Virginia Kuulei Berndt, PhD

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McDaniel College
Department of Sociology
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ACADEMIC POSITIONS & PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS:

Assistant Professor of Sociology – McDaniel College (**2024-present)**

Managing Editor – *Sociological Forum* **(2024-present)**

Acting Department Chair of Sociology – McDaniel College **(Spring 2026)**

Assistant Professor of Sociology – Texas A&M International University **(2021-2024)**

EDUCATION:

Ph.D. – Sociology, University of Delaware **(2021)**
Comprehensive Exam Areas: Health and Sociological Theory
Dissertation: *Women's Embodied Experiences with Contraception and its Medicalization*
(Chair: Ann V. Bell, PhD)

M.A. – Sociology, Lehigh University **(2016)**
Thesis: *Different Disasters, Differential Impacts: The Effect of Droughts and Floods on Women's HIV Burden in Developing Nations* (Chair: Kelly F. Austin, PhD)

B.A. – Sociology and Philosophy, Millersville University of Pennsylvania **(2013)**
Thesis: *Life, Money, and Liberty: Religious Frames and the Contraceptive Clause of the Affordable Care Act* (Chair: Carrie Lee Smith, PhD)
Departmental Honors

A.A. – Social Sciences, Harrisburg Area Community College **(2011)**
Highest Honors

PUBLICATIONS:

BOOKS:

Brown, Brian and **Virginia Kuulei Berndt. 2023.** *Body Art (Arts for Health).* Emerald Publishing. [Link to Book Listing]

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES: (*Denotes student co-author)

Virginia Kuulei Berndt. 2026. "'How does it feel to be a problem, #bossbabe?' Repackaging the Social Problem of Unintended Pregnancy." *Global Discourse* (Online First). [DOI] (Invited)

Berndt, Virginia Kuulei and Ann V. Bell. **2024.** "Beyond knowledge: Introducing Embodied Aversion through the case of contraception." *Social Science & Medicine* 341: 116516. [DOI]

Neumann, Pamela, **Virginia Kuulei Berndt**, and Ashley Grajeda*. **2024.** "Shifting social support: Mexican-American women's navigation of pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum periods during the COVID-19 pandemic." *Social Currents* 11(3): 274-292. [DOI]

Manzer, Jamie L., **Virginia Kuulei Berndt,** and Ann V. Bell. **2023.** "Intersections between culture, contraception, knowledge and the body in the USA." *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 25(9): 1164-1179. [DOI]

Manzer, Jamie L., **Virginia Kuulei Berndt,** and Ann V. Bell. **2022.** "Comparing methods of long-acting reversible contraception: A qualitative study of Delaware women's perceptions of intrauterine devices and the implant." *Contraception* 113: 73-77. [DOI]

Berndt, Virginia Kuulei and Ann V. Bell. **2021.** "'This is what the truth is': Provider-patient interactions serving as barriers to contraception." *Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness, and Medicine* 25(5): 613-629. [DOI]

Berndt, Virginia Kuulei and Ann V. Bell. **2021.** "Contextualizing barriers to long-acting reversible contraception in Delaware." *Contraception* 103(6): 439-443. [DOI]

Berndt, Virginia Kuulei and Kelly F. Austin. **2021.** "Drought and disproportionate disease: An investigation of gendered vulnerabilities to HIV/AIDS in less-developed nations." *Population and Environment* 42(3): 379-405. [DOI]

Austin, Kelly, Mark D. Noble, and **Virginia Kuulei Berndt**. **2021.** "Drying climates and gendered suffering: Links between drought, food insecurity, and women's HIV in less-developed countries." *Social Indicators Research* 154(1): 313-334. [DOI]

Berndt, Virginia Kuulei. 2020. "Contextualizing contraceptive access in disaster settings: A comparison of state-level contraceptive refill policies, Title X clinic availability, and emergency refill laws in California, Texas, South Dakota, and New York." *Sociological Viewpoints* 34(1): 115-133. [DOI]

Berndt, Virginia Kuulei. **2018.** "Gender, disaster, and women's access to contraception and reproductive healthcare." *Sociology Compass* 12(12): e12645. [DOI]

Austin, Kelly F., Michelle Choi, and **Virginia Berndt**. **2017.** "Trading sex for security: Unemployment and the unequal HIV burden among young women in developing nations." *International Sociology* 32(3): 343-368. [DOI]

ARTICLES IN PROGRESS: (*Denotes student co-author)

Katherine Kafonek, **Virginia Kuulei Berndt,** and Payton Eckell*. "Provider Perspectives on Sexual Victimization Among Disabled Individuals." (Full draft available)

RESEARCH PROJECTS IN PROGRESS: (*Denotes student co-author)

Title: "'Reproductive Health Care Access for College Students During and After Disasters."
Co-investigator: Melissa Villarreal (ORISE)
Current stage: Survey and interview data collection and analysis in progress.

RESEARCH AND PROGRAMMATIC GRANTS:

2023-2024 – (Co-Investigator) Multi-Disciplinary Training of the Next Generation of Public Health Practitioners of South Texas, awarded to Cindy Salazar-Collier. Texas A&M International University Innovation Grant. Role: Co-Investigator. Award Amount: $47,850.

2021-2024 – (Co-Investigator) GET PHIT: Gaining Equity in Training for Public Health Informatics and Technology, awarded to Eric Boerwinkle and Jiaje Zhang. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology: The PHIT Workforce Development Program. Role: Co-Investigator, Committed effort: 20%. Subaward amount: $453,600.

2021 – (Principal Investigator) University Research Grant, Texas A&M International University: "Women's Experiences with Contraceptive Access and Use at the U.S.-Mexico Border during the COVID-19 Pandemic." Award amount: $10,000

2015 – (Principal Investigator) Dale S. Strohl Research Fellowship Award, Lehigh University: "Global Environmental Degradation and HIV/AIDS Prevalence among Women." Award amount: $5,000

COURSES TAUGHT:

UNDERGRADUATE:

Introduction to Sociology
Introduction to Sociology (Medical Focus)
Gender & Society
Health, Medicine, & Society
Medical Sociology
Sociological Theory
Sociology of Disasters
Sociology of Sexuality

GRADUATE:

Disasters & Society
Sociology of Health & Illness
Sociology of Reproduction
Women, Gender, & Health

AWARDS:

2025 – McDaniel College: Phenomenal Woman Award (Nominated)
2024 – TAMIU: Faculty Advisor of the Year (TAMIU Fashion Society) (Won)
2023 – TAMIU: Faculty Advisor of the Year (TAMIU Fashion Society) (Nominated)
2018 – Natural Hazards Center: Student Paper Competition (Won)
2016 – Lehigh University: Donald T. Campbell Social Science Research Prize (Finalist)
2016 – Lehigh University: Graduate Life Leadership Award (Honorable Mention)
2013 – Millersville University: Outstanding Sociology Senior Award (Won)

INTERVIEWS & MEDIA:

2023 – Laredo Morning Times. "Turkey-Syria Relief Effort Panel."
2022 – E&E News. "Packing a hurricane go bag? Don't forget your birth control."
2022 – Laredo Morning Times. "Sociology expert weighs in on Roe v. Wade repercussions."
2022 – Dvino Magazine. "Roe v. Wade decision could affect gay marriage."
2021 – Vox. "It's time to stop describing lifesaving health care as elective."
2021 – E&E News. "SCOTUS may limit abortion access. So might climate change."
2020 – YASS Magazine. "Virginia Berndt on body positivity & invisible illnesses awareness."
2020 – UDaily. "How is COVID-19 Impacting Delawareans?"

RESEARCH ASSISTANT EXPERIENCE:

2016-2021: University of Delaware
"Delaware Contraceptive Access Now (Del-CAN) Evaluation."
Principal Investigator: Ann V. Bell, PhD

2020: Disaster Research Center (DRC), University of Delaware
"COVID-19: Community Impacts and Adaptation Study."
Principal Investigators: Tricia Wachtendorf, PhD; James Kendra, PhD

2015-2016: Lehigh University
"Community-Based Research in Bududa, Uganda" (Remote duties from USA).
Principal Investigator: Kelly F. Austin, PhD

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:

ASA = American Sociological Association	OSSD = Organization for the Study of Sex Differences
ASC = American Society of Criminology	SFP = Society for Family Planning
ACJS = Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences	SSSP = Society for the Study of Social Problems
ESS = Eastern Sociological Society	SWS = Sociologists for Women in Society
ISA = International Sociological Association	

2026 – ASC: "Collaborative Responses in Victim Services."
2026 – SSSP: *(Invited)* "Problematizing Unintended Pregnancy."
2026 – ESS: "'Reproductive Health Care Access for College Students During and After Disasters."
2026 – ACJS: "Provider Perspectives on Sexual Victimization Among Disabled Individuals."
2025 – SSSP: "Evaluating Del-CAN: Implications for Reproductive Autonomy."
2025 – ESS: "Contraceptive Use Patterns Among women in England: 2015-2019."
2024 – ESS: "A five-year evaluation of the Del-CAN Initiative."
2024 – ESS: "Mexican-American Women's Reproductive Health Experiences during COVID-19."
2023 – SSSP: "Benefits and limitations in online chronic illness education groups."
2023 – International Workshop on HIV & Women: *(Invited)* "Impact of food insecurity."
2023 – ESS: "News coverage of the right to contraceptives post-*Dobbs*."
2022 – SSS: "Contextualizing contraceptive access in disaster settings."
2022 – ESS: "Understandings of and embodied aversion toward contraception."
2021 – ASA: "The relationship between contraception and the anatomical body."
2021 – ASA: *(Invited)* "Entering the academic job market during COVID-19."
2020 – SFP: "Provider and administrator attitudes and experiences with early LARC removal."
2020 – ASA: "An analysis of the body positive movement's past, present, and future."
2020 – SSSP: "Complicating and contextualizing barriers to LARC."
2020 – ESS: "Providers' selective incorporation of emerging contraceptive knowledge."
2020 – ESS: "Reducing unintended pregnancy by increasing access to contraception."
2019 – ASA: "Women and provider knowledges in contraceptive decision-making."
2019 – NEEDS: "Droughts and the HIV burden among women in less-developed Nations."
2019 – OSSD: "Present women's healthcare policies worsen future disaster impacts."
2019 – UD SOCCJ Conference: "Hormonal hierarchies among hysterectomy patients."
2019 – ESS: "Contraceptive knowledges and decision-making at the interactional level."
2019 – ESS: "Moving beyond the individual: Providers as potential barriers to contraception."
2018 – ISA: "The effect of droughts & floods on women's HIV burden."
2018 – Natural Hazards Workshop: "Disasters and women's access to contraceptives."
2018 – UD Grad. Student Forum: "Compromised contraceptive access in disaster settings."
2018 – ESS: "The medicalization of contraception and decision-making."
2018 – UD SOCCJ Conference: "Women's online chronic reproductive illness forums."
2017 – UD Grad. Student Forum: "IPV against young women in sugar daddy relationships."
2017 – ESS: "Complicating and contextualizing barriers to contraceptive use."
2016 – ESS: "Unemployment and the unequal HIV Burden among young women."
2014 – ESS: "Religious frames and the contraceptive clause of the Affordable Care Act."
2014 – SWS: "Religious frames and the contraceptive clause of the Affordable Care Act."

CONFERENCE ORGANIZING & PRESIDING:

2026 – SSSP: "Disasters and Health"
2025 – SSSP: "Reproductive Autonomy and the Law"
2025 – ESS: Mini-Conference on Reproduction (Co-organized 12 sessions)
2024 – ASA: "Theorizing the Body."
2024 – SSSP: "Bodily Autonomy and Health."
2024 – ESS: Mini-Conference on Reproduction (Organized 10 sessions)

2023 – SSSP: "Invisible Disabilities and the Body in Physical and Virtual Spaces."
2023 – SSSP: "Reproductive Bodies and Autonomy."
2022 – SSSP: "Reproductive Justice: Race, Intersectionality, and Health."
2021 – SSSP: "Mind, Body, and Fitness."
2021 – SSSP: "Being Made Vulnerable in COVID-19: Global Responses and Perspectives."
2018 – ASA: Roundtable – "Intimate Partner Violence."
2017 – UD Grad. Student Forum: "(en)Gendered History, Governance, & Social Institutions"

INVITED GUEST LECTURES

2025 – TAMIU: "Graduate Seminar in Sociological Theory"
2024 – University of Delaware: "Sociology of the Body"
2023 & 2026 – TAMIU: "Sociology of Gender Roles"
2023 – TAMIU: "Songs & Signs"
2023 – TAMIU: "Your Voice, My Voice, Our Voice"
2022 – TAMIU: "Social Warrior for Issues that Matter"
2021 – American University: "Power, Privilege, & Inequality"
2020 – Millersville University: "Social Statistics"
2020 – University of Florida: "Medical Sociology"
2018 – University of Central Florida: "Medical Sociology"

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

2026 – McDaniel: "The Last Lecture" (Scholars on the Hill)
2025 – McDaniel: "Droughts and Women's HIV"
2024 – TAMIU: "Social Vulnerability & Disasters"
2024 – ASA: Culture & Contemporary Life Series Panel
2023 – TAMIU: "Disaster Movies: Fact vs. Fiction"
2023 – De Montfort University: "Mentoring Needs of Conducting Sensitive Research"
2023 – TAMIU: "Turkey-Syria Earthquake Relief Effort"
2022 – TAMIU: "Ecofeminism, HIV, and Droughts"
2021 – University of Delaware: "Drying Climates and Gendered Suffering"
2020 – University of Delaware: "Hindsight is 2020: COVID-19 Community Impacts"

SELECTED ACADEMIC SERVICE:

THESES/DISSERTATIONS, EXAMINATIONS, AND FACULTY REVIEWS (*DENOTES CHAIR):

- **Master's Theses:** Ashley Denise Grajeda*, Erica Benavides Moore, Jillian Garcia
- **Dissertations:** Yanela Ndabula
- **Comprehensive Exams:** Iraida Elizondo, Angelica Ramirez
- **Pre-Tenure Review:** External Reviewer, Sociology (1 review)

MCDANIEL COLLEGE

- **Admissions Interviews:** Nursing and Occupational Therapy programs
- **Chapter Advisor:** Alpha Kappa Delta (Sociology Honor Society)
- **Job Search Committees:**
  - **For Fall 2025:** Assistant Professor, Sociology
  - **For Fall 2026:** Assistant Professor, Sociology

TEXAS A&M INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

- College of Arts & Sciences (COAS):
  - **2021-2023:** Graduate Council Member (Appointed)
  - **2022-2024:** TAMIU VOICES

- Job Search Committees:
  - **For Fall 2024:** Assistant Professor, Psychology
  - **For Fall 2023:** Visiting Assistant Professor, Art
  - **For Fall 2023:** Assistant Professor, Public Administration
  - **For Fall 2022:** Advanced Assistant/Associate Professor, Criminology
- Sociology Program:
  - **2021-2024:** Assessment Co-Coordinator (BA, MA Programs)
- **2022-2024:** TAMIU Fashion Society: Faculty Advisor
- **2022-2023:** Sames Mentorship Program: Mentor to two local high school seniors

AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (ASA) – SECTION ON THE SOCIOLOGY OF BODY & EMBODIMENT (300+ MEMBERS)

- **2020-2021; 2023-2026:** Council Member
- **2023-2024:** Co-Chair: Communications Committee
- **2020-2024:** Social Media Manager: Communications Committee
- **2019-2023:** Member: Mentorship, Nominations, & Membership Committees
- **2021:** Contributor: "Ask a Mentor" Column

SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS (SSSP)

- **2023-2025:** Health, Health Policy, and Health Services Division: Co-Chair (~150 members)
- **2023-present:** Health, Health Policy, and Health Services Division: Newsletter Editor
- **2023:** Health Division: Graduate Student Paper Award Committee
- **2022:** Sport, Leisure, and the Body Division: Graduate Student Paper Award Committee

MANUSCRIPT REFEREE SERVICE (BY JOURNAL):

BMJ Open
Body & Society
Disasters
Health
Health & Justice
Gender, Place, & Culture
Global Discourse
Health Education and Behavior
International Journal of Comparative Sociology
International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction
International Sociology
Journal of Health & Social Behavior
Qualitative Health Research
Qualitative Sociology
Social Problems
Social Science Research
Sociological Inquiry
Sociology Compass
The Lancet Planetary Health
Women's Health

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS (ACTIVE & HISTORICAL):

American Sociological Association
Eastern Sociological Society
International Sociological Association
Society for the Study of Social Problems
Sociologists for Women in Society