A Word From The Chair, Dr. Richard Colignon

Greetings from the Chair:

We have embarked on another challenging year. This past summer we moved from Fitzgerald to McGannon Hall. We also added space in the Laclede Building. Not only are we now centrally located on campus but we have more than doubled our office space through this move. We have also acquired an Anthropology/Forensic Science laboratory, two conference/seminar rooms and a departmental library.

The changes are more than architecture and space. We started our new master’s degree program and welcomed our first cohort of graduate students. We continue to revise and upgrade the undergraduate curriculum to provide a deeper and richer field of courses. We now offer a greater variety of courses and have attached a science lab to some of our existing courses. These curricular changes promise to bring the Department’s teaching in line with mission of the University and strengthen its academic reputation. With the new location, new curriculum, new lab facilities and new graduate program, we are poised to expand and progress along with Saint Louis University in the years to come.

Thinking About Applying for Graduate School?
Consider doing a Masters Degree in Sociology or Criminal Justice
Information is available in the Departmental Office or ask your Faculty Advisor

Welcome New Faculty

Dr. Ness Sandoval

Dr.J.S. Onésimo (Ness) Sandoval is an urban sociologist and social demographer. He received his undergraduate and master’s degree from the University of Nebraska (1992 and 1994) and his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley (2002). Formerly an assistant professor at Northwestern University, he is currently an assistant professor of Sociology in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at Saint Louis University. His research interests cover spatial demography, poverty and social welfare, urban sociology, transportation policy, and Latino sociology. He has organized his work to examine the social, economic, and cultural life of the metropolis and to analyze the processes of building and maintaining systems of social inequality.

The thematic nature of his research can be classified into five distinct projects: (1) neighborhood diversity and residential segregation; (2) pan-ethnic diversity; (3) transportation for vulnerable populations; (4) Latino demography, and (5) welfare-to-work outcomes. The research projects are unified by an underlying theoretical concern with inequality and stratification. The projects recognize the importance that human, economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital play in shaping the metropolitan opportunity structure. His research also demonstrates his willingness to foster a methodological pluralism that facilitates the study of time-honored sociological questions in refreshing and innovative ways. He has consciously designed his projects to initiate a dialogue that promotes new directions for an urban sociology that captures the diversity of social life, social suffering, and racial harmony and discord in the contemporary metropolis. Lastly, as a devoted urban sociologist, he is committed to using the metropolis as a resource for teaching and he will use the metropolis to develop intellectually challenging research projects that encourage students to embed themselves in the social worlds they study.
Sociology News

Sometimes a student came up to me after class and handed me a section of a newspaper. He said, “I write for the sports section of SLU’s paper. This time I wrote about the upcoming Olympics from a symbolic interactionist perspective and thought you might be interested in it.” The student handed me his column and I assured him I’d read it soon.

What the student probably couldn’t tell from our interaction was just HOW excited I was to read it! I mean a student thinking sociologically outside of class, putting it on paper for others to read and be influenced, and then thinking enough about me as a teacher to give me a copy. I read it as soon as I got home.

The student’s commentary was good; showcasing his sociological imagination unbeknownst to all those sports fans reading his commentary. He discussed the meanings people attach to words and events; how meanings are impacted by individuals’ statuses and how those change over time; how current and historical events impact our interpretations of reality; and how people categorize life into meaningful categories. He actually alluded to a number of phenomenological ideas, which I later confirmed was without exposure to that area of theory. It’s students like him and situations like this that make being a teacher worth it. Makes it worth looking past all the blank stares, delayed responses to questions, lackluster discussions, and just a general apathy (it seems) towards academia. There are those listening. There are those seeing sociology in the real world. Critical thinking is a reality!

So this one event made my entire semester. Sure there are other students who make good comments, questions, or suggestions in class, especially at Saint Louis University where a surprisingly large percentage of students complete quality work on time, most of the time. But THIS not only showed an ability to accurately apply subject matter...THIS showed general interest in the subject...THIS is why I became a teacher.

Anthropology News

Recently, SLU’s campus went wireless. That means students, faculty, staff, publisher’s reps, or visitors to campus can log onto their laptops anywhere, anytime, and access the Internet. Students love it. Faculty generally hate it.

I was one of those faculty members myself, until I decided to embrace the technology, and actively incorporate Web 2.0 into my classroom instruction. Web 2.0 stands for the current incarnation of many Internet applications, including social networking sites like MySpace or Facebook (or for the professional set, LinkedIn), file sharing sites like YouTube, or information sharing sites like Google docs, or the ones I like: wikis.

A wiki is a website set up to allow multiple users to access and, depending on the site, also edit existing documents, post their own documents, embed videos or other files, and publish the results for others to see. Most people have heard of one enormous, global wiki called Wikipedia. Love it or hate it, what Wikipedia does extremely well is to allow users to edit and update almost any entry in real time, thereby allowing for constant updating as events unfold or more information becomes available.

This semester I am embracing Web 2.0 by using wikis as the class’s “home base,” much like Blackboard does for many faculty members. Like Blackboard, students may access course materials online, including the syllabus, class assignments, reading materials, etc. Unlike those 2 course management tools, wikis allow the user to edit documents right in the website, and publish the results as a web page as opposed to an attached document. So my primary reason for using wikis is to allow students to take notes in real time and with multiple users, which results in a collective account of the day’s lecture or discussion. I post lecture outlines on the wiki, and students “fill in the blanks” during class. I tell them the more eyes, ears, and minds involved, the more complete the account of that day’s class will be. I also count contributions to the wiki as class participation, so shy students have an outlet to contribute to class. A latent function of this practice is that I can make a rule in the class that if a student is working on a laptop during class I expect to see notes from that student on the wiki. No notes, no laptop. It makes it easy to enforce my stated intention (that they use laptops for educational purposes only).

Come take a look at one of my wikis (http://sluculturalanthro.wetpaint.com/). Since you are not a registered user, you will only get to look at the home page, but it will give you some small idea about the power and possibility of using Web 2.0 in the classroom!
Dr. Noelle Fearn has continued her research on punishment, sentencing, and corrections with the publication of a new book: *Understanding Correctional Violence*. Co-edited with one of the top correctional experts (Rick Ruddell, Ph.D.) and with a foreword by one of the nation’s most prominent correctional scholars (Travis C. Pratt, Ph.D.), her book presents an extensive overview of the main issues surrounding violence in our nation’s prisons, jails, and juvenile facilities. One in one hundred American adults are currently incarcerated and the threat of violence in these facilities affects not only the inmates who reside there but also the custodial and professional staff who work there. Despite recent reductions in lethal violence over the past two decades, each year approximately 70 homicides occur in these facilities and tens of thousands of incidences of non-fatal violence occur. The threat of violence may, in many cases, force treatment and rehabilitation efforts to take a backseat to institutional and personal safety concerns. Further, the aftermath of violence for victims, perpetrators, and witnesses poses serious issues for the community as the overwhelming majority of inmates eventually return home. The contributors to this volume examine all of these issues, highlight promising violence prevention and reduction strategies, and outline an agenda for future research.

**Selected Faculty Presentations**

Dr. Richard A. Colignon presented:

Dr. Noelle E. Fearn presented:

Dr. Scott Harris presented:

Joel Jennings presented:

Dr. Kathryn Kuhn and Dr. Andre Arceneaux presented:

Dr. Katherine C. MacKinnon presented:

**Selected Faculty Publications**


In Memoriam:
Prof. William “Bill” Monahan

William “Bill” Monahan passed away on August 4, 2008, and here is a note Jean Monahan (Bill’s wife) wrote to the Department.

“Dr. Monahan was born September 28, 1933. He is survived by his wife, Jean Monahan and his children, Catherine, Mary Clare, Joe, and Paul Monahan. Dr. Monahan was 74 years old.

Thank you for all you did with and for Bill. His years with the department (from 1969!) were a joy, and he truly found his niche in the teaching profession. Someday I will write all that I remember: his 9 years as chairman of the department, co-founding the Latin American Studies Program and Faculty for Life, teaching the first Criminal Justice course, bringing Fr. Daniel Berrigan to speak at SLU in 2006, the years he conducted the Police Audit with Jim Gilsinan, the weekly lunches with the science faculty in Busch Center, daily Mass at the College Church, his terrific sense of humor and his yearning for social justice.

I think of all the students he mentored over the years! A few years ago a claims-adjuster from our insurance company came by the house to check out some water damage. He noticed Bill’s picture in our living room and exclaimed, “Dr. Monahan turned my life around!” This young man had been a minority student at SLU years before.

And of course, there was the day the university’s most eligible bachelor met Assistant Dean Jean Heithaus on the steps of DeSmet Hall (and, as they say, the rest is history).

Love,
Jean, Catherine, Mary Clare, Joe and Paul Monahan

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A few words from Department Chair Ric Colignon:

Bill Monahan was the archetypal teacher/scholar and an accomplished humorist in the finest Irish traditions. He served as a role model for the rest of us through his personal grace and service. He was a gentleman of calm civility and humor—optimistic in action and generous in attitude. Finally, Bill was a reminder to all of us of the presence, and indeed, gravity of politeness and humility. He will be greatly missed by his colleagues.

A Selection of
New Undergraduate Courses

SOC 118 World Geography
This course provides students with a worldwide overview of the relationship between people and place. Emphasis is given to the relationships among physical geography, environment, population, economy and culture.

SOC 222 Peace and Conflict Studies
This course introduces students to social science perspectives on peace and conflict by examining cooperation and conflict in human society. Cross-cultural examples and examination of our evolutionary past reveal what is really “human nature.”

SOC 223 Cross Cultural Perspectives on Human Sexuality
This course examines human sexuality in an anthropological context, highlighting the importance of integrating biological and cultural aspects of sexuality. Broad perspectives on sexual behavioral patterns across, and within, human cultures are taken. Topics include sexuality in an evolutionary perspective, the physiology of sex, human sexual practices, and gendered sexuality.

SOC 301 Quantitative Analysis
This course provides computer analysis skills. It focuses on data management and data analyses using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for Windows software. The students learn to: prepare data for processing, formulate hypotheses, discern the relationships of variables in the analysis stage, and interpret the output from SPSS.

SOC 302 Qualitative Analysis
This course introduces the major methodologies and techniques for conducting research into the human condition in its natural context. It includes discussion of the analysis of group behavior, beliefs, rituals, ceremonies related to technologies, and generally order their natural world and control their societies.

SOC 322 Urban Sociology
Sociology of the city and the metropolis. This course examines processes of change and resistance to change in the urban community; ethnic and racial groupings; the effects of varying social policies and efforts at urban development.

SOC 327 Environmental Anthropology
This course examines current ecological problems and conservation/management efforts around the world, and combines case studies with classic anthropological theory to explore the ethical, cultural and biological ramifications of habitat use and environmental change. Topics include population growth, large-scale development, biodiversity conservation, sustainable environmental management, indigenous groups, consumption, and globalization.