

## Undergraduate Research Opportunities in the Sociology Program: Fall 2017

### Dr. Jennifer Givens:

Opportunities for undergraduates to get involved on a four year project. Collecting/analyzing media coverage of climate change in Utah and the Intermountain West. Focuses on concern about climate change, resistance to the reality of climate change, and action and resilience in the context of climate change.

Interested in getting involved? Contact Dr. Givens at [jennifer.givens@usu.edu](mailto:jennifer.givens@usu.edu), or visit her office hours. Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:30-4:30pm in Old Main 216E

### Dr. Peggy Petrzelka:

**“I get along better if I just pretend to be the little ole’ lady they want me to be”:**

Issues of Power and Gender among Female Landowners of Agricultural Land

Female Ownership of Agricultural Land is on the rise in the US. In some states, close to 50% of the ag land is now owned by women, who typically rent this land out to male farmers to operate. The limited research which has been conducted on this topic shows the women face many complications when working with their male renters—including their voices being dismissed and marginalized. The marginalization of women’s voices does not solely occur by male farmers, but also by US Department of Agriculture natural resource agencies, whose mission is to provide information to underserved populations such as these women landowners.

A research team in the USU Sociology Program is currently interviewing women landowners to obtain data on the challenges they face as women landowners—challenges brought on both by their age (most are elderly) and by their gender. In addition, this research team is evaluating a form of conservation outreach being conducted with these women—in order to provide information to the women about their land and their position as women landowners (for e.g. soil health, how to get conservation practices into the leases they have with their male renters, how to ask for and obtain the same rent per acre that male landowners are getting, etc.)

There are opportunities for 1-2 undergraduates who are interested in this topic and willing to transcribe interviews of the women, be involved in participating in on campus and nationwide conference presentations on the research, and to participate in writing and publishing journal articles on the data collected thus far, and on data being collected. Hourly wage is provided.

Please contact Peggy Petrzelka ([peggy.petrzelka@usu.edu](mailto:peggy.petrzelka@usu.edu)) for more information on these research opportunities.

### Dr. Mehmet Soyer:

**(De)constructing Prenatal Mortality as Environmental-Caused in Vernal**

In this project, Dr. Soyer will explore the framing of prenatal mortality as environmentally caused and the meanings such frames hold for Moms. He wishes to speak with moms who attribute their experience to an environmental cause to understand how they concluded the environment was to blame for stillborn deaths, and meanings that conclusion holds for them in terms of their illness and treatment. On a broader perspective, he wishes to explore how this information informs the sociological literature about health and

the environment and what impact a social construction of the environmental as a health threat has on the families of stillborn deaths. Vernal is a fracking boomtown. The natural gas industry has grown rapidly. While some research has been conducted on the quantitative study of infant mortality, Dr. Soyer can find very little research on the relationship between infant mortality with fracking from a local resident perspective. When presented with findings that a possible fracking related infant mortality exists in their area, how do patients respond? What meanings and expectations do they hold in reference to such findings? This will be a significant contribution to the literature on the relationship between fracking and stillborn death research, social constructions of illness.

If you are interested in getting involved contacted Dr. Mehmet Soyer at [mehmet.soyer@usu.edu](mailto:mehmet.soyer@usu.edu), or visit during his office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:30-3:00pm in Old Main 224C.

Dr. Courtney Flint:

Dr. Courtney Flint and Dr. Jennifer Givens have a project investigating well being in Utah. Part of that project involves measuring how local residents perceive their own wellbeing and that of their community. We are looking for a team of students to conduct public intercept surveys across Utah using iPads to record information. Additional research roles (depending on interest) might include managing data, transcribing and analyzing open-ended comments, analyzing survey data, and comparing community wellbeing data from multiple sources. Students will learn the various ways in which wellbeing is defined and measured and gain practical research skills and experience working as part of a collaborative research team. Students will have opportunities to frame independent research questions and make presentations at upcoming conferences.

If you're interested in getting involved contact Dr. Flint at [Courtney.Flint@usu.edu](mailto:Courtney.Flint@usu.edu), or visit during her office hours on Thursdays from 1:30-3:00pm in Old Main 216G.