



CENTER FOR
FOR Medicine
Health &
Society



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MHS

"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members," Coretta Scott King once said. So has it been for the community of MHS. In a moment of unprecedented crisis, our remarkable students, staff, and faculty rose to the challenge. When the pandemic hit, students rallied to form outreach networks and aimed to better understand the moment and assist those at risk. Faculty and staff worked heroically to move our curriculum and advising online, while at the same time producing state-of-the-art research at the nexus of medicine, health, and society.

MHS thus emerged as a vibrant hub in Vanderbilt's response to the pandemic. Our students and faculty have been at the fore of a number of vital efforts – addressing the structural drivers of racial inequities in COVID mortality rates, advising the Nashville city government about communal safety practices, creating innovative new formats for online teaching, analyzing the healthcare of tomorrow, and researching the pandemic through lenses of history, literature, sociology, disability, gender, geography, and economy. These and other efforts have been guided by our overarching commitment to health social justice that suffuses our diverse efforts to address the grand challenges relating to health, healthcare, and healthcare solutions in the U.S. and the world. Along the way, our community proved over-and-again the adage that, *if you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.*

This is the seventh and final edition of the Vanderbilt Center for Medicine, Health, and Society (MHS) newsletter. In 2020-21, as a testament to our communal growth and success, we will become the Vanderbilt Department of Medicine, Health, and Society. I particularly wish to thank Tara McKay, Odie Lindsey, and Dana DeLoca for their tremendous efforts in crafting and editing the content that appears within these pages.

MHS continues to flourish, even during a pandemic moment. The Center continues to produce world-class research, teaching, and immersion. We boast a growing cohort of top-of-the-field scholars, and expanding, innovative undergraduate and graduate curricula. We offer over 70 MHS courses, and support over [700 undergraduate majors](#) and a smaller number of minors. Over 200 students graduated with the MHS major in May 2020. Success stories abound. As but one example, in 2019, a remarkable 83% of MHS students who applied to medical school were accepted—more than double the national average. Our undergraduate curriculum offers seven important concentration areas, driven by student interest and faculty expertise in areas such as global health, health policies and economies, health justice, and medicine, humanities, and the arts. We also support a vibrant and growing master's degree program—the MA in [Social Foundations of Health](#). MA students, too, are going on to exciting and diverse careers in a variety of fields. We also collaborate with several other departments to support PhD students.

Our robust cohort of core faculty spans a continuum of expertise including mental health, global health, health policy and health economics, health demography, research ethics, military mental health, men's health and racial disparities, gender and disability studies, literature and medicine, and pre-med curricular innovation, to name but a few!

As this newsletter details, over the past year our faculty published important articles and books, won major grants and awards, and appeared on a host of national media outlets. With the added expertise of more than 90 jointly appointed and affiliated faculty members, the Center is truly a trans-institutional cog bridging Vanderbilt's many intellectual strengths.

We also continue to publish scholarly articles that detail the impact of our curriculum. For instance, [a major study](#) in *Social Science and Medicine* detailed the effectiveness of our "new approach to teaching [race and health](#)." This is but the latest testament to the ways that MHS students learn to think critically about complex social issues that impact health, health care, and health policy—skills particularly vital in the current pandemic crisis. By teaching students to grapple with these monumental questions, the Center is helping develop sophisticated thinkers who are trained to be unsatisfied with the status quo—a generation of students who are prepared to find new solutions out of a complex web of challenges that we will face in the post-pandemic era. The future feels in many ways uncertain—but I feel great confidence knowing that students like ours will become the leaders of tomorrow and show us all the way forward.

These and other initiatives are continually updated on our website, www.vanderbilt.edu/mhs, and our doors are always open to students, parents, scholars, community members, and all others. We hope that you will visit often and stay tuned as we grow.

Wishing safety for our community,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Metz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Jonathan Metz, MD, PhD,

Frederick B. Rentschler II Professor of Sociology and Medicine, Health, and Society,

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Jonathan Metz

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ANNUAL REPORT

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MHS Writer-in-Residence Odie Lindsey Welcomes the Publication of His Novel, *Some Go Home*

MHS faculty member Odie Lindsey's new novel considers the impact of a Civil Rights-era murder on a small southern community, exploring both the personal and structural nature of violence, trauma, and memory. Braiding together the stories of multiple families in fictional Pitchlynn, Mississippi, *Some Go Home*'s central character is Colleen, an Iraq War veteran who navigates new motherhood. (Colleen first appeared in Lindsey's short story collection, *We Come to Our Senses*, W.W. Norton, 2016.) When Colleen's elderly father-in-law is retried for the murder, she must consider her personal relationship to the event, and confront the cycle of class, race, and landownership that continue to define her community, and her country. Meanwhile, the town itself is gentrifying, a process that may smother the citizens' complicity in the murder, sanitizing town history without addressing the legacy of the crime.

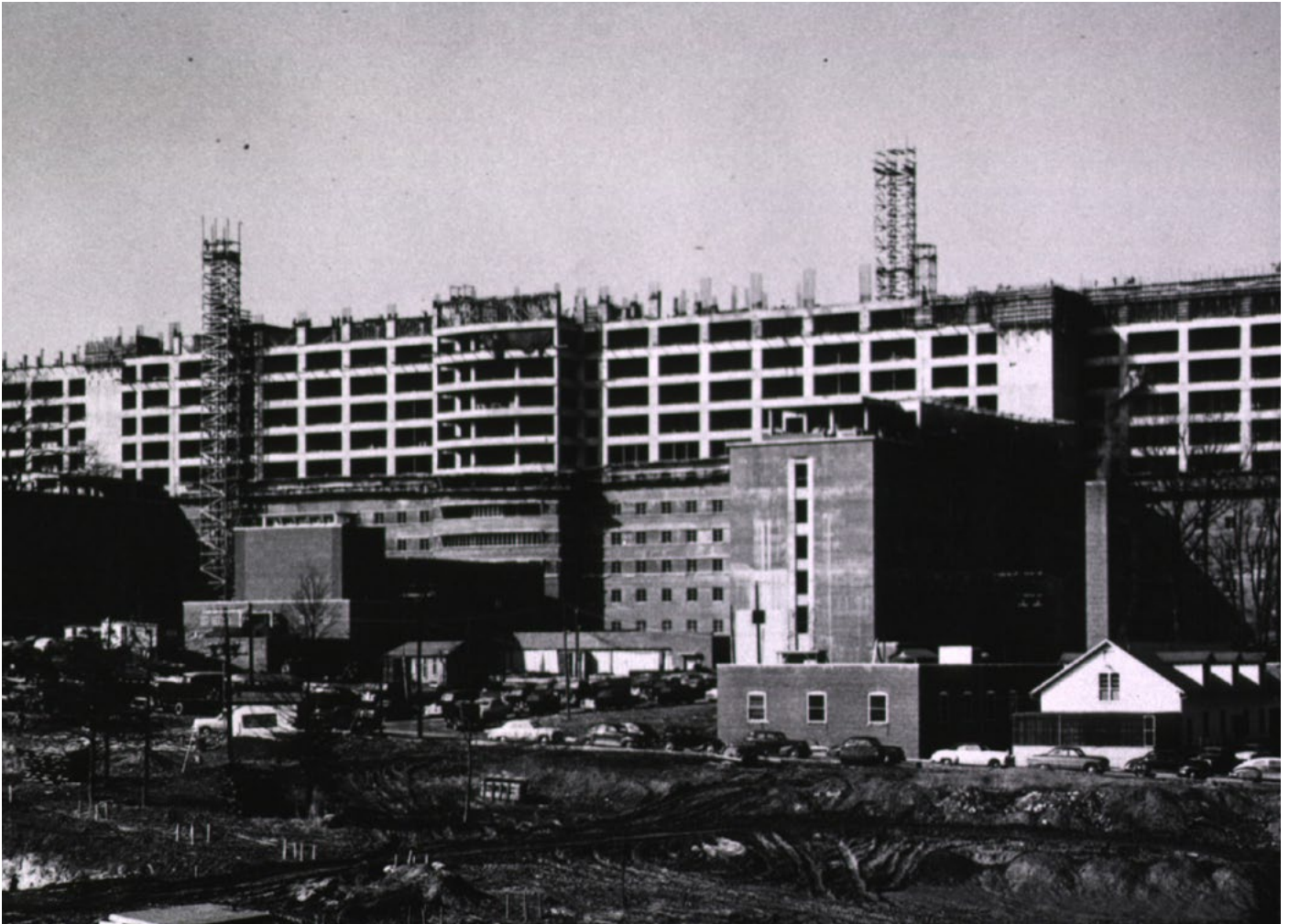
Professor Lindsey's own combat deployment informs some of the story, as does his work as associate editor of the award-winning *Mississippi Encyclopedia*, and of course the MHS community. Interdisciplinarity, likewise the intersections of class, race, gender, and region, shape the contours of the novel.

Some Go Home will be published by W.W. Norton in July. Professor Lindsey's readings from the novel include Vanderbilt's MFA / Visiting Writers' Series in Fall 2020.



Writer-in Residence Caroline Randall Williams Pens New Work for Collaboration with Choreographer, Musicians

After a successful collaboration with Nashville Ballet's Paul Vasterling in 2019, which saw Randall Williams perform her own poetry alongside and original score by Grammy award-winning singer and songwriter Rhiannon Giddens, in a ballet named for and inspired by her first collection, *Lucy Negro, Redux* (Third Man Publishers, 2019), she was invited to return to the ballet's stage for a new collaboration. Taking inspiration from music by guest recording artists Louis York and choreography by guest choreographer Jennifer Archibald, Randall Williams wrote two new poetry performance pieces which were debuted on stage at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center as part of the larger piece comprised of Archibald's dynamic choreography, Louis York's complicated, exciting music, and the original poetry.



The National Library of Medicine, under construction, 1952. Source: Public Domain, NIH

Congratulations to Professor Laura Stark!

Professor Laura Stark was awarded the 2019 Freidson Prize from the American Sociological Association's section on Medical Sociology. The prize recognizes an article published in the previous two years "that has had a major impact on the field of medical sociology." The prize was awarded at ASA's annual meeting in New York City.

Professor Stark won the award for her article "Contracting Health: Procurement Contracts, Total Institutions, and Problem of Virtuous Suffering in Post-War Human Experiment," which was published in the journal *Social History of Medicine*. The article documents how, in the years after World War II, science leaders at the U.S. National Institutes of Health created and expanded a system to supply researchers with healthy civilians for human experiment, in addition to the system in place to experiment on people with restricted civil liberties, such as servicemen and incarcerated people. This civilian market is still in place today and is behind any new drug or vaccine on the current medical market. Before Professor Stark's research, it was unclear how this civilian market originated—an important puzzle to solve to understand the legal and ethical effects today.



Photo Credit: Evan Roberts



Anivarya Kumar, President



Alyson Win, Vice President

MHS Majors and Minors Association Formed

MHS students have created the MHS Majors and Minors Association, a way to connect with each other and show support for the MHS department. The new association already has 90 members. What's more, students have launched the MHS Mentorship Program, which matches junior and senior MHS majors with sophomores. There are currently 103 participants.

Mentors and mentees meet two times per semester to discuss courses, registration, independent studies, internships, study abroad, and other aspects of the department. The goal of the program is to help beginning students gain more knowledge and insight into the MHS major.



Reagan Martin, Secretary



Hitha Uday, Treasurer

MHS Welcomes Two New Post-Doctoral Fellows and Project Coordinator, KaTerri Kelly!

We are thrilled to welcome Ellesse-Rosalee Akré and Harry Barbee to MHS, starting August 2020. Both Ellesse and Harry will be post-doctoral researchers affiliated with the Vanderbilt University Social Networks, Aging, and Policy Study (VUSNAPS).

Ellesse-Rosalee Akré

Ellesse recently defended her PhD in Health Policy and Management at the University of Maryland School of Public Health. Her research examines structural and environmental barriers and facilitators to health care access and utilization for lesbian, gay, and bisexual people in the U.S. Prior to joining the VUSNAPS team at Vanderbilt, Ellesse worked for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), where she has contributed to the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) at the Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight (CCIIO). Welcome, Ellesse!

Harry Barbee

Harry is currently finishing his PhD in Sociology at Florida State University. His work examines how gender and sexuality influence health and well-being over the life course. His dissertation considers middle-aged adults' experiences of aging across sexual orientation and gender identity, specifically, their fears of aging, experience of health and aging bodies, age identities, and projections for the future. Harry will continue this important work with VUSNAPS. Welcome, Harry!



Ellesse-Rosalee Akré



Harry Barbee

KaTerri Kelly

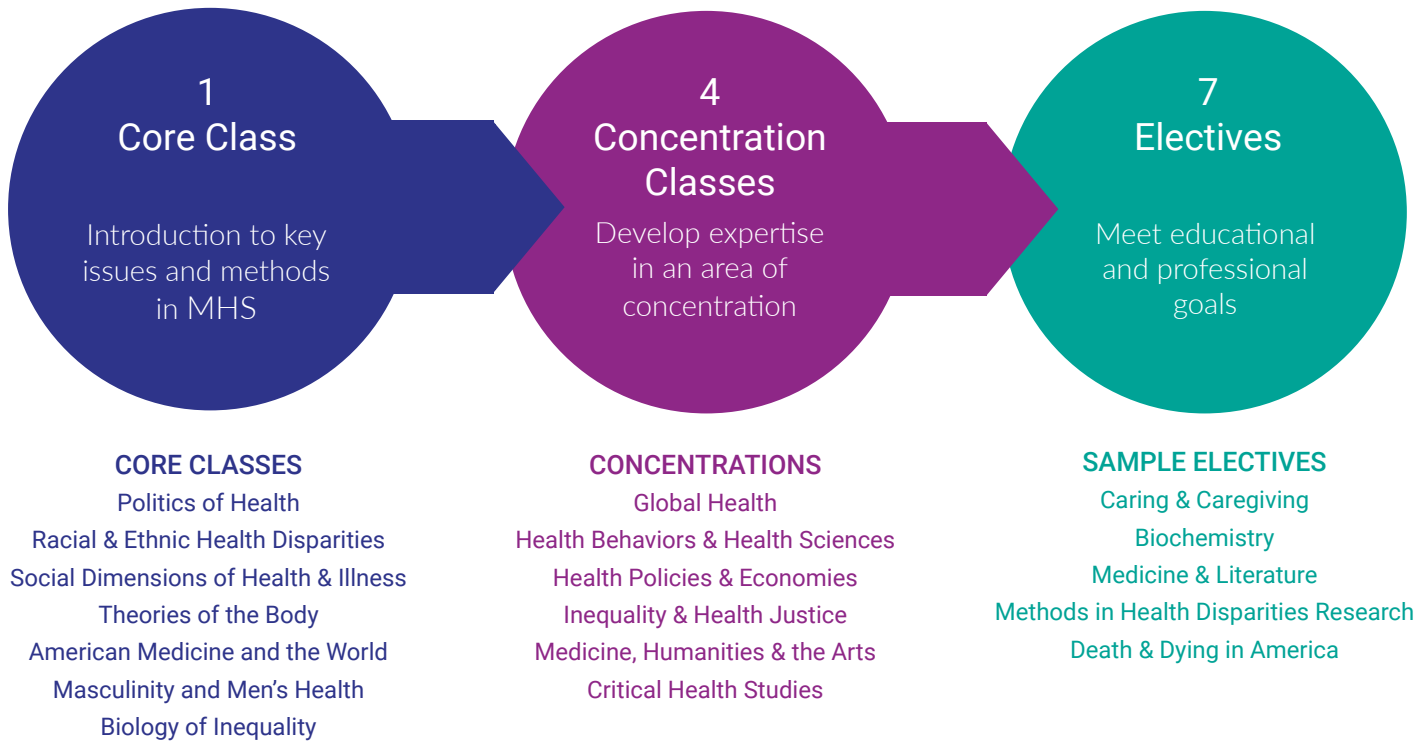
MHS welcomes researcher and social justice and health policy advocate KaTerri M. Kelly. KaTerri, who joined MHS in February 2020, is a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Policy Scholar and former Special Assistant on Global Health Communications and Strategy to Andrew J. Young, a Civil Rights activist and former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. Working alongside Professor Tara McKay, KaTerri is directing recruitment efforts of the Vanderbilt University Social Networks, Aging, and Policy Study (VUSNAPS), engaging members of the LGBT community across the South in a study on relationships, health, and aging.



KaTerri Kelly

What is Medicine, Health, and Society?

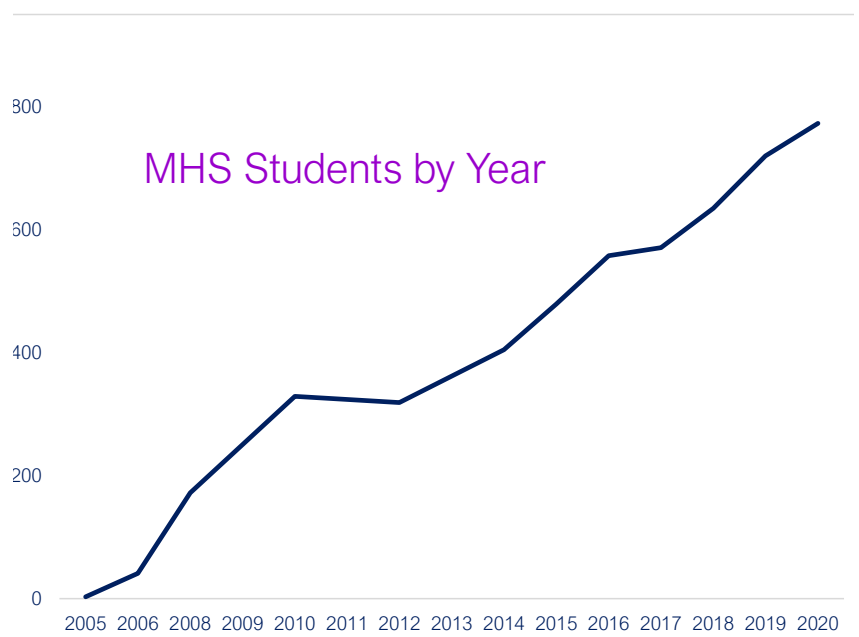
A unique, flexible undergraduate program and a major for the present moment



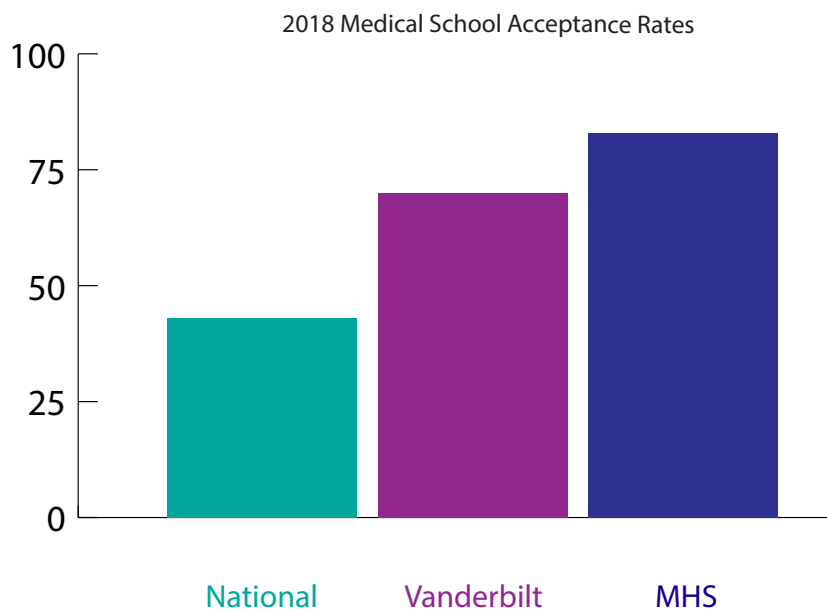
Exploring the relationship between structural factors and health outcomes

Vanderbilt's Center for Medicine, Health, and Society investigates the political, cultural, economic, demographic, and biological factors that impact health. Drawing on a structural competency framework and courses in the medical sciences, humanities, and social sciences, this innovative interdisciplinary program transcends the traditional biomedical approach to understanding health and illness.

The MHS major began with only 40 students in 2005; it now has nearly 773 and is one of the most popular pre-med majors at Vanderbilt. Courses are taught by leading experts in interdisciplinary health approaches from anthropology, sociology, history, gender studies, psychology, neuroscience, public health, disability and design studies, and health humanities.



Deeper understanding and unprecedented results



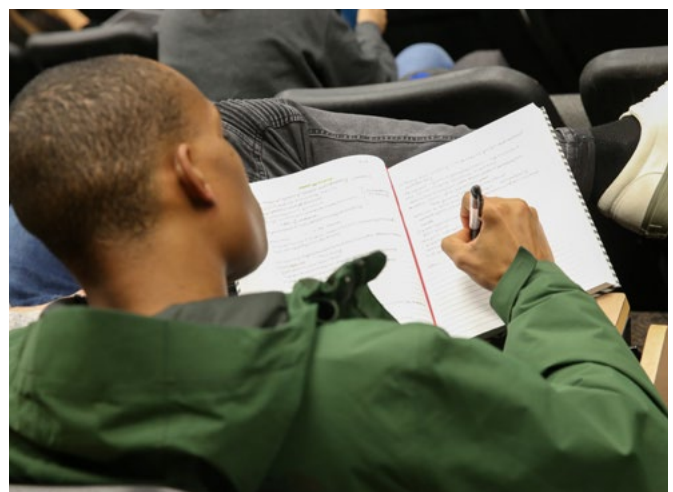
83% of pre-med MHS majors are admitted to medical school— above Vanderbilt’s overall average and nearly double the national average

Interdisciplinary preparation for health careers



Through immersive coursework, collaborative research, service learning, and internships, MHS students connect to real world health problems, learn to think critically about social issues that impact health, and devise effective strategies for targeting health care challenges. The unique, flexible program prepares students for careers in medicine, nursing, public health, global health, health business and administration, and academic health research.

Program evaluations show that MHS majors understand the relationship between structural factors and health outcomes in deeper ways than other pre-med science majors, and MHS students demonstrate greater knowledge of racism, structural inequality, and health disparities. These proficiencies are highly valued by national health professional and educational bodies like the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). MHS students report a great sense of preparation for their planned post-graduation professional careers, and MHS students were accepted to medical school at a rate of 83% in 2018, nearly double the national average of 43%.



MEET OUR STUDENTS



Internship Focuses on Food Insecurity and Community Health

RACHEL GROSS

When Rachel Gross decided to do an MHS internship in the Production Garden at The Nashville Food Project, she envisioned a fully-immersive experience that would bring her passions for food justice to her Nashville community. After spending two years working to bring visibility to campus food insecurity at Vanderbilt, she was ready to broaden her horizons and engage in social justice work in Nashville. Her MHS internship gave her the perspective she needed to study the ways in which infrastructure of growing cities contribute to issues of food access. She used her experience at The Nashville Food Project as a case study for an organization working to address this issue. Alongside boots-on-the-ground experience, working in the Production Garden informed Rachel's research about food access in Nashville. The Nashville Food Project kitchens prepare over 5,000 meals a week using Production Garden produce, donated food from local farms, and rescued food from grocery stores and restaurants, which are then redistributed to support the missions of neighboring communities. The Nashville Food Project meets people facing food insecurity in an emergency setting, and brings about a larger shift in the way food is accessed by everyone. They identify as a "community food organization," which means that they focus on addressing the bigger issues of system-wide access by providing food in an ongoing way. Rachel helped lead weekly volunteer groups which worked on harvesting, planting, bed maintenance, compost pile upkeep, and various carpentry projects. She gained a true appreciation for the role sustainable agriculture can play in creating a just, equitable food system.



Experiences of College Students with Chronic Conditions

KATIE CARLSEN

Katie Carlsen has learned through her academic and personal experiences at Vanderbilt how various structures grant and impede the visibility of certain groups of people. As an MHS major with a focus on health inequalities, Carlsen wondered how she could highlight one group in particular: college students who struggle with daily life on campus due to health conditions. In Fall 2019, Katie began an Honors thesis on the intersections of college students with chronic conditions, disability studies and disability activism, normative expectations for young adult development, and previously-developed anthropological theories regarding the chronic illness experience. Due to a lack of research both on this population and on the boundaries between disability, chronic illness, and mental illness, Carlsen's research is exploratory and intended to produce greater understanding of how these categories of experience differ and converge in the college setting. Using grounded theory with a feminist approach, Katie conducted semi-structured, ethnographic interviews in December and January with 10 undergraduate students, seeking to understand their experiences of attending college while dealing with chronic conditions. Preliminary data suggest that such students view their conditions as a collection of interacting physical and mental experiences which shape who they are, how they develop as young adults, and how they relate to others. Furthermore, these students appear to continually develop their views of their conditions through interactions with peers, professors, family, medical professionals, and academic institutions.

Organizational Planning for Fall 2020 Health Humanities Conference

AMANDA BERK

To top off her final semester as an undergraduate MHS student, Amanda Berk worked with MHS director Jonathan Metzl to produce and prepare for a Fall 2020, International Health Humanities (IHH) symposium at Vanderbilt. Focused on the “Politics of Health,” the symposium will host scholars, healthcare professionals, and students, in an exploration of the politics of health and healthcare within the context of global events, and the 2020 U.S. election year. The array of topics to be covered at this conference align with many of Amanda’s curricular experiences as an MHS major — including classes within MHS, and through affiliate departments such as Sociology, Anthropology, and Women’s and Gender Studies. As an active member and committee leader of the MHS Student Advisory Board, Amanda has promoted MHS programming and opportunities to students around campus. She is currently conducting a research study through the Department of Anthropology, exploring medical decision making and its intersection with abortion politics. Amanda hopes to one day combine her passion for healthcare and women’s reproductive health in order to increase access and equity of care in the U.S. and abroad.



Amanda Berk



Iris Kim

Working to Normalize Conversations about Asian American Mental Health

IRIS KIM

Iris Kim is a double major in Neuroscience and MHS with a self-directed track in Critical Health Studies, exploring the intersection of cultural health disparities and mental illness. She is particularly passionate about normalizing conversations about Asian American mental health, and is currently working on a project in the Body, Mind, and Brain lab with Dr. Sohee Park to address the lack of schizophrenia research done among the Asian American and Pacific Islander populations. In the future, Kim hopes to emphasize the importance of preventative mental health care and help-seeking methods through community health research. This past year, Iris has served as the president of the Asian American Student Association and oversaw several new initiatives regarding mental health awareness, from establishing the first multicultural mental health organization, to holding a mental health dinner between Asian American students, faculty, and mental health professionals as part of AASA’s celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. She has also led the inaugural cohort of the Asian American Book Club, which meets weekly to discuss Asian American representation in various forms of new media and literature.

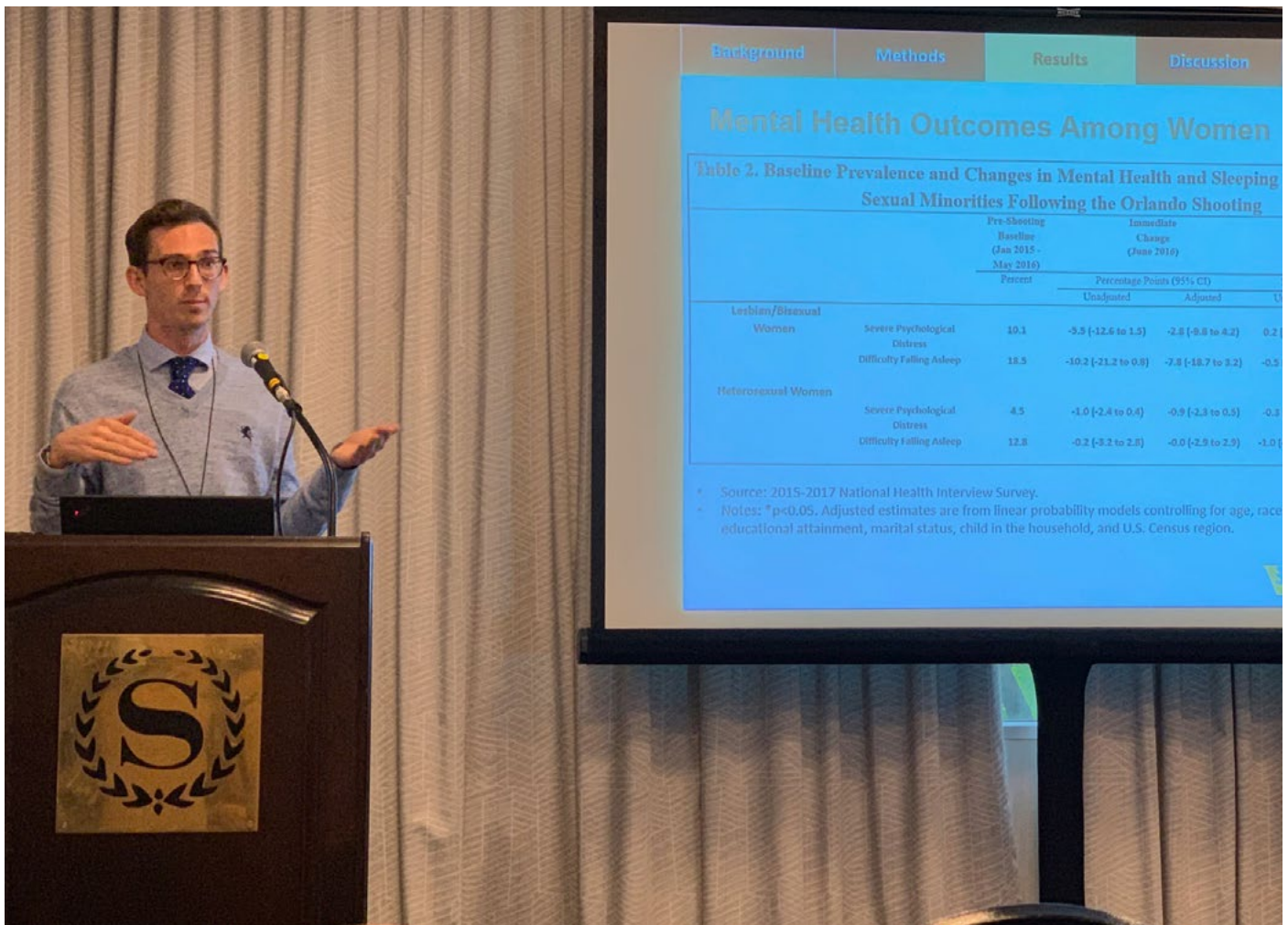
Iris entered Vanderbilt not knowing what she wanted to study, but the MHS major has allowed her the flexibility to pursue her diverse passions in medicine, mental health, and the Asian American identity. In her senior year, she will be studying global health and development policy in Geneva, Switzerland, before returning in the spring for a final semester.



Dr. Sohee Park at Mental Health Dinner



Iris Kim



Kyle Gavulic presents at IAPHS, 2019

MHS Senior Presents Study at Major Conferences

KYLE GAVULIC

In October 2019, Kyle Gavulic, an MHS senior and lab manager to Professor Gilbert Gonzales, presented a study at the Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science Conference about the association between the Orlando shooting at Pulse nightclub and mental health among lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations. A month later, Gavulic presented this study again at the Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association (APHA) in a session on Mass Shootings and Mental Health. “Considering the impact that mass shootings have had on public health across the country in recent years, I expected that this session would be a popular one,” Gavulic said. “Sure enough, it was encouraging to see a packed room for this panel, especially since we had worked so hard to make recommendations for how social service and health care providers can better tailor care for LGBT individuals following traumatic events to be sensitive to their previous encounters with discrimination. This felt especially empowering as I was the only individual on the panel representing the voice of the LGBTQ community.” Gavulic continues to actively use his research to advocate on behalf of LGBT populations. To this end, a piece that he co-authored with Dr. Gonzales, “The Equality Act is Needed to Advance Health Equity for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Populations,” was recently accepted for publication in the *American Journal of Public Health*.

Additionally, Gavulic has become very engaged in pharmaceutical drug policy. This inspired his MHS Honors thesis, an investigation of pharmaceutical drug expenditures, out-of-pocket costs, and financial burden related to pharmaceutical spending before and after the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. Notably, Gavulic recently published “Peer Comparisons for Drug Price Setting: Why International Reference Pricing May Not Provide Optimal Prices” in the *Journal of the American Medical Association Health Forum* with co-authors Dr. Stacie Dusetzina and Dr. Nathalie Pelletier-Fleury.

In April 2019, Gavulic and fellow undergraduate, Klara Lou, founded Universities Allied for Essential Medicines (UAEM)–Vanderbilt. With chapters around the world, UAEM aims to improve access to and affordability of pharmaceutical drugs by advocating for policies to lower drug costs, promote clinical trial transparency, and reform the biomedical research and development (R&D) process.



UAEM Lobbies for Access to Essential Drugs, 2020



Packed Session at American Public Health Association Meeting, 2019



Introductory Course Leads to Internship in Nutrition Education, Career Path in Public Health

BETHANY DIERINGER ('20)

Senior Bethany Dieringer is an MHS major with a minor in Communication of Science and Technology (CSET). She plans to attend graduate school to study Nutrition Science to pursue becoming a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN). Initially a Chemical Engineering student, Dieringer took Jamie Pope's Introductory Nutrition course to round out her first-year schedule, and was impassioned to pursue the connection between food, the body, and the world. She later decided to transfer to Arts and Sciences to study MHS, which allowed her the flexibility to combine her interests in public health, biochemical science, and communication. Dieringer has enjoyed exploring the social and political dimensions of health and healthcare in her studies, including an independent study with Dr. Courtney Peterson on the Health at Every Size public health approach to weight management.

Dieringer's background in MHS and CSET have given her the opportunity to intern with the National Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Sponsors Association, in

which she developed and accredited recipes to fit the nutritional guidelines of the USDA-sponsored program, providing meals and snacks for children and adults in daycare facilities. Similarly, she had the opportunity to develop recipes and cooking/food safety education materials for a student-run food pantry at the University of Texas-Austin. Dieringer looks forward to continuing her career in nutrition education and outreach for food insecure communities, and is grateful for the experiences and support she has received from the MHS program and faculty.

Master's Candidates in the Social Foundations of Health



CALEB PEART

Caleb Peart is an MHS 4+1 masters student. His undergraduate double majors in African American Diaspora Studies and MHS have heavily influenced and shaped his graduate research interests. Through the 4+1 program, Peart has focused on gun violence and the ways in which racial constructions influence news coverage of mass shootings in America. With bans on federally-funded gun research, Peart realized that there was dire need for more studies on gun violence and mass shootings that took race into consideration. This led him to pursue questions such as why news reports frame mass shootings with white perpetrators differently than black ones, and why mental illness is a label seemingly reserved for white shooters. In his thesis "Narratives of Harm: How Reports of Mass Shootings Privilege White Identities and Perpetuate Black Pathology," Peart unpacks racial codes and tactics within the word choices of news articles. He hopes to use a critical race lens among the many other tools learned through the MHS program to improve the health care industry.

PAYTON ROBINETTE

Payton Robinette's thesis research is inspired by her experiences as a Clinical and Translational Research Coordinator at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center. As a coordinator in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, she became interested in how patient socioeconomic and demographic factors influence perceptions of health. For her thesis, Payton decided to explore how sociodemographic factors are associated with self-reported measures of health status, disability, and depression among adults living with chronic back pain.

Payton's thesis project is a descriptive, preoperative analysis that uses data collected from an ongoing spine surgery registry at VUMC. She uses information collected from 2,600 participants and multivariable regression models to determine the relationship between patient socioeconomic status and demographic factors, and patient reported health measures prior to surgical intervention. Her hope is to

use this data to identify key patient characteristics that are most influential in subjective health reporting. In doing so, Robinette focuses on theories in health services research and structural competency to provide a more holistic view of how patients can internalize feelings of well-being, and how these feelings intersect with medical practice. By working to develop a better understanding of how larger social factors can influence health at the individual level, this project presents an opportunity to improve upon conceptualizations of how patient health is cultivated outside the confines of medical practice.





ANDRIANA JOHNSON

Andriana Johnson is a master's candidate in the MHS 4+1 program, and she also works as a resident advisor, athletic tutor, and graduate teaching assistant. She is interested broadly in public health, with a specific focus on low-income and minority populations. Johnson's thesis research focuses on social media and mental health, particularly the use of social media as a medium for challenging dominant narratives and regaining a sense of agency. Her project focuses on the 2014 killing of Michael Brown, the ways in which Twitter was used as an arena for sense-making and understanding the events, with an extended focus on how the sense-making process takes place following polarizing events.

Johnson found that while previous research has examined how Twitter has been used to sense-make following generally accepted traumatic events, there was less research focusing on the sense-making process behind events that are highly polarizing, such as police brutality. Because of this, she found the Tweet classification categories proposed by preceding papers to be insufficient, and proposes the introduction of another category, "narrative challenging," to be included in analysis of Tweets, particularly following polarizing events.

ROWAN GODWIN

MHS graduate student Rowan Godwin arrived at Vanderbilt after attending the University of South Alabama. In addition to undergraduate work as a Criminal Justice major, Goodwin played football for both South Alabama and at the United States Military Academy at West Point, NY. His interest in MHS was tied to the opportunity for further study of the complexities of the criminal justice system, especially in the U.S. Goodwin's initial research considered the factors of control and autonomy that interpenetrate the system, guiding him to the groundbreaking Supreme Court case, *Estelle v. Gamble*. He has since been consumed by the implications of the case, which technically paved the way for the guarantee of health care for all inmates. Goodwin's research questions have to do with lack of defined parameters for what, exactly, constitutes "adequate health care," and the various interpretations and policies that relate to the case. He will address this variability by outlining policies applied by federal, state, correctional health care administration, and other actors.





Hamraie's Class with architect Keith Louiseau (left)

Designing Healthy Publics

Professor Aimi Hamraie's class, Designing Healthy Publics, donned hard hats on a field trip to a campus construction site. Led by Vanderbilt architect Keith Louiseau, students toured two historic campus buildings that are being renovated for accessibility improvements via an innovative architectural strategy: a new, third building constructed to connect the two while providing unprecedented environmental sustainability. Students learned about how historical buildings can be adapted to the current needs of the Vanderbilt community, including the need for disability accessibility and more environmentally conscious use of materials, while preserving their charm and beauty.



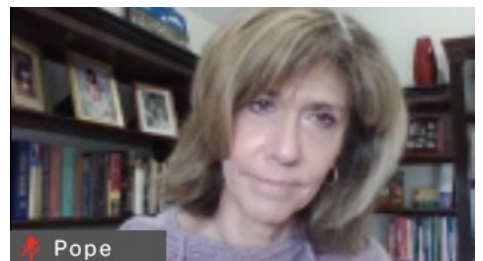
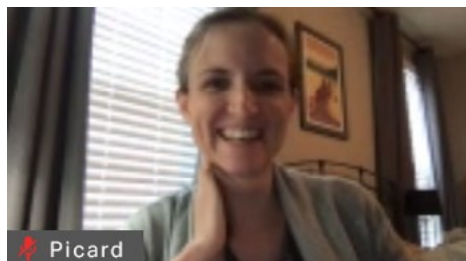
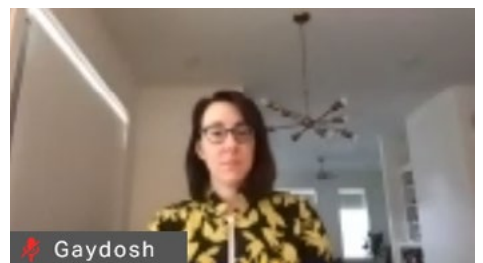
Crip Ritual Symposium Art Exhibition

All cultures have rituals. Rituals can be ways to change material circumstances, politics, lived experience, or even spiritual realities. So rituals are a method for designing a better world. Classically, anthropologists define rituals as prescribed actions that bring people together to recognize a change in social status through references to shared cultural symbols and an appeal to a higher power. Scholars of anthropology and disability studies explore how disabled people use rituals to design and anticipate more inclusive futures. In collaboration with the University of Toronto, MHS professor Aimi Hamraie's Critical Design Lab, a multi-institutional collaborative spanning graduate students and scholars in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K., will host "Crip Ritual," an academic symposium and art exhibition focused on the intersections of disability and ritual theory. The exhibition will gather together artworks that use elements of design, ceremony, social scripts, and community agreements to create more inclusive worlds. Examples include rituals of retiring or receiving a new assistive device, negotiating accessibility where there is none, or building community around shared language and culture (such as using American Sign Language in Deaf spaces). A symposium in Spring 2021 will feature leading scholars in disability studies, disability arts, and ritual theory. The Lab will also design the gallery launch event for the exhibitions, which will take place at the Tangled Arts + Disability gallery and the Doris McCarthy Gallery at the University of Toronto, Scarborough.



Read more about
this project at
[Mapping Access](#)

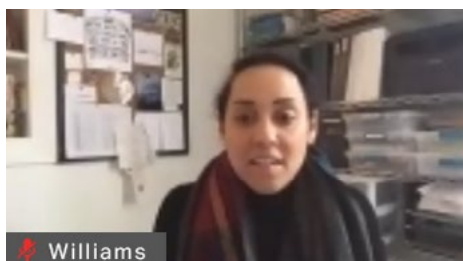
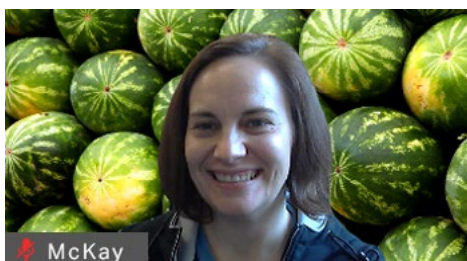
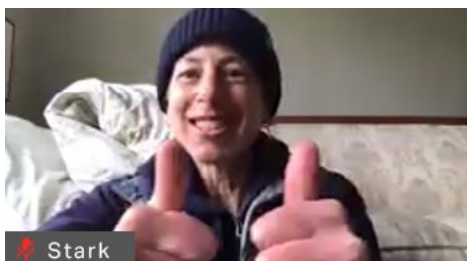
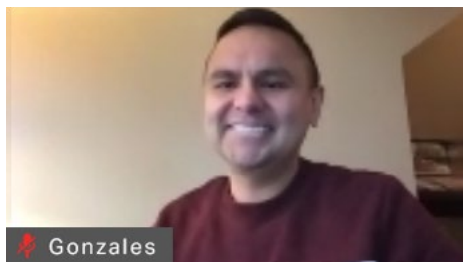
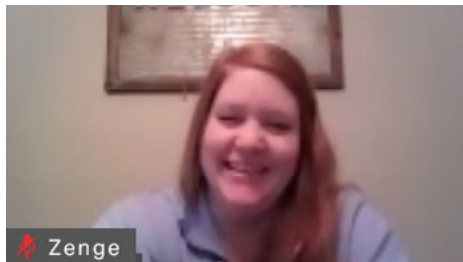




#COVIDCAMPUS

Aimi Hamraie

The global coronavirus pandemic has forced universities to shift to online teaching. As a result, faculty are faced with developing new approaches to connecting with and assessing students. Facebook groups, Twitter hashtags, and other social media platforms have served as spaces for faculty to share tips and experiences. Professor Aimi Hamraie, whose research focuses on accessibility for disabled people, developed a resource guide for faculty moving online. In “Accessible Teaching in the Time of COVID-19,” Hamraie argued that adopting principles of accessibility for online teaching—including providing “remote access” via video conferencing, providing transcripts for lectures, and making sure that PDFs have optical character recognition (OCR)—would benefit all faculty as they face students with diverse learning styles. Teaching online presents new accessibility challenges. As students and faculty increase their screen time, new accessibility issues arise (even for people who do not identify as disabled). Eye and bodily fatigue, headaches, and the need for more frequent breaks are becoming widespread. Furthermore, many students were now returning home to places where internet or other technologies may not be readily accessible. Conversations on Twitter’s #COVIDCampus hashtag demonstrate, however, that many faculty are responding to the increased workload by developing creative strategies. Some MHS faculty make available “asynchronous” learning that students can complete on their own time. Others are using the full capacities of learning management systems such as Brightspace to provide online tests and quizzes. Still others are shifting assignments and conversations to focus on the pandemic’s societal impacts. Through innovative and inclusive pedagogy, and our unique approach to medicine and society, MHS is leading new approaches to teaching in the time of coronavirus.



A group of approximately 12 people, including Professor Gilbert Gonzales and 10 MHS students, are posing for a selfie outdoors in Miami, Florida. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The group is diverse in age and ethnicity. The background shows a bright, sunny outdoor setting with some buildings and trees. The title 'MHS Goes to Cuba' is prominently displayed in the upper half of the image.

MHS Goes to Cuba

In 2019, Professor Gilbert Gonzales led a Maymester course on Cuba's Health Care System (MHS 3890), which took 10 students to Miami, Florida and Havana, Cuba to learn about Cuban history, U.S.-Cuba relations, and Cuba's perspectives on health and health care. The key lesson they brought back home was simple: a focus on public health and community-based primary care is essential for maintaining relatively good population health outcomes with limited resources in Cuba.

MHS students taking a break from learning about US-Cuba relations in Miami, Florida.

In contrast to the United States, Cuba operates a national health system that is financed and administered by the national government. Despite limited resources and a trade and travel embargo with the U.S., Cuba's population health indicators outperform those in wealthy countries. According to the World Health Organization, the average life expectancy in Cuba (79.0 years) is at least six months longer than the average life expectancy in the United States (78.5 years).



MHS students visit and tour the Freedom Tower in Miami, a U.S. National Historic Landmark that was used to process Cuban refugees fleeing to Florida.



MHS students learn about the Cuba health care system from a Cuban professor at the National School of Public Health (ENSAP).



While in Cuba, Professor Gonzales and the Maymester students met with a variety of health care professionals, including physicians, nurses, medical students, community health promoters, and biomedical researchers. One of the highlights of the trip was being able to speak with Cuban medical students to discuss the similarities and differences in medical education between the two countries. Students described this course as an "incredible opportunity" and "being able to see the [Cuban] system in action through site visits was an amazing experience." Professor Gonzales hopes to take more students to Cuba to learn about the country's history, public health activities, and health care system.



MHS students visit a group home and day care for Cubans living with intellectual and physical disabilities. Students are observing a craft workshop designed to teach residents how to make crafts that can be sold.

Mental Health and Social Well-Being: an Experiment in Collective Research and Immersive Teaching

This term, nine students participated in an independent study with Professor Béhague on a topic that touches the lives of all at Vanderbilt: mental health and social well-being. They reviewed the literature, designed a research proposal, completed IRB training and applied to the IRB for ethics approval, developed an open-ended interview guide, and conducted nearly 30 confidential interviews with Vanderbilt students using qualitative research methods. Dr. Béhague added to the research by conducting a few confidential qualitative interviews with faculty. The three key aims of the study were to investigate how students conceptualize and experience mental illness and mental well-being, understand how students seek to influence what they identify as the key determinants of mental health, and develop some simple policy recommendations for community-building. Using an inductive grounded theory approach, their collectively-written essay explores how stigma and stigma reduction initiatives interrelate with what some of their interlocutors have identified as “community well-being,” and the social mitigation of mental illness. Thanks to FaceTime and Zoom, they managed to continue their research even after the pandemic sent them home. Some of their interview questions have shifted to consider how our collective, transformed lives are changing notions and practices of social care and well-being.

Stay tuned for a small summary of their results!

– Mikayla Alsopp ('22), James Blair ('22), Katie Carlsen ('20), Andriana Johnson ('19, *20), Francis Lee ('20), Victoria Mityul ('22), Payton Robinette ('19, *20), Mariah Sanders ('21), Michael West ('20)

Health Disparities Research

Members of the Gonzales Lab are working on health disparities research. Projects include studying the effects of the Orlando Pulse nightclub shooting on LGBTQ mental health, identifying sociodemographic characteristics of sexual minority adults who will be impacted by the new Tobacco 21 law, and analyzing health disparities at the intersections of LGBTQ status, race, ethnicity, and marital status.



*Top: Professor Gonzales, Kyle Gavulic, Sachin Sanam
Middle: Rohan Patel, Marcus Bennett, Emilio Loret de Mola
Bottom: Eva Elton, Lena Robertson*



MHS Faculty McKay, Gonzales, and Gaydosh Receive 5-year Grant to Study LGBT Aging from the National Institutes of Health, Launch VUSNAPS

Assistant Professor Tara McKay, in collaboration with MHS faculty Gilbert Gonzales and Lauren Gaydosh, and professor of economics and Director of the Vanderbilt LGBT Policy Lab, Kitt Carpenter, received \$1.9 million over 5 years from National Institute of Aging to study the effects of social networks and policy contexts on health among older LGBT adults in the U.S. South. The study is called the Vanderbilt University Social Networks, Aging, and Policy Study, or VUSNAPS.

The goal of VUSNAPS is to better understand the health of older LGBT adults in the South. "We are concerned by data that show older LGBT adults to be at higher risk for various health issues and disability in later life," says McKay. "All of us on the team are deeply invested in LGBT health and policy. We designed this study to help identify the social and policy drivers of poor health outcomes among older LGBT adults. We're also interested in what helps older LGBT adults thrive in later life." The team recently launched the first wave of data collection. They were able to include measures on how older LGBTQ people in the South are responding to coronavirus, and they are working closely with the Metro Nashville LGBTQ Caucus to ensure that older LGBTQ people's needs are being met. The study will continue through 2024.



Kitt Carpenter, Tara McKay, Lauren Gaydosh, Gilbert Gonzales



Ally Bronson

MHS Alumni Tackle Complex Issues around the Globe

ALLY BRONSON

Ally Bronson ('19) is pursuing research in the Dominican Republic. Her research and travel is supported by a Fulbright Scholarship. She is studying the psychosocial well-being of pregnant adolescents in a network of clinics outside of Santo Domingo. Ally is working with the clinics to build-up their resources and programming to improve the quality of care for this population. She seeks to understand the relationship between psychosocial indicators and maternal and child health (MCH) outcomes by primarily understanding the stressors and challenges of pregnancy and parenthood during adolescence. Her research encompasses a combination of well-being and stress-related indices, as well as analyzing themes in interviews and focus group discussions. Ally is grateful for her interdisciplinary education in MHS, which provided her with both practical skillsets in public health and research, as well as theories regarding health disparities and the structural and social foundations of health. Her invaluable preparation at Vanderbilt facilitated learning both inside and outside of her project. She has assisted the clinic's community health workers in giving "Charlas" (group discussions) to patients, accompanying home visits and rural community visits, and giving school presentations. In addition, she volunteers with three others for a free English learning course at a community center in a low-resource neighborhood. Bronson remarks on how surprised she was by the interest in the class; each week more and more people attend, from ages 9 to 40+. Most of the students have to bring their own chairs from home because the community center does not have the accommodations! Ally loves exploring both the city and the country when she can find the time, noting that the Dominican Republic has an incredibly vibrant culture, landscape, and people.

SAM EDWARDS

After graduating with his MA from the MHS 4+1 program in May 2019, Sam Edwards started preparing for a new life as a Peace Corps volunteer in Belize. When talking to returned Peace Corps volunteers, many implored that he begin the journey with as little expectation as possible. Aware that he would be a Health Educator for the Rural Family Health Project in Belize, Sam knew there would be language, cultural, and lifestyle adjustments for which he could not fully prepare. Regardless, he could not help but expect to be stepping forward from a firm foundation. More than eight months into this journey, that expectation has transformed into a confirmed reality.

Sam's work in MHS helped him through technical trainings on non-communicable disease prevention, and maternal and newborn health. On a daily basis, he applies that knowledge toward teaching the Belizean Health and Family Life curriculum in a village school. He believes that the MHS foundation made it easier to understand and empathize with the political, socioeconomic, and sociocultural complexities that affect the health outcomes in the 200-person village in the heart of the Belize River Valley. Sam's MA thesis on quality of life interventions for pediatric cancer patients in major children's hospitals illustrated that even the simplest of non-biomedical aid for sick or in-need children can have a positive impact on their well-being and development. As the new American in a small Kriol village, cultural exchange, learning, and growth occur constantly. Each new day comes with laughter and lessons learned from the villagers. Standing on the foundation built by Vanderbilt and MHS, Sam is confident that when his journey ends, the villagers will have learned something from him.



Sam Edwards





Image description: A professional headshot photo of Nell, a white woman with short dark brown hair, bangs partially covering her forehead, wearing glasses, against a light gray background. She wears a white jacket, black button up, and black and gold diagonal striped bow tie. She smiles widely so that her left eye squints slightly.

NELL KONECZNY

Nell Koneczny (she/her/hers) was an undergraduate double major in Anthropology and European Studies and worked closely with MHS faculty members. Following graduation in 2014, Nell continued her education at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where she earned an MS in Disability and Human Development in 2019. She has since worked as the Accessibility & Meetings Coordinator for the American Anthropological Association. At AAA, she leads accessibility initiatives to promote cultural change in the anthropology discipline so that anyone, whether Disabled, Deaf, Blind, Autistic, Neurodivergent, Mentally Ill, Chronically Ill, and/or otherwise disability-adjacent, may equitably participate in AAA events and access AAA resources. In 2019, Nell developed the expanded accessibility section of the AAA website (americananthro.org/accessibility), which provides accessibility resources for anthropologists, conference attendees, and the broader community. When considering the impact of her time spent in the MHS program, Nell shares, "Without Professors Kenneth MacLeish and Aimi Hamraie, I would not be where I am today. Taking classes in MHS and working closely with justice-minded professors ensured I was able to understand the cultural and social constructions of disability issues that traditional medical courses would be unable to provide. My experience in MHS opened the door so that I could develop disability pride and a sense of urgency to advocate for disability rights and justice."

JORDAN MOODY

In August 2019, Jordan Moody graduated from the MHS 4+1 program. Her academic career included teaching assistant positions for Dr. Hamraie's Theories of the Body course and Professor Dieu-Porter's Comparison of Healthcare Systems Maymester in France and Italy. She also completed a Certificate in Global Health through the Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health. Following graduation, Jordan accepted a position in the Public Health Associate Program, a competitive, two-year training program with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Jordan is now assigned to work at the Metro Public Health Department (MPHD) in Nashville. She is delighted that she gets to work in the city that she grew to love during her time at Vanderbilt. As a Public Health Associate, Jordan is assigned to HIV Prevention at MPHD. Moody serves as a public health educator and assistant program navigator in MPHD's Sexual Health Center. In this role, she provides HIV prevention and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) education to clients. She also coordinates community outreach and the marketing campaign for the PrEP Clinic. Additionally, Jordan is focused on developing education interventions at local universities with high incidence of STIs.

Jordan also serves as the Topics Coordinator for the PHAP African-American Allies in Health Workgroup, and is now assisting MPHD with their ongoing COVID-19 response. As she continues her career in public health, Jordan is grateful for the innovative, multidisciplinary education she received through the Center for Medicine, Health, and Society.



Jordan Moody



Kelly (middle) with HIV unit nurses and staff in front of Sanpatong Hospital, Chiang Mai, Thailand, while conducting her HIV/AIDS-related stigma study during the summer 2017.

KELLY PERRY

MHS alumna Kelly Perry notes that her coursework “elevates my global public health work in international development and HIV cure research. I still proudly refer to my notes from Dr. Laura Stark’s American Medicine and the World course, and leverage concepts from Dr. Gilbert Gonzales’ course on health policy in the United States in my work—locally and globally.” Perry is currently pursuing a master in public health (MPH) degree from the UNC-Chapel Hill Gillings School of Global Public Health, with a concentration in public health leadership. The program is offered online, providing Perry the opportunity to work full-time from anywhere on the globe while learning from world-renowned professors. She recently moved back to Thailand (her home country), and is currently working with FHI 360 on health and human development projects in the Asia Pacific region. Perry has also worked with the Vanderbilt Institute for Clinical and Translational Research’s drug repurposing program, which made the Top 100 list for the MacArthur 100&Change \$100M grant.

During the summer of her junior year, with guidance from Dr. JuLeigh Petty, Perry conducted an HIV/AIDS-related stigma study in which she interviewed 210 people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWH) in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The work considered gender inequality and Buddhism’s associations with stigma, and it informs her current work on an HIV cure-related research project called The Last Gift. This study is a rapid autopsy research study enrolling PLWH who are terminally ill and have a strong desire to contribute to HIV cure-related research at the end of life. Perry is the research associate for the project, overseeing the study’s socio-behavioral and ethical dimensions, conducting qualitative and quantitative analyses, and writing manuscripts that report out study participants’ stories, perceptions, and experiences related to being involved in an HIV cure-related study at the end of life. Grateful for her MHS background, Perry encourages outreach about collaboration, or discussions about mentorship and careers in public health. Please don’t hesitate to reach out!

UAEM Students Advocate for Access to Prescription Drugs

Vanderbilt has already hosted several on-campus, University Allies for Essential Medicines (UAEM) initiatives, including a panel discussion on, "Access to Pharmaceutical Drugs in an Age of Innovation," and a public display during Access to Medicines Week. To build on their efforts, 10 students (Laurie Lapp, Paxton Walton, Kyle Gavulic, Cortez Johnson, Klara Lou, Lisa Su, Jane Yao, Emma Fargo, Tony Owusu, and Rohan Patel) traveled to Washington, D.C., during their spring break to meet with 20 congressional offices, including Rep. Jim Cooper and senators Blackburn, Alexander, and Warren.



In February 2020, trip participants prepared policy briefs that would serve as a leave-behind, outlining their talking points for each meeting. Topics for these briefs were selected based upon current UAEM national campaigns, such as University Report Cards that evaluate Research & Development (R&D) of top research institutions, clinical trial transparency, as well as current pharmaceutical drug policy legislation on the floor of the House or Senate. For example, participants presented on topics such as international reference pricing, accountability in R&D, and lowering drug costs for insulin. Additionally, participants attended several pre-site workshops with guest speakers such as Drs. Dusetzina and Munoz from VUMC; Advocacy Field Director Keila Franks of the Tennessee Justice Center; and Merith Basey, executive director of UAEM North America. This preparation privileged congressional offices, both Democrat and Republican, to be receptive to their advocacy efforts. UAEM-Vanderbilt hopes to continue building these relationships with congressional offices and plans to make this an annual spring break trip!



10 members of UAEM-Vanderbilt meet with Dr. Karen Summar, health policy advisor to Senator Marsha Blackburn.



(left to right): Laurie Lapp, Paxton Walton, Emma Fargo, Cortez Johnson, and Kyle Gavulic meet with Congressman Jim Cooper who represents TN's 5th congressional district.



(left to right): Kyle Gavulic, Emma Fargo, Lisa Su, and Rohan Patel question Congresswoman Debbie Dingell's health policy staffer if the congresswoman will co-sponsor the Lower Insulin Costs Now Act (H.R. 5444).



(left to right, back row then front): Tony Owusu, Klara Lou, Cortez Johnson, Emma Fargo, Rohan Patel, Lisa Su, Jane Yao, Laurie Lapp, Kyle Gavulic and Paxton Walton breathe a sigh of relief after meeting with Senator Marsha Blackburn's office. Cooper who represents TN's 5th congressional district.

Teaching Innovations at Vanderbilt: Danielle Picard, Mary Anne Caton, and Wikipedia Editing

Faith Rovenolt

We've all been told—or have been the ones telling people—not to use Wikipedia as a source. There are a variety of reasons, of course, with the main one being the credibility of the information. The Wikipedia community is aware of this and has made a series of changes aimed at rectifying it. Wiki Education's programs are also making Wikipedia a valuable tool for educators. Dr. Danielle Picard has worked with the Jean and Alexander Heard Libraries' Grants and Programs Manager and Wikipedian-in-Residence, Mary Anne Caton, to incorporate Wikipedia editing into her course, MHS 3890: Special Topics – Eugenics and Its Shadow.

Picard has been editing Wikipedia for years but was motivated to use it in her teaching by her friend and fellow instructor, Dr. Kathleen Sheppard at Missouri University of Science and Technology. (Sheppard was recently featured by Wiki Education for her approach to "Engaging engineering students in the humanities.") By swapping out the typical research papers and essays for Wikipedia editing, Picard gives her students a chance to reach a broader audience with their writing. Their assignments will have a life and meaning outside of the classroom.



Danielle Picard

The process is aided by Wiki Education: instructors can create a Dashboard course page, where they can bookmark relevant pages for students to edit or be inspired by. Picard recommends choosing 15–40 articles, depending on the class size. The site also contains guided tutorials, teaching everything one needs to know to edit Wikipedia. Included in the tutorials is a built-in, peer review process. One thing to keep in mind is that Wiki Education asks that instructors not grade assignments by word count, since more isn't always better when it comes to Wikipedia pages. Another metric to judge productivity can instead be the number of references added. Wiki Education provides plenty of resources to guide this, including a rubric on how to assess student contributions to Wikipedia.

Picard had students focus on knowledge gaps and allowed them to choose an article of interest to them to create or edit. This assignment helps connect students to the past, illustrating how relevant and interconnected the history of the course's subject is, and that the topic is still relevant to the present. This project also helps students evaluate sources and judge their credibility. Writing for Wikipedia is also different than much of the writing some students may do in college; encyclopedic writing is distinct from argumentative writing, because it focuses on clear, concise information that is accessible and from a neutral point of view. This project, like Wikipedia's broader campaigns, is also helping to democratize knowledge. Students at Vanderbilt are often experts in various topics. This training can be harnessed, to make sure student knowledge reaches everyone.

Picard would teach this again, though for a larger class, students might work in teams rather than alone. Additionally, the tutorial pace should be set by the instructor to best match the class—upperclassmen may be able to go at a faster pace than first years. Picard also suggests grading students on doing the tutorials, perhaps through reflections on the tutorials to make sure they are taking them seriously. This assignment works very well for a history class, but non-history courses may need to put extra thought into how to utilize Wikipedia editing. STEM classes also need to know that to edit some science and medicine related pages, you need more training. If there are controversial topics or pages related to a course, students should be steered clear of them to keep them out of internet drama. Picard didn't run into any problems with this, but suggests that students make sure to make a username that doesn't reveal their identity.

Students enjoyed Picard's course, and appreciated that their writing would have a longer lifespan than a traditional essay that was only read by the professor. The public nature of the writing had multiple benefits both pedagogically and personally for the students. Many students stated that they took the assignment more seriously because their work would continue to exist online for others to read. Another student added that he also liked that he could show others what he produced, including his parents. "My mom thinks it's cool," he stated in his final presentation.

Currently, Picard's students' articles currently have added 19.5K words and 256 references to 26 different articles. Those edits have received over 297,000 views in just 2 months.

This post is a republishing of a piece by Faith Rovenolt, Center for Teaching undergraduate intern, on Vanderbilt's blog, with minor edits. The original appeared on December 15, 2019.



Digital Literacy and Understanding Eugenics

Alicia Liu

In Professor Danielle Picard's fall course, *Eugenics and Its Shadow*, MHS student Alicia Liu explored the role of digital literacy in expanding the collective understanding of the 20th-century eugenics movement. Students in Dr. Picard's class were asked to create or enhance Wikipedia articles relating to eugenics, and learned to distill academic writing into an impartial and widely accessible format different from their typical class papers. Applying digital literacy to the history of eugenics is essential because eugenics is often misunderstood as a confined, peripheral movement led by a few racist individuals. By incorporating information about eugenics in Wikipedia articles that span disciplines such as history and medicine, students aimed to demonstrate that eugenics was in truth a pervasive movement, supported by many of the 20th century's leading scientific figures. Liu chose to do her project on the Galton Institute, a British genetic organization formerly known as the Eugenics Education Society, because it continues to exist. She researched a variety of primary and secondary sources to create a timeline of the institute's activities, from 1907 to the present day. Using a publicly-available platform such as Wikipedia to discuss an institution's eugenic history has the ability to ensure that eugenicists' legacies are not whitewashed or dominated solely by their positive contributions. Liu believes that Wikipedia editing is a crucial skill for students at diverse institutions such as Vanderbilt, as getting more students to edit MHS subjects will allow a greater range of perspectives to determine what is noteworthy information, moving us away from a binary, privileged definition of legitimate knowledge.

The Global Psyche: Experiments in the Ethics and Politics of Mental Life

Professors Dominique Béhague and Ken MacLeish are delighted to announce the publication of a co-edited special issue of *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, the flagship journal for the Society for Medical Anthropology. The collection brings together an international group of scholars who study how psychiatric expertise “travels” to diverse sites and populations across the world, and what it looks like in the hands of clinicians, patients, and everyday people on the ground in Japan, Italy, Argentina, Kosovo, First Nations communities in Canada, and various settings in which U.S.’s post-9/11 wars have been waged. The collection examines what Béhague and MacLeish call the “global psyche.” The term refers in part to the ways that American-dominated modes of psychiatry, global health, and transnational psychiatric drug production and marketing, tend to involve a one-way imposition of expert knowledge and authority from the outside. As anthropologists, the contributors to this collection are interested in the fact that such impositions are always cultural as well—that is, they involve everyday human practices and become sources of meaning and experience. The volume’s articles take up problems of global proportion in varied local incarnations, from Professor Margaret Lock’s work on the Anthropocene and environmental destruction in First Nations Canada and

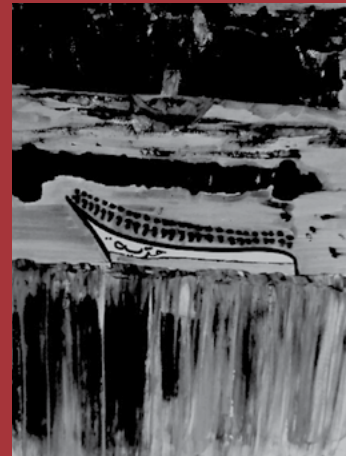
New Series / Volume 34 / Number 1 / March 2020

Medical Anthropology Quarterly

International Journal for the Analysis of Health

Special Issue: The Global Psyche

Guest Editors: Dominique P. Béhague and Kenneth MacLeish



Ken MacLeish



Dominique P. Béhague

professors Jocelyn Chua, Hanna Kienzler, and Sean Brotherton’s papers on war and political violence in the U.S., Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Argentina, to Professor Cristiana Giordano’s consideration of forced migration and displacement in Italy, and Professor Junko Kitanaka’s research on dementia in aging populations in Japan. Yet as authors show, the seemingly straightforward terms “global” and “psyche” cannot simply be taken for granted; the authoritative claiming of mental experiences as part of a “global” and universalist, expertly-validated phenomenon has to be actively produced by a combination of local and global modes of psychiatric authority. These authors—some of the most cutting-edge scholars working in contemporary medical anthropology—show how mental life also becomes a site where ordinary individuals and powerful institutions navigate moral and political problems, dilemmas of survival and producing a good life, and fundamental questions of justice and rights. Profs. Béhague and MacLeish are grateful to the Vanderbilt International Office, the Research Scholars Grant Program of the Office of the Provost, and the Trans-Institutional Partnership Program (TIPs) at Vanderbilt University for funding the two conferences upon which this special issue is based.

How Can Psychiatrists Contribute to Dialogue on Mental Illness and Violence?

by Mark Moran

Jonathan Metzl, MD, PhD, has examined history to expose the ways that gender, class, race, and societal assumptions are intertwined with—and sometimes obscure—social and public policy issues such as guns and gun violence.

Maybe gun violence, including a mass shooting, is a simple thing: a guy (or woman) with a gun pulls the trigger. Bang. Or maybe it is the violent intersection of any number of social and political influences: gun laws or the lack of them, socioeconomic status, racial and gender stereotypes, social networks (or their lack), and feelings of community connectedness.

Metzl, this year's Benjamin Rush Award winner, will seek to untangle these social determinants of gun violence and how psychiatrists might usefully address them in the lecture "Mental Illness, Mass Shootings, and the Politics of American Firearms."

He is the Frederick B. Rentschler II Professor of Sociology and Psychiatry and the director of the Center for Medicine, Health, and Society at Vanderbilt University. The Benjamin Rush Award, established in 1967, recognizes an individual renowned for major contributions to the literature on the history of psychiatry.

Metzl is the author of the recently published book *Dying of Whiteness: How the Politics of Racial Resentment Is Killing America's Heartland*. In the book, Metzl examines how racial and class anxieties and resentments among white working-class Americans are connected to public policies—repeal of gun control laws and curtailments of school, health, and social support programs, including the Affordable Care Act—that have measurably hurt working-class Americans.

It is Metzl's fourth book. In 2010 he published *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease*, in which he examined how schizophrenia and race became intertwined and African American men came to be overdiagnosed with the disorder.

Metzl's 2003 book, *Prozac on the Couch*, traces the notion of "pills for everyday worries" from the 1950s to the early 21st century through psychiatric and medical journals, popular magazine articles, pharmaceutical advertisements, and popular autobiographical "Prozac narratives."

His recent work has focused on guns and gun violence, including mass violence, and the ways in which gun violence is falsely conflated with mental illness. In a 2015 article in the *American Journal of Public Health*, Metzl and co-author Kenneth MacLeish, PhD, wrote: "[N]otions of mental illness that emerge in relation to mass shootings frequently reflect larger cultural stereotypes and anxieties about matters such as race/ethnicity, social class, and politics. These issues become obscured when mass shootings come to stand in for all gun crime and when 'mentally ill' ceases to be a medical designation and becomes a sign of violent threat."

In comments to *Psychiatric News*, Metzl said his lecture will address how psychiatrists can meaningfully contribute to discussion and debate about guns. "A host of false assumptions surrounds the narrative that tries to connect mental illness with mass shootings," he said. "You have to look at mass shootings in the context of gun laws, social networks or the lack of them, gender stereotypes, substance abuse, what guns symbolize for people—all of the other stories that get put on the back burner in the rush to focus on mental illness. These are the kinds of issues psychiatrists can address more meaningfully than trying to make individual-level predictions about who will be violent."



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Published Online: 18 Feb 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.pn.2020.2b28>

Interview with Jamie Pope: A Reflection on 34 Years of Nutrition



Q: 2020 marks your 34th year at Vanderbilt. Tell us a bit about your journey.

I came to Vanderbilt in 1986 to join a multidisciplinary team in the Department of Psychology to do obesity research. This opened doors for publishing in both the academic and popular press arenas in the area of weight management. Over these years, I've also worked in the areas of health promotion, heart disease prevention, and since 2000, teaching Introductory Nutrition. Along the way, I've also had opportunity to teach one of Vanderbilt's first "MOOC"s (Massive Open Online Course), co-author a nutrition textbook (*Nutrition for a Changing World*), and most recently, record an audio non-credit nutrition course that will be offered through Learn25.com and Audible.

Q: You've taught nutrition for 20 years. How has the field of nutrition and your classroom experiences changed over the past two decades?

Keeping up with the evolving science of nutrition as well as the advances in education and classroom technology have kept me on my toes. In 2000, I started with an overhead projector and

white board. Now, we have not only a robust Learning Management System, but student response systems and other engagement tools. Teaching the MOOC also impacted my teaching style and approach—and certainly made me more conscious of global considerations of my students, and nutrition beyond our borders.

The college years are ones of transition as students take more responsibility for their food choices and deal with perceptions and pressures surrounding health and weight. The mixed media messages are confusing, but present an opportunity to explore the science behind headlines and claims. A primary goal of my course is to free students from rigid beliefs and practices, foster an appreciation and enjoyment of eating for overall health, and provide skills to critically evaluate what they read and hear.





Occupational Health Safety in Tennessee

In 2019, Dr. Martha Jones and collaborators from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) finished a three-year project funded by the CDC NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) to improve occupational health and safety in Tennessee. Using data from 300,000 workers' compensation claims from 2014–16, their comprehensive report details claim counts and rates for nearly 300 separate industries as well as aggregating injuries by their proximate cause (e.g. lifting), type (e.g. strain), and body part (e.g. back). Individual industry reports were issued for the transportation, healthcare, manufacturing, and temporary help services industries. The research team also examined the relationship between injuries and tenure, determining that nearly 39 percent of all claims were made by employees in their first year of employment with a firm.

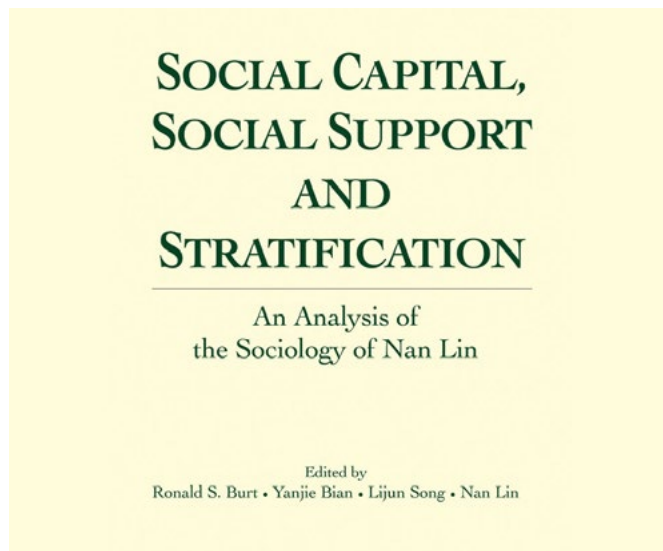
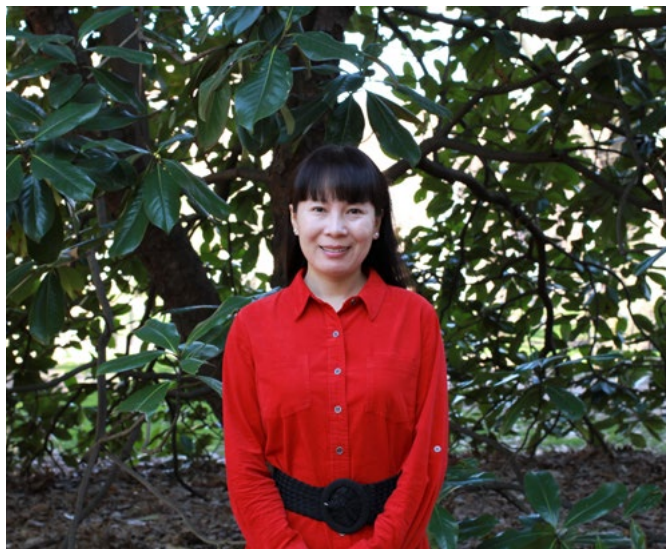
This project was a collaborative effort on many levels. In addition to Dr. Jones, UTK researchers on the project included Edward Taylor, Terry Higgins, John Wagner, John Moore, and Thomas Cressler. First reports of injury from the TN Bureau of Workers' Compensation were matched to unemployment insurance records located at the UTK Boyd Center for Business and Economic Research to provide industry information and employment levels for individual employers. Publicly available Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages and American Community Survey data were also used in rate calculations. In addition to Tennessee, CDC NIOSH funded California, Massachusetts, Ohio, and Michigan. Regular communication and meetings between researchers were held to share best practices in methodology and results, which helped identify trends in workplace injury/illness and determine causation in workers' compensation claims.

The TN reports are available online: <https://sites.google.com/site/tennesseewc20142016/documents>

The Sociology of Nan Lin

Professor Lijun Song was thrilled to publish a co-edited book with three sociologists, Ronald Burt, Yanjie Bian, and Nan Lin, titled *Social Capital, Social Support and Stratification: An Analysis of the Sociology of Nan Lin*. This is Dr. Song's first book. "Nan has been my mentor and friend since my graduate school days. In this book, three of Nan's former students, including myself, have the honor to celebrate Nan's pioneering and significant contributions to multiple schools of sociological research." In Chapter 5, Song reviews Nan's four-decades-long research on social support. "I worked so hard on this chapter that I even came to further appreciate the Vanderbilt University Police Department: working late in my office I often had to use their friendly and warm van escort service. Many thanks to them!" Song says.

"Scholarly exchange is always intriguing and fun. I was honored to give eight invited talks, taking place at Emory University, Hehai University, Nanjing University, University of California at Davis, University of Kentucky, and Vanderbilt University." Dr. Song also presented her work at two domestic and one international academic conferences.



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Senior Naveen Krishnan celebrates graduation Covid-style with friends.

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