



**College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Sociology**

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Dr. Latonya Hesterberg, Chair
Department of Sociology, Social Work and Criminology
Morehead State University
335 Rader Hall
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To Dr. Hesterberg and the Search Committee:

I am writing in application to the position of Assistant Professor of Criminology in the Department of Sociology, Social Work & Criminology at Morehead State University. As an advanced doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Tennessee, I will defend my dissertation in February and receive my PhD in May 2016. I successfully completed coursework in the concentration area of criminology and comprehensive examinations in the specialty areas of cultural criminology, state crime, and social disorganization theory. I have additional research and teaching interests in the areas of criminological theory, gender and sexuality, research methods, and the political economy of crime.

My dissertation is a study of post-9/11 U.S. Presidential discourse entitled "Never Forget: The Meaning of the Global War on Terror in Post-9/11 U.S. Presidential Discourse." Through the framework of cultural criminology, I examine the construction of the Global War on Terror in 190 public speeches made by U.S. Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. My methodology is grounded in discourse and ethnographic content analysis, through which I examine these questions: How is terrorism constructed as a social problem? What tactics of persuasion are utilized to motivate action and/or acquiescence? The key contributions of this work include building a clearer understanding of the discursive interaction between the symbolic and the material in global affairs as well as the development of a cultural criminology of the state. Whereas cultural criminology's customary focus on the politics of meaning and transgression in deviant subcultures is often criticized for glorifying deviance and ignoring real harm, my research expands the framework to analyze the cultural practices of the state in regard to the waging of war.

Whereas my dissertation research is grounded in qualitative work, my methodological proficiency is not exclusive to qualitative endeavors. As a research assistant on a collaborative project funded by the NSF to improve the spatial resolution of U.S. Census PUMS (Public Use Microdata Sample), I have multiple years experience in quantitative data handling and analysis. This project required competence in advanced statistical methods as well as proficiency in the statistical software environment and programming language of R. In addition, I am trained in the qualitative data analysis software packages of NVivo and TAMSAalyzer and the data visualization tools of RStudio. Finally, I have actively attended professional conferences at the regional and national levels across my graduate career, presenting research at annual meetings of the American Society of

Criminology, American Sociological Association, Society for the Study of Social Problems, Midwest Sociological Society, and Southern Sociological Society, among others.

My pedagogical philosophy is designed to cultivate the sociological imagination, through which students begin not only to understand their own personal lives in the context of larger social forces, but also to see the role each of us plays in the constant reconstruction of those social forces. In addition to teaching core classes in criminology, social change and social justice, and marriage and family, I also helped to initiate, develop, and teach an interdisciplinary, seminar-style course on sex and violence for first-year students. Further, I have experience developing and teaching online courses in criminology and am prepared to teach in the areas of criminological theory, punishment, deviance, drugs and society, gender and sexuality, as well as both quantitative and qualitative research methods. I can also envision developing a course on drugs in society to further strengthen the chemical dependency counseling curriculum. Such a course would explore the social meaning of drug use, abuse, and addiction in modern society and interrogate the discourses that stigmatize and dehumanize individuals suffering from addiction.

I am interested in this post for a variety of reasons. I would look forward to working closely with graduate and undergraduate students in an intellectual atmosphere committed not only to student-focused collaborative learning, but also the practice of sociology through community engagement. I can envision guiding and working with students in campus and community outreach efforts as part of the American Democracy Project, and organizing Constitution Day activities, such as a forum centered around the effects of social media and other emergent technologies on First Amendment rights. I have multiple years of leadership experience in student organizations and would anticipate contributing in an advisory capacity to a group such as Lambda Alpha Epsilon. I have experience organizing and participating in panels devoted to sexual violence awareness and feminist identity development, and would thus cherish the opportunity to participate in the Student Association of Gender Equality's "Ask a Feminist" panel. Finally, I am drawn to Morehead and the Rowan County area for personal reasons. As a student at Western Kentucky University, I established lasting friendships with multiple people who still call Morehead home, and I have made annual visits since. I grew up in Stewart County, TN, an area less densely populated and similarly surrounded by nationally protected forests, and Morehead has always felt like home. Thus inspired by these personal and scholarly connections, I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Lal B' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Landon Bevier