



# The Soc connection

Tuesday, May 5, 2009

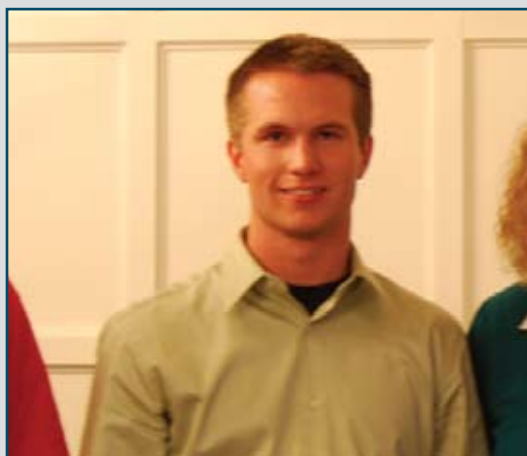


The Soc connection is a bi-weekly newsletter for the Department of Sociology. If you would like to have an announcement or story published please email it to nvanberk@iastate.edu

## Dr. Lasley to Address Students at LAS Graduation



The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences will hold its spring 2009 Graduation Ceremony Friday, May 8, at 8 p.m. in Hilton Coliseum. All LAS graduates in attendance will be formally and individually recognized at the cap and gown ceremony. Paul Lasley, professor of sociology and chair of the departments of Sociology and Anthropology, will be the faculty speaker.



Andy Isaacson, a senior sociology major, will deliver the student address. Andrew was recognized at the Department of Sociology AKD Award Ceremony for the Undergraduate Excellence Award for the Senior class.

## GRADUATION ACTIVITIES

**College of Liberal Arts and Sciences**  
Friday, May 8  
8:00 p.m., Ceremony  
Hilton Coliseum

**Contact Person:** Steve Jones  
jones@iastate.edu

**College of Agriculture and Life Sciences**  
Saturday, May 9  
8:00 a.m., Reception, 9:00 a.m. Ceremony  
C.Y. Stephens Auditorium

**Contact Person:** Mickie Deaton  
mjdeaton@iastate.edu

## EVENT CALENDAR

**May 8**  
International Graduation Reception  
2:00 - 4:00 p.m., Great Hall, MU

**May 8**  
Graduate College Commencement  
8:00 p.m., Stephens Auditorium

**May 9**  
Undergraduate Commencement  
1:30 p.m., Hilton Coliseum

**May 13**  
SWS Picnic  
6:00 p.m.  
Brookside Park

**May 18**  
Summer Session I Begins

**May 25**  
University Offices Closed for Memorial Day

**June 15**  
Summer Session II Begins



# Sociology

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

**The University of Alabama in Huntsville** invites applications for a tenure-track position at the Assistant or Associate Professor level, beginning August 2009. Applicants should have a genuine commitment to high quality undergraduate instruction and a productive research program. The successful candidate will teach Introduction to Sociology, Sociological Theory and a mix of other courses. Preference will be given to those able and willing to teach in one or more of the following areas: Sociology of Science, Sociology of Technology, Sociology of Medicine, and Social Stratification. Those with teaching and research interests in other areas may be considered as well. A Ph.D. in Sociology by the date of appointment is preferred, but strong ABD candidates will be considered.

Applications should include Curriculum Vitae, three letters of reference, and transcripts and be sent to Mitch Berbrier, Chair, Department of Sociology, University of Alabama in Huntsville, Huntsville, AL 35899. All materials except for the reference letters may be submitted via email to [mitch.berbrier@uah.edu](mailto:mitch.berbrier@uah.edu). Our review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the hiring process is complete.

**The Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg** invites applications for a visiting assistant professor position beginning Aug. 15, 2009.

Duties and Responsibilities: The successful applicant will teach introductory sociology and courses in her/his specialty area. Minimum Qualifications: ABD in sociology; demonstrated ability to engage in effective teaching. Preferred qualifications: research and teaching interests in race, criminology, juvenile delinquency, stratification, and/or education. Demonstrated skill in quantitative methodology is also desirable.

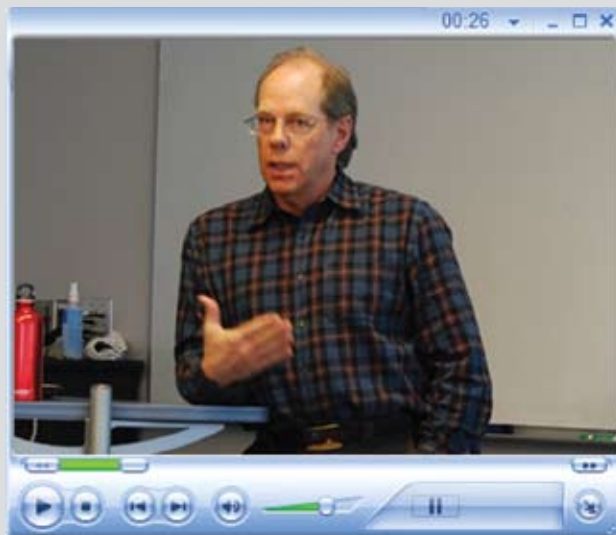
Interested applicants must complete an employment application form located on the University of Southern Mississippi Human Resources website at [www.usm.edu/hr](http://www.usm.edu/hr).

**East Tennessee State University, Department of Criminal Justice & Criminology** invites applications for a one year renewable for three years non-tenure track position at the rank of lecturer of criminal justice and criminology beginning August, 2009. We seek an experienced individual with a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice or Criminology to teach a variety of courses in criminal justice & criminology. Evidence of prior college teaching experience is required. Teaching load is typically 4 courses per semester. Submit a letter of application and current vita by May 15th, 2009 to John T. Whitehead, Ph.D., Chair, Department of Criminal Justice & Criminology, Box 70555, Johnson City, TN 37614.

## the COMPUTER CORNER

Steve Aigner delivered a seminar on April 23, 2009 titled "The Case of Steamboat Springs - Experiencing the Classroom."

A full video download can be found at:  
[www.soc.iastate.edu/video/aigner.html](http://www.soc.iastate.edu/video/aigner.html)



## Women's Studies Program Suffers 'Disproportionate' Cuts - Iowa State Daily

The women's studies department recently suffered a 33 percent budget cut, an amount that is "disproportionate" to the rest of the university's cuts, said Anastasia Prokos, assistant professor of sociology—Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Women's studies professors and students gathered at the free-speech zone in front of the Parks Library on Monday for a teach-in to discuss the effects of the budget cuts on the program.

The teach-in featured a petition that students, faculty and staff could sign to offer their support and express their concerns about the budget cuts.

With the instituted cuts, classes within the program were terminated, including sections of a class on Race, Class and Gender, and a course about Women and the Body.

"There's no other place in the university where courses like that are taught," said Diane Price-Herndl, professor of women's studies and English.

As a result of the budget cuts, fewer classes are being offered to students.

Price-Herndl said she hoped the teach-in would be a way to inform students interested in women's studies of why the classes have gotten larger and why some of the sections of certain courses are not being offered.

"This may be efficient, but it's not the best thing for your education," Prokos said, addressing a crowd of students.

"Business matters more than anything else," Prokos said, "even education."

Prokos said the integrity of a land-grant institution tradition, where education is available to everyone, is being compromised as a result of economic interests.

In addition, Prokos speculated that the result of the disproportionate cuts to women's studies were a result of unbalanced members of the Advisory Committee making budget cuts, with all members being men.

[Click here for the entire article.](#)

## International Organization is Hosting August Seminar on Campus for Faculty, Thanks to Alumna Debra Engel's Support. - College of LAS News

Facing history is something Debra Engel does daily. Now she's attempting to get others to do the same. The 1973 Iowa State psychology graduate has established a fund to bring the Facing History and Ourselves program to campus. Last summer three faculty members from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences attended Facing History seminars in New York City and Toronto through Debra's support.

Facing History and Ourselves is an international educational and professional development organization that engages students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice and anti-Semitism in order to promote the development of a more humane and informed citizenry. Each year, Facing History reaches 1.8 million students through a network of 26,000 educators.

"By studying the historical development and lessons of the Holocaust and other examples of genocide, students make the essential connection between history and the moral choices we confront in our own lives," said Debra, of Sunnyvale, Calif.

"I've wanted to contribute to Iowa State for a number of years, but I couldn't think of a project I was truly interested in. This was a way I could marry my two interests and get really excited about it," she said.

**Teresa Downing-Matibag, assistant professor of sociology, was one of the three ISU professors to attend a Facing History seminar. She says the experience encouraged her to consider how to engage students in history, empowering them to work for justice and positive social change.**

"The experience reminded me that being an upstander involves making history and that my students have this wonderful potential," she said.

That's exactly the impact that Debra is hoping for. She thought she was well equipped for the world from a moral and ethical standpoint.

[Click here for the entire article.](#)

## ISU Study Finds Link Between Individual Stress and Teens Being Overweight or Obese - Iowa State News Service

Stress may indeed be a direct contributor to childhood obesity. That's according to a new Iowa State University study finding that increased levels of stress in adolescents are associated with a greater likelihood of them being overweight or obese.

The study of 1,011 adolescents (aged 10-15) and their mothers from low income families living in three cities -- Boston, Chicago and San Antonio -- was posted Monday on the Web site of the Journal of Adolescent Health (<http://www.jahonline.org/inpress>), which will publish it in the August issue. Forty-seven percent of the teens in the sample were overweight or obese, but that percentage increased to 56.2 percent among those who were impacted by four or more stressors.

"We found that an adolescent or youth who's more stressed -- caused by such things as having poor grades, mental health problems, more aggressive behavior, or doing more drugs and alcohol -- is also more likely to be overweight or obese," said lead author Brenda Lohman, an Iowa State assistant professor of human development and family studies (HDFS).

Susan Stewart, an ISU associate professor of sociology; and Steven Garasky, a professor of HDFS at Iowa State; joined Lohman on the research team. Former ISU faculty members Craig Gundersen, a member of the agricultural and consumer economics faculty at the University of Illinois; and Joey Eisenmann, a member of the kinesiology and pediatrics faculty at Michigan State University; also contributed to the study.

Data collected from noted three-city study

The study analyzes data obtained from the "Welfare, Children and Families: A Three-City Study" -- a six-year longitudinal investigation. Researchers measured the height and weight of the adolescents to determine their body mass index, which was subsequently used to determine weight status based on two widely used classification systems. Adolescent food insecurity status and individual, maternal and family stressors were also determined through interviews.

[Click here for the entire article.](#)

## Same-Sex Ruling Belies the Staid Image of Iowa - NY Times

As of Monday, gay couples will be allowed to marry in places like this small town that once served as the background for Grant Wood's "American Gothic," the painter's famous depiction of stern, traditional Midwesterners.

Many people, even some who live here, cannot mesh their plain-Jane image of Iowa, a state that sits so sturdily in the middle, with the front lines of the same-sex marriage debate.

"To be honest, I would rather not have it in Iowa," said Shirley Cox, who has spent most of her 84 years in this old railroad town. Ms. Cox said she had always been proud to tell people what state she was from, but now was not so sure.

"But the thing is," she went on, "it's really none of my business. Who am I to tell someone how to live? I live the way I want, and they should live the way they want. I'm surely not going to stomp and raise heck and campaign against it."

This reluctance to interlope in the lives of one's neighbors — "a very Iowa attitude," in the words of one local political scientist, derived in part from the state's rural heritage — may help explain how Iowa finds itself in this moment. Add to that individualistic sensibility the state's current political alignment and its little-known, pioneering legal past on once similarly volatile questions, like segregation and the role of women, and suddenly it seems far less surprising to outsiders that this could happen here in the seemingly endless, rolling acres of cornfields.

"People may think of us some other way," said Paul Lasley, a sociologist at Iowa State University, "but in the main, it is tolerance — not always support, but tolerance — that has really been the weave and warp of Iowa culture."

"Understanding the culture of Iowa is understanding that many of us are descendants of people who were once denied liberties in their home countries."

[Click here for the entire article.](#)

High corn prices and low ethanol prices are bad for the U.S. ethanol industry. For ethanol producers, this recipe for disaster is a no-brainer. However, not everyone outside the industry understands the gravity of this simple math. Even some industry insiders are surprised when they actually put pencil to paper.

**Take David Peters, for example. He's an assistant professor of sociology in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa.**

During the summer of 2007, while working as a community economics specialist in the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for the university's extension service, Peters assisted communities and local governments with assessing the long-term viability of proposed ethanol plants. "We had a lot of local governments—cities and counties—that had ethanol companies coming to them asking for them to provide infrastructure revenue bonds or property tax abatements and to extend roads, rail lines, and water, sewer and electric lines," which were expensive propositions for small towns with as little as 500 people, he says. "The question was: 'If we bond out the infrastructure for 15 to 20 years, what is the long-term viability of the ethanol plant? Will we have a stable, long-term revenue stream?' I did some research and put together this calculator where they can input the parameters and assumptions and look forward in time to determine profits. The goal was to give the communities a tool that can help them to make public policy decisions."

That was when corn prices were low and ethanol prices were high. Peters' calculator hasn't changed, but prices have. Peters can easily show you how high-priced inputs and low-priced outputs mean losses instead of profits, but even he is surprised at how far things have gone up and down. "The main thing that surprised me was how sensitive the bottom line is toward changes in corn and ethanol prices. Obviously, it's intuitive that it would work that way, but what surprised me is how relatively minor changes either way can lead to profits or losses in sizeable amounts. At \$3.50 per bushel for corn, the price of ethanol would only have to tick up another dime to change the entire economics of an ethanol plant."

[Click here for the entire article.](#)

## **Nicki Cortum Selected as General Co-Chair for 2010 VEISEHEA Celebration**



Nicki Cortum, senior in public service and administration in agriculture, were selected as general co-chairwomen for next year's celebration.

Cortum, a Norwalk native, served on a Veishea committee her first and second years at Iowa State and worked as the office manager this year.

"I want to focus on the positive things from 2009 and be a good face for Veishea next year," Cortum said.

"One of the things I want to do is make Veishea a positive factor in the Ames environment and the Ames community," Cortum said. "I want to show people that we're here to make a positive difference and we want to be a contributing member of the community."

## **Susan Stewart Honored as Featured Speaker at Bowling Green State University's University Commencement. 2008.**



## Sociology Makes Top-Ten Careers List

CareerCast.com names sociology as one of the nation's best jobs in its "2009 Jobs Rated Report." Sociology ranked as the eighth most appealing job in the new website's analysis of 200 occupations. The ranking is based on various job characteristics including perceived work environment, income, employment outlook, physical demands, security, and stress. See [www.careercast.com/jobs/jobsRated](http://www.careercast.com/jobs/jobsRated).

CareerCast.com's finding that mathematician was ranked as the most desirable job contrasts with ASA research, which used the 2003 Survey of Doctoral Recipients data on satisfaction among PhDs within nine disciplines. In ASA's research, which has been submitted for publication, PhD mathematicians reported the lowest level of job satisfaction, while sociology fell toward the middle of the pack. See [www.asanet.org/galleries/default-file/SatisfactionWithDoingScience.pdf](http://www.asanet.org/galleries/default-file/SatisfactionWithDoingScience.pdf)

This latest "top-ten" recognition for sociology comes on the heels of an online Forbes feature appearing in April 2008 in which the discipline was listed as one of the nation's highest-paying rare jobs.

## Sociology Grounding in the Obama Admin, White House

Sociology is a common tie among three members of President Barack Obama's cabinet. A magna cum laude graduate of Harvard University's sociology program, Chicago public schools administrator Arne Duncan was appointed Secretary of Education in December. Duncan's senior thesis, "The Values, Aspirations, and Opportunities of the Urban Underclass," focused on inner-city Chicago.

United States Trade Representative Ronald Kirk majored in sociology and political science as an undergraduate at Austin College. His career has included service as the secretary of state in Texas and mayor of Dallas.

Ray LaHood, appointed Secretary of Transportation, earned his bachelor's degree from Bradley University in education and sociology in 1971. Prior to his cabinet appointment, LaHood represented the 18th district of Illinois in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The election of Barack Obama to the presidency also

brings a sociological mind to the White House. First Lady Michelle Obama graduated cum laude with a degree in sociology from Princeton University in 1985. During her studies, she wrote a thesis examining "Princeton-Educated Blacks and the Black Community."

## What Can I Do With a Master's Degree in Sociology?

### About the Study of Master's Candidates:

Master's-level education, especially as a vocational and professional degree, has become an increasingly important area of focus in higher education. Sociology departments have not had the support necessary to take full advantage of this phenomenal growth. It is in the interest of the discipline's overall health that such programs not be ignored by the discipline, but rather be provided with greater guidance and support. One area of weakness appears to be the lack of information is available about the career trajectories of Master's degree recipients.

To better position programs, the new Task Force on the Master's Degree, in cooperation with the ASA Research Department, is conducting a longitudinal survey beginning in early 2009 to learn what becomes of Master's graduates after they obtain their degrees. The first year of the survey will examine the characteristics of the their Master's programs. The second year will examine employment and additional education outcomes. Findings will be made available on an ongoing basis.

### About the Task Force on the Master's Degree:

In 2004, an informal group of chairs of master's-only programs asked the ASA to work with them to develop strategies to ensure the master's degree is a meaningful professional degree. The ASA Council appointed a Task Force on the Master's Degree to produce a report that would be useful to sociology departments starting or reviewing an applied, professional, clinical or other terminal master's degree program. <http://www.asanet.org/>

[Click here for more information.](#)

