

socio news

spring 2013 edition
presented by alpha kappa delta

the roadmap

Message from the Editor, by Christian Mercado 1

Study Abroad Reflections

Studying Social Change in London, by Katia Barone.....	2
Songkran: Thai New Year, by Alex Skula.....	3
I Love My Host Family!, by Alisha Patman.....	4
Black in Africa: Morocco, by Alisha Patman.....	5

Advice

Sociology 101 with Professor Camiolo, by Jaclyn Bennett.....	6
Tips for a Sociology Major, by Kyle Tomalin.....	8
How to Secure a Meaningful Internship, by Kyle Hogan.....	10
The Quest for an Internship, by Christopher Golden.....	11
Lessons Learned: Professional Conferences, by Jessica Scardino.....	12
Advice from a Future Graduate Student, by Hana Paster.....	13

Interviews

An Interview with the Backbone of the Department: Karen Debrule, by Jason Hammer.....	14
Identity in the Caribbean: An Interview with Dr. Brown-Glaude, by Sara Manzon.....	15

The World Through a Sociological Lens

Bonner Scholar and Introduction to Social Work, by Brianna Anthony.....	16
Sociology in Our Backyard, by Megan Fixter.....	17
The Duty of a Sociology Major, by Kyle Tomalin.....	18
Sociology, Huh?, by Jenna Benjamin.....	19

Visit us on the web!

www.alphakappadelta.pages.tcnj.edu

message
from the
editor: hello
and welcome!

christian
mercado

Dear Readers,

Hello, and welcome to the spring 2013 edition of SocioNews! This biannual newsletter is a tradition held by members of the TCNJ chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta, or the international sociology honor society. Last semester, members revived SocioNews after a four-year hiatus, and it is a great honor to have been given the torch as editor to continue this tradition. This edition of SocioNews has stories that will pique the interests of both students and faculty alike. These stories include advice regarding the graduate school application process, securing internships, and how to succeed in sociology classes and beyond. Other articles involve commentary on study abroad experiences, faculty interviews, and viewing the world through a sociological lens.

As editor, both compiling and designing this edition of SocioNews has been a great honor. I hope that it leaves you with positive energy and good spirits. I leave you with a quote from the late Steve Jobs that, as a graduating senior, leaves me with hope for the future as a sociologist. Furthermore, I hope that it quells the storm of anxiety that most students who are pursuing with a degree in either sociology or in the liberal arts have in their heavy hearts during these hard economic times:

“The people who think that they are crazy enough to change the world, are the ones who do.”

Best wishes,

Christian Mercado

Editor and Co-President of Alpha Kappa Delta, Chapter Xi

Class of 2013

The background of the entire image is a blurred photograph of a city street. A prominent, bright yellow light flare or lens flare is visible, originating from the bottom left and extending diagonally towards the center. The colors in the background are muted, with greys, blues, and greens, suggesting an urban environment.

studying social change in london

katia barone

Last semester I took advantage of the opportunity to study abroad. As sociology majors we are not only inherently interested in how people and societies are structured, but also in how they differ from one another. A semester abroad is the perfect way to witness and assess these differences on your own. I chose to spend my semester in London, and although it is located on the opposite end of the ocean I did not expect a drastic difference in cultural and societal norms. However, I was greatly mistaken. Although I encountered numerous of these differences in my everyday life while living abroad, the most pertinent materialized in my academic experience.

I took a majority of sociology classes while in London, however the one that left me with the biggest influence was Women, Gender and Power. This is the equivalent of TCNJ's Women in World Perspective, or SOC303. The first thing that came to me as a surprise in this class was that I was far from being the only foreign student. London is an extremely diverse city, with strong Indian and Pakistani populations. Due to this, there was a very large number of Pakistani girls in my class who had selected to go to University abroad. So many, in fact, that I was one of the only girls in the class not wearing a hijab. Initially, I believed that these girls would have significantly different opinions on the issue of gender and power, considering they were born and raised in a country so rich in male dominance. Once again, I was wrong.

Both the Pakistani students and the British students had completely equal views on feminist issues that I did as an American. The main difference was in how their peers and all other individuals in their societies accepted their views. I found myself quite often relaying stories of efforts performed by TCNJ students to raise awareness of gender issues. With things such as LGBTQ Awareness Week (the same-sex bathrooms in the library was a class favorite), to sexual assault awareness and self-image awareness projects, TCNJ and its students do an incredible job educating the academic community on gender-affected issues. Before going abroad and sharing these projects with others, I had never taken into account exactly how important and impactful they really are.

As I had learned through my classmates while in London, it is commonplace for people to have yearnings and ideals for societal change, however to also feel stuck in the process of how things are. My classmates felt that although they had the conceptual ideas for gender rights, there was nothing they could do to change anything. After hearing my stories of what TCNJ students do to raise awareness enlightens the population, they felt more inspired to try similar methods themselves. As sociology students, although we realize the hardships faced by underprivileged members of our society, we may at times take for granted our ability to assess these issues and bring them to light. We all know that we cannot immediately change how society works, but we realize that there are things we can do to make a difference. TCNJ not only provides us with an incredible sociological education, but also in the ability to fashion this education into programs that facilitate actual change.

The most important lesson I learned from this class, my classmates, and my time abroad is to never take for granted the opportunities that education gives you. Take advantage of the circumstances given to us as Americans and as TCNJ students, and realize that you were given the power to spread awareness and hope to people lacking in this ability.

songkran:
thai new year

alex skula

In America, the celebration of the new year usually encompasses a night of partying, spending too much money, and watching a luminescent sphere descend from some tall building. Yawn. In Thailand, the celebration of the new year means a week-long festival, complete with live music, parades, and, the most important ingredient, water! The entire country partakes in a giant water fight. Everyone equips themselves with their weapon of choice (usually a watergun, bucket, or hose), and takes to the streets. Being that I studied abroad in Bangkok this semester, I was able to experience Thai New Year. The first day I made the mistake of going out unarmed for what I thought was an innocent, quick trip to the 7-11. I returned to my guesthouse completely drenched and ready to experience Songkran.

The Songkran Festival's water-throwing tradition originated as a way to pay respect to people. Water would be captured after having been poured over the Buddha for cleansing, and then said blessed water would be used to give good fortune to family members. Somewhere along the way, the holiday evolved into drenching strangers with water. Being that the festival is held during April, Thailand's hottest month, this tradition becomes a source of refuge from the heat.

What I loved most about Songkran was that every person was included. Regardless of age, social class, or whether someone was Thai or a Farang (foreigner), every single person was soaked for that week, and everyone couldn't get enough of it. I was so surprised by the fact that so many people were so happy after receiving countless buckets of water to the face. Many of which were ice-cold and viciously thrown at the eyes, I might add.

While having a festival such as this in America would be incredible, based on cultural differences, I don't think it would work. Thailand's unofficial motto is *mai pen rai*. In English, this translates to "Don't worry about it," or "No problem." I think the spirit of Songkran is reflected in this, as Thais take a week off work and adopt this carefree temperament. I feel as though Americans, many of whom operate on a "time is money" outlook, would have trouble doing this.

Thus, this countrywide water fight was certainly the most appropriate (and fun) way to manifest everything I had learned about the laid-back culture and traditions of the Thai people during my stay abroad. In addition, I could think of no bigger episode of "culture shock" than experiencing Thai New Year and comparing it to the familiar American traditions of celebrating this holiday. So, if crazy New Years Eve parties have never really been your thing, perhaps try to experience a different country's way of doing things. I would certainly recommend a trip to Thailand.

i love my host
family!

alisha patman

If you decide to study abroad, there are a few housing options you can choose from that are unique to your particular program. One such option that might be available is the “homestay.” This option allows you to live with a family in the country or region where you are studying abroad. Some students are hesitant of accepting this housing option due to fears or issues that may arise, such as the lack of privacy and less independence that one is accustomed to at home, and frustration from language barriers. However, my experience in a homestay during my semester in Morocco has been great. Yes, I have had some really frustrating moments with members in my host family and my roommate, but the good has definitely outweighed the not so good.

Being surrounded by individuals who sincerely care about me and view me as a member of their family is very heartwarming. One such instance revolved around my third week in Morocco. I had fallen seriously ill, and wanted to cut my trip short and return home. Although usually preferring to rest rather than take medication, my host mother and sister insisted, and later force-fed me, medication I was hesitant to take for the the ingredients and directions were in French, a language I do not understand. I felt better within a few hours and was able to recover fully under their guidance. My host mother literally substituted the role of my mom and made sure that I felt better. Granted it is her responsibility to ensure my safety and well-being, as it must be detailed in her contract with ISA, my study abroad program, but I truly felt a sense of love and sincerity behind her actions.

Living with a host family presented to me an invaluable opportunity to understand and partake in Moroccan cultural practices. For example, I learned how to eat delicious Moroccan food, pour and drink tea, greet and interact with others, and haggle for souvenirs, all in true, Moroccan fashion. Also, my usage of the Arabic language has expanded due to living with a host family. These experiences have really made my time here in Morocco worthwhile and although I have had some really challenging experiences while here, I have felt such an acceptance and love from my host family. I will always view them as “family” and they will always have a place in my heart!

black in africa: morocco

alisha patman

Let's talk about race relations in Morocco. In the United States I am considered a minority, for I am both female and African American, but I do not think I have ever felt really "black" until I came to Morocco. Morocco's population is mostly Arab and Berber, or ethnic North Africans, which means that I stand out. Perhaps not as much as my fellow ISA members, who identify as white, but I stand out. I should not neglect to mention that there are a number of black Africans present within Morocco. Whether majority of these individuals are just traveling through the country or actually reside here, I am not completely sure. Regardless, I cannot help but feel less welcomed or think that some Moroccans are slightly suspicious of people who look like me, in comparison to my classmates.

These negative feelings could have nothing to do with my phenotypical features. My quiet nature, short stature, and my hair, which at times resemble dreadlocks, have given Moroccans the impression that I was Senegalese. (By the way, dreadlocks are associated with Rastafarianism and Bob Marley, who was highly revered in Morocco years back.) Am I not the only black ISA student who has experienced similar feelings? Although I would not quite say that we are experiencing racism in Morocco, I have heard the "N" word directed towards me twice since I have been here. However, could these two instances be more of a reflection of the American culture that many Moroccan youth have come in contact with, via American music or films? Regardless, it frustrates me that I have experienced these negative feelings in Africa, where the largest black population resides.

Yes, I am studying abroad in North Africa, where the black population is not as large as it is in Sub-Saharan Africa, but it never crossed my mind that I would even have this experience here. I never thought to research "racism in Morocco", but after these unpleasant moments I decided to just that. I was surprised to see that many other people feel this way. Although, there are limited amount of scholarly articles regarding racism in Morocco (there is currently one article on EbscoHost), there are a number of blogs and newspaper articles (over three million hits on Google) about this topic—many of which were published just last year.

Some speak of the influx of immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa who enter Morocco in hopes of making it to Europe to find work. Others speak of these immigrants who ultimately wanted to live and work in Morocco, despite the high jobless rates. I can actually testify to this phenomenon. When I traveled to Italy for my spring break, the woman at Customs questioned if my father and I were from the United States, even though she had my American passport in hand. I was confused why she had asked for about a minute or two, until I realized that she must have thought that I was an African immigrant trying to make it to Europe through illegal means.

Despite being told that there is no great conflict between Moroccans and Black Africans, my experiences tell me otherwise. This is not to say that all Moroccans hold this sentiment, but I know that what I, and other people who look like me, feel is real—and I refuse to be silent about it.

sociology 101
with
professor
camiolo

jaclyn bennett

Fall of 2009 was my first college semester, and Intro to Sociology with Professor Camiolo at 8:30 Monday morning was my first college class. I took a seat in the front row. Professor Camiolo was already there, waiting for the students to arrive. He advised us to show up early to class because being “on time” means you’re late. I almost made it through that first day, but with five minutes left of class, I yawned without covering my mouth. Instantly, Professor Camiolo stopped what he was saying and told me that yawning without covering one’s mouth is a violation of a folkway. It was my first day and I already violated a folkway; I didn’t even know what a folkway was! Until this day, I have never again yawned without covering my mouth—life lesson one.

From then on, things did not get easier. After failing assignments for the first time in my life, I knew I needed to change something. His military teaching style of breaking us down to build us up seemed to be working. My mediocre high school study habits were not going to “cut-it” at TCNJ. One Sunday night I pulled my first “all-nighter,” studying for one of his quizzes, because I spent the majority of my weekend socializing instead of doing my work. I still received a terrible grade but I also learned my second life lesson: time management is a major key to success.

Noticing that my study skills were not up to par, I was looking forward to writing the major paper assignment. After working hard on the paper, I felt confident that I would get an A. When I received my grade it read: B-. It just so happened that I failed to read all the directions and left an entire section out. This mistake had cost me ten points. Life lesson three: read *all* the directions carefully for every assignment and take guidelines seriously.

Seeing that some students were struggling, such as myself, Professor Camiolo gave extra credit options very early every Sunday morning, none of which I took advantage of, and I decided to sleep in. Not taking these opportunities greatly affected my final grade, which brings me to life lesson four: take advantage of every positive opportunity.

Besides the quizzes, papers, and extra credit, Professor Camiolo’s overall teaching style was more than memorable. He demonstrated the concept of “achieved status” every day when he favored the seniors. He was “nicer” towards them, praised them more, and they didn’t even have to take the final if their grade was above a 95. At the time, what I portrayed to be completely unfair was actually life lesson five: through years of hard work and dedication, you will earn credibility.

The final project in Professor Camiolo’s class was a group PowerPoint presentation on shams. We were not only graded on the information presented, but we were also graded on our presentations skills. Professor Camiolo made it very clear that while we were presenting he did not want to hear the word “Ummm,” he did not want to see people leaning on the front desk, and he did not want to see

any distracting movements. In addition we were not allowed to read off of anything while presenting. Needless to say, my group and I practiced our presentation every day for a week. Directly after we presented, Professor Camiolo took us out in the hallway and critiqued us on the spot. He notified us that this method is used because we will retain more information while our adrenaline is running. Professor Camiolo was right; I can still remember exactly what my critique was: I looked down at my flashcard notes way too much; however, *my* presentation style reminded him of his own presentation style. After an entire semester of feeling as if I was failing everything, a compliment never felt so rewarding.

It wasn't until I left Professor Camiolo's SOC101 course and continued on in my college career that I was able to appreciate what a truly admirable professor he was. He was not being mean or unfair, but rather he was teaching me to always be mindful of my manners in professional settings, read every single part of the directions, create healthy competition for myself in order to strive to be my best, present myself to others the way I want to be portrayed, and complete every assignment to the best of my ability, because the work I turn in and present is a reflection of the student I am and want to become. Now that I am a senior sociology/special education double major, I can still remember sitting in the front row of Professor Camiolo's class thinking that I would never make it. Well I have made it! Three years later I can still remember and apply the lessons I learned in Professor Camiolo's class to my life. Professor Camiolo did not only teach sociology 101 material, but he also became a mentor and a continuous subconscious reminder for me to live up to my own expectations that I have set for myself. The most important concept Professor Camiolo taught me is that life isn't going to give me anything; I need to reach out and take advantage of the opportunities I have in front of me.

tips for a sociology major

kyle tomalin

College can often be both a fun and awful experience. Most of the better parts of my college days were within the first two years of being here. I met a lot of people, joined a lot of activities and had a relatively good social life. I still enjoy a good social life as I'm within a month of leaving TCNJ. It's been a good four years of my life, and I don't regret attending college. College can also be awful. Academics can be a nightmare, writing papers or taking tests is heavily stress inducing, and I honestly wish I had some more guidance while being in college. Nobody really gives you the kind of guidance and assistance you had in high school. Teachers may be more understanding than you may have expected, but it's still, for the most part, a solo experience. For all you sociology majors who are starting out or have a few more years left at TCNJ, I'd like to give you some advice on how to make college less stressful and more fun. This advice also can be taken into account with other courses you take, since more than half of your education will be devoted to non-sociology classes.

- 1 Do the research on your professors before you take any class here. Places like ratemyprofessor.com have gotten me to either take a course or not. Some of the reviews may be a little harsh on certain professors, but do not take these complains with a grain of salt. Even the meanest reviews have a modicum of honesty to them. Look for a consensus on the teaching style of the professor, or the structure of the course, and chose to your liking. Most professors here are good teachers, especially in the sociology department. However, they may not teach in a way that you like, or they will structure their class in a way you may not agree with. Of course, sociology courses are usually taught by one professor a semester, so you're stuck with the professor you get for a course you must take. As for the elective classes, failing to research professors may ruin your entire semester, or make it that much harder.
- 2 Always refer to the syllabus! That package of class scheduling and grade breakdowns will be vital to doing well, especially the grade breakdowns. Knowing how much each assignment is worth to your total grade will help you with prioritizing your assignments. Usually, papers and midterms/finals count the most, so put more of your effort into assignments that hold more value to your grade. Within sociology, the readings are tantamount to the larger assignments, so do your readings, and take notes when you can!
- 3 Papers aren't monsters! Don't fear doing papers. They may seem intimidating and awful, but they are the real joy of being a sociology major. You get to learn ASA formatting (which you can always find proper citation methods online), conduct academic research (not too bad), and you have to include the most pertinent information. This isn't like writing for English. Worry less about word choice and more about the content and properly including the literature in your paper.

- 4 Here's a quick method on how to master writing for sociology! You can do most of your research online using academic databases. You would rarely need to copy sources out of journals unless absolutely necessary. In that case, go to the library and get cozy with a copier. Abstracts give you a good idea of what the reading will be like, so use them to judge if a source is worthy of inclusion. When you write a paper for sociology, always put the most pertinent and important information in a paragraph at the beginning, and then further explain your reasoning or arguments from there. Professors will appreciate it. Have a clear thesis at the beginning of the paper, and make sure to actually hit every point you make in your thesis. Don't plagiarize. Don't mess up citations or quotes. And when you're done with what you write, go back and read the entire paper aloud. If you can't speak what you write without feeling weird, you wrote it badly. Fix it so you can read it aloud with ease.
- 5 When you have the time to, and you will, go out on the weekends and get away from campus. Staying at TCNJ too much will atrophy your brain. You will need a change of scenery once in awhile. If you feel the need to get away from this environment and take a small break, do it. There are plenty of nice places nearby to visit, like Princeton, New Hope, or Philadelphia. Even New York isn't too far away. Rejuvenate yourself. If you need a mental health day during the week, go ahead and relax. You'll have a bit of catching up to do, but you will be in a better mental place to take on the challenges you face.
- 6 Finally, my last bit of advice is to use the tools the college provides you with if you are in a jam. Falling behind in a course? Go to the Tutoring Center. Need to talk to a counselor? Go to CAPS. Use the gym. Use the pool. Check out the Green Lane fields. Go to CUB events. Your tuition money doesn't just go to classes, it goes to these services as well. You're paying to use this stuff, use as much of it as you can. Also, if you do not go to the Career Center in your entire time at TCNJ, I guarantee you made an awful mistake. Go there. Go on Lion's Link. Get your resume padded up. Get career counseling. Secure your future that way, because the academic side of TCNJ is focused almost entirely on your academics; they are not the ones to help you find a job.

Hopefully this advice will be helpful to many of you entering the major. Feel free to experiment with things too. Don't let college overwhelm you. You are in control of everything you do here, including whether you want to be here or not. Best of luck with your education!

how to secure a meaningful internship

kyle hogan

Are you a current sociology student on the verge of reaching senior status? First, congratulations on all your hard work! Also, as you are probably aware for students not doing a senior thesis, successful completion of SOC499 (Senior Seminar) is a requirement for graduation. A major component of this course is a 90 hour internship where students have the opportunity to gain real world experience in their chosen profession. There is no need to panic if you have not yet begun searching for internships! Here are some helpful suggestions for selecting a meaningful internship.

The first suggestion is to begin the search process early! SOC499 is a required course for the sociology major unless a student is working on a senior thesis, so it is advantageous to be proactive. You can start this process by building a rapport with faculty. After conversing with a professor about your long-term goals, they can potentially recommend organizations and programs that would be a good fit. Additionally, it is beneficial to talk with other TCNJ students who have already completed internships as these individuals can offer insight on the “do’s or don’ts” of the application and interview process. I would encourage students to become familiar with learning how to navigate the TCNJ online database for local internships and job opportunities, LionsLink.

While searching for possible internship opportunities, think about what you want to do for an eventual career. Internships have the possibility of leading to an employment opportunity, so it is important to search for organizations and companies that fit with your area of interest. Also, it is strongly suggested to not apply for just one internship and do research on several places that you envision having a meaningful experience with! There is nothing wrong with wanting to have a have a dream internship, but you should have backup’s places to apply to in case the first choice does not work out.

Once an internship has been secured, it is crucial to be honest and upfront about your goals and objectives with your supervisor. By doing so, you are demonstrating that considerable thought has been given on what you hope to gain from this experience. Furthermore, be professional and courteous at all times at the internship site! You are representing the TCNJ community and as mentioned earlier, employment opportunities could come to fruition from this internship. Most importantly, have fun! This is an awesome opportunity to apply the concepts and theories you have learned to real world situations at your internship. I wish you all the best and happy searching!

the quest for an internship

christopher
golden

There are many paths for a sociology major, ok well there are 3 concentrations, and then I guess you could just not concentrate so that's 4, but hey if we count all of you with some sort of education major then it's a couple more. Regardless, they all end the same way: unemployed. Just kidding! They all end with Senior Seminar, or SOC499. A pretty intimidating course number tied with intimidating tasks: obtain an internship, and work 90 hours. The 90 hours is actually not a whole lot—if you do eight hours a week you can complete the 90 hours in 12 weeks. The hours are not the main issue, what is, is actually getting the internship. Now, I will not claim to be an authority on this but I did pull it off so you may benefit from me recounting my personal experience with it.

I had absolutely no luck finding a listed position in the vast reaches of the internet, and I even joined interships.com! (If you do that uncheck the box about emails they just won't stop coming.) Have no fear however, that fact that you are not asking for financial compensation is here. A fair amount of companies are willing to take in unpaid and unscheduled interns if you just ask. So where do you start well it is more of a question of what do you want to do. Start in Trenton or Ewing and work your way out, unless you are a commuter then start from your home base. Now I wanted to work for a non-profit, particularly one dealing with poverty and construction development so I did a Google search to find one, and it worked! I actually found a list of them.

I made my first mistake when I emailed them. Think about how many new emails you get a day and how many you bother to read. I probably sent around 15 plus emails early the semester before SOC499 and I got about two responses. One actually turned into a successful interview with Homefront, but that's not the point. The point is just call the organizations and state your case: "Hi my name is ____ I am a sociology major at TCNJ looking for an unpaid internship around this to this time." If you are calling the right kind of people you will be surprised by how many actually appreciate your major, I certainly was. From this phone call you will either told they don't need you or to email them a resume. But here's the kicker, the email address they give you will not be the general one but the one of a person actually in need of intern assistance, and that's your best shot.

I actually got referred to a guy in North Jersey who referred me back to a place in Trenton I had already contacted but to a different person. So I used his name, a man in northern New Jersey I had never met, and secured an interview with CityWorks, and was offered a position. In reality it is an unpaid position and many of you are looking to work in places that could use all the help they can get all you need to do is get invited to do an interview and many will take you on. Good luck, and happy hunting!

lessons learned: professional conferences

jessica
scardino

This March, Christian Mercado and I had the privilege of attending the Eastern Sociological Society's (ESS) annual meeting in Boston, Massachusetts. At 6:00 in the morning, we boarded an Amtrak train filled with feelings of nervousness and excitement. To my surprise, it turned out to be one of the best experiences of my college career! Here are a few pieces of helpful advice.

1. Practice Makes Perfect

The best way to beat stage fright and calm those nervous butterflies is to be well prepared. Practice your paper or poster presentation in front of a friend, a mirror, or even your stuffed animals—knowing what you are going to say will help you to feel confident during your presentation.

2. Pack Lightly

Packing lightly has always been difficult for me—I rather be over-prepared than without something I need! However, traveling with a large suitcase and a large tote bag was a hassle, to say the least. Some of the subway trains in Boston have elevated platforms, where you have to walk up stairs to get to the seats. Dragging a suitcase up the stairs was a challenge. I would recommend carrying a small rolling suitcase and a backpack.

3. Go to the Other Paper Sessions

When you check-in to the conference, you will receive a conference program with a list of all of the sessions: paper presentations, roundtable discussions, poster presentations, etc. The best thing to do is to circle all of the sessions that interest you and try your best to attend all of them. If two interesting sessions are happening during the same time block, exercise good conference etiquette by sitting in the back row and exiting quietly to attend the next session.

4. Network with Other Students

The most memorable part of the conference was making friends with other like-minded students. Definitely talk to students in your poster session, attend other undergraduate poster sessions, and do not be afraid to introduce yourself to someone new. By speaking to students in our poster session, Christian and I made two new friends—one of whom we will be meeting in New York City at the end of May. The four of us spent hours talking about libertarianism, the drug trade, and feminism. These conversations opened my eyes to new ways of thinking about the world, sociology and my own experiences and opinions.

advice from a
future
graduate
student

hana paster

As I near the end of my graduate school application process, and prepare to embark on the adventure that is graduate school, I reflect back on the long, tedious process that took me here. As I think back, I realize that there are a lot of hints and tricks that I picked up along the way, which would have been quite helpful to know before. So based on this knowledge, I wanted to share with you all these tidbits of advice, in order to simplify your own process. Don't get stuck in the last minute crunch that I did—plan ahead, and start early!

1. Start with compiling a list of potential schools you would be interested in attending. Think about certain criteria such as public or private, part time or full time, entry requirements, tuition costs and financial aid, and housing or commuting options. This is a great and necessary starting point. You should narrow this list down to your top five or ten favorite programs before starting your applications!
2. During winter break of your junior year, buy all of your GRE (other entry exam) study guides, and/or register for review classes. You will want to start the studying process during the spring semester, in order to avoid cramming at the last minute for your exam.
3. Register to take your GRE (or other) exam late summer, or at the beginning of your fall semester of your senior year. You will want to get it out of the way before the craziness of senior year comes into full swing. Also, make sure to start a rough draft of your personal statement. You will want to do at least a few drafts before deciding which one fully encompasses you, and which one you want to submit.
4. During the summer between junior and senior year, you will want to periodically check the websites of the schools to which are applying. Find out when the applications will be posted and when their deadlines are. In the meantime, make sure to begin to finalize your personal statement, and start asking your professors, advisors, and internship supervisors for letters of recommendations! Some of them may request a copy of your resume, or an informal list of your accomplishments during college, so make sure you have that available.
5. In the beginning of your senior year, make sure to bring your resume and personal statement to the Career Center to be edited and revised. It always helps to have another set of eyes review it for you. The more, the merrier!
6. Request copies of your transcript from Records and Registration. Sometimes, it will be easier to send them directly to your programs. Due to the fact that it takes a few days for them to process your request, make sure to do this well in advance of the deadline for your applications—don't get stuck in that last minute crunch!
7. During the winter break of senior year, finalize and send in all of your applications! Yay! You're almost done! Make sure to submit a FAFSA form, and formally request scholarship, fellowship, or assistantship from each of your schools. This is a crucial step, which could potentially delay some of your other materials from being processed.
8. Once your applications have been submitted, don't freak out! Most schools process applications on a rolling-basis, and will inform you of their decision as soon as they have one. Though, if some time has passed after the deadline date, it is a good idea to follow up with schools you have not heard back from yet, so you can make a final decision!
9. Once that decision is made, make sure you attend all of the events hosted by your school, such as admitted students day, and orientation. Stay on top of all of the paperwork they may send your way, such as field placement forms, health insurance forms, and the like.
10. Make sure you send thank you letters to those who wrote recommendations for you, and share your success with them. After all, their words helped you get into your program!

an interview
with the back-
bone of the
department:
mrs. karen
debrule
jason hammer

Solving the problems of every distressed sociology student and faculty member, Mrs. Karen Dubrule is a vital and greatly appreciated addition to the department. Although she was only hired this past October, Karen is quickly mastering the ins and outs of The College of New Jersey. I recently had the opportunity to interview Mrs. Dubrule about her transition to TCNJ and her experiences so far!

JH: What led you to apply to your position here at TCNJ?

KD: I had always worked in various educational administrative jobs, previously working at the Princeton Day School and as a Program Manager for study abroad experiences at the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE). I had been looking to return to a full-time, long-term position, and I knew that I loved working with students and being on a college campus. Since I was a sociology minor in college, I had a slight understanding of the field. I thought it would be very good fit for me!

JH: What is your favorite part about your job?

KD: I feel very fortunate every day to work with such a wonderful group of faculty members and a motivated student body. I am blessed to have an incredible Chair, Dr. Liz Borland, who made my transition as easy as possible! The most fun I have had with my job so far has been working in this very welcoming TCNJ community to better publicize the Department. I also love being on such a pretty campus and it fits very well with my family life.

JH: What can you tell us about your life outside of work?

KD: My family and I live on the campus of a local boarding school. I have four kids—two boys, two girls, whose ages range from 5 to 14. We also just adopted a new puppy, Mack, so you can imagine how very busy I am outside of work. Coming to work almost feels like a break!

JH: Can you tell us more about your undergraduate background?

KD: I am originally from St. Louis, but I went to Georgetown University, majoring in Russian language, with minors in Russian area studies and sociology. I really treasured the close-knit campus community that we had at Georgetown, and I have the same feeling here at TCNJ. I lived in Moscow for a year where I met my husband, while we were both working at the US Embassy. After our time at the embassy, we moved back to the US and got our master's degrees at the University of Kansas in Russian Area studies, which led us out here where I started my study abroad job.

JH: Is there anything you would like the sociology students to know?

KD: I want every student to know that we're always here for guidance and to listen to any problems or concerns they may have. I'm always here from 8:30 to 4:30, and I welcome everyone to come into the office (SSB 317), even if it's just to say hello! I truly love getting to know the students. We want our department to feel like a family, where there is support for our students and faculty members. We're working extremely hard to make the department more visible on campus by scheduling lectures and events with esteemed figures in the world of sociology. Since I have been here we have really pushed to keep our website updated with our faculty profiles and links to various student resources. We also have our Facebook page (TCNJ Department of Sociology of Anthropology) and our LinkedIn profile, which has been great in keeping our current students and alumni connected to the department. It is our goal for next year to continue to follow up with our alumni and utilize their contacts to help our undergraduate students. I really want to make it a priority to have our students feel great pride for our department. I truly love working in the TCNJ community, especially with our incredible department, and plan on many wonderful years to come!

identity in the
caribbean:
an interview
with dr.
brown-glaude
sara manzon

This fall, Dr. Brown-Glaude is offering a small group of students the opportunity to research race, gender, class, and ethnicity in the English speaking Caribbean. I recently sat down with her to find out more information about this SOC390 research experience.

SM: What is a Sociology 390 course like?

Dr. B-G: It's a student-faculty research collaborative, so it is not a typical class. Rather than meeting twice a week for lectures, we will really be working together to try to engage in research.

SM: What is this research about?

Dr. B-G: It relates to a book that I'm working on that focuses on racial, gender, and sexual identity in the Caribbean and how they are expressed through our bodies. It is a combination of sociological literature and feminist literature about the body, race and gender. Students will do a literature review for the first half of the class, which will get the background information, and then apply this information in a content analysis of media images, newspaper articles, and YouTube clips.

SM: What are some topics that will be discussed?

Dr. B-G: Some of the things that we're going to look at the ways in which certain bodies are represented in the media. One of the things we will look at is body image. For example, men who bleach their skin often have their sexuality called into question. This is really interesting because women who bleach their skin are not considered lesbians, so why are men considered gay? We're going to look at that and see how these men are represented in cartoon images.

SM: So the media tends to focus more on gay men than lesbians?

Dr. B-G: Yes, in fact they rarely talk about lesbians, almost as if they are invisible. When thinking about the representation of the LGBT citizens of Jamaica, there is an emphasis on the depiction of gay male bodies. (Note from author: Dr. Brown-Glaude showed me cartoon depictions of gay males from Caribbean magazines, which were very homophobic. Gay males were depicted as women, holding handbags and wearing high heels and skirts.) There is much more emphasis on gay men rather than lesbians. We are going to see why this emphasis exists, what that says about the way homosexuality is publicly imagined, and what that means in terms of how the nation itself is imagined.

SM: Are there any other topics the class will explore?

Dr. B-G: We will also be asking questions about race. In Trinidad, they have a mixed-race category, which encompasses people with a background from both Africa and East India. In the United States, a person who has a mixed background is usually considered "not white," but in Trinidad they are a completely different category. We will discuss how they see this race in terms of beauty and femininity. The general idea is that the body is used to express identity in terms of sexual identity, racial identity, and gender identities. That is the larger project the book is trying to understand. We are going to learn together, so by the end of the class students will get a better sense of the connection between our identities and our bodies.

bonner
scholar+
introduction
to social work

brianna
anthony

Being a Bonner Community Scholar has given me the opportunity to witness many interesting sociological phenomena. Mentorship, diversity, justice, and normativity are just a few of the concepts that appear daily in my work in the Trenton community. Prior to taking Professor Scarpati's Introduction to Social Work class, I walked into my community service site, Habitat for Humanity of Trenton's Learning Lab, with a "tutor cap" on, and not looking to investigate or interpret the events taking place in the classroom. However, once I began bringing my group mates to the after school program, my perspective changed.

An aspect of the class curriculum for SOC205 is a community-based field experience in which students are required to participate in thirty hours of service. Students work with a non-profit site of their choosing and volunteer there while learning how it is ran. The majority of my classmates chose social services agencies that had a social worker on staff. This person would give direction to students for their service requirements, and would then be periodically interviewed for course assignments. My affiliation with the Bonner Center presented my group and I a different direction to complete the community service requirement for Introduction to Social Work.

Our site was the Learning Lab, which is located in the headquarters of Trenton's Habitat for Humanity. Students who go to the Learning Lab after school dismisses receive tutoring and engage in extracurricular activities. My group and I became mentors and tutors to elementary-aged children almost immediately, and were quickly integrated into the classroom. Once everyone was comfortable, my group and I began our investigation of Learning Lab. We discovered more information than I would have ever found out on my own.

First, I became more knowledgeable of the students' cultural backgrounds. The majority of students either have cultural ties to Central America. It began to make more sense to me as to why two Hispanic students would use different words for the same object or why they did not understand certain English idioms. More than half of the students' parents speak little to no English, so this enlightenment really made an impact on my work the children. I began explaining more concepts that the students may not understand such as, "the early bird catches the worm." Never before had I stopped to think about the diversity in the classroom and the injustice it has on the kids' Americanized schooling.

Besides diversity and injustice, the work we did in SOC205 made me understand the importance of mentorship, tutoring, and technology in urban settings. During my Bonner orientation we had spoken about the large number of students in Trenton performing below grade level but we did not fully unpack the reasoning behind the failing grades. As per our class discussions, the median household income of an area has drastic implications on education. In the entire City of Trenton, the median household income is \$36,000, while in East Trenton it declines to about \$18,000. Knowing these facts put into perspective how little money this area has to spend on education and technology. An important concept that was unraveled in our class expressing the notion that children in school districts with more money and better accessibility to technology get better grades. This idea directly relates to how Trenton schools may never catch-up to other suburban schools solely due to money and accessibility. With this knowledge, my group and I recommended that the Learning Lab allow students to spend more time on the computers in an effort to familiarize them with technology.

Through this field experience I learned that sometimes it takes another perspective or set of eyes to see what is best for a given program or to further investigate the reasons for people's behaviors in a system. Even though I had volunteered at Learning Lab for months, it was not until I looked at it as a sociologist that I realized problems the program was facing. I never took the time to really discover my students' backgrounds, and that kept me from understanding where they come from and the reasons they act as they do. Taking SOC205 allowed me to take a step back and observe my site to see all the positive attributes it contains and the problems that we can address. As sociologists, we must remember that sometimes the best way to analyze a situation is to take one's self out of it and see it through the lens of an onlooker. Therefore, we can see the potential that lies ahead.

sociology in our backyard

megan fixter

Imagine a utopian community where wealth was determined by a job well done and careers were assigned based on the interests and desires of the individual. Even less desirable jobs receive higher pay! Travel one hour east from The College of New Jersey and this community is a reality. Of course, you'll be approximately 160 years late to the party, but who's counting? The North American Phalanx was a secular, cooperative community located in Colts Neck Township, in Monmouth County, NJ. This experimental community lasted from 1843-1856.

The North American Phalanx was based the ideas of Charles Fourier. Fourier was a French philosopher and influential thinker. His ideas about social and moral issues were radical for his time but are commonplace in today's society. For example, Fourier is credited with originating the word feminism, defended homosexuality as a personal preference, and was intensely concerned with liberating all people through education and freedom of human passion.

Fourier was opposed to individualism because it created an imperfect and immoral social structure. He declared that concern and cooperation were the secrets of social success. He believed that a society that cooperated would see immense improvement in their productivity levels. Workers would be paid for their labors according to their contributions. Fourier imagined this social structure to occur in communities he called "phalanxes". These communities would consist of a single structure. Although there would be private property, eating and cooking would be communal. Each community was made up of 1,620 people. Fourier believed that there were 12 common passions, which resulted in 810 types of character, so the ideal community size is exactly 1,620 people.

Fourier had many followers and, in 1844, a Flouriest group led by Albert Brisbane purchased 673 acres of land to build the North American Phalanx. The property included a large structure that contained living quarters, social areas, a kitchen, and eating areas. The community also included a number of other structures such as a steam mill, guest cottages, and stables.

The people who lived at the North American Phalanx were called associates. The community had a population of approximately 135 people throughout its existence. People were offered admission based on their skills. Prospective members lived in the community for 30 days before being offered one-year provisional membership. The entire community voted on membership status.

Living standards in the North American Phalanx were better than the country average. Although wages were below minimum wage compared to American standards, so was the cost of living. Compensation was based on the character of the work multiplied by an hourly wage. No distinction was made between age and sex when it came to jobs. The economy was steady, but slowly declining.

In 1853, the community faced a split over the women's rights and abolitionist movements. There was also controversy about adding a religious affiliation to the North American Phalanx. Then in 1854 the fire destroyed mills and several workshops. The community was unable to comeback from this catastrophe because their insurance company went bankrupt. In 1855 the community voted to sell its estate. In 1857 the North American Phalanx was legally dissolved.

The main building stood until 1972, when it was destroyed by yet another fire. Today, only a commemorative plaque and two auxiliary structures remain of the original the North American Phalanx property.

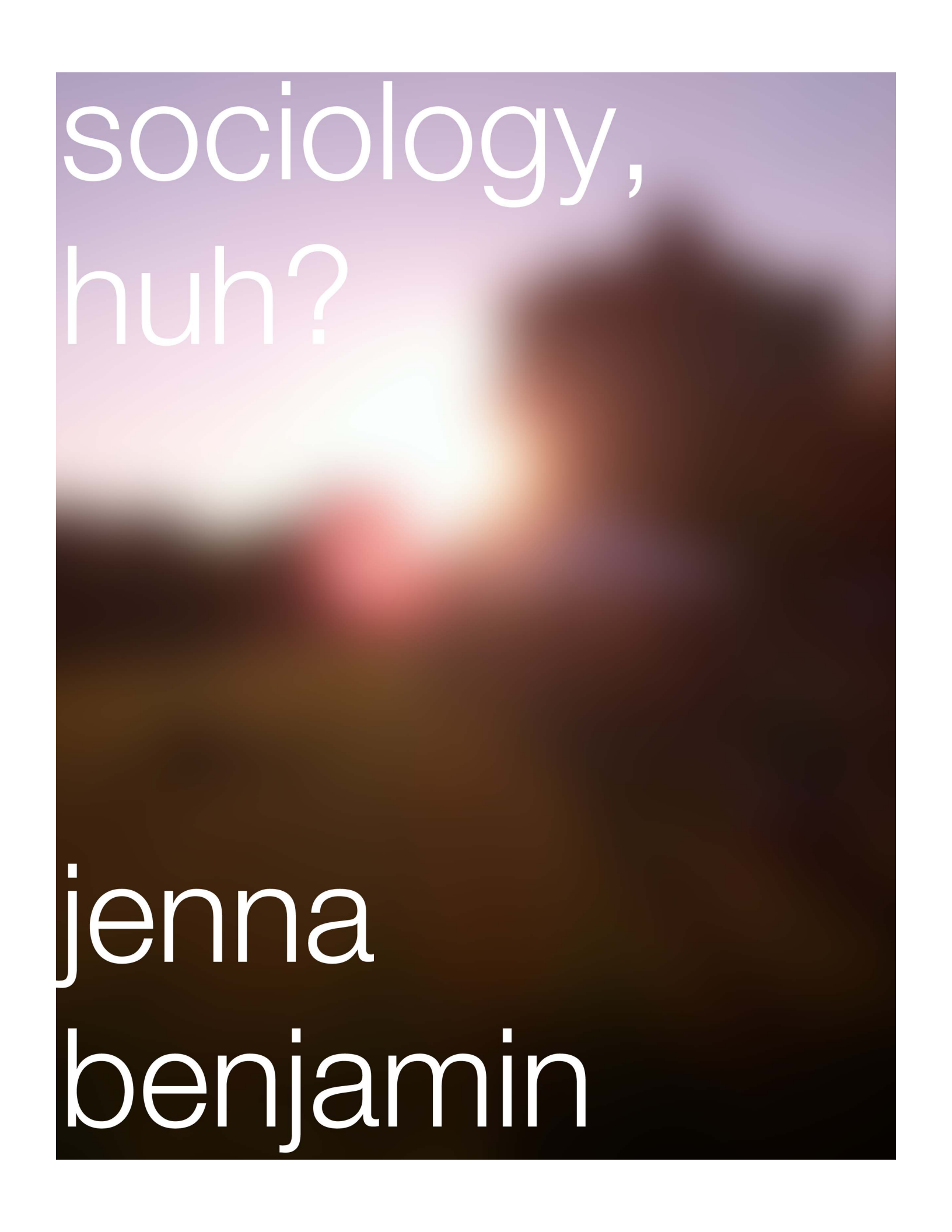
the duty of a sociology major

kyle tomalin

Early on in my days as a sociology major here at TCNJ, one of my professors, and I can't recall who, joked about what the duty of a sociology major was. The professor said something like "it's the duty of a sociology major to fill out surveys, because you'd want someone to fill out your survey too!" And it's true, anytime I receive a Qualtrics survey in my inbox, I'll fill it out, based on the idea that I'd also want someone to fill out whatever study I'd be conducting via TCNJ email. If any of this seems silly to you, that's a good thing. Though I find lots of value in the empiricism and scientific methodology of sociology studies, I don't think that the duty above is necessarily reflective of what sociology majors here do, or what we can truly do to help out others around us.

I think that the real duty of a sociology major is related to the idea that society, and all things within it, are created by humans, or as it's normally called, social construction theory. Everything social is socially constructed, so our social ills are also socially constructed. This includes such awful things as racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, and any kind of prejudice based upon social statuses. The issue with many people is that these social ills are so ingrained into the public psyche that people do not understand them to be social constructions. As sociology majors learn about the causes and effects of prejudice, we also learn, implicitly, the cure to these ills.

By highlighting the constructions of these prejudices, we may be able to stop the prejudice from occurring. We, as sociology majors, have a duty to become activists against these social ills. We have the ability to educate others about prejudice, and we have the ability to create new social norms to discourage prejudice from occurring. In 2013, we as a society are starting to stigmatize prejudice based upon social categorizations. It is no longer acceptable to be homophobic or racist or sexist or ableist, but we are not fully done with these ills. Sometimes prejudice is more subtle, and we as sociology majors are better equipped to understand the subtleties of prejudice. By educating others on when actions not perceived as prejudiced are in fact prejudiced, we can tackle these more subtle expressions of social ills. We can have a socially equal society if we work hard enough for it.



sociology,
huh?

jenna
benjamin

“Sociology, huh?”

It’s a question a sociology student will get every now and then. A combination of inquiry with a comfortable size of hesitancy. In the asker’s eyes you see something familiar – with your trained ears, you hear an unspoken question; that is, what the heck are you going to do with *that*?

And maybe, for many of us, in the beginning of our sociology student careers, we were asking the same question. Maybe today, maybe right this very moment even, far into our sociology student experience, we are *still* asking.

But I challenge you to ask yourself a different question. I challenge you to remember the reason why you chose sociology to begin with – something that cannot fully be described in answering what we *can* do with it. Instead, I challenge you to ask yourself: what have I *already* done?

We’ve chosen to major or minor in sociology because we want to help people. Point blank. There are expansions to our motives for focusing on this discipline, but at the heart of all these explanations this singular point remains: we see an injured world and we want to be a part of making the bandage that will protect it. And sociology teaches us how to make that bandage.

Sociology doesn’t just help us understand, it helps us find better glasses to see. *Everything*. We know not to take anything at face value, to see that there are layers – that there are *always* layers. It teaches us about the power of the question mark. The power of not knowing, of *knowing* we do not know – of questioning our society, our peers, our professors, our family, ourselves because the world isn’t black and white. It is one *billion* shades of gray. And, we sociology students, we know that.

The classes we take open our minds and open minds cannot be shut. And open minds cannot help opening the minds of others – whether it’s when we’re at dinner with our friends and we’re talking about the vested interests of the media or at home with our parents discussing the social constructions of gender and race, challenging them to challenge their preconceived notions.

Sociology isn’t just about memorizing theorists and concepts and statistics; it’s about expanding our perspectives, about shaping our attitudes. It’s the opportunity we give the people around us to have questions about the words coming out of their mouths.

Sociology doesn’t just produce knowers; it produces askers. It produces a perspective that this planet needs in order to spin. So, even now, in pursuing our undergrad, in interacting with the people around us, we are already doing important *important* social work.

In this field of study, I’ve come across some of the most interesting and thoughtful people I’ve ever met. And these are the types of people I would trust with our delicate world. These are the types of people I know have the important tools to mend it.

So, I dare you, next time you’re hit with a “Sociology, huh?” say:

“Yes, sociology. The study of people. Of groups. Of you and me, together here. Of why we do the things we do. With my education, I can go into social work, teaching, law, journalism, politics, and more. But most importantly, I am becoming a more well-rounded person. And I promise, if you can get past this hump of ‘sociology’, just by being around me, you will be more well-rounded too. And that, my friend, *that* is the way we create a better world. One domino at a time.”

So, please, for a moment, forget *what can you do with that*.

You are a sociology student. **What *can’t* you do?**

the end

thanks for reading!