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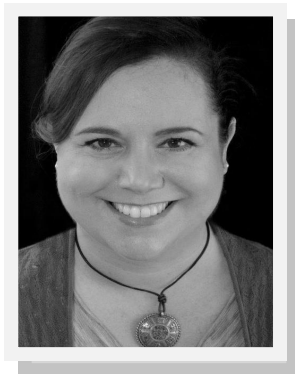
Newsletter Editor: Dr. Nichole Boutte-Heiniluoma

The Social Connection: Sociology at Ashford University

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Welcome Message from Our Chair



Welcome to the first edition of **The Social Connection**, the newsletter for Sociology faculty and students at Ashford University @) - # . In this first edition, I would like to introduce the full-time faculty team, share some resource info on sociology and also highlight some exciting devel-

opments for social interaction within the sociology program. I have a wonderful team in sociology who strive to support our ssociate faculty who in turn influence the positive outcomes of students in the BA in Sociology and Sociology minor. @ teaching courses and supporting each other's initiatives, they are responsible for the following: Dr. Layana Navarre-Jackson coordin our mentoring programs to ensure ssociates have the tools they need for success; Dr. Chishamiso Rowley coordinates our faculty

ssociate aculty development; Efua Akoma is the Faculty Advisor for the Ashford Sociology Club for students and faculty on LinkedIn; Dr. Nichole Boutte-Heiniluoma is editor of our newsletter, and Dr. Alan Barton has been pivotal in supporting me in redesigning the SOC 120 @ k to ensure its relevance and success when it is relaunched with a new text at the end of the year. We are also excited about our upcoming program review to ensure the Sociology program at Ashford is engaging, relevant, and supports our Sociology graduates to make an impact!
-Dr. Elaine Alden

Up and Coming: Sociology Club on LinkedIn



This is a space where you can enrich your experiences as sociology students by increasing your interactions

with sociology faculty, volunteering with faculty and your peers, and reading and posting about resources for college and career success! We will be looking for a dynamic student to serve as president soon. Join us on LinkedIn for more details on

becoming a candidate and interacting with established and budding sociologists! This club is open to all sociology majors and minors. Just log into LinkedIn and look for the Ashford University Sociology Club - we are waiting for you!

*“Neither the life of
an individual nor
the history of
society can be
understood without
understanding
both.”
-C. Wright Mills*

Elaine Alden, PhD

Dr. Elaine Alden is an Assistant Professor and Chair of the Sociology program in the College of Liberal Arts. She obtained her PhD in Social Policy from the University of Kent, UK and her postdoctoral research was the first social policy fellowship to be awarded by Age UK, the British policy and advocacy group for issues concerning an aging population. Dr. Alden has worked on mixed methods and qualitative

research projects in social support systems, generational membership and work motivations, as well as other diverse and interesting areas. Dr. Alden taught at the University of Greenwich, London and at the University of Kent, School of Social Policy, Sociology, and Social Research. She is a dual citizen of the US and Britain, a San Diego native, and has lived in many countries due to her career and her upbringing

in a US military family. Lastly, she is a guardian to Coco, a Norwegian Forest cat.



Efua Akoma, MS



Ms. Efua Akoma

Ms. Efua Akoma was born in St. George's, Grenada in the Caribbean, which is a tiny little country above South America. She was raised in Miami, FL and is currently residing in Georgia.

Her academic accomplishments include a BA in African American Studies, a BS in Psychology and an MS in Educational Psychology, all from Georgia State University. Ms. Akoma is also nearing completion of a PhD in Sociology with a concentration in Africana Studies at Virginia Tech.

She is married to her college sweetheart and has three kids; two boys and a girl! She loves to travel both domestically and internationally and fits in at least two vacations a year to do so. Her primary research interests are really diverse. They include race and mental health, Africana studies, the prison industrial complex, the preservation and retention

of Caribbean and African cultural traditions in the African diaspora, culturally relevant education, sustainable agriculture, permaculture and eco building.

She is big on scholar activism and enjoys using advances in her research interests to empower the lives of individuals and groups should they decide they would like to take that course of action.

Alan Barton, PhD



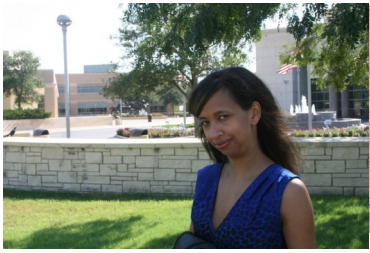
Dr. Alan Barton

Dr. Alan Barton is a sociologist by training with an interest in natural resource management and policy. He has a BA in Sociology and Spanish from the University of California, an MS in Forest Management from the University of Washington, and a PhD

in Development Sociology from Cornell University. In addition to teaching sociology at the college level, Dr. Barton has worked as a ranger at national parks, a Peace Corps volunteer in South America, a Census enumerator, and an adult educator in environmental education. Dr. Barton has conducted research on cooperative

organizations for forest landowners, community-based management of national parks in Central America, natural heritage tourism along the Mississippi River, and racial reconciliation initiatives in the deep South. In his free time, Dr. Barton enjoys watching baseball, theater, travel, and music.

Nichole Boutte-Heiniluoma, PhD



Dr. Nichole Boutte-Heiniluoma is an Assistant Professor of Sociology in the College of Liberal Arts at Ashford University. She completed all of her schooling at Texas A&M University where she earned a PhD in Sociology,

Dr. Nichole Boutte-Heiniluoma a Masters of International Affairs (with a concentration in National Security), and BA in History and Political Science. She also holds a certification in Women’s Studies.

Dr. Boutte-Heiniluoma comes from a long line of educators. She credits the professors she had during her graduate career for encouraging her to think outside of the box and reach

beyond what she thought were her own limitations. She now practices this type of supportive guidance as an instructor herself and believes that every student has the potential to be great.

Dr. Boutte-Heiniluoma lives in Texas with her husband, their two precious children, and their two crazy Shih Tzus. When she is not teaching, she loves reading, running, traveling, and spending time with family and friends.

Layana Navarre-Jackson, PhD

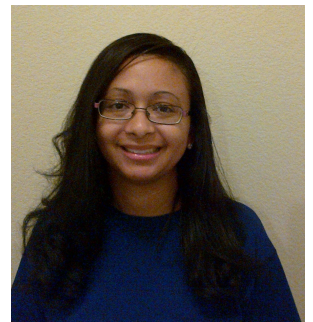
Dr. Layana Navarre-Jackson is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Ashford University. She was born and raised in New Orleans, LA where she attended Xavier University of Louisiana and obtained her B.S. in Psychology. After completing her Bachelor’s degree, Dr. Navarre-Jackson moved to Iowa and attended The University of Iowa, where she obtained a MA in Rehabilitation Counseling, a

MA in Sociology, and a PhD in Sociology.

Dr. Navarre-Jackson’s research experience has ranged from conducting laboratory experiments and vignette-surveys to using secondary data. Her specific research interests include examining stigma and status in relation to various status characteristics. She has co-authored a book chapter and an article on volunteering. She is

also the sole author of an article that was published in the *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Religion*. When Dr. Navarre-Jackson has free time, she enjoys reading, drawing, and painting. She recently returned to Louisiana after living in Iowa for fifteen years and Colorado for one year. She enjoys being close enough to visit her family in Louisiana.

Dr. Navarre-Jackson



Chishamiso (C.T.) Rowley, PhD



Dr. C.T. Rowley has been teaching courses in the Social Sciences and Multicultural Education for over 15 years. Her professional expertise is in the areas of Social Organization, Organization Development, Social Psychology, Cultural Diversity and Healthy/Green Living and she draws on these

areas and others in her courses. She enjoys working with students from diverse backgrounds and has been helping Ashford students on their path to academic success since 2007.

History of Sociology At Ashford



Contributing Author:
Dr. Gary Heath

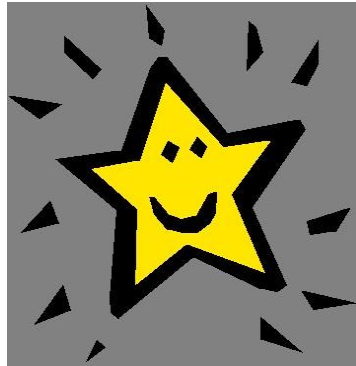
In 1988, Dr. Gary Heath arrived at Mount St. Clare College in Clinton, Iowa. When he arrived on campus there was no Sociology BA. However, all of that began to change with the iteration of the Social Science concentration in a Liberal Arts BA. This liberal arts degree consisted of liberal arts courses with a 15 hour core of social science courses. After several years, they decided to expand this and so they leveraged the Social Science concentration, and created a full Social

Science BA. From the Social Science BA., the Sociology BA. was born. All the necessary array of Sociology courses were in place for a Sociology BA when Mount St. Clare College (then known briefly as The Franciscan University of the Prairies) became Ashford University. All that was needed was a demand for the degree. That came from the online side of the University. At San Diego's behest, Dr. Heath wrote the online Sociology BA program and the next year it went online.

At the same time, the BA was also implemented on the Clinton campus where we serve a small cadre of majors. However, the online program, as expected, has many more majors. During his tenure, Dr. Heath met a good number of enthused, appreciative graduates of the BA in sociology program at the commencement ceremonies in Clinton. That has given Dr. Heath a warm feeling to know he has been a part of making that happiness possible!

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is What are you doing for others?"
-Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Faculty Highlights



Stellar Sociology Associates

Periodically, the Instructional Specialist team reviews the most improved and consistently high performing associate faculty members. Accordingly, the sociology program would like to recognize **Linda Atkinson** and **Sharon Chappelle** for their stellar achievements in the classroom.

Well done, Linda and Sharon!

Other news of note:

2013 also saw the full-time sociology faculty attend 13 conferences and present 13 different papers in the process.

Well done!

In The Know: Sociology In Action



"Sociology of Aging and the Life Course provides an analytical framework for understanding the interplay between human lives and changing social structures. Its mission is to examine the interdependence between (a) aging over the life course as a social process and (b) societies and

groups as stratified by age, with succession of cohorts as the link connecting the two. This special field of age draws on sociology as a whole and contributes to it through reformulation of traditional emphases on process and change, on the multiple interdependent levels of the system, and on the multidimensionality

of sociological concerns as they touch on related aspects of other disciplines. The field is concerned with both basic sociological research on age and its implications for public policy and professional practice."

-Excerpt from (ASA, 2013)

Global Outlook: Sociology Around the World



**Inequality
Across
the Globe**

“The richest 1% in the world (about 50 million people), have as much income as the poorest 57% (about 2.7 billion people). This inequality reflects a global distribution of poverty: 80% of the world's

population have incomes below the US and European poverty lines.

Two-thirds of the world's population is worse off than the poorest 10% of Americans.

This poverty is concentrated in Africa, India, and Bangladesh.

While average age at death is 75 or older in North America, Australia, and Western Europe, it falls to 60 or so across continental Europe and Asia, and below 60 in Latin America, North Africa, and the Middle East. In many West and Central African countries, infant

mortality is so high that the median age at death is less than 10 years. Gross national income per head is \$34,100 in the US and \$24,430 in Great Britain, compared with \$3,020 in South Africa, and \$260 in Nigeria. Countries such as Russia and China show a growing polarization of wealth and poverty as a result of the growth of private enterprise and market production.”

– Excerpt from (Fulcher & Scott, 2013)

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Sociology In The Global Context:

Introspection on Body Ritual and the Sociological Lens

One of the favorite social science research studies for many sociologists was published by Horace Miner in 1956. It is called Body Ritual Among the Nacirema. In the study, Miner purports to examine the architecture of daily life as enacted by a mysterious “North American group living in the territory between the Canadian Cree, the Yaqui and Tarahumare of Mexico, and the Carib and Arawak of the Antilles (Miner, 1956).”

In doing so, Miner presents a thorough and appropriately antiseptic examination of an “exotic” culture; which contextualizes this strange society against the lens of objectivity and universality social scientists are presumed to have.

Those of you familiar with the study know of the trick Miner plays on his readers. Whether you are familiar with his work or not, Miner's study of the Nacirema

provides an invaluable opportunity for sociologists and budding social scientists to interrogate and deconstruct the assumptions they may bring to work in cultural contexts outside of their own. It also provides an opportunity for us to view our own native landscapes from a new perspective.

–Piece provided by Dr. C.T. Rowley

Sociology from the Classroom to Reality

What is one of the hottest topics in America today that also appears in our classrooms? How about marijuana legalization? In our SOC 331 course, students are asked to analyze the social and legal implications of the legalization of medicinal marijuana. Although there are ongoing anti-drug educational programs, 55% of Americans under 30 have favorable feelings about legalizing marijuana (Craighill & Clement 2012). Perspectives about this drug are changing as

more support for the use of this drug emerges and students are exploring what the possible social outcomes could be. One student posits, despite the evidence of medicinal benefits, marijuana should still be tightly controlled. Another student believes if doctors have found a medical use for the drug, they should be able to administer it. This conversation has also jumped into our SOC 305 course. As we discuss the impact of the “war on drugs” policies, one student poses a possible solution to the use of

more harmful drugs. This student believes by legalizing the use of marijuana and taxing it like cigarettes and beer, this would decrease the use of other drugs and people would turn to smoking weed because it is legal and safe. The question begs: will the outcomes of increased availability influence more states to legalize marijuana or not? If this topic interests you, check out SOC 331 and SOC 305.

–Piece provided by Ms. Efua Akoma



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Sociology Department Faculty

Dr. Elaine Alden, Program Chair

Ms. Efua Akoma, Assistant Professor

Dr. Alan Barton, Assistant Professor

Dr. Nichole Boutte-Heiniluoma, Assistant Professor

Dr. Layana Navarre-Jackson, Assistant Professor

Dr. C.T. Rowley, Assistant Professor

Ashford University is a vibrant community that offers effective learning online. Whether you pursue your education online or in the traditional college experience, you'll find both infused with the same history of academic excellence.



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