

# The Interactionist:

*An Informative Newsletter for Sociology  
Students*

## Sociology Department Mission Statement

Uniting sociological and anthropological perspectives, the students and faculty of the Department of Sociology join in exploring human society and culture.

Course offerings and co-curricular activities address a full range of issues in both the applied and the more academic areas of the disciplines. The department is unique in its international and interdisciplinary emphases.

## Sociology Club Officers, 2006-07

President: Krissie Wells (s08.kwells)

Vice President: Melissa Niese (s07.mniese)

Treasurer/Public Relations: Ben VonBlon (s08.bvonblon)

Faculty Advisor, Jerry Pankhurst

The Sociology Club will meet every other Thursday at 6:30 in Morris Lounge in the Student Center. See page eight for this year's activities. The first meeting is September 7th.

## First Sociology Fall Colloquium

Dr. Steve Fryburg, Director of the Peace Museum in Dayton, will come to Wittenberg University on Monday, September 18, to speak about his *experiences* in Iran last spring. The event is sponsored by the Sociology Department and Dr. Alan McEvoy's Witt Sem course. The colloquium will begin at 4:00 PM in Carnegie 215.

**In this issue: Blake Troxel on his Peace Corps Work (page 2), Sociology Graduates' News and Pictures (pages 3-4), Faculty News (pages 5-7), and Sociology Club Activities (page 8).**

### DR. BROH HAS HAD HER BABY!

Elijah Bennett Broh was born August 15th weighing in at 7 lb., 13 oz., 19.5 inches long. Mom and Eli are finding each other pretty amazing. Sociology faculty and students are very happy for Dr. Broh.

## News from Blake Troxel sociology graduate currently working with Peace Corps in Vanuatu



Ok, I don't really even know where to start, there's so much. I've been living with a host family for the past 3

months in the village - Namasari. I eat with them and my house is a stone's throw away. I should be able to start cooking for myself when I go back to site because they just finished my kitchen. My host father and I made a charcoal grill so I'm going to start using that to cook my island kaekae (food). I have really gotten used to the island food and even start to crave it some...about the poison in manioc...we just boil it or bake it in stones. I have three small brothers and a small sister, and uncles and aunts and cousins and grandmas because I was formally adopted into this family. It's been good. The village that I live in has about 37 families (200 some people) church is extremely influential everywhere (because of the missionaries). I can talk to pretty much anyone in Bislama but the hard part is just creating the common ground with the people in the village to have something to talk about (that's the most challenging part for me). My favorite thing to do is go out on the canoe. My family has another house about 30 min walk down the coast so we all pile into my papa's huge canoe and go fill it up with fire wood and food and anything else we need from the gardens or the bush (jungle) and then paddle home (to my house). I don't even know if I can explain it, but it feels so good just sitting in and paddling out on the open water. Let's see,

school...I am helping at a primary school called Losalava. I am more of an aid for year 7 math and science but I've done a little teaching so far. The government's education system has little to no money and most if not all the schools need considerable help - more resources/materials,



teachers, buildings, funds. I've been approached to help with some projects from other communities which I am very excited about. One is a local marine conservation project, another is a sea cucumber farming project (sell them to Koreans and Chinese as food), and I was asked to be on a committee to start a cooperative in my village. My plate is pretty full now, and I hope that I can help and I hope that I don't let them down. I feel extremely lucky for this opportunity and the situation that I'm in...I'm a little worried that I may benefit more from the experience than those who I'm supposed to be helping...Anyway, I am enjoying life here immensely and I am extremely appreciative of every day - more so than ever before. I know this only a short, general description of my life here, and I know that I've left a ton of stuff out.

**More  
Sociology  
Graduate News**

Lindsay Brehm is going to OSU for school psychology.

Kylie Evans is attending graduate school in social work at West Virginia University. She is a teaching assistant in two sections of "Introduction to Women's Studies."

Jalyn Parks will be leaving her job at the Ohio House of Representatives to pursue a Master of Higher Education Degree at Ohio University.

Nicole Spirgen is attending American University on a full scholarship to pursue her Masters degree in Public Administration

Latesha Clay is working full-time in Cincinnati with children that have mental illnesses.

Pam Evans is working as a family teacher at Mooseheart Child, City, and School in Chicago. Mooseheart is an organization that works with children whose parents or guardians can no longer care for them.

Jess Savage is moving to Chicago to pursue a career in business.

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More  
Sociology  
Graduate  
News

Ashley  
Burloff is  
working this fall  
for Teach for  
America.

Marianne Hitchcox is  
working as a case  
manager at Project  
Woman here in  
Springfield.

Travette  
Harper is applying to  
a Culinary Program in  
North Carolina and hopes to  
work eventually in Spain.

Jeannine  
Harold is a  
social worker  
here in Springfield.

Tracie Fairbanks is  
working as an assistant  
manager at Barnes and  
Noble College Bookstore.



Robert  
Bhoolai got  
married this spring and is  
now living in  
Florida.

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## Faculty News/Jerry Pankhurst

Jerry Pankhurst, Professor of Sociology, convened a session at the international conference on "Religion, Culture, and Conflict in the Former Soviet Union and Beyond," held in Moscow, Russia, May 22-24. The conference, sponsored by the Institute of Culture, Religion, and World Affairs of Boston University and the J.M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies of Baylor University, was hosted by the Institute of Multidisciplinary Sociological Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences. During the week of the conference, Pankhurst also met with his collaborators in a research project on religion in Russia.

Professor Pankhurst also participated in a faculty seminar in Granada, Spain in June, followed by a four-day study trip to Morocco. With support from the Provost's office and the study abroad organization, the Institute for the International Education of Students (IES), Pankhurst joined approximately twenty-five faculty members from U.S. colleges and universities to explore issues related to international education on the topic, "The Islamic Presence in Spain and Europe."

In the first part of the week, participants learned about the wonderful resources of Granada, where IES joins the University of Granada in a program for U.S. students. In addition, workshops by American participants and European instructors for IES were devoted to various teaching issues. Based on his experience at Wittenberg teaching Sociology 277, Islam and Islamic Societies, Pankhurst presented a paper in the workshop devoted to "Teaching about

Islam in U.S. Universities: Challenges and Opportunities."

The last two days of the week were devoted to a separate but closely related topic under the co-sponsorship of the Euro-Arab Foundation for Higher Education and IES-Granada: "Challenges of Security and Defense in the Mediterranean: Processes of Dialogue and Meeting Spaces." Besides U.S. faculty members, this part of the seminar included scholars, journalists and heads of public organizations from Spain and France, representatives of the Spanish government and security forces, and the Ambassador of the Arab League in Spain.

Pankhurst joined a bi-lingual (Spanish-English) panel devoted to "Radical Islamism, Salafism, and Legitimacy on the Southern Shore of the Mediterranean," which devoted much attention to the impact of immigration from Africa to Europe. He discussed possible sources of Islamic radicalism in his presentation on "Social Issues of Islam in the European Context."

Following the Granada seminar program, Pankhurst participated in a four-day follow-up trip to Morocco to explore study-aboard opportunities there. Organized by Morocco Exchange Ltd. for IES, the trip included discussions with faculty members in Tangier (on cultural diversity in Morocco) and Rabat (on western images of Moroccans and Muslims), a presentation on the work of a women's cooperative project in Tangier, a two-day home stay in Rabat, a conversation with two Peace Corps volunteers and a post-B.A. Fulbright scholar, a visit to a rural family for dinner

and afternoon together, and an overnight in Chefchouen, a city that retains many connections to the Spanish Andalusian-Muslim-Jewish experience. While brief, Pankhurst found this experiential introduction to Moroccan culture and society extremely valuable. He believes that the potential for study by U.S. students there is great, with opportunities to study Arabic language – he met two high school students from Seattle who were doing just that in Rabat – or North African Islamic culture and history. He notes that Morocco is an ally of the United States, and its society and government have had western-leaning patterns for most of the recent past. Even

so, it is genuinely Muslim, and its diverse ethnic makeup (both Arab and Berber, with other small minorities) provides special interest.



## Faculty News/Stephen Smith

This fall a new course called The Silk Road (EAST 290) is being team-taught by Profs. Stephen Smith (Sociology), Marcia Frost (Economics) and Jennifer Oldstone-Moore (Religion). The term Silk Road is the common misnomer for a vast network of trade routes that carried goods throughout the Old World. In its most limited sense it was caravan roads connecting ancient China and the Roman Empire, yet it was much, much more, leading north into Mongolia and Russia and south to India and as far Egypt. With the decline of the stabilizing Mongol Empire, and the rise of maritime trade, the overland routes fell into disuse in the 14th century and, in time, once

thriving oasis way stations and Buddhist monasteries were abandoned to the sands of the Taklamakan desert. The very existence of these towns was forgotten. It was not until the late 19th century that colonial spies and Western treasure hunters rediscovered these long lost sites and set about looting them of their art works and libraries.

Preparation for this course was underwritten by a Freeman grant. In the summer of 2004 eight Wittenberg professors went on a faculty development trip to the Chinese Silk Road, visiting Xi'an, the ancient terminus of the trade route, as well as several major

oasis cities on the trail around the Taklamakan desert. This past summer Profs. Smith and Frost returned to China to do the ground work for a summer field school (one month, 6 credits) on the Silk Road. Starting in the summer of 2007, they will take students on a program that will include not only study at a Chinese university, but also such experiential learning as overnight stays with Chinese families, a stay in a Buddhist monastery, a stay in a Kazak yurt (tent) camp and a camel-back trip through the desert.

## Faculty News/Keith Doubt

### THIRD ISSUE OF *DUH BOSNE/SPIRIT OF BOSNIA* PUBLISHED

In May 2006 Professor Doubt traveled to Sarajevo with a research travel grant from Wittenberg University to collect materials for the third issue of the interdisciplinary, international, bilingual journal, *Duh Bosne/Spirit of Bosnia*. The journal can be found at <http://www.spiritofbosnia.org>

The third issue begins with the poem "Emina" by Aleksa Šantić. While Šantić is best known as a Serbian poet, he is no less a Bosnian poet. Vera Javarek writes the following: "His brotherly feeling towards the Moslems of his own country is also expressed in his poems. The exotic note which this interest in the Moslems sometimes lends to his lyrics is seen in the lilting *Emina*, which has been set to music and is well known as a song in Yugoslavia (xxii)."

Another significant Bosnian writer introduced to readers with this issue is Branko Ćopić. Every visitor to Bosnia notices in the bookstores volumes of children's literature written by Ćopić. Ćopić is the childhood author of every educated Bosnian. The humor and playfulness of his writing could be compared to the American writer Mark Twain, as one friend from Bosnia pointed

out to me. In this issue, we publish "A Letter to Zijo," which introduces the collection "The Garden of Mallow Color." This letter-dedication, is addressed to the author's friend, the Bosnian writer Zijo Dizdarević, who was killed in the concentration camp Jasenovac in 1942.

This issue contains as well an essay on what the Bosnian spirit is by the Sarajevo philosopher Vladimir Premec. While the essay begins skeptically about the very concept of a Bosnian spirit, it ends by embracing and exemplifying what this concept might very well mean.

This issue continues to make available to the world the work of Mak Dizdar. This issue draws attention to a less acknowledged side of Dizdar's poetry by publishing "Calypso," "Penelope," and "Polyphemus," poems that are Greek in character and informed by Homer's famous work.

Finally, the issue publishes a second drama by Nermina Kurspahić, titled "Consequences." During the war, Kurspahić's biting satires against the poetry of Radovan Karadžić so provoked the war criminal that he had his gunners aim directly at her apartment in Sarajevo.

### NEW BOOK

Professor Doubt's book, *Understanding Evil: Lessons from Bosnia*, will be published this November by Fordham University Press. The book uses the horrors of

the recent war in Bosnia to develop meaningfully adequate accounts of evil within the context of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Since the foundations of the social are found in human action, evil's assault on these foundations results in the demise of the social. In Bosnia, not only were individuals, families, homes, and buildings destroyed, but entire towns and cities were obliterated. Not only were individual human beings murdered, but so was the history and memory of vibrant communities. Crimes against humanity in Bosnia, Doubt argues, were "sociocidal"; they were systematic attacks on social life itself. The book develops the significance of "sociocide" as what evil is in order to understand the suffering and tragedy of the people and communities in Bosnia.



### FULBRIGHT TEACHING

From February till July 2007 Professor Doubt will be in Innsbruck, Austria to teach classes in the Sociology Department at the University of Innsbruck. One class will be on the American Social Character, another on African American Social Thought, and a third on Bosnia-Herzegovina. It will be interesting for him to teach as well as to learn about Bosnia in Austria because Bosnia was once part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Fall semester Professor Doubt is preparing for the trip and practicing his less than adequate German.

# Sociology Club Activities, 2006-07

1. Programing in the area of Fair Trade, collaborating with STAND in the Fair Trade display and food stand at homecoming, etc., and mounting a letter writing campaign to advocate for grocery stores to sell locally grown foods more than just the corporately produced. The club will use IDEED: A Toolkit for Local Farmers online to serve as a basic resource.

2. Sponsor a program that reviews the sexual assault policy on campus and gives the student point of view. Krissie says there are problems

that could be corrected if there was an organized student voice, and the Sociology Club could lead in mobilizing that voice.

3. In cooperation with Project Womyn, get movie tickets for children in battered women's shelters in the area. Try to assist in the children's circumstances.

4. A film series of undetermined theme, joint with STAND and maybe other groups.

5. Some kind of program on socially responsible careers for Sociology majors. The club might want to arrange for this to be the theme for the Alumni Careers Day speakers in October. Find some good examples of alums with socially responsible careers and ask them to speak. The Club could

be a special host for the program, even introducing the speakers.

6. Join with STAND and AIA, a speaker sponsored by aidemocracy.org. The group will help sponsor good speakers.

7. Come share your ideas for this year.

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Club meets  
every other  
Thursday at  
6:30 PM in the  
Morris Lounge  
in the Student  
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September 7th.**