
JOHN JAY

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

FALL 2021 ISSUE

BY ALISA THOMAS

NEWSLETTER

Statement From Department Leadership

Although we are in our third full semester under the pandemic, there has been much afoot in the Sociology Department. We began with a well-attended round-table pedagogy discussions for all our faculty before the semester started, and followed this with an orientation session to our majors, attended by over 100 students. Alisa Thomas, who also compiled this newsletter, is largely to thank for such an outstanding turnout. Students truly appreciate efforts to help them orient in these times.

Our new full-time professor, Tarun Banerjee, who came aboard in the midst of lock-down, has been chosen as a developer of workshops on racial justice for the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Professional Development (DEI-PD) program. Tarun is one of our full-time professors teaching in-person this semester. We are grateful to other full-time faculty members who responded to the provost's request to contribute to sociology's in-person teaching presence: Carla Barrett, Mucahit Bilici, David Brotherton, Louis Kontos, and our new substitute professors, Brian Maule and Skye Roper-Moses. We (Robert and Jayne) also opted to teach in-person and are enjoying being back in an actual classroom, a respite from zoomland. Thanks also to our many adjunct professors who are teaching on campus. Likewise to Carla Barrett who has been able to resume her stellar work with the Prison to College Pipeline. In the Spring CUNY expects that 70% of our courses are to be taught in person (not hybrid). We are

hopeful that over the coming months we will begin to see some return to a semblance of normality and the Department restored to its pre-pandemic hive of activity.

We have recently submitted a five-year hiring plan to Provost Li, and will begin our search for a full-time tenure-track position in the Dispute Resolution Program. Jana Arsovska worked with Carla Barrett to complete our the self study of the Sociology Major, approved unanimously by Undergraduate Curriculum and Academic Standards Committee. Now Lou Kontos is working to bring in external evaluators of our major, as Andrew Karmen begins the laborious self study process for the Criminology Major. We have begun to introduce a mentoring project for new adjuncts and are working on improving our support materials for new hires. We would like to welcome Andrew Thompson, Bridget Degnan, Guido Giordano to our Department, and wish everyone a productive and invigorating semester.

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20th Anniversary of 9/11

Mucahit Bilici Interview



On the approaching 20th anniversary of 9/11, Professor Mucahit Bilici (GC/John Jay, Sociology), author of *Finding Mecca in*

America, reflects on how the attack and the U.S. response to it have affected the American Muslim community, of which he is a member.

The Graduate Center: How did 9/11 impact the progress that immigrant Muslims were making toward integrating into American society and culture?

Bilici: It was a curse and a blessing. While most literature is focused on the subsequent practices of discrimination, targeting, and overall racism towards Muslims, I find it disingenuous not to acknowledge the fact that 9/11 actually accelerated Muslim integration. Muslims were seeking inclusion and equality before 9/11, as they still do after it, and 9/11 gave Muslim identity in the United States unprecedented recognition, even if it was mostly negative. With some undeniable suffering, hard work, and cultivation of civic skills, immigrant American Muslims were able to secure greater integration.

GC: In your 2012 book *Finding Mecca in America* you explored the ways that Muslims were finding a home in the U.S. Twenty years after 9/11, how do you think Muslim Americans are faring?

Bilici: The American Muslim community includes large African American and various convert (white, Latinx, etc.) communities and this, together with the coming of age of a large cohort of second- and third-generation Muslims, means that America was already home — the only home — for at least a third of Muslims in the U.S. However, for immigrant Muslim communities, like many other immigrant communities, the transformation of America into a home and homeland has been a laborious process. There was a time when at least some Muslims saw America as spiritually unclean and morally suspect. They saw no point in interfaith encounters. Some were even skeptical that the English language could function properly as a Muslim language. Today, we are far beyond such distant, doubtful attitudes. Today, American Muslims practice their version of American patriotism in ways that are not merely pragmatic but theological. So, yes, Muslim immigrants found a home in America and their children not only

know no other place as home but are increasingly growing proud of it Islamically.

GC: Where were you on 9/11 and what are your memories of that day?

Bilici: I was a graduate student in Ann Arbor, Michigan, at a seminar. My prior perception of the American Muslim community, of which I am a part, was optimistic, especially in comparison to Muslim-majority countries. American exceptionalism seemed to work, even from an Islamic point of view. Free from political authoritarianism and the traditional clergy's institutional control, American Muslims could produce a better Islam — that was both my observation of the sentiments of most American Muslims and my own wishful thinking. That sentiment was crushed under the collapsing weight of the Twin Towers. It inaugurated a depressive era, one American Muslims have not fully come out from, even 20 years later. This is what I mean when I say 9/11 has been both a curse and a blessing.

GC: How would you assess the U.S. response to 9/11 and what is one thing you'd change about it if you could?

Bilici: The U.S. government's tendency to securitize all things Muslim or Islamic is an absolute blunder. Most Muslim-originated grievances, anti-Western sentiments, and violence have very little to do with religion. They are about identity. You have to respect the dignity of a people, any people (and that includes "rednecks" in the U.S. whose revolt takes the form of post-truth politics). Power is surely needed but should always be deployed smartly. U.S. invasions of Muslim countries in the Middle East and mass detention of domestic Muslim individuals were poisonous practices. I need not mention President Trump's various racist policies and targeting of Muslims. A show of strength can also take the form of understanding and civility. The U.S. response to 9/11 lacked any such sophistication or humanity, and we are still seeing the results of those mistakes today.

GC: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Bilici: With the U.S. departure from Afghanistan and the various lessons learned in the last three administrations, my hope is that the Biden administration will have the vision and will to pursue a more rational and dignifying relationship with its Muslim interlocutors, domestic and foreign. As for American Muslims, I have no doubt they will fare well. They are Americans, after all.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Henry Pontell



In the winter and spring of 2021, Distinguished Professor Henry Pontell engaged in the following professional and research activities.

Earlier development of some of this work involved John Jay undergraduate student research assistants, some of whom who have gone on to careers in law enforcement and government agencies, the FBI, private industry, and law school. They are: Eimer Baez, Elizabeth Luder, Carmen Mejia, Harini Maragh, Niven Hemraj, Josselyn Klinger, Nicolle Ramirez, Brian Moriarty and Ivan Yeung.

On April 14th, he gave an honorary lecture for a commemorative conference in Portugal (planned for an in-person visit before the pandemic) for the *CJS (Interdisciplinary Research Centre on Crime, Justice and Security) of the School of Criminology of the Faculty of Law of the University of Porto, XV CJS Conference, entitled "Thinking About White-Collar Crime: theory, practice and policy."* The conference was part of the commemoration of FDUP's 25th Anniversary.

With Professor Mary Dodge of the University of Colorado he co-edited a Special Issue of *Crime, Law and Social Change* (Volume 5 No. 3, April 2021) "***Political Crime and Corruption Take Center Stage,***" and co-authored the introduction

to the volume which documents current major issues in corruption and white-collar crime.

He also co-authored the lead article for the issue, "***In-Your-Face Watergate: Neutralizing Government Lawbreaking and the War Against White-Collar Crime.***" The piece documents elements related to white-collar and government crime during the Trump administration up to, and including the attack on the Capitol. It has already attracted considerable positive national attention, including major Tweets and interviews by nationally acclaimed journalists (Eli Stokols, White-House reporter for the Los Angeles Times, and Pulitzer-Prize winner, David Fahrenthold of the Washington Post).

On July 1st he was a guest on Ian Masters' nationally syndicated NPR broadcast, *Background Briefing*, to discuss the article and its relationship to current and forthcoming indictments naming the Trump organization and individual officers brought by the NYC prosecutor's office. Renowned historian and professor emeritus, Spencer Ohlin, commented that the article was, "*...a devastating indictment of a genuine white collar criminal extraordinaire....I can only wish that the article could be required reading for ALL Americans.*" Preeminent social deviance theorist and professor emeritus Erich Goode noted: "*This is a brilliant article. It's very useful for anyone in the sociology of deviance and criminology generally, and in the study of white collar criminality specifically. The point that the trivialization of Trump's offenses redraws the line regarding what is prosecutable is important.*"

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Jayne Mooney



On August 2021 it was announced that Jayne Mooney was elected as Vice-Chair of the ASC Division on Critical Criminology & Social Justice!



David Brotherton

In May of 2021 David Brotherton gave a webinar on “Youth Gangs in Long Island: Myths and Realities,” to more than 100 immigration lawyers in New York organized by the Long Island Immigrant Legal Assistance Center, and in June a second webinar on the subject of “Resilient Training Against Transnational Gangs (RESCAT)” organized by the Latin American and Caribbean Research Centers at Florida International University and NYU.

In August he was interviewed by Elizabeth Robinson and Marisela Marquez for “No Alibis” radio show on KCSB (California) about the “New York City Deportation Pipeline Project” funded by NSF and for the radio program “Top of the Mind” produced by BYU on the subject of “Gang legalization in Ecuador.”

In September DB participated in the national launching of CM3 (Credible Mes-

senger Mentoring Movement). This exciting new initiative “seeks to establish a series of local Credible Messenger Initiatives around the nation” and “aims to transform thousands of lives while helping to redefine justice policy as we know it by providing viable, innovative models of healing, restoration and empowerment.” This follows his 4 year evaluation of the initiative at the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services located in Washington, D.C. John Jay has committed to support this initiative in its national aspirations.

Finally, DB has accepted the position of Co-Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of Critical Criminology with Professor Jayne Mooney to run from January 2022 for 3 years. Both the Sociology and Criminology Ph.D. programs will provide research assistants in this exciting new endeavor for the college and the department.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Jan Yager

ESSENTIALS OF VICTIMOLOGY

Crime Victims, Theories, Controversies,
and Victims' Rights



Jan Yager

Essentials of Victimology is an engaging new textbook for anyone seeking to gain a fundamental understanding of the field. Renowned author Jan Yager provides an awareness of the evolution of the discipline of victimology, as well as an understanding of the early and current theories, and a discussion of key concepts. The text includes practical, up-to-date chapters on victims and their interactions with the criminal justice system and on the medical and legal help available to victims. In addition, the major violent, property, and white-collar or economic crimes are explored in separate chapters.

Henry Pontell

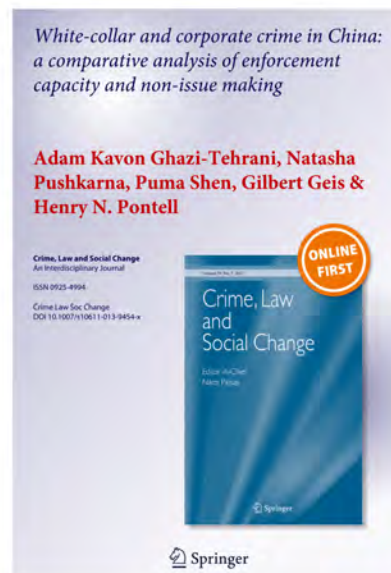
Henry Pontell recently completed the in-press book (with Ghazi-Tehrani), ***Wayward Dragon: White-Collar and Corporate Crime in China*** (Springer, *Series on Asian Criminology*), which represents the culmination of over 10 years of fieldwork and research on forms of fraud and corruption in the country.

A partial list of pre-publication endorsements from major international scholars includes the following:

Filling a sizable gap in the literature regarding the pervasive problem of white-collar crime in China, this book avoids the simplistic "China-bashing" often found in the popular media, focusing instead on broader societal, political and economic conditions that have made China a dominant global player in both legitimate and illegitimate markets. Thorough and engaging, it is an important scholarly work.

Robert Tillman, Professor Emeritus, St. John's University

Crime follows opportunity, and the rise of China has provided criminal opportunities in abundance. As its economy grows and its military capacity intensifies, what happens in China has global implications. This important book provides a disturbing picture of white collar crime in China and its wider impact. It deserves the attention of China specialists, comparative criminologists, and regulatory scholars alike. **Peter Grabosky, Professor Emeritus, Australian National University**



My book of the year. This might be the book of the decade. White-collar and corporate crime in focus, this well-written, edgy, theoretical and disturbing book illuminates how this particular type of crime has always been a silent companion of China's glamorous economic growth in the past four decades.

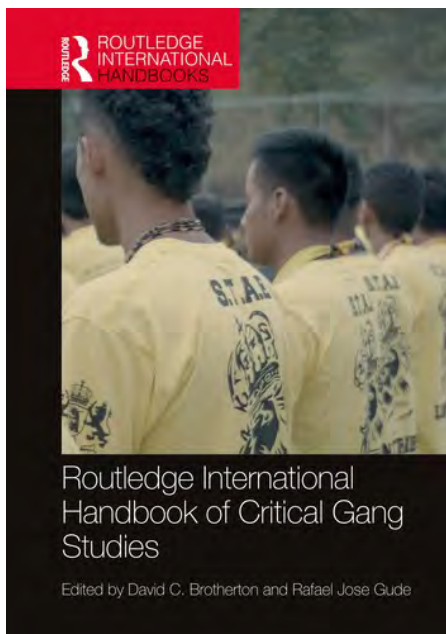
Liqun Cao, Professor, Ontario Tech University

Pontell and Ghazi-Tehrani's important book offers a comparative analysis of white collar crime in China. Featuring a treasure trove of white-collar crime case studies and situated in the broader criminological literature, the book is a must-read for anyone interested in corruption, corporate crime, comparative criminology and Chinese law and society.

Benjamin van Rooij, Chair in Law and Society, University of Amsterdam, Global Professor of Law, University of California, Irvine.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

David Brotherton



Professor Brotherton published Routledge International Handbook of Critical Gang Studies in July 2021 co-edited with Rafael Gude. This is one of the largest handbooks ever produced with over 750 pages and more than 60 authors.

Following are two of the reviews:

"Spanning the globe, this extraordinary book provides exciting and theoretically informed analyses that challenge the status quo, provoke difficult conversations, and compel the reader to view social justice and inequality as central to contemporary gang studies. A tour de force that will stimulate and create pause for reflection, it is simultaneously a major chronicle of our times." **Walter S. Dekeseredy, Professor, West Virginia University**

"Gangs are much maligned, misunderstood and demonised. While gang members are caricatured as thugs, deviants, drug dealers and the criminals. Gangster is a term all too often mis-used to stigmatise the marginal and criminalise racial groupings of young people. Yet, gangs can be sites of resistance that offer marginalised young people a space for collective identify formation to contest the militarised policing and suppression efforts of settler colonialism that lingers in so many parts of the world. The *Routledge Handbook of Critical Gang Studies* unpacks these caricatures. Drawing on original studies from Africa, Central and Latin America, Asia, Canada, Europe and United States this compendium debunks the shortfalls of reactionary approaches, such as gang suppression. Based on rich ethnographies, biographies and qualitative methods the 49 chapters apply theories from critical, cultural, de-colonial, Indigenous, Latina and southern perspectives to unearth rich new understandings about gangs as spaces of identity, resistance and belonging. It is essential reading for anyone remotely connected to the correctional and criminal justice systems, such as social workers, police, lawyers, legislators and of course students and academics from an array of disciplines in the social sciences, including criminology, law, sociology, anthropology, social work, public policy, humanities, cultural studies and history." **Kerry Carrington, Professor, QUT Centre for Justice, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane Australia**

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Antonio Alvarez-Benavides



Our colleague Antonio Álvarez-Benavides has coordinated with Emanuele Toscano a special issue on the global growth of new far-right for the journal *Política y Sociedad* entitled: *Nuevas articulaciones de la extrema derecha global: actores, discursos, prácticas, identidades y los retos de la democracia*.

This issue bets on qualitative research methods and the sociology of action for researching far-right political parties and groups. It compiles excellent contributions about the Spanish, Italian, Canadian, and American cases. Jeffrey Alexander analyses the Frontlash / Blacklash dynamics in the US, followed by an extensive commentary by Rubén Díez. Brieg Capitaine and Denisse Helly focus on the Canadian Christian Heritage Party and their hate speech. Pablo Rocamora and Eva Espinar study the neo-fascist discourse of Hogar Social in Spain. Two other articles deal with the new far-right Spanish political party Vox, where Mateo Ballester analyses its use of history as a political tool, and Antonio and Francisco Jiménez its cultural counterprogramming and anti-feminism. Finally, Emanuele Toscano explains the possibilities of the close-up investigation using the CasaPound example in Italy.

Open access: <https://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/POSO>

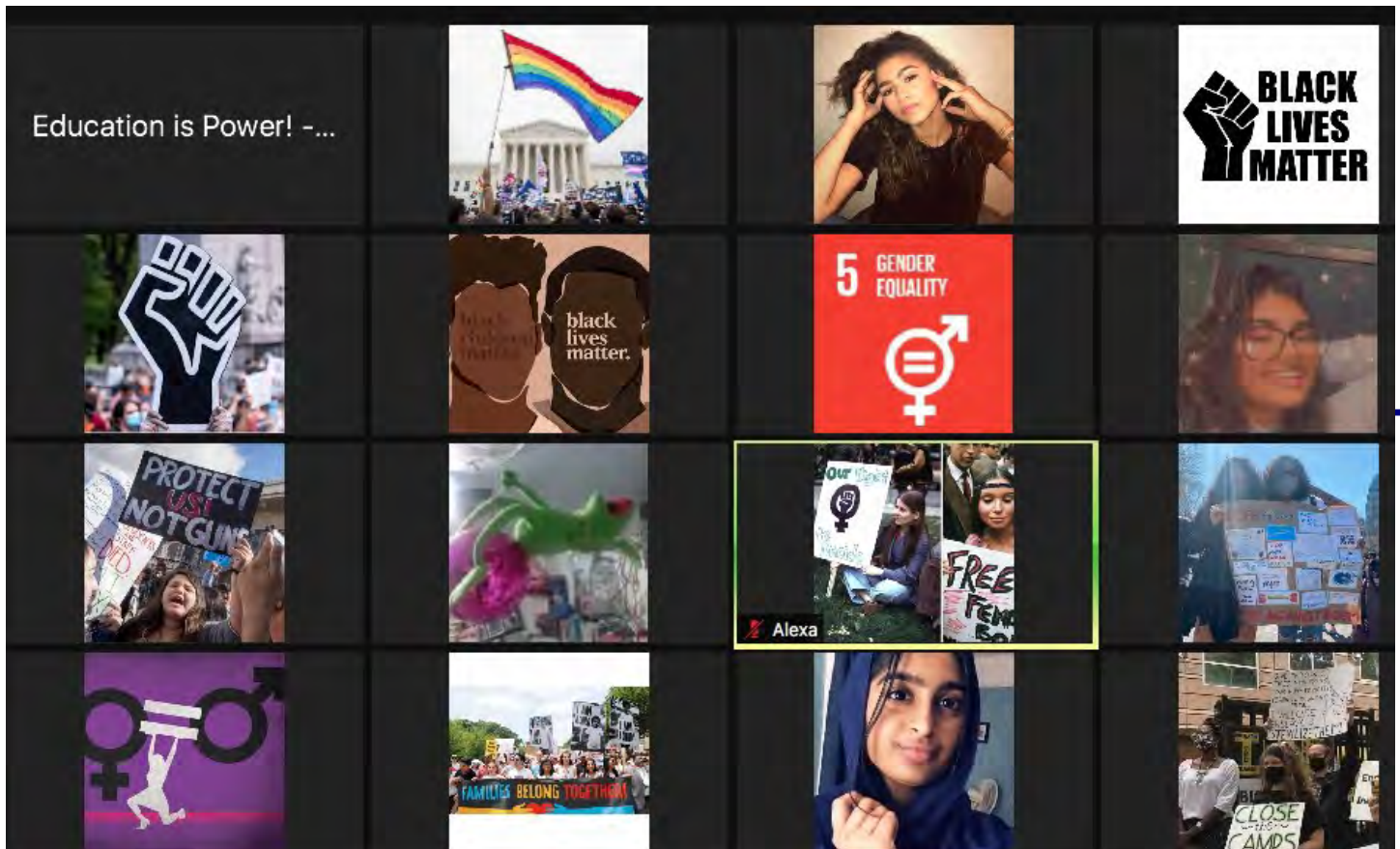
Patricia Johnson Coxx & Kathryn Kikandall, Open Stax Reviewers!

Two professors in the Sociology Department were Reviewers for the recently published (2021) open source textbook, OpenStax, Introduction to Sociology 3e. The open source book is excellent, foundational, resourceful and accessible (licensed and free) for ALL SOC students. The OpenStax textbook is highly recommended by several JJC faculty .

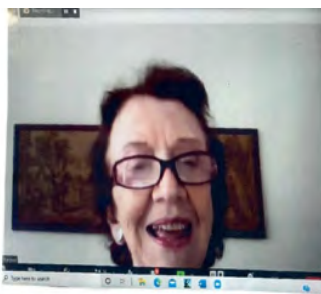


WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE CLASSROOM?

Snapshot of some students in **Professor Patricia Johnson's SOC 101-11, Introduction to Sociology class**, who were studying Chapter 21: Social Movements and Social Change in the textbook, OpenStax, Introduction to Sociology 2e. They used their Zoom profile to express their call for social change. Note, this does not include the entire class since many wanted to remain anonymous. P.S. *Education is Power* is the professor.



Dr. Ann Wolbert Burgess comes to John Jay!



On Monday September 27th, **Professor Jan Yager** interviewed living legend **Dr. Ann Wolbert Burgess** via ZOOM for her SOC 236– Victimology class. Dr. Ann Wolbert Burgess is an internationally recognized pioneer in the assessment and treatment of victims of trauma and abuse. *Mindhunter*, a new Netflix drama about Federal Bureau of Investigation profilers, includes a main character based on the work and Forensic research of Dr. Ann Wolbert Burgess. Her work continues in the study of elder abuse in nursing homes, cyberstalking, and Internet sex crimes. She teaches courses in Victimology, Forensic Science, Forensic Mental Health, Case Studies in Forensics and Forensic Science Lab.

CLICK LINK TO SEE INTERVIEW

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84461212693?pwd=Zm7xGunDMkAokP6sZCAclUwIxi0.dlo4Ax7LkabBTKbP> Passcode: *85.+TbI



Dear Freshman

Jaclyn Katzenberger,

Criminology Major Class of 2022

First off, welcome to John Jay freshmen students! Congratulations, you've entered a great school and you're going to have such an amazing four years here. The good thing about right now is that you're here and in person to make new friends and learn from some of the best professors. What the trick is to having a successful school year is managing your social life and Academic studies. The fact of the matter is, it's not easy. Someone else's experience is not going to be the same for you. However, it's a good thing I'm here to give you a few tips and tricks (from a senior who's *been through it*). My first piece of advice is a bit of a double-edged sword: don't be afraid to say no, but don't be afraid to say yes. Now let me explain, the first couple of weeks you've been at school is when the work load is going was light. If someone asks you to go out *say yes*. That's how you're going to begin your social life. No one has the same class schedule though, so if you're essentially drowning in work, it's okay to say no. People will understand because eventually everyone is going to drown in their

work. Next, plan ahead. It sounds so simple, and it doesn't require a planner to do. If you want to go out on the weekend, set aside time on the weekday to get some work done. That way you have most, if not all of your weekend to do whatever you want. I can attest to that, I decided to have no classes on Fridays, and I would get all my work done that day so I could do whatever on the weekend. One last thing before you go off to class or to hang out with friends is to have fun. This is going to sound counterproductive, but you are only an undergrad one time in your life. School is incredibly important, but have fun with it. Form study groups regardless of major, take a class that interests you outside of your major, and join clubs. There are so many ways that you can fuse academics and your social life. Find something that fits you the best though because I've had my time to figure this all out. Now it's up to you.



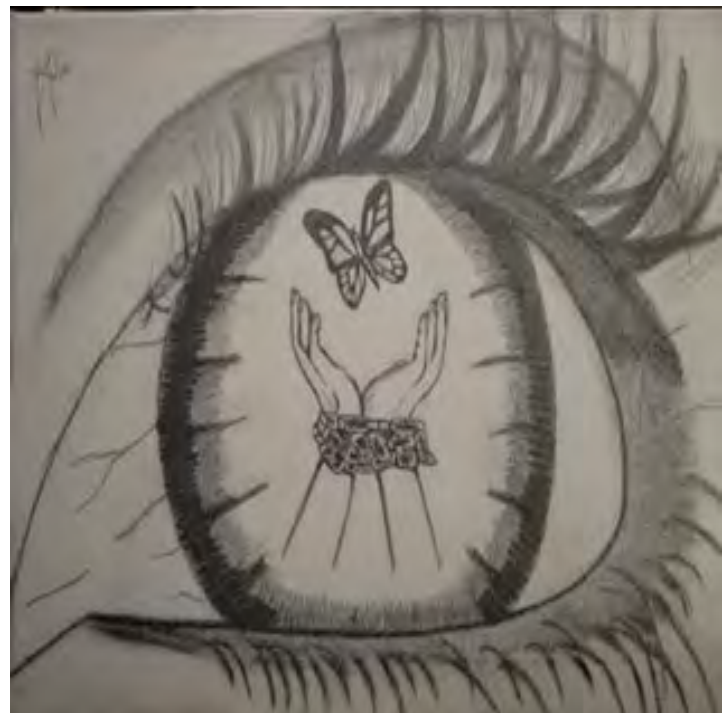
A Journey of Perseverance-Yareli Perez

Criminology Minor

The pandemic has filled my life with challenges, challenges that I learned to transform into opportunities. I was suddenly forced to live life in a new way starting in March. I never imagined I would take an online class yet had to adapt to the idea that this was the new and only means of learning during the pandemic. I also recall the image and feeling of the empty train on my way to work, trying my best to remember the time in which they were once overcrowded and filled with busy, fast-paced passengers. For the first time ever, New York City and its people had fallen into a deep sleep, no longer awake with the usual, never-ending noises in the street. This struck me the hardest since a city already filled with individualism now had the added traits of fear, for the pandemic, and further isolation the 6ft apart mandate, use of masks, and regulation of going out only for essential workers.

However, I was determined not to let this pandemic have a hold of me with that same fear and loneliness I saw instilled in other people's faces. I continued my usual routine of going to work and appreciated still having a job, my health, but most of all, people with whom to surround myself with: friends, family, even strangers. School was another challenge, especially in keeping my motivation, but I knew the end goals of getting my education and being a step closer to obtaining my degree were worth it. To help with this, I took up activities I had let go of

in the midst of maintaining all my focus on my studies such as drawing, yoga and meditation, and learning a new language. I began to see that a balance of both an academic and personal/social life were needed if I was going to be successful. Now, I am on my last semester working on my courses, my research, but most of all, on myself. While I was able to find my drive in continuing my life during the pandemic, my hope is that others do the same and remember that we must always keep moving



Artwork by-Yareli Perez



Adonia Escalano

Dispute Resolution Certificate

My name is Adonia Escalona. My major is Deviance, Culture, and Culture, currently, I am a senior and my minor is Art and the Dispute Resolution Certificate. Coming back to school hit me very hard to a different reality than I thought since I was used to online learning. I was adapting to my schedule which is a hybrid so on most days I have online classes mixed with in-person classes and only two days out of the week that I just have an in-person class only. Since this was my first time in a year going to campus I was somewhat annoyed because I have to travel one hour and thirty minutes to forty minutes and be awake around 6:10-6:15 and be out of my house by 7:00-7:30, to make sure I am not late I usually am an hour early for my first class. But to my surprise, I ended up falling in love with the campus and was quick to find some of the resources to adapt to being in person out of my own curiosity.

I currently work at the Center for Career Professional Development (CCPD) as a work-study student on campus, then I am a Peer Success Coach and enrolled in SOC 381 the internship course. I had to adapt to doing work-study in person this semester unlike last semester where it was remote but I feel content at my job. On Thursdays, I help facilitate sophomore transfer seminars as a Peer Success Coach, and this semester it is the first time that they are running these courses to help accommodate them. I felt nervous to do my role but as the semester progresses I am slowly easing into my role and I generally still have a lot to learn. I was nervous for my internship course because at the very beginning of the semester I got fired before I really started my role due to the sched-

ule that I had set with the CCPD and the Peer Success Coach it was causing a schedule conflict. Unfortunately, the days that I was available were not compatible and I had to be let go to find a new site for the internship. I was extremely anxious because if I didn't find an internship by the end of the semester I would have to be granted an incomplete and I tried so hard to prevent that by taking the steps to secure an internship early.

Life is always going to be unexpected and unpredictable, I contacted professor Volpe and she helped me secure an internship at PRASI since it was two weeks after I got let go from my previous internship. I felt like the process was quick to find another one. This internship was online and that was a big factor in me accepting the internship considering how my schedule is designed with the

other jobs that I already have in place, this internship was extremely flexible and catering to my schedule. PRASI is different than what I thought it would be but I do like how everything is starting off within the internship and I'm really grateful for this opportunity. Time management is a huge part of my semester and I'm balancing everything as a full-time student and organizing my job roles, building myself up day by day.



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