

Astrosociological Insights



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Inaugural Issue of ARI's Newsletter



WELCOME to the first issue of *Astrosociological Insights*! We at ARI have begun several new projects, news of which we wish to share with our supporters, contributors, and the general public. This newsletter begins our quarterly report about astrosociology, conferences, publications, and news. While you can always visit www.astrosociology.org to get updates about ARI and space-related news, this newsletter will serve to give you information about changes at ARI, upcoming publications and conferences, updates on projects, highlights of astrosociological-based work, and a variety of other topics. Furthermore, we continue to request assistance from researchers in various fields and disciplines to assist us in developing astrosociology. We hope that you will find value in these newsletters as ARI moves forward in its mission to educate and promote astrosociology.

Respectfully,

Jim Pass, Christopher Hearsey, and Simone Caroti

Upcoming ARI Projects To Look For

- ◆ Website redesign
- ◆ Journal of Astrosociology announcement
- ◆ *Astrosociology in the Classroom* Program
- ◆ *Launching Astrosociology* Reader
- ◆ Fundraising Campaign

New Advisors Join ARI

ARI is pleased to announce several new advisors!

Dr. Vadim Rygalov, Luke Idziak, Kevin Maher, Joseph Reynolds, Renato Rivera, and Annie Wargetz have accepted to serve as ARI advisors. ARI congratulates each new advisor and thanks them for supporting ARI and helping to promote astrosociology. Please check out their biographies at <http://www.astrosociology.org/aboutARI.html>.



Special Thanks to Current and Past ARI Advisors

The leadership team at ARI would like to extend a special thank you and appreciation to current and past advisors who have helped us with their valuable inputs.

Why Astrosociology?

Currently, there are several ongoing campaigns geared toward enticing students to pursue STEM subjects (i.e., those focusing on “hard” Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). Understandably, NASA is a big proponent of STEM education. We support it as well. However, the same attention does not exist for students interested in space exploration who also happen to favor the social sciences, behavioral sciences, and humanities over STEM subjects. Astrosociology is a multidisciplinary academic field created to fill this under-populated scientific niche.

Our mission at ARI includes informing students about this academic option and opportunity and assisting those interested to pursue astrosociology. Participation in ARI programs and projects, submission of manuscripts for the *Journal of Astrosociology*, and other activities will all contribute toward this goal. Of course, our mission includes assisting social science professors, scholars, theoreticians, and empirical researchers, too. The answer to the question — Why Astrosociology? — relates to the notion that social and behavioral scientists, and humanities scholars, along with their students and other interested parties, need to participate in the further development of this academic field so as to build a community in which collaboration contributes to the growing body of astrosociological knowledge and literature. Moreover, collaboration with the space community and generally those specializing in the “hard” sciences will allow for a synergy of ideas and outcomes that will advance space exploration to unparalleled levels of success. The two branches of science, “hard” and “soft,” working together, can create progress for human spaceflight and exploration beyond what is possible in the current regime.

Astrosociology in the Classroom Program

On many levels, the development of astrosociology has progressed markedly since it was first introduced in 2003. From 2003 to mid-2008, the efforts aimed at developing and popularizing this academic field have focused on conference presentations and publications, mostly within the space community. The incorporation of ARI in 2008 began a transition to a new mission.

There are three prongs to the *Astrosociology in the Classroom* program: (1) get astrosociological materials into classrooms, even if they are social science and humanities courses at first, (2) create workshops and classes devoted to astrosociology, and (3) expand to astrosociology programs, and eventually departments. For now, we will concentrate on the first two objectives.

Thus, this program is intended for the physical and natural sciences in addition to the social and behavioral sciences, and the humanities. Placement of materials is intended for a variety of different subject matters: sociology or social psychology classes, history classes, and astronomy or aerospace engineering classes. Demonstrating the relevancy of astrosociology to various subjects serves as a major theme of the program.

We want you to assist us. If you are a teacher or professor, add materials to your syllabus. We encourage you to develop your own materials and share them with us. You can use the resources in the Virtual Library. If you are a student, encourage your teachers/professors to add astrosociological materials. Attempt to gain approval from your teachers/professors for reports, theses, and dissertations.

In the upcoming months, we plan to develop “official” astrosociology materials for others to use.

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Visit us on the web:
www.astrosociology.org

Your Support Will Assist in Continuing the Development of Astrosociology

As a scientist interested in space, I watch the space news websites and newsfeeds constantly, and most often, the talk is about the year a mission is expected to occur or what launch vehicle or capsule we are going to use. We hear so much buzz about going to an asteroid in 2025 in the Orion MPCV launched on a new Space Launch System (SLS) rocket.

There are fundamental gaps in this way of thinking. One of the gaps, one of the crucial questions we *must* answer is how are we going to sustain these astronauts psychologically and physiologically? And more importantly, what impact will these missions have on society?

When the crew of Apollo 11 returned from the Moon victoriously, they were greeted around the world with ticker-tape parades and peoples of all nations shouting “We did it!”, not “The Americans did it!” What will people around the world say when humans step foot on Mars for the first time? Will such a mission engender international cooperation? Or, will human society evolve into something else – an intra-Solar society? What benefits and losses to society on Earth could we expect from continued human missions to Mars? Such questions are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to understanding how the next leg of space exploration will affect our species. Astrosociologists are in the best position to study and answer these questions.

The Astrosociological Research Institute (ARI) provides a home to the study of astrosociology and endeavors to move forward the dialogue about social science’s role in space exploration. ARI seeks to bring awareness to the social scientific aspects of space studies, an area currently lacking in adequate attention in terms of research and education. Researchers at ARI endeavor to expand this field with outreach and research activities, bringing the social sciences to the forefront of an exciting field otherwise dominated by engineering and physical sciences.

You can be a part of this endeavor by supporting us with your financial gifts and by volunteering to assist in the development of this academic field. Your support helps us to conduct research, engage in public outreach to students and others, provide astrosociological education, and assist researchers and students to present at conferences. All this will help develop this needed field and bring more awareness to the social, cultural, and behavioral dimensions of space exploration. We look forward to getting the word out to other social scientists around the world and expanding our network of professionals and students, which is not possible without your help.

Please consider helping ARI to bring greater attention and thereby more participation in developing astrosociology. To learn more about ARI and its mission, please look for our Facebook pages, on Twitter (@astrosociology, @HearseyAstrosoc), and on our main website at www.astrosociology.org. We cannot move forward in this grand adventure without you.

ARI is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Your donations are fully tax deductible.

Donate by check, payable to “The Astrosociology Research Institute” or “ARI.” Address: ARI, P.O. Box 1129, Huntington Beach, CA 92647. Alternatively, you can donate via PayPal at <http://bit.ly/U4Mxqm>. You can also donate via Causes in Facebook under “Support the Astrosociology Research Institute (ARI) at <http://bit.ly/QJ6L5K>.

Sincerely,
Annie Wargetz
Special Assistant for Fundraising