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## **UIC Sociology's Spring 2018 Alumni Newsletter**

### **Innovative Sociology Courses Incorporate STEM Experience**



Pictured left to right, TAs Lydia Dana, Angela Silva, Cal Garrett, Ryan Sporer, Scott Wallace and Visiting Asst. Prof. of Sociology Ray Muhammad and Prof. of Engineering, Ludwig Nitsche

Visiting Assistant Professor of Sociology Ray Muhammad and Graduate Student Carla Ilten worked with Associate Professor of Chemical Engineering Ludwig Nitsche this past summer to create Sociology 100 and Sociology 105 courses that incorporate STEM principles and demonstrate the insight a sociological approach brings to the physical sciences.

#### Introduction to Sociology

Professor Muhammad has designed two extended modules that will connect behavioral and physical sciences throughout his Sociology 100 course during the Spring 2018 semester.

#### *Module 1: Testing Chicago Neighborhoods' Water Quality*

In order to understand the connections between neighborhood histories and Chicagoans' access to clean water, Dr. Muhammad created a project in which groups of students are assigned to different community areas within the city. They will conduct community background studies, detailing the social history of the neighborhood, the construction history, and past water quality test results.

Students will then make a prediction of the water quality they expect to find in their study areas, taking their own samples of water during the semester. Students will have the opportunity to bring the samples to the laboratory and then participate in real-time water tests, comparing the actual water quality with their predictions. Whatever they find, students will have thought deeply about the connections between geography, race, class, resources and infrastructure.

#### *Module 2: Women in STEM: An American History*

To explore the often invisible role of women in STEM, Ray is asking Sociology 100 students to conduct interviews with people in their family or friendship networks who are 20 and 40 years their senior. The interviews will ask about attitudes, as well as where people did and didn't see women pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Just as students will connect technology and its social underpinnings in the water quality module, so too will they connect the social underpinnings of women's participation in STEM fields during the time since Rosie the Riveter became a model of both femininity and physical capability.

#### Sociology 105: Social Problems

Doctoral Candidate Carla Ilten also worked to design a STEM module for a Social Problems course during the Fall 2017 semester. She introduced students to Science and Technology Studies through issue-oriented lessons and reflections on how social problems are connected to science and technology. One of these lessons focused on social media, and students explored how social media are used to set agendas. In particular, she focused on how social media has a direct effect on young adults' perceptions of news and of social media. In another lesson, students explored the connection between humans and technology using the example of the Flint water crisis, but bringing it closer to home through examining issues of industry and environmental justice in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago.

Carla said, "The module was successful, in combination with the instructors' own materials and efforts, in painting a complex picture of technology as a socially embedded phenomenon. Students were able to describe technology's impact and use in relation to various social processes and phenomena, ranging from interactional issues such as empathy and conflict to structural issues such as inequality and access."

#### Future Directions

By combining STEM and Sociology from the outset, students will have the distinct advantage of understanding the deeply entwined world in which we live, and will begin to locate where and how they want to contribute to it. The sociology department, under the leadership of Professor Nilda Flores Gonzalez, and

Department Head Maria Krysan is working to further develop this exciting Engineering-Sociology partnership. Stay tuned for updates on where they are hoping to take it!

## Three New Books for Three Sociology Faculty!



Profs Maria Krysan (left) and Nilda Flores-Gonzalez celebrate their new books!

Expanding sociological knowledge both inside and outside the academy walls are Professors Maria Krysan, Nilda Flores-Gonzalez and Barbara Risman, all of whom have had new books come out recently!

Dr. Flores-Gonzalez's book, *Citizens but Not Americans: Race and Belonging among Latino Millennials* (New York University Press, October 2017) explores how race shapes Latino millennials' notions of national belonging. Although these Latinos are US citizens by birth, they often do not feel like they are part of the "American project". The book examines how ancestry, skin color, language and culture converge to

shape youths' feelings of belonging as they navigate everyday racialization.

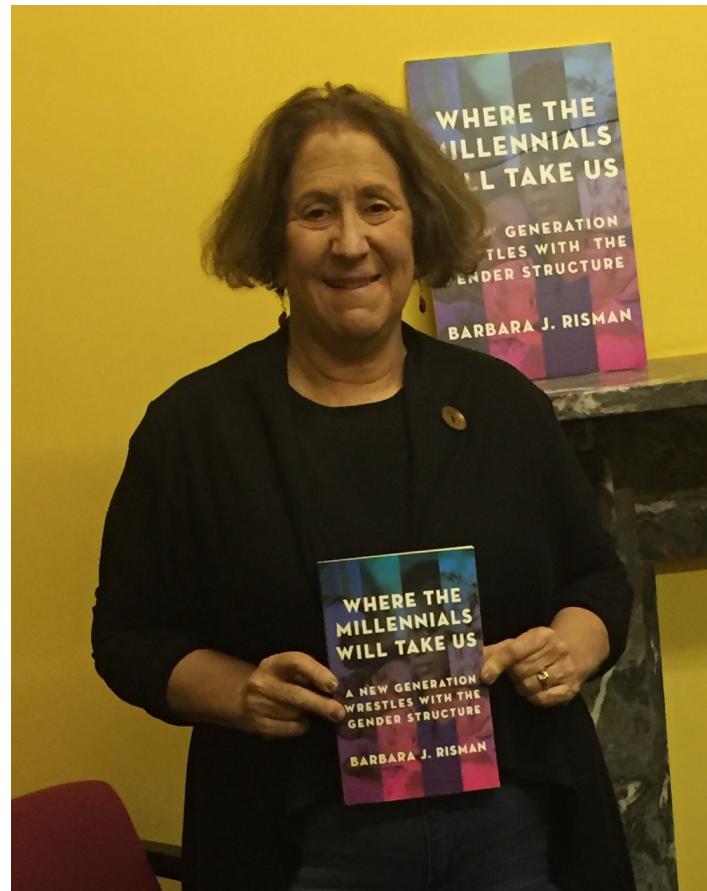
In *Cycle of Segregation: Social Processes and Residential Stratification*

(Russell Sage Foundation, December 2017) Dr. Krysan and her co-author Dr. Kyle Crowder address why 50 years after the Fair Housing Act of 1968--which outlawed housing discrimination by race--residential segregation remains virtually unchanged in metropolitan areas. The book delves into why residential segregation persists at such high rates and what makes it so difficult to combat.

Dr. Risman's *Where the Millennials Will Take Us: A New Generation Wrestles with the Gender Structure* reveals diverse strategies youth use to

negotiate the ongoing gender revolution. She finds millennials range from true believers to innovators to gender rebels, all contending with the unsettled gender norms and expectations of the era.

*Congratulations to all three of these professors on such timely and important books!*



Barbara Risman poses with her latest book!

## Thoughts on the 2018 Women's March



Photo taken by Eman H. Aly

Alumna Eman Aly spoke at the 2017 Women's March and helped organize and lead social media for the 2018 Women's March. We asked her to tell us about her experience at this year's march. As always, she shared some wonderfully inspiring thoughts.

*"Last year's Women's March was so great in that it infused the crowd with hope and motivation to make their world a better place.*

*But then we all went home, and moved on to our day to day, and the world kept turning. As we reflected on 2017, we realized the movement still had much to do. So the organizers of the Women's March Chicago came together*

*late in 2017 to launch the 2018 Women's March and called it "March to the Polls".*

*As citizens of this nation, I think we have all realized that if we wanted to see change at the top, we have to start from the bottom. We need the people who represent us to look like us, and that means that more women need to run for office and the rest of us need to vote in more elections than just the big ones in November.*

*That's what the march was about, and it was exhilarating. I was honored to speak last year, and this year I did what I do best and that was helping the organizers with social media. So I had incredible access to the stage and the backstage area to capture pictures of the speeches and the march. The energy was high and happy, just as it was last year. And the march saw bigger crowds than last year.*

*Overall the message was that we need to get more involved in our communities civically. If we have the capacity and resources to run for office, then we should do that. If we only vote in the big elections, then we need to vote in all the elections. If we are registered to vote but have never voted, then we need to make sure that we at minimum vote in the big elections. If we're eligible to vote, and not registered to vote, register NOW and vote in the next election.*

*Not everyone is going to run, but everyone needs to vote. It's a right and a responsibility. And we march on.*



Photo by Eman H. Aly

Chicago, Illinois 60607-7140

Phone (312)996-3005

Fax (312)996-5104

Website: <http://www.soc.uic.edu/sociology>

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