



Union College Sociology Department

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Chair's Corner

By Professor Deidre Hill-Butler

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Tracy Chen, Lora Condon, Rwan Mashrah, Aneisya Williams and Haley Gibbons, our collaborative Sociology Club and Newsletter team, for their hard work on this issue.

Please look inside for important updates and student highlights. You will find profiles on our seniors, who are currently finishing thesis work on a wide range of fascinating topics. It has been a robust term, indeed: the Sociology Club hosted two successful events, and the Department partnered with the Becker Career Center on two occasions.

Looking ahead, the Sociology Junior/Senior Thesis Information Session was February 19th.



Dr. Deidre Hill Butler
Professor and Chair of Sociology
Winter 2026

Faculty Updates



*Dr. Deidre Hill Butler
Professor and Chair of
Sociology
Winter 2026*

Professor Deidre Hill Butler looks forward to mentoring a cohort of independent study and senior thesis students during the Spring term. She and Marietta Carr, Librarian at the Schenectady County Historical Society, were awarded a New York State Conservation/Preservation of Library Research Materials grant and a New York State Archives Documentary Heritage Grant to support the preservation and archiving of Black women's leadership in the New York Capital District.

Beyond her academic work, Professor Hill Butler has stepped down from the Boards of Safe Inc. and the Duryee Community Foundation. She now serves on the Advisory Committee to the Board of the Schenectady Scholars Charter School, whose mission is to nurture compassionate, knowledgeable, and confident learners by fostering academic achievement and character development in a holistic, engaging environment.

In April 2026, Professor Hill Butler will present her forthcoming article, "Womanist Homeplaces: Black Placemaking in Ireland," at the 12th Annual Africa Conference at Tennessee State University, aligned with the conference theme: "Identities, Continuities, and Transformations: Women, Youths, and Children in Africa and the African Diaspora."

Professor Goldner is teaching "History of Sociological Thought" this term, which is the required theory course (SOC 305). Of the three different versions of the course, this one pairs classical theorists with contemporary theories. For example, we compared Durkheim's statements on solidarity with functionalism's analysis of stratification by Davis and Moore. Also, her thesis students are analyzing quantitative and qualitative data on a range of topics from health to sports. Next term, she will teach "Introduction to Sociology." Finally, she is working on an encyclopedic entry on complementary and alternative medicine that will place sociological research on users and practitioners in a global context.



*Dr. Melinda A. Goldner
Professor of Sociology
Winter 2026*

Faculty Updates



*Dr. David A. Cotter
Professor of Sociology
Winter 2026*

Professor Cotter has been teaching a section of Introduction to Sociology and advising a series of thesis students this winter. He recently had a paper accepted for publication applying the 3P model to depression among faculty at liberal arts colleges during the COVID pandemic. Differentiating between predisposing, precipitating, perpetuating factors, we showed that while predisposing factors (sex, race, parenthood, rank, and tenure) did not significantly predict depression, precipitating factors like work-life balance, teaching resources did, as did the perpetuating factor of sleep deprivation. While he is on sabbatical this spring Professor Cotter plans to start on a book project on the stalled gender revolution.

Prof Kaplan is looking forward to the Winter term and the community outreach her students in SOC 450 are doing this term. Organizations that students are working with include the Audubon Society, Schoharie River Center/Schenectady Environmental Education Center, and the NYS Dept of Environmental Conservation.

Prof Kaplan continues to be involved with NOAA, reviewing and commenting on fisheries policies and user group participation as well as with the Marine Policies Center of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.



*Dr. Ilene M. Kaplan
Professor of Sociology
Winter 2026*

Faculty Updates



*Dr. Timothy P. Stablein
Associate Professor of
Sociology
Winter 2026*

Next term (Spring, 2026), I will be teaching two exciting courses. In the first course, Social Constructions of Deviance (SOC-204), we explore a variety of topics related to social deviance and social control. In the second course, Qualitative Methods (Soc-304), we will explore a variety of qualitative research methods that sociologists employ to examine the social world, such as participant observation, in-depth interviewing, and ethnography, and employ them to undertake independent research projects. Students will work primarily on their own research projects throughout the term. Those planning to write a senior thesis that incorporates qualitative methods of observation and analysis are especially encouraged to take this course so that they may not only learn important "tricks of the trade," but also get a head start on developing qualitative thesis proposals and projects. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have about either of these courses at Stableit@union.edu.



Thesis Spotlight

Skyler Semon
Class of 2026

My thesis explores the socioeconomic opportunities and barriers within professional sports, focusing specifically on how professional tennis reflects and reinforces broader social inequalities. My thesis examines the intersection of class, gender, and race in shaping athlete development, media coverage, and institutional governance. Through case studies of American players Frances Tiafoe, Taylor Fritz, Coco Gauff, and Emma Navarro, my research illustrates how systemic advantages and disadvantages impact professional trajectories and public perception.



Skyler Semon
Winter 2026

Sociology Club Update

By Lora and Tracy

The Sociology Club, led by Co-Presidents Lora and Tracy, had a meaningful and service-focused winter term centered on community engagement and applied sociology.

This term began with a Sociology & Sandwiches event featuring New Choices Recovery Center. Staff members shared insights on local recovery services and current substance-use trends, prompting thoughtful discussion among students.

In February, the club organized a Valentine's Day care-package initiative supporting SAFE Inc. Students contributed donations and assembled packages that directly benefited youth in the community.

Club members also participated in the Moonbee during the campus-wide MLK Week of Service, joining peers and community partners in a hands-on project honoring Dr. King's legacy. The club continued its commitment to service by taking part in the Black History Month Day of Service, offering another opportunity for reflection, learning, and collective action.

Together, these events highlight the club's ongoing dedication to community care, social justice, and engaged learning.



**Co-Presidents of Union College Sociology Club
Winter 2026**

Sociology Club Events



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. 2026 Week of Service

"Life's persistent and most urgent question is: 'What are you doing for others?'" - MLK

Weekend 1/17-18	Monday 1/19	Tuesday 1/20	Wednesday 1/21	Thursday 1/22	Friday 1/23	Saturday 1/24
FOOD DRIVE <i>at Union</i> Hockey Games vs Brown and Yale Donate shelf-stable snacks and food items for Schenectady Shares	SNACK PACKING 12:50pm Hale House Prepare snack kits for local kids with OIA and STEP	DONATE CLOTHING 9am-9pm Kenney Center Drop off your gently used professional clothes and outerwear	IMPACT FAIR 12-2pm Wald and Olin Learn about involvement opportunities with Clubs, Orgs, Depts, & Community Partners	MOONBEE 12-2pm Old Chapel Support women's health and education with APO, SDT, and the MoonCatcher Project	COMMUNITY CLOSET POP-UP 12-2pm Wald Atrium Free professional and outerwear items	FACE OFF AGAINST HUNGER at Mayor's Cup Donate shelf-stable food items for Food Pantries for the Capital District
		SERVE DINNER 4:30-6:30pm City Mission With Theta Delta Chi (sign up required)	BLOOD DRIVE 1-7pm Old Chapel With Wicker Wellness and Red Cross (sign up required)	DINNER & DISCUSSION 5:30-7:30pm Old Chapel Explore service and MLK's legacy with OIA and religious leaders		
FOR MORE INFO, VISIT volunteer.union.edu OR EMAIL volunteer@union.edu				EXPERIENCE COCOA HOUSE Board van at Old Chapel Circle at 1:45pm or 3:30pm Volunteer with COCOA House Club and learn how you can get more involved in after school support opportunities		

SOCIOLOGY CLUB

Join us to assemble Valentine's day care packages for Safe Inc of Schenectady

Please consider purchasing hygiene and winter essentials for youth in the community using the QR code or link below



AMAZON WISHLIST QR CODE

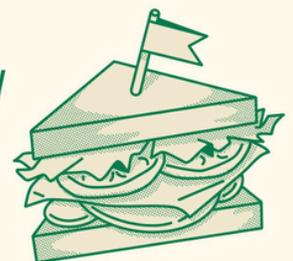
Wednesday, February 4th
6:00 - 7:00 PM
ISEC 187

SOCIOLOGY CLUB

SOCIOLOGY & SANDWICHES

WITH GUEST SPEAKERS LAURA COMBS & JESSICA NIVEN

JOIN US TO EXPLORE & GAIN KNOWLEDGE ON CURRENT SUBSTANCE USE TRENDS AND NEW CHOICES SERVICES.



JANUARY 21ST
5-6
KARP 105

8 BOLT POINTS

Sociology Department Events

 UNION COLLEGE
SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Career Center Workshops



Career Exploration

February 11, 2026
Becker Career Center
5-6 p.m.



LinkedIn & Garnet Grove

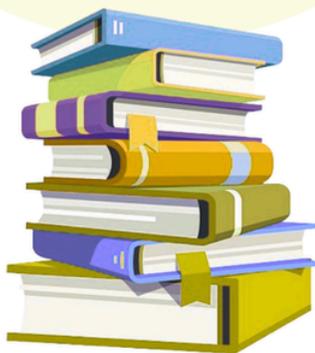
February 18, 2026
Becker Career Center
5-6 p.m.

butlerd@union.edu
fowlerp@union.edu

 Becker Career Center
@ Union College

Sociology Thesis Information Session

— 2026-2027 —



FOR SOCIOLOGY SENIOR
THESIS 2026-2027 STUDENTS
(CURRENT JUNIORS)

Thu Feb 19
5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Wold 128

Contact Prof. Deidre Hill Butler with
any questions butlerd@union.edu

Sociology Club Safe Inc. Valentines Pictures



Senegal Mini-Term Winter 2027

By Professor Deidre Hill-Butler

The Union College Mini-Term in Senegal is an interdisciplinary program involving a variety of departments and programs.

Students experience Africa firsthand through Senegal, the westernmost point of the continent (over 500 kilometers or 330 miles of Atlantic coastline). Senegal is a vibrant cultural crossroad between the Middle East (Islam was introduced to Senegal in the 11th century), Europe (Senegal was the former capital of French West Africa), and the Americas.



**SENEGAL DOCUMENTARY
FILM FESTIVAL**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1
6:00-7:30 P.M.
KARP 005**

Senegal: Water Treatment and Distribution
Reassemblage: A Complex Visual Study of the
Women of Rural Senegal
Sembene!: The Father of African Cinema
Senegal Wrestling Tradition

Applications for SOC 341T 2026 Senegal Mini Term
are OPEN!

Contact Prof. Deidre Hill Butler, Prof. Cheikh Ndiaye
and/or International Programs with questions



**SENEGAL
MINI-TERM
INFO SESSIONS**

Thursday 1/15 5-6 p.m.
Tuesday 1/20 5:30-6:30 p.m.
Tuesday 4/7 5-6 p.m.

Location: Karp 105

The 3-week program in Senegal is open to all students
and offers 4 main opportunities:

- Internship Opportunities
- Lecture Series
- Host Family Accommodations
- Various Excursions

**WINTER
BREAK
2026**

Application Deadline:
04/17/2026

union.edu/international butlerd@union.edu \$4,100 + airfare
*Scholarships may be available

Spring 2026 Sociology Courses

