Erykah N. Hafner

Sociology Ph.D. Candidate, M.A.

Literature, Science, and Arts Building
500 S. Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Email: erykahb@umich.edu
Website: https://www.erykahbenson.com/
ORCID iD | Web of Science

Education

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
Ph.D. Sociology, *in progress* (expected May 2027)
M.A. Sociology, May 2024
Preliminary Exam: Social Demography (Pass)
Advisor: Dr. Erin Cech
Dissertation: "Black Entrepreneurs' Sensemaking of Digital Technologies for Work", *in progress*
Committee: Erin Cech (Chair), Karyn Lacy, Paige Sweet, Corey Fields, Apryl Williams

Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI
B.A. Interdisciplinary Social Sciences (*Honors Distinction*), 2021
Thesis: "A Content Analysis on the Erasure of Structural Racism and Oppressed Voices"
Committee: John Waller, Heather McCauley, Melissa Fore, Maribel Santiago

Research Areas

Work and Identity; Race & Sexuality; Digital Studies; Entrepreneurship; McDonaldization; Survey and Interview Methods

Fellowships, Honors, and Awards

External Fellowships

2023 - 2027	**National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship (DGE-2241144)**
2021 - 2023	**National Institutes of Child and Human Development Graduate Fellowship (5T32HD007339-37)**

Internal Funding and Awards

2026	**Sociological Practice and Public Sociology Robert Dentler Student Practitioner Award** American Sociological Association, Co-Awarded with Jasmine Simington
2025	**Population Studies Center (University of Michigan)** Conference Travel Grant ($750 - HICSS 2026)
2025	**Office of Academic Affairs (University of Michigan)** SAMI Conference Travel Grant ($577 - HICSS 2026)
2025	**Rackham Graduate School (University of Michigan)** Professional Development Grant ($400 - HICSS 2026)
2025	**Rackham Graduate School (University of Michigan)** Conference Travel Award ($1,150 - HICSS 2026)
2025	**Sweetland Writing Center (University of Michigan)** Graduate Fellows Seminar ($1,000 - Declined)
2025	**Population Studies Center (University of Michigan)** Conference Travel Award ($750 - PAA 2025)
2025	**Rackham Graduate School (University of Michigan)** Conference Travel Award ($900 - PAA 2025)
2024	**Rackham Graduate School (University of Michigan)** Conference Travel Award ($900 - PAA 2024)

2024 **Population Studies Center (University of Michigan)**
Conference Travel Award ($750 - PAA 2024)
2022 **Population Studies Center (University of Michigan)**
Conference Travel Award ($400 - APPAM 2022)
2022 **Rackham Graduate School (University of Michigan)**
Conference Travel Award ($900 - APPAM 2022)

Additional Honors
2024 **Department of Sociology (University of Michigan)**
Graduate Student Mentorship Award

Publications, *denotes graduate students at the time of publication

Peer-Reviewed Journal 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.*. (2026). "Needs Translation: Advocating for Marginalized Communities in Tech Design" (Proceedings of the Hawaii International System Sciences Conference)

Student Journals

2026 **Benson, E*.** & Lundy, L*. "More than an Appetite for Convenience: Usage Patterns of Grocery Delivery Services in Detroit, Michigan", *Michigan Journal of Public Affairs Volume 22*.

Papers in Preparation (*Denotes graduate student authors at time of publication)

- **Hafner, E*.** "The Spectacle of Craft: Black Creatives, Digital Labor, and Hyper (In)visibility", *Forthcoming Article in Feminist Media Histories, a University of California Press Journal.*
- Monier, M.*, Banks, J.*, Sayler, J.*, **Benson, E.***, Brathwaite, K., Williams, A. (2025). "'It's giving fast food:' Black Women's Perceptions of Dating App Platforms and Algorithms", *Revise and Resubmit*
- Banks, J.*, **Benson, E.*,** Halegoua, G., Abrons, E., Williams, A., Bui, M. "Reparative AI: A socio-historical approach toward redressing and repairing AI", *Revise and Resubmit*

Project Grant Funding

Rackham Graduate School: Student Research Grant
Project: "Black Creatives in the Platform Gig Economy"
Amount: $1,500 (May 2024); Role: Benson (PI)
Project: "Listening to Black Entrepreneurs"
Amount: $3,000 (January 2026); Role: Benson (PI)

Phillip J. Bowman Center Anti-Racism Grant: Graduate Student Research Grant
Project (2023): "Black Creatives in the Platform Gig Economy"
Amount: $5,000 (April 2023); Role: Benson (PI)
Project (2025): "Measuring Young Adults' Self-Perceptions and Attitudes Regarding Desirability in Dating Contexts"
Amount: $4,700 (April 2025); Role: Monier (PI); Banks (Project Lead); Benson (Project Lead); Sayler (Project Lead)

Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)
Clifford C. Clogg Scholarship
Purpose: Attending the 2022 ICPSR Summer Program
Amount: $2,800 (May 2022)

Public Scholarship

Research 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.
- Covered in *The Michigan Chronicle*

2023 **Benson, E.*** & Simington, J.* "Collective Remembrance and Detroiters' Views Toward Racial Inequity." Issue Brief. Center for Racial Justice.
- Covered in *WDET, Michigan Advance, Michigan Public Radio, CBS News Detroit, Yahoo, Fox News, The Michigan Chronicle, Detroit Free Press, Crain's Detroit Business, Detroit Metro Times, MyScience*

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.
- Covered in *Bridge Detroit News*

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.

Invited Opinion Articles

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*.

Publicly Accessible Data

2025 **Benson, E.*** (2025) "Grocery Stores in the City of Detroit and Metro Area". ArcGIS Online. April 8, 2025. [URL].

Select Media Engagement

2026 Gayety. "Is 'Normal' a Myth? Feeld's New Report Says Your Desires Probably Aren't Unusual."
2025 Detroit Free Press. "Reparations program offers $25,000 in housing support to Black metro Detroiters."
2023 Michigan Chronicle. "Flint and Detroit Are at the Forefront of the National Reparations Discussion."
2023 Michigan Public Radio. "Report: Detroiters' views on reparations linked to perception of racial inequity."
2023 CBS News Detroit. "U-M report finds majority of Detroiters support some form of reparations."

Select Research Experience (*Denotes undergraduate mentorship)

2025 - Present *Project Lead, *The Love Unseen Study,* The University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, LSA Digital Studies Institute, *Principal Investigator Mel Monier, 2025 Bowman Center Anti-Racism Grant*

2025 - Present *Principal Investigator, *Listening to Black Entrepreneurs,* The University of Michigan - Ann Arbor

2024 - Present *Research Lab Member, *The Bodies, Identities, Intimacies, and Technologies (BIIT) Lab*
The University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, LSA Digital Studies Institute
Principal Investigator Apryl Williams

2024 - 2025 Research Assistant, *Reparative Artificial Intelligence (AI)*
The University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, LSA Humanities Collaboratory
Principal Investigators: Germaine Halegoua, Matthew Bui, Apryl Williams, Ellie Abrons, Tung-Hui Hu

2022 - 2025 Research Fellow, *Center for Racial Justice*
The University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, Ford School of Public Policy, and Center for Social Solutions
Principal Investigator: Mara Cecilia Ostfeld

2022 - 2024 Research Assistant, *Detroit Metro Area Communities Study*
The University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, Ford School of Public Policy
Principal Investigators: Jeffrey Morenoff, Mara Cecilia Ostfeld, Elisabeth Gerber

Teaching Experience

University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, MI

2026 Seminar Lecturer, SROP Senior Seminar, "*Preparing for Academic Research Posters*." Summer Research Opportunity Program (SROP). Rackham Graduate School. Ann Arbor, MI.
2024 Guest Lecturer, PUBPOL475: Race, Place, and Inequality, Dr. Mo Torres, *"The Case for Reparations."* Ford School of Public Policy. Ann Arbor, MI.
2024 Guest Lecturer, Detroit Students Establishing Educational Dreams (S.E.E.D.) Program, *"Grocery Delivery Use in Detroit"*. Office of Academic and Multicultural Affairs. Ann Arbor, MI.
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) (Hybrid Instruction)

Michigan State University - East Lansing, MI

2021 Undergraduate Teaching Assistant, SOC 100: Introduction to Sociology, *Dr. Eric Beasley* (Virtual Instruction)
2020 Undergraduate Teaching Assistant, SOC 161: International Development & Change, *Dr. Benjamin Marley* (Virtual Instruction)

Pedagogical Training

2025 Finding a Job at Teaching-focused Institutions Workshop, American Sociological Association 2025 Meeting, August 9, 2025, Hyatt Regency Chicago, IL.

Invited Presentations

Formal Academic Presentations

2026 **Benson, E.**, "The Development of Black Social Impact Entrepreneurship in the Digital Age", October 14th, 2026. **International Sociological Association, RC36 Alienation Theory and Research.** October 14th - 16th, 2026. Virtual Conference.

2026 Monier, M., **Benson, E.**, Sayler, J., Banks, J. "Love Unseen: Measuring Young Adults' Self-Perceptions and Attitudes Regarding Desirability in Dating Contexts", April 2, 2026. **Bowman Center Graduate Research Showcase**. April 2, 2026. Michigan League, Ann Arbor, MI.

2026 Williams, A., Brathwaite, K., Banks, J., **Benson, E.**, Monier, M., Sayler, J., Paredes, G. "Needs Translation: Advocating for Marginalized Communities in Tech Design". Invited Panelist and Presenter. Selected from abstracts. **Hawaii International Conference on Systems Sciences** 59th Annual Meeting. January 6-9, 2026. Lahaina, Hawaii.

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: Per$pectives 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 **Bowman Center 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 Panels

2026 **Benson, E.,** Lacy, K., Waller-Bey, A., Young, A., "Developing a career vision, public engagement, and building a public profile". Invited Panelist. **Black Sociologist Mentorship Collective.** April 13th, 2026. Ann Arbor, MI.

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.

Invited Talks

2024 **Benson, E.** "Get the Voter 411." MountUp! For Social Justice Series. **Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church. P**odcast Invited Speaker. October 17, 2024. Detroit, MI

2024 **Benson, E. "**Technology, Food Access, and Reparation: Why Public Attitudes Matter". **Detroit Promise Program.** August 21, 2024. University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI.

2024 **Benson, E.** "Voting in the Michigan Primaries". *MountUp!* For Social Justice Series. **Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church.** Organizer & Presenter. February 26, 2024. Detroit, MI.

2021 **Benson, E.** "Building Financial Knowledge and Equity Across Generations." *MountUp!* For Social Justice Series. **Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church.** Organizer & Presenter. April 19, 2021. Detroit, MI.

Academic and Professional Service

Conference Organization and Administration

2026 Invited Reviewer, *Big Data & Society*
2026 - Current Co-Editor of the Communication, Information, Technology, and Media Sociology Section of the American Sociological Association.
2026 Invited Reviewer, *Hawaii International System Sciences Conference (HICSS-60)*
2025 Conference Symposium Organizer. Black Graduate Student Association Graduate Research Symposium. "Illuminating Our Black Joy". March 20th - March 22nd. Ann Arbor, MI
2023 - 2024 Student Coordinator, Race & Racial Identities Workshop, U-M - 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
2025 Invited Reviewer, *American Sociological Review*
2022 - 2024 Graduate Student Recruitment Coordinator, U-M - Ann Arbor, MI
2022 - 2026 Graduate Student Recruitment Volunteer

Select Methodological Training

University of Michigan
2026 Responsible Conduct of Research, Sarah Burgard
2025 Qualitative Research Methods Practicum, Department of Sociology, Elizabeth Armstrong
2025 Digital Studies Institute, Digital IDEAS Summer Institute, Sarah Murray
2023 Quantitative Methods: Practicum, Department of Sociology, Robert Manduca
2022 Research Logics and Strategies of Sociology Research Inquiry, Erin Cech
2022 Race, Ethnicity, & Quant Methodology, ICPSR Summer Program, Kerem Kalkan & Jamil Scott
2022 R Statistical Computing Environment, ICPSR Summer Program, Kerem Ozan Kalkan
2022 Statistical Methods II, Dept. of Sociology (Stata Statistical Software), Mark Mizruchi
2021 Statistical Methods I, Dept. of Sociology (Stata Statistical Software), Rachel Best

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

Certifications

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

Undergraduate Mentorship

2026 Partnerships for Access, Community, and Excellence (PACE), Summer Research Opportunity Program Ambassador Coaching, 2026/7 Graduate Application Cycle, University of Michigan
(Camila Amaya Navarette, Najla Hall, Danya Mendoza Mares)
2026 Summer Research Opportunity Program, University of Michigan, Senior Academic Coach
2026 Social Science Scholars Program, Michigan State University
(Madison Lynch)
2024 - 2025 Detroit Metro Area Communities Study, University of Michigan
(Love Lundy)
2023 - 2024 Applied Policy Internship and Research Experience Program (ASPIRE), University of Michigan
(Morgan Chambers, Lexi Turner)
2024 - 2025 Sociology Undergraduate Research Opportunity (SURO), University of Michigan
(Zihao Xu, Sanjana Sunilkumar, Aanya Panyadahundi, Maegan Davis)

Professional Memberships

2021 American Sociological Association (ASA)
- Communication, Information Technologies, and Media Sociology (CITAMS)
- Sociological Practice and Public Sociology (SPPS)
- Organizations, Occupations, and Work (OOW)
- Sociology of Mental Health (SMH)

2021 Association of Black Sociologists (ABS)
2021 Population Association of America (PAA)

Academic Affiliations at the University of Michigan

2024 Bodies, Identities, Intimacies, and Technologies (BIIT) Lab, Digital Studies Institute
2022 Center for Racial Justice (CRJ), Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy
2021 University of Michigan Population Studies Center Traineeship (PSC), Institute for Social Research