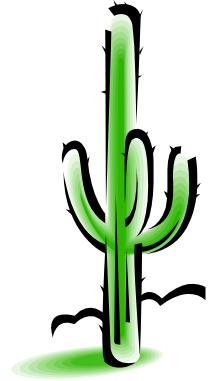


**The School of Sociology  
Colloquium**

**Sharon Koppman**

**PhD Candidate  
School of Sociology  
University of Arizona**



**“Entering the Creative Class: The Role of  
High-Status Culture.”**

Occupations that add economic value through purported creativity, a socioeconomic category popularized by Richard Florida’s (2002) *Rise of the Creative Class*, have in recent years come to define desirable employment. Yet we know relatively little about who enters these “creative” occupations, how and why. I address this gap by proposing and testing a novel link from class background to creative employment through a cultural process of labor market sorting. Focusing on the case of the advertising industry, I combine primary survey data collected from a probability sample of U.S. advertising agencies and semi-structured interviews with advertising practitioners. Qualitative data show how high-status culture—specifically, “omnivorous” (diverse and inclusive) forms of taste and socialization—signals creative potential to employers and motivates people to pursue these positions. Structural equation modeling reveals that these forms of high-status culture mediate the relationship between class background and creative employment. This study’s findings highlight a new direction for research on creativity, contribute to the debate on the role of culture in occupational attainment, and extend knowledge on the early origins of career choice.

**September 19, 2014  
Social Sciences, Room 415  
12:00pm-1:15pm**