

DANIELA RUIZ, Ph.D.

Adjunct Professor of Sociology | Applied Social Research

Chicago, Illinois • +1 312 555 0142 • daniela.ruiz@protonmail.com

linkedin.com/in/daniela-ruiz-sociology • ORCID 0000-0002-6841-7305 • danielaruiz.org

Academic Profile

Student-centered sociology educator with 11 years of experience teaching undergraduate learners at public universities and community colleges. Instructor of record for 46 course sections across face-to-face, hybrid, and online formats, with sustained teaching evaluations averaging 4.8/5.0. Expertise in introductory sociology, social inequality, race and ethnicity, research methods, and urban communities. Known for clear course design, inclusive discussion practices, transparent assessment, and applied projects that connect sociological evidence to students’ work and civic lives. Active scholar-practitioner with peer-reviewed research on first-generation college access and neighborhood change.

Teaching Areas

Core Sociology	Introduction to Sociology; Social Problems; Sociological Theory; Sociology of the Family
Inequality	Race and Ethnicity; Social Stratification; Gender and Society; Immigration; Education and Society
Methods	Social Research Methods; Qualitative Methods; Program Evaluation; Community-Based Research
Applied Topics	Urban Sociology; Work and Organizations; Community Change; Public Sociology
Teaching Formats	In-person; synchronous and asynchronous online; hybrid; accelerated 8-week; dual-enrollment

Education

Ph.D., Sociology	2015
University of Illinois Chicago, Chicago, IL	Urban Sociology and Education
Dissertation: <i>Pathways Through the City: Institutions, Neighborhoods, and First-Generation College Persistence</i>	
Committee Chair: Teresa M. Alvarez, Ph.D.	
M.A., Sociology	2010
DePaul University, Chicago, IL	Applied Social Research
B.A., Sociology, <i>magna cum laude</i>	2007
Loyola University Chicago, Chicago, IL	Minor: Latino Studies

Academic Appointments

Adjunct Professor of Sociology	2018–Present
Lakeshore Metropolitan University, Chicago, IL	Department of Sociology
- Teach 3–4 sections per academic year, including Introduction to Sociology, Race and Ethnicity, Urban Sociology, and Social Research Methods; typical enrollments range from 24 to 62 students. - Redesigned Introduction to Sociology around low-stakes retrieval practice, scaffolded writing, and locally grounded data exercises; D/F/withdrawal rates declined from 21% to 12% across six sections. - Built accessible learning modules in Canvas using backward design, captioned media, screen-reader-ready documents, and transparent assignment prompts aligned to Universal Design for Learning principles. - Earned mean student ratings of 4.8/5.0 for instructor effectiveness and 4.9/5.0 for respect for diverse perspectives across the most recent 12 evaluated sections.	

Adjunct Faculty, Social Sciences*Harbor City College, Evanston, IL***2015–Present***Division of Liberal Arts*

- Deliver transfer-level sociology courses in 16-, 12-, and 8-week formats for a diverse student population that includes first-generation learners, working adults, and multilingual students.
- Serve as lead adjunct for the common Introduction to Sociology course, coordinating shared outcomes, assessment rubrics, textbook review, and onboarding for seven part-time instructors.
- Introduced an open educational resource course pack that eliminated approximately \$28,000 in annual student textbook costs while maintaining department-wide learning-outcome performance.
- Piloted an early-alert and structured check-in process that increased assignment completion by 14 percentage points in asynchronous online sections.

Visiting Lecturer*Northbridge University, Chicago, IL***2016–2018***College of Professional Studies*

- Taught evening and weekend sections of Social Problems, Work and Organizations, and Program Evaluation for adult degree-completion students.
- Partnered with local nonprofits to create client-based evaluation projects; student teams delivered logic models, survey instruments, and findings briefs to six community organizations.

Graduate Instructor and Teaching Assistant*University of Illinois Chicago, Chicago, IL***2009–2015***Department of Sociology*

- Served as instructor of record for four sections of Introduction to Sociology and as teaching assistant for Sociological Theory, Statistics for the Social Sciences, and Urban Sociology.
- Led weekly discussion and methods labs, advised students on research design and academic writing, and received the department's Outstanding Graduate Instructor Award in 2014.

Selected Teaching Effectiveness

Instructor effectiveness	Mean across 12 recent sections (institutional student survey)	4.8/5.0
Inclusive learning climate	"Respects perspectives different from their own"	4.9/5.0
Learning-outcome attainment	Students meeting or exceeding common-course benchmark	86%
Online course quality	Internal Quality Matters-aligned review, SOC 101	Met all 42 criteria
Peer observation	"Purposeful, well-paced, and notably effective at drawing quieter students into analysis"	Excellent

Selected Course Portfolio

Introduction to Sociology	OER redesign; data labs using census indicators; cumulative social-structure portfolio	22 sections
Race and Ethnicity	Comparative case studies; media discourse analysis; community oral-history assignment	8 sections
Social Research Methods	Mixed-methods proposal; survey design; interviewing; ethics; introductory analysis in R	6 sections
Urban Sociology	Neighborhood observation fieldnotes; housing-policy simulation; Chicago community profile	5 sections
Social Problems	Evidence briefs; structured deliberation; public-facing final project	3 sections
Program Evaluation	Community partner project; logic models; measurement plans; executive presentation	2 sections

Curriculum and Pedagogical Leadership

- Co-led departmental alignment of 28 course sections to five measurable general-education outcomes; developed common analytic-writing rubric and facilitated two calibration workshops for full- and part-time faculty.
- Created a reusable bank of 40 inclusive, discussion-ready case studies with facilitation notes and alternative asynchronous activities; materials are used across nine sociology and social-science courses.
- Designed a four-stage research assignment sequence that reduced last-week submissions and improved average rubric performance in evidence use from 3.1 to 3.8 on a 4-point scale.
- Mentor new adjunct instructors on pacing, academic integrity, accessible course materials, difficult-dialogue facilitation, and equitable grading; supported nine colleagues since 2020.
- Facilitate annual workshops on transparent assignment design and practical strategies for belonging in commuter and online classrooms.

Scholarship

Peer-Reviewed Publications

1. **Ruiz, D.** (2024). Institutional navigators and the uneven work of belonging among first-generation commuter students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 65(4), 421–439.
2. Patel, N., **Ruiz, D.**, and Okafor, M. (2022). Teaching the city with the city: Community-engaged inquiry in introductory sociology. *Teaching Sociology*, 50(3), 244–258.
3. **Ruiz, D.** and Chen, L. (2020). Beyond displacement: Social infrastructure and resident adaptation in changing neighborhoods. *City & Community*, 19(4), 982–1005.
4. **Ruiz, D.** (2018). Navigating transfer: Organizational signals and first-generation students' institutional choices. *Community College Review*, 46(2), 176–198.
5. Alvarez, T. M., **Ruiz, D.**, and Williams, J. (2016). Neighborhood context and college persistence in a metropolitan public university. *Sociology of Education*, 89(3), 214–233.

Public Scholarship and Instructional Resources

1. **Ruiz, D.** (2023). *Reading Neighborhood Change: An Open Data Workbook for Undergraduate Sociology*. Lakeshore Open Press. CC BY 4.0.
2. **Ruiz, D.** (2021). Making introductory research methods consequential through community questions. *The Society Pages: Teaching & Learning*.
3. **Ruiz, D.** (2019). *Chicago in Social Context*, an open collection of 18 teaching cases. Harbor City College OER Repository.

Selected Presentations and Invited Workshops

“Small Changes, Stronger Persistence: Course Design for Commuter Students” <i>Invited workshop, Lakeshore Metropolitan University Center for Teaching Excellence, Chicago, IL</i>	2025
“Community Questions as the Spine of an Introductory Methods Course” <i>Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Montréal, QC</i>	2024
“OER Beyond Cost Savings: Building a More Local Introductory Sociology Course” <i>Midwest Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Minneapolis, MN</i>	2023
“Designing Equitable Participation in Hybrid Discussion Courses” <i>Illinois Online Learning Summit, Virtual</i>	2022
“Institutional Navigators and First-Generation Student Belonging” <i>Association for the Study of Higher Education Annual Conference, San Juan, PR</i>	2021

Academic and Professional Service

Lead Adjunct, Sociology Curriculum Committee, Harbor City College	2021–Present
Faculty Advisor, Students for Community Research, Lakeshore Metropolitan University	2020–Present
Member, General Education Assessment Working Group, Harbor City College	2019–2024
Reviewer, <i>Teaching Sociology</i> and <i>Journal of Applied Social Science</i>	2020–Present
Volunteer Research Advisor, Chicago Neighborhood Learning Collaborative	2018–Present
Session Organizer, Midwest Sociological Society Annual Meeting	2022, 2024

Awards and Professional Development

Excellence in Part-Time Faculty Teaching Award, Harbor City College	2024
Inclusive Teaching Fellowship, Lakeshore Metropolitan University	2022
Open Education Innovation Grant, Illinois Community College Consortium, \$8,500	2021
Outstanding Graduate Instructor Award, University of Illinois Chicago	2014
Quality Matters, Applying the Quality Matters Rubric certification	2023
Association of College and University Educators, Effective College Instruction certificate	2020

Research, Instructional, and Language Skills

Learning Platforms	Canvas, Blackboard, D2L Brightspace, Moodle, Zoom, Hypothesis, Perusall, Turnitin
Research Methods	Interviews, focus groups, survey design, program evaluation, community-based participatory research, IRB protocols
Analysis	R, SPSS, Stata, Qualtrics, NVivo, Tableau, U.S. Census and IPUMS data
Course Design	Backward design, Universal Design for Learning, transparent assignment design, OER curation, authentic assessment
Languages	English and Spanish (bilingual professional proficiency)

Professional Memberships

American Sociological Association • Midwest Sociological Society • Sociologists for Women in Society
National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development • POD Network in Higher Education

References

Marisol Chen, Ph.D. Chair, Department of Sociology Lakeshore Metropolitan University marisol.chen@lakeshoremetro.edu	Peter Okafor, Ph.D. Dean, Division of Liberal Arts Harbor City College peter.okafor@harborcity.edu	Teresa M. Alvarez, Ph.D. Professor of Sociology University of Illinois Chicago talvarez@uic.edu
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