

**Texas A&M University
Department of Sociology
Sociology Colloquium Series Schedule
Fall 2019**

Location: 326 Academic Building, College Station TX 77843
Day and Time: Wednesday, 12–1:30pm

September 4, 2019

Dr. Kevin Lewis, University of California San Diego

Race and Online Dating

Kevin Lewis is an associate professor of sociology at the University of California San Diego. He studies the formation and evolution of social networks, the principles of human interaction that produce global network patterns, and the implications of these processes for the genesis and reproduction of inequality. To address these topics, he has analyzed a number of large-scale network datasets—spanning topics such as online dating, internet activism, and college students' behavior on Facebook—and his work has been published in a variety of sociological and interdisciplinary journals.

September 11, 2019

Dr. Stjepan Meštrović, Texas A&M University

A Sociological Perspective on War Crimes and Subsequent Court Martials

Dr. Mestrovic will discuss common themes he has found in his research on war crimes and subsequent court martial obtained on his role as an expert witness in cases such as Abu Ghraib, Operation Iron Triangle, the Baghdad Canal killings, and the Kill Team murders.

September 18, 2019

Dr. Heili Pals, Texas A&M University

Paradox in Mental Health: Racial Differences in Depression, Anxiety, and Self-derogation through the Life Course

Puzzlingly, white Americans report higher levels of depression and lower levels of self-esteem than blacks even though they experience lower levels of discrimination and are under-represented among lower socio-economic statuses (Barnes, Keyes and Bates 2013, Hughes and Demo 1989, Williams et al. 2007). Dr. Pals explores the racial gap in these social psychological indicators using the Kaplan Longitudinal and Multigenerational Study (KLAMS). KLAMS allows a comparison of two generations (parents and children) and a long-term analysis (from adolescence to adulthood). Dr. Pals' research will attempt to: 1) delineate the gap between whites and blacks across different ages from adolescence to adulthood and over two different generations; 2) compare the gap between whites and blacks in three different dimensions of negative self-feelings (anxiety, depression, and self-derogation); and, 3) explore possible mechanisms to explain the gap.

September 25, 2019

Dr. Defne Over, Texas A&M University

Insult and Charisma in Turkey: Deployment of an Obsolete Law in Personalization of Power

Defne Over is a political sociologist interested in the study of human rights, political institutions, and national, religious and ethnic identities. Her work centers on a set of questions raised by the return of repressive regimes and mass mobilization in the 21st century. In this article, she and her co-author explore the revival of insult laws as an instrument of political transformation in Turkey. In Turkey, insulting the president is a crime punishable by up to four years in prison. In 2016, the number of insult cases for which an investigation was started was 38,254. Compared to 20 cases opened in 2006 during Ahmet Necdet Sezer's presidency, 175 cases opened in 2011 during Abdullah Gül's presidency, and to 350 cases opened during the much criticized nine years of de Gaulle government in France in the 1960s, this number stands out as a controversial break with the national and global past. In this study, we ask: why was this law revived all of a sudden following Erdoğan's election as president? What role do insult proceedings play in politics and how do they transform state-society relations? Inspired by contemporary debates on democratic retrogression (Huq and Ginsburg 2018, Bermeo 2016) we see the revival of this law as part of the authoritarian turn in Turkey. Specifically, we argue that this law is revived in the context of personalization of power, and it transforms politics in two major ways: First, it personalizes power in the hands of a single person by curbing dissent. Second, it personalizes power by constructing a new framework of legitimacy for the rising authoritarian regime in Turkey, namely Erdoğan's charisma.

October 2, 2019

Vanessa Gonlin, Texas A&M University

Linking Identity: Discrimination and Linked Fate among Adults with Mixed-Race Ancestry

Come ask questions and provide advice on my job talk! I study how people who could feel connected to multiple communities – those aware of multiracial ancestry – come to feel more connected to one group or the other, or neither. How people aware of mixed-race ancestry are incorporated into the U.S. racial schema can influence feelings of community closeness, which impacts political alliances and marriage patterns. I test how perceived discrimination influences linked fate for people who know of mixed-race ancestry. I constructed and administered an online survey that used vignettes that prompt linked fate and includes detailed questions on perceived discrimination, linked fate to various racial groups, racial identity, and actual and desired partner's race. This survey data indicates the perceived experiences of a growing but under-studied portion of the U.S. population that cannot be combined into a monolithic group because they tend to have different sociohistoric trajectories by racial component group, which impacts perceived discrimination and community connections.

October 9, 2019
Stephanie Ortiz, Texas A&M University

Racists Without Racism? From Colorblind to Entitlement Racism Online

To evaluate if colorblind racism remains the master interpretive framework following the 2016 Presidential Election, I analyze 60 interviews with college students about their experiences of racism. Overt racism experienced online is a key feature of respondents' lives, which challenges their adoption of a colorblind framework. However, few classify their experiences as racism. Respondents rely on the intersubjective definition of racism, which suggests that racism describes face-to-face incidents involving physical violence. I use Essed's concept of entitlement racism to explain how respondents make sense of this "racists without racism" situation — by invoking the "right to be racist" online. By showing how racism is subjectively experienced in a new social domain, my work holds implications for how sociologists theorize, measure, and address racial inequality.

October 23, 2019
Dr. Pat Rubio Goldsmith, Texas A&M University

**Latinx Educational Achievement in New and Traditional Immigrant Destinations:
Assimilation and Racial Oppression**

We estimate Latinx achievement, its annual growth, and its correlates in traditional and new immigrant destinations with data from 2008-2015 on over four million third through eighth grade students in four thousand public school districts. We find that Latinx achievement and growth are higher in new destinations than in traditional destinations. In both destinations, Latinx achievement correlates with the district's socioeconomic status, as assimilation theory predicts, and with relative presence of Mexican and Puerto Rican Latinxs, as racialization theory predicts. However, more evidence of assimilation is found in new destinations and more evidence of racialization is found in traditional destinations. Based on a refractory perspective of schools, we find that non-school factors create most of the variation in Latinx achievement in English Language Arts, but schools create a substantial amount of the variation in math achievement related to district socioeconomic status.

October 30, 2019

Hyunseok Hwang, Texas A&M University

How to be resilient?: Local philanthropy as a collective response to natural disasters

When communities are struck by natural disasters, human service organizations play an important role in supplementing governmental aids and catering to immediate humanitarian needs. Social capital is one of many factors affecting resource mobilization – or local philanthropy – directed toward human service organizations. This study analyzes the effect of social capital on local philanthropy in disaster-inflicted communities and compares it to the effect of corporate philanthropy. Also, to answer a long-standing argument regarding the effect of racial diversity on social capital, this study examines how the relationship between social capital and local philanthropy is moderated by racial diversity. To this end, a panel data set covering three given years and 3,123 U.S. counties was analyzed using GEE models. Results suggest that social capital does not always facilitate resource mobilization and its influence on resource mobilization is catalyzed by racial diversity. Also, corporate philanthropy positively influences resource mobilization, more noticeably in disaster-affected communities.

November 6, 2019

Dr. Carlee Purdum, Texas A&M University

Angels in Red: All-Hazard Inmate Firefighters in Emergency and Disaster Response

Carlee Purdum is a research assistant professor and social scientist within the Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center at Texas A&M University. She studies the vulnerability of incarcerated populations to the impacts of emergencies and disasters.

In her presentation “Angels in Red: All-Hazard Inmate Firefighters in Emergency and Disaster Response,” Dr. Purdum will discuss her research relating to inmate “all-hazard” firefighters in Georgia who through the Department of Corrections are integrated into local 911 emergency response systems to respond to all hazards including motor vehicle accidents, emergency medical calls, search and rescue, bomb incidents, structure fires, and any kind of emergency within local communities and across the state. In her presentation she will discuss the relationship between inmate all-hazard firefighters to obstacles facing modern emergency response systems, mass incarceration, and criminal justice reform.

November 13, 2019

Dr. Sergio Lemus, Texas A&M University

The Use of Border Theory to Explain Colorism: An Anthropological View

Through examining the material and discursive production of colorismo in Mexico, I emphasize its distinct presence in the lives of Mexicans as they have migrated north to the City of Chicago. Specifically, I theorize how border theory is useful to document the shifting terrains of color hierarchies. I then mobilize ethnographic data as my participants encountered color orders in South Chicago in everyday life, which I coin as “color inspections,” a metaphorical, ethnographic and practical concept to help us understand how this process takes place. This talk uses border theory and “color inspections” to then argue that it is the framework that best explains how color emerges as a structuring force in the lives of working class people despite some calls that suggest we live in a so called post-racial society and culture.

November 20, 2019

Dr. Samuel Cohn, Texas A&M University

How To Become A Public Intellectual or Fail Miserably Trying

This brownbag considers the problem of how we take our research and academic work and insert it into public discourse. What does it take to make our work relevant to the larger social and political problems of our times? Attendees are encouraged to bring their phones and laptops with them. Attendees are also encouraged to think about where they go on the internet to get information and opinions on social and political issues. We will be using our own experience as consumers of media content to advance our understanding of what we have to do to increase our effect on social policy and contemporary understandings of social issues.

December 4, 2019

Dr. Gretchen Sneegas, Texas A&M University

Environmental Subjects at the Food-Energy Nexus: Struggling Family Farms and the Marcellus Shale Gas Boom

Shale gas development via hydraulic fracturing remains controversial among landowners in the Marcellus Shale region of the United States. The perturbances of shale gas development are rendered particularly visible within and upon agricultural landscapes, as farmers comprise a disproportionately impacted stakeholder group in the region. Yet, it remains unclear what long-term impacts will result from the Marcellus Shale gas “boom” which peaked in 2012. This paper uses the Marcellus boom as a lens to examine the tensions emerging from the intersecting, overlapping political economies of shale gas and agricultural development. I employ a combination of critical discourse analysis and Q methodology, or “critical Q,” to empirically render the environmental discourses reproduced by farmers, Cooperative Extension educators, and land grant college researchers in the Marcellus region. By integrating qualitative and quantitative results, this paper demonstrates how farmers are shaped as neoliberal environmental subjects at the convergence of state-level policy, external economic incentives, structural vulnerabilities, and internalized norms of “good” agricultural practice.
