



Early Career Scholarship Award

Description

The MSS Early Career Scholarship Award recognizes a number of publications by an early career scholar, working alone or with collaborators, which are particularly meritorious, creative or enlightening. The Award is offered biennially and carries a cash prize of \$500.

Rationale

The Midwest Sociological Society offers the Early Career Scholarship Award to recognize the quality of scholarship produced by early career scholars and to underscore the Society's commitment to the professional development of early career scholars and researchers.

Criteria

1. The Award is bestowed upon a body of work rather than a single publication or a group of unrelated publications. The scholarly work being recognized should stem from a discernible research agenda or theoretical approach.
2. The body of work may consist of as few as three publications of high quality. "Publications" include books, monographs, edited collections, articles in peer-reviewed journals, policy- and value-oriented scholarship, applied social research reports, textbooks and readers, documentary photographs and videos, and scholarly literature for general audiences.
3. The recipient of the Award must have received his or her terminal degree within the previous 10 years. (The terminal degree is expected to be in sociology. However, individuals with degrees in related disciplines and interdisciplinary fields may be eligible if their work clearly displays a sociological sensibility.) The Award recognizes scholarship completed after graduate school, although it may have begun during those years. The expression "early career scholar" designates a stage-of-career rather than an age range. The Award may not be granted to a senior scholar, either for work completed early in his or her career or for current work undertaken with the recipient.
4. The recipient is expected to be an individual. However, the recipient may be a team of two or three persons at the same stage of their careers who share responsibility for the body of work being recognized. The thrust of the Award is the recognition of the creative and original work of an individual at the beginning of a promising career. However, when a pair or team of co-authors are equally responsible for the scholarship that forms the basis of the Award, so that it is impossible to distinguish a single guiding hand behind their collaboration, the Award should be granted to the collaborators collectively.
5. The recipient must currently be a member of the Midwest Sociological Society and have some history of involvement in the Society's annual meeting. Where a team is responsible for the body of work being recognized, at least half of the team must be members of the MSS at the time the Award is bestowed. MSS involvement need not be extensive, but the Award may not be granted to early career scholars educated in the Midwest who have no organic connection to the Society. Residence in the nine-state region is not required.
6. The body of work being recognized may be as diverse as the membership of the MSS and may include but is not limited to: academic writing in any field of sociological research; studies in sociological practice and applied sociology; research in teaching and learning; studies in social problems, social policy, and social welfare, including crime and corrections; studies in race, class, and gender; writings in critical theory and social criticism; and writings oriented to the edification of the general public (public sociology).

Procedures

1. The MSS organizes the Award competition biennially (every other year). The first Award was bestowed in 2008. Subsequent awards will be bestowed at the spring annual meetings in even-numbered years.
2. Following the annual meeting in each odd-numbered year, the President of the MSS shall appoint an ad hoc Award Committee of 3 to 5 members and name its Chair by May 15th. The term of service is one year. Reappointment is allowed, but no one may serve more than three consecutive terms.
3. Once the Award Committee is formed, the Executive Director of the MSS shall publicize the competition at opportune times and in appropriate outlets.
4. Nominations shall be submitted to the Award Committee Chair via the Executive Office (themss@themss.org) by November 15th of the competition year.
5. All forms of nomination are welcome. Nominators need not be members of MSS.
6. Nomination shall consist of a brief letter of nomination plus supporting materials. The letter of nomination must: (1) identify the set of publications that forms the basis of the nomination; when collaborative work forms the basis of the nomination, the letter of nomination must clearly indicate who is being nominated and distinguish the relative contributions of the various co-authors; (2) describe the nominee's research agenda, theoretical orientation, or distinctive scholarly voice; and (3) provide the nominee or nominees' contact information. If the nominator is in a position to do so, he or she should additionally provide: (4) the nominee or nominees' current curriculum vitae with references; and (5) copies of the publications that form the basis of the nomination. A complete nomination consists of all five elements. Elements not provided by the nominator must be obtained by the Award Committee. The Committee may reject nominees on the grounds of incomplete nomination, but no nominee may win the Award without the Committee's scrutiny of all five elements.
7. The standards that the Award Committee uses to evaluate nominations for the MSS Early Career Scholarship Award are set by the Committee itself. The Committee may wish to consult previous committees to maintain consistency in standards. Unsolicited comments, letters or emails received in support of any particular nomination should not be circulated within the Committee or used in the evaluation process. The judgment of the Committee is final. No appeal process accompanies this proposal, nor should one be created ad hoc to adjudicate a contested decision. The Award Committee is solely responsible for the decision-making process and its outcome during its year in existence.
8. The Award Committee shall complete its deliberations by January 31st. No later than January 31st the Chair of the Award Committee shall notify the Executive Director and the President of the Committee's selection. The Executive Director is responsible for purchasing a plaque, having it inscribed, and asking the Treasurer to draft a check to the winner(s) in the amount of \$500. (Multiple winners shall receive equal shares of the \$500 prize.)
9. The Chair of the Award Committee shall present the MSS Early Career Scholarship Award to the winner(s) during the awards ceremony at the annual meeting, accompanied by a brief description of the work being recognized. If the Chair of the Award Committee is unable to attend the meeting, another member of the Committee or the President-Elect (or other officer of the Society) shall present the Award instead.
10. When no completed nominations are received or no nominees meet the standards set by the Award Committee, the Chair of the Award Committee will inform the President-Elect and Program Chair and the Executive Director by January 31st that no Early Career Scholarship Award will be offered during this competition year.