

Joshua Lew McDermott, PhD

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EDUCATION

University of Pittsburgh, PhD Sociology	Pittsburgh, PA • 2016-2022
New Mexico State University, MA Political Science	Las Cruces, NM • 2014-2016
Utah State University, BA English/Political Science	Logan, UT • 2010-2013

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS (in alphabetical order)

Agrarian Change, Class, Culture, Development, Environmental Sociology, Ethnography, Gentrification, Global Studies, Globalization, Inequality, Informal and Precarious Labor, International Political Economy, Land, Mexico, Postcolonialism, Poverty, Race and Ethnicity, Research Methods, Social and Labor Movements, Social Reproduction, Social Theory, Sierra Leone, the State, Urban Studies, West Africa

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS HELD

2026 – Present	Graduate Coordinator • Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice • SLU
2022 – Present	Assistant Professor of Sociology • Southeastern Louisiana University
2024 – 2025	Fulbright Scholar (Teaching and Research) • Njala University, Sierra Leone
2021 – 2022	Visiting Assistant Professor of Sociology • Utah State University
2017 – 2021	Teaching Fellow • University of Pittsburgh
2017 – 2018	Managing Editor • <i>Journal of World-Systems Research</i>
2016 – 2017	Graduate Assistant • University of Pittsburgh
2014 – 2016	Teaching Assistant • New Mexico State University

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Undergraduate Courses Taught

Globalization, Human Rights and Gender, Introduction to Cultural Studies, Introduction to Global Studies, Introduction to Sociology, Introduction to Political Science, Race and Ethnicity, Social Movements, Social Problems, Social Science Research Methods, Social Stratification, Social Theory, Sociology of Sports

Graduate Courses Taught

Advanced Qualitative Methods, Globalization and Social Transformation, Race and Ethnicity in Global Perspective, Theories of Development

Graduate Advisor

- Service as a thesis advisor and as a thesis committee member for numerous graduate students in the Master of Applied Sociology program at Southeastern Louisiana University.
- Service as a mentor for master's and PhD students in the School of Social Science and Law at Njala University in Sierra Leone.

PUBLICATIONS

Peer Reviewed Journal Articles/Book Chapters

McDermott, J.L. Forthcoming. "Own-Account Work in Africa's Informal Economy: A Class Analysis of Petty Trading in Sierra Leone." In: Anwar, M.A., H. Dawson, N. Opong. eds. *African Labour Studies: Conceptual Shifts and Empirical Realities*. Bristol University Press.

McDermott, J.L. 2026. "A Marxist Critique of Informality and the Informal Economy Paradigm: The Realities of Irregular Labor in the New Peripheral Capitalism." In: Das, R., R. Latham, D. Fasenfest. eds. *The Power of Marxist Thought*. Brill and Haymarket.
https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004746015_007.

McDermott, J.L. 2025. "Reclaiming the Class Struggle in Africa Today." *International Critical Thought* 15(2): 268-294. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21598282.2025.2514615>.

McDermott, J.L. 2024. "Difference between Global South Cities: Mexico City, Freetown, and the Global Division of Urban Informal Labor." *Urban Studies* 62(5): 932-953.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00420980241269659>.

McDermott, J.L. 2024. "The Class Foundations of Anti-Marxism Today: Why the Specter Persists." *Portuguese Journal of Philosophy (Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia)* 80(1-2): 555-584.
https://doi.org/10.17990/RPF/2024_80_1_0555.

McDermott, J.L. 2024. "The Dilemma of Consumerist Masculinity in Capitalist West Africa: Men Navigating Gender, Class, and Romance in Sierra Leone's Informal Economy." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 53(6): 723-757.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/08912416241269890>.

McDermott, J. L. 2023. "Searching for the Informal Labor Movement: Theorizing Class Location and Collective Action among Informal Workers in the Global South." *Review of Radical Political Economics* 55(2): 333-352. <https://doi.org/10.1177/04866134221134548>.

McDermott, J. L. 2021. "Understanding West Africa's Informal Workers as Working-Class." *Review of African Political Economy* 48(170): 609-629. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056244.2021.1967734>.

McDermott, J. 2019. "Towards an Icon Model of Gentrification: Global Capitalism, Policing, and the Struggle for Iconic Spaces in Mexico City." *Urban Studies* 56(16): 3522-3539.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098018813065>.

Articles Under Consideration

McDermott, J.L., and M. Bisciglia. "Dependency, Extractivism, and Informality in Africa: Connecting Primarization and Informal Employment." Revise and Resubmit at *New Political Economy*.

McDermott, J.L., F. Manju. "Maintaining Dispossession: Contemporary Plantation Capitalism and the Contested Legacy of an Oil Palm Land Grab in Pujehun, Sierra Leone." Under review at *Journal of Agrarian Change*.

Manuscripts in Progress

McDermott, J.L., F. Manju, and L. Musa. "A Case Study of Plastic Waste and Class Differentiation in Freetown's Kroo Bay Neighborhood." Anticipated Completion in 2026.

McDermott, J.L., and G. Kamara. "The Role of Class in the Farmer/Herder Conflicts in West Africa: A Case Study of Tonko Limba Chiefdom, Northern Sierra Leone" Article. Anticipated completion in 2026.

Burley, D., K. Gilbert, and J.L. McDermott. "Far-Right Politics and the Ideology of Anti-Wolf Violence in the Mountain West." Article. Anticipated completion in 2026.

McDermott, J.L. *The People's Work: Informality, Irregular Labor, and New Peripheral Capitalism in 21st Century Africa*. Book. Anticipated completion in 2027.

Book Reviews

McDermott, J.L. 2023. Book Review: *Changes in Care: Aging, Migration, and Social Class in West Africa* (by Cati Coe). *Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews* 52(3): 227-228.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00943061231172096d>

McDermott, J.L. 2015. Book Review: *The Ebola Outbreak in West Africa: Corporate Gangsters, Multinationals, and Rogue Politicians* (by Chernoh Alpha M. Bah). *Pambazuka Press*.

Select Public-Facing Scholarship

McDermott, J.L. "The Age of Supraliberalism: A Requiem for Neoliberalism, Capitalist Democracy, and the American Unipolar World." *Hampton Institute*. Online.

McDermott, J.L., and G. Kamara. 2025. "Revitalizing Mani in Sierra Leone." *Endangered Languages Project Blog*. Online. <https://www.endangeredlanguages.com/blog/>.

McDermott, J.L. 2024. "How Informal Economies are Shaped by Global Capital: A Comparison of Informal Work and Urban Life in Freetown, Sierra Leone, and Mexico City, Mexico." *Urban Studies Online*. Online.

McDermott, J.L. 2024. "For a Broad Conception of the Working Class and Against Factory-Workerism." *Cosmonaut Magazine*. Online.

McDermott, J.L. 2024. "Informal Workers in the Global South and the Global Labor Movement." *Marxist Sociology Blog*. American Sociological Association. Republished by *Sage Perspectives* and by *Monthly Review*. Online.

McDermott, J.L. 2023. "Two Myths about the Working Class." *Cosmonaut Magazine*. Online.

McDermott, J.L. 2019. "Who are the Workers?" Newspaper article. *The Concord Times* (Sierra Leone). Print.

McDermott, J.L. 2016. "Extracting Democracy." *Jacobin Magazine*. Online.

Select Artistic Publications

McDermott, J.L. 2019. *Codex*. Hand to Mouth Books. Walla Walla, WA. Poetry.

- Numerous poems also published in various print and online publications.

PRESENTATIONS

Select Academic Conference Presentations

Gilbert, K., D. Burley, J.L. McDermott, A. Pope. 2026. "Human-Wolf Conflict in the Western United States." Society for Applied Anthropology Annual Meeting 2026. Albuquerque, New Mexico.

McDermott, J.L. 2025. "Invisible Legion: The Political Economy of Informal Own-Account Workers in Sierra Leone and West Africa." Paper presented at American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting 2025. New Orleans.

McDermott, J.L. 2025. "Critiquing Informality and the Informal Economy Paradigm." Paper presented at American Sociological Association Annual Meeting 2025. Chicago.

McDermott, J.L. 2024. "Young Men Navigating Gender, Consumerism, and Romance in Sierra Leone's Informal Economy." Presented as part of the West Africa Research Center (WARC) and Fulbright Sub-Saharan Africa Virtual Seminar Series. Virtual.

McDermott, J.L. and M. Bisciglia. 2024. "Causes of informality in Africa: Extractivism and the Neocolonial Roots of Informal Labor." Paper presented at Southern Sociological Society Annual Meeting 2024. New Orleans.

McDermott, J.L. 2023. "Poetry as a Working-Class Art Form: A Sociological Analysis of Radical Poetry." Paper presented at Association for Humanist Sociology Annual Meeting 2023. New Orleans.

McDermott, J. L. 2022. "Informal Work in Different Urbanisms: Mexico City, Freetown, and the Global Division of Urban Informal Labor." Paper presented at Association for Humanist Sociology Annual Meeting 2022. Mexico City.

- McDermott, J.L. 2021. "Not Your Entrepreneurs: Understanding West Africa's Informal Workers as Working-Class." Paper presented at the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting 2021. Virtual.
- McDermott, J.L. 2019. "Searching for the Informal Labor Movement: Theorizing Class Location and Collective Actions among Informal Workers in the Global South." Paper presented at the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting 2019. New York.
- McDermott, J.L. 2018. "Spectre: James Bond and the Policing of Symbolic Gentrification in Mexico City." Paper presented at the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting 2018. Philadelphia.
- McDermott, J.L. 2017. "Elections in the Shadow of Ebola: Sierra Leone's African Socialist Movement and the Struggle for Democracy." Paper presented at Social Practice of Human Rights Conference, University of Dayton. Dayton, Ohio.

Invited Talks/Public Appearances

- McDermott, J.L. 2022. "Ethnography and the Extended Case Method in Practice: The Dialectic of Theory and Induction." Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Utah State University.
- Barrie, F., A.R. Sei, W.O. Macaulay Jr, and J.L. McDermott. 2020. Television Panel: "The U.S. Election and What it Means for Africa." Sierra Gem Media. Sierra Leone.
- McDermott, J.L. 2019. "Informal Workers and Urbanism in Context: from Freetown to Mexico City." Presented as part of a workshop with various civil society and informal workers' groups at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México in Mexico City.
- Bah, C.A.M. and J.L. McDermott. 2015. "The Ebola Outbreak and Elections in West Africa." New Mexico State University.

Select Moderated/Organized Events, Panels, and Workshops

- Katz-Fishman, W., and J. Scott. 2025. "Building a Working-Class Movement for Racial and Economic Justice." Southeastern Louisiana University Annual Social Justice Speaker Series. Organizer and Moderator.
- Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center. 2023. "Protecting Housing Rights in the Housing Crisis." Southeastern Louisiana University Annual Social Justice Speaker Series. Organizer and Moderator.

FUNDING AND AWARDS

Research Awards and Fellowships

- 2020-2021: Social Science Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship, Awarded \$24,000 for field work and dissertation writing. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, University of Pittsburgh.

- 2019: Collective Knowledge Pittsburgh Stipend, Awarded \$2,000 for study of labor history in Pittsburgh through art and architecture in preparation for *Working Thought*, an art exhibition at the Carnegie Museum of Art. Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.
- 2019-2020: Andrew Mellon Predoctoral Fellowship, Awarded \$23,698 for dissertation fieldwork in West Africa. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, University of Pittsburgh
- 2017: Summer Research Fellowship, Awarded \$3,000. Department of Sociology, University of Pittsburgh
- 2015: Roque M. Lujan Scholarship for Community Involvement and Academic Excellence, Awarded \$500. Department of Government, New Mexico State University

Grants and Travel Awards

- 2024-2025: Fulbright Scholar Grant. Awarded approximately \$80,000 to conduct research and teach in Sierra Leone. Host institution: Njala University, Sierra Leone.
- 2022: Faculty Travel Grant for travel to Mexico City. Awarded \$1200. Southeastern Louisiana University Center for Faculty Excellence.
- 2019: World History Center Travel Fund, Awarded \$1000 for travel to Sierra Leone. World History Center, University of Pittsburgh.
- 2018: PBC Conference Presentation Grant, Awarded \$600. Office of Graduate Studies, College of Arts & Science, University of Pittsburgh
- 2017: Research Methods Training Grant. Awarded \$1200 to attend Coding and Analyzing Qualitative Data intensive course with Dr. Johnny Saldana, Odum Institute for Research in Social Science, University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill. Department of Sociology, University of Pittsburgh.
- 2017: SSSP Annual Conference Travel Grant, Awarded \$200. Society for the Study of Social Problems.
- 2016: Duck, Waverly, Jackie Smith, Joshua McDermott. “Cities and Social Inclusion in Global Perspective,” Proposal for Research in Diversity Grant. Awarded \$4800. Office of the Provost and the University Research Council, University of Pittsburgh

Accolades

- 2025: Distinguished Article Award of the Year, PEWS Section of ASA. Winner of Political Economy of the World-System (PEWS) section of the American Sociological Association (ASA) Distinguished Article Award for the article “Difference Between Global South Cities: Mexico City,

Freetown, and the Global Division of Urban Informal Labor.” Recognized at the 2025 ASA Annual Conference. Chicago.

- 2024: Recognized by Njala University to the US Embassy in Sierra Leone for significant contributions in teaching, research, and faculty training at the university. Njala University, Bo, Sierra Leone.
- 2024, 2026: Praise the Pride. Nominated for recognition for outstanding teaching/mentorship by a faculty member. Student nominated. Center for Faculty Excellence, Southeastern Louisiana University.
- 2019. Norman P. Hummon Research Award. Department of Sociology, University of Pittsburgh. Awarded to best graduate student research paper in the department.
- 2016. Most Exceptional Graduate Student Award. College of Arts & Sciences, New Mexico State University. Awarded to the top graduate student in the college, as nominated and chosen by a committee of administrators and professors. Awarded \$500.
- 2013. First place winner: Undergraduate Poetry. *Scribendi Literary Magazine*. Utah State University.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Departmental Service

2026 – Present	Graduate Coordinator, Master of Applied Sociology, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice, Southeastern Louisiana University
2022 – Present	Member of Social Justice Speaker Series Organizing Committee, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice, Southeastern Louisiana University
2022 – Present	Member of Sociology Curriculum Committee, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice, Southeastern Louisiana University
2022 – Present	Member of Graduate Faculty Committee, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice, Southeastern Louisiana University
2023 – 2024	Head of Sociology Marketing and Outreach Committee, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice, Southeastern Louisiana University
2017 – 2018	Co-President of Sociology Graduate Student Organization, Department of Sociology, University of Pittsburgh
2015 – 2016	President of Government Graduate Student Organization, Department of Government, New Mexico State University

University Service

2026 – Present Member of Graduate Council, Southeastern Louisiana University
2024 – Present Member of Honors Faculty, Southeastern Louisiana University
2023 – 2024 Faculty Advisor, United Students Against Sweatshops, Southeastern Louisiana University Chapter
2017 – 2019 Board Member of Graduate Council, Dietrich School of Arts and Science, University of Pittsburgh

National Service

2026 Paul M. Sweezy Book Award, Committee Member, Marxist Sociology Section, American Sociological Association
2026 Albert Szymanski-T.R. Graduate Student Paper Award, Committee Chair, Marxist Sociology Section, American Sociological Association
2025 – Present Treasurer, Marxist Sociology Section, American Sociological Association

Editorial Service

2026 – Present Editorial Board Member, *Sociology Race of and Ethnicity*, American Sociological Association's Racial and Ethnic Minorities Section Journal
2017 – 2018 Managing Editor, *Journal of World-Systems Research*, American Sociological Association's Political Economy of the World-System Section Journal

Peer Reviewer

Contemporary Sociology, Discover Sustainability, Human Geography, International Critical Thought, Journal of World-Systems Research, Review of African Political Economy, Review of International Political Economy, Social Problems, Sociological Forum, Sexuality Research and Social Policy, Third World Quarterly, Urban Studies

Professional Memberships

American Sociological Association (ASA)
Association for Humanist Sociology (AHS)
Southern Sociological Society (SSS)
Fulbright Alumni Association

ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Leadership Positions

2022 – Present Cofounder and Lead Consultant • Society for Indigenous Languages, Communities, and Cultures of Sierra Leone (SILCC).

- 2020 – 2022

Cofounder and Editor • Line Rider Press

 - *SILCC is a Sierra Leone-based NGO which aims to protect and preserve indigenous cultures, communities, and ecosystems in the country while also promoting human rights, democracy, and economic rights*
 - *Independent book publisher and literary website featuring socially conscious poetry and social commentary with a focus on the Mountain West. Org was mentioned in the New York Times.*
- 2017 – 2018

Cofounder and Board Member • Pittsburgh Community Advisory Board

 - *Working group that facilitated University of Pittsburgh faculty and student engagement with local community members and organizations in addressing social justice issues across the city*
- 2015 – 2016

Board Member • Ayotzinapa Organizing Committee

 - *Statewide committee which worked with local, national, and international volunteers to facilitate a New Mexico leg of the publicity tour for parents of the 43 student victims of forced disappearance in Iguala, Mexico, in 2014*
- 2011 – 2013

Board Member • Helicon West

 - *Helicon West is an organization that promotes the literary arts and organizes a monthly guest reader series and public literary readings in and around Logan, Utah*

Select Projects and Initiatives

- 2024– Present

Assistant Coordinator • Village Ecosystem Protection and Revitalization Project

 - *An initiative of SILCC which works closely with community members in rural Sierra Leone in utilizing traditional cultural practices to advocate for and protect endangered forests and ecosystems. Work involves community-led initiatives to protect culturally, ecologically, and economically significant natural areas from destructive commercial activities*
- 2023 – Present

Assistant Coordinator • Bullom Revitalization Project

 - *An initiative of SILCC aimed at working with community members to preserve and revitalize the endangered language of Bullom (Mani) in the Samu region of Sierra Leone. Work involves living with, consulting with, and working with community members to teach children and adults to speak the language*
- 2014 – 2015

Co-Editor • Emergency Ebola Community Updates

 - *Worked with Sierra Leonean journalists and community members in areas impacted by the West African Ebola Outbreak to publish and disseminate emergency updates on the outbreak to isolated communities without access to traditional emergency notification outlets*
- 2014 – 2015

Social Media Director and Camera Operator • Helicon West

 - *Directed the social media presence of Helicon West and recorded and published the organization's public literary events online*

Memberships and Affiliations

American Association of University Professors (AAUP)
United Federation of College Teachers (UFCT) – Louisiana Chapter
Global Rewilding Alliance

CERTIFICATIONS AND LANGUAGES

Professional Certifications

A.I. Literacy Certification • University of Louisiana System
Cultural Studies Graduate Certificate • University of Pittsburgh

Languages

English – Native
Krio (Sierra Leone) – Advanced
Spanish – Intermediate

References available upon request