

RUO-FAN LIU

Curriculum Vitae
May 2025

Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center
Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies
Stanford University

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ACADEMIC POSITION

2026 Aug Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, National Chengchi University.
2024-2026 Postdoctoral Fellow, Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, Freeman Spogli
Institute for International Studies, Stanford University.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Department of Sociology (Minor in Education Policy Studies), University of
Wisconsin-Madison, 2024
Dissertation: When Ladders Move: How Social Classes Navigate Uncertainty to Gain an Edge
in Taiwan's Post-Admissions Era
M.A. Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2017
B.A. Department of Sociology, National Taiwan University, 2008

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Sociology of Education, Social Stratification, Culture and Inequality, Organization, Ethnography and Mixed
Methods, Transnational and Comparative Sociology, East Asia

PUBLICATIONS

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Forthcoming Out with the Old, In with the New: The Meaning of Merit in Taiwan's Holistic Admissions
Reforms, *The Journal of Asian Studies*.
2022 [Hybrid Ethnography: Access, Positioning, and Data Assembly](#). *Ethnography*, (Online First, top
download among the monthly issue).
2020 [Pathways to College Admissions: Student Strategies and Class Variations in Activating
Cultural Knowledge in Taiwan](#), *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 31:3, 284-304

BOOK

2015 *Let the Timber Creek: An Alternative School's Utopia for Coming Generations*. New Taipei City, Taiwan: Acropolis. (See [Book Content](#) in English Translation)

- Best non-fiction book, *China Times Open Book Award*.
- Best Ethnographic Master Thesis: Taiwanese Sociology Association, Taiwanese Alternative Education Association, Taiwanese Critical Social Studies Association

UNDER REVIEW

“Transparent but Unequal: Social Capital, Institutional Brokerage, and College Decisions of Underprivileged Youth in Taiwan” (Under Review, *Comparative Education Review*)

- Best Graduate Student Paper, Youth, Aging, and Life Course Division, SSSP.
- Student Paper Award, RC28 on Social Stratification and Mobility, ISA.

“My Degree is Better than Yours: Digital Credentialism and Symbolic Power in Massified Higher Education.” (Under Review, *International Studies in Sociology of Education*)

- Graduate Student Paper Honorable Mention, Educational Problems Division, The Society for the Study of Social Problems.
- Graduate Student Paper Second-Prize, Midwest Sociological Society.

WORK IN PROGRESS

“From Brain Linkage to Transnational Pipeline: How Korean Migrants Institutionalize Cross-Border Exchanges,” with Minyoung An & Gi-Wook Shin. (Manuscript Available)

“When Career Funnels Become Leaky Pipelines: How Elite College Resources Fall Out of Reach in Low-Income Students’ Workforce Transitions” with Elizabeth Lee and Janel Benson. (Manuscript Available)

“Revisiting the Shape of Sieves: Which Pool is Likely to Change after Rising Competition in the Admission Field,” with Hsing-Cheng Chen and Hsuan-Wei Lee. (Manuscript Available)

“Scripting The Move Through Hybrid Habitus: How Taiwanese Teachers Blend Exam Inertia with Holistic Demands.” (In Prep)

- Best Graduate Student Paper, East Asia SIG, Comparative Educational and International Society.
- Third-place Graduate Student Paper Award, Midwest Sociological Society.

“Classed Signaling, Disciplinary Fit: Adaptive Cultural Capital and Students’ College Entry into Heterogeneous Fields.” (In Prep)

Study Up Transnationally: Code-Switching and Positionalities across Borders with Gi-Wook Shin (Data Analysis)

BOOK MANUSCRIPT

When Ladders Move: How Social Classes Navigate Uncertainty to Gain an Edge in Taiwan's Post-Admissions Era (In Prep)

RESEARCH LAB

2024-2026 Project Investigator, Stanford Next Asia Policy Lab, Project Title: *Invisible Role of Nations in the US Academic Field*, Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, Freeman Spogli Institution, Stanford University.

2022-2024 Student Project Investigator, College Admissions Lab, Project Title: *Revisiting the Shape of Sieves: How Universities Screen and Why Variation Matters*, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin at Madison.

FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS, AND HONORS

2023 Taiwanese Oversea Pioneers Grants, National Science Council (\$30,000)
2021-2022 Dissertation Fellowship, Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation (\$20,000)
2021-2022 Dissertation Completion Fellowship, China Times Cultural Foundation (\$6,000)
2019 Social Science Research Council Fellow, Publication Writing Workshop for International Studies
2017-2019 Fellowship, Education Bureau of Taiwan (\$32,000)
2016-2018 Fulbright Fellowship (\$34,000)
2023 Travel Award, American Sociological Society.
2022 Research Grant Award, Midwest Sociological Society (\$3,000)
2022 East and Inner Asian Council Research Grant, Association for Asian Studies (\$2,500)
2022 Vilas Travel Award, Graduate School, UW-Madison
2021 Publication Award, European Research Center on Contemporary Taiwan
2019 Liao Shutsung Research Award, National America Taiwanese Professor Association (\$5,000)
2019 Fieldwork Award, Institute for Regional and International Studies, UW-Madison (\$3,000)
2019 Research Grant, Graduate School, UW-Madison (\$1,500)
2018 Minority Recruitment and Retention Committee Grant, UW-Madison

CONFERENCE & INVITED PRESENTATIONS

Invited Talks

2025 "When the Rules of the Game Shift: How Taiwanese Teachers Turn Student Traits into Favorable Signals in Uncertain Admissions," Stanford University, USA, April 22.
2024 "Taiwan in the World: Uncertainty, Social Changes, and Class Landscape," Stanford University, USA. May 2.
2023 "Negotiating Potential: How the Privileged Get Ahead in Uncertain Admissions," Singapore Management University, Singapore. October 26.

- 2023 “Uncertainty at Play: How Do Universities Respond to Whole-Person Evaluation in an Exam Society?” East Asia Demography and Inequality Workshop (READI), Princeton University, USA. July 25.
- 2021 “What Do Numbers Tell? Real and Imagined Opportunities to College Entry,” East Asia Demography and Inequality Workshop (READI), Princeton University, USA. March 24.
- 2021 “Farsighted Habitus: Theorizing Temporality in Cultural Reproduction,” Grad Seminar, Cultural Workshop, University of California Santa Barbara, USA. February 18.
- 2021 “Do Admission Reforms Level the Playing Field?” National Cheng-Ching University, Undergrad Course, Comparative Education in East Asia, Taiwan. December 12.
- 2021 “Four Scripts to Turn Thesis into a Book: Event, Interpretation, Role, and Scene,” Ethnography Summer Training Program, Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, Taiwan. January 21.
- 2020 “Hybrid Ethnography: Studying Teens in Digital and Physical Sites,” Colgate University, Sociological Research and Methods, USA. December 1st
- 2020 “Conducting Ethnography in Uncertain Times,” National Taiwan University, Sociological Research and Methods, Graduate Seminar, Taiwan. May 25.

Conferences & Panels Organized

- 2025 “Taiwan Forward, Driving Modernization Amid Shifting Global Dynamics,” Stanford & NTU Joint Conference, National Taiwan University, March 23rd
- 2022 “Reconceptualizing Educational Opportunities: Challenging Inequality, Creating Equity,” Society for the Study of Social Problems, August 5-7.
- 2022 Planning Committee; Chicago Ethnography Annual Conference, April 15.
- 2020 Roundtable Organizer and Diversity Committee Member; ASA Culture Section; American Sociological Association, August 8-11.
- 2018 Program Committee, North American Taiwan Studies Association, Sociology and Education Discipline, University of Texas at Austin, May 24-26.

Selected Conference Presentations

- 2026 “Revisiting The Shape of Sieves: Which Pool is Likely to Change after Rising Competition in an Admission Field,” with Hsuan-Wei Lee and Hsing-Cheng Chen, The Future of World Society Theory Conference, Stanford University.
- 2025 “Cultural Guides and Bridgework in Uncertain Admissions,” American Sociological Association, Chicago, IL, August 8-12.

- 2023 “Inside the Black Box of College Admissions: How Universities Screen and Why Variation Matters,” American Sociological Association, PA, August 17-21.
- 2023 “Facing the Unknown Together: How Efforts to Manage Uncertainty Lead to Stratified Outcomes” American Sociological Association, Philadelphia, PA, August 17-21.
- 2023 “Well, You Never Know!: Strategic Cultural Coaching and Uncertain Transmission to Educational Attainment.” Sociology of Education, Monterey, CA. February 23-26.
- 2022 “Retrospective Cultural Matching: How Cultural Fit is (Re)negotiated in College Admissions,” Social Science and History Meeting, Chicago, IL, November 16-19.
- 2022 “Hybrid Ethnography: Positioning, Access, and Data Assembly,” American Sociological Association, Virtual, August 5-9.
- 2022 “Envisioning Opportunities to College Admissions: Social Capital in the Development of Students’ College Plans,” RC28 on Social Stratification and Social Mobility, London, England, April 21-23.
- 2022 “The Road (Not) Taken: How Teens Choose Parallel Paths and How Future Involves,” Midwest Sociological Society, Chicago, IL, March 13-16.
- 2021 “Farsighted Habitus: Theorizing Temporality in Cultural Reproduction,” American Sociological Association Virtual. August 6-10.
- 2019 “Status Competitions in the Digital Era: Degree-Seeking, Public Credentialism, and Informal Counseling in Taiwanese Social Media,” Association of Asian Studies Conference, Virtual, January 6-10.
- 2019 “Pathways to College Admissions: Student Strategies and Class Variations in Activating Cultural Knowledge in Taiwan,” Annual Meeting of the Comparative International Education Society, San Francisco, CA, April 14-18.
- 2018 “Bounded Dreams: Social Stratification in Higher Education in Taiwan,” North American Taiwan Studies, Austin, TX, May 24-26.
- 2017 “Revisiting Adolescent Society in East Asia: Student Autonomy, Peer Strategy, and Teacher Control,” American Sociological Association, Montreal, Canada, August 12-15.

TEACHING EXPERIENCES

Instructor

Sociology of Education (2026 Fall), National Chengchi University.

The Sociological Enterprise (2023 Fall), University of Wisconsin-Madison.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

To the Discipline

Student Paper Award Committee; Youth, Aging, and Life Course Division; Association of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, 2022.

Diversity and Inclusion Committee; ASA Culture Section (with Ann Mische & Jean Beaman), 2021-2022
Roundtable Organizer; ASA Culture Section, 2020-2021.

Advising, Mentoring, and Policy Consulting

Mentor; American Sociological Association, Sociology of Education, 2024-Present

Student Chair; Minority Recruitment and Retention Committee, UW-Madison, 2018-2019

Policy Consultant; Taiwan Educational Bureau, Taiwan Congress, Taiwan Thinktank, and Taichung City
Government, 2014-2016

Occasional Reviewer

American Sociological Review; Sociology of Education; Media, Culture & Society; Symbolic Interaction;
Ethnography; Teachers and Teaching; Ethnic and Racial Studies; Journal of Marriage and Family

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Sociological Association (ASA); Sections: Education; Culture; Children & Young; Social Psychology;
Organization; Sociological Theory; Life Course.

Taiwanese Sociological Association (TSA)

LANGUAGES AND SKILLS

Languages: Mandarin; Hakka; English

Software: MAXQDA, Stata, Qualtrics, R

REFERENCES

Prof. Mustafa Emirbayer
Conway-Bascom Professor of Sociology
University of Wisconsin-Madison
1180 Observatory Drive, WI 53706
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Prof. Eric Grodsky
Professor of Sociology
Department Chair, Sociology
University of Wisconsin-Madison
1180 Observatory Drive, WI 53706
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Prof. Gi-Wook Shin
Professor of Sociology
Director of Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center
Founding Director of the Taiwan Program and the Korea Program
Senior Fellow, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies
Professor, by Courtesy, of East Asian Languages & Cultures

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