

RACHEL ELLIS

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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2020–*present* Assistant Professor, Criminology and Criminal Justice
Faculty Affiliate, Sociology (beginning 2023)
University of Maryland
- 2017–2020 Assistant Professor, Criminology and Criminal Justice
University of Missouri-St. Louis

EDUCATION

- 2017 Ph.D. Sociology, University of Pennsylvania
2012 M.A. Sociology, University of Pennsylvania
2010 B.A. Sociology and French, Georgetown University (*Magna cum laude*, *Phi Beta Kappa*)

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Punishment, Gender, Prisons, Probation, Reentry, Religion, Qualitative Methods

PUBLICATIONS

Book

- 2023 **Ellis, Rachel.** *In This Place Called Prison: Women's Religious Life in the Shadow of Punishment.* Oakland, CA: **University of California Press.**

*Distinguished Book Award from the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (2024)

*Reviews: [Affilia: Feminist Inquiry in Social Work](#), [Criminal Law and Criminal Justice Books](#), [Gender & Society](#), [Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion](#), [Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion](#), [Journal of Contemporary Religion](#), [Law, Culture and the Humanities](#), [Law & Society Review](#), [Political Theology](#), [Review of Religious Research](#), [Sociology of Religion](#)

*Media coverage: [Maryland Today](#), [Pennsylvania Gazette](#), [UC Press Blog](#)

*Author-Meets-Critics: American Sociological Association, American Society of Criminology (*Upcoming*), Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (*Upcoming*)

*Book talks: American University, CCBC Essex, Georgetown University, Harvard University, Lecture Group of Baltimore, Northwestern University Prison Education Program, University of Maryland, University of Notre Dame. *Upcoming:* University of New Mexico, Arizona State University, University of Arizona

Peer-Reviewed Articles (^denotes graduate student co-author)

- 2024 **Ellis, Rachel** and Victoria Inzana^. “Salvation Scripts: How Religion Matters for Women’s Desistance Narratives.” *Justice Quarterly* 41(4):545-572.
- 2023 **Ellis, Rachel**. “What Do We Mean By a ‘Hard-to-Reach’ Population? Legitimacy versus Precarity as Barriers to Access.” *Sociological Methods & Research* 52(3):1556-1586.
- 2023 Branigan, Amelia, **Rachel Ellis**, Wade Jacobsen, and Anna Haskins. “System Management and Compensatory Parenting: Educational Involvement Following Maternal Incarceration.” *Criminology* 61(3):482-517.
- 2021 **Ellis, Rachel**. “‘You’re not serving time, you’re serving Christ’: Protestant Religion and Discourses of Responsibilization in a Women’s Prison.” *British Journal of Criminology* 61(6):1647-1664.
***Student Paper Award**, 2017, American Sociological Association Section on Religion
***Gene Carte Student Paper Award**, Third Place, 2017, American Society of Criminology
*Media coverage in [OMNIA Magazine](#)
- 2021 **Ellis, Rachel**. “Prisons as Porous Institutions.” *Theory & Society* 50(2):175-199.
*Lead article
- 2020 **Ellis, Rachel**. “Redemption and Reproach: Religion and Carceral Control in Action among Women in Prison.” *Criminology* 58(4):747-772.
- 2018 **Ellis, Rachel**. “It’s Not Equality’: How Race, Class, and Gender Define the Normative Religious Self among Female Prisoners.” *Social Inclusion* 6(2):181-191. (Special Issue)
- 2017 **Ellis, Rachel**. “Silent Disagreement: Microinteractional Solutions to Moral Dissent among Catholic Converts.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 56(2):383-397.
- 2015 **Ellis, Rachel**. “Outreach and Exclusion: Jewish Denominational Marketing in the Early 20th Century.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 54(1):38-56.
***Student Paper Award**, 2012, Society for the Scientific Study of Religion

Manuscripts in Progress

Ellis, Rachel, Melissa J. Wilde, and Gabrielle Wy^. “Religious Reformers: How Varied Beliefs in Eugenics Shaped Views of Juvenile Delinquency in the Post-Progressive Era.” *Re&R*.

Ellis, Rachel, Ziyue Gu^, and Frank Donohue^. Probation and Socioeconomic Mobility among Women in Baltimore, MD. *In Preparation*.

Ellis, Rachel. The Social Inequalities of Serving a Probation Sentence among Women. *In Preparation*.

Public-Facing, Editor-Reviewed Scholarship

- 2024 **Ellis, Rachel.** “Author’s Reply to Book Talk Response by Cesraéa Rumpf.” *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* 20(1):5-9.
- 2020 **Ellis, Rachel.** “Prison Labor in a Pandemic.” *Contexts* 19(4):90-91.
- 2020 **Ellis, Rachel.** “In Prison in a Pandemic: Gender Behind Bars.” *The Gender Policy Report*. <https://genderpolicyreport.umn.edu/in-prison-in-a-pandemic-gender-behind-bars/>
*Featured in the *Top 10 Most Read GPR Articles of the Year*

Pedagogical Scholarship

- 2021 **Ellis, Rachel,** with undergraduate student contributions. 2021. “Engaged Pedagogy in the Classroom: A Visual Essay.” *American Anthropologist* ([Special Issue](#) on “Carceral Crisis”)

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

National

- 2024 *Institute for Humane Studies Course Buyout Award*
George Mason University
- 2021–2023 *Pipeline Grant for Emerging Scholars*
Russell Sage Foundation
- 2016–2017 *Dissertation Completion Fellowship*
Mellon / American Council of Learned Societies
- 2016–2017 *Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship* (honorary)
Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation
- 2016–2017 *Dissertation Fellowship* (honorary)
Louisville Institute
- 2012–2015 *Graduate Research Fellowship*
National Science Foundation
- 2014 *Constant H. Jacquet Research Award*
Religious Research Association
- 2014 *Joseph H. Fichter Research Grant*
Association for the Sociology of Religion

University

- 2024 *Independent Scholarship, Research, and Creativity Awards*
University of Maryland

- 2018–2019 *Research Board Grant*
University of Missouri System
- 2016–2017 *Dissertation Completion Fellowship* (honorary)
University of Pennsylvania
- 2014 & 2013 *Gertrude and Otto Pollak Summer Research Fellowship*
University of Pennsylvania
- 2011 *Philip E. Goldfein Research Award*
Jewish Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania
- 2010–2011 *Pew Presidential Prize Fellowship*
University of Pennsylvania

AWARDS

- 2024 Distinguished Book Award, *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion*
- 2024 Early Career Award, *American Sociological Association, Section on Religion*
- 2024 Research Excellence Honoree, *University of Maryland*
- 2017 Gene Carte Student Paper Award, Third Place, *American Society of Criminology*
- 2017 Student Paper Award, *American Sociological Association, Section on Religion*
- 2012 Student Paper Award, *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion*
- 2010 Hoggson Award for Excellence in Sociology, *Georgetown University*

INVITED TALKS

- 2025 University of Alberta (virtual, upcoming: March 28, 2025)
Centre for Criminological Research
- 2023–2025 *In This Place Called Prison*: Book Talks
- *Arizona State University*, School of Criminology & Criminal Justice. Upcoming: September 16, 2024
 - *University of Arizona*, Department of Sociology. Upcoming: September 13, 2024
 - *University of New Mexico*, Department of Sociology & Criminology. Upcoming: Spring 2025
 - *Harvard University*, Department of Sociology, Contemporary Ethnography and Inequality Workshop. January 25, 2024
 - *The Lecture Group*, Baltimore, MD. January 17, 2024
 - *Northwestern University Prison Education Program*, Field Methods Seminar. December 8, 2023
 - *Community College of Baltimore County, Essex*. October 23, 2023
 - *Georgetown University*, Department of Sociology. September 20, 2023
 - *University of Maryland*, Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice. May 4, 2023 (Book Launch Event & Lecture)

- *American University*, Department of Justice, Law, and Criminology, School of Public Affairs. April 11, 2023
 - *University of Notre Dame*, Sociology Department, Center for the Study of Religion and Society. February 27, 2023

- 2024 University of Maryland
Racial Democracy, Crime & Justice Network (RDCJN) Workshop
Discussant: “Hope, Redemption, and Reimagination”

- 2024 University of Michigan
Hosted by the Russell Sage Foundation
Pipeline Scholars Capstone Conference
Paper: “Punished in Plain Sight: Women’s Experiences on Probation”

- 2024 Brown University
Hosted by Urban Institute and Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs
Punishment Beyond Mass Incarceration Symposium
Panelist: “Conditions Inside: Complicating Labor and Control”

- 2021 Columbia University
Department of Psychology, Social and Moral Cognition Lab
“‘I’ll Get Out in God’s Time’: Religious Redemption and Carceral Control in a U.S. State Women’s Prison” (virtual talk)

- 2020 London School of Economics
Department of Methodology Seminar Series
“What do We Mean by a ‘Hard to Reach’ Population?” (virtual talk)

- 2018 Washington University in St. Louis
John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics Colloquium Series
“Obedience is a Sure Favor: Prison Religion and Inequality”

- 2018 Loyola University Chicago
Chicago Area for the Study of Religious Communities Working Group
“Obedience is a Sure Favor: Prison Religion and Inequality”

- 2016 University of Pennsylvania
Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies Interdisciplinary Colloquium
“Daughters of Christ in the D.O.C.: Religion Inside a State Women’s Prison”

- 2015 University of Pennsylvania
Culture and Interaction Workshop
“Breaking Every Chain: Religion, Faith, and Identity of Incarcerated Women”

- 2014 University of Pennsylvania
Alice Paul Center for Research on Women, Gender, & Sexuality, 40th Anniversary Conference
“Incarceration and Intersectionality: Race/Class/Gender in a Women’s Prison”

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Panels Organized

- 2023 Session Organizer, “Religion and Justice: The Transformative Power of Religion in the Criminal Legal System,” American Sociological Association, Philadelphia, PA
- 2021 Session Co-Organizer, “Gender and Punishment,” American Society of Criminology, Chicago, IL
- 2020 Session Co-Organizer, “Gender and Punishment,” American Society of Criminology, Washington, DC (Canceled due to Covid-19)
- 2018 Session Organizer, “Qualitative Insights into the Social Organization of Prison: Moving Past Old Debates,” American Society of Criminology, Atlanta, GA
- 2017 Session Organizer, “Gender, Race, and State Control in Prison,” American Society of Criminology, Philadelphia, PA

Papers Presented

- 2024 *Upcoming*: “Author-Meets-Critics Panel for *In This Place Called Prison: Women’s Religious Life in the Shadow of Punishment?*” Critics: Janet Garcia-Hallett, Matthew Clair, Jamie Fader, Jill McCorkel, Shadd Maruna (chair)
▪ American Society of Criminology, San Francisco, CA
- 2024 *Upcoming*: “Second Chance or Set Up to Fail? Inequality in Women’s Lived Experiences on Probation,” with Ziyue Gu[^] and Frank A. Donohue[^].
▪ American Society of Criminology, San Francisco, CA
- 2024 *Upcoming*: “Institutional and Personal Narratives of Reporting Academic Sexual Misconduct,” with Sarah Silberman[^].
▪ American Society of Criminology, San Francisco, CA
- 2024 *Upcoming*: “Author-Meets-Critics Panel for *In This Place Called Prison: Women’s Religious Life in the Shadow of Punishment?*” Critics: Orit Avishai, Edward Flores, Jeffrey Guhin, Amanda Napior, Sabina Vaught, Tricia Bruce (chair)
▪ Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Pittsburgh, PA
- 2024 “Book Forum (formerly Author-Meets-Critics) for *In This Place Called Prison: Women’s Religious Life in the Shadow of Punishment?*” Critics: Forrest Stuart, TaLisa Carter, Lynne Haney, David Harding, Annette Lareau (chair)
▪ American Sociological Association, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
- 2023 “Supervised and Controlled: Women’s Experiences on Probation.”
▪ American Society of Criminology, Philadelphia, PA

- 2023 “Theorizing Prisons as Porous Institutions in the Context of Covid-19.”
- American Society of Criminology, Philadelphia, PA
- 2023 “Conducting Qualitative Research on Probation in the Covid-19 Era: Challenges and Possibilities.”
- Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Salt Lake City, UT
- 2023 “Finding Freedom through Religion in a Women’s Prison.”
- American Sociological Association, *Section Session Organizer and Presenter*, Philadelphia, PA
- 2023 “Author Meets Critics: *Invisible Mothers: Unseen Yet Hypervisible after Incarceration* by Janet Garcia-Hallett.”
- Eastern Sociological Society, Baltimore, MD
- 2022 “‘We blame... the parents’: Eugenics and Juvenile Delinquency after the Progressive Era,” with Melissa J. Wilde and Gabrielle Cabrera Wy^.
- American Society of Criminology, Atlanta, GA
 - Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Baltimore, MD
- 2022 “By The Least Restrictive Means? Administering Religious Freedom in a State Women’s Prison.”
- American Sociological Association, *Thematic Panel*, Los Angeles, CA
- 2022 “It Takes a Village or a Higher Power? Narrative Mechanisms of Religion among Desisting Mothers,” with Victoria Inzana^.
- Western Society of Criminology, Honolulu, HI
- 2021 “‘The Woman God Placed Me On This Earth to Be’: Religion, Recovery, and Reentry from Prison,” with Victoria Inzana^.
- American Society of Criminology, *Thematic Panel*, Chicago, IL
- 2021 “Teaching Religion in the Social Sciences: Sociology and Criminology”
- Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, *Invited Panel*, Portland, OR (virtual presentation)
- 2021 “Educational Involvement Among Formerly Incarcerated Mothers”
- American Sociological Association (virtual presentation)
- 2020 “Teaching Religion in the Social Sciences: Sociology and Criminology”
- Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, *Invited Panel*, Pittsburgh, PA
canceled due to COVID-19
- 2020 “Motherhood, Addiction, and Prisoner Reentry”
- American Society of Criminology, *Thematic Panel*, Washington, DC
canceled due to COVID-19

- 2019 “Author Meets Critics: *Jesus Saved an Ex-Con* (2018, NYU Press) by Edward Orozco Flores”
- Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, St. Louis, MO
- 2019 “Obedience is a Sure Favor: How Religion Leads to Material Inequality in a Women’s Prison”
- American Society of Criminology, *Thematic Panel*, San Francisco, CA
 - Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, St. Louis, MO
 - American Sociological Association, *Criminology Session*, New York, NY
- 2018 “How Religion Structures the Social World of Incarcerated Women”
- American Society of Criminology, *Thematic Panel*, Atlanta, GA
- 2018 “‘It’s Not Equality’: How Race, Class, and Gender Define the Normative Religious Self among Female Prisoners”
- American Sociological Association, Philadelphia, PA
- 2017 “Sanctioning the Sacred: Religion and Sexuality among Female Inmates”
- American Society of Criminology, *Thematic Panel*, Philadelphia, PA
 - Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Washington, DC
- 2016 “Daughters of Christ in the D.O.C.: Religion Inside a State Women’s Prison”
- American Society of Criminology, New Orleans, LA
 - American Sociological Association, Sociology of Religion Section Session, Seattle, WA
 - Association for the Sociology of Religion, Seattle, WA
 - Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Atlanta, GA
- 2015 “Breaking Every Chain: Religion, Faith, and Identity of Incarcerated Women”
- American Society of Criminology, Washington, DC
 - American Sociological Association, Chicago, IL
 - Association for the Sociology of Religion, Chicago, IL
 - Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Newport Beach, CA
- 2014 “Maintaining Order in the Face of Conflict: A Microinteractional Approach to Catholic Conversion”
- American Sociological Association, San Francisco, CA
 - Association for the Sociology of Religion, San Francisco, CA
 - Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Indianapolis, IN
- 2014 “The Social Mobility of American Jews,” with Melissa J. Wilde and Stephen Viscelli (equal authorship).
- American Sociological Association, San Francisco, CA
- 2013 “Rejecting the Teachings, Joining the Religion? Ethnography of a Catholic Conversion Class”
- American Sociological Association, New York, NY

- 2013 “The Social Mobility of American Jews,” with Melissa J. Wilde, Kristin Geraty, and Stephen Viscelli (equal authorship).
- Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Boston, MA
 - Association for the Sociology of Religion, New York, NY
- 2013 “Marketing to Whom? Nativity, Ethnicity, and Social Class of Jewish Denominations' Desired Members in the Early 20th Century”
- Institute for Religion, Economics, and Society, Chapman University, Orange, CA
- 2013 “Social Networks and Denominational Identity: Immigrants and Jewish Denominations in the Early 20th Century”
- Jewish Studies Program Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Colloquium, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
- 2012 “Marketing to Whom? Desired Members and Jewish Denominational Niches, 1913-1920”
- American Sociological Association, Denver, CO
 - Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Phoenix, AZ
- 2011 “Why High EE Churches are Stronger: Interaction Ritual Chains and Denominational Strength”
- American Sociological Association, Las Vegas, NV
 - Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Milwaukee, WI

TEACHING

University of Maryland

- 2020–*present* CCJS 699Q Seminar in Qualitative Methods (graduate)
 CCJS 660 Gender & Crime (graduate)
 CCJS 600 Seminar in Criminal Justice (cooperative online MA program, Nanjing)
 CCJS 418C Gender and Crime (undergraduate)
 CCJS 342 Corrections (undergraduate)

University of Missouri-St. Louis

- 2017–2020 CRIMIN 6454 Corrections (graduate)
 CRIMIN 4390 Senior Capstone: “Perspectives of the Punished” (undergraduate)
 CRIMIN 2260 Corrections (undergraduate)

Johns Hopkins University

- 2017 Locked Up: Sociology of the Prison Experience (*Visiting Instructor*, undergraduate)

NATIONAL-LEVEL PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Reviewer	<i>American Journal of Sociology, American Sociological Review, Criminology, Deviant Behavior, Feminist Criminology, Incarceration, Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Social Problems, Social Science History, Sociological Inquiry, Sociological Methodology, Sociological Quarterly, Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, Theory & Society, Qualitative Sociology</i>
Editorial Board	<i>Criminology (2024-2026)</i>
Grant Reviewer	<i>Russell Sage Foundation, Social Science Research Council</i>

American Society of Criminology

2022–2025	Membership Committee (Member) <i>American Society of Criminology</i>
2024	Mentoring Program Committee (Member) <i>ASC Division of Corrections and Sentencing</i>
2023	Student Paper Award (Member) <i>ASC Division on Critical Criminology and Social Justice</i>
2023	Anat Kimchi Memorial Travel Award Committee (Member) <i>ASC Division of Corrections and Sentencing</i>
2022	Ben Steiner Student Paper Award Committee (Member) <i>ASC Division of Corrections and Sentencing</i>
2020	Gene Carte Student Paper Award Competition (Member) <i>American Society of Criminology</i>

American Sociological Association

2025	Distinguished Scholar Award Committee (Member) <i>ASA Section on Crime, Law, and Deviance</i>
2024	Student Paper Award Committee (Chair) <i>ASA Section on Crime, Law, and Deviance</i>
2023	Nominations Committee (Member) <i>ASA Section on Crime, Law, and Deviance</i>
2020–2023	Council Member <i>ASA Section on Religion</i>

- 2021–2022 Nominating Committee (Member)
ASA Section on Religion
- 2018–2020 Ad-Hoc Membership Committee (Chair)
ASA Section on Religion
- 2018 Sally Hacker Graduate Student Paper Award Committee (Member)
ASA Section on Sex and Gender
- 2018 Philadelphia Liaison Committee (Chair)
ASA Section on Sex and Gender

Society for the Scientific Study of Religion

- 2024 Student Travel Awards Committee (Chair)
SSSR
- 2023 Student Travel Awards Committee (Member)
SSSR
- 2020–2022 Nominating Committee (Member)
SSSR
- 2015 Committee on Postdoctoral Support for Research on Religion (Member)
SSSR

Other

- 2013 Interdisciplinary Religion Conference Planning Committee (Member)
University of Pennsylvania

DEPARTMENTAL AND UNIVERSITY-LEVEL SERVICE

- 2022–2025 Faculty Senator (Representative for BSOS)
University Senate
- 2024-2025 General Qualifying Exam Committee: Policy (Chair)
University of Maryland, Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice
- 2023–2025 Graduate Affairs/Awards Committee (Member)
University of Maryland, Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice
- 2024 Ad Hoc MCPD@USG Partnership Committee (Member)
University of Maryland, Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice
- 2023–2024 Workload Policy Committee (Member)
University of Maryland, Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice

- 2023–2024 Graduate Program Assessment Committee (Member)
University of Maryland, Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice
- 2022 Chair Search Committee (Assistant Professor Representative)
University of Maryland, BSOS, Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice
- 2020–2022 Graduate Affairs/Awards Committee (Member)
University of Maryland, Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice
- 2020–2022 Departmental Teaching & Undergraduate Curriculum Review Committee (Member)
University of Maryland, Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice
- 2020–2021 Anti-Black Racism Subcommittee on Policy & Community Engagement (Member)
University of Maryland
- Fall 2020 General Comprehensive Exam Committee (Member)
University of Maryland, Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice
- 2019–2020 Undergraduate Committee (Member)
University of Missouri-St. Louis, Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice
- 2019–2020 Graduate Student Book Club (Faculty Coordinator)
University of Missouri-St. Louis, Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice

GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISING (*denotes completion)

- PhD Dissertation Committee: Sarah Silberman, UMD (2023 – *present*), Chair
Cassandra Philippon, UMD (2021 – 2023), Co-Chair*
Lisa Pierotte, UMD (2023 – 2025), Member
Claire Greene, UMSL (2019 – 2022), Member*
- MA Thesis Committee: Alexandra (Xandie) Wood, UMD (2023-2024), Chair
Carly Brownstein, UMD (2023-2024), Chair*
Erika Feeney, UMD (2024 – *present*), Member
Elena Tapia, UMD (2024 – *present*), Member
Jocelyn Evans, UMD (2022-2024), Member*
Gwynne Shepherd, UMD (2022-2024), Member*
Isabella Castillo, UMD (2022-2023), Member*
Cassidy Mitchell, UMSL (2018 – 2019), Member*
- Student Advisees: Ziyue Gu, UMD (2024-2025)
Daniel Fredes, UMD (2023-2025)
Xandie Wood, UMD (2022-2024)
Elena Tapia, UMD (2022-2024)
Frank Donohue, UMD (2021-2022)
Heidi Neff, UMD (2021-2022)
Victoria Inzana, UMSL (2019 – 2020), Chair

Amanda Miller, UMSL (2017 – 2020), Chair
Alessandra Early, UMSL (2019 – 2020), Member
Ashley Cox, UMSL (2019 – 2020), Member
Claire Greene, UMSL (2017 – 2019), Member

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Sociological Association

Section on Crime, Law, and Deviance

Section on Religion

Theory Section

Society for the Scientific Study of Religion

American Society of Criminology

Division on Corrections and Sentencing

Division on Critical Criminology & Social Justice

Division of Feminist Criminology