



Question of the Month: What is Public Sociology?

As many of you are aware, beginning with this academic year the title of SOC 496 Seminar in Sociological Analysis has been changed to Seminar in Public Sociology. With this change you may be wondering what is public sociology and why are we emphasizing it in the final course for the Sociology major.

In his 2004 Presidential Address, Michael Burawoy, President of the American Sociological Association, made a case for public sociology. He argues that public sociology is a way to “engage multiple publics in multiple ways” and that it brings together knowledge from four different realms, professional, critical, policy and public, in examining issues that impact society. He also argues that public sociology has the power to reinvigorate the discipline of sociology and make it more visible to those who are outside of academia. It is through public sociology that Burawoy believes that sociology can enter into conver-

sation with a wide range of publics. So in short it is moving sociology beyond the academy to understand and improve the real life conditions of the publics comprising the societies in which we live.

So what does this mean for sociology majors at Meredith other than a change in a course title? The SOC 496 course now is designed to allow students to not only research social issues, but to engage in work that allows them to interact with publics and in the end understand the issue well enough to offer concrete recommendations and steps that should be taken to alleviate the problem. Additionally this information is shared with publics so that those beyond the local college community can benefit from the research.

This semester the SOC 496 class is tackling the issue of homelessness. Within the topic students have chosen specific aspects that are of interest to them to further focus upon. Recey Blake is

focusing on HIV/AIDS, Margot Childs is examining substance abuse, Joni Liverman is focusing on immigration, and Cara Nevitt is examining women and children. In completing their projects the students are looking at research literature and public data sources along with local community resources on their particular areas of focus. Additionally some students are engaged in volunteer work with agencies working with the homeless, and all will be talking about the issues with community stakeholders and will hear speakers who are working on Raleigh’s 10 year plan to end homelessness.

The students in the course will be sharing their findings with members of the department and the larger Meredith community so look for these presentations in the coming months!

You can read Michael Burawoy’s entire Presidential Address on Public Sociology in the *American Sociological Review* 2005 vol. 70 p.4-28.

Sociology Students & a Service Project?

During the winter months, blankets and warm clothes are always in short supply for those who are homeless. The Raleigh Rescue Mission is currently looking for new and gently used blankets that can be distrib-

uted to their clients. Given our focus on homelessness this may be a project that sociology students would want to take on. Interested? Contact Dr. Brown or Dr. Cokely.

Poem of the Month:

**Watching the people
I’m standing in the middle
Self regulating**

Written by A.M. in reference to Foucault’s Panopticon.

Write your own sociology haiku (3 line poem with 5 syllables in the 1st line, 7 in the second, and 5 in the third) and submit it to Dr. Cokely—cokelyc@meredith.edu for inclusion in a future edition of the newsletter!

Cemeteries, Cremation, and Sociology?

Students of sociology study many different aspects of society. This month the students in sociology and social work classes had the opportunity to hear about the research on cemeteries and cremation gardens that was conducted by Meredith alumna, C.D. 'Abby' Collier.

Abby graduated in 1985 from Meredith with a major in psychology. Since graduating Abby has earned a Masters degrees in both Sociology and Art Therapy and is currently completing her Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of Georgia in Athens Georgia. The title of her dissertation research is "Cremation as a Cultural System" and it is 'an analysis of the cultural implications of the increasing use of cremation, versus the tradition of burial, in the United States, using survey, inter-

view, symbolic, legal and industry data.'

On Monday of her visit to Meredith, Abby spoke in SOC 374: Social Research Principles regarding the portion of her research that examined cremation gardens.



Following that course she spoke in SOC 230: Principles of Sociology regarding the portion of her research related to carvings on headstones in cemeteries and how they changed over time. On Tuesday she spoke to a social

work lifespan course regarding the headstones and identity and concluded the day by offering a workshop on art therapy for students, faculty and staff. In the workshop students had the opportunity to learn about art therapy as a profession as well as to see some of the work that Abby analyzed in working with her own clients.

In addition to her formal presentations, Abby was available throughout her visit for informal conversations with interested students in the department and is open to continue to dialogue with anyone interested in hearing more about her research via email. She can be reached at colliera@uga.edu

Women's Rights and Health Activist to Visit Meredith

Announcement from the Women's Studies Website: '

Judy Norsigian, health activist and executive director of "Our Bodies, Our Selves" will be coming to Meredith College on Wednesday, March 14th, 2007, at 7:00 p.m. in Jones Auditorium to give a lecture entitled, "Women's Health and the Media: Sorting Fact from Fiction."



Judy Norsigian is a co-founder of the BWHBC and co-author of all editions of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. Norsigian is a graduate of Radcliffe College and an internationally renowned speaker and writer on a wide range of women's health concerns. She has appeared on numerous television and radio programs including *Oprah*, *Donahue*, *The Today Show*, *Good Morning America*, and *NBC Nightly News* with Tom Brokaw.'

AKD Honor Society Nominees

Alpha Kappa Delta is the International Sociology Honor Society founded in 1920 by Dr. Emory S. Bogardus to promote scholarship in sociology. Membership is limited to students who have obtained junior standing, an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher and rank in the top 35% of their class in general scholarship. Additionally to be considered for membership students must have a GPA of 3.0 in sociology courses and have completed at least 12 credits in sociology coursework.

Meredith College combines with NCSU and St. Augustine's College to form

the Beta Chapter of AKD which was formed in 1950. This year Meredith College will host the induction ceremony and the following Meredith students have been invited for membership.

A. Aviana Alam
Priscilla Bryant
Margot Childs
Robin Gary
Amanda Mills
Jessica Wolf



Congratulations!

Soccer & Sociology

Congratulations to senior Sociology major, Margot Childs who was selected for the All-Independent Women's Soccer Team First Team. This is a team selected by the women's soccer coaches from the Association of Division III member schools.

Additionally, Margot was chosen as defensive player of the year and was also named to the NSCAA All-South Region Team.

Margot will be graduating in May of 2007 and is currently working on her public sociology project in SOC 496.