Dear Animals & Society section members!

It is an honor to write to you as our new section chair. I want to thank Elizabeth Cherry for her hard work as chair. In her tenure, she worked to increase our numbers, organized the inaugural session of our very successful mentoring program, and by growing the mentorship program. In January we will also be launching a section blog that will showcase the work of section members. I want to thank Corey Wrenn for her help getting this set!

We have a number of new members on the council. I want to welcome Diane C. Bates (TCNJ) and Cameron Thomas Whitley (MSU). Congratulations to you both! I am looking forward to working with Diane and Cam who take the positions vacated by Justin Goodman (PETA) and David Nibert (Wittenberg University). Both Justin and David have contributed a great deal to the section. Thank you both for all you have done!

As has been the case over the past few years, we continue to face low section membership. Last year the council made a concerted effort to increase membership. This year, I hope to add to those efforts by increasing the value of membership with monthly announcements, a more active social network presence, and by growing the mentorship program. In January we will also be launching a section blog that will showcase the work of section members. I want to thank Corey Wrenn for her help getting this set!

Finally, I would like to thank Loredana Loy for compiling and editing the newsletter, Justin Goodman for running our social media sites, and Larry and Helene Lawson for the new webpage design!

Here’s to a relaxing break from classes and to a wonderful holiday season!

Colter Ellis
Section Chair
Hello again section members!

As you might recall, in the previous issue of our newsletter we introduced an interview series featuring section member scholars. Our first guest was Professor Leslie Irvine from the University of Colorado Boulder. In this issue we bring you an interview with Professor Colin Jerolmack from New York University. Many thanks to Professor Jerolmack for his time and a very interesting discussion!

Our section now has a blog that is in need of contributions from section members: http://animalsandsociety.blogspot.com Blog posts will be publicized via our section’s Facebook and Twitter accounts. If you would like to contribute please contact Colter Ellis at colter.ellis@montana.edu

Enjoy the holidays and happy reading!

Loredana Loy
Newsletter Editor

A photo from the 2014 section mentorship lunch.
Being taken seriously in the human-centric field of sociology is a complicated enough task. Yet, you have managed to bring the focus on animals and society issues to the forefront with publications in journals such as the American Sociological Review, Social Problems, and Sociological Theory. Can you talk about some of the things that scholars could do in order to promote animal studies scholarship and increase the visibility and credibility of animal-focused issues in the field?

I have to say that, while there may have been some behind-my-back snickering when I first embarked on my research, I have found the field of sociology to be surprisingly open to it. When I began sending articles to journals, the reviews on the whole were fair. Even when I was rejected, the referees were not dismissive of the topic; I was judged the same way anyone trying to publish in a mainstream sociology journal is judged—was I engaging with one or more broad theoretical questions that crossed several subfields, and was my work empirically rigorous? All of my articles that were published in sociology journals met these criteria, and I continue to find that if I meet these criteria then my work is taken seriously. So I guess the takeaway is twofold: one, do not sell yourself short by thinking from the get-go that ASR or AJS will never publish research on animals; two, you have to make your animal-related research relevant to folks who are not interested in animals per se—so do not just frame the literature around prior human-animal studies. The latter suggestion, I think, applies to many topics and is not a distinct “problem” of animal studies. For instance, if someone who writes about pickup basketball wants to publish in a general interest sociology journal, they will have to go beyond the sociology of sports. I think this move actually strengthens, not dilutes, the power of sociological animal studies by encouraging all of us to show how animals matter to—and impact—almost every sociological topic, from community to class, gender, race, culture, and so on.

Launched in 2010, the NYU Animal Studies Initiative is an interdisciplinary program and one of the first programs in the country to offer an animal studies minor. Tell us about this program, your role in it, and your experience with teaching students participating in this program.

I have a joint appointment with environmental studies, and when I arrived I found that there were a few other folks in ES interested in some aspect of animal studies, such as animal ethics, animals in literature, and food. Just as we were beginning to discuss ways to grow animal studies at NYU, an NYU alumnus came along and offered a very generous gift for Environmental Studies to develop the Animal Studies Initiative. The result is an interdisciplinary—and very popular—animal studies minor, a series of public events [including a recent discussion with the director Darren Aronofsky about his choice to not use any real animals in his movie “Noah”], annual academic conferences on selected topics [e.g., animals in media, animal ethics], and grants and fellowships for graduate students pursuing animal-related research. I am on the steering committee, and in that capacity I played a role in designing the interdisciplinary curriculum, hiring the postdoc who teaches a number of our courses, and organizing some of the conferences.
It’s great—we have courses on animal minds, primate behavior, animal ethics, animals in literature and history, and so on. We draw students from every background, from photography to biology to women’s studies. I teach “Animals and Society” every year, the unofficial gateway course to the minor, which covers core readings in sociology, anthropology, and politics. The course enrolls 40 students and always has a waitlist.

On a broad level, our mission is twofold: to integrate animal studies into the liberal arts curriculum at NYU and to play a part in setting the agenda for animal studies as a rigorous, interdisciplinary program of scholarship. I am happy to say that our program has inspired several others, including one at Harvard.

You’re also a professor of environmental studies. How do you see these two fields—Animals and Society and Environmental Studies—working together? What are some of their important intersections in your experience?

This is an important linkage. To begin with, animal studies at NYU is housed within environmental studies—so that already gives an indication that my colleagues and I view these two fields as inherently connected. In my own work, I have looked at how understandings of nature shape the way we relate to animals. For instance, I argue that the imaginary town-country dichotomy primes people to view “nature” as the place where people are not, and so animals like pigeons that live on city sidewalks come to be viewed as “trespassers” for “invading” spaces we have designated as for humans only. I develop the concept of “pedestrian species” to describe how certain animals have adapted to living in the built environment, in effect forgoing their “natural” behaviors by begging humans for food or scavenging in dumpsters. The battle against these animals is a proxy for the larger war to control nature’s relationship to society, and their very presence in the city speaks to the ecological crisis [e.g., the fragmenting of their native habitats]. So for me, how I think about animals is often in the broader context of the built or natural environment. Berger’s classic essay “Why Look at Animals” makes the argument that urbanized society’s alienation from nature is what has caused us to reduce animals to mere instruments [in totemic cultures, they were sacred]. Whether one agrees with his thesis or not [I critique it in my book], it is a very penetrating—and influential—analysis that makes a firm linkage between how we relate to the environment and how we relate to animals. This echoes the overlap between sociological arguments about the commodification of animals [e.g., Nibert] and the exploitation of nature [e.g., the treadmill of production], both of which are fundamentally Marxist critiques of how capitalism alienates us from other life forms [including other people too!]. I think actor-network-theory also presents a [decidedly apolitical] paradigm for thinking about the connections between animals and the environment—all of which can be conceived of as “actants” that shape, not merely reflect, our social world. And finally, environmentalism often argues for the conservation of “wild” animals and their associated habitats because animals and ecosystems are so thoroughly imbricated. So environmental and animal ethics are very well aligned on some issues.

Your new book, The Global Pigeon, was very well received in academia and also benefited from a lot of media attention, including coverage in The New York Times and on the BBC radio. Please tell us about it. Also, what is it that attracted the media to your story? The best question you were asked?

I think “mainstream” media is where folks studying animals can have an advantage. People love animals!
I think the quirkiness of my topic also helped—a sociologist studying pigeons?! And he went around the world to do it? And I think the diversity of my case studies allowed different media outlets to find and hook onto a dimension interesting to them. For instance, two chapters of my book are about men who breed and fly pigeons from their rooftops in Brooklyn and Queens. The New York Times Metro section is always looking for unique stories about New York City neighborhoods and communities, and so I was able to successfully sell them on writing about my discovery of how ethnic whites passed pigeon-keeping onto Puerto Ricans and African Americans who moved into their neighborhoods after white flight. I also wrote about pigeon racing, including the Million Dollar Pigeon Race in South Africa, and so folks like a radio station in New Zealand that were doing stories on pigeon racing contacted me to talk about why people do it and how a pigeon race works. My writings on how pigeons came to be viewed as “rats with wings” opened up the possibility for an entirely different set of stories, and as my own research has shown the media love to write about how people hate pigeons—I was viewed as having finally offered an explanation of why they do. So I don’t think there was one single thing that appealed to various media outlets but rather that I had so many different stories I could tell. As for the best question, one time I was asked something like, “So, as a graduate student in sociology you decided to pin your career hopes on writing about pigeons—what were you thinking?”

What are some issues and areas in the field of animals and society that you think could use more attention or could represent prolific areas of study for aspiring animal studies scholars?

You know, in a way it is tough to identify one or two areas because I think—within sociology, anyway—the field is still relatively wide open. While many topics have been touched on, there is still so much that has not penetrated the core of the discipline that I think someone could make groundbreaking studies—and a name for themselves—writing about how animals are implicated in gender, class, and race relations. I think a lot of the work has been very interactionist and pet-centric, and so more macro-oriented research on how animals structure human society would be great [Richard York is doing some very interesting work in this vein]. I think more research that takes animals seriously as agents in interaction and social relations—not merely social constructions—would be important [Arnold Arluke, Leslie Irvine, and Clinton Sanders have done some of the groundbreaking work in this area, but this approach could be generalized to a much broader array of sociological issues]. Another area I would love to see more work on is the disconnect between attitudes toward animals and our treatment of them: surveys consistently indicate that many people appear supportive of animal welfare, if not rights, yet relatively few people become vegetarians or animal activists. What is this discrepancy about? Do people merely misinterpret survey questions, or do they have sympathy for animals that is somehow blocked from turning into empathy?
SECTION MEMBERS’ NEW PUBLICATIONS


Distinguished Graduate Student Scholarship:


Distinguished Scholarship:

Lisa Jean Moore and Mary Kosut, Purchase College-SUNY, for their book *Buzz: Urban Beekeeping and the Power of the Bee*. NYU Press.

Clifton Bryant Animals & Society Course Award:

Liz Grauerholz, University Central Florida. Animals and Health (SYO 3408).

Elizabeth Cherry presenting Lisa Jean Moore with the 2014 Book Award.
NYU Press: Biopolitics

The Biopolitics: Medicine, Technoscience, and Health in the Twenty-First Century Series examines the intersection of various practices of medicine and technoscience with human bodies and lives through an interdisciplinary perspective, focusing in particular on the ways in which the practices of medical, technological, and scientific institutions function in the modern world. The series also seeks to understand how society and culture foster new developments in these fields that “work on” human bodies. The editors welcome submissions from scholars in medical sociology, medical anthropology, science and technology studies, bioethics, gender and sexuality studies, disability studies, and other interdisciplinary fields, and especially seek projects that offer new theoretical insights about biopolitics, analyze health-related topics in fresh ways, or take up an intellectual problem in relation to biopolitics. General Editors: Monica J. Casper, University of Arizona mjcasper@email.arizona.edu and Lisa Jean Moore, Purchase College (SUNY) lisa-jean.moore@purchase.edu Website http://nyupress.org/series/biopolitics/


Animal Publics: Emotions, Empathy, Activism. Convened by the Australian Centre and the Human Rights and Animal Ethics Research Network. Abstracts of 250 words for 20 minute paper presentations are due Monday, December 22, 2014. They should be sent to aasg-conference@unimelb.edu.au For more information, visit http://animal-publics.com


“Living with Animals II” is a reprise of the first “Living with Animals” conference that took place at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) in 2013. EKU, located in Richmond, Kentucky, just south of Lexington, “The Horse Capital of the World,” began offering the first undergraduate degree in Animal Studies in 2010. As the conference title suggests, the Living with Animals conference is offered every two years. Email contact: livingwithanimals@eku.edu Conference website http://livingwithanimals.eku.edu

Submissions for extended abstracts are invited for the 9th Junior Theorists Symposium (JTS), taking place the day before the annual meeting of the ASA. The JTS is a one-day conference featuring the work of up-and-coming theorists, sponsored in part by the Theory Section of the ASA. Since 2005, the conference has brought together early career-stage sociologists who engage in theoretical work. The organizers are pleased to announce that Patricia Hill Collins (University of Maryland), Gary Alan Fine (Northwestern University), and George Steinmetz (University of Michigan) will serve as discussants for this year's symposium. Submission deadlines: February 13, 2015.

In addition, the conference will feature an after-panel on “abstraction” featuring Kieran Healy (Duke), Virag Molnar (The New School), Andrew Perrin (UNC-Chapel Hill), and Kristen Schilt (University of Chicago). The panel will examine theory-making as a process of abstraction, focusing on the particular challenge of reconciling abstract “theory” with the concrete complexities of human embodiment and the specificity of historical events. The organizers invite all ABD graduate students, postdocs, and assistant professors who received their PhDs from 2011 onwards to submit a three-page précis (800-1000 words). The précis should include the key theoretical contribution of the paper and a general outline of the argument. As in previous years, in order to encourage a wide range of submissions there is no pre-specified theme for the conference. Instead, papers will be grouped into sessions based on emergent themes and discussants’ areas of interest and expertise. Please send submissions to the organizers, Hillary Angelo (New York University) and Ellis Monk (University of Chicago), at juniortheorists@gmail.com with the phrase “JTS submission” in the subject line. The organizers will extend up to 12 invitations to present by March 13, 2015. Please plan to share a full paper by July 27, 2015.


Compassionate Conservation 2015 is an international conference on animal welfare in conservation organized with the support of the Born Free Foundation and the Centre for Compassionate Conservation at the University of Technology in Sydney, Australia. The conference will be hosted by the Animal Welfare Program at the University of British Columbia. The conference will be a multidisciplinary event aiming to address animal welfare issues in conservation, examine potential synergies, look for practical outcomes and promote further dialogue between these disciplines. It follows the highly successful inaugural symposium at the University of Oxford in 2010. Expressions of interest may be sent to info@compassionateconservation.org
CALL FOR PAPERS - Continued from page 9

Solving Social Problems

Series Editor: Bonnie Berry, Director of the Social Problems Research Group, USA

Solving Social Problems provides a forum for the description and measurement of social problems, with a keen focus on the concrete remedies proposed for their solution. The series takes an international perspective, exploring social problems in various parts of the world, with the central concern being always their possible remedy. As such, work is welcomed on subjects as diverse as environmental damage, terrorism, economic disparities and economic devastation, poverty, inequalities, domestic assaults and sexual abuse, health care, natural disasters, labour inequality, animal abuse, crime, and mental illness and its treatment. In addition to recommending solutions to social problems, the books in this series are theoretically sophisticated, exploring various discussions of the issues in question, examining other attempts to resolve them, and adopting and discussing methodologies that are commonly used to measure social problems. Proposed solutions may be framed as changes in policy, practice, or more broadly, social change and social movement. Solutions may be reflective of ideology, but are always pragmatic and detailed, explaining the means by which the suggested solutions might be achieved.

For more information on this series please visit www.ashgate.com/SSP

Call for Proposals

Proposals should take the form of either:
1. a preliminary letter of inquiry, briefly describing the project; or
2. a formal prospectus including: abstract, brief statement of your critical methodology, table of contents,
   sample chapter, estimated word count, estimate of the number and type of illustrations to be included and a c.v.

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Service Sociology and Academic Engagement in Social Problems

Edited by A. Javier Treviño, Wheaton College, USA and
KAREN M. McCORMACK, Wheaton College, USA

‘A provocative, critical analysis of sociology’s original purpose: that of solving social problems, not just analyzing them. Thoughtful, theoretically rigorous and passionate the book presents a compelling case for returning to that mission, even within the dissident demands of sociology in the academy. This work offers both Sociology and Social Work a philosophical examination of the importance of our mutual responsibility as members of the human community.’

Kathleen McNinis Dittrich, Boston College Graduate School of Social Work, USA

With both contemporary and historical analyses, the book traces the legacy, characteristics, contours, and goals of the sociology of service, shedding light on its roots in early American sociology and its deep connections to activism, before examining the social context that underlies the call for volunteerism, community involvement and non-profit organisations, as well as the strategies that have promise in remaking contemporary social problems.

February 2014
240 pages
$89.95

Women, Incarceration, and Human Rights Violations

Feminist Criminology and Corrections

Alana Van Gundy, Miami University, USA and Amy Baumann-Grau, University of Cincinnati, USA

Women, Incarceration, and Human Rights Violations is a must-read for those who care about the imprisonment of women. Using extensive case studies, Alana Van Gundy and Amy Baumann-Grau have grounded their work squarely in the international human rights arena. They make the disturbing abuse, neglect and exploitation of women prisoners around the globe both tangible and real.”

Susan F. Sharp, University of Oklahoma, USA

‘Drawing on wide-ranging evidence to illustrate both the abuse of women and lack of attention to their gender-specific needs in USA prisons, the authors utilise United Nations Human Rights Treaties and Conventions to emphasize the precise time for change.’

Loraine Gelsthorpe, Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge, UK

A rich examination of the neglect and abuses occurring to women in correctional facilities. Women, Incarceration, and Human Rights Violations draws upon a wealth of case studies from around the world and class action law suits to shed light on ‘cover’ abuse such sexual or physical abuse, as well as ‘over’ abuse such as the denial of medical treatment. Calling attention to the necessity of addressing the gender-specific needs of women who are incarcerated, this book offers a review of current policy, laws and regulation bearing on the issue, whilst providing concrete recommendations and policy changes to address abuses.

November 2013
340 pages
$99.95
Animals and Society member, Erin M. Evans, is a contributing editor for Mobilizing Ideas, the premier blog for social movement research. Erin posts regularly on issues related to animals, including the role of pop-culture in changing societal attitudes towards animals, and the long term consequences of policy reform goals for animal advocates. Please check out her work at: http://mobilizingideas.wordpress.com/author/emevans2014/

Our colleagues across the pond have just published a sociological piece on childhood socialization and animals published by Ashgate: http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781409464600 The first chapter is available free through the publisher. There is also a 50% discount that is valid through the end of 2014. The code is A14izl50 Cole & Stewart are members of the British Sociological Association and have been very active in promoting animals & society as a subject of sociological inquiry. Their work is also featured on our new blog: http://animalsandsociety.blogspot.com/2014/12/our-children-and-other-animals-new-book.html

This is a publication of the American Sociological Association, Animals & Society Section. 
http://www.asanet.org/sectionanimals/animals.cfm