

SOCIOLOGY

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 03

AUGUST 2021

CELEBRATING OUR SUCCESSES AND SCHOLARSHIP



INSIDE:
RECENT GRADUATES &
HIGHLIGHTS





THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND CRIMINOLOGY IS DIVERSE, DYNAMIC & DISTINCTIVE

We offer a variety of courses and program flexibility designed to serve the interests of students pursuing academic and non-academic careers in the social sciences.

Howard's location in the heart of Washington, D.C. affords students with special opportunities for engaging federal agencies and prominent domestic and international nongovernmental organizations. Such opportunities enhance students' prospects as they pursue academic and non-academic career tracks.

We are the only doctoral program in Sociology in the nation's capital.
We are the only doctoral program in Sociology in the HBCU network.

WHAT IS OGS?

EXCELLENCE. SERVICE. SCHOLARSHIP

AUGUST 2021, ISSUE 03



The Organization of Graduate Sociologists (OGS) is a student-run and student-led research, development, and activist organization. It operates under the guidelines and rules set forth by the Office of Student Activities and the guidelines for student organizations as set forth by the Howard University Association Constitutions.

The purpose of OGS is to provide internal support for the graduate students of Sociology at Howard University. OGS promotes professional development, community activism, and academic excellence to assist its members in understanding the importance of applying scholarly theories and networking in the field of Sociology.

The Executive Board from left to right:

Alexandra Rodriguez (Co-Chair), Denae Bradley (Co-Chair), Dana McCalla (Membership Chair and Public Relations), Tia Dickerson (Meeting Representative)

WELCOME NEW FACULTY

Academic Year 2021-2022



Dr. Anaheed Al-Hardan has accepted a position as Associate Professor, specializing in transnational, global, postcolonial and historical sociology. Her research is concerned with coloniality and resistance in relation to counter-memory, decolonial knowledge, and south-south thought in the Global South. She will begin her tenure in Spring 2021 through virtual instruction.



Dr. Nickie Jenkins has accepted a position as teacher of qualitative sociological methods and other courses. Her research incorporates intersectional and critical feminist frameworks, centering on the experiences of women of color. This semester she will be teaching Sociology of Poverty and Problems of the Black Community. She is also currently working on her first book tentatively entitled "Crowned: Black Women's Entanglement with Beauty, Work, and Family."



Dr. Reynaldo Ortiz-Minaya has accepted a position as a social justice studies professor. His research examines the historical relationship between forms of confinement (penal in particular) and the accumulation of profits under varying economic systems. He is a Fulbright Scholar and, in separate capacity, Fulbright Specialist in Mass Incarceration, Penal Reform, and Rule of Law. In addition, he also specializes in slavery along with penal confinement. He will be joining us in Fall 2021.

OGS WELCOMES DR. CAROLETTE NORWOOD



A STATEMENT FROM OUR NEW DEPARTMENT CHAIR

**"Sociologist by Training,
Black Feminist by Circumstance"**

"I often introduce myself as a sociologist by training and Black feminist by circumstance. All of my work is informed by a Black feminist lens and a sociological understanding of structural inequalities. My research is simultaneously intersectional and interdisciplinary. My work is also glocal (global and local) – especially my work on Black feminism(s). I earned two Bachelor's degrees from LSU – one in French, the other in Sociology. I also earned an MA in Liberal Arts with a concentration in African and African American Studies from LSU and a Ph.D. degree in Sociology with a concentration in comparative international development studies and demography from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. As an Andrew W. Mellon Fellow at the Université de Montréal (pre-doc) in African Demography, I was able to marry all of my interests and training to do research to advance women's "empowerment," health, and well-being in Ghana and later in Cameroon. In 2013, I turned my attention to Cincinnati – the community where I work.

I began my ethnographic work looking at Black women's lived experiences at the intersection of race, gender, sexuality and space. Since my first urban ethnographic study, which commenced in 2013, I've gone on to collect nearly 100 in-depth interviews with Black women residing in Cincinnati.

My most recent projects include a Reproductive Justice study (2017-2020) for the Ohio Policy Evaluation Network (OPEN). Using Community Based Participatory Research Methods (CBPR), I led a study focused on what reproductive justice looks like for Black women in Cincinnati. An essential part of this project was building and sustaining a Community Advisory Board (CAB). The CAB was constituted at the onset of the study and continues to play an important role at all stages of the research. The CAB helped with the interview guide, recruiting sample, and data coding and will be assisting in writing peer-reviewed publications.

In December 2020, I began working on a new study focused on Black women and economic mobility funded by the Greater Cincinnati Women's Fund. Black Cincinnati has a rich and proud history but one mired in discrimination, exclusion, and segregation. While there are many stories of success and thriving in spite of the momentous challenges white supremacy presents, there are many more stories (some known, others buried) that reveals institutional barriers that maintain a racial status quo that keep African Americans and Black women (in particular) in poverty. This study aims to understand the intergenerational challenges and successes of Black women's mobility in Cincinnati. All of these data collected (100+ interview data (prior mentioned) as well as archival data and health statistics) will be incorporated in my monograph tentatively entitled *Jim Crow Geographies: Mapping the Intersections of Gender, Race, and Sexuality in Urban Space*. The book explores how structural violence (e.g. structural racism, poverty and heterosexism) shapes and sustain health injustice for Black women in Cincinnati.

For the last 15 years, I have been housed in interdisciplinary departments such as Africana and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS). My favorite classes to teach in Africana Studies were Black Health Care and a three part course called the Sociology of Black Community course (developed by Patricia Hill Collins who had been at UC's Africana Studies for 25 years; she left the year before I arrived) with a focus on Race, Gender, and Social Class. In both Africana and WGSS I enjoyed teaching courses on Black Feminism(s), Comparative Black Feminism(s), and Black Women in the US. In WGSS at UC and Sociology at Saint Mary's College (Notre Dame, IN), I enjoyed teaching mixed research methods. I'd love to teach a course on Urban Sociology and a course on Health Justice at Howard University. I look forward to getting to know the existing curriculum better."



*"Sisters, how y'all feel?
Brothers, y'all alright?"
~ Erykah Badu*

MENTAL HEALTH & BEING A GRADUATE STUDENT OF COLOR

Let's talk about it. 2020 was marked by multiple crises: COVID-19, racial protests for justice, and rising mental health issues for graduate students of color. Our collective trauma over the past year has contributed to anxiety, fear of the uncertain, and honestly, major burnout. Hear us loud and clear: Graduate school is already difficult. You do not have to be 100% during a global health and economic crisis. We are still figuring out what our normal is, and are continuing to heal and recover. However, we must do this together! Take care of, and be compassionate with yourself and others. We love you and we are here for you.

Be Kind To Yourself: You are deepening your academic training because you have a dream, because you are committed to a cause, and because you care about your communities and the knowledge that is created about them...We need more Black, Brown, and QTPOC folks in academia. You are a walking miracle. Thank You.

Find Your Community: *What is your passion and who at your university or in the greater community is already doing that work?* Find those people, learn from them, work with them, it makes a world of difference.

Binge Watch: I'm going to keep this short and sweet. Find your favorite shows, pour up a glass of wine, and watch for hours.

Therapy and or Spiritual Grounding: Talking out your pain with others in your community is so important. However, they are navigating the same systems as you and though they can provide support, they must also sustain themselves. Be respectful of their capacity and look for ways to cultivate your emotional health on your own.

Take a Break and/or Leave: Some people may find this advice controversial, but I do not. If you have done everything that you can and your program consistently makes you miserable, then leave. Your success and self-worth are not contingent on your program...Leaving a program is an incredibly difficult decision and I do not suggest that you do so lightly. But I do suggest that in lieu of asking questions like, *what will people think of me if I leave this program?* That you instead inquire *what do my soul, body, and spirit need and is it here?*

- Written by Ciarra Jones who is a Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator & Public Policy and International Affairs Program Director at the University of California, Berkeley.

Student Accomplishments

Dr. Ebony Russ will be participating in a doctoral fellowship at George Washington University, creating a program to address the policing of DC's black and brown youth.

Dr. Marie Plaisime has accepted a three-year post-doctoral research position at Harvard University where she will continue to build her research program, and participate in programs to reduce racial inequities in healthcare.

Dr. Emerald Jones has accepted a tenure-track position at Alabama A&M University as an Assistant Professor of Criminology.

Dr. Anas Askar has accepted a position as an Assistant Professor at Rosemont College in Fall 2021. He previously served as a fellow for the NOAA Center for Atmospheric Sciences and Meteorology.

Dr. Shannell Thomas was selected as the Graduate Student recipient of the Hanes Walton, Jr. Award for Quantitative Methods Training offered by NCOBPS, and a Diversity Scholar in the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) at the University of Michigan. In 2020, she won the inaugural Winslow Sergeant Doctoral Fellowship Award from the Ronald W. Walters Leadership and Public Center. Shannell was also inducted into the Edward Bouchet Graduate Honor Society in 2021.



Dr. Cassandra Jean has accepted a 2-year post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Washington. She previously served as a fellow for both the NOAA Center for Atmospheric Sciences and Meteorology and the Bill Anderson Fund for Hazard and Disaster Mitigation, Education and Research. Cassandra also co-authored a book chapter in *Black Girl Civics: Expanding and Navigating the Boundaries of Civic Engagement*, which was published in January 2020.

Kiara Davis is currently developing progressive federal policies as a Legislative Aide for Congresswoman Cori Bush.

Alexandra Rodriguez starts a position as an adjunct professor teaching intro to sociology at Prince George's Community College in Fall 2021. She was recently inducted into AKD, the international honor society of sociology. This was especially monumental to her as it was once she began studying what she loved, that she excelled academically. She also had the honor of serving as co-chair for OGS alongside Denae Bradley for the last two years.

Dr. Britany Gatewood is currently a 2nd year Post-Doctoral Researcher for the Center for Educational Opportunities at Albany State University as well as an adjunct professor at Georgetown University, George Washington University, and Prince George's Community College.

Dana McCalla has been accepted to the American Institute of Research's pilot P3 ENGAGE mentoring program for the '21-'22 academic year. She has also started a part-time role as Assistant Program Analyst at Urban Alliance DC. In 2020, she co-authored a book chapter in *Black Girl Civics: Expanding and Navigating the Boundaries of Civic Engagement* with classmate Cassandra Jean.

Denae Bradley has been accepted to the Health Policy Research Scholars program, a multi-year, national leadership program for Doctoral students of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. She was recently inducted into AKD. During 2020 - 2021, she presented at conferences and a university talk alongside Tia Dickerson. She also has two recent publications with Tia Dickerson and Dr. Marie-Claude Jipguep-Akhtar. Denae had the honor of serving as co-chair for OGS alongside Alexandra Rodriguez. She wishes all the best to the new student leaders.

Dr. Akiv Dawson, is currently an Assistant Professor on tenure-track in the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology at Georgia Southern University. She was recently accepted into the 2021 Summer Research Institute hosted by the Racial Democracy Crime and Justice Network at Rutgers University. Dr. Dawson has forthcoming publications in *Transforming the Institution: Achieving Justice and Legitimacy in Policing* and the *Journal of Adolescent Health*. Since graduation, she has contributed to articles published in *Criminal Law Bulletin* and the *American Journal of Public Health*.

Tia Dickerson participated in the Fragile Families workshop at the Columbia Population Research center during Summer 2021. She also presented at conferences and a university talk with Denae Bradley. Tia has two recent publications with Denae Bradley and Dr. Marie-Claude Jipguep-Akhtar.

Sydni Turner accomplished much during and after her time at HU: presenting at the first ever resilient children of incarcerated parents digital conference, 2 graduate assistantships, 2 published articles, and 3rd is on the way. Sydni is a board member and secretary at It Takes A Village Collaborative (ITAVCollab) non-profit organization whose mission is to provide individuals, families, and communities, with resources, services, and networks to empower them to reach their fullest potential. ITAVcollab will infuse a holistic approach to wellness in partnership with the National Reentry Network program to help build support, awareness, resilience, opportunity, enrichment, communication skills, self-empowerment and self-confidence in its participants and staff.

Graduate CLASS OF 2020



AKIV DAWSON, PH.D.

Dr. Akiv Dawson received her Ph.D. in Sociology from Howard University in 2020 during which time she was awarded the Ernest E. Just-Percy L. Julian Graduate Research Assistantship to conduct research on race and crime victimization over the last thirty years. She also served on the advisory board of Social Problems and worked as a researcher for the Justice, Housing, and Health Study at American University. She is a member of Omicron Delta Kappa national leadership honor society, Alpha Kappa Delta International Honor Society of Sociology, and the Edward A. Bouchet Graduate Honor Society.

Her area of focus is inequality in the criminal justice system, particularly as it pertains to issues of race, gender, and citizenship status. Her research on Black women's experiences during traffic stops was recognized by the Society for the Study of Social Problems as an exemplar in social action and justice-oriented research. Currently, she conducts research on intersections of crimmigration and mass incarceration; racialized and gendered police violence; police administrative policy, prisoner reentry, and criminal justice and criminology education. Her research has been published in *Critical Studies in Media Communications*, *Race-Ethnicity and Education*, *The Southern Sociologist*, *Medium*, *Criminal Law Bulletin*, and *Prisoner Reentry in the 21st Century: Critical Perspectives in Prisoner Reentry*.

Dissertation Title:

"The Key Word Is Illegal": Examining Police Violence in America's New Crimmigration Control System.

Her dissertation focused on crimmigration, the merger of criminal justice and immigration apparatuses in the United States. It focused on the ideology and rhetoric that justify the merger of the criminal justice and immigration apparatuses, the policies that codify it into law, the enforcement strategies and programs that sustain it, and the impact it has on police violence against Latinos.

Future Plans:

Currently, Dr. Dawson is an Assistant Professor on tenure-track in the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology at Georgia Southern University. She teaches victimology and inequality, crime, and justice at the undergraduate level and race and the criminal justice system at the graduate level. She is also a co-investigator on the Justice, Housing, and Health Study. Dr. Dawson has forthcoming publications in *Transforming the Institution: Achieving Justice and Legitimacy in Policing* and the *Journal of Adolescent Health*. Since graduation, she has contributed to articles published in the *Criminal Law Bulletin* and the *American Journal of Public Health*. She has also given talks about race and police violence at Rutgers University, Howard University, and Georgia Southern University. Recently, Dr. Dawson was accepted into the 2021 Summer Research Institute hosted by the Racial Democracy Crime and Justice Network at Rutgers University which began in June.

Graduate CLASS OF 2020



BRITANY GATEWOOD, PH.D.

Dr. Britany J Gatewood is a Post-Doctoral Researcher for the Center for Educational Opportunities at Albany State University and earned her Ph.D. in Sociology from Howard University in 2020. She identifies as a Black queer woman scholar-activist whose research interests focus on social inequality, criminology, and social movements. Dr. Gatewood's research and publications focus on social movements within carceral institutions as well as the political practice and tradition of resistance of Black women and their children. Recently, she has been a guest speaker at several events, including the University of Minnesota's Teach-Ins on Protest and Policing, Democracy Under Threat in Times of Populism and Racial Nationalism Conference, the Children of Incarcerated Parents Digital Conference, and Sociologists for Social Justice with the District of Columbia Sociological Society. Her graduate students write pieces for her Critical Student Discourse Blog (<https://www.criticalstudentdiscourse.com>), where students share their thoughts, opinions, and analysis on current issues by integrating topics they have learned within the classroom. Her recent community work includes co-founding, Masks 4 Many (www.masks4many.com), a group that provides reusable masks to vulnerable populations. As well as hosting a community book exchange program with the DC Sociological Society and volunteering with local mutual aid organizations in the Washington, D.C. area.

Dissertation Title:

"Opposition Behind Bars: Incarcerated Black Working-Class Women and the Tradition of Resistance, 1970-2011"

Dr. Gatewood's qualitative study explores the lives of twenty-five incarcerated Black working-class women from 1970 to 2011 and the relationship between their material conditions within carceral institutions, their understanding of oppression, and the methods of resistance employed. Findings show the majority of authors had a level of racial and gender awareness and inequality, but not an analysis of class consciousness. Although they did not see themselves as political actors, the majority of authors participated in either individual or collective acts of resistance while incarcerated. Their participation in these acts was influenced by their experiences within the carceral institutions.

Future Plans:

Dr. Gatewood is currently a 2nd-year Post-Doctoral Researcher for the Center for Educational Opportunities at Albany State University, as well as an adjunct professor at Georgetown University, George Washington University, and Prince George's Community College.

Graduate CLASS OF 2021



ANAS ASKAR, PH.D.

Dr. Anas Askar's research interests include green criminology, disaster research, and second-generation Muslims. During his doctoral student tenure, he was a fellow of NOAA Cooperative Science Center in Atmospheric Sciences and Meteorology (NCAS-M). As a fellow, his primary focus was how best to relay weather-related information to the public under the guidance of Dr. Terri Adams.

Dissertation Title:

"Coastal Residents and Permanent Relocation: Analyzing Selective Factors that Influence Decision Making Among Americans"

His dissertation, coastal residents and their attitudes towards permanent relocation, examined selective factors that may influence residents' decision-making in terms of retreating from the coast. By using quantitative methods, he found coastal residents prefer staying on the coast due to the minimization of their own victim status, and dismissal of the threats associated with disasters exacerbated by climate change. In addition, his study utilized three different theoretical frameworks: green criminology and green victimology, symbolic interactionism, and social learning theory.

Future Plans:

Dr. Askar has accepted a position as an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Rosemont College starting Fall 2021.

Graduate CLASS OF 2021



ANTHONY JACKSON, PH.D.

Dr. Anthony Jackson is a Ph.D. graduate from the class of 2021. In Dr. Jackson's work, he analyzes exploitation and oppression vis-à-vis laws, policies, and practices. He explores repressive systems, institutions, and structures to the extent that they infringe on constitutional and human rights and create the conditions that disrupt humanity in general and working-class people in particular. He received his undergraduate degree in Sociology from a HBCU in Petersburg, Virginia: Virginia State University. He received his M.A. in Sociology at HU; his master's thesis entitled, *"The Crisis of Black Labor in Relation to State Policy and Practice in the United States from 1960 to 2015: A Historical Materialist Analysis,"* explores increased state violence against Black bodies. Essentially this study was designed to explore the increase in Black people being shot and killed by police.

Dissertation Title:

"The Crisis of Capitalism and the Working Class in the United States from 1970 to 2019: A Historical Materialist Analysis,"

Dr. Jackson's dissertation defines the current capitalist crisis and explores its impact on workers in general and Black and White workers in particular. To sum, Dr. Jackson's research, in general, explores state violence, racial oppression, and shift in sociopolitical and economic conditions. During his matriculation, he has interned for a nonprofit organization as a researcher, presented his research at professional sociological conferences, worked with grassroots organizations coordinating political education sessions, and interned for the Government Accountability Office as a research analyst.

Future Plans:

Dr. Jackson has accepted a lecturer position at Howard University in the Dept. of Sociology and Criminology. He looks forward to growing in his scholarship and expanding his research towards bridging the gap between the academy and the streets—that is, communities in which we too are apart.

Graduate CLASS OF 2021



CASSANDRA JEAN, PH.D.

Dr. Cassandra Jean's research interests focus on social and global stratification, intersectionality (e.g., race, gender, sexuality, class), and the Sociology of Disaster. Her work on structural impacts on black girl civic leadership has recently been published in the book "Black Girl Civics: Expanding and Navigating the Boundaries of Civic Engagement." Her current research examines Black women's experiences after the 2017 hurricane season, specifically looking at the relationship between intersectionality, social suffering, and social vulnerability.

Dr. Jean has over ten years of research experience and a Criminal Justice, Public Policy and Administration, and International Relations background. She received her Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from Adelphi University and a Master of Art in Political Science from Howard University. Currently, in the Department of Sociology and Criminology at Howard University, Dr. Jean majored in Social Inequality, Criminology, and research methodology. She is also a part-time lecturer in the Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology Department at Montgomery College in Takoma Park, MD.

Dissertation Title:

"Suffering and Surviving: An Intersectional Analysis of Vulnerable Communities after the 2017 Hurricane Season"

Program Distinctions:

During her academic tenure at Howard, Dr. Jean was a fellow in two national research programs: the NOAA Center for Atmospheric Sciences and Meteorology (NCAS-M) which aims to increase workforce-ready graduates from underrepresented communities in NOAA-related and supporting sciences; and the Bill Anderson Fund (BAF) for Hazard and Disaster Mitigation Education and Research which aims to expand the number of historically underrepresented professionals in disaster and hazard research and practice.

Future Plans:

Dr. Jean has accepted a post-doc fellowship at the University of Washington where she will be conducting culturally sensitive research with indigenous communities and other vulnerable populations on disaster-related response and recovery programming. She will also be a part of the social science research design and implementation team there.

Graduate CLASS OF 2021



EMERALD JONES, PH.D.

Dr. Emerald Jones, a Charlotte, North Carolina native, is a recent graduate of Howard University focusing on the areas of criminology and social inequality. She received her master's degree in Sociology from Fayetteville State University and a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Fayetteville State University. Her research - which focuses on mass incarceration, social inequality, racial discrimination, and occupational inequality - explores how race and gender play a major role in the judicial system. Dr. Jones worked as a professor at Montgomery Community College and Bowie State University, where she taught courses in Sociology and Criminology. She also served as an academic Coach and general one-on-one coach for Montgomery's ATPA program (Achieving the Promise Academy), where she assists students in refining their personal academic goals. At Howard University, Dr. Jones served as the Vice President for OGS (Organization of Graduate Student). She also recently was inducted into Yale's Bouchet Honor Society for outstanding scholarly achievement.

Dissertation Title:

"Investigating the Differences in The Use of Stop, Question, & Frisk for Black and White Women"

Dr. Jones looked at data from New York City and the likelihood of Black women being stopped in relation to White women. The research findings indicated that Black young and older women were stopped, questioned, and frisked more than White women.

Future Plans:

This summer, Dr. Jones accepted a position at Alabama A & M University as the new Assistant Professor (Tenure Track) of Criminal Justice in the College of Business and Public Affairs in the Social Sciences department.

Graduate CLASS OF 2021



TREVOR KINLOCK, PH.D.

Dr. Trevor Kinlock completed the social inequality/criminology Ph.D. specializations in the sociology dept. As a Howard student, his interests centered on race analysis, urban studies, and social inequality. His research was a sociology of education study that looked at the intersection of race, class, and education in urban communities. Specifically, he researched how Black faith-based communities pursue racial equity in education and mitigate opportunity gaps through collective actions of liberation and resistance.

Dissertation Title:

"Raising Black Excellence: An Exploration of How a Black Operated Seventh-day Adventist school Empowers Black Student Achievement and Development through Liberation and Resistance"

In this study, Dr. Kinlock utilizes a critical pedagogy theoretical framework to understand how Black faith communities resist educational racism, inequality, and marginalization to create heightened outcomes and opportunities for their Black children. Findings highlight liberatory pedagogies and practices that are critical for Black student success in urban education.

Future Plans:

Immediate plans are the dissemination of research findings to the broader community. To facilitate this, Dr. Kinlock will be publishing a book based on this study by the end of the year. He is also looking at adjunct teaching opportunities in the DMV. He will continue to serve as pastor and community leader in the DMV region.

Graduate CLASS OF 2021



MARIE PLAISIME, PH.D.

Dr. Marie Plaisime is a Ph.D. graduate from the class of 2021, specializing in Medical Sociology. She was a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Health Policy Research Scholar (HPRS), a Just-Julian Graduate Research Scholar, and former president of the Organization of Graduate Sociologists during her time at Howard. Dr. Plaisime's research examines how structural racism in medicine and medical education jeopardizes healthcare delivery, access, and quality of care for people of color.

Dissertation Title:

"Perceptions of Racial Bias and Interracial Anxiety Among Medical Students: A Mixed Methods Study"

Dr. Plaisime's dissertation is a mixed-methods study that examines the effect of racial bias and interracial anxiety on medical judgment. She investigates the complex interactions between race and health, as well as examining the roles that physicians, nurses, patients, and health advocates play in shaping health inequity.

Future plans:

Dr. Plaisime has accepted a 3-year post-doc fellowship studying Structural Racism and Health care at Harvard University.

Graduate CLASS OF 2021



EBONY N. RUSS, PH.D.

Dr. Ebony N. Russ has recently graduated from the Ph.D. program as a Medical Sociologist specializing in criminology. She is passionate about improving health disparities among individuals who are part of dispossessed, vulnerable populations.

Dissertation Title:

Cardiovascular Disease Risk Factor Prevention among Formerly Incarcerated African Americans

Dr. Russ' dissertation is a mixed-methodological study, where she uses words from individuals who have been involved in the criminal justice system to inform health statistics.

Future Plans:

Dr. Ebony N. Russ was awarded a doctoral fellowship at George Washington University to develop both a sociology course and program to address the policing of DC's Black and Brown Youth. This initiative is in response to the Black Student Union's demands to make a change in the GW Community. Specifically, she has developed a program and a two-semester course titled "Rethinking DC Youth & Policing" which incorporate the tenets of community-based participatory research (CBPR).

Graduate CLASS OF 2021



SHANNELL THOMAS, PH.D.

Dr. Shannell Thomas has completed her Ph.D. with specializations in Social Inequality and Criminology, and with a minor in Political Science. Her research interests are centered around Black political power and Black liberation movements, with a specific focus on how suppression of the Black vote is enacted and resisted. While at Howard, Dr. Thomas has spent considerable time qualitatively and quantitatively analyzing issues in the Black community. Her research has included studies with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation "HBCU CO-VID HUB" Team, Bowie State University's Racial Impact Research Team, the Howard Initiative for Public Opinion, Essence Magazine, and Homeland Security's Command, Control, and Interoperability Center for Advanced Data Analysis (CCICADA) at Rutgers University.

In 2019, Dr. Thomas was selected as the Graduate Student recipient of the Hanes Walton, Jr. Award for Quantitative Methods Training - offered by the National Conference of Black Political Scientists, and as a Diversity Scholar in the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) at the University of Michigan. In 2020, she won the inaugural Winslow Sargeant Doctoral Fellowship Award from the Ronald W. Walters Leadership and Public Center. Most recently, in 2021, Dr. Thomas was one of five Howard University students inducted into the Edward Bouchet Graduate Honor Society, a society inaugurated by Yale University and Howard University in 2005. She also won first place recognition in the category of Social Sciences for her presentation of her Doctoral Research at Howard University Graduate School's Research Conference.

Dissertation Title:

"Re-Racializing the Republic: An Analysis of How Florida's Sociopolitical Context Is Being (Color-Blindly) Shaped By 'Virtuous' Citizens and Felony Disenfranchisement".

Her dissertation research studied the justifications used for maintaining the disenfranchisement of one of Florida's most controversial voting blocs - convicted felons - looking specifically at the requisites of "civic virtue" and appeals to the "common good". Testing a novel theoretical model that integrated communitarian ideology into the framework of color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2017). Dr. Thomas sought to determine the extent to which politicians and legislators have racialized their invocations of civic virtue and the common good.

Future Plans:

Dr. Thomas has accepted an Assistant Professor position at Bowie State University in Prince George's County Maryland. There, she hopes to integrate her sociological, criminological, and political interests with her passion for data analysis.

Doctoral Candidate



APRIL GREENE, M.A.

April Greene is a Ph.D. Candidate at Howard University focusing on the areas of social inequality and criminology. She currently holds two Master's degrees one in Paralegal studies from George Washington University and another in Education Policy from American University. She received her Bachelor's degree in Communications and Culture from Howard University. Her research - which focuses on education systems, social inequality, racial disparities, and academic achievement explores how race and class intersect in school systems. April has maintained a career as an Elementary School teacher in the District of Columbia for the past twelve years. Additionally, she serves as a consultant within the education industry where she provides professional development on the importance of cultural competency and making spaces for Black children in the classroom. Lastly, she supports educators in the development of curriculum and programming that highlights the intersections of identity, social justice, and advocacy, utilizing this lens to empower students to become active members of society. April is a member of Alpha Kappa Delta, the International Sociology Honors Society, and is a Center for Advancing Opportunities Fellow.

Dissertation Title:

"Black Faces, White Spaces: Racial Identity Development in Predominantly White Spaces"

This dissertation is an exploration of identity development in pre-adolescent Black children who attend racially dissonant schools. Specifically, looking at students aged 9-11 at a predominantly white private school this study uses a comparative lens to determine the factors that contribute to a positive development of self in a space in which students function as an anomaly.

Future Plans:

April's hope is to serve as a school administrator next year while continuing to do research on ways to support Black children in various education settings. Long-term, she hopes to continue her work with educational programs ensuring academic spaces are creating environments where all children feel seen. Additionally, she hopes to support education policy and influence changes to the education system in the United States.

MASTERS GRADUATES!

"The purpose of education is to create in a person the ability to look at the world for themselves and make their own decisions"

- James Baldwin



Sydni Turner, M.A.

Sydni Turner graduated from Howard University with a Masters of Arts in Sociology. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Sociology with a concentration in Criminal Justice and a minor in Family Studies from Towson University. Her Master's Thesis "The Rebirth of Black is King: Exploring the Parent-Child Experience Among Incarcerated Black Fathers Narrated by Their Children" discusses the successful parenting practices Black fathers used during incarceration. Additional research explores mass incarceration, the Black family, and reentry into society. Sydni is a full time OPM retained Background Field Investigator III responsible for protecting national security as she investigates individuals seeking government security clearances. As a Prince George's county native, she currently serves as a reentry mentor at Welcome Home Reentry Program. Her role assists young adults, who reside in the Prince George's County Community Release Center, with successfully reintegrating into society post incarceration. In addition, she is a board member and secretary at It Takes A Village Collaborative (ITAVCollab) non-profit organization whose mission is to provide individuals, families, and communities, with resources, services, and networks to empower them to reach their fullest potential.

Kiara Davis, M.A.

Kiara is currently developing progressive federal policies as a Legislative Aide for Congresswoman Cori Bush.

"The knowledge I gained at Howard has helped me develop a transformative worldview and imbued me with the confidence to confront social problems at their economic root. I have been able to translate my critiques of political economy into federal legislation that puts people first, rather than profits. I'm grateful for the chance to embody and carry on the Black Radical Tradition, as envisioned by Drs. Kelly Miller, E. Franklin Frazier, Ralph Gomes, and Walda Katz-Fishman."

Kiara earned their M.A. in Spring 2020.



In Love & Struggle

"Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it." - Frantz Fanon



Wise Words From Walda

Part of what has been a joy in the midst of this turbulent time is continuing to be in deep relationships with my students. Being a part of thesis and dissertation committees has kept me doing what I love most: working and doing really radical education with you all at HU as well as helping to facilitate you moving on in your life and career.

What I know from talking with students and from my own life, is that the loss of Ralph left a big hole. His passing left a space that he filled for so many of us. It made me want to be important in continuing to lift up what Ralph's vision was. If we really want to honor his legacy, his vision, and his memory, then we need to *fight like hell* to ensure a radical and progressive doctoral program in sociology continues forever at Howard University.

COVID was disorienting. I think all of us, despite the delta variant, are beginning to reground ourselves. We've been a year plus in limbo; you find new sea legs. You find a new way of being, moving, and recognizing that even as we do what we need to for matriculation and securing a future, that we are living in a world that is deadly and destructive. If we do not get rid of it - this capitalist white supremacist patriarchal system - then there is no future. All else does not and will not resolve the problems that we've been living with for a very long time. COVID was a doorway into the deep destruction, inequality, repressiveness, and violence of this society. It was an "aha moment" for all kinds of people who had never recognized that. Overall, I am totally optimistic and excited for when we can all reconnect in person safely again.

My advice to new and graduating students would be that this is not an individual or solo journey. You must make this a collective journey. Each of us must find our personal political, intellectual, and collective home & constantly reconnect to it. We must do this because that is the nature of life and how people survive and make it - with the collective help and support of others. You may be told that it is a dog-eat-dog world and that you have to trample on others to make it, but that is absolutely *incorrect*. That mentality will ensure that you will be miserable and isolated. We must understand we are in this together and it is only our unity, our collectivity, and our acting and thinking together that will take us to the next stage of our lives and the next stages of human and planetary history.

REMEMBERING DR. RALPH GOMES



A TRIBUTE: RALPH CHRISTOPHER GOMES, 1937-2020

*contributed by Walda Katz-
Fishman and the Howard
University Department of
Sociology and Criminology*

Ralph Christopher Gomes joined the ancestors on Monday, March 16, 2020, from complications following surgery. Ralph will be remembered with love and appreciation by all he touched. He was a loving father and grandfather. Ralph was our friend and colleague, our teacher and mentor, and he was our comrade in struggle in the Department of Sociology and Criminology at Howard University and in the larger society. Ralph was a humanist, a scholar-activist researching global capitalism, race and class, and poverty and the black experience. He was a revolutionary who intertwined theory and practice in all his life's work—personal, professional, and political.

Ralph Gomes was a proud native son of Guyana, where he remained a citizen over the decades and was involved in political struggle in the interests of the working class. As an accomplished athlete, he represented Guyana as a middle-distance runner in the 1960 Summer Olympics in Rome, Italy. Dr. Gomes received his BA from the Inter-American University—San German, Puerto Rico; his MA from the University of Wisconsin; and his PhD from Pennsylvania State University under the direction of Dr. Muzafar Sherif, a renowned social psychologist.

In 1971 Dr. Ralph Gomes began his 49-year academic career at Howard University as a lecturer in what was then the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. He quickly moved on to become an assistant professor in 1973 and was promoted to full professor in the Department of Sociology and Criminology in 1993. Ralph Gomes and the department became virtually synonymous—from the doctoral program and administration, to teaching and mentoring, and research and activism.

REMEMBERING DR. GOMES CONTINUED...

In 1974 Ralph wrote the proposal and successfully advocated for the establishment of what remains the only PhD program in sociology at a historically black college or university. Dr. Gomes was a tireless champion for the department, always seeking opportunities to enhance its academic standing, and was a trailblazer

in curricular development. He took on key leadership roles in the department, serving as the first director of the Graduate Program from its inception in 1974 to 1984 and again from 1999 to 2007. He served in other positions throughout the years, including acting chair, associate chair, chair of the Appointments, Promotion, and Tenure Committee, and director of the Undergraduate Program.

Ralph never wanted the "official" chair position, though he was asked on several occasions to take it on. Nevertheless, he was a powerful force and the "historic memory" of the department. A network analysis would locate Ralph at the center of power and his office as the hub of department activity. Ralph was a wise and steady hand, had good rapport with all factions and intellectual tendencies in the department, and was our essential problem solver. Ralph was also a key actor in the college and university. He helped draft the first faculty governance document establishing the Faculty Senate across the university and remained active on college committees until his death.

Dr. Gomes leaves behind an impressive body of scholarly work. He co-authored *From Exclusion to Inclusion: The Long Struggle for African American Political Power* with his late wife, Dr. Linda Faye Williams, and published more than 15 book chapters and a large number of refereed journal articles. Ralph's real love and passion was his teaching and mentoring. In his poverty class, undergraduate honors, and graduate directed readings he focused on the dialectics of the black experience, racial oppression, poverty, class, and social struggle within global capitalism. He directed and served on MA thesis and dissertation committees for more than 100 students in sociology and other campus departments. Of the more than 150 PhDs in sociology, Ralph directed 31 dissertations and served on another 30 committees. Ralph nurtured many African American sociologists who are working as change agents, administrators, public servants, and scholars throughout the United States and across countries in the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East, and South America. Ralph was also generous with department colleagues, advising and mentoring those rising through the ranks and freely engaging in discussions of all kinds.

Ralph is beloved as a teacher and mentor. He demanded intellectual rigor, clarity, and precision but was always supportive. He would take his graduate students' theses and dissertations home on Thursday for a long weekend of work and come back to campus Monday or Tuesday, and they would be completely marked up and corrected, with new language added.

REMEMBERING DR. GOMES CONTINUED...

Hundreds of messages flowed into the department from colleagues, students, and alums across the country honoring Ralph. These brief reflections from Ralph's past and present doctoral students capture Ralph's life and legacy:

Dr. Gomes was a calm quiet revolutionary spirit who always kept his word, no matter the difficulty. He unceremoniously ensured safe matriculation and mastery for many students like myself in a sociology Ph.D. program he was central in creating. (Tdka Kilimanjaro)

An intellectual giant, disciplined, and accessible...a gentle soul, thoughtful, and devoted. His legacy will live on and I am forever grateful that he was part of my life. (Sabrina Smiley)

The Gomes family and Ralph's department family were his life and greatest joy. We are all richer in human ways-intellectually, politically and personally-for having shared time and space with Ralph. Even as we mourn Ralph's passing, we celebrate Ralph's life and legacy and commit to carry on his revolutionary spirit in the department, in the academy and profession, and in the larger social struggle.

Rest in power.

ADVICE corner



"It is in collectivities that we find reservoirs of hope and optimism" - Angela Davis

"First, take care of yourself mentally, physically, and emotionally. You need to instill self-care into your daily life and you have to have work, life balance. Next is that you should appreciate the instruction that you are getting at HU because it is unlike anywhere else in the world. You are taught to be critical of the social world in a way that no other school can provide, so take it all in. Yes, I know that it is hard and a struggle but I think that as graduate students we get "in the weeds" a lot and want to change the world with our dissertations. The things you are writing about no one else is looking at, therefore look more macro and set the foundation that is probably not even there. The dissertation is only the starting point, you have your whole career!" - Britany

Gatewood
"Everyone's journey is different so you can not compare yourself to others, it will drive you insane if you do. I have faced a ton of challenges and outside distractions that could have stopped me from completing my degree but I kept my eyes ahead and pushed through. Also, work together and support each other. I would not be where I am today were it not for many of my classmates who cheered me on, encourage me and helped me up when I was falling." - April Greene

"Do not forget that this is your journey, and never lose sight of who you are/want to be as a person. Self-care is paramount because burnout is real, and maintain a strong relationship with your cohort by uplifting each other. Remember that this journey is a process, try your best to take it one day/semester at a time. And ALWAYS remember that at the end of the day, you are more than just a student. Your academic endeavors alone, shall/will NOT define you as a person. You are wonderful regardless!" - Anas Askar

"It's a marathon, not a sprint. It's important to build a support system and make connections. Make time to connect with your classmates and folks in older cohorts. I can't thank my cohort enough for their love and support. Shout out to Shannell, Cassandra, Anas, Anthony, and my bestie, Emerald Jones!!! We made it!" - Marie Plaisime

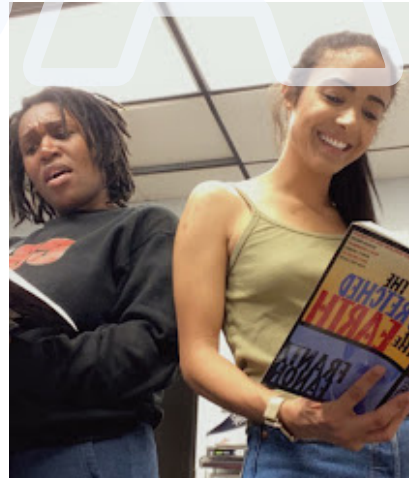
Never give up! Be relentless and undeterred. Work together with your cohort and colleagues and help each other to make it through this academic journey. Most importantly, No matter how difficult things get along the way, keep the faith!- Trevor Kinlock

"You have autonomy over your life and the power to overcome any and every obstacle that is in your path is already in you; nurture it and allow it to abound in your heart. We experience struggle and feel emotions in great depths; allow yourself to process all the energy around you and let it strengthen your spirit. Hardships will come, it will sometimes feel and actually be overwhelming—this is normal. You are resilient, work through it and remember: despair manifests itself in many forms, do not make it your dwelling place. Remember to be critical and analytical, to grow in your scholarship and intellect, to find community and build in camaraderie, to have faith—which is the assurance of things hoped for, to have hope, but not in what is seen but unseen, and most importantly remember to love, because love is what drives us, it's what fuels us, and what reminds us that weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. Keep your head high. Know that you are not alone. You got this." - Anthony Jackson

"For students who have recently begun the program, the best advice I can offer is, "plan your life". Outline the goals that you want to accomplish each year. Once you have identified your goals, seek out an advisor who will help you achieve these goals. Go after what you want every day and remember the dissertation is only a part of it. For students closer to graduating, the biggest piece of advice I can offer is to prepare to enter the job market in a different world. The covid-19 pandemic has drastically changed what teaching and research look like. In terms of going on the job-market, I suggest that you start to put your application packets together early and practice your job talk. Also, it is true that you will never have more time than you do right now." - Akiv Dawson

"Some give in...some give out...and some never even get *that far!*" (Unknown). No matter how rough the road gets, stay the course. You may have to go over, go under, go around, or go through your obstacles, but stay the course! - Shannell Thomas

Build your network, collaborate with colleagues, get involved, join student groups and take advantage of what Howard and the DMV have to offer. Advocate for yourself and others & keep the legacy of OGS alive!
- OGS E-Board





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