

# Sociology Graduate Program

Newsletter: Fall 2015



## Welcome to the Department of Sociology at Sam Houston State University!

The Department of Sociology faculty and staff welcome you (back) to SHSU and to another year of success in personal and academic pursuits. We will continue to provide you quality instruction, prepare you with adequate sociological knowledge and skills to work in the dynamic and changing world, and help you find the career path you wish to pursue. Graduates from our Sociology program have found careers in all levels of government, non-profit organizations, and industry.

We are thrilled to have Dr. Jason Konefal to serve as the new Director of Graduate Studies. Thanks to Jason for volunteering to take the leadership role in this very important function for the department. In addition, we are also excited to have two new faculty members joining us this fall. Dr. James Stykes (Ph.D. Bowling Green University, 2015) will be teaching classes on statistics, family, gender, population, and social stratification. His research focuses on fertility, parenthood, parenting, and

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individual well-being; gender, union formation and dissolution; family complexity and survey measurement. Dr. Tze-li Hsu (Ph. D. Florida State University, 2014) will be teaching classes on statistics, aging, family, and medical sociology. His research focuses on aging and the life course, statistics, social psychology, marriage and family, social demography, and social epidemiology.

Thank you for selecting and being part of the Department of Sociology at Sam Houston State University. We welcome all of you to drop us a note or stop by for a visit. We also welcome your input on how we can improve to make your SHSU experience meaningful and rewarding. You can keep up on what's going on in Sociology on our Facebook page ([facebook.com/SHSUsociology](https://facebook.com/SHSUsociology)).

Sincerely,

Furjen Deng, Ph. D.  
Professor and Chair

## Graduate Director Column

I hope everyone's semester is off to a good start. As the new director of the graduate program in sociology, I am still getting my feet wet. This is one of the new initiatives that I am launching. Beginning with this newsletter there will be a Graduate Program Newsletter at the start of every semester.

This newsletter contains several important pieces of information. First, is a list of important dates, including comprehensive exams. Please look these dates over to ensure that you do not miss any deadlines.

Second, there is a list of conferences that faculty members typically attend. I strongly encourage you to consider presenting a paper at one of the meetings, especially if you are considering going on to a Ph.D. program. Note that the deadline for submissions of abstracts tends to be several months prior to the meeting. The Office of Graduate Studies typically offers funding for students to attend conferences. If you are interested in potentially attending a conference and applying for funding, please let me know and monitor the Office of Graduate Studies website (<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/graduate-studies/>).



**Can you name the sociologists?**

Third, I would like to remind everyone that the graduate handbook contains a wealth of knowledge. It can be accessed at <http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/6061c5b8-5a54-44c9-8df8-ba4802e21d12.pdf>.

Fourth, I would like to congratulate your fellow graduate students Mary Ahlstrom and Julie Daniels who both received Ruth A De Blanc Scholarships for this fall. Scholarships are awarded in the spring semester for the next year. I strongly encourage all of you to apply.

Fifth, in the next week I will be setting up a Skype conference call to discuss comprehensive exams.

Sixth, please follow the graduate program on Facebook (SHSU Sociology Graduate Program) and Twitter: Graduate Director@ShsuSocGrad.

Lastly, if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Jason Konefal



## Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Emily Cabaniss

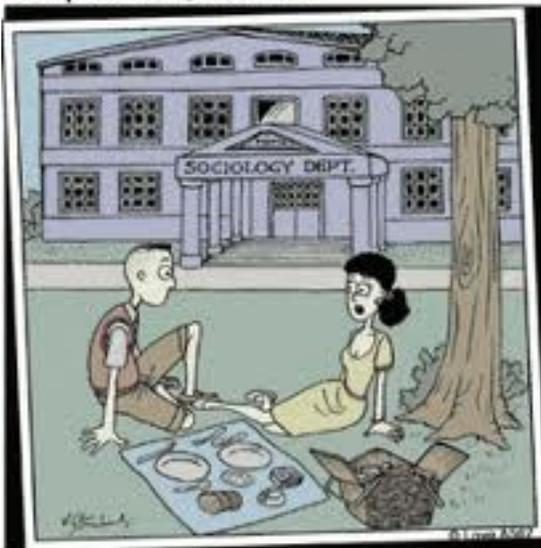
I was born in Savannah, Georgia, and spent many summers exploring the bluffs and beaches along the southern coast with my sisters and cousins. While I was still very young, my family moved to a small town in the Piedmont region of North Carolina. It was there that I started school and began building some of the most influential relationships in my life. I met my best friend in the seventh grade, when she moved to the same community from Colombia, South America. And many of my sisters' closest friends were from Southeast Asia and Latin America. North Carolina, I later learned, was home to three major immigrant and refugee resettlement agencies, which made it a particularly popular destination for newcomers. It was in that culturally rich environment that I developed an enduring curiosity about the lives and experiences of immigrants. When I started graduate school at North Carolina State University, I was able to translate that interest into a research agenda. I did my dissertation on the efforts by undocumented youth involved in the DREAM Act Movement to use their personal stories to influence the policy debates around immigration. Another project examined the work experiences of foreign-born teachers in a school for new immigrants. To date, my research has focused on themes related to the social psychology of immigration (identity, emotion work, stigma), the reproduction of inequality (race, class, gender, sexuality), and social change. I primarily use qualitative methods, including ethnographic fieldwork and in-depth interviewing; and my work is informed by the conflict and symbolic interactionist perspective.



Dr. J. Bart Stykes

I am a family demographer who is primarily interested in family formation, individual well-being, gender, and survey measurement. One line of research grew out of my master's thesis and considers multiple forms of masculinity that manifest in fatherhood and how they are associated with father involvement. Another line of work examines family complexity with a particular emphasis on data quality and adjusting survey measurement to accurately identify diversity in contemporary US families. The final vein of my research considers non-marital and unintended childbearing and their associations with union formation/dissolution, parental investment, and parent/child well-being. As a researcher and teacher, I make a special effort to enhance classroom experiences by incorporating insights from my own scholarly work. Accordingly, I am primarily interested in teaching methods and statistics classes, as well as substantive courses concerning family and demography.

Snapshots at [jasonlove.com](http://jasonlove.com)



"I love our lunches out here, but I always get the feeling that we're being watched."

## Important Dates

Comprehensive Examination: Sunday, October 25-November 8

Must Notify Graduate Director of Intent to Take Comprehensive Exam by October 1

\*To take the Comprehensive Exam: Must complete a minimum of 24 credit hours, including the three core required courses (SOC 5310, SOC 5312, and SOC 5314) and one of the applied core elective courses (SOC 5313, SOC 5376, SOC 5378, or SOC 5380), students are allowed to take the Comprehensive Examination.

September 14: Spring 2016 Class Schedules Posted

September 14: File for Graduation with the Registrar's Office for Fall 2015 Graduation

October 19: Advising for Spring 2016 begins

\*All students will need to be advised by the graduate director either via phone, Skype, or email to enroll for Spring 2016 classes.

November 6: Registration for Spring 2016 Classes opens

December 11-12: Graduation (Sociology Graduation Slot TBA)

## Conferences

American Sociological Association Annual Meeting: August 20-23, Seattle, WA.

Southern Sociological Association Annual Meeting: April 13-16, Atlanta

Midwest Sociological Association Annual Meeting: Chicago, March 23-26

Rural Sociological Society Annual Meeting : Toronto, TBA

Southern Rural Sociological Association Annual Meeting: San Antonio, February 6-9

Southwest Social Science Association Annual Meeting: Las Vegas, March 24-27

Sam Houston State Medical Conference: Spring 2016 (Exact dates TBA)

International Rural Sociology Association Congress: Toronto, August 10-14