

**College of Humanities and Social Sciences: 2009-2010 Global Learning Awards**

**ABSTRACTS:**

**Dr. Sam Abaidoo, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice, “Perspectives and Attitudes toward Filial Obligations and Rights in Urban Ghana.”**

In Ghana, as in other African countries, there are unwritten norms that have historically prescribed strong adherence to filial obligations. These have served as a mechanism for providing community welfare primarily on the basis of consanguineous relationships as represented by a broad network of relationships in an “extended family”.

Over the last several years it has been reported in the literature that the institution of the extended family, along with the strength of filial obligations, is rapidly changing in Ghana. This has been reported to be the case primarily in urban areas. In rural communities where kinship is the prime context for enactment of social relations the social control mechanisms apparently continue to sustain the fulfillment of filial obligations. In such contexts the neglect and negation of filial obligations are defined as deviant behavior that attracts a range of sanctions. In urban areas on the other hand where extended family networks and associated filial rights and obligations are said to be weakening it is not clear what the patterns and underlying mechanisms are. If the extended family system and adherence to filial obligations are indeed weakening in urban areas, what are the underlying factors, mechanisms and implications as the Ghanaian society becomes more urbanized? Are such changes similar among different groups of urban dwellers? If not, what are the sources of variation and what do these teach us about the strength of traditional practices and institutions such as the extended family? The purpose of this proposed study is to investigate these questions in an urban community in Ghana.

**Dr. Paul M. Dover, Department of History, “Fifteenth-century Rome as diplomatic center and information hub.”**

This proposal seeks support to attend two international conferences in May 2010 in Rome and Fiesole, respectively, and to conduct 8-10 days of original documentary research in the Secret Vatican Archive in Rome. These activities will contribute to on-going scholarship on fifteenth-century Rome as an information hub in Renaissance Europe.

Building upon my published work on diplomacy and ecclesiastical politics at the papal court, it seeks to situate Rome within the diplomatic revolution underway in Renaissance Italy. Changes in diplomatic praxis in this period encouraged a new emphasis on the collection and exchange of information by ambassadors, and nowhere in Europe received and hosted more envoys than did Rome. This project thus examines a historical episode reminiscent of a very modern problem: the effective dissemination and acquisition of useful information.

**Drs. Darina Lepadatu and Cristina Stephens, Department of Sociology & Criminal Justice, “Immigration-Friendly Lands or Acculturation Traps? A Comparative Analysis of Romanian Immigration to United States and European Union.”**

The purpose of this project is to compare and contrast the experiences of immigration and acculturation of Romanian immigrants in the United States versus the European Union, particularly Italy and Spain. The project will explore the immigration experiences in terms of perceived accessibility, ease of the immigration process, perceived availability of opportunities and chances for integration, as well as the acculturative strategies that Romanian immigrants in the US and the EU are most likely to adopt. This study is the first study on Romanian immigration in the US, but will also be a relevant contribution to the research on international migration and comparative sociology as it offers a comparative perspective on barriers against immigration and naturalization, perceptions of discrimination, perception of the “stranger” and acculturation strategies of immigrants in host countries. Using a multi-method design, this research study will be based on data collected from 900 surveys, 150 in-depth interviews and participant observation of eight major Romanian communities abroad in US, Italy and Spain. The project will (hopefully) be co-sponsored by the Department of Romanian Diaspora -Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**Dr. Charles M. “Buddy Mayo, Department of Communication, “Establishing a European Partner at Jacobs University in Bremen, Germany for the Masters in Integrated Global Communication Program.”**

This grant will provide the means for the Department of Communication to establish a partnership with Jacobs University in Bremen, Germany. The Department of Communication has proposed a Masters in Science in Integrated Global Communication with a launch date of fall 2010, and Rich Vengroff, dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, has given the program high priority. The focus of the proposed graduate program is derived from the “Global Learning for Engaged Citizenship” initiative and reflects KSU’s commitment to global education. The centerpiece for this innovative, contemporary and relevant 16-month graduate program is the summer term when students break from classroom instruction and choose from a variety of international experiences: a practicum with a global corporation in a foreign country or in the U.S., a service learning project with a nonprofit organization with global reach, or a study abroad opportunity with a KSU international partner institution. We established a

partnership with Shanghai International Studies University in Shanghai, China, in summer 2008. Jacobs University offers the Department of Communication two important features: a partner institution in Germany and the European Union; and a partner institution that, like SISU in Shanghai, is modeled on the American system and uses English as the primary instructional language and campus communication. Like the partnership established with SISU, the agreement struck with Jacobs University will require face-to-face discussions with faculty and administrators. This grant will go toward paying the expenses for travel to Bremen, Germany.

**Dr. Lynn Patterson, Department of Geography and Anthropology, “Increasing Global Citizenship and Social Responsibility through a Virtual Classroom.”**

As global awareness and connectivity are vital to the study of geography, geographers try to increase student interaction with other places and cultures. Limited by many factors, including logistical and political ones, geographers seek innovative means of creating exchanges for students. This project will develop an online class experience between students of Kennesaw State University (KSU) and students at Corporación Universitaria Minuto del Dios in Bogota, Colombia (UNIMINUTO). KSU students enrolled in the Geography Senior Seminar will spend approximately one-third of their course engaged in a dynamic exchange with peers at UNIMINUTO who are enrolled in a course on social responsibility. Students will regularly video conference to listen to joint lectures, share knowledge and experiences, and co-develop a report detailing recommendations to improve the social development projects coordinated through UNIMINUTO. Students in both classes will be exposed to the importance of social responsibility and their roles as global citizens. A series of global learning outcomes include: an opportunity to interact with Colombian students that otherwise would not happen because of US Department of State travel restrictions; the ability to put theories into practice; and an increased awareness of conditions in other parts of the world. To measure the global learning outcomes, pre- and post- course surveys will be conducted for both sets of students that assess their attitudes about global citizenship and social responsibility as a part of this process. Results of the project will be disseminated through conference presentations and a peer-reviewed journal article.

**Dr. Terry G. Powis, Department of Geography and Anthropology, “ The Rise of Complex Society in the Maya Lowlands: Excavations at Preclassic Pacbitun, Belize.”**

I propose to conduct original archaeological field work at an ancient Maya site in Belize, Central America. In addition to fostering faculty research, my field work will contribute to the university’s “Global Learning for Engaged Citizenship” initiative by having two student researchers working with me on the project. This international

research opportunity will contribute to our knowledge of early Maya life. It will also provide for an intensive learning experience for several Kennesaw State University anthropology students. This project will serve as a pilot for what I hope will become a formal field school in archaeology in Belize in the future.

**Dr. Vanessa Slinger-Friedman, Department of Geography and Anthropology, “The Globalization of Philanthropy: Understanding the Impact of Travelers Philanthropy on a Local Community in Dominica.”**

This proposal requests funds under the Global-Learning Award Competition to support research on an emerging type of tourism, referred to as travelers’ philanthropy, considered to be a significant source of international development assistance. This study will specifically seek to define the quantitative and qualitative impacts in terms of how philanthropic travel contributes to sustainability or enhancement of local culture and the environment at a philanthropic travel site (Petite Savanne) in Dominica. Since this is a newly developing form of tourism there is almost no formal literature available on this topic, therefore this study will be seminal and contribute much to the knowledge and understanding of travelers’ philanthropy and the impact of travelers’ philanthropy on the development of poor communities in developing countries of the world.

**Dr. Ginny Q. Zhan, Department of Psychology, “China’s only children revisited: I may not have a sibling, but I have internet!”**

Since the implementation of the official “One-Child-Per-Family” in 1979, China has produced approximately 90 million only children, mostly in urban areas (Sun & Zhao, 2006). Many scientific studies suggest that Chinese only children fare well in academic achievement, behavioral characteristics, intelligence, and some areas of mental health (Chen, Rubin, & Li, 1994; Falbo & Polit, 1986). However, findings also indicate that only children frequently feel lonely, desperately need a best friend, and most have developed an intense co-dependence with their parents (Chen, 1997). Some of these issues might be reduced or eliminated by having sibling interactions, or those with sibling substitutes. The current research attempts to examine a unique 21<sup>st</sup> century phenomenon:

use of modern technology. Specifically, the research question is: can use of technology fulfill the traditional roles of siblings? Chinese children, adolescents, college students and parents will participate in focus-group discussions as well interviews to provide answers.