

# Sociology and Anthropology

“My experience in the department has been life changing. The ability to understand diverse perspectives and experiences is one of the biggest takeaways. It will help me in my future and also make it easier to communicate with people in my day-to-day life.”

*Morgan Brim '18*

The department of sociology and anthropology combines two distinct, yet related, disciplines. Students can major (or minor) in either sociology or anthropology or combine the two disciplines for a sociology and anthropology major. In addition, faculty can offer students interested in law, criminal justice, global studies, health fields, human-social services, public policy, or urban studies, a recommended course of study that will provide a strong pre-professional foundation.

Sociology and anthropology courses also contribute to the following interdisciplinary programs: gender, sexuality, and women's studies; ethnic studies; environmental studies; international relations; and civic engagement.

**ANTHROPOLOGY:** Careful attention to the everyday lived experience of people around the world offers opportunities to examine what it means to be human, and to think critically about the complex influences of history, tradition, social norms, religions, families, global and local systems of power, innovation, and individual agency. Thinking anthropologically allows us to explore the rich diversity in human life and encourages respect for individuals and for other cultures.

**SOCIOLOGY:** Sociology encourages us to look at society with a fresh perspective, to question our taken-for-granted assumptions, to investigate people's actions, and to explore the organization of society. Our courses provide a basis for thinking about social alternatives, imagining possibilities for social justice, and being engaged citizens.

The mission of the sociology and anthropology department is to foster a

critical consciousness concerning how different cultures and societies organize, make sense of, and change their worlds. Students are engaged in a challenging, yet supportive, learning environment in which they develop an awareness of their social location, respect for diverse experiences and cultures, and commitment to social justice.

#### **BENEFITS OF ONE COURSE AT A TIME**

Cornell's One Course At A Time schedule facilitates strong learning communities and allows professors to approach material from multiple perspectives and in a variety of teaching and learning styles. Courses incorporate discussions, lectures, guest speakers, films, and other experiential learning activities. Students and faculty dive deeply into topics, engaging in sustained, nuanced dialogues, not bound by the limits of a traditional classroom. Such immersive conversations allow students the time and space to grapple with complex issues and difficult texts as well as propose solutions and imagine social change. Sociology and anthropology faculty also use the block plan for individualized meetings and structured workshops for collaborative student projects.

Direct studies of culture are critical to the practice of anthropology, and the block plan enables field-based studies on a regular basis. Students conduct daily archaeological fieldwork with State Archaeologist John Doershuk at a local site during Archaeological Field Methods. Professor Misha Quill's Anthropology of Tourism students travel to the Bahamas to explore the impact of tourism and development on local culture. In 2017 Quill took students in her Anthropology of Changing Ireland course to both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, where they experienced first-hand some of

## Faculty Bios & Courses

### **TORI BARNES-BRUS**

*Associate Professor of Sociology*

Teaches courses on inequality, deviance and social control, reproduction, media, and research methods. Her courses demonstrate a dedication to social justice, and many involve field trips or incorporate public sociology projects. She has sponsored numerous student research projects at the Iowa Sociological Association and the Midwest Sociological Society meetings. Her own research investigates the cultural construction and commercialization of womanhood and cultural debates surrounding women's reproductive control. Ph.D., sociology, University of Kansas.

### **ERIN DAVIS**

*Professor of Sociology & Associate Dean of the College*

Explores cultural diversity and social inequalities, focusing on gender, sexualities, bodies, and identities in her courses and her research. She also works closely with students on their research, sponsoring student presentations at the Iowa Sociological Association and Midwest Sociological Society meetings. Her research has examined transgender identification and the social regulation of gender, as well as women's experiences in male-dominated leisure activities. Ph.D., sociology, University of Virginia.

### **MARY B. OLSON**

*Professor of Sociology*

Teaches courses in sociology that address social inequality and social change, including American Indians: Culture, Activism, and Social Justice; Race and Ethnic Relations; The African American Civil Rights Movement Through Film; and Religion, Spirituality, and Community. Her research with native tribes focuses on fishing rights in the Pacific Northwest. Ph.D., sociology, University of Wisconsin at Madison.



the changes and continuities that connect the island nation to the European Union (and to the rest of the world), through emigration, immigration, refugee resettlement, ethno-religious conflict, and global economic crises. In 2019 students in Quill's Applied Anthropology will travel to Nepal, where they will learn about traditional Nepali and Tibetan cultures, meet with aid workers still trying to help rebuild after the 2015 earthquake, and trek to remote villages.

Understanding social change is critical to the practice of sociology. Students in Professor Barnes-Brus's course, Community Development, Public Policy, and Social Change, spend two to three weeks at the McLennan Center in Chicago, learning directly from community leaders and organizers working on issues of poverty, violence, public health, education, housing, and community engagement. The most recent trip included meetings with a documentary filmmaker about public housing in Chicago, a tour of the future site of the National Public Housing Museum, and phone-banking for a community organization devoted to diversity, social justice, and grassroots leadership.

Other courses extend the classroom learning experience with shorter field trips to sites such as a local community-supported farm, nearby emergency shelters and women's centers, and local grocery stores, hospitals, museums and even day-trips to Chicago. We also bring experts into the classroom. Guests have included Breanne Fahs, professor of women and gender studies at Arizona State University, who specializes in women's sexuality and political activism; Robin Marty, author and reproductive justice activist; Dolores Huerta, grassroots labor and civil rights activist; Liz Bennett, Iowa State Representative; Daniel Caropreso, U.S. Probation and Pretrial Services Officer for the Southern District of Iowa; and Francine Thompson, co-director of a feminist health-care clinic.

#### STUDENT RESEARCH

In a range of courses, including research methods, and through independent studies and one-on-one work with faculty members, students develop individual research projects and regularly present their research at Student Symposium, the Iowa Sociological Association Annual Meeting, and the Midwest Sociological Society Annual Meeting. Several students have applied for and received awards at both of these professional meetings. Additionally, an ongoing collaboration between Cornell faculty and a local nonprofit organization provides regular opportunities for students to do significant community-based research on homelessness.

#### SELECT RECENT INTERNSHIPS/FELLOWSHIPS

- Youth United for Action, East Palo Alto, California
- Office of the State Archaeologist, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa
- United Way of Dane County, Madison, Wisconsin
- The Field Museum, Chicago, Illinois
- Waypoint Services, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- Jeremiah Project, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Overseas Migration Museum, Kobe, Japan
- Catherine McAuley Center, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- Linn County Department of Public Health, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- Covenant House of Texas, Houston, Texas
- Willis Dady Homeless Services, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- Cook County Courts, Chicago, Illinois

#### AFTER CORNELL

##### ALUMNI CAREERS

Benefits counselor, Mercer Insurance Group, Des Moines, Iowa (Class of 2018)

Peace Corps volunteer, Costa Rica, Paraguay, & Uruguay, (Class of 2017)

Domestic violence advocate, Riverview Center, Iowa City, Iowa (Class of 2017)

Resident assistant, Willis Dady Homeless Services, Cedar Rapids, Iowa (Class of 2017)

Survey and rail crew, AmeriCorps, Utah Conservation Corps, Cedar City, Utah (Class of 2017)

Patrol officer, San Antonio Police Department, San Antonio, Texas (Class of 2017)

Youth specialist, Foundation 2, Cedar Rapids, Iowa (Class of 2017)

Project manager, Meta-Culture, Bengaluru, India (Class of 2015)

##### GRADUATE SCHOOLS

M.A., museum studies, University College Cork, Ireland (Class of 2018)

M.A., social work, University of Denver, Denver, Colorado (Class of 2018)

M.A., library and information science, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa (Class of 2017)

M.A., applied sociology, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee (Class of 2017)

M.A., social work, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland (Class of 2013)

M.A., anthropology, University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina (Class of 2013)

#### MISHA QUILL

*Assistant Professor of Anthropology*

Teaches courses in justice, gender, human rights, social organization, sustainability, medical anthropology, religious practice, and research methods. Her courses, which focus on the social world, often include trips in places such as India, Nepal, the Bahamas, Ireland, and Mexico. Quill's research in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Ireland focuses largely on the complex interactions that NGOs and nonprofits have with the people they seek to help. Ph.D., cultural anthropology, University of Iowa.

#### JILL DAVIS

*Visiting Assistant Professor in Sociology & Anthropology*

Specializes in culture, bodies, performance, and identity, with a research focus on drag kings and queens in the U.S. Her research examines how people create and contest ideas of community and belonging through ritual and performance. Davis teaches both sociology and anthropology courses on gender, sexuality, linguistics, identity, and families. Ph.D., anthropology, University of Iowa.

#### JOHN DOERSHUK

*Lecturer, Iowa State Archeologist*

Teaches archeology courses and has supervised numerous Cornell internships and student projects on seven different Iowa field sites since 2007. Ph.D., anthropology, Northwestern University.