

Department of Sociology

Happy spring! We hope this newsletter finds you and your family doing well. There is a lot happening in the [Department of Sociology](#) and hope you enjoy reading the latest news.



As always, we would love to hear from you! If there are any stories you would like us to share, please reach out and we will include them in our next newsletter. Or drop us a line just to let us know how you're doing! In the meantime, please stay connected with us on [Twitter](#).

Sincerely,

Daniel Levy and John M. Shandra
Professors and Co-Chairs
Department of Sociology

Professor Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí Wins Distinguished Africanist Award

The African Studies Association selected Professor **Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí** as the winner of the [2021 Distinguished Africanist Award](#). This award recognizes and honors individuals who have contributed a lifetime of outstanding scholarship in African studies combined with service to the Africanist community.



Professor Oyěwùmí noted, "In the 38 years since this award has been conferred, more than 50 percent have been given to white men and six to white women; no African woman has ever been recognized with this award. Thus, I am the first African woman to win this prestigious African Studies prize. The statistic makes explicit the racial and gender exclusions that are a fact of academic institutions, and American life. These numbers make even more poignant the widespread call for need

for diversity, equality and inclusion, including here at Stony Brook." [Click here](#) to read the full interview.

Congratulations on this amazing achievement, Professor Oyěwùmí!

We Miss You Already, Sharon!

At the end of 2021, **Ms. Sharon Workman** retired after more than 25 years serving as our undergraduate major coordinator. Sharon had been at the University for several years before joining our Department. In the past several years, Sharon was also engaged in advising and coordinating for our students in Health, Medicine and Society, the largest minor on campus.



Sharon is someone who could always be seen welcoming students into her office – both to help with their academic plan, and to chat and listen to them as they talked about their lives. It did not go unnoticed that she barely ever left the office for lunch and always welcomed an interruption from a student, or anyone. Even through the pandemic when there were few students on campus, Sharon spent hours each day communicating in all the ways she could, to keep our students on track, calm and inspired.

Our entire faculty and graduate student group at Stony Brook could count on her for so much, and in fact we did. Few know that it was Sharon's idea, a number of years ago, to coordinate with the Career Center to launch a number of events/meetings that we called "Life After Stony Brook." Sharon wanted to offer our majors a chance to meet with alumni and other staff on campus who could speak directly to our majors about the professional and academic options (and paths) that would and could follow beyond their graduation from our major. These were enormously well received events.

Sharon worked hand in glove with Pat Bremer, the assistant to the chair, as well as Wanda Vega (who also recently retired, as we featured in our last newsletter), to make sure that all students and staff always had everything we needed.

More than this, Sharon's absence reminds us of what a warm and caring person she is and of the incredible conviviality and sense of community she brought to us all.

What Do I Do with a Sociology Major?

Sasha McKay graduated *summa cum laude* in December of 2021 with a double major in Sociology and Biochemistry. Since June 2020, Sasha has been investigating racial and geographical disparities in cancer rates under the mentorship of Dr. Jaymie R. Meliker in Stony Brook's Family, Population, and Preventive Medicine Department and Program in Public Health. In this capacity, she gave a presentation on "Racial and Geographical Disparities in Colorectal Cancer Incidence in Mississippi, 2003-2018" at the 2021 Summer Symposium sponsored by Stony Brook's [Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities](#) program as well as nationally at academic meetings. A co-authored publication on this topic is under review.



Sasha's long term goal is to pursue medical training with a focus on public health (MD/MPH). Keep up the amazing work, Sasha!

Faculty News and Notes

- Associate Professor **Carrie L. Shandra** delivered a talk, "Between School and Work: Supply and Demand in the Internship Market" at Columbia University's Center for the Study of Wealth and Inequality. Professor Shandra leveraged two proprietary data sources — a college exit survey of 730,000 students and a database of more than 1 million internship job

postings — to identify the internship market and evaluate the correlates of its fluctuations.

- Assistant Professor **Yongjun Zhang** received a seed grant from Brook’s Office of the Vice President of Research (OVPR) to study mobility and segregation in the United States. In his project, Professor Zhang seeks to understand how individuals experience segregation in their daily activities by connecting large-scale digital trace human daily mobility data with consumer records.
- Professor **Crystal M. Fleming**, along with Veronica Y. Womack and Jeffrey Proulx, published an edited volume, *Beyond White Mindfulness: Critical Perspectives on Racism, Well-Being, and Liberation* with Routledge. Routledge described the book as follows:

While there is growing public interest in mind-body health, holistic wellness, and contemplative practice, critical research examining these topics featuring minority perspectives and experiences is relatively rare. This book draws on cutting edge insights from psychology, sociology, gender, and critical race theory, to fill this void. Major themes include culture, identity, and awareness; intersectional approaches to the study of mindfulness and minority stress; cultural competence in developing and teaching mindfulness-based health interventions, and the complex relationships between mindfulness, inequality, and social justice.

- Assistant Professor **Kristen Shorette** and Associate Professor **Rebekah Burroway** published “Consistencies and Contradictions: Revisiting the Relationship between Women’s Education and Infant Mortality from a Distribution Perspective” in *Social Science Research*. In this important article, Professors Shorette and Burroway applied quantile regression models to cross-national data to demonstrate how the effect of education changes in nations with different levels of infant mortality. In doing so, they challenged the widely-held view that education always leads to improvements of health in low- and middle-income nations.
- Professor **Daniel Levy** and **Dafina Nedelcheva**, a graduate student in the Department of History, published “Civilizational Mnemonics and the Longue

Duree: The Bulgarian Case” in *Memory Studies*. In the article, the authors demonstrate how memories endure and how their longevity is sustained by recourse to what the authors refer to as "civilizational mnemonics". Using the Bulgarian case, they challenge the pervasive concept of “methodological nationalism” by demonstrating how memory configurations can be part of a *longue durée*, predating the national container and extending to civilizational figurations.

- Professor **John M. Shandra**, graduate student **Samia Tasmim**, and SBU alumnus **Jamie M. Sommer**, assistant professor of Sociology at University of South Florida, published “Feed Me! China, Agriculture, Ecologically Unequal Exchange, and Forest Loss in a Cross-National Perspective” in *Environmental Policy and Governance*. In their article, the authors demonstrate that China is displacing its forest loss by importing agricultural products from other low- and middle-income nations.

Graduate Student News and Notes

Nayla Huq was named an Alumni Ambassador for Critical Language Scholarship by the United States State Department. In this position, Nayla answers questions from prospective applicants to the program while also sharing her experiences.

Danielle Lucksted has been selected as a 2021 Edmonds Summer Fellow with Human Rights Educators USA to create a "train the trainers" module for educators across the country. At the same time, Danielle has been elected as the student representative to the American Sociological Association’s Human Rights Section.

Nick Rogers received a grant from the Civic Health Project, which will support his work studying how individuals with different political ideologies consume political content on television. Nick has published on the topic in *Psychology of Popular Media*. His other work can be found in *American Politics Research*, *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*, *Social Computing*, and *Contemporary Ethnography*.

Samee Shirazi and **Aarushi Bhandari**, alumnus and an assistant professor of Sociology at Davidson College, published “Economic Dependency and Rural

Exclusion: Explaining the Global Digital Divide” in *Sociology of Development*. In the article, Aarushi and Sam add to the cross-national literature on the topic by demonstrating how various external factors like foreign investment and commodity concentration adversely impact mobile phone subscriptions. At the same time, economically dependent governments exacerbate the harmful impact of rurality of a nation.

We Appreciate Your Support!

We are grateful for the generous giving of so many of our alumni and friends! We depend on this support to build and improve our research and teaching opportunities through scholarships, graduate fellowships, and other experiential opportunities for our students. If you are interested in learning more about how you can [support our students and Departmental initiatives](#), please feel free to contact [Christopher Scarpati](#), Director of Development, at 631.632.1202.