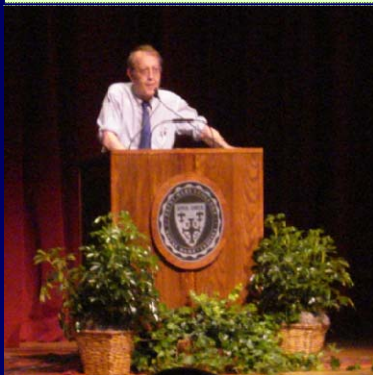




## Sociology Newsletter

Fall 2010

### Sociology Department Welcomes Renowned Educational Activist Jonathan Kozol



The Sociology Department co-sponsored a lecture titled "Education and Social Justice" by noted author Jonathan Kozol on October 4, 2010. Before the large crowd in O'Laughlin Auditorium, Kozol described his own educational experiences as an English major at Harvard University and later as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University. Kozol left Oxford before finishing the program in order to spend time in Paris with ex-patriot American writers such as Richard Wright. Upon his return to the United States, Kozol opted to work as a teacher in one of the poorest schools among Boston Public Schools. Kozol was soon fired for reading the poem "What happens to a dream deferred?" by eminent poet Langston Hughes, to his mostly African American students. Despite this inauspicious educational background, Kozol became a national spokesperson advocating for integrated public education in the United States. He also is an outspoken critic of school vouchers and the No Child Left Behind program. As Kozol noted about the standardized testing required by No Child Left Behind, "All year long, everything [in the curriculum] is driven by the test. It excludes everything that won't be tested, robbing urban children of the entire richness of curriculum and capaciousness of culture that won't be on the test."

Kozol has published a number of bestselling books including: *Death at an Early Age: The Destruction of the Hearts and Minds of Negro Children in the Boston Public Schools* (1967), *Prisoners of Silence: Breaking the Bonds of Adult Illiteracy in the United States* (1980), *Rachel and Her Children: Homeless Families in America* (1988), *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools* (1991), *Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation* (1995), *Ordinary Resurrections: Children in the Years of Hope* (2000), *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America* (2005), *Letters to a Young Teacher* (2007). Many of you may remember reading one or more of these books in sociology courses!



Jonathan Kozol (right) with Susan Alexander (center), and Natalie Haber-Baker, Loyola University (left)

### Sociology and On-line Courses



During the past summer of 2010, Saint Mary's College began offering on-line courses. Carrie Erlin offered the first online sociology course, SOC 203 Social Problems. Fourteen students participated in the six-week course, which was themed around the culture of food. Students completed assigned readings and viewed films posted on the internet, then discussed those readings and films through the use of online forums. Students also completed weekly projects, which they then posted on the course website. The addition of an online course allowed students to work or complete internships while receiving full credit for this general education class. As student response to the class was overwhelmingly positive, the course will be offered online again during the Summer, 2011 session.

# Sociology Alumna Returns to SMC

## Charmaine Torma



Charmaine Samaraweera Torma graduated in 1999 with both a sociology and psychology major from Saint Mary's College and immediately after graduation she went to work at the American Sociological Association (ASA) as a program assistant in the Academic and Professional Affairs Program. While working there, she helped professors compile their curriculum. In addition, she reviewed grant proposals from potential research fellows. How could a degree in sociology help in this field of work? When asked this, Charmaine answered by stating that the courses she took while at Saint Mary's prepared her for work in applied sociology, specifically with analyzing data through statistical formulas and then to form conclusions based on the results. How exactly did she get the opportunity to participate in this fabulous job? A former professor provided her with the job description and helped her through the application process. After several years as a program assistant at ASA and then at the Center of Concern (a non-governmental organization in DC), Charmaine became the Development Director at Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in Chicago.

For the past five years Charmaine has been a stay at home mom taking care of her two children, but she has continued to be involved in fundraising and development. Recently, after a conversation with the current Vice President of College Relations at Saint Mary's, she applied for a position in the Development Office at the College. This past August, Charmaine accepted a position in the Annual Giving Office and is in charge of Reunion Giving for the Annual Fund. She truly enjoys what she does because she is able to personally talk to alumnae and energize them on

reunion. Being in charge of the Reunion Giving for the Annual Fund, she persuades past Belles to donate slightly more to the Annual Fund in honor of the year of their reunion. Of course, these alumnae have been more than willing to donate to their Alma Mater and love to see it expand and flourish.

Based on the academic success and pure joy the professors and faculty bestow upon us students, Saint Mary's is the ideal college for career oriented women. Charmaine Torma is the perfect example of students being placed in incredible internships, some even returning to their Alma Mater, and professors willing to help with every student's need.

## Find us on Facebook!

The Sociology Department has a Facebook group!

Find us and join at:

**SMC Sociology**

A screenshot of the Facebook page for the SMC Sociology department. The page features a cover photo of a group of people, a search bar, and a navigation menu with options like Wall, Info, Photos, Events, and Video. The main content area shows a post from Susan Bankie Alexander about a job opening for a Sociologist at the Department of the Army Agency. Below this, there are links to USAJOBS and a post about food price comparisons. The page also includes a 'WELCOME!' message and an 'Information' section.

## Share your stories!

E-mail Dr. Susan Alexander at  
[salexand@saintmarys.edu](mailto:salexand@saintmarys.edu)

# Recent Faculty Research

In addition to teaching classes, the sociology faculty are also busy engaging in new research. In the past few months, the faculty have published the following research articles.

## Susan Alexander on Masculinity



Susan Alexander published "Questioning Masculine Performativity: The Basis of Marital Conflict in Advice Columns, 1965-2004" for the *Journal for the Liberal Arts and Sciences*, Volume 15, Issue 1, Fall 2010. In this study, Susan conducted a textual analysis of the advice column "Can This Marriage Be Saved?" from the women's lifestyle magazine *Ladies Home Journal* between 1965 and 2004.

During the later half of the twentieth century, the husband-wife marital relationship experienced a tension between cultural expectations of the "good" husband and father and the less than ideal real life practices of men in families. This project examined how women's magazines present the wives' views of their husbands in light of larger social and cultural changes regarding masculine gender behaviors and how husbands struggle to manage their own identities during this time of social change regarding masculinity. The study provides a historical overview of the perspectives of wives and husbands concerning the sources of marital conflict.

The study finds that wives, husbands, and the magazine itself locate the source of marital conflicts primarily in the inability of the husbands to fulfill the expected masculine gender role according to the ideals of masculinity as constructed in this magazine. By constructing the source of marital conflict as flawed masculine performativity, the magazine serves to reinforce conservative ideas regarding appropriate gender roles in American society.

## Mary Ann Kanieski on Parenthood



Mary Ann Kanieski published "Securing Attachment: The Shifting Medicalisation of Attachment and Attachment Disorders" in the August 2010 issue of *Health, Risk and Society*(12(4):335-344.)

In the article, Mary Ann discussed the changing ways that risks of attachment disorders are medicalized within the psycho-medical literature. In particular, she argues that in the past, attachment disorders were understood as discrete ailments affecting a small group of mothers and children, often from marginalized groups in society. As a result, psycho-medical treatments were targeted to these mothers. This was a discriminatory outcome. By contrast, the contemporary construction of attachment disorders relies upon models of risk in studying attachment relationships. Risk factors related to attachment disorders are understood to be widespread and found in all social groupings. Consequently, the understanding of attachment disorders has shifted from a discrete illness to a characteristic of mother-infant relationships that varies by degree. As a result, all mother-infant relationships are subject to scrutiny as a means of securing attachment. The contemporary medicalization of attachment has democratized risk because all families are subject to psycho-medical scrutiny. In other words, all relationships are at risk. The paper speculates that viewing family life through the lens of risk may change our degree of comfort in interacting with our children.



# Sociology Club News

The Saint Mary's Sociology Club is excited to be sponsoring a lot of great activities and service events this year. The new club officers are Colleen Lowry (president), Kelly Reidenbach (vice-president), Denise Lopez (secretary), Meg Campbell (treasurer), Jessica Doherty and Kelcey Lerner (PR/Advertising), Ashley Feely and Mary Wilkom (Fundraising), Mara Martinez and Sarah Mayer (Community Relations), Mia Van Nostrand (SAC Representative), Kelli Minor (Sociology Assessment Committee) and Maura Sommers (Assistant Newsletter Editor). Our club advisor is Professor Leslie Wang this year.



The Sociology Club will again this year fundraise for the CommUnity Fund. The CommUnity Fund was created by sociology alumna Chelsea Gulling (05) to provide assistance for hourly staff with an unexpected financial need. In previous years the club has sold sweatpants to raise money. During the

second week of January the club will again be selling sweatpants to raise money for this great fund.

During the Stanford game, the Sociology Club had a cornhole tailgate and also recently participated in the Christmas on Campus event. The club members helped kids from South Bend create snowmen

coloring pages they could take home for the holidays. The club also held a service event at the Unity Gardens in South Bend and helped harvest food while learning the sociological effects of community gardening.

Sociology Week is coming up in the spring and the club is busy planning activities and finding speakers for the week. There will be a meeting to plan Sociology Week and we encourage anyone who is interested to come to the meeting. Look forward to hearing more about sociology happenings around campus!

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