Dr. Rachel Dwyer is leading a National Institutes of Health-funded study on “Improving Data Collection of Debt and Financial Strain to Assess Health Impacts of Economic Insecurity.” This project uses multi-pronged data collection and analysis to build a stronger data infrastructure, more adequate and accurate measures of indebtedness, and best practices for analyzing various forms of indebtedness and their relation to economic hardship and financial strain for low-income families. Rachel is a former Director of Graduate Studies and very active with graduate students in the department. Check out a paper she co-authored with Dr. Elizabeth Martin, former OSU Sociology Graduate Student: “Financial Stress, Race, and Student Debt During the Great Recession” in Social Currents.

Dr. Lauren Valentino is leading a study titled “Measuring Cultural Logics of Racism & Sexism: Refining our Understanding of How Discrimination Impacts Health & Well-Being,” funded by the OSU Institute for Population Research, the Sociology Department, and the Russell Sage Foundation. Along with Sociology Graduate Student Eva Warren, she leads a team of undergraduate research assistants in collecting interview data and survey-experimental data to map out the many cultural meanings Americans make related to discrimination.

Dr. Chris Browning is leading an interdisciplinary team of OSU faculty and graduate students in a large scale, longitudinal investigation of the link between socio-spatial exposures and developmental outcomes among youth in Franklin County (Columbus), OH. The Adolescent Health and Development in Context (AHDC) study was funded by multiple national funding organizations and includes extensive geo-spatial, social network and biomarker data intended to understand how to define adolescents’ social spaces and connections, and how they are related to adolescent health and well-being. This project has resulted in many innovative publications in Sociology and related fields and advances our understanding of the interplay among social, psychological, and biological processes in shaping youth developmental outcomes such as risk behavior and victimization, mental and physical health, and educational outcomes. Dr. Browning welcomes graduate students to collaborate on this project and to utilize this unique dataset.
Dr. Cindy Colen was recently awarded a National Institutes of Health grant titled, “The Effects of Workplace Social Status on Minority Health Disparities.” The study will use administrative health and earnings records from millions of workers in Utah to examine the causal pathways between workplace social status and minority health disparities. Dr. Colen is an active member of the Institute for Population Research and publishes high-impact research articles with graduate students, such as: “Racial Disparities in Health among College Educated African Americans: Can HBCU Attendance Reduce the Risk of Subsequent Morbidity in Midlife?” in the American Journal of Epidemiology with OSU Sociology Graduate Student Nicolo Pinchak. Dr. Colen published “Shades of health: Skin color, ethnicity, and mental health among Black Americans” in Social Science and Medicine with lead author, OSU Sociology Graduate Student Christina Bijou.

Dr. Chris Knoester specializes in the study of the sociology of family and the sociology of sport. In his family work, he has mostly focused on studying fatherhood and, most recently, parental leave patterns and attitudes. He has now largely turned to focus on sports and society issues as the principal investigator of the National Sports and Society Survey (NSASS)-- a landmark survey that focuses on patterns of sports involvement over the life course and their links to adults’ attitudes, social patterns, and well-being. There are dozens of untapped projects that can be nurtured from these unique data, including emphases on family, deviance, social connections, health and well-being, gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, and social class-- over the life course and across generations. Dr. Knoester is always happy to collaborate with students and has been doing so extensively with his NSASS data, in recent years. He is a North American Society for the Sociology of Sport Research Fellow and the Chair of Research for the Ohio State University Sports and Society Initiative.

Dr. Sam Clark is a demographer, epidemiologist, and data scientist who develops new methods and does research in demography and epidemiology. Dr. Clark is a faculty affiliate of the OSU Institute for Population Research and OSU Translational Data Analytics Institute. During 2020 Dr. Clark worked on a survey to estimate the prevalence of the coronavirus and an excess deaths study to characterize the total burden of mortality associated with the COVID-19 epidemic. Both projects were in the state of Ohio, USA and were conducted by large teams at The Ohio State University in close coordination with the Ohio State Department of Health. On an ongoing basis Dr. Clark works to improve: 1) verbal autopsy as a tool to measure the burden of disease, 2) mathematical models of human mortality, 3) indirect estimates of child mortality, and 4) small-area estimates of mortality. Dr. Clark leads the openVA Team that works to improve verbal autopsy and has been a member of the WHO Verbal Autopsy Reference Group (VARG) since it was formed in 2013.