

CHRISTIAN MICHAEL SMITH

Louise McBee Institute of Higher Education
University of Georgia

ChristianSmith@uga.edu
August 2026

EDUCATION

PhD	University of Wisconsin-Madison Sociology	2020
MS	University of Wisconsin-Madison Sociology	2018
BA	Macalester College Applied Mathematics and Statistics major, Educational Studies major Magna Cum Laude	2015

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University of Georgia	Assistant Professor of Higher Education	2024—
UC Merced – Higher Education, Race, and the Economy Lab	Postdoctoral Fellow	2021-2024
Berea College	Visiting Assistant Professor of Sociology	2020-2021
Cornell University Dept. of Mathematics	NSF-Funded Research Assistant in High-Dimensional Data Analysis	2013

INTERESTS

stratification & mobility, poverty, wealth, racialized dispossession, sociology of education,
education finance & policy

PUBLICATIONS (*UGS/GS* = undergraduate student/graduate student at time of publication)

Refereed Journal Articles

Jeffrey, W., C.M. Smith, and L.T. Hamilton. “Hidden Advantage along the Pipeline: Family Wealth and Educational Transitions from High School through Graduate School.”
[*Sociology of Education*](#) (forthcoming/online first).

Smith, C.M., L.T. Hamilton, and C. Eaton. 2025. “Wealth, Race, and Under-Addressed Financial Need in Federal Student Aid Policy.”
[*Research in Higher Education*](#) 66(5):31.1-31.24.

Topaz, C., H. Brooks, U. Kan^{GS}, B.Sandstede, C.M. Smith. 2025. “Diversity, Identity, and Data.”
[*The American Mathematical Monthly*](#) 132(1):36-47, data science special issue.

- Smith, C.M., A.D. Villalobos (equal authors), L.T. Hamilton, and C. Eaton. 2024. “Promising or Predatory? Online Education in Non-Profit and For-Profit Universities.” *[Social Forces](#)*, 102(3):952-977.
- Hamilton, L.T., H. Daniels ^{GS}, C.M. Smith, and C. Eaton. 2024. “The Private Side of Public Universities: Third-Party Providers and Platform Capitalism.” *[Socius](#)* 10:23780231231214952. (policy editorial [here](#)).
- Hirschl ^{GS}, N. and C.M. Smith. 2023. “Advanced Placement Gatekeeping and Racialized Tracking.” *[Sociology of Education](#)* 96(3):190-210.
- Smith, C.M. and N. Hirschl ^{GS}. 2023 “Mixed Signals? Economically (Dis)advantaged Students’ College Attendance under Mandatory College and Career Readiness Assessments.” *[Educational Researcher](#)* 52(3):131-143. (Lead article).
- Goldrosen ^{GS}, N., Smith, C.M., M.V. Ciocanel, R. Santorella ^{GS}, C.M. Topaz, and S. Sen. 2023. “Racial Disparities in Criminal Sentencing Vary Considerably across Federal Judges.” *[Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics](#)* 179(1):92-113.
- Smith, C.M. 2022. “Does State Allocation of University Funding Moderate Effectively Maintained Inequality?” *[Social Currents](#)* 9(3):245-264.
- Smith, C.M. and N. Hirschl ^{GS}. 2022. “College Attendance among Low-Income Youth: Explaining Differences across Wisconsin High Schools.” Online first at *[Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal](#)* 12(3):33-57.
- Smith, C.M. 2020. “In the Footsteps of Siblings: College Attendance Disparities and the Intragenerational Transmission of Educational Advantage.” *[Socius](#)* 6:2378023120921633.
- (equal first authorship) Hirschl ^{GS}, N. and C.M. Smith. 2020. “Well-Placed: The Geography of Opportunity and High School Effects on College Attendance.” *[Research in Higher Education](#)* 61(5):567-587. (Lead article).
- Ciocanel, M.V., C.M. Topaz, R. Santorella ^{GS}, S. Sen, C.M. Smith, and A. Hufstetler ^{UGS}. 2020. “JUSTFAIR: Judicial System Transparency Through Federal Archive Inferred Records.” *[PLOS One](#)* 15(10):e0241381.
- Topaz, C.M., J. Cart, C.D. Eaton, A.H. Shrout, J.A. Higdon, K. Ince, B. Katz, D. Lewis, J. Libertini, and C.M. Smith. 2020. “Comparing Demographics of Signatories to Public Letters on Diversity in the Mathematical Sciences.” *[PLOS One](#)* 15(4):e0232075.
- Smith, C.M., E. Grodsky, and J.R. Warren. 2019. “Late-Stage Educational Inequality: Can Selection on Noncognitive Skills Explain Waning Social Background Effects?” *[Research in Social Stratification and Mobility](#)* 63:100424.

Policy Reports, Op-Eds, and Other Publications

Hamilton, L.T., C.M. Smith, W. Jeffrey, and M. Abrahamson. 2025. “Beyond Income: How Wealth Can Better Target State Funding for Higher Education.”
October 2025 [policy report](#) with Partnership for College Completion and The Institute for College Access and Success.

*Covered in [The EDU Ledger](#).

Smith, C.M. L.T. Hamilton, and C. Eaton (equal authors). 2024. “A Supplemental Wealth-Based Pell Grant: How to Meet Unaddressed Need and Close Racial Gaps in Student Loan Borrowing.”

September 2024 [policy report](#) with The Institute for College Access and Success.

*Covered in [Inside Higher Ed](#), [DIVERSE: Issues in Higher Education](#), and [Higher Ed Dive](#)

Hamilton, L.T., C.M. Smith, and C. Eaton. Sept. 24, 2024. “It’s Time for a New Pell Grant.”
[The Chronicle of Higher Education](#).

Smith, C.M. and E. Grodsky. 2016. “Stratification in Higher Education.”
[International Encyclopedia of Higher Education Systems and Institutions](#).

MANUSCRIPTS RESUBMITTED AND UNDER REVIEW

Smith, C.M. “Psychological Stratification into Midlife.”

Revised and resubmitted to *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*.

Smith, C.M. “The Racialization of Financial Aid Policy.”

Under review.

FUNDED GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

William T. Grant Foundation Officers’ Research Grant (PI, \$50,000) “Can More Wealth-Conscious Financial Aid Policy Narrow Racial Inequality in Student Borrowing?”	2025-2027
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Lumina Foundation Research Grant (PI, \$44,000) “Wealth and Educational Attainment”	2025-2026
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Institute of Education Sciences Predoctoral Fellowship (\$100,000)	2016-2019
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University of Wisconsin-Madison, University Fellowship (\$40,000)	2019-2020
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GRANTS/FELLOWSHIPS ADVANCING TO FINAL ROUND OF SELECTION

Spencer Foundation Vision Grant (PI, \$75,000) “The Potential of Wealth-Based Financial Aid to Improve Persistence and Reduce Racial Disparities in Higher Education”	2026
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National Academy of Education/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship (\$70,000)	2025
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CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“The Racialization of Financial Aid Policy.”

- *Midwest Sociology of Education*. South Bend, IN. October 2025.
- *ISA Research Committee on Social Stratification and Mobility*. New York, NY. August 2026.
- *American Sociological Association*. New York, NY. August 2026.
- *Association for the Study of Higher Education*. San Juan, PR. November 2026.

“Fixing the Formula: Targeting Wealth in State Financial Aid Policy.” (with A. Villa-Moges)

- *Student Financial Aid Research Network*. Louisville, KY. July 2026.

“Hidden Advantage along the Pipeline: Family Wealth and Educational Transitions from High School through Graduate School.”

- *American Sociological Association*. Chicago, IL. August 2025.

“Transforming Student Aid: A Researcher-Funder Collaboration on Wealth-Based Financial Aid.” (with J. Raphael and E. Ezeugo – Lumina Foundation)

- *Student Financial Aid Research Network*. College Park, MD. July 2025.

“Wealth, Race, and Under-Addressed Financial Need in Federal Student Aid Policy.”

- *Association for the Study of Higher Education*. Minneapolis, MN. November 2024.
- *American Educational Research Association*. Denver, CO. April 2025.

“Psychological Stratification into Midlife.”

- *American Sociological Association*. Philadelphia, PA. August 2023.
- *ISA Research Committee on Social Stratification and Mobility*. Ann Arbor, MI. August 2023.

“Promising or Predatory? Online Education in Non-Profit and For-Profit Universities.”

- *American Sociological Association*. Los Angeles, CA. August 2022.
- *ISA Research Committee on Social Stratification and Mobility*. South Bend, IN. August 2022.
- *Sociology of Education Association*. Virtual. February 2022.

“Mixed Signals? Economically (Dis)advantaged Students’ College Attendance under Mandatory College and Career Readiness Assessments.”

- *American Sociological Association*. Virtual. August 2021.
- *American Educational Research Association*. Virtual. April 2021.
- *Association for the Study of Higher Education*. Virtual. November 2020.

“Does State Allocation of University Funding Moderate Effectively Maintained Inequality?”

- *American Educational Research Association*. Virtual. April 2021.
- *Midwest Sociological Society*. Chicago, IL. April 2019.
- *Eastern Sociological Society*. Boston, MA. March 2019.

“Advanced Placement Gatekeeping and Racialized Tracking.” (With N. Hirschl).

- *American Sociological Association*. Virtual. August 2020.

“Well-Placed: The Geography of Opportunity and School Effects on College Attendance.”
(With N. Hirschl).

- *American Sociological Association*. Virtual. August 2020
- *Midwest Sociology of Education*. Columbus, OH. October 2018.

“Interrogating Causation with Screencasts, a ‘Clickbait’ News Activity, and Short Essays.”

- *Midwest Sociological Society*. Omaha, NE. April 2020 (Cancelled due to COVID-19).

“In the Footsteps of Siblings: College Attendance Disparities and the Intragenerational Transmission of Educational Advantage.”

- *Midwest Sociology of Education*. Evanston, IL. October 2019.
- *American Sociological Association*. New York, NY. August 2019.
- *ISA Research Committee on Social Stratification and Mobility*. Princeton, NJ. August 2019.

“Late-Stage Educational Inequality: Can Selection on Academic and Noncognitive Skills Explain Waning Social Background Effects?”

- *Midwest Sociology of Education*. West Lafayette, IN. October 2017.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

“Beyond Income: How Wealth Can Better Target State Funding for Higher Education.”
(With L.T. Hamilton).

- *Californians for College Affordability Coalition*. Virtual. October 2025.

“Advanced Placement Gatekeeping and Racialized Tracking.”

- *University of Toronto*, presentation to *Issues of Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education* graduate seminar. Virtual. February 2022.

“In the Footsteps of Siblings: College Attendance Disparities and the Intragenerational Transmission of Educational Advantage.”

- *Macalester College, Department of Sociology*. Saint Paul, MN. February 2022.
- *Down The Research Rabbit Hole* podcast. Virtual. December 2021.

“Redundant or Complementary? Mechanisms of Intergenerational Educational Transmission among One's Less- vs. More-Educated Parent.”

- *University of Oxford, Nuffield College*. Oxford, United Kingdom. November 2020.

“Well-Placed: The Geography of Opportunity and High School Effects on College Attendance.”

- *Macalester College, Department of Sociology*. Saint Paul, MN. March 2020.

“High Schools Helping Economically Disadvantaged Students Get to College.”
(With N. Hirschl).

- *Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction*. Madison, WI. October 2018.
- *Wisconsin Center for the Advancement of Postsecondary Education*. Madison, WI. Nov. 2017.

“College Attendance among Low-Income Youth: Explaining Differences across Wisconsin High Schools.” (With N. Hirschl).

- *Office of Financial Aid at University of Wisconsin-Madison*. Madison, WI. December 2017.

“Visualizing Bifurcations in the Three-Dimensional Lotka-Volterra Equation.”

- *Cornell University Department of Mathematics*. Ithaca, NY. August 2013.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE, TRAINING, AND COMMUNICATION

University of Georgia, Louise McBee Institute of Higher Education 2024–
Quantitative Methods I; College Choice, Access, and Success

Berea College 2020-2021
Social Statistics; Research Methods; Social Class and Education;
Introduction to Sociology

Ripon College 2019
Introduction to Sociology

University of Wisconsin-Madison 2019
Statistics Short Course (co-taught with Morgan Matthews)

Macalester College (as Teaching Assistant) 2012-2015
Differential Equations (3 semesters), Linear Algebra,
Discrete Mathematics, Applied Multivariable Calculus III

Professional Development and Graduate Coursework in Teaching and Learning
Pedagogy Certificate (UC Merced) 2021
Student-Faculty Partnership Program (Berea College) 2021
Inclusive Pedagogy (American Sociological Association) 2019
Teaching Statistics (UW Madison) 2019
The College Classroom (UW Madison) 2018
Teaching Sociology (UW Madison) 2017

Peer-Reviewed Teaching Resource

Smith, C.M. 2020. “Interrogating Causation with Screencasts, a ‘Clickbait’ News Activity, and Short Essays.” [*Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology*](#).

Public Essay

Smith, C.M. 2025. “Student-Centered Instruction in an Introductory Quantitative Methods Course.” *McBee Institute of Higher Education Report 2025*.

Award

A. Wayne Roberts Prize in Mathematics Education (Macalester College) 2015

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Conference Proposal Reviewer Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE); American Educational Research Association	2025–
Member of Graduate Studies & Professional Development Committee Louise McBee Institute of Higher Education at the University of Georgia	2024–
Discussant and Paper Session Chair ISA Research Committee on Social Stratification & Mobility; ASHE	2019–
Manuscript Reviewer <i>American Sociological Review, American Journal of Sociology, Social Forces, Social Problems, Educational Researcher, Research in Higher Education, Sociology of Education, American Educational Research Journal, Research in Social Stratification and Mobility, Social Science Research, Social Currents, American Journal of Education, PLoS One, Educational Studies, Journal of Mathematical Sociology</i>	2017–
Member of Search Committee for McBee Professor Louise McBee Institute of Higher Education at the University of Georgia	2025
Graduate Student Mentor American Sociological Association, Sociology of Education Section	2024
Chair of Sociology Graduate Mentoring Committee Dept. of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison	2018–2019
Mentor for Students Applying to Graduate School Eastern Sociological Society Mentoring Program	2019
Graduate Student Mentor Dept. of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison	2017-2018