Few students can muster up the courage to participate in Social Science Research Day; however, Ashley Woll is one of them. This past year, with the assistance and guidance of Dr. Mike Johnson, Ashley took a chance and presented her research on the treatment of the disabled population in the correctional system. Her passion for this topic stems from her wanting to one day be an advocate for people with disabilities. It was her goal to reveal the abuse and neglect disabled persons experience in correctional facilities. When she conducted her research she found it to be extremely difficult to find statistical information on her topic, as it is severely underreported. This minor detail did not discourage her as she was able to present an extremely informative overview of the abuses disabled individuals face within detention facilities.

In addition to being able to share her research with others, this project allowed Ashley to earn a credit toward her degree through the option of conducting an independent study. This type of credit is available to all sociology students and is a chance for students to pursue topics of interest with a professor as a mentor. It allows students the chance to choose what they want to study, which can tremendously helpful to individuals focusing on a specific topic of interest. As Ashley was able to find a topic that ignited her passion; other students can as well through conducting an independent study.
What is the Sociological Collective?

The Sociological Collective is a student organization which serves to educate both sociology majors and the larger student body about career opportunities in sociology. It seeks to be of service to the Carrollton community by utilizing the skills that sociology students are expected to have attained throughout the duration of their time here at West Georgia. We want to take what we have learned in the classroom and use those tools to have a positive impact on the community around us.

What made you decide to join the Sociological Collective?

I wanted to get involved on campus and saw this as a great opportunity to build something from the ground up. In past years, the sociology club has been fairly inactive; many people did not even know that we had a sociology club here at West Georgia. My main goal this year is to simply revive the organization. I want to make it a viable entity for years to come and cultivate a space for students to come learn, be of service to others, meet new people, and have some fun while doing so.

What are the biggest hurdles for the organization this year?

Frankly, the fact that no one knows that we exist is the biggest obstacle. There have been sociology clubs in the past, but this year we are going through a bit of a rebranding phase, which has its pros and cons. At times it has been hard trying to get things accomplished with our membership being so low, but I’m confident that in the next few weeks that will change. With the organization being so inactive for so long I don’t blame other students for being a bit less than excited about coming out to meetings. For all intents and purposes, we haven’t really had a club on campus. Sure one technically existed, but as far as I’m concerned that was in name only. If you don’t actually do anything, then what do you really have? Other students are justified in thinking that the organization will start off strong and eventually wane out just like in years past. It’s the job of our current members, no matter how small, to change that perception. Yeah, it can be a bit frustrating at times; but to be honest the challenge is exciting for myself, our advisor, and the rest of the executive board. As I mentioned before, we have the opportunity to start something fresh and new that can hopefully have a positive impact on other people. It’s not every day opportunities such as these that are afforded, so a little bit of adversity in the beginning isn’t a deterrent for us. I’m thankful to be surrounded by a great executive board who are willing to work and give up their time, as well as having an advisor (Dr. Hunt) that is dedicated to the success of our group. Any obstacles we have faced thus far have just made us want to work harder to get our name out there and show people why they should want to be a part of this organization.

Story continued on pg. 3

If you would like more information about the Sociological Collective please contact Dr. Hunt.
What types of events will the collective be involved in this year?

This year we hope to be involved in a myriad of service opportunities that will be open to the entire student body. On October 18th we will be taking part in the AIDS Walk in Atlanta, the biggest AIDS fundraising event in the southeast. I’m really excited about being a part of the AIDS Walk, as it will not only be for a good cause, but it will be a great opportunity for our members to get to know each other as well.

In the next few days we are going to try to set up a pumpkin carving event for Halloween with the local Boys and Girls Club located on Maple Street. I’m hoping to foster an ongoing relationship with the Boys and Girls Club in the next few months that can continue for years to come. Eventually we would like to offer tutoring services and other seasonal events like the pumpkin carving. Also we would like to fill in doing whatever work the club staff might need help with. West Georgia is located right down the street from the club. I’m not sure if any other organizations have been involved with them yet, but someone needs to be. Many of the kids know the university is here, but may not know anything about it; we can change that by establishing positive relationships with them. There might be a kid in the club who doesn’t think they will be able to or is incapable of going to college even though a university is right down the street. If all goes well, hopefully we can change that this year.

We also plan on having a canned food or turkey drive for Thanksgiving, as well as adopting a child during the holidays. This will give us the opportunity to provide toys for children in shelters who otherwise may not be able to receive toys for the holidays.

In addition, we also want to put together a lecture series in which professors from the university can come and present their personal work to the student body. I feel as though allowing students to find out what professors are interested in outside of the textbook material will allow an opportunity for students to get an insight into who their professors are and possibly find commonalities with them and/or spark an interest in doing some research of their own. We also plan on working with the Rape Crisis Center and possibly Habitat for Humanity.

The project I am most excited about for the collective this year will be our attempt to conduct an ethnography that will hopefully not only allow us to utilize and sharpen skills we learned in our research methods class, but also identify problems in the community and attempt to do something about them. We will be out there taking notes, doing interviews, conducting a content analysis, the whole nine yards. We want to figure out what is going on here in the community and strategize with community leaders about ways we can work to improve the quality of life for people here in Carrollton. Ideally, we won’t be doing this alone. We would like to meet with Carrollton community leaders to find out what we can do in conjunction with them to accomplish these goals. Developing partnerships between the collective and the community leaders here in Carrollton will not only serve to create positive relationships between the student body and the community, but will ensure that whatever initiatives are put in place will continue to progress and be beneficial for all those involved for years to come.

We want to keep our service opportunities coming one after the other so that if some people are not able to attend a particular event, there will be others coming up right behind them. I don’t want people to feel like the club is ever being stagnant. If people don’t know anything else about the Sociology Collective, I want them to know that we are always being active. We want to establish a presence not only on campus, but also around the Carrollton community through a wide array of service opportunities that will not only be available to collective members, but also the entire student body.

Special points of interest:
- Participating in AIDS Walk on October 18th
- Set up a pumpkin carving event with the local Boys and Girls Club
- Planning on having either a canned food drive or turkey drive for Thanksgiving
- Conducting an ethnography in the community
Impact International by Rachel Taylor

Community Leaders on campus treated students with guest speakers in classes on Tuesday, October 6. Kathy Parsons, CEO of Impact International spoke in Dr. Luken’s Housing and Homelessness class about her many organizations. Impact International is a non-profit organization that exists to connect cross-cultural projects. Kathy spoke of Manna House, a food distribution ministry that serves between 450-700 families per month and The Literacy Program which teaches adults reading and writing skills. The program also includes English as a second language, and offers tutoring to children and youth. She also started the HOPE Center from scratch which is a transitional facility for homeless men. She talked about her kid’s club and tutoring program. She also works with disaster relief for situations like Hurricane Katrina and flood victims in Georgia. During Christmas and Thanksgiving, Kathy helps distribute turkeys and hams to needy families. Her ministry honors veterans by praying for military that have died and among her many achievements listed here, Kathy wholeheartedly serves her community. She presented the class with a quote that accurately describes her work by Albert Schweitzer, “I don’t know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are the ones who have sought and found how to serve.”

Family Connections by Adrienne Reeves

Beginning this year, the sociology and criminology department introduced Campus Day, which is a chance for leaders in the community to come in and talk to students about how their studies can be applied in the real world. In Dr. Johnson’s class, we had the pleasure of welcoming Vickie Fulbright from Family Connections to talk with us about her organization and what they do. Her speech provided students looking to work with children, families, and at risk youth the opportunity to gain insight into what they can expect, as well as how hard this chosen field may be. It also showed us how rewarding this field can be.
Meet the New Instructors

Meet Tiffany Parsons by Adrienne Reeves

Professor Tiffany Parsons began her academic career majoring in business; however, before finishing the degree she took some time off and began working in the nonprofit sector. In this time, she taught English as a second language for ten years before deciding on coming back to the University of West Georgia. This time around at the University she decided to major in sociology, as her focus was on inequality and poverty.

After finishing her undergrad, Professor Parsons knew without a doubt that she would be trudging on to earn her masters. This decision of continuing her degree was largely influenced by the encouragement that both Dr. McCandless and Dr. Fuller gave her. In 2008, she proudly finished up her master's degree and is now working at UWG as an instructor in the sociology department. This year, however, is not the first encounter she has had in the classroom; in the fall of 2008 she was lucky enough to sub in for Professor Rudibaugh during her maternity leave. In this time, she gained experience and recognition for her teaching abilities, which I can personally vouch for as I was taking that class and received an A!

Professor Parsons is currently teaching Intro to Women’s Studies and Introductory Sociology, however, in the spring she will include Cultural and Racial Minorities to her class list. In addition, outside of the classroom Professor Parsons still pursues her interest in working with those in need at both the HOPE Center as well as at the Adult and Community Education Center. Through both of these nonprofit organizations she is able to go back to where she was first inspired to become a sociology major.

Meet Kelley Christopher by Sarah Knowles

Before Professor Kelley Christopher became involved with sociology, she was a mental health therapist. After feeling stagnant in that field she decided to make a change. Professor Christopher was introduced to sociology after being thrown into a sociology class after an instructor became ill. “I am so grateful for that fateful event. I knew very quickly that this is what I was ‘supposed to be doing.”

Before teaching at West Georgia, Professor Christopher taught at a technical college for about three years. She is very passionate about social injustice and would like to volunteer for organizations, such as The Innocence Project. Beginning in 2010, Professor Christopher is looking forward to starting her Ph.D.

Professor Christopher said, “I love being here at UWG; some of the smartest people I have ever encountered in terms of social issues and deviance are right here on this campus; the kind of folks you just want to sit and listen to and have free reign to really get into their heads. Fascinating people whose minds I so respect. Even though I have studied, with an unwavering passion, society and deviance and human behavior for more than 25 years, I feel I know nothing compared to the scholars right here in this building; absolutely brilliant people.”
**HOPE Center** by Rachel Taylor

The HOPE Center is one site where students in Dr. Luken’s “Housing and Homelessness” are engaged in service learning. It is a wonderful transitional facility for men who, according to Jimmy, a manager, “were on the right path but took a left turn somewhere”. The center is the only men’s shelter in ten counties and has never had a vacancy. It is a charming facility motivated by caring people who want to make a difference in the lives of others. The facility currently houses ten men, one of which must include a veteran. Since the purpose of the center is to help these men find and keep jobs, they must be out of the facility by 7 am and may return at 6 pm. All food, toiletries, clothing, and other essentials are provided to the men. This center is unique in that it encourages housing for families and is not gender specific. The HOPE Center relies heavily on fundraisers for all their finances since the men are not charged a fee. The environment is drug and alcohol free and provides a warm and welcoming atmosphere. The main objective of the HOPE Center is to get these men back on their feet after straying from the right path.

**Advisement**

It is that time of the year again! Registration is right around the corner for the spring semesters, and now is the time to schedule an advising appointment with Dr. Luken (678-839-6333; pluken@westga.edu), the advisor for all undergraduate sociology majors. If you use email, suggest several days and times that will work for you. It is important to be prepared before showing up to your advising appointment. Here is a basic checklist to ensure that you are ready for advising:

- An updated degree evaluation. This can be found on the Registrar’s office webpage, [http://www.westga.edu/~registra](http://www.westga.edu/~registra/).
- A list of courses in which you plan to register. Include the following:
  - CRN
  - Course Identification Number
  - Section number
  - Class days and times
  - Credit hours

Remember to check “The Scoop” for the registration schedule.
Three sociology students, from a contingent of seven from the University of West Georgia, delivered research papers at the first annual Middle East Symposium on April 18, 2009, a competitive undergraduate research conference. The symposium was sponsored by the Council for the Middle East and hosted by Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville, Georgia. Vincent Binder, Jessica Purkey, and Joseph Kasriel represented the sociology program at the conference. Jessica presented a paper on the social construction of gender and sexuality in Saudi Arabia, while Vincent and Joseph presented papers on the Arab-Israeli Conflict and the political economy of the region's oil dependence. All three presentations were well received. The conference attracted students from universities throughout the Southeast including North Carolina Central University, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and the Georgia Institute of Technology. Oud master Suheil Sedran performed traditional Middle Eastern music for the participants at the conclusion of the conference. Dr. Neema Noori served as the faculty sponsor for the event, and he hopes to continue the department's robust turnout at this year's conference.
Graduation is a very important time for seniors. It is imperative that seniors pay attention to important dates and know when and how to apply for graduation. Follow these steps, and seniors will have no problems applying.

Before applying for graduation, seniors should pull up their degree audit evaluation to make certain they are eligible to graduate. Seniors can get the steps to run this evaluation off the Registrar’s website.

If eligible, upcoming graduates must fill out the undergraduate application graduation form. Seniors can either pick the form up from the Registrar’s office or print the form online by visiting the Registrar’s office website. Along with the application form there is an application fee of $30.00. Both must be submitted at the same time to the Registrar’s office, located in Parker Hall. The form and payment may also be mailed to their office. The application deadline has already passed for Fall 2009 and Spring 2010. To apply for the Summer 2010 graduation, the deadline is March 1st. The Registrar’s website is: http://www.westga.edu/registrar/

If interested in attending graduate school information about taking the GRE can be found at www.ets.org/gre/

Information consist of how to register for the test, test dates, testing centers, and various fees.

Advise from Dr. Jenks about Graduate School
by Rachel Taylor

Dr. David Jenks, the Director of Graduate Studies, gave constructive advice on how undergraduates should prepare themselves for graduate school. His first piece of advice was to focus on the courses that most students do not like. Research methods, theory, and statistics are useful in every area of research and will constantly be revisited in graduate school. The specialized classes are fun, but can be taken later for graduate school. Another piece of advice is deadlines. Most students let time fly by and do not pay attention to deadlines. Be aware of application deadlines well in advance and turn in materials early. The earlier the applications are turned in, the better the chances are of being accepted into the graduate program. When it comes to the GRE, practice, practice, practice. If students plan to take the GRE online, practice taking the test online; if the test is on paper, practice writing it out on paper. While practicing, focus on weak areas so when testing it will not stump you. Even practicing one year in advance is not a bad idea. If students follow these tips from Dr. Jenks, and get enough sleep, the future looks bright.
Many new sociology classes will be offered in the spring term. These courses are Special Seminars and all are listed as SOCI 4999. Since they are new, you cannot find course descriptions in the catalog, but this should give you an idea of what to expect.

**“Political Sociology” Dr. Noori**

In the spring Dr. Noori will begin to offer “Political Sociology,” a course that he hopes will become a staple offering of the sociology curriculum. He looks forward to exploring the following four themes: “First, we will look at the declining power of labor unions in the U.S. and assess what this means for growing levels of inequality and the effectiveness of our democratic institutions. Second, we will examine the enduring legacy of the race question in the U.S. Why, despite the election of America’s first African American president, does race continue to matter? Our approach to this question will be both historical and comparative. Third, we will study the resilience of gangs in large American cities such as Chicago and New York. How have they changed over time and why have they proven so resistant to public policy interventions? Fourth, some social scientists such as Bruce Western have argued that unemployment and the penal system are inexorably linked. To develop a better understanding of these connections, we will read Bruce Western’s highly acclaimed book entitled, *Punishment and Inequality in America*. Though the bulk of readings for the class will consist of recent sources, such as Sudhir Venkatesh’s *Gang Leader for a Day*, we will also read brief selections from classic political sociologists such as C. Wright Mills, Marx, and Weber.”

**“Social Movements, Protest, and Change” Dr. Holland**

Sociology and Criminology graduate students will have the opportunity to take “Social Movements, Protest, and Change” (SOCI/CRIM 6700) as an online course for the first time in the Spring of 2010. The course will be taught by Dr. Holland. She says, “The first part of the course will focus on the history of social change from the classical perspective to contemporary theories. As the semester progresses students will examine particular movements for their sociological contributions to change in American history. Some of the movements to be investigated include the civil rights movement, the environmental movement, the labor movement, and the lgbt movement.”

**“Deviance” Dr. Hunt**

Another new course for graduate students is “Deviance” (SOCI 6182) which will be taught by Dr. Hunt. She describes the course as “a sociological examination of the definitions of deviant behavior and the identification of individuals as deviant. The students will learn how history has shaped the definitions of deviant behavior and the methods used to control it. Students will read leading peer-reviewed journal articles on the topic of deviant behavior with regard to youth, subculture, as well as organizational deviance.”
Dr. Matthews will be offering a discipline specific writing course (formerly known as WAC) entitled Poverty. This is a new offering for Dr. Matthews and for the department, and he is very excited about it. He notes, “The course will have several key areas of focus, including poverty definitions; poverty trends worldwide, in the U.S. and locally; social-scientific theories of poverty and inequality; urban and rural poverty; responses to poverty; and possible poverty policies. This is a writing intensive course, with a variety of types of writing assignments designed to enhance students’ depth of understanding of the complexities of poverty.” Dr. Matthews added that he hopes to see many of you in the class in the Spring.

Dr. Matthews will be offering a discipline specific writing course (formerly known as WAC) entitled Poverty. This is a new offering for Dr. Matthews and for the department, and he is very excited about it. He notes, “The course will have several key areas of focus, including poverty definitions; poverty trends worldwide, in the U.S. and locally; social-scientific theories of poverty and inequality; urban and rural poverty; responses to poverty; and possible poverty policies. This is a writing intensive course, with a variety of types of writing assignments designed to enhance students’ depth of understanding of the complexities of poverty.” Dr. Matthews added that he hopes to see many of you in the class in the Spring.

Drs. Holland and Luken are looking forward to teaming up on “Researching Social Problems in Our Local Community.” Dr. Holland describes the course as “an opportunity for students to put what they have learned into action and learn more about the local community! This course will allow students to learn more about the types of social problems that exist in our community and how these problems impact the family and other social institutions. The course will be very interactive and will provide the opportunity to learn qualitative methodologies such as interviewing, taking field notes, and transcription.” This course also involves teamwork and photography, so students will be required to have a camera for this class.
Faculty Scholarship


Todd L. Matthews was selected to participate in the National Poverty Center one-week workshop on the American Community Survey, at the University of Michigan, in June 2009.


Hunt, Pamela. 2009. “Meaning Differences in Settings.” Presented at the Southern Sociological Society (SSS) annual meeting, New Orleans, LA.

Suggestions or Comments

The “sociNews” wants to hear from you. Tell us what you have been up to, and what you think of the “sociNews.” We are always interested in new story ideas and in improving the quality of the newsletter. And if you would be interested in working on the newsletter, you will find that there is plenty to do. Contact Dr. Luken at pluken@westga.edu.
Sociology Graduates

**B.S. in Sociology-Spring 2009**
- Jenny Leigh Adkins
- Kristian Barfield
- Tara Darcel Caldwell
- Tracey Joelle Coker
- Regina Patrice Collins
- Michael Edward Eason
- Henrick Foster
- Matthew Halpern
- Latasha Katris Judson
- Ijeoma Mba
- Judith E. Mitchel-Horne
- Maurice O'Brian O'Hara
- Jennifer Payton Rabbitt
- Erica L. Reynolds
- Blake Terry
- Matthew Scott Vaughn

**B.S. in Sociology-Summer 2009**
- Gisell Joi Beecher
- Vincent John Binder
- Lindsey Faith Cranford
- Rachel Lindsey-French
- Ashley Nicole Haynes
- Nikkia Keiunta Hill
- Casey LaDawn Jordan
- Joseph Kasriel
- Shaun Melson
- Susan Alicia Moore
- Nicole North
- Ethara Dionne Roseberry
- Marlayna Faye Rowe
- Melissa Ann Walker
- Bronwyn McRae Williams

**M.A. in Sociology-Spring 2009**
- Winston Patrick Bethel
- Kelly Ann Voelker

**M.A. in Sociology-Summer 2009**
- Arnold Ray Butler, Jr.
- Tiffany Aaron Parsons

---

**Master’s Thesis Titles**

**Bethel** – Therapeutic Jurisprudence: A Survey of Attitudes of Judges at the Entry Level of the Criminal Justice System.

**Voelker** – The Impact of Violent Video Games on Violent Behavior.


**Parsons** - Homelessness and the Homeless: A State of the Field
Welcome from the Department Chair

Thank you for taking a moment to read about the Department of Sociology and Criminology. Indeed, this is an exciting time for our department.

Again, this year, we welcome three new colleagues: Dr. Richard Lemke (who will arrive in January) and Professors Kelly Christopher and Tiffany Parsons. All three of our new colleagues bring to our department teaching excellence, outstanding work in their respective areas of interest, and a commitment to working with our students and our department.

As we welcome our new colleagues, we have (again) set for ourselves an ambitious agenda. For example:

- As a department we are searching for another tenure track faculty member in the field of criminology.

- As a department we are debating whether or not this is the time to turn one academic program into an online degree program.

- Our accelerated M. A. program proposal – a proposal allowing undergraduate students to begin work on a Master’s degree while completing an undergraduate degree – has been approved by the Faculty Senate;

- And, all of our programs – our undergraduate programs in both sociology and criminology, our graduate programs in both sociology and criminology, and our minor program in women’s studies are, again, being reviewed and revitalized to maintain a competitive edge.

Always, I thank you my colleagues for their vision and hard work, and I thank our students, both present and past, for their commitment to their department.

Sincerely,

N. Jane McCandless
Professor and Chair