



Skidmore Sociology Newsletter

Fall 2012

Volume 1, Issue 1

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Reginald Millington, Editor

A Note From The Chair

Welcome to the Skidmore Sociology Department's first-ever newsletter! We are serious about keeping in touch with students, both present and past, and we hope this newsletter will be a great way to reach out to you. Please do the same, by the way: let us know what you are up to, and we will share it with the rest of our community of sociologists.

Our program is as vibrant as ever. Students fill our classes at a high rate, for example. In terms of percentage of seats filled, we are in the top ten year after year, and Sociology ranks in the top 15 of total majors at Skidmore. The material and the teaching techniques found in our classes excite students to such a degree that even non-majors and minors return for more, and other majors across campus rely on our courses to fulfill requirements in Gender Studies, Environmental Studies, Management and



Rik Scarce in the Field

Business, Religious Studies, Government, Health and Exercise Sciences, and other majors and minors.

Our majors energize the classes they take with their curiosity and insight. They clamor for research opportunities and, despite working very hard in their academics, they manage to play hard, too. They are involved in everything from sports to theater productions, recently helping to found "Fight Club," a dispute-resolution group on campus that must be doing something right since it came under fire from the *Skidmore News*!

And our faculty is outstanding. My colleagues produce scholarly articles and books at an astounding rate, each year they present their research at national and international conferences (often with students who have worked with them on their research projects), and they are called upon to consult at colleges and universities across the U.S. about their sociology departments and about how they can improve interracial dialog on their campuses.

At Skidmore, our faculty are campus leaders. Since I arrived here in 2003, a sociologist has served the College through one or another administrative post almost continuously. We sit on campus committees that are the heartbeat of College governance and create entirely new programs of study that promise to transform how we interact here. I can think of only one other department on campus of comparable size that has served Skidmore with such distinction so consistently.

Sociologists who study community are all over the map regarding how to define and understand the concept, and I won't try to settle that long-running debate here. But I will say that Sociology at Skidmore is all about creating and maintaining community at every level: in our classrooms, on our campus, in the Saratoga region, nationally, and internationally. Please be a part of our community—see page 3 about "Friending" us on FaceBook. We look forward to hearing from you.

Rik Scarce, Associate Professor of Sociology

Skidmore Sociology Welcomes New Faculty

Like nearly every college department and program, Sociology at Skidmore often relies upon temporary faculty members to teach courses while tenure-line faculty are on sabbatical or are released from teaching some or all of their classes when they take on administrative responsibilities. Stepping in for David Karp, who is serving as Associate Dean of Student Affairs, is Debbie Warnock. Similarly Kim Tauches covered John Brueggemann's courses during his year-long sabbatical in 2011-2012 and is standing in for Kate Berheide during her 2012-2013 sabbatical.

Professor Warnock joined the faculty in 2010 and will be at Skidmore through 2014. She earned her bachelor's degree from Vassar College, with both her M.A. and Ph.D. coming from the University of Washington in Seattle. In her dissertation, Professor Warnock examined the effect that parents' perceptions of paying for college had on students' "educational expectations and college preparedness." Professor Warnock brings with her interests in the fields of sociology of education, social inequality, sex and gender, race and ethnicity, and quantitative research. Professor Warnock has taught Social Inequality (SO-208), Statistics for the Social Sciences (SO-226), The Sociology of Education (SO-351), and Presenting Sociological Research (SO-377).

Professor Tauches is a doctoral candidate at the State University of New York at Albany. She graduated with a M.A. in Sociology from Northeastern University and holds a second M.A. in Women's Studies from SUNY Albany. Her undergraduate degree was in Sociology from Drew University. Professor Tauches' dissertation focuses on the ways that gender performance might differ from space to space in everyday life. Her primary areas of interest for both teaching and research are gender and sexuality. Professor Tauches teaches Sociological Perspectives (SO-101), Femininities and Masculinities (SO-203), Sociology of Sexualities (SO-251), and Transgender Lives and Identities (SO-351).

Department Chair Rik Scarce said of professors Warnock and Tauches, "We are so fortunate to have visiting instructors of the quality of Debbie and Kim. They are devoted to their students and are active participants in department life, and their teaching is first-rate."

Professor Bill Fox Retires



Professor Fox called time on his Skidmore career after 35 years of distinguished service.

After 35 years of distinguished service to the Department and the greater Skidmore community, Professor William Fox retired at the end of the 2010-2011 academic year. Professor Fox had an admirable academic record at Skidmore, where he pursued interests in social statistics, social change, folklore, and the sociology of culture. Professor Fox also served four terms as Chair of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work.

Professor Fox will be most remembered for his effective teaching style and willingness to engage students inside and outside of the classroom. Alex Jarvis '12 remembered Professor Fox's enthusiasm for teaching, saying, "Professor Fox brought such a positive energy to class every day that he accomplished the incredible feat of making statistics amusing for sociology students, most of whom don't consider themselves math-minded people."

Professor Fox's retirement leaves a hole in the Department that can never be filled. He was genial, patient, and supportive of students and colleagues, both, and is already missed. He plans to spend his retirement traveling (particularly to folk & bluegrass festivals) and spending more time with his wife, Collette.

Intergroup Relations Minor Created

As our world shrinks, it becomes increasingly important for Sociology to consider the varying identities that each of us embrace and their effects on our interactions with others. Skidmore's Intergroup Relations program (IGR) uses specific pedagogical techniques to expand students' awareness and acknowledgement of race-related identities while training students to lead semester-long facilitations around race. Program Director and Associate Professor of Sociology Kristie Ford brought the program to Skidmore four years ago from the University of Michigan, where it was first developed, and she oversaw the process of making Skidmore's IGR program the first to offer a minor in the United States. Professor Ford had this to say about the program:

"IGR is a nationally recognized social justice academic, credit-bearing program that originated at the University of Michigan in 1988 as a means of addressing racial tension. Its primary goal was to support student learning and competencies around inter- and intra-group relations, conflict, and social justice across a range of social identities, including race, gender, sexuality, social class, religion, and nationality. Since then, it has expanded to a number of colleges and universities across the United States, including the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, University of Maryland, Occidental College, and Mount Holyoke College.

"In 2008, Skidmore College supported the development of a pilot program, adapted from the Michigan model, to meet our Strategic Plan goals focused on intercultural and global understanding to better prepare students to live in an increasingly diverse and global society.

"The curricular series consists of: (1) *Race and Power*, a 200-level introductory course worth 4-credits; (2) *Racial Identities: Theory and Praxis*, a 300-level advanced training course for students interested in facilitating race dialogues worth 4-credits; (3) *Peer-Facilitated Race Dialogues*, a series of topical inter- (People of Color/White People) and intra-group (White Racial Identity; Multiracial Identity) courses facilitated by graduates of the training course worth 2-credits; and, (4) *Practicum in Facilitating*, a 300-level course that provides ongoing support for peer-facilitators worth 3-credits.

"These courses bridge social identity theory, experiential learning, and dialogue facilitation skills to promote understanding of inter- and intra-group relations across race and other social identities groups."

The program has been producing noteworthy results, and its status as a minor offers opportunities for students that they cannot find anywhere else.



2011's Student Facilitators with Professor Kristie Ford at the end of their four semester long process of training and practice.

Skidmore Sociology Goes Viral

Sociology is a discipline that examines all aspects of human life. We sociologists are everywhere! Given that mission and reality, Skidmore Sociology has decided to make the jump to cyber space. That's right, the department has a FaceBook page! The purpose of this page is not for research. Rather, it is intended to be a space where alumni/a and other organizations can reach out to present and past Skidmore Sociology students. However, for the page to achieve its full potential we need YOU to "like" it. An added benefit is that you will have the opportunity to post and/or receive messages about everything from past graduates' activities to current students' interests to career interests and job openings. So please search the title "Skidmore College Sociology Department" and "like" it!