

June 2025

ASA RETIREMENT NETWORK NEWSLETTER

PostScripts

Greetings all,

All ASA members who are in the Retired membership category are also members of the ASA Retirement Network (ASARN). We intend this newsletter, PostScripts, as one way to keep in touch with your colleagues and your profession. Please also use our ASARN listserv for announcements and notices; for this, contact the listserv administrator Diane Pike, Co-chair, pike@augsborg.edu.

ASARN is led by an elected advisory board of its members. It organizes monthly discussions on timely topics, a bi-monthly book discussion, and social events at the ASA Annual Meeting. Our ASARN [webpage](#) will soon be updated with more information when we transition to becoming an ASA Retired Sociologists Community (see more below).

As your new newsletter editor (Linda Breytspraak), I have the challenging job of filling the shoes of David Ekerdt who innovated this newsletter. We have been professional colleagues for many years with shared interests in social gerontology. We both live in the Kansas City metropolitan area where a street divides Kansas and Missouri, but both have worked in the opposite state from that in which we live. I have spent my career (after doing graduate and postdoctoral work at Duke) at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

In this issue:

- The Retirement Network at ASA this summer: Chicago 2025
- ASA 2025 Award Winners by Emeriti Faculty
- Considering the influence of artificial intelligence (AI) on teaching sociology
- Changing our Network to a Community within the ASA structure
- New books and articles by Retirement Network members

ASA Annual Meeting



The ASA annual meeting is well located in Chicago this year and should be easily accessible to many of us.

The 2025 Annual Meeting Online Program is available. Log into the [online portal](#) with your ASA username/password and select “View the Online Program”.

Our ASARN group will be actively participating with the following sessions:

- **ASARN Advisory Board and Business Meeting**--Sun, August 10, 12:00-1:30pm, West Tower, Hyatt Regency Chicago, Floor: Ballroom Level/Gold, New Orleans; **Online business meeting:** There will be an online business meeting for those not attending the Chicago conference, Wednesday, August 6, 1:00 pm (PDT), 3:00 pm (CDT), 4:00 pm (EDT) (link to be announced in the regular listserv sent by Diane Pike).
- **ASARN Life in Sociology Lecture and Reception: Philip W. Nyden, Loyola University-Chicago**-- Sun, August 10, 2:00 to 3:30pm, West Tower, Hyatt Regency Chicago, Floor: Ballroom Level/Gold, New Orleans

With over 40 years of teaching and research experience, Professor Philip Nyden's work has centered on public sociology, with a focus on community-based participatory research. Early in his career he examined union democracy in steelworker and coal miner unions. He was the Founding Director of Loyola University Chicago's Center for Urban Research and Learning where he worked collaboratively in university-community partnerships. Working at local, regional, national, and international levels, he engaged with academics and community activists to bring community knowledge into the research process. This work has helped to shape innovative solutions to pressing issues such as preserving affordable housing, stabilizing diverse neighborhoods, increasing community voice in policy making, and a wide range of other topics. **Reception to follow in the same room (3:00-3:30)**

- **This Historic Moment: What Can Retired Sociologists Offer?** Mon., August 11, 10:00-11:30 am, West Tower, Hyatt Regency Chicago, Floor: Ballroom Level/Gold, New Orleans--Mary Lou Finley, presiding (Antioch U.-Seattle); Wornie L. Reed (Virginia Tech); Rosalyn Benjamin Darling (Indiana U. of Pennsylvania); Linda M. Breyspraak (U. of Missouri-Kansas City); Myra Marx Ferree (U. of Wisconsin-Madison)

Each will speak briefly on topics related to areas of career specialization as they may relate to these current times. Audience participation will be invited.

- **"You Don't Know What You've Got 'Til It's Gone": Continuity of Scholarly Resources After Retirement**, Mon, August 11, 2:00 to 3:30pm, West Tower, Hyatt Regency Chicago, Floor: Ballroom Level/Gold, New Orleans

The facilitators will lead a discussion of the challenges of maintaining continuity of scholarly resources after one retires. They will address issues of IT support, office space, library access, web presence, emeriti status, as well as professional identity concerns. After introductory remarks, they will invite comments, questions, and discussion among session participants, inviting workshop participants to share their experiences and their solutions to these dilemmas.

Facilitators: David J. Ekerdt (University of Kansas) and John M. Kennedy (Indiana University)

PLEASE NOTE: Early bird registration is available at a discounted rate of \$145 for retirees until July 1 (11:59 pm Eastern) and from July 2-August 12 for \$191 for retirees. Full registration information can be found at this link [REGISTRATION](#)

ASA 2025 Award Winners

Congratulations to the following emeriti sociology faculty being honored at this year's ASA annual meeting:

Public Understanding of Sociology Award: **Gregory D. Squires**, Professor Emeritus, Sociology, George Washington University

Cox-Johnson-Frazier Award: **Jualynne E. Dodson**, Professor Emerita, Sociology, Michigan State University

Distinguished Career Award for the Practice of Sociology: Carole Joffe, Professor Emerita, University of California-Davis; currently University of California-San Francisco

W.E.B. Du Bois Career of Distinguished Scholarship Award: **David A. Snow**, Professor Emeritus, Sociology, University of California-Irvine

Detailed descriptions of these individuals and their accomplishments can be found here:

<https://www.asanet.org/about/awards/2025-asa-award-winners/>

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Teaching

Artificial intelligence has become pervasive in every aspect of our daily lives—often in ways that we don’t even recognize. Daily newspapers and journals are full of articles on its operations and effects. As ASA is “Reimagining the Future of Work” at its annual meeting, most work sectors will in some way be influenced by the introduction of artificial intelligence. Hence, it seems logical to raise questions about the role of AI in the educational endeavor and how higher education will be changed. There is no way that education can be exempt, and universities/colleges are being challenged to integrate AI into the curriculum. According to *The Wall Street Journal* (Natasha Singer, “A.I. on Campus: Casting Chatbot as Study Buddy,” 6/7/2025), OpenAI is selling premium A.I. services to universities for faculty and student use, and schools like Duke, the University of Maryland, and California State University are already heavily into its use. Today’s college students must be prepared to enter a job market transformed by AI. As editor I posed the question to any ASA retiree to consider how AI would have changed their approach to teaching sociology (given that many of us escaped into retirement before it became so widespread). Following are four different responses.

AI and Teaching: Why I’m Relieved I Don’t Have to Deal With This

Diane Pike, Professor Emerita. Sociology

Augsburg University

Most sociologists spend all or much of their career teaching—in various contexts of course. We generate future sociologists, and thus sustain and advance the discipline, by the teaching and learning of sociology.

I am fascinated and worried about the impact of AI on what students can and do learn. Assertion: The capacity to think critically is generated by learning to write and writing is advanced by being able to read.

Yes, AI has positive impacts. It is here to stay and being used everywhere. Lots is being written in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and elsewhere. (You might check out Marc Watkins work as a start.) But Durkheim would ask us to think not only about functional intended consequences (from the sellers of AI), but also about—a la Robert Merton, the unintended dysfunctional consequences. We are in the midst of a significant social change and cannot know where that will take sociology or society.

Here are questions that I would be (and I know others are) thinking hard about if still in the classroom:

- Is using AI plagiarism? Does it matter what the student can think versus what ChatGPT generates?
- Who will be able to identify the mistakes AI makes if everyone relies on AI to begin with?
- If students themselves cannot write, what do they lose?
- How do assignments need to change/are changing? How much additional work will professors be asked to do to educate students given this new tool?

I'm worried enough to remind us that just listening to the promoters and seers of the wonders of AI for education is dangerous. There are always unintended consequences—positive and negative. They rarely can be predicted in either direction. (No AI in this piece!)

ChatGPT Explains Teaching with ChatGPT

John Sloan, Professor Emeritus, Criminal Justice and Sociology,
University of Alabama-Birmingham

I've been retired from full-time faculty life for nearly a decade and all I can say is "Thank God!" During that decade a "[new normal](#)" emerged in higher education as a result of the [pandemic](#), introduction by [OpenAI](#) of [ChatGPT](#) in 2022, the nearing [demographic cliff](#), and the 2024 [election](#). Whew!

If I was still teaching, to see how AI might change my style I submitted the following prompt to [ChatGPT 4o](#): "Explain how using you might shift my teaching style in a college classroom."

Here's its answer (edited for length):

[T]he use of AI like me in your college classroom could **shift your teaching style** in some meaningful ways, depending on how much you integrate me into your pedagogy. Here's a breakdown of how your style might evolve across different dimensions of teaching:

1. From Lecturer to Learning Coach

Before AI:

You might focus a lot on delivering information through lectures or content-heavy presentations.

With AI:

You may shift toward being a **facilitator of learning**—guiding students to critically engage with material, interpret AI-generated content, or troubleshoot AI mistakes.

2. Curriculum and Assignment Design

Before AI:

Assignments likely focus on content mastery: essays, research papers, problem sets, etc.

With AI:

You may design assignments that:

- Ask students to **critique or fact-check AI outputs**
 - Require students to **compare their own work to AI-generated drafts**
 - Involve **reflection essays** on the limits of using AI in academic work
-

3. Classroom Time Use

Before AI:

Class time might center on direct instruction, review, or going over readings.

With AI:

You could **flip the classroom**:

- Assign AI-assisted prep work at home (e.g., reading summaries, AI-generated questions)
 - Use class time for **debates, problem-solving, or peer feedback** on drafts the AI helped generate
-

4. Emphasis on Ethics and Digital Literacy

Before AI:

You might touch on plagiarism policies or research ethics as needed.

With AI:

You'll likely need to:

- Teach **AI literacy** (how to use it responsibly and critically)
 - Discuss **academic honesty in the age of AI**
 - Emphasize **original thinking, source evaluation, and ethical dilemmas**
-

5. Assessment Strategies

Before AI:

You might rely on essays, quizzes, and take-home exams.

With AI:

You may redesign assessments to:

- Include **oral defenses** or in-class writing to ensure authentic student work
- Focus more on **how students think** rather than just what they write
- Use AI as a **collaborative tool**, but require **reflection** or justification

My Uses of AI: A Personal and Pedagogical Reflection

John Kennedy, Indiana University

As sociologists, we're trained to observe and adapt to the evolving structures that shape our lives. One of the most transformative developments in recent years has been the rise of artificial intelligence (AI). While much of the public discourse focuses on its implications for labor markets and ethics, I've found myself engaging with AI in more personal and practical ways—both in everyday life and in imagining how I might have used it in teaching.

Like many of you, I've grown frustrated with traditional search engines. The clutter and irrelevant results make finding clear information harder than it should be. AI tools have offered a refreshing alternative. For example, I've used AI to generate recipes based on my dietary goals. The results often need tweaking, but I bring my own knowledge to refine them. It's a collaborative process—much like research: start with a framework, then adapt.

Another example: after a recent MRI for sciatica, I found the medical jargon in my health portal nearly indecipherable. While doctors would understand it, I didn't. I turned to two AI tools for help. Both provided readable interpretations—and they largely agreed. That consistency gave me confidence, even as I remained cautious. I've since used AI to explore a range of topics. I don't fully trust it, but the stakes are often low. And frankly, I've found AI to hallucinate less than some weather forecasts.

Although I'm no longer teaching, I've thought about how I would integrate AI into the classroom. I imagine using it for lesson prep—refining materials, uncovering new research, clarifying concepts. I would also encourage students to use AI, but with guidance. Their first assignment might be to write about the ethical use of AI in academic work. Then they'd explain how they plan to use it in assignments. I'd ask them to share drafts, queries used, and reflections on the process. The goal would be to foster thoughtful, responsible use of a tool that will likely be a constant in their lives.

I'm reminded of the time I converted an in-person course to an online format. It took eight months and the help of an instructional design consultant. I suspect integrating AI into a

course would require similar effort—and that the first attempt might not be perfect. But that’s part of the process.

AI is here to stay. For some of us, it’s an opportunity to learn and adapt. For others, it may feel unnecessary. Both responses are valid. But for those who choose to engage, the challenge is to do so thoughtfully and ethically.

NOTE: This article was prepared using Co-Pilot. I first drafted a very rough outline and then made a few revisions before submitting the outline to Co-Pilot and Claude. I also included an article that I wrote for this newsletter last year to guide the AIs for formatting and style. The editor thought the Co-Pilot version was more readable but a little too long. I asked Co-Pilot to reduce the article to 475 words. If you would like to see the documents I used for this article, please contact me directly – kennedyj@iu.edu

Student Assignments for Engagement (without AI)

Linda Breytspraak, Professor Emerita, Sociology,

University of Missouri-Kansas City

My teaching days were behind me before AI was even a thing, but I recall that even then I often found that the best learning occurred through active engagement situations— projects that most likely could not be driven by AI. I regularly taught young medical students in a 6-year BA/MD program, as well as students studying gerontology and medical sociology. My aim was to get them into real-life situations as much as possible. I made use of many service learning and practicum projects, but two assignments that were built into courses will illustrate my point.

In a Medical Sociology course my goal was to help students see relationships between health disparities as they interrelated with environments in which people lived (a topic that might be unacceptable in the current climate). Students worked in pairs forming a hypothetical family of four with a 16-year-old boy and 10-year-old girl and were randomly assigned an intersection within a reasonable distance of the University where their hypothetical family would live. Within a ½ mile radius of their intersection they observed the neighborhoods and their resources, availability of all types of medical facilities, safe places for exercise, and types of food sources for a healthy diet. They were asked to report back as though they were speaking to the City Council with observations, needs, and recommendations. Students each wrote up their observations and recommendations separately according to guidelines provided, and results were shared in class. It was quite an eye-opening experience, especially for those whose intersections were located near food deserts with few opportunities for good health resources or social support systems.

In another project (which was collaborative with several medical faculty and grant-funded) first- and second-year medical students in the 6-year BA/MD program (age-wise the equivalent of first- and second-year college students) were paired with healthy senior residents in a nearby retirement community. The elders became mentors to the students as the students interviewed them and kept journals for at least 8 weeks of the semester. In addition, all students worked on a project with the senior mentor. These included scrapbooks and videos of the mentor's life, recipe books from the mentor's family, learning favorite arts and crafts of the mentor, writing poems about aging, and collecting cartoons and humorous stories about aging. The mentors had much to teach the students about the aging process as was reflected in the student journals. The mentors gave feedback on their mentees at the end of the semester. This type of activity could not be AI generated, and it changed many students' minds in a positive direction about working with older adults as patients in the future.

ASARN Becoming an ASA “Community”

The ASA Retirement Network is in the process of moving to the status of ASA Community, a shift requested by the ASA administration. As described on the ASA website, www.asanet.org/communities-and-sections/communities.

ASA communities are a member-generated organizational structure approved by the ASA Council. Communities differ from sections in that they: create new space for connection and networking separate from research foci; provide new avenues for professional development and mentoring; and provide a broader range of opportunities for engagement with ASA

Communities are organized not around research foci, as are sections, but rather by other principles that members share, such as common professional backgrounds and/or shared identities. In the case of current ASARN members, it is our status as retired sociologists that brings us together. Some examples of current Communities are Community College faculty; first-gen and working-class sociologists; sociologists teaching in carceral settings; sociologists working outside university and college contexts.

Our relationship to the A.S.A remains mostly the same. We will continue to have a listserv for notifications and communication; an ASA website; a session at the Annual Meeting (in addition to the virtual Annual Business Meeting that we will convene in advance of the ASA Annual Meeting); and our annual Life in Sociology lecture. We anticipate retaining the same leadership structure, with officer positions and a Board of 6-9 elected members, and to continuing to offer the same activities—newsletter, listserv, online discussions, book group, and so forth.

We have posted a link on our listserv inviting current ASARN members to sign a petition indicating your support for creating a Retired Sociologists Community. We have already received more than the required minimum number of signatures but are eager to have all current ASARN members join the Community. Once the petition is approved by the ASA, we will post the procedure for officially joining the new Retired Sociologists Community.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the ASARN Co-Chairs Diane Pike pike@augsborg.edu and/or Judy Howard jhoward@uw.edu.

Recent Books by ASARN Members

Medical Sociology, 16th edition, by William Cockerham, Routledge, 2025. [More](#).

The High School: Sports, Spirit, and Citizens: 1903-2024, by Mike Messner, Rutgers University Press, 2025. [More](#)

Inequality and Violence in the United States: Casualties of Capitalism (3rd ed.) by Barbara Chasin, Lexington Books, 2025. [More](#). The second edition of this book won the Best Book of the year award in 2004 from the Marxist Section of the American Sociological Association.

Working-Class Kids and Visionary Educators at a Multiracial High School: A Story of Belonging, by Karen Hansen, Lexington, 2024. [More](#).

Cops on Campus: Rethinking Safety and Confronting Police Violence, by Y. Suriel, G. Watkins, J.P.M. Dizon, & J.J. Sloan III, U. of Washington, 2024. [More](#).

We Can Change the World: Tales from a Generation's Quest for Peace and Justice, by Douglas L. Murray, Westview Press, 2024.

A Kaleidoscope of Identities: Reflexivity, Routine, and the Fluidity of Sex, Gender, and Sexuality, by James W. Messerschmidt and Tristan Bridges. Rowman & Littlefield (now Bloomsbury), 2022. [More](#).

Recent Articles by ASARN Members

David Ekerdt, University of Kansas, co-authored this publication

Poggio, J., Ekerdt, D.J., & Meyen, E. (2025, January). Schools and their faculty retirees: The potential for mutual goodwill. *TIAA Institute Research Paper Series*, 1-10. Available at SSRN: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5113113>

Gary Marx, M.I.T., recently published this article:

Goffman at 100: A Chameleon Seen as a Rorschach Test within a Kaleidoscope. *Symbolic Interaction*, December 2024 (open access).

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/symb.1216> [onlinelibrary.wiley.com]

John Sloan, University of Alabama-Birmingham, co-authored two papers:

Sloan III, J.J., Paoline III, E.A., & Nobles, M.R. (2025). The more things change, the more they stay the same: A multi-wave national assessment of police academy training curricula. *Criminology and Public Policy*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9133.12691>

Cardwell, S., Copes, H., & Sloan III, J.J. (2025). Perceptions of publication pressures and burnout among students in U.S. criminology and criminal justice PhD programs. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2025.2463441>

John Kennedy, Indiana University, co-authored this recently published paper:

Daehyoung Lee, John Kennedy, Donetta J. Cothran, Patrick C. Shih, Stephanie Dickinson, Lilian Golzarri-Arroyo, Georgia C. Frey; Correlates of physical activity, sedentary time, and cardiovascular disease risk factors in autistic adults without intellectual disabilities. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*. Vol. 161, June 2025, 104980. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0891422225000642?dgcid=coauthor>

James W. Messerschmidt Adjunct Professor, School of Justice, Faculty of Law, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia, recently published these articles

“Masculinities and Crime.” In S. Browning, L. Butler, and C. Jonson Eds. *Gender and Crime: Contemporary Theoretical Perspectives*, pp. 52-77. NY: Routledge, (2024), (with Stephen Tomsen). [More](#).

Interrogating ‘Political Masculinities.’ *European Journal of Politics and Gender*, 7 (3): 345-360, (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1332/251510821X16897800306124>

Legitimation as Linchpin: On Raewyn Connell’s Changing Conceptualization of ‘Hegemonic Masculinity’.” *International Review of Sociology*, 34 (2) (2024): 211-239, (with Tristan Bridges). <https://doi.org/10.1080/03906701.2024.2388616>

Greg Squires, Professor Emeritus, George Washington University, published this article

“DEI is Dead.” *Social Policy*, Winter 2025.

<https://www.socialpolicy.org/133-articles/current-issue/winter-2025/1364-community-development-corner-where-left-and-right-come-together.html>

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