ALIZA LUFT

Department of Sociology, University of California, Los Angeles
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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

University of California, Los Angeles
Interim Director, Bedari Kindness Institute & Initiative to Study Hate 2026 –
Associate Professor of Sociology 2026 –
*Assistant Professor of Sociology** 2016 – 2026
** Parental leave AY 2019–20 and 2023–24.*

EDUCATION

University of Wisconsin–Madison 2016
Ph.D., Sociology (minor: Political Science), 2016; M.S., Sociology, 2011

University of California, Berkeley 2008
M.A., Education

Bates College 2006
B.A., Sociology, History, and Religion — Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa

LANGUAGES

French (fluent) · Italian, German, Hebrew (proficient) · English (native)

PUBLICATIONS

Books

2026 *Sacred Betrayal: How the French Catholic Church Broke Its Pledge to Protect Jews During the Holocaust*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
— Starred review, Kirkus Reviews (2026).

2023 Hitlin, Steve, Shai Dromi, and Aliza Luft (Eds.). *The Handbook of the Sociology of Morality, Volume 2*. New York: Springer.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

In prog. Luft, Aliza, Torsten Michel, and Jonathan Leader Maynard. Special Issue on "Dehumanization and Violence." *Journal of Perpetrator Research*.

2025 Brady, David, Aliza Luft, and Ezra W. Zuckerman Sivan.* "How Does Culture Matter for Attainment, and How Would We Know If It Did?" *American Sociological Review*, 90(5): 916–931. (*Equal authorship.)

2024 Luft, Aliza and Jelena Subotić. "Ethics of Archives: Improving Historical Social Science Through the Consideration of Research on Violence." *Social Science History*, 49(1): 229–253.

2023 Luft, Aliza. "The Moral Career of the Genocide Perpetrator: Cognition, Emotions, and Dehumanization as a Consequence, Not a Cause, of Violence." *Sociological Theory*, 41(4): 324–351.
— Winner, Clifford Geertz Award for Best Article in Cultural Sociology, ASA (2024).
— Honorable Mention, Best Article Award, ASA Altruism, Morality, and Social Solidarity (2024).
— ASA top-10 most-downloaded Sociological Theory articles in 2023, 2024, and 2025.
— Discussed on the Sociological Theory and Moral Matters podcasts; featured in ASA Footnotes; featured, with video interview, in the University of California Office of the President systemwide course on hate crimes; interview on faculti.net.

2023 Luft, Aliza. "Genocide: Theories of Participation and Opportunities for Intervention." *Law & Social Inquiry*, 48(4): 1251–1260.

2023 Leader Maynard, Jonathan and Aliza Luft.* "Humanizing Dehumanization Research." *Current Research in Ecological and Social Psychology*, 4: 100102. (*Equal authorship.)

2021 Luft, Aliza and Sue Thomson. "Race, Nation, and Resistance to State Symbolic Power in Rwanda Since the 1994 Genocide." *Political Power and Social Theory* (Global Historical Sociology of Race and Racism), 38: 105–134.

2020 Luft, Aliza. "How Do You Repair a Broken World? Conflict(ing) Archives after the Holocaust." *Qualitative Sociology*, 43: 317–343.

— Outstanding Published Article Award, ASA Peace, War, and Social Conflict (2021).

2020 Luft, Aliza. "Religion in Vichy France: How Meso-Level Actors Contribute to Authoritarian Legitimation." *European Journal of Sociology*, 61(1): 67–101.

— Distinguished Article Award, Honorable Mention, ASA Sociology of Religion (2021).

2020 Luft, Aliza. "Theorizing Moral Cognition: Culture in Action, Situations, and Relationships." *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*, 6: 1–15.

— Summary essay published in ASA Footnotes special issue on COVID-19.

2020 Luft, Aliza. "Three Stories and Three Questions about Participation in Genocide." *Journal of Perpetrator Research*, 3(1): 196–206.

2019 Luft, Aliza. "The Contribution of Social Movement Theory to Understanding Genocide: Evidence from Rwanda." *Contention: Journal of Social & Political Protest*, 7(2): 1–30.

2017 Luft, Aliza. "Has the 2016 Election Institutionalized Systemic Social Exclusion and Violence in America—and Perhaps Paved the Way for Authoritarianism and the Possible 'Social Death' of Groups Perceived as Undesirable to the New Administration in Washington?" *Jewish Social Studies*, 22(3): 203–211.

2015 Luft, Aliza. "Toward a Dynamic Theory of Action at the Micro-Level of Genocide: Killing, Desistance, and Saving in 1994 Rwanda." *Sociological Theory*, 33(2): 148–172.

— Candace Rogers Best Student Paper Award, Eastern Sociological Society (2015).

— Outstanding Graduate Student Paper, Honorable Mention, ASA Collective Behavior and Social Movements (2015).

— Op-ed summarizing findings published in The Washington Post; reposted on RwandaWire, MMC News, and Political Science Now.

2015 Luft, Aliza. "Genocide as Contentious Politics." *Sociology Compass*, 9(10): 897–909.

Book Chapters, Reviews & Essays

2025 Luft, Aliza. "Unpacking Ethnoracial Violence: Categorization, Classification, and Valuation in Comparative Perspective." Invited response to Loïc Wacquant's "A Checkerboard of Ethnoracial Violence," *Contention*, 12(2): 9–24.

2023 Dromi, Shai M., Steve Hitlin, and Aliza Luft. "The Sociology of Morality: Looking Around, Looking Back, and Looking Forward." In *The Handbook of the Sociology of Morality, Vol. 2*. New York: Springer.

2022 Luft, Aliza. "Normalizing Violence: How Catholic Bishops Facilitated Vichy's Violence Against Jews." In *Politics, Violence, Memory: The New Social Science of the Holocaust*, eds. J. Kopstein, J. Subotić, and S. Welch. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

2022 Luft, Aliza and Jelena Subotić. "Ethics and Archival Research on Violence." *Broadstreet*.

2021 Luft, Aliza. "An Ordinary Tale of Solidarity and Survival? Reflections on Jacques Sémelin's 'The Survival of the Jews in France, 1940–44.'" *Shofar*, 39(2): 280–286.

2020 Luft, Aliza. "Citizen Reporting as Social Control." Review essay on Bergemann, *Judge Thy Neighbor*. *American Journal of Sociology*, 126(2): 453–458.

2020 Luft, Aliza. "Culture, Crisis, and Morality." *Footnotes*, ASA special issue on COVID-19.

2020 Luft, Aliza. "Interdisciplinary Travels." Reflections on historical sociology and political science. *Trajectories* (ASA Comparative-Historical Sociology) and APSA Comparative Politics Newsletter.

2018 Luft, Aliza. Review of Berry, *War, Women, and Power*. *Mobilization*, 23(4): 531–541.

2018 Luft, Aliza. Review of Bulutgil, *The Roots of Ethnic Cleansing in Europe*. *Journal of Politics*, 80(2): e41–e43.

2017 Luft, Aliza. Review of Nelson, *Who Counts? The Mathematics of Life and Death after Genocide*. *Contemporary Sociology*, 46(3): 341–342.

2016 Luft, Aliza. "Women's and Feminist Activism in Eastern Africa" and "LGBT Activism in Eastern Africa." *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

2013 Luft, Aliza. "A Train in Winter: An Extraordinary Story of Women, Friendship, and Resistance in Occupied France." *Mobilizing Ideas*.

2009 Luft, Aliza. Teacher's Accompaniment, *Racial Domination, Racial Progress: The Sociology of Race in America* (Desmond and Emirbayer). New York: McGraw Hill.

Public Sociology (Select)

2024 "From a researcher of violence, we must reject all forms of extremism to progress." *UCLA Daily Bruin*.

2020 "Vichy's Family Separation Policy, and Our Own." *Scatterplot*.

2019 "Dehumanization and the Normalization of Violence: It's Not What You Think." *SSRC Items*.

— Featured in The New York Times, "What We're Reading Now."

2019 "Dual-Process Theories of Morality and Their Implications for Research on Genocide." *Inference: International Review of Science*.

2019 "On Cruelty." *The Why Factor*, BBC podcast with American Public Media.

2018 "The Root of Violence." Letter in *The New Yorker*.

2018 With Daniel Solomon. "How Dangerous Is It When Trump Calls Some Immigrants 'Animals'?" *The Washington Post*.

2018 "What We, As Citizens, Can Do To Fight Genocide." *The Washington Post*.

2018 "Threat and Mobilization in Vichy France." *Mobilizing Ideas*.

2016 "What Vichy France Can Teach Us About the Normalization of State Violence." *Scatterplot*.

2015 "Once a killer, always a killer? Here are 4 lessons about stopping mass violence." *The Washington Post*.

2015 "Past and Present in France: Don't Give Them What They Want." *Political Violence at a Glance*.

2015 "Questions of Complicity: France and the Nazi Occupation." Videotaped interview, *Facing History and Ourselves*.

2013 With Senka Filipović. *Western Balkans LGBTI Landscape Analysis of Political, Economic & Social Conditions*. USAID, Global Development Fund, and Astraea Foundation for Justice.

2011 With Sikumba-Dils, Mogegeh, and Von Hase. Gender analysis of political parties' constitutions and manifestos in the SADC region. SADC Parliamentary Forum.

2011 Acar, Chiles, Grainger, Luft, et al. "Inside the Wisconsin Occupation." *Contexts*, 10(3): 50–55.

2011 "Another Look at Rwanda." *Footnotes*, 39:7.

2010 "Genocide: What's in a Name?" *Salon*.

SELECTED MEDIA COVERAGE & COMMENTARY

2026 "The 360: Polarization, fear, and hate during midterms." UCLA Newsroom, 10/19/26; also in West LA Times, 10/20/26.

2026 "Initiative to Study Hate partners with LA County on efforts to understand and mitigate identity-based hate." UCLA Bedari Kindness Institute, 05/26/26.

2026 "The French Catholic Church and the Holocaust." *The Holocaust History Podcast*, Ep. 84 (interview).

2026 "How the Catholic Church Reassured French Jews Before the Holocaust—and Failed Them." *The Jewish Angle* (podcast interview).

2026 "*Sacred Betrayal*: The Catholic Church & French Jewry in WW2." *The French History Podcast* (interview).

2026 Interview on *Sacred Betrayal*, New Books Network (forthcoming).

2025 "Meeting of the Minds." UCLA College Magazine, Summer 2025.

2023 "Dehumanization and hate speech can contribute to inciting violence." CBC, 10/22/23.

2022 "'Great replacement theory' and its deep roots in America." NPR, 05/22/22.

2022 "Recreating a Family's Lost Holocaust History, Step by Step." The New York Times, 03/01/22.

2022 "Scholars Issue Statement Objecting to Russia's Use of 'Denazification' to Justify Ukraine Invasion." Jewish Journal, 02/26/22.

2020 "Across the US, families are having tough talks about racism." Los Angeles Times, 06/19/20.

2020 "Opening of 'Hitler's Pope' Archive May Shed More Light on Roles of Vatican and Pius XII During World War II." Newsweek, 02/23/20.

2019 "New UCLA institute will study — and spread — kindness." Los Angeles Times, 09/25/19.

2019 "The Interpreter: What We're Reading." The New York Times, 09/06/19.

2019 "The U.S. Holocaust Museum is wrong to deny that Trump's racism resembles Nazism." Los Angeles Times, 07/15/19.

2019 "An Open Letter to the Director of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum." The New York Review of Books, 07/01/19.

2019 "The Treatment of Migrants Likely Meets the Definition of a Mass Atrocity." The New York Times, 06/29/19.

2019 "University of Chicago's Interdisciplinary Conference on Violence." Chicago Policy Review, 02/18/19.

2018 "Here's what social science tells us about that migrant 'caravan' — and the Trump administration's response." The Washington Post, 10/23/18.

2018 "'You take a life, you're going to go through something.'" Chicago Tribune, 02/15/18.

2017 "UCLA professors launch website to help students affected by travel ban." The Daily Bruin, 02/17/17.

AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS

Awards

2024 Winner, Clifford Geertz Award for Best Article, ASA Sociology of Culture Section.

2024 Honorable Mention, Best Article Award, ASA Altruism, Morality, and Social Solidarity Section.

2021 Outstanding Published Article Award, ASA Peace, War, and Social Conflict Section.

2021 Distinguished Article Award, Honorable Mention, ASA Sociology of Religion Section.

2018 Hellman Award, UCLA.

2018 Faculty Career Development Award, UCLA.

2016 Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award, ASA Peace, War, and Social Conflict Section.

2015 Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award, Honorable Mention, ASA Collective Behavior and Social Movements.

2015 Candace Rogers Best Student Paper Award, Eastern Sociological Society.

2014 Best Graduate Student Paper Award, Association for the Study of Nationalities.

2013 Vilas Research Travel Award, UW–Madison.

2011 Honored Instructor Teaching Award, UW–Madison.

Fellowships

2022 French Institutes for Advanced Study Fellowship Programme, IAS Paris (declined).

2020 Bedari Research Fellowship, UCLA.

2016 Visiting Fellow, Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (declined).

2015 Kagan Fellow, Saul Kagan Claims Conference.

2014 Visiting Research Fellow, Department of Sociology, CUNY Graduate Center.

2012 Chateaubriand/Fulbright Fellowship, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2010 Scott-Kloeck Jensen Global Studies Fellowship, UW–Madison.

2006 Rodney F. Johonnot Graduate Fellowship.

2005 Mulford Service-Learning and Research Fellowship.

2004 Study Abroad Research Fellowship.

Grants & Scholarships

2024 UCLA Research Projects on Islamophobia and Antisemitism.

2020 Research Enabling Grant (with Jessica Collett), UCLA.

2020 Sharon Abramson Grant for the Study of the Holocaust, HEF Northwestern University.

2018 US-UK American Academy of Arts & Sciences / British Academy Research Grant.

2018 Research Enabling Grant, UCLA.

2017 Faculty Research Grant, Center for the Study of Women, UCLA.

2017 Dean's Faculty Opportunity Fund, UCLA.

2015 Department of Sociology Travel Grant, UW–Madison; International Studies Association Travel Grant.

2014 Departmental Small Grants Award, UW–Madison.

2013 SSHA Tilly Graduate Student Travel Grant; Berman Scholarship and Mazursky Grant, Center for Jewish Studies, UW–Madison.

2012 'Ouisconsin' Field Research Scholarship, Wisconsin Alumni, UW–Madison.

2009 Departmental Small Grants Award, UW–Madison.

LECTURES, CONFERENCES, SYMPOSIA

Invited Lectures

2026 University of California, Irvine, *Sacred Betrayal* book talk (Dec. 3); Harvard University, Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, *Sacred Betrayal* book talk (Nov. 18); Robert H. Jackson Center, Jamestown, NY, "25 Years of Asking Questions: Can We Stop Hate?" (Nov. 16); UCLA, Alan D. Leve Center for Jewish Studies, *Sacred Betrayal* book talk (Oct. 15); Village Well Books & Coffee, Culver City, *Sacred Betrayal* book talk (Sept. 19); McGill University, International Holocaust Remembrance Day Commemorative Lecture (Jan. 27).

2025 UW–Madison, Wisconsin Historical Analysis Table (May 2).

2024 Colgate University, Political Science & Peace and Conflict (Apr. 1).

2023 Northwestern University, Sociology (May 5).

2022 University of Toronto, Sociology (Nov. 24); Johns Hopkins University, Sociology & SNF Agora (Sept. 22); Harvard University, Culture Workshop (Apr. 12); Universität Leipzig, Institut für Soziologie (Mar. 31); University of Minnesota, Sociology (Mar. 28); Sciences Po, Observatoire sociologique du changement (Mar. 25).

2021 New York University, Sociology Culture Workshop (Nov. 12); Duke University, Political Science (Apr. 14); Yale, Political Violence and Its Legacies Workshop (Apr. 1); University of Toronto, Center for Jewish Studies (Feb. 8).

2020 University of Southern California, Sociology (Feb. 3).

2019 Colby College, Sociology (Sept. 10).

2018 UC Berkeley, Sociology (Feb. 4); University of Chicago, Neubauer Collegium (Oct. 12); Queensborough College, NEH Series (Apr. 12).

2017 Notre Dame, Sociology and Kroc Institute (Apr. 20); University of Arizona, Sociology (Nov. 11); Facing History and Ourselves (June 29); Yale, Order, Conflict, and Violence Workshop (Apr. 24); Northwestern University, Sociology and Buffett Institute (Mar. 3–4); American Bar Foundation (Mar. 1–2).

2016 CUNY Graduate Center, Politics and Protest Workshop (Apr. 7).

2015 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (June 22–25); Illinois College, History (Mar. 16).

2014 Notre Dame, Young Scholars in Social Movements (May 1); Harvard Kennedy School, Carr Center for Human Rights (Apr. 27); Harvard University, with Project Zero and Facing History and Ourselves (Apr. 11).

Workshops, Symposia & Convenings (Select)

2026 Host, "The Future is Peace: A Conversation about Loss, Hope, and Israel Palestine," with Aziz Abu Sarah and Maoz Inon, UCLA Bedari Kindness Institute (Dec. 8); In conversation with Heather Morris on *The Piano Teacher of Montparnasse*, Zibby's Bookshop, Santa Monica (Nov. 4); Moderator, "Beyond the Divide: What the Science of Polarization Reveals, Right Before the Midterms," with Jay Van Bavel and Stuart Soroka, UCLA Bedari Kindness Institute (Oct. 28); Dean's Roundtable: Kindness, Conflict and Community in America, UCLA (Oct. 22); Commission on the State of Hate Community Forum, California Civil Rights Department (Sept. 1); Initiative to Study Hate Impact Symposium, UCLA (June 3); Understanding and Addressing Online Hate symposium, UCLA BKI, ISH & LA County ARDI (Apr. 29).

2025 Initiative to Study Hate Impact Symposium, UCLA (May 27); Religion and Dehumanization Workshop, Goethe University Frankfurt (Oct. 10–11).

2024 Roméo Dallaire Archive and 30th Commemoration of the Genocide in Rwanda Symposium, U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

2022 Processual Perspectives in Research on Political Violence Workshop, Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence.

2021 Catholic Archives and Holocaust Memory Workshop, Boston College, USHMM & Yad Vashem; Social Movements and Strengthening Democracy Convening, SNF Agora & More in Common; Dehumanization Workshop (invited), University of Bristol.

2018 US-UK American Academy of Arts & Sciences / British Academy Violence Symposium, Cambridge, MA.

Conference Presentations (Select)

2026 Author-Meets-Critics, "The Diversity of Morals" (Lukes). American Sociological Association.

2024 Author-Meets-Critics, "Revolution Squared" (Said); "Race in the United States" (invited session); "Ethics of Archives." Social Science History Association.

2023 Author-Meets-Critics, "Taking America Back for God" (Whitehead and Perry). American Sociological Association.

2022 Author-Meets-Critics, "Rally 'round the Flag" (Feinstein), SSHA; "Moral Shifting: Social Perception, Dehumanization, and Decision-Making about Violence," ASA (Social Psychology).

2021 Author-Meets-Critics, "Breaching the Civil Order," SSHA; "Challenges to Democracy: Do We Learn From the Past?" ASA (invited, Comparative-Historical); graduate professionalization panel, ASA (invited, Culture).

2020 "Theorizing Morality: How Situational Contexts and Social Perceptions Influence Judgment." ASA.

2019 "The Global-Historical Dimensions of Race and Racism"; "The Future of Comparative-Historical Social Science II"; "Archival Work as Qualitative Sociology II." SSHA.

2018 Author-Meets-Critics, "The Limits of Whiteness" (Maghbouleh). SSHA.

2017 "A Bourdieusian Approach to Explaining the Rise of Religious Nationalism in France 1940–1942." ASA.

2016 "Normalizing Violence: Bourdieu, Theories of Socio-historical Change, and Church and State in France during the Holocaust." SSHA.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

External

Steering Committee: University of California Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation.

Consulting Editor: American Journal of Sociology (2025–).

Editorial Boards: Journal of Genocide Research (2025–); American Sociological Review (2021–24); Sociological Theory (2016–20).

Association service: ASA Sociology of Culture, Geertz Best Article Award Chair (2024–25); SSHA Nominations Committee (2024–); SSHA Executive Committee (2020–24); ASA Comparative-Historical Sociology Council (2019–22); ASA Altruism, Morality, and Social Solidarity Nominations (2019–22); ASA Peace, War, and Social Conflict Mentorship Committee (2021–22); ASA Theory Section Council (2018–20), Nominations (2020–21), and Best Book Award (2018–19); ASA Comparative-Historical Best Graduate Paper Award (2018–19); SSHA States & Society Network Organizer (2017–18).

Reviewer: American Journal of Sociology; American Sociological Review; Comparative Studies in Society and History; Distinktion; European Journal of Sociology; European Sociological Review; Gender & Society; Genocide Studies and Prevention; Holocaust and Genocide Studies; Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies; Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour; Journal of Peace Research; Journal of Genocide Research; Journal of Perpetrator Research; Journal of Politics; Law and Society; Peace and Change; PS: Political Science & Politics; Qualitative Sociology; Science Advances; Social Forces; Social Problems; Social Science History; Sociologica; Sociological Theory; Sociology Compass; Sociology of Race and Ethnicity; Theory and Social Inquiry; Theory and Society.

University (UCLA)

2022– Affiliate, Initiative to Study Hate.

2019– Affiliate, Bedari Kindness Institute.

2017–20 Affiliate, Center for European and Russian Studies.

2016– Faculty Advisory Committee, Center for Jewish Studies.

2016–20 Affiliate, Center for the Study of Women.

Departmental

2024– Chair, Political Sociology Field Exam; Graduate Committee (2024–25).

2021–22 Chair, Department Colloquium; Co-chair (with K. Harris), Political Sociology Field Exam.

2020–22 Chair and Co-organizer, Scholar(ship) Denied: Race and Violence Colloquium (with O. Lizardo, D. Longbear-Rodriguez, M. Gaddis).

2020– Sociology of Culture Field Exam; Sociology of Gender Field Exam (2016–).

2018–21 Graduate Committee; Political Sociology Field Exam (2016–20).

2017– Co-chair (with E. Walker), Movements, Organizations, Markets Working Group.

2016–19 Co-chair (with K. Harris), Theory & Research Seminar in Comparative Social Analysis.

2017–18 Chair, Gender and Sexuality Working Group; Junior Faculty Search Committee.

2016–17 Undergraduate Executive Committee.

STUDENTS SUPERVISED

Ph.D. advising & dissertation committees: Joseph Weinger (PhD Advisor; placement: postdoctoral fellow, Harvard University); Joelle Rosenberg (MA & Dissertation, Chair); Abraham Calderon; Antwann Simpkins; Corey O'Malley; Grace Vu; Jessica Huerta; Johanna Hernandez Perez; Millicent Robinson (Community & Health Sciences); Nicole Toedtli (Clark University, Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies).

M.A. committees: Claire Yujie Ji (Chair); Alexis Coopersmith (Chair); Nina Naffziger; Andrew Malmuth; Dan Zipp; Oscar Contreras.

Undergraduate honors & research: Ana Gonzales; Franklin Acevedo; Haoran Li; Katherine Amy Linder; Perla Hernandez; David Shin.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Sociological Association · Social Science History Association · Association for the Study of Nationalities · International Studies Association