

Mia Aun Silberstein
Ph.D. Student in Sociology and Rackham Merit Fellow, University of Michigan

Literature, Science, and Arts Building
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EDUCATION

August 2024 – Present	Ph.D. Student in Sociology, University of Michigan Special Field Examination (2026): Transracially Adoptive and Mixed-Race Families (<i>Honors</i>) Area Examination (2025): Culture and Knowledge (<i>Pass</i>) Advisor: Karin Martin	Ann Arbor, MI
Sep 2020 – May 2024	B.A. in Sociology (Honors) and Philosophy, Wellesley College <i>Summa Cum Laude</i> <i>Phi Beta Kappa</i> <i>Alpha Kappa Delta (International Sociology Honor Society)</i> Advisor: Markella Rutherford	Wellesley, MA
Sep 2022 – Dec 2022	Study Abroad, Lady Margaret Hall, University of Oxford Tutorials in Post-Kantian Philosophy and Practical Ethics	Oxford, UK

RESEARCH AREAS

Family; Adoption; Culture & Knowledge; Race & Ethnicity; Immigration and Assimilation

RESEARCH

“Mapping the Racial In-Between: Transracially Adoptive and Mixed-Race Families”

[Ongoing] Dissertation project examining race-making processes in multiracial families.

“Best Interests Beyond Biology: The Prominence of Culture in US News Coverage of Adoption Lawsuits”

[Ongoing] A paper tracing cultural narratives shaping the “best interests of the child” legal standard as depicted in news articles on adoption lawsuits from 1950 to present.

“When Love Isn’t Enough: A Critical Image Analysis of Birth Parents in Children’s Picture Books”

[Ongoing] First author of a paper with Markella Rutherford (Wellesley College) examining depictions of birth parents in picture books on transnational adoption.

“Identity Narratives of Transnational, Transracial Cambodian Adoptive Families”

Senior honors thesis in Sociology presenting qualitative research built on interviews with the Cambodian adoptive community on themes of social, racial, and familial identity, cultural heritage, parenting, and the transnational adoption process. Supervised by Markella Rutherford.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

June 2026	“Best Interests Beyond Biology: The Prominence of Culture in US News Coverage of Adoption Lawsuits” <i>Alliance for the Study of Adoption and Culture (ASAC)</i> Funded by the Rackham Conference Travel Grant (\$1,150) and ASAC (\$333)	Leeds, UK
March 2025	“When Love Isn’t Enough: A Critical Image Analysis of Birth Parents in Children’s Picture Books” <i>Eastern Sociological Society</i> Funded by the Rackham Conference Travel Grant (\$900)	Boston, MA
March 2024	“Cambodian Adoptive Storytelling as Counternarrative” <i>Eastern Sociological Society</i>	Washington, DC

SELECTED AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

August 2024	Rackham Merit Fellowship Awarded and nominated by the Department of Sociology for a competitive 5-year merit-based funding package.	University of Michigan
May 2024	Alpha Kappa Delta Award for Distinction in Sociology Awarded to “the senior who has maintained the very highest academic record in her sociology major.”	Wellesley College
March 2024	Best Undergraduate Poster Award Awarded in recognition of “Cambodian Adoptive Storytelling as Counternarrative” poster.	Eastern Sociological Society
June 2023	Samuel and Hilda Levitt Fellowship \$4,000 grant awarded in support of senior honors thesis research.	Wellesley College
May 2022	Student Library Research Award Awarded for exemplary research skills demonstrated in a course project in recognition of the paper “A Battle for the Soul of Our Courts: The Case for a Biden Administration Article I Independent Immigration Court System.”	Wellesley College
Apr 2022	The Ruth Anna Putnam Essay Prize Awarded for an outstanding essay in the broad area of social and political philosophy in recognition of the paper “White Professor: Considerations for Evaluating White Professors’ Credibility in Race-Related Academic Settings.”	Wellesley College

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Aug 2026 – Dec 2026	Graduate Student Instructor for Sociological Theory (SOC 305), University of Michigan Department of Sociology Leads 2 sections of 20-25 upper-level sociology majors, prepares teaching materials, writes and grades assignments, hosts office hour appointments, mentors advanced sociology students in preparation for graduate study. Supervising Professor: Terence McGinn Supervisor for Honors Student	Ann Arbor, MI
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Supervises an honors project for a sociology major enrolled in SOC 305.
Advises on project development in regular meetings, assigns and evaluates related assignments.

Aug 2025 – Dec 2025	Graduate Student Instructor for Introduction to Sociology (SOC 100), University of Michigan Department of Sociology Led 3 sections of 25 students, prepared teaching materials, wrote assignments, lectured on course content, graded assignments and examinations, hosted office hour appointments, and collaborated with a teaching team of 4 to cater to a class of 300 undergraduate students. Supervising Professor: Robert Jansen	Ann Arbor, MI
Jan 2023 – May 2023	Research Assistant to Professor Markella Rutherford, Wellesley College Department of Sociology Performed qualitative content analysis on a sample of global children's literature and translated Chinese children's books to English for use in a research paper.	Wellesley, MA

LEADERSHIP & SERVICE ROLES

Mar 2022 – May 2024	Cofounder and Executive Board Member, Adoptee Connections and Awareness Served on the founding Executive Board for the campus organization Adoptee Connections and Awareness, a group dedicated to creating space for and raising awareness of the young adult adoptee experience through community meetings and educational/cultural events.	Wellesley, MA
Aug 2021 – May 2023	Dormitory Resident Assistant Collaborated with a team of 12 residential staff to build community and maintain accountability within residence halls, with a focus of ensuring the comfort of residents belonging to marginalized gender and racial groups. Responded to medical and mental health emergencies and mediated interpersonal conflicts across campus.	Wellesley, MA
Sep 2020 – May 2021	College Government Senator Represented a constituency of ~400 students in weekly Senate meetings by serving as a bridge between college administration and the student body.	Wellesley, MA

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Sociological Association (ASA)	Alliance for the Study of Adoption and Culture (ASAC)
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EXTERNAL MEMBERSHIPS

Adoptee Advocates of Michigan (AAOM)

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

English (Native), Mandarin Chinese (Intermediate)