

Zikang Hou

Department of Sociology | Rice University
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EDUCATION

- May 2030 **Ph.D. in Sociology** (*expected*), Rice University, Houston, TX
Comprehensive Examination Areas: Religion, Culture, and Immigration
Advisor and Committee Chair: Elaine Howard Ecklund
Committee Members: Corey M. Abramson and Christina J. Diaz
- May 2026 **M.A. in Sociology**, Rice University, Houston, TX
Thesis: “The Impact of Religiosity on Ethnicity: The Case of Religious and Non-Religious Chinese Immigrants in the U.S.”
Committee: Elaine Howard Ecklund (Chair), Christina Diaz, and Jenifer Bratter
- May 2023 **M.A. in Sociology**, Columbia University, New York, NY
Advisor: Courtney Bender
- May 2022 **B.A. in Sociology with Honors**, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA
Advisor: Richard Flory; Minor in Philosophy
Magna cum laude; Phi Kappa Phi

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Sociology of Religion • Cultural Sociology • Immigration and Ethnicity

SCHOLARSHIP

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles and Chapters

- 2026 Biney, Moses, **Zikang Hou**, and Elaine Howard Ecklund. “Religious Representation in Science: How Scientists in the United States, Mexico, and South Africa Respond.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. doi:10.1111/jssr.70068.
- Ecklund, Elaine, John Evans, and **Zikang Hou**. “Sociology of Religion, Science, and Technology.” In *The New Oxford Handbook in the Sociology of Religion*. Oxford University Press. Invited chapter, forthcoming.

Manuscripts Under Review

- Hou, Zikang**. “Where Religion Matters: Chinese Belonging among Immigrants from Mainland China.” Under review at *Socius*.
- Hou, Zikang**. “Routes and Their Uses: Changing Plans in Chinese Educational Migration.” Under review at *International Migration Review*.

In Progress

Manuscript available upon request.

**Equal contribution.*

Hou, Zikang, Kerby Goff, and Elaine Howard Ecklund. “Reported Religious Bias and Moral Acceptance of Abortion across Religious Positions.”

Hou, Zikang* and Xiwen Huang*. “Religiosity across Immigrant Generations in the United States.”

Ecklund, Elaine Howard, Rachel Schneider, **Zikang Hou**, and Moses Biney. “Religious Diversity and Perspectives on Social Problems in Houston, Texas.”

Schneider, Rachel, Elaine Howard Ecklund, Akpan Ubong-Abasi, and **Zikang Hou**. “Religious Leaders’ Approaches to Collaboration in Houston, Texas.”

Book Reviews

Forthcoming **Hou, Zikang**, and Elaine Howard Ecklund. Review of *The Limits of Diversity: How Secular and Evangelical Campuses Reproduce Inequality*, by Esther Chan. Invited review in *Contemporary Sociology*.

2026 **Hou, Zikang**. Review of *Religion for Realists: Why We All Need the Scientific Study of Religion—Now More than Ever*, by Samuel L. Perry. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Research Grants

2025	Constant H. Jacquet Research Award, Religious Research Association	\$2,000
2025	M.A. Thesis Development Grant, Department of Sociology, Rice University	\$1,000
2022	Provost’s Undergraduate Research Fellowship, USC	\$1,000

Honors and Distinctions

2026	Honorable Mention, Walter and Helen Hall Department of Sociology Graduate Student Paper Award, Rice University	
2026	Gallagher Travel Grant, Association for the Sociology of Religion	\$550
2026	Student Travel Award, Society for the Scientific Study of Religion	\$800
2026	Travel Scholarship, Asian Pacific American Religions Research Initiative	\$550
2025	Student Travel Grant, Sociology of Religion Section, American Sociological Association	\$200
2022	Dornsife Scholar, USC Dornsife College USC Dornsife’s highest recognition for a graduating student	\$10,000
2022	Renaissance Scholar Distinction, USC	
2022	Discovery Scholar Distinction, USC	
2021–2022	Academic Achievement Award, USC	\$8,140

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

*Equal contribution.

- 2026 **Hou, Zikang**, Kerby Goff, and Elaine Howard Ecklund. “Reported Religious Bias and Moral Acceptance of Abortion across Religious Positions.” *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Meeting*, Denver, CO. *Scheduled*.
- 2026 **Hou, Zikang**. “How Do Religious and Nonreligious Chinese Immigrants Use Religion to Navigate Ethnicity and Social Integration?” *American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, New York, NY.
- 2026 Ecklund, Elaine Howard, Rachel Schneider, and **Zikang Hou**. “Religious Diversity and Perspectives on Social Problems in Houston, Texas.” *American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, New York, NY.
- 2026 **Hou, Zikang*** and Xiwen Huang*. “Religiosity across Immigrant Generations in the United States.” *Association for the Sociology of Religion Annual Meeting*, New York, NY.
- 2026 **Hou, Zikang**. “Transnational Epistemologies: Chinese Immigrants Navigating Faith, Secularity, and Diasporic Solidarity in America.” *Asian Pacific American Religions Research Initiative Conference*, Berkeley, CA.
- 2025 Biney, Moses, **Zikang Hou**, and Elaine Howard Ecklund. “Religious Representation in Science: How Scientists in the U.S., Mexico, and South Africa Respond.” *American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, Chicago, IL.
- 2025 **Hou, Zikang**. “The Culture War Myth Revisited: Evaluating the Impact of Partisanship and Religious Affiliation on Americans’ Moral Attitudes toward Biomedical Ethics.” *Association for the Sociology of Religion Annual Meeting*, Chicago, IL.
- 2022 **Hou, Zikang**. “The Impact of Restricted Gatherings on Religious Need and Ritual Participation under COVID-19 in Nanjing, China.” *Pacific Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, Sacramento, CA.

MEDIA COVERAGE

- 2026 “New research shows the hidden challenges facing religious scientists.” *Rice News*, June. [Article](#).
- 2026 “Religious Representation in Science: How Scientists in the United States, Mexico, and South Africa Respond.” Boniuk Institute, Rice University, June. [Feature](#).

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE AND AFFILIATIONS

- 2024–Present **Affiliated Graduate Student**, Rice University
Boniuk Institute for the Study and Advancement of Religious Tolerance
- 2022–2023 **Research Assistant**, Department of Sociology, Columbia University, New York, NY
- 2022 **Research Intern**, Center for Religion and Civic Culture, USC
Exploring the Pandemic Impact on Congregations (EPIC), Long Beach, CA
Prepared online profiles for ten participating congregations.
Helped host a June 2022 visit by Rashad Hussain, U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2026 **Teaching Assistant**, Rice University
SOCI 381: Research Methods; Instructor: Elizabeth Roberto
- 2025 **Teaching Assistant**, Rice University
SOCI 101: Introduction to Sociology; Instructor: Tony Brown
Designed and delivered two lectures on culture and media beyond regular TA duties.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- 2026 Co-Leader, Social Science of Science and Religion Affinity Group, *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Meeting* (with Elaine Howard Ecklund). *Scheduled*.
- 2026 Member, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, Sociology of Religion Section, American Sociological Association
- 2026 Session Convener, “Religion and Immigrant Experiences,” *Association for the Sociology of Religion Annual Meeting*

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Academy of Religion; American Sociological Association
Association for the Sociology of Religion; Religious Research Association
Society for the Scientific Study of Religion

LANGUAGES

Chinese (native); English (fluent)

REFERENCES

Elaine Howard Ecklund

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Rice University
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