

## CINTHIA J. ROMO ALBA

Washington University in St. Louis  
Department of Sociology  
1 Brookings Drive, Washington University  
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phone: (314) 935-5790 | email: [cj.romoalba@wustl.edu](mailto:cj.romoalba@wustl.edu)

### **RESEARCH INTERESTS**

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Immigration & Enforcement, Racial Stratification, Qualitative & Mixed Methods

### **EDUCATION**

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Washington University in St. Louis  
PhD Student, Sociology 2021—  
MA, Sociology 2023

Grinnell College  
B.A., Sociology and French, *Honors* 2021

### **AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND HONORS**

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- Spencer T & Ann W. Olin Fellowship
- Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship 2021-2027
- Harry S. Truman Scholarship Finalist 2019-2021
- Beinecke Scholarship Nominee 2020
- Grinnell College Dean's List 2020
- QuestBridge National Match Scholar 2018-2021
- Kansas City Hispanic Development Fund Scholar 2017-2021
- 2017-2019

### **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

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#### **Working Papers:**

Master's Thesis | Washington University in St. Louis 2020—  
Title: *"They Can Murder Us Today and it Wouldn't be a Novelty:"*  
*U.S. Expulsion Policies & the Violent Structure of the U.S. Border Enforcement Matrix.*

I argue that asylum seekers' experiences at the border illuminate the ways in which the United States has created a robust enforcement network that deters, redirects, and stops migration through the persistent threat or routine exposure of migrants to violence.

Mentored Research Collaboration | Washington University in St. Louis 2021—  
Title: *Resisting Enforcement: The Civic and Political Mobilization Effects of Encountering the Immigration Enforcement System*

I am first-author on this paper with Dr. Ariela Schachter and Dr. Margot Moinester where we analyze how police & immigration enforcement contact affects civic and political engagement amongst Latinx/e and Asian immigrants

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### Working Papers Cont.:

Independent Project | Washington University in St. Louis 2022—  
Title: *Wielding Citizenshipcraft: The Cases of Liminal Citizenship in Puerto Rico and Immigrant Detention as Evidence of the Illusory Logic Behind Structures of Oppression*

Borrowing from the concept of racecraft (Fields & Fields 2012) I offer the theoretical concept of citizenshipcraft. Using the case of Puerto Rican's liminal citizenship status and the case of immigration detention as starting points, I demonstrate how citizenshipcraft is wielded to uphold structures of capitalism, racism, colonialism and heteropatriarchy.

Research Collaboration | Washington University in St. Louis 2022—  
Title: *Exploring while Exploiting: Voluntourism and the (Re)production of Coloniality through Digital Exhibitionism*

I am first-author on this paper with Garrett Pekarek where we analyze how volunteer tourists from the “West” engage in digital exhibitionism of host communities and reproduce relationships of coloniality in the online space.

### Other Research Experience:

Health & Violence in Immigrant Detention | Justice Labs of America 2019-2021  
I work in a lab with other sociologists to analyze how detention centers affect various wellness outcomes for immigrants that have been detained and the communities in which detention centers are located.

Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship | Grinnell College 2020-2021  
I completed individual research utilizing feminist methods on how asylum seekers experience life in a refugee camp at the U.S./Mexico border.

Research Assistant | Grinnell College & Waterloo Museum of Art in Waterloo, Iowa 2020  
I assisted in Haitian art history research, and the development of a publicly accessible platform that features the Waterloo Museum of Art's Hatain Art Collection through a decolonial lens.

Directed Research | Grinnell College 2022—  
I completed independent research on French media representations of refugees and asylum seekers utilizing content analysis of French newspaper articles.

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### **PRESENTATIONS**

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Tourism and Leisure Conference   Granada, Spain	2023
Title: <i>Exploring while Exploiting: Voluntourism and the (Re)production of Coloniality through Digital Exhibitionism</i>	
Law & Society Association Conference   San Juan, Puerto Rico	2023
Title: <i>Wielding Citizenshipcraft: The Cases of Liminal Citizenship in Puerto Rico and Immigrant Detention as Evidence of the Illusory Logic Behind Structures of Oppression</i>	
Inaugural Conference on Im/migrant Well-Being   St. Petersburg, FL	2023
Title: <i>Unpacking the Enforcement Matrix: Immigrant (Un)Wellness within the U.S. Border Enforcement System</i>	
Sociologists for Women in Society Conference   New Orleans, LA	2023
Title: <i>Unpacking the Enforcement Matrix: U.S. Expulsion Policies &amp; the Externalization of the Border</i>	
Immigrant Service Providers Network Conference   St. Louis, MO	2022
Title: <i>Community Engagement &amp; Collaboration: Radically Re-Imagining Immigration Systems</i>	
Law & Society Association Global Conference   Lisbon, Portugal	2022
Title: <i>Unpacking the Enforcement Matrix: The Role of Cartels in Border Enforcement</i>	
MMUF Midwest Regional Conference   Macalester College	2021
Title: <i>Navigating Life in a Liminal Place: Asylum Seekers and Multidimensional Violence at the U.S./Mexico Border</i>	
MMUF Midwest Regional Conference   Carleton College	2019
Title: <i>Negotiating Life in a Liminal Space: Immigration and Epistemic Oppression</i>	

### **ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

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- American Sociological Association  
Sections: Latina/o/x Sociology
- Law & Society Association
- Sociologists For Women in Society  
Sections: Latin & Feminist Sociology Collective

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### **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

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Mentored Teaching Collaboration   Washington University in St. Louis Teaching Assistant for Dr. Cynthia Feliciano: Introduction to Research Methods	2023
Mentored Teaching Collaboration   Washington University in St. Louis Teaching Assistant for Dr. Kiara Wyndham-Douds: Introduction to Research Methods	2022
Exploring Practices within the Classroom Program (EPIC) Program I completed an interdisciplinary program where I developed reflective teaching habits and and learned pedagogical skills.	2022
Liberal Arts in Prison Program   Newton, Iowa Correctional Facility	2018-2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Virtual Scholar Series Coordinator<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ I managed this virtual series that developed and provided educational materials to incarcerated students throughout the COVID-19 crisis.</li></ul></li><li>• Math Tutor &amp; Tutor Coordinator for incarcerated students</li><li>• French Tutor for incarcerated students</li><li>• Volunteer Teacher<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ I designed, proposed, and co-taught an interdisciplinary literature course to incarcerated students on George Orwell's <i>1984</i>.</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2020-2021</li><li>2019</li><li>2019</li><li>2018</li></ul>

### **INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE**

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Sociology Department Graduate Committee   Washington University in St. Louis	2022-2023
Latinx Race & Ethnicity Research Advisory Group   Washington University in St. Louis The Latinx Race & Ethnicity Research Unit aims to bolster support for and catalyze innovative scholarship, creative practice, and research on race, ethnicity and equity across Latin America and throughout the Latinx diaspora.	2022
Student Life Committee   Grinnell College Appointed by the Dean of Students, I collected data on student life and made recommendations for the improvement of students' academic and residential experiences	2018-2019
Dean for Health & Wellness Search & Hiring Committee   Grinnell College Appointed by the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, I interviewed and evaluated candidates for the Dean of Health & Wellness position in a collaborative setting that included administration, faculty and staff.	2019

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### **NON-ACADEMIC SERVICE**

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Migrant and Immigrant Community Action Project Legal Assistant | St. Louis, MO 2021—  
I assist in the organization of pro se asylum clinics, the intake and screening process for new clients, the filling out asylum applications, and the composing of asylum seekers' affidavits.

Restorative Justice & Practices Steering Committee Member | Grinnell College 2019-2021  
I facilitated restorative practice circles and recommended implementation tactics for restorative community practices.

Grinnell Advocates Sexual-Assault Advocate | Grinnell College 2018-2021  
I provided a confidential service to sexual assault survivors and managed the 24 sexual assault and domestic violence hotline and live chat.

El Proyecto Corazon Legal Assistant | Matamoros Tamaulipas, Mexico 2020  
I completed intake and screening for new clients, translated legal documents, composed legal briefs, filled out asylum applications and advocated for asylum seekers throughout their interactions with Customs and Border Patrol (CBP).

Dilley Pro Bono Project Legal Assistant | South Texas Family Residential Facility, Texas 2019  
I prepared detained asylum seekers for credible fear interviews at an immigration detention facility

Restorative Justice Project Intern | Belfast, Maine 2019  
I facilitated restorative conferencing circles for youth in the criminal justice system, wrote grant proposals and trained volunteers,

Grinnell Alternative Break Co-Leader | Grinnell College & Centro Romero, Chicago IL 2018-2019  
I proposed, planned, and led a cohort of peers on a service trip to volunteer with Centro Romero, an immigrant non-profit organization. I implemented embodied learning practices for peers on the trip through the exploration of immigrant museums, enclaves, and culture hubs in Chicago.

### **LANGUAGES & SKILLS**

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#### ***Languages***

Fluent      Proficient

Spanish      French  
English

#### ***Software***

- STATA
- NVivo
- ArcGIS Pro
- Slate
- AirTable
- Basecamp
- Zotero