

**Sociology Major, Christina Mayse ('15), on her participation in the  
2014 American Sociological Association's Honors Program  
In San Francisco, CA  
Interview by Professor Catherine Harnois**

*CH: So, Christina, you are you just recently came back from the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, in San Francisco, where you participated in the Undergraduate Honors Program. What made you want to participate in this program?*

CM: The program was spoken about in a class that I was taking, and I thought that it sounded like a wonderful opportunity to be able to present research that I am passionate about. I am in the honors psychology program here at Wake, so I thought that this would be a great opportunity for me to present research even though I am not pursuing honors sociology here. Also, prior to this trip, I had never been farther West than Indiana, so a trip to San Francisco really appealed to me. I didn't get the opportunity to go abroad at Wake, so I was very excited about this program so that I can get out beyond the Wake bubble and spread my wings a bit.

*CH: Can you tell me a little about the steps you took to apply, and the sources of funding you sought out to help with the expenses?*

CM: The application process is much like an application process that you would undergo to apply for a research fellowship or a scholarship. I was required to submit the paper that I was proposing to present, along with a letter explaining why I wanted to participate and what I thought that I could contribute to the program by attending. I was also required to have one letter of recommendation with my application, and, naturally, had to fill out an application form for the Honors Program, which included things like my overall grade point average and my grade point average in sociology.

I applied to two different sources of funding, one through the university (called the STARR Travel Grant) and the other through our wonderful sociology department. I felt very supported throughout the entire process, especially from Ms. Julie Potter, Dr. Hana Brown, and Dr. Catherine Harnois for helping me work out the kinks!

*CH: Can you tell me a little about the overall ASA Honors program? And what was the most memorable part of your experience?*

CM: The program was very diverse in what it had to offer. The main part of the program for us was our paper presentation, which took place in a round table setting. We had about four students per table with one presider, which made the presentation feel more relaxed, but still very professional. We also had the opportunity to attend some of the many sessions that were offered throughout the conference. It was in one of these sessions, regarding the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Second Shift, that I was able to see Arlie Hochschild speak. It was really amazing to be able to put faces with the names that I have been reading about for four years now. I have to admit that I

was a little star struck throughout the whole experience! The presider at my round table was actually none other than Dr. Earl Babbie, whose textbook we had used for my research methods course in the previous semester, and Dr. Annette Lareau came to speak to the Honors participants, which was really amazing. I was able to ask her a question about building rapport with the individuals she studies, where she told me that there were a lot of pies made and flowers were brought, among other things (who knew that pies don't have class distinctions in the ways that cakes do?).

The Honors Program also took us to Alcatraz Island and presented us with an article to read to accompany our trip. It was really cool to be able to go to the island and think of the prison with our sociological imaginations engaged (plus we were afforded the opportunity to be tourists).

*CH: What was the title of the paper you presented, and what was it about?*

CM: The title of the paper that I presented was entitled "Religion and Same-Sex Parenting: Denomination or Degree of Affiliation?" In this paper I sought to examine the ways in which religious identification (in the form of doctrine or specific religious belief), religiosity (how much an individual identifies with a particular religious belief) and degree of affiliation (how frequently an individual attends religious services) affect the ways in which they view same sex parenting as compared to heterosexual parenting.

My results demonstrated that when controlling for sex, age, education, race, and political party, the most significant predictors were religiosity and degree of affiliation. So, what matters more regarding the formation of opinions regarding same-sex parenting as compared to heterosexual parenting is degree of affiliation and individual religiosity as opposed to the denomination that individual is affiliated with.

Other significant variables included sex (with females being more accepting of homosexual parenting than males), age (with younger individuals being more approving than older individuals), and education (with more education being associated with higher approval of homosexual parenting).

*CH: What were the most important things you took away from the experience?*

CM: We had two different sessions discussing graduate school, which I found to be particularly enlightening. There was a lot of focus on what we can do with our sociology degrees, whether it be pursuing a Ph.D. in sociology or in some other field. It really opened my eyes to see that regardless of where my path takes me, my sociology degree is going to be an essential stepping-stone to help me along that path. So I think I really came away with the confidence that my degree in sociology was going to aid me in whatever my academic pursuits may be.

*CH: Would you recommend the ASA Honors program to other WFU students? And if so, what advice would you give to students who were interested in participating next year?*

CM: I would absolutely recommend this program to other WFU students! The experience that I gained by participating in this program is truly unforgettable and will definitely serve to help my academic career as I pursue post-graduate options. As far as advice that I would give to students who are interested in applying, I would definitely say to submit a paper that you are interested in, and to not be afraid to be bold and pose questions regarding the structure of society, or something that you are passionate about, within your personal statement for you application. I really think that because I was passionate about what I wanted to present that I was able to stand out a bit more in the application process. Be excited about it!

**Congratulations, Christina!**