

**Erika M. Arias**

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Department of Sociology

Population Studies Center

School of Information

[ariaseri@umich.edu](mailto:ariaseri@umich.edu)[LinkedIn](#)**CURRICULUM VITAE****EDUCATION**

Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology

Expected May 2026

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Area of Specialization: Social Demography

Master of Science in Information

May 2025

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Areas of Specialization: User-Centered Agile Development &amp; Big Data Analytics

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

January 2016

California State University, Fullerton (CSUF)

**RESEARCH INTERESTS**

Goal navigation in online dating environments; relationship formation; fertility intentions; choice processes; designing systems for social good; inclusive design

**RESEARCH EXPERIENCE****Social Demography Researcher**

August 2021 – Present

**Department of Sociology and U-M Population Studies Center**Project Title: Voluntary Childlessness in the United States: 2002 – 2019

Faculty Advisors: Dr Yasamin Kusunoki, U-M School of Nursing and Dr. Sarah Burgard,  
Department of Sociology at U-M

- Led a time series analysis on U.S. fertility trends (2002-2019) to explore changes in childlessness and parenthood, contributing to theories of demographic fertility change
- Applied advanced statistical techniques to investigate the interrelationships between fertility, relationship status, and predictors of voluntary childlessness

**Product Manager (Academic Collaboration) at U-M  
Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor, MI**

January 2025 – May 2025

- Led a cross-functional team to design and launch a patient storytelling health application, improving diagnostic accuracy and aligning product features with patient and practitioner needs
- Drove sprint planning, backlog refinement, and weekly stand-ups via Jira and Zoom, while coordinating across design and development in GitHub to streamline collaboration and accelerate feature development

**User Experience Research Intern at Google  
Seattle, WA**

May 2024 – August 2024

- Led an exploratory UX research study on how Google engineers define collaboration overload by facilitating 11 semi-structured interviews and leading a multi-phase thematic analysis, generating insights to inform workflow efficiency
- Contributed to the refinement of a new collaboration metric by integrating qualitative insights into broader research on engineering team dynamics and communicated findings with cross-functional stakeholders

**User Experience Research Intern at U-M  
University of Michigan School of Nursing**

May 2023 – May 2024

Project Titles: C-ARCHES

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Yasamin Kusunoki, U-M School of Nursing

- Led UX research and strategy for a digital health app by conducting stakeholder interviews and mapping user flows to prioritize features and ensure alignment with user needs and research goals
- Conducted usability testing and collaborated with researchers and developers to integrate a clinical intervention into a scalable mobile app, identifying accessibility barriers across user groups and improving user experience before development handoff

**Research Assistant at the University of Michigan (U-M)  
Injury Prevention Center, Ann Arbor, MI**

November 2021 – January 2022

Project Titles: Binding Research to Advance Transmasculine Health (BREATHE); Adapting an Evidence-Based Sexual Assault Prevention Program Online

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Sarah Peitzmeier, Health Behavior and Biological Sciences Department, U-M

- Reviewed BREATHE interview transcripts, and compiled a list of quotes and themes that were visually represented in a health education comic book on transmasculine binding experiences
- Reviewed interview transcripts from first-year undergraduate students on their perceptions of online-based sexual assault prevention programs, and used the findings to design and adapt the Enhanced Assess, Acknowledge, and Act (EAAA) sexual assault resistance education program to be completed online

**Research Assistant for Laura Carroll, Nonfiction Author**

April 2020 – Oct. 2020

- Analyzed qualitative data using NVivo software for a longitudinal study on childfree women

**Research Assistant at the University of Michigan (U-M)  
Society, Population, and Environment (SPE) program**

October 2019 – Sept 2021

Project Title: Chitwan Valley Family Study (CVFS)Faculty Advisor: Dr. William Axinn, Sociology Department, U-M

The CVFS studies family change and has collected full life histories of more than 10,000 individuals for over 20 years. This is a comprehensive family panel study of individuals, households, and communities in the Chitwan Valley of Nepal.

- Collaborated with SPE program faculty and staff on longitudinal research covering a broad range of topics, including family change, mental health, and reproductive health
- Assisted with the preparation of research papers and proposals

**Research Assistant at CSUF**

October 2018 – January 2020

**Social Psychology Q-Laboratory**Project Title: Cultural Consensus of Love ExperiencesFaculty Advisors: Dr. Jessica Tessler and Dr. Kristin Beals, Psychology Department, CSUF

The purpose of the current research is to examine the cultural consensus of felt love among men and women in the United States. The data collected from this survey will include measures of sexual attraction and identity, love languages, relationship styles, & Big Five Personality traits.

- Assisted with survey design & scale selection
- Collaborated with lab members to finalize Institutional Review Board (IRB) application
- Attended weekly research meetings to discuss current and future projects

**Research Assistant at CSUF**

August 2015 – April 2016

**Social Psychology Q-Laboratory**Project Title: Consensual Non-Monogamy Pilot StudyFaculty Advisors: Dr. Jessica Tessler and Dr. Kristin Beals, Psychology Department, CSUF

This research aimed to describe the unique and shared experiences of consensually non-monogamous (CNM) couples living in Southern California. Participants were asked to create a historical timeline using color-coded caption cards to pair significant events with associated emotions experienced throughout the course of their primary relationship. This study offered a supplement to the growing body of research on how CNM relationships operate, and why individuals elect CNM relationships over monogamous relationships.

- Recruited and interviewed couples about the benefits and challenges of committing to an alternative relationship style
- Analyzed qualitative data via interview transcription

- Collaborated with lab members to create a poster for the 2016 Western Psychological Association (WPA) conference

### **Independent Researcher at CSUF**

August 2015 – December 2015

Project Title: Social Media as a Relationship Outlet: Can Extra-Dyadic Interactions Preserve Social Monogamy?

Principle Investigators: Erika M. Arias and Dr. Kristin Beals, Psychology Department, CSUF

This study sought to investigate how extra-dyadic behavior serves socially monogamous relationships. It was hypothesized that there would be a positive relationship between relationship longevity and extra-dyadic interactions (EDI's) using social media. It was further predicted that individuals in monogamous relationships who reported EDI's using social media would also report overall less self-expansion within their current primary relationship. Third, it was predicted that individuals would report less relationship commitment if they reported low self-expansion.

- Reviewed and compiled literature on social expansion theory, the effects of social media on relationship commitment, and efforts to maintain monogamy
- Composed a research proposal & recruited participants from social media sites
- Submitted IRB application and received approval
- Designed an online survey that measured extra-dyadic interaction, relationship commitment, & social expansion

### **Summer Research Opportunity Program (SROP) Scholar U-M Stigmatized Sexualities Laboratory**

May 2015 – August 2015

Project Titles: Casual Sex Study; Great Lover Study; Not All Men Study; Orgasm Goal Orientation Study

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Terri Conley, Psychology Department, U-M

- Conducted content analyses of academic journals including The Journal of Social and Personal Relationships and Personal Relationships
- Built scales and coded data for studies that examined physical and instrumental reasons for why men and women engage in casual sex
- Presented on casual sex differences between men and women at the final SROP poster symposium

### **Research Assistant at CSUF Reproductive Ecology Lab**

January 2015 – December 2015

Project Title: Mate Preference Shifts and Women's Ovulation Cycles

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Elizabeth Pillsworth, Anthropology Department, CSUF

This research supported an original UCLA study directed by Dr. Elizabeth Pillsworth & Dr. Martie Haselton (2006) that examined women's ovulation shifts, extra-pair attraction, and mate retention behavior.

- Prescreened participants for eligibility, collected participant consent forms, & proctored in-person survey data collection

## CONTENT PRODUCTION & MEDIA COMMUNICATION

### Podcast Producer & Host

April 2019 – May 2021

Citizen-Powered Media, Remote

- Produced, hosted, and interviewed guests on podcasts exploring global perspectives on relationships, sustainability, & population-environment dynamics, managing end-to-end production using Zoom, SquadCast, & Adobe Audition to increase audience engagement

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

### Graduate Student Instructor

August 2024 – Present

Department of Sociology at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

- Collaboratively instructed *Digital Life in the Social World* and *Health and Society: An Introduction to Sociology*, exploring human-technology interaction, digital behavior, and social determinants of health
- Led discussions and developing instructional materials to break down complex sociological concepts for diverse students—enhancing skills in research communication and group facilitation
- Guided students in research methodologies and critical thinking, aligning with UX research practices such as defining clear research objectives and applying these to real-world applications

## HONORS & SCHOLARSHIPS

Population Studies Center Trainee at U-M

August 2021 – May 2024

Dean's List CSUF

December 2014 & May 2015

Summer Research Opportunity Program (SROP) at U-M

May 2015 – August 2015

## PUBLICATIONS

**Arias, E.** (2022, April 15). Voluntary childlessness: An upstream choice in the anthropocene. D. Thornley (Ed.), *Childfree across the disciplines: Academic and activist perspectives on not choosing children*. Rutgers University Press.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

**Arias, E.**, (April 2025). *Voluntary Childlessness in the United States: 2002 – 2019*. Presented at the 2025 Population Association of America Conference, Washington, D.C.

**Arias, E.**, Barajas, A., & West, A. (April 2019). *Consensual non-monogamy: Destigmatizing atypical relationships*. Presented at the 2019 Western Psychological Association Conference, Pasadena, CA.

Tessler, J., **Arias, E.**, Feese, K., Beals, C., & Beals, K. (April 2016). *Exploration of a variety of styles of consensual non-monogamous relationships*. Presented at the 2016 Western Psychological Association Conference, Long Beach, CA.

Baker, M. J., **Arias, E.**, (April 2016). *Touch in sport: A video coding methodology*. Presented at the 2016 Western Psychological Association Conference, Long Beach, CA.

**Arias, E.**, & Conley, T. (August 2015). *Gender differences in sexuality*. Presented at the 2015 Summer Research Opportunity Program Symposium, Ann Arbor, MI.

## SKILLS

- **UX Research Methods:** User interviews, usability testing, survey design, survey analysis, comparative analysis, A/B testing and experimental design, heuristic evaluations
- **Qualitative Analysis Tools:** NVivo, Miro, Figma
- **Programming & Analytical Tools:** Python, R, SQL, Stata, Tableau, Microsoft Power BI
- **Design & Collaboration Tools:** Figma, Adobe XD, Notion, Jira, GitHub, HTML5, CSS3, JavaScript, React, Django

## LANGUAGES

- English
- Spanish

## **REFERENCES**

Yasamin Kusunoki, Ph.D., MPH  
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