

THE EMIC



Sociology | Anthropology | Carleton College

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The Class of 2017 Sociology & Anthropology early graduates.



The Class of 2017 Sociology & Anthropology early graduates.

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Oliva He - "Single Children Abroad: How Chinese International Students Perceive Filial Piety"

Nathan Edwards - "'Mínima-a-Mínima': How informal strategies and benign deceit localize missions of International NGOs"

The Emic is published each term by Carleton's Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

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If you have questions, comments, or things you would like to submit for future editions of the Emic, please contact Tammi at tshintre@carleton.edu.

COMPS ADVICE FOR JUNIORS

SHAYNA GLEASON '17



In the last week, I've been acutely aware of the fact that as we seniors hand in our comps projects, the members of the junior class are just beginning to think about theirs. I remember that I was working in the office last year when the Class of 2016 handed in comps, and while they ate cake and celebrated their accomplishment, I mulled over where I would stand in a year's time, when I would cross that threshold.

On the other side of the finish line, now, there are a few things that helped me tremendously that I want to communicate to the current juniors. The first is to read as much as possible, as early as possible. Find out if you actually like your topic. I did an independent directed reading seminar with Annette last Spring, and it helped me hugely. I had a draft of a literature review ready before summertime, which set me up well for the crunches of Fall and Winter.

A lot of the early work is thinking, thinking deeply about what matters to you and what you're curious about and what will be practically viable. I got incredibly lucky in that I really loved my topic from beginning to end, and I know Comps would've been a more exhausting process had I not. Spend a lot of time just thinking and reading about it now. Follow your curiosities, the subjects you don't ever get sick of thinking about. If you pick something you really love, it won't feel like a burden.

Also think creatively. I think sometimes we, as undergrads with our still limited knowledge of field, think that there are only a few categories of sociological and anthropological study—race, gender, sexuality, etc. These are deeply important subjects, but there are many, many more. Just this year, Winona Rachel's research consisted of hiking the Appalachian trail with her mother and talking to people she met along the way. Laura Levitt studied community gardens. Nate Edwards studied NGOs. Just about any human phenomenon can be studied sociologically or anthropologically. There are infinite possibilities, if you step out of the fervor of the Carleton marathon and just watch whatever's going on around you, whatever is interesting in your own little corner of the world.

Best of luck to all of you!!

APPLYING SOAN BEYOND THE MAJOR

INGRID HOFELDT '17



My understanding of my skills in sociology/anthropology is that they aren't tangible traits I can hold onto. Cultural awareness, reflexivity, and a gendered analysis of the world around me aren't things I can work towards, claim, and then move on from, once I've shown that I can exhibit them. Rather, as sociology/anthropology students, we work to constantly think about these concepts, what they mean, and how we can apply them. I don't think I have cultural awareness—I think I can apply it to different situations, but it's not something I constantly carry with me, ready to prevent me from making mistakes. The very essence of the skills we learn in sociology/anthropology is that they're not ours to claim. They're verbs we work with, challenge, analyze, and apply, instead of adjectives we can tack onto ourselves.

In the job search, I'm finding it incredibly hard to self-promote, not because I'm not confident in my abilities, but because I feel it's fundamentally inaccurate to claim them. In addition to my earlier reservations, I think there's something inherently uncomfortable about claiming cultural awareness when you don't have the capability to perceive the true effects of your behavior. If it's impossible as an outsider to view your behavior and impact objectively, how can I attest that I have those skills?

In the world of the job search, I take a more practical approach. I discuss skills I feel uncomfortable, or unable to claim. I toss aside my reservations, because at the end of the day I value not living in my parents' basement over my theoretical reservations. Regardless of our diversity of job prospects, they exist in a capitalist society where we must swiftly and concisely show our ability to work at an organization and benefit that organization, instead of recognizing the complexity of humans and how what they have to offer exists outside of our list of accomplishments, or brief, pre-scripted interview answers.

In learning to analyze systems, I never realized how to enter those systems. I never realized I would have to show my ability to analyze those systems in a manner completely antithetical to the worldview I gained from learning how to analyze them.

For me as a sociology/anthropology student, the struggles of the job search go beyond finding a job. They're theoretical, as well as practical. I feel prepared to enter the workforce. What I'm not prepared for is the stark reality of learning to negotiate what I've learned as a sociology/anthropology student in a space where I have to manage my self-interest. I don't feel prepared to negotiate truthfully applying my morals about systems of oppression within whatever system I enter. I'm learning to discover what being a sociology/anthropology student will mean once I no longer have the privilege of regularly reading, dissecting, and discussing articles hand-picked to help me learn. I'm slowly figuring out how to be a sociology/anthropology student outside of Carleton, and with only myself to guide me.

SENIOR COMPS ABSTRACTS

Please join us Saturday, April 8th in Leighton 305 for Senior SoAn Majors
Comprehensive Research Project presentations



Margaret M. Carragher

My Big, Fat, (Expensive) American Wedding: Insights from wedding industry content

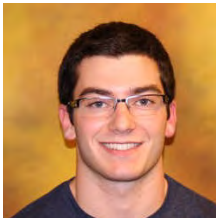
This comprehensive project critically examines the social significance of marriage, the role weddings play in the United States today, and how the wedding industry continues to boom. In the U.S., the role of marriage has evolved due to the introduction of emerging adulthood as a life stage and marriage itself has become a luxury good, meaning that the couples marrying today can afford to throw extravagant weddings. Through conducting a qualitative content analysis, I found that bridal sources frame weddings as parties and opportunities to flaunt social and economic status rather than the religious and/or legal binding of two people.



Lydia Chu

“I am Taiwanese, not Chinese”: A comparative study of how second-generation Taiwanese-Americans and Taiwanese-South Africans conceptualize their Taiwanese identity

This paper explores the complex Taiwanese identity among second generation immigrants of the Taiwanese diaspora through fourteen in-depth interviews conducted with seven Taiwanese-Americans and Taiwanese-South Africans. This study compares and connects the experiences of Taiwanese-Americans and Taiwanese-South Africans to learn how the Taiwanese diaspora construct their ethnic identities, specifically focusing on how they might distinguish themselves from being “Chinese.” Familial heritage, attending Chinese school, and having the opportunity to visit Taiwan are all factors that play a role in how my participants construct their Taiwanese-ness.



Nathan Edwards

“Mínima-a-Mínima”: How informal strategies and benign deceit localize missions of International NGOs

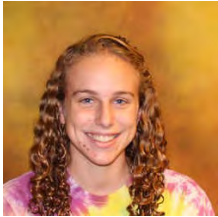
Based on two seasons of ethnographic fieldwork in Brazil, this study reveals how national branches of INGOs are using informal strategies to collectively interpret, reform and adapt global platforms to local structures. I argue that these strategies are critical to successfully localizing global visions. However, they also foster a self-perpetuating cycle of discontentment and disjointed collective actions between local and global levels. This approach is particularly risky to national branch leaders since they must negotiate both local and global expectations in a process that is neither top down nor a grassroots approach. Instead I propose a bottleneck model that centers around the strategies implemented by key individuals at the national level. International development NGOs could benefit from supporting the bottleneck and empowering middle-out development strategies that link local knowledge with the social capital of international actors.



Shayna Gleason

“It’s Late but Everything Comes Next”: Creative Aging in Modern America The emergence of “Creative Aging” Programs, or fine arts programs exclusively for older adults, invites analysis of these new institutions and their influence on the social elements of the aging process. Drawing on ethnographic methods including participant observation, interviews and content analysis, the present study initiates the sociological and anthropological study of a topic that has primarily been addressed by fields like psychology, neuroscience and gerontology. This paper demonstrates Creative Aging programs to have a unique discourse characterized by the self-deprecation of older adults and the affirming language of instructors. This pattern of interaction renders such programs sites for the contestation of negative popular discourses around aging.

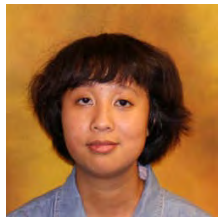
SENIOR COMPS ABSTRACTS CONTINUED



Emma Grisanzio

La Familia es la Fundación: Children, Change and the Reproduction of the House and Family among the Kaqchikel Maya

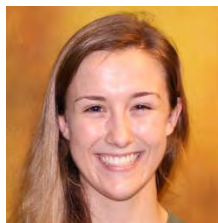
Among the Kaqchikel Maya in the highlands of Guatemala, family is the foundation of social life, and its roots reside in the house. In response to the effects of globalization and modernization, kinship structure among the Kaqchikel Maya is shifting, while still remaining deeply rooted in local social structures. While “traditional” kinship structures may appear to be breaking apart, I argue that they are simply reproduced in different ways to adapt to rapid social change, maintaining the family and house as the foundations of social life. However, the instability caused by such rapid change has led to new challenges and inconsistencies in social norms, expectations, and opportunities among Kaqchikel families. As children serve as both the products and agents of family reproduction I focused my research specifically on the perspectives and prospects of children in this period of social change. Through ethnographic fieldwork based mainly on informal interviews and participant observation, I explored the reproduction and adaptation of Kaqchikel kinship in the face of rapid social change, recognizing both the current signs of change among Kaqchikel families as well as the potential implications for the children charged with building the future of the family in Santa Catarina.



Olivia He

Single Children Abroad: How Chinese International Students Perceive Filial Piety

Given the one-child policy and rapid socioeconomic changes in China, it is hard not to expect shifts in traditional values like filial piety. A concept emphasizing children’s obligations to care for, obey, and respect parents, filial piety has governed Chinese familial relationships for centuries. In this study, I explore how Carleton Chinese students reconcile traditional filial expectations and practical constraints and reinterpret filial piety. My data suggests that a sense of individuality coexists with an unwillingness to relinquish traditional values in my interviewees. While they criticize traditional filial piety for allowing no room for individuality, they still abide by some filial norms, such as meeting parental expectations. They feel particularly responsible for parents’ emotional needs and intend to support their parents in the future. Although my interviewees’ future plans conflict with their family obligations, they remain optimistic about resolving these conflicts.



Erin Healy

"We're All Worn Out": Women and Animal Rescue Work in the American South

Middle-age women occupy a notable presence in animal rescue circles, both as participants and as leaders of rescue efforts. Why are women drawn to rescue work at this time in their lives, and how does their rescue work reinforce gendered ideas of care and calling? Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted over two months in North and South Carolina, this research explores how women involved in animal rescue work reflect on their own life histories, particularly how their socializations as women fostered their interest in rescue work. I suggest that interpretations of womanhood associated with nurturance and self-sacrifice serve as a key framework by which women animal rescuers understand their social roles and how their rescue work might serve to reproduce cultural values more in line with an ethic of care. This research extends anthropological attention to middle-aged women animal rescuers, a population understudied by anthropologists to date.

SENIOR COMPS ABSTRACTS CONTINUED



Noheli Hernández

While at Carleton: Safe space and Identity for Queer students

What do queer students of color at Carleton think about safe spaces in comparison to their queer white counterparts? How are these students navigating their intersecting identities? How has queerness been historically shaped by whiteness? By examining the concept of “safety” and the development of safe spaces throughout time and on other campuses, I investigate whiteness as normative and its relationship to Carleton’s student body. The concept of intersectionality is a vehicle of analysis to comprehend how people of different racial identities, yet the shared identity of queerness, understand safe space on campus. I specifically focus on race, as a comparative factor, as a result of the historical rhetoric in academia which ignores students of color. With the usage of 60-70 minute, in-depth interviews, I discuss how these questions play out at Carleton as a small, private, predominantly White liberal arts college.



Ingrid Hofeldt

Contradictions in the Bubble: Conflicting Legal Consciousnesses of Partner Abuse and Rape Crisis Center Legal Advocates

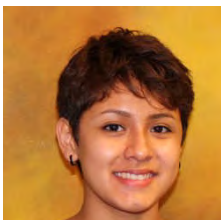
I conducted a qualitative, interview-based sociological study in which I interviewed 18 legal advocates at rape crisis centers and partner abuse nonprofits across the Midwestern and Northeastern United States. In this study, I aim to discover how these legal advocates conceptualize the legal system: namely, do they think it works for managing or potentially eradicating sexual violence and partner abuse, do they consider it a fair system, and how do they think about it. I have used Ewick and Silbey’s theory of legal consciousness to explore my interviewees’ legal consciousnesses, which both inform and are informed by their opinions on these issues. Ultimately, I found that these legal advocates have contradictory and conflicting opinions within themselves on both the effectiveness of the legal system, the biases of the legal system, and their own forms of legal consciousness.



Laura Levitt

An Expansive Vision of Place: Lessons from a Small Urban Garden

How do we make places? How do the places we make reflect both global patterns of movement and intimate renderings of our imaginations? Using a small urban garden in Chicago as my focal point - focal place - I show how individuals and groups draw from multiple geographic scales to create places layered with meaning and material import. From the transnational, to the urban, to the neighborhood level, I analyze the conflictual and collaborative social processes that form the garden as place. Ultimately, I offer an “expansive vision of place” that takes into account movement and multi-scalar geographies in the name of inclusive and equitable placemaking.



Susie Perez

Solidarity in Mistrust: Exploring complex relationships among Salvadoran Immigrants in Milan

Since the mid-1970s, the population of Salvadorans in Milan’s metropolitan area has increased to more than 40,000. These Salvadorans have become unified through various events and experiences resulting in well-established and organized communities. I have found that although women find clear and organized “community” and solidarity through church masses, events, and community programming, women also inherently distrust most other Salvadorans. This tension between trust and mistrust creates a social hierarchy that aligns with the formal hierarchy within church community organizing, and takes its toll on interpersonal relationships. I aim to delve deeper into the ways relationships among Salvadoran women immigrants either help or hurt them when they really need support. Countering emphasis on the unequivocal advantages of social capital, I investigate if mistrust and the resultant social hierarchy serve as a disadvantage to the women who partake in the Salvadoran community of Milan.

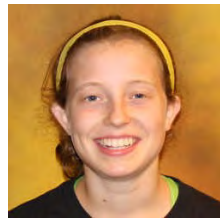
SENIOR COMPS ABSTRACTS CONTINUED



Winona Rachel

Yogi the Bear Has Stolen My Picnic Basket: Tourism, Gifts, and Commodities on the Appalachian Trail

Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in summer 2016, I argue that market and non-market exchange exist alongside each other on the Appalachian Trail and sometimes result in hybrid transactions. Local businesses find roundabout ways to advertise and provide for hikers on often remote, government-owned lands. Outdoor outfitters have capitalized on the growing market for hiking gear, which has influenced perceptions of nature evident in “gear culture” on the trail. At the same time, gifts are exchanged between community members and hikers and among hikers themselves. Specific rules such as the length of time spent on the trail and how badly a gift is needed determine who gives and who receives and whether reciprocation is necessary.



Caroline Sheffield

“It was Hell, but I Did It”: Dignity in Precarity at an Alaskan Salmon Cannery

This study explores how salmon processors find dignity in precarious labor conditions in an Alaskan cannery. Transnational migration, abusive mismanagement, unstable physical infrastructure, climate change, Taylorized mechanization, and workers’ disposability in a seasonal, contract-based industry insert precarity into the everyday experiences and understandings of salmon processors. Participant observation augmented by informal exchanges and 10 semi-structured, in-depth interviews revealed, however, that processors respond to uncertain and often difficult circumstances with dignity and resilience. Expressly, workers draw upon a hegemonic masculine code of strength and tough bodies; resistive humor and playfulness; and independent meaning construction to create dignified occupational identities. Precarity itself offers creative openings for identity formation, yet workers’ dignities are ultimately precarious, and salmon processors labor each day to prove their worth and gain respect from themselves and others. The study contributes the concepts of precarious dignity and dignified precarity to understand this tension and facilitate sociological and anthropological conversations on the interplay of structure and agency in factory conditions. Grounded in a theoretical understanding of reality as socially constructed, the analysis testifies to the ambiguity of human experience.



Sarah Trachtenberg

“Carving out space to envision a future of shared liberation”: Community-Building and World-Making Around Gender and Sexuality in the Twin Cities

Social scientists have studied radical queer world-making and community-building in a variety of geographic contexts. In Minnesota, however, there is limited research new enough to address the impact of recent events, including the passing of marriage equality in the state and nationally, a massacre at a gay bar in Orlando, increasingly-publicized police brutality against black and brown bodies, and the election of Donald Trump. Through participant observation and in-depth interviews with queer and trans activists in the Twin Cities, my research explores their vision of the worlds they are working to create. These worlds are built around their connections to one another as sources of power, radical safety, and validation of their existence.



Ankita Verma

The Black Liberation Collective: How Contemporary Racial Inequality Influences Student Demands

Recent years have seen the increase of college and university students publicizing race-related demands to their administration through various social media platforms. Based on qualitative content analysis of student demands, this paper examines the language and rhetoric that students use to communicate with their school’s administration about race. In doing so, I build on scholarship about race and ethnicity in higher education, situated within sociological analysis of communicative action and critical race theory, to create a discursive space about communication between members of a community and people with power.

Faculty Public Scholarship

Annette Nierobisz

Recognition:

Appointed a faculty fellow to the Humanities Center 2017-18 research seminar, "Rethinking the Commons and Politics in the Democratic Public Sphere."

In December 2016, Annette and her husband, Rob Morrow, were the recipients of the Robert Bonner Distinguished Service Award, presented by Laura Baker Services Association.

Presentations:

Paper, "Religious Coping and the Job Loss Experience: A Qualitative Study of Older Unemployed Workers," was accepted for presentation to the Religion and Mental Health Session at the 2017 Society for the Study of Social Problems Annual Meeting in Montreal, QC, Canada. The paper is coauthored with Dana Sawchuk, Associate Professor of Sociology at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Jerome M. Levi

Publications:

Levi, Jerome M. "Book Review of *My Father's Wars: Migration, Memory, and the Violence of a Century* by Alisse Waterston." *Anthropological Quarterly* 89, no. 4 (fall 2016): 1277-1283.

Wes Markofski

Recognition:

The Global Religion Research Initiative recognizes Wes Markofski as a 2017 award recipient. The initiative, directed by Christian Smith, aims to advance the empirical study of global religion in mainstream academia by granting funds to promising researchers in the field. It launched late summer of 2016 in the Center for the Study of Religion and Society at the University of Notre Dame.

Awarded a Curriculum Development Grant from the Global Religion Research Initiative at the University of Notre Dame.

Publications:

Published an invited contribution to a Religion & American Culture FORUM on the topic, "Studying Religion in the Age of Trump."