

# CRIM Communiqué



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

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"Always do your best. What you plant now, you will harvest later." ~Og Mandino

## Hey! Read this.

Please take a few minutes to read through the CRIM Communiqué—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**  
**1:00PM-4:00 PM**  
**FRIDAY 9:00AM-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 Criminology adviser. If you schedule an appointment with a different Criminology 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

### **You can enhance your advising by:**

- Reviewing your audit and bringing a list of

questions to your appointments

- Keeping your long-range plan up-to-date
- Bringing in a draft schedule
- Thinking about career possibilities that can be explored together

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.





## “I need a letter of recommendation!”: Etiquette Tips to Ensure a Good Outcome

At some point in your future, it is very likely you may need a letter of recommendation. They 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, they are 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 consider.

### 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.

- 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 with whom you’ve worked as a teaching assistant, research assistant, etc., or a former supervisor. It should NOT be an instructor whose class you received a good grade in, 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 letter.
- 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 pre-addressed, postage paid envelopes. 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.

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, TA’s, etc., put yourself out there, and make connections!



### 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 (sociology@la.psu.edu) 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 our internship coordinator, Cynthia Meyers (cab408@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 Cynthia Meyers with the names of the three sites.
- April 19** Placements should be finalized by this date. Send an email to Cynthia Meyers 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 and Julie are available to discuss questions about internships including the internship process, how an internship fits into your academic plan, and potential sites.

### Email Policy - To Email, or Not to Email

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

- 1) Include your name, a greeting (ex. Hi Julie), and your PSU ID number.
- 2) 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.
- 3) 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 if 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.
- 4) 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.



## 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/future.html>

### Congratulations!

## Spring Scheduling Tips

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: CRIM 250W is required for most of the 400 level CRIM courses.

CRIM 250W must be scheduled and successfully completed before you are permitted to complete an internship for departmental credit.

Strive for some balance in your schedule. In other words, don't load up on 400-level CRIM classes if you can help it.

As always, please feel free to contact Karen or Julie about any scheduling concerns.

## Student Spotlight – Andrea Sherman

It is a given that there is only so much you can learn in the classroom. It is hard to truly grasp and understand some concepts unless you have hands-on experience and real-world application of textbook concepts. This past summer I had the opportunity to work as an intern with the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office, where I worked primarily in the Bureau of Narcotics Investigations. During my time at my internship I was able to participate in the execution of various types of search warrants, intelligence research for upcoming projects and investigations, surveillance, and other various tasks. I also was given the chance to attend a training program for narcotics agents from all over the state, and was able to utilize my minor in Spanish to assist in translating evidentiary materials. During classes at Penn State I had learned about search warrants, but I never fully understood all the components to a search warrant and preparation for execution until I was able to participate in one. Also, while conducting my research and gathering information, I was able to utilize the information I learned about research and data gathering from my CRIM 250 class here at Penn State. The previous summer I was an intern in a District Attorney's Office, so I understood the process of the courts, but it was amazing to be able to experience and learn about the other side of the criminal justice field that must occur before there is a trial.

I benefitted greatly through my internships, not only in terms of learning about the criminal justice field but perhaps more importantly, about myself. I embraced the responsibility entrusted to me and was determined to ask questions when I wanted to learn more. My best advice for other interns is to make sure from the outset that you know what your agency expects from you, and they know what you expect from them. This will ensure that both parties are getting what they want out of the internship. I met many great people and made connections. My internship with the PA Attorney General's Office helped me to better understand what I want to do in the future and I understand the processes of the criminal justice field much better than I did before.

## 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 advisor, 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.

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

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

### Still Need a CRIM Course?

The following CRIM courses are still open for the spring semester:  
CRIM/SOC 012, CRIM 100, CRIM 113

## 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 Karen or Julie about your plans first.





**Kristie Kalvin**

### Kristie Kalvin—Advising Farewell

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.

### Alpha Phi Sigma

Applications for Alpha Phi Sigma, the national criminal justice honor society, are available outside of room 315 Oswald Tower. To be eligible, CRIM majors must have completed a minimum of four CRIM courses, have an overall grade point average of 3.2 as well as a major grade point average of 3.2. For more information about Alpha Phi Sigma, contact the APS faculty adviser, Howard Smith (hbs103@psu.edu).



### Important Semester Dates At-A-Glance

<b>December 13</b>	Withdrawal deadline
<b>December 13</b>	Classes end
<b>December 16–21</b>	Final exams
<b>December 21</b>	Fall commencement
<b>January 13, 2014</b>	Spring semester classes begin
<b>January 13—22</b>	Spring Drop/Add Period



### The Justice Association

The Criminology major has an active undergraduate student organization called the Justice Association (J.A.). Students are encouraged to join the organization and get involved in the many activities that are available throughout the academic year. These activities include faculty/student mixers, nationally known guest speakers who discuss topics related to the criminal justice profession, and trips to prisons and agencies. J.A. members also volunteer for various programs and activities in the local community and on the Penn State campus. Please join the J.A. Facebook page for updates and meeting information.

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