

The Sociology and Anthropology
Department of
MUHLENBERG

COLLEGE

presents

The 5th Annual
Senior Research Symposium



Wednesday April 30th 2008

*The Department of Sociology & Anthropology
Welcomes You!*

Dr. Tammy Lewis, Associate Professor of Sociology & Chair


Dr. William Abruzzi, Associate Professor of Anthropology

Dr. J. Christopher Kovats-Bernat, Associate Professor of Anthropology

Dr. Janine Chi, Assistant Professor of Sociology

Dr. Anne Esacove, Assistant Professor of Sociology

Mrs. Tracy Kline, Department Secretary



Schedule of Speakers

Introductory Remarks

Dr. Tammy Lewis

No Minorities Here: A study of racial diversity at the Allentown Art Museum

Mallory Carey

Published Stories: Identity Configuration and Constraint on Facebook

Emily Breines

Interpreting Grave Goods: Is Gender Meaningful?

Kelly Turner

Path to Prevention: A comparative study of HIV prevention education at private schools and community centers in Lavender Hill, South Africa

Emily Hanlen

Concluding Remarks

Dr. Tammy Lewis

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29 April 2008

Welcome to the Fifth Annual Senior Symposium in Sociology and Anthropology,

The four seniors who are presenting today have worked diligently this semester preparing their research. Throughout the semester, we have focused on the **PROCESS** of research rather than the product of research. Today they have the opportunity to share a summary of what they have learned during the course of their project.

By focusing on process, the students have learned how to problem-solve when their best laid plans did not work out. This group has worked together as a team to assist each other with model building, computer programs, data analysis, concept clarification, among other issues.

Emily B., Emily H., Kelly, and Mallory are self-reflexive about what they have learned. Here is some of the advice they have to offer to juniors considering taking Senior Seminar next year:

“I feel such pride...having come this far. This was the first time I really applied what I have been learning in my courses...Writing such a long comprehensive paper was obviously a challenging task, but one that was worth it...I would definitely suggest this course for juniors...It ties together what you learn over the four years in the form of a project of your choice that – if you chose a good one - can end up being a wonderful evolution of questions and analysis that guides your work over the semester.”



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“Senior Seminar was the most difficult and most rewarding class I have taken during my time at Muhlenberg College...Writing a thesis has allowed me to feel like I am really ready to graduate. It has made me realize that I have learned many skills...With the completion of this project I am ready to move on...I would tell juniors to prepare themselves to be pushed past limits...Embrace the opportunity to conduct your own research, do something different, take changes, and have fun...the end result is well worth the sweat and tears!”

“When I first decided to take Senior Seminar I was really scared...but once I found a project that I was excited to do, I got into the class...I never thought that I would be able to make it to the end of the project, but I have...Not only have I learned the basics of doing a research project, how to write proposals, learn how to use statistical programs, but I have also learned that I am able to do a major research project. This is really a big personal achievement...It is a great way to send senior year because you feel like you have accomplished something big.”

“The most important lesson I learned was to trust myself intellectually. Because school is often so structured it is all too easy to forget what it is like to develop something on my own. Beginning from the initial concept, this project was my baby...Senior seminar is a great way to test yourself...There is no better way to build confidence than to prove yourself that you can complete a large research project...Work hard. It’s almost over!”

The department is proud of these students. We are glad they are able to share what they have learned in this senior capstone experience with their classmates, friends and family. Thank you for supporting them

Best of luck seniors!

Tammy L. Lewis



Ms. Mallory Carey



Mallory is from hometown of Dallas, PA.

Mallory is majoring in Anthropology and Media and Communication

No Minorities Here: A study of racial diversity at the Allentown Art Museum

As an educational institution, it is the mission of a museum to serve the people of its community. Museums are often the cultural epicenter of a metropolitan city. The Allentown Art Museum is no exception. Located in a large city with significant populations of Latinos and African Americans, the museum is failing to serve the entire community, providing programming targeted mainly at the white middle class of the Lehigh Valley.

Racial stereotyping is engrained into American culture. Museums are labeled a “white” activity so both the institution and the minority communities feel no obligation to each other. This stereotype is perpetuated by the values of communities, families, and the institution itself. Because the museum has been culturally designated as a white activity, museums must work to provide outreach into the overlooked minority communities. As America is thrust into an ever-diverse era, museums must adapt or risk persecution by these communities. It is, however, also the responsibility of the community to eliminate the notion of a “white” activity and see that the museum also belongs to them.

It is my conclusion that the Allentown Art Museum is resistant to put substantial effort into reaching out to the minority groups that are literally in their backyard. It is my suggestion that they must overcome their resistance or risk being ostracized by such a large community. Through progressive outreach and the help of the educational system, we can begin to erase the stereotypes that limit minority groups from feeling like they belong.



Ms. Emily Breines



Daughter of Joseph Breines and Claire Anderson, Emily is from Newton, MA.

Emily is a Sociology Major with a minor in Women's Studies and French.

Emily is undecided about post-graduation plans.

Published Stories: Identity Configuration and Constraint on Facebook

This project explores the nature of the presentation of identity on the popular social networking website, Facebook. Using interviews and content analysis of Facebook Profiles of college underclassmen at a small liberal arts college in the Northeast, I examine the ways in which Facebook configures, directs, and constrains identities of its users through their Profiles. These Profiles act as their homepage and vehicle for identity presentation and online interaction with fellow users. Grounded in sociological theory concerning identity formation and presentation, this project argues that Facebook, which is largely understood to be a means of identity exploration, is actually a powerful social institution reinforcing and constraining even further our understandings of ourselves and others.



Ms. Kelly Turner



Kelly is from New York, NY.

Kelly is a Anthropology major.

Interpreting Grave Goods: Is Gender Meaningful?

The study of gender relationships in different civilizations was not thought to be relevant in archeology for a long time. Beginning in the late 1980s, a number of women archeologists began to ask: if gender identity was important in ancient cultures, wouldn't this show up in some way in the archeological remains of those cultures? Looking at burial sites, they found evidence to show that gender was important, not only in societies but in what meaning people wanted to carry with them after death. They concluded that the meaning of gender in culture and belief deserves to be studied in all societies, past as well as present. For my research project I have chosen to look at Lowland Mayan burials to see if there is a difference in the grave goods associated with males and females. I studied data from two Mayan sites, Altun Ha and Lamanai. After analyzing the data, I saw that while there was a significant difference between the amount of grave goods in male and female graves, the difference wasn't as great as it would have been if status was the primary thing involved. While the hypothesis that male graves overall did contain more grave goods than female graves was supported, the analysis suggests that occupational differences may have been more important in marking gender differences.



Ms. Emily Hanlen



Daughter of Barbara Hanlen.

Emily is a Sociology major.

After graduation, Emily plans on teaching elementary school in New York City with Teach for America

Path to Prevention: A comparative study of HIV prevention education at private schools and community centers in Lavender Hill, South Africa

This project compares HIV prevention education in private schools and community centers in the Coloured community of Lavender Hill, South Africa. It aims to explore the perceived opinions of teachers, students and peer educators in private schools and community centers towards the quality and applicability of HIV prevention education. Interviews with individual members of each group were conducted. Other methods included participant observations and surveys of the private school students. My research suggests that peer educators, through their combined knowledge of the social realities faced by the students and training of HIV/AIDS prevention education similar to that of teachers, could mediate the relationship between students and teachers in order for HIV/AIDS prevention education in schools to be more applicable and therefore more effective. Findings from this project will contribute to the development of an effective HIV/AIDS prevention education which, ideally, would contribute to the eventual decrease in HIV/AIDS contraction rates in South Africa.



The Senior Seminar Class



Clockwise from top left: Emily Hanlen, Mallory Carey,
Dr. Tammy Lewis, Kelly Turner, Emily Breines



Special Thanks to:

The Spring '08 Sociological Theory Class:

Tracy Anderson

Joy Mitchell

Monique Ellison

Miles Davison

Sydney Fairchild

Amanda McGovern

Emily Franco

Carly Rotfeld

Michael Kurtz

Anna Stressenger

Hannah Woodward

Dr. Tammy Lewis,
Associate Professor of Sociology & Chair

Tracy Kline, Department Secretary



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