# Stephanie Zhang

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## Education

**University of California: Los Angeles**, Los Angeles, CA (2023 – Present)
PhD, Sociology

**University of California: Los Angeles**, Los Angeles, CA (2023 – 2025)
MA, Sociology

- Committee: Hannah Landecker, Omar Lizardo

**University of Virginia**, Charlottesville, VA (2019 – 2023)
B.A, Mathematics (Probability/Statistics) & Sociology, Highest Distinction

- Thesis (Sociology): Twitter Dreams of AI: Understanding Futurity Through Sentence Embeddings

## Research Interests

Computational Sociology, Science and Technology Studies

## Papers

Peer Reviewed

Zhang, S. (2025). Twitter dreams of AI: understanding AI futurity through sentence embeddings. *Information, Communication & Society*, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2025.2525490

Technical Reports

Salvo J, Shipp S, **Zhang S**. Building a Case Study of Domestic Migration and the Curated Data TR# 2022-027 - Essential Elements, Technical Report BI 2022-027. [Print]. Proceedings of the Biocomplexity Institute, University of Virginia; 2022 April. https://doi.org/10.18130/bcwa-gt69

Salvo J, Shipp S, **Zhang S**. Defining the Role of Gig Employment in the Post-Pandemic World of Work, Technical Report BI 2022-026. Proceedings of the Biocomplexity Institute, University of Virginia; 2022. https://doi.org/10.18130/wkx0-4y46

Shipp S, Salvo J, **Zhang S**. Understanding the State of Nursing Homes and Residential Care Facilities - A Use Case to Support the Development of the Curated Data Enterprise. Technical Report 2022-028. Proceedings of the Biocomplexity Institute, University of Virginia; 2022. https://doi.org/10.18130/5d6x-f676

In Preparation

Zhang, S. Derailed: The Collapse of Pacific Electric (1911-1961) [*In Preparation for Journal of Historical Network Research*]

Pojman, E. M.*, Mwedzi, D.*, Olaya Bucaro, O.*, **Zhang, S.***, Chong, M., Alexander, M., Alburez-Gutierrez, D., Leaving for life: Using online crowd-sourced genealogies to estimate the migrant mortality advantage for the United Kingdom and Ireland. *[Revise and Resubmit at Population Research and Policy Review]* WP: https://dx.doi.org/10.4054/MPIDR-WP-2023-050

* Denotes equal contribution

## Honors/Awards

- University of Virginia Sociology, Best Distinguished Major Thesis Award, (2023)
- University of Virginia, Echols Scholar; Top 5% of incoming students in the College of Arts and Sciences (2019)

## Grants

- University of California: Los Angeles, Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Fellowship, 2025 ($6,000)
- University of California: Los Angeles, Graduate Research Mentorship Fellowship, 2024-2025 ($20,000)
- University of California: Los Angeles, Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Fellowship, 2024 ($6,000)
- University of Virginia, Ingrassia Family Research Grant for Echols Scholars, 2023 ($1,125)
- University of Virginia, College of Arts and Sciences Small Research and Travel Grants, 2023 ($779)

## Talks

- *The American Community Survey and Administrative Data*, MPIDR Incubator Tutorial Series (July, 2023)

## Presentations

- Zhang, S. *Derailed: The Collapse of Pacific Electric (1911 – 1961).* 2025 International Network for Social Network Analysis Sunbelt Conference, Paris, France [Oral Presentation] (June, 2025)
- Zhang, S. *Twitter Dreams of AI: Understanding AI Futurity Through Sentence Embeddings.* 2024 Annual Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Montreal, Canada [Oral Presentation] (August, 2024)
- Pojman, E. M., Mwedzi, D., Olaya Bucaro, O., **Zhang, S.**, Chong, M., Alexander, M., Alburez-Gutierrez, D., *Leaving for life: Using online crowd-sourced genealogies to estimate the migrant mortality advantage for the United Kingdom and Ireland.* European Population Council Meeting 2024, Edinburgh, UK [Presented by O.O.B]
- Pojman, E. M., Mwedzi, D., Olaya Bucaro, O., **Zhang, S.**, Chong, M., Alcexander, M., Alburez-Gutierrez, D., *Leaving for life: Using online crowd-sourced genealogies to estimate the migrant mortality advantage for the United Kingdom and Ireland.* 2024 Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America, Columbus, Ohio [Presented by D.M]
- Zhang, S. *Twitter Dreams of AI: Understanding Futurity Through Sentence Embeddings*, Echols Research Symposium, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia [Oral Presentation] (April, 2023)
- Zhang, S. *Classifying and Measuring Open Source Software Projects on GitHub*, Data Science for the Public Good Symposium, Biocomplexity Institute [Virtual Poster Presentation] (August, 2021)

## Research Experience
**Graduate Student Researcher**, UCLA/UC Irvine (2025)

- Supervisor: Dr. Naomi Sugie

**Visiting Researcher,** Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (2023)

- Part of the [Population and Social Data Science Summer Incubator Program](#)
- Affiliated with the Kinship Inequalities Research Group and used FamiLinx data to examine migration and mortality (Supervisor: Dr. Diego Alburez-Gutierrez)

**Research Fellow**, UVA Biocomplexity Institute: Social and Decision Analytics Division (2021 - 2023)

- December 2021-May 2023: Worked on case studies regarding nursing homes, gig economy, migration and the undercount of young children as part of a project spearheading use of administrative data in the 2030 Census (Supervisors: Drs. Joseph Salvo and Stephanie Shipp)

- August 2021-December 2021: Worked on translating a term matching approach in the development of an R package ([tidyorgs](#)) designed to classify GitHub users into sectors based on location, email domain and institutional affiliations. (Supervisor: Dr. Brandon Kramer)

**Intern**, Data Science for Public Good Young Scholars, UVA Biocomplexity Institute (2021)

- Received training on data science in R and Python, research methods and ethics, data visualization and techniques such as topic modeling, and network analysis for the following projects:
  - [Classifying and Measuring Open Source Software Projects on GitHub](#)
  - [Manpower Planning using Skill Data](#)

**Albemarle County Department of Social Services Child Welfare Report** (2020-2021)

- Utilized administrative data from Albemarle County Department of Social Services and American Community Survey Data to study racial disparities at different stages of the child welfare referral process. (Supervisor: Dr. Michele Claibourn)

## Teaching Experience

**Teaching Assistant:**

- Soc 180D: Mass Incarceration and Social Inequality (Spring 2025)
  - Instructor: Dr. Naomi Sugie [Sociology, UCLA]

**Reader**:

- SocGen 180: Science and Technology Studies through Feminist Framework (Fall 2024)
  - Instructor: Dr. Rachel Vaughn [Institute of Society and Genetics, UCLA]

## Non-Academic Experience

**Data Science Intern**, MITRE (2022)

- Supported the Response Geospatial Office within Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the development of a new Disaster Analytical Platform based on historical storm data and damage assessments
- Utilized OpenFEMA datasets and CDC Social Vulnerability Index measures in a model based on Monte Carlo and Bootstrapping simulation in Python to predict county-level emergency, food and shelter needs

## Professional Service

Internal

**Social Chair**, Sociology Graduate Student Association (2024-2026)
**Student Organizer**, Computational Sociology Working Group (2024-2026)

## Technical Skills

Coding Languages: R, Python
Datasets: Familinx, American Community Survey
Other: LaTeX (Overleaf), Version Control (git)