

DAVID CURTISS

David_curtiss@brown.edu

www.davidcurtiss.com

EDUCATION

Brown University	Providence, RI
Ph.D., Sociology	Current
M.A., Sociology	2026

American University	Washington, DC
B.A., Sociology, <i>Magna Cum Laude</i>	2018
Minor: Justice & Law	
Senior Thesis: <i>#YouGoodMan?: How Black Men Use Twitter To Turn Masculinity Upside Down For Their Mental Health</i>	

University of Edinburgh	Edinburgh, Scotland
Scottish Parliament Internship	2016
Capstone Paper: <i>Training Up A Child: Examining Scotland's Child Hearing System</i>	

Universidad La Habana	Havana, Cuba
Undergraduate Exchange Program	2015
Cuba: Serving Social Justice	

American University of Rome	Rome, Italy
Undergraduate Exchange Program	2014
Cultural Foundation of Italian Politics	

RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS

Global and transnational sociology, Africa and the African diaspora, Blackness, development, postcolonial theory, critical tourism studies, third-world organizing, solidarity, volunteering, mixed methods

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Brown University	Providence, RI
<i>Swearer Center Royce Graduate Fellow</i>	September 2025- June 2026
Lead grant-funded research as a Royce Graduate Fellow on Black diaspora engagement in Ghana, conducting ethnographic fieldwork and qualitative analysis grounded in community-participatory research design, while collaboratively developing a diaspora-focused guidebook and translating findings into public-facing programming, curriculum, and digital media with community partners.	

Community Coalition**Los Angeles, CA***Special Projects Manager*

January 2020- August 2022

- Co-designed and participated in two large-scale surveying projects (3 months each) and conducted a combination of field work, digital surveying, and focus groups to collect data on residents' views and experiences of the built environment to share findings with elected officials.
- Developed five digital/ paper surveys and hosted seven focus groups spanning over 200 individuals and synthesized major findings into formal report and presentation.

University of Edinburgh**Edinburgh, Scotland***Scottish Parliament Research Intern, Office of Richard Lyle MSP*

August-December 2016

- Conducted qualitative research on behalf of the MP's legislative office to produce a white paper which investigated policy implementation around Scotland's Children Hearing System (CHS) for the Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Women, Families and Justice.

Columbia University**New York City, NY***Leadership Alliance Summer Research Program, Sociology*

June 2016-August 2016

- Trained under Dr. Carla Shedd in mixed methods and research to conduct semi-structured interviews and population data analysis to track the movement of African-American adolescents receiving mental health treatment through multiple systems of care. This research culminated in a findings report, detailing multiple visual diagrams that were constructed to map the various pathways of youth's introduction into the mental health system through referrals.

Los Angeles Mayor's Office**Los Angeles, CA***Mayor's Office of Economic Development Research Assistant*

June-August 2015

- Conducted field research on BIPOC small businesses in Los Angeles using surveys and digital content analysis to support the publication of an external mayoral report on building the capacity of diverse businesses in Los Angeles office.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE**Brown University****Providence, RI***Teaching Assistant*

August 2025-Present

- What's Wrong with Empowerment: Critical perspectives on Development, Fall 2025
- Organizations and Society, Spring 2026

Los Angeles Unified School District**Los Angeles, CA***Special Education Paraeducator, General Education*

August 2018- March 2019

- Supported the development of four English Language Arts and Pre-Algebra course syllabi and taught and graded material to 65 students (thrice a week) with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) across 4 different schools.

American University**Washington, DC***AUx Peer Leader, American University Experience*

August 2017-December 2017

- Co-designed course syllabus and taught weekly lesson plans alongside a faculty member focused on helping 18 first year students, primarily of-color, on college acclimation, success, as well as diversity, equity, & inclusion within a credited course. Included mentorship and advisement via weekly office hours and grading coursework.

American University**Washington, DC***Intergroup Dialogue Instructor, Center for Diversity & Inclusion*

January 2016- May 2017

- Created interactive, multimedia syllabi and co-facilitated three dialogue courses of 38 individuals (short-term; 120 mins weekly; 10 weeks) on foundational sociological identity markers, including race, class, nationality, and ability.
- Completed a 4-week facilitative teaching certificate in the realm of dialogue and facilitation, conflict resolution, and pedagogical frameworks for identity-based teaching and theory.

American University**Washington, DC***Racial Reconciliation Instructor, American University Chi Alpha*

January 2017- May 2018

- Designed syllabus and facilitated 3-month dialogue course (short-term; 120 mins twice weekly; 12 weeks; 2 sets) around racial equity and religion for American University's largest religiously-affiliated student Group and Chaplaincy, Chi Alpha, with over 40 staff and student attendees.

REPORTS & PUBLICATIONS

2020 Curtiss, D. (working paper). *The People's Corridor: Great Streets Challenge 2020* (pp. 1–71). Los Angeles, CA: Community Coalition.

News Articles:

Curtiss, D. (2019, March 6). What Happens to Vulnerable Students When Teachers Strike? *Education Week*, pp. 18–19. Bethesda. Retrieved from <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-what-happens-to-vulnerable-students-when-teachers-strike/2019/02>

Curtiss, D. (2019a, January 29). My special needs students needed their teachers in the classroom — not on the picket line. *USA Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/voices/2019/01/29/los-angeles-teachers-strike-disabled-special-needs-students-column/2699621002/>

Blog Posts:

Curtiss, D. (2025, May 16). Dreams and Deliverables: Holding Onto Vision in the Work of Community. Peace First.

<https://medium.com/@PeaceFirstOrg/dreams-and-deliverables-holding-onto-vision-in-the-work-of-community-4e7fd7f735df>

Curtiss, D. (2023, October 18). 5 Things You Should Know Before You Leave the U.S. (If You're Black). Etho Travel Blog.
<https://etho.travel.blog/2023/10/18/5-things-you-should-know-before-you-leave-the-u-s-if-youre-black/>

Curtiss, D. (2020, May 23). There's No Time to Waste. Building Hope Project Blog.
<https://buildinghopeproject.blog/2020/05/23/theres-no-time-to-waste/>

Curtiss, D. (2018, October 18). A Trick Reflection: How I Handled Being Black in Africa. True Culture University.
<https://www.truecultureu.com/post/a-trick-reflection-how-i-handled-being-black-in-africa>

PRESENTATIONS & TALKS

(2026) "From Roots to Regimes: Black American Migration, Nation-Building, and the Afterlives of Empire", Watson-MIT Development Conference

(2026) "Diaspora Brokerage: Black American Mobilities and the Political Economy of Return", Eastern Sociological Society Annual Symposium

(2025) "George Floyd, Black Lives Matter, and Contemporary Pan-African Solidarity", Introduction to Diaspora Seminar Lecture, University of Cape Coast

(2023) "From The Mouth of Babes: Youth-Driven Leadership models in NGOs", Youth Leadership Conference Series, Joint Clinical Research Centre

(2022) "Uganda As The Most Refugee-Friendly Country on Earth", Third World Solidarity Speaker Series, Community Coalition [panel]

(2021) "The Road To Justice: How We Use Policing Data To Make Law Enforcement Less Racist & Lethal", Center for Policing Equity's Virtual Partner Series, Black Rock Inc.,

(2020) "The People's Corridor: Challenging Urban Blight Through Community-Centered Urban ReDesign in South Los Angeles", Great Streets Challenge Finalist Symposium, Los Angeles Mayor's Office of Eric Garcetti

(2018) "Dissecting The Black Scholar Experience in PWIs", Frederick Douglass Distinguished Scholars Senior Symposium, American University

(2017) "International Solidarity and Coalition Building" The Darkening Teach-In, American University [panel]

(2017) “Denying Displacement: An Alternative Model to Gentrification in DC Using Art & Public Healing Strategies”, American University Honors Challenge Course Conference, American University, Symposium

(2016) “Pedagogical Strategies for Fostering Inclusivity that Radiates Beyond the Classroom”, 27th Annual Ann Ferren Conference on Teaching, Research, and Learning, American University [panel]

(2016) “‘The Golden Ticket’: Examining the Role of Mental Health Referrals in Treatment of Youth”, Leadership Alliance Summer Research Scholars Conference, Harvard University

(2016) “‘The Golden Ticket’: Examining the Role of Mental Health Referrals in Treatment of Youth”, Leadership Alliance Summer Campus Symposium, Columbia University

(2016) “Race & Virtual Reality: Mapping New Realities Through Bias-Driven Technologies”, American University Honors Symposium, American University

PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY

Building Hope Project, Managing Founder	2013
Campaign Volunteer, Karen Bass Los Angeles Mayoral Campaign	2022
Producer & Host, The Ubuntu Podcast	2020-2022
Vice President of Outreach, American University Black Student Alliance	2015- 2016
Community Teacher & Mentor, Life Pieces to Masterpiece	2014-2015
Community Storyteller & Ambassador, Peace Over Violence	2012-2015

HONORS & AWARDS

Swearer Center for Public Service Engaged Research Mini-Grant (\$500)	2026
Joukowsky Summer Research Award (\$1,500)	2026
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program Honorable Mention (Highly Competitive)	2025
Watson Ph.D. Fellows Research and Travel Award (\$2,000)	2025
Joukowsky Summer Research Award (\$1,500)	2025
Fulbright U.S. Student Grant for Research Finalist (Highly Competitive)	2024
Jinja City Office of Education Certification of Excellence	2024
Echoing Green Fellowship Finalist (Highly Competitive)	2021
Princeton in Africa Fellowship Alternate (Highly Competitive)	2020
Forbes Under 30 Scholars Award (Competitive)	2019
American University Honors Scholar Award (Highly Competitive)	2014-2018
Frederick Douglass Distinguished Scholars Award (Highly Competitive)	2014-2018

GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS

The William R. Rhodes Center for International Economics and Finance Graduate Fellowship Award (\$3,000)	2026
Royce Graduate Fellowship (\$5,000)	2025

Kemper Knapp Fellowship (\$32,396)	2024
Great Streets Challenge Opportunity Grant (\$500,000 for organization)	2020
StartingBloc Fellowship	2019
Taco Bell Live Más Scholars Award (\$10,000)	2019
Values Partnership Fellowship (\$7,000)	2018
Hatcher Group Communication Leaders Fellowship (\$10,000)	2017
Leadership Alliance Early Identification Program- Columbia University (\$5,000)	2016

MEDIA

American University Magazine, July 2018, *We Are Family*

<https://www.american.edu/magazine/article/frederick-douglass-distinguished-scholars.cfm>

Los Angeles Sentinel, July 2014 , *LA Teen Starts Non-Profit to Educate Uganda Youth*

<https://lasentinel.net/la-teen-starts-non-profit-to-educate-uganda-youth.html>

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Swearer Center for Public Service	Providence, RI
<i>Community Partnerships Graduate Assistant</i>	October 2024-Present

- Lead analysis and strategic recommendations for Brown's community engagement platform (Brown Engage), focusing on user experience, stakeholder integration, and system-wide process improvements.
- Collaborate with university and external partners to assess engagement data, streamline workflows, and strengthen alignment between community partners, students, and institutional goals.

Building Hope Project	Jinja, Uganda
<i>Managing Founder</i>	January 2013 - Present

- Lead fundraising endeavors and brokered long-term, multi-year funding relationships with schools, foundations, and faith-based institutions to support international student sponsorship program; has grown organization budget 39% within past 5 years
- Developed and execute bicoastal individual donor infrastructure amongst 80% people of color base to support core operations
- Developed and led six culturally-tailored service trip teams to Kampala, Uganda for African-Americans to foster connection, collaboration, and partake in education & leadership programming
- Created and taught 6-month leadership curriculum in years '19-'24 aimed at decolonizing voluntourism work and centering local solutions, strategies, and capacity to a Ugandan team of 8

Center for Policing Equity	Los Angeles, CA
<i>Grants & Community Engagement Coordinator</i>	July 2020-March 2022

- Developed and operationalized a task force of 14 community-based organizations in St. Louis, MO alongside the Mayor's office to propose public safety redesign programs,

community violence intervention policies, and mutual aid neighborhood networks which culminated in a robust working plan and report

- Established and cultivated key relationships with law enforcement agencies, city managers, and mayoral teams in San Diego and Berkeley, CA to build a robust, data-driven public safety evaluation that identifies racial disparities in policing behavior through a community perspective
- Curated virtual town halls alongside community leaders in cities across the country to connect residents and law enforcement agencies in order to craft hyper-local alternatives to public safety
- Designed and implemented the Cityscape Template, a preliminary research tool that analyzes key political landscape features within select cities to monitor community stakeholders, relevant policies, and community infrastructure involved in public safety efforts

Community Coalition

Los Angeles, CA

Special Projects Manager

March 2019 - July 2024

- Sustained organizational funding through leading efforts to prepare and submit compelling grant proposal narratives, interim and final reports, and conducting site visits to support \$12M annual budget within team of 3
- Oversaw half a dozen of the organization's public contracts regarding initiatives from Los Angeles City, LA County, and the Federal government
- Directed the organization's "Great Streets Initiative", a place-based urban planning City of Los Angeles partnership after successfully securing \$500,000 design build for disinvested communities

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

African Studies Association	2026- Present
Association for the Study of Worldwide Diaspora	2025- Present
Eastern Sociological Society	2024- Present
American Sociological Association	2024- Present
Association of Black Sociologists	2023 - Present
DC Sociological Society	2023 - Present

LANGUAGES

Spanish (Conversant)

Luganda (Conversant)