

"Never believe that a few caring people can't change the world. For, indeed, that's all who ever have."

-Margaret Mead



North Central Sociological Association

A Bi-annual Newsletter

Spring 2006

Highlights from the NCSA annual meeting, March 23-25, 2006.

NCSA Highlighted Speeches

Student Paper Competition Award Winners

Plenary Address

Teaching about Hurricane Katrina

Notable Session LGBTQ



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New NCSA Executive Council

The new elected North Central Sociological Association officers for 2006-07 began their term at the Business Meeting on Saturday, March 24. The NCSA executive officers include: President Jay Howard, Vice-president Jay Weinstein, President-elect Robert Shelly, Vice-president elect Lissa Yogan, Treasurer Anna Linders, Secretary Leslie Wang, Membership Chair Marty Jendrek, Council members at large Kevin Christiano, Joseph Yenerall, and Hans Bakker



New NCSA officers: Leslie Wang, Lissa Yogan, Bob Shelly, Marty Jendrek, Kevin Christiano, and Jay Howard



Aida Tomeh Distinguished Service Award

The 2006 North Central Association's Distinguished Service Award was presented to Dr. Thomas Calhoun, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. First given in 1982, this award is given to an NCSA member for distinguished service to the NCSA throughout his/her professional career.

John F. Schnabel Distinguished Contribution to Teaching Award

This year's recipient of the North Central Sociological Association's John F. Schnabel Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award is Leslie T. C. Wang, University of Toledo. The award is based upon the sharing of pioneering innovations in curriculum design, creative classroom activities, and/or development of instructional methods, the development of especially creative instructional materials, a distinguished record of publication and/or research on or about the teaching of sociology, and a distinguished record of contributing to the teaching emphasis at the NCSA.



NCSA annual meeting Indianapolis, IN March 23-25, 2006

This year's annual meeting in Indianapolis was quite a success. The meeting was held in the Crowne Plaza Hotel at Union Station, complete with "sleeper cars."

The theme of the meeting was "Making a Difference: Sociology as Social Activism."

One of the highlights was the Ruth and John Useem Plenary Address given by Dr. Walda Katz-Fishman, Professor of Sociology at Howard University. Walda's inspirational talk was titled "Putting Activism and Movement Building at the Center."



On behalf of the NCSA, Robert Newby presents Waldo Katz-Fishman with an engraved platter in thanks for her participation at the NCSA meeting.

Walda Katz-Fishman is a scholar, educator, and activist who combines her interests in class, race/ethnicity/nationality and gender inequality and political economy with political activism in bottom-up struggles for economic equality and race and gender justice. Such concerns and how social movements can bring about positive social change was central point of the plenary address.

In addition to her position at Howard University, Dr Katz-Fishman serves as the Board Chair of Project South: Institute for the Elimination of Poverty and Genocide. She also serves on the Steering Committee of the Grassroots Global Justice and is a Coordinating Committee member of the U.S. Social Forum.

NCSA Student Paper Competition Award Winners



Each year the NCSA sponsors a student paper competition for both graduate and undergraduate students.

This year's graduate paper competition winners are:

1st place Laura Hamilton, Indiana University for her paper titled "Trading on Heterosexuality: College Women's Gender Strategies and Anti-Lesbian Discrimination." The 2nd place award was given to Samantha Kwan, University of Arizona, for her paper titled "Framing Fat: Government, Activists, and Industry Frame Contests." The 3rd place award was a tie between Kyle Dodson, Indiana University, for his paper "Revisiting the Turnout Decline: Assessing the Contribution of Cohort Replacement" and Shelley McGrath, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, for her paper "Female Body Builders: Crossing Gender Lines."

The undergraduate paper competition winners are:

1st place, Mary Kathleen (Katie) Dingeman, Saint Mary's College, for her paper titled "From War to 'Refugee': A Case Study of Liberian Refugees in South Bend, IN." The 2nd place award was jointly given to Michelle Manno, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne for her paper "Weight Room Etiquette: Who Belongs, Who Doesn't, and How Everyone Seems to Know Without Needing to be Told" and Demoya Gordon, Macalister College for her paper "Policing Sexuality in America's Churches: Theological, Congregational, and Political Influences on Regulation of Same-Sex Behavior." The 3rd place award was



given to Sarah (Sam) Medina, Saint Mary's College, for the paper "(Sexual) Minority Report: A Survey of Student Attitudes Regarding the Social and Cultural Environment for Sexual Minorities." Congratulations to all those students who submitted papers for the competition.

FACES FROM THE NCSA MEETING IN INDIANAPOLIS



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

In her presidential address, Kathy Feltey focused on the ways that the discipline of sociology can be used to address the social crises of our times. She noted that "sociology has the frameworks we need to... discover knowledge, and to transform that knowledge into action and effective outcomes."



Challenging the paradigm of objectivity and value-free science, Dr. Feltey argued for a values-centered approach to research and teaching, stating that she feels "a responsibility to use the tools of (sociology) to work for a more humane social world...so that citizens are empowered to act for meaningful social change."



Those who attended the NCSA Business Meeting got a special treat that livened up the day – a musical performance by Jackie Bergdahl and Michael Norris of Wright State University.

Highlights of the annual NCSA meeting in Indianapolis

Keynote Teaching Address

Kathy Rowell, Sinclair Community College, received the 2005 Distinguished Contribution to Teaching Award. As the recipient of the award, Kathy delivered a key note address titled "A Year of Reflection: What We Know About the Classroom and What We Don't Know About the Hallways."



In her talk, Kathy reflected on the question of what we know about teaching excellence in sociology. Based upon her survey with award winning sociological teachers and a review of materials in *Teaching Sociology*, we seem to know a lot about teaching and learning in the classroom. However, she noted that we really don't know much about what happens outside the classroom. She discussed that we do not know much about the "informal" process of teaching and learning with our discipline. She noted that one article in *Teaching Sociology* has mentioned this issue but, to date, there has been no systematic attempt to research these issues. One example she noted is the area of office hours and how we have had no research to date on the learning that takes place during office hours. Kathy concluded with several recommendations of topics that should be examined by sociologists. As she noted, if anyone should be studying the nature of informal teaching and learning, it should be sociologists.

LGBTQ ISSUES AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM

While social activism has been used to address various forms of social inequality, perhaps one of the most visible areas today is the social activism of individuals seeking to end discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer individuals.

The NCSA is committed to the inclusion of all its members, and a diversity of research topics was evident at this year's annual meeting.

Papers related to LGBTQ issues included such titles as: "Sexual Images in Fat Gay Male Subcultures" by Jason Whitesel, Ohio State University; "Out

and About: Coming Out and Sexual Identity" by Adam Klaybor, Indiana University; "The Truth About Fags and their 'Hags': The Inter-workings of Cross-gender Relationships" by Richard Mills, Indiana University; "Media Framing Strategies of LGBT Issues in Newspaper Editorial Pages" by Tina Norris, Kent State University; "Youth: A Curious Frame for Gay Rights Claims" by Andrew Ruffner, University of Cincinnati; "Policing Sexuality in America's Churches: Theological, Congregational and Political Influences on Regulation of Same-Sex Behavior" by Demoya Gordon, Macalester College.



Jason Whitesel

SOCIOLOGISTS FOR WOMEN IN SOCIETY (SWS) ANNUAL LUNCHEON



MSS President Helen Moore, Carolette Norwood, Marcia Segal, and Edwin Segal were among the approximately 40 NCSA attendees at this annual event.

FEATURED SESSION

**SOCIAL
ACTIVISM
AND
HURRICANE
KATRINA

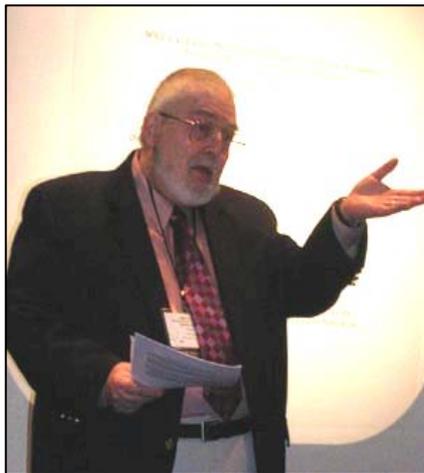
ANALYZING AND
TEACHING ABOUT
DISASTERS**



F. Dale Parent, Southeastern Louisiana University, with Kathy Feltey, New Orleans native

The NCSA sponsored two sessions addressing the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. On Friday, March 24, Kathy Feltey, University of Akron, organized a session on "Disaster Research." In this session on disasters, Kent Schwirian presented on the "politics of blame" in the aftermath of disasters. He was followed by a very moving presentation by Dale Parent from Southeastern Louisiana State. Dale talked about his very personal experiences with Katrina, the impact on the Sociology Department with the many transfer students they took in, and his sociological observations of the multi-layered devastation wrought by this natural disaster. Last, Kathy Feltey, whose family lives in New Orleans and Metairie, talked about gender

and Katrina. She focused on the ways that home and family are affected by disaster and how women (mothers, daughters, and sisters) protect and preserve these through the disaster period and beyond.



Kent Schwirian

On Saturday, March 24, a thematic session titled "How We Lost New Orleans: Teaching about Race and Class in the Context of Disaster" was organized by Robert Newby, Central Michigan University.

The panelists, including Newby, Mary Senter, and Angela Haddad, described the array of informational events they organized on their campus to draw attention to the effects of this natural disaster, and they highlighted the overwhelmingly positive audience response to their creative programming.



Robert Newby discussing programming on hurricane Katrina at CMU

**NCSA PRESIDENT'S
COMMENTS**

Exciting things are in the works for the 2007 joint meeting of the North Central Sociological Association and the Midwest Sociological Society. The 2007 annual meeting will take place in Chicago from Wednesday April 4th at noon until Saturday April 7th at noon because the week ends with Easter Sunday on April 8th. It just might be the largest gathering of sociologists outside of an American Sociological Association annual meeting in US history.



Jay Howard

We want you to be a part of it!

The meeting program will be fully integrated. NCSA Vice President Jay Weinstein, Eastern Michigan University, and MSS President-elect Helen Moore, University of Nebraska, are serving as the Co-chairs. Our program theme is "Social Policy, Social Ideology, and Social Change." In addition to the two Presidential Addresses, there will be two plenary addresses. Professor Saskia Sassen, University of Chicago, will deliver the NCSA's Ruth and John Useem Plenary Address and Professor Edna Bonacich will deliver the MSS Plenary Address.

This joint annual meeting of the NCSA and the MSS has been in the works for over two years. It promises to offer plenty of opportunities to reconnect with colleagues and to make new friends with common interests! There will be an abundance of research and teaching sessions to provide you with feedback on your current work and to inspire your future work.

I have been asked if this joint meeting of the NCSA and MSS is a "trial run" for a merger of the two organizations. The answer is no. There are no discussions underway to merge the NCSA and the MSS. However, if our meeting is as successful as we think it will be, we may very well want to consider occasional joint meetings with the MSS in the future. We just think meeting with our good friends to the west can make for an exciting annual meeting! Just as the NCSA seeks to emphasize both teaching and research, so does the MSS. Just as the NCSA seeks to be an organization that is welcoming of faculty from all types of institutions of higher education, so does the MSS. Just as the NCSA seeks to welcome high school teachers, graduate students, and undergraduate students, so does the MSS. We have a whole lot in common and that will add to the energy and excitement of our annual meetings!

Take a moment and sign up to organize a session at the 2007 joint annual meeting of the North Central Sociological Association and the Midwest Sociological Society! It promises to be a great meeting in a great city with great people!

GRADUATE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Katherine (Katie) Claussen is the Student Committee Chair for 2006-07. Katie is currently completing her Master's degree in sociology at Loyola University in Chicago. Katie is examining Chicago nonprofit art organizations that use art to create social change. She also co-chairs the university's Graduate Association of Sociologists and serves as graduate student representative for the NCSA. Katie's research interests include urban sociology and gender.



During her time as a graduate student, Katie has served as a researcher assistant on a variety of projects, including a study that explored revenue-generating practices in community organization and a University of Chicago study examining how cultural scenes are connected to urban development. As a Fellow at the Center for Urban Research and Learning at Loyola, Katie participated in a community-based, qualitative program evaluation of a Chicago social service program, and she has served as a research assistant for the American Sociological Association's Task Force on Institutionalizing Public Sociologies and a participant in the Sustainable and Equitable Community Development Project.

"Thanks to the encouragement of several Loyola peers and my long-time mentor, I attended NCSA as a first year graduate student. I couldn't be more grateful for their advice. During the meeting, I met professors and students whose session presentations, casual conversations, and formal speeches all reflected a genuine passion for sociology. When I stood up for my first conference presentation, I felt support from the audience as well as the other presenters. What was most important about my first NCSA experience was that I left the conference feeling inspired to forge ahead and follow my dream of making sociology my life's work."

NCSA STUDENT COUNCIL UPDATE
BENEFITS OF JOINING THE NCSA FOR STUDENTS

The NCSA can play an integral role in your sociological development and it can be just as valuable to your career. By joining the Student Committee, you open yourself to a myriad of opportunities to meet other students (graduate and undergraduate), actively promote the value of teaching sociology, advocate for social change, and yes, build your Curriculum Vitae. As a member of the Student Committee, you have the opportunity to facilitate undergraduate round tables, make significant contributions to growing membership of NCSA and develop the leadership skills that are crucial to being a future faculty member. The opportunities are limitless.

NCSA can make a difference in your sociological endeavors, so I make the same recommendation that others offered me. Take part in NCSA and join the Student Committee. At the very least, make it a priority to attend next year's joint NCSA - Midwestern Sociological Society (MSS) annual meeting in April, a rare and exciting collaborative event. I encourage you to go a step further and join the Student Committee by checking out the student section of the NCSA website an email to the NCSA listserv, NCSA_Students@googlegroups.com.



Establish professional contacts

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

From Saint Mary's College, Amanda Shropshire is the new 2006-2007 Undergraduate Student Representative for the NCSA. She is a rising senior sociology major and English writing minor and intends pursuing a career in journalism after college. Next year Amanda will be working on her senior composition project focusing on inequalities in the higher educational system. During the past year, Amanda served as the President of the Student Diversity Board at Saint Mary's and she is currently the assistant editor of the NCSA newsletter. This summer Amanda will be engaged in an internship at WNDU, a local news station in South Bend and getting ahead in her classes in summer school.



The NCSA Student Committee is looking for enthusiastic sociologist graduate and undergraduate students who might be interested being appointed a committee representative

As a student representative, you contribute to designing sessions for students, help build membership, and overall influence how NCSA serves students like you! If you're interested, send an email to Katie Claussen, Student Committee Chair, at kclauss@luc.edu.

For more information on the type of work the committee does, check out our section of the NCSA website

<http://www.ncsanet.org/students/index.htm>

And join our listserv by going to http://groups.google.com/group/NCSA_students

http://groups.google.com/group/NCSA_students

Butler Jones Minority Scholarship Fund

Dear NCSA Member:

I am writing to encourage you to contribute to the **Butler Jones Minority Scholarship Fund**. Since you may not know about the scholarship fund or Butler Jones, let me begin by providing some background.

Butler Jones was a sociologist and activist well known for his work on civil rights and desegregation.

Growing up in Dothan, Alabama, Dr. Jones attended Southeast Alabama High School, a parent-supported private school (the local public schools did not provide education for African Americans beyond the sixth grade). Graduating from Morehouse College in 1937, he went on for a master's degree from Atlanta University, and earned his doctorate in sociology in 1955 from New York University.

During his graduate studies, Dr. Jones was selected by sociologist Gunnar Myrdal to join a team of young southern scholars to conduct a study of American race relations. This team provided essential research to Myrdal's book, "An American Dilemma," that would later win a Nobel Prize for the author after it was published in 1944. Upon completion of his Ph.D., Dr. Jones worked for the NAACP on many Southern school cases before the historic 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision outlawing segregated schools. He was one of 100 scholars asked to prepare memos for Thurgood Marshall, supporting the NAACP in the case.

An active member of the NCSA, and recipient of the Distinguished Service Award, Dr. Jones taught at Ohio Wesleyan University from 1952-1969 and headed the sociology department for eight of those thirteen years. He became chair of Cleveland State's sociology department in 1969 and retired as professor emeritus in 1982. He also served visiting professorships at NYU, Oberlin and other

colleges. In 1975, on leave from Cleveland State, he became the W.E.B. DuBois Visiting Professor of Sociology at Tuskegee Institute. His work during that time with the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery provided historic analyses on the behavior of state judges in the treatment of African Americans. Dr. Jones retired in 1982 as professor emeritus. He passed away on May 9, 2003.

We have worked diligently over the years to build the Butler Jones Minority Scholarship Fund, and we are close - just \$3,000 from our goal of \$10,000. Once we reach this level, NCSA can begin awarding scholarships to sociology students conducting research on race/ethnicity.

You can make this possible with your tax-deductible contribution; just include it with your membership renewal this year! Please join us in making the Butler Jones Minority Scholarship Fund active in support of our students and their research.

Please join us in keeping Butler Jones' legacy alive.

Sincerely,

Kathy Feltey

Past President, NCSA



Kathy Feltey and Robert Perry

NEW APPLIED AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM

Members of the NCSA are engaged in creative change throughout the region. One example comes from Eastern Michigan University where they recently launched a new program in Applied African American Studies. Taking the lead in this venture are sociologists Bob Newby and Jay Weinstein.



Jay Weinstein
NCSA Vice President

According to Jay, "the first entering class will begin studies in September 2007. The degree is intended for students who want to pursue an advanced degree in the field of African American Studies with a focus on its

applications in the community. The curriculum features courses in African American Studies as well as Sociology and other disciplines. Based on extensive research into other African American Studies graduate degrees, we believe that there is a unique yet urgent need for such a program. To the best of our knowledge this would be the first graduate degree in Applied African American studies in the nation.

The program will enable students to integrate, in a practice setting, the theory, knowledge, and skills of the field and of the several disciplines upon which the field draws. The students will develop a professional identity, demonstrate a capacity for leadership, and adhere to the appropriate ethical standards in their practice endeavors. The program will instill a comprehensive knowledge of the field and a specialized content area, as well as educate students in critical analysis and application. Classroom and fieldwork experiences will establish a learning environment that will attract teachers, social workers, and graduates who work for profit and non-profit organizations and businesses that serve the African American community."

**For information, contact
Dr. Robert Perry, EMU Dept of
African American Studies,
robert.perry@emich.edu**

TEACHING NOTE

“Abandoning Objectivity: Instructor Advocacy and the Development of Critical Thought”

by Todd Callais
The Ohio State University

Good sociologists have a perspective, not a bias, yet many teach as if to avoid the latter. Buraway's recent advocacy of Public Sociologies comes at the same time that books describing professors as dangerous ideologues make the New York Times bestseller list and television journalist Sean Hannity



advocates students recording professors saying politically charged things in class so that they can be publicly demonized. It is easy to understand where the desire to be passive and “objective” in teaching comes from.

A content analysis of popular teaching literature reveals three ways we are taught to teach social justice and inequality. We are taught 18% of the time to be *optimistic filters* that have faith in the system and spoon-feed controversial issues to resistant students. We are taught 76% of the time to be *passive regurgitators* that objectively report theory and research with limited analysis. This parallels the transition from investigative journalism to the passive “we report, you decide” model that exists today. Ironically, despite this objective style of news, the general population still believes in a liberal media bias and I suspect the student population has similar feelings about the first two styles of teaching. We are taught 6% of the time to be *pessimistic challengers* that question forms of government and social norms; I believe this should be more common. Generally, business and political science literature advocate being honest and consistent as keys to gaining trust with resistant audiences; this strategy should be considered when teaching sociology.

Embracing and discussing your sociological perspective is an effective strategy for improving critical thinking and instructor/student relationships. Recently, I have begun each course discussing three important issues. First, students are expected to understand the difference between bias and perspective. Second, my beliefs on social structure and justice (e.g. I dis-

close my belief that laws reflect interests of the powerful). Third, I promise to be intellectually honest, but refuse to be an optimistic filter for the sake of student comfort. The following ground rules exist for discussion. First, students can disagree but they must explain why. Second, students don't have to agree, but they must attempt to understand. Third, what I teach is not law, but it's also not opinion. Fourth, social and political advocacy in class are not taboo if drawn from theory and research.

This style of teaching allows students to think critically in a stimulating environment; student feedback confirms this assumption. In the six courses that this strategy has been incorporated, 234/241 students spoke indicating a general comfort with the tone of the course. Qualitative feedback indicates that these classes were better than most in regards to class discussion and the development of critical thinking skills. A representative theme in my recent evaluations is that students were encouraged to question and strengthen their own beliefs. End of quarter evaluations indicate the greatest improvement in my courses have been in the categories “intellectually stimulating” and “encouraged independent thinking.” While this strategy is not universal, it is important to note that professors and instructors don't need to shy away from the role of pessimistic challenger; it can improve your students' learning.

ASA TASK FORCE ON SOCIOLOGY AND GENERAL EDUCATION

By Carla B. Howery
ASA Deputy Executive Officer

A year ago, the ASA Council approved the formation of a Task Force on Sociology and General Education. I developed the proposal for such a Task Force, for Council's consideration, because of the number of troubling calls I'd received from members. Their campuses were undergoing a general education review. Usually the sociologists were calling *after* a report had been issued, and one which had unfavorable consequences for sociology enrollments or involvement in general education requirements. It seemed important for ASA to get a scope of the general education landscape and to help departments with both the process and the content of enhancing sociology's contributions to general education.

For any new task force, ASA puts out a call to the membership to see who might volunteer to

serve. Those volunteers and other nominees are reviewed and vetted by a subcommittee of Council and the Task Force is constituted and launched.

As its charge, this Task Force would develop models and rationales for how sociology courses can (do and should) contribute to general education requirements and liberal arts skills. Within higher education, there is a renewed push to identify “competencies” that may be developed in different courses. It is important to assist sociology departments articulate how sociology is vital to developing key skills in a liberal arts curriculum, thereby strengthening the position of these departments themselves. An ASA Task Force would provide guidance and materials that would help our colleagues think through this opportunity and make the best case for sociology's contributions, making this “case” a solid one, by giving examples course syllabi and content that engender these competencies.

This Task Force would focus on six frequent challenges in general education where sociology does, can, or should play a role:

- Multicultural education/diversity
- Quantitative literacy
- Writing intensive experiences
- Freshman survey courses
- Interdisciplinary freshman seminars
- International/global issues.

The Task Force would identify promising practices where sociology courses have creatively met general education requirements. In the spring 2006, Task Force members led workshops on sociology and general education at three regional meetings, including NCSA, as well as at a meeting of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) on general education. At the 2006 ASA Annual Meeting, the Task Force will hold an Open Forum to solicit members' views on our work thus far. An executive summary of our report will be on the ASA website later in the summer as a springboard for that discussion. <http://www.asanet.org/index.wv>

The report takes various skills and competencies and suggests how sociology can, does, and should contribute to their development in students who are mostly non-majors and mostly taking lower division courses. The Task Force has combed the teaching sociology literature and higher education more generally to find support, if available, for these arguments. The Task Force will also post examples of various campuses general education programs and sociology's contributions.

Please join us at the Open Forum in Montreal in August to share your ideas and concerns.

CONSIDER JOINING A NCSA COMMITTEE

The committees listed below are looking for new members. Contact the Chair for more information

Teaching

Debra Swanson
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Student Paper Awards

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Race, Ethnic, and Gender Equality

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Applied and Clinical

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Sociological Focus

Manuscript submissions welcome. Send to:

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CALL FOR ORGANIZERS

2007 JOINT MEETING
OF THE
NORTH CENTRAL
SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

AND
MIDWEST
SOCIOLOGICAL SOCIETY

THEME: "Social Policy, Social Ideology and Social Change"

April 4-7, 2007

Chicago Downtown Marriot Hotel

Research Paper Sessions: Lissa Yogan, Valparaiso University,

lissa.yogan@valpo.edu

Teaching Sessions: Debra Swanson, Hope College,

swansond@hope.edu

Panels: Dale Parent, Southeastern Louisiana University,

dparent@selu.edu

Workshops: A Troy Adams, Eastern Michigan University,

aadams@emich.edu

Roundtables: Jeli Li, Ohio University,

li@ohio.edu

Teaching Poster Sessions, Kathleen Piker-King, Mount Union College,

kingkd@muc.edu

If you are interested in organizing a session, send your proposal to the appropriate person listed above. Include the name of the panel, your name, institutional affiliation, mailing address, email, and telephone number.

Proposal must be received by
August 15th, 2006.

PROGRAM CHAIR

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COMMENTS?

Got an idea for newsletter items?



Contact the NCSA newsletter Editor Susan Alexander or Assistant Editor Amanda Shropshire

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MORE FACES FROM THE NCSA ANNUAL MEETING

