

FORUM, WINTER 2025

*The Official Newsletter of the Mid-South
Sociological Association, Inc.*



The Mid-South Sociological Association Inc. (MSSA), founded in 1975, is a 501-C-(3) non-profit organization providing both professional support to, and a forum for sociologists who teach, conduct research and reside in the Mid-South region of the US. Through its publications, annual conference, academic support and collegial networks, MSSA. promotes the advancement of sociological research, the diffusion of knowledge, innovative service and teaching. From its inception, MSSA, Inc has been and continues to be committed to mentoring and enabling the growth of the next generation of sociologists in the value of high-quality research and engagement, and ethical, professional service.

The Mid-South Sociological Association Inc. embraces diversity and promotes inclusion by recruiting, including, and valuing people of all races, genders and gender identities, sexualities, ethnicities, religions, economic and employment statuses, abilities, and other dimensions. The MSSA celebrates all expressions of diversity and identity and strives to provide an environment conducive to free expression of ideas without fear of judgment in any way. Moreover, the MSSA does not tolerate any action from any member or conference participant that encourages or promotes hatred and/or intolerance in any form. Further, to the extent that the Board determines that it is not detrimental to the best interests (financial and otherwise) of the association, the MSSA will use the economic power of the annual conferences and other activities to select locations and enter into agreements with businesses that have policies and practices that reflect the values of the MSSA.

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From The President's Desk

Dear Colleagues,

As we begin our journey towards the next 50 years for the Mid-South Sociological Association, the work we do has never been more important. Your research, teaching, and service to the discipline documents the lived experiences within our social worlds. As scholars, we create a contemporary time stamp of the human condition through our work, demonstrating power dynamics and democratic advances alike. As teachers, we weave the past with the present to understand the future. Through our service, we help to create passion among the next generation as we share our own diverse knowledges and commitments to social justice.



As we look forward to 2026 and all the new year's surprises it will hold, I want to highlight our own role as an association and scholarly community. We are here to support your academic achievements! We are here to provide a space and place to share your work and have it be understood – we want your articles submitted to *Sociological Spectrum*! We want your applications submitted for the Lyman Dissertation Award! We want to connect you to peers who become friends that last for decades! We are here to encourage you, support you, and help you grow as sociologists.

So, whether you look upon 2026 with excitement, angst, or ennui, just remember we, the MSSA, are here for you. I can't wait to see you at our next meeting: *Revisiting Democracy: Facts, Fears and Myths about the Threats to American Democracy*, in Huntsville, AL on October 14-17, 2026.

As always, many thanks for all you do for the MSSA,

Jess Pardee, Ph.D.

President, Mid-South Sociological Association
Associate Professor of Science, Technology, and Society
Rochester Institute of Technology

Editor's Introduction

Welcome, everyone, to the Winter Issue of *Forum*, the “voice of the Mid-South.” As you all know, we are coming off of a very successful conference in North Augusta, SC. I had a wonderful time connecting with old friends and new, learning from my peers, and discovering that many of our members are deeply serious karaoke singers. When I attend these annual meetings, I feel a strong sense of community, and this is why I love MSSA. And while the conference didn’t bring only good news – it was jarring to hear about the threats to academic freedom that many members were reporting – I was also reminded that this is *why* building academic community and support networks are so important.



In recent weeks, we were also reminded that we should not take this community or our relationship to each other for granted. In December, we learned of the passing of [Dr. Ashleigh McKinzie](#). Ashleigh was an active and respected member of our organization. She was kind, thoughtful, and always supportive of our student members. She will be greatly missed.

In this issue of *Forum*, despite these challenges, we celebrate the accomplishments of our members. In the pages ahead, you will find a commentary piece on “Recognizing Zemiology in the U.S.” from Dr. Jason Ulsperger and a teaching note on Vaun Baltimore’s innovative approach to teaching sociological theory through tabletop roleplaying games. Additionally, you will be introduced to MSSA’s recent award winners, first time conference attendees, and newly elected executive council members. And of course, it wouldn’t be a proper edition of *Forum* if we didn’t also make note of members wins, including recent publications and promotions.

Forum is a publication that is made possible MSSA’s membership. If you have any questions about or ideas for the newsletter, feel free to reach out (schneiderm@uncw.edu)! I would love to create space in the newsletter for your work. This might include, but is not limited to commentary pieces, teaching notes, and reflections on the discipline. We will also be creating space to remember Ashleigh in the next issue. If you have any memories you’d like to share, please be in touch.

As always, thanks for trusting me to amplify your voices. I hope to hear from you soon!

Matt Schneider, Ph.D.
Forum Editor, Mid-South Sociological Association
 Assistant Professor of Sociology
 University of North Carolina Wilmington

Commentary

Recognizing Zemiology in the U.S.

*Jason Ulsperger, Ph.D.
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Most of us teach deviance and crime with traditional theoretical tools. Theories based on them help us explain much to students eager to learn. They also miss a lot. Zemiology, the study of harm, starts with a different question: what injuries shape everyday life even when nothing spectacularly abhorrent or illegal happens?

With a current project on harm and family breakdown, I argue that families experience injury long before harsh community reactions, administrative punishments, police, courts, or corrections enter the picture. Three areas make the point. First, consider long-term care. Staff shortages and efficiency rules turn “care” into rushed routines and confusion that spreads through a whole facility. Second, contemplate a child’s medical diagnosis. Parents learn to manage insurance, referrals, and school meetings while absorbing stigma and fatigue. Third, think about domestic life. Coercive rituals involving the control of money, isolation from friends, and patterned silence undercut an intimate partner’s freedom without leaving marks. None of this requires a criminal charge, but all of it grinds people down.

Structural Ritualization Theory (SRT), developed by past MSSA President J. David Knottnerus, gives a clear way to track these injuries. It asks us to look at the patterned practices that hold a day together and to notice what happens when those patterns change. With a precise definition of “ritualized symbolic practices,” it argues that when repetition, meaning, similar actions, and resources line up, people feel steady. When they do not, strain grows. SRT literature uses a simple sequence to describe this: disruption, deritualization, and reritualization. With disruptions, there is an interruption of rituals. Deritualization then emerges and rituals stop. Reritualization involves building a new set of rituals for an emerging sense of self and stability.

This is where zemiology and SRT meet. Zemiology keeps our attention on harm that most do not see. SRT shows how that harm travels. Put together, they have the potential to help sociologists name specific policies and procedures existing in the shadows and alleviate injuries. In a nursing home, something as simple as unrushed mealtime can elevate dignity. After a diagnosis, a short pre-visit call from a hospital social worker and a systematic follow-up can steady the family’s week. In a household under pressure, sociologically recognizing coercive sequences producing personal and family instability early has the potential to halt minor and significant destruction. The U.K. has pushed this conversation further than we have. The U.S. needs to catch up. For example, we know how bureaucracy in our institutions easily objectifies people and produces social carnage. Consider how things have changed so radically in university settings as of late. As sociologists, we need to widen our traditional frameworks addressing deviance and crime, especially in the current historical context. Clinical sociology might be one place to do that work. It is reemerging internationally, and the basic task fits our



classrooms and communities: connect patterned symbolic routines to lived outcomes and design repairs that people can actually perform.

C. Wright Mills wanted people to develop their sociological imaginations. I certainly think most still fail to connect personal troubles to public issues. Bernard Phillips reminds us that sociological understanding requires moving down and up the ladder of abstraction, linking the concrete routines of everyday life with the broader structures. When we begin at the level of everyday routines, the value of sociological thinking becomes immediately visible, not as theory for specialists, but as a practical lens for making ordinary life more livable. We have to keep pushing that agenda. Zemiology can help by insisting we focus on the routine injuries that never reach stages of public outrage or hallowed courtrooms. SRT gives us the mechanism to gauge how disruption spreads, how order erodes, and how repair begins. When the public can see how ordinary harms take shape and how they can be repaired, the broader value of sociology becomes clearer for everyone.

Teaching Note

Rolling for Theory: Teaching Sociology through Dungeons and Dragons

Vaun Baltimore

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In recent years, tabletop roleplaying games have emerged as powerful tools for education, creativity, and collaboration. Among them, Dungeons and Dragons stands out not only for its enduring popularity, but also for its capacity to model complex social systems through narrative play. Once stigmatized during the moral panics of the 1980s and 1990s (Laycock 2015), the game has since undergone a cultural renaissance. New editions have made its mechanics more accessible, and positive portrayals in mainstream media have reframed it as a space for imagination, empathy, and identity exploration. This shift opens new possibilities for sociological engagement.

Although I have not yet implemented this approach in a formal classroom setting, I have play-tested a sociologically grounded Dungeons and Dragons module with undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty members. Most recently, I facilitated a workshop at the Mid-South Sociological Association conference in North Augusta, South Carolina, where participants explored how roleplay can illuminate core sociological theories. The experience revealed not only the pedagogical potential of tabletop games, but also the value of collaborative inquiry across academic levels.

This model builds upon earlier classroom activities I have facilitated, including a modified version of Monopoly designed to teach inequality. In that exercise, students were assigned specific social profiles that shaped their access to resources and ability to accumulate wealth, prompting discussion about structural constraints and privilege (Feagin and Vera 2008).

The adventure begins in Baldur's Gate, a sprawling metropolis on the Sword Coast known for its diverse cultures, bustling markets, and layered social dynamics. Players arrive in the city and are approached by Elara Dirken, a respected sociologist conducting a study on urban inequality and institutional power. She has identified three key districts for investigation: the Market District, the Undercity, and the Noble Quarter. Each area presents distinct challenges. In the Market District, escalating tensions have made her presence unwelcome. In the Undercity, resource access is tightly controlled by elite factions who actively suppress outside inquiry into their influence and operations. In the Noble Quarter, thefts and threats have obstructed access to critical information. As these disruptions mount, Elara enlists the party's help in completing her research and confronting the forces that seek to suppress it. Unbeknownst to the players, a powerful noble named Lord Jothar McCarthis is working to undermine Elara's efforts to preserve his control over the city's power dynamics.

Each segment of the adventure is designed to foreground a foundational sociological theory. The Market District emphasizes symbolic interactionism, inviting students to analyze meaning-making, identity negotiation, and micro-level interactions in a contested public space (Blumer 1969; Goffman 1959). In this encounter, players must navigate a dispute between merchant groups over the symbolic use of flags that represent cultural identity and territorial claims. The Undercity

centers on conflict theory, challenging players to investigate an impoverished community whose access to basic resources—such as clean water and medical supplies—is being restricted by noble factions seeking to preserve their dominance (Marx [1848] 1978; Collins 1975). This scenario highlights structural inequality and the reproduction of power through resource control. The Noble Quarter explores functionalism, as players examine a series of thefts that have disrupted ceremonial roles, economic exchanges, and institutional routines within elite society (Durkheim [1895] 1982; Parsons 1951). The investigation reveals how social systems rely on interdependent functions and how disruptions can expose underlying tensions. These theoretical lenses guide both gameplay and analysis, allowing students to connect narrative developments to sociological paradigms.

To support this engagement, I have developed a participatory mechanic known as the Fate Token system. While a subset of students actively roleplay as characters within the scenario, the rest of the class serves as Elara's Research Assistants. These assistants observe the unfolding narrative, take notes, and contribute sociological theories to help the players interpret and respond to in-game challenges. Each assistant is given one Fate Token to award to a player in recognition of that player's theoretical insight, ethical reasoning, or strategic collaboration. Players may then use these tokens to influence outcomes in the game world, such as altering events, gaining access to restricted knowledge, or protecting vulnerable populations. This structure reinforces the idea that sociological understanding carries real consequences, both within the narrative and in broader social contexts.

Throughout playtesting, participants have reported increased engagement, deeper understanding of abstract concepts, and a sense of ownership over their learning. Roleplay encourages empathy and reflexivity, allowing students to ask not only what the theory suggests, but how they might respond if placed in similar situations. It also fosters collaborative analysis, as students debate strategies, interpret outcomes, and connect narrative developments to sociological literature.

This approach requires careful design, ethical boundaries, and inclusive world-building. The goal is not to gamify sociology, but to use narrative as a bridge between theory and practice. By positioning students as co-creators of meaning, the activity transforms the classroom into a space of inquiry, imagination, and critical reflection.

As I continue to refine this model, I remain inspired by the creativity and insight demonstrated during playtesting. The characters reflect diverse values and experiences.

The decisions reveal tensions between agency and structure. The reflections suggest that even in fictional worlds, the questions of sociology remain urgent and real.

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2025 Award Winners

DeMond Miller, Rowan University, Calhoun Excellence in Mentoring Award

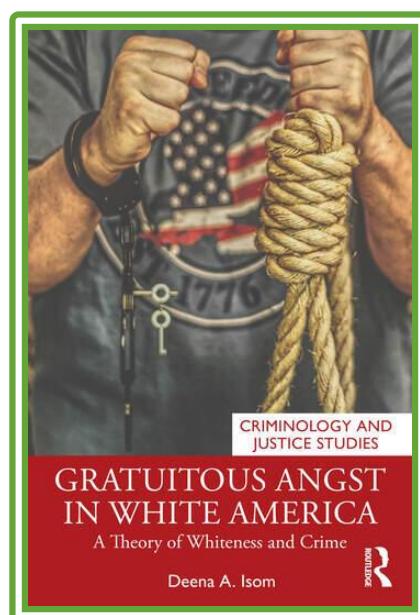
Named after Thomas C. Calhoun, an influential and long-time member of the MSSA, this prestigious award honors members who provide exceptional support to the development and career advancement of their students. This year, the award was earned by Dr. DeMond Miller, who accepted the award in person to a standing ovation. Dr. Rosalyn Harrington, who wrote a letter in support of Dr. Miller noted that he "has exemplified the highest standards of mentorship, scholarship, and service. His unwavering commitment to student success and professional development has left an indelible mark on countless individuals across disciplines and backgrounds... Dr. Miller's compassion remains both a guiding principle and a source of strength—reminding us all that the measure of our progress is not only in what we achieve, but also in how we uplift those around us."



Deena Isom, University of South Carolina, Standford M. Lyman Distinguished Book Award Winner

Gratuitous Angst in White America: A Theory of Whiteness and Crime

Gratuitous Angst in White America presents a new criminological theory that explains the racialized experiences of white people. Unlike orthodox traditions that assume whiteness as normative or progressive traditions that center the experiences of the marginalized and oppressed, the theory of whiteness and crime flips those perspectives and turns a lens toward white people's lived experiences and the ideologies of whiteness. The theory of whiteness and crime answers two overarching questions: How does being white impact one's likelihood of engaging in deviant, criminal, and/or violent behaviors? And, why are white people treated differently than other racial and ethnic groups by the criminal legal system? Through the application of a critical whiteness perspective to criminology, the theory of whiteness and crime is an intersectional and integrated framework that explains within (and between) group differences in negative behaviors and entanglements with the criminal legal system.



This book examines the racialized history of America to contextualize the current racial strife in society and inform a more nuanced theoretical approach to explaining disparities. The reader will gain a socio-historical understanding of the depths of the current divides and insight into how such are perpetuated and potentially dismantled. Students will see connections between various theoretical traditions and an application of theory to current social conditions. Researchers will acquire a new theoretical foundation and propositions to ground empirical work that will fill

extensive gaps in the criminological literature. And policy makers will see how oversights in understanding the depths of historical significance perpetuate and increase disparities and disadvantages, which are counter to a pursuit of justice.

<https://www.routledge.com/Gratuitous-Angst-in-White-America-A-Theory-of-Whiteness-and-Crime/Isom/p/book/9780367763992>

Mashaekh Hassan, Florida Atlantic University, Graduate Paper Competition Winner

“Crossing the Line: Felani Khatun’s Tragedy and the Gendered, Racialized Politics of the Bangladesh-India Border”

This paper examines Felani Khatun’s case within the broader context of migration control, focusing on how borders function to uphold a system of violence that disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable, while reinforcing national security narratives that dehumanize and criminalize migrant bodies. Followed by an outline of the theoretical approach, the paper turns to a critical review. This critical review is organized into three sections: (1) the historical and contemporary context of the Bangladesh-India border, exploring how it became a site that requires protection by specialized government forces; (2) an examination of how the concepts of legality/illegality and “otherness” are constructed within the context of border control; (3) a discussion of how Felani’s case is situated within this broader framework, highlighting how her death reflects the disposability of certain bodies, framed as a necessary security measure shaped by racialized, gendered, and classed assumptions about her body.

Jade Tran, Loyola University New Orleans, Undergraduate Paper Competition Winner

“The Racialization of Radicalism: Communism and Racial Imagery”

This study aims to revisit a field of academic literature on communism and race that has, in the past half-century, been largely neglected—or avoided—in the mainstream political perspective. Using a randomized survey experiment (N = 85), this study examines whether exposure to racialized images of communists influences respondents’ views on communism and economic redistribution. Drawing upon historical and theoretical frameworks laid by Marx and Du Bois, and elaborated upon by Melter and others, I hypothesize that Americans primed with non-white representations of communists will exhibit stronger anti-communist sentiment than those shown white communists or neutral content. This research aims to contribute to understandings of how race operates as a powerful predictor of political attitudes, and how white supremacy acts as a foundational pillar of capitalist production in the United States.

Katie Capuano, University of North Carolina Wilmington, Undergraduate Paper Competition Second Place

“The Costs of Outsourcing Climate Solutions to Artificial Intelligence from an Environmental Justice Framework.”

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a technological innovation that is evolving particularly in the field of climate change research. Previous literature has studied how AI benefits the exploration and feasibility of climate change mitigation and adaptation; however, this paper investigates the implications of outsourcing climate change solutions to AI on environmental outcomes through its carbon footprint, neoliberal ideologies, and overall alignment problem. The intersections of the Anthropocene and the information and technological revolution raise several questions in both the natural and social scientific research. As such, the guiding research question is: how does outsourcing climate solutions to AI contribute to further environmental degradation and unequal distribution of environmental burdens? Researching the implications of AI through an interdisciplinary lens will be imperative to the future of studying the environmental and societal impacts of climate change in the age of technology. This paper critically addresses how such implications bring about environmental justice concerns through unequal distribution of pollutants and toxic materials, neoliberal objectives that turn natural resources into a commodity, and how its alignment problem contributes to skewed opinions from the general public on not just AI itself, but disparities enacted through the climate crisis as well. I hold that the infrastructure behind generative AI must be restructured to address its extensive carbon footprint, growth-centered approach, and misalignment before it can begin developing proper mitigation strategies. With the use of environmental sociology, the issues surrounding AI's counter technologies, neoliberal ideologies, and alignment problem can be better addressed and understood, ensuring that AI's benefits can actually be put into practice without the occurrence of additional environmental degradation.

Abigail Kizziah, Samford University, Undergraduate Paper Competition Third Place

“Effects of Family Size on Imprudent Behavior in Adulthood”

Family size is an often-discussed decision, and stereotypes and narratives about only(or middle, oldest, youngest) children abound. This paper aims to contribute to a fuller understanding of the developmental consequences of family size, adding to the literature base that agrees on the negative effects of large families. Using the Add Health Wave V public use data, risky and imprudent behavior as defined in the general theory of crime is analyzed in relation to number of siblings in an attempt to determine long-term behavioral effects of large families. Theories of self-control, resource dilution, life course, and strain are utilized to explain levels of deviance in relation to sibship size. Regression and correlation analysis reveals no relationship between adulthood-specific deviance and sibship size, but significant correlation between general life-stage deviance and sibship size. This reveals an opportunity for further research on effects of sibling number in adulthood, and in changes over time in deviant and imprudent behavior.

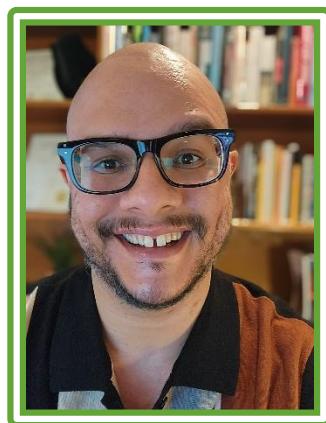
Member Spotlight – Newly Elected Executive Councilors*President Elect, Giselle Greenidge, Northwest Missouri State*

Dr. Giselle Greenidge is an Associate Professor of Sociology in the Behavioral Sciences Division in the School of Health Science and Wellness at Northwest Missouri State University. She received her doctoral degree in Sociology from the University of North Texas. She currently teaches General Sociology, Race and Ethnic Issues, Social Stratification, and Research Methods in the Social Science. Her research interests include race and ethnicity, culture, social movements, and visual ethnography.

Dr. Greenidge has been involved with the Mid-South Sociological Association (MSSA) since 2015 at the 41st Annual Conference where she presented and competed in the Graduate Student Paper Competition session. She is currently serving as President-Elect (2025-2026). Previously, she held the position of Vice President-Elect (2023-2024) and Vice President (2024-2025). Additionally, she has served on the Stanford M. Lyman Distinguished Book Award Committee and the Committee on Racial and Ethnic Minorities.

*Secretary-Treasurer, Marcus Brooks, Western Kentucky University*

Dr. Marcus Brooks first attended the MSSA conference when he was a graduate student at Middle Tennessee State University (2013-15) and continued going regularly during his PhD program at the University of Cincinnati (2017-2022). Now an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Western Kentucky University, his work broadly examines how the laundering and mainstreaming of reactionary racist rhetoric in the media, and especially social media, influences public understanding about race and racism. Marcus' current projects examine how the changes in U.S. culture, technology, and population demographics force us to reconsider our disciplinary assumptions about race, racism, and national identity. His work is informed by the traditions of Black and Public Sociology and focuses on using his research findings to inform his public education and scholar activism. He is also the leading expert on the life and work of the little-known, Harlem Renaissance-era, Atlanta University trained sociologist, Augustus Granville Dill. He draws on the tradition established by Dill to inform his practice of Black Public Sociology. You can find Marcus' work in numerous outlets, including, most recently, [Social Problems](#), [Sociology Compass](#), [Social Currents](#), and [Sociology of Race and Ethnicity](#).



January 2026

Membership Committee Chair, Stephen P. Davis, Arizona State University

A member of MSSA since 2020 and a proud Sociology ally, Stephen P. Davis is an anthropologist, geographer, and Associate Teaching Professor in Arizona State University's organizational leadership (OGL) program. He is the new chair of the MSSA Membership Committee. He teaches grad and undergrad courses such as "Diversity and Organizations," "Leading Social Change," and "Leadership for Wicked Environmental Problems" while serving as chair of the college Curriculum Committee, coordinator of the Teaching Innovations Exchange, director of the Leadership Innovations Lab, lead faculty on study abroad programs in Ireland and South America, and leader of ASU's circle of Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK), the national leadership honors society. He is a former farm boy, theatre nerd, football player, English major, and editor at Encyclopedia Britannica (in Chicago). In his down time he is an ethnographer among Phoenix-area street activists, vegan entrepreneurs, and animal-rights organizers while repairing the Great Wall of Cathay (for cats with Feline Leukemia) in his backyard and lugging equipment and socials around for his wife's pop-punk band www.mermaidriot.com.



Nominations Committee Chair, Brett Lehman, Auburn University at Montgomery

I am an Associate Professor of Sociology at Auburn University at Montgomery. I first attended an MSSA conference as a graduate student in 2009. With the exception of a few years with scheduling conflicts, I have regularly attended MSSA meetings since that time. That includes participating on panels, organizing sessions, and presiding over sessions. I have been a member of both the Nominations and Membership committees. Along with being the current chair of the Nominations committee, I also serve on the Sociological Spectrum editorial board. I teach across the Sociology curriculum at my University, including core courses such as Statistics, Research Methods, and Senior Capstone. My research focuses on bullying victimization and other forms of school-based aggression through the analysis of publicly available survey data. Based on these interests I also enjoy teaching courses on Criminology, Sociology of Education, and Inequalities.



January 2026

*Racial and Ethnic Minorities Committee Chair, Jenn Simmns,
University of Tennessee, Knoxville*

Jennifer Patrice Sims is a sociologist at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She has been a member of MSSA since 2020 and is a past winner of the Stanford M. Lyman Distinguished Book Award. Her research examines racial construction, perception, and identity, and interrogates how knowledge about race and racism is produced and disseminated. She is the author of four books-- *The Fallacies of Racism* (2024), *The Inequality of Racial Perception* (forthcoming), *Mixed-Race in the US & UK* (2020), and *The Sociology of Harry Potter* (2012)-- and over a dozen articles/book chapters. She offers academic book proposal reviews to aspiring writers and routinely speaks at universities & corporations and to national & international news media.



Member Spotlight: First Time Attendees from University of North Carolina at Pembroke

Ciara Smith

My name is Ciara Smith, and I am a senior at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke majoring in sociology. I am interested in mental health, substance abuse, and medical sociology fields. In the future, I am interested in being an advocate for marginalized communities and possibly helping out with non-profits. I truly enjoyed networking with people from different university's as well as presenting my own work and bringing attention to the community conditions in Robeson County, North Carolina. I feel that my experience at MSSA was extremely beneficial to me simply because of the connections I made as well as all of the things I learned from my peers and other experts in the field.



Trey Watson

Trey Watson is an undergraduate student at UNCP and has academic interests in veterans and mental health. He would like to attend graduate school for sociology and eventually work with veteran populations. He believes that his first trip to MSSA was very helpful in explaining more about the graduate school process while also exposing me to more research in the field of sociology.



Geterean D. Wright

Geterean Wright (center) is an undergraduate student at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke with a major in sociology and minor in psychology. His academic interests include learning about mental health and how mental health issues not only heavily affect individuals but also their communities. His career/academic goals are to continue conducting mental health research, to attend more academic conferences, and to network with other emerging scholars. Ultimately, he hopes to attend a graduate level Clinical Mental Health Program.

Through MSSA, he has enjoyed meeting new people and experiencing a new place. It was his first time in North Augusta, he learned about expectations for graduate school through conference programming, and he feels that attending research presentations will help as he pursues his own research agenda.



Publication Spotlight

- **Dollar, Cindy Brooks.** 2025. "Considerations on the Construction, Timing, and Consequences of the Psychedelic Renaissance." *Contemporary Drug Problems*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00914509251344637>.
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- **Lehman, Brett** and Chenghui Zhang. 2025. "Bias-Based Bullying and Hate Crimes in Schools". *Handbook on Marginalized Groups in the United States and their Challenges*. Editor, Maruice Mangum. Routledge.
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- Ojeh, Kalasia and **Marcus A. Brooks.** In Press. "The Multiplicity of Race Structures Theory: How the Black Sociological Tradition Helps to Rewrite Our Structural Understanding of Race." *Sociology of Race & Ethnicity*.
- **Reiter, Abigail, Miranda Reiter, Matthew Jerome Schneider**, and Timothy Dacey. 2025. "'I Have to Change Sometimes Little Pieces of Me so That I Don't Come Off a Certain Way': Managing Black and Brown Identities at the White University." *Sociological Inquiry*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soin.70024>.
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- **Schneider, Matthew Jerome** and Brian F. O'Neill. 2025. "Social Science for a Just Transition." *Sustainability and Climate Change* 18(4): 247-266. <https://doi.org/10.1177/26922932251369516>.
- **Schneider, Matthew Jerome** and Brian F. O'Neill. 2025. "'Thank you in advance for not changing my retirement home's intrinsic beauty': NIMBYism, environmental privilege and the politics of offshore wind energy." *Coastal Studies & Society* 4(1): 54-83. <https://doi.org/10.1177/26349817251315582>.
- **Schneider, Matthew Jerome**, Tessa Newson, and Cara Schildknecht. 2025. "'What's right for the environment is right in every other way': environmental volunteering as a gateway to environmental justice frameworks." *Sociological Spectrum*.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02732173.2025.2519342>.

- **Sims, Jennifer Patrice**, Melina Lanius, Ryan Conners, and Candice Lanius. 2025. "The Physiology of Sociology: Students' Biometric Response to Lessons on Race and Racism." *Teaching Sociology*: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0092055X251380849>.

Causes for Celebration!

- **Harry F. Dahms** has helped establish The Center for Social Theory at the University of Tennessee Knoxville! The center builds upon more than a decade of work executed by the Committee on Social Theory, Dr. Dahms, and Dr. Allen R. Dunn. Aimed at fostering interdisciplinary research across the social sciences, humanities, and natural/applied sciences, the center now institutionalizes the committee's efforts and activities through conferences, lectures by visiting scholars and faculty, student capstone presentations, an interdisciplinary graduate certificate, and the creation of a new online journal. Organized around seven thematic complexes -- American Society/Modernity; Constellations of Past, Present, and Future; Film, Television, and Literature; Governance and Law in the 21st Century; Mass Media and Social Media; Technology and Society; and Universities and Higher Education – the center will provide a vital space for intellectual exchange that complements and counterbalances disciplinary boundaries. You can learn more about The Center for Social Theory [here](#).
- **Stephen P. Davis** was promoted to Associate Teaching Professor School of Applied Professional Studies at Arizona State University.
- **Mei Escue** and colleagues Bryan Sales and Haitao Zhao earned a \$85,000 North Carolina Collaboratory Grant for an interdisciplinary project on AI Adoption in Small Farms in Robeson County, NC.
- **Deena A. Isom** won the American Society of Criminology's Division on Critical Criminology & Social Justice's 2025 Jock Young Criminological Imagination Book Award for *Gratuitous Angst in White America: A Theory of Whiteness and Crime*. [This comes as no surprise to as, as *Gratuitous Angst* also won this year's MSSA Stanford Lyman Book Award :)].
- **Casey Schreiber** was promoted to Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Dillard University!
- **Jason Ulsperger** appeared in the THV11 (Little Rock) documentary *Danger in the Silos*, where he discussed his book *The 53: Rituals, Grief, and a Titan II Missile Disaster*, recipient of the MSSA Stanford Lyman Book Award. He provided historical and community context related to the long-term emotional impact of the event.

Join us in Huntsville, AL for the 52st Annual MSSA Conference!



See [MSSA Membership Rate Structure](#) for membership pricing.

Join or renew your membership and register for the conference using our [Online Portal](#).

Hotel Information

Embassy Suites by Hilton Huntsville
 Address: 800 Monroe Street, Huntsville, Alabama, 35801
 Phone: (256) 539-7373

Block Rate Booking Information Coming Soon!

Conference Registration Rates

| | Early Registration | Late Registration |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|
| 2026 Regular Meeting Registration | \$120.00 | \$150.00 |
| 2026 Emeritus Meeting Registration | \$120.00 | \$150.00 |
| 2026 Joint Meeting Registration | \$120.00 | \$150.00 |
| 2026 Non Member Meeting Registration | \$155.00 | \$185.00 |
| 2026 Graduate Student Meeting Registration | \$70.00 | \$100.00 |
| 2026 Undergraduate Student Meeting Registration | \$55.00 | \$85.00 |
| 2026 Sponsored Undergraduate Registration | \$10.00 | \$10.00 |

2026 CALL FOR SESSION ORGANIZERS



As President-Elect and Program Chair, I am excited to invite you to organize a session for the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Sociological Association to be held **October 14-17, 2026, in Huntsville, AL**, in-person with an online option for a limited number of participants.

This year's theme is:

Revisiting Democracy: Facts, Fears and Myths about the Threats to American Democracy

This theme is meant to set a contemplative and profound mood of the meeting as we recognize our 52nd Annual Conference. The MSSA was formed in 1975 to not only provide professional support to its members but to also foster engagement among the future generation of sociologists. I implore each of us to meditate on what democracy means in the 21st century and why it is important in maintaining an inclusive and empowered society. I encourage you to consider organizing a panel discussion, paper session, poster session, roundtable, or workshop that incorporates this year's theme. You may propose sociological or interdisciplinary panels and sessions - all topics are welcome.

Please submit your session no later than **February 1, 2026**. Send your ideas for organizing a session to mssaprogramchair@midsouthsoc.org. Include a brief description (and a working title if you have one), type of session, whether you would prefer an online or in-person session, and your contact information. I eagerly anticipate collaborating with you to create a successful and inspiring conference!

Types of Sessions:

Panel Session: A discussion focused on a particular topic guided by a group of expert panelists.

Paper Session: 3-5 individuals present their research followed by a Q&A session.

Poster Session: Individual presenters display a poster version of their research and provide a brief description to viewers.

Roundtable: Conducted at a round table, intended to bring together individuals interested in a particular topic to discuss ideas, ongoing research, or ask questions.

Workshop: Directed sessions with the goal of participatory learning.

Thank you for your time and service to the MSSA!

Giselle Greendale, PhD

**Questions about MSSA? Want to get involved?
Reach out to our Executive Council!**

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Committee on Nominations, [Brett Lehman](#), Auburn University at Montgomery

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Technology Committee, [Harry F. Dahms](#), University of Tennessee - Knoxville

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