

# PATRICIA A. THOMAS

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Department of Sociology  
Purdue University  
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West Lafayette, IN 47907

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*Last updated: March 2025*

## EDUCATION

**Ph.D. Sociology**, Duke University (2010)

- **Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies**, Duke University (2010)

**M.A. Sociology**, Duke University (2007)

*Qualifying Exams*: Medical Sociology and Stratification

**B.A. Sociology and American Studies**, California State University, Fullerton (2005)

*Summa cum laude* (and with University Honors)

## ACADEMIC POSITIONS

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 2024 – present | Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Sociology, Purdue University               |
| 2019 – present | Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Purdue University                        |
| 2013 – present | Faculty Associate, Center on Aging and the Life Course,<br>Purdue University           |
| 2013 – 2019    | Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Purdue University                        |
| 2010 – 2013    | NICHD Postdoctoral Fellow<br>Population Research Center, University of Texas at Austin |

## PUBLICATIONS

(\*denotes graduate student co-author, +denotes undergraduate student co-author)

\*Nemeth, Samuel R., **Patricia A. Thomas**, +Cassidy M. Stoddart, and Kenneth F. Ferraro. (forthcoming). "[Racial and Ethnic Differences in Community Belonging and its Impact on Cognitive Function in Older Adults](#)." *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*.

**Thomas, Patricia A.**, Elizabeth Teas, Elliot Friedman, Lisa L. Barnes, \*Madison R. Sauerteig-Rolston, and Kenneth F. Ferraro. (forthcoming). "[Early-Life Parental Affection, Social Relationships in Adulthood, and Later-Life Cognitive Function](#)." *Journal of Aging and Health*.

- Friedman, Elliot, **Patricia A. Thomas**, \*Madison R. Sauerteig-Rolston, Lisa L. Barnes, and Kenneth F. Ferraro. (forthcoming). [Sustained purpose in life is associated with slower cognitive decline in older adults: A longitudinal analysis with a diverse national sample.](#) *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Science*.
- Ferraro, Kenneth F., \*Madison R. Sauerteig-Rolston, Shawn Bauldry, **Patricia A. Thomas**. (forthcoming). [“Disparities in the Life Course Origins of Dual Functionality.”](#) *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*.
- \*Sauerteig-Rolston, Madison R., Lisa L. Barnes, **Patricia A. Thomas**, Jacqueline L. Angel, and Kenneth F. Ferraro. 2025. [“Religious Involvement and Cognitive Function Among White, Black, and Hispanic Older Adults.”](#) *Research on Aging* 47(2): 116-127.
- Bauldry, Shawn, **Patricia A. Thomas**, \*Madison R. Sauerteig-Rolston, and Kenneth F. Ferraro. 2024. [“Educational Inequalities in Dual-Function Life Expectancy.”](#) *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 79(7): gbae072.
- Friedman, Elliot, Melissa Franks, \*Elizabeth Teas, and **Patricia A. Thomas**. 2024. [“Social Connectedness, Functional Capacity, and Longevity: A Focus on Positive Relations with Others.”](#) *Social Science and Medicine* 340: 116419.
- \*Cha, Hyungmin and **Patricia A. Thomas**. 2023. [“A Time of Healing: Can Social Engagement after Bereavement Reduce Trajectories of Depression after the Death of a Child?”](#) *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 78(10): 1717-1726.
- Ferraro, Kenneth F., Shawn Bauldry, \*Madison R. Sauerteig-Rolston, **Patricia A. Thomas**. 2023. [“Dual Functionality in Later Life.”](#) *The Gerontologist* 63: 1110-1116.
- Bauldry, Shawn, **Patricia A. Thomas**, \*Madison R. Sauerteig-Rolston, Kenneth F. Ferraro. 2023. [“Racial-Ethnic Disparities in Dual-Function Life Expectancy.”](#) *Journal of Gerontology: Medical Sciences* 78(7): 1369-1275.
- Upenieks, Laura and **Patricia A. Thomas**. 2023. [“Matters of the Heart: Childhood Maltreatment, Religious Transitions, and Cardiovascular Problems over the Life Course.”](#) *Journal of Aging and Health* 35(5-6): 405-418.
- Ferraro, Kenneth F., \*Madison Sauerteig-Rolston, Lisa L. Barnes, Elliot Friedman, Laura P. Sands, **Patricia A. Thomas**. 2023. [“Subjective Memory Decline Predicts Incident Cognitive Impairment among White—but Not Black or Hispanic—Older Adults.”](#) *The Gerontologist* 63(4): 690-699.
- Thomas, Patricia A.**, Elizabeth A. Richards, and \*Anna K. Forster. 2022. [“Is Marital Quality Related to Physical Activity Across the Life Course?”](#) *Journal of Aging and Health* 34(6-8): 973-983.
- \*Cha, Hyungmin, **Patricia A. Thomas**, and Debra Umberson. 2022. [“Sibling Deaths, Racial/Ethnic Disadvantage, and Dementia in Later Life.”](#) *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 77(8): 1539-1549.

- Thomas, Patricia A.**, \*Monica Williams-Farrelly, \*Madison Sauerteig, and Kenneth Ferraro. 2022. "[Childhood Stressors, Relationship Quality, and Cognitive Health in Later Life.](#)" *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 77(7): 1361-1371.
- \*Kemp, Blakelee R., Kenneth F. Ferraro, Patricia M. Morton, **Patricia A. Thomas**, Sarah A. Mustillo, and Eileen Crimmins. 2022. "[Do Early-Life Social, Behavioral, and Health Exposures Increase Later-Life Arthritis Incidence?](#)" *Research on Aging* 44(7-8): 479-493.
- Upenieks, Laura and **Patricia A. Thomas**. 2021. "[Gaining Faith, Losing Faith: How Education Shapes the Relationship Between Religious Transitions and Later Depression.](#)" *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 62(4): 582-598.
- Thomas, Patricia A.** and Seoyoun Kim. 2021. "[Lost Touch? Implications of Physical Touch for Physical Health.](#)" *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 76(3): e111–e115.
- Gauthier, G. Robin, Jeffery Smith, Catherine García, Marc A. García, and **Patricia A. Thomas**. 2021. "[Exacerbating Inequalities: Social Networks, Racial/Ethnic Disparities, and the COVID-19 Pandemic.](#)" *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 76(3): e88-e92.
- Thomas, Patricia A.**, Amy Lodge, and Corinne Reczek. 2019. "[Do Support and Strain with Adult Children Affect Mothers' and Fathers' Physical Activity?](#)" *Research on Aging*, vol. 41(2): 164-185.
- \*Kim, Seoyoun and **Patricia A. Thomas**. 2019. "[Direct and Indirect Pathways from Social Support to Health?](#)" *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 74 (6):1072–1080.  
[**Awards:** Recipient of *The Innovative Research on Aging Bronze Award*, Mather Institute]
- Thomeer, Mieke Beth, Elaine Hernandez, Debra Umberson, and **Patricia A. Thomas**. 2019. "[Influence of Social Connections on Smoking Behavior across the Life Course.](#)" *Advances in Life Course Research* 42: 100294.
- Thomas, Patricia A.** and Mieke Beth Thomeer. 2019. "[Why Sons Hurt: Exploring Biological and Social Mechanisms Influencing Maternal Health.](#)" *Journal of Gerontology: Biological Sciences* 74(5): 652-654.
- Richards, Elizabeth A., **Patricia A. Thomas**, \*Anna K. Forster, Zachary Hass. 2019. "[A Longitudinal Examination of the Impact of Major Life Events on Physical Activity.](#)" *Health Education & Behavior* 46(3): 398-405.
- Thomas, Patricia A.** and Debra Umberson. 2018. "[Do Older Adults' Relationships with Their Adult Children Affect Cognitive Limitations, and Does this Differ for Mothers and Fathers?](#)" *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 73(6): 1133-1142.  
[**Awards:** Recipient of the *Burkhart Award for Excellence in Research about Families*, Purdue University]

- Thomas, Patricia A.**, Hui Liu, and Debra Umberson. 2017. "[Family Relationships and Well-Being](#)." *Innovation in Aging* 1(3): 1-11, igx025.
- Umberson, Debra, Mieke Beth Thomeer, Kristi Williams, **Patricia A. Thomas**, and Hui Liu. 2016. "[Childhood Adversity and Men's Relationships in Adulthood: Life Course Processes and Racial Disadvantage](#)." *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 71(5): 902-913.
- Thomas, Patricia A.** 2016. "[The Impact of Relationship-Specific Support and Strain on Depressive Symptoms across the Life Course](#)." *Journal of Aging & Health* 28(2): 363-382.
- \*Xu, Minle, **Patricia A. Thomas**, and Debra Umberson. 2016. "[Marital Quality and Cognitive Limitations in Late Life](#)." *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 71(1): 165-176.
- Umberson, Debra, Kristi Williams, **Patricia A. Thomas**, Hui Lui, and \*Mieke Thomeer. 2014. "[Race, Gender, and Chains of Disadvantage: Childhood Adversity, Social Relationships, and Health](#)." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, vol. 55(1): 20-38.
- Zheng, Hui and **Patricia A. Thomas**. 2013. "[Marital Status, Self-Rated Health, and Mortality: Overestimation of Health or Diminishing Protection of Marriage?](#)" *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, vol. 54(1): 128-143.
- Thomas, Patricia A.** 2012. "[Trajectories of Social Engagement and Mortality in Late Life](#)." *Journal of Aging & Health*, vol. 24(4): 547-568.
- Sautter, Jessica, **Patricia A. Thomas**, Matthew E. Dupre, and Linda K. George. 2012. "[Socioeconomic Status and the Black-White Mortality Crossover](#)." *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 102(8): 1566-1571.
- \*McFarland, Michael J., \*Cheryl A. Smith, Loren L. Toussaint, and **Patricia A. Thomas**. 2012. "[The Relationship between Forgiveness of Others and Health: Do Race and Neighborhood Matter?](#)" *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, vol. 67B(1): 66-75.
- Thomas, Patricia A.** 2011. "[Trajectories of Social Engagement and Limitations in Late Life](#)." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, vol. 52(4): 430-443.
- Thomas, Patricia A.** 2011. "[Gender, Social Engagement, and Limitations in Late Life](#)." *Social Science & Medicine*, vol. 73: 1428-1435.
- Thomas, Patricia A.** 2010. "[Is It Better to Give or to Receive? Social Support and the Well-Being of Older Adults](#)." *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, vol. 65B(3): 351-357.
- Thomas, Patricia A.**, Edythe M. Krampe, and Rae R. Newton. 2008. "[Father Presence, Family Structure, and Feelings of Closeness to the Father among Adult African American Children](#)." *Journal of Black Studies*, vol. 38(4): 529-546.

## INVITED BOOK CHAPTERS AND BOOK REVIEWS

**Thomas, Patricia A.** “[The Golden Years Are Not so Golden for Some](#).” 2020. *The Gerontologist*, vol. 60(3): 588-589.

**Thomas, Patricia A.** 2008. “The Shifting Roles of Fathers and the Consequences of Father Absence and Presence.” in *Battleground: The Family*, vol. 1, edited by Kimberly P. Brackett. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

## UNDER REVIEW

Sauerteig-Rolston, Madison R., **Patricia A. Thomas**, Shawn Bauldry, Elizabeth A. Richards, Kenneth F. Ferraro. Are Relationship Patterns between Parents and Adult Children Associated with ADL Disability Risk in Later Life? (Revise & Resubmit at *Journal of Aging and Health*).

## GRANTS AWARDED (Extramural)

February 2020 – Jan 2024. Role: Co-Investigator. PI: Ken Ferraro. R01: “Childhood Misfortune and Adult Health among Black, White, and Hispanic Americans,” Funded by the National Institute on Aging. Budget: \$824,948; grant # R01AG043544-04 (converted to RF1AG043544, August 2020).

September 2020 – Aug 2024. Role: Co-Investigator. PI: Ken Ferraro. R01: “Disparities in the Life Course Origins of Cognitive Decline.” Funded by the National Institute on Aging. Budget: \$675,256; grant # RF1AG068388.

## AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 2024        | Kofmehl Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching Award, Purdue University                             |
| 2022        | Recognized as Fellow, Gerontological Society of America (FGSA), the highest class of membership |
| 2020        | The Innovative Research on Aging Award Bronze Award, Mather Institute                           |
| 2018        | Burkhart Award for Excellence in Research about Families, Purdue University                     |
| 2017        | Daryl P. Evans Outstanding Teaching Award, Department of Sociology, Purdue University           |
| Summer 2014 | RAND Summer Institute on Aging, Full Scholarship  |
| 2009 – 2010 | Phillip Jackson Baugh Fellowship (for aging research), Duke University                          |

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|-------------|---|
| Spring 2005 | Outstanding Undergraduate Award, California State University, Fullerton |
| Spring 2005 | Academic Achievement Award, California State University, Fullerton      |
| Summer 2004 | American Sociological Association Honors Program, San Francisco, CA     |
| 2001 – 2005 | President's Scholarship, California State University, Fullerton         |

### **SELECTED PRESENTATIONS (since 2013)**

Cha, Hyungmin, \*Samuel Nemeth, Patricia A. Thomas, and Debra Umberson. "More Deaths of Family Members Predict Higher Inflammation, but Biopsychosocial Mechanisms Mediate Differently between Black and White Adults." Population Association of America. Washington, D.C. April 2025.

Sauerteig-Rolston, Madison, Patricia A. Thomas, Shawn Bauldry, Elizabeth Richards, and Kenneth F. Ferraro. "Do negative social relationships raise the risk of disability in later life?" Gerontological Society of America. Seattle, WA. November 2024.

\*Nemeth, Samuel R., Patricia A. Thomas, +Cassidy Stoddart, and Kenneth F. Ferraro. "Racial and Ethnic Differences in Community Belonging and its Impact on Cognitive Function in Older Adults." American Sociological Association. Montreal, Canada. August 2024.

Friedman, Elliot M., Patricia A. Thomas, Lisa Barnes, Madison Sauerteig-Rolston, and Kenneth F. Ferraro. "Maintaining purpose in life predicts less cognitive decline in older adults." March 20-23, 2024, Brighton, UK. March 2024.

Thomas, Patricia A. "Relationship Quality and Functional Health in Later Life." Invited talk for University of Minnesota Demography and Aging Seminar Series. September 2023.

Bauldry, Shawn, \*Madison Sauerteig-Rolston, Patricia A. Thomas, and Kenneth F. Ferraro. "Gender and the Education Gradient in Dual-Function Life Expectancy." American Sociological Association. Philadelphia, PA, August 2023.

\*Cha, Hyungmin and Patricia A. Thomas. A Time of Healing: Can Social Engagement after Bereavement Reduce Trajectories of Depression after the Death of a Child? Population Association of America, New Orleans, April 2023.

Thomas, Patricia A., \*Madison Sauerteig-Rolston, Shawn Bauldry, +Samuel Nemeth, Kenneth F. Ferraro. "Social Relationships and Cognitive Impairment in Later Life." Gerontological Society of America, Indianapolis, IN, November 2022.

Upenieks, Laura and Patricia A. Thomas. "Gaining Faith, Losing Faith: How Education Shapes the Relationship Between Religious Transitions and Later Depression." Population Association of America, May 2021. Paper presentation. (*conference moved to online*)

\*Cha, Hyungmin, Patricia A. Thomas, and Debra Umberson. "Sibling Deaths, Racial/Ethnic

Disadvantage, and Dementia.” Gerontological Society of America, November 2020.  
Paper presentation (*conference moved to online*).

Thomeer, Mieke Beth, Elaine Hernandez, Debra Umberson, and Patricia A. Thomas. “Influence of Social Connections on Smoking Behavior across the Life Course.” American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, New York, NY, August 2019.

\*Monica Williams-Farrelly, Patricia A. Thomas, and Kenneth Ferraro. “Does Social Support Mediate the Influence of Childhood Exposures on Cognition in Later Life?” Gerontological Association of America Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, November 2018.

Richards, Elizabeth A., Patricia A. Thomas, Anna K. Forster, and Zachary Hass. “A Longitudinal Examination of the Impact of Major Life Events on Physical Activity.” International Conference on Social Stress Research, Athens, Greece, June 2018.

Thomas, Patricia A., Amy C. Lodge, and Corinne Reczek. “Do Support and Strain with Adult Children Affect Mothers’ and Fathers’ Physical Activity?” Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Denver, CO, April 2018.

Thomas, Patricia A. “Can Relationship Strain Benefit Adult Health?” Invited talk for Sociology Department, Baylor University, Waco, TX, March 2017.

Thomas, Patricia A. “Getting a Job: Hunting, Interviewing, and Early Career Planning.” Invited talk for ASA Section on Aging and the Life Course mentoring dinner, Seattle, Washington, August 2016.

Thomas, Patricia A. and Debra Umberson. “Relationship Quality with Adult Children: Gender and Cognitive Limitations among Older Adults.” International Sociological Association. Vienna, Austria, July 2016.

Thomas, Patricia A. “Does Relationship Strain Benefit Adult Health?” Invited talk for Human Development and Family Studies Department, Purdue University, February 2016.

Thomas, Patricia A. “The Impact of Relationship-Specific Support and Strain on Depressive Symptoms across the Life Course.” American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, August 2015.

Thomas, Patricia A. Student Forum Workshop. Ten Things I Wish I Knew in Graduate School: Advice from Assistant Professors. American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, August 2015.

Thomas, Patricia A. “Does Relationship Strain Benefit Adult Health?” Invited talk for Center on Aging and the Life Course, Purdue University, February 2015.

Kim, Seoyoun and Patricia A. Thomas. “Social Support, Psychological Resources, Mental Health, and Inflammation: Potential Pathways?” The Gerontological Society of America Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, November 2014.

Xu, Minle, Patricia A. Thomas, and Debra Umberson. "The Effects of Marital Quality on Cognitive Decline among Older Adults." American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA, August 2014.

Thomas, Patricia A. "Support and Strain in Social Relationships: Do They Matter for Health at Different Stages of the Life Course?" Population Association of America Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, April 2013.

## **TEACHING**

Purdue University      Soc 609: Aging and the Life Course  
Soc 591: Professionalization Seminar  
Soc 581: Methods of Social Research II (Graduate-level Intro to Statistics)  
Soc 571/461: Health and Social Behavior  
Soc 402: Sociological Theory  
Soc 382: Introduction to Statistics in Sociology  
Soc 100: Introduction to Sociology

Duke University      Soc 129: Gender, Work, and Organizations

## **Pedagogical Training**

Spring 2009      "Introduction to College Teaching" course taken, Duke University  
2005 – 2009      Sociology Department teaching workshops, Duke University  
Spring 2007      "Teaching Race, Teaching Gender" course taken, Duke University  
Spring 2004      Peer Mentor/Service Learning Assistant for two Introduction to Sociology Courses, California State University, Fullerton

## **PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

2024 –      Chair (elected), Section on Aging and the Life Course, American Sociological Association  
2022 – 2024      Editorial Board Member, *Society and Mental Health*  
2020 – 2022      Membership Chair (elected), Medical Sociology section, American Sociological Association  
2018 – 2021      Council Member (elected), Section on Aging and the Life Course, American Sociological Association  
2017 – 2020      Editorial Board Member, *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*  
2009 – present      Manuscript Referee: *American Sociological Review*, *Social Forces*, *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, *Journal of Gerontology: Social*



*Sciences, Demography, Gender & Society, Advances in Life Course Research, Ageing & Society, Journal of Aging & Health, Research on Aging, The Gerontologist, Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences, Innovation in Aging, Journal of Family Issues, Journal of Comparative Family Studies, Longitudinal and Life Course Studies, Population Research and Policy Review, Population Studies, Journal of Social Structure, Society & Mental Health, The Sociological Quarterly, Social Science Research*

- 2013 – present      *Dissertation Committee, Purdue University:* Seoyoun Kim (defended April 2015), Li Miao (defended July 2015), Jong Hyun Jung (defended June 2017), Yun Lu (defended July 2017), Monica Williams-Farrelly (defended July 2020), Abbey Nawrocki (defended July 2021), Elizabeth Teas (HDFS; defended April 2023), Rob Frase (defended July 2023), Madison Sauerteig-Rolston (defended July 2024), Mallory Bell
- 2013 – present      *Analytic Project (Master's level) Committee, Purdue University:* Kaitlin Johnson (defended April 2014), Siyun Peng (defended April 2015), Kia Hastings (defended April 2017), Robert Frase (defended April 2018), Callie Zaborenko (defended April 2018), Reilly Kincaid (*Co-Chair*, defended March 2020), Madison Sauerteig (defended April 2020), Mallory Bell (defended April 2022), Chris Kaufman (defended April 2024), Sigrid Ren (defended April 2024), Juwen Wang (defended April 2024), Johnny Gao (defended November 2024), Piritmwa Shemu
- 2021 – 2023          F31 mentor for Elizabeth Teas, Purdue University
- 2008 – 2009          Survey construction and data analysis consulting for the Executive Committee of the Graduate Faculty, Duke University
- 2007 – 2009          Editorial Assistant, *Demography*, for Kenneth C. Land (Editor)
- 2004 – 2005          President, Alpha Kappa Delta Sociology Honor Society, California State University, Fullerton

## **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP**

- American Sociological Association
  - Member, Aging & the Life Course Section
  - Member, Family Section
  - Member, Medical Sociology Section
  - Member, Race, Gender, and Class Section
- Gerontological Society of America
- Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science
- Population Association of America