

# Soap Dispenser

The Official Stanford Sociology Graduate Newsletter

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## The Editor Reveals History...

by Yan Li

It's a tradition for the *Soap Dispenser* editor to have the first words (and it's only fair). So welcome to a new academic year, or to the department/graduate school if you're one of the "young 'uns"!

I was reviewing past issues of *Soap Dispenser* for inspirations and noticed readers', as well as editor's, puzzle over the name of the newsletter: Why "Soap Dispenser"? In the spirit of welcoming new members to the Stanford Sociology family, perhaps it's time to unearth some not-so-distant memories...

It all happened in the autumn of 2002, when newly elected newsletter editor Brian Colwell had an epiphany in the men's restroom.<sup>1</sup> You should read his own account of the story in the Fall 2002 issue, the earliest newsletter archived on the new department website, but the gist is that he was overjoyed by the then-newly-installed soap dispenser, and the foamy fluffy soap gave him an vision for the newsletter

and a title that has lasted to this day.

Brian and his successors kept the newsletter as entertaining as a variety show, including interviews with sociology offspring, cartoons, puzzles,<sup>2</sup> and insider stories from an unnamed "snitch." My own contributions included a lengthy lament on my fleeting third year, a collection of sociology bumper stickers, and a Chinese restaurants review.<sup>3</sup> All that probably explains my attachment to the newsletter and why I decided to be the editor this year while I really should be doing a lot of other things as my advisors and peers would at least agree if they're too polite to point that out to me.

But enough retrospection. I'm here to deliver the great stuff I promised: a thick issue of goodness. I won't repeat what can be easily gained from a glimpse at the table of contents, but want to draw your attention to the "wisdom on grad school" piece which so many of you (faculty, grads and alums) contributed to. Thank you, everyone!!! In my years at Stanford this is the first time I've seen faculty advice in such concentrated manner and if you only read one issue of *Soap Dispenser*, you should read this one!

With peace and gratefulness,

Your humble editor

<sup>1</sup> I'm not sure on which floor but since his office used to be in the basement, I'm inclined to accord this historical significance to the basement restroom. The one by the vending machines to be exact.

<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, our in-house cartoonist Songhua Hu and puzzlemaker Jen van Stelle have both graduated. Incidentally, both are pursuing careers outside of academia, and I wonder if it's partly due to their creative talents.

<sup>3</sup> Two of these involved my sending solicitation emails to grads and faculty, a newsletter-related behavior of mine which, by now, you're all too familiar with.

Dept Welcome Dinner, 9-28-07.  
(Photo credit: Editor Blurrie Kam)

### Upcoming Events

(See dept website for exact dates):

- \* Dept Colloquia  
Thursdays 12:30-1:45pm
- \* "Soc Socials" (try say that really fast!)  
Fridays 4-5pm



## Welcoming Remarks from the ASGS Chairs

by Candy Ku and Sarah Harkness

Greetings from your new ASGS co-chairs!

We have found ourselves the victors of the vicious onslaught that was the ASGS elections, and to the victors go the spoils, including this much-sought-after space in the first installment of the 2007-2008 *Soap Dispenser*. This is indeed a privilege, as only a few months ago we were living sans Soap. Thanks to Yan's outrage, we now no longer live in fear.

In the spirit of Yan's enthusiasm, the ASGS team has already taken the steps to make this year an exciting one. Even before the advent of the Fall Quarter, our incoming cohort went on a hike and had a BBQ with their buddies, organized by our wonderful social activities committee. In addition to making sure that we are putting the "social" back into the sociology department, we will try our hardest to advocate on your behalf. Of course, as the 2004-2005

co-chairs put it, "if it's increased discretionary funding, more space, or better pay you're after, you're clearly deluded and perhaps better suited as a candidate at GSB" (Kukutai and Cobb 2005).

All joking aside, we are looking forward to serving our fellow students. We might seem scary and unapproachable, but feel free to give us suggestions, voice your grievances, and growl at academia. We won't tell, we promise.

We wish you a wonderful fall quarter!

~Candy & Sarah

### Reference(s)

Kukutai, Tahu and Curtiss Cobb III. "Introductory Remarks from Your ASGS Co-Chairs." *Soap Dispenser* (Fall 2005):1-2.



## News from Faculty, Students, and Alums

Below is news I collected through the surveys I sent out to faculty, graduate students, and alums. I have no way of verifying the sources since data were collected anonymously. Therefore, reader's discretion is advised in telling truth from lies. (Hint: one faculty news item was submitted through the graduate student survey...) Items are in alphabetical order by last name. For lack of time, I only contacted alums who graduated in 2000 through 2007. I'd also like to mention that a quick search at the ASA website yielded 12 graduate students of our department who presented single- or co-authored papers at the past ASA meeting in New York. But people seem to be too modest to report these things nowadays.

**Kendra Bischoff** moved to a new apartment in Palo Alto.

**Jamillah Bowman** received a NAACP Earl Warren Civil Rights Training Scholarship.

**Carol Caronna** (PhD 2000) is in her sixth year as an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice at Towson University in Maryland, where she teaches Introduction to Sociology, Work and Occupations, Organizations and Society, and Sociology of Gender. She has recently published a paper in *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*. She is going up for tenure and promotion this year. In June 2006 she got married to Antonio Martinez Bouza, a mechanical engineer who works at the U.S. Department of Energy and is a PhD candidate (ABD) in mechanical engineering at University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

**LaToya Baldwin Clark** gave birth to a daughter, Amina Renee Clark, on August 28, 2007 at 9:15pm. Amina weighed in at 6lbs 5ozs and was 19 inches long. She is

LaToya's second child, sister to William Ahmir who is 20 months old.

**Brian Colwell** (PhD 2006) began a tenure-track position at the University of Missouri. He is currently trying to get material from his dissertation published, and working with **Lynny Chin** on an experiment pertaining to the relationship between a group's goals and the development of bonds among group members. He is also jump starting a project on the impact of the social context of childbirth on social bonds.

**Sarah Harkness** presented a paper at the American Sociology Association conference.

**Yan Li** celebrated her blog's first anniversary by blogging about it. Her coauthored paper with **Justine Tinkler** (PhD 2007) and **Stefanie Mollborn** (PhD 2006) is coming out in *Social Psychology Quarterly* in December.

**Monica McDermott** climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro.

**Susan Olzak** received funding from NSF Sociology Program (with Sarah Soule, Cornell) to study the impact of environmental protest and advocacy groups on pro-environmental legislation. She recently published a paper in *Social Forces* (June 2007) with graduate student **Emily Ryo** on diversity in tactics and goals in the Civil Rights Movement. She gave a presentation of preliminary results from the environmental legislation and protest project at the 2007 ASA (with Sarah Soule), and is working on a project with **Doug McAdam**, John McCarthy and Sarah Soule on all types of social protest in the US, 1960-1995.

**Heili Pals** just came back from Estonia where she gave an invited intensive short course on Life Course Sociology at Tartu University.

**Dongtao Qi** returned from fieldwork in Taiwan, highly impressed and motivated by what have been happening in that island. The fieldwork experience has had profound

impact on both his research and personal development. On a more personal front, Dongtao reported, "My son Oliver has been in preschool for about one month. He likes it so much that he even begs for going there in the weekend. Obviously, to him a family with two PhD-student parents is much more boring than a preschool."

**Matt Snipp** is back from his year of leave. He commented, "No wants to see their sabbatical come to an end but if you have to return 'somewhere,' Stanford is a very nice somewhere to which to return."

**Irena Stepanikova** (PhD 2006) is making it through the first year as faculty. And building a house!

**Jen van Stelle** (PhD 2006) married Dave Blum on October 7. She's also just started a new job as a financial/contracts analyst at UCSF. Jen welcomes you to contact her if you have any questions or are looking for a job at UCSF.

CONGRATULATIONS to everyone!!!



## Grads' Feedback on the Fall Institute

On Saturday, October 13, 2007, eight of our graduate students/graduates on the job market practiced their job talks at the inaugural Fall Institute, to an audience consisting of most faculty members and graduate students from the department. I survey-monkeyed graduate students on what they thought of the Fall Institute and 8 out of 9 respondents thought that the department should do this every year. Below are some detailed comments.

### From presenters

It's very helpful to get feedback from profs outside my own area, which is rare. Also, having the date superimposed by the department (instead of arranging for a practice talk myself) is a great way to help me get work done.

Surprisingly, yes [it was helpful]. I think it's a good idea to have the practice and also a good way to help build a sense of community. Although I see no reason why it has to be on the early side of morning.

I think the institute is a keeper. I seriously had no idea what kind of reception my talk would get, or if I could even do it. And most of the profs at my talk had never seen my research before; we don't get many opportunities like that.

I think that the Fall Institute is an excellent idea, even if the name seems fancy. Helped me a lot.

### From non-presenters

Yes, it was helpful. I've seen informal student presentations during workshops and more formal faculty presentations at the Colloquiums, but this was a nice in-between. It was useful to hear about the research other grad students are doing, and I liked comparing the

presentation styles. I also loved having four or five faculty members in the same room, all giving feedback. All in all, I thought the event went really well, and I hope it continues. It was very helpful to me--it gave me an idea of the type of criticism one can expect to face during a job talk! It was also good to see different techniques in presenting long-term research projects in short time frames.

Yes! I thought it was wonderful! I liked it especially because I felt a sense of department cohesion that I hadn't often felt in the past. I also enjoyed seeing what people have been working on. I hope this keeps going.

It was helpful in the sense that it was beneficial for me to find out what a job talk feels like. The worst part of it was, not surprisingly, the time, the day and the point in the quarter during which the Institute was held. If we either made a colloquia series for these job talks on Fridays during the beginning of the fall or have an extended day on a Friday before the Fall quarter began so that we could hear more job talks at a more convenient time, this would improve the Institute.

Yes, I think the institute is good for the department and was helpful for me to see what a dissertation project consists of.



## Dispatches from Ohio: “Breathing in”

by Victor Thompson

“I knew that somewhere that night there’d be people sitting together over there talking about the bad old days of jubilee and that one of them would remember and say, Yes, never mind, there were some nice ones too.”

--Michael Herr, *Dispatches*

Today was hot, tomorrow is going to be hotter and I think the next day may be a little hotter than tomorrow. This about sums up the story of life in Ohio for me so far. Oh yah, and trying to find the switch for the frickin humidifier that someone left on in this part of the country. Any clues?

The rest of the time is spent working on publications—and if you are reading this then I have had some measurable success in this department. This is a difficult task, as many of you know. Yes, Yan promises to publish anything that comes across her desk, clearly reflecting the high standards of *The Soap Dispenser*, but that only makes it that much harder to write. In my final throes before giving up I asked Yan what the Hell is expected of me in this task. “Dispatches.” she said. “Dispatches!” So with that command I was left with the task of deciphering what exactly should be in a “dispatch” and more importantly, what could keep the readers entertained through my dispatches.

I think I will begin this ongoing series of “dispatches with a brief comparison of the different environments.

	OHIO	CALIFORNIA
Population	11,478,006	36,457,549
% Change in Population	1.1%	7.6%
Foreign Born Persons	3.3%	26.2%
Population by Race		
<i>White, Non-Hispanic</i>	83.1%	43.8%
<i>Black</i>	11.9	6.7
<i>Hispanic</i>	2.3	35.2
<i>AIAN</i>	0.2	1.2
<i>Asian</i>	1.4	12.2
<i>NHOPI</i>	0.0	0.4
<i>Two or More</i>	1.3	2.4
BA or Higher	21.1	26.6
Median Home Value	\$103,000	\$211,500
State Motto	“With God, All Things are Possible”	“Eureka!”
Red or Blue State in 2004	Red	Blue
% Christian	91.1%	71.4%

Other facts about Ohio and California: 50% of the U.S. population lives within a 500 mile radius of Ohio; First McDonalds was opened in San Bernardino, CA; The tallest tree in the world is in Humboldt County—go see the 369 foot Redwood!; Ohio has the NFL football Hall of Fame—(and yes, OSU).

I asked my kid, Justice, to give me some cool facts about Ohio, but all he had to say was a little song he learned at school. Something about apple trees, apple pies, telling lies and breaking his mother’s teapot. In the end, I think there will be some interesting comparisons to make between life in California, but that will take some time to consider. For now, I am still *breathing in* the surroundings and remembering the days I spent at Stanford. I will always have my memories of the kind people, wonderful food (please visit the “roach coach” behind Green Library— aka the lunch truck—weekdays around 12:30); beautiful weather, and fun times of the Bay area (Go Sunnyvale!). I know everyone there will be taking care of things for me though I also know they will do their best to make it theirs.

Look for my next Dispatch from Ohio, “Hell Sucks,” in the next edition of *The Soap Dispenser*. If you have requests for assignments you would like me to take while on location in Ohio feel free to email me: [vthomps@stanford.edu](mailto:vthomps@stanford.edu). Until next time, keep your flak jackets closed and your socks dry!



(Photo credit: V. Thompson or family)

## The Real Mr. Mom

by "Mr. Mom"

Dear Readers,

I was recently asked by a friend to describe what it is like to be a stay-at-home dad and the first thing that came to my mind was how was I going to get the story done with all my responsibilities such as washing clothes, making cookies for the bake sale, etc. Fortunately, my spouse went out with some co-workers and it freed up some time for me to write down my feelings.

First of all, there is no glamour in being a stay-at-home dad. You don't sit around with your girlfriends and sip sangria while you talk about your day and the kids all simultaneously nap. The media might have you think otherwise with such films as Mr. Mom and Little Children, but the reality is it is a very isolating experience. Kate Winslet never plays kissing games with me at the playground and all the other stay-at-home moms don't endlessly flirt with me to pass the day away. More often than not, the response by moms is discomfort. My life, like that of all stay-at-home parents, revolves around an ever-changing schedule focused on naps, poops, and the occasional store outing. This has happened every single day since his birth and rarely has changed. The key point is that the daily roles are the same, irrelevant of gender.

With that said, I want my readers to realize that my being male greatly influences my experience as a stay-at-home parent, similar to what any underrepresented group experiences when they enter a world dominated by others. For instance, one of the important ways of remaining sane during the long hours at home is being social with other people. Outlets such as play groups and classes are offered in numerous proportions, story time at the library, and just about anything that you want your child involved in. But that is where the opportunity stops. Everything is titled "MOMMY" and when you try to enter the group in spite of this, you always get the same reaction: "Oh, that is so great that you are staying home with your child", followed by a smile possessing a hint of falseness. That is where the hospitalities end. As the social interactions progress over a period of time, you find that

you are never allowed into the social network of the mommies no matter how hard you try. Now, everyone loves to disagree, and I know there is a group of attachment parents who are liberal, open-minded, and think a leprechaun is always at the end of the rainbow waiting to give you a pot of gold. Well, what happens when that leprechaun is always a Palo Alto socialite who has a husband who works in Silicon Valley, drives an SUV, and always makes you eat her damn nasty brownies at the kiddy party where the actual Barney showed up. I see it all the time. Simply put, you are never fully welcome in the group. Don't get me wrong, I have made a few other mommy friends and yes, we have had sangria together, but the experience as a whole is one of isolation.

The response by males is just as interesting. I've had older males think I was lying when I told them I stayed home with my child. The males in my own family of liberal-minded pacifists still talk to me every week about getting a "real" job. With all that said, I still choose to take on the same status of any stay-at-home parent, one of no pay and very little status. BUT, and I mean a huge BUT, I possess probably the greatest occupation one can ever have. I, too, was like the rest of the world and endlessly tried to climb the work ladder, desperately seeking reassurance for my self-esteem by solving tasks that I and the society around me valued. Then one day I took a job that trained me in leadership skills, required me to make key decisions when they counted, and the pride of serving my family and country - no not the Army - the real task of being a stay-at-home dad. I mean, how many times at work has your boss ever come up to you and given you a kiss and hug and mumbled "love you" in a language only you understand? Well, some of us have had a couple of creepy bosses, but still, it is probably the most rewarding part of my life and I hope all parents try it out some time in their life.

Toodles,  
Mr. Mom



Mr. Mom's boss in a pumpkin field

(Photo credit: Editor Papparazzi)

## **Words of Wisdom on Graduate School** **- Advice from Faculty, Alums and Fellow Graduate Students -**

You asked, and now you have the answers! When I asked grads whether they would like to see faculty advice on graduate school in the newsletter, all who responded (N=22) said yes! Almost everybody indicated that they would also like to hear advice from fellow graduate students and alumnae/i. Our faculty members are troopers indeed, sending in advice which accumulated to 7 single-spaced pages. For alums, I only surveyed those who graduated between 2000 and 2007, later realizing that most of them are the ones who are the busiest, being junior faculty and facing tenure pressures. Still, I think you'll appreciate their advice and the fact that they took the time to answer some of our questions.

Your fellow graduate students, as usual, offered wisdom sprinkled with both sincerity and humor. I refrained from editing as best as a communist daughter could, adhering to the "We'll Print Anything!" motto (see Fall 2003 issue). I did have to make one executive decision to exclude a couple of quickie answers from one respondent whose humor vaguely eluded me, mainly because telling new grads "don't do it" without saying why doesn't sound all that helpful, as funny as it could be. In the interest of space and in the context of all the other words of wisdom, I think this contributor will agree that it was a good call. My job title, after all, is "editor," not "compiler."

I didn't include my own advice in here, because my advice deserves its own space! © Seriously, I have compiled a list of blogs by sociologists where you can find useful tips and advice on surviving succeeding in graduate school with quite a range of topics and perspectives. So be sure to read "The Socio-Blogical Imaginations" on page 13.

For easy of perusal, I have grouped the questions into 5 categories: career and the job market, dissertation, productivity, reproductivity, and graduate school in general. Answers to each question are in random order.

### **1. CAREER AND THE JOB MARKET**

**[TO FACULTY] What do you think the outlook is for soc graduates in the coming years, in light of the trend toward more non-tenure track positions?**

I think that this is a good time to be getting a PhD in sociology. There is a burgeoning college-age population and a demographic bulge of near-retirees, both factors that will tend to increase demand for regular faculty. [faculty]

I hope this is a short-term development but I also worry that this reflects public universities having to rely on temporary help to cover their teaching obligations because they don't have the budget authority to recruit regular full-time faculty. [Matt Snipp]

The trend toward non-tenure track positions will probably be counter-balanced by the retiring generation of baby-boomers and the large number of college-age students. I think it's a great time to be entering the field. [faculty]

I suppose there will be more position, and also more candidates. A higher proportion of positions will be outside regular sociology departments (e.g., tied to special programs or institutes), and outside the university. [John Meyer]

Based on a couple of search committees I think the students are becoming more and more qualified in terms of having papers published. A lot of them have more papers

published because they didn't get a job right away. Teaching skills count for a lot more than I realized. [Patricia Chang]

The demographic profiles of existing departments send a clear signal that there are going to be more and more openings for junior positions that are tenure track jobs in virtually all good departments for Stanford Ph.D.s, in my view. [Susan Olzak]

**[TO FACULTY] What do you feel is the most common obstacle students face that has resulted in the rise in the average number of years a soc grad student at Stanford takes to graduate?**

I don't know that the number of years has gone up much (data are always problematic, and departments avoid knowing or reporting them accurately). A drift away from tightly formalized dissertations (e.g., experiments) lengthens dissertation time. [John Meyer]

I think there are two factors, one market and one cultural. The market factor is that, if you want a good, tenure-track job, you really need a single-authored paper published or forthcoming when you go on the job market. It takes time to get one's research to a point where one can produce this, so that means people can't pop out of graduate school as they once did. As for the cultural factor, I do not know what causes it. However, my observation would be that there is not a lot of group public energy around doing research among graduate students here. For example, come ASA-submission time I do not see a flurry of activity among lots of graduate students trying to get papers out. I

am not saying no one submits, I am saying there is no noticeable public culture that supports this kind of activity. I don't know if this happens because faculty, all working away at home, are, by virtue of their invisibility, poor models of how to "do" academia. I don't know if it happens b/c this is a nice place to live and so there are a lot of distractions from work. [faculty]

I am not sure because this appears to be a national trend & a trend that all disciplines are experiencing. Perhaps family & dual career pressures may play a role, but there is no hard evidence on what is behind this trend. [Susan Olzak]

I find it baffling that the time to degree is so long in a program with such generous funding and so few requirements. Perhaps there is insufficient structure and/or guidance after the first couple of years. [faculty]

I'm not sure what the obstacle is, but it isn't unique to Stanford; it is a national trend in all the social sciences and humanities. [Paula England]

I am not sure because this appears to be a national trend & a trend that all disciplines are experiencing. Perhaps family & dual career pressures may play a role, but there is no hard evidence on what is behind this trend. [Susan Olzak]

I think the most common obstacle is to take a perfectionist attitude towards exams and such. The best way to learn is to move ahead and listen to criticism and hear the advice people are giving you to improve. Put your thoughts out there. Seek out feedback. Act on it to improve your work or approach. [Patricia Chang]

**[TO ALUMS] What are your recommendations on career choices? What type of settings are you in (academia, industry, research institute, etc.)? Are you satisfied with your career choice?**

I'm in academia at a research I university and really enjoy it. From the way people talked I thought teaching would be utterly unimportant, but it's actually a crucial part of each day. I do enjoy the research even more than I did in grad school--having RAs makes it easier and more fun! [Stefanie Mollborn, PhD 2006]

Be open minded...sometimes jobs that you think you want, you don't. [PhD 2007]

I'm working in the finance department of an academic medical center -- I interact with university department chairs & faculty as well as executives of the hospital. So, it's the health care industry, but many of the people I interact with are academics. Am I satisfied? So far, so good, but I only started a month ago... [Jen van Stelle, PhD 2006]

I opted for a post-doc - I am a post-doctoral research associate at Texas A&M University. I do like the job and enjoy the opportunity to do research, thus would suggest a post-doc. However, I do not know yet how it affects one's

job market opportunities, thus - take my advice with caution. :-) [Heili Pals, PhD2006]

I am in academia and I am pretty satisfied. Can't beat the flexible hours and summers off. [Irena Stepanikova, PhD 2006]

I'm in academia. Yes, very satisfied. Though I have a deeply ingrained self-identification with manual, rather than mental labor. [Brian Colwell, PhD 2006]

I am an assistant professor at a comprehensive university and I am entirely satisfied with my career choice. We are a Master's Level university with a few applied doctoral programs in the health sciences. Our department only has undergraduate majors. The teaching load is 3-3 which means 3 courses per semester. I also have 50 advisees as a course equivalent which counts toward my load, so my real load is 3-4. Our research expectations are less than what you would find at a Research 1 university with a Doctoral program. To get tenure and promotion you need about 4 solid publications in peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, etc., and you must have excellent teaching plus service. Teaching is very important here. My recommendation is if you are going to apply to this type of university, you will need to have taught several classes by yourself to be competitive. If you send our your job packet to a bunch of places like this and they reject you, you probably haven't done enough teaching. This is not a good fit for someone who doesn't like teaching or for someone who wants to focus primarily on research. [Carol Corona, PhD 2000]

**[TO ALUMS] What are the aspects of going on the job market and/or being an asst prof for which you felt least prepared? Do you have any hints for succeeding on the job market?**

As I wrote above, I wish I had fully realized how important publications are for getting a job. Letters are the other really important piece, so developing good relationships with at least 3 faculty members is critical. [Stefanie Mollborn, PhD 2007]

Still feel not prepared for the uncomfortable feeling of the fear about future. [Heili Pals, PhD 2006]

You need publications, and you need to be pretty far along on your dissertation...if you don't have some analysis done in September, don't go on the market. [PhD 2007]

People in industry generally have no idea what to do with someone who has a Ph.D., even though we ourselves know how applicable our skills and abilities are. If you're going to go on the non-academic job market, (1) have a single-page resume [no one called me back until I changed my two-page CV to a one-page resume]; (2) try using a recruiter to get your foot in the door [especially with large organizations, you need to use internal organizational networks to find the right position, and it's much easier to do that when you're actually inside]; (3) don't get discouraged if you're not finding anything right away, but

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do consider changing your tactics if they're not working. [Jen van Stelle, PhD 2006]

Teaching undergrads at a state school in the South! They are in general much less prepared and much less engaged than Stanford undergrads. [Irena Stepanikova, PhD 2006]

When I first went on the market I didn't realize how little time faculty members on a search committee have to read your application. As a faculty member I think I only spend about 5 to 7 minutes reading an application. So a lot of decisions are made very quickly. You have to make your application stand out by having major themes about who you are and what your work is all about, and emphasize these themes throughout your packet, kind of like writing an essay with a thesis. If you don't know who you are and what your work is all about, you are probably not ready for a job. Also in the majority of cases we judge applicants by fit (fit with Towson, fit with our department, fit with the job description) so there will be many jobs that you won't fit, and being rejected from them means nothing about you personally. [Carol Corona, PhD 2000]

Publish a lot and pick a dissertation topic that will have broad appeal. [Justine Tinkler, PhD 2007]

I feel pretty prepared to be an assistant prof. (Though you might want to get back to me in about 5 years on that one!!). I have no hints for the job market. From what I've seen it is an utter crapshoot. It makes no sense to me--don't take rejection personally and don't take acceptance as a sign of your predestination. It just is what it is. Send out a lot of applications. [Brian Colwell, PhD 2006]

**[TO FACULTY] If you got to do it all over again, would you still choose to be a sociology professor or might you have chosen another career? What would you be doing if you WERE NOT a professor or researcher?**

I cannot imagine anything else would be as much fun. Acting would have been a blast, I guess. [Susan Olzak]

Being a sociology professor is a good fit for me--there isn't another career I'd prefer. [faculty]

Faculty positions offer the best of all worlds. One is busy all the time, but usually busy doing what we enjoy. Rarely do I find other people with as much job satisfaction as I do with academics. We are, essentially, our own bosses, setting our own schedules, researching and teaching topics of interest to us, mostly. It's the best kept secret within the working world! [Christine Min Wotipka, assistant professor of education and (by courtesy) sociology]

Well, if I could be a famous rock star or a race car driver, I might bag sociology but otherwise, it's a pretty good gig. [Matt Snipp]

My priorities now are my family, writing and research. Those things will always be with me whatever I do professionally. I am glad I worked when my kids were young. I have a lot of friends today who put their careers

on hold to have their kids and feel like they gave up a lot and that it's really hard to re-enter the workforce after a 6-8 year hiatus. Personally, I like knowing I had both. [Patricia Chang]

Absolutely. I love being an academic sociologist. It was the right thing for me to do. [faculty]

**[TO GRADS] Any insight on schools and career choice considerations?**

Believe you have the choice before you send out the application package -- make sure what you want is really what you want.

Policy is not a dirty word.

Think creatively. A tenure track position at a university in the US isn't the only career option. It's a big world out there and there's lots of innovative ways to use your PhD.

## **2. DISSERTATION**

**[TO FACULTY] What, in your opinion, makes a good dissertation topic or good dissertation? What is the most common mistake students make in their dissertations?**

A good topic is one that is relevant to a significant literature in the field and makes an original contribution. The most common mistake people make is to write about something for strategic reasons that they don't care about intellectually. [faculty]

There are two common mistakes I see. One is to start out so broad and ambitious that it isn't doable in a year or two. Usually faculty get students to trim it down. The second is the more serious mistake: having shaky logic link in the question and the research design. You want to think ahead to what you think you might find and what you'd conclude. Now, assume you're trying to defend that conclusion from what you've done. What alternative explanation (maybe from a competing theory) could someone advance for the same finding? If your claim is causal, what have you done about omitted variable bias? Could you do something better about it? These are the questions that kill you in a) job talks and b) reviews of your submitted articles. You don't want these concerns to paralyze you, but you do want to make it as logically bullet proof as possible. [Paula England]

A really good dissertation will pose a puzzle and resolve it. An excellent dissertation will deeply theorize the puzzle. The most common mistakes students make are in either writing dissertations that provide an illustration of something or a minor extension of someone else's ideas, or in doing empirically very complex projects with very weak theoretical grounding, so that the dissertation produces findings but doesn't include the conceptual tools to illuminate what those findings mean. [faculty]

Think about the really big & significant questions that have not been addressed yet in the literature, or try to provide a twist on an old core problem in sociology. I don't know what the most common mistake might be, but thinking too small would top my list. [Susan Olzak]

Good dissertations in the field are often focused on topics of general interest. In this department, good dissertations have tended to address theoretically significant and interesting issues. Two common mistakes: (1) For safety, repeating what has already essentially been done. Very derivative work doesn't attract much interest. (2) Pursuing a topic one is substantively interested in without having much of a sociological reason for it. Most dissertations in the field don't have real sociological questions. [John Meyer]

Many things can make a good dissertation topic. A good question helps, even if the results don't pan out. However, what makes a good question is its framing. The question needs to be framed so your audience knows why it is interesting, why testing it in this way is smart and useful, and what the results will tell you whether positive or negative, and finally, why those results are interesting and applicable. Interesting results make it easier to have a "good" dissertation topic. [Patricia Chang]

Spending too much time on the dissertation when it should just be seen as a launching pad to several good articles or a great book. Get the dissertation mostly done, go on the job market, work on articles/book while on the job market (as it can take several years to land a good position, even for Stanford's graduates, esp. those with partners in tow). [Christine Min Wotipka]

A really good dissertation will pose a puzzle and resolve it. An excellent dissertation will deeply theorize the puzzle. The most common mistakes students make are in either writing dissertations that provide an illustration of something or a minor extension of someone else's ideas, or in doing empirically very complex projects with very weak theoretical grounding, so that the dissertation produces findings but doesn't include the conceptual tools to illuminate what those findings mean. [faculty]

The best dissertation is a finished one. [Matt Snipp]

**[TO GRADS] How did you come up with the idea for your dissertation?**

personal interest + research doability + discussion with the advisor.

Painfully and slowly.

Lots of reading in lots of different areas. Don't expect to find the topic immediately, it took me two years.

I had a totally different idea that completely didn't work out (I spent a fair bit of time to find out my idea was unfeasible), but then I noticed something happening with a subset of my data that looked really interesting and then things started rolling from there.

I got desperate and looked for anything.

Personal experiences, and experiences of people close to me.

I thought about what the things are that I always read about instead of reading the things I'm supposed to be reading, and then I chose a dissertation topic that let me focus on those things.

### 3. PRODUCTIVITY

**What is your work routine? How many hours per week do you think you are reasonably productive, and how do you budget your time to be most productive?**

From alums

One thing I have learned is that two things are required: deadlines and breaks. With deadlines I mean anything - a promise to somebody, a conference presentation, etc. With breaks I really mean small breaks during the working day - one cannot expect to work with full efficiency the whole day, so be conscious to take breaks. Also - it's a good idea to prepare a to do list at the end of the day - so that you don't have to sit in front of a computer in the morning, frantically trying to think where to start. [Heili Pals, PhD 2006]

I turn my email off most of the time, that definitely increases my productivity. [PhD 2007]

I work 8:30 am - 5:30 pm Monday through Friday. Most of those hours are reasonably productive. I find I'm most productive when I've had enough sleep, so I've had to change my own schedule to get to bed earlier -- those grad school days of sleeping 'til noon and working 'til midnight are over! [Jen van Stelle, PhD 2006]

I found that I must fiercely protect my research time from service and administration connected to classes. I am learning to delegate to TAs/RAs and administrative assistants. I also use some little tricks that other faculty suggested, such as asking students at the beginning of the semester to get to know two other students in the class who will serve as their "slacking buddies" and give them notes that they missed, etc. [Irena Stepanikova, PhD 2006]

Some weeks I work 70-80 hours due to grading papers and some weeks I work very little. I am on a 10 month contract so I have two months off in the summer with no pay, but we are expected to use that time to write and publish. I spend both my summer break and my winter break writing and working on research, and also traveling. My semesters are consumed with teaching and committee work with tiny bits of time for research. I am on a 3 course per semester load. For me I need the structure of courses to help me budget my time. [Carol Corona, PhD 2000]

## ***Soap Dispenser***

Lately it's a struggle to keep a focus. But typically I'd say I have about 3 hours of creative productivity (usually given to writing/revising) a day, about 3 hours of mundane (reading articles/books, administrative, course development, email stuff) productivity and the rest is given to in-class, teaching, additional reading, taking breaks and what not. I try to come to work to work and leave when I feel I'm done, rather than hang out there. I do my 'creative' work first thing in the morning and reserve the mundane stuff for later. [Brian Colwell, PhD 2006]

I'm in what seems to be a pretty unusual situation in working at a research I where most people put in about 40 hours a week. Like many of my colleagues, I keep a fairly rigid 9-5 schedule plus the occasional evening activity. I have kids and can't work more, but I think 50 hours/week would be ideal to keep up with my workload. I rarely take lunch breaks and do some email in the evenings, and by doing that I find that I can get my work done except in rare crunch periods. [Stefanie Mollborn, PhD 2006]

### From current grads

My recent work routine has been much better than before - about 30 hours per week are really productive. Maintaining a healthy sense of guilty for not working in my most productive hours.

Find the time that works best for your writing and clear your schedule for that time for at least a couple of weeks. Your most productive time may shift every so often. Also make sure you have a comfortable place to write with all the amenities that you need (this can include a microwave or kettle for making tea, a comfortable chair, the ability to listen to music while coding, etc).

I don't really know how many hours per week I am reasonably productive, but I know that I try to keep a 9-to-5 routine on weekdays, do some "easy work" on weeknights (e.g., returning emails and organizing work files), and work in the afternoons on weekends.

all of my hours are productive.. i'm even productive in my sleep. i keep a notepad by my bed for brilliant ideas and wake up to write them down. kidding.

I work when the inspiration hits me. Don't believe the 'write your thesis in fifteen minutes a day' crap. Unless of course you want to write crap.

Routine has changed over the years to meet shifting demands - especially with less teaching and TAing in later years. I aim for a minimum of 40 productive hours.

MONDAY: Be excited about the week. Schedule lots of meetings. Attend class. Do very little real work, but reassure myself that the week is young. TUESDAY: Work in the morning for an hour, then check e-mail. Feel slightly depressed. Cheer self up by taking a three-hour lunch with friends. WEDNESDAY: The best day for work. Unfortunately, there are a lot of Wednesday classes and meetings. Still, get in 2-3 solid hours of work. Work out. Worry about

personal health. Resolve to sleep more. THURSDAY: Work, fret about job prospects. Contemplate dropping out. Decide there is more to life than work. Drink too much that night. FRIDAY: Get up late, nurse headache. Make dinner plans with friends. Work slowly for six hours before dinner, checking e-mail once every eight minutes or so. SATURDAY: Decide I deserve a break. Hang out with friends, feel generally happy. Read something for pleasure and an article or two for school. SUNDAY: Resolve to do better the next week. Repeat until graduation.

## **4. "RE"PRODUCTIVITY**

### **Which period during an academic scholar's career is a good time to add a child to the family? (esp. for female academics!)**

I think it depends on your age and your biological clock. I think grad school or a postdoc would be the most flexible time to have a baby. Pre-tenure would be tough. Post-tenure is tough too because your responsibilities increase the longer you are at a job. I myself have no children and can't imagine being able to maintain my job and raise a child unless we hired a small staff, including a housekeeper and a full-time nanny--Alice + Mary Poppins. [Carol Corona, PhD 2000]

Definitely in graduate school - preferably in years 3-5. [Justine Tinkler, PhD 2007]

Sometime in the 10th grade, before you take your SAT exam. Seriously, I don't know. My guess would be that (depending on any number of other factors) starting the program with a child that is of daycare age would be a good idea, or waiting until you are at a more flexible point in the program (not the first two years) when you can piece together a full day's work from a 24 hour period. Or wait until a few years after you complete the program. I think a good rule of thumb is not to start too many new projects at the same time, whether they are professional or personal. But take this advice at your own risk! [Brian Colwell, PhD 2006]

Having had three kids before tenure, the first while a postdoc and the other two while an assistant professor I'd say that grad school is a pretty good time. Having a child made me much more disciplined and focused about my work and a lot more productive. I didn't have as much useless anxiety or feel like I should be working all the time. I worked when I could and became much more focused on getting a task done rather than if it was done perfectly. It may be worth mentioning that I gave a job talk when I was 8 months pregnant with my second child, and published one co-authored book and six articles in the first year he was born (and I got the job). Of course much of that work had already been in the pipeline (although that was during my first child's first two years.) I also had a very supportive husband who was also a new academic and had a flexible work schedule. [Patricia Chang]

No time is a bad time anymore. Twenty years ago it was difficult for a female academic to have a family, now it is actually encouraged (for both men and women) by pro-natalist policies at many universities. [faculty]

If you can afford it, grad school. Several female colleagues have had children as assistant professors and have found it hard to cut off all their ongoing projects for parental leave. You don't have as many simultaneous projects going on in grad school, so it's easier to take some time when you need it. But then there's the money thing... [Stefanie Mollborn, PhD 2006]

I shouldn't answer b/c I waited to have children until I was a tenured full professor in a very good program. There are very few women who have this luxury, in any discipline. I hardly need to mention that there are a host of complex trade-offs between career and family and each person has to decide what's best for her (or him). Some decide that there is no good time while others may decide to risk compromising her career to invest time in child rearing, as sad as this sounds. I think universities are more attuned to the family/work balance but others operate as if next year will be 1957 again. [Matt Snipp]

From what I've seen, it works best to wait until after getting tenure. If one cannot wait that long, then just before going up for tenure, when one's publications are further along the pipeline. Probably best to raise kids with a lot a help, esp. a helpful partner. [Christine Min Wotipka]

These days, I don't think it matters so much when you have children. In grad school, you have more informal flexibility, but most institutions today have formal programs that support faculty having kids (e.g., leave, tenure clock extensions, teaching reductions, etc.). Whether you are in graduate school or on a faculty somewhere, you will still have to negotiate how to handle this stuff at home with your spouse/partner/other family members. A senior scholar at another institution once told me she gives graduate students and young faculty the following piece of advice, which I think is a good one: Being an academic is absorbing enough that you can do it and one other thing -- the other thing could be having a family, being very politically active, having a super-absorbing hobby, etc. The average life has room for being a scholar plus one. I think this is a fair observation for most of us. [faculty]

## 5. GRADUATE SCHOOL IN GENERAL

**[TO ALUMS] What would you have done the same or differently if you were starting your PhD program again?**

I would have realized how important publications are and would have sent them out more promptly. They don't need to be perfect when they're first sent out--the publication process helps make them better. [Stefanie Mollborn, PhD 2006]

I would have addressed difficulties such as getting a writing tutor earlier in my academic career. [PhD 2007]  
Would have taken more classes at the business school. -  
Would have set up regular meetings with my dissertation advisor so that I'd have "real" deadlines. [Jen van Stelle, PhD 2006]

In the hindsight, having a kid while in grad school seems like a good idea, especially if you are living in EV! Also, I would have networked with people outside of the department more -- the opportunities at Stanford are just tremendous. [Irena Stepanikova, PhD 2006]

I would have done all the same research and teaching, but I would have been more assertive about seeking RA funding. I would have done all the committee work--now that I am on the "other side", I know that we are really lucky at Stanford that the faculty have seats for grad students on so many committees. Not every grad program does that. It is excellent training and exposure to serve on committees alongside the faculty. [Carol Corona, PhD 2000]

I'm pretty happy with what I did. Stanford was an excellent choice for me. I would have liked to worked more closely with faculty. But at the same time, I think it is good to keep some degree of separation between one's own work/ideas and those of your mentors. But it's a fine balance to maintain one's healthy skepticism of convention without being a reflexive contrarian. [Brian Colwell, PhD 2006]

**[TO GRADS] What is some advice you would give to the new graduate students? Or advice about graduate school in general?**

Try to maintain a life and interests outside of academia.

Stick to one (not many) paper or research, and get it published ASAP.

Don't worry about grades. Take your time selecting an advisor. Try not to piss too many people off - especially faculty. Make lots of friends outside the department.

Always remember why you came here.

Don't spend too much time going to workshops or classes. Once you have the basic critical thinking tools, you'll learn much more by developing your own program of study and agenda. Find the other students and faculty you like and talk to them.

Work with emeriti and junior faculty as much as possible, they will actually give you time and good feedback.

Be aware that nobody will teach you how to write a dissertation. You need to keep reminding yourself of this fact, and then rely on yourself and trust yourself since almost nobody failed in this department and you won't either.

## ***Soap Dispenser***

Having a partner has helped a lot and given me a life outside of academia.

Make sure to keep exercising. Also, live close to campus, get a pet, and don't stop doing whatever hobby you like best (unless it's playing Halo online, which you might have to give up for grad school).

Grad school shouldn't be your life. Make friends, hang out, develop hobbies. If you wanted to work 100 hours a week, you could've been a lawyer.

Do something unrelated to sociology everyday.

Don't believe you can graduate in five years. I know that's what they're telling you, but unless you already have a master's in social science, it ain't going to happen. And if you were out in five anyway, you wouldn't know enough and be a good enough scholar to get a job anywhere.

Enjoy graduate school!

**[TO FACULTY] Were you incredibly diligent in grad school or did you spend a lot of time goofing around? Do you really read all the journal articles in your discipline? How can grad students get to know you better outside the classroom?**

I worked hard, and my life at that time was primarily centered around work. I was at an institution where that was the culture, and we enjoyed it at the time. My life now is still primarily centered around work, but it is a lot more fun now and I worry about it less, and my life has more balance. Back then, I read AJS and ASR each time they came out. Now I read books and articles that either look really interesting or are relevant to my research. These days, I justify the former reading by telling myself I might use it in a course -- but, really, some work is just cool and a pleasure to read. Outside the classroom, the best way to get to know me is to come talk to me about your research. [faculty]

I was a work-hard/play-hard type in grad school. I read ASR, AJS and SMR; otherwise I stuck to articles that were relevant to my sub-field. Now I probably read more books than articles, and reading an issue of ASR or AJS cover-to-cover seems like a big waste of time to me. But I'm glad I went through a period of doing so. [faculty]

No. I was a very undisciplined, intuitive student. I may be the worst example to follow. I thought I knew things because I came to them in my own way and was probably unteachable in some ways. I thought a lot of rules were arbitrary because I had spent most of my life breaking them or getting around them in high school and college. I have a lot of sympathy for people who don't feel like they fit in for whatever reason. I would often walk around campus wondering what I was doing there. [Patricia Chang]

I spent only a little time goofing around and when I did, I felt guilty about it! Unfortunately, on top of everything there is to do, reading has fallen to the bottom. I try to

keep up with journal alerts and at the very least, read the abstracts of relevant articles, and only read those most of interest. Did I mention that I'm raising two little kids along with a partner who is also an academic so time is very limited?! [Christine Min Wotipka]

For the most part I was a drudge. It was part of the culture at Wisconsin. [Matt Snipp]

First question - as someone I know well says, these are just "inputs" - what counts are the outputs (and the quality of outputs). Second question- in grad school, I tried to read everything, now it's a matter of priorities. Third question - stop by chat; I just about live in my office [Susan Olzak]

**[TO FACULTY] What are your top ten book/ article recommendations for the year (or for all time)?**

I think sociologists need to read widely and in other disciplines, whatever their research interest happens to be. That is where really good dissertation topics come from. If you can see how other people are looking and thinking about a thing from other perspectives than you can see how you can really make a contribution. [Patricia Chang]

Fiction: anything by Ken Bruen; John Sandford; Hakan Nesser; Robert Crais; Ian Rankin. Sociology: Anything by Stan Lieberson, Bill Wilson, Roger Gould, Peter Blau, Fredrick Barth, Charles Tilly, Art Stinchcombe, Michael Hechter, and just about anything by the rest of our faculty, and of course, my collaborators. [Susan Olzak]

**[TO ALUMS] Do you still keep in touch with most of your cohort-mates?**

Yes, definitely! [Stefanie Mollborn, PhD 2006]

The ones who are local are easier to keep in touch with than the ones who've gone to jobs across the country or internationally; I exchange email with most of the latter a couple of times a year. [Jen van Stelle, PhD 2006]

I still keep in touch with most of my cohort-mates, but I also just graduated. Ask me in 5 years. [Justine Tinkler, PhD 2007]

With about a half. [Irena Stepanikova, PhD 2006]

Yes, my cohort is still in touch. Of the 8 who graduated, one has passed away and I don't know where one ended up, but the rest of us (6) keep in touch and visit at ASA. [Carol Corona, PhD 2000]

A little. But I think about them often. [Brian Colwell, PhD 2006]

I keep in touch to a certain extent. Actually wish I'd be more active on this. Loved ASA this time because it gave me a chance to see old friends. [Heili Pals, PhD 2006]



## The Socio-Blogical Imaginations

by Yan Li

At the past ASA in New York, I attended an informal gathering of blogging sociologists. As you can see from the photo, it was a surprisingly well-attended event -- better than some of the presentation sessions many have said! I don't know much of the history of sociology blogs, who started first and when, and so on, but my introduction to these blogs was

initiated by Blue Monster (see below) last year and since coming back from the bloggers meeting at ASA, I've been reading more of these blogs and have come to view them as a wonderful extended sociologist community. Like always, I feel the need to share these goodies with everyone and what better channel to use than



my very own newsletter? And by the way, if you've been reading these blogs all along, it wasn't very communal of you to not have shared!

You can go to my del.icio.us bookmarks page ([http://del.icio.us/yli\\_yli/socio-blogical\\_imaginations](http://del.icio.us/yli_yli/socio-blogical_imaginations)) for a lengthy list of blogs by sociologists and their kins. Here I'll only list a few that I read more or less frequently. From there, you can certainly get to a large web of blogging sociologist and academics and intellectuals in other disciplines.

### Group Blogs

To be honest, I'm not a faithful reader of group blogs, mainly because they post too often and it's impossible to catch up! But it's worth browsing them once in a while.

**orgtheory.net** (<http://orgtheory.wordpress.com/>) is purportedly about organization theory, but really covers a range of topics in sociology, a fair amount of sociology applied to everyday observations and politics. A lot of discussions about the discipline, academia, etc. **Every graduate student should read Fabio's "grad school rulz" series.**

**Sociological Images: Seeing Is Believing** (<http://sociologicalimages.blogspot.com/>). This is a fun group blog started by (I believe) graduate students in sociology somewhere, with contributions from junior faculty members as well. It's a collection of images and photographs that carry heavy culturally constructed meanings. Needless to say, you can find a lot of teaching

materials here for your gender and race classes.

**The Situationist** (<http://thesituationist.wordpress.com/>). This is actually not by sociologists but social psychologists in psychology. But I'm biased. It's a very well-done blog with lots of insightful critique from social psychological perspectives on current social events and cultural phenomena. It's more geared toward educating the public, and I think it's a great model for a public sociology group blog.

**Feministing** (<http://www.feministing.com/>). Again, I'm biased. But sociology is not complete without feminism.

### By Profs

These are more fun than the group blogs. Almost all of the personal blogs combine varying proportions of public sociology, academic life and personal life, all of which I think are sources and forms of sociological, and therefore socio-blogical, imaginations.

**Jeremy freese's weblog** (<http://jeremyfreese.blogspot.com/>) is the celebrity of all sociology blogs. Yes, it's the Freese in Long and Freese (2005) and his blog writing is nothing like that in the book. Something about Jeremy's blog makes it very readable and easy to get hooked. If you only read two sociologists' blogs, this is one of them.

**Blue Monster** (<http://monster-blue.blogspot.com/>) by Dan Myers is my favorite in this category, and you've guessed, it's the other sociologist's blog if you only read two. Dan's blog is as addictive as the drink that made the title. A fun mixture of academic advice, random inspirations, personal attics, and serious application of sociology, or as he calls it, over-thinking, to everyday objects ranging from music to urinals.

**Rachel's Tavern** (<http://www.rachelstavern.com/>): "Race, Gender, and Sexuality from a Sociological Perspective." A great public sociology blog that keeps abreast of news and racial issues in America, offering sociological analyses. Tips on teaching sociology classes on race, etc.

### By Grads

This is the "last but not least" category. Like profs' blogs, most graduate students' blogs contain a mixture of public sociology, learnings and frustrations in academia/grad school, and personal life. I especially recommend the grads blogs because they comprise a unique community that is unavailable at any single sociology program. If you think about it, graduate school is probably *the* period in your career where you're most insulated from your disciplinary peers outside your own little department. In college, you had your high school friends who could fill you in on how

## Soap Dispenser

things are at other universities and colleges, but how many of your college friends went on to graduate school and if they did, how many of them end up in sociology? As a result, unless you've hopped here through another program, chances are that Stanford sociology will be the only sociology graduate culture you'll know till you land on a job. And need I say not all sociology programs are the same? The benefit of connecting to peers outside our own department ranges from that of weak ties to strong social support.

**Total Drek** (<http://totaldrek.blogspot.com/>). Despite his long blogging history and fame in the sociologist blogger world, Drek has succeeded in maintaining a rather mysterious identity. Nobody knows who he is. I'm referring to Drek as a he only because of the frequent appearance of one "sainted fiancée" on the blog, who has consistently been female. It's also a mystery (at least to Drek) why so many people read his blog, despite his drekky description of the blog:

Total Drek. Or, the thoughts of several frustrated intellectuals on Sociology, Gaming, Science, Politics, Science Fiction, Religion, and whatever the hell else strikes their fancy. There is absolutely no reason why you should read this blog. None. Seriously. Go hit your back button. It's up in the upper left-hand corner of your browser... it says "Back." Don't say we didn't warn you.

Heed Drek's warning, but heed more my advice to go there for his "**unhelpful hints for graduate students**" (dated 09-04-2007). It is intended for new grads but I assure you, old-timers will find that helpful as well!

**Jim Gibbon** (<http://jimgibbon.com/>) calls himself a "recovering procrastinator," or something to that effect. In

addition to discussions on graduate schools and academia in general, observations from his field research in Turkey, his blog has lots of great, wise tips on curbing procrastination, enhancing productivity, and developing professional skills.

**Wicked Anomie** (<http://wickedanomie.blogspot.com/>) is another example of a sociology graduate students blogging under a pseudonym. Mostly about different aspects of academic life as a graduate student such as publishing, teaching, etc., but also bits of personal life such as conversations with her daughter and "arts and crafts for geeks."

I think I'll be really selective (and biased) and stop here. I hope you'll check these out and discover the wonderful world of sociology blogs. Some readers may be tempted to ask: "So, Editor Yan, do *you* have a blog?" -- Well, the answer is yes. But this is already too long so I'll leave it to your curiosity to find my blog. Although, I suspect some of you have already found it... In any event, I'm glad to report that my blog has already inspired one fellow student to start a blog of his own, and I hope some of you, if inspired by the above blogs to start your own as well, would leave me a comment (can be anonymous) so I can add you to my blog roll!

Until then, add these blogs to your feed reader<sup>1</sup> and happy blog reading! Or, aren't you glad I've just shown you another way to procrastinate? :)

<sup>1</sup> If you don't know what a feed reader is, email or come find me.

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**Comments, ideas, request?**  
**Email your editor! - liy (at) stanford (dot) edu**

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Photo by Editor



**Random Rumor**  
(from a reliable source)  
With the help of funding from the dean's office, the department has ordered 18 new computers, 3 new printers, and a new print server for the computer clusters. The new equipment are likely to be installed in October or November.