

John A. Bernau, PhD

(Updated: March 2026)

Center for the Study of Law and Religion
Emory University School of Law
310 Gambrell Hall
1301 Clifton Rd NE
Atlanta, GA 30322

Email: john.bernau@emory.edu
Phone: 404-727-0695
Website: www.johnabernau.com

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

2025 – McDonald Research Scholar, Center for the Study of Law and Religion, Emory University
2025 – Adjunct Professor, Department of Sociology, Emory University
2021 – Director of Digital Scholarship, Center for the Study of Law and Religion, Emory University
2019 – 2021 Digital Scholarship Fellow, Center for the Study of Law and Religion, Emory University

EDUCATION

2019 Ph.D. Sociology, Emory University
2017 M.A. Sociology, Emory University
2013 B.A. Sociology and Philosophy (*Cum Laude*), The University of Iowa

PUBLICATIONS

- Bernau, John A.** 2026. "Is Reality Still Socially Constructed?" *The American Sociologist*, x(x):1-23.
- Bernau, John A.** 2024. "Review of *Sociology of Death and the American Indian*." *Contemporary Sociology*, 53(3):242-243.
- Bernau, John A.** 2022. "The Institutionalization of Kübler-Ross's Five-Stage Model of Death and Dying." *Omega – Journal of Death and Dying* 90(1):120-142.
- Idler, Ellen L., **John A. Bernau**, and Dimitrios Zaras.* 2022. "Narratives and Counter-Narratives in Religious Responses to COVID-19: A Computational Text Analysis." *PLoS ONE* 17(2): e0262905. [*Equal co-authorship]
- Browne, Irene, **John A. Bernau**, Katharine M. Tatum, and Jieyu Jiao. 2021. "Immigration Coverage in the Black Press and the General Audience Press: What Can Mixed Methods Reveal about Race and Immigration?" *The Sociological Quarterly* 63(4):688–710.
- Xu, Bin and **John A. Bernau**. 2021. "The Sympathetic Leviathan: Modern States' Cultural Response to Disasters." *Poetics* 93(A):1-11.
- Bernau, John A.** 2021. "From Christ to Compassion: The Changing Language of Pastoral Care." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 60(2):362–381.
- Semenza, Daniel Charles and **John A. Bernau**.* 2020 "Information-seeking in the Wake of Tragedy: An Examination of Public Response to Mass Shootings Using Google Search Data." *Sociological Perspectives* 65(1):216-233. [*Equal co-authorship]
- Bernau, John A.** 2018. "Text Analysis with JSTOR Archives." *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*. 4:1-2.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2025 "The Social Ontology of Law and Religion." Paper presented at the Annual Law and Religion Roundtable, June 2025. Atlanta, GA.
- 2025 "Is Reality Still 'Socially Constructed'?" Paper presented at the Philosophy of Social Science Roundtable, March 2025. Atlanta, GA.
- 2023 "Modeling Worship Attendance: An Exploration of Endogenous Effects." Paper presented at the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR), October 2023. Salt Lake City, Utah.
- 2021 "Narratives and Counter-Narratives in Religious Responses to COVID-19: A Computational Text Analysis." Paper presented at the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, August 2021. Virtual.
- 2019 "Are All Mass Shootings Equal? Assessing a Cultural-Cognitive Theory of Public Interest using Google Search Data." Paper presented at the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, August 2019. New York, NY.
- 2019 "Hurricane Maria and the Boundaries of Compassion." Paper presented at ACLS-Funded Conference "Politics, Societies, and Disasters: China and Beyond," June 2019. Copenhagen, Denmark.
- 2018 "The (De)Institutionalization of Kübler-Ross' Five-Stage Model of Death and Dying." Paper presented at the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Meeting, October 2018. Las Vegas, NV.
- 2018 "Communion to Compassion: The Changing Language of Death in America." Paper presented at the Southern Sociological Society Annual Meeting, April 2018. New Orleans, LA.
- 2017 "The Sympathetic Leviathan: How Do Modern States Culturally Respond to Disasters?" Paper presented at the Social Science History Association, November 2017. Montreal, QC, Canada.
- 2017 "From Leibniz to Lefty: Country Music as Theodicy." Paper presented at the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, August 2017. Montreal, QC, Canada.
- 2016 "I Wanna Hear Some Jones': Benchmarks and Boundary Work in Country Music Lyrics." Paper presented at the Southern Sociological Society Annual Meeting, April 2016. Atlanta, GA.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

- 2025 "The People's Canon: Human Flourishing in the Age of AI." AIAI Network Seed Grant. (\$3,775)
- 2021 The CSLR Study on Law and Ministry. Lilly Endowment. (\$400,000)
Role: Survey consultant and lead data analyst.
- 2020 Word Vectors for the Thoughtful Humanist Training Award. Northeastern University. (\$700)
- 2020 Committee nomination for ASA Best Dissertation Award. Emory University.
- 2018 Martin Levin ICPSR Training Award. Department of Sociology. Emory University. (\$2,500)
- 2018–2019 Digital Humanities Fellowship. Emory Center for Digital Scholarship. Emory University.
- 2016 DHSI Course Scholarship. Emory Center for Digital Scholarship. Emory University. (\$1,200)
- 2013–2018 Laney Graduate School Fellowship. Emory University.
- 2009 Old Gold Scholarship. The University of Iowa. (\$12,000)

PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP & MEDIA COVERAGE

Bernau, John A. and Whitney L. Barth. Co-Hosts of the *Interactions* Podcast. 9 Episodes between 2023-2024.

Fall 2023: CSLR Study on Law and Ministry, Michael Broyde, Deepa Das Acevedo, John Witte, Jr., Matthew P. Cavedon.

Fall 2024: Thomas Jared Farmer, Alexa Windsor, Ariel Liberman, Mark Storslee.

Rebecca Randall. 2021. "Study: Today's Pastoral Counseling Is More Fluent in Psychology" *Christianity Today*.
<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2021/march-web-only/pastoral-care-counseling-journal-psychology-language.html>

Bernau, John A. 2020. "Digital Scholarship: Discipline or Method?" *ECDS Project Team Blog*. [non-refereed]

Bernau, John A. 2019. "Introducing DOIs to Atlanta Studies." *Atlanta Studies*. [non-refereed]

TEACHING

Full Instructor

- 2025 SOC 457: Sociological Theory. Emory University [Fall]
 2018 SOC 333: Sociology of Religion. Emory University [Spring]
 2017 SOC 333: Sociology of Religion. Emory University [Spring]

Workshop Instructor

- 2020 Data Visualization in R
Emory Department of Sociology [Fall]
 2019 R Advanced: Social Media Scraping
Emory Center for Digital Scholarship [Spring]
 2019 R Intermediate: Data Visualization II
Emory Center for Digital Scholarship [Spring]
 2018 R Basics: An Introduction
Emory Center for Digital Scholarship [Fall]
 2018 Data Cleaning and Manipulation in R
Emory Center for Digital Scholarship [Spring]
 2018 Data Visualization in R
Emory Center for Digital Scholarship // Emory Health Sciences Center [Spring]
 2018 Data Visualization in R
Emory Center for Digital Scholarship // Institute for Quantitative Theory and Methods [Spring]
 2017 Data Visualization in R
Emory Center for Digital Scholarship // Institute for Quantitative Theory and Methods [Spring & Fall]
 2016 Zotero for Academic Research and Publishing
Department of Sociology, Emory University [Spring]

Teaching Assistant – Emory University

- | | | | |
|------|--|------|--|
| 2017 | SOC 506: Applied Regression* [Spring] | 2015 | SOC 355: Social Research [Spring] |
| 2016 | SOC 389: Cont. Chinese Culture [Fall] | 2014 | SOC 457: Dvlp. of Sociological Theory [Fall] |
| 2016 | SOC 343: Mass Media & Society [Spring] | 2014 | SOC 221: Culture & Society [Spring] |
| 2015 | SOC 101: Intro to Sociology [Fall] | 2013 | SOC 101: Intro to Sociology [Fall] |

*Graduate-level

DEPARTMENTAL & PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- 2026 Reviewer for *Sociological Methodology*
 2025 Reviewer for *Laws*
 2023 Graduate Proseminar lecture. "Narratives and Counter-Narratives in Religious Responses to COVID-19: A Computational Text Analysis." Techniques for Advanced Data Analysis (TADA) at Emory University.
 Reviewer for *Journal of Computational Social Science, Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, Review of Religious Research*
 2022 Reviewer for *American Sociological Review, Cultural Sociology, and Omega: Journal of Death and Dying*
 2021 Reviewer for *PLoS ONE* and *Sociological Methodology*
 2020 Graduate Proseminar. "Navigating the Academic Job Market: Tenure Track Positions and Postdocs." Dpt. of Sociology. Emory University [Spring]
 Invited Lecture. "The Rise of Kübler-Ross's Five-Stage Model of Death and Dying." Emory Undergraduate Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. [Spring]
 2019 Search Committee Member. Assistant Director for Student Support. Emory Law [Summer]
 Invited Lecture. "Digital Scholarship in the Classroom." Dpt. of Sociology. Emory University [Spring]
 Graduate Proseminar. "Developing an Online Presence." Emory University [Spring]

- Invited Lecture. "Publishing in Sociology." Dpt. of Sociology. Emory University [Spring]
- 2018 Graduate Proseminar. "Organization & Independent Learning." Emory University [Fall]
 Research in Sociology at Emory (RISE) Graduate Mentor [Fall]
 Research in Sociology at Emory (RISE) Graduate Mentor [Spring]
- 2016 Chair of Culture and Social Psychology Study Group. Emory University. [Spring]
 Southeastern Undergraduate Sociology Symposium. Session Presider. Emory University. [Spring]
- 2015 Research in Sociology at Emory (RISE) Graduate Mentor [Spring]
 New Faculty Hire Candidate Host and Guide [Spring]
- 2013-15 Department of Sociology Graduate Recruitment Committee [Spring]

SPECIALIZED TRAINING

- 2023 "An Introduction to Causal Inference" (May 22 – 26)
 Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)
 University of Michigan // Virtual
- 2021 "Agent-Based Modeling for Social Scientists" (August 2 – 13)
 Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)
 University of Michigan // Virtual
- 2021 "Word Vectors for the Thoughtful Humanist Training" (July 12 – 16)
 Northeastern University // Virtual
- 2020 "Multilevel Modeling in the Social Sciences" (June 8 – 12)
 Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)
 University of Michigan // Virtual
- 2020 "Analysis of Unstructured Text Data" (June 4)
 Data Science and Analytics Section
 Statistical Society of Canada // Virtual
- 2018 "Multilevel and Mixed Models Using R" (July 31 – Aug 1)
 Statistical Horizons (SH)
 Temple University // Philadelphia, PA
- 2018 "Machine Learning for the Analysis of Text as Data" (July 16 – 20)
 Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)
 University of North Carolina Chapel Hill // Chapel Hill, NC
- 2017 "Understanding Topic Modeling" (June 12 – 16)
 Digital Humanities Summer Institute (DHISI)
 University of Victoria // Victoria, BC

DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP

- 2021 – Present Director of Digital Scholarship
 Emory Center for the Study of Law and Religion (CSLR)
 Emory University School of Law, Atlanta, GA
- 2019 – 2021 Digital Scholarship Postdoctoral Fellow
 Emory Center for the Study of Law and Religion (CSLR)
 Emory University School of Law, Atlanta, GA
Designed and launched new digital publication Canopy Forum on the interactions of law and religion. Manage a team of seven undergraduate student assistants as we work on the center's ongoing digital scholarship efforts: main website, Canopy Forum, Scholarly Commons, Interactions podcast, video production, social media, and digital analytics.
- 2016 – 2018 Digital Scholarship Specialist II
 Emory Center for Digital Scholarship (ECDS)
 Emory University, Atlanta, GA

Authored original training materials, led bi-annual half-day workshops on R and data visualization, worked with ECDS staff / faculty on digital projects. Specialization: data visualization, text analysis, WordPress and web development.

2015 – 2016 Digital Scholarship Specialist I
 Emory Center for Digital Scholarship (ECDS)
 Emory University, Atlanta, GA

Worked with faculty, staff, and students on digital research and pedagogy-related questions. Consultation expertise: R, python, data analysis / manipulation / visualization, Canvas, WordPress, Dropbox, EmoryBox, Zotero, Trello, Slack, Timeneye, iMovie, Audacity, high-resolution scanning.

REFERENCES

Frank J. Lechner
Professor of Sociology
 Department of Sociology
 Emory University
 Email: flechn@emory.edu

Ellen L. Idler
Samuel Candler Dobbs Professor of Sociology
 Department of Sociology
 Emory University
 eidler@emory.edu

Whittney L. Barth
Executive Director
 Center for the Study of Law and Religion
 Emory University
 Email: whittney.barth@emory.edu

Timothy J. Dowd
Professor of Sociology and Department Chair
 Department of Sociology
 Emory University
 tdowd@emory.edu

John Witte, Jr.
Faculty Director
 Center for the Study of Law and Religion
 Emory University
 Email: john.witte@emory.edu