Michael S. Topping

November 2026

University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan
michatop@umich.edu

Population Studies Center
Institute for Social Research

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

2026 - Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Michigan
Population Studies Center, Institute for Social Research
- Affiliate, Stone Center for Inequality Dynamics

EDUCATION

2026 **Ph.D.**, Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Committee: Michal Engelman, Katherine Curtis, Eric Grodsky, Stephanie Robert (Social Work), Megan Zuelsdorff (Nursing)
Minor: Quantitative Analysis and Data Science
Preliminary Exams: Social Stratification; Demography & Ecology

2020 **M.A.**, Sociology, University of Memphis

2018 **B.S.**, Social Work, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, *magna cum laude*

2018 **B.A.**, Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, *magna cum laude*

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Demography
Social Stratification
Aging and the Life Course
Medical Sociology
Health Disparities
Quantitative Methodology

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles

Vachuska, Karl and **Michael S. Topping**. 2026. "Socioeconomic Disadvantage Explains Neighborhood Racial Inequality in Opioid Mortality." *Social Science & Medicine* 394:119007.
- *Graduate Student Paper Award*, American Sociological Association Section on Drugs and Society, 2026

Garbarski, Dana, Jennifer Dykema, James A. Yonker, Rosie Eungyuhl Bae and **Michael S. Topping**. 2026. "Improving the Measurement of Gender in Surveys: Effects of Select One or Select-all-that-Apply Response Format on Measurement and Data Quality Among College Students." *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology* 14(3):713-745.

Fletcher, Jason, **Michael S. Topping,** and Won-tak Joo. 2025. "Trends in the Female Longevity Advantage of 19th Century Birth Cohorts: Exploring the Role of Place and Fertility." *Social Science History* 49(2):422-423.

Topping, Michael S., Jinho Kim and Jason Fletcher. 2024. "Variation in Adult Cognition Across Domains and Life Course Place Effects in the UK." *Journal of Aging and Health* 36(10):599-609.

Topping, Michael S. and Jason Fletcher. 2024. "Educational Attainment, Family Background, and the Emergence of Pain Gradients in Adulthood." *Social Science & Medicine* 346:116692.

Topping, Michael S., Jinho Kim, and Jason Fletcher. 2023. "Area-Level Infant Mortality Exposure in Early Life and Alzheimer's Disease Mortality: Examining Variation Based on Age, Sex, and Place of Birth." *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* 93(3):1007-1016.

James, Wesley, Claire Brindley, Christopher Purser, and **Michael S. Topping**. 2022. "Conceptualizing Rurality: The Impact of Definitions on the Rural Mortality Penalty." *Frontiers in Public Health* 10:1029196.

Topping, Michael S., Jinho Kim, and Jason Fletcher. 2021. "Association and Pathways of Birth in the Stroke Belt on Old Age Dementia and Stroke Mortality." *SSM-Population Health* 15:100841.

Xu, Wei, **Michael S. Topping,** and Jason Fletcher. 2021. "State of Birth and Cardiovascular Disease Mortality: Multilevel Analyses of the National Longitudinal Mortality Study." *SSM-Population Health* 15:100875.

Topping, Michael S., Jinho Kim, and Jason Fletcher. 2021. "Geographic Variation in Alzheimer's Disease Mortality." *PLoS ONE* 16(7):e0254174.

Fletcher, Jason, **Michael S. Topping,** Fengyi Zheng, and Qiongshi Lu. 2021. "The Effects of Education on Cognition in Older Age: Evidence from Genotyped Siblings." *Social Science & Medicine* 280:114044.

UNDER REVIEW

† - *denotes equal authorship.*
Topping, Michael S. and Jason Fletcher. "Area-Level Infant Mortality Exposure in Early-Life and Later Life Stroke: The Role of Modifiable Risk Factors and Place of Birth."

Topping, Michael S. "Pathways of Early Life Residence and their Association with Old Age Cognition."

Topping, Michael S. "Place of Birth and Cognitive Life Expectancies: The Role of Education."

Peters, Sara A.† and **Michael S. Topping**.† "Decomposing the Rural-Urban Life Expectancy Gap."
- *Student Paper Award*, Rural Sociological Society Research Interest Group on Population, 2026

Topping, Michael S. "Place of Origin and Dementia Risk in Later Life: Evidence from the Stroke Belt."

IN PROGRESS

Topping, Michael S. "Geographic Differences in Lifespan Inequality in the United States."

Topping, Michael S. "Periods, Pathways, and Prolonged Exposure: Socioeconomic Status Across the Life Course and Old Age Cognition."

Peters, Sara A., Katherine Curtis, **Michael S. Topping**, Clayton Adamson, and Anton Babkin. "Structural Determinants of Rising Premature Mortality: The Role of Region, Race, and Rurality."

Furuya, Shiro, Jia Wang, Wei Xu, and **Michael S. Topping**. "The Life Course Geographies of Loneliness."

Peters, Sara A.[†] and **Michael S. Topping**.[†] "Understanding Rural-Urban Differences in Life Expectancy: The Role of Race and Regional Context."

Topping, Michael S. and Sara A. Peters. "Contribution of Deaths of Despair to Geographic Differences in Life Expectancy."

GRANTS

National Institute on Aging R36 Grant for Dissertation Research (1R36AG094877) "The Place-Based Origins of Cognitive Aging." Overall Impact Score: 24*

*Mechanism rescinded due to change in administration priorities.

HONORS AND AWARDS

2026	Rural Sociological Society, Research Interest Group on Population Student Paper Award
2026	American Sociological Association, Section on Drugs and Society Graduate Student Paper Award
2026	Department of Sociology Scholarship Supplement, University of Wisconsin-Madison ($4,478)
2026	Evelyn T. Crowe Travel Award, University of Wisconsin-Madison ($1,500)
2025	Student Research Grant Competition, University of Wisconsin-Madison ($1,500)
2025	Department of Sociology Scholarship Supplement, University of Wisconsin-Madison ($5,792)
2025	American Sociological Association Student Forum Travel Award ($250)
2025	Janet R. Hankin Medical Sociology Award, University of Wisconsin-Madison ($1,000)
2024	Department of Sociology Scholarship Supplement, University of Wisconsin-Madison ($4,172)
2024	Center for Demography of Health and Aging Early-Career Travel Award ($2,000)
2024	Departmental Citation for Excellence as a Lecturer, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

2023	Southern Demographic Association PopLine Scholarship ($525)
2023	American Sociological Association Student Forum Travel Award ($250)
2023	American Association for Public Opinion Research Student Conference Award ($800)
2022-2026	Graduate Research Fellow, Institute for Research on Poverty
2020	Morton Thesis Award, Graduate School, University of Memphis ($500)
2018-2020	Department of Sociology Travel Grants, University of Memphis
2018	Albertson Medallion Award, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
2018	Chancellors Leadership Award, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
2017	Alpha Kappa Delta, National Sociology Honor Society
2017	Phi Alpha, National Social Work Honor Society

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

**Indicates work presented by coauthor*

"Persistent Penalty or Shifting Context? The Southern Disadvantage in Cognitive Health Across Cohorts"
- Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Seattle, Washington, 2027 (*Submitted*)

"Unpacking the Contribution of Chronic Disease to Rural-Urban Life Expectancy Gaps Across Race and Ethnicity"
- Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Seattle, Washington, 2027 (*Submitted*)

"Place of Birth and Dementia Risk in Later Life: Evidence from the Stroke Belt"
- Southern Demographic Association Annual Meeting, Austin, Texas, 2026
- American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, 2025

"Early Life Context, Childhood Stress Exposure and Dual Functionality in Later Life."
- American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, New York City, New York, 2026

"Structural Dimensions of Rising Premature Mortality in the US: An Examination of the Role of the Economy, Race, and Rurality"*
- Rural Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Raleigh, North Carolina, 2026
- American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, 2025
- Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Washington DC, 2025

"Understanding Rural-Urban Differences in Life Expectancy: The Role of Race and Regional Context."
- Rural Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Raleigh, North Carolina, 2026
- Southern Demographic Association Annual Meeting, Lexington, Kentucky, 2025

"Decomposing The Rural-Urban Life Expectancy Gap"
- Rural Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Raleigh, North Carolina, 2026
- Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Washington DC, 2025

"Contribution of Deaths of Despair to Geographic Differences in Life Expectancy"
- Population Association of America Annual Meeting, St. Louis, Missouri, 2026

"The Changing Value of Education in U.S. Mortality Trends"*
- Population Association of America Annual Meeting, St. Louis, Missouri, 2026

"Socioeconomic Status Across the Life Course and Old Age Cognition"
- Gerontological Society of America Annual Meeting, Boston, Massachusetts, 2025
- American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Montréal, Quebec, 2024

"Place of Birth and Cognitive Life Expectancies: The Role of Education."
- Southern Demographic Association Annual Meeting, Lexington, Kentucky, 2025
- Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Washington DC, 2025

"The Life Course Geographies of Loneliness"*
- Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Washington DC, 2025

"Impact of High School Background on Old Age Cognition: Evidence from a Wisconsin Cohort"
- Gerontological Society of America Annual Meeting, Seattle, Washington, 2024

"Pathways of Early Life Residence and their Association with Old Age Cognition"
- Southern Demographic Association Annual Meeting, Savannah, Georgia, 2024
- Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Columbus, Ohio, 2024
- American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2023

"The Role of Health in Racial Classification and Identification"
- Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Columbus, Ohio, 2024
- Southern Demographic Association Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Texas, 2023

"Geographic Variation in Cognitive Domains: Evidence from the UK Biobank"
- Southern Demographic Association Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Texas, 2023

"Early, Intermediate, and Late Respondents: Associations with Survey Responses, Data Quality, and Sample Quality in a Campus Climate Web Survey"
- Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research, Chicago, Illinois, 2023

"Childhood Disadvantage and Later Life Disability: The Impact of Parental Death"
- Population Association of America Annual Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana, 2023
- American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, 2022

"Trends in the Female Longevity Advantage of 19th Century Birth Cohorts: Exploring the Role of Place and Fertility"
- Southern Demographic Association Annual Meeting, Knoxville, Tennessee, 2022

"Area Level Infant Mortality Exposure in Early Life and Alzheimer's Disease Mortality: Examining Variation Based on Age, Sex, and Place of Birth"
- Southern Demographic Association Annual Meeting, Knoxville, Tennessee, 2022

"Geographic Disparities in Lifespan Inequality in the United States: The Role of Cardiovascular Disease Mortality"
- Southern Demographic Association Annual Meeting, Knoxville, Tennessee, 2022
- American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, 2022
- Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Atlanta, Georgia, 2022

"The Effects of Education on Cognition in Older Age: Evidence from Genotyped Siblings"
- Integrating Genetics and Social Sciences Conference, Boulder, Colorado, 2021

"Rural-Urban Cancer Disparities: The Role of Physician Supply"
- Population Association of America Annual Meeting, St. Louis, Missouri, 2021 (Virtual)

INVITED TALKS

2026 The Pennsylvania State University, Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, and Education; University of Michigan, Population Studies Center

2025 University of Texas at Austin, Department of Sociology; Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research; Nuffield College, Oxford University, Department of Sociology

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2024-2026 NIA T32 Predoctoral Trainee, Center for Demography of Health and Aging, University of Wisconsin-Madison

2022-2025 Graduate Research Assistant, University of Wisconsin Survey Center, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Faculty Advisor: Jennifer Dykema, PhD

2020-2024 Graduate Research Assistant, Center for Demography of Health and Aging, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Faculty Advisor: Jason Fletcher, PhD

2019-2020 Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Sociology, University of Memphis
Faculty Advisor: Wesley James, PhD

2018-2020 Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Sociology, University of Memphis
Faculty Advisor: Gretchen Peterson, PhD

2017-2018 Undergraduate Research Assistant, Department of Sociology and Social Work, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Faculty Advisor: Maggie Böhm-Jordan, PhD

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2025 Guest Lecturer (Fall), Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Course: SOC 343 - Sociology of Health and Medicine, "Contribution of Deaths of Despair to Population Health"

2023 Lecturer (Fall), Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Course: Population Problems (SOC 170 - 4.78/5.00 Course Evaluation)

2019-2020 Teaching Assistant, Department of Sociology, University of Memphis
Advisor: Kendra Murphy, M.A.
Courses: Introduction to Sociology; Racial/Ethnic Minorities; Methods of Social Research; Sociology of Religion; Rise of Sociological Theory; Sociology of Poverty

2018-2020 Teaching Assistant, Department of Sociology, University of Memphis
Faculty Advisor: Jennifer Bamford, PhD
Courses: Introduction to Sociology; Racial/Ethnic Minorities; Methods of Social Research; Social Inequality; Sociology of Education

2018-2019 Teaching Assistant, Department of Sociology, University of Memphis
Faculty Advisor: Jeni Loftus, PhD

Course: Sociology of Gender

WORKSHOP PARTICIPATION

2024 10th Annual Workshop on Formal Demography, University of California, Berkeley

SERVICE

Discipline

2027 Presider, "Geographic Differences in Morbidity and Mortality", Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Seattle, Washington.

2027 Session Organizer, "Geographic Differences in Morbidity and Mortality", Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Seattle, Washington.

2026 Presider, Section on Sociology of Population Roundtables: "Aging and Population Change", American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, New York City, New York.

2026 Presider, Section on Medical Sociology Roundtables: "Health Inequality", American Sociological Association Annual Meeting,New York City, New York.

2026 Co-Organizer, Sociology of Population Roundtables, American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, New York City, New York.

2026 Poster Reviewer, Population Association of America Annual Meeting, St. Louis, Missouri.

2025 Presider, Oral Session: "Mortality", Southern Demographic Association, Lexington, Kentucky.

2025, 2026 Abstract Reviewer, Gerontological Society of America Annual Meeting.

2024 Regular Session Organizer, "Population and Demography", American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Montrèal, Quebec.

2023 Presider, Oral Session: "Population and Demography", Southern Demographic Association, San Antonio, Texas.

2023 Presider, Section on Sociology of Population Roundtable: "Education, Schooling, and Well-being", American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

2022-2024 Section on Aging and the Life Course Outstanding Mentor Award Committee, American Sociological Association.

2022-2025 Chair, Undergraduate Student Paper Award Committee, Southern Demographic Association, Knoxville, Tennessee.

2022 Presider, Oral Session: "The Social Determinants of Health", Southern Demographic Association, Knoxville, Tennessee.

2022 Presider, Open-Refereed Roundtable: "Inequality", American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, California.

2022 Panel, "Careers in Sociology." University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Stevens Point, Wisconsin.

2020-2022	Academic Justice Committee Member, Sociologists for Women in Society
2019-2021	Elections Committee Member, North American Society for the Sociology of Sports
2019	Panel, "Grad Student Information Session: Grad Students Speak from Experience." Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Starkville, Mississippi.

Departmental/University

2024-2026	Co-Coordinator, Health, Aging, and Life Course Student Working Group, University of Wisconsin-Madison
2024-2026	Student Mentor for Incoming Students, Center for Demography and Ecology, University of Wisconsin-Madison
2023	Co-Facilitator, Spatial Thinking Seminar, University of Wisconsin-Madison
2022-2024	Sociology Graduate Student Association Culture and Climate Committee (Assoc. Chair 2023; Chair 2023-2024), University of Wisconsin-Madison
2021,2023, 2025	Peer Mentor for First Year Graduate Students, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison
2020-2022	Sociology Graduate Student Association Mental Health and Wellness Committee, University of Wisconsin-Madison
2020-2025	Sociology Graduate Student Association, Cohort Representative, 2020 Cohort, University of Wisconsin-Madison
2019-2020	Representative of the College of Arts and Sciences, General Assembly of the Graduate Student Association, University of Memphis
2019-2020	Professional Development Committee Member, Graduate Student Association, University of Memphis
2017-2018	Student Ambassador, National Association of Social Workers, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
2017-2018	Treasurer of Alpha Kappa Delta, Sociology Honor Society, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
2017-2018	Treasurer of Phi Alpha, Social Work Honor Society, University of Wisconsin Stevens Point
2016-2018	Director of Public Relations, Sociology and Social Work Organization, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Sociological Association
Sections: Aging and the Life Course; Medical Sociology; Mental Health; and Sociology of Population; Inequality, Poverty and Mobility
Gerontological Society of America
Population Association of America
Rural Sociological Society
Southern Demographic Association

JOURNAL REFEREE

American Journal of Epidemiology, Innovation in Aging, International Journal of Epidemiology, Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences, Journal of Health and Social Behavior, Scientific Reports, SSM-Population Health, The Gerontologist

SKILLS

Computing: ArcGIS Pro, SPSS, Stata, R, GeoDa, LaTeX, Microsoft Office, Qualtrics, MPlus, Tableau
Languages: Italian (intermediate), Friulian (elementary)