

LOUISE SEAMSTER

Curriculum Vita

Assistant Professor
Sociology and African-American Studies
University of Iowa
401L North Hall
Iowa City, Iowa 52242

email: lseamster@uiowa.edu
phone: (319) 467-1704

EDUCATION

2016	Doctor of Philosophy, Sociology, Duke University Dissertation: "Race, Power and Economic Extraction in Benton Harbor, Michigan"
2013	M.A., Sociology, Duke University
2008	M.A., Liberal Studies, The New School for Social Research
2005	B.A., English, Vassar College (with honors)

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

2019—present	Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology/African American Studies, University of Iowa (courtesy appointment at the College of Law)
2017—2019	Postdoctoral Teaching Associate, Department of Sociology, University of Tennessee-Knoxville
2015-2017	Lecturer, Department of Sociology, University of Tennessee-Knoxville

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Charron-Chénier, Raphaël, **Louise Seamster**, Tom Shapiro, and Laura Sullivan. "A Pathway to Racial Equity: Student Debt Cancellation Policy Design." Forthcoming at *Social Currents*.

Purifoy, Danielle and **Louise Seamster** (2020). "Creative Extraction: Black Towns in White Space." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. DOI: [10.1177/0263775820968563](https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775820968563).

Louise Seamster and Danielle Purifoy (2020). "What is Environmental Racism For? Place-Based Harm and Relational Development." *Environmental Sociology*. DOI: [10.1080/23251042.2020.1790331](https://doi.org/10.1080/23251042.2020.1790331).

Charron-Chénier, Raphaël, and **Louise Seamster** (2020). "Racialized Debts: Racial Exclusion from Credit Tools and Information Networks." *Critical Sociology*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920519894635>.

Christian, Michelle, **Louise Seamster** and Victor Ray (2019). "Introduction to Special Issue #1: New Directions in Critical Race Studies: Sociological Imaginations and Theoretical Insights." *American Behavioral Scientist*.

Christian, Michelle, **Louise Seamster** and Victor Ray (2019). "Introduction to Special Issue #2: Critical Race Theory and Empirical Sociology." *American Behavioral Scientist*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764219859646>.

Seamster, Louise (2019). "Black Debt, White Debt." *Contexts* 18(1): 30-35.
doi/10.1177/1536504219830674

Seamster, Louise (2019). "WHEN DEMOCRACY DISAPPEARS: Emergency Management in Benton Harbor." *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 15(2), 1-28.

Seamster, Louise and Victor Ray (2018). "Against Teleology in the Study of Race: Towards the Abolition of the Progress Paradigm." *Sociological Theory* 36(4), 315-342.

Charron-Chénier, Raphaël and **Louise Seamster** (2018). "(Good) Debt is an Asset." *Contexts* 17(1), 88-90.

Seamster, Louise and Raphaël Charron-Chénier (2017). "Predatory Inclusion and Education Debt: A New Approach to the Growing Racial Wealth Gap." *Social Currents* 4(3:):199-207.

Henricks, Kasey, and **Louise Seamster** (2017). "Mechanisms of the Racial Tax State." *Critical Sociology* 43(2), 169-179.

Ray, Victor and **Louise Seamster** (2016). "Rethinking Racial Progress: A Response to Wimmer." *Racial and Ethnic Studies* 39(8), 1361-1369.

Seamster, Louise (2015). "The White City: Race and Urban Politics." *Sociology Compass*, 9(12), 1049-0165.

Seamster, Louise, and Kasey Henricks (2015). "A Second Redemption? Racism, Backlash Politics, and Public Education." *Humanity & Society*, 39(4), 363-375.

Seamster, Louise and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2011). "Introduction: Examining, Debating, and Ranting about the Obama Phenomenon." *Political Power and Social Theory* (22), 3-15.

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo with **Louise Seamster** (2011). "The Sweet Enchantment of Color Blindness in Black Face: Explaining the 'Miracle,' Debating the Politics, and Suggesting a Way for Hope to be 'For Real' in America." *Political Power and Social Theory* (22), 139-175.

GUEST-EDITED SPECIAL ISSUES

Christian, Michelle, **Louise Seamster** and Victor Ray (Eds.) (2019). "New Directions in Critical Race Studies 1: Sociological Imaginations and Theoretical Insights." *American Behavioral Scientist*.

Christian, Michelle, **Louise Seamster** and Victor Ray (Eds.) (2019). "New Directions in Critical Race Studies 2: The Empirical Landscape of Critical Race Studies." *American Behavioral Scientist*.

Henricks, Kasey and **Louise Seamster** (Eds.) (2016). "Taxing Racism: Racial Hoarding, Redistribution, and Contestations of 'The Public.'" *Critical Sociology*.

Seamster, Louise and Kasey Henricks (Eds.). 2015. "Racializing the Public: The Post-Civil Rights Retreat from Public Education." *Humanity & Society*, 39(3).

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo, and **Louise Seamster** (Eds.). 2011. *Political Power and Social Theory: Special Section on the Obama Phenomenon*, vol. 22.

BOOK CHAPTERS

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo, **Louise Seamster**, and Victor Ray (2015). "Unpacking the Imperialist Knapsack: White Privilege and Imperialism in Obama's America." In *I Don't See Color*, eds. Bettina Bergo and Tracey Nicholls. Pennsylvania State University Press, 146-166.

MANUSCRIPTS IN PROGRESS and WORKING PAPERS

Heads I Win, Tails You Lose: Water Secession, Debt, and the Domination of Flint. Book proposal under contract at Columbia University Press.

Seamster, Louise, Victor Ray and Hannah Zadeh. "Racism without Race: Proxies and Algorithmic Inequality."

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Seamster, Louise (2021). Expert Commentary: "Predatory Inclusion and the Racialization of Debt." P. 71-74 in "Chicago's Racial Wealth Gap: Legacies of the Past, Challenges in the Present, Uncertain Futures," Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy (IRRPP).

Charron-Chénier, Raphaël, and **Louise Seamster** (2020) "Some Notes on the Impact of Student Debt Forgiveness Across Income Groups." Scatterplot, December 17. Available at <https://scatter.wordpress.com/2020/12/17/some-notes-on-the-impact-of-student-debt-forgiveness-across-income-groups/>

Seamster, Louise (2019). "How should we measure the racial wealth gap? Relative vs. absolute gaps in the student debt forgiveness debate." Scatterplot, July 27. Available at <https://scatter.wordpress.com/2019/07/27/how-should-we-measure-the-racial-wealth-gap-relative-vs-absolute-gaps-in-the-student-debt-forgiveness-debate/>

Seamster, Louise (2019). Scholars Exchange: Municipal Takeovers." Invited Response to "How Municipal Takeovers Reshape Urban Democracy: Comparing the Experiences of Camden, NJ & Flint, MI," *Urban Affairs Review*, April 29. Available at <https://urbanaffairsreview.com/2019/04/29/scholars-exchange-municipal-takeovers/>

Charron-Chénier, Raphaël, **Louise Seamster**, Tom Shapiro, and Laura Sullivan (2019). Letter to Senator Elizabeth Warren analyzing student debt cancellation policy proposal, April 28. Available at <https://elizabethwarren.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Experts-Letter-to-Senator-Warren-pdf>

Seamster, Louise, Derek Galyon, Nichole Proctor, and Patrick Sonnenberg (2017). "Flint, Mich. Water Crisis: How Much is Gov. Snyder Responsible?" *The Root*, June 27. Available at <http://www.theroot.com/flint-water-crisis-how-much-is-gov-snyder-responsible-1796457891>

Seamster, Louise (2017). "Why You Need a Writing Group." *Chronicle Vitae*, June 15. Available at <https://chroniclevitae.com/news/1829-why-you-need-a-writing-group>

Seamster, Louise and Jessica Welburn (2016). "How a Racist System Has Poisoned the Water in Flint, Mich." *The Root*, January 9. Available at <http://www.theroot.com/articles/politics/2016/01/how-a-racist-system-has-poisoned-the-water-in-flint-mich.html> (quoted in the New Yorker, US Uncut, and the American Constitutional Society's blog).

BOOK REVIEWS

[*The Fiscalization of Social Policy: How Taxpayers Trumped Children in the Fight against Child Poverty*](#) by Joshua McCabe, *American Journal of Sociology*; May2021, Vol. 126 Issue 6, p1512-1514, 3p.

"[Social capital's value in the courtroom.](#)" Review of *Privilege and Punishment: How Race and Class Matter in Criminal Court* by Matthew Clair in *Science* (Dec 11 2020).

"[King and the Other America: The Poor People's Campaign and the Quest for Economic Equality](#)" by Sylvie Laurent, *Contemporary Sociology* 49 (3), 280-282.

"All Credentials Aren't Created Equal." Review of *Lower Ed* by Tressie McMillan Cottom in *Contexts* (Winter 2018).

HONORS AND AWARDS

2020 Dean's Micro-grant, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (\$1,995)

2020, 2021 Support from the Public Policy Center support for Social Research Teams (\$2,500)

- 2020 Honorable Mention, American Sociological Association Section on Sociological Practice and Public Sociology Publication Award.
- 2020 Innovations in Teaching with Technology Award, University of Iowa: "Text Classification Tool for Flint Water Crisis Email Archive" (\$10,000)
- 2020 Arts and Humanities Initiative Major Grant, University of Iowa: "Poison Pen: Tracing the Digital Paper Trail of the Flint Water Crisis" (\$30,000)
- 2019, 2018 Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture at Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation's Buell Center Research Prize for an Independent Project in American Architecture, Urbanism, and Landscape, for "The Right to Infrastructure," with Danielle Purifoy (\$60,000 total)
- 2019 Teaching and Learning Innovation's Teaching Support Award, Office of Undergraduate Research, University of Tennessee-Knoxville (\$2000)
- 2018 Award from the College of Arts and Sciences, Joint Institute for Computational Sciences Collaborative Funding (\$40,000)
- 2014 American Sociological Association's Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline award for "No Vacancy: Discrimination in an Online Rental Market," with Victor Ray and Matthew Hughey (declined-\$6,000)
- 2014 Dissertation Support for Work on Altruism, Charitable Giving and the Nonprofit Sector, Center for the Study of Philanthropy and Voluntarism, Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University, Durham, NC (\$11,265)
- 2014 Domestic Dissertation Travel Award, Duke University, Durham, NC (\$1,800)
- 2014 Law and Social Science Fellowship, American Bar Foundation, Chicago, IL (declined)
- 2013 Rethinking Regulation Graduate Research Award, Kenan Institute for Ethics, Durham, NC (\$1,800)
- 2013 Dissertation Research Support, The Graduate School, Duke University (also in 2014)
- 2012 Summer Research Fellowship, The Graduate School, Duke University, Durham, NC (also in 2013, 2015 and 2016)
- 2010 James B Duke University Fellowship

2008 Pass with Honors for graduate thesis, New School for Social Research

2005 Phi Beta Kappa

INVITED TALKS AND APPEARANCES

2021 [“The Right to Infrastructure.”](#) Invited lecture with Danielle Purifoy at Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture, Columbia University, New York, NY, June 7.

2021 “Predatory Inclusion and the Racial Wealth Gap.” Invited panelist at Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy (IRRPP) [report](#) release, Feb 24.

2021 “The Landscape and Life Course of Student Debt.” Lecture at Florida State University Geography Department, January 28.

2021 “Debt is the Lifeblood of Late Capitalism.” Invited lecture at Debt Collective’s Institutional Debt workshop, January 15.

2020 “What caused the Flint Water Crisis?” Lecture at University of Iowa Library “Share your Scholarship” series, October 28.

2020 “Water Secessions and the Flint Water Crisis.” Lecture at Boston University Sociology Colloquium, October 5.

2020 “What’s Systemic About Systemic Racism?” Lecture at University of California-Berkeley School of Social Work, September 28.

2020 Invited panelist, “Debt Talks Episode 2: Debt, Wealth and Racial Inequalities.” Institute for New Economic Thinking, September 15.

2019 “Dominating Flint’s Water Future.” Lecture at University Michigan-Flint Intercultural Center, November 7.

2019 Invited panelist, “Dispossession is Nothing New,” Michigan Journal of Law Reform 2019-2020 Symposium — “Dispossessing Detroit: How the Law Takes Property,” Ann Arbor, MI, November 9.

2019 Invited panelist, “Debt Cancellation Policy,” cohosted by Demos, Roosevelt Institute, and The Century Foundation, Washington, DC, October 24.

2019 “Black Debt, White Debt.” Lecture at University of Chicago-Illinois Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy (IRRPP), October 11.

2019 Invited panelist, "Transcending the Academy: How, Why, and When to Practice Public Sociology," ASA Student Forum Workshop, American Sociological Association Conference, New York, NY, August 11.

2018 "Black Debt, White Debt (City Edition)." Inaugural speaker at the Risk, Lending and the Future of Debtor Urbanization Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, November 30.

2018 "Uneven Development and Racial Housing Inequality." Invited speaker at NAACP Affordable Housing Group, AME Clinton Chapel, Knoxville, TN.

2018 "The Algorithmic Reproduction of Racial Inequality" (with Travis Wilson) Invited panelist at thematic session on "Race, Technology and 21st Century Inequality," American Sociological Association, Philadelphia, PA.

2018 "Creative Extraction: Black Towns in White Space." Invited panelist with Danielle Purifoy at "Bridging the Gap: Race and the Environment," ASA mini-conference, Philadelphia, PA.

2018 "Black Debt, White Debt." Invited panelist at the 5th Parren J. Mitchell Symposium, "Race and Wealth Inequality," College Park, Maryland.

2018 "When Democracy Disappears: Emergency Management in Benton Harbor." Invited lecture, Africana Studies Spring 2018 Symposium, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN.

2018 "Emergency Management and the Extraction of Infrastructure." Invited panelist at "Legacies of Emergency Management: Looking Back and Looking Forward" (workshop co-organizer), co-hosted by Columbia University Buell School of Architecture and the University of Michigan Taubman School of Architecture and Urban Planning. Detroit and Ann Arbor, MI.

2018 "Black Debt, White Debt." Invited Panelist at University of California-Irvine Law Center on Law, Equality and Race (CLEAR) symposium, "Race, Debt, and Inequality," Irvine, CA.

2017 "Against Teleology in the Study of Race: Towards the Abolition of the Progress Paradigm." Invited lecture with Victor Ray at Intersectionality Community of Scholars Workshop, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN.

2017 "Infrastructure and Emergency Powers." Invited panelist at Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture, Columbia University, New York, NY.

2013 "Conversation on Racism and Capitalism." Invited panelist, Howard University, Washington DC.

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

“Racism Without Race.” Paper presented at American Sociological Association Conference (virtual), August 10, 2020.

“Dominating Flint’s Water Future.” Paper presented at American Sociological Association Conference, New York, NY, August 10, 2019.

“Racialized Organizations Theory: A Case Study of Airbnb.” Presented with Victor Ray at Race in the Marketplace, Paris, France, June 26, 2019.

“Dominating Flint’s Water Future.” Paper presented with Amanda Ricketts at Southern Sociological Society Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, April 11, 2019.

“The State’s Role in the Flint Water Crisis.” Paper presented at Southern Sociological Society Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana, April 7, 2018.

“Creative Extraction: Black Towns in White Space.” Paper presented with Danielle Purifoy at “Freedom Dreams in White Structures: Contemporary Dynamics of Black Space” (session organizer), Eastern Sociological Society, Baltimore, Maryland, February 25, 2018.

“The City as an Extraction Machine.” Paper presented at “Freedom Dreams in White Structures: Contemporary Dynamics of Black Space” (session organizer), Eastern Sociological Society, Baltimore, Maryland, February 25, 2018.

“The State’s Role in the Flint Water Crisis.” Paper presented at “Disasters, Displacement and Human Rights” conference, University of Tennessee, Feb 11, 2018.

“Digital Scholarship in Undergraduate Research.” Presentation on ongoing research with Nichole Proctor at OIT Community of Practice Workshop, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, Oct 25, 2017.

“Settler Colonialism, Place and Racialized Citizenship.” Paper presented at American Sociological Association, Montreal, Canada, August 14, 2017.

“Against Teleology in the Study of Race and Ethnicity.” Paper presented with Victor Ray at New Directions in Critical Race and Ethnicity, Knoxville, TN, April 28, 2017.

“Racialized Organizations Theory: A Case Study of Airbnb.” Invited presenter with Victor Ray at Eastern Sociological Association, Philadelphia, PA, Feb 26, 2017.

“Rethinking Racial Progress: Racism as a Fundamental Cause.” Paper presented with Victor Ray at American Sociological Association, Seattle, WA, August 23, 2016.

“When Democracy Disappears: Emergency Management in Benton Harbor.” Paper presented at Southern Sociological Society Conference, Atlanta, GA, April 15, 2016.

Invited panelist for Author Meets Critics, "Behind the White Picket Fence: Power and Privilege in Multiethnic Neighborhoods," by Sarah Mayorga. Southern Sociological Society Conference, Atlanta, GA, April 14, 2016.

"Backlash: Racialized Anti-Public Sentiment in the Post-Civil Rights Era." Panel co-organizer, Society for the Study of Social Problems, San Francisco, CA, August 17, 2014.

"Disenfranchisement and Urban Redevelopment in a New Company Town." Paper presented at "The Color of Citizenship: Continuing Racial/Ethnic Inequality in Citizenship Rights and Representations" (session organizer), Southern Sociological Society Conference, Charlotte, NC, April 5, 2014.

"Disenfranchisement and Urban Redevelopment in a New Company Town." Paper presented at Place, (Dis)Place, & Citizenship Conference, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, March 22, 2014.

"Public Goods? Privatization and Local Disenfranchisement in Michigan." Paper presented at Association for Humanist Sociology (session co-organizer), Arlington, VA, October 13, 2013.

EDITORIAL SERVICE

2018 Associate Editor, *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*

2013-present Associate Editor, *Humanity and Society*

2015 Student Advisory Board Member, *Social Problems*

Referee: *American Sociological Review, American Journal of Sociology, American Behavioral Scientist, Humanity and Society, Journal of Urban Affairs, Qualitative Sociology, Social Problems, Sociological Spectrum, Sociological Theory, Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, Critical Sociology, Urban Studies*

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Committee Service

2020-present Conference Committee, Southern Sociological Society

2019-present Publications Committee, Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities, American Sociological Association

Conference Organization

2018 Co-organizer, "Legacies of Emergency Management: Looking Back and Moving Forward" (two-day workshop), March 22-23, Detroit & Ann Arbor, MI

- 2018 Co-organizer, “That Used to be Our Neighborhood” community event series on development and displacement in Knoxville*
*project awarded a “Ready for the World” grant, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, for panel discussion, “Development in Knoxville: From Community Displacement to Community Restoration” (\$1,600)
- 2017 Co-organizer, New Directions in Critical Race and Ethnicity Conference, April 27-29, Knoxville, TN
- 2012 Co-organizer, Triangle Race Conference (“Research and Resistance: Race Across the Disciplines”), March 30-31, Durham & Chapel Hill, NC*
*project awarded a Kenan-Biddle Partnership Grant (co-winner with members of Triangle Race Workshop), Kenan Charitable Trust & Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, Durham & Chapel Hill, NC (\$5000)

Departmental and University Service

2021-present: Advancing Environmental Justice Strategic Initiative, Advisory Committee

2020-present: Policy RISE subcommittee

2020-present Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, Sociology and Criminology

2019-present: Public Policy Center Fellow, Student Research Teams

2019-present Graduate Committee, African American Studies

2010-2014 Coordinator, Race Workshop, Sociology Department, Duke University

COURSE PREPARATION AND STUDENT RESEARCH SUPPORTED

Courses:

Research Methods

Community Sociology

Applied Research: Flint Study

Applied Research: Gentrification

Introduction to Critical Race and Ethnicity

Social Inequality

Introduction to African American Society

Environmental Racism: Black and White Community Politics

Racial Wealth Gap: Black Debt, White Debt

Undergraduate thesis/project advising:

Sarah Berkowitz

Hannah Zadeh

MA exam committee:

Kelly Guinn

MA Thesis committee:

Chad Rhym

Undergraduate Research Assistants sponsored:

Nichole Proctor, Summer 2017

Amanda Ricketts, Summer 2018-Spring 2019

Paige Greene, Spring 2019

Levity Smith, Spring-Summer 2020

Terry Saul III, Summer 2020-Spring 2021

Hannah Zadeh, Spring 2020-Spring 2021

Selveyah Gamblin, Summer 2021

Theodore Byrnes, Summer 2021

RECENT INTERVIEWS

2021. Petersen, Anne Helen. "[The future of the middle class depends on student loan forgiveness.](#)" *Vox*, Feb 25.

2021. Swaminathan, Aarthi. "['I also defaulted': Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley reveals her experience with student loan debt.](#)" *Yahoo Finance*, Feb. 19.

2020. Green, Erica, Luke Broadwater and Stacy Cowley. "[Student Loan Cancellation Sets Up Clash Between Biden and the Left.](#)" *New York Times*, Dec. 10.

2020. Thompson, Chris. "[A Student-Debt Researcher Fucks Me Up With America's Broken Promises.](#)" *Defector*, Dec 8.

2020. Swaminathan, Aarthi. "[Here's what student debt forgiveness would look like for borrowers and the U.S. government.](#)" *Yahoo Finance*, Dec. 3.

2020. Bloomberg Markets, "[The Close.](#)" November 20.

2020. Berman, Jillian. "[Should the Biden administration cancel student debt? Read this before you decide.](#)" *Marketwatch*, Nov. 18.

2020. Rindlisbacher, Christof. "[Joe Biden Should Absolutely Erase Student Debt via Executive Order.](#)" *Jacobin*, Nov.17.

2020. Berman, Jillian. "[President-elect Joe Biden has signaled he's open to canceling student-loan debt — the question is when and how much.](#)" *Marketwatch*, Nov. 9.

2020. Dillard, Jarrell. "[Writing Off Student Debt Is One Way Biden Can Build Black Wealth.](#)" *Bloomberg*, Nov 12.

2019 Fuchs, Hailey. "[Sen. Bernie Sanders pushes free college and student debt forgiveness — and finds the field crowded.](#)" *Washington Post*, August 24.

2019 [CNBC International](#), August 23.

2019 Berman, Jillian. "[All the ways student debt exacerbates racial inequality — 'it's like landing in quick sand.'](#)" Marketwatch, July 30.

2019 Maier, Jean Marie. "[The Sociologists Behind Warren's Education and Debt Plans.](#)" *The Society Pages*, May 15.

2019 Kreighbaum, Andrew. "[Warren plan puts spotlight on racial disparities in student debt.](#)" *Inside Higher Ed*, May 7.

2019 "[Grading Sen. Elizabeth Warren's Student Loan Relief Plan.](#)" *On Point*, National Public Radio. April 30.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Association of University Professors

American Sociological Association

Southern Sociological Society

LSA National Center for Institutional Diversity, University of Michigan, Diversity Scholars Network