

Erykah N. Benson

Sociology Ph.D. Candidate, M.A.

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Education

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor - Ann Arbor, MI

Ph.D. Sociology, *in progress*
M.A. Sociology, May 2024
Preliminary Exam: Social Demography (Pass)
Advisor: Dr. Erin Cech

Dissertation: Between Productivity and Imagination: Black Entrepreneurs' Sensemaking of Digital Technologies for Work

- Erin Cech (Chair), Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Michigan
- Paige Sweet, Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Michigan
- Apryl Williams, Associate Professor of Media & Communications, University of Michigan
- Karyn Lacy, Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Michigan
- Corey Fields, Associate Professor of Sociology, Georgetown University

Michigan State University - East Lansing, MI

B.A. Interdisciplinary Social Sciences (*Honors Distinction*), 2021

Research Areas

Predatory Inclusion; Digital Studies; Entrepreneurship; Platform Labor; Work and Identity; Survey and Interview Methods

Publications, *denotes graduate students at time of publication

Articles

2024

Hudgins, K.*, **Benson, E.***, Carr, S.*, Simington, J.*, Walker, Z., Cruz, J., Hutchings, V., Lewis, E., Ostfeld, M. C., & Young, A. Crafting Democratic Futures: Understanding Political Conditions and Racialized Attitudes Toward Black Reparations. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 10(3), 49–67. <https://doi.org/10.7758/RSF.2024.10.3.03>

Peer-Reviewed Proceedings

2026

Williams, A., Brathwaite, K., Banks, J.*, **Benson, E.***, Monier, M.*, Sayler, J.*, Paredes, G.*. (2025). "Needs Translation: Advocating for Marginalized Communities in Tech Design", ([Proceedings of the Hawaii International System Sciences Conference](#))

Invited Comments & Op-Eds

2024

Hudgins, K.*, **Benson, E.***, Ostfeld, M., Hutchings, V. (2024). "Detroit reparations task force now has until 2025 to make its report, but going slow with this challenging work may not be a bad thing." [10.64628/AAI.mack3qfcx](https://doi.org/10.64628/AAI.mack3qfcx).

Policy Briefs

2025

Benson, E.* & Lundy, L.* (2025). "From Aisles to Doorsteps." [Issue Brief](#). Center for Racial

Justice and Poverty Solutions.

- 2023** **Benson, E.*** & Simington, J.* "Forty Acres and a Mule? How Flint residents believe the government should repay Black Americans." [Issue Brief](#). Center for Racial Justice.
- 2023** **Benson, E.*** & Simington, J.* "Collective Remembrance and Detroiters' Views Toward Racial Inequity." [Issue Brief](#). Center for Racial Justice.
- 2022** **Benson, E.*** & Simington, J.* "The Electoral Impact of Racial Reckoning: The Effect of Reparations Policy on Voter Engagement in Detroit." [Issue Brief](#). Center for Racial Justice.
- 2022** Wileden, L. & **Benson, E.*** "The Economic Well-Being of Detroit Residents Two Years Into the COVID-19 Pandemic." [Issue Brief](#). Detroit Metro Area Communities Study.

Fellowships, Grants, and Awards, \$241K Fellowship Funding

External Fellowships

- 2023 - 2027** National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, DGE-2241144
- 2021 - 2023** Population Studies Research Traineeship, National Institutes of Child and Human Development, 5T32HD007339-37

Internal Funding and Awards

- 2025** Rackham Student Research Grant (\$3,000)
- 2025** Population Studies Center Research Support Fund, University of Michigan (\$750) *Hawaii International System Sciences Conference*
- 2025** SAMI Conference Travel Grant (Office of Academic and Multicultural Affairs), University of Michigan (\$577) *Hawaii International System Sciences Conference*
- 2025** Rackham Professional Development Grant, University of Michigan (\$400) *Hawaii International System Science Conference*
- 2025** Rackham Conference Travel Award, University of Michigan (\$1,150) *Hawaii International System Science Conference*
- 2025** Sweetland Graduate Fellows Seminar, University of Michigan (\$1,000, Declined)
- 2025** Population Studies Center Traineeship Travel Award, University of Michigan (\$750), *Population Association of America 2025 Conference*
- 2025** Rackham Conference Travel Award, University of Michigan (\$900) *Population Association of America 2025 Conference*
- 2025** NCID Anti-Racism Grant, "Love Unseen: Measuring Young Adults' Self-Perceptions and Attitudes Regarding Desirability in Dating Contexts", Principal Investigator: Mel Monier, Team Members: Jasmine Banks, Janae Sayler, Erykah Benson (\$5,000)
- 2024** Rackham Conference Travel Award, University of Michigan (\$900) *Population Association of America 2024 Conference*
- 2024** Population Studies Center Traineeship Travel Award, University of Michigan (\$750) *Population Association of America 2024 Conference*
- 2023** NCID Anti-Racism Grant, University of Michigan (\$5,000)
- 2023** Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant, University of Michigan (\$1,500)
- 2022** Clifford C. Clogg Scholarship, University of Michigan - Ann Arbor (\$2,800)
- 2022** Population Studies Center Conference Travel Award, University of Michigan (\$400), *Association of Public Policy and Management 2022 Conference*
- 2022** Rackham Conference Travel Award, University of Michigan - Ann Arbor (\$900) *Association of Public Policy and Management 2022 Conference*

Additional Honors

- 2024** Graduate Student Mentorship Award, University of Michigan Department of Sociology
- 2023** Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship, Honorable Mention

Papers in Preparation

- **Benson, E.***. (2025) "Crafting Our Own Narrative: Making Sense of Disposable Racial Politics and Unpaid Labor in the Digital Economy", *under review*
- Monier, M.*, Banks, J.*, Saylor, J.*, **Benson, E.***, Brathwaite, K., Williams, A. (2025). "'It's giving fast food:' Black Women's Perceptions of Dating App Platforms and Algorithms", *under review*
- **Benson, E.*** & Lundy, L*. "More than an Appetite for Convenience: Usage Patterns of Grocery Delivery Services in Detroit, Michigan", *under review*
- Banks, J.*, **Benson, E.***, Haleboua, G., Abrons, E., Williams, A., Bui, M., Hui-Hui, T. "Reparative AI: A socio-technical approach toward recognizing, redressing, and repairing AI harms", *draft available*
- Wallace, G., **Benson, E.***, Coates, R., Erving, C. "Gaps and Opportunities in the New Technologies of Work"

Select Research Experience

2024 - Present	Research Assistant, <i>The Bodies, Identities, Intimacies, and Technologies (BIIT) Lab</i> The University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, LSA Digital Studies Institute <i>Dr. Apryl Williams</i>
2024 - Present	Research Assistant, <i>Reparative Artificial Intelligence (AI)</i> The University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, LSA Humanities Collaboratory <i>Drs. Germaine Haleboua, Matthew Bui, Apryl Williams, Ellie Abrons, Tung-Hui Hu</i>
2022 - 2024	Research Fellow, <i>Center for Racial Justice</i> The University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, Ford School of Public Policy <i>Dr. Mara Cecilia Ostfeld</i>

Teaching Experience

University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, MI

2024	Guest Lecturer, PUBPOL475: Race, Place, and Inequality, Dr. Mo Torres
2024	Guest Lecturer, Detroit Students Establishing Educational Dreams (S.E.E.D.) Program
2024-5	Graduate Principal Investigator, SOC 394: Sociology Undergraduate Research Opportunity

Wayne State University - Detroit, MI

2021	Graduate Teaching Assistant, ENG 1010: Basic Writing, Dr. Thomas Trimble (Section Faculty)
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Michigan State University - East Lansing

2021	Undergraduate Teaching Assistant, SOC 100: Introduction to Sociology, <i>Dr. Eric Beasley</i>
2020	Undergraduate Teaching Assistant, SOC 161: International Development & Change, <i>Dr. Benjamin Marley</i>

Pedagogical Training

2025	Finding a Job at Teaching-focused Institutions Workshop, American Sociological Association 2025 Meeting, August 9, 2025, Hyatt Regency Chicago, IL
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Invited Presentations, *denotes graduate students

Formal Academic Presentations

2026	Williams, A., Brathwaite, K., Banks, J.*, Benson, E.* , Monier, M.*, Saylor, J., Paredes, G. "Needs Translation: Advocating for Marginalized Communities in Tech Design". Invited Panelist and Paper Presenter. Selected from abstracts. Hawaii International Conference on Systems Sciences 59th Annual
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- Meeting. January 6-9, 2026. Lahaina, Hawaii.
- 2025** Halegoua, G., Abrons, E., Bui, M., **Benson, E.**, "Harness: Reparative AI + Futures". Invited Panelist. Digital Studies Institute, Digital IDEAS Summer Institute. June 26, 2025. Ann Arbor, MI.
- 2025** **Benson, E.** "Delivering Change to the Motor City? Usage Patterns and Affective Experiences of Online Grocery and Meal Delivery in Detroit", Michigan. April 10 - 13, 2025. Poster Presentation. Selected from abstracts. Population Association of America. Washington, D.C.
- 2025** Mel, M.*, Banks, J.*, Sayler, J.*, **Benson, E.***, Brathwaite, K., Williams, A., "It's giving fast food: Black women's perceptions of Dating App Platforms and Algorithms," Black Graduate Research Studies Conference. March 22, 2025. Ann Arbor, MI.
- 2024** Easter, M., **Benson, E.**, Piazza, G., Davis, J., Hooker, J. "[Making It: Perspectives on the Business of Creativity](#)". Invited Panelist. Ross Impact Studio. December 5, 2024. Jeff T. Blau Hall. University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, MI.
- 2024** **Benson, E.** "Driving Change in the Motor City? Usage Patterns and Affective Experiences in Online Grocery and Meal Delivery in the City of Detroit, MI". September 26 - 27, 2024. Oral Presentation. Selected from abstracts. Detroit Food Policy Council, Marygrove College. Detroit, MI..
- 2024** **Benson, E.** "Black Creatives in the Platform Gig Economy". April 17 - 20, 2024. Poster Presentation. Selected from abstracts. Population Association of America. Columbus, OH.
- 2024** **Benson, E.** "Catharsis, Community, and Craft: How Black Creatives Make Meaning of Online Community-building in the Platform Economy". April 2, 2024. Oral Presentation. Invited Talk. 2024 NCID Anti-Racism Graduate Research Showcase. Ann Arbor, MI. [Public Link](#).
- 2024** **Benson, E.** "Catharsis, Community, and Craft: How Black Creatives Make Meaning of Online Community-building in the Platform Economy". March 23, 2024. Oral Presentation. Selected from abstracts. Black Graduate Student Association Research Symposium. Ann Arbor, MI.
- 2023** Hudgins, K., **Benson, E.**, Simington, J. "Crafting Democratic Futures: Understanding Political Conditions and Racialized Attitudes towards Black Reparations in the US". April 21, 2023. Invited Oral Presentation. Russell Sage Foundation. New York, NY.
- 2022** **Benson, E.** "Entrepreneurship and Perceived Economic Uncertainty in Detroit during COVID-19". November 17 - 19, 2022. Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Fall Research. Conference. Oral Presentation. Selected from abstracts. Washington, D.C.

Invited Talks

- 2024** "Get the Voter 411." MountUp! For Social Justice Series. Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church. Podcast Invited Speaker. October 17, 2024. Detroit, MI
- 2024** "Technology, Food Access, and Reparation: Why Public Attitudes Matter". Detroit Promise Program. August 21, 2024. University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI.
- 2024** "Voting in the Michigan Primaries". *MountUp!* For Social Justice Series. Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church. Organizer & Presenter. February 26, 2024. Detroit, MI.
- 2021** "Building Financial Knowledge and Equity Across Generations." *MountUp!* For Social Justice Series. Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church. Organizer & Presenter. April 19, 2021. Detroit, MI.
- 2021** "Suffer Not the Children: Education and Equity in COVID-19." MountUp! For Social Justice Series. Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church. Organizer & Presenter. March 26, 2021. Detroit, MI.
- 2021** "Biden Administration's 100-Day Plan and Black America." MountUp! For Social Justice Series. Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church. Organizer & Presenter. February 22, 2021. Detroit, MI.
- 2021** "Candid Convo on COVID-19". MountUp! For Social Justice Series. Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church. Organizer & Presenter. January 21, 2021. Detroit, MI.
- 2020** "Get the Voter 411!" MountUp! For Social Justice Series. Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church. Organizer & Presenter. October 30, 2020. Detroit, MI.

Select Invited Media Coverage

"Reparations program offers \$25,000 in housing support to Black metro Detroiters." [Detroit Free Press](#). October 2025.
 "ASPIRE program bridges research and real-world impact." [Youth Policy Lab](#). August 2024.
 "U-M report finds majority of Detroiters support some form of reparations." [CBS News Detroit](#). April 2023

Academic and Professional Service

Conference Organization and Administration

2025 Conference Symposium Organizer. Black Graduate Student Association Graduate Research Symposium. "Illuminating Our Black Joy". March 20th - March 22nd. Ann Arbor, MI.
2023 Book Discussant. "The Love Jones Cohort: Single and Living Alone in the Black Middle Class: A Conversation with Dr. Kris Marsh". October 3, 2023. Ann Arbor, MI
2023 - 2024 Student Coordinator, Race & Racial Identities Workshop, U-M - Ann Arbor, MI

Administrative and Collective Duties

2025 Invited Reviewer, *American Sociological Review*
2022 - 2024 Graduate Student Recruitment Representative, U-M - Ann Arbor, MI

Select Methodological Training

University of Michigan

2025 Qualitative Research Methods Practicum, Department of Sociology, Dr. Elizabeth Armstrong
2025 Digital Studies Institute, Digital IDEAS Summer Institute, Dr. Sarah Murray
2023 Quantitative Methods: Practicum, Department of Sociology, Dr. Robert Manduca
2022 Research Logics and Strategies of Sociology Research Inquiry, Dr. Erin Cech
2022 Race, Ethnicity, & Quantitative Methodology, ICPSR Summer Program, Dr. Kerem Ozan Kalkan & Dr. Jamil Scott
2022 R Statistical Computing Environment, ICPSR Summer Program, Dr. Kerem Ozan Kalkan
2022 Statistical Methods II, Dept. of Sociology (Stata Statistical Software), Dr. Mark Mizruchi
2021 Statistical Methods I, Dept. of Sociology (Stata Statistical Software), Dr. Rachel Best

Additional Research Skills

Geographic Information Systems - ArcGIS Pro Version 3.3.2 (Spatial Mapping)
 Dedoose and MAXQDA, Qualitative Data Analysis
 Microsoft Excel
 Survey design, implementation, and analysis
 Focus group and individual in-depth interview

Certifications

2025 Digital Studies Institute, IDEAS Summer Institute
2024 Program for the Education and Evaluation of Responsible Research and Scholarship

Undergraduate Research Mentorship

2026 Gabe Paredes, University of Michigan, University of Michigan, Honors Thesis Program
2026 Madison Lynch, Michigan State University, Social Science Scholarship Program
2025 Aanya Panyadahundi, University of Michigan, Sociology Undergraduate Research Opportunity (SURO)
2025 Sanjana Sunilkumar, University of Michigan, Sociology Undergraduate Research Opportunity (SURO)
2025 Zihao Xu, University of Michigan, Sociology Undergraduate Research Opportunity (SURO)
2025 Halle Chen, University of Michigan, Sociology Undergraduate Research Opportunity (SURO)

- 2024** Maegan Davis, University of Michigan, Sociology Undergraduate Research Opportunity (SURO)
2024 Morgan Chambers, Spelman University, Applied Policy Internship and Research Experience Program
2024 Love Lundy, Spelman University, Public Policy, and International Affairs Program
2023 Lexi Turner, Spelman University, Applied Policy Internship and Research Experience Program

Professional Memberships

- 2021** American Sociological Association
2021 Association of Black Sociologists
2021 Population Association of America

Academic Affiliations

- 2024** Bodies, Identities, Intimacies, and Technologies (BIIT) Lab, Digital Studies Institute
2022 Center for Racial Justice, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy
2021 University of Michigan Population Studies Center, Institute for Social Research
2019 Black Alumni Association, Michigan State University
2019 Social Science Scholars Alumni Association, Michigan State University