



Spring/Summer 2020

Volume 3, No.2

# Newsletter

of the Department of Sociology & Anthropology



Several of our Department faculty stand in silence outside of University Hall this past June with their colleagues from the College of Arts in Letters in solidarity to protest the killing of George Floyd. (Image source: UT College of Arts and Letters (<https://www.facebook.com/UToledoCAL/photos>))

## Social Justice & Social Distancing

### *A Message from the Chair*

Our departmental newsletter is intended to be a place to celebrate our accomplishments. In that spirit, the chair's letter typically is upbeat and somewhat lighthearted. But I can't be like that right now – not while over 100 thousand Americans have died in the pandemic, and not while millions of Americans are grieving yet another unnecessary loss of life to police brutality. These problems are sorrowful, but also alarming because they reveal fundamental flaws in our society and governance. For example, while social distancing has proven effective in flattening the curve, the disproportionate affect of COVID-19 on Black, First Nation, and Latin-X communities reminds us that we cannot justly solve public health problems without rectifying social inequities.

This point was made abundantly clear with the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor. Millions of people across the nation are not only aggrieved but also enraged. They are enraged not only by the loss of these individuals' lives, but also by a long and ongoing history of discrimination and oppression – not only as it relates to law enforcement, but also health care, housing, employment, education, political

representation, cultural appropriation, and environmental well-being.

For social scientists, discrimination and oppression are not mere curiosities to observe dispassionately. They are another sort of pandemic we must eradicate. And in this department we will work with the same urgency and resolve of epidemiologists to analyze and understand the aforementioned problems in hopes that knowledge and understanding will beget the solutions and healing that we the people of America so deeply want and deserve. Social justice is our occupation, and we're glad to have you all working with us!

*Dwight Haase, Ph.D.*

*Chair, Associate Professor,  
Department of Sociology and Anthropology*

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# Social Injustice and Social Actions:

## Department Faculty and Alum

### Provide Reflection and Guidance

In the wake of the social unrest brought on by the continued murder of African Americans at the hands of members of the American police forces, the University of Toledo provided a space for reflection and action. The Office of Diversity and inclusion, led by Vice-Provost Dr. Willie McKether (Anthropologist and our former Department Chair), provided several virtual Town Hall meetings that permitted students and faculty a venue to engage one another in reflective, but necessary discussion on the continued state of injustices in our nation, and around the world. During the first virtual town hall, Dr. Monita Mungo (Sociology)



Dr. Monita Mungo  
Sociology



Professor Angela  
Siner  
Africana Studies

provided her insights on the current movement to address the systemic police violence against African Americans. She was joined by a former UT Master's Student in Sociology, the UT Director of Public Safety & Chief of Police Jeff Newton who offered his perspective as the University's head Policing officer.

The second virtual town hall held in late June was co-hosted by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Africana Studies Program. Professor Angela Siner (Program Director Africana Studies) served as moderator, leading several discussants in another open-forum that explored not only the current social discord surrounding police violence against African American and other minority communities, but the history of such social unrest between the broader public and its police force.

## VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE

### Dialogues on Diversity

The Death of George Floyd: Where Do We Go From Here?

Thursday, June 25 at 5:30 p.m.



## STAY CONNECTED

*Stay up to date* with the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at UT. Like and Follow us on **Facebook** to keep in touch with the latest developments in our Department including recent the accomplishments of our students, updates on the latest research in our fields, and notices for our upcoming events. Alumni be sure to keep in touch and let us know what is important to you, what questions do you have, what is new in your world!

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Education-Website/>

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## Graduation: Reflections and the Road Ahead...

*Before they continue on their journey forward, we stop and review the undergraduate experiences of two of our 2020 graduates and tune in to the future they see before them.*

### **Chartyise ("CJ") Fagan**

CJ graduated in May 2020 with a Bachelor's degree in Sociology. In fall 2019, CJ took advantage of an amazing opportunity to be a Research Assistant at Boise State University. This internship provided him with the chance to get firsthand experience in performing and applying research. After receiving his degree, CJ accepted a job in Houston, Texas as a Juvenile Probation Supervisor. His background in sociology will allow him to communicate effectively with youth and provide them guidance not only from an educational stance but also from experience. While working, he will be applying to graduate schools to get a Master's in Family and Marriage Counseling. Although the national crisis of the pandemic has slowed down his plans, CJ said, "it has blessed me with the time to write a book, refocus my energy, and prepare for the next stages in this journey of life."



### **Krystle Griffith**

After graduating in Spring of 2020 with her Bachelor's degree in Sociology, Krystle plans to continue working with young children of different races and genders in the Toledo area. She has been working with preschoolers as a lead-teacher for two years. It brings Krystle great pleasure to work with preschoolers and teach them what they need to know, in order to do well in testing for kindergarten and starting school. In the future, Krystle hopes to publish a



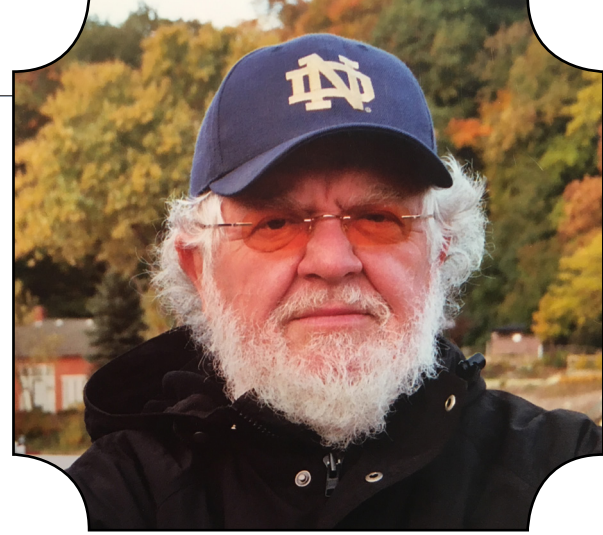
children's book and visit every elementary school in Toledo to give back to her community by reading to young children. In addition, she hopes to start a reading club for young children to join, so that they can receive help with things like reading, writing and math and grow up to be the next lawyers, teachers, and doctors that the world needs.

Krystle strongly believes that learning should start at a young age to help build and expand children's vocabulary. As a Sociology graduate, her studies helped her to put things into perspective on how she views the world today. She feels that, in order for our world to heal, we have to stick together, because a divided nation will only bring violence between one another. Her experience has showed her that when you look at how young children play with one another, you see love, happiness, and helpfulness. In Krystle's words, "We must learn to love one another when we are grown no matter what race or gender you are and that's how we keep moving toward to have a better future for our young children that look up to us as role models."



# Knowing the Past to Understand the Present and Envision the Future

## 50 Years of Contributions of Professor Seamus Metress to UT's Department of Sociology and Anthropology and the Field of Anthropology



*The 2019-2020 Academic year marks Dr. Seamus Metress' 50th year at the University of Toledo as a Professor of Anthropology. To mark the occasion, a couple of our department members, Krista McCarthy Noviski (Graduate Student in Sociology) and Dr. Karie Peralta (Associate Professor of Sociology) endeavored to capture the long career of Dr. Metress through a series of interviews with him and his wife Dr. Eileen Metress (herself a Professor Emeritus of Public Health at UT). The following is a result of those interviews which Ms. Noviski and Dr. Peralta encapsulated in a poster that adorns our department's hallway. If you are on campus, feel free to swing by and learn more about the career and contributions of one of the founders of the UT Anthropology program.*

Seamus in his biology lab in Michigan where he taught school in the 1960s before going on for his Ph.D.



In many ways, the prolific career of Dr. Seamus Metress parallels that of the ideal social scientists - aiming to bridge the gap between the classroom and the real world we find ourselves intertwined in. Ever the consummate academic, Seamus attained his Bachelors in Science from Notre Dame and Master's in Science from Columbia University. Among his earliest experiences as a teacher in the classroom occurred in Michigan for a time until he headed off to Indiana University to pursue his doctoral dissertation.

He arrived at the University of Toledo in 1969 shortly after it attained the status of a 'state university.' At this time the Sociology and Anthropology department was housed in a metal structure, affectionately known as "the hut", originally located just west of the

present Carlson library on campus. It was here in the first days of the 1970s that Seamus, along with his colleagues Robert Wells and Earl Prahl, established the Anthropology department at UT. In 1971, Seamus was tasked with developing a degree program for an Anthropology Major, a program he continues to teach and mentor students in to the present day.



Founding members of the UT Anthropology department: (from left to right) Robin Wells (cultural), Earl Prahl (Archaeology), Seamus



While principally trained as a biological anthropologist, with ample experience as an archaeologist as well as an engaged cultural anthropologist; he would also go on to be a founding member of the Society for Medical Anthropology. Seamus' most renown scholarly accomplishments, and the passions he so readily instills in his students are those in the arena of political activism. His long history of engaged anthropology includes the civil rights movements of Northern Ireland, apartheid in South Africa, the rights of Indigenous people, labor issues and the environment.

In the early 1980s Seamus and his wife Eileen K. Metress participated in the annual Anti-internment March held in Belfast Ireland. It was during the 1983 annual march that the Metresses witnessed first-hand the use of violent police suppression as the Royal Ulster Constabulary fired plastic bullets at the unarmed crowds, leaving many wounded and



Dr. Seamus Metress with Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, a noted Irish civil rights leader and political activist; 1981.

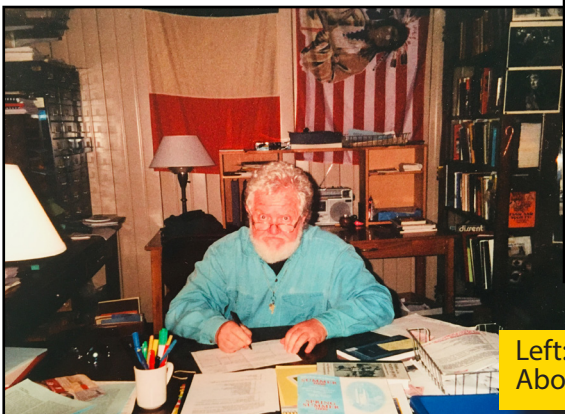
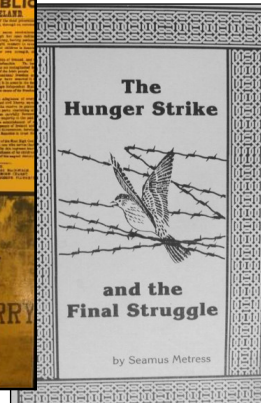
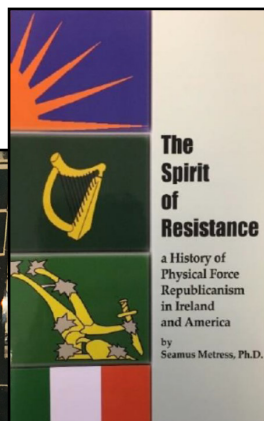
nal Article on Injury Control

#### THE ANATOMY OF PLASTIC BULLET DAMAGE AND CROWD CONTROL

Eileen K. Metress and Seamus P. Metress

The plastic bullet was introduced into Northern Ireland as a riot control weapon in 1973. It became fully operational in 1975, replacing its predecessor the rubber bullet. The missile, which has been portrayed as a "minimum force," nonlethal weapon, has resulted in 13 deaths, including those of seven children, and scores of serious, permanent injuries and disabilities. Evidence regarding injury inflicted by the plastic bullet indicates that it is more dangerous than the rubber bullet that it replaced. It tends to cause more serious injuries to the skull and brain and therefore more deaths. An examination of the three rubber bullet and 13 plastic bullet deaths.

one killed. They would go on to publish an article through John's Hopkins University in 1987 about the deaths caused by plastic bullets (pictured left).



Left: Dr. Seamus Metress in his office;  
Above Right: a selection of Dr. Metress' publications.

Seamus's fieldwork in Ireland spanned the 1980s and 1990s, culminating in numerous national presentations, books, and articles. Being especially passionate about Irish American history, Irish ethnicity, and Irish American labor history (particularly that of Irish-American women), he has devoted many years of study to those topics resulting in various publications (pictured above).

By special invitation of the American Anthropological Association, he spoke at its meeting as part of a major symposium honoring the contributions of Ashley Montague as "one of contemporary society's finest thinkers." Central stage was Montague's genetic critique and dismemberment of the concept of race. The symposium culminated in the book *Race*

Right: Dr. Metress (background) posing a question to Dr. Ronald Seavoy (Professor of History) at a BGSU sponsored debate about the conflict in Northern Ireland; (image source The BG News, October 20, 1981; photo by Dean Koepfler).





and *Other Misadventures: Essays in Honor of Ashley Montague in His Ninetieth Year*, for which Seamus authored a chapter titled "British Racism and Its Impact on Anglo-Irish Relations." His book, *The Irish in Toledo*, won the 2006 Local History Award from BGSU's Center for Archival Collections.

In addition to his fieldwork, publications and public addresses on contemporary social injustices, Seamus and his wife Eileen have served as patrons to various local and regional groups including Sunshine Inc. (supporting developmental disabilities), NW Ohio Food Bank, Raven (Respecting Aboriginal Values and Environmental Needs), The White Earth [Reservation] Land Recovery Project, Coal River Mountain Watch, among many others.



Dr. Metress with former student Markie Miller. Ms. Miller went on to receive her Masters in Environmental Science. Inspired by the work of Seamus and Eileen Metress, she has gone on to become an environmental analyst, leading the drive to establish a Lake Erie Bill of Rights. In 2019 she was invited to address the United Nations, speaking to the Rights of Nature, specifically those of Lake Erie.

As his career started in the classroom, it is there that he identifies as having had the opportunity to bring about profound impacts. Over the last 50 years Professor Metress has taught students across multiple generations. A student once told him that he had taught both his father and grandfather. Always looking for ways to get students engaged, Seamus, and his wife Eileen Metress (herself a Professor Emeritus of Public Health at UT), lead a group of 18 UT students on a three week study abroad trip to Ireland; an experience that led to a number of graduate theses. Seamus notes that his students are the reason for doing what he does, and why he has carried on for these 50 years. He takes great pleasure in seeing the personal and intellectual growth of his students as well as their achievements.



## Tenured.

This past spring, the University of Toledo Board of Trustees approved the tenure and promotion of two of our faculty members. Dr. Melissa Baltus (Anthropology) and Dr. Karie Peralta (Sociology) each achieved the status of tenured professor. Over the past few years, these two (now) Associate Professors have worked diligently in their respective fields to conduct research and publish. Just as importantly, they have been able to get undergraduate students involved in their respective fieldwork, from archaeological excavations at prehistoric sites in the Midwest to ethnographic fieldschool expeditions to the Dominican Republic. Our Department is fortunate to have two outstanding Professors, and extend to them a whole-hearted :

***Congratulations!***



Dr. Karie Peralta  
Sociology



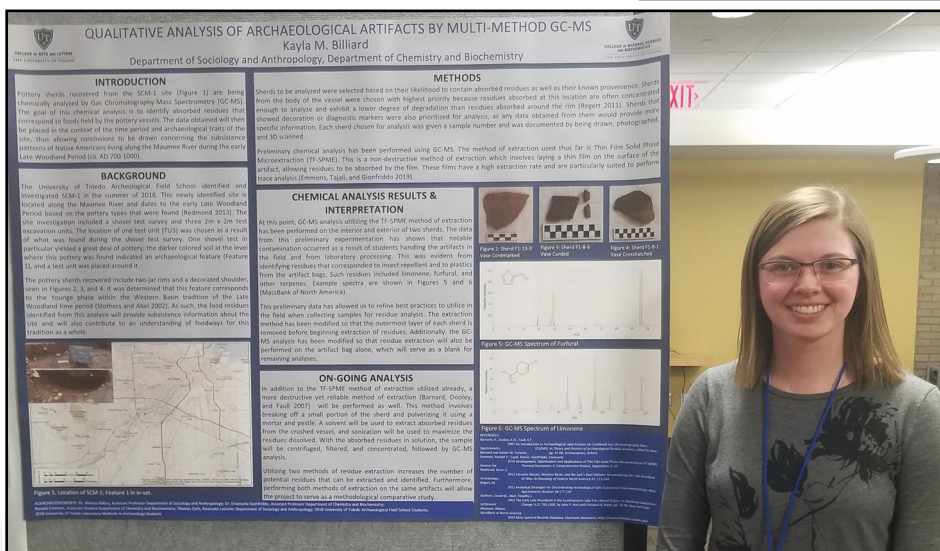
Dr. Melissa Baltus  
Anthropology



# UT Undergraduate Research Exhibition

*This past Winter, several undergraduate students represented the department at the "University of Toledo Undergraduate Research Exhibition." Held annually at the Carlson Library, the exhibition highlights students' original research carried out during their undergraduate career.*

Undergraduate students **Sarah Bayes** and **Katie Raczkowski** (pictured right) presented their research poster titled "Stateless in the Dominican Republic: Haitian Elementary Students" focused on their 2019 field experience in the Dominican Republic, a fieldschool program led by Drs. Peralta and Arps.



**Kayla Billiard** (pictured left) presented her original research poster titled "Quantitative Analysis of Archaeological Artifacts by Multi-Method GC-MS." Combining her Chemistry and Anthropology majors, Kayla analyzed trace food residue from prehistoric pottery recovered during the 2018 archaeological fieldschool led by Dr. Baltus, during which Kayla also served as a student excavator.

## Department Brown Bag Series

This past winter, Sociology graduate student Joshua Williams provided a brownbag presentation based on his recently published research. Joshua discussed the imbalances that arise between societies and their newly developed technologies. His talk provided a suite of thoughts for users of contemporary technology to consider as we continue to develop and advance our digital technologies while avoiding the pitfalls we (should have) learned from history.





# From Fieldwork to Advancing the Conversation

*This spring, our burgeoning social scientists and their mentors continued to engage academic research outside the classroom. Several of our department's students built upon that integral part of our two disciplines, fieldwork, and engaged local communities and academic peers to expand upon our understanding of the human condition....*

Edelweiss Murillo Lafuente, a graduate student, conducted field work research in Bolivia during last summer. She interviewed several disabled women to explore how their life experiences were shaped by their participation in disability activism. In January, Edelweiss

Murillo Lafuente presented a paper titled 'The social production of impairment in Bolivia' at the Sociologists for Women in Society Winter Meeting in San Diego, California. Additionally, she participated at a roundtable discussion and joined the international committee. During the different plenaries, Edelweiss made important connections with several feminist scholars. Her M.A. thesis analyses the experiences of Bolivian disabled women through a transnational feminist approach.



Above: Edelweiss involved in engaged research during her time in Bolivia. Right: Edelweiss (second from left) stands alongside fellow participants at the Sociologists for Women in Society's Winter Meeting.



This past winter a group of UT Sociology and Anthropology faculty and students participated in a panel discussion entitled, "Fieldwork in the Dominican Republic: Bringing Haitian Immigrant Issues into Focus," at Ohio University for the Ohio Latin Americanist Conference (Feb. 28th-29th).

Photo from left to right: Edelweiss Murillo Lafuente (Sociology graduate student); Sarah Bayes (Anthropology undergraduate student); Katie Raczkowski (Anthropology undergraduate student); Dr. Shahna Arps (Assistant Professor of Anthropology); and Dr. Karie Peralta (Associate Professor of Sociology).



# Spring 2020 Graduates: Witnesses to a Global Pandemic and Social Injustice

The year 2020 will undoubtedly be one we are not soon to forget. The prolific spread of the Covid-19 virus forced the second half of the Spring semester to a 100% online format. National events which transpired in the spring highlighted the need for social reform which culminated in large-scale protests and rallies at local, national, and international scales. During these trying times we want to recognize and congratulate our students who remained focused on not only the pandemic and social justice movements transpiring around them, but also attended to their academic responsibilities and graduated with the class of 2020.

## Graduating with a Bachelor of Arts

Kayla M. Billiard	<i>Anthropology &amp; Chemistry</i>	Jessica L. Hardy	<i>Sociology</i>
Angela A. Byrd	<i>Africana Studies</i>	Brian A. Knutson	<i>Anthropology</i>
Jordan G. Dionne	<i>Anthropology</i>	Sarah J. McZahn	<i>Anthropology</i>
Chartyise M. Fagan	<i>Sociology</i>	Tierra L. Murphy	<i>Africana Studies</i>
Krystle D. Griffith	<i>Sociology</i>	Abdullah K. Nooh	<i>Anthropology</i>
Alaysia B. Grose	<i>Anthropology</i>	Allyson R. Spoering	<i>Anthropology</i>
Nicole Haney	<i>Sociology</i>	Conor M. Thomas	<i>Anthropology &amp; History</i>
		Taylor Woodward	<i>Anthropology</i>

2019-2020

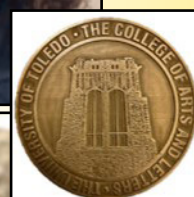
## Outstanding Students

Each year our department recognizes the student from each discipline that exemplifies the qualities of an accomplished academic and scholar. Typically honored at the College of Arts and Letters Honors & Awards Recognition Ceremony, this year had to recognize them and celebrate their accomplishments at a distance.

**Jordan Dionne** is graduating *summa cum laude* with a major in Anthropology and minor in Biology. In addition to his academic excellence in Anthropology, he is well-read and conversant about a variety of fields. Jordan plans to seek a job or internship after graduation where he can use his communication skills and creativity.



**Jessica Hardy** graduated *cum laude*, majoring in Sociology. She impressed her professors and fellow students with her intellect, open-mindedness, and her interpersonal skills as she eloquently advocated for a more just and sustainable society. Jessica plans to pursue her graduate studies at the University of Toledo.





## Graduating with a Master's in Sociology



This spring we also recognize our graduating Master's students who, despite the shift to social distance learning, managed to complete their thesis and defend it via digital meetings with their respective committee members. We look forward to hearing about all their upcoming future accomplishments.

Our Master's degree recipients found a moment early in the semester to pose for a photo. From left to right: Edelweiss Murillo Lafuente, Solomon Sackey Amoatey, Dr. Karie Peralta (who served as chair for each of their Thesis committees) and Krista Noviski McCarthy.

### Edelweiss Murillo Lafuente

Thesis title: "Experiences of Bolivian Disabled Activist Women"

Committee members: Dr. Karie Peralta (Chair, Associate Professor of Sociology), Dr. Shahna Arps (Assistant Professor of Anthropology), and Dr. Allison Day (Associate Professor of Disability Studies).

### Solomon Sackey Amoatey

Thesis title: "Disability in Ghana"

Committee members: Dr. Karie Peralta (Chair), Dr. Shahna Arps, and Dr. Jim Ferris (Professor of Disability Studies).

### Krista Noviski McCarthy

Thesis title: "Empathy in Medicine: The Lived Experience of Teaching Empathy in Medical Education."

Committee members: Dr. Karie Peralta (Chair), Dr. Monita Mungo (Assistant Professor of Sociology), and Dr. Shahna Arps.

## Love found in University Hall

Bringing about some happiness in the midst of a pandemic, two of our former Graduate students in Sociology, Aleiah Jones and Justin Armstrong managed to celebrate their marriage this Spring with a quick (Covid-responsible) stop by the halls of the department in which they achieved their Master's degrees. We send them our congratulations and wish them best wishes as they continue their journey together.

