

Congratulations and Best Wishes to the Sociology Class of 2011!



The SMC Sociology Class of 2011 includes (back row left to right):
Mary Willkom, Ashley Feely, Kelcey Lerner, Sarah Mayer, Kelli Minor, Mia Van Nostrand,
Meg Campbell, Denise Lopez, Mara Martinez, and Colleen Lowry
(in absentia: Josie Cohen, Melissa Croft, and Maura Sommers)
Front row: Sociology Faculty Susan Alexander, Mary Ann Kanieski, Carrie Erlin, and Leslie Wang

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Students and Faculty Attend the North Central Sociological Association Annual Meeting

Since 2003, the Sociology Department has invited many sociology students to participate in the North Central Sociological Association's (NCSA) annual meeting. Thanks to a generous grant from the Center for Women's InterCultural Leadership, this year eight sociology majors attended the conference, which was held in Cleveland from March 31-April 2, 2011.



papers related to their teaching or research specializations. The theme of the conference was "Pragmatism in Research and Education." The keynote address, titled "Pragmatism and Ideology in Revolutionary Leadership (A Structuralist Revisits the Self)," was given by Jack A. Goldstone, Virginia E.

and John T. Hazel Jr. Professor at the George Mason School of Public Policy.

All the senior students presented research from their comprehensive research projects in regular research sessions. One of our students, Colleen Lowry, even organized a panel on "The Sociology of Community Gardens." Additionally, Susan Alexander, Leslie Wang, and Carrie Erlin all organized sessions and/or presented

Our sociology faculty continue to be well represented in the leadership of the organization of NCSA as Carrie serves as NCSA Vice President and Susan is the NCSA Public Relations Coordinator. Two of the sociology majors, Meg Campbell and Kelly Reidenbach, served as Assistant to the Program Chair.

Saint Mary's Sociology Majors Win North Central Sociological Association's Annual Student Paper Competition

Congratulations to the two sociology majors who won awards in the NCSA Student Paper Competition.

Each year the NCSA sponsors a student paper competition for both graduate and undergraduate students. Saint Mary's Sociology majors did quite well in the undergraduate competition.

Kelli Minor won first place for her paper *Culture of Thinness: An Examination of the Factors That Influence Body Image at an All-Women's College* and Josie Cohen won second place for her paper *Under Oath: A Content Analysis of Controlled Images of Women in Elkhart, Indiana Courtrooms*. Both students received a certificate of their accomplishments along with a cash prize.



Kelli Minor



Josie Cohen

Summer Reading: Sociology Faculty Suggestions

My recommended summer read is a book I use in my Contested Masculinities course titled *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* by Michael S. Kimmel (2006, Oxford University Press). This book explores the social and cultural changes that impact ideals of American manhood. Drawing on a number of sources from advice books, popular films, novels, and magazine columns, this book covers the period from the late 1700s with its ideal of manhood as the land-owning "Genteel Patriarch" on southern plantations to the 1990s image of manhood as "Anger White Men" experiencing downward economic mobility in a global market. This is an educational book for anyone interested in how definitions and expectations of manhood have changed over time, and why this happens.



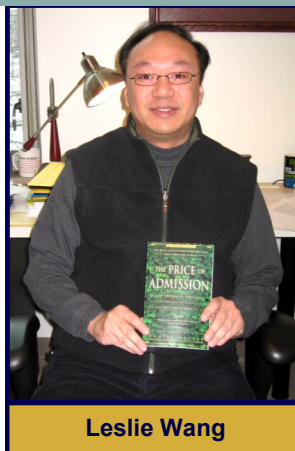
Susan Alexander

If you have children, you likely have heard many requests for the latest toy. Why do children want so many things? And why is it so hard for parents to say no? In the book, *Longing and Belonging: Parents, Children, and Consumer Culture*, (2009) sociologist Allison Pugh examines why it is so difficult to resist the commercialization of childhood. Pugh's ethnographic study finds that parents are buying more than just American Girl dolls or the latest Game Boy; they are purchasing social dignity for their children. Pugh asserts that children use toys as a ticket to belonging. As parents, we may wish to curtail the consumerism in our children's lives, but few of us are willing to watch our children endure the social exclusion that would result. A thought provoking read; especially for those of us whose houses are overflowing with princesses, Groovy Girls, and silly bands.



Mary Ann Kanieski

Getting into good colleges and universities are the dreams of many Americans. We value education, want our children to receive the best education, and we expect the admissions process into colleges and universities to be a democratic process. However, most of us know very little about the selection process. In *The Price of Admission; How America's Ruling Class Buys Its Way into Elite Colleges – and Who Gets Left Outside the Gates*, Daniel Golden provides us with a journey inside a few well-known American colleges and universities. This book is both shocking and eye-opening, as the reader tastes the social inequalities within a very American institution.



Leslie Wang

My recommended summer reading is the book *Outliers*, by Malcolm Gladwell. This book uses sociological data to explore the connections between social context and individual outcomes and achievements. Gladwell shows readers how "accidents of birth" — such as the economic, historical, family context into which one is born — influence achieved monetary and/or social success. I have used excerpts from this book in my Social Psychology course, and I highly recommend this book, along with the other Malcolm Gladwell books (*Blink*, *What the Dog Saw*, and *The Tipping Point*).



Carrie Erlin

Donald N. M. Horning Senior Comprehensive Award Winner

by Colleen Lowry

Planting Connections: How Urban Gardens Enhance Community Participation

The 2011 Donald N. M. Horning Award is conferred by the department faculty to the senior sociology major whose senior comprehensive research project was deemed outstanding.

For my senior research comprehensive, I performed qualitative interviews with twelve members of Jubilee

Gardens, a community garden, in Youngstown, Ohio to assess the experiences of participants in a community garden. Participants were asked how their connection to others in the garden shaped their experience and if this led to higher involvement in programs outside of Jubilee Gardens. Participants were eager to talk about their community involvement and many shared intimate details how their life has been affected as a result of their involvement in Jubilee Gardens.

My study shows that gardeners become more involved in community activities and create new social networks as a result of their participation in Jubilee Gardens, supporting the community



Colleen (left) with SMC students at a local South Bend community garden. Fellow sociology major, Mia Van Nostrand is third from left.

development theory. Furthermore, participation in community gardening leads to involvement in other community projects, programs and organizations, while also increasing community networking. I found that those who lived in the community for the longest period of time and those who were involved in the garden for the longest period of time had the highest

levels of involvement in other community projects, programs and organizations. Most of these organizations were similar to Jubilee Gardens, with an emphasis on greening the community and creating a more hospitable inner-city.

This project was a great way to experience the community and hear the stories of the many people that are working to make a difference in their own life and the lives of those around them. I hope that my research can show the positive effects of community involvement and will encourage others to become involved in community gardening and other urban organizations.



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E-mail Dr. Susan Alexander at salexand@saintmarys.edu

