

*The Department of
Sociology and Anthropology at*
MUHLENBERG
COLLEGE

presents

*The 10th Annual
Senior Research Symposium*



Wednesday, April 30, 2014
4:30 pm



*The Department of Sociology & Anthropology
Welcomes You!*

Dr. Krista Bywater, Assistant Professor of Sociology

Dr. Benjamin Carter, Visiting Assistant Professor of Anthropology

Dr. Janine Chi, Associate Professor of Sociology & Department Chair

Dr. Amy Cooper, Assistant Professor of Anthropology

Dr. Anne Esacove, Associate Professor of Sociology

Dr. J. Christopher Kovats-Bernat, Associate Professor of Anthropology

Ms Tracy Kline, Department Office Manager



Schedule of Events

Introductory Remarks

Dr. Benjamin Carter

Posters

- ◇ **The State of Rasa in Bharatanatyam and Contemporary Theater and Dance**
Allison Berger (Anthropology)
- ◇ **Constructing Knowledge Hierarchies: Student Understandings of Truth in Research**
Rachel Dordal (Sociology)
- ◇ **Voting Green at the Supermarket: How Allentown-Area Ethical Consumers View the Social and Environmental Impact of Their Consumption Choices**
Katy Molinaro (Anthropology)
- ◇ **Wild or Domesticated: Faunal Analysis of the Joy/Flood Site, a Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century Archaeological Site**
Simmi Patel (Anthropology)

Presentations

- ◇ **A Double-Edged Sword: Community-Led Development and the Religious Institution in Bulongwa, Tanzania**
Joshua Clement (Sociology)
- ◇ **“An Apple Is Better Than Lanzones”: Filipinos Negotiating Immigrant Status Through Language Use**
Rachelle Jereza (Sociology)

Concluding Remarks

Dr. Janine Chi



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Welcome to the Tenth Annual Senior Symposium in Sociology and Anthropology.

We are exceptionally proud of the students presenting their research today. They have spent many hours reading, interlibrary loaning books, writing and rewriting IRB requests, talking to each other and themselves, collecting data - in foreign countries, local communities, and archaeological sites - writing up and preparing to present their results. They have persevered through many a quandary, such as deciding how many emails per day they should send to their advisor, decoding feedback on their work, devising an apt title, and completing a random sample. Yet, they are lucky - even if they didn't always feel that way. Although they have felt the anxiety and the exhaustion of research, they have also experienced the pleasure of deepening their own knowledge and contributing to academic research and, finally, the elation of finishing.

We thank family, friends, students, faculty and administration for joining us tonight.

Drs. Carter and Chi

Honors Presentations



Joshua Clement (Sociology)

A Double-Edged Sword: Community-Led Development and the Religious Institution in Bulongwa, Tanzania

Abstract: Community-led development (CLD) is a development approach that focuses on the leadership and collaborative participation of community members. This research examines the role of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT) in community-led development by focusing on the *Pomoja Tuwalee* (Together We Can) project in Bulongwa, Tanzania. I conducted six weeks of fieldwork in Bulongwa including semi-structured interviews with religious leaders, community members, and government officials. My data analysis reveals that community-led development programs in Bulongwa capitalize on bonding social capital through association with the central religious institution (ELCT). The development program also utilizes the ELCT's connections and networks to create bridging social capital in the community. By associating with the ELCT, *Pomoja Tuwalee* benefitted from the institution's social networks and community trust in the ELCT. This relationship also had drawbacks, as the religious institution was able to dictate personnel decisions and program goals of the CLD program. This indicates that there are benefits working with already established religious institutions in the community, but there are also detrimental effects that hinder the agency of program workers and the possibility for truly collective community development.

Advice to Rising Seniors: You have to ask yourself just what it is that you want to know, what do you care about. The senior thesis is one of few things during my college career that is actually mine and it has been a culmination of two years of research. These are the types opportunities that the senior thesis provides, and it is worth the work. Your peers will be your strongest support system. If you want to own your project and research something that you are interested in, then the senior thesis is the venue to do so



Honors Presentations



Rachelle Jereza (Sociology)

“An Apple Is Better Than Lanzones”: Filipinos Negotiating Immigrant Status Through Language Use

Abstract: Although issues surrounding language maintenance among Asian immigrant groups in the United States have been well studied, there is a dearth of research on language maintenance among Filipino immigrants. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining Tagalog-speaking Filipino immigrants’ perceptions of using and maintaining Tagalog in the United States. Drawing from ten semi open-ended interviews, this study finds that Filipino immigrants in the U.S. are confronted with assimilationist narratives to speak English as well as Filipino cultural narratives to maintain their heritage language of Tagalog. To navigate around these conflicting pressures when interacting with non-Tagalog speakers, Filipino immigrants use multiple discursive strategies that include code switching and translating for non-Tagalog speakers. This research demonstrates how Filipino immigrants in the U.S. consider the cultural and political meanings of Tagalog in decisions about language use .

Advice to Rising Seniors: Senior seminar presents a unique opportunity to really be able to say something about a topic you are passionate about. As Dr. Esacove would say, do it if there is a topic you’re itching to explore. While the research process has certainly been a challenge, it has helped me grow not only as a student, but also as an individual. It has also afforded me the wonderful privilege to work closely with faculty and fellow students. Lastly, it has solidified my decision to apply to grad school, so that I can do it all over again (and again). Things to keep mind about the research process: 1) When conducting your research, you might find that you vacillate between feeling discouraged to feeling like you’re on top of the world – this is normal. 2) You might also find that conducting a senior research project is a lot like being in a relationship, because it involves a lot of commitment and emotional energy. This is also normal. Just remember to make time for yourself, your other interests, and for the people in your life (friends, family, pets etc.). But most importantly, remember to have fun with it (relationships are supposed to be fun, no?). I wish you all the best of luck!



Senior Thesis Presentations



Allison Berger (Anthropology)

The State of Rasa in Bharatanatyam and Contemporary Theater and Dance

Abstract: This research examines the performative state of consciousness known as rasa as it appears in the Hindu dance-drama Bharatanatyam. Rasa is arguably not unique to Bharatanatyam and appears in contemporary theater and dance practices. In acting, dancing, and Bharatanatyam, the performer uses body posture, emotive facial expressions, and gestures of the hands and arms to simulate an emotional response that affects both the audience and the performer. Furthermore, according to the 14 dimensions of altered states of consciousness as outlined by G. W. Farthing (1992), rasa, acting, and dancing can all be considered altered states of consciousness. Suggested methods of data collection include interviewing and observing actors and dancers at Muhlenberg College to determine if performative altered states of consciousness are occurring. In addition, the proposal requires comparative information obtained by interviewing and observing performers of Bharatanatyam.

Advice to Rising Seniors: My best advice to you is to start preparing for your research NOW, and continue to work throughout the summer. It's better to have a topic or question in mind and solidify what you want to be working with before you come back to school in August. While you're on break, spend some time finding resources (books, articles, films, etc.), scan them, and take some notes on them. Read up on the IRB and review AAA citation formats. The more you are prepared before the semester starts, the more you'll be able to focus on the analysis and research itself, rather than starting from nothing at the top of the semester.



Senior Thesis Presentations



Rachel Dordal (Sociology)

Constructing Knowledge Hierarchies: Student Understandings of Truth in Research

Abstract: The literature demonstrating that “expert knowledge” is employed in maintaining the current organization of social, political, and economic power is extensive. These studies demonstrate that “non-experts”, meaning those who are not formally involved in producing research studies, are active members of the power relationships in which “expert” knowledge is used. However the role of “non-experts” in these power relationships has been understudied. To more fully understand the relationship between “expert” knowledge and power, it is necessary to examine how “non-experts” construct a hierarchy in which different kinds of knowledge are differentially valued. In this study I demonstrate that undergraduate students at a small liberal arts college construct a discursive separation between personal experiences and research studies. In doing so they establish that research studies cannot capture the “truth” of personal experiences; for these students, research studies on personal experience cannot make valid knowledge claims. Therefore discursively separating personal experiences and research studies constructs a framework in which research on personal experiences is less valuable than other kinds of research.

Advice to Rising Seniors: Completing a senior thesis has been one of the best experiences of my college career. There is nothing to describe the feeling of developing a research question I am deeply interested in and then trying to understand it. It is definitely an emotional process, but not in a bad way. It’s emotional because it means so much to be making new knowledge about something that fascinates you. To those of you considering a senior thesis, I really recommend thinking about why you want to do it—a senior thesis isn’t a status symbol; it doesn’t make you better at sociology than students who don’t and it isn’t something to do just because you feel like you should. As much as I have loved this experience, it is really hard and it is a lot of work. If you don’t think that the process of doing the work will make you happy, then a thesis is probably not the right decision for you. That said, if you even think that you would enjoy the process of doing research then I absolutely recommend it. It is really an incredible experience.



Senior Thesis Presentations



Katy Molinaro (Anthropology)

Voting Green at the Supermarket: How Allentown-area Ethical Consumers View the Social and Environmental Impact of Their Consumption Choices

Abstract: The aim of my study is to find out how local green consumers think and feel about the products they choose at the supermarket and their agency as consumers. The term, “green consumption,” which is frequently used interchangeably with “ethical” or “political” consumption, is marked by the purchase of products designated as environmentally friendly, sustainable, organic, or locally-produced. Implicit in this type of consumption is the notion of the consumer as an agent of social change. In this context, the act of consumption is equated to participation in democracy. By purchasing green products, the consumer “votes” with his or her dollar for the ethical, socially and environmentally-responsible principles by which these commodities are thought to be made. Though this notion of the consumer-as-citizen is hotly contested amongst scholars, I want to find out if the people who buy green in the Allentown area have taken on this empowered role in their identities as consumers. I intend to study local green consumers’ sense of agency by accompanying each participant on a single trip to the grocery store, where I will observe their purchasing decisions. I will follow up the excursion with a brief interview about why they choose to buy these kinds of commodities.

Advice to Rising Seniors: A good research project revolves around a solid, focused question—but don’t expect yourself to have it right away. Instead, read somewhat broadly about your topic and allow your mind to freely brainstorm. Anticipate your question to *evolve* as you read and write about it. As you write up your report, keep in mind that you are entering into a larger dialogue with other scholars in your field. You are not writing for yourself, but for your readers. The feedback you receive from your professor and peers is extremely valuable in this regard. Be sensitive to the things they don’t understand and seek to clearly explain them. When you are done, you will emerge from your research endeavors with new skills and confidence in your ability to convey your ideas.



Senior Thesis Presentations



Simmi Patel (Anthropology)

Wild or Domesticated: Faunal Analysis of the Joy/Flood Site, a Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century Archaeological Site

Abstract: The Joy/Flood site located in Downeast Maine plays a vital role in depicting the life of the pioneers during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Zooarchaeological analysis can reveal subsistence strategies of the pioneers through identification and analysis of the animal remains excavated from the site. Many of the pioneers that settled in Downeast, Maine came from Massachusetts. However, it is not clear whether or not pioneers retained subsistence strategies from their Massachusetts origins or modified them to utilize natural resources available in Downeast Maine. While animal taxa are similar in both Maine and Massachusetts, I hypothesize that pioneers modified food strategies from their previous environment in Massachusetts to their new environment in Downeast, Maine. Compared to archaeological evidence from Boston, faunal remains from the Joy/Flood site represent a greater utilization of wild resources.

Advice to Rising Seniors: Many say that the only way to learn in life is through experience. I completely agree. Learning through experience has provided me with insight on how sometimes things work out and sometimes they do not. Doing research has been one of the most rewarding, yet struggling, tasks thus far in my life. Once you have an idea, it's almost like a catalytic process. One idea sparks the next and so on. These ideas become a cohesive project through the pathway of a research project. By conducting research, one gains skills that mimic a "real world" experience versus simply reading about project ideas in textbooks. I have been grateful for the opportunities to conduct my own research project that Muhlenberg has provided. Use those opportunities and you will be surprised on how much you learn and gain in four years.



Notes

Special Thanks to:

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