

Colin Olson, Ph.D.

Sociology & Criminology

Summer 2017

Educational History:

Doctorate in Sociology, 2009.

University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM.

Dissertation title: *Who Rules the City? How Growth Coalition Elites Believe They Influence Decision-Making*. Dissertation committee members: Dr. John M. Roberts, Dr. Richard L. Wood, Dr. Susan Tiano, and Dr. Harry Van Buren III.

Masters of Arts in Sociology, 2001.

University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM.

Master's Thesis: *"Is Local Counter Discourse Dead? Mainstream and Alternative Newspapers in Albuquerque Compared."* Thesis committee members: Dr. Beverly Burris (Chair), Dr. Richard Wood, and Dr. Everett Rogers.

Bachelor of Science in Sociology, 1998.

Cum Laude, Western Oregon University, Monmouth, OR.

Thesis Title: "Ethnic Revitalization of the Siletz Indians of Western Oregon."

Thesis Chair: Dr. Dean Braa.

Employment History

Senior Lecturer, 2017-Present, Department of Sociology, University of New Mexico

Lecturer III, 2014-2017, Department of Sociology, University of New Mexico

Instructor, 2001 – 2014, Department of Sociology, University of New Mexico.

Research Assistant, 2002-2003, for Dr. Paul Steele & Dr. Lisa Broidy at the Institute for Social Research, University of New Mexico.

Research Assistant, 1998 – Spring, 2002, for Dr. Richard Boyle at the Institute for Social Research, University of New Mexico.

Graduate Assistant, 1998 – 2001, Department of Sociology, University of New Mexico.

Employment History

Instructor, 2003- 2014, Central New Mexico Community College (CNM)

Instructor, 2004, 2006, College of Santa Fe Albuquerque (CSFA)

Professional Recognition, Honors, etc.

2016 UNM Center for Teaching Excellence, Lecturer or Affiliated Teacher of the Year Award
\$1250

2014 Online Teacher of the Year Award nominee, Center for Teaching Excellence

2013 Conference Travel Award, Communication, Humanities, and Social Science Department,
CNM \$800

2013 Part-Time Teacher of the Year Award nominee, Center for Teaching Excellence

2012 Part-Time Teacher of the Year Award nominee, Center for Teaching Excellence

2011 The Daily Lobo ““Lo Mejor” Student Choice Awards for Best UNM Teachers, 2nd place

2009 Conference Travel Award, Sociology Department, University of New Mexico \$800

2007 UNM Graduate Dean’s Dissertation Fellowship \$1,000

2005 UNM College of Arts & Sciences Gunter Starkey Teaching Award \$1,500

2001-2004 Teaching Assistantships, Department, University of New Mexico

1998-2003 Graduate Assistantships, Department, University of New Mexico

2002 Conference Travel Award, Sociology Department, University of New Mexico

2001 Conference Travel Award, Sociology Department, University of New Mexico

Teaching, Research and Service Interests.

I started my teaching career while I was a graduate student in the PhD program in the Sociology and Criminology Department at UNM. While I worked on coursework, comprehensive exams preparation, and dissertation research and writing I was also teaching introductory to sociology, classical and contemporary theory, research methods, crime, public policy and criminal justice, deviance, causes of crime and delinquency, social control, sociology of mass communications, and the sociology of mainstream and alternative media. I kept myself rather busy negotiating the responsibilities of teaching and my own research agenda. In a conversation with the late communication scholar Ev Rogers, while serving on my dissertation committee until his death, we talked about the importance

of keeping one foot in the classroom and one foot in research throughout one's teaching career. Only a few semesters before my meeting with Ev, while contemplating my path through graduate school, I sought out Rich Wood's advice and he reminded me, quite simply, to pursue that which I find meaningful and important. Shortly after that conversation I stopped working at UNM's Institute for Social Research and focused on creating a critical pedagogy of teaching and research that pushes for understanding society from a perspective that put cultural forces within the context of social structural ones, what Donald Black calls *pure sociology*. Towards this goal, I began a self-study of social network analysis, social theory, and cultural studies to understand the reinforcing process that culture plays in relation to structure, settling on a dissertation investigating the various relationships city-level communications media workers and institutions have with prominently placed political and economic actors, operating under the presumption that these ties are consequential for understanding the communication infrastructure that shape civil society. What came out this dissertation research interest, for me, were not so much the findings of the study but the process of self-reflection I undertook over the course of those years of simultaneously teaching a wide variety of courses and doing research. I was impressed with how keeping my feet in both of these worlds of teaching and research, how the classroom lectures were enhanced by my research experiences at the same time that my lectures were helping me work through my understanding of my research. While I was benefitting from reading wide and deep across the literatures that were informing my research, I was putting myself in the position to do the same in my teaching, asking for and accepting the opportunities to teach a wide array of courses. I have emerged from this kind of eclectic exposure devoted and fascinated with finding the underlying linkages of ideas between the literatures in criminology, media theory, sociological theory, political sociology, cultural studies, and research methods. It is this fascination with contextualizing literatures that is my core interest in teaching and educating: How do we know what we know and how does that knowledge flow through the literatures my students are asked to read? For instance, I have tried recently to use a set of books in my Sociology 424 Race, Class, and Crime class to uncover how the various assigned authors draw on Orlando Patterson's idea of social death. In keeping with my commitment to keep a foot in both doors, , since graduating with my PhD in 2009, I have been writing an introductory textbook based off my lectures in my introductory to sociology course, and the proposal is currently under review with a publisher. My interests today, moving forward, are the same as they've always been, to push students and myself to develop of critical pedagogy around a moral philosophy informed by deep and thoughtful sociological investigation into whatever topic we are studying, which is accomplished through reading, writing, and talking. It is my goal, as I take bell hooks to mean, to find our voices and use them. I will continue to write, read, and teach across as much of the fields of knowledge that I can, seeking to bring out that critical thoughtfulness in myself and my students, to, as I say in all my classes, find out what positions we occupy in the structures of our lives so that we can work to enhance, change, or abandon those networks that are so consequential in our lives. My service is to my students and to the larger community and I hope to be useful in building those bridges.

AREAS OF INTEREST

Criminology, law and social control, social network analysis, political culture, mass media, & social theory

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Introduction to Sociology (UNM; CNM)

This course introduces students to the sociological perspective. Students are exposed to social network analysis methods, including a reading of G. W. Domhoff's *Who Rules America?* Students also undertake an interlocking directorate study of the university's foundation board of directors to illustrate the types of organizations that contribute to the university. Students also gain an insight into one of the ways the university links up to the surrounding community. Substantive areas covered in the course are culture, socialization, social structure, sex roles, bureaucracies, deviant behavior, race relations, social stratification, group dynamics, and social change.

Crime, Public Policy & the Criminal Justice System (UNM)

The course introduces students to the study of crime, the criminal justice system and crime-related public policy. Discussion of key criminological concepts, measurement of crime and delinquency, its distribution in society, victimization, public opinion, the criminal justice system, crime control strategies and policies.

Social Problems (CNM)

This course describes and analyses some of the major social problems facing American society. Employing the sociological perspective (imagination) focus is paid to the economic and political forces that contribute to the persistence of poverty, homelessness, crime and incarceration rates, race and ethnic relations, and gender problems.

Deviance (UNM; CNM)

This course surveys the major forms of norm-violating behavior in American society, such as drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness, criminal behavior and sexual deviance. Discussion of sociological explanations of the causes of, and attempts to address, these behaviors.

Introduction to Research Methods (UNM; CNM)

The course examines the ways in which social scientists investigate society and social phenomena. Students are led through some of the same reasoning that researchers use when they think about doing their work in a professional setting. What distinguishes sociology as an orderly examination of social phenomena from the arbitrary manufacture of myth? Is sociology

an art or a science? The course surveys major research issues and methods in both quantitative and qualitative study. Topics include research design: measurement; sampling logic; experiments; surveys; data analysis; association and causation; ethics and the uses of research. Finally, the course provides an introduction to the use of computers in social research, from data analysis to communicating and accessing information on the Internet.

Causes of Crime and Delinquency (UNM)

This course surveys criminological theories and explores why some people are more likely to engage in crime than others and why crime rates vary over time and space and across social groups. Attendant policy issues are also discussed. Significant emphasis is placed on the link between white-collar crime and street crime.

Social Control (UNM)

This course is the study of informal and formal social control strategies for guiding and monitoring individual behavior and social interaction. In this class social control is viewed in relation to social order in late modern society. Particular attention is paid to the increase in surveillance in contemporary society.

Juvenile Delinquency (CNM)

This course offers an overview of sociological theories and research on juvenile delinquency in the United State. What is juvenile delinquency? How do we define this concept? How do we measure it? What kinds of data are available to measure juvenile delinquency? What is the distribution of juvenile delinquency across races and classes? Next, we talk about sociological theories of delinquency. What do sociology/ criminology theories have to offer in regards to the causal explanations of juvenile delinquency? In the process of doing that, we talk about different forms of social control (formal and informal) against juvenile delinquency. Throughout, we want to be critical – do the sociological/criminological explanations or the policies/programs based on them succeed or fail to succeed in reducing juvenile delinquency. How do we know? We will read a number of theories as well as empirical studies concerned with juvenile delinquency in an effort to have a systematic understating of juvenile delinquency. In addition we will also explore the *environmental influences on delinquency* and finish the semester with *preventing and controlling delinquency*.

Social Theory (UNM)

This course exposes students to the dominant sociological traditions, including the conflict, utilitarian, Durkheimian, and microinteractions traditions. Students first analyze the classic statements within each tradition, with particular emphasis on Engles and Marx, Weber, Locke, Durkheim, Colley, and Mead. Then students read contemporary selections within each tradition. It seems that authors writing about classical theory fall along two discursive models. The first model is storytelling, of which Randall Collins is representative. In this model the authors take us on a journey through time and through theoretical development, noting personalities,

biographies, parallel developments in other realms of society, and theoretical traditions. This “tour guide” approach can be very useful as it can make the material more pleasant to students new to the theories and theorists. The second model, or approach, is more formal, using block models to highlight the core theoretical insights of a particular theory, theoretical tradition, or theorist. This model is more typical of Jonathan Turner and David Held. Their models of the sociological theories that Randall Collins discusses in his book *Four Sociological Traditions* are drawn upon to help round out his discussion.

Culture, Politics, and Society: The Political Economy of the Mass Media (UNM)

This course examines the contemporary studies on the mass media in the United States and the United Kingdom with special focus on the intersection of politics, economics, and culture. Attention is paid to alternative and mainstream media and their role for democracy.

Introduction to Cultural Studies (CNM; CSFA)

This course explores the cultural constructions of differences, including but not limited to gender, race, ethnicity, social class and sexual orientation in contemporary U.S. society. Patricia Collins’ concept of the matrix of domination is used as a key organizing framework.

Social Psychology (CSFA)

This course focuses on sociological approaches to social psychology, emphasizing symbolic interactionism and social constructionism. The course is designed to illustrate how the individual and social interaction shape and are shaped by the cultures and social structures in which they exist. Topics covered include the nature and scope of social psychology, symbols and symbolic communication, the structure of social interaction, the development and maintenance of the social self, and the production and influence of culture.

Social Change (CSFA)

This course gets to the heart of one of sociology’s primary theoretical contributions: explaining how and why societies change. Beginning with some of the classic theories on social change, including Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, the class ends with Sewell, Swidler, Giddens, Luhmann, and Fuchs.

Mainstream and Alternative Media (UNM)

This class explores the historical and contemporary issues surrounding the state of our public sphere. Students will be expected to understand the sociological (political economic and cultural contexts) of both the mainstream and alternative media. This class is divided into two sections. The first focuses on the contemporary state of the mass media in the United States. The second section focuses on the conception, theories, and historical development of the alternative media.

Sociology of Corrections (UNM)

This course is a selective study of the field of penology that focuses on how we think about punishment and how we punish. Particular attention is given to theoretical frameworks that put the statistical and personal realities of incarceration into workable discourses.

Sociology of Police and Social Control (UNM)

This course is the study of police as an instrument of social control. In this course we will chart the development of professional policing in the United States from slave patrols to the policing of the protest movements of the present and the “militarization” of policing. We take a critical analytical lens of policing, noting the complexities in understanding its evolution as an instrument of powerful groups but also as a powerful force in society in its own right. Guiding our discovery and discussions will be the importance the police play in maintaining the status quo—whatever it is—by managing, suppressing, and silencing dissenting voices in the public sphere.

Sociology of Law (UNM)

This course seeks to situate the law within the socio-historical context of societies in historical and comparative perspectives. We start by looking at some of the classic approaches to studying law sociologically with the aid of Gerald Turkel’s classic text *Law and Society: Critical Approaches*. Next we look closely at *The Behavior of Law* by Donald Black, in which he lays out a highly abstract and anthropological theory of law akin to Durkheimian social morphology. From here we look at Aas Katja Franko’s book *Sentencing in the Age of Information: From Faust to Macintosh*, in which the thesis that how we talk about crime and consequently how sentencing is increasingly done is mediated by computer technology, which have implications for fairness and justice. Next, we look at Daniel Solove’s book *Nothing to Hide: The False Tradeoff Between Privacy and Security*, which focuses on privacy law and surveillance with many timely and interesting questions posed. Finally, continuing the theme of privacy and surveillance, on Thursdays throughout the semester we will take a look at the edited volume *Surveillance and Governance: Crime Control and Beyond* compiled by Mathieu Deflem.

The Urban Community (UNM)

This course is a selective introduction to the urban condition. Sociology was born out of, in part, the desire to understand the urban condition. In the wake of the Industrial Revolution and the enclosure movements in England and then the rest of Europe, the countryside emptied and the urban spaces swelled. This process has continued into the present in a global way. In fact, more humans live in towns and cities than in non-urban areas. This course will try to put the city into context: historical, in the development of the city; globally, as we try to understand our city in relation to the urbanization of the world’s population; and methodologically, with social network analysis.