

Emily Coombes, M.A., PhD Candidate

Department of Sociology

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

coombes@unlv.nevada.edu | emc.phd

EDUCATION

2025 PhD Candidate in Sociology

University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), Las Vegas, NV

Committee: Dr. Barbara Brents (Chair), Dr. Robert Futrell (Sociology), Dr. Lillian Junglieb (Sociology), Dr. Benjamin Burroughs (Journalism & Media Studies)

- *Dissertation: "Posting into the Void: An In-Depth Case Study of #LetUsSurvive, Survivors Against SESTA, and Networked Collective Action in the 2018 anti-FOSTA/SESTA Campaign"*

2021 MA in Sociology

University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), Las Vegas, NV

Advisor: Dr. Barbara Brents

- *Thesis: "#LetUsSurvive and #SurvivorsAgainstSESTA: Hashtag Activism, Online Claimsmaking, and Digital Mobilization Against Threat in the 2018 Anti-FOSTA/SESTA Campaign on Twitter."*

2020 Graduate Certificate in Social Justice Education

University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), Las Vegas, NV

Advisor: Dr. Christine Clark

2017 Graduate Certificate in Sexuality, Culture, and Society

University of Amsterdam, Graduate School of Social Sciences, Amsterdam, NL

2016 BS in Sociology

Northeastern University, Boston, MA

Minors: Mathematics and Psychology

- *Thesis (2016 Public Sociology Award Winner): "Social Capital in Cyberspace: A Content Analysis of the Sex Worker Community on Reddit."*

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Social Movements (PhD Comprehensive Exam passed with Distinction Fall 2022)
- Sexual Politics (PhD Comprehensive Exam passed with Distinction Spring 2023)
- Surveillance & Technology
- Social & Design (In)Justice
- Qualitative Methods (Trauma-Informed)
- Survey Research
- Evaluation Research
- Community-Based Participatory Action Research (PAR)
- Public Sociology, Policy, & Advocacy

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES & ESSAYS

- [WIP] **Coombes, Emily**. “#LetUsSurvive and #SurvivorsAgainstSESTA: Hashtag Activism, Online Claimsmaking, and Digital Mobilization Against Threat in the 2018 Anti-FOSTA/SESTA Campaign on Twitter.”
- [WIP]. **Coombes, Emily** and Benjamin Burroughs. “Political Livestreaming and the Role of Far-Right Influencers in the 2021 U.S. Capital Insurrection.”
- 2026 **Coombes, Emily**. “Sex, Tech, and Sci-Fi: Subversive Comics in Pursuit of a Queer Sex Worker Feminist Imagination.” *Radical History Review Issue 155* (Under Review)
- 2025 **Coombes, Emily**. “Review of *Policing Patients: Treatment and Surveillance on the Frontlines of the Opioid Crisis* by Elizabeth Chiarello.” *Surveillance & Society* (Forthcoming)
- 2024 Underwood, Mary and **Emily Coombes**. “Review of *Dangerous Love: Sex Work, Drug Use, and the Pursuit of Intimacy in Tijuana, Mexico* by Jennifer Leigh Syversten.” *Gender & Society*.
- 2022 **Coombes, Emily**, Danielle Blunt, and Ariel Wolf. “Disabled Sex Workers’ Fight for Digital Rights, Platform Accessibility, and Design Justice.” Special Issue on Sex Work and Disability in *Disability Studies Quarterly (DSQ)*.
- 2022 Marianno, Bradley D., Hemphill, Annie A., Loures-Elias, Ana Paula S., Garcia, L., Cooper, Diana, and **Coombes, Emily**. “Power in a pandemic: Teachers’ unions and their responses to school reopening.” *AERA Open*
- 2020 **Coombes, Emily**, Andrea Dassopoulos, and Jonathan Jimenez. “Forging Fandom: Shared Culture and Porn Tourism at the Adult Entertainment Expo” Special Issue on Sexual Tourism in *Porn Studies*.

RESEARCH REPORTS

- 2025 Brents, Barb, **Emily Coombes**, Lillian Jungleib, and Mary Underwood. “Sex Industry and Sex Workers in Nevada” in *The Social Health of Nevada: Leading Indicators and Quality of Life in the Silver State*. UNLV: Center for Democratic Culture Publications. (Forthcoming)
- 2022 Stardust, Zahra, Emily van der Nagel, Katrin Tiidenberg, Jiz Lee, **Em Coombes** and Mireille Miller-Young. “Manifesto for Sex-Positive Social Media.” *ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision- Making and Society* <https://sexpositivesocialmedia.org/>
- 2022 Marianno, Dr. Brad, Dr. Mark Spinrad, **Emily Coombes** M.A., Gillian Bowden M.Ed. “YMCA of Southern Nevada Power Scholars Academy Annual Evaluation Report.” *Center for Research Evaluation and Assessment (CREA)*.
- 2020 Blunt, Danielle, **Emily Coombes**, Shanelle Mullin, and Ariel Wolf. “Posting into the Void: Studying the Impact of Shadowbanning on Sex Workers and Activists.” *Hacking//Hustling* <https://hackinghustling.org/posting-into-the-void-content-moderation/>

BOOK CHAPTERS

- 2027 **Coombes, Emily.** “#LetUsSurvive and the Networked Sex Workers’ Rights Movement” in *Digital Technologies and Sex Work* edited by Teela Sanders. Palgrave Publishing’s for the Advances in Sex Work Series. (Forthcoming)
- 2026 **Coombes, Emily.** “Anti-Trafficking Activism and Survivor-Led Protest in the #LetUsSurvive Campaign against FOSTA/SESTA” in *Human Trafficking in Mass Media: (Mis)Representations, Sensationalization, and Implications* edited by Menaka Raguparan. Palgrave Publishing’s Crime and Media Series. (Forthcoming)

PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY

- 2021 **Coombes, Emily.** “When Sex Workers Speak, Who Listens?” *The Nation* <https://www.thenation.com/article/society/only-fans-sex-work/>
- 2018 **Coombes, Emily.** “New Legislation Poses Threat to Sex Workers in the U.S.” *NSWP* <http://www.nswp.org/news/new-legislation-poses-threat-sex-workers-the-us>
- 2018 **Coombes, Emily.** “USA Sex Workers Resist Closures Strip Clubs.” *NSWP* <https://www.nswp.org/news/usa-sex-workers-resist-closures-strip-clubs>
- 2018 **Coombes, Emily.** “Canada’s Liberal Party votes to support the decriminalization of sex work.” *NSWP* <https://www.nswp.org/news/canadas-liberal-party-votes-support-the-decriminalisation-sex-work>
- 2018 **Coombes, Emily.** “Woodhull Freedom Foundation and Human Rights Watch file a federal lawsuit against FOSTA.” *NSWP* <https://www.nswp.org/news/woodhull-freedom-foundation-and-human-rights-watch-file-federal-lawsuit-against-fosta>
- 2018 **Coombes, Emily.** “Largest Sex Worker Conference in the USA is cancelled due to threat from FOSTA-SESTA.” *NSWP* <https://www.nswp.org/news/largest-sex-worker-conference-the-usa-cancelled-due-threat-fosta-sesta>
- 2018 **Coombes, Emily.** “Canadian Sex Worker Organisations Organise #JusticeforMoka Campaign.” *NSWP* <https://www.nswp.org/news/canadian-sex-worker-organisations-organise-justiceformoka-campaign>
- 2016 **Coombes, Emily.** “Pimps are not the problem, harsh laws and lack of services are.” *The Huffington Post*

PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- 2023-Now **Teaching & Research Graduate Assistant**
- 2016-2019 UNLV Department of Sociology, Las Vegas, NV
SOC 474: Sociology of Religion

SOC 470: Sociology of Deviance
 SOC 403: Techniques of Social Research (Sociological Methods)
 SOC 102: Social Problems
 SOC 101: Principles of Sociology

- 2023 **Graduate Assistant & Evaluation Researcher**
 2019-2020 Nevada Problem Gambling Study (NVPG)
 UNLV International Gaming Institute (IGI), Las Vegas, NV
 PI: Andrea Dassopoulos, MA
- 2019-Now **Resident Movement Scholar & Community Researcher**
 The Hacking//Hustling Collective
- 2021-2023 **Graduate Assistant Researcher**
 The Center for Research Evaluation and Assessment (CREA), Las Vegas, NV
 PI/Director: Bradley Marianno, PhD
- 2021-2022 **Research Consultant**
 Max Planck Institute for Software Systems, Germany
 PI: Elissa M. Redmiles, PhD
- 2020-2021 **COVID Contact Tracing Researcher**
 School of Public Health, UNLV
- 2018-2019 **Global Correspondent & Researcher, North America**
 Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP)
- 2015 **Summer Research Student: Berlin & Istanbul**
 Global Experience Office (GEO), Northeastern University, Boston, MA
 Research dialogue trip between Berlin, Germany & Istanbul, Turkey: *"Politics of Space: Islam, Gender, and Sexuality in Istanbul and Berlin"*
- 2012-2014 **Research Assistant**
 ADAM Center, New York, NY
 PI: Dr. Braw Shonner, DPT

OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE

- 2014-2016 **Crisis Counselor & Medical Advocate**
 Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC), Boston, MA
- 2015 **Community Relations Intern**
 Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts (PPLM), Boston, MA
- 2014 **Operations Management Co-op**
 Root Cause, Boston, MA

INVITED TALKS

- 2024 **UNLV Libraries Special Collections & Archives**
Sexual Entertainment & Economies: 21st Century Issues and Approaches
Panelist: *"Sex Worker Rights: Representation, Research, and Resistance in the Age of FOSTA/SESTA"*
- 2023 **University of Leicester**
Virtual Event: "Online Sex Work & Platform Governance: Can Regulation Make Things Safer?"
Presenter: *"Performing Sex Worker-led Research Under FOSTA/SESTA"*
- 2022 **AIDS United**
Virtual Listening Session
Panelist: *"Sex Work, Policy, and the Intersections of the Law"*
- 2022 **Boston University Faculty of Computing & Data Sciences (BU FCDS)**
Virtual Spring Speaker Series
Presenter: *"Sex Work and Surveillance"*
- 2021 **RightsCon Global**
Annual Conference, Digital due to COVID
Community Lab Co-Facilitator: *"Alternative Frameworks for Sexual Content Moderation"*
- 2021 **The Labor and Working-Class History Association**
Annual Conference, Digital due to COVID
Panelist: *"Canaries in the Coal Mine: Sex Workers at the Front Lines"*
- 2019 **UNLV Department of Sociology**
Brownbag Lecture, Las Vegas, NV
Presenter: *"Mobilization via Threat: Sex Worker Resistance in the #LetUsSurvive Anti-SESTA/FOSTA Campaign"*
- 2019 **The Cyberlaw Clinic @ Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society**
Harvard Law School, Cambridge, MA
Presenter: *"Mobilization via Threat: Sex Worker Resistance in a Post-SESTA/FOSTA Era"*
- 2018 **UNLV Department of Sociology**
SOC 101: Principles of Sociology
Guest Lecturer: *"Sociology and Social Movements"*
- 2017 **UNLV Department of Sociology**
SOC 443: Urban Sociology
Guest Lecturer: *"Sex Work, Policy, and Urban Spaces."*

CONFERENCES

- 2025 **Pacific Sociological Association (PSA)**
Annual Conference, San Francisco, CA
Presider and Presenter: *"Sex Worker- and Survivor-Led Protest in #LetUsSurvive #SurvivorsAgainstSESTA."*
- 2023 **Surveillance Studies Network (SSN)/Surveillance & Society**
Biennial Conference, University of Oregon
Discussant: *"The Battle for Control: Protest Policing, Extinction Rebellion & the Spiral of Surveillance and Counter-Surveillance in the Age of AI."*
- 2019 **American Sociological Association (ASA)**
Media Preconference, New York, NY
Presenter: *"Examining Digital and Sexual Citizenship in a FOSTA/SESTA Era: Who Gets to Survive Online and Who Doesn't?"*
- 2019 **Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP)**
Annual Conference, New York, NY
Moderator: *"The Future of Work in the Digital Age"*
- 2019 **Beyond Discourse: Critical and Empirical Approaches to Human Trafficking**
The Anti-Slavery & Human Trafficking Initiative (ASHTI) @ Center for the Study of Injustice
Institute for Policy & Social Research, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS
Presenter: *"Online Anti-Trafficking Activism and Twitter: Investigating Survivor Led Advocacy in the Campaign Against FOSTA-SESTA."*
- 2019 **Pacific Sociological Association (PSA)**
Annual Conference, Oakland, CA
Co-Presenter with C. Wakefield and Dr. B. Brents: *"Legality, Prostitution and Public Health: Reported Condom Use Among Buyers of Sexual Services in Different Markets."*
- 2018 **National Women's Studies Association (NWSA)**
Annual Conference, Atlanta, GA
Moderator: *"Exploring Sex Work/er Feminism as a 21st Century Intersectional Feminism."*
- 2018 **Law and Society Association (LSA)**
Annual Conference, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Co-Presenter with Dr. Barb Brents: *"Sex Worker Owned, Operated or Organized?: Global Comparisons of Worker-involved Businesses."*
- 2017 **COST Action PROSPOL Conference: Displacing Sex for Sale**
Aalborg University, Copenhagen, Denmark
Presenter: *"Global Trends in the Neo-liberalization of Social Movements: An Analysis of the Relationship between Contemporary Anti-Trafficking Efforts and the Sex Workers' Rights Movement."*

2017 **Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP)**

Annual Conference, Montréal, Quebec Canada

Presenter: *"Workers' Rights vs. Human Rights: Investigating the Impact of Contemporary Social Movement Strategies through a Case Study of the Sex Workers' Rights Movement."*

2017 **Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS)**

Annual Conference, Albuquerque, NM

Presenter: *"Addressing Intersectionality in the Sex Workers' Rights Movement: Resistance or Reproduction?"*

2016 **CSSH Undergraduate Research Forum**

Northeastern University, Boston, MA

Presenter: *"Social Capital in Cyberspace: A Content Analysis of the Sex Worker Community on Reddit."*

2016 **Eastern Sociological Society (ESS)**

Annual Conference, Boston, MA

Poster Presenter: *"Social Capital in Cyberspace: A Content Analysis of the Sex Worker Community on Reddit."*

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

2023-2024 **Grad Rebel Advantage Program Mentor for Undergraduate Students**

Graduate College, University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV)

2019-2020 **Graduate Student Representative**

UNLV Sociology Undergraduate Committee

2018-2020 **Graduate Representative for UNLV Department of Sociology**

UNLV Graduate & Professional Student Association (GPSA) Council

ACADEMIC SERVICE

2022-Now **Peer Reviewer**

- *Feminist Media Studies*
- *Sexualities*
- *The Age of Human Rights Journal (TAHRJ)*

AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

2024 **Outstanding PhD Student Award**

Department of Sociology, UNLV, Las Vegas, NV

- 2024 **Summer Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship** (\$7000)
UNLV Graduate College
- 2024 **Grad Academy Award** (\$750)
UNLV Graduate College
- 2024 **Grad Rebel Advantage Scholarship** (\$100)
UNLV Graduate College
- 2023 **Grad Rebel Advantage Scholarship** (\$100)
UNLV Graduate College
- 2019 **Graduate Student Public Sociology Award**
Department of Sociology, UNLV, Las Vegas, NV
- 2017 **Sponsorship Travel Award** (\$1000)
Graduate Professional Student Association (GPSA), UNLV, Las Vegas, NV
- 2016 **Public Sociology Departmental Award**
Department of Sociology, Northeastern University, Boston, MA
Senior Thesis awarded: "Social Capital in Cyberspace: A Content Analysis of the Sex Worker Community on Reddit."
- 2016 **Undergraduate Dean's List**
College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Northeastern University, Boston, MA
- 2015 **Undergraduate Dean's List**
College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Northeastern University, Boston, MA

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED PROJECTS & ADVOCACY

- 2025 **Founder & Curator**
#LetUsSurvive Hashtag Syllabus (Forthcoming)
- 2020 **Contributor: "Solidarity (not charity) forever."**
International Whores Day Zine, Kink Out Productions
- Winner of Broken Pencil Magazine's "Best Political Zine" and selected for MoMA PS1's permanent collection. <https://www.internationalwhoresday.com/zine>
- 2018 **Presenter: "A Feminist's History of Anti-Capitalism"**
Left in LA, Los Angeles, CA
- 2018 **Organizing Lead for Sex Worker Community Outreach**
Women's March, Las Vegas, NV
- 2017 **Panelist: "Femme Identity in the Workplace"**
Left in LA, Los Angeles, CA

- 2017 **Panelist: Health Care Hearing with Senator Cortez Masto**
 Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (PLAN), Las Vegas, NV
 - Organized by Senator Cortez Masto and Planned Parenthood

MEDIA QUOTES & COVERAGE

- 2020 “No New Normal, Who Will We Be After This Nightmare is Over?” Kim Kelly. *Bitch Media*.
<https://www.bitchmedia.org/article/no-new-normal-after-coronavirus>
- 2020 “Report Says Shadowbanning is Real—and it’s Suppressing Sex Workers.” Ana Valens. *Daily Dot*. <https://www.dailydot.com/irl/shadowbanning-sex-work/>
- 2020 “Sex Workers are Stressed, Anxious, and Depressed amid COVID-19 Pandemic.” Nicole Karlis. *Salon*. <https://www.salon.com/2020/03/22/sex-workers-are-stressed-anxious-and-depressed-amid-covid-19-pandemic/>
- 2019 “Sex Workers Are at the Forefront of the Fight Against Mass Surveillance and Big Tech.” Erin Taylor. *The Observer*. <https://observer.com/2019/11/sex-workers-mass-surveillance-big-tech/>
- 2018 “Social Media for Mobilization.” *UNLV News Center*.
<https://www.unlv.edu/news/article/social-media-mobilization>

SKILLS & CERTIFICATIONS

Statistical Programs: Stata, SPSS

Qualitative Data Analysis Programs: Nvivo, ATLAS.ti

Survey Design Programs: Qualtrics, SurveyMonkey, Google Forms, Microsoft Forms

Other Certifications: UNLV Grad Academy Research Certification, CITI Social/Behavioral Research Certification, Planned Parenthood’s Sexuality Education Certification Series (SECS)

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Sociological Association (ASA): Media Soc; Collective Behavior & Social Movements

Pacific Sociological Association (PSA)

Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP): Conflict, Social Action, & Change; Labor Studies

Surveillance Studies Network (SSN)