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On Friday, November 15, students took a break from 9th-week stresses to invoke the assistance of sociologists and anthropologists from beyond the grave by making magical veladoras. Which of these theorists do you recognize? Which sociologists or anthropologists would you call on for help?
Welcome and Welcome Back!

On Thursday, September 26, SOAN students, faculty, and friends gathered in the SOAN Lounge to celebrate the start of a new year with conversation, tamales from El Triunfo, and ice cream sundaes.

Cover:
SOAN majors Anschel Burk ’14 and Truc Kieu ’14 with Professor of Anthropology Constanza Ocampo-Raeder, her husband Aureliano, and their son, Emiliano.

Amelia Piazza ’14 speaks with Professor Jay Levi as students chat in the background.

Morgan Matzke ’14 talks with Professors Annette Nierobisz and Nader Sohrabi.

Pachee Vang ’14 and Mo Vue ’14 smile for the camera.

Emily Lamberty ’14, Gaby Arteaga ’14, Rui Sun ’16, Amelia Piazza ’14, Milah Xiong ’14
An Interview with Nader Sohrabi

What made you decide to come work at Carleton?
I had just been teaching at the University of Chicago for a year and was going to be there for a few more, but I was contacted by someone from the SOAN department who asked whether I would be interested in this opportunity. I had visited Carleton many years ago, and I like the place. I like the fact that it’s a small college in a small town close to a big urban center. At this point in my life I have family, and I thought that this would be a nice environment. Academically, I have been exposed to students at many universities through my graduate work at Madison and by teaching at Columbia and Chicago. I find the students to be pretty much the same caliber. And, of course, I had heard about Carleton students all through my graduate life from professors and from their own graduates. It’s good to see the reputation in action.

How are you enjoying life in Northfield so far?
As I said if I was at a earlier period of my life and did not have a family, I probably would have felt more reluctant about moving, but at this point of my life I feel that this is ideal. It’s very nice. As I said, I have lived in a university town that was bigger than Northfield, but it was much farther away from a big city. I taught for a couple of years at the University of Iowa when I was just starting, before I moved to Columbia. Very good university, good colleagues, good students in general, but I was just beginning and it was really far away. Chicago was the closest large city. I don’t feel that way here. You don’t feel you’re missing out on the things you would want to have in your daily life.

What is your specific field of study?
My special interest is historical sociology, social theory, and theoretical approaches to history. I concentrate on the Middle East, but I do so with a comparative perspective, comparing it to other parts of the world and within itself. I’m a native of Iran and have compared Iran and the Ottoman Empire, but my work is mainly on the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. I’m moving in that direction with nationalism at the breakdown of the Ottoman Empire.

What classes are you teaching this year?
I am teaching my interests and my major focus. That was another thing that was very attractive about Carleton. My approach is very interdisciplinary. I love anthropology, and the fact that this is a SOAN department was very attractive to me. I have become something of a historian, as well, because I work with archives in Turkey and Iran, and I also use the British Archives. So the opportunity here was really to teach classes that draw from all of my interests, like my theory class and my nationalism class that I’m teaching right now. My historical sociology class, which I will teach next term, and my Middle East class, which I’ll teach in the spring, let me draw from everything I know, and I don’t think I know more than that. Next term, I’m also teaching a course on Intro to Sociology.
What made you decide to come work at Carleton?
Right after grad school I got a tenure track position at a Research 1 University, a big university, which is sort of what everybody wants to do because you want to expand your research. I was there for many, many years and I realized that it wasn’t the type of scholarly or educational atmosphere that I wanted to be in. I missed engaging with students and having institutional support to do so. I started thinking that these big universities are very hierarchical. You basically have to do what you’re told, and you’re supposed to be really creative with your work, but there’s not a lot of room for collaboration. I decided about two years ago that I was going to move. I didn’t care whether I got tenure in this new place. I was moving. I wanted to go to a small liberal arts school, but I wouldn’t go to just any school. It had to be one of the best. I know the rankings are tricky, but I really wanted to be at a top school because I attended Grinnell, and top liberal arts schools are teaching schools where professors have research agendas, as well. They’re institutions that offer both support your research and great students. So I looked around. When you look for a position in Anthro, there has to be an opening related to your area. Mine is Latin America. I always had Carleton in my head, but you never think that the place you really want to go to will have an opening. Carleton did, though, and it ended up going in my favor, so it was just great all around.

What is your specific field of study?
I consider myself an environmental anthropologist. I started out as a bio undergrad, but I started looking at how environmental issues play out on the ground, and I realized that it’s not a question you can solve through a biological perspective alone, because most of the problems are humans. I then got a Watson fellowship to start exploring these human-nature connections with more of a social lens, and I found an entire field called ecological anthropology that looks at all of these different angles. Getting interested in that, I moved toward the question of how we can go about making a difference in solving environmental problems. I think the answer is that we need to look at the humanitarian crisis, paying attention to the cultural characteristics and social dynamics of the people we work with as well as how those dynamics occur on the ground and connect to global processes.

What classes are you teaching this year?
Right now I’m teaching Anthropology of Good Intentions and Introduction to Anthropology. In the winter, I’ll teach an environmental anthropology seminar, which will delve deeply into major issues in that field. I will be on leave spring term because I’ll be having my baby, but in the future I want to teach my Anthropology of Food course, which brings together a lot of environmental, human, and gender issues. I’ll also teach the Ethnography of Latin America at some point, and I want to teach a course on women and the environment.

What have been your first impressions of the school?
I love it, love it, love it. I love the students. It’s been a real transition for me to teach students who are much more engaged, who do the readings, and who bring all of these outside experiences to class. That’s been fantastic. Northfield is beautiful, but I knew that. My college roommate was from Northfield, so I used to come here a lot. The department is lovely, and more than anything, I love all of the support that the college gives—not only to students, but also to faculty. It’s the kind of place where if you have an idea, they seem say, “Ah! Wonderful! Let’s figure out a way to do it.” I’m trying to measure my enthusiasm and not go too crazy. I feel like I suddenly walked into a candy store and someone said, “Take whatever!” I’m just having a wonderful time. I really love it here.
If you’ve been hanging out in the SOAN Lounge this term, you may be wondering where Pamela Feldman-Savelsberg, Professor of Anthropology, has gone. Well, wonder no more! Pamela has written to us from halfway around the world to reveal her whereabouts.

We just returned from a long weekend in Berlin. In addition to meeting with some of my favorite Cameroonian mothers with whom I’m still in touch from my 2010-11 fieldwork, I started a new fieldwork project among a growing population in Germany’s capital—the Ampelmaennchen.

In this population, gender has a strong symbolic value. In their original habitat on traffic poles, Ampelmaennchen emphasized the androgyny of the former East German worker. But since the population has found a new habitat in tourist shops and on T-shirts—in other words, since the incursions of a neo-liberal, globalized consumer culture—in indigenous cultures of androgyny have given way to gender-specific representations. Female Ampelmaennchen, or Ampelfrau, are portrayed with skirts, in red or pink, always stopping traffic as well as the flow of ideas and creativity. Male Ampelmaennchen, in contrast, are portrayed in Green, progressively striding toward new heights of a nuclear-free pedestrian and bicycle friendly culture. It appears that current developments among this population of Ampelmaenner throw us back to the era of Sherry Ortner’s original 1974 article, “Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture,” undoing progress in anthropological theorizing reflected in Ortner’s own 1996 auto-critique. Women are once again reduced to the mundane and repetitive, and binaries are assumed to reflect reality. And I must advise—there is evidence that Ampelmaennchen culture is spreading. Even here in Bonn the occasional Ampelmaennchen can be found lingering on traffic light poles.

Figure 1. Common behaviors among the Ampelmaennchen of Berlin.

Just kidding!

As a fellow at the Käte Hamburger Kolleg/Center for Advanced Study “Law as Culture” affiliated with the University of Bonn, I am writing a book, Mothers on the Move: Birth and Belonging from Africa to the European Union, based upon years of ethnographic and archival research in rural and urban Cameroon as well as in Europe. The book investigates how children and communities are reproduced through movement and rootedness, and through circuits of care and exchange that anchor individuals and families in a sea of global mobility. It describes ambitious African women seeking a good life in which to form families and raise their children into a world of multiple, simultaneous belonging. It examines three types of mobility (spatial, social, and temporal) across three locales (a village, an African metropolis, and a European capital), focusing on three levels of interaction (the family, community organizations, and the state). Four concepts frame my argument—reproductive insecurity, belonging, social networks, and legal consciousness. My previous work on infertility and other reproductive challenges has interwoven symbolism, political economy, and networks. This year, I hope to deepen my understanding of how law is experienced and understood by ordinary people as they try to build families across transnational space. The stories African migrants tell each other about belonging and exclusion, about encounters with neighbors, teachers, physicians, and public officials, sediment into collectively held ideas about getting along with the law while birthing babies and raising children in a new place.
Q&A with the SDAs (Student Departmental Advisers)

or, What’s so cool about SOAN?

Despite a busy term filled with comps and other senior year activities, our Student Departmental Advisers, Amelia Piazza and Gaby Arteaga, found some time to share stories of their SOAN experiences and offer advice to any other students with a passion for the field.

Why did you become a SOAN major?

Amelia
I declared SOAN because the major gives you so much freedom. You can study pretty much any topic in SOAN as long as it involves people. Our Comps shows that. Majors can research pretty much any topic, and there’s huge diversity every year. I also like all of the theory involved in SOAN. These disciplines combine really experiential learning like field research with big ideas about how people and society work.

Gaby
I declared SOAN because of the SOAN Mundo Maya off-campus studies program. I was set on Studio Art, but Anthro Professor Jay Levi said he knew I was going to be SOAN! Near the end of the trip we had home-stays for three weeks, and we conducted field research projects culminating in a paper. Doing field research on Mayan midwives and seeing it all come together from the existing literature on the subject was an amazing experience, and I knew I wanted to do my own project with Comps.

What are your top interests in SOAN?

Amelia
I’m broadly interested in rules and choice—concepts that are compelling not only from SOAN perspectives, but also from philosophical, psychological, political, and economic perspectives, to name a few. What I like about SOAN is that I’ve learned the methods and theory that let me study those compelling concepts in pretty much any context. I pursued my interest in rules, for example, through off-campus research I did on customary law, community justice, and state authority in a rural Mayan town. Right now, my comps research on adult conversion to Jehovah’s Witnesses addresses choice in a big way. SOAN just helps you see patterns in the way the world works. It’s really cool!

Gaby
I’m interested in marginalized populations. As I mentioned, I studied midwives on my off-campus study program because I thought it would be interesting to explore a very specific group of women; I was going to do my project on menstruation, but I was advised that it might be too difficult to have people talk about it! I was at a market in Chichicastenango, however, and while I ate my meal I asked the cook about menstruation, and she told me all about it, so who knows. Anyway, I’m currently working on a project on students with mood disorders at Carleton.

What advice would you give to students interested in SOAN?

Amelia
Take SOAN electives on a variety of subjects, and start trying to identify topics or parts of the world that are especially compelling to you. Visit with the faculty! They love to talk to students, and often they can help you articulate your confused thoughts and nameless interests—super helpful. And of course, contact us SDAs if you have any questions or feedback, or you just want help thinking about your SOAN future at Carleton.

Gaby
I started early with the major, and the first class I took changed the trajectory of my college experience. It doesn’t have to be that dramatic for everyone, but I would recommend taking a chance by exploring something that seems interesting, even if you know anything about it. I would also say visit office hours! The faculty in our department are wonderful and really helpful. The Mundo Maya trip is definitely something you should consider, if at all possible. It was a great experience.
Teaching an A&I is A Matter of Balance

The freshman Arguments and Inquiry seminar is a balancing act for instructors. It serves as an introduction to liberal arts writing, reading, and argument through the lens of a specific academic discipline. For the SOAN department, it is also an important opportunity to introduce freshmen to the value of sociological and anthropological inquiry. This fall, the SOAN department is offering “Sex in the Colonial Era” and “9 to 5 and then Bye-bye: Working Across our Lives” taught by Visiting Lecturer LaToya Beck and Associate Professor Annette Nierobisz respectively.

When she began to plan “Sex in the Colonial Era,” Visiting Lecturer LaToya Beck put herself in the place of an incoming freshman. She felt it was important for the A&I to be relevant and timely for freshmen students. Minnesota has recently legalized same-sex marriage in August, and Beck felt this fall was the perfect time to teach students about how sexuality has been used as an implement of power, focused on colonial era society. When designing the course, Beck wanted students to understand how anthropological and academic inquiry can inform discussions we engage in everyday.

In “Sex in the Colonial Era,” students are introduced to a variety of scholarship that is not exclusively “anthropological.” Beck introduces scholars such as philosopher Michel Foucault, archeologist Barbara Voss, and historian Saidiya Hartman to expose students to variety of social thinkers. Though this list might seem intimidating for a freshman, Beck believes that interdisciplinary thinking must be taught in an accessible way.

“In high school, I remember there being a disconnect between all of my classes,” said Beck. “The idea of constant change was hard for me…I would learn about the voice of the narrator in one English class and then the next year, my teacher taught us not to trust the narrator!”

Beck challenges her students to blur the boundaries between disciplines, pushing students to see their learning as continuous, rather than discrete. Beck understands the importance of giving students the tools to approach learning at Carleton. In the first three weeks of the A&I, students received sheets with key terms, focusing on academic terms like concept and theory. Students also received a sheet with research skills terms that help them navigate academic journals, citations, and sources. Students used these sheets as tools to guide them through challenging texts and writing assignments.

To Beck, it is crucial for students to learn close reading skills. As students read Foucault’s The History of Sexuality, she challenged them to summarize his argument and identify the key theoretical tools he uses. This “move by move” approach to reading difficult monographs coupled with special attention to building an academic vocabulary helps support freshmen in their first foray into academic life at Carleton. After the first few weeks, the course transitions to become more discussion based, giving students the opportunity to facilitate discussions on different days.

Associate Professor Annette Nierobisz was determined to create a timely, relevant A&I for incoming freshmen. She has always loved teaching courses on the sociology of work and occupation, but has often struggled to find adequate enrollment for similar classes. Following the release of the new strategic plan, Nierobisz saw an opportunity to create an A&I about work and occupation. In the class, students study the forces that shape the workplace like social and cultural capital, gender, and motivations behind work. Nierobisz designed “9-5 and Bye-Bye: Working Across Our Lives” to meet Carleton’s strategic focus on career-related education. She believes that fall term is an important time for freshmen to think critically about what career and success means to them.
“9-5 and Bye-Bye” is a SOAN A&I that is geared towards teaching students how to understand and craft arguments informed by quantitative data. Nierobisz wants her students to see how quantitative data and sociological insight can provoke thought about our preconceptions about careers. “When we examined Bureau of Labor Statistics, I think some members of the class were surprised that women statistically earn less,” said Nierobisz.

Nierobisz recognizes that reading quantitative social science is often difficult for new Carleton students, and carefully devised strategies to help students. In the first few weeks of the class, students focus on developing strong reading skills through deliberate, guided reading assignments. Nierobisz strives to teach students to be conscientious readers, scanning texts to find the author’s methods and argument.

Students are not just asked to be able to quickly analyze an argument – they are also taught how to deliver condensed, precise arguments of their own. Nierobisz has students create and present what she calls a “3-minute thesis.” Students have just two slides and three minutes to present a finding from their research on labor statistics.

Beck and Nierobisz are both aware of the barriers they face when introducing students to sociological and anthropological thinking. SOAN scholars are well aware of the preeminence of the scientific discourse. It seems to be a constant struggle to when it comes to showing students the merits of sociological and anthropological scholarship. For Beck, it is important to show students that the hard sciences played a quiet role in reinforcing notions of biological race that profoundly shaped our society. In Nierobisz’s course, she feels it is important for students to see the value of examining work through a sociological lens and see how an education in sociology can prepare them for future careers.

Through mindful teaching and engaging topics, it is clear that this year’s SOAN A&Is have taught students crucial liberal arts skills and shown them the value of the SOAN approach to understanding the world.

“When I asked the class about potential majors at the beginning of the term,” Nierobisz said, “I noticed that just a few were interested in SOAN.” “I think that number has increased since then.”
Where in the States are SOAN Alumni?

Our alumni are spread out across 20 different countries, colored red in the map above.

Where in the World are SOAN Alumni?

SOAN majors live in 49 of the 50 states. Although Minnesota is the most popular, California, Illinois, New York, Washington, and Wisconsin are also home to many alumni.
Alumni Spotlight
Judge Larnzell Martin, Jr., Class of 1972

This fall, Carleton introduced Pathways (apps.carleton.edu/pathways), a website for helping students find and explore the variety of careers that relate to their interests. Among other things, the website offers stories and advice from many alumni, including our very own Larnzell Martin, Jr., from the Class of 1972. Here’s what Judge Martin had to say about his own pathway.

What skills did you acquire as an undergraduate that you’ve carried into your professional life?
What courses particularly shaped your path?

I think that I still have the critical thinking and writing skills that I acquired at Carleton. I have a respect for other people and “cultures” that I acquired during my years at Carleton; though that might not qualify as a skill, it has been absolutely necessary in my professional life.

There was not a course that led me to attend law school; rather, that occurred as a result of a casual conversation I had in the Spring of 1971 with one of my professors, the late Paul Wellstone, at a moment when I was contemplating graduate school in social work. He encouraged me to consider attending law school. Interestingly enough, being a judge places one at the center of affecting lives in this country, and I have often commented to friends that "I'm doing social work." I have heard a lot of family law cases and now one-third of my administrative and docket duties involves youth abuse and neglect.

What student organizations, activities, or work-study were you involved in at Carleton? How did these activities inform your life after college?

I was a member of Students Organized for Unity and Liberation (SOUL), a benefit of birth. I also was a member of the Voices of Inspiration, formed while I was at Carleton. My work-study job was in the library, first as a book shelver and, later, as a worker at the reference desk.

During the summer of 1971, I was a tutor counselor with the A Better Chance Program. Other activities were not within an organized context.

It is difficult to specify how these activities informed my life after Carleton. 1968 through 1972 was part of a dynamic period in this country’s history. Carleton was a great place to experience all that was occurring. I suspect that a significant percentage of my classmates has found the sense of social responsibility to never be too distant from their thoughts. When I believe in something, I try to find a way to "contribute."

How your Carleton experience has helped you in your career?

My Carleton experience has aided me tremendously with critical thinking and appreciation of varying views. I try to examine issues and situations presented with an effort to understand how a person with whom I am interacting might take a view different from mine. At Carleton, I learned to value myself and my views without discounting others and their views. I think that this has aided me as a judge in the ongoing challenge of recognizing my own preferences, biases and prejudice and not allowing those elements to govern how I rule.

Judge Larnzell Martin, Jr., ’72, Chief Judge, Circuit Court of Prince George’s County, Prince George County, Maryland
Summer Research Fellowships

or, Your Next Big Adventure!

Want to go on an adventure next summer? Now is an excellent time to start planning! Below are descriptions of just a few of the many fellowships available specifically for Carls. For a complete list of fellowships with details on how to apply, visit this website: apps.carleton.edu/fellowships/carleton_fellowships.

Allen and Irene Salisbury Student Fellowship
Supports student research in academic, performance arts, and creative arts, especially in Nepal and Asia.

Global Team for Local Initiatives
GTLL is a non-governmental organization working with the Hamar tribe in southwest Ethiopia. Its main objective is to help this indigenous community adapt to social, economic, and climate change without disturbing their traditional cultural values. This program consists of six weeks on the ground, preceded and followed by independent study with Carleton Professor of Economics Faress Bhuiyan.

Jonathan Paradise Israel Experience Scholarship
Funds travel to Israel to learn more about the country’s culture, history, and politics in the name of global understanding.

Larson International Fellowship
Supports students from the U.S. or Canada with adventurous ideas involving traveling abroad that bring the student into contact with a culture or society.

M. Leith Shackel ’29 Internship Endowment Fund
Provides stipends for first year students, sophomores, and juniors pursuing unpaid or low-paying internships.

Richard T. Newman Family Fund for Language Study Internships
Supports internships in foreign countries that can lead to jobs opportunities in foreign languages.

Service Internships in International Development
Supports students performing volunteer services for established programs in international community development.

Social Justice Internships
Supports internships or training programs for non-profits or other groups promoting social justice.

Richard Salisbury Student Fellowship
Supports student research in academic, performance arts, and creative arts, especially in Latin America and Africa.

Recent Faculty Publications

or, How our Professors Spent Their Summer Vacations

Pamela Feldman-Savelsberg

Annette Nierobisz
In August, Annette spoke on Jeff Johnson’s morning show on Northfield’s KYMN radio. She was invited to discuss her new research project on older workers (age 50+) who have lost their jobs due to a downturn in the economy.
In September, she presented her new study, "America Idle: Job Loss Among Aging Americans," at Carleton’s Faculty Retreat.

Liz Raleigh