



## Introducing our New 2021-2022 Chapter Leaders & Fellows

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Scholars Strategy Network is proud to introduce the researchers who are stepping up this year to lead SSN chapters in building a nationwide culture where research informs policy at every level. These new chapter leaders come from a variety of disciplines, institutions, and methodological traditions - but they share the common goal of advancing evidence-based policy and strengthening democracy in the states. This year, we welcome 13 new chapter leaders. Read more about their work and meet the new leaders below.

### Bay Area

#### **CARINA GALLO**

San Francisco State University



Gallo is a social worker and researcher focusing on historical and international trends in crime and welfare policy, with particular attention to Scandinavia and the United States. Her current research focuses on three areas: 1) the relationship between crime and welfare policy; 2) the history and roots of the victim movement; 3) the scholarship of teaching and learning, with a particular focus on how we can make education more inclusive.

### Central Pennsylvania

#### **RAY BLOCK**

Pennsylvania State University-University Park



Block did his undergraduate training at Howard, received his Ph.D. from Ohio State, and specializes in the areas of racial, ethnic, and gender group politics, voting behavior, and public opinion. Overarching themes in Block's writings include group differences in civic involvement, the formation and mutability of social identity, campaigns and elections, and other topics. Block is co-author of *Losing Power: Americans and Racial Polarization in Tennessee Politics*, a forthcoming book in the University of Georgia Press.

## Florida

### ELIZABETH M. ARANDA

University of South Florida-Tampa



Aranda's research and teaching areas of expertise are on the immigration of Latinos in the United States and Florida, as well as Puerto Rican migration. Her research addresses issues such as how Latino young adults identify; how undocumented youth and young adults negotiate their presence in this country and manage the trials of being undocumented (including DACA's affect); and the emotional challenges that Latinos often face regarding racism and inequality.

## Maine

### LAURA MELLISA CYR

Maine Department of Education



Cyr's research focuses on public higher education funding as well as on issues of redistribution in tax policy, state politics, and grassroots communication strategies. Overarching themes in Cyr's writing include critiques of the neoliberal approach to education and threats to American middle-class education, phantom savings as budgetary stop-gaps in public policy. She serves as Executive Director of the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments and received her Ph.D. from the University of Southern Maine.

## Nevada

### BARBARA BRENTS

University of Nevada-Las Vegas



Brents' research focuses on the sexual economy, consumption and the sex industry, sex work law and regulation, and the labor of sex work. Overarching themes in Brents' writings address sexuality, gender and politics in market culture. Brents has been active nationally and internationally in sex work research, the sex worker rights movement, the ACLU and various peace and justice movements.

## New Jersey-Philadelphia

### SUSAN L. DEJARNATT

Temple University Beasley School of Law



DeJarnatt's research focuses on the impact of market-based reforms on public education. Overarching themes in DeJarnatt's writing include how privatization of public education undercuts democracy, reduces transparency, and limits oversight by the public and public institutions. DeJarnatt provides testimony to state and local institutions on the impact of charter expansion and renewal and works with civic groups, including parent and teacher organizations, who try to support public education.

## New Mexico

### DANIEL G. SHATTUCK

Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation-Southwest



Shattuck's research is divided into two divergent areas. His dissertation is in the anthropology of food, focusing on the production of cultural knowledge about food and the way that information is then used to further political, economic, or social ends. In addition to his doctoral research, he is a research assistant for the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation working on health disparities for vulnerable or underserved groups with a particular interest in sexual and gender minority populations.

### SHANNON SANCHEZ-YOUNGMAN

University of New Mexico



Dr. Sanchez-Youngman is a community based participatory researcher with expertise in Latino mental health disparities intervention research and health equity policy. She has over 20 years of experience developing community health interventions aimed at reducing social and health disparities among economically marginalized groups and racial and ethnic groups in the United States. Dr. Sanchez-Youngman seeks to bridge the gap between social science theories and methods with multi-level health intervention research.

## New York City

### SOFYA APTEKAR

CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies



Aptekar conducts research on immigration, race and ethnicity, and urban communities. She teaches classes on sociology, race and ethnic relations, sociological research methods, and social theory. Aptekar is knowledgeable about citizenship acquisition by immigrants in the United States and beyond, as well as how the naturalization process and the meaning of citizenship have changed over time. Her most recent work examines how people get along in

diverse and changing urban neighborhoods.

## San Diego

### ABIGAIL ANDREWS

University of California-San Diego



Andrews's research focuses on globalization, migration, gender, and politics. In her recent work on Mexico-US migrant communities, Andrews uses ethnography to examine how city-level practices of immigration control work to silence undocumented communities, while shunting their activism back to the Mexican side. She also writes about gender, and about development and globalization in Latin America, with a particular interest in the power dynamics that permeate social movements and political institutions.

### SAMUEL GREG PRIETO

University of San Diego



Prieto's research falls into 3 areas: 1) immigration and social movements in the United States, 2) policing and police violence (Border Patrol and local police), 3) LGBTQ youth and their pathways into and out of the juvenile justice system. These substantive foci lie at the intersection of race, nation, sexuality and legal violence. Prieto is interested in social inequality as it is experienced by vulnerable populations and how those groups develop strategies to manage and resist their marginalization.

## Virginia

### BOBBI G. GENTRY

Middle Georgia State University



Gentry is a scholar of teaching and learning who focuses on improving student engagement in the classroom through simulations, policy problem/solution proposals, and research projects. She is also a youth voting scholar and does extensive research in political identity development. Dr. Gentry has recently published her book, *Why Youth Vote: Identity, Inspirational Leaders, and Independence*. Her current work on the scholarship of teaching and learning includes best practices in internships, curriculum review in higher education, and identity development in the Political Science classroom.

### BENJAMIN T. BLANKENSHIP



Blankenship's research focuses on the role of identity and stereotypes on the political engagement, belonging, and well-being of marginalized groups, specifically focusing on groups with concealable identities. His scholarship has asked such questions as: "How do our social identities affect what social/political institutions we trust?," "How do people's feelings about their identities affect their political engagement?," and "How can we broaden the scope of what we think of as political activism and engagement?"

## **New 2021-2022 Chapter Fellows**

Each chapter is also supported by chapter fellows — emerging scholars and advocates — who are crucial to the success of our chapter's program. We are excited to announce the following new chapter fellows joining our leadership teams this year:

### **Central Ohio**

Musbah Shaheen - Musbah is a doctoral student in the College of Education at the Ohio State University studying college outcomes, particularly interfaith learning and development.

### **Central Pennsylvania**

Lisa Guida - Lisa is a PhD student at the Pennsylvania State University studying American Politics including as related to gender, sexuality, and race.

### **Confluence**

Rebecca Clendenen - Rebecca is a PhD Student in Political Science studying comparative politics with a focus on cultural identity formation at the University of Illinois Chicago

### **Indiana**

Kayla Marie Gurganus - Kayla is a graduate student in Political Science/Ecological Science and Engineering at Purdue University.

### **Kentucky**

Leah Halliday - Leah is a doctoral candidate at the University of Louisville in Curriculum and Instruction with a focus in Literacies, Languages, Cultures, and Communities.

### **Los Angeles Unified**

Alex Eleazar - Alex is a PhD student and University of California Santa Barbara Doctoral Scholar interested in the experiences of LGBTQ migrants, with a focus on identity formation and transnational community ties.

Kyle Nelson - Kyle is a PhD Candidate in Sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles whose research focuses on eviction, housing policy, and inequalities in the civil justice system.

### **Maine**

Paul Fink - Paul is a graduate student in the School of Computing and Information Science at the University of Maine studying technology education, user experience, and accessibility.

### **New Jersey-Philadelphia**

Lauren Nolan - Lauren is a Ph.D. student at the Rutgers Bloustein School with a background in fair lending, wealth creation, and financial systems reform.

### **New Orleans**

Devin Wright - Devin is a graduate student in Sociology at Tulane researching the material and symbolic relationships between food production, climate, environment, and social structures.

### **New York City**

Victoria Fix - Victoria is currently pursuing a Masters of Public Administration and is especially interested in policing, urban development and planning, and mass incarceration.

### **San Diego**

Kevan Malone - Kevan is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History at UC San Diego, interested in how urban growth impacts public health and natural resources across international borders.

### **Tennessee**

Rho Townsley - Rho is a graduate student in political science at Vanderbilt with a focus on political violence, displacement, and political exclusion.

## **Appreciation for our Departing Leaders and Fellows**

Finally, we want to thank all of our chapter leaders and fellows who are stepping down this year. We look forward to working with these scholars as active members in years to come:

### **Former Chapter Leaders**

Diane Tober, Bay Area

Katrina Kimport, Bay Area

Candis Watts Smith, Central Pennsylvania

Jamila Michener, Finger Lakes

Laura Tach, Finger Lakes

Heide Castañeda, Florida

Kate Pride Brown, Georgia

Leigh Raymond, Indiana

Rosie Clawson, Indiana  
Amy Fried, Maine  
Luisa Deprez, Maine  
Davia Downey, Michigan  
Vanessa Mari, Nevada  
Joanie Mazelis, New Jersey-Philadelphia  
Elise Jaramillo, New Mexico  
Ruth Milkman, New York City  
Lina Mary Caroline Stepick, Oregon  
John Skretney, San Diego  
Sara Yeo, Utah  
Sarah Quinn, Washington  
Megan Finn, Washington  
Margaret O'Mara, Washington

**Former Chapter Fellows**

Megan Kennedy, Central Pennsylvania  
Emily Hallgren, Chicagoland  
Damen Alexander, Confluence  
Sarah Kang, Confluence  
Telyse Masaoay, Confluence  
Elizabeth Day, Finger Lakes  
Scovia Aweko, Indiana  
Emily Libecap, Kentucky  
Anthony James William, Los Angeles Unified  
Brie Berry, Maine  
Kate Cruz, New Jersey-Philadelphia  
Jessica Liddell, New Orleans  
Hanna Golderg, New York City  
Karina Shklyan, San Diego  
Darrian Stacy, Tennessee  
Aliyah Abu-Hazeem, Washington  
Sarah Charnes, Washington  
Jennifer Marie Smith, Washington