New Graduates!

Congratulations to our three recent graduates, who will convocate on 12 November 2013:

Koyel Ranu, PhD

Benjamin R. Higgins, MA

Sonja Schuetz, MA

Koyel Ranu joined the department of Sociology at the University of Calgary in the Fall of 2005, after having received her MA in Sociology from the University in Windsor and her BA from Presidency College, Calcutta, India. In her M.A, her dissertation was on the “Influence of human capital and social capital on occupational mobility of ethno-racial minorities in Canada” under the supervision of Dr. Reza Nakaie. She was awarded the International Tuition Scholarship by University of Windsor in 2004 (scholarship for International students who maintain a high academic standing) and the Drs. George and Susannah Kurian Doctoral Scholarship award in Sociology, by the Department of Sociology, University of Calgary for 2005-2009, the Graduate Student Dissertation Award by the Department of Sociology, University of Calgary in 2008, and the Prairie Regional Research Data Centre Student Incentive Grant, by the Prairie Research Data Centre, University of Calgary in 2011. Koyel’s doctoral dissertation at University of Calgary was on “Mapping the Social Participation of South Asians and Mainstream/Dominant Canadians: A Comparative Study” under the supervision of Dr. Lloyd Wong. In her future research endeavours, Koyel plans to explore the social interactions of expats and indigenous Taiwanese in Taipei.
New Graduates, Contd.

Ben Higgins came to the University of Calgary in 2011 with a BA from Bowdoin College, Maine. For his Master’s thesis, Ben applied theoretical concepts from Bourdieu to understand the patterning of weight related health in Canada. He used data from the Canadian Health Measures Survey, and worked under the supervision of Dr. Jenny Godley. During his time at the University of Calgary, Ben also worked for Statistics Canada at the Prairie Regional Data Centre (PRDC). He defended his thesis, entitled “Exploring Relationships Between Socio-Economic Status and the Health Correlates of Excess Weight Among Canadians,” in May 2013. Since June, Ben has been working as a Health System Data Analyst at the Health Quality Council of Alberta.

Sonja Schuetz graduated from Mount Royal University with a B.A. in Sociology and a minor in Psychology. It was during her time at MRU that the interest that directed her MA research first emerged – specifically, in a class presentation from AIDS Calgary about HIV and how it affected women (particularly immigrant women) in Calgary. “Having not really thought about HIV until that point, it was really eye opening to hear that women were coming to Canada HIV-free, but were becoming infected at an alarming rate while here”, she said. “After leaving my undergrad, I knew I wanted to research something related to HIV and to women.” Once in the MA program, Sonja took a Sociology of Gender class, and located some research that suggested HIV-positive women who chose to mother were often stigmatized for their choice, even when the risks of mother-to-child transmission were very low. Sonja noted that no research on the topic had been done in Canada, and so decided to explore how HIV-positive women who chose to mother experienced their decision, and the pregnancies and life with children that followed. Her thesis included an analysis of interviews with HIV-positive mothers, and also an exploration of online textual material directed at HIV-positive mothers and prospective mothers.

Sonja is now working as a data analyst at the Health Quality Council of Alberta. Currently she is analyzing interviews with people who have had multiple experiences with health care providers over long periods of time. The goal, she explained, is to improve their quality of care.
Meet the New SSA Executive Team

Lesley Herd – President
I am in my third year of university with a main focus in sociology. I hope to be accepted into the faculty of social work within the next year. My concentration in sociology has this far consisted of crime and deviance, and the criminal justice system. My goal is to begin a social program one day that educates students in high school and elementary school about people with disabilities to help with integration. This is my second year as president of the SSA and I am looking forward to working with the new executive team.

Johanna Vanneste – VP Communications
I am in my third year at the University of Calgary pursuing a major in Sociology with a concentration in Criminology, Deviance and Social Control. I am considering doing a minor in Law and Society as well. I started my studies here in Biological Sciences, but I realized after a short time that it wasn’t right for me, and after exploring the different programs available, I realized Sociology was exactly where my interests lie. I love learning about social interactions and the reasons people do what they do, especially when it comes to crime and the criminal justice system. I’m not sure what I’ll do with my degree when I graduate, but I’m considering law school as an option. I’m so excited to be a part of the SSA and I am looking forward to a great year!

Sarah Hogendorp – VP Academic
I am Sarah, or the one with the dreadlocks (and the cool Batman socks – Ed.). I applied to the sociology program having a vague idea of what sociology was and now here I am, in my third year of sharing my opinions in your classes. I can’t narrow down what my interests are in the field, they change every semester. I have been blessed to meet some of you and look forward to meeting the rest of you!

Daniel Stefulic – VP Finance
I am currently a third year student pursuing a combined degree in sociology and psychology. Upon completion of my undergraduate education, I intend to pursue graduate studies in sociology. My academic interests encompass a wide variety of sociological and psychological issues, but my primary interest is in the area of health and illness. I joined the SSA as an executive this year because I wanted to participate in an organization that helps to build connections among sociology students and provides support for academic success.

Brock Farkas – VP Events
I’m in my third year of Sociology with a focus on family, gender and social work. I discovered sociology in my second year of university and loved it so much I transferred into it. My favorite sociology courses I have taken so far are Sociology of Families and Sociological Statistics. With my Sociology Degree, I would like to go into education and become a secondary school teacher.
Meet the New SGSC Executive Team

Chris Esselmont, Graduate Studies Committee Representative, Presentation Seminar and Writing Workshop Coordinator
Chris got both his BA and MA from the Department of Sociology at the University of Calgary. He is currently in the fourth year of the PhD program here at U of C. Chris is working with Dr. Erin Gibbs Van Brunschot, where he is currently working on his dissertation, in which he will be analyzing the NCS -A data to examine the similarities and dissimilarities between bullying and other forms of deviant behavior, and explore the ways in which the bullying and crime literatures can inform one another.

Miranda MacCallum, Graduate Studies Committee Representative
Miranda is in the first year of her MA in sociology after receiving her BA with honours also in sociology at Mount Royal University. Her current research interests include applying classical theorists to the power dynamics of the athletic triangle in competitive Highland dance. Miranda has spent most of her life in dance or teaching dance, and hopes to one day be certified as an official judge for the Scottish Official Board of Highland Dance (includes travel perks!)

Pernille T. Goodbrand, Equity Awareness Representative
After the first year of her undergraduate degree, Pernille transferred from Aalborg University in Denmark to the University of Calgary. She finished her BA in Sociology in the summer of 2012 with an Honours thesis on the history and revitalization of Calgary’s East Village. After a year working for local non-profit Inn from the Cold, Pernille is back at the University of Calgary to pursue her MA, and plans on doing her thesis on a topic within the realm of Urban Sociology. In her spare time she enjoys practicing yoga, watching old episodes of the Simpsons, and going back to Inn from the Cold to volunteer.

Suzanne Kanuka, Communications Committee Representative
Suzanne graduated from the University of Calgary in June of 2013 with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology. As an undergraduate, she developed an interest in criminology, among other things. She is currently in her first year of the Master of Arts Program. Apart from academia, Suzanne has previously volunteered at the Sheriff King Home in Calgary.
Meet the New SGSC Executive Team, Contd.

Shoghi Nikoo, Communications Committee Representative, Presentation Seminar and Writing Workshop Coordinator

Shoghi completed his BA with distinction in psychology at the University of Alberta in 2009, and hasn’t looked back. He is now a second year MA student under Dr. Ariel Ducey. For his thesis, he is investigating physician learning and decision making in the context of medical innovation and evidence-based medicine. His data will be largely observational, and he is excited to begin his fieldwork in the upcoming weeks. He is also a research assistant with Dr. Ducey and is, among other things, looking at the multiple knowledges produced in the early studies on which the tension-free vaginal tape, a medical device that strongly impacted female pelvic floor surgery, was based. He is also excited to start coursework for his MD next year and hopes, perhaps optimistically, to bring a sociological perspective to his future medical work.

Department Members’ News

Dr. Jim Frideres gave an informative presentation to a standing room auditorium at the “Understanding Idle No More and Canada-Indigenous Struggles” session hosted by the Canadian Sociological Association on June 7 at Congress 2013 at the University of Victoria. Spotted in the audience were some former department faculty members including Don Mills, Eugen Lupri, and Melissa Munn.

Patty Thille recently presented a paper at the Society for the Social Studies of Science Conference, Oct. 9-12, 2013. Patty’s presentation, entitled “Obesities, Subjectivities, and Textual Rhetoric,” was based on a textual analysis of the documents produced by the Canadian Obesity Network for their 5As of Obesity Management toolkit.
United Way Mega Draw: Sociology Leads the Way!

The Department of Sociology is spearheading a major initiative to raise funds for the United Way Campaign. The "United Way Mega Draw" is a collective effort of the Sociology Students Association and the Sociology Graduate Student Caucus and will probably offer more prizes than any other fundraising effort on campus. In fact, DOZENS OF PRIZES will be available to be won including $100 gift certificates, coolers with bottles of wine, tote bags full of goodies, ski passes, and so much more. Tickets are $2 each or 3 for $5 and will be available the last week in October and the first week in November with the draw scheduled for noon on Friday, November 8. We are in competition with other Departments on campus so we want to go all out to win. You will always recognize the ticket sellers because they will be carrying around big stuffed animals which will become prizes too!