

SEMAPHORE



October 2016

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE GEORGIA SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

President's Pen

Dr. Philip Thomas, President Georgia Sociological Association

Dear GSA members and friends,

Over the past 52 years, the GSA has grown to become one of the best state sociological associations. We certainly understand the value of academic research and scholarship and the need to come together to renew our spirit.

Many of us are reminiscing about last year's GSA meeting at Jekyll Island. This year we are planning an interesting and exciting meeting which will be held at Embassy Suites in Savannah on October 26-28. The executive committee members and the Program Chair, Sara Mason, are working hard to get ready for the meeting.

I hope many of you are working hard to get your presentations ready. Even if you do not have a paper to present, please make plans to attend the meeting. You will enjoy the discussions. The theme of the meeting is "Transformation of the South: Georgia on My Mind." The program includes several fabulous speakers. One of the plenary session speakers is Katherine S. Lowney of Valdosta State University, a noted sociologist with a national reputation and the past editor of the American Sociological Association's journal Teaching Sociology. She is the co-author of *In the Trenches: Teaching and Learning Sociology*. If you teach sociology, you do not want to miss her presentation. Another speaker will be the Director of the Pin Point Museum which is dedicated to Gullah/Geechee culture.

We are encouraging graduate and undergraduate student participation. If you or your students have a paper, please contact the program chair through her email, sara.mason @ung.edu. Since sociologists have been increasingly specializing and our specialized areas overlap with other social science disciplines and humanities, please encourage your colleagues also to attend our meeting. Whether they have a paper related to the theme or not, we will find a space in the program.

Other important events include a business luncheon and awards ceremony on Thursday, and a presidential reception on the same evening with a low country boil and a tour of the Pin Point museum.

Given the attractive program in terms of the nature and variety of sessions as well as the attractions of a fabulous city, this is a meeting you will not want to miss. Savannah is one of Georgia's "must-see" places. It is Georgia's oldest city and is known for its architecture and Southern hospitality. Almost two dozen squares make up the Historic District and the celebrated Forsyth Park and fountain. Speaking of Savannah, the readers of the 2016 September issue of Travel & Leisure magazine ranked Savannah as the 6th highest city for food out of all cities in the U.S.

Looking forward to seeing you in Savannah!

Philip Thomas

President

Reminder:

This year's annual meeting begins on Wednesday afternoon and ends on Friday noon.

**** INFORMATION ON THURSDAY NIGHT PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION****

Please RSVP The GSA President's reception will be held at the Pin Point Heritage Museum on Thursday, October 27th, at 6:30 pm. The museum is about a 20 minute drive from the hotel, directions will be available at the registration table. There is no charge for registered conference attendees, and guests are welcome for a fee of \$20. The reception includes a tour of the Pin Point Museum and a plated Low Country Boil with shrimp, blue crab, sausage, corn, and potatoes. There will be a cash bar; \$4 for beer and wine and \$7 for liquor. The only cost for registered conference attendees is the cash bar. We will also conduct our annual silent auction at this event. The proceeds from the auction are used to support student scholarships to help defray the costs of attending the GSA.

RSVP to Alison Hatch by 5 pm on October 20th. Alison.Hatch@armstrong.edu

The conference looks like it will be a great one! Looking forward to seeing you in Savannah, October 26-28!

AKD News from Paine College

AKD News from the IOTA of Georgia Chapter at Paine College. Philip Thomas serves as the advisor to the chapter. New inductees for the year 2015-2016 academic year were: Angela LaTisha Cobbins, Telicia Shaneil Pass and Felicia Roshelle Riely.

Note from Dr. Bates, Clayton State University

Discussions of Best Practices in undergraduate education have recently emphasized the role and importance of undergraduate research and participation in professional conferences as an important means to enhance student learning and professional development. The GSA has long promoted these goals through undergraduate paper sessions at the annual meetings of the association. I strongly encourage departments and faculty at all of our institutions in Georgia to encourage students to submit papers and/or attend our meetings. By mentoring our students and promoting our discipline we are serving both our students as well our discipline.

Rodger Bates, Ph.D.
Professor of Sociology
Clayton State University

Obituary for Purna Mohanty: Professor Extraordinaire



Paine College sociology department lost one of its longtime colleagues, and the Georgia Sociological Association has lost one of its active members and loyal supporters with the passing of Purna Mohanty on May 18, 2016 at the age of 73. Surviving are his wife, one son, two daughters and two grandchildren.

Born in India, Purna earned his undergraduate and master's degrees from Utkal University, Orissa, India. He received his doctorate in social anthropology from the University of Georgia. Purna's training under Dr. Bailey, as well as his gerontology training, prepared him well for teaching sociology/anthropology/gerontology classes at Paine College. Purna joined the faculty of Paine College in 1980. From 1992 until his retirement in 2015, he was the Coordinator of Sociology department and the anchor of the department.

Purna has been an extraordinary teacher and a mentor to many students. He leaves a lasting impact on his students. He encouraged and was instrumental in many students attending graduate school. Purna received the Evelyn Berry Teacher of the Year Award for being an excellent professor and an outstanding contributor to the Paine College community. He will be remembered for his teaching and socialization of students.

As committed as he was to Paine College, Purna was also dedicated to serving the community. He served as a board member in many organizations including the Communities in Schools in Augusta, Area Agency on Aging in the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) and the Governor's Board for nursing Homes in Georgia. Also, Purna was a member of the boards for several professional associations including the GSA and SSS. He was a regular participant in sociology professional meetings.

Purna received many honors through the years. More satisfying to him was the outpouring of love and appreciation he received from his colleagues and students during his retirement celebration in April 2016. Though Purna's health was declining and he was not teaching during the 2015-16 academic year, he came to his office every week. Since Purna was frail, his daughter was planning to take him to the GSA annual meeting in Savannah this year. Purna Mohanty will be missed for not only his leadership at Paine College and his active participation in the GSA meetings, but the way and style of how he handled himself as a professional sociologist for the past 35 years. We will dearly miss our colleague and friend.

Philip Thomas

News From Valdosta State University

Dr. Thomas Hochschild Jr. Honored with President's Award for Excellence in Teaching



Pictured, from left to right, is Dr. Cecil P. Staton, interim president of VSU, and Dr. Thomas Hochschild Jr., an associate professor in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice.

VALDOSTA – Dr. Thomas Hochschild Jr. is the recipient of Valdosta State University's 2016 President's Award for Excellence in Teaching.

The President's Award for Excellence in Teaching is presented to a full-time faculty member who has worked at VSU for a minimum of three years and displays a strong and consistent commitment to advancing the quality and practice of teaching and learning; develops critical thinking and problem-solving skills and/or global and multicultural understanding; uses effective teaching strategies to enhance student learning, including innovative uses of technology, active learning communities, student portfolios, and assessment; and fosters the academic success of VSU students through interaction outside of the classroom.

Hochschild, an associate professor in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice, was selected by the College of Arts and Sciences Presidential Award Committee for his presentation of specific examples of interactions with students, use of innovative technology, and encouragement of interactive and service learning both in- and outside of the classroom.

Whether he is speaking about topics such as race, gender, social class, media, deviance, social psychology, or research methods, Hochschild utilizes a number of exercises and strategies to

impact student learning. He said one of his top priorities is to impart how sociological ways of thinking can be of use both personally and professionally.

“If there is one phrase that encapsulates my teaching, it is ‘applied engagement,’” said Hochschild, who joined the Blazer Nation family in August 2011. “As an avid reader of books and journal articles regarding teaching and learning, I am well aware that if students are not meaningfully engaged in the course material, they are less likely to think critically about the material, apply the material, remember the material, and enjoy the material. Therefore, I strive to make learning fun and relevant to students’ lives.

“Because of advances in technology, our students have access to a broad amount of information, misinformation, and opinions. As a social scientist and sociology teacher, I consider it my responsibility to ensure that students can determine valid and reliable information from information that is not valid or reliable. To this end, I incorporate discussions of social theory and research methods in all of my courses.”

Noted as a “committed, devoted, and, from all accounts, masterful teacher in the classroom” by Dr. Connie L. Richards, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Hochschild uses a dynamic teaching approach that incorporates PowerPoint lectures, student-led homework discussions, in-class group activities, service learning, guest speakers, on-campus cultural events, computer lab assignments, online discussions, outdoor activities, field trips, and video clips in order to benefit students with different learning styles.

“Dr. Hochschild’s teaching style is buttressed by high energy, dynamic enthusiasm, effective communication skills, and interspersed with appropriate humor, demonstrating his passion for conveying topical information for students,” said Dr. Darrell L. Ross, head of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice.

In SOCI 1101: Introduction to Sociology, he implements one of his more popular activities titled “Step to Privilege.” After a short walk to VSU’s front lawn, students are lined up side-by-side and then asked to step forward, or backward, depending on the privilege or obstacle they have experienced in life.

“For example, if one of the students’ parents graduated from college, they take two steps forward,” said Hochschild. “If the student grew up in a neighborhood where drugs were prevalent, they take one step backward. By the end of the 75 questions, there is great dispersion among students. I ask students in the front to reflect on the questions I asked and the privileges they have benefitted from. Conversely, I ask students toward the back of the group about the obstacles they have had to overcome in order to be college students at Valdosta State University.”

Hochschild said the feedback he receives from the students indicates that the activity profoundly affects their ability to recognize the social factors that have affected their life chances.

After a lesson on interviewing in SOCI 3510: Research Methods, he asks students to break off into separate rooms and practice their interviewing skills as the interviewer, the interviewee, and the assessor. He creates a similar activity for a lesson on focus groups.

“When discussing the method of content analysis, I have students analyze gendered photographs in popular magazines,” he said. “Working in small groups, students learn how to operationalize and code variables during this hands-on activity.”

For their primary research project, Hochschild requires students to conduct non-participant research observations of a social group of interest. After conducting a literature review and analyzing the data, students are asked to present their findings to classmates.

In SOCI 3350: Social Deviance, he requires students to wear a temporary tattoo on their wrist, neck, or face for one week. Throughout the week, students are asked to keep a record of all of the reactions they receive from family, friends, and strangers.

Hochschild said the experience of living with the temporary stigma helps students understand the techniques of stigma management and offers a glimpse of the lived experience of others with short-term, long-term, and invisible stigmas.

In SOCI 4800: Self and Community Service, Hochschild implements an activity called, “The Examined Life” where, after discussing Socrates’ notion that “the unexamined life is not worth living,” students are asked to rate themselves in terms of being a good person, caring about

others, and keeping informed about social issues, environmentalism, and other issues. He then hands out the second part of the assignment that requires students to report the amount of community service they have performed in the past year, as well as the number of pro-social organizations they belong to, the amount of recycling they have done, the amount of money they have donated to charity, and several other pro-social behaviors.

“Typically, scores on the first part of the activity are much higher than on the second part of the activity,” said Hochschild. “The implication of the activity is that many students’ behaviors do not fully align with their attitudes. We then discuss how we can restructure our lives for the betterment of others and the planet.”

He noted that students are asked to retake the second part of the activity at the end of the semester and their scores show much improvement.

With regard to his applied engagement approach to teaching, as well as his passion for internalizing the importance of reducing the ecological footprint and helping others who are less fortunate, Hochschild said he requires students in most of his courses to expand their sociological knowledge by attending educational and cultural events on campus.

“With a central focus on social problems, sociology often sometimes comes across as doom and gloom to students,” he said. “I make a concerted effort to ensure that students leave my courses with a sense of empowerment. Through service learning, advocacy initiatives, and social justice pedagogy, many students report feeling the ‘helper’s high’ associated with addressing community problems. These assignments are a reflection of my personal commitment to social justice and positive social change.”

In his Introduction to Sociology course, students are required to attend a play performed by VSU’s Theatre and Dance Area and a second educational event in their personal area of interest and then provide a written assessment of the performance’s sociological relevance.

Students in his Self and Community Services course are also required to complete at least 20 hours of service while detailing their experiences and applying sociological ideas in a personal reflection journal.

“In my [Self and Community Services] course, groups of five students become advocacy teams that learn about, teach, and effect change pertaining to one social problem,” he said. “In one class, we talked via Skype — through an interpreter — with former female sweatshop workers in the Dominican Republic. We heard about their difficult experiences and low pay working in textile factories. Now, these workers work for a company called Alta Gracia, which is a fair trade company that makes T-shirts and other clothing for universities across the country. Through their advocacy team, several students convinced the VSU bookstore to carry Alta Gracia merchandise. This is just one of many rewarding projects my students have worked on.”

Hochschild also encourages students to participate in his spring recycling program, Give and Go. At the end of every spring semester, he and student volunteers collect nonperishable food, furniture, clothing, and household items from students moving out of the residence halls and donate them to Second Harvest of South Georgia. All of the items are distributed to families in need.

While Student Opinion of Instruction scores, peer evaluations, student comments, and various assessment tools suggest high levels of student engagement and learning, Hochschild said he is always looking for new ways to improve his pedagogy.

Hochschild earned a Bachelor of Science in sociology in May 2003 and a Master of Arts in sociology in May 2004, both from Cleveland State University in Ohio. He earned a Doctor of Philosophy in sociology from the University of Connecticut in July 2011.

He is the author of eight peer-reviewed publications and three in-progress manuscripts and a three-time journal reviewer for *Teaching Sociology*. He has taught three study abroad courses in France and Russia and organized 10 conference sessions and presentations pertaining to the field of sociology throughout his career.

Contact Dr. Thomas Hochschild Jr. at trhochschild@valdosta.edu or (229) 333-5483 for more information.

Source: Valdosta State University, used with permission.

**Please send Semaphore items to
kdolan@gsu.edu**