Finding Aid for the Melvin Pollner papers, circa 1967-2007 LSC.2184

Finding aid prepared by Kelly Besser with assistance from Kamarin Takahara, 2013; final revisions made by Angel Diaz, 2017.

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18 August 2017
Title: Melvin Pollner papers
Identifier/Call Number: LSC.2184
Contributing Institution: UCLA Library Special Collections
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 15.0 linear feet (Fourteen record cartons, two document boxes and one half size document box)
Date: circa 1967-2007
Abstract: Melvin Pollner was a UCLA Professor of Sociology for nearly 40 years and a leading practitioner of ethnomethodology, one of the department's signature specialties. The collection consists of field notes, research files of ethnomethodology papers and notes, Pollner's drafts and reprints, his Mundane Reasoning dissertation files, Sociology course materials and audio tapes from traffic court studies.
Language of Materials: Materials are in English.
Physical Location: Stored off-site at SRLF. All requests to access special collections material must be made in advance using the request button located on this page.
Creator: Pollner, Melvin
Restrictions on Access
COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE AT SRLF: Open for research. All requests to access special collections materials must be made in advance using the request button located on this page

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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Melvin Pollner papers (Collection 2184). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

Provenance/Source of Acquisition
Judy A. Pollner, 2008.

Processing Information
Processed by Kelly Besser with assistance from Kamarin Takahara, 2013; final revisions made by Angel Diaz, 2017.

UCLA Catalog Record ID
UCLA Catalog Record ID: 7345927

Biography/History
Melvin Pollner was born on October 13, 1940, in the Bronx neighborhood of New York City. He attended the Bronx High School of Science and earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from the City College of New York. He went on to earn a master's degree in sociology from UC Berkeley and a PhD in sociology from UC Santa Barbara. He joined the UCLA Department of Sociology in 1968 where he taught for nearly 40 years.

In the early 1980s, as part of the reorganization of the Department's graduate program, faculty organized themselves into areas of common interest. One of these areas focused on ethnomethodological, phenomenological and observational sociologies (EPOS) and included the following professors as affiliated faculty: Melvin Pollner, Harold Garfinkel, Robert Emerson, Jack Katz and Emanuel Schegloff. Pollner taught Sociology 271, one of the introductory courses in this area that grappling with fundamental ideas and concerns which animate ethnomethodological and phenomenological investigations. Pollner's course featured guest presentations by the aforementioned faculty and included topics such as "The world of everyday life and the problem of rationality," "Rules, norms and tacit knowledge" and "Speaking and discourse."

Professor Pollner's primary research interests were the sociology of mental illness; self and identity; ethnomethodology; and toward the end of his career, economic sociology. His work in these areas included studies of psychiatric emergency teams, the construction of reality in families, making and managing meaning in traffic court, the impact of religious beliefs on psychological well-being, and narrative practices in Alcoholics Anonymous.

UCLA Department of Sociology colleague and longtime collaborator, Professor Emeritus Robert Emerson described Pollner as deeply committed to sociology and specifically to ethnomethodology. Emerson remembers that Pollner described ethnomethodology as follows: "The study of the practices used to craft whatever participants in particular settings recognize as intelligible, meaningful and real." According to Emerson, this meant "understanding all social matters --
gender and social class, reality and truth -- not as fixed objects or facts, but as meanings people create and sustain in interaction with one another.”

Melvin Pollner died at the UCLA Medical Center on November 2, 2007. The Melvin Pollner Prize in Ethnomethodology was created in 2009 and awarded every other year beginning in 2010 to the author of an article, chapter or book that develops original work resonant with Pollner’s interests in topics such as mundane reason, reality disjunctures, radical reflexivity and the connections and contributions of ethnomethodology to other types of sociology.

Scope and Content
The collection includes field notes, research files of ethnomethodology papers and notes, Pollner’s drafts and reprints, his Mundane Reasoning dissertation files, Sociology course materials and audio tapes from traffic court studies.

Organization and Arrangement
The collection has been arranged in the following series:
1. Field notes.
2. Research files.
3. Drafts.
4. Reprints.
5. Academic course materials.
6. Open reel audio tapes.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements
COLLECTION CONTAINS AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS: Audiovisual materials in this collection will require assessment and possible digitization for safe access. All requests to access special collections material must be made in advance using the request button located on this page.

Related Material
Harold Garfinkel Papers (Collection 1273). Available at Library Special Collections, UCLA.
Gail Jefferson papers (Collection 2319). Available at Library Special Collections, UCLA.
Harvey Sacks Papers (Collection 1678). Available at Library Special Collections, UCLA.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Ethnomethodology--Research.
Sociologists--California--Los Angeles--Archives.
Traffic courts--Social aspects--Case studies.
University of California, Los Angeles. Department of Sociology--Faculty--Archives.

Box 1-2, 4-5, 8, 13
Field notes.
Scope and Content
Materials include Pollner's field notes for studies which include data sets used for articles.
Box 1: Includes the following folders: Stress and Religiosity, Religious Belief and Well Being, Mental Illness and Divine Relations.
Box 2: Traffic court transaction notes.
Box 4: Interviews and notes for Alcoholics Anonymous article and Taking Findings Back to the Field notes and interview transcripts.
Box 8: Alcoholics Anonymous field notes.
Box 13: Traffic court notes and transcriptions of court proceedings.
Scope and Content

Materials include ethnomethodology papers and articles by Pollner's colleagues, many of which are unpublished, and his related notes.

Box 4: Working notes for studies of observer-observed relationships and notes on inclusion and distance.

Box 5: Aaron V. Cicourel file which includes the following drafts: "Observing the Everyday World in the Act and After the Fact: Structural and Processual Explanations of Discourse and Social Networks in Task-Oriented Environments" and "The Interpenetration of Communicative Contexts: Examples from Medical Encounters.

Box 6: Files include articles, drafts and notes from the following colleagues: Mike Lynch, Richard A. Hilbert, Harold Garfinkel, Eric Livingston, Harvey Sacks, Scott Jacobs, Sally Jackson, Samuel Vuchinich, Max Levin, Albert B. Robillard, Edmond Wright, Jeff Coulter, D. Lawrence Wieder, Alan Blum, Deirdre Boden, James L. Heap, Michael Moerman, David Silverman, Kenneth Charles Leiter and Phillip J. Kuykendall.

Box 7: Files include articles from the following scholars: David T. Helm, Charles Blondel and Dale Lowery.

Box 8: "Delusions of Competence: A Socio-Behavioral Study of the Maintenance of a Deviant Belief System in a Family with a Retarded Child" by Marilyn McDonald Wikler, a bound dissertation inscribed to Mel from Lynn.


Box 11: Files include papers from the following: Harvey Sacks, Harold Garfinkel, Gail Jefferson, Jeff Coulter, Albert B. Robillard, Thomas P. Wilson, Lindsey Churchill, John Heritage, Renee R. Anspach, Aaron V. Cicourel, Paul Drew, Dorothy E. Smith, James A. Holstein, Hugh "Bud" Mehan, Wayne A. Beach, Norbert Wiley, Richard A. Hilbert and Ethnomethodology Newsletter No. 1 compiled at the Department of Sociology, University of California, Santa Barbara.


Box 13: Files include papers by Harold Garfinkel, Louis Narens, D. Lawrence Wieder, Don H. Zimmerman, Albert B. Robillard, Joan C. Zielinski and Berkeley Journal of Sociology which includes articles by Harvey Sacks, Sherri Cavan, Marvin B. Scott, Carl Werthman and Emanuel A. Schegloff.

Box 14: California Mental Health Research Monographs by Dorothy Miller including Words That Fail Part I: Retrospective Analysis of Mental Patients’ Careers and Words That Fail Part II: Disbanded Worlds: A Study of Returns to the Mental Hospital. Materials also include a bound copy of Case Studies submitted to the Administrative Director, Southwestern Montana Drug Program and Anita Pomerantz's article, "Extreme Case Formulations: A Way of Legitimizing Claims."

Box 15: A copy of Anita Pomerantz's paper, "Presenting 'Raw Data' as a Conversational Practice" and copies of Peter Eglin's papers, "Reality Disjunctures on Telegraph Avenue: A Study in Practical Reasoning and the Law," "Leaving Out the Interpreter's Work: A Methodological Critique of Ethnomosemantics Based on Ethnomethodology" and "What Should Sociology Explain - Regularities, Rules or Interpretations?"
Box 1-5, 15

**Drafts.**

Scope and Content

Pollner's handwritten and typed drafts of articles including unpublished writing.

Box 1: The Socio-Symbolics of Athletic Courses and Psychological Well-Being, Mental Illness Reader, and Mundane Reasoning. The Mundane Reasoning files include his dissertation proposal, a binder of notes, annotated chapter drafts and proofs.

Box 2: Tell it to the Judge: A Study of Practical Sociological Reasoning in a Municipal Court and Mundane Reasoning chapters.

Box 3: Folder of writing entitled "Misc. Writings."


Box 15: Typescript of "The Very Coinage of Your Brain": The Resolution of Reality Disjunctures," and a folder of handwritten and typed pages in a file labeled Schematizing Experience in Terms of Mundane Reason.

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Box 1, 4-5

**Reprints.**

Scope and Content

Reprints by Pollner.

Box 1: The Effect of Spouse Presence on Appraisals of Emotional Support and Household Strain, Divine Relations, Social Relations and Well Being, The Interpersonal Context of Mental Health Interviews, The Effects of Interviewer Gender in Mental Health Interviews and Cross-Culturing and Self-Evaluation: The Case of Lesbian and Gay Elderly.


Academic course materials.

Scope and Content

Materials include lecture notes, syllabi, readings and student work for Sociology, Ethnomethodology and Communication Studies courses taught by Pollner.

Box 1: UCLA student dissertations include Identity Work Among Homosexual Elderly by Dana Rosenfeld and Rock Musician Careers: The Culture of the Long-Term Professional by Jill Marie Stein.


Box 3: Boston University Ethnomethodology course syllabus, Sociology 267 annotated reader, Sociology of Knowledge lectures, Sociology of Science course notes, Reflexivity and Post-structuralism annotated reader, Sociology 222 lecture notes, annotated readings, final exams, syllabi, case studies and class exercises, Sociology 149: Analyses of Belief Structures and Analyses of Practical Activities student papers.

Box 4: Sociology 157 Socio-Somatics papers and notes.

Box 5: Sociology 197 and Communication Studies 197G exercises and project guidelines for courses on humor. Sociology of Consciousness course notes. Sociology 159 syllabi, paper guidelines and notes.

Box 7: Sociology 148/157: Sociology of Mental Illness PowerPoint slide printouts and lecture notes concerning stress, family response, biological/psychological models, societal reaction, mental health establishment and treatment. Sociology 284: Topics in Mental Health and Illness materials include syllabi, notes, lecture notes and student papers. Sociology 184D: Social Structure and Subjectivity materials include syllabi, notes and lecture outlines. Sociology 197: Self and Society materials include lecture note outlines, presentations, exams and annotated readings.

Box 8: Sociology 197: Self and Society reader and lecture notes; Sociology 223: Mind and Body seminar notes, outlines and syllabus; Sociology 159: Sociology of Knowledge reading lists, exams and syllabus and Sociology 220: Sites of Selfing discussion guides and lecture notes.

Box 12: Student “Heap” journal includes Pollner’s notes on sociological theories and course assignments, file of Pollner’s notes on ethnomethodology and theorists, Sociology 202 notes and Sociology 271: Introduction to Ethnomethodology notes.

Box 14: Sociology 149/Sociology 17 and Sociology 154 lecture notes, class exercises, midterms, finals and copies of readings.

Open reel audio tapes.

Scope and Content

Box 16: Fourteen tapes. Ten concern Pollner’s traffic court field studies, one is a Harold Garfinkel talk with a question and answer session, another includes a note to Garfinkel and two are unidentified.

Box 17: Twelve tapes concerning Pollner’s traffic court field studies.

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