Celebrating New Beginnings!
This fall has been filled with a feeling of community. Let’s take time to celebrate our diversity and our common bond in sociology.

Recent Happenings:

- **Ben Snyder Colloquium**: The department’s first colloquium of the year featured alumnus, Ben Snyder, who gave a riveting talk entitled, “Life in Staccato: The Rhythms of Work in the New Capitalism.” The talk was based on his dissertation research. And Ben’s talk is the start of a new tradition; each year, our first colloquium will feature a UVA alumnus.

- **Alumni Colloquium**: Dan Potter, Laura Holian, and Patricia Goerman joined us to share their experiences on the non-academic job market (additional details inside).

- **Back to the Lawn Gala**: We also celebrated the department’s return to Grounds on October 2nd. Department Chair, Jeff Olick, highlighted distinguishing characteristics of the department and its continual improvement, while Murray Milner, Professor Emeritus, shared the department’s history.

---

**News: Past & Future**
Learn about recent achievements of our faculty and grad students & opportunities for professional development…

Page 2

**Faculty Interview**
Read what our faculty members say about their life and work in progress at UVA, in Cville, academia and sociology…

Page 3

**Sociology-Inspired Art**
Explore department’s artistic spirit, by appreciating pieces of self-expression inspired by sociology and sociologists…

Page 5
Grad Student and Faculty Achievements

Our Francesca Tripodi was one of the eight finalists in UVA’s 2nd Three Minute Thesis competition for advanced doctoral students.

Our Sarah Mosseri is one of the six 2014-2015 members of the new Student Affairs Committee for the ASA Organizations, Occupations, and Work (OOW) section.

Our Josipa Roksa has a new book with Richard Arum titled *Aspiring Adults Adrift: Tentative Transitions of College Graduates* which was highly promoted and debated in several media outlets.

Our Krishan Kumar has a new article titled “The Return of Civilization – and of Arnold Toynbee?” in Vol. 57 Issue 04 of *Comparative Studies in Society and History* this month.


Our Liz Gorman organized a panel on the future of organizational theory organized at ASA that will result in a volume of statements on the topic by the panelists Howard Aldrich, Liz Clemens, Martin Ruef, Ezra Zuckerman as well as others like Jerry Davis, Charles Perrow, Dick Scott, and hopefully Heather Haveman, Liz herself, and Mark Mizruchi.

Our Tom Guterbock was the member of a task force that undertook revisions to AAPOR’s on-line material for researchers on negotiating the approval process with IRB’s.

Our Rachel Rinaldo is organizing the one day symposium “Gender and Globalization” this month, where our Rae Blumberg will present a paper and our Rachel herself and Simone Polillo are discussants to the two main sessions.

Professional Development Opportunities

* Deadlines for submitting proposals to Southern and Eastern Sociological Societies Annual Meetings are October 24th and 31st respectively.
* On October 29th, there is a Job Fair in Newcomb Hall on the 3rd floor.
* There is a Networking workshop on October 29th in Alumni Hall, and registration for that event is due by October 23rd.
* On November 6th, on the 5th floor of New Cabell Hall there will be a Career Services Orientation, which will be an introduction to Career Services and will provide a timeline for academic and non-academic career prep.
Faculty Interview: Miranda Waggoner

We are delighted to welcome Professor Miranda Waggoner this fall. Professor Waggoner’s research focuses on the sociology of health, medicine and science, gender and reproduction, culture and qualitative methods. Her current book project examines how medical and public health ideas about pregnancy risk and birth outcomes shifted dramatically in the last few decades, with implications for how women and reproduction are viewed in medicine, politics and society. She has also published on the topics of pre-pregnancy care and emerging epidemics.

Professor Waggoner earned her PhD in Sociology and Social Policy from Brandeis University and joins us after spending the last three years as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Office of Population Research at Princeton University.

She graciously sat down with us a few weeks ago to share her initial impressions of Charlottesville and UVa, talk about her research and offer advice for graduate students.

You have now been in Charlottesville for a little over a month. What are your initial impressions?

I moved here from New Jersey which is not too far away, but I have spent the last ten years in the northeast. I'm now back in the south. I grew up in Texas, so this actually feels more like home to me. It feels nice.

I think Charlottesville is beautiful. As I’ve mentioned to several times, this is one of the most beautiful campuses I have ever been to. I think this is a beautiful place, and I am happy to have landed here.

Your work is located at the intersection of gender, health and medicine. What motivated your interest in these topics?

One of the ways in which we see gender inequality continually promoted and naturalized in interesting ways is through biological arguments. We still see these arguments floating around constantly in the popular press and even in other arenas...To me, biological arguments about the difference between the sexes is a linchpin for gender inequality today. It has been historically, and it is today...Feminist science studies scholars and feminist scholars of health and medicine have been at the forefront of unearthing these biological assumptions that pervade the way that social policies get pushed and deployed in our society.

So, that’s why I study what I study. I think it is not only important in terms of talking about the cultural dimensions of health and medicine, which I think in itself is important. I think it also reveals and unearths some of the consistent rhetoric about gender difference and gives us a window into the ways in which gender inequality gets perpetuated.

In reading your work, one thing that stands out is that you often provide historical context for contemporary ideas and debates that are rapidly shifting and often fraught with emotion. Can you talk about the role that an understanding of historical context plays in understanding some of the contemporary issues that you address in your research?

It is hard for me to talk about the things I study without putting it in historical context. I just think it is so important to understand the trajectory of an issue. I am not formally trained in history or comparative historical work, but in all of my work, I do try very hard to put it in historical context. I think that we can't understand our issue without that.

I’ve always been in reading groups and writing groups with interdisciplinary scholars, so I have always tried to learn as much as possible from the people trained in the history of medicine rather than just focusing on the sociology of health and medicine. I sought out those groups as much as I could because I think it is so important, not only to contextualize our work historically, but to have interdisciplinary conversations. I think it sharpens my sociological work.

My work is always evolving after conversations with historians of medicine. Often times, I may think a contemporary problem is interesting because it is a contemporary problem, and my historian friends are always very...
quick to give me examples of when this has happened before. That’s why these conversations are so helpful. It’s not to say there is not something new about the contemporary moment or the contemporary issue, but again, if you don’t contextualize it in a historical frame, you are losing quite a bit, and you are not able to make a sharp argument.

Many students in the program are in the beginning stages of their dissertations. Do you have any advice on picking a topic, forming a committee or structuring your time?

One of the best pieces of advice I got in grad school was that someone told me to pick out an article or book that I wish I had written and use it as a model. That was one of the best pieces of advice I ever got. It forces you to figure out what kind of writing you like, what kind of research questions you like, what kind of articles and books you prefer to read and what kind of scholar you want to be. It gives you a sense of what to strive for and also a sense of how that scholar organized his or her work and how that scholar’s career trajectory looks. It gives you something to look to. I think that’s hard because you have a lot of different interests in grad school.

Also, I would often—if I got stuck in my dissertation—go back and read one of those books, or a chapter of a book I really like, or a scholarly article somehow related to my field. It wasn’t something that I was using in my writing right then, but it helped to just sort of shift my thinking a bit and also remind me why I am doing this. Having those pieces that make you passionate about what you do, I found that really helpful. It would not only reignite my passion about what I’m doing, but it would also kick-start my writing because reading good writing helps to kick-start your own writing.

While I would read for inspiration, I would try not to get bogged down in not writing because I felt like there was more that I needed to read. I think that’s the key. We often feel like we haven’t read enough or there’s stuff out there that we haven’t read yet and thus we have no idea what we’re writing about. I think you have to just keep going. You have to get over that fear that you haven’t read everything that is relevant to your topic because you’ll get there.

The last thing I would say is to remember it is a work in progress. One thing that started to paralyze me at one point during my writing process was that I thought I had to write that book that was my model…You will publish from this beyond your defense date, which means that you will continue to write on this topic beyond your defense date. I think it’s important to remember that while it is a finished product when you turn it in and defend it, it is also still a work in progress because it is still propelling your work that you are going to do beyond grad school.

You have recently survived the academic job market. What were the most challenging and most rewarding aspects of your experience?

One of the rewarding things about being on the job market was that it also forces you to define yourself. I think the process of putting together an application forces you to come up with your big intellectual agenda and your big research program. Because it’s not just “I wrote this paper, I published this paper.” You need to have a vision. Getting that down on paper is not an easy task. It is an intellectual task in and of itself to write those materials. That is very stressful, but it is also very fun if you let that document be an identity-building moment for you as well.

I think the most important lesson but also the one that is hardest to adhere to is that it is not personal. So many of my colleagues and mentors told me it is never personal when, for instance, you don’t get a call back or if you don’t get that job. I always felt that was such clichéd advice, but it is important to remember that because this is your life. It is what you do. And you are putting yourself out there when you send in an application or when you give a job talk, and if it doesn’t work out—or if it does—it is not personal. The decisions that go on in departments and in search committees often have nothing at all to do with you. It doesn’t mean that your intellectual work is not up to par, or on the other hand, it doesn’t mean that your intellectual work is the best out there. There is so much involved in making those decisions at the department and at the university level. It’s important to remember that it’s not personal.

Are you currently reading anything interesting?

I enjoy reading fiction. I think that reading novels and reading other kinds of writing, like popular writing like The New Yorker, helps me to also be a better writer. If I just read academic writing all day, as much as I like it…I think reading different kinds of writing helps me to hone my own writing skills.

I think sometimes you need a bit of a spark. A bit of a creative angle. Even though our writing is not creative writing in the classic sense, we are creative people in formulating our arguments and putting together what needs to go in a paper. I think that’s important.

Professor Waggoner is currently teaching Health & Society. She is also very interested in speaking with grad students, particularly anyone with an interest in gender, reproduction or health-related issues, so feel free to stop by her office hours this semester on Tuesdays from 2-4pm.
Out of the library window

Out of a window  
You can have the most beautiful moments  
Looking out of that window  
From your library chair  
Over your laptop screen  
Life happens  
Out of a window  
Leaves fly  
The wind blows  
Waltzes excite leaves  
Big ones, little ones  
Riding the airy flows  
And colors explode  
They move as you work  
And eyes catch them sometimes  
Memory snapshots  
And you get amazed  
At momentary beauty  
And hurry to share  
Pointing at them  
The fire full sky  
The white grayish clouds  
The black blue dark night  
Approaching there far  
Out of a window  
Happiness waits  
Its energy grabbed  
Inside the library flaked  
Among the words on paper  
Among the pages on books

Among the scribbles on documents  
Intensely worked through  
That’s work in the library  
Amazing surprisingly  
Where hope pushes forward  
To open new windows  
Towards a different world  
Wishing it saves for us  
The same exciting beauty  
We find out of a window  
This fall

Joris Gjata  
Alderman Library - 23 October 2013