

Pamela J. Rooks
Curriculum Vita

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EDUCATION

May 2022	Ph.D., Sociology, University of Kansas Dissertation (with honors): <i>The “Jayhawk Nazi” of Kansas: Gerald Winrod, Antisemitism, and the Evangelical Far Right 1925-1944</i> Committee chair: David N. Smith Areas: political sociology, organizational sociology, religion, historical sociology, qualitative methods
July 2012	M. A. Sociology, University of Central Missouri
May 2012	B. A. Biology, University of Central Missouri
May 2010	B. G. S. General Studies, University of Central Missouri

PUBLICATIONS

Rooks, P. J. (2023). Hegemonic fundamentalism in Wichita, Kansas: The Defenders of the Christian Faith, 1926-1931. *Critical Research on Religion*, 11(3), 300-313. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20503032231199484>

Contributor: Jews and “Others” in the American West: A Roundtable. (Fall 2022). Jason Schulman, Ed. *Western States Jewish History*, 53(1), 5-33.

Book under contract (two-volume set): *Roots of American Conservatism: Antisemitism and the Evangelical Far Right, 1925-1944*, De Gruyter (formerly Brill – Studies in Critical Social Sciences - New Scholarship in Political Economy)

Social Thought and Research (STAR) Journal, Volume 33: A review of *Connecting Social Problems and Popular Culture: Why the Media is Not the Answer*, by Karen Sternheimer

Skeptic Magazine: A review of *The Evolution of God*, by Robert Wright—December 2010

PRESENTATIONS

“Becoming a fascist: Dichotomization, compartmentalization, superstition, and the authoritarian personality” for Critical Theory section of the Midwest Sociological Society meeting March 23-26, 2023

Gerald B. Winrod, the “Jayhawk Nazi”—presentation for the Self and Society Symposium pre-conference of the American Sociological Association conference, August 5, 2022

Backfilling the iron cage: Radical anti-modernism, militant antisemitism, and Gerald B. Winrod, the “Jayhawk Nazi” of Kansas—presentation for the International Social Theory Consortium conference, June 9-11, 2022

Evangelical Christianity and Authoritarianism: A Historical Case Study of Gerald Winrod, the “Jayhawk Nazi”—paper for roundtable at the annual meeting of American Sociological Association, August 2021

AWARDS AND HONORS

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| 2017 | Clark Award for Teaching Excellence |
| 2015 | Dean’s Award for Student Employee Excellence, KU Libraries |

TEACHING (Instructor of Record – listed by level in descending order)

SOC 534/AAAS 510/AMS 534: Global Ethnic and Racial Relations – University of Kansas

- Asynchronous online
- Fall 2017, Fall 2018, Spring 2019, Summer 2019, Fall 2019, Spring 2020, Summer 2020

SOC 461: Competing Perspectives on Crime and Deviance – University of Kansas

- Asynchronous online and in-person
- Fall 2024, Spring 2025, Fall 2025, Spring 2026

SOC 437/AAAS 437/AMS 437: Global Ethnic and Racial Relations – University of Kansas

- Asynchronous online and in-person
- Spring 2024, Fall 2024, Spring 2025, Fall 2025, Spring 2026

SOC 330: American Society – University of Kansas

- In-person and asynchronous online
- Summer 2015, Summer 2017, Spring 2018

SO 207/AD 299: Race and Ethnic Relations – Washburn University

- Asynchronous online
- Fall 2021

SOC 161: Social Problems and American Values, Honors – University of Kansas

- In-person
- Fall 2017, Spring 2018, Fall 2018, Spring 2019, Spring 2020

SOC 160: Social Problems and American Values (Regular) – University of Kansas

- In-person
- Summer 2014, Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Fall 2016, Spring 2025, Spring 2026

SOC 150: Self and Society – University of Kansas

- In-person
- Spring 2017, Fall 2022

SOC 131: Sociology of Families – Johnson County Community College

- In-person and synchronous online
- Spring 2021, Fall 2021, Spring 2022

SOC 125: Social Problems – Johnson County Community College

- Synchronous online
- Spring 2021

SOC 122: Introduction to Sociology – Johnson County Community College

- In-person and synchronous online
- Fall 2020, Summer 2021, Fall 2021, Spring 2022, Summer 2022, Fall 2023, Summer 2024, Fall 2024, Summer 2025, Fall 2025, Summer 2026

SOC 104: Elements of Sociology – University of Kansas

- Asynchronous online
- Summer 2021

RESEARCH AND TEACHING STATEMENT

My dissertation research, which is now currently under contract as a two-volume book with DeGruyter, incorporated Weberian, Marxian, Frankfurt school, and systems-theoretical approaches to a historical-archival content analysis and case study of a Wichita-based revivalist preacher, Gerald Winrod, and the rise of antisemitism among his network of fundamentalist Christians during the first half of the twentieth century. The research culminated in the production of a visual chart demonstrating relationships between different worldviews which, across several decades, drove the evolution of this movement. For example, my article published in *Critical Research in Religion* demonstrated how Arminian (rising Methodist) views of Christianity challenged formerly Calvinist perspectives, which had, for years, been instrumental in cementing the privileges of white, Christian men in the United States. Facing the possible liberalization of Christianity, many thinkers in the late 1800s compiled hand-picked biblical passages that would rationalize the argument that women and people of color must stay “in their place,” as dictated by God. During the second decade of the twentieth century, proponents here formalized their movement, calling themselves the “Fundamentalists.” Although at the time it represented a version on Christianity that was informed by selective biblical literalism, today the same word is recognized as something more of an adjective. It remains as relevant as ever, though, as a religious basis of authoritarianism, particularly among contemporary evangelical Christians.

Yet, as researchers on authoritarianism have demonstrated, this is a movement that highlights—now, as always—a great sense of loss, particularly, as many sociological theorists have described, the loss of a sense of belonging that has accompanied the rise of the urban lifestyle. My case study of Winrod deeply explored, across three decades, the thinking of a man who began as an evangelical faith healer—popularized in his day by personalities like Billy Sunday and Aimee Semple McPherson—to that of a raging antisemite who was linked in with other antisemitic groups and individuals that were, at the time, working to organize a paramilitary trained to overthrow the U.S. government in the event of a “communist takeover.” Winrod’s trajectory, however, began with anti-modernism, and his loss of a sense of rural community, faith, and his social place at the top of the social hierarchy with other white, Christian men.

From a theoretical perspective, I’m fascinated by work at the boundaries, which is to say, the gray spaces within the lines groups draw between “us and them.” These are the margins, and as such, they are points of exchange. These gray spaces are the areas where group formation and identity are evolving in real-time, as members, prospective members, past members, and non-members negotiate and frame the behaviors and beliefs that comprise the in-group (as well as, incidentally, the out-group). For me, this is part of an ongoing interest in syncretic movements, religious or otherwise, that contribute to the evolution of groups and the identities of their members.

In its focus upon alienation and fear as prime movers of authoritarian movements, my work has drawn heavily as well upon the writings of theorists such as Theodor Adorno, Erich Fromm, and Robert Altemeyer. This research, which emerged largely after World War II, has demonstrated the significance of systems of dominance and submission in creating ladders of power in which anyone who may have previously felt alienated can suddenly feel that they have a social place. As Fromm has illustrated, social place can be constructive or destructive, but in a highly commodified society such as ours, the sense of anomie is not uncommon, and often, due to competition, finding one's "place" can feel very challenging. Unfortunately, in recent decades, we have witnessed the rise of some very destructive forms of place-finding, which have culminated in mass shootings and misinformation campaigns that support a reified "us versus them" dynamic, designating an "out-group" to be targeted. Within this, and as research in what I will call, "boundary work at the margins," my previous research, as it left off, pointed to unanswered questions about the rise of the "Christian soldier" – a phenomena first romanticized during the Civil War era but that has evolved and continues today, alongside programs that appeal to a sense of militia-like authority, whether malicious, benign, or in some cases even, constructive.

As Abraham Maslow and Erich Fromm explored the elements of social life that contribute to lasting contentment (as well as, for Fromm, those that detract from it), my interest moving forward taps an unexplored aspect of authoritarianism, in that militia culture appears to offer a social "place" to people who may previously have felt this absence in their lives and who struggle, instead, with the overwhelming sense of anomie not uncommon to urban life. My interest is in exploring how this is achieved in both destructive and constructive ways, for example, by comparing the authoritarian components of modern paramilitary movements alongside more constructive approaches, for example, what I might call the "pseudo-authority" embraced by parents or individuals who pay to engage with organizations offering military-like hierarchies and experience, such as the type found in sports like taekwondo, where crisply uniformed students bow in respect to the "master" of the school, and advance through the ranks, someday to become "masters" themselves through shows of deference, discipline, grit, and triumph in sparring and other controlled conflicts. Here, they are afforded an embodied, militia-like experience, and that fact that it is by choice does not appear, for many, to negate its usefulness in place-finding.

Similarly, but from a darker origin, Erich Fromm pointed out in his book, *Escape from Freedom*, that failure to find a social place, which, he noted, may be rooted in economic injustice, created the potential to give rise to automaton conformity, authoritarianism (specifically, irrational authority, meaning that it was not directed toward the development of one's best self) and destructiveness. This is a critical jumping off point for my teaching as well, as I believe that helping each person find their most fulfilling social niche helps build society as a whole and serves as a bulwark against rising fascism, in which people aim to fill emptiness with the unearned rankings of imposed hierarchy.

Fromm represented authority as the outward expression of power. Yet, he said, there were two manifestations of power. First was the “power over somebody” and second, the power “to do something, to be able, to be potent,” which is experienced as an increasing sense of self-competency in the pursuit of individualism and mastery—a sense of successfully climbing the steps along the road to becoming one’s best self. Fromm said that these two forms of power were mutually exclusive, with the idea of “power over” operating as a “perversion of potency” and “power to” as a way of preventing authoritarianism, anomie, and destructive tendencies.

As Fromm pointed out, a downfall of capitalist economies is the production of individuals who—because they have been trained to pursue financial rewards rather than developing the best within themselves—end up functioning like automatons, trapped and tunnel-visioned within the rigidities of bureaucracy. These culturally reproduced habits of thought can restrain agency and undermine problem-solving by sending the implicit message that people are passive consumers—rather than active stake-holders—in the world that surrounds them. It seems, then, that eliciting a tenacious sense of self-efficacy may be an important need in bridging this gap. Tapping into students’ empathy while activating them as constructive agents whose ideas contribute importantly to the greater good, I feel that teachers can be a part of helping them step beyond complacency to realize and develop the best in themselves. My teaching goals, then, have been centered on leading students through assignments intended to produce a deeper sense of the “power to” create and develop the best within themselves, alongside the opportunity to produce original research at the undergraduate level through scaffolded content analysis.