Stanford



Aliya Saperstein

Benjamin Scott Crocker Professor of Human Biology

Sociology

Bio

BIO

Professor Saperstein received her B.A. in Sociology from the University of Washington and her Ph.D. in Sociology and Demography from the University of California-Berkeley. In 2016, she received the Early Achievement Award from the Population Association of America. She has also been a Visiting Scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation and Sciences Po (Paris).

Her research focuses on the social processes through which people come to perceive, name, and deploy seemingly immutable categorical differences —such as race and sex—and their consequences for explaining, and reinforcing, social inequality. Her current research projects explore several strands of this subject, including:

1) The implications of methodological decisions, especially the measurement of race/ethnicity and sex/gender in surveys, for studies of stratification and health disparities.
2) The relationship between individual-level category fluidity or ambiguity and the maintenance of group boundaries, racial stereotypes, and hierarchies.

This research has been published for social science audiences in the American Journal of Sociology, the Annual Review of Sociology, Demography, Ethnic & Racial Studies, and Gender & Society, among other venues, and for general science audiences in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences and PLoS One. It also has been recognized with multiple article awards, and gained attention from national media outlets, including NPR and The Colbert Report.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Professor, Sociology

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

- Director, Co-terminal Master's Program, Department of Sociology, (2016-2021)
- Faculty Affiliate, Center for Population Health Sciences, (2015- present)
- Faculty Affiliate, Program in Feminist, Gender and Sexuality Studies, (2013- present)
- Faculty Affiliate, Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity, (2011- present)
- Assistant Professor, University of Oregon, (2008-2011)

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Poster Award, Population Association of America Annual Meeting (with A. Gullickson) (2026)

- First Prize, Genealogy Best Paper Award (2024)
- Early Career Award, Population Association of America (2016)
- Visiting Scholar, LIEPP, Sciences Po (2016)
- Faculty Fellow, Center for Comparative Study of Race and Ethnicity (2015-2016)
- Editor's Choice Award, Demographic Research (2015)
- Faculty College Fellow, Stanford University (2014 - 2015)
- Visiting Scholar, Russell Sage Foundation (2014 - 2015)
- Kimberle Crenshaw Best Article Award, SSSP Racial and Ethnic Minorities Division (2014)
- Oliver Cromwell Cox Best Article Award, ASA Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities (2014)
- IPUMS Research Award, Minnesota Population Center (2013)
- Roger Gould Prize, American Journal of Sociology (2013)
- Faculty Fellow, Clayman Institute for Gender Research, Stanford University (2012 - 2013)
- Poster Award, Population Association of America Annual Meeting (with A. Penner & J. Kizer) (2012)
- Chancellor's Dissertation-Year Fellowship, University of California (2007 - 2008)
- Phi Beta Kappa, University of Washington (1999)

PROGRAM AFFILIATIONS

- Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity (CCSRE)
- Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- B.A., University of Washington, Seattle , Sociology (1999)
- M.A., University of California, Berkeley , Sociology (2004)
- M.A., University of California, Berkeley , Demography (2005)
- Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley , Sociology and Demography (2008)

Research & Scholarship

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Diversity and Identity
- Gender Issues
- Poverty and Inequality
- Race and Ethnicity
- Research Methods
- Sociology

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **A Roadmap for Inequality Research: Transparency, Intersectionality, and Multiple Measures of Race** *SOCIOLOGICAL SCIENCE*
  Williams-Baron, E., Saperstein, A.
  2026; 13: 825-863

- **Recognizing Identity Fluidity in Demographic Research** *POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW*

Saperstein, A.
2024

- **Racial classification as a multistate process** *DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH*
  Muniz, J., Saperstein, A., Queiroz, B.
  2024; 50
- **Diversifying Gender Categories and the Sex/Gender System** *ANNUAL REVIEW OF SOCIOLOGY*
  Ridgeway, C. L., Saperstein, A.
  2024; 50: 385-405
- **Identification in Interaction: Racial Mirroring between Interviewers and Respondents.** *Social forces; a scientific medium of social study and interpretation*
  Pickett, R. E., Saperstein, A., Penner, A. M.
  2023; 102 (1): 23-44
- **The Social Construction of Age: Concepts and Measurement** *ANNUAL REVIEW OF SOCIOLOGY*
  Johfre, S., Saperstein, A.
  2023; 49: 339-358
- **Reflecting Race and Status: The Dynamics of Material Hardship and How People Are Perceived** *SOCIUS*
  Sosina, V. E., Saperstein, A.
  2022; 8 (2)
- **Measuring Race and Ancestry in the Age of Genetic Testing.** *Demography*
  Johfre, S. S., Saperstein, A., Hollenbach, J. A.
  2021
- **Gender and Health: Beyond Binary Categorical Measurement.** *Journal of health and social behavior*
  Hart, C. G., Saperstein, A., Magliozzi, D., Westbrook, L.
  2019: 22146519825749
- **New Categories Are Not Enough: Rethinking the Measurement of Sex and Gender in Social Surveys** *GENDER & SOCIETY*
  Westbrook, L., Saperstein, A.
  2015; 29 (4): 534-560
- **Race, color, and income inequality across the Americas** *DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH*
  Bailey, S. R., Saperstein, A., Penner, A. M.
  2014; 31: 735-756
- **How social status shapes race** *PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA*
  Penner, A. M., Saperstein, A.
  2008; 105 (50): 19628-19630
- **Formatting the two-step gender measure: Experimental insights from the United States** *DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH*
  Holtzman, T., Saperstein, A.
  2026; 54: 1125-1158
- **Normative Discrimination and the Gender Binary: Negative Evaluations of People with Nonconventional Pronouns** *SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY QUARTERLY*
  Hart, C., Saperstein, A., Correll, S. J.
  2026
- **Chronic Disease and Aging-Related Risk Factors in Multiracial Subgroups: California, 2014-2023.** *Journal of racial and ethnic health disparities*
  Lam-Hine, T., Odden, M. C., Saperstein, A., Thomas, T. W., Rehkopf, D. H.
  2025
- **"You're supposed to say White": Epistemic Ambiguity and Ethnoracial Classification.** *Sociology of race and ethnicity (Thousand Oaks, Calif.)*
  Kim, H. J., Saperstein, A.
  2025

- **New Categories are not Enough. Rethinking Measurement of Sex and Gender in Social Surveys** *PAPELES DE IDENTIDAD-CONTAR LA INVESTIGACION DE FRONTERA*
  Westbrook, L., Saperstein, A.
  2025
- **Asthma Prevalence in the Disaggregated Multiracial Population of California.** *JAMA network open*
  Lam-Hine, T., Thakur, N., Saperstein, A., Mujahid, M. S., Rehkopf, D. H.
  2024; 7 (12): e2449588
- **Marginalized measures: The harmonization of diversity in precision medicine research.** *Social studies of science*
  Jeske, M., Saperstein, A., Lee, S. S., Shim, J. K.
  2024: 3063127241288498
- **Conflating race and ancestry: Tracing decision points about population descriptors over the precision medicine research life course.** *HGG advances*
  Bentz, M., Saperstein, A., Fullerton, S. M., Shim, J. K., Soo-Jin Lee, S.
  2023: 100243
- **Conflicting signals: Exploring the socioeconomic implications of gender discordant names.** *Social science research*
  Francis-Tan, A., Saperstein, A.
  2023; 110: 102842
- **Counting on Whiteness: Religion, race, ethnicity, and the politics of Jewish demography** *JOURNAL FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF RELIGION*
  Tapper, A., Kelman, A. Y., Saperstein, A.
  2022
- **Targeting Representation: Interpreting Calls for Diversity in Precision Medicine Research.** *The Yale journal of biology and medicine*
  Lee, S. S., Fullerton, S. M., McMahon, C. E., Bentz, M., Saperstein, A., Jeske, M., Vasquez, E., Foti, N., Saco, L., Shim, J. K.
  2022; 95 (3): 317-326
- **Strategies of inclusion: The tradeoffs of pursuing "baked in" diversity through place-based recruitment.** *Social science & medicine (1982)*
  Shim, J. K., Bentz, M., Vasquez, E., Jeske, M., Saperstein, A., Fullerton, S. M., Foti, N., McMahon, C., Lee, S. S.
  2022; 306: 115132
- **Regimes beyond the One-Drop Rule: New Models of Multiracial Identity** *GENEALOGY*
  Iverson, S., Morning, A., Saperstein, A., Xu, J.
  2022; 6 (2)
- **Consistent Divisions or Methodological Decisions? Assessing the U.S. Racial Hierarchy Across Outcomes.** *Race and social problems*
  Guluma, B., Saperstein, A.
  1800: 1-19
- **Beyond inclusion: Enacting team equity in precision medicine research.** *PloS one*
  Jeske, M., Vasquez, E., Fullerton, S. M., Saperstein, A., Bentz, M., Foti, N., Shim, J. K., Lee, S. S.
  2022; 17 (2): e0263750
- **Gender, Generation, and Multiracial Identification in the United States.** *Demography*
  Xu, J., Saperstein, A., Morning, A., Iverson, S.
  2021
- **Dangerous data: Seeing social surveys through the sexuality prism** *SEXUALITIES*
  Westbrook, L., Budnick, J., Saperstein, A.
  2021
- **Consumer (dis-)interest in Genetic Ancestry Testing: The roles of race, immigration, and ancestral certainty.** *New genetics and society*
  Horowitz, A. L., Saperstein, A., Little, J., Maiers, M., Hollenbach, J. A.
  2019; 38 (2): 165-194
- **Ethics of inclusion: Cultivate trust in precision medicine.** *Science (New York, N.Y.)*

Lee, S. S., Fullerton, S. M., Saperstein, A. n., Shim, J. K.
2019; 364 (6444): 941–42

- **Placing Racial Classification in Context.** *Socius : sociological research for a dynamic world*
  Pickett, R. E., Saperstein, A. n., Penner, A. M.
  2019; 5
- **The Generational Locus of Multiraciality and Its Implications for Racial Self-Identification** *ANNALS OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE*
  Morning, A., Saperstein, A.
  2018; 677 (1): 57–68
- **Making the Most of Multiple Measures: Disentangling the Effects of Different Dimensions of Race in Survey Research** *AMERICAN BEHAVIORAL SCIENTIST*
  Saperstein, A., Kizer, J. M., Penner, A. M.
  2016; 60 (4): 519-537
- **Still Searching for a True Race? Reply to Kramer et al. and Alba et al.** *American Journal of Sociology*
  Saperstein, A., Penner, A. M.
  2016; 122 (1): 263-285
- **Scaling Up: Representing Gender Diversity in Survey Research** *Socius*
  Magliozzi, D., Saperstein, A., Westbrook, L.
  2016; 2
- **Disentangling the Effects of Racial Self-identification and Classification by Others: The Case of Arrest** *DEMOGRAPHY*
  Penner, A. M., Saperstein, A.
  2015; 52 (3): 1017-1024
- **Race, Ethnicity and Ancestry in Unrelated Transplant Matching for the National Marrow Donor Program: A Comparison of Multiple Forms of Self-Identification with Genetics.** *PloS one*
  Hollenbach, J. A., Saperstein, A., Albrecht, M., Vierra-Green, C., Parham, P., Norman, P. J., Maiers, M.
  2015; 10 (8)
- **Beyond the Looking Glass: Exploring Fluidity in Racial Self-Identification and Interviewer Classification** *SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES*
  Saperstein, A., Penner, A. M.
  2014; 57 (2): 186-207
- **The Criminal Justice System and the Racialization of Perceptions** *ANNALS OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE*
  Saperstein, A., Penner, A. M., Kizer, J. M.
  2014; 651 (1): 104-121
- **The Dynamics of Racial Fluidity and Inequality in the United States** *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective*
  Saperstein, A., Penner, A. M.
  edited by Grusky, D.
  Westview Press.2014; 4th
- **A "Mulatto Escape Hatch" in the United States? Examining Evidence of Racial and Social Mobility During the Jim Crow Era** *DEMOGRAPHY*
  Saperstein, A., Gullickson, A.
  2013; 50 (5): 1921-1942
- **ENGENDERING RACIAL PERCEPTIONS: An Intersectional Analysis of How Social Status Shapes Race** *GENDER & SOCIETY*
  Penner, A. M., Saperstein, A.
  2013; 27 (3): 319-344
- **When white people report racial discrimination: The role of region, religion, and politics** *SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH*
  Mayrl, D., Saperstein, A.
  2013; 42 (3): 742-754
- **Racial Formation in Perspective: Connecting Individuals, Institutions, and Power Relations** *ANNUAL REVIEW OF SOCIOLOGY, VOL 39*

Saperstein, A., Penner, A. M., Light, R.
2013; 39: 359-378

- **Representing the Multidimensionality of Race in Survey Research** *Mapping 'Race': Critical Approaches to Health Disparities Research*
  Saperstein, A.
  edited by Gomez, L. E., Lopez, N.
  Rutgers University Press.2013
- **Racial Fluidity and Inequality in the United States** *AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY*
  Saperstein, A., Penner, A. M.
  2012; 118 (3): 676-727
- **Capturing complexity in the United States: which aspects of race matter and when?** *ETHNIC AND RACIAL STUDIES*
  Saperstein, A.
  2012; 35 (8): 1484-1502
- **Looking the Part: Social Status Cues Shape Race Perception** *PLOS ONE*
  Freeman, J. B., Penner, A. M., Saperstein, A., Scheutz, M., Ambady, N.
  2011; 6 (9)
- **Cause of Death Affects Racial Classification on Death Certificates** *PLoS One*
  Noymer, A., Penner, A. M., Saperstein, A.
  2011; 6 (1): e15812
- **The Race of a Criminal Record: How Incarceration Colors Racial Perceptions** *SOCIAL PROBLEMS*
  Saperstein, A., Penner, A. M.
  2010; 57 (1): 92-113
- **Different Measures, Different Mechanisms: A New Perspective on Racial Disparities in Health Care** *Research in the Sociology of Health Care*
  Saperstein, A.
  2009; 27: 21-45
- **(Re)Modeling Race: Moving From Intrinsic Characteristic to Multidimensional Marker of Status** *Racism in Post-Race America: New Theories, New Directions*
  Saperstein, A.
  edited by Gallagher, C.
  Social Forces Publishing.2008: 335–50
- **Double-checking the race box: Examining inconsistency between survey measures of observed and self-reported race** *Annual Meeting of the Population-Association-of-America*
  Saperstein, A.
  OXFORD UNIV PRESS INC.2006: 57–74
- **Where Americans Came From: Race, Immigration and Ancestry** *Century of Difference: How America Changed in the Last One Hundred Years*
  Fischer, C. S., Hout, M., Saperstein, A.
  edited by Fischer, C. S., Hout, M.
  Russell Sage.2006: 23–56