



# Division of Youth, Aging, and the Life Course

## Society for the Study of Social Problems

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### Letter from the Chair

Hello! I hope this newsletter finds you well this spring semester.

Plans for the **SSSP Annual Meeting (August 18–20, 2023)** are underway with the theme “Same Problem, Different Day: Recognizing and Responding to Recurring Social Problems.” I am excited for the seven sessions that YALC will be sponsoring and co-sponsoring. Details on these and other sessions are available [online](#).

Our award committees have chosen winners for YALC’s two awards—please join me in congratulating the Graduate Student Paper Award Competition winner **Ruo-Fan “Mikki” Liu** (committee: Chris Wellin, Ann M. Beutel, and Valerie Leiter (chair)) and the Maggie Kuhn Award for Scholar-Activists winner **Jonathan Coley** and honorable mention **Christopher J. Douçot** (committee: Jennifer Bulanda, Julia Wolf, and Christina Barmon (chair)). Congrats! Thank you to those who submitted nominations and volunteered to serve on the committees! Details on the awards and nomination processes can be found [here](#).

Welcome to our new co-chair for 2023–2025, **Brittney Miles**! Thank you to those who submitted nominations for YALC co-chair. For anyone else interested in this leadership role, we will be looking for another co-chair next year for 2024–2026.

Please see more information in the next few sections about all of our winners.

**We are looking for a new social media manager!** If you are interested in this job (with a ~\$75 stipend per year), please let me ([julia.wolf@utsa.edu](mailto:julia.wolf@utsa.edu)) know.

The **YALC Business Meeting** will be Thursday, June 22 at 12:00pm CST. A Zoom link will be emailed closer to the event. Please join to learn more about YALC and suggest future SSSP sessions!

**Please continue to send us your important news, announcements, and accomplishments!** YALC has a newsletter we distribute three times a year and active [Facebook](#) page and [Twitter](#) accounts. Send your information to Newsletter Editor, Pat Barrett ([pbarre4@emory](mailto:pbarre4@emory)), and/or me ([julia.wolf@utsa.edu](mailto:julia.wolf@utsa.edu)).

Cheers,  
Julia Kay Wolf

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### CONNECT WITH YALC!



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[twitter.com/ssspYALC](https://twitter.com/ssspYALC)

## **Welcome YALC's New Co-Chair: Brittney Miles**

**We are pleased to announce that Brittney Miles was elected as the 2023–2025 YALC Co–Chair!**

About Brittney: Brittney Miles completed her PhD in Sociology at the University of Cincinnati in Spring 2023. She will be an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign. She completed a graduate certificate in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and a Master of Arts in Sociology at UC. She also holds a Master of Education in Social and Cultural Foundations in Education at DePaul University. She is the 2022–2023 Marilyn Yarbrough Dissertation & Teaching Fellow of Sociology In Residence at Kenyon College. Her scholarship centers Black girlhood, specifically related to (a)sexuality, dis/ability, embodiment, and beauty. She uses interdisciplinary qualitative methods to prioritize Black women and girls' critical subjectivities in Black feminist sociological issues. During her previous experiences in elected leadership roles, she learned to find a balance between political mobilization, professional development, and joy – she will bring each of these to serving as Co–Chair of YA&LC.



## **YALC Members: *Save the Date!***

### **YALC's Virtual Business Meeting June 22, 2023, 1–2pm ET**

Save the date for our upcoming, virtual YALC Business Meeting. A zoom link will be forthcoming. Look out for more details via email from the YALC Chairs.

## **YALC's 2023 Student Paper Competition**

### **Winner: Mikki Ruo-Fan Liu, University of Wisconsin-Madison**

Ruo-Fan Liu is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her interests include higher education, college access, culture and inequality, and qualitative research methodologies. Her dissertation explores the challenges high school students face as they navigate the college admissions process, particularly in an environment where the state heavily intervenes to shift the rules of the game and to create a more equitable system. Her work has been published in *International Studies of Sociology of Education and Ethnography*. Her work has received numerous paper awards from CIES, MMS, SSSP, and RC28. Her dissertation has been supported by Fulbright, Midwest Sociological Society, China Times Cultural Foundation, and many others. You can contact her through her [website](#) and [Twitter](#).



### **Winning Paper and Abstract: “Envisioning Opportunities to College Admissions: Social Capital in the Development of Students’ College Plans”**

This paper explores how social capital operates in the college counseling field, where admissions criteria are elucidated. Drawing on a year of fieldwork in a high school and 156 interviews in Taiwan, I argue that the effects of social capital for college applicants are not solely determined by the presence of social ties but by the content of messages given to students. I propose a mechanism called “envisioning opportunities,” which involves an informational exchange among parents, teachers, and college representatives to reassess the range of possibilities available to students and help students negotiate the system. Three types of envisioning opportunities are identified: leveraging opportunities, successful renegotiation, and selling (un)wanted options. Leveraging opportunity refers to how middle-class parents take advantage of transparent criteria to assist students in spotting opportunities in selective universities. Successful renegotiation occurs when middle-class teachers analyze evaluation rules to encourage high-achieving, working-class students to take another chance. Selling (un)wanted options refers to college representatives presenting generally undesirable options to working-class parents and students to lure them into enrolling in for-profit universities. Each type shows how social capital gets implemented through informational exchanges among multiple actors, the contestation among the different actors involved, and how different types of social capital can be beneficial or detrimental in the application process.





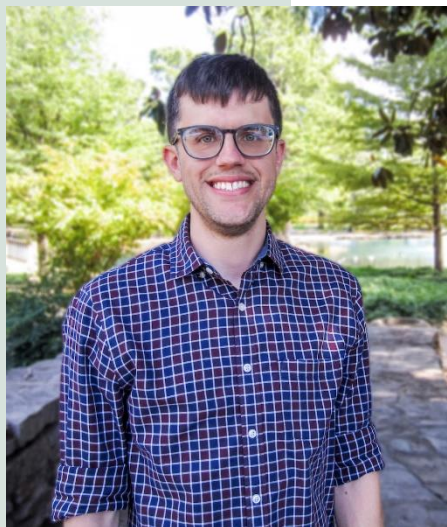
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## The Maggie Kuhn Award for Scholar-Activists

Maggie Kuhn was the founder of the Gray Panthers, an intergenerational social justice organization. The Maggie Kuhn award, established in 2014, is awarded to a scholar-activist who upholds the ideals of social and economic justice and peace for individuals of all ages, in both their scholarship and service.



### Winner: Jonathan Coley, Oklahoma State University

Jonathan Coley is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Oklahoma State University. He conducts research on social movements, politics, education, religion, gender and sexuality, and race and ethnicity. One of his ongoing research projects examines LGBTQ activism and inequalities at religious colleges and universities in the United States. Another research project draws on oral history interviews to examine the 1960s Nashville civil rights movement. In addition to his ongoing research in these areas, he has served as an expert witness for federal court cases involving the rights of LGBTQ students at religious colleges and universities and as a leader of several organizations promoting LGBTQ equality at U.S. colleges and universities.

### Honorable Mention: Christopher Douçot, Central Connecticut State University and the University of Hartford

Christopher J. Douçot has a BA from Holy Cross in Worcester, and an MA from Yale Divinity School. He has two adult sons with his loving wife Jackie Allen. With Jackie, he and Brian Kavanagh founded the Hartford Catholic Worker (HCW) community in the north end of Hartford in 1993. At the HCW they have shared their home with homeless persons and their food with hungry persons, while seeking shalom, right relationships, with their neighbors by actively resisting the violence of greed, white supremacy, patriarchy, and militarism. This resistance has translated into several dozen arrests and time in prison, as well as time with nonviolent movements in war and genocide zones in Bosnia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine and Israel, Darfur Sudan, and Chiapas Mexico. Chris teaches classes about race, class, and gender, human rights and genocide, and social movements at Central Connecticut State University and the University of Hartford.





## Call for Proposals: *Agenda for Social Justice*

The Society for the Study of Social Problems and the Justice 21 Committee is working on the seventh iteration of the publication the *Agenda for Social Justice*. This iteration of the series – *Agenda for Social Justice: Solutions for 2024* – is the US–nationally focused volume that coincides with the US Presidential election cycle. It is designed to inform the public–at–large about America’s most pressing social problems and to propose actionable responses and solutions to those social problems.

In their Call for Chapter Proposals, the editors are requesting brief proposals (1–2 pages max.) identifying a significant social problem in America.

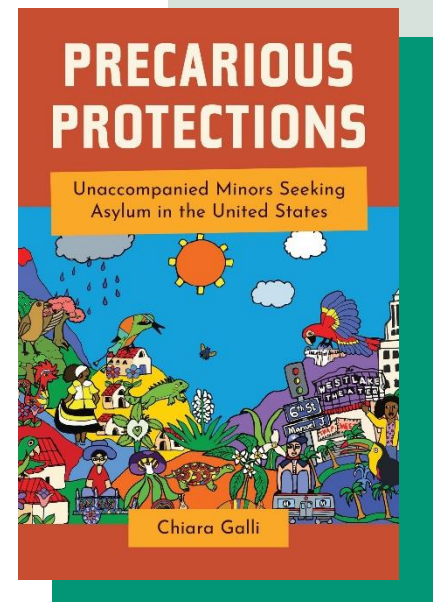
**Proposals are due May 01, 2023.** [Learn more about the CFP here.](#)

## Member Accomplishments and Highlights

### Chiara Galli, University of Chicago

Congratulations to Chiara as she has recently published her book, *Precarious Protections: Unaccompanied Minors Seeking Asylum in the US*, with the University of California Press! You can purchase the book [here](#). Use the promo code 21W2240 for a 30% discount.

**About the book:** More children than ever are crossing international borders alone to seek asylum worldwide. In the past decade, over a half million children have fled from Central America to the United States, seeking safety and a chance to continue lives halted by violence. Yet upon their arrival, they fail to find the protection that our laws promise, based on the universally shared belief that children should be safeguarded. A meticulously researched ethnography, *Precarious Protections* chronicles the experiences and perspectives of Central American unaccompanied minors and their immigration attorneys as they pursue applications for refugee status in the US asylum process. Chiara Galli debunks assumptions about asylum, including the idea that people are being denied protection because they file bogus claims. Instead, the United States interprets asylum law far more narrowly than what is necessary to recognize real–world experiences of escape from life–threatening violence, particularly those experiences unique to children in Central America. Galli reveals the formidable challenges of lawyering with children and exposes the human toll of the US immigration bureaucracy.



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#### **Mikki Ruo-Fan Liu, University of Wisconsin-Madison**

Mikki Liu's working paper, "[Well, You Never Know!: Strategic Cultural Coaching and Uncertain Transmission to Educational Attainment](#)," has received graduate student paper awards from the Comparative International Education Society and Midwest Sociology Association. Congrats, Mikki!

#### **Rin Ferraro, University of Oklahoma**

Congratulations to Rin Ferraro for being selected as a recipient of the University of Oklahoma's Nancy L. Mergler Dissertation Completion Fellowship! Rin is a fourth year Sociology Ph.D. student and one of the seven doctoral students selected across the University for this award. Rin is working on their doctoral dissertation titled "The Effect of Child Welfare Involvement on Youth's Well-Being and Expectations for Their Futures." This dissertation uses mixed methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the pathways involved in how child welfare involvement impacts future expectations and how these patterns are demonstrated both in nationally representative data and reflected in local youth's lived experiences. This award includes a stipend, tuition waiver, and health insurance coverage for a full academic year, so the fellows can devote time to completing their dissertations.

## Recent Member Publications

#### **Julia Kay Wolf, University of Texas at San Antonio**

Hill, Terrence D., et al. "Do religious struggles mediate the association between neighborhood disorder and health in the United States?" *Journal of Religion and Health* (2023): 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-023-01780-0>

#### **Leah Schmalzbauer, Amherst College**

Schmalzbauer, Leah, and Manuel Rodriguez. "Pathways to Mobility: Family and Education in the Lives of Latinx Youth." *Qualitative Sociology* 46.1 (2023): 21–46. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-022-09523-5>

#### **Mikki Ruo-Fan Liu, University of Wisconsin-Madison**

Liu, Ruo-Fan. "Hybrid ethnography: Access, positioning, and data assembly." *Ethnography* (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1177/14661381221145451>

#### **Owasim Akram, Örebro University**

Akram, Owasim, and Mathilde Maïtrot. "Family's Roles as a Welfare Pillar: The Case of Older Persons Living in Extreme Poverty in Bangladesh." *Development Policy Review* (2022): e12679. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dpr.12679>

