

# The Sociology Source



Penn State University: Sociology Department, College of the Liberal Arts

Volume 19 Issue 2

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“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.”  
- Helen Keller

Please take a few minutes to read through the Sociology Source—it contains important updates and information related to advising, academics, enrichment, and extra-curricular opportunities. You should receive two newsletters during the fall and two newsletters during the spring semesters via email. Please let us know if you do not receive them.



## Advising Hours

### FALL AND SPRING ADVISING HOURS

#### DROP-IN HOURS:

MONDAY/WEDNESDAY

1:00 PM-4:00 PM

FRIDAY 9:00 AM-11:00 AM

### ALL OTHER ADVISING BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

You can schedule an appointment by going to [www.la.psu.edu/advising-appt/](http://www.la.psu.edu/advising-appt/).

*\*A note about making appointments: When scheduling an appointment, please be sure you make your appointment with your assigned Sociology adviser. If you schedule an appointment with a different Sociology adviser, you may be asked to cancel the appointment and reschedule with the adviser you have been assigned.*

## Contacting your advisers

Karen Sones  
([klo1@psu.edu](mailto:klo1@psu.edu))  
317 Oswald Tower

Julie Willits  
([jaw300@psu.edu](mailto:jaw300@psu.edu))  
316 Oswald Tower

TBA  
315 Oswald Tower

Phone number: 814-865-2217

Department Web site:  
[www.sociology.psu.edu](http://www.sociology.psu.edu)



## Role of the advisers

The Criminology and Sociology advising offices are available to help you clarify requirements and choices, empower you to take charge of your education, and assist with career planning.

### The undergraduate advisers can:

- Help you with class scheduling
- Help you create a long-term academic plan

- Explain College and University requirements
- Help you decipher your degree audit reports
- Advise you in planning an internship or study abroad experience
- Provide information on support services available at the University
- Keeping your long-range plan up-to-date
- Bringing in a draft schedule
- Thinking about career possibilities that we can explore together

### You can enhance your advising by:

- Reviewing your audit and listing questions

The final responsibility for fulfilling major, College, and University requirements is yours. Students who self-advise may run the risk of discovering that they haven't met all graduation requirements! Don't let this happen to you.

## Withdrawals

Those who are experiencing significant difficulties this fall may consider withdrawing for the semester. The last day to withdraw from the fall 2013 semester is **Friday, December 13, 2013**. After this date, no student will be permitted to withdraw. You can easily process a withdrawal using eLion at <https://elion.psu.edu>, but it is strongly recommended that you talk to your adviser about your plans first.



## Email Policy—To Email or Not to Email

Below are a few guidelines to follow when you write an email to an adviser:

- Include your name, a greeting (ex. Hi Julie), and your PSU ID number.
- Please do not use text message lingo. We can't understand your emails if they include partial words. This is something you should get used to—your future employers will expect the same.
- We are happy to answer quick questions via email. We will not, however, replace an advising meeting with email correspondence. For example, discussing possible courses for the next semester is something that you should do in person, not via email. If we feel that something is too difficult to explain through email, or a reply would be too extensive, we'll ask you to come in and speak to us personally.
- Please limit your emails. If you have several questions, send them all at once. Avoid sending multiple emails on the same day.

We'll do our best to answer your questions as quickly as possible, but we might not be able to answer them on the same day. We also do not review emails during vacations, holidays, or on weekends.



### Law School

Considering law school? If so, contact the new pre-law adviser, Katherine Garren (keg146@psu.edu), at the Division of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) located in the Grange Building or call 814-865-7576.

Visit [www.psu.edu/dus/prelaw/](http://www.psu.edu/dus/prelaw/) for Pre-Law information including LSAT prep courses, law school resources, and other upcoming events. Also check out [www.lsac.org](http://www.lsac.org) to get more information regarding law school.

### Internship Central

If you're considering a summer internship, the internship dates are planned for **May 12–August 15, 2014**. Be sure to contact the SOC department by **February 8** regarding summer internships. Following are key deadline dates:

- February 8** Indicate your intent to complete an internship by this date and email [sociology@la.psu.edu](mailto:sociology@la.psu.edu) to let the SOC department know your plans.
- March 15** Letters must be sent to three possible internship sites by this date. Send an email to [sociology@la.psu.edu](mailto:sociology@la.psu.edu) with the names of the three sites.
- April 19** Placements should be finalized by this date. Send an email to [sociology@la.psu.edu](mailto:sociology@la.psu.edu) with your internship site placement. We will then send a letter to your internship site with information and instructions about your internship duties/activities.

For more information about the internship process, go to the departmental Web site: [sociology.la.psu.edu/undergraduate/internships](http://sociology.la.psu.edu/undergraduate/internships). Karen, Krisitie, and Julie are available to discuss questions about internships including the internship process, how an internship fits into your academic plan, and potential sites.

## “I need a letter of recommendation!” - Letter of Recommendation Etiquette

At some point in your future, it is very likely you may need a letter of recommendation. Letters of recommendation are required for entry into almost all post-graduate schools, sometimes for education abroad experiences, internships, and/or potentially a professional position. If a letter is required, it is an important reflection from an outside perspective as to what you have to offer. As you pursue various opportunities that require a letter of recommendation, there are some important factors to remember.

1. Consider who you are asking to write the letter. Recommenders should be people who can provide specific details as to the strength of your work ethic and professionalism. In other words, professional or academic contacts with whom you've worked closely are ideal. This may be a professor you've worked with in the capacity as a teaching assistant, research assistant, etc., or a former supervisor. It should NOT be an instructor in whose class you received a good grade, but that you never developed a relationship through meetings or otherwise.
2. Once you have connections established and need a letter, you should ask the potential writers. A very important detail is to GIVE THEM TIME! Provide a minimum of two weeks' notice to the writer. You want to respect their time and ensure there is a suitable window of opportunity for them to put together a solid letter. Asking someone at the last minute is not only inconvenient for the letter writer, but also potentially disadvantageous for you in that there is not sufficient time to really invest time into writing a good recommendation.
3. Try to make it as easy for the letter writer as possible. For example, if the letter needs to be sent via 'snail mail,' bring the writer a pre-addressed, postage paid envelope. If there is an electronic link, make sure you provide all pertinent information and uploading instructions. Also, it's helpful if you provide specific information about the opportunity for which you are applying so that they can tailor the letter as such. Last, attaching a resume, so that the writer has other details to draw from, is beneficial. Providing all of this information to the recommender will make it a much smoother writing process.
4. With this information in mind, if you can't think of people you could ask for a recommendation, now is a great time to start building bridges. Get to know your professors and TA's, put yourself out there, and make connections!



## Graduating Seniors

Seniors, you're in the home stretch. The fall graduation ceremony for the College of the Liberal Arts is scheduled for Saturday, **December 21, 2013** at 12:30 p.m. in the Bryce Jordan Center. Tickets are not required for family and friends to attend the ceremony. However, we recommend you and your supporters arrive early to find your seats. Caps and gowns can be purchased at the Penn State Bookstore.

Any last minute questions about the ceremony? Be sure to check out this Web site: <http://commencement.psu.edu/>.

Congratulations!

## Spring Scheduling

Spring scheduling is coming to a close, so please review your audit and consider the degree requirements that you still need to satisfy. Below are a few scheduling tips to keep in mind:

- Remember you need to schedule SOC 207 and successfully complete it before you are permitted to complete an internship for departmental credit.

- SOC 470 **MUST** be successfully completed prior to SOC 400W. Keep in mind that you will take SOC 400W during your senior year; it is a senior seminar course. Students often think SOC 470 is also a course for seniors only, but taking SOC 470 as a junior is fine. Once you've completed SOC 207 and STAT 200, go ahead and schedule SOC 470.

**What Will You Do Post-PSU?**  
 Advisers in CRIM/SOC developed a list of important issues that many graduating seniors face. This list of issues was developed by surveying graduating seniors during spring and summer semesters of 2013. Based on the suggestions from the respondents, a large list of relevant resources (websites and YouTube video links) was compiled. This handout is available from your adviser, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Oswald, or online on the Sociology and Criminology website under Career and Professional Development.

## Career News

This year's People to People Fair will be held on Thursday, February 27, 2014. The People to People Fair is geared towards service-oriented careers which include agencies related to Sociology and Criminology majors. We will be sending more information to you as the date approaches.

Thursday, February 27, 2014  
10:00 AM-2:00 PM  
Bryce Jordan Center

### Still Need a SOC Course?

The following SOC courses are still open for the spring semester:

SOC 001, SOC 005, SOC 012, SOC 023, SOC 030, SOC 035, SOC 297A, SOC 470, and SOC 497D



## Student Spotlight – Noelle Meyers-Powell—Internship

Over the past six months I have been interning for the Susquehanna Child Advocacy Commission here in State College Pennsylvania. The Commission works through St. Paul's Church, and acts as a nonprofit organization. Its key aims are to identify the major issues affecting today's youth, in central Pennsylvania and the Commonwealth, as well as serve as advocates for children in need. As an intern, I have received the opportunity to take part in several projects and see how Sociology is present within this organization. In April, I attended our first conference event and took part in table discussion with researchers, social workers, nonprofit representatives, clergy members, and other individuals related to the welfare of youth and family. Hearing firsthand accounts of abuse, neglect and abandonment solidified the importance of this Commission's work for me. The emotion displayed by speakers created a tangible window, if even for just a second, of the hardship so many children face growing up today. Since this event, I've had the opportunity to research and create various county demographic reports depicting areas of great need and help for children. One report pertaining to Food Insecurity and Poverty helped me to see the immense scope and reach that current social issues can wield on family life. In the future months, I will be traveling to the locations where we will hold upcoming conferences, and where I will help establish advocacy teams to continue this organization's goals. This cause relates directly to Sociology because it serves to connect the entire community to the issues affecting their children. It especially works to achieve this through networking local leaders, increased social interaction and civic engagement. It aims to bring together all facets of local societies; their government, churches, nonprofits, schools, and businesses to share their knowledge, and work together to create sustainable ways of positively improving the lives of today's youth in central Pennsylvania.

## The Sociology Club

The purpose of the Sociology Club is to better serve our students, and the club focuses on perennial questions asked by sociology majors including:

- What can I do with a sociology degree when I graduate?
- How do I get into graduate school?
- What do graduate students think about graduate school?
- What can I do to make myself more marketable after graduation?
- Where can I find a forum to interact with and make friends with other sociology students?
- What kinds of volunteer and service activities will help me get a job and can the club provide them?

If you have any questions, please contact faculty adviser, Dr. Stacy Silver (sjr11@psu.edu).

## A Farewell from Kristie!

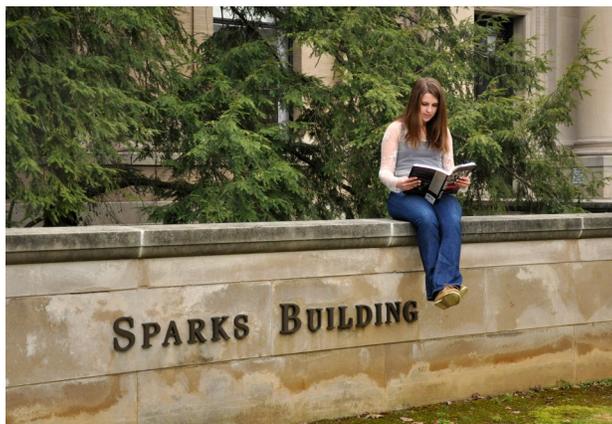
As opportunities present themselves in life, it's hard to know whether it's best to open the door and walk through or stay in place. Either choice could lead to growth. Needless to say, the decision as to whether to go to Political Science and International Politics was very difficult. Criminology and Sociology has been a great place to work due to the faculty and staff who work here (a special shout to Karen and Julie, who have been awesome). Also, the students are fabulous, and I will miss the people tremendously! The desire to learn more about Liberal Arts programs is what motivated me, and I am looking forward to developing professionally and within the college. Going forward, I thank everyone for their support and wish nothing but the best! Cheers to a great rest of fall semester! A new adviser is expected to be in place as soon as possible. Please direct all questions in the meantime to Karen or Julie.



## Get Involved!

### Alpha Kappa Delta

Sociology majors and minors can strive for membership in the Penn State chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta, the international sociology honor society. To be eligible for membership, majors/minors must be a junior or senior with an overall grade point average of 3.00 as well as a 3.00 grade point average in the sociology major or minor. Qualified applicants must also have completed four sociology courses. Application forms for Alpha Kappa Delta are available outside of 315 Oswald Tower. For more information, please contact the faculty adviser, Dr. Stacy Silver (sjr11@psu.edu).



### Important Semester Dates At-A-Glance

December 13	Withdraw deadline
December 13	Classes end
December 16–20	Final exams
December 21	Fall commencement
January 13, 2014	Spring semester classes begin
January 13-22	Drop/Add period

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