

Summer 2010

Justice Studies on the Move...

Since becoming an independent department in 2008, Justice Studies (JS) continues to mature. We now have consolidated office space around 4062 Lech Walesa Hall (LWH), and we have added two new full-time faculty: Dr. Maria De La Torre, who specializes in immigration issues joined us in fall 2009, and yours truly, who joined as the new department chair in fall 2008. I'm a political theorist by training with an interest in human rights and Third World politics. Also, we have two support staff on board to help us with all sorts of work: Bashir Siddiqui joined us in June 2009, and our new Office Manager, Ryan Johnson, recently came aboard in May. In the way of departures, we bid farewell to Professor Randy Bowcott, who officially retired in May 2010.

But staffing changes are only part of the Justice Studies department story. We also have been hard at work on curriculum development, pedagogical innovation, co-curricular events, engaging the larger world, and working in Chicagoland. The number of Justice Studies majors continues to grow (465 and counting), and we now graduate over 100 majors a year. We're proud that NEIU Justice Studies' alumni are out in the world, striving to make a difference. Keep an eye out for the launch of our new website—we'll send you the link when that happens. Be sure to read the other articles in the newsletter for more information about these and other JS activities.

Cris Toffolo

Professor & Chair
Justice Studies Department

Keeping It Fresh Curriculum Innovations and Engaging Pedagogies

Have you ever looked at the catalogues of other universities? Sometimes programs can look so impressive—pages of wonderful course offerings on every possible subject! But then you enroll and find out Dr. X, who taught two of the classes you were dying to take, has retired; and Dr. Y has a two-year research grant, so all six of her cool classes won't be taught for at least two more years, etc.

Well, here in Justice Studies we've had the opposite problem: we offer tons of great classes, but many of them have been sharing one label: JUST 315: Proseminar. The good news is that the 15 different classes currently using this number are each getting their own listing in the next catalogue. Beginning this fall, you will be able to enroll in White Collar Crime, Human Rights, Latino/as & the Criminal Justice System, Environmental Justice, Postmodern Law & Criminology, Social Justice & Literature, and many more. Keep checking back, as next year we will be adding more new classes.

But the faculty hasn't only been working on creating new classes: they also continue to keep the current offerings relevant by experimenting with new ways of teaching. This year the department offered its first on-line classes, created by Dr. June Terpstra. Patricia Hill's students wrote proposals for two new city ordinances which they presented at City Hall. One of these was aimed at preventing cuts in sports programs in the Chicago Public Schools. As part of this process, her students organized a press conference to publicize their efforts.

And getting our classes connected to Chicagoland didn't end there. In a course called Hunger & Homelessness,

(See "Curriculum," page 2)

Stateville Speaks

What you are reading right now isn't the only newsletter the Justice Studies department publishes. Beginning in the fall of 2009, Professor Kingsley Clark, working with some students in his internship seminar, took over publishing *Stateville Speaks*, a prison newsletter that started seven years ago as a one-time *zine*. It now has a subscription of over 3,000 people around the state. Its circulation includes inmates and their families, prison reform advocates, state legislators, public officials and concerned private citizens.

This publication is a vehicle whereby prisoners can express themselves on a variety of issues utilizing narrative, poetry and art. It is also a unique method of sharing what's going

down "on the inside." And it is a forum for discussing prison reform issues.

Though NEIU has only become officially involved within the last year, JS students were the first reporters to interview Michael Randle, Illinois' new Director of the Illinois Department of Corrections. By working on this newsletter, students learn how to publish a newsletter,



do investigative reporting, and get opportunities to visit prisons. They also meet with parole board members, the families of prisoners, and with state legislators. It is from these experiences that they begin to understand how organizing and advocacy work is conducted.

Justice Studies is now exploring a way to partner with the Chicago Teachers Center to help develop programming for the children of incarcerated parents, as a way of helping them address the unique issues they face.

Justice Sponsors a New Minor: CAST

In July 2009, Justice Studies' Dr. Shelley Bannister, and Susan Stall, chair of the Sociology department, traveled to Minnesota to learn about Child Advocacy Studies (CAST). They returned to NEIU inspired and energized to create a CAST minor here on our campus—the first one in the State of Illinois. For the last year, they've worked with the chairs of the Justice Studies, Psychology, and Social Work departments to develop an interdisciplinary minor that will be piloted beginning Fall Semester 2010.

The CAST minor will educate students about the unique issues facing youth today, and will provide specific training on how to work with the growing population of youth who, due to issues beyond their control, are involved in the courts and other state agencies.

From a feasibility study conducted this year, we know this area of specialization is sought by many agencies at the local, regional, state and national levels. Therefore, we anticipate a respectable demand for individuals with this minor, which will ultimately enhance the employability of our JS graduates.

Curriculum (continued from page 1)

Professor Audrey Natcone's students did a service learning project in which each student spent time one-on-one with persons who are homeless. From their conversations they learned it is often simply an accident of fate or certain dynamics of race and class that cause one person to succeed and another to fall.

As part of the class, each student created their own blog to publish their thoughts and opinions, the intent being to educate all of us about the growing problem of homelessness. You can view student Clarence Kelley's outstanding blog at <http://doestheusandtherestoftheworldcare.blogspot.com/>.

Not surprisingly, Professor Natcone's students have called her class "transformative."

Stay Connected!

We'd love to hear from you. Let us know what you've been up to since graduating from NEIU, or share anecdotes with us of how the Justice Studies curriculum prepared you for your career.

Your continued involvement in the Justice Studies department also provides valuable opportunities for students to benefit from your real-world experiences. Consider offering your services as a guest lecturer or internship site supervisor; or sign up to conduct informational interviews with current students.

Please consider adding your name to our email list. You can contact us at Justice-Studies@neiu.edu. And look for an alumni survey coming your way soon!

NEIU has also just launched a new Alumni Association. Join today at <http://www.neiu.edu/alumni>.

Velez Wins Award

Congratulations are in order to Angel Velez, who was recently announced as the winner of the 2010 Justice Studies Award.



Angel Velez poses with Cris Toffolo, Chair of the Justice Studies Department.

Giving to NEIU Justice Studies

Want to help Justice Studies make a difference? Your tax-deductible gift to the Justice Studies Department will enhance our programs and provide much-needed support for scholarships.

Visit www.neiu.edu/give, or you can contact the NEIU Office of Development, at (773) 442-4216.

Find out more about how you can make a difference for Justice Studies through your gift of time, talent, or treasure. We thank you for your support!

Taking It Global

Dr. Nancy Matthews recently organized a trip to Guanajuato, Mexico during the spring break. Ten students from Justice Studies, Women's Studies,



and Sociology joined her and another NEIU faculty member to work with Las Libres, a grassroots organization. The mission of Las Libres is to advance and defend the sexual and reproductive rights of women and youth. The group learned first-hand about the state

of human rights and democracy in Mexico, in addition to touring several historical sites.



JS students playing with children in the Mexican town of Maravillas.

For several years, Professor T.Y. Okosun has led student groups to South Africa over spring break. While he didn't do so this year, in part because he was invited by the African Development Bank to attend the conference, "Mobilizing the African Diaspora for Capacity Building and Development" in the Côte d'Ivoire, he plans to resume his trips next spring.

Last March Dr. June Terpstra sailed away on a study tour to Cuba, the purpose being to examine the status of gender and race equity fifty years after the Revolution. The trip also served to show support for ending the U.S. embargo against Cuba. She is now exploring the possibility of scheduling future trips with students to Cuba to conduct research.

Dr. Terpstra in Revolution Square.



Dr. Terpstra in Revolution Square.

Alumni News

What Do Justice Studies Majors Do When They Graduate?

New students often ask, “What can I do with a Justice Studies major?” The answers are numerous. Some students pursue their studies with the goal of joining the legal profession, teaching or doing research. For instance, former JS student Keith Atterberry, Class of ‘09, is currently working on a doctorate in Criminology, Law and Justice at UIC. Keeanga Taylor, Class of ‘07, is working on a doctorate in History and African American Studies at Northwestern University. Keenan Arnold, Class of ‘09, has just finished his second year at Northwestern Law School. Gayle Tulipano, who graduated in 2009, is working on a Masters in Inner City Studies at NEIU, and has become a respected community activist on prison reform issues. Adeicha Martinez, Class of ‘09, will begin a Masters in Public Administration at DePaul this fall. Also pursuing graduate studies at DePaul is Sabrina Purdis, Class of ‘09.

Other JS graduates go directly into careers with various state agencies, such as the Cook County Juvenile Probation Department or TSA. Wilfredo Cruz, Class of ‘09, works for the Chicago Police Department.

Some graduates pursue jobs in the press, such as 2005 graduate Gary Gaspard, who is a reporter for the independent media. Teaching is another career that attracts many of our graduates: Jason Garcia, Class of ‘09, is doing anti-racism education.

Still others become involved with not-for-profit organizations both here and abroad. Joshua Cruz, Class of ‘09, works with homeless and formerly incarcerated veterans. Charytin Fernandini, Class of ‘09, is an Information & Referral Specialist working on homelessness prevention for Catholic Charities of Chicago; and Helen Sinclair, who graduated in 1985, went to Malawi with the Peace Corp.

Graduating Seniors Weigh In

Last year we began asking JS majors their thoughts about Justice Studies as they graduate. In their own words, here are a few samples of what they had to say:

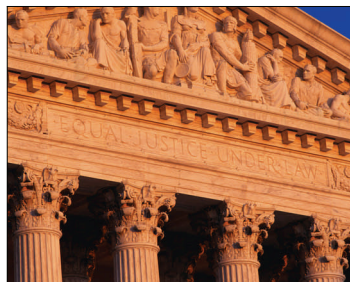
- ◆ The department is like a family that looks out for the best interest of the student.
- ◆ Being a justice studies major, I think is the first time I have really felt engaged, excited and passionate about what I am learning, and I thank all the teachers and the department for that.
- ◆ Being in the Justice Studies major has made me open my eyes to many challenges and opportunities in my life. Coming into this major, I really did not know much, or even if this is really what I wanted to do in my life; but... I am now convinced that Justice Studies is truly my interest. The Justice Studies program has been a wonderful experience for me. I developed great relationships with my professors as well as with the other students.
- ◆ In every class I took I learned something new. I would always be excited to know what we were going to learn next. This major opened me up to many new things and made me see the world in a new way.
- ◆ The program is useful in not only preparing you for the field of study, but also to make you ready to take on some of the problems in society and even the world. It also helps you with maintaining yourself on an individual level, to make you a better person, and helps you handle different situations that you may encounter.
- ◆ I’m pleased that I choose NEIU for my undergraduate studies... I’m planning to stay here for my graduate degree.
- ◆ Since becoming a student of the Justice Studies program, I have grown in my personal and professional life... I am more socially aware of concerns affecting many groups in our society.
- ◆ ...this major, to tell you the truth—I think it’s perfect. In every class you

learn a different thing and somehow it all leads back to the same thing— injustice—and how we could help change it. I believe the staff of the Justice Studies department is doing an amazing job and the next group of students that will be joining is in for an amazing ride... Thank you for changing my life.

- ◆ My education at Northeastern has made me want to go out into the world and really try to make a difference... Thank you Northeastern for a quality education and for helping me realize what I wanted to do for the rest of my life.

And following are some students’ thoughts about professors in the department:

- ◆ The faculty here are absolutely amazing. They are well informed of all their topics and prepared for class thoroughly.
- ◆ Being a transfer student from another university, I was very pleased at how down-to-earth and willing to help their students the professors were.
- ◆ The best thing is most of the teachers here care and want you to do well and succeed, so they are always there looking out for your best interest.



- ◆ I have been challenged to the maximum. I appreciate the feedback and the attention to detail in my reports that each professor invested.
- ◆ I found a great connection with my professors... They have each helped and showed me a path that I was unable to find on my own.
- ◆ It was a privilege to meet every single professor, as they are wonderful and very educated individuals.
- ◆ For the Justice Studies program I can say that my experience was quite interesting at the same time exciting... This school [and the] department made me the person that I am today; and, without having the courses that were provided and [the] caring instructors, it wouldn't be as exciting.

Justice Studies Club Kicks It Up

The Justice Studies Club (JSC), led by Sherilyn Maddex and Ebony Kennebrew, has had an amazing year. Among its outstanding accomplishments was volunteering at Mozart Parks' Annual Health Fair, which provided free check-ups, dental cleanings, and school supplies to hundreds of children to start their school year off right. JSC also worked with the department to respond to the Haitian earthquake, supplying the people power to transport four car loads of materials to the Haitian Congress, which is coordinating the relief effort on the north side of Chicago.

JSC also worked with the department to bring an American Red Cross lecture series to NEIU. It featured Jimmie Briggs, author of *Innocence Lost*, and our own professor, Maurice McFarlin. Additional work with the Red Cross included organizing a one-day teacher training on how to educate K-12 teachers about international humanitarian law (IHL), as international law about war is known. The club also helped the department host two Cuban students, part of the first nationwide US speaking tour in seven years. For Earth Week, JSC sponsored a screening of the acclaimed film *Planet Earth*.

JSC's biggest event was organizing a trip to Washington D.C. to march for immigration reform. To accomplish this, JSC raised \$5,000 to help cover travel costs. It was absolutely inspiring to be part of a movement of 250,000 people, and to march on the capital the same day health care reform was passed. The outstanding work of JSC did not go un-

ticed: JSC advisor, T.Y. Okosun, as well as President Sherilyn Maddex and Vice President Ebony Kennebrew, were nominated for Leadership Awards by NEIU.

Although technically on break over the summer, JSC is continuing its mission of promoting social justice by adding donation boxes in Becks Bookstore to help children with leukemia, as well as helping once again with Mozart Parks' Annual Health Fair.

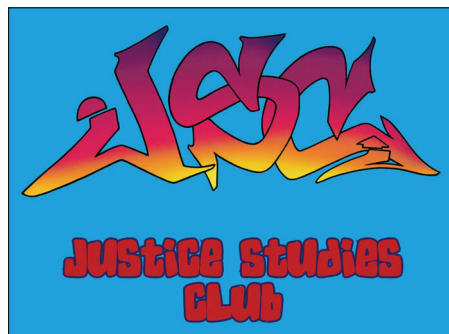
This fall it will be back to fundraising: JSC already has several bake sales planned to raise money for the Rory Donnell Award, which helps single mothers pay for their education, and to provide a monetary prize to the department's annual Justice Studies Award. You can help the club by purchasing and/or donating tasty treats and baked goods. Students can

also join JSC's planning committee. Interested persons should contact Sherilyn Maddex at s-maddex@neiu.edu.

Lastly, JSC extends a special thank you to its mentors. T.Y. Okosun inspired the creation of the organization, and continues to provide support every step of the way. And department head Cris Tofolo offers valuable encouragement and guidance. JSC also wishes to thank all of the faculty and staff for allowing the club the freedom to promote its goals and activities within the department.



NEIU Justice Studies Club members gather on the Mall in Washington, D.C. for the march on immigration reform.



Kudos Corner

The department is proud to honor the accomplishments of its faculty:

- ◆ Professors Dragan Milovanovic and T.Y. Okosun were honored at this year's Recent Authors Reception for the publication of their new books, *Revolution in Penology*, and *Social Justice and Increasing Global Destitution*, respectively.
- ◆ In June 2010, Professor Okosun was elected President of the National Justice Studies Association.
- ◆ Dr. Milovanovic's accomplishments were recognized this year by being awarded a PAI.
- ◆ Dr. Shelley Bannister's work was recognized with a Faculty Excellence Award and a sabbatical leave during Spring 2010.
- ◆ Instructor Patricia Hill was honored with the 2009 Human Rights Award by the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression.
- ◆ Professor Kingsley Clark was given the title of Professor Emeritus. He will continue to teach the internship seminar.



Professor Clark in action in the classroom.

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