Notes from the Chair

Brea Perry blperry@indiana.edu

It is March and spring is near! In this edition of the newsletter, I bring you some important announcements from the ASA and the Section. First, our annual meeting session organizers have finalized their sessions, and the program schedule will be released online in April. This year, our section programming day is Monday, August 12.

Most of our section sessions, as well as the joint reception with the Section on Sociology of Mental Health, will be held on this day. I hope your travel plans will allow you to attend these section events. The reception provides an excellent opportunity for networking and socializing with friends and colleagues old and new.

Second, please be sure to vote in the ASAwide and section elections. Ballots will be distributed to eligible members in April via email. Voting will close at 5 p.m. eastern on Friday, May 31, 2019. The last day to join ASA or the section to participate in the election is March 31. Our Committee on Nominations has prepared an outstanding slate of candidates. You will definitely want to cast your vote, so please make sure your membership is current.

(continued)
Notes from the Chair (continued)

Third, Angela Frederick and Laura Mauldin have written an excellent and practical guide for giving inclusive presentations. It is called *Accessibility is for Everyone: How to Rock Your ASA Presentation and Make it Inclusive*. If you are presenting at ASA this year, please check it out.


I hope you enjoy the spring edition of the newsletter! Thanks to all our great contributors, and especially to our editor, Evan Roberts.

Section Slate of Candidates for 2019 Elections

**Jennan Read, Chair, Nominations Committee**

Nominations Committee: Jennifer Karas Montez (Chair-Elect), Courtney Boen, Tania Jenkins, and Lauren Olsen

Thanks are due to our terrific Committee and Chair for their hard work and to all who were willing to run for office.

**Chair elect**

Andrew London  Syracuse University
Scott Lynch  Duke University

**Chair-elect, Nominations committee**

Kimberly Huyser  University of New Mexico
Daniel Menchik  Michigan State University

**Member, Nominations Committee (vote for 2)**

Mathew Gayman  Georgia State University
Hanna Grol-Prokopczyk  SUNY Buffalo
Patricia Homan  Florida State University
Megan Reynolds  University of Utah
Section Slate of Candidates (continued)

Student Member, Nominations Committee

Kasim Ortiz  University of New Mexico
Jessica West  Duke University

Council Member

Taylor Hargrove  University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
Hedwig Lee  Washington University

Teaching Committee Chair

Carrie Lee Smith  Millersville University
Mieke Thomeer  University of Alabama

Publications Committee Chair

Margot Jackson  Brown University
David Warner  University of Nebraska

Career and Employment Committee Chair

Tasleem Padamsee  Ohio State University
Theresa Morris  Texas A&M University

Student representative

Alexandra Brewer  University of Chicago
Alexandra Kissling  Ohio State University

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Call for nominations for section awards

2019 Simmons Award

Nominations are being accepted for the 2019 Roberta G. Simmons Outstanding Dissertation in Medical Sociology Award. The award is given each year by the Medical Sociology section. The awardee will receive a $750 travel grant to attend the ASA meetings and an award certificate, and will attend the Reeder dinner as a guest of the Medical Sociology section. Self-nominations are acceptable. Eligible candidates must have defended their doctoral dissertations within two academic years prior to the annual meeting at which the award is made. To be considered for the 2019 award, the candidate should submit an article-length paper (sole-authored), not to exceed 35 double-spaced pages (11- or 12-point font), inclusive of references. This paper may have been previously published, or may be in press or under review. A letter of recommendation from a faculty mentor familiar with the candidate's work is also required. Electronic submission of the paper (MS Word or PDF) is required. The letter of recommendation should be sent directly by the recommender as an email attachment (MS Word or PDF). Please send all materials to Patricia Rieker at rieker@bu.edu with the subject line: 2019 Simmons Award Nomination. Deadline for receipt of all submission materials is April 1, 2019. The nominator and nominee must be current section members.

2019 Louise Johnson Scholar

The Medical Sociology Section will select a student member of the section to be the 2019 Louise Johnson Scholar. The Louise Johnson Scholar fund was established in memory of Louise Johnson, a pioneering medical sociologist whose mentorship and scholarship we are pleased to honor. The fund was made possible by Sam Bloom of Mount Sinai School of Medicine, a former colleague of Louise Johnson. The Scholar will receive travel funds up to $500 to present at the annual ASA meetings in New York and attend section events. Selection will be based on academic merit and the quality of an accepted ASA paper related to medical sociology; papers with faculty co-authors are ineligible. To apply, please send: 1) a copy of your acceptance notification to present at the 2019 ASA meetings, 2) a copy of your paper, 3) your CV, and 4) a letter of recommendation from a professor who can write about your academic merit. Submissions should be sent via email, as Word documents or PDFs, to Hui Liu at liuhu@msu.edu with the subject line: 2019 Louise Johnson Scholar Nomination. Applications are due by May 1, 2019. The nominator and nominee must be current section members.

2019 Howard B. Kaplan Memorial Award in Medical Sociology

This award is established to support graduate students doing research in one of the substantive areas that defined the distinguished academic career of Dr. Howard B. Kaplan, namely mental health, self-concept and health, or deviance, by providing funds up to the amount of $500 to contribute to expenses associated with attending the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association (ASA). The award recipient will be invited to attend the Reeder dinner as a guest of the Medical Sociology section. Self-nominations are acceptable. To be considered for the 2019 award, the candidate should submit a CV and letter of nomination to Hui Liu at liuhu@msu.edu with the subject line: 2019 Kaplan Award Nomination. Deadline for receipt of all submission materials is April 1, 2019. The nominee and nominator must be current section members.
Call for nominations for section awards

2019 Eliot Freidson Outstanding Publication Award: Seeking Journal Article Nominations

The Freidson Award is given in alternate years to a book or journal article published in the preceding two years that has had a major impact on the field of medical sociology. The 2019 award will be given to a journal article published in either 2017 or 2018. The article may deal with any topic in medical sociology, broadly defined. Co-authored articles are appropriate to nominate. Self-nominations are permissible and encouraged. When making your nomination, please indicate (however briefly) the reason for the nomination, and include a PDF of the article. Nomination letters should be emailed to: Claire Decoteau, Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Illinois at Chicago (decoteau@uic.edu) with the subject line: 2019 Freidson Award Nomination. Nominations and submissions are due by April 1, 2019.

2019 Donald W. Light Award for Applied Medical Sociology

The Donald W. Light Award for the Applied or Public Practice of Medical Sociology is given in alternate years to a book or journal article published in the preceding two years that employs the concepts and methods of medical sociology to an applied issue or problem of significance. The 2018 Light Award will be given to an article published in either 2017 or 2018. The Light Award recognizes sociologists whose professional work or advocacy contributes to politically or ethically important challenges in health, health care, or health care policy at the national or international level. The award recipient will be invited to attend the Reeder dinner as a guest of the Medical Sociology section. Self-nominations are acceptable. To be considered for the 2019 award, the candidate should submit a letter of nomination and a copy of the article to Jane McLeod at jmcleod@indiana.edu with the subject line: 2019 Donald W. Light Award. Deadline for receipt of all nomination materials is April 1, 2019. The nominator and at least one author must be current section members.

2020 Leo G. Reeder Award

The Medical Sociology Section invites nominations for the 2020 Leo G. Reeder Award to be awarded at the annual meeting of the Medical Sociology Section in San Francisco. This award is given annually for Distinguished Contribution to Medical Sociology. This award recognizes scholarly contributions, especially a body of work displaying an extended trajectory of productivity that has contributed to theory and research in medical sociology. The Reeder Award also acknowledges teaching, mentoring, and training as well as service to the medical sociology community broadly defined. Please submit a letter of nomination and the nominee’s curriculum vitae to Deborah Carr at carrds@bu.edu with the subject line: 2020 Reeder Award Nomination. Nominations are due by April 1, 2019. The nominee and at least one nominator must be current section members. Note: If a person nominated for the Reeder Award is currently a member of the Medical Sociology Section Council, the nomination will be deferred until the person is no longer on the Council.
Interview with 2018 Donald W. Light Award winner Jennifer Reich

We are Alexandra Brewer (left) and Meredith Van Natta (right), this year’s student editors of the Medical Sociology Newsletter. Alexandra is a PhD candidate in sociology at the University of Chicago, and Meredith is a PhD candidate in sociology at the University of California San Francisco.

For the spring installment of the student column, we spoke with Dr. Lindsay Stevens, winner of the 2018 Roberta G. Simmons Outstanding Dissertation in Medical Sociology Award. Dr. Stevens is currently a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Princeton’s Center for Health and Wellbeing.

We were curious about Dr. Stevens’ process for writing an award-winning dissertation, which examines the notion of the “planned pregnancy” in U.S. public health policy, medical practice, and lived experience. Dr. Stevens confessed that like many graduate student researchers, she had doubts along the way about the novelty and impact of her work. What kept her motivated was her excitement about her data, particularly her interviews with women about their pregnancy planning process. Although at times it was nerve-wracking to ask strangers personal questions about their reproductive lives, she was consistently impressed by her interviewees’ surprising and enthralling stories. She found it thrilling to speak with individuals whose narratives about pregnancy planning complicated the typical “planned” versus “unplanned” pregnancy binary. For example, she recalled interviewing a woman who remained ambivalent about motherhood while at the same time pursuing in-vitro fertilization and finding this nuance both intriguing and underrepresented in the literature. Returning to such data helped Dr. Stevens at moments when she felt stuck in her writing process.
Interview with 2018 Simmons Award winner Lindsay Stevens

We also asked Dr. Stevens about the best advice she received from a mentor while working on her dissertation. After collecting her first round of interviews, she remembers feeling overwhelmed by the amount of data and the number of possible directions for her research. Her advisor suggested that she start by writing what was most obvious. “You don’t have to do everything at once,” she explained. “Just tell one story at a time and trust that you’ll return back to the data to continue unpacking all of those complexities, loose ends, and exciting little things you found.” This advice helped Dr. Stevens narrow down her research questions in order to write her first publication.

Finally, given Dr. Stevens’ recent transition from graduate student to postdoc, we wanted to know about the particular advantages and challenges that have come with her new position. Dr. Stevens told us that while her graduate program was generally more structured, the postdoc has given her more free time in which to develop her research. “I’m working on a book manuscript right now, and I feel like I finally have the space to think both deeply and broadly about my research,” said Dr. Stevens, “whereas the end of my PhD program often felt like a sprint to meet deadlines.” At the same time, she recognizes that the relatively unstructured format of a postdoc can also hinder productivity if one has too much free time. In order to combat this and to create structure for herself and others, she has formed a writing group with other postdocs that has engendered mutual accountability.

Stay tuned for our next column in the Summer 2019 Newsletter!
Communicating Research to Public Audiences

Although peer-reviewed journal articles remain the coin of the realm for hiring, tenure, and promotion, they are not the best way to communicate our research to public audiences and thereby influence policy and practice. To have true impact, we have to think, write, and speak differently in our communications with public audiences.

Why Communicate your Research to Public Audiences?

✦ It is fun and challenging. It gives you a chance to break out of the academic writing mold and be colloquial, tell stories, and toss away nuance.
✦ It helps break down barriers between academics and the public.
✦ If you are at a public university, faculty salary is partly funded by taxpayers. We owe it to them to share our work in accessible ways.
✦ If you have a job outside of academia, it may be your job. Researchers at think tanks and government agencies are expected to write and present in ways that the public can understand.
✦ Your department chair, dean, and/or center director can use it to show off your work.
✦ Your parents, children, or partner may be able to understand your research when you make it more accessible.
✦ It gives you the opportunity to direct the conversation. You are an expert in your area. If you don’t tell policymakers or the public what’s up, who will?
✦ HAVE IMPACT! It may be your best shot at someone actually paying attention to and making use of your hard work.

Examples and Outlets for Public-Facing Research Communication

There are many methods researchers can and should use to translate their research to practitioners, policymakers, and the public. Several section members have been successful with disseminating their research through brief reports (e.g., policy briefs, research briefs, fact sheets), media interviews, infographics, op-eds, and presentations to policy and public audiences. The Scholars Strategy Network (https://scholars.org/) and The Conversation (https://theconversation.com/us) are two venues through which academics regularly disseminate their work in short, easily digestible, and publicly accessible formats.
Communicating Research to Public Audiences

Pointers for Public-Facing Communication

Regardless of the mechanism, there are a few key tips for effective public-facing communication.

1. *Keep it simple.* Keep your argument straightforward. What is the ONE important thing you want this particular audience to get out of your message? Tell your audience why they should care, and get to your main point immediately. Do not start with background. Do not discuss theory. Emphasize the connection to your audience’s everyday lives. This may mean you cannot discuss every finding or nuance from a particular study.

2. *Use plain writing.* Use language a middle-school aged child can understand. Avoid scientific jargon and acronyms. Use simple vocabulary, even when it seems less precise (e.g., instead of ‘analogous’, use ‘similar’). Keep sentences short. Limit your use of adverbs and adjectives. Simplify unnecessary phrases (e.g., instead of ‘conducted an investigation of’, use ‘investigated’.) Use catchy titles and engaging first sentences.

3. *Be concrete.* Use stories about people and places. Give examples that mean something to the real lives of your audience. Use statistics strategically, but do not assume that they speak for themselves. Explain what they mean and why they matter.

4. *Use images and graphics (when applicable), but use them with care.* Graphics and images can be very useful for illustrating a point and for grabbing media and public attention. But be clear on the purpose of your graphic. Use large font sizes. Include no more than two data series in one graphic. Use descriptive graphic titles rather than a generic title (e.g., ‘Education Disparities in Life Expectancy Have Surged’ rather than ‘Relationship between Educational Attainment and Life Expectancy’).

Here are just a few examples of recent public-facing research communications from section members:

The Assault on our Education System in the House and Senate Tax plans will Literally Kill, *Huffington Post*, by Jennifer Karas Montez

*Does Knowledge about Abortion Depend on Where People Live?*, Scholars Strategy Network, by Danielle Bessett and Alison Norris

Drug Overdose Rates are Highest in Places with the Most Economic and Family Distress, Carsey School of Public Policy, by Shannon Monnat

Unequal Until the End, *The Atlantic*, by Corey Abramson

The Health Consequences of Moving from Place to Place, Scholars Strategy Network, by Antwan Jones

If you are interested, but you do not have a lot of experience with translating research to public audiences, I encourage you to reach out to your media communications office at your university. They might be willing to meet with you to discuss your research and draft a strategy for disseminating your work. You could also get in touch with your local chapter of the Scholars Strategy Network (https://scholars.org/chapters) to get you started.
Teaching
The Value of Video Conferencing in the Undergraduate Classroom

The focus of our newsletter is a growing yet still underutilized teaching tool, video conferencing. While many readers may be familiar with using such a tool in the context of job searches, this visual connection opens up a world of possibilities in our own classrooms.

Our focus here is inviting researchers who reside in a separate location from your own institution, however readers can likely envision a variety of leaders one might invite into the classroom, including activists, practitioners, and/or future employers.

We utilized video conferencing in our Introduction to Sociology Course-based Undergraduate Research Experience course at the University of Texas at El Paso where students completed a research project on the medicalization of childbirth. Because it offered a valuable introduction to sociological ideas and research and a useful foundation to the focus of our course, students read the book “Cut it Out,” by Dr. Theresa Morris. We were fortunate that Dr. Morris (Professor of Sociology, Texas A&M) participated in a virtual Q and A session with our students. Her visit meant students could easily communicate and network with a professor ten hours away (yes, Texas is that big). In addition, students knew from the beginning of the semester that their course book’s author was going to speak directly to them, and we believe this face-to-face experience instilled a higher level of accountability to read and reflect on the material.

Similar to any teaching tool, there are hurdles. We want to briefly mention that students were extra anxious to ask questions, based on the added nerves of a distinguished guest and the use of a microphone. However, we asked students to submit questions prior to the video conference for us to select a few for the actual video conference. This practice gave us more control over the content, made students less nervous because they knew we chose “good” questions, prepared the visiting scholar (who received the questions prior), and made students more accountable to completing the readings. Not only were their question submissions graded, we also printed out and assigned an order to efficiently use our 50-minute period.

Such technology may take practice and thus require a test run prior to the actual virtual visit. Readers may be concerned about cost, and fortunately, numerous free software-related resources support video conferencing, including Skype, Google Hangouts, and Zoom. If your classroom is not equipped with the necessary hardware (webcam and microphones), we encourage you to begin a conversation with your chair and/or dean to make such a purchase. Other options include locating a more suitable room on campus, or you might be able to bring a laptop to your classroom, which you might be able to borrow from your campus technology center.
Career and Employment

For this month’s newsletter, I set out to reverse engineer part of the hiring process by asking colleagues across the country and in different industries: where do potential employers of medical sociologists post job ads?

ASA’s job bank is certainly a starting point for scholars interested in an academic position. It is also, it turns out, a place where some organizations outside of the traditional academy post job opportunities. However, as any medical sociologist who has been on the job market knows, there are far more opportunities out there than what is listed in the ASA job bank. I briefly list here some other venues medical sociologist jobs are being posted drawn from my very unscientific convenience sample of colleagues.

First, colleagues highlighted the behemoth of online job posting, www.indeed.com, and its non-profit-specialized peer: www.idealist.org. Other suggestions were more tailored to their organization’s topical focus or industry. For instance, www.academyhealth.org is a great resource for health policy researchers. For scholars interested in public health and social justice, www.spiritof1848.org is a good place to look. There are also social media hubs focused on particular areas, such as Twitter’s @ReproJobs, that colleagues asked to share their job posting. Try hunting for hashtags related to your desired field on Twitter.

Of course, word of mouth helps a great deal. If you find a job ad that appeals to you, don’t stop after you’ve submitted your CV/resume. See if you know someone who knows someone at that employer, ask for an informational interview, look for similar employers and seek informational interviews with them. Good luck!

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Welcome to the spring issue of the Medical Sociology newsletter.

My thanks to the regular contributors who have been so timely with their content, and to members who have shared conference and publication announcements. This is your space, and we are not limited by printing costs. Please make use of it to share conference opportunities and publications that are not in our main field journals. There is so much good work in the field today.

In the summer I will be seeking a new team of graduate student editors. Please be in touch with me, or Alexandra or Meredith, if you want to find out what this role entails and think about it for a while.

Our summer issue will have section election results, further details of the section sessions at ASA, and more interviews.

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2019 Midwest Big Data Summer School.

This fourth edition of the summer school will be held from May 20-23, 2019 in Ames, Iowa. The summer school consists of a series of tutorials on the beginning and intermediate Data Science topics. The majority of these tutorials include hands-on activities. The summer school also includes four tracks that dig deeper into the foundations of data science, Big Data applications, application of Data Science to Digital agriculture, and Software Analytics. The overview of the program this year can be found here http://mbds.cs.iastate.edu/2019/program.shtml.

Registration for the summer school is open, and the website is here: http://bit.ly/bigdata11333.

Space is limited. Register now.
Conference announcement

Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology Annual Conference,
Theme: “The Profession of Sociological Practice.”
Focus: Medical Sociology.

We, at AACS, think medical and mental health care sociologists have something to say about health care policy and practice. This year the AACS conference has a special focus on health care, including the keynote address and several sessions. We would like to discuss the role of medical and mental health care sociologists in health care policy and practice.

We are pleased to announce the Call for Participation for the 2019 Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology Annual Meeting, October 17-19 in Portland, Oregon. Our conference theme is “The Profession of Sociological Practice.” Please see the text below. We would appreciate it greatly if you would forward this mail to colleagues in your department, and others who may be interested in attending a professional conference dedicated to advancing the social and behavioral sciences in work, occupations, professions, and organizations, as well as networking with applied, clinical, and engaged public sociologists, and other professionals, at the 2019 AACS Annual Meeting.

In the last quarter century, applied and clinical sociologists have marshalled significant momentum to “professionalize” sociological practice. Join sociologists who serve the public in sundry occupations in the academic and non-academic workplace and professional marketplace. Open to all sociologists, social and behavioral scientists, and professionals who use social and behavioral science in business and industry, government, and academia. AACS Annual Meetings attract practicing sociologists and other professionals from around the world who know how to make a difference.

We don’t just present “papers” at AACS – we look for innovation and creativity in content and presentation form. Consider leading a professional development workshop, panel, roundtable, or poster session. Proposals that address teaching with an applied focus are also invited. Program participants are invited to submit their presentations to the Journal of Applied Social Science, AACS’s Official peer-refereed journal, for publication.
Conference announcement

AACS has a reputation as a student-friendly Association. Our annual meetings offer mentoring opportunities for students. Students who attend AACS Annual Meetings are encouraged to submit their papers for the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Paper Competition. Student teams are welcome to participate in the Client Problem-solving Competition.

AACS pre-conference professional development workshops are available on Thursday afternoon for a modest additional charge for non-members. Registration includes the welcome and closing receptions, complimentary breakfasts by Embassy Suites with stay, keynote and presidential luncheons, and refreshments.

**Deadline: June 1, 2019.** For more information, please visit AACS at [https://www.aacsnet.net/](https://www.aacsnet.net/), and explore the Conferences tab. Become a Member! Register here! Submit here! Get Certified!

The location for the 2019 AACS Annual Meeting is:

Embassy Suites by Hilton Portland Washington Square
Publication announcements


With contributions from: Adele E. Clarke, Ruha Benjamin, Donna Haraway, Michelle Murphy, Yu-Ling Huang, Chia-Ling Wu and Kim TallBear.

As the planet’s human numbers grow and environmental concerns proliferate, natural scientists, economists, and policy-makers are increasingly turning to new and old questions about families and kinship as matters of concern. From government programs designed to fight declining birth rates in Europe and East Asia, to controversial policies seeking to curb population growth in countries where birth rates remain high, to increasing income inequality transnationally, issues of reproduction introduce new and complicated moral and political quandaries.

Making Kin Not Population ends the silence on these issues with essays from leading anti-racist, ecologically-concerned, feminist scholars. Though not always in accord, these contributors provide bold analyses of complex issues of intimacy and kinship, from reproductive justice to environmental justice, and from human and nonhuman genocides to new practices for making families and kin. This timely work offers vital proposals for forging innovative personal and public connections in the contemporary world.


Publication announcements

Metzl, Jonathan Michel  
https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-1-5416-4498-4  
https://www.dyingofwhiteness.com


Torres, Stacy. “We must prioritize pedestrian safety in Oakland and other Bay Area cities for the good of us all”. *San Francisco Chronicle*. February 8, 2019.  
Members of the section might be interested in a 40 minute video we have made about the careers and experiences of a cohort of women in medicine who have achieved full professorships. Entitled “Navigating Academic Medicine,” the film, based on videotaped interviews and released in 2017, is available on YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pp8sbSFOzIs).

It could be useful in classes related to sociology of medicine, sociology of gender or covering diversity topics. The film consists largely of the women themselves reflecting on surviving numerous challenges and addressing a range of issues, such as differential treatment, bias, harassment, combining work and family and accomplishing career advancement.

Please contact Mary Zimmerman (mzimmerman@kumc.edu) if you have questions or have any problems accessing the film.

Mary K. Zimmerman
Professor, Dept of Health Policy and Management
School of Medicine
Professor (Courtesy), Department of Sociology
University of Kansas