

SexualitiesNews

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
SECTION ON THE SOCIOLOGY OF SEXUALITIES

Statement by the Chair

Happy New Year Sexualities Members!

It is a real honor to chair this section and to have the opportunity to get to work with many of you. I know that we will have an exciting meeting in Las Vegas and we are in the process of organizing a fabulous reception. Please do not forget that the deadline for nominating people for our various section awards is January 31st. Writing this letter to you in the new year has prompted me to remark on some of the legal changes that have happened over the past few years.

After his election, President Obama repealed the notorious “gag rule” that denied U.S. funding of international groups that perform abortions or give information about abortions. In 2010, the U.S. dedicated money for comprehensive sexuality education, after three decades of supporting abstinence only education. While federal money still exists for abstinence-only-education, states may also choose to apply for funding for comprehensive sex education programs.¹

The movement for same-sex marriage has seen both gains and setbacks, with more states recognizing same-sex marriage and more states banning it. There are many queer critiques of same-sex marriage— about whether or not same-sex couples who marry will challenge or enforce heteronormativity; whether non-traditional family forms will be further marginalized by the campaign for same-sex marriage. As I have seen friends who are ardently opposed to the institution of marriage get married “because of the benefits,” it becomes clear that achieving structural equality with heterosexuals necessitates marriage equality. Recent research shows that, in contrast to queer critiques, a majority of LGBT people of color and working class LGBT people support marriage as a movement goal.² However, this does not mean that we should not support universal health care or make sure that single mothers can earn a wage that can support their families.

More surprisingly, perhaps, “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” was finally repealed. In part, I see this as a true victory for the LGBT movement and equality. The repeal is of profound symbolic importance as a statement by the government about the value and worth of gay men and lesbians. In 1996, the U.S. Congress overwhelmingly passed the defense of Marriage Act, sending a symbolic message that same sex relationships were not worthy of the same rights and respect as heterosexual relationships. Like the 2003 Supreme Court decision, *Lawrence and Garner v. Texas* which overturned the country’s remaining sodomy laws that had been used to defined lesbians and gay men as criminals, the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, signals a profound shift in consciousness.

The repeal of DADT also provides many working class gay men and lesbians as well as gay men and lesbians of color who may have limited economic opportunities with the same possibilities that have been open to heterosexuals. However, as the group Queers for Economic Justice reminds us, a military job is not economic justice. The military should not be the main employer of poor and working class people. According to Queers for Economic Justice:

(continued next page)

¹<http://www.siecus.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.ViewPage&PageID=1272>

²Hull, Kathleen E. and Timoty Ortyl. 2011. “Same-Sex Marriage and Constituent Perceptions of the LGBT Rights Movement.” Unpublished Paper.

This Section

In the last decade or so, the study of sexuality has emerged as a vibrant interdisciplinary field of social analysis. For many years, sexuality was approached as an individual, biological or psychological phenomena. Today, the idea of sexuality as a social fact or construction is the point of departure for much of the most exciting scholarship in the area...

Sections are an important mechanism for getting out information about our specialty area... Section status also affords a variety of institutional supports from the ASA, including funding for information dissemination and a guaranteed number of paper sessions at the annual conference.

In short, we believe it is in the best interests of the discipline of sociology to advance the sociological study of sexuality. One way to promote this goal is to support the... "Sociology of Sexualities" as an ASA section and to encourage you to join... when you renew your membership in the ASA.

Text written by Steve Seidman, Gil Zicklin, and Mark Hager

The Purpose

The purpose of the Section on the Sociology of Sexualities is to encourage, enhance and foster research, teaching and other professional activities in the sociology of sexuality, for the development of sociology and the benefit of society, through organized meetings, conferences, newsletters, publications, awards, and other means deemed appropriate by the Section Council.

The Section seeks to promote communication, collaboration, and consultation among scholars in sociology, the sociology of sexualities, and allied disciplines.

(Chair's statement, continued from page 1)

1. The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans reports that about one-third of all homeless people in the US are veterans, but about 1.5 million more veterans are at risk of homelessness "due to poverty, lack of support networks, and dismal living conditions in overcrowded or substandard housing." They also report that 56% of homeless veterans are Black or Latino.
2. Some studies also show that one in four veterans becomes disabled as a result of physical violence or emotional trauma of war. There are currently 30,000 disabled veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
3. Rape and sexual violence are very common occurrences for women in the military, and the ACLU is currently suing the Pentagon to get the real numbers on reported incidences.
4. Half of the US budget in 2009 was made up of military spending, including current expenditures, veterans benefits and the portion of the national debt caused by military costs, according to the War Resisters' League. That is more than the US spent on Health & Human Services, Social Security Administration, Housing and Urban Development and the Department Education combined.³

So while I see the repeal as a victory in many ways, we must question the role of the military in our society.

Mary Bernstein
Chair, Sociology of Sexualities Section, ASA

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³<http://q4ej.org/military-job-is-not-economic-justice-qej-statement-on-dadt>

An open letter to ASA sections about the Real Utopias theme of the 2012 ASA annual meeting

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October, 2010

The theme for the 2012 Annual meeting of the ASA is “Real Utopias: Emancipatory projects, institutional designs, possible futures.” Here is how I described the core idea of this theme in the ASA newsletter, Footnotes:

“Real Utopias” seems like an oxymoron: Utopia means “nowhere” – a fantasy world of perfect harmony and social justice. To describe a proposal for social transformation as “utopian” is to dismiss it as an impractical dream outside the limits of possibility. Realists reject such fantasies as a distraction from the serious business of making practical improvements in existing institutions. The idea of real utopias embraces this tension between dreams and practice: “utopia” implies developing clear-headed visions of alternatives to existing institutions that embody our deepest aspirations for a world in which all people have access to the conditions to live flourishing lives; “real” means taking seriously the problem of the viability of the institutions that could move us in the direction of that world. The goal is to elaborate utopian ideals that are grounded in the real potentials of humanity, utopian destinations that have accessible way stations, utopian designs of viable institutions that can inform our practical tasks of navigating a world of imperfect conditions for social change.

Exploring real utopias implies developing a sociology of the possible, not just of the actual. This is a tricky research problem, for while we can directly observe variation in what exists in the world, discussions of possibilities and limits of possibility always involve more speculative and contentious claims about what could be, not just what is. The task of a sociology of real utopias, then, is to develop strategies that enable us to make empirically and theoretically sound arguments about emancipatory possibilities.”

I am hoping that many of the sections of the American Sociological Association will be enthusiastic about engaging this theme in some of the sessions which they directly organize, but I also hope that members of different ASA sections will submit proposals to the program committee for thematic panels which explore the problem of real utopias within their subfield. To facilitate such proposals I thought it might be helpful if I shared some of my general ideas on the structure of the thematic and plenary panels for the 2012 meetings. This is all quite tentative – the first real meeting of the program committee where these and other ideas will be discussed will be in early December – but it may give people some idea of the kinds of things I hope to see happen. What follows, then, is a brief sketch of the different kinds of panels around the theme of Real Utopias I would like see at the meeting.

I. Real Utopia Proposals Sessions

Each of these sessions will revolve around a proposal for a real utopian design to resolve some domain of problems. Examples would include: unconditional basic income, market socialism, equality-sustaining parental leaves, participatory budgets, random-selection democratic assemblies, worker cooperatives, stakeholder corporations, solidarity finance, democratic media, etc. The ideal here is to recruit an anchor person for the session who we know has already worked extensively on formulating such real utopia designs rather than simply a person who has thought critically about the theme (although there will certainly be flexibility on this). This format will not be appropriate for all of the themes around real utopias; it will be especially effective for those problems around which there exists an on-going discussion of alternative institutions.

My idea is for the sessions to be organized as follows:

- We will create a dedicated website for these sessions.
- The person who anchors these sessions will prepare an elaborated proposal for institutional designs around some theme which will be posted online by early 2012. While of course these essays will include some discussion of what's wrong with existing structures and institutions, the goal is for them to sketch the central contours of alternatives. By this I do not mean a detailed "institutional blueprint", but rather a careful elaboration of the core principles of an institutional proposal. My expectation is that these will be in the 10,000 word range, although some could be longer.
- In some sessions there could be two competing or contrasting proposals. Having two different proposals could make for a very lively session for some topics.
- The website will allow for comments and dialogue so that these proposals can be part of a discussion prior to the meeting. I am not sure yet precisely what the best design for the website would be, but I am hopeful that it will be an interactive site rather than simply a passive site.
- At the session there will be a very brief – 15-20 minute – presentation of the proposal and at most one commentary, or perhaps a contrasting proposal. I want to avoid panels with lots of presentations and little time for debate and discussion.
- In Footnotes, section newsletters, and other modes of information dissemination we will encourage people to look at the proposals before the meeting and to come to sessions with issues they want to raise. While of course we want to avoid long-winded speeches from the floor, I think somewhat longer than usual interventions could be constructive.

Partial list of potential Topics for Proposal Sessions

Below is an initial list of thematic panels built around real utopia proposals. I have identified these sessions by the central principle of the proposal (for example, Unconditional Basic Income) rather than by the general topic or target of a proposal (eg. Healthcare), except where I do not have a specific real utopian proposal in mind. Because of my own expertise, most of the topics I have thought of revolve around political and economic issues. Nevertheless, it would be good if some of these thematic proposal sessions revolved around cultural issues of various sorts and around egalitarian and social justice issues that are not exclusively socio-economic in character (gender, race, sexuality, etc.). Some of these topics may be more suitable for general thematic sessions rather than for the proposal sessions.

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| 1. Unconditional Basic Income | 12. Community policing |
| 2. A democratic media system | 13. Worker-owned cooperatives |
| 3. "High road" capitalism | 14. Pensions, labor's capital, solidarity finance, wage earner funds |
| 4. Democratizing finance | 15. Citizen assemblies |
| 5. Participatory budgeting | 16. Local exchange trading systems) |
| 6. Egalitarian campaign finance | 17. Globally just/fair trade |
| 7. Deliberative referenda | 18. Market socialism |
| 8. Parental leaves for gender equality | 19. Intellectual property |
| 9. Participatory Economics | 20. Public education |
| 10. The digital network economy | 21. Universities |
| 11. Building the Scientific Commons | 22. Healthcare |

II. Film/documentary sessions

I think it would be very interesting to have a number of sessions which present documentary films on exemplary and iconic cases of social innovations to solve problems. The intention here is not to have cheerleading films, but documentaries that analyze specific kinds of leading cases. The films could either be presented by the filmmaker or by an expert who researches the case and could lead a discussion following the film. Most documentaries which are thematically relevant on these issues tend to be mainly about social movements and

struggles – sometimes of the “heroic struggle” variety – and not so much about outcomes, institutional innovations, actual transformations of social structures. So, I am not sure exactly what is available.

Examples could include things like:

- The kibbutz experience
- Holding Ground (a film about the Dudley Street neighborhood association)
- Public transportation
- Local food, alternative agriculture

III. Thematic panels around broad topics and disciplinary subfields

Some of the topics listed under Real Utopia Proposals sessions could be shifted to these regular thematic sessions if we don't find a suitable anchor person with a well-worked out institutional/transformational proposal. And some of the topics listed below, of course, could also be moved to the institutional proposal category.

In terms of format, I have a strong preference for sessions which do not have so many presentations that there is no time for discussion, and generally I prefer sessions without discussants – my experience is that it is usually more interesting to have discussion from the floor unless the discussant is really engaged in a debate with a specific argument (as in the proposal sessions). For these sessions, then, I would generally like three presenters and no discussant.

IV. Plenary Panels

The program contains up to three plenary sessions – one on Friday evening and the in the noon slot on Saturday and Sunday. Tentatively, I am thinking of the following possibilities:

1. Big Ideas for Real Utopias: This could be one or two of the plenary panels, depending on other plenary suggestions. The idea would be to have a panel(s) featuring very prominent, articulate advocates of specific real utopian proposals. I envision three presentations for this panel, each around some Big Idea. One idea is also for these panelists to lead a proposal-thematic session (category I above) on the day after they are on the plenary panel. This would make it possible for there to be intensive discussion of the high profile ideas presented in the plenaries.

2. Energy, the environment, and global warming: This plenary would focus on institutional designs for countering global warming and other aspects of ecological crisis rather than just the nature of the problem itself. Mostly when I have seen panels and discussions of these issues the discussion of institutional design is pretty thin. There is a sharp indictment of existing consumption and production patterns and a call for dramatic transformation in how we do things, but little discussion of the mechanisms for accomplishing this and how sustainability and low growth can be institutionalized and reproduced.

3. Sociology as Real Utopia: I am less sure about this, but it might be possible to have a session which reflected on the nature of the discipline and academic life, and asked what the real utopia vision for sociology might be.

Kudos!

To Mikaila Arthur, on the publication of her new book: *Student Activism and Curricular Change in Higher Education*. Surrey, UK: Asghate.

And to Amin Ghaziani, on the publication of his recent article in *Contexts*: “There Goes the Gayborhood?” (vol. 9, issue 4: pp. 64-66) examining the implications of cultural assimilation of American gays for the distinctiveness of traditional urban gay enclaves.

Sociology of Sexualities Section Awards – Call for Nominations for 2011

2011 Simon-Gagnon Award

The Simon and Gagnon Award honors career contributions to the study of sexualities as represented by a body of work or a single book. This award commemorates decades of research and writing on sexualities by Professor William Simon (University of Houston) who died on July 21, 2000, and his longtime collaborator, Professor John Gagnon (SUNY-Stony Brook). The recipient of the award will make a presentation to the Sexualities Section at the 2011 Annual Meeting, in Las Vegas.

Please submit letters of nomination (e-mail preferred) to: Beth Schneider, schneider@soc.ucsb.edu; or Dept. of Sociology, 3409 Social Science and Media Studies Building, University of California - Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA 93106-9430.

Deadline for nominations is February 1, 2011.

2011 Distinguished Article Award

A prize for the best article in the Sociology of Sexualities published in the 2009 through 2010 calendar years. Chapters in edited volumes will also be considered. Winner(s) will receive the award at the annual meeting of the ASA in Las Vegas in August 2011. Articles/chapters may be self-nominated or nominated by another scholar.

If you wish to nominate an article/chapter, please send a brief nomination letter and an electronic copy of the article to: Amy Stone, astone@trinity.edu. Please do not send hard copies.

Deadline for nominations is February 1, 2011.

Martin P. Levine Memorial Dissertation Fellowship

The Martin Levine Memorial Dissertation Award was established to honor the memory of Martin Levine, who died of AIDS in 1993. It provides \$3,000 to a graduate student (and \$500 to an honorable mention) in the final stages of dissertation research and writing, who is working on those topics to which Levine devoted his career: 1) the sociology of sexualities, 2) the sociology of homosexuality, and 3) HIV/AIDS research. It is designed to help students complete their dissertations; the committee therefore evaluates dissertation proposals rather than completed work.

Please send your proposals **electronically** to: Michael Kimmel at: Michael.kimmel@sunysb.edu.

The deal for submissions is April 1, 2011.

Best Graduate Student Paper

Papers are currently being accepted for the 2011 Graduate Student Paper Award. This award is given to a paper authored by a student currently enrolled in a sociology graduate program. A paper may be coauthored by two or more students who would share the award (papers co-authored with faculty are not eligible). The focus of the paper should be sexualities broadly defined. Papers should be manuscript length and no longer than 35 typed, double-spaced pages. Self-nominations will be accepted.

Please email a letter of nomination and a copy of the paper (PDF or Word format) to Héctor Carrillo at hector@northwestern.edu.

The deadline for nominations is February 1, 2011.

Sexualities Section 2011 ASA Sessions

Session I (Co-sponsored with the Section on Collective Behavior and Social Movements)

Session Title: Sexualities, Politics, and Social Movements

Description: This session will examine social and political movements concerning sexuality (broadly conceived) or sexual issues. Topics might include (but are not limited to) the role of sexuality in the emergence and development of social movements, the effects of social movements on sexuality, the role and strategies of movements in sexual politics. Papers on transnational and/or U.S. movements are welcome.

Session Organizers: Janice Irvine, University of Massachusetts-Amherst; Irvine@soc.umass.edu

Session II

Session Title: Sexualities and Institutions

Description: Scholarship in the sociology of sexuality increasingly demonstrates the potentially transformative impact of sexual practices, beliefs, and controversies on a diverse set of social institutions, ranging from intimate domains such as the family to the macro arenas of the market and the state. At the same time, sexuality is itself constantly reshaped by the effects of other institutions. Papers in this panel will focus on specific institutions to explore one side or the other of this complicated, two-sided interplay between sexuality and institutions.

Session Organizer: Steven Epstein, Northwestern University; s-epstein@northwestern.edu

Session III

Session Title: New Directions in Sexualities Research

Description: This panel explores the future of sexualities research. Where have we been? Where should we go from here? What questions are left unanswered? How can the study of sexualities transform dominant theoretical paradigms?

Session Organizer: Mary Bernstein, University of Connecticut; Mary.Bernstein@uconn.edu

Roundtable Organizers: Maura Kelly, Portland State University and Natalie Peluso, Concordia College.

Call for Applications: Center for Population Research in LGBT Health.

National Mentoring and Fellowship Program of the Ctr. for Population Research in LGBT Health.

The Summer Institute in LGBT Health, open to postdoctoral trainees, doctoral students and advanced Masters' students, provides participants with foundational training in interdisciplinary theory, knowledge and methods for conducting population research in sexual and gender minority health. To be held July 18-August 12 in Boston, the Institute includes a 3 week seminar that will overview key topics, methods, and perspectives in the study of LGBT Health, a one week intermediate-level statistics and data analysis course, and hands-on training and supervision in work on an independent analysis project with LGBT population health data. There is no cost for tuition and slots are available for free housing in Boston University dormitories during the Institute.

Applications are due April 18, 2011.

Please visit <http://training.lgbtpopcenter.org> to learn more about the program and to download an application. Contact Aimee Van Wagenen (summerinstitute@lgbtpopcenter.org) for further information.

Call for Applications: Postdoctoral Fellowship at Northwestern University

Postdoctoral Fellowship in Sexuality Studies (Social Scientific Approaches)

Deadline: February 15, 2011

The Gender Studies Program at Northwestern University invites applications for a two-year post-doctoral fellowship in social scientific approaches to sexuality studies, to run September 2011 - August 2013. Applications are welcome from scholars who study sexuality from a social science Perspective (broadly construed). The Fellow will be affiliated with both the Gender Studies Program and a department at Northwestern, which must be either Anthropology, History, Human Development and Social Policy, Linguistics, Performance Studies, Political Science, Psychology, Religious Studies, or Sociology. That is, the Fellow must have relevant expertise in both sexuality studies and one of these fields, and must be prepared to teach courses that are cross-listed in both Gender Studies and the affiliated department.

The Fellow will pursue a program of independent scholarship under the guidance of a faculty mentor and will teach two undergraduate courses each year. The Fellow will also be expected to assist in the organization of on-campus educational activities such as an annual workshop, as part of a new interdisciplinary initiative on sexuality and health in social context.

Applicants must have completed all the requirements for the Ph.D. (or equivalent) by September 1, 2011, or have received their degree within the last five years. The stipend is \$45,000 plus benefits in the first year of the fellowship and \$46,350 plus benefits in the second year. In addition, the Fellow is eligible for \$2,000 per year to fund research and conference travel, and up to \$2,000 for allowable relocation expenses in the first year.

Applicants should send the following materials in PDF format by email attachment to sexuality@northwestern.edu, with the subject heading of "Postdoc Application":

- 1) A cover letter: Please briefly situate your work in relation to the field of sexuality studies. Please identify the department(s) with which you are qualified to be affiliated, from among the above list. Optionally, please identify a possible faculty mentor in that department or in Gender Studies. Please address the question of your experience within interdisciplinary academic environments.
- 2) A full curriculum vitae.
- 3) A two-page summary of the dissertation.
- 4) A two-page research plan for the fellowship period (this may include, but should extend beyond, revisions to the dissertation).
- 5) Titles and short descriptions of at least two courses that you could teach and that might be appropriate for cross-listing between Gender Studies and your department.
- 6) A writing sample consisting of either a dissertation chapter or an article.
- 7) A full graduate school transcript from your doctoral-degree-granting institution.

In addition, please arrange for three letters of recommendation to be sent, either by email to the same address (subject heading: "Postdoc application letter of reference"), or by mail to Gender Studies Program, Sexuality Studies Postdoc, Northwestern University, Kresge Hall 2-321, Evanston, IL 60208-2211. One letter should be from the dissertation chair, and at least one should comment on teaching qualifications.

Administrative questions should be directed to Clare Forstie at sexuality@northwestern.edu. Substantive questions may be addressed to Héctor Carrillo at hector@northwestern.edu or Steve Epstein at s-epstein@northwestern.edu. For more information about any of the participating departments or programs, see: <http://offices.northwestern.edu/browse/A/academic>.

In Print Recent Articles

- Adams, Tony E. 2010. Paradoxes of Sexuality, Gay Identity, and the Closet. *Symbolic Interaction* 33(2): 234-256.
- Anderson, Eric & Mark McCormack. 2010. Comparing the Black and Gay Male Athlete: Patterns in American oppression. *J of Men's Studies* 18(2): 145-158.
- Barton, Bernadette & Constance L. Hardesty. 2010. Spirituality and Stripping: Exotic Dancers Narrate the Body Ekstasis. *Symbolic Interaction* 33(2): 280-296.
- Benjamin, Orly, & Dmitry Tlusten. 2010. Intimacy and/or Degradation: Heterosexual images of togetherness and women's embracement of pornography. *Sexualities* 13(5): 599-623.
- Brickell, Chris. 2010. Sex, Space and Scripts: Negotiating homoeroticism in history. *Social & Cultural Geography* 11(6): 597-613.
- Brugman, Margaret, Sandra L. Caron, & Jany Rademakers. 2010. Emerging Adolescent Sexuality: A Comparison of American and Dutch College Women's Experiences. *Int'l J. of Sexual Health* 22(1): 32-46.
- Carpenter, Laura M. 2010. Gendered Sexuality Over the Life Course: A Conceptual Framework. *Sociological Perspectives* 53(2): 155-178.
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- Eunjung, Kim. 2010. The Melodrama of Virginity and Sex Drive: The Gendered Discourse of 'the Sexual Oppression of Disabled People' and Its 'Solutions'. *Sexuality Research & Social Policy: J. of NSRC* 7(4): 334-347.
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Have Something to Say?

Submit your brief announcements, 500-word essays, reviews, letters, art or photos for the next issue of *SexualitiesNews* to: Bayliss J. Camp, bayliss.camp@csus.edu, Dept. of Sociology, CSU Sacramento, 6000 J St., Sacramento, CA 95819 Fax (916) 278-6281.

Key Dates

Feb. 24-27, 2011: Eastern Sociological Society, Philadelphia, PA

March 10-13, 2011: Pacific Sociological Association, Seattle, WA

June 15, 2009: Submission deadline for the Summer 2010 issue of *SexualitiesNews*.

August 14-17, 2010: ASA annual meeting ("Social Conflict: Multiple Dimensions and Arenas"): Las Vegas, NV