Eunsil Oh (middle in photo) is a 2018 PhD in Sociology from Harvard University. She is interested in understanding fundamental problems at the intersection of sociology and cultural studies in the issues of gender, social class, work, and family. Eunsil's current projects focus on women's status and how young individuals make work and family decisions in East Asia. She joins the department as an assistant professor and also holds an appointment in the department of Asian Languages and Cultures.



Katherine Jensen (left in photo; PhD 2018, University of Texas at Austin) joins us from Tulane University, where she was a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Center for Inter-American Policy and Research. An ethnographer of race and immigration, Jensen's dissertation examined Brazil's asylum system. She joins the department as an assistant professor, with an appointment in International Studies also.



Nicholas Pedriana (PhD 2000, University of Iowa) joins us from his tenured position at UW-Whitewater. As the second permanent lecturer hired into the department, Pedriana will use his 20+ years as an instructor across broad subfields at five universities (three of them within the UW System, including UW-Madison) to teach a breadth of sociology courses each semester. His research interests include law and social movements, with a focus on comparative civil rights law and historical-comparative methods.



Wisconsin Idea Book to Be Published in 2020

A new book provisionally titled *Education for Democracy: Renewing the Wisconsin Idea* is under contract with the University of Wisconsin Press for publication in 2020. The book, edited by Department of Sociology member Chad Alan Goldberg, is based on the highly successful outreach course and public lecture series that Patrick Brenzel started in 2016. Brenzel, who received two prestigious awards in 2016–17 for his role in developing the course (the University Staff Recognition Award as well as the L&S University Staff Excellence Award), has retired after more than fifteen years as a University Services Associate in the Department of Sociology. The book includes a preface by Brenzel, an introductory chapter by Goldberg, and ten essays on various aspects of the Wisconsin Idea, past and present. Contributors include Jane L. Collins from Community & Environmental Sociology and Lewis A. Friedland, who is affiliated with the Department of Sociology. Another chapter by historian J. David Hoeveler covers the intellectual legacy of John Bascom, president of the University of Wisconsin from 1874 to 1887, who taught sociology and wrote a textbook on the subject. Goldberg says a new book about the Wisconsin Idea is needed now to encourage a “vigorous public discussion ... about the university’s purpose and role in a democratic society, the full range of ways it can and should serve the public, and the reasons it deserves robust public support.”

Forward? The Wisconsin Idea Course

This uniquely non-partisan topics course and public lecture series, “Forward? The Wisconsin Idea, Past and Present,” is offered for a fourth fall semester, this time by Emeritus Professor of Sociology Cora Marrett. Created by staff member Patrick Brenzel, the inaugural semester was led by Professor Chad Goldberg during fall 2016, by Professor Eric Sandgren of the School of Veterinary Medicine in 2017, and by School of Business Professor Tom O’Guinn in 2018. The course is the product of an idea that blossomed during Brenzel’s volunteer work, and involves significant collaboration among UW campuses and citizens across the state. It examines the origins of the Wisconsin Idea and its historical application across Wisconsin and beyond by engaging students and faculty from the UW System into a broader public conversation with Wisconsin citizens. Brenzel also received significant input from a group of other individuals, including Emeritus Professor of Sociology Joe Elder. With Brenzel’s retirement, the loss of his significant leadership could have left a gap of knowledge and enthusiasm. We are grateful that others have taken up the torch of this remarkable course that both shares and embodies the Wisconsin Idea.

Supporters of the course have honored us with generous donations, and we have created an account specifically for those who wish to support this endeavor.

To donate, visit www.wiscidea.com

Marrett Leads Fourth Wisconsin Idea Course

We are honored that Emeritus Professor of Sociology Cora Marrett, an alumna and nationally prominent figure, is leading the fall 2019 course and public lecture series. This year’s course focuses on the forging of democracy and building of relationships, trust, and common understanding across the populace. Says Marrett, “The Idea potentially has links to democracy, by broadening and deepening social connection among citizens. This vision of the Idea has been explored less frequently.” Holding both MS and PhD degrees from our department, Marrett was a Sociology professor here from 1974 to 1997. She went on to positions of prominence with UW System Administration and the National Science Foundation. Marrett also sits on our Board of Visitors.



The Wisconsin Idea Course planning group meets together one final time over the summer. Left to right: O’Guinn, Brenzel, Goldberg, Sandgren, and Marrett.

Spring 2019 Graduation Celebrations

SPRING UNDERGRADUATE CEREMONY

Graduating seniors accompanied by family and friends joined Department of Sociology faculty, staff, and alumni in May for our graduation celebration. After a breakfast reception, Chair James Raymo welcomed everyone, and former Dane County Executive Joe Parisi with Board of Visitors member Kingsley Gobourne (both Sociology alumni) addressed the assemblage by sharing reflections and encouragement. Raymo called the names of our graduates, and advisor Ellen Jacobson joined in congratulating each graduate as they crossed the stage. A noon ceremony for all UW undergraduates was held at Camp Randall.



SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

The recipients of the Reschke scholarship are Sydney Alhadeff, Adam Kanter, Ellen Krebs, and Jiazhi Yang. The Luvella K. and Alfred Reschke Social Sciences Fund honors the late Alfred Reschke, a former student and assistant in our department. Endowed by a generous bequest from his wife, Luvella K. Reschke, the scholarship supports outstanding undergraduates in sociology. Preference is given to those whose future plans include teaching or working in the social sciences, social services, or the ministry.

The recipient of the Sperka scholarship is Marissa Fowler. The Andrea Michelle Sperka Fund was established by Carol and Michael Sperka in memory of their beloved daughter who lost her life in Botswana following a study abroad. Recipients of this award exemplify the outstanding qualities that Andrea possessed and keep the memory of this bright and caring young woman alive.

INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING OUR UNDERGRADUATES' INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES?

Consider donating to the Joann and Joe Elder Undergraduate Fund in Sociology (account 132751323).



PHD CELEBRATIONS

On May 10, the Department of Sociology held its annual celebration for those graduate students earning a PhD. Faculty advisors and staff, along with family members and friends from across the US and as far as Australia, convened to recognize students' achievements.

The PhD candidates and their advisors wore traditional academic regalia—the silk and velvet robes and caps similar to clothing worn by medieval church officials who founded the first universities in Europe. Each student was called to the front of the room to join his or her faculty advisor for the hooding ceremony. The advisor summarized the candidate's dissertation and described the contributions the research will make and then placed a stole over the student's head and around her or his neck to acknowledge completion of the doctoral program and induction into the community of scholars. The new alum then reflected on his or her experiences in Madison and thanked those gathered for their support.

The research by our new alumni focused on a wide array of topics: the movement toward organic dairy farming in the US; effects of gender and motherhood on labor force outcomes; mental illness, the criminal justice system, and inequality; home, identity, and perceptions of nature in the US Rust Belt; institutional reproductions of sex and gender; social forces of inequality, student engagement, and academic progress; and the transformation of homeowner insurance markets in hurricane-prone areas along the US Gulf and Atlantic coasts.

Those who earned a PhD in 2018-19 include:

Kathryn Anderson	Madeleine Pape
Catherine Doren	Jaymes Pyne
Emma Frankham	Emanuel Ubert
Amanda McMillan Lequieu	

Department News

DISTINGUISHED ELLEN JACOBSON

Ellen Jacobson, our undergraduate advisor, was promoted to Distinguished Student Services Coordinator in the fall of 2018. Ellen is only the second person on campus in a departmental student services position to receive the honor of Distinguished status. The process involves an extensive nomination process similar to the tenure process, including multiple external letters of recommendation acknowledging her significant impact across campus over decades. Congratulations, Ellen!

FACULTY RECEIVE UW2020 AWARDS

UW2020 awards are given to stimulate and support cutting-edge, highly innovative research at UW–Madison. Two Department of Sociology faculty members received the prestigious award this past spring. Professor **Jenna Nobles'** project, "A New Window into Human Reproduction," will use data from cell phone and tablet fertility apps to understand the pathways that lead to conception, pregnancy loss, and live births.

Professor **Jason Fletcher's** project, "Wisconsin Longitudinal Study 2020 and Beyond," will expand the famous study of Wisconsin high school graduates by digitizing additional records and linking them to new surveys that will help us understand how circumstances throughout life shape economic and health trajectories at older ages.

RETIREMENTS



Pamela Oliver has retired as the Conway-Bascom Professor of Sociology. Pam received her PhD from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in 1977 and joined the UW–Madison faculty in 1980 after teaching at the University of Louisville. Her influential research has focused on collective action and social movements, and on racial disparities in the criminal justice

system. These charged topics proved to be of interest beyond academia, leading Pam to dedicate considerable time and energy to meaningful engagement with local community groups. Her public and professional service also extended to writing popular blog posts offering insight and advice on topics ranging from social activism to professional issues in academia. Pam brought the same commitment to fostering critical thinking and informed engagement on controversial issues to her teaching at UW, where her well-known course "Ethnic Movements in the US" put her in ongoing dialogue with undergraduates about US race relations, and her leadership of two training seminars (Politics, Culture & Society and Race & Ethnicity) made her a key mentor for numerous graduate students. Though she will no longer be teaching, Pam looks forward to continuing her work with graduate students as Professor Emerita. "That's how you really learn new things," she says.



Myra Marx Ferree recently retired as the Alice H. Cook Professor of Sociology. Myra received her PhD from Harvard in 1976, and spent the first 24 years of her career at the University of Connecticut, Storrs before coming to UW–Madison, where she held appointments in Sociology and Gender & Women's Studies. Her scholarship spanned an array of subjects, including feminist organizations and politics in the US, Germany, and internationally; gender inequality in families; the inclusion of gender in sociological theory and practice; and the intersections of gender with race and class. She has been the recipient of the Jessie Bernard Award (sociology's highest honor for work in gender), vice-president of the American Sociological Association, president of Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS), and recipient of SWS mentoring and feminist scholarship awards. At UW, she played a major role in making scholarship on gender a significant strength of our department. As many of her students and colleagues attest, her contributions to expanding the inclusion of women in sociology extend well beyond her scholarship. By teaching, mentoring, and leading FemSem, our graduate training seminar in the sociology of gender, she has championed the cause of women within and outside the field of sociology, and around the globe.



After nearly 17 years in Sociology's main office, **Patrick Brenzel** (BS Mechanical Engineering '89), has retired to a home near the beach in Sitges, Spain, with husband Gary Gruetzmacher and their dogs. While Patrick has interacted with nearly every person affiliated with our department and managed countless responsibilities, he is most proud of his brainchild, The Wisconsin Idea

Course and Lecture Series. Patrick received both the University Staff Recognition Award and the L&S University Staff Excellence Award in 2016-17 in recognition of his work creating and developing this unique and powerful course. Says Patrick about Spain, "We are adjusting to life in a foreign country. It certainly is foreign!"

Emeritus Sociology Professor **Russ Middleton's** book *History of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin–Madison* is now available as a free download! To download the file or order a paperback edition, visit <https://sociology.wisc.edu/history>. Thank you, Russ, for your dedication to our department as well as our history!

Graduate Student Spotlight: Sarah “Frankie” Frank and Julia Thomas



In the three years **Frankie Frank** has been in our graduate program, she's accumulated numerous honors, and also spearheaded relief efforts for immigrants at the U.S. southern border. In 2017, Frankie was selected for UW's Campus-Wide Teaching Assistant Award,

which recognizes exceptional graduate student teaching. The award acknowledged her work in fostering undergraduate learning in Survey of Sociology, Sociology of Gender (PEOPLE program), and as a tutor for UW Athletics. Frankie was also awarded an Honored Instructor Award from University Housing.

The same year, Frankie was chosen as a Writing-Across-the-Curriculum TA Fellow for UW's Writing Center, where she facilitated the interdisciplinary training for new instructors in writing-intensive courses. Frankie also received the Alpha Kappa Delta Sociology Honors Society Teaching & Learning Fellowship for the Midwest Sociological Society's 2018 conference.

This past year, Frankie won the Midwest Sociological Society's "Three-Minute Thesis" competition, which challenges grad students to explain their research and its significance in three minutes to an audience of non-specialists. In addition, a paper based on her current research was selected first-place winner in this year's Alpha Kappa Delta Graduate Paper Competition, awarded at the American Sociological Association conference.

In July 2019, Frankie drove to McAllen, Texas, her car full of donated menstruation supplies for immigrants released from detention centers. She made connections with non-profits in that region and also met with migrants at Greyhound Bus Stations from San Antonio to Brownsville. Following her efforts, Frankie formed The Menstruation Collective to help in humanitarian crises. She now is helping hurricane survivors in the Bahamas.



In May, second-year graduate student **Julia Thomas** was one of a handful of UW–Madison students chosen to receive a prestigious National Science Foundation Fellowship. The Foundation's Graduate Research Fellowship Program recognizes individuals who, early in their training, have demonstrated

potential for significant research achievements that can benefit society. The program supports these students by providing three years of funding along with networking opportunities and professional development.

Julia's project, titled "Capital Punishment and the Legacy of Lynching," was motivated by her reading of a 1936 *New York Times* article about the public execution of Rainey Bethea, a black man sentenced to death for raping a white woman. Its headline read, "10,000 See Hanging of Kentucky Negro . . . Crowd Jeers at Culprit . . . Some Grab Pieces of Hood for Souvenirs." Although a state execution, this event had the characteristics of a lynching. Given the simultaneous decline in lynching and increase in death penalty sentencing, Julia decided to explore the broad connections between racism and capital punishment. Her project evaluates how US criminal justice policies have descended from historical patterns of racial oppression by examining the role of racialized norms in contemporary sentencing, specifically whether violations of the "racial order"—i.e., harm to white individuals—shape the sentencing of people of color.

Julia uses archival records to develop case studies and combines them with advanced statistical analysis of historical data to evaluate whether, when, and how, in the past 40 years, capital punishment has operated as "legal lynching" in the US. Her work will lead to the creation of a new national data set on sentencing in homicide cases. This is the first comprehensive assessment of the connections between historical racial violence and contemporary sentencing.

An Ecuadorian Adventure in Data Journalism



In 2017, PhD student **Javier Rodriguez** used his data analysis and visualization skills to start a blog on politics in Ecuador, his native country, which was electing a new president. Javier's posts anticipated the outcome of the election; his site also included an interactive tool that he created for visualizing the results, which was circulated widely among colleagues, journalists, and even members of Ecuador's congress.

The following year, Javier and his family lived in Ecuador while his wife Nicolle, a doctoral student in UW's Geography Department, conducted fieldwork there. Javier continued to post—this time about Ecuador's 2019 sectional elections—using an approach similar to that of the US data journalists whom he admires. His most popular piece contradicted widespread interpretations of the results of the mayoral election in the capital that were filled with racist undertones. Javier's work was picked up by Ecuadorian journalists, and he had a short collaboration with a news outlet during which he wrote stories analyzing election outcomes. This led to an invitation

to present his maps and visual analyses on national TV as a member of a panel of experts commenting on the elections. "It was quite an experience," Javier says, "and it was exciting to see the UW Department of Sociology referred to on the TV screen back home."

Javier's dissertation examines how rising inequality and massive demographic changes shape public attitudes and socioeconomic trajectories of individuals in the US. He continues to write about Ecuadorian politics occasionally and hopes to develop his skills further by writing popular pieces for broad audiences that are based on rigorous data analysis.



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Private support from alumni and friends is crucial to sustaining the ranking and reputation of the Department of Sociology. Your gifts help recruit talented graduate students, provide financial aid that ensures access to higher education, and recognize research and teaching of outstanding faculty.

Please make a gift today to the **Department of Sociology Annual Fund** or other departmental funds. To view a list of fund options, visit sociology.wisc.edu/alumni-connection/make-a-gift.

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Questions? Want to discuss other ways to support Sociology? Contact **Abby Funseth** at abby.funseth@supportuw.org or 608-308-5346.

