Department of Sociology

Dr. Anthony S. Alvarez, Associate Professor, Department Undergraduate Advisor
Areas of research & teaching specialization: Economic Sociology, Poverty and Inequality, Historical Comparative Sociology, Public Policy, Race/Ethnicity, Technology Studies
My general research interests lie in economic sociology, particularly in using the lens of economic sociology to understand patterns of inequality. I have recently focused on how households use payday loans – short term, high cost loans – and how these loans fit into their broader pattern of financial behaviors and beliefs. Central to this are the ways in which households manage their financial networks – friends and family they rely upon for material forms of support. I also have an interest in the development of economic and social policy, in particular the history of the income tax and the development of monetary policy across US history. More recently I have been interested in contemporary social policy, including housing, the affordable care act (aka Obamacare), and the ways in which polarization and partisanship have changed American policy making. Currently, I am teaching Social Statistics, Research Methods, Social Inequality, and Economic Sociology. I am currently revamping the course on the Sociology of the Welfare State.
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Dr. Mariam Ashtiani, Assistant Professor
Areas of research & teaching specialization: Crime, Law, and Deviance; Race and Ethnicity; Inequality and Stratification; Education; Immigration
Mariam Ashtiani is an assistant professor of sociology at California State University, Fullerton. Her dissertation from University of California, Irvine, examined how the impact of drug arrests on life outcomes varies for youth from different racial backgrounds. Her current project compares the impact of juvenile drug arrests to violent crime and property crime arrests, to assess how drug arrests are unique in their nature and consequences. She has presented her work at a variety of conferences, including the American Sociological Association, Sociology of Education, and Nanzan University in Nagoya, Japan. She has also worked on research projects for UC/ACCORD, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and most recently, MDRC. From the UC Irvine School of Social Science, she has received awards for both her second year paper and her research under Professor Cynthia Feliciano. Before coming to UC Irvine, Mariam spent one year doing volunteer work in Israel.
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Dr. Christina Chin, Assistant Professor, Department Graduate Advisor
Areas of research & teaching specialization: Immigration, racial and ethnic identity, youth, popular culture, media representation, sports, Asian American communities, and qualitative methodologies.
Christina Chin received her doctorate from the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles. Prior to coming to Cal State Fullerton, she was a post-doctoral fellow for the Asian American Studies Department at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Her research examines racial and ethnic identities, immigration, inequalities, and popular culture, particularly within the Asian American community. She has published articles about the construction of racial identities, gender roles, and ethnic community building within Japanese American youth basketball leagues. She has also collaborated on a content analysis study that examines Asian American and Pacific Islander representation in television. Dr. Chin is also a co-editor of the anthology Asian American Sporting Cultures (NYU Press).
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Dr. Dana Collins, Professor
Areas of research & teaching specialization: Food Studies; Gender/Sexualities/Queer Studies; Postcolonial Studies, Critical Globalizations & Development; Theory; Transnational Feminisms; Urban Communities; Qualitative Research Epistemologies
Dana Collins is a professor of sociology at California State University, Fullerton. She conducted critical ethnographic research in Manila, the Philippines, following gay-led gentrification and the production of gay urban space. She has a book on this research, titled The rise and fall of an urban sexual community: Malate (dis)Placed
(2016) from Palgrave Macmillon. Her future research interests lie in exploring global crises and food production, following how food justice activists confront the climate crisis, GMO foods, and socially created food scarcity in the global South. Her work appears in two of Gender & Society's special issues—“Gender-Sexuality-State-Nation: Transnational Feminist Analysis” (2005) and “The Reaches of Heteronormativity” (2009)—as well as in Sexualities (2012), Feminist Studies (2012), Feminist Formations (2012), Tourist Studies (2007) and Signs (1999). She has also co-edited a book titled New Directions in Feminism and Human Rights (2011). She believes that educational environments can incite profound changes in thought and practice as well as challenge the separation between academy and community. Thus in her teaching, she strives to create a collaborative learning classroom that encourages students to connect their diverse identities, experiences, and knowledge with a realization of themselves as civically engaged agents within a rapidly changing global social world.

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Dr. Taylor Cruz, Assistant Professor
Areas of research & teaching specialization: Health politics and policy; Political sociology; Medical sociology; Science, technology, and society (STS); Social theory; Gender, race, sexuality; Qualitative methods

Taylor M. Cruz is Assistant Professor of Sociology at California State University, Fullerton. Her current research examines the changing social landscape of health care with the rise of new political technologies of quantified accountability. She draws from multiple sources of qualitative data to show how the uptake of information technology and data analytics within health care has shifted longstanding issues of medical social power to new domains of technical measurement. She has also studied the politics of quantifying social difference within population-based data systems such as Electronic Health Records (EHRs) and the Census, and the consequences of stigma on access to care for underserved populations. She received her PhD in Sociology from University of California, San Francisco, where she received the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, the Forsythe Dissertation Award for Social Studies of Science, Technology, and Health, and a paper award from the Society for the Study of Social Problems’ Health, Health Policy, and Health Services Division. Prior to joining CSUF, she taught social theory and policy at California State University, East Bay and San Jose State University.

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Dr. Jorge Fontdevila, Professor
Areas of research & teaching specialization: Health and Illness, Sexualities, HIV/AIDS, Latino populations, Migration, Microsociology, Emotions, Sociolinguistics, Sociological theory

Dr. Jorge Fontdevila is Associate Professor of Sociology at California State University, Fullerton. He received a Ph.D. in Sociology from Columbia University. His doctoral research explored HIV risk taking in the context of masculinity constructions and drug-using networks among heroin-involved heterosexual men in Harlem. He has worked with the Social Intervention Group at Columbia University conducting socio-behavioral research among several New York populations disproportionately affected by HIV, including injection drug users in street settings and methadone clinics. From 2003 to 2006 he was affiliated with the UCSF Center for AIDS Prevention Studies as research ethnographer of the Trayectos Study. In this study he conducted ethnographic research on contexts of HIV risk among Mexican gay and bisexual immigrant men in the San Diego border regions. His recent research explores contexts of HIV risk among Latino men who have sex with men and women in Orange County, CA. Dr. Fontdevila also publishes social theoretical research on the relationship between language and social networks. Dr. Fontdevila’s teaching goals are to actively stimulate critical thinking and analytical skills among his students so that they can apply their sociological imagination, sociological concepts and theories, to their daily lives. He teaches Social Interaction, Sociology of Sexualities, and graduate seminars Sociology of Medicine, Sociology of HIV/AIDS, Sociology of Emotions, and Advanced Theories of Social Behavior.

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Dr. Christopher W. Gibson, Assistant Professor
Areas of research & teaching specialization: Economic Sociology, Environmental Sociology, Public Policy, Inequality, Urban Sociology
Chris Gibson received his doctorate from the Department of Sociology at UC Irvine and he also holds an MA in Global Studies from UC Santa Barbara. His research focuses on the intersection of economic markets and social policy, with special attention to environmental governance. In short, he is interested in asking questions like, in what ways can we best prepare our governance institutions to equitably address the challenges climate change? His current research project examines water management in California to understand the role of financial markets in shaping policy decisions. Chris has published in the International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society and The Oxford Handbook of Consumption and he has forthcoming research in the Review of European Studies and the Routledge Handbook on the Green New Deal. At UC Irvine, Chris was a Pedagogical Fellow, and, in his teaching, he embraces collaborative learning environments in which students are empowered as co-creators of collective knowledge and understanding of important social issues.
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Dr. Sharon Kim, Professor
Areas of research & teaching specialization: Race and Ethnicity, Immigration, Religion, Asian Americans, Social Inequality
Dr. Sharon Kim’s research, which focuses on the intersections of race, religion, and immigration among Korean Americans, has been published in numerous articles and books. Most recently, she has authored a book entitled A Faith of Our Own: Second Generation Spirituality within Korean American Churches that was published by Rutgers University Press. In A Faith of Our Own, she investigates the development and growth of hybrid third spaces of worship among second generation Korean Americans. Prior to her appointment at Cal State Fullerton, she was awarded a post-doctoral fellowship from the Irvine Foundation and taught for three years at Occidental College. She was a recipient of two grants from the Louisville Institute: The Dissertation Fellowship and The First Book Grant for Minority Scholars.
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Dr. Patricia Literte, Associate Professor
Areas of research & teaching specialization: Race and Ethnicity, Social Inequalities, Higher Education, Urban Sociology
Patricia Literte received her Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Southern California. Her current research interests include race and ethnicity, higher education, racial politics, and urban sociology. More specifically, Dr. Literte has conducted research on Black-Latino/a relations in higher education, Black-Latino/a relations in low-income housing developments, Black immigrants in Southern California, student affairs’ interaction with Hapa students and multiracial students, and historically Black sorority members’ attitudes about gays and lesbians. She teaches social inequality, race and ethnic relations, sociology of families, sociology of city life, and gender, sex, and society. In addition to her teaching and research, Dr. Literte serves as the Academic Coordinator for the Sociology Online Degree Completion Program and the Academic Coordinator for the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Scholars.
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Dr. Edwin Lopez, Assistant Professor
Areas of research & teaching specialization: Immigration, Latina/o Studies, Race and Ethnicity, Social Inequality, Social Control, Globalization, Gender, Culture, Social Movements
My research focus is on the political mobilization and organizing strategies of Latina/o immigrants. My doctoral research investigated the variety of ways people organized for justice in post-Katrina New Orleans. From Latina/o immigrant workers to African American residents to white college-aged volunteers, my qualitative study examined how racialized groups used culture to redistribute resources along racial lines. My current research is on the Central American children who migrated to the Mexico-U.S. border in summer 2014. With a focus on the racial images produced by the media, I am concerned with how such representations may shape public opinion on immigration and the popular call for stricter border security. More broadly, my research interest is on the institutions of mass detention/deportation and mass
incarceration, their impact on Latina/o immigrant and African American communities, and how the technologies of social control that sustain them may engender multiracial alliances for social justice.

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Dr. Maria Malagon, Assistant Professor, Department Undergraduate Advisor
Areas of research & teaching specialization: Education, Latina/o populations, Critical race theories, Chicana Feminisms, Qualitative Research Methods, Non-dominant Youth and Resistance, Migration

Maria C. Malagon received her Ph.D in 2011 in Social Sciences and Comparative Education, specializing in Race and Ethnic Studies at UCLA and completed a postdoctoral position with UC/ACCORD’s Pathways to Postsecondary Success project in 2013. Her research interests examine various segments along the Latina/o educational pipeline, specifically by using feminist analysis to interrogate how discourses of racialized femininities and masculinities manifest in educational policy and practice. She has a professional background in gender education programs, high school outreach, and juvenile “delinquency” prevention and intervention programs. Her published work can be found in several education, social justice and legal studies journals. She is currently working on a book that explores the experiences of Mexican American girls in a California reformatory school during the 1940s.

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Dr. Michael Perez, Professor
Areas of research & teaching specialization: Critical race studies, race, ethnic and indigenous relations, Native Pacific studies, sociology of sports, education and critical pedagogy, deviance and delinquency.

Michael P. Perez is a native diasporic Chamorro/Chamoru ancestrally rooted in Guam, and born in Long Beach, CA. He is Professor of Sociology and the Faculty Athletics Representative at Cal State Fullerton. He was previously an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Guam. He received his Ph.D. in sociology at the University of California at Riverside, after conducting fieldwork and completing his dissertation on indigenous identity in Guam. His teaching and scholarly interests include critical race studies, race, ethnic and indigenous relations, Native Pacific studies, sociology of sports, social justice, education and critical pedagogy, deviance and delinquency. Perez’s published work has appeared in Amerasia Journal, Critical Criminology, Deviant Behavior, Ethnic Studies Review, Faculty of Color Teaching at Predominantly White Institutions (Anker Publishing), Global Processes, Local Impacts: The Effects of Globalization in the Asia Pacific Region (University Press of America), Pacific Studies, Social Identities: Journal of the Study of Race, Nation and Culture, Social Science Quarterly, Sociological Spectrum, and Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestation and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-Determination (University of Nebraska Press).

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Dr. Carter Rakovski, Professor
Areas of research & teaching specialization: Sociology of Work and Occupations, Intersectionality and Healthcare Workers, Employment and Health, Drug Policy

As a teacher, I help students learn about statistics and its application to sociological problems. I enjoy mentoring undergraduate and graduate students in the research process. My research focuses on work, especially low-wage care workers and their occupational risks and satisfaction by intersectional identity characteristics. Another current project is a content analyses of gender, race and work in popular films. Prior to joining CSUF, I was a statistical consultant at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Bentley University. My previous research has examined the effect of organizational characteristics of nursing homes on patient outcomes and on the conditions of healthcare workers. I have published in a range of journals including Gender & Society, Sociology of Health and Illness, Work, Employment and Society, and the Journal of Accounting Research. I am faculty advisor of CSUF Students for Sensible Drug Policy and Students for Social Justice.

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Dr. LaTosha L. Traylor, Assistant Professor
Areas of research and teaching specialization: Prisoner Reentry and Reintegration, Female Incarceration, Mass Incarceration at the Intersection of Race, Class, and Gender Oppressions, Qualitative Research Methods
LaTosha Traylor holds PhD and MA degrees in Criminology, Law, and Justice from the University of Illinois at Chicago and a BA in Women's Studies from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Dr. Traylor is an interdisciplinary researcher, teacher, and mentor trained in qualitative research methods. Traylor's research interests are comprised of three substantive areas: motherhood at the intersection of criminalization, reentry decision-making strategies for women during the reentry process, and the implications of criminalization and subsequent incarceration on vulnerable families and communities. Dr. Traylor has published papers on these topics in Sociology Compass (2015), Souls: A Critical Journal on Black Politics, Culture, and Society (2012), and the Oxford Handbook on Sentencing and Corrections (2012). Her doctoral research examined the implications of racialized imagery of motherhood on post-incarceration experiences of a group of formerly incarcerated Black women. Traylor's research highlighted the complex formal and informal systems of surveillance, benchmarks, and oversight these women navigate, which are a byproduct of their reality as Black women and mothers with a history of incarceration. Traylor’s current research project examines decision-making strategies used by formerly incarcerated mothers during reentry. Her future research agenda includes examining the implications of micro-level processes associated with familial incarceration and the social organization of disadvantaged community at the structural level. This involves not only investigating how families cope with the incarceration of the loved ones, but also how social institutions subsequently respond to the disproportionate impacts of incarceration on vulnerable families and communities of color. Dr. Traylor
is a committed educator and mentor to her students and perceives her role in the classroom as a facilitator of their learning and development into critical consumers of social research and practices. Her courses include Sociology of Corrections and Social Research Methods. She structures her courses and curriculum in ways that incorporate innovative teaching methods and material that encourages high levels of student engagement and positive learning outcomes. Dr. Traylor’s teaching and mentoring techniques are influenced by her commitment to using education as a tool for social justice.

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Dr. Eileen Walsh, Professor, Department Chair
Areas of research & teaching specialization: Research Methods, Inequality; Race, Theory, Race class, Gender; Multiracial families; Education inequalities
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Department of African American Studies

Professor Siobhan Brooks, Associate Professor
Siobhan Brooks received her Ph.D. in Sociology from New School University. Brooks’ work explores the intersections sexuality, race, gender, class, and mental health among LGBT urban identified Black women. She is the author of Unequal Desires: Race and Erotic Capital in the Stripping Industry (SUNY Press, 2010). Brooks’ current research examines the ways inner-city Black LGBT identified women negotiate identity and homophobia within their home communities in Los Angeles. Her research and teaching areas are race, gender, sexuality, mental health, comparative ethnic studies, and qualitative research methods.

Department of Women and Gender Studies

Professor Rebecca Dolhinow, Professor
Dr. Dolhinow's research interests include, activism and activist geographies; Immigrant community organizing; Youth social justice activism, networks, education; NGOs and their role in governmentality; Globalization and global justice movements.

Her teaching interests include: Gender and Globalization; Activism; Research Methods; Gender and Popular Culture; Social Theory; Feminists Theorists; Gender and Geography.

Professor Karyl Ketchum, Associate Professor
Dr. Karyl E. Ketchum received her Ph.D. in Cultural Studies from the University of California, Davis in 2005. Her research emphasis is on critical and theoretical analysis of technology, visual culture and new media forms as these intersect with gender, sexual orientation, race, class and nation. She is also involved in a number of projects centered on K-12 education reform through principles of social justice, critical theory and transformative pedagogies.

Dr. Ketchum has published and contributed to articles in the U.S., Germany, the U.K., and Italy. She is currently working on a book, “Technologies of Embodiment and Desire." This text considers the shifting meanings of the body, and the experience of embodiment itself, as these are inflected by new forms of technology. The project emphasizes the challenges new forms of technology pose for cultural institutions that have historically relied upon the normative body as a mechanism of surveillance and control. It also considers the way in which technologies of vision in particular, theorize us, through the patterns of information they highlight within massive and previously unwieldy data sets.

In the classroom, Dr. Ketchum emphasizes the importance of thinking critically and typically makes use of a number of different technologies toward this end. She encourages her students to strategically intervene in the workings of representation, technology and the Internet: taking issue with censorship; pushing technology’s DIY potential; critiquing and exploring new media’s visual language; and affirming the Internet as a democratic space of intellectual and creative freedom.