



ASSOCIATION FOR APPLIED & CLINICAL SOCIOLOGY
Sociology at Work

2025 Annual Meeting Speakers

St. Louis, Missouri

October 16th–19th 2025



Plenary Panel:

“Addressing Social Problems in Missouri: From Scholarship to Equity”

This panel will feature several Missouri-based scholars who are addressing social problems - such as food security, housing security, and gentrification in the state of Missouri. Although their scholarship specifically focuses on these issues in Missouri — there are implications for addressing them as global social problems.

Keynote Address: James M Thomas, PhD

James M. Thomas (JT), also known by his social media handle “The Insurgent Professor”, is associate professor of sociology at the University of Mississippi, and co-editor of *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*. He is the author or co-author of five books, and over forty journal articles, book chapters, and invited essays on the causes and consequences of race and racism in America and abroad. His research has been funded by the American Sociological Association, the National Science Foundation, and the Russell Sage Foundation, and has been featured in popular media outlets like *The New Yorker*, *The Washington Post*, and *Pacific Standard*. JT is deeply dedicated to public scholarship, regularly writing for mainstream outlets like *The Mississippi Free Press*, serving on the boards of non-profit organizations, and giving public lectures on race, racism, and inequality to academic and lay audiences alike. JT’s most recent book is *The Souls of Jewish Folk: W.E.B. Du Bois, Antisemitism, and the Color Line* (University of Georgia Press, 2023).



Plenary Speaker: Yasser A. Payne, PhD

Yasser Arafat Payne is a professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice and Africana Studies at the University of Delaware. He holds a joint appointment as an associate professor with the Department of Africana Studies at UD. Payne’s street ethnographic research program examines policing and reentry; economic well-being and educational inequality; and gun violence with street-identified Black-Americans by utilizing Street Participatory Action Research (Street PAR) — the process of doing research and activism with street identified populations. Payne’s work has appeared in *Journal of Urban Health*, *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *Sociological Forum*, *Sociology Compass* and *Race & Justice*. Payne and his colleagues have also authored the book project: *Murder Town USA: Homicide, Structural Violence and Activism in Wilmington* (Rutgers University Press, 2023).



Presidential Address: Lindy S. F. Hern, PhD

“From PK to Scholar-Activist: Continuing the Fight for Social Justice in a Dystopian Context”

Lindy Hern is an Associate Professor in and Chair of the Department of Sociology at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo. Known as a scholar-activist, Dr. Hern has extensively studied the grassroots “Medicare for All” movement in the U.S., emphasizing its growth within progressive social movements and the critical role of narrative practice in mobilizing public support for healthcare reform. Her recent book, *Single Payer Healthcare Reform: Grassroots Mobilization and the Turn Against Establishment Politics in the Medicare for All Movement*, provides a detailed analysis of how the movement has evolved in response to U.S. political shifts, examining how activism has been shaped by opportunities and challenges over different eras. Beyond her work on healthcare reform, Dr. Hern has researched student retention and community responses to natural disasters. She frequently engages with the public through lectures and discussions, where she shares insights into the interplay between activism and social policy, particularly around universal healthcare systems. Her academic and activist efforts underscore her commitment to social justice, with a focus on accessible healthcare and community resilience.



More Information: [2025 Conference – AACCS](#)