

SUMMER 2024

# (MINI) FORUM

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MID-SOUTH  
SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.



*Mid-South Sociological Association, Inc.*  
*Organizational Statement*

The Mid-South Sociological Association, Inc. (MSSA, Inc.), founded in 1975, is a 501-C-(3) non-profit organization providing both professional support to, and a forum for sociologists who teach, conduct research and reside in the Mid-South region of the US. Through its publications, annual conference, academic support and collegial networks, MSSA, Inc. promotes the advancement of sociological research, the diffusion of knowledge, innovative service and teaching. From its inception, MSSA, Inc. has been and continues to be committed to mentoring and enabling the growth of the next generation of sociologists in the value of high-quality research and engagement, and ethical, professional service.



*MSSA, Inc. Inclusion Statement*

The Mid-South Sociological Association Inc. embraces diversity and promotes inclusion by recruiting, including, and valuing people of all races, genders and gender identities, sexualities, ethnicities, religions, economic and employment statuses, abilities, and other dimensions. The MSSA celebrates all expressions of diversity and identity and strives to provide an environment conducive to free expression of ideas without fear of judgment in any way. Moreover, the MSSA does not tolerate any action from any member or conference participant that encourages or promotes hatred and/or intolerance in any form. Further, to the extent that the Board determines that it is not detrimental to the best interests (financial and otherwise) of the association, the MSSA will use the economic power of the annual conferences and other activities to select locations and enter into agreements with businesses that have policies and practices that reflect the values of the MSSA.



## Is the summer really almost over?!?

Written by: Andrew Tatch

Welcome in to a special (and brief) Summer edition of the Forum! I hope your summer has been as wonderful as mine has; I have been able to do some traveling, spend time with family and friends, relax—but also have been at least a little productive with working on a few manuscripts and other projects I pushed aside during the intense times of the academic year.

The reason for this Forum is more so just to check in, say hello, and remind you of our upcoming conference in Nashville. This will undoubtedly be a special one, as it is the 50th annual meeting of the Mid-South Sociological Association, and organization that means so much to so many of us and one that we are strategically working to ensure is able to persist for years to come. We have a lot of special things planned, and we really hope you will join us. As we often proudly proclaim at our meetings, I don't think you will find a friendlier or a more student friendly conference than ours.

I'm still new to this whole game. I have been an Assistant Professor all of 3 and a half years. But—when I do reflect on my academic journey, the connections I made and the experiences I got through Mid-South were extremely helpful for several reasons. First, I met so many wonderful people invested in me and who continue to support me in this challenging field.



Second, Mid-South was wonderful in allowing more experienced graduate students to serve on the executive board, and I gained very valuable experiences as the Chair of Nominations before transitioning to the Forum editor. In addition to helping me gain confidence in my own skills and abilities, serving on the board helped with getting my name out there a bit more, which was certainly helpful as I was applying for jobs.

With that said, I hope this Forum is able to reach as many graduate students in our region as possible. Mid-South can really benefit you in multiple ways. Your work and presentation don't need to be perfect, and you are welcome to come as you are. We have a supportive network in place to constructively criticize your work, encourage you, and offer opportunities to get more involved within sociology in our region. So please—submit those papers that you turned in at the end of the semester. We would love to see some new faces in Nashville. Maybe you can even hear Dave May sing on Broadway Street!

Outside of the invitation to this year's special conference, I am also including some innovative assignments that some of our members sent my way! I hope you might consider incorporating them in to your course plans or adapting them in ways that can help facilitate strong student learning outcomes.

## From the Desk of the President

TERESA DAVIDSON

Greetings MSSA and I hope you all are having a restful summer!

It has been my honor to serve as President this past year. I am humbled by the hard work, positive energy, and love that all of you have put into planning for the upcoming conference. I want to note with special recognition, Dr. Melencia Johnson, our current President-Elect who has been working tirelessly to pull together what will surely be a fantastic 50th anniversary conference. Dr. Johnson has themed the conference “Social Change & Resistance: Looking Back to Move Forward”. Centered on this powerful theme she has planned a variety of exciting plenaries and events, and I am very much looking forward to seeing everyone in Nashville this October.



As I stated, I am humbled by the hard work that so many people have put into making this conference, and the MSSA organization overall, strong and enduring. In the words of our past president, Dr. Meredith Dye, “we are small but mighty”. In that light, many more thanks are in order. Deep thanks to Dr. Jessica Pardee (Vice President), Dr. Giselle Greenidge (Vice President-Elect), and Dr. Erin Rider (Secretary Treasurer). Profound thanks to all of you chairing committees that make sure the important work of the MSSA gets done: Dr. Marcus Brooks (Technology), Dr. Tina Deshotels (Membership), Dr. Jessica McCarty (CREM), Dr. Jessica Burke (Nominations), Dr. Matthew Schneider (Profession), Dr. Matthew West (Small & Community Colleges), and Dr. Andrea Hunt (WGS). Many thanks to Dr. Kevin Breault for serving as editor of *Sociological Spectrum*. Finally, Dr. Andrew Tatch for serving as editor of this publication, *The Forum*.

Again, thanks for everything all of you do. I am forever grateful to this supportive and welcoming organization that has supported me, my students, and countless others over the years. The MSSA is a true example of what can be accomplished when a group of caring and dedicated people work together to make the world a better place.

In Peace, Love, & Social Justice,

Theresa Davidson

# 50TH MID-SOUTH SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION CALL FOR PAPERS

## Social Change and Resistance: Looking Back to Move Forward

### SAMPLE OF SESSIONS SEEKING PAPERS

- ✓ Criminal Legal System
- ✓ Health and Well-Being
- ✓ AI, Scholarship, and Teaching
- ✓ Beyond the Binary
- ✓ Media and Popular Culture
- ✓ Environmental Justice
- ✓ Sociological Theory Mini Conference

### IMPORTANT DATES

1. Paper submission deadline September 2, 2024
2. Acceptance notification September 6, 2024
3. Early bird registration and payment deadline September 12, 2024
4. Registration and payment deadline October 11, 2024
5. Conference date October 16-19, 2024

### REGISTER NOW

#### Regular (By 12th September 2024)

- ✓ Member Registration \$105
- ✓ Non-Member Registration \$130
- ✓ Graduate Student Registration \$60
- ✓ Undergraduate Student Registration \$50

#### Late (after 12 September 2024)

- ✓ Member Registration \$135
- ✓ Non-Member Registration \$160
- ✓ Graduate Student Registration \$90
- ✓ Undergraduate Student Registration \$80



#### Submission Info:

[www.midsouthsoc.org](http://www.midsouthsoc.org)

President

Theresa Davidson, PhD  
Samford University

President-Elect &  
Program Chair

Melencia Johnson, PhD  
University of South Carolina Aiken

### JOIN US IN CONTRIBUTING TO OUR \$50 FOR 50 CAMPAIGN

We're celebrating 50 years of the MSSA!

The MSSA was established in 1975 to honor the work of sociologists in the mid-south region and to create a more inclusive space for research and publication, especially for historically marginalized populations. All proceeds will benefit the sociological work of MSSA. Donors will be celebrated at our annual banquet and business meeting.

### HELP US BY BOOKING AT THE CONFERENCE HOTEL

Millennium Maxwell House Nashville  
2025 Rosa Parks Blvd, Nashville, TN, 37228, US  
\$139 per night

[BOOK NOW](#)



More Information

[www.midsouthsoc.org](http://www.midsouthsoc.org)

[mssaprogramchair@midsouthsoc.org](mailto:mssaprogramchair@midsouthsoc.org)

[@midsouth\\_soc](https://twitter.com/midsouth_soc)

# MSSA, INC. SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY MINI CONFERENCE



**For the first time, MSSA will host a theory mini-conference during the annual meeting. Sessions proposed in the call for papers (49-55) address the following themes: differences between sociological theory and critical theory; the link between history and social theory; the prevalence of crises and the prospect of apocalypse; critical theory and/of film or television; the relationship between critical theory and politics; Adorno as a sociologist; and planetary sociology. Prospective presenters also can contact the mini-conference organizer, Harry F. Dahms, at [hdahms@utk.edu](mailto:hdahms@utk.edu), with questions and additional suggestions. There will be in-person sessions on Thursday, October 17, and online sessions on Saturday, October, 19, 2024.**

# AWARD OPPORTUNITIES WITH MSSA, INC

WE LOVE TO RECOGNIZE THE STRONG WORK OF OUR MEMBERS. PLEASE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING AWARDS, DEADLINES, AND SUBMISSION CONTACTS

## Undergraduate Student Paper Competition

- **Deadline: September 2**
- **\$100 prize**
- **Papers should be submitted to Dr. Giselle Greenidge (ggreenidge@nwmissouri.edu)**



## Graduate Student Paper of Distinction Award

- **Deadline: September 2**
- **\$100 (1st), \$50 (2nd), \$25 (3rd) prizes**
- **Papers should be submitted to MSSA Vice President Dr. Jessica Pardee (jwpgss@rit.edu)**

## Dr. Thomas C. Calhoun Excellence in Mentoring Award

- **Deadline: September 1**
- **Questions and nomination information should be sent to the Committee Chair, Dr. Earl Wright II (wrighte@rhodes.edu)**

## Stanford M. Lyman Distinguished Book Award

- **Deadline: September 2**
- **Nomination information (detailed online) should be sent to the Committee Chair, Dr. James Gadberry (james.gadberry@athens.edu)**

## Stanford Lyman Memorial Scholarship

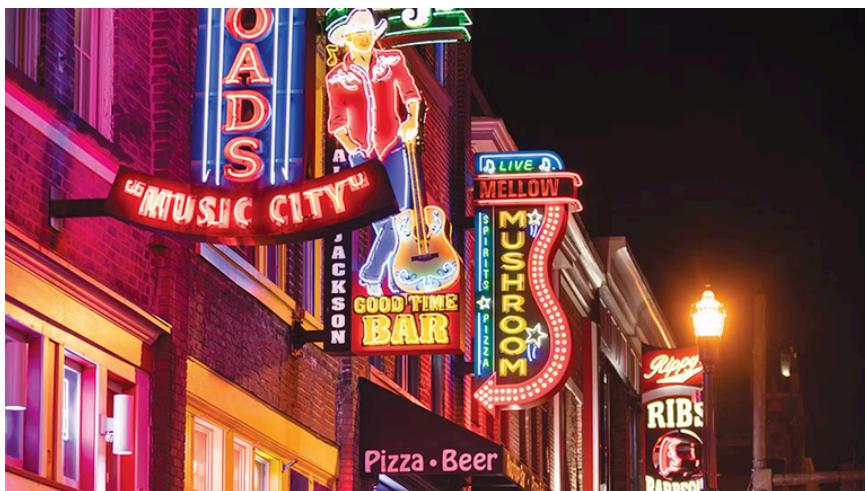
- **Deadline: September 15**
- **\$1,000 prize**
- **Send all application materials (detailed online) to Committee Chair, Dr. Raymond Barranco (RBarranco@soc.msstate.edu)**



# JOINING US IN MUSIC CITY? IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ALLLLL WORK!

Why not maximize your time in the vibrant Nashville community? Rumor has it there is a big music scene, thriving nightlife, and any number of food, arts, and shopping experiences!

Before you travel, consider exploring Nashville's online travel guide, which also includes a calendar that is sortable by date and types of activities! [Have a look around here!](#)





# WALKING TOUR OF GERMANTOWN

**Join us for a walking tour of  
Historic Germantown on  
Saturday, October 19th  
11:00am-12:30pm**

**Known as Nashville's first suburb, Germantown was  
established in the 1850s by German immigrants.**

**Join Valeria Eadler, graduate student of Public History at  
MTSU and Dr. Katherine Everhart, Assistant Professor of  
Sociology at UVA-Wise, on a 10-stop walking tour to learn  
about the history and preservation of this neighborhood.**

**We will meet at the Tennessee  
State Museum (1.3 miles from  
the conference hotel).  
Transportation is available via  
ride-sharing and WeGo Public  
Transit Bus 42.**

**RSVP**

**<https://forms.gle/RUmiGtrtNyEhcA6C7>**

**Questions?**

**Katherine Everhart  
sks9nm@uvawise.edu**

# MSSA's Conversations with Colleagues: A Unique Virtual Post-Conference Experience

We are proud to announce that we are hosting a day of remote sessions, Saturday, October 19th!

As an organization MSSA recognizes that there are many reasons that our members would prefer to have the option to present their work remotely at our annual conference. We are pleased that for the 5th year in a row we are able to offer this opportunity to our current (and hopefully future) members.

Submission Deadline: September 2

<https://www.midsouthsoc.org/>

## Virtual Post Conference Details

- Registration and membership fees apply even if you are only attending the post conference.
  - Sessions are fully remote, i.e. not hybrid.
  - You can both attend/present in person *and* at the post conference.
- Post Conference sessions are designed to facilitate deep engagement with colleagues in your field of study, with time allotted for presentation feedback and analysis.





**2024 Mid-South Sociological Association  
Committee on Women, Gender, & Sexualities  
Travel Scholarship  
Deadline: 9/25/2024**

**Program Description**

The Mid-South Sociological Association and the Committee on Women, Gender, & Sexualities is pleased to announce the availability of a travel scholarship for support in attending the 2024 annual meeting in Nashville, TN (October 16-19). The scholarship is awarded on a competitive basis and the recipient will be offered up to \$250.00 to defray expenses associated with travel to the MSSA meeting.

**Eligibility and Application Requirements**

To be eligible for the scholarship, the applicant must:

- Have a demonstrated need for funding (i.e., the applicant receives minimal or no university funding for travel to the conference).
- Be an active participant of the annual meeting by presenting research or participating in a panel on gender and/or sexuality.
- A member of the Mid-South Sociological Association at the time of the award.

Applications can be completed through the Google Form [here](https://forms.gle/QrRYp6L1mF7KuWnR6) (or copy and paste the following link into your browser <https://forms.gle/QrRYp6L1mF7KuWnR6>). Applications should be submitted completed by September 25, 2024. Email Andrea Hunt at [ahunt3@una.edu](mailto:ahunt3@una.edu) if you have any questions.

Thank you, and we look forward to seeing you in October.

Dr. Andrea Hunt, Chair  
Committee on Women, Gender & Sexualities  
Associate Professor of Sociology  
Executive Director, Mitchell-West Center for Social Inclusion and Center for Women's Studies  
University of North Alabama  
[ahunt3@una.edu](mailto:ahunt3@una.edu)  
256-765-5158



**2024 Mid-South Sociological Association  
Committee on Small and Community Colleges  
Travel Scholarship  
Deadline: September 25, 2024**

**Program Description**

To encourage participation in all aspects of the MSSA on the part of persons from small and community colleges, the Committee on Small and Community Colleges is pleased to announce the availability of travel scholarships to support participating in the 2024 annual meeting in Nashville, TN. These scholarships will be awarded on a competitive basis. Each scholarship recipient may be offered up to \$250.00 to defray expenses associated with participation in the MSSA meeting.

**Eligibility and Application Requirements**

To be eligible for the scholarship, the applicant must:

- Have a demonstrated need for funding, receiving minimal or no institutional funding for conference participation
- Be an active participant at the meeting by participating in a paper session or panel relevant to small and community colleges
- Be a member of the Mid-South Sociological Association at the time of the award
- Be registered for the Mid-South Sociological Association conference at the time of the award

Please email Dr. Matthew West at [mwest@lawsonstate.edu](mailto:mwest@lawsonstate.edu) your request and include the session you will be participating in, and how much (if any) financial support you reasonably anticipate receiving from your institution.

# INNOVATIVE TEACHING FROM MSSA, INC.

ROBYN BROWN: UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
PEMBROKE

## Using the Salem Witch Trials to teach about identity and social identity theory

After reading about the impact of identities and social identity theory, I detail to students that they are to form groups with two differing objectives, depending on their assigned identity: nonwitches should form the largest group possible without a witch and receive ten points of extra credit, and witches should infiltrate a group of two or more nonwitches with an additional reading quiz dropped. I inform students that the disproportionate rewards are due to the fact that there are less witches than nonwitches, being sure to never state a number. I have students come out of the classroom, one at a time and show them a flashcard that says one of the following, emphasis in the original: you are not a witch or you are not a witch.

What follows is twenty minutes of students negotiating, interrogating, and ousting their fellow classmates without ever bothering to ask each other their names before beginning. This is all in the idea of finding what does not exist, all due to an authority figure offering a reward to do so. At the end, before the reveal, I ask them to define minimal group paradigm and watch the realization occur, as one student reads the book's definition: "the tendency of people to form groups and actively distinguish themselves from others for the most trivial of reasons" (Wade, 2021, p. 65).

## Incorporating Reichel's (1975) Criminal Activities Checklist

In Reichel's work, he provides a varied list of criminal activities that questions participants' acts over a certain length of time. I took some of these statements, researched my state's penalties associated with them, and converted it to, oftentimes, a decimal. I take my students through the activity, having them think on previous behaviors and use their phones to calculate a number that they never guess what it stands for. After haggling as to whether their actions "count," students are shocked to find out that the resulting number, at the end of the activity, is the number of years they should be incarcerated for.

Considering these are often actions students see as normal but are in many states' criminal codes, students learn the difference between deviancy and criminality; likewise, it builds up a constructionist mindset towards deviancy, when we like to portray morality as unchanging. Lastly, they're left with the reminder that they also can choose to create or reaffirm our ideas of deviancy and criminality as they lived and are living through major and contradicting portrayals of the same acts: mask mandates during times of pandemic and the responses to movements, such as Black Lives Matter.

Reichel, P. (1975). Classroom uses of a criminal activities checklist. *Teaching Sociology*, 3(1), 81-86. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1316853>

Wade, L. (2021). *Terrible magnificent sociology*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

# INNOVATIVE TEACHING FROM MSSA, INC, CONTINUED...

MARCOUX FAIIA: PROFESSOR EMERITUS, RIVIER  
UNIVERSITY

## **The Pecha Kucha presentation format...**

I thought that I would offer a an technique that I utilized in 2019. I only used the assignment in Fall of 2019, however it was very well received by the students and it was a fun alternative to traditional in class presentations. The style is called, "Pecha Kucha" I gave students the choice of doing a traditional term paper or the Pech Kucha. It was a relatively small class, 24 students) and in a 200 level course. Most of the students in the class opted for the Pecha Kucha. I am attaching a short description of the style and format.

Pecha Kucha is, it is a presentation format that originated in Japan in the year 2003. In Japanese, Pecha Kucha translates to chit-chat or chatter. Each Pecha Kucha speaker presents with a deck of 20 slides (or images) each. Each of these slides progresses automatically to the next one, after being visible onscreen for 20 seconds. This is the reason why Pecha Kucha is often called 20x20. That's a total time of less than 7 minutes, and explains why most Pecha Kucha slides are more visual than text-laden. Text heavy slides would take much more time to explain than the allocated 20 seconds, and will also get the audience reading the text rather than giving their undivided attention to the Pecha Kucha presenter.

## Wrapping up this edition (and the summer)

One final thing I would like to end on: I had the privilege of sitting on a newly formed committee designed to reward a strong teacher within my university's College of Arts and Sciences. Ultimately, we asked for nominations and received a number of submission packets, complete with self-narratives, course evaluations, teaching materials, etc. Most interesting-- and by far the most powerful, were the letters of support submitted by students. If you ever need a pick-me-up or to be reminded that what you do is important, reach out to former students and ask them about your role in their development. Academic mentorship matters, but so does helping to empower students to grow into confident and contributing citizens who are willing to challenge their current comfort zones. A special shoutout and thank you to all my previous professors. I definitely would not be here without your mentorship and help.

Hail State,  
*Andrew*

