

Lamar Criminal Justice Newsletter



Irish Summer: Lamar-Waterford Institute to Team up on Research and Students

Criminal Justice Director Eric F. Bronson and Professor Jim Mann of Lamar University successfully completed a study abroad program in Ireland in the summer of 2016. As a result, they were able to form a partnership with the Waterford Institute of Technology in Waterford, Ireland for further study abroad programs for Lamar students and possible student exchange programs where students from the Institute could attend classes at Lamar while Lamar students attend classes at Waterford. The Institute has expressed great interest in collaborating with Lamar University Professors on research.

This year 14 students from Lamar University participated in the two-week-long study abroad program in Ireland and attended classes on comparative criminal justice and sports and crime, taught by Dr. Mann and Dr. Bronson, respectively. The classes were held at the Waterford Institute of Technology, Waterford, Ireland. The students were Kaneisha Green, Lindsey Darby, Alexis Harris, Tammy Ray, William Tyler IV, Karla Flores, Savannah Simon, Elroy Rigsby-Leday, Crystal Gardner, Milagro Contreras, Tracey Allen, Alejandro Guadian, Jennifer Luna, and James Hollingsworth. Besides Waterford, they also visited Dublin, Kilkenny, Cork, and several historical sites which were over a thousand

Continued on Page 3

Irish Summer 2016	1
CJ Director Greeting	2
Conference Participation	7
Jeff Ferrell Interview	8
Student Focus	10
InfraGard Meeting	11
Federal Prison Tour	12
DNA Exoneree	13

Editor-IN-Chief:
Dr. Vidisha Barua Worley, Esq.,
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 Justice, Lamar University

Greetings from the CJ Director



Dr. Eric F. Bronson

Greetings to the Lamar community! The year, 2016, has been a remarkable one for the Division of Criminal Justice. The division as a whole, including faculty members and graduate students, has

published over 10 articles in 2016. Our alumni have joined reputed Ph.D. programs and law schools. We also completed a very successful study abroad program over the summer in Ireland and are slated to have more such programs in Ireland, China, and Korea in 2017. During the study abroad in Ireland, Dr. Jim Mann and I were able to build a partnership with the Waterford Institute of Technology in Waterford, Ireland which will facilitate Lamar University professors to conduct research in Ireland, besides a yearly study abroad program. We also discussed possible

student exchange programs with the Institute. Another major venture embarked on by our faculty members, Drs. Vidisha Barua Worley and Robert M. Worley, is the two-volume encyclopedia set, *Lockdown Nation: An Encyclopedia of Controversies and Trends in American Prisons*, to be published by ABC-CLIO in the Fall of 2018. While several of our faculty members have contributed to the Encyclopedia, it has attracted entries from over a hundred scholars across the nation and worldwide.

Several of our professors are also engaged in a sex offender registration study where offenders are interviewed about their crimes, the registration process, and their everyday lives. Professor Robert M. Worley also received a research enhancement grant to pursue this project. Besides, our McNair scholar Miroslava Zendejas recently won the first place for the History and Culture of South East Texas Award at Lamar University. As part of her research, she is interviewing inmates in the Jefferson County Jail under the guidance of Dr. Robert Worley.

Lamar's online Criminal Justice Master's program ranked 19th in the Nation by AffordableColleges.com!!

CJ Division Welcomes Admin Associate Brittany



Brittany Ann Wood

Ms. Brittany Ann Wood has recently joined the Criminal Justice Division as the new administrative associate. She graduated from Lamar with an M.A. in English in 2014 and is currently also a graduate student of Criminal Justice at Lamar. She has recently published her first peer-reviewed article with Drs. Robert and Vidisha Worley titled, "‘There Were Ethical Dilemmas All Day Long!’: Harrowing Tales Of Ethnographic Researchers In Criminology And Criminal Justice," in the journal, *Criminal Justice Studies*. In such a short time, Ms. Wood has proved to be an asset to the CJ Division. Ranging from any technical difficulty with our

ever-changing computer screens, to advising, to just helping out generally, Ms. Wood seems to have the solution to everything. Her efficiency, willingness to help, and pleasant personality has made her an invaluable member of our division.

Study Abroad: Irish Summer



Criminal Justice students hold the Lamar flag at the Blarney Castle in Ireland.

Continued from Page 1

years old. One of the more interesting historical sites visited by the team was the Blarney Castle where the students kissed the Blarney stone which as Irish legend goes, bestows the gift of gab. Allegedly, this gift of gab is so great that a person blessed with this gift could charm anyone into happily making choices to their own detriment. The students greatly enjoyed this. The Lamar study abroad group also attended the Gaelic Hurling match, a sporting event that has been around for thousands of years. "It was originally created to train the Irish to battle with axes against The Crown

of England. Now, long wooden sticks called hurlies are used instead of axes. Players bounce the ball with the hurlies," explained Dr. Bronson.

When asked about the experience, Dr. Mann recounted, "This was one of the more exciting times, going to the Hurling semi-finals where the home team, Waterford, was playing. In spite of being heavy underdogs, they played to a tie. The following week, we went to a pub to watch the rematch. It was disappointing that Waterford narrowly lost to Kilkenny this time, but the local atmosphere in the pub was highly exciting...and linguistically educational."



Get Ready for Irish Summer 2017

The next Study Abroad to Ireland will be May 28-June 11th, flying from Houston into Dublin. Students can earn up to 6 hours credit in CRIJ, SOCI, and/or PSYC: Global Crime Control, Deviance and Sports, & International Psychology. The Lamar team will be staying in the dorms at Waterford Institute of Technology. Waterford is the smallest and the oldest city in Ireland (with only 6 cities in Ireland). It was established in 942 A.D. by the Vikings. While the students will be touring many of the tourist sites, and kissing the Blarney Stone, they will also have behind-the-scene passes to many areas off-limits to tourists and even the general population of Ireland. Professors Bronson and Mann plan to take the students to the National Police Academy, a psychiatric clinic for mentally ill offenders, a diversion program for substance abuse offenders, and attend court sessions. Additionally, the students will be exposed to new sports, such as Irish football and Hurling - a combination of hockey, baseball, and lacrosse - you have to see it to understand it, the fastest game on grass. Recruitment for the trip is currently in progress. More than 30 students have expressed interest and those who have signed up have already started fund-raising projects. So, hurry up before all the spots are taken!!!



IRELAND

Criminal Justice & Psychology

CRIJ 4313 - Deviance and Sports

CRIJ 4365 - Global Crime Control

PSYC 4301 / 5304 - International Psychology

May 28 - June 11, 2017



ACTIVITIES

Travel to Ireland to get a new perspective on the cultural and global factors that influence criminal justice, social services, and mental health. Students will be housed at the Waterford Institute of Technology campus and from there will visit various private and public institutions related to criminal justice, mental health, and sport.

Supplementing their excursions, the students will attend special lectures at WIT delivered by Irish professors. Additionally, students will be exposed to a wide variety of cultural and historical sites in Ireland, including Blarney Castle, Kilkenny, Dublin, Cork, and Wexford.

PROGRAM FEE

\$3,700 (pending approval) + LU Tuition & Fees

Includes: Roundtrip airfare, accommodations, excursions, ground transportation, some meals, & intl. health insurance.

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Lamar CJ Faculty and Alumni Take Part in National Conferences

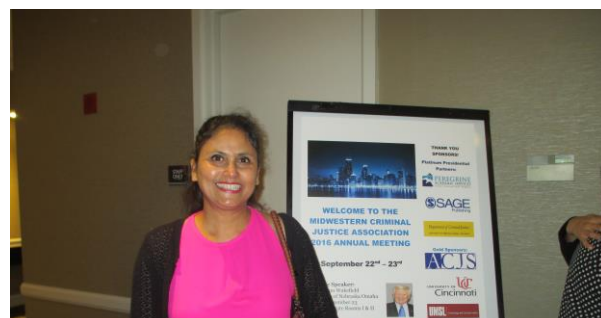


Drs. Jim Mann, Ginger Gummelt, and Robert Worley (left) and Dr. Sanaz Alasti and Mayra Picon (right) after presenting papers at the ASC Annual Meeting held in New Orleans in November 2016.



At the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Criminology held in New Orleans from November 16th to 19th, 2016, several CJ professors presented papers. Dr. Eric F. Bronson along with Lamar alumni Mayra Picon presented a paper titled, *Family Members Feelings towards the Death Penalty: Is Offender Race a Factor?* Dr. Sanaz Alasti and Amir Fakhravar presented the paper, *Middle Eastern Harshness in the Application of Death Penalty: Why Israel Is the Only Abolitionist?*

Jesse Doiron of Lamar University presented the paper, *Witnessing Executions in Saudi Arabia: Is the Executioner Happy?* Dr. Sanaz Alasti and Amir Fakhravar presented the paper, *Battered Nation Syndrome: A Response to Threat of Islamic Terrorism*. Drs. Robert M. Worley, Ginger Gummelt, Vidisha B. Worley, and Jim Mann presented the paper, *The Sex Offender across the Street: A Qualitative Assessment of Male and Female Sex Offender Registrants' Offenses, Judicial Processing, and Registration Experiences*. Dr. Cheng-Hsien Lin and Lamar graduate Rain Perlik presented the paper,



Dr. Vidisha Worley in Chicago in September.

Domestic Violence Victimization: An Examination of Data Collection. Drs. Vidisha Worley and Robert Worley also presented the paper, *Smart Weapons Need Smart Policies: Municipal Liability for the Inappropriate Use of Tasers by Police*. Additionally, Dr. Robert Worley chaired the panel, *Race, Gender and Visual Representations of Crime and Violence*.

At the Mid-Western CJ Association conference held in Chicago from September 22nd to 23rd, 2016, Drs. Robert and Vidisha Worley presented, *Show me the money: Why it is important to pay correctional officers what they're worth*.

Ferrell Urges Lamar Students to Develop an Ethnographic Sensibility in Everyday Life



Professor Jeff Ferrell (left) and Professor Stuart Wright (right) with Vidisha Worley at Lamar

Critical Criminologist Jeff Ferrell spoke to Lamar University students about his ethnographic research which included dumpster diving, drifting, and being a graffiti artist. Later, in a Q&A with **Vidisha Barua Worley**, **Professor Ferrell** unfolded the perilous and colorful research journey he continues to undertake.

VW: Your ethnographic research work sounds like a lot of fun, albeit fraught with danger. What was it early on in your career that made you decide to take this path?

JF: Early on, my ethnographic research started from the straightforward assumption that the best way to learn about social situations and social interactions is to immerse oneself in them.

In addition, I've always been genuinely curious as to how other people accomplish their lives, based in turn on another assumption: that there is far more complexity and nuance to any situation or social role than can be understood from afar. Also, I've always been interested in building bridges between academic scholarship and the larger community; while there are many ways to do this, certainly one way is to bring your scholarly training and ideas out into the world as a researcher, that is, to engage in a sort of ongoing conversation between scholarly analysis and on-the-ground involvement.

VW: Among the different participant observation studies that you have carried out, which was the most interesting to you and why?

JF: I've found all the long-term ethnographies I've done very interesting, and I have in every case remained involved with the people and the issues long after my research was published. But among them I suppose I found two most interesting. First was the five years I spent as an ethnographic researcher and graffiti writer, which led to the book *Crimes of Style*. Here I discovered a complex, elaborate subculture suffused with alternative meanings and practices—a full-blown, illicit world of graffiti writing that has developed over the past 40 years or so and that has now spread worldwide. Second would be the year I spent living as a dumpster diver (leading to the book *Empire of Scrounge*) and my ongoing participation and research in this area. As I found, there is indeed an “empire” of different sorts of people and situations that make up the world of trash picking, but, moreover, there are also the ongoing insights into consumerism, waste, and reclamation that come from this research and the understandings of new forms of urban economy and urban policing.

VW: What mental and or physical abilities does a researcher need to embark on the not-often trodden path of ethnographic research?

JF: Above all else is the ability to interact comfortably with various sorts of people, and in various sorts of situations, many of them unfamiliar or even unsettling. Throughout my decades of street ethnography, I've also found it essential to negotiate the balance between demanding respect and giving respect—often the key to new or uncertain situations. Finally, I'd say you have to be willing to “kill your ego,” that is, to put aside your assumptions, be in the moment, and humble yourself to learning from those you are studying.

VW: Do you think your research has changed you as a person? Could you please elaborate?

JF: My research has profoundly changed me as a person; in fact, I would argue that if ethnographic research doesn't change you as a person, you're probably not doing it correctly. To learn new codes of conduct, make sense of new situations, acquire new bodies of knowledge, and achieve a degree of *verstehen* with those you study is not just to engage in good ethnography; it is to become a new person yourself. This is why autoethnography is important: not as some sort of narcissistic endeavor but as a way of thinking through how an ethnographer's changing sense of self also tells us something significant about socialization, meaning, and interaction in the realm being studied. In addition, I've realized that the ethnographic work I've done has taught me new orientations toward time, spatial arrangements, and even my way of living in the world—existential changes, you might say.

VW: What message do you have for the undergraduate and graduate students at Lamar with regard to research work at their levels?

JF: I would urge students not to be put off by the long-term commitments that are often required in traditional ethnography. Of course, years-long ethnographies are valuable, but if as a student you are not in a position to do such ethnography, you can still engage in short-term ethnographies, and you can still develop an ethnographic sensibility in your research and in your everyday life. Ethnography is, in some ways, as much a way of seeing and engaging with the world as it is a “method,” a matter of being attentive to nuances and details, curious as to alternative ways of living, and eager to put aside biases and assumptions and explore other people's lives—and you can do this at any time, and as part of any research project.

Continued on Page 14



McNair Scholar Miroslava Zendejas Wins First Place for the History and Culture of South East Texas Award at Lamar



Criminal Justice Students Association at Lamar pie the professors as a fund-raiser on November 21, 2016!

New Initiatives in CJ Courses

Dr. Vidisha Worley will be teaching a new course, *Correctional Counseling*, beginning Spring 2017. This course will be geared toward teaching students about the role of the correctional counselor, legal and ethical issues, basic rapport building with the offenders, family systems and group therapy, and substance abuse counseling, among others. It will serve as a prerequisite to *Correctional Counseling Practicum*, which will be taught by Ms. Karen Roebuck. The practical class will require students to learn hands-on as they go to the prisons to mentor and counsel offenders.

Our Alumni

One of our alumni, Laura Ashley Shearer, has become a licensed attorney in Texas. Another alumni, Terra Richardson published an article in *ACJS Today* (co-authored with Drs. Robert Worley and Eric Bronson), and has accepted a job as a probation officer with Travis County (Austin, Texas). Also, Mayra Picon, recipient of Lamar University President's *Grow Your Own Program* scholarship, has completed her first year of doctoral studies at Florida State University.

Lamar Hosts InfraGard Meeting on Big Data, Social Media, & Cyber Crime



Mr. Ray Shearer, Ms. Karen Roebuck, and Dr. Stuart Wright with the InfraGard speakers.



Twitter message sent out by FBI Houston about the InfraGard meeting held at Lamar University on September 20, 2016.

Criminal Justice faculty members Robert M. Worley and Raymond Shearer together with Southeast Texas Special Interest Group InfraGard organized two presentations at Lamar University on September 20th, 2016. First, Marc Mori, Director of Nuance Blue and former FBI Special Agent, presented a paper titled, “Big Data and Social Media.” Next, Chris Tortorice, Assistant U.S. Attorney, Eastern District of Texas presented, “Cyber Law and Federal Crime.” Both talks underscored the importance of technology and its impact on crime. The event appeared in a message sent out by FBI Houston’s twitter account.



CJ students take a tour of the Federal Bureau of Prisons in Beaumont, TX, with their professor Robert Worley, in April 2016





The Criminal Justice Student Association invited DNA Exoneree Cornelius Dupree to speak to Lamar students on December 8, 2016. Cornelius was exonerated on April 4, 2011, after spending more than 30 years in prison for a rape and robbery he did not commit. He was found innocent through DNA testing after serving 31 years of a 75-year sentence.





Ms. Karen
Roebuck
recruiting
students at the
Youth
Solutions
Southeast
Texas in
September
2016

Critical Criminologist Jeff Ferrell speaks at Lamar

Continued from Page 9

VW: What do you suggest for young faculty scholars, especially with regard to ethnographic research?

JF: Ethnographic research takes time and commitment, and when done as part of criminology or criminal justice, it almost always crosses some sort of legal or moral boundary. Consequently, it is difficult and demanding, especially as compared to other research methods. On the other hand, ethnographic work often produces scholarship that achieves great visibility and influence and that endures far longer than scholarship produced by other methods. So, while young scholars may want to think about the demands of ethnography, and perhaps balance ethnographic work with other forms of research, I would strongly urge them to undertake ethnography, for their own sake and for the sake of the disciplines in which we work.

Happy Holidays

