



## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

FALL 22 ISSUE  
EDITOR ALISA THOMAS

## NEWSLETTER

### Statement From the Chair

**R**enewal!

This is an exciting time to be a member of the John Jay College Sociology Department. This semester's newsletter, under the careful stewardship of Alisa Thomas, features our wonderful new hires, bringing new energy and enthusiasm into our programs, so vital to the students and mission of our College. We begin with Tarun Banerjee, whom we hired in Spring of 2020, out of a search that began with in-person campus visits, and then had to go virtual. Tarun comes to us with a number of years of experience at the University of Pittsburgh, where he published eight journal articles in venues such as *Sociological Forum*, *Sociological Focus*, *Sociological Perspectives*, and *The Sociological Quarterly*. This year, he is a member of President Mason's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. He is also highly active professionally, co-organizing thematic panels at the annual conference of the International Network of Social Network Analysis. Our second new Assistant Professor is Chloe Choi, who joins our Dispute Resolution program. Chloe comes to us from Kennesaw State University, where her prescient dissertation, *completed prior to the pandemic*, is entitled, "Should Employees Come Back to the Office?": *The Effectiveness of Eliminating Remote Working Policies for Diverse Virtual Teams*. Welcome, Tarun and Chloe!

We were also fortunate to receive three new doctoral lecturer lines in the department, as part of Chancellor Matos's push to vitalize and invigorate general education courses throughout CUNY. This initiative involves hiring 250 new lecturers, 19 of whom are at John Jay. Our new doctoral lecturers are Sara Martucci, Yolanda Ortiz-Rodriguez and Marisa Tramontano. Below, you will read about their many years of commitment to our college and our department, their vast prior experience, and meet

their lovely families. Welcome, Sara, Yolanda and Marisa!

This issue also features exciting accomplishments by Maria Volpe, Rosemary Barberet, Kimora, Tarun Banerjee, Jason Williams and Sean Wilson. Reynaldo Tapia has published an enterprising and exciting new book on heavy metal music in Bolivia! We are especially pleased by Janice Johnson-Dias's promotion to Interim Dean of Student Academic Engagement and Retention. This is a fitting recognition of Janice's hard work as an educator, changemaker and strategist; we are proud of you, Janice!

We close with insights from two enduring contributions to our department: the Analyzing the News events by Andrew Karmen and Marisa Tramontano, and Jan Yager's 13th Skills Building Workshop, where, semester after semester, she generously offers free books and helpful advice for our students. These events are much appreciated by all, and are wonderful aspects of our department culture.

Overall, *Renewal* is a fitting theme for these contributions, and this time for our department and campus. We hope you share in the positive energy these new faculty members bring, as they join us in sharing our passion for critical inquiry that distinguishes our department.

--Robert Garot

#### Inside this issue:

Janice Johnson Dias	2
New Faculty	3-9
Achievements	10
New Books	11
Department Events	12-13
Whom to Contact	14



# NEW ROLES



## **Janice Johnson Dias, PhD**

**Interim Dean of**

**Student Academic Engagement & Retention**

As many of you may know, I have been at John Jay since 2007. I have taught a variety of courses all of which focus on research methods and inequality, specifically economic inequality and public health with special emphasis on mothers and their children. Prior to and including my time here, I have had many careers including leading large-based initiatives related to welfare reform, public health and violence.

I am also a first-generation college student and immigrant; educational spaces have always been my safe space. Schools have been my home away from home. As an undergrad, I helped create a center focused on creating safe spaces for students--that institution remains today and I remain proud of how powerful students can be when they work together. I know that feeling safe and cared for enhances academic achievements. I want that for our students. In graduate school, I help co-create a mentorship program because I believe the power of connection, and I find that we all need help to reach our professional and personal goals. As a faculty member here and at other institutions, I have worked hard to create academic and professional opportunities for students to see and make the connections between their academic training and their future job options.

I am excited to be named the Interim Dean of Student Academic Engagement and Retention. My enthusiasm for this work comes from wanting our students to succeed, knowing that they can and knowing they will with our help. But admittedly, I am most excited about what the faculty, staff and students can do together if we make the motto of “educating for justice” a reality. I really want to see how WE can make this phrase real in the academic lives of our students and in the way we do OUR work.



# MEET OUR NEW FACULTY

## Tarun Banerjee

Assistant Professor

### How I became a sociologist

Kind of accidentally. I studied psychology as an undergrad (at Baruch) and enjoyed it but kept feeling it wasn't getting at bigger questions of justice. I was talking out my frustrations with my mum when she suggested I look at Sociology. It turned out it was her major in college (how did I not know that?), and how she described the subjects she studied made me fall in love with it. Clichéd as it is, I can say seeing the world through a sociological lens has been a life-changing gift. (I ain't ever taking those glasses off.)

### What I research

I like to study the power structure (those at the top of business and government) and how they rule, create policy, and wield influence. To me it's important to understand structure not for the sake of it, but so we can change it; and so, my second interest is in social movements and social change. I'd like to be able to use my research to give movements a slightly better understanding of power at the top, and of the strategies that do and don't work well in organizing for a more fair, democratic world. We're a long way from that I know, and the struggle for me (but also the peace) comes from accepting that the fight is long but just. I'm content to be a drop in the ocean.

### What I learned as a (relatively) new faculty member

How important it is to try and stay sane and grounded. Publishing or writing more (or in more prestigious journals) does no good if you lose your sanity or yourself in the process. I want to be happy and in the company of a great big supportive family and community, first and foremost.

### Some other little bits about me

I love to ride my bike all over this mad city. I might be the biggest Beatles fan under 60. If you tell me you like spicy food, I will consider it a personal challenge to eat more chilies than you and win (it's not good I know, but my mouth is watering even now...). I'm a momma's boy. I fell in love with Buddhist thinking over the pandemic. And plants. Both so peaceful. I thought I was bad at math...until I moved to the US ha.

I'll cook you a *delicious* curry any day (gotta like heat though!)

### SOME PICTURES...



*With my brothers, parents, and grandparents in India (I'm in the snazzy red sweater)*



*That time you color coordinate with AOC and snag a pic!*



*Partying it up Covid style with the cousins*



*My ma (in blue) came to visit this summer :)*



# MEET OUR NEW FACULTY

## Sara Martucci, PhD

Doctoral Lecturer

(Fall 2022)



I am beyond thrilled to be returning to CUNY this Fall! I received my PhD at the Graduate Center in 2018 and for the past four years I was a professor in Social and Behavioral Sciences at Mercy College where I taught classes on New York City, Information Literacy, Sociology, and Research Methods. In that position, I enjoyed planning events for students on topics ranging from emotionally intelligent parenting, reproductive justice, the Black Lives Matter movement, the future of masculinity, as well as several career panels. I look forward to continuing this work at John Jay and engaging students around sociological issues. My service work and teaching have always centered on a deep commitment to inclusion, equity, and supporting all students, and I'm excited to contribute to department and college wide initiatives around these issues.

Throughout my academic career, my research focus has been on gentrification and inequality in New York. My first book, *There Was Nothing There: Changing Perceptions of Gentrified Williamsburg*, reveals how an individual's attachment style to a neighborhood can impact their experiences of crime, retail, and community activism in a gentrifying locale. It will be published next year by NYU Press. In 2019, I led undergraduate students in a survey project, measuring perceptions and feelings about gentrification throughout NYC. Those students went on to present their work at the Eastern Sociological Society and Urban Affairs Association conferences. Those experiences were among my favorite moments as a professor, and I hope to conduct more research with students in the future. During the first months of the Covid pandemic, I teamed up with Sociologists in Italy on the "Smart Mama" project, a study of the division of labor in two-parent, heterosexual households. With domestic and work life suddenly collapsed into one venue, we investigated how mothers of young children negotiated unpaid and paid work with their partners, finding that mothers with already flexible jobs suffered the most in carving out time for their careers. We also explored solidarity building via virtual networks of support, and how conditions like pre-pandemic childcare arrangements impacted experiences of parenting under lockdown. The "Smart Mama" research has been published in *European Societies*, *The Journal of Family Issues*, *Critical Social Policy*, and the book: *Gender Equality in the Mirror*.

In my spare time, I love camping, cooking, and dancing, but I'm always happiest when traveling. I'm looking forward to meeting all of you this semester!



# MEET OUR NEW FACULTY

## Chloe Choi, PhD

Assistant Professor



My name is Yeju “Chloe” Choi. I hold a Ph.D. in International Conflict Management and a Master’s degree in Conflict Management. My research interest is in organizational conflict, specifically in cross-cultural conflict and communication, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), and virtual team management. This interest was developed while I was working at a multinational corporation. I was working as a liaison between foreign expatriate managers and local managers and working as a middle manager between foreign expatriate managers and local employees. Working there, I experienced much cross-cultural conflict due to national cultural differences, race, ethnicity, gender, age, and level of education.

Based on this experience, I wanted to know how to help organizations and leaders better manage cross-cultural conflict. Doing so, I developed my interest in mediation, facilitation, and managerial training since this was often used to prevent and manage conflict at workplace. Then, for my dissertation, I studied virtual team management because I’ve noticed a lot of team interactions, including conflict, have occurred in virtual environment and space. Therefore, I studied how the degree of virtuality and degree of diversity affect team processes and outcomes as well as how to overcome the challenges of a virtual team in communication and collaboration.

I am very excited to join John Jay College of Criminal Justice as an Assistant Professor of Sociology, specializing in Conflict Resolution. I visited NYC for the first time when I was in college. I loved the city and dreamed about working in NYC one day. I am so happy that the dream came true! I am honored to be part of John Jay College. I look forward to educating fierce advocates for justice and contributing to the Dispute Resolution Center and Program with my professional background, research interests, and enthusiasm for teaching!

# MEET OUR NEW FACULTY

## Yolanda Ortiz- Rodriguez

Doctoral Lecturer



I have been wandering the halls of John Jay College since the spring semester of 1993- my freshman year as an undergraduate student. The relationships I formed and the amazing people I met during my academic journey have helped shape who I am today- an educa-

tor that believes in public education and in the importance of supporting and mentoring students.

I have been teaching undergraduate studies for a little over 15 years; most of which have been with the Sociology Department at John Jay College. I have also taught in the Criminal Justice programs at St. John's University and Mercy College. I often draw from my applied experience when teaching- particularly when discussing culture, oppression, criminal justice responses to domestic violence, and juvenile justice issues. I began working with women and victims of violence at an outpatient substance abuse treatment program while I was a student in the BA/MA program. The women I worked with were under court supervision as parolees and probationers. It was there that I was exposed to some of the consequences of drug use, incarceration, surveillance, domestic violence, and the institutional interference so many of the women had to succumb to and accept. It was there where I also learned the importance of community and culture, developed my interest in researching social problems and developed a desire to give a voice to those who felt silenced. Shortly after I graduated, I worked for a juvenile detention facility in Brooklyn (Boys Town). Although my posi-

tion was adversarial by default, my program was one of advocacy for and providing treatment (via social skills) to the youth in our care. I draw heavily on my experience as a juvenile justice agent when teaching the *Youth, Crime, and Justice* (SOC 309) course. I speak of the gaps in services provided to the youth as well as to why the new political initiatives governing justice involved youth are important. Years later, I worked as a program director for a domestic violence agency, where I built on my advocacy skills and, more importantly, developed the cultural competency skills that I use in teaching and in my interactions with students and colleagues.

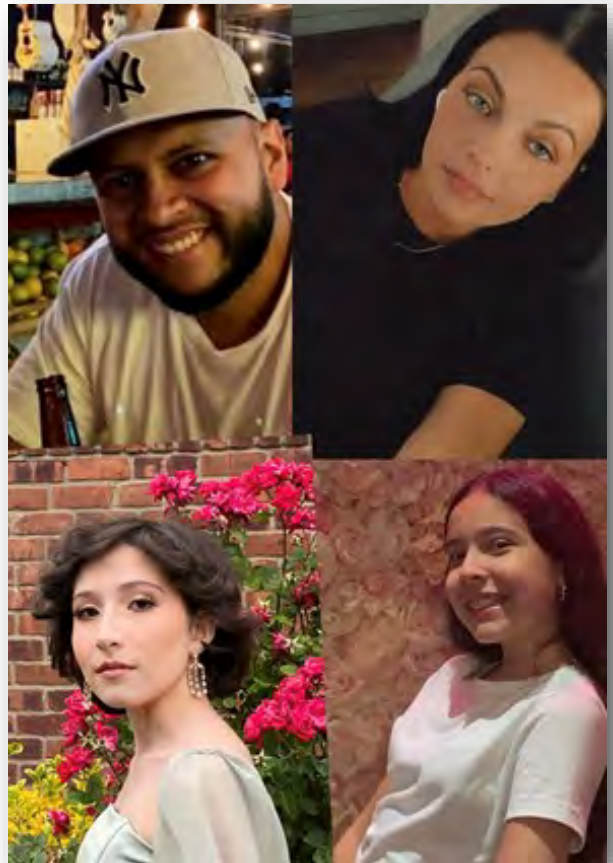
While I am thankful for the experiences gained from my non-academic work, I must credit my desire to mentor and support students to the mentors I had during my academic journey, Dr. Jayne Mooney (Sociology) for her invaluable and continued support during my post graduate years and Dr. Keith Carrington (Sociology) and Dr. Emerson Miller (Mathematics) for their mentorship during my undergraduate years at John Jay. These professors encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone, to dream big, and to never give up. They were invested in my progress and helped me learn how to believe in myself. I look forward to doing the same for the students at John Jay. Go Bloodhounds!

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE





*I love being a Bloodhound almost as much as I love being a mom and grandma! Here's a glimpse of my family- just so you know, my son is also a John Jay Graduate (Class of 2013).*



# MEET OUR NEW FACULTY

## Marisa Tramontano

Doctoral Lecturer



When I was in college I majored in history. I loved professors that told stories about intriguing individuals and exciting events. Then I realized that these stories didn't do enough to analyze the social and cultural explanations that made these stories pan out the way they did. So I minored in sociology

to gain that insight. It was love at first class.

My mom had gone to college for sociology in the 70s so I already knew it was a thing. But my favorite part about learning sociology was gaining formal knowledge about concepts, theories, and studies that gave me precise vocabulary to talk about what I already observed in my own life and out in the world.

After working in the corporate world and non-profits for a few years, I decided I wanted to go back for a Master's. Most of the history I'd learned had been international and so much of it was horrific, that I decided I wanted to study international relations and work at the United Nations or a humanitarian nonprofit. Throughout my time in that program, my professors kept saying: "You think and see like a sociologist. You are always paying attention to power, stratification, gender, race, class, and the role of systems and structures in people's lives." So I abandoned my plans and joined a PhD program in sociology.

There, I realized that most of the training I'd received to that point was extremely problematic, taught mostly through the lens of white saviorism that claims superiority in solving the world's problems while denying the historical legacies of colonialism, racism, capitalism, heteropatriarchy, slavery, and Christian hegemony that brought about today's most pressing issues. Moreover, I began to see that instead of trying to solve faraway problems, the types of violence, oppres-

sion, and conflict that I hoped to address were not some distant and abstract global issues: all of them were playing out right here in NYC.

With that realization, I changed course once again. I began to think about my own white privilege, our police violence at home and military violence abroad. I began to see injustices that I was taught to ignore in the everyday. That was when I finally realized the contribution I wanted to make in the world. I wanted to teach sociology so my students could have the same types of awakenings I had: there are names for what students go through "and studies" that refute their detractors. Most of all, academics are not enough and course content has to always center healing, fighting back for meaningful change, and understanding the ways our systems and structures are made up and that we can just as easily re-envision them.

After 9 years of teaching in the sociology department at John Jay College part time, while I also got a taste of the differences in teaching Hunter, Pace, or NYU students, I knew it was my forever home. That John Jay students are special. That John Jay was the only place I wanted to be. And so this year, I join the full time faculty as a Doctoral Lecturer. I didn't think I'd ever get to stay at John Jay and only John Jay forever, since the choices were low-paid part time teaching or research heavy full-time positions that would tear my focus away from my students. But then, beyond anything I could imagine or hope for, CUNY created a role in between these two options: one where I didn't have to teach anywhere else, where my focus could be on improving General Education requirements across the college, doing the same for Introduction to Sociology, and teaching 144 John Jay students per semester. The dream. Took me 17 years to figure it out and achieve it, but I did it.

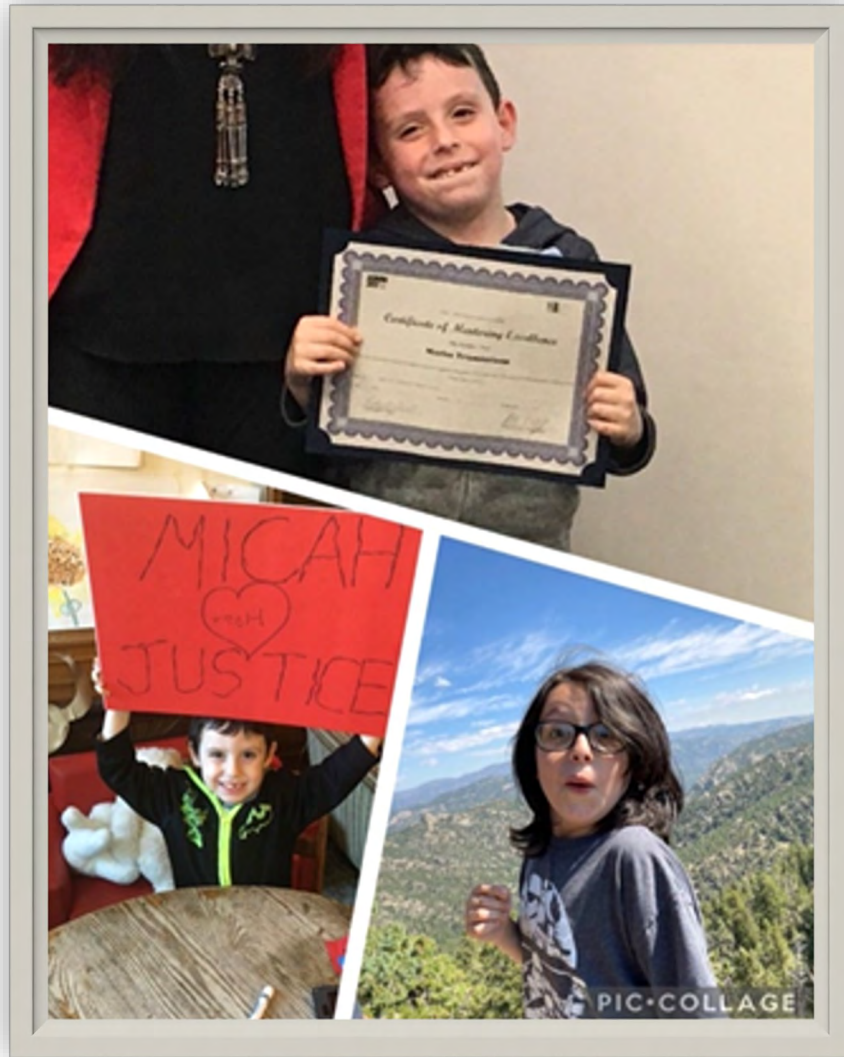
CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE





**Marisa Tramontano Continued**

So to anyone reading this, my message to you is that I'm here. I'm here for you. My office is 520.35 Haaren Hall. I have a cozy space to chat or chill, I have snacks and drinks, tea and ginger ale if you don't feel well, products for menstruation and safer sex, and a place where I hope you know you are always seen, welcome, and safe. Whether you're enrolled in my classes this semester or not, my door is always open.



- *Micah at 3 holding his first protest sign*
- *Micah at 6 holding my award at a departmental ceremony*
- *My 8 year old child Micah living his best life in the Rocky Mountains this summer*

# FACULTY AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

## Professor Rosemary Barberet

Rosemary Barberet along with Dawn Beichner (Illinois State University) and Sheetal Ranjan (Montclair State University) guest-edited a special issue of the journal *Violence Against Women* titled, “Prioritizing the Elimination of Violence Against Women Worldwide: Lessons From the 65<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.” It is temporarily available from Sage Publishing for free downloads, until the end of September. You can access the special issue here <https://journals.sagepub.com/toc/yawa/28/8>. The issue features articles from the authors' presentations at the sessions organized by the editors at NGOCSW Forum, held in conjunction with the 65th Session of the UN CSW.

## Professor Kimora

Professor Kimora serves on the CUNY Cannabis Board. She will be aiding Lehman College (and possibly BMCC) in administering this \$2M CUNY grant that is part of the \$5M grant from Governor Hochul. Here is the link of a grant announcement from Governor Hochul:

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-5-million-funding-support-launch-new-and-existing-cannabis>

## Professor Tarun Banerjee

Congratulations to Tarun Banerjee a CUNY Black, Race, and Ethnic Studies Initiative (BRESI) 2022 \$10,000 Grant Award Winner! The Title of his grant is:  
*From Racial Justice Activism to Policy Success: Lessons for Today from the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.*  
Dr. Banerjee looks back to the Johnson Administration's 1960s' War on Poverty, specifically the distribution of Community Action Program funds, for lessons today's activists can apply to a fight for justice, dignity, and social change.

## Professors Jason Williams & Sean Wilson

Congratulations to **Jason Williams** on receiving the *Outstanding Mentorship Award from the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences* and to **Sean Wilson** who was *awarded the Coramae Richey Mann Award from the Minorities and Women Section, also of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences*. We are very lucky to have you teaching with us

## Professor Maria Volpe

Dr. Maria Volpe, Professor and Director of John Jay's Dispute-Resolution program has received the 2022 DRI Law Firm Corp Legal Dept. Diversity Award! Dr. Volpe has been serving on the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Working Group of the Defense Research Institute, the largest international membership organization of defense trial attorneys and corporate counsel. The DRI Annual Meeting and ceremony will be held Friday, Oct. 28th in Philadelphia.



**REYNALDO TAPIA, Ph.D.**

**NEW BOOK ALERT!**

## **El tejido de las cuerdas disonantes del metal en Bolivia. Análisis descriptivo e histórico del under Boliviano**

‘The Weave of the Dissonant Strings of Metal (Music) in Bolivia: A Descriptive and Historical Analysis of the Bolivian under.’

This book analyzes the social and cultural effects of metal music in Bolivia. The book is a series of collective knowledge and perspectives of nine authors who used their professional skills as social researchers, journalists, musicians, novelists, concert organizers, and passionate fans of metal music, to describe their experience within the Bolivian metal scene. Therefore, it is crucial to highlight that this work is not only intended for the academic reader but for the general public. Some of the authors were and still are active members of the underground metal scene in Bolivia and therefore their contributions are auto-ethnographic and a significant element to this work. The authors of this text did not face the challenges of gaining access to bands and members of the metal underground community, since most of the authors were not only members but founding members of the underground metal scene. They did not face any problem of mistrust during the interview process, but on the contrary, the data collected was deep and provided valuable information on the historical development of the Bolivian metal scene.

The influence of metal music was adopted in many cases by the Bolivian youth not only as a form of decolonial resistance but also as a way to honor their indigenous culture and affirm their Bolivian identity. The formation of the Bolivian metal scene took place during an era of contentious politics characterized by the influence of US imperialism and the historical impact of colonial legacies. The underground metal

scene became a space where a series of discourses of social, cultural and political identity would be generated, mostly by young men whose cultural ideals were basically invisible to the conservative mentality of the time. The use of this western type of music, metal, becomes circumstantial since it is used as a vehicle from which an indigenous cultural identity can be reinforced. Metal music goes through of process of indigenization, it becomes Bolivian metal music because it is inspired in the concepts of the Pachamama (Mother Earth), the Achachilas (indigenous mountain gods), and the Amazon jungles but the social-political, and economic reality of Bolivia is also used as inspiration.

*Edited/Compiled by Reynaldo Tapia and Boris Mendoza*





# SPECIAL DEPARTMENT EVENTS



## **ANALYZING THE NEWS THROUGH A SOCIOLOGICAL LENS**



## **Bringing Back Analyzing the News!**

In 2018, John Jay's Sociology Department started a Community Hour series entitled, "Analyzing the News." The Sociology community, including faculty, staff, and students, came together to discuss hot topics in current events using sociological analysis. Topics included tuition hikes at CUNY, Trump's Immigration policy, and reports on white collar crime.

After a two-year hiatus due to COVID, we are proud to announce that we are reinstating this exciting and well-attended series! On Wednesday, September 21, we discussed Biden's Student Loan Forgiveness Policy, using Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction and misrecognition in education. We also draw on sociological insights into public opinion on changing policies that benefit some in the future, without addressing past injustices. The event also includes pizza and desserts, reinforcing the social solidarity that stems from eating together. Here is our call for participants:

Are you or your family members or friends saddled with large amounts of student debt due to the high cost of college tuition and inadequate funding for public education?

President Biden recently issued an executive order erasing up to \$10,000 in student debt for individuals earning less than \$125,000 and up to \$20,000 for those who had received Pell grants

But his executive order actually has stirred up a great deal of controversy. Some people say the policy is not "fair" to those who have paid off their loans. Others say the policy is insulting because it's a drop in the bucket if we don't want the next generation to begin adult life deeply in debt. Still others say it's merely a band-aid that doesn't begin to address educational inequity and equal access for all.

Keep an eye out for our next installment!

*For more information contact [mtramontano@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:mtramontano@jjay.cuny.edu) & [Akarmen@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:Akarmen@jjay.cuny.edu)*

# SPECIAL DEPARTMENT EVENTS

## DR. YAGER'S SKILLS BUILDING WORKSHOP

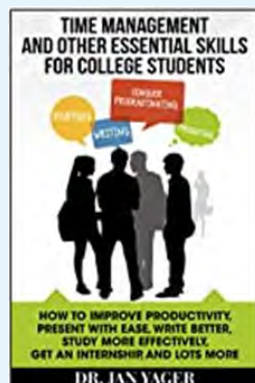


***Jan Yager, Ph.D., Adjunct Associate Professor***

Dr. Yager, has been offering a free Skills Building Workshop since Fall 2016. (Dr. Yager's been teaching sociology, criminology, and victimology courses at John Jay since Fall 2014). Her Skills Building Workshop began as a multi-day event but it morphed into a very manageable and popular 1 hour workshop offered during Community Hour. Until the pandemic, the workshop was in person, which enabled students to share in a free light lunch, generously provided by the Sociology Department, as well as free books by Dr. Yager related to the topics covered in the workshop such as time management, better writing, and presenting with greater ease. Two other topics that are quickly addressed are the importance of notetaking as well as the best way to ask a professor for a reference letter.

Since the pandemic of 2020, the workshop has been offered at the beginning of the new semester remotely via Zoom. Now students are given free e-book access to Dr. Yager's two newest books related to the workshop for a three day period, including the day of the workshop: *Time Management and Other Essential Skills for College Students* and the companion workbook, *Skills Building Workbook for College Students*. In addition to the free book and workbook, attendees receive a 31 page PDF that they use throughout the workshop since it is an interactive workshop with exercises and discussions as a key part of the one hour event. Says Dr. Yager, "It is very rewarding to receive positive responses from attendees about how much what they have learned in the workshop has helped them with their schoolwork as well as achieving a better school-life or even school-work-life balance."

For more on Dr. Yager, please visit her main website: <https://www.drjanyager.com>



# Whom To Contact

## **CHAIR**

Robert Garot 212.237.8680

[rgarot@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:rgarot@jjay.cuny.edu)

## **DEPUTY CHAIR**

Leona Lee 212-237-8678

[llee@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:llee@jjay.cuny.edu)

## **ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST**

Alisa Thomas 212.887.6123

[althomas@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:althomas@jjay.cuny.edu)

## **DEPARTMENT SECRETARY**

Theresa Rockett 212.237.8666

[trockett@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:trockett@jjay.cuny.edu)

## **CRIMINOLOGY COORDINATOR**

Andrew Karmen 212.237.8695

[akarmen@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:akarmen@jjay.cuny.edu)

## **SOCIOLOGY COORDINATOR**

David A. Green 646-557-4641

[dagreen@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:dagreen@jjay.cuny.edu)

## **DISPUTE RESOLUTION CERTIFICATE AND MINOR/ CUNY DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER**

Coordinator and Adviser

Maria Volpe 212.237.8692

[dispute@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:dispute@jjay.cuny.edu)

## **CRIMINOLOGY/SOCIOLOGY**

### **MAJOR ADVISERS** FA 22

Liza Steele

[lsteel@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:lsteel@jjay.cuny.edu)

David Brotherton

[dbrotherton@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:dbrotherton@jjay.cuny.edu)