

Ben Merriman

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EMPLOYMENT

Associate Professor, School of Public Affairs & Administration, University of Kansas 2022 - present
(Department of Sociology by Courtesy)

Assistant Professor, School of Public Affairs & Administration, University of Kansas 2016 - 2022

EDUCATION

2016 Ph.D., Sociology, University of Chicago

2010 A.M., Sociology, University of Chicago

2008 B.A., Sociology, James Madison University

PUBLICATIONS

Books

2025 Merriman, Ben. *The Kansas Court of Industrial Relations: Interwar America's Dangerous Experiment in Social Control*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

2019 Merriman, Ben. *Conservative Innovators: How States are Challenging Federal Power*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Articles

2026 Merriman, Ben. "How Was Democracy under the Administrative Presidency Supposed to Work?" *Public Administration Review* 86(5): 1225-1234.

2025 Merriman, Ben. "Overturning *Chevron* Won't Change Much—And What Was So Great About *Chevron*, Anyway?" *Administration & Society* 57(6): 859-875.

2022 Merriman, Ben, and Josh Pacewicz. "The Great Interstate Divergence: Partisan Bureaucracies in the Contemporary United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 127(4): 1221-1266.

2022 Merriman, Ben, and Jeffrey N. Parker. "Voting Rights and the Cloak of Administrative Incompetence." *Wake Forest Journal of Law & Policy* 12(1): 1-60.

- 2021 Merriman, Ben. "Public Management's Problems are Legal Problems: How Law Contributes to Inequity in Contemporary Governance." *Perspectives on Public Management and Governance* 4(2): 213-228.
- 2021 Merriman, Ben. "Peer Review as an Evolving Response to Organizational Constraint: Evidence from Sociology Journals, 1952-2018." *American Sociologist* 52(2): 341-366.
- 2021 Owens, B. Robert, and Ben Merriman. "Habit and Creativity in Judges' Definition and Framing of Legal Questions." *Theory & Society* 50(5): 741-767.
- 2020 Merriman, Ben. "Parties and American Administration." *Perspectives on Public Management and Governance* 3(1): 13-18.
- 2019 Merriman, Ben. "Establishing the Conservative Phenomenon." *Sociological Quarterly* 60(3): 354-370.
- 2017 Merriman, Ben. "Testing the Great Lakes Compact: Administrative Politics and the Challenge of Environmental Adaptation." *Politics & Society* 45(3): 441-466.
- 2017 Merriman, Ben. "The Editorial Meeting at a Little Magazine: An Ethnography of Group Judgment." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 46(4): 440-463.
- 2015 Merriman, Ben, and Santiago J. Molina. "Variable Conceptions of Population in Community Resource Genetic Projects: A Challenge for Governance." *New Genetics & Society* 34(3): 294-318.
- 2015 Merriman, Ben. "Duels in the European Novel: Honor, Reputation, and the Limits of a Bourgeois Form." *Cultural Sociology* 9(2): 203-219.
- 2015 Merriman, Ben. "Three Conceptions of Spatial Locality in Chicago School Sociology (and Their Significance Today)." *American Sociologist* 46(2): 269-287.
- 2014 Merriman, Ben. "Ethical Issues in the Employment of User-generated Content as Experimental Stimulus: Defining the Interests of Creators." *Research Ethics* 10(4): 196-207.
- 2010 Merriman, Ben. "Gender Differences in Family and Peer Reactions to the Adoption of a Vegetarian Diet." *Feminism and Psychology* 20(3): 420-427.

Book Chapters

- 2021 Merriman, Ben. "Art or the Aesthetic? The Relevance of the Classical Sociology of Art for the Current Sociology of Culture." Pp. 399-417 in *Handbook of Classical Sociological Theory*, Abrutyn & Lizardo, eds.
- 2018 Merriman, Ben. "Modern State-Federal Conflict: The Central Role of Administration and Administrative Law." Pp. 67-80 in *Handbook of American Public Administration*, Frederickson & Stazyk, eds.

- 2015 Martin, John Levi, and Ben Merriman. "A Social Aesthetics as a General Cultural Sociology?" Pp. 132-148 in *International Handbook of the Sociology of Art and Culture*, Hanquinet & Savage, eds.

Reviews, Comments, etc.

- Forthcoming. Merriman, Ben. "Review of *The Loyalty Trap* by Jaime Lee Kucinkas." *Contemporary Sociology*.
- 2025 Merriman, Ben. "Coming Soon to a State Capitol near You: The 1920s?" ASA Political Sociology Section Newsletter, Fall/Winter: 24-26.
- 2025 Merriman, Ben, and Jeffrey Parker. "Chicago School." Pp. 110-115 in *Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, Barney Warf, ed. Cham: Springer.
- 2022 Merriman, Ben. "Review of *Fighting Political Gridlock* by David J. Toscano." *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 52(2): e31-e33.
- 2021 Merriman, Ben. "Review of *Partisan Supremacy* by Terri Jennings Peretti." *Perspectives on Politics* 19(3): 1007-1008.
- 2021 Epp, Chuck, Ben Merriman, Rosemary O'Leary, and Shannon Portillo. "Introduction to the Symposium Issue on 'Law and Governance.'" *Perspectives on Public Management and Governance* 4(2): 95-99.
- 2021 Merriman, Ben, and Jeffrey Parker. "Want to Protect Voting Rights? Do an Empirical Study." ASA Political Sociology Section Newsletter, Fall/Winter: 3-4.
- 2020 Merriman, Ben. "Review of *Red State Blues* by Matt Grossmann." *American Journal of Sociology* 126(2): 477-479.
- 2020 Merriman, Ben. "Review of *Good Enough for Government Work* by Amy E. Lerman." *Contemporary Sociology* 49(5):447-449.
- 2020 Merriman, Ben. "Review of *Bending the Rules* by Rachel Potter and *Hyper-Active Governance* by Matthew Wood." *Interest Groups & Advocacy* 9(1): 121-125.
- 2018 Merriman, Ben. "Review of *Under the Cover* by Clayton Childress." *American Journal of Sociology* 124(1): 253-255.
- 2016 Merriman, Ben. "A Duty to Explain." *Management Matters* 14(2): 4-5.
- 2015 Merriman, Ben. "'Editing': A Productive Metaphor for Regulating CRISPR." *American Journal of Bioethics* 15(12): 62-64.

General Readership

- 2024 Merriman, Ben. "Informed Optimism: How Kansas Became a Local Government Leader in the 1920s." *Kansas Government Journal* 110(2): 53-55.
- 2019 Merriman, Ben. "State Governments are Among the Biggest Threats to Higher Ed – So Why Don't More Scholars Study Them?" *Chronicle of Higher Education* August 7, 2019.
- 2017 Merriman, Ben. "Rewriting the Rules of Art: Pierre Bourdieu's *Manet: A Symbolic Revolution*." *Los Angeles Review of Books*.
- 2017 Merriman, Ben. "The Great Lakes Compact: How Political Divisions Shape Environmental Decisions." American Sociological Association *Work in Progress* blog.
- 2017 Merriman, Ben. "Learning from Mistakes: Howard S. Becker's *Evidence*." *Los Angeles Review of Books*.
- 2016 Merriman, Ben. "Caught in the Middle." *Chronicle of Higher Education* 63(14): B14-B15.
- 2015 Merriman, Ben. "A Science of Literature." *Boston Review* 40(4): 49-54.
- 2015 Merriman, Ben. "Lessons of the Arkansas." Pp. 141-156 in *City by City: Dispatches from the American Metropolis*, Keith Gessen and Stephen Squibb, eds. New York: Faber and Faber.
- 2015 Merriman, Ben. "A New Deal for the Colorado River." *Boston Review* online, March 9, 2015.
- 2014 Merriman, Ben. "Genetic Code." *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas* 34: 73-85.
- 2014 Merriman, Ben. "Why Doubt is a Scientific Virtue Worth Supporting." *Chronicle of Higher Education* online, June 30, 2014.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Merriman, Ben. "The 'Professional Mortality' Problem in Early City Management: A Study of Organized Denial." [Revised & Resubmitted, *Public Administration Review*]

Alvord, Daniel R., and Ben Merriman. "Implementing Immigrant-Inclusive State Policy: The Case of State EITCs for ITIN Filers." [Revised & Resubmitted, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*]

Merriman, Ben. "The Accidental Rise of Ad Hoc Refereeing in American Social Science Journals, 1965 to 1980."

AWARDS AND HONORS

- 2016 Finalist, British Sociological Association/SAGE Prize for Innovation & Excellence
- 2015 Park Lectureship, University of Chicago, Dept. of Sociology
- 2015 Robert Dentler Award, ASA Sociological Practice & Public Sociology Section

2014 Graduate Student Paper Award, ASA History of Sociology Section
2010 Outstanding Graduate Student Paper, ASA Animals & Society Section
2009 Outstanding Graduate Student Paper, ASA Animals & Society Section
2008 Junior Fellow, American Academy of Political and Social Sciences

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

2017 New Faculty Research Grant, University of Kansas
2014 Henderson Dissertation Fellowship, University of Chicago, Dept. of Sociology
2014 Summer Research Grant, University of Chicago, Social Sciences Division
2014 Overseas Travel Grant, University of Chicago, GSA
2014 Bidwell Fund Travel Grant, University of Chicago, Dept. of Sociology
2013 Urban Doctoral Fellow, University of Chicago, Urban Network
2013 *American Journal of Sociology* Editorial Fellowship
2011 Archive Research Fellowship, Dole Institute of Politics, U. of Kansas
2011 ASA Student Forum Travel Award
2008 Social Sciences Doctoral Fellowship, University of Chicago

PRESENTATIONS

Invited Presentations

2024 “A Bold Vision Forgotten: Local Government in Kansas in the 1920s—And Why it Matters Today,” Kansas City/County Managers Conference, Lawrence, KS.

2024 “Informed Optimism: How Kansas Became a Local Government Leader in the 1920s,” National League of Cities Centennial Roadshow Kickoff, Lawrence, KS.

2020 “Voting Rights and the Cloak of Administrative Incompetence,” Wake Forest Journal of Law and Policy Symposium, Winston-Salem, NC. (w/ Jeffrey Parker)

2020 “Voting Rights as an Administrative Problem,” Department of Sociology Colloquium, Brown University, Providence, RI.

2018 “Establishing the Conservative Phenomenon.” 20th Annual Chicago Ethnography Conference, Chicago, IL.

2017 “After the EPA: Preparing for the Subnational Future of American Environmental Policy,” Department of Science and Mathematics, MidAmerica Nazarene University, Olathe, KS.

2016 “Water Governance and Prospective Environmental Justice in the Great Lakes Region: The Case of Waukesha, WI,” Urban Workshop, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL.

Conference Presentations

2025 “What Can We Learn from the Resilience of the Pre-New Deal Administrative State?” American Society for Public Administration Annual Meeting, Washington, DC.

- 2023 “Conservative Policy Innovation: The Next Five Years.” American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA. (Presented by Amy Binder)
- 2021 “The Partisan Professionalization of American Elections Administration.” Social Science History Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA. (Virtual Presentation)
- 2021 “Enhancing Staffing and Skill Levels in Local Election Administration: A Post-Pandemic Research and Policy Agenda.” American Society for Public Administration Annual Conference.
- 2019 “Federalism, Regionalism, and the Central Role of Universities in Post-War American Literary Production.” Social Science History Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.
- 2019 “The Judicialization of the American Political Imagination.” Social Science History Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.
- 2019 “Unrepresentative Institutions and the Fortunes of Popular Nationalism: Timing Matters.” American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, New York, NY.
- 2018 “Why Does the U.S. Supreme Court Cite so Little Economics?” Social Science History Association Annual Meeting, Phoenix, Arizona. (w/ B. Robert Owens)
- 2018 “The Great Divergence: How Advocacy Organizations, Attorneys and Bureaucrats Use State Government to Disarticulate Federal Policy,” American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA. (w/ John Pacewicz)
- 2018 “A Divergence, not a Rupture: State Political Ecologies and the Disarticulation of Federal Policy,” Comparative & Historical Sociology Mini-Conference, Philadelphia, PA. (w/ Josh Pacewicz)
- 2018 “How can an Agency Lose? A Study of U.S. Federal Appellate Reasoning about Administrative Discretion,” Law & Society Association Annual Meeting, Toronto, Canada. (w/ Kevin Campbell)
- 2017 “The Persistent Importance of Librarianship in the Digital Age of Knowledge.” Social Science History Association Annual Meeting, Montreal, Canada.
- 2017 “Field Theory and the Assumption of Autonomy,” American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Montreal, Canada. (w/ John Levi Martin)
- 2017 “The Violence of Party: On the Role of Honor Culture in the Genesis of Political Fields,” Junior Theorists Symposium, Montreal, Canada.
- 2017 “The Use of Social Science in U.S. Supreme Court Decisions, 1947-2013: Findings and New Questions from a Comprehensive Dataset,” (with B. Robert Owens) Law & Society Association Annual Meeting, Mexico City, Mexico.

- 2016 “Administrative Centralization and the Progressive Era Origins of Contemporary Restrictive Voting Laws,” Social Science History Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.
- 2016 “Conservatives as Innovators: The Use of Novel Administrative Forms to Achieve Policy Goals in Kansas,” Midwest Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.
- 2015 “How to Become a Public Sociologist: A Semi-practical Guide,” Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.
- 2015 “The Styrofoam Statehouse: The Creation of Pseudo-Public Spheres in US State Government,” Media Sociology Preconference, Chicago, IL.
- 2015 “The Office of the Repealer: Citizen and Legislative Engagement with a Novel Political Agency,” Eastern Sociological Society Annual Meeting, New York, NY.
- 2014 “A Social Aesthetics as a General Cultural Sociology?” (with John Levi Martin) ASA Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA.
- 2014 “Explaining Early Career Gender Inequality in Literary Publishing,” CITASA Symposium, Berkeley, CA.
- 2014 “New Answers to Old Questions? Conservative Activism and the Economic Crisis,” Annual Seminar, Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology, Bielefeld, Germany.
- 2014 “Unmaking the Anticommons: Copyright for Donor Protection and Scientific Openness in Human Genetic Research,” Infrastructures of Creativity, Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, IL.
- 2013 “Spatial Scales as Social Processes: Propositions for an Ecology of Scales,” Social Science History Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.
- 2013 “When Anti-statists Govern: Kansas, 2010-2013,” Graduate Student Conference on Conservative and Center Right Politics, Center for European Studies, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
- 2013 “Duels in the European Novel: Class, Status, and the Limits of Bourgeois Sensibility,” Workshop on the Media of Time-specific Cultural Patterns, Center for Interdisciplinary Research (ZiF), Bielefeld, Germany.
- 2013 “The Dilemma of Openness: Risk to Populations in the International HapMap and 1000 Genomes Projects,” (with Santiago J. Molina), ASA Annual Meeting, New York, NY.
- 2013 “Three Conceptions of Spatial Locality in Chicago School Sociology (and Their Significance Today),” Reenvisioning the History of Sociology Symposium, New York, NY.
- 2013 “Epistemic Orphans and the Construction of Risk in Studies of Human Population Genetics: The Case of the International HapMap Project,” (with Santiago J. Molina), Midwest Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.

2012 “Toward a World-Systems Explanation of Demographic and Economic Decline on the Central Plains,” ASA Annual Meeting, Denver, CO.

2011 “The Editorial Board Meeting at a Literary Magazine: A Preliminary Report on Literary Judgment.” ASA Annual Meeting, Las Vegas, NV.

Workshop and Intramural Presentations

2024 “Overturning *Chevron* Won’t Change Much—And What Was So Great About *Chevron*, Anyway?” Center for Democratic Governance, University of Kansas.

2016 “Contemporary American Conservatism: An Analogue of the Progressive Era,” Department of Sociology, University of Kansas.

2014 “Explaining With Space,” Urban Doctoral Fellows Research Colloquium, Urban Network, University of Chicago.

2014 “Causes of Early Career Gender Inequality in Literary Publishing: Hypotheses from Scientific Fields,” Gender and Sexualities Working Group, University of Chicago.

2014 “Duels and Democratization: European Novels and the Limits of a Bourgeois Form,” Social Theory Workshop, University of Chicago.

2013 “What is a Spatial Scale?: A Contribution to the Theorization of Space and Region,” Workshop on City, Society, and Space, University of Chicago.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Courses Taught: Doctoral

Qualitative Methods in Public Administration, University of Kansas
Public Administration and Democracy, University of Kansas

Courses Taught: Undergraduate

Hard Choices in Public Administration, University of Kansas
Capstone in Law & Society, University of Kansas
The Pursuit of Rights: Law, Democracy & Power, University of Kansas
Theoretical Foundations of Law & Society, University of Kansas
Introduction to Law & Society, University of Kansas
Methods in Law & Society, University of Kansas
Opposing the State, University of Chicago
Self, Culture and Society 1, University of Chicago
Technology and Social Change, Illinois Institute of Technology

Dissertation Committee Member

David Martinez (Education, 2026)
 Cassandra Osei (Public Administration, 2026)
 Walter Goettlich (Sociology, 2025)
 D'Arlyn Bell (Public Administration, 2025)
 Morgan Farnworth (Public Administration, 2024)
 Kevin Campbell (Public Administration, 2023)
 Andrew Osorio (Public Administration, 2022)
 Daniel Alvord (Sociology, 2019)
 Jyleesa Hampton (Public Administration, in progress)
 Inoru Morris (Public Administration, in progress)
 Heather Shurtliff (Public Administration, in progress)
 Michael Thompson (Public Administration, in progress)

SERVICE

University and Professional Service

2023- Director, Doctoral Program, SPAA
 2021-2023 Member, Doctoral Program Committee, SPAA
 2019-2020 Member, Committee on Sabbatical Leaves, University of Kansas
 2019-2022 Faculty Facilitator, Problem Solving Sociology Dissertation Proposal Wkshp.
 2019 Reviewer, Undergraduate Research Award, Center for Undergraduate Rsch, University of Kansas
 2019 Mentor, ASA Sociology of Law Section Mentorship Event
 2018 Travel Grant Peer Review Committee, Hall Center for the Humanities, University of Kansas
 2017-2021 Member, Undergrad Committee, SPAA
 2012 Associate Editor, *American Journal of Sociology*
 2011 Associate Editor, Book Review, *American Journal of Sociology*
 2010 Manuscript Board, *American Journal of Sociology*
 2009 Social Science Representative, Library Student Resource Group
 2009 President, Society for Social Research
 2008 Representative to Graduate Students United, Society for Social Research

Reviewer

<i>Acta Sociologica</i>	<i>Administration & Society</i>
<i>American Journal of Sociology</i>	<i>American Political Science Review</i>
<i>American Review of Public Administration</i>	<i>American Sociological Review</i>
<i>American Sociologist</i>	<i>Contexts</i>
<i>Cultural Sociology</i>	<i>Environmental Sociology</i>
<i>Law & Policy</i>	<i>Medical Humanities</i>
<i>Minerva</i>	<i>Philosophy of the Social Sciences</i>
<i>Poetics</i>	<i>Perspectives on Public Management & Governance</i>
<i>Public Administration Review</i>	<i>Publius: The Journal of Federalism</i>
<i>Social Currents</i>	<i>Social Science Quarterly</i>
<i>Sociological Theory</i>	<i>Sociology</i>
Columbia University Press	

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