Zikang Hou

Department of Sociology | Rice University
zikang.hou@rice.edu | zikanghou.com | Updated October 2026

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 • Science and Technology

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.

Forthcoming — 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.

Manuscript Under Review

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. "Where Religion Matters: Chinese Belonging among Immigrants from Mainland China."

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
Designed and delivered two lectures on sociological interviewing and research ethics beyond regular TA duties.

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
Herbert S. Autrey Chair in Social Sciences and Professor of Sociology
Director, Boniuk Institute for the Study and Advancement of Religious Tolerance
Rice University
713-348-6761 | ehe@rice.edu

Corey M. Abramson
Professor of Sociology
Co-Director, Center for Computational Insights on Inequality and Society
Rice University
713-348-4452 | ca80@rice.edu

Christina J. Diaz
Associate Professor of Sociology
Rice University
713-348-7435 | christina.diaz@rice.edu

Richard Flory
Executive Director, Center for Religion and Civic Culture
Affiliated Faculty, School of Religion
University of Southern California
213-743-1606 | rflory@usc.edu

Courtney Bender
Ada Byron Bampton Tremaine Professor of Religion
Department of Religion
Columbia University
212-851-4134 | cb337@columbia.edu