Melissa J. García

Department of Sociology
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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

2024 - Present **Assistant Professor**, Department of Sociology, Texas State University
2025 – Present **Director**, Latina/o Studies, Department of Sociology, Texas State University

EDUCATION

2024 Ph.D., Sociology, Indiana University - Bloomington
Minor: Social Science Research Methods
Dissertation: "Asian and Latiné Student Experiences with Panethnic Student Organizations"
Committee: Drs. Jennifer C. Lee, Dina G. Okamoto, Hyeyoung Kwon, Sylvia Martinez

2017 M.A., Sociology, University of Memphis
Committee: Drs. Joseph Lariscy, James Wesley, and Gretchen Peterson

2012 B.A., International Studies: Anthropology & Latin America Focus, Southwestern University

RESEARCH AREAS OF INTEREST

Latinx Studies; Immigration; Race and Ethnicity; Sociology of Education; Social Inequality; Organizations

PUBLICATIONS

Emily A. Ekl, **Melissa J. García,** Denise Ambriz, Caroline V. Brooks, Nicholas C. Smith, Gerardo Maupomé, Brea L. Perry. "The Relationship Between Trusted Sources of COVID-19 Information and Preventative Health Behaviors among Hispanic Immigrants." ***Social Science & Medicine*** Published online September 9, 2026. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2026.119810

Nicholas C. Smith, Caroline V. Brooks, Emily Ekl, Denise Ambriz, **Melissa J. García**, Brea L. Perry, and Gerardo Maupomé. 2024. "The Informal Safety Net: Social Network Activation among Hispanic Immigrants during COVID-19." ***The Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*** 10(3): 371-388.

García, Melissa J., Caroline V. Brooks, Denise Ambriz, Emily A. Ekl, Nicholas C. Smith, Gerardo Maupomé, Brea L. Perry. 2023. "Pandemic precarity: COVID-19's impact on Mexican and Central American immigrants." ***Journal of Marriage and Family*** 85(5): 1028-1046.

Adem, Muna, Shelley Rao, Helen B. Marrow, **Melissa J. García,** and Dina G. Okamoto. 2023. "A Relational Approach to Perceived Discrimination: The Case of Asian Indians." ***Social Psychology Quarterly*** 86 (3): 357-378. *Special Issue on Race, Racism, and Discrimination, edited by Corey D. Fields, Verna M. Keith, and Justine E. Tinkler.*

Marrow, Helen B., Dina G. Okamoto, **Melissa J. García**, Muna Adem, and Linda R. Tropp. 2022. "Skin Tone and Mexicans' Perceptions of Discrimination in New Immigrant Destinations." ***Social Psychology Quarterly*** 85(4): 374-385.

Lowe, Maria R., Reginald A. Byron, Griffin Ferry, and **Melissa J. Garcia**. 2013 "Food for Thought: Frequent Interracial Dining Experiences as a Predictor of Students' Racial Climate Perceptions." ***The Journal of Higher Education*** 84(4): 559-600.

MANUSCRIPTS IN PROGRESS

Garcia, Melissa. "A 'Mexican American Idea of *Latinidad*': Inclusion and Exclusion within Latiné Panethnic Organizations?" *Under review.*

Ambriz, Denise, **Melissa J. García**, Caroline V. Brooks, Emily Ekl, Nicholas C. Smith, Gerardo Maupomé, Brea L. Perry. "The Effect of Context of Exit on Latinx Immigrants' Well-being during COVID-19." *Manuscript Draft Available.*

Garcia, Melissa. "Support, Identity, and Advocacy: Latina/o Sororities and Fraternities as Spaces of Empowerment at PWIs." *In progress.*

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

2023	Grant-in-Aid Doctoral Dissertation Research Award, Indiana University Graduate School
2023	American Educational Research Association (AERA) Travel Award
2023	Travel Award for Norma Williams Mentoring Workshop by ASA Latina/o Sociology
2022-2023	President's Diversity Dissertation Fellowship, Indiana University
2022-2023	Advanced Departmental Fellowship, Indiana University, Department of Sociology
2021	Graduate Student Research Grant, Indiana University, Latino Studies (LATS)
2021	Graduate Student Research Grant, Indiana University, Asian American Studies (AAST)
2021	Research Grant, Indiana University, Graduate & Professional Student Government
2020	Graduate Student Research Grant, Indiana University, Center for Research on Race and Ethnicity in Society (CRRES)
2020	Sheldon Stryker Graduate Research Grant, Indiana University, Department of Sociology
2018	Summer Research Fellowship, Indiana University, Department of Sociology
2017	Morton Thesis Award, "Berclair Neighborhood Study," University of Memphis

PRESENTATIONS

2026 "Latina/o Sororities and Fraternities as Spaces of Empowerment at PWIs," American Sociological Association, New York City, New York.

2024 "Asian and Latiné College Experiences in Panethnic Student Organizations," American Education Research Association, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

2023 "Asian and Latiné College Experiences in Panethnic Student Organizations," American Sociological Association, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

2022 "Pandemic Precarity: COVID-19's Impact on Mexican and Central American Immigrants," Workshop in Sociology at Indiana University (WiSIU), Bloomington, Indiana.

2022 "Skin Tone and Mexicans' Perceptions of Discrimination in New Immigrant Destinations" (with Helen B. Marrow, Dina G. Okamoto, Linda R. Tropp, and Muna Adem), American Sociological Association, Los Angeles, California.

2022 "A Relational Approach to Perceived Discrimination: The Case of Asian Indians," (with Shelley Rao, Muna Adem, Helen B. Marrow, and Dina G. Okamoto), American Sociological Association, Los Angeles, California.

2021 "Co-existing Sanctuary and Anti-Sanctuary Policies: Atlanta, GA & Austin, TX," (with Dina G. Okamoto), 5th Annual International Conference on Public Policy, Barcelona, Spain. *Virtual.*

2021 "Cultivating Social Capital and Strengthening Ethnic Identity among Latinx Greek Members," Center for Research on Race & Ethnicity in Society, Bloomington, Indiana.

2020 "Framing Strategies and Character Work in Letters to and from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," American Sociological Association, Virtual Conference. *Cancelled.*

2019 "Identity Formation and Leadership Experiences among Student Officers of Latina/o Organizations," American Sociological Association, New York City, New York.

2017 "Understanding Processes Shaping Hispanic/Latino Residential Patterns: A Case Study of Memphis, TN," Southern Sociological Society, Greenville, South Carolina.

2011 "Racially Invisible Yet Invisibly Racial: White University Students' Conflicting Perspectives on Race and the Value of Racial/Ethnic Diversity" (with Reginald A. Byron, Maria R. Lowe, and Griffin Ferry), American Sociological Association, Las Vegas, Nevada.

2011 "Food for Thought: The Impact of Race and Frequent Interracial Dining Experiences on Students' Perceptions of the Racial Climate on Campus" (with Maria R Lowe, Reginald A. Byron, and Griffin Ferry), American Sociological Association, Las Vegas, Nevada.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2022-2024 Graduate Assistant, Center for Research on Race & Ethnicity in Society (CRRES)
Director: Dr. Sylvia Martinez, Indiana University
Prepared weekly email blasts and managed social media accounts
Collaborated with the Center's social media intern to create content and promote events
Interviewed affiliates about their research for faculty spotlight features

2021-2022 Research Assistant, VidaSana & Hispanic Rapid Response COVID-19 Study
Principal Investigators (PIs): Dr. Brea L. Perry, Indiana University
Collaborated on manuscript preparation using survey data on immigrant well-being

2020 Research Assistant, Sociological Research Practicum (SRP): "Immigrant Activism"
PI: Dr. Dina G. Okamoto, Indiana University
Compiled archived Asian and Hispanic newspapers from physical copies & microforms
Digitally scanned newspapers to make text extractable for data analysis software, like R

2018-2020 Research Assistant, SRP: "Social Networks and Parenting"
PI: Dr. Jessica Calarco, Indiana University
Recruited survey participants at clinics & conducted in-depth interviews with mothers

Summer 2018 Research Assistant, SRP "Forgiveness, Revenge, and Status"
PI: Dr. Stephen Benard, Indiana University
Coded open-ended survey responses and met with a group for inter-coder reliability

2017-2021 Research Assistant, "Immigrant-Native Relations in 21st Century America: Intergroup Contact, Trust, and Civic Engagement."
PIs: Dr. Dina G. Okamoto, Michael Jones-Correa, Helen B. Marrow, Linda R. Tropp.
Analyzed transcripts of interviews of Mexican immigrants conducted in Spanish
Wrote thematic memos about discrimination

2015-2017 Research Assistant, Project: "Origin-Country Context and Cigarette Smoking among Immigrants to the United States."
Principal Investigator: Dr. Joseph T. Lariscy, University of Memphis

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2024-2026 Assistant Professor, Sociology of Latinos and Immigration, Department of Sociology & Latina/o Studies Minor, Texas State University
Fall 2024: 15-week course, 40 students
Spring 2025: 15-week course, 38 students
Fall 2025: 15-week course, 21 students

Spring 2026: 15-week course, 43 students
Fall 2026: 15-week course, 33 students

2024-2025 Assistant Professor, Intro Sociology, Department of Sociology, Texas State University
Fall 2024: 15-week course, 91 students
Spring 2025: 15-week course, 95 students
Fall 2025: 15-week course, 78 students
Fall 2026: 15-week course, 49 students.

2021-2022 Co-Liaison for Undergraduate Research Program
Center for Research on Race and Ethnicity in Society, Indiana University
Prepared and co-led in-person and synchronous workshops for 8 undergraduate students
Provided mentorship to 4 students in preparation of their poster presentation

2019-2021 Instructor of Record, Social Inequality, Department of Sociology, Indiana University
Full responsibility for course design and instruction
Fall 2019: 16-week course, 47 students, in-person
Fall 2020, Spring 2021: 16-week course, 48 students, synchronous

Spring 2020 Graduate Assistant, Sociological Research Practicum on Immigrant Activism
PI: Dr. Dina G. Okamoto, Department of Sociology, Indiana University
Assisted and provided guidance to 3 students with their master's research
Co-led a group of 5 first-year graduate students to code newspaper data

2017-2022 Graduate Assistant, Department of Sociology, Indiana University
Graded assignments and exams, managed Canvas site, proctored exams, & held office hours
Fall 2017: Race and Ethnic Relations, Dr. Hyeyoung Kwon
Spring 2018: Medicine in America, Dr. Elaine M. Hernandez
Fall 2018: Social Problems and Policies: Immigration, Dr. Dina G. Okamoto
Spring 2019: Introduction to Sociology, Dr. Jessica Calarco
Summer 2022: Sociology of Media, Ben Gallati, asynchronous

2015-2017 Graduate Assistant, Department of Sociology, University of Memphis
Social Statistics, Dr. Joseph T. Lariscy
Graded assignments and exams

GRADUATE THESES OR EXIT COMMITTEES

Nayeli Medina, Practicum Committee Member (3rd Reader), *Completed*

ACADEMIC SERVICE & PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Texas State University

2026-Current Member, Rubric Review Committee (RRC), Department of Sociology
2025-Current Chair, Nina Vaca-Humrichouse Scholarship Committee, Latino Studies Minor
2025-Current Chair, Latino Studies Advisory Board, Latino Studies Minor
2024-Current Member, Introduction to Sociology Assessment Committee, Department of Sociology
2024-2025 Member, Presidential Award Nominations (PAN) Committee, Department of Sociology
2024-2025 Member, Introduction to Sociology Assessment Committee, Department of Sociology

Indiana University

2021-2022 Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee, Department of Sociology
2019-2021 Preparing Future Faculty Committee (PFF), Department of Sociology

Spring 2020	Research Mentor to undergraduate honors student, Department of Sociology
2019-2020	Co-coordinator, Gender, Race, Class Workshop (GRC), Department of Sociology
2019-2020	Member, Undergraduate Affairs Committee, Department of Sociology
2019-2020	Chair, Latinx Graduate Student Association (LGSA)
2017-2018	Public Relations, Latinx Graduate Student Association (LGSA)

Professional Service
Ad Hoc Reviewer for: *American Journal of Sociology, Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities, Sociological Forum*

Association Service
2026 Chair for panel on "Latino K-12 Pedagogies," Latina/o Studies Association, Austin, Texas

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Spanish Fluent in reading, writing, and speaking

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND AFFILIATIONS

American Sociological Association (ASA)
- Community Engaged Scholars and Teachers
- International Migration
- Latina/o Sociology
- Racial and Ethnic Minorities
- Sociology of Education

Latina/o Studies Association (LSA)

American Association for Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE)

REFERENCES

Jennifer C. Lee
Associate Professor
Dept. of Sociology
Indiana University
lee484@indiana.edu

Dina G. Okamoto
Herman B. Wells Professor
Dept. of Sociology
Indiana University
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Brea L. Perry
Grimshaw Professor
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Hyeyoung Kwon
Assistant Professor
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