BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Sciences and Humanities
Department of Sociology

Spring 2020

State of the Department

As I write this, almost all of us are still at home, finishing work from a spring semester interrupted by a global pandemic, preparing for an altered campus this fall, and taking stock of the events of a rapidly-evolving present. Current events have cast intersectional inequalities into sharp relief, especially with regard to health, safety, and power.

Our discipline places us in a unique position to evaluate and understand who does what, who gets what, and why, using methodological tools that lay bare these empirical truths. It also provides us with tools to ask what we might do to bring the world in which we live into closer alignment with the world in which we dream of living. Belief in the possibility of leaving the world better than we found it drew many of us to this discipline.

Here in the Department of Sociology, we believe in the power of science to help us understand social problems and to craft policy that will be effective in achieving its goals, such as in monitoring and limiting the spread of disease. Health is unequally distributed, and we support evidence-driven measures that will protect the most vulnerable—whether due to age, ethnicity, gender, or social class.

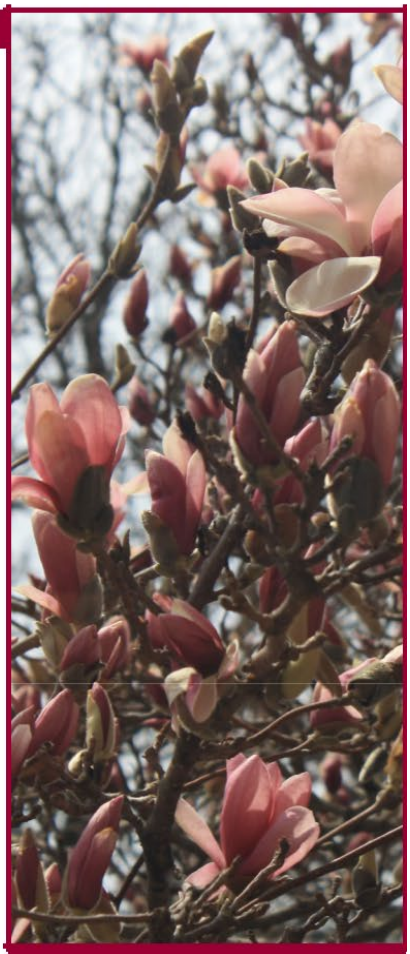
We also believe in the power of social movements to create an equitable, just, and anti-racist society. We support peaceful protests and civic engagement that help work toward this goal. We know that our alumni and friends also overwhelmingly support such goals.

As sociologists, many of us study and research topics of racism and structural inequality. But these discussions are not meant to stay within the classroom; knowledge can shape our values which in turn informs our actions. The Department is committed to continue to engage with both discussion and action around systemic inequalities and social change within the Ball State community, Muncie, and beyond. Thank you for all that you continue to do through your time and support as we pursue these and related missions.

In the following pages, you will find many examples of people working towards these shared goals, and in multiple ways. We take great pride in the work of our students, faculty, staff, and community partners in the pursuit of knowledge, excellence through immersive experiences, and service. We were especially pleased to welcome **Dr. Ellen Whitehead** and **Ms. Michelle Poole** to our department this year. As always, we welcome your engagement by email, phone, letter, or on our social media channels. Please stay in touch!

Chadwick L. Menning, PhD

Professor and Chair



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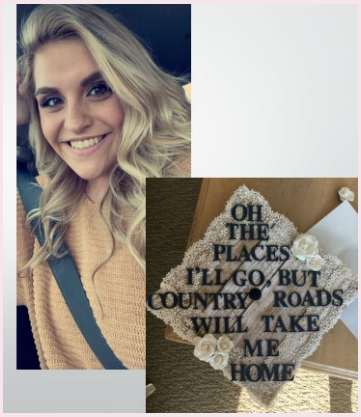
Ball State Sociology
#SociologySolvesIt

Our Year in Review

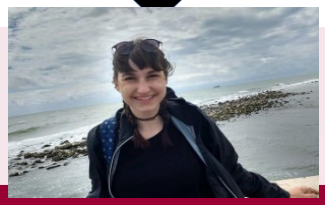
Our Cap Winners!

Tia Sharp



Rachael Finchum

Audrey Loomis



This 2019-2020 academic year started out strong, but we managed to hit a few speedbumps along the way. However, the pandemic did not slow our students down!

Spring 2020 Capstone

Sociology Capstone students administered a survey at 35 different "The Big Idea" school pantries within the eight counties of East Central Indiana. "The Big Idea" is a Second Harvest Food Bank program designed to encourage kids to dream big about their future goals and stories, and for families to encounter resources and relationships with a welcoming school staff that helps them foster big dreams. The purpose of the survey was to measure the degree to which "The Big Idea" has been successful in assisting families to connect with schools. The students also provided a chance to elevate participant voices and find stories about the program.

One Ball State Day

One Ball State Day was held on April 7th, 2020. Through twenty-four gifts, the Sociology department raised $1,624!

Spring 2020 Graduation

Since the graduation ceremony was postponed, we took matters into our own hands and made sure each graduate had their own kind of celebration. All graduates were able to decorate their caps online and sent them in for a friendly competition. Tia Sharp, Rachael Finchum, and Audrey Loomis were our top three winners—congrats!

Student Highlights

Award Recipients

Catherine Teague– Tamney Award

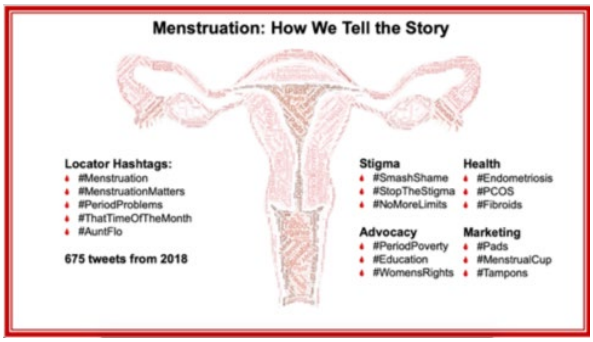
Erica Fox—Academic Honors in Writing

Erica Fox and Audrey Loomis– Outstanding Seniors

Betsy Kiel– Outstanding First Year Grad Student

Junior Marshals—Catherine Teague and Megan Jones

Congratulations to Amber Urban for winning the Ball State University 3 Minute Thesis Competition!



Amber Urban won the campus-wide 3 Minute Thesis Competition this spring! She was slated to represent Ball State University at a regional competition this spring before the pandemic caused a change of plans.

"From an academic standpoint, Amber Urban is, quite simply, incredibly gifted. As her thesis advisor I have told her—on more than one occasion—that she just naturally 'gets it.' She is intelligent, detail-oriented, reliable, and adept at the application of sociological material. In fact, what I appreciate most about Amber is her self-motivation and self-discipline. She is driven and focused and that is why her record is so impressive. Her 3MT win is but one more example of her tremendous talent. Amber is also just a delight to have around. She is someone with whom I have developed a close mentoring relationship and friendship. Because of her laughter, good humor, and enthusiasm for sociology, she is a consistent bright spot in my day. I enjoy her company, I respect her intellect, and I have every confidence she will excel in all of her future endeavors." – Dr. Mellisa Holtzman

Thesis Writers

Audrey Loomis, Senior thesis: The Impact of College Education on Recycling Rates –Chair –Dr. Rachel Kraus

Leilani Pearce, MA thesis: Toward a Better Understanding of Role Exit: A Qualitative Study for Former Mormon Women –Chair –Dr. Rachel Kraus

Amber Urban, MA thesis: Menstruation: How the Story We Tell Online Impacts the Menstrual Stigma–Chair –Dr. Mellisa Holtzman

Rachael Finchum, MA thesis: Performing Gender Reveal Parties on Social Media –Chair –Dr. Melinda Messineo

Brandon Million, MA thesis: Sense of Connectedness within Male Sexual Minority Communities –Chair –Dr. Melinda Messineo

Lauren Kren, Senior thesis: Perceived Knowledge of Domestic Violence Relationships on Ball State University campus. –Chair -Dr. Kim Hennessee

Peter Moskalew, MA thesis: Religiosity, Nationalism, and Attitudes Toward Immigrants and Immigration –Chair –Dr. Richard Petts

Congratulations Graduates!

Spring & Summer 2020 Graduates

Undergraduate

Maegan Ackerson
Roseanna Barber
Skye Cable
Adrianna Contreras
Haley Cook
Peighton Cook
Emajh Donaldson
Margaret Fishbeck
Erica Fox
Kaitlyn Grandidier
Jennifer Harkcom
Griffin Janosky
Gabriel Kinder
Lauren Kren
Audrey Loomis
Megan Matthews
Lilly-Rose McElwee
Tylan Miles
Jasmine Moehn
Victoria Prouse
Sarah Rice
Jayla Robinson
Tia Sharp
Lucas Spurlock
Cassidy Stigall
Carrie Tackett
Madelyn Troy
Braxton Williams
Amadi Wisdom

Graduate

Rachael Finchum
Brandon Million
Leilani Pearce
Devyn Phillips
Amy Ross
Jennifer Schultz
Seth Throneburg
Amber Urban
Peter Moskalew

Alumni News

Thank you to all of our alumni and donors. Without your contribution and support, we would not be where we are today. From helping our students in the greatest way to providing support and encouragement to our department as a whole, you are a tremendous part of who we are today—and for that we thank you!

SECOND HARVEST food bank

IU HEALTH Ball Memorial Hospital

Dr. John Gerald Condran
November 9, 1938 – June 30, 2020

It is with great sadness that the department marks the passing of our long-serving emeritus faculty member, Dr. Jerry Condran.

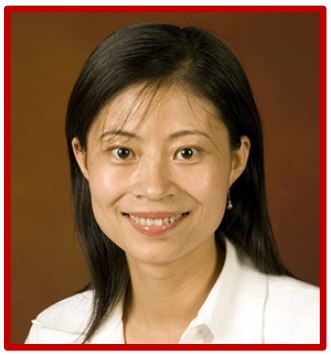
Jerry studied sociology and earned his bachelor's degree from Rutgers University, and a PhD degree from University of Wisconsin, Madison. Jerry served in the Army during the years 1962 – 1964, becoming an expert level at Rifle M-14. He remained committed to his fellow veterans throughout his life.

Jerry was a lifelong learner, was recognized for thirty years of teaching in the sociology department at Ball State University. After retirement, Jerry took quite a few math classes in his free time to better learn his passion, physics. His daughter Catherine would often accompany him to the Bracken Library. Catherine grew up to earn her master's degree in library science and a doctorate in education studies. Jerry was also blessing to be the dad of Dave Gover, who serves the needs of disabled people in Kansas City.

Dr. Chadwick Menning overlapped with him during his first year at Ball State where Jerry was quick with jokes, had some good advice about teaching, and left bags after bags of tomatoes from his garden. He will be missed.

Faculty Highlights

Dr. Jun Xu and Dr. Fang Gong



Gong, Xu, and Wenjie Sun co-authored "*Individual and Contextual Correlates of Cardiovascular Diseases among Adults in the United State: A Geospatial and Multilevel Analysis.*" The article has since been accepted in *GeoJournal*!

Dr. Melissa Holtzman

Dr. Holtzman received the Outstanding Teaching Award! This award is given in recognition of excellence in teaching inclusive of the highest standards of pedagogy, creativity, or innovation in the classroom and curricula. Awardees have demonstrated leadership in teaching methodologies and advancement of the scholarship of teaching. Each year, this award may only be won once in a faculty member's career. Congratulations Mellissa!

Dr. Richard Petts

Dr. Petts's promotion to Professor went into effect Fall 2019. Dr. Petts's career at Ball State began in 2008 when he was hired as an Assistant Professor after completing his PhD at The Ohio State University. Congratulations to Dr. Petts on his achievements!

Dr. Rachel Kraus

Congratulations to Dr. Rachel Kraus for 15 years at Ball State! In addition, Dr. Kraus had her publication, "Abandoning Belly Dance: Leaving Female-Dominated Serious Leisure" accepted for publication in the International Journal of Sociology of Leisure.

Dr. Roger Wojtkiewicz

Congratulations to Dr. Roger Wojtkiewicz for 20 years at Ball State University!

From our faculty to you, have a great summer!

Want MORE sociology news from Ball State?

Check out our updates on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram!

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We invite you to contact us with news, comments, and questions!

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