

AMBER JOY POWELL, PH.D.

University of Iowa
Department of Sociology & Criminology
amber-powell@uiowa.edu
[Website Information](#)

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2024 Researcher Affiliate, Center for Social Science Innovation (CSSI), University of Iowa
- 2022 Assistant Professor of Sociology & Criminology, University of Iowa

EDUCATION

- 2022 Ph.D., Sociology, University of Minnesota – Twin Cities
- 2014 B.A. Criminology & Law Studies/Spanish, Marquette University (Magna Cum Laude)

RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS

Gender-Based Violence; Criminalization, Law, & Punishment; Carceral Studies; Race, Gender, & Sexuality; Black Feminist & Qualitative Methodologies

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

- Powell, Amber Joy and Brittany Battle. 2027. “‘What is Justice to Me?’: How System-Impacted Survivors and Advocates Disentangle Justice, Accountability, and Criminal Punishment through an Abolition Feminist Frame.” *Theoretical Criminology*.
- Powell, Amber Joy, Faith Deckard, Shannon Malone Gonzalez, and Brittany Battle. 2026. “Black Abolition Feminist Storytelling as Method: Lessons Within the Stories We (Re)Tell about Violence.” *Feminist Criminology*.
- Powell, Amber Joy. 2025. Powell, Amber Joy. “Incarcerated Girls, Credibility, & Sexual Misconduct in Juvenile Detention.” *Violence Against Women* 31(12-13): 3137-3157.
- Powell, Amber Joy. 2025. “I Just Feel Re-violated: Coercive Sexual Control in Youth Detention.” *Social Forces* 104(1): 386-403.
- Battle, Brittany and Amber Joy Powell. 2024. “‘We Keep us Safe!’: Abolition Feminism as a Challenge to Carceral Feminist Responses to Gendered Violence” *Gender & Society* 38(4):

523-556.

Michelle S. Phelps, Christopher E. Robertson, and **Amber Joy Powell**. 2021. “‘We’re still dying quicker than we can effect change:’ Legal Estrangement and Ambivalence in the #BlackLivesMatter Era.” *American Journal of Sociology* 127(3): 867-903.

~Winner, 2023 Joan Petersilia Outstanding Article Award, American Society of Criminology

Powell, Amber Joy and Michelle Phelps. 2021. “Gendered Racial Vulnerability: How Women Confront Crime and Criminalization.” *Law & Society Review* 55(3): 429-451.

Powell, Amber Joy, Heather Hlavka, and Sameena Mulla. 2017. “Intersectionality and Credibility in Child Sexual Assault Trials.” *Gender & Society* 31(4): 457-480.

Book Chapters

Phelps, Michelle, **Amber Joy Powell**, and Christopher Robertson. 2024. “The Residents Left Out” in *The Minneapolis Reckoning: Race, Violence, and the Politics of Policing in America* (Princeton University Press).

Powell, Amber Joy, Sameena Mulla, and Heather Hlavka. 2022. “Intersectionality in the Courts: Collaborative Feminist Ethnography of Sexual Assault Adjudication.” In *Researching Gender-Based Violence: Embodied and Intersectional Approaches*. New York University Press.

Powell, Amber Joy. 2021. “A Reflection on Racism, Police Violence, & Abolition.” In *Sparked: George Floyd, Racism, and the Progressive Illusion*. Edited by Minnesota Historical Society.

Savelsberg, Joachim and **Amber Joy Powell**. 2020. “Political Systems and the Carceral State,” in *Handbook of Political Sociology*, 2nd edition, edited by Thomas Janoski, Isaac Martin, Joya Misra, and Cedric De Leon. Cambridge University Press.

Encyclopedias, Essays, & Reviews

Powell, Amber Joy. 2027. “Listening to Survivors in an Age of Political Retrenchment.” Forthcoming in *The Criminologist*.

Powell, Amber Joy. 2025. “A Review of Jessica C. Harris’ 2024 Hear Our Stories: Campus Sexual Violence, Intersectionality, and How We Build a Better University.” *Social Forces*.

Powell, Amber Joy. 2025. “On the Wrong Side: How Universities Protect Perpetrators and Betray Survivors of Sexual Violence by Nicole Bedera.” *Punishment & Society*.

Powell, Amber Joy. 2024. “Inside Knowledge: Incarcerated People on the Failures of the American

Prison by Doran Larson.” *Law & Society Review*.

Powell, Amber Joy. 2023. “A Review of Ruja Benjamin’s Viral Justice.” *Sociology of Race & Ethnicity*.

Powell, Amber Joy. 2020. “Jennifer Cobbina, *Hands Up, Don’t Shoot: Why the Protests in Ferguson and Baltimore Matter, and How They Changed America*.” *Punishment & Society* 1-3.

Powell, Amber Joy. 2020. “Date Rape,” in *Criminal Justice in America: The Encyclopedia of Crime, Law Enforcement, Courts, and Corrections*. Edited by Carla Lewandowski and Jeff Bumgarner.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Powell, Amber Joy. “Governing Compliance: Legal Endogeneity & the Prison Rape Elimination Act in Juvenile Detention.” *Revise & Resubmit*.

Powell, Amber Joy. “‘Women Kind Of Get Away With It’: Hegemonic Femininities & Gendered Constructions of Women’s Sexual Abuse Against Boys in Juvenile Detention. *Under review*.

Powell, Amber Joy. “‘People Out Here Don’t Believe Us’: Sexual Citizenship, Carcerality, and Prison Rape Reform in the Age of Mass Incarceration.” *Data collected and in draft*.

Powell, Amber Joy. “Investigating Sexual Harassment & Abuse in Juvenile Detention.” *Data collected and in draft*.

PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP & MEDIA SELECTIONS

2025 “CSSI Researcher Affiliate Amber Joy Powell Investigates Sexual Violence Towards Incarcerated Youth.” Interviewed by the University of Iowa Center for Social Science Innovation (CSSI).

2024 “Summer Researchers-in-Residence Address Systemic Issues Affecting Vulnerable Populations.” Interviewed by the University of Iowa Public Policy Center.

2022 “How Minneapolis Women Confront Interpersonal Violence, Neighborhood Crime, & State Criminalization in the Age of Policing Reform.” Invited talk at *University of California, Irvine School of Law, UCI Initiative to End Family Violence*.

2022 “How Penal Institutions Respond to Sexual Threats in Youth Detention.” Law & Society Association, *Punishment Digital Speaker Series* (hosted by Ashley Rubin).

2021 “Confronting Crime and Criminalization: Race, Gender and Policing in Minneapolis.” *Gender Policy Report*.

2021 “Challenges of the Prison Rape Elimination Act Implementation in Youth Detention Settings.” Interviewed by *EXPO: Ex-Prisoners Organizing Radio*, Milwaukee, WI. Wisconsin.

2021 “Students Demand Abolition Coursework from Colleges and Universities.” Interviewed by *The Progressive*.

- 2020 “The Persistence of Sexual Violence in Minnesota.” *Gender Policy Report*.
- 2020 “Over-Policed and Under-Protected: Public Safety in North Minneapolis.” *Center for Urban and Regional Affairs Report*. Co-authored with Michelle Phelps and Christopher Robertson.
- 2019 Powell, Amber Joy, and Caity Curry. “Unearthing Black Women’s Early Contributions to Sociology.” *The Society Pages*.
- 2019 “City Implements Policy to Aid Sexual Assault Survivors Amid Campus Efforts.” Interviewed by the *Minnesota Daily*.
- 2018 “Increase in Reported Sexual Assaults, According to University Safety Report.” Interviewed by the *Minnesota Daily*.
- 2017 “Dismantling Victim Credibility in the Child Sexual Assault Trial.” *Gender & Society* Wordpress.
- 2015 “Two professors observed over 650 court cases, to write book on sexual violence research.” *The Marquette Wire*. October 29, 2015. Marquette University. Milwaukee, WI.

HONORS, AWARDS, & GRANTS

- 2026 Small Seeds Research Grant - Race & Ethnic Studies Institute, Texas A&M University (\$2,500)
- 2025 Midwestern Sociological Society Research Grant (\$3,500)
- 2024 Summer Researcher-in-Residence Program University of Iowa Center for Social Science Innovation (CSSI)
- 2024 Invited Faculty Reviewer for the University of Chicago’s Pozen Center for Human Rights Doctoral Fellow Seminar
- 2024 Invited Reviewer for the National Institute of Justice W.E.B. Du Bois Program of Research on Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Justice System Virtual Standing Review Panel (SRP) Convening
- 2023 Winner, Joan Petersilia Outstanding Article Award, American Society of Criminology
- 2023 Racial Democracy, Crime and Justice Network’s Summer Research Institute (SRI) Awardee
- 2022 Horowitz Foundation for Social Policy Award (\$7,500)
- 2022 Martindale Graduate Student Fellowship Award - University of Minnesota, Department of Sociology (\$1,000)
- 2021 New Directions in Law and Society: A Graduate Student and Junior Scholar Workshop (University of Massachusetts, Amherst and the Law and Science Program of the National Science Foundation)
- 2021 Law & Society Association Graduate Student/Early Career Workshop
- 2020 American Bar Foundation Law & Inequality NSF Fellowship, Northwestern University, 2020-2022 (\$35,000)
- 2020 Ruth Peterson Fellowship, American Society of Criminology (\$6,000)
- 2020 University of Minnesota, Department of Sociology Service Award (\$100)
- 2020 Interdisciplinary Doctoral Fellowship (IDF), University of Minnesota (\$25,000), *Declined*
- 2019 Anna Welsch Bright Research Award, University of Minnesota (\$2,000)
- 2018 Graduate Research Partnership Program Fellowship, University of Minnesota (\$4,000)
- 2018 Race, Indigeneity, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (RIGS) Dissertation Proposal Fellowship (\$1,000)
- 2018 Summer Dissertation Proposal Workshop - Center on Race and Wealth at Howard

University and the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (\$300).

INVITED TALKS

- 2025** Invited presenter for the Racial Democracy, Crime & Justice Network (RDCJN) Summer Research Institute (“Toward a Critical and Race-Conscious Criminology”). Presented “When Women Staff Harm Incarcerated Boys: Gendered Power & Sexual Violence and the in Juvenile Detention” for the Gender, Sexuality, Violence, & Justice panel.
- 2024** Invited presenter for “Carceral Ambiguity & Administrative Decision-Making for Incarcerated Youths’ Sexual Misconduct Claims” in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Missouri - St. Louis (UMSL).
- 2024** Invited panelist for “Punishment Beyond Mass Incarceration” hosted by the *Urban Institute* and the *Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs* at Brown University.
- 2023** Invited presenter for the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault webinar “Unpacking the Challenges of Prison Rape Elimination Act Implementation.”
- 2023** Invited presenter for the Justice Involved Women and Girls Taskforce (Minnesota) January meeting.
- 2022** “[How Minneapolis Women Confront Interpersonal Violence, Neighborhood Crime, & State Criminalization in the Age of Policing Reform.](#)” Invited talk at *University of California, Irvine School of Law, UCI Initiative to End Family Violence*.
- 2021** “Transformative Justice.” Invited panelist at Oriana House virtual conference with Uriel Serrano, Rodrigo Martinez, and Mike Randle.
- 2021** “Criminal (in)Justice, Race, and Policing: Derek Chauvin, Mohamed Noor, and Beyond.” Invited graduate student moderator. University of Minnesota Interdisciplinary Collaborative Workshop.
- 2021** “Gender, Science, & Human Rights: Violence.” Invited roundtable panelist at the University of Dayton with Chai Senoy, Rosa Beltre, Josh Segalwitz, Ericka Curran, and Ethan Czuy Levine.
- 2020** “At the Frontlines: Emerging Voices on the Practice and Politics of Criminal Justice Reform.” UMass Amherst - Center for Justice, Law, and Societies. Invited Talk. Panelist with Kayla Preto-Hodge, Nathalie Amazon, and Nicole Gonzalez Van Cleve.

CONFERENCE & WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

- 2025** Top Scholar Visit Day at the University of Iowa, presented “Becoming a Criminologist: How

to Design a Criminal Justice Related Project.”

- 2025** Invited Panelist for the Racial Democracy Crime & Justice Network Annual Meeting (University of Maryland).
- 2025** Invited Discussant for the “Gender, Power, and Law in Contemporary Times: Revisiting Institutional and Legal Responses to Sexual Violence” at the Law & Society Association (LSA) meeting.
- 2025** “It’s a Joke: Prison Rape Reform & the Politics of Carceral Protectionism.” Panelist at a paper session at the Law & Society Association (LSA) meeting.
- 2025** “Incarcerated Girls, Credibility, & Sexual Misconduct.” Panelist for paper session at the Midwestern Society of Sociology (MSS).
- 2024** Invited discussant and panelist for the Gender Power Theory Workshop (Northwestern University)
- 2023** Racial Democracy, Crime & Justice Network (RDCJN) Summer Research Institute Panelist.
- 2023** “How Carceral Organizations Respond to Sexual Harassment & Abuse in Juvenile Detention.” Paper session at Law & Society Association.
- 2023** “I Don’t Understand Why These Boys Would Complain About Having Sex with Female Staff:’ Cultural Constructions of Sexual Victimization & Offending in Youth Detention.” Roundtable at Sociologists for Women in Society.
- 2021** “Gender, Race, & Coercive Sexual Control in Youth Detention.” American Sociological Association Virtual Conference.
- 2021** “A Theory of Coercive Sexual Control in Youth Detention.” Law & Society Association Virtual Conference (co-organized panel).
- 2020** “‘We’re still dying quicker than we can effect change:’ Legal Estrangement and Ambivalence in the #BlackLivesMatter Era.” Scheduled talk. Non-presenting author with Michelle Phelps and Christopher Robertson. Southern Political Science Association, San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- 2019** “‘It’s like we don’t exist:’ An Intersectional Analysis of Women’s Legal Estrangement..” Paper session on Research on Deviance and Social Control with Michelle Phelps (non-presenting coauthor). American Sociological Association, New York.
- 2019** “Still Questioning: DOing Feminist Research on Sexual/Gender-Based Violence.” Roundtable with Sameena Mulla, Heather Hlavka, Lena Palacios, Rose Corrigan, April Petillo, and Dawn Moore at the Law and Society Association Meetings. Washington, DC.

- 2019** “Legal Estrangement, Intersectionality, and Attitudes towards Police in North Minneapolis.” Roundtable at the Sociologists for Women & Society Winter Meeting. Colorado Springs, CO.
- 2018** “Intersectionality, Ethics, and Method: Doing Feminist Research on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence.” Roundtable with Sameena Mulla, Rose Corrigan, April Petillo, Dawn Moore, and Deborah White at the Law and Society Association Meetings. Toronto, Canada.

LOCAL PRESENTATIONS & PANELS

- 2021** “Unpacking Sexual Violence in Youth Detention & Supporting Survivors.” Guest speaker for the Dispositional Advisor Spring Institute, Minneapolis, MN.
- 2019** “Policing In Minneapolis: Northside Voices.” Community Forum event at the Robert J. Jones Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC).
- 2019** “Sexual Harassment & Department Norms in Faculty and Student Relationships.” Invited talk with sociology faculty at the University of Minnesota.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Women, Crime, & Justice (CRIM 3425)
 Gender & Violence (CRIM: 4300)
 Juvenile Justice (CRIM: 4400)
 Criminal Justice Systems (CRIM: 5120)
 Policing in U.S. Society (CRIM: 6470)

STUDENT MENTORSHIP

Graduate Student Alexandra Bibbs (2025)
 Graduate Student Andrea Smith: Research Assistant (2024-)
 Graduate Student Kendall Riley: Research Assistant (2024-) & Committee Member
 Graduate Student Taylor Domingos (Northwestern University, 2025): Committee Member
 Graduate Student Sarah Witmer (2024-): Committee Member
 Graduate Student Kimberly Ingold (2025): Committee Member
 Undergraduate Student Sanaa Thomas: Summer Research Opportunity Program (2025)
 Undergraduate Student Adriana Novello: Summer Research Opportunity Program (2024)
 Undergraduate Student Lonni Garcia: Summer Research Opportunity Program (2024)
 Undergraduate Student Cassie Elsberg Research Assistant (Fall 2024-)
 Undergraduate Student Maddissen McFatridge (Fall 2024-Spring 2025)

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND COMMITTEES

Sociology of Race & Ethnicity Editorial Board (2023-2025)
 Law & Social Inquiry Editorial Board (2021-2022)

American Sociological Association - Crime, Law, and Deviance Section
 Sociology Graduate Student Organization (GSO) Chair (2019)
 Department Development Committee of the President's Initiative to Prevent Sexual
 Misconduct. Minneapolis, MN. University of Minnesota (2018-2020)
 Sociologists for Women & Society (2018)
 Midwestern Sociological Society (2017)
 Council of Graduate Students (COGS), University of Minnesota. Minneapolis, MN (2016)
 DOVE Fellowship Program, University of Minnesota. Minneapolis, MN (2015)
 The Society Pages, Section Editor for *Discoveries*, Graduate Board Member and Writing
 Contributor, University of Minnesota. Minneapolis, MN (2015-2020)
 Critical Race and Ethnic Studies Graduate Studies Writing Group, University of Minnesota.
 Minneapolis, MN (2015-2016)
 McNair Scholars Program, Marquette University. Milwaukee, WI (2013-2014)

ARTICLE & BOOK PEER REVIEWING

American Sociological Review, American Journal of Sociology, Social Problems, Social Forces,
 Sociological Perspectives, Gender & Society, Law & Society Review, Law & Social Inquiry, Feminist
 Criminology, Punishment & Society, Sociology Compass

SERVICE & OUTREACH

- 2024** Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault - Advocacy For Incarcerated Victims/Survivors
Work Group
- 2022** Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee - Twin Cities
- 2022** Diversity Committee (University of Iowa)
- 2021** Consultant for United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence
Globally 2022
- 2019** Junior Faculty Search Committee in Diversity
- 2019** Mentor and Coordinator for the University of Minnesota, Department of Sociology
Mentoring Program
- 2019** Sociology Graduate Student Organization (GSO) Lead Chair
- 2018** Department Development Committee of the President's Initiative to Prevent Sexual
Misconduct. Minneapolis, MN. University of Minnesota.
- 2017** Minnesota WATCH Court Monitoring Program
- 2016** Community of Peace Charter School Mentor, St. Paul, Minnesota.
- 2015** Victim Advocate at the Sexual Assault Treatment Center, Aurora Sinai
Hospital. Milwaukee, WI.
- 2014** Spanish Translator at the Marquette University Legal Clinic. Milwaukee, WI.

SKILLS AND SPECIAL TRAINING

Proficient in written and spoken Spanish
 Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Training (Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault)

REFERENCES

Christopher Uggen, Professor
University of Minnesota
Department of Sociology
uggen001@umn.edu
612.624.4016

Michelle Phelps, Associate Professor
University of Minnesota
Department of Sociology
phelps@umn.edu
612.626.0863

Heather R. Hlavka, Professor
Marquette University
Department of Social & Cultural Sciences
heather.hlavka@marquette.edu
414.288.6846

Valerie Jenness, Distinguished Professor
University of California - Irvine
Department of Criminology, Law, & Society
jenness@uci.edu
949.824.7223