

Rachael D. Weaver

University of Georgia
Department of Sociology
419 Baldwin Hall
rachael.weaver@uga.edu

EDUCATION

- In progress Ph.D. Sociology, University of Georgia, Athens, GA
- In progress Graduate Certificate in Gerontology, University of Georgia, Athens, GA
- 2026 M.A. Sociology, University of Georgia, Athens, GA
Thesis: *Aging in the Shadow of the Great Recession: Pathways from Cumulative SES Risk to Accelerated Epigenetic Aging among Black American Women*
Committee: Drs. Man-Kit Lei (Chair), Steven Beach, Leslie Gordon Simons
- 2023 B.S. Psychology, University of Georgia, Athens, GA
Area of Emphasis: Neuroscience
Minor: Criminal Justice Studies
Certificate in Legal Disparities and Equity
Magna Cum Laude

AREAS OF INTEREST

Sociology of Health; Family, Life Course, and Aging; Quantitative Methods

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Publications (indicates corresponding authorship)*

- Beach, S. R. H., Lei, M. K., Ong, M. L., **Weaver, R. D.**, Carter, S. E., Philibert, R. A. (2026)
Genomic markers of heavy alcohol consumption outperform self-report and other common predictors of mortality in two middle-aged samples of Black Americans. *Genes*, 17(7), 799.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/genes17070799>
- Lei, M. K., **Weaver, R. D.**, Beach, S. R. H., & Mielke, M. M. (2026). Racial discrimination accelerates age-related increases in serum neurofilament light chain among African American women: Examination of change from midlife to older adulthood. *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 81(5), gbag041.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbag041>
- Named Editor's Choice by The Journals of Gerontology, Series B

Weaver, R. D.* & Lei, M.-K. (2026). Comorbid diabetes and hypertension in early adulthood predict neurodegeneration in midlife: Insights across racial/ethnic groups using a blood-based biomarker of dementia risk. *Alzheimer's & Dementia: Behavior & Socioeconomics of Aging*, 2(1), e70069. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bsa3.70069>

Lei, M.-K., **Weaver, R. D.** (2025). The buffering effect of social support on the link between biologically embedded childhood maltreatment and adult cardiovascular disease. *Social Science and Medicine*, 118530. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118530>

Simons, R. L., Ong, M. L., Lei, M.-K., Beach, S. R. H., Lu, Y.-W., **Weaver, R. D.***, & Mielke, M. M. (2025). Diabetes and hypertension at midlife predict increases in biomarkers of dementia among Black Americans. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, 13(2), 1005-1012. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-025-02310-2>

- Interviewed for coverage in UGA Today, WSB Atlanta

Rigg, K. K., **Weaver, R. D.**, & Kusiak, E. (2023). Attitudes toward methadone treatment among Black/African Americans: Implications for engagement and retention. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 93(6), 476-485. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000692>.

Forthcoming

Weaver, R. D.*, Austin, K., & Lei, M.-K (accepted). Mastery moderates the association between cumulative SES risk and accelerated epigenetic aging among middle-aged Black American women. *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*.

Manuscripts Under Review

Weaver, R. D.*, Lei, M.-K., & Beach, S. R. H. An intervention that protects parental engagement leads to increased academic motivation and disrupts the path from neighborhood crime to delinquency.

Lei, M.-K., **Weaver, R. D.** The protective role of family cohesion and support in cyberbullying and depressive symptoms: A representative cross-sectional study in Taiwan.

Lei, M.-K., Austin, K., & **Weaver, R. D.** The long shadow of economic hardship: Parenting, adult future-orientation resources, and accelerated physiological systems aging.

Weaver, R. D.* & Lei, M.-K. Adolescent violent victimization and age-related differences in a biomarker of neurodegeneration in early midlife.

Manuscripts in Preparation

Weaver, R. D. & Lei, M.-K. Aging in the shadow of the Great Recession: Pathways from cumulative SES risk to accelerated epigenetic aging among Black American women.

Weaver, R. D. Social mobility following the Great Recession: Cumulative SES risk across midlife and patterns of accelerated epigenetic aging among Black American women.

Books in Preparation

Lei, M.-K., **Weaver, R. D.**, & Ong, M. L. *Understanding the Social Determinants of Health*. Edward Elgar Publishing. Book under contract (Dec 2027).

GRANT SUPPORT

2025 – 2026 “Neighborhood Stress and Mental Health: The Protective Role of Couple Relationship Functioning in Rural African American Communities.” Mental Research Institute. Total cost: \$20,000. Role: Co-investigator.

PRESENTATIONS

2026 Weaver, R. D. “A Family Intervention Preserves Parental Engagement, Strengthens Academic Motivation, and Disrupts Neighborhood Crime Effects on Delinquency.” American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL (Upcoming, November).

Weaver, R. D. & Austin, K. “Testing the Limits of Control: Mastery Buffers the Association between Cumulative SES Risk and Accelerated Aging among Middle-Aged Black American Women.” Southern Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Jacksonville, FL (April).

2025 Weaver, R. D. “Interpreting and Analyzing Quantitative Data.” Invited guest lecture for undergraduate Research Methods in Sociology course, University of Georgia, Athens, GA (October).

Weaver, R. D. “Racial/Ethnic Health Disparities in Aging: Understanding Social Determinants, Key Theoretical Frameworks, and Innovative Research Techniques.” Invited guest lecture for undergraduate Introductory Sociology course, University of Georgia, Athens, GA (April).

2022 Weaver, R. D. “Attitudes toward Methadone Maintenance Treatment among Black/African Americans.” Symposium on Substance Use Research, Rural Drug Addiction Resource Center, University of Nebraska, Remote (November).

Weaver, R. D. “Attitudes toward Methadone Maintenance Treatment among Black/African Americans.” Summer Research Institute Symposium, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL (August).

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- 2025-Present *Research Assistant*
Center on Biological Embedding of Social Events and Relationships, University of Georgia
PI: Drs. Steven Beach, Man-Kit Lei
- 2024-Present *Research Assistant*
Families, Communities, and Health Workshop, Department of Sociology, University of Georgia
PI: Drs. Ron Simons, Man-Kit Lei, Leslie Gordon Simons
- 2022 – 2024 *Research Assistant*
National Cannabis Legalization Research Study (NCLRS) Lab, Owens Institute for Behavioral Research, University of Georgia
PI: Dr. Lydia Aletraris
- 2022 *Research Assistant*
Summer Research Institute, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, University of South Florida
PI: Dr. Khary Rigg
- 2020 – 2021 *Research Mentee*
Google Computer Science Research Mentorship Program, Kennesaw State University

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2024-Present *Teaching Assistant, Department of Sociology, University of Georgia*
Quantitative Methods of Social Research
Race and Ethnicity in America
Research Methods in Sociology
Introductory Sociology (online)
The Science of Happiness

HONORS & AWARDS

- 2026 Tim Liao Graduate Student Publication Award (\$1,500)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Ad hoc Journal Reviewing

Journal of Black Studies
Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities

Journal of Child and Adolescent Trauma
Genes & Nutrition
Psychological Reports

Public Health

The Journals of Gerontology, Series A:
Biological Sciences

Department of Sociology, University of Georgia

2026 – 2027 Sociology Graduate Student Society (SGSS) Academic Community Chair

2025-Present Graduate Student Mentor

2025 Graduate Student Recruitment Committee Member/Host Coordinator

University of Georgia

2025-Present UGA-CARMA (Consortium for the Advancement of Research Methods & Analysis)
PhD Representative

2022 – 2023 American Society of Law, Medicine, & Ethics Social Media Manager/Co-Vice
President

Students for Psychedelic Advocacy, Research, & Connection Member

2021 – 2022 Doctors Without Borders/Friends of MSF Member

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

2026-Present Southern Sociological Society

2025-Present American Sociological Association
Sections: Medical Sociology; Aging and the Life Course; Inequality, Poverty, and Mobility

TRAINING

2024 Elevate & Excite: Designing Meaningful Learning Experiences, Center for Teaching
and Learning, University of Georgia

2022 Research Ethics & IRB Practices, Summer Research Institute, University of South
Florida

Social & Behavioral Research, CITI Program

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2021 – 2026 Patient Care Assistant, Acumen Fiscal Agency

2021 – 2023 Crisis Counselor, Crisis Text Line

2020	Companion, Papa: Companion Care for Older Adults and Families
2019	Builder, Habitat for Humanity