

Department of Sociology and Anthropology
University of Mississippi
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Ryan J. Parsons

Academic Employment

The University of Mississippi

August 2022 – Assistant Professor, Sociology and Southern Studies
Present Senior Personnel, NSF REU Site, “Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Study of Race, Power, and the Politics of Place”

Russell Sage Foundation

August 2026 – Visiting Fellow
July 2027

Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

October 2025 – Community Development Research Fellow
October 2026

Education

Princeton University

2015 – 2022 PhD in Sociology and Social Policy
Dissertation Committee: Mitch Duneier (co-chair), Kathy Edin (co-chair), Matthew Desmond, Bob Wuthnow, Kevin Kruse (History)
General Exam Areas: Community and Urban Sociology (with Mitch Duneier), Stratification (with Yu Xie), Political Sociology (with Kim Lane Schepppele)

University of Cambridge

2011 – 2012 MPhil in Development Studies, with distinction
Member, Darwin College
Exam Areas: Development Economics, Environmental Economics, Globalization and Corporate Governance, Sociology and Politics of Development

University of Mississippi

2007 – 2011 BA in International Studies, *summa cum laude*; BA in Chinese, *summa cum laude*
Minor in Economics

Publications

*Student co-author

In Progress. Book manuscript, tentatively titled *Dreams Deflected: Race, Poverty, and Mobility in Rural America*.

Under advance contract with University of Chicago Press, Fieldwork Encounters Series.

Under Review. “Embodied Southern Whiteness, Racial Knowledge, and the Great Migration.”

- Under Review.* “Invested in Ambiguity: Internal Colonialism in Contemporary China.”
- Under Review.* With *Ellie Crane. “‘On Our Own’ or ‘Together’: Disability, Race, and Local Food Access in Appalachia and the Mississippi Delta.”
- Under Review.* “Depopulation, Institutional Survivorship, and Racial Inequality in Rural School Closure.”
- Under Review.* “Not Quite Helping, Not Quite Leaving: Ethnographic Assistance and the Endurance of Fieldwork Entanglements.”
- Under Review.* With Emily Miller. “Economic Decline and the Disabling Role of Place.”
- Under Review.* “Pushed Out, Pulled Home: Black Return Migration to the Rural United States South and the Challenge of the Bionecropolis.”
- Accepted.* With Amy McDowell and *Julia Krause. “I Don’t Know That You Can Do That Anywhere Else: The Role College Towns Play in the Formation of Queer Identity.” *Journal of Queer and Trans Studies in Education*.
2025. With *Semoni Jannat. “The Impact of Parent Migration on Education Expenditures for Children in Rural China.” *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education*, 35(3): 30-48.
<https://doi.org/10.47381/aijre.v35i3.788>
2024. “Neighborly Surveillance: The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission and the Development of a Post-Jim Crow Ideological Apparatus.” *Surveillance & Society*, 22(3): 276-291.
<https://doi.org/10.24908/ss.v22i3.15994>
- *** Winner, 2024 SSN Early Career Researcher Prize
2023. “Logics of Extraction and of the Valorisation of Culture: The Role of Post-extraction Investment in the Creation of Inequality in China.” *International Development Policy* (16).
<https://doi.org/10.4000/poldev.6011>
2022. “Moving Up to Move Out: Higher Education as a Mobility Pathway in the Rural South.” *The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 8(3): 2-8-229.
<https://doi.org/10.7758/RSF.2022.8.3.09>
2021. “The Role of Transportation Development in Producing Spatial Inequality in China.” *Migration and Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21632324.2021.1979182>
2021. Interpreting the American Caste System as Racialized Economic Performance. *The American Sociologist*, 52(2), 367-389. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12108-021-09498-w>
2021. Business as Usual: Poverty, Education, and Economic Life Amidst the Pandemic. in *COVID-19: Global Pandemic, Societal Responses, Ideological Solutions*, 139-50.

Grants

At the University of Mississippi

External:

- 2025 Visiting Scholar Fellowship. Russell Sage Foundation. (\$92,000)
- 2024 “Intergenerational Mobility Outcomes and Supplemental Security Income (SSI)” Early Career Mentoring Institute, Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin (\$24,979)
- 2024 “Accessibility of State Services,” NaNDA Pilot Funding for New Neighborhood Measures, Institute for Social Research/NaNDA, University of Michigan (\$21,600) [Interrupted, in part, by federal action]
- 2024 UW-RDRC and IRP Extramural Mentored Fellowships on Poverty, Retirement, And Disability Research (\$45,000) [Interrupted, in part, by federal action]

- 2024 (Awarded to UM in 2023) “NSF REU Site: Interdisciplinary Study of the Politics of Place.” National Science Foundation’s Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE) Office of Multidisciplinary Activities (SMA) – REU program. Award # 2243249. *Senior Personnel* from January 2024. (\$413,757)
- 2023 Presidential Grant for “Disability Insurance and Economic Decline in Rural America,” Russell Sage Foundation (\$74,924)
- 2022 Early Career Scholars Program, Center for Research on College-Workforce Transitions, University of Wisconsin (\$2,500)

Internal:

- 2026 Isom Fellows Program, The Sarah Isom Center for Women and Gender Studies, University of Mississippi (\$9,000)
- 2026 CLA Research and Creative Scholarship Council Summer Funding, University of Mississippi (\$9,974)
- 2026 Mobile Institute for Scientific Teaching, College of Liberal Arts, University of Mississippi (\$1,500)
- 2023 Inclusive Teaching Fellowship, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, University of Mississippi (\$4,000)
- 2023 Advancing Equity Grant, “Community Driven Oral History,” Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, University of Mississippi (\$10,000)
- 2023 Community Engaged Fellows, Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, University of Mississippi (\$1,500)
- 2022 Community Partnership Development Grant, Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, University of Mississippi (\$1,000)

Teaching

University of Mississippi

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| EDHE105 | Freshman Seminar (instructor) |
| BUS400 | Social Entrepreneurship (instructor) |
| SOC414 | Race, Space, and Place (cross-listed in African American Studies, Southern Studies, and Gender Studies) |
| SOC427 | Social Stratification |
| SOC312 | Poverty and Society |
| SST101 | Introduction to Southern Studies |
| SST401 | Southern Studies Methods Seminar |
| SST560 | Oral History of Southern Social Movements |
| SST602 | Southern Studies Graduate Seminar II |

Princeton University

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| SOC223 | Hustles and Hustlers (preceptor for Rachel Ferguson) |
| SOC101 | Introduction to Sociology (preceptor for Mitchell Duneier) |
| SOC204 | Social Networks (preceptor for Matt Salganik) |
| SOC207 | Poverty in America (preceptor for Matthew Desmond and Kathryn Edin) |

Millsaps College/Freedom Summer Collegiate

FSC101	Comparative Social Issues
FSC101	Pandemics and Society
FSC101	Neighborhoods

NJ-Step/Prison Teaching Initiative

SOC231	American Minority Relations (East Jersey State Penitentiary, credit offered through Raritan Valley Community College)
SOC101	Introduction to Sociology (Garden State Youth Correctional Facility, credit offered through Raritan Valley Community College)

Talks and Presentations

** Past five years*

- 2026 ““On Our Own” or “Together”: Disability, Race, and Local Food Access in Appalachia and the Mississippi Delta.”
- Southern Rural Sociological Association Annual Meeting (Louisville, KY)
- 2025 “Socio-political Consequences of Rural Depopulation: Evidence from the Great Migration”
- Southern Demographic Association Annual Meeting (Lexington, KY)
- Invited, Brown University Population Studies and Training Center (Providence, RI)
“Gender Conformity and Rurality in High School Achievement: A Machine Learning Analysis of Educational Disparities”
- Population Association of America (Washington, DC)
- ASA Annual Meeting (Chicago)
- 2024 “Moving Out to Move Up? Education Pathways in Low-Mobility Contexts and the Pull of Home”
- ASHE Annual Meeting (Minneapolis)
“Ambiguity, Asymmetric Legibilization, and State Formation”
- ASA Annual Meeting (Montreal)
“The Role of Gender Non-conformity in Critiquing Social Mobility Norms: Evidence from the Hijra Community of Bangladesh”
- SSS Annual Meeting (New Orleans)
“The Impact of Parent Migration on Education Expenditures for Rural China in China”
- SSS Annual Meeting (New Orleans)
- 2023 “Pushed Out, Pulled Home: Pathways to Black Return Migration in Rural America”
- ASA Annual Meeting (Philadelphia)
- Department of Sociology and Anthropology Speaker Series, University of Mississippi
“Disability and Economic Decline in Rural America”
- ASA Annual Meeting (Philadelphia)
- Population Association of America (New Orleans)

Student Supervision

William Moffat (PhD dissertation, economics, committee member)

David Smith (MA thesis, chair)
Md. Saiful Hasan (MA thesis, chair)
Julia Kraus (MA thesis, chair)
Charlie Pappas (MA thesis, chair)
Khadiza Tul Kubra (MA thesis, chair)
Semonti Jannat (MA thesis, committee member)
Savannah Avery (MA thesis, committee member)
Angela Rankin (MA thesis, committee member)
Walker Bray (MA internship project, committee member)
Caroline Nolte (MA internship project, committee member)
Genesis Moronta (McNair Scholars Program, advisor)
Reice Hicks (BA honors thesis, chair)
Feagin Hardy (BA honors thesis, chair)
Te'keyra Shelton (BA honors thesis, committee member)
Kharley Redmon (BA honors thesis, committee member)

Service to the Profession and University

- Occasional reviewer for journals in sociology, demography, and social services
- Occasional reviewer for the National Science Foundation
- Member, Editorial Board, *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*
- Member, nominations committee, Section on Ethnic and Racial Minorities, ASA
- Member, James E Blackwell Student Paper Award committee, Section on Ethnic and Racial Minorities, ASA
- Member, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee in the Center for the Study of Southern Culture