

[REDACTED] Ph.D.

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Career Profile

Highly skilled applied qualitative sociologist and human-centered technology strategist with a background in intersectional analysis, critical race theory, civil rights, technology policy, and civic engagement. Proven ability to identify and communicate social and cultural trends, design actionable human-centered research practices, and develop theoretically informed and evidence-based strategies, metrics, and implementation plans to build digital solutions and experiences. A captivating public speaker, educator, and leader who builds strong relationships across cultures, with clients, and within teams; Jillian is viewed as a troubleshooter with a creative approach to problem solving and a passion for emancipatory social change.

Areas of Expertise

Cultural & Social Theory	Education & Communication	Qualitative Methods
Storytelling	Implementation	Design Research & Strategy
Strategy	Research Design	Organizational & Digital Transformation
Innovation	Diversity & Inclusion	UX/Service Design
Ethical AI		

Professional Experience

- 2021- Present Responsible AI Lead, Global COGNIZANT
 - Design and implement a data-driven, people-first, and systemic approach to ethical, compliant, and humane applications of AI systems and ML development within Cognizant and globally for clients.
 - Develop governance structures, partnerships, associate training programs, tools and data-enabled solutions as well as interdisciplinary approaches to data, model, and outcome explainability, bias detection, fairness, communication to users, and auditing services that are interactive, role-based, and accessible.

- 2018- 2020 Senior Resident Ethnographer IDEA COUTURE, COGNIZANT
 - Lead projects, manage teams, design research, execute/present ethnographic, mixed-methods, and strategic insights and direction, and provide strategic guidance for innovation, system and experience design, and people processes.

- 2018- 2019 Head of Research & Business Development NARATIV
 - Design and execute internal growth strategy, assess and standardize current services and expand offerings/deliverables.
 - Build KPIS and instruments and measurements to evaluate services and impact.
 - Manage staff of freelance writers and designers.

- 2017- 2019 Lecturer DEMOCRACY PREP
 - Developed seminar-style course in American democracy to prepare entire 12th grade class at Democracy Prep’s Harlem campus for civic engagement.

- 2017 Consultant/Strategist GEMIC
 - Developed research strategy and field-guide for multi-market ethnographic deep dive for major CPG clients. Conducted research, oversaw database and analysis and developed new perspective for marketing and innovation. Built behavioral models for clients around consumer decision making.

- 2016-2017 Consultant ReD ASSOCIATES

- Designed mixed-method research for clients that brought clarity and strategic direction to pressing business challenges.
- Oversaw recruitment, designed field guides, conducted international and domestic ethnographic fieldwork, engaged in pattern recognition, insight/strategy development, and client presentations/workshops. Introduced qualitative analytic software, which streamlined analysis and optimized insight development.
- Initiated recruitment strategy which led to the largest and most diverse applicant pool in ReD's history.
- Contributed to the company's position as an industry leader through public speaking and thought leadership.

2013-2016 Kay Fellow in Immigration & American Society BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

- Designed and executed a variety of engaging courses in American Studies and Sociology that increased program enrollment and number of majors.
- Mentored and managed undergraduates and graduate students. Served as Undergraduate Advising Head for the Sociology Department and oversaw independent thesis research for undergraduates and Masters level students.
- Inspired activism and social engagement that extended past the classroom, facilitated training seminars, participated in curriculum development, organized diversity workshops and community events.

2015 Freelance Consultant POWERS AND LABENDZ

- Provided strategic guidance for startups and philanthropic organizations—analyzed customer data, cultural landscape, market reports, and designed research strategies and assessment tools for clients with limited budgets.

2011-2013 Research Fellow WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

- Designed application-based qualitative methods courses.
- Managed students in collaborative team-based research using qualitative analytic software, built social media database, directed and oversaw publicly available research report.
- Topics included the St. Louis Tea Party and the role of social media for community after Hurricane Sandy.
- Organized public events for undergraduates & scholarly community. Developed marketing and publicity strategy that increased attendance and engagement.

Education

2011 Ph.D., Sociology DUKE UNIVERSITY

Traveling to Belong: Homeland Tourism and the American Imagined Community.

Designed the first mixed-method and multi-case study of American international homeland tourism. Research methods: ethnography, interviews, focus groups, community engaged research, semiotics, content and visual analysis. Cases: African Americans traveling to Ghana on slavery tours, Chinese adoptees returning to China, and Jewish American participants of Taglit Birthright Israel.

2006 M.A., Sociology DUKE UNIVERSITY

2003 B.A. with honors, Sociology DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

Selected Publications

Powers, Jillian and Emily Van Duyn (Eds.). (under review) *The Precariat and The Professor*. SUNY Press.

Powers, Jillian. *Traveling to Belong: Boundary Making and the Experience of Homeland Tourism*. New York: New York University Press. (advanced contract).

Powers, Jillian. 2017. "Transnational Encounters: Constructing Diasporic Bonds on Homeland Tours to China and Ghana," in *The Poetics of Travel*. Edited by Garth Lean, Russel Staiff and Emma Wateron. Berghahn Books.

Powers, Jillian. 2017. "The Baggage of Tourism: Collecting Memories and Navigating Kinship on Diaspora Homeland Tours," in *Tourism and Memories of Home*. Edited by Sabine Marschall. Channel View Publications Ltd. (invited submission).

- Powers, Jillian. 2011. "Chasing China: Adoption Tourism, Images of China and the Negotiation of Asian American Identity." *Chinese America: History and Perspectives—the Journal of the Chinese Historical Society of America* (invited submission).
- Powers, Jillian. 2011. "Re-Imagining the Imagined Community: Homeland Tourism and the Role of Place." *The American Behavioral Scientist* 55(10).
- [*The Precariat and the Professor: A Collection of Contingent Voices in Higher Education*](#), w. Emily Van Duyne.

Selected Invited Talks/Community/Public Engagements

- 2021 *Immersive Ethics, Anticipating Risks & Harms in Virtual & Augmented Reality* EPIC2021
- 2021 *Bring Your Own Brunch, Welcome Session*. American Sociology Association Section on Sociology in Practice, Committee Member and Organizer
- 2020 Applied Sociology, Applying Sociology: Careers Outside Academia, Eastern Sociological Association Annual Meetings, Philadelphia, PA.
- 2020 *Applied Jobs, Applying Sociology*, Invited Speaker for Sociology Seminar at CUNY Graduate School, New York, NY.
- 2019 Engaging Client Engagements: Embodying Ethnography. Workshop for the American Sociological Association. New York, NY.
- 2019 *Active Listening, Radical Teaching*. Workshop for BASE Conference on Equity and Education. BASE, Bronx, NY.
- 2019 *Politicizing our Practice*, Invited Speaker at NeuroStorm. Rockefeller University, New York, NY
- 2019 *Applied Jobs, Applying Sociology*, Invited Speaker for Sociology Seminar at CUNY Graduate School, New York, NY.
- 2018 [*Teaching Writing in Times of Crisis*](#), Panel Discussion at the Chautauqua Institute, Chautauqua, NY
- 2017 ["Calling \(in\) a Few Good Men: The Missing Piece in D&I Strategies Today"](#), with Jennifer Brown.
- 2017 *The Precariat and the Professor: Vox Clamantis in Precarity*. Dartmouth Sociology Department. Hanover, NH
- 2017 *Leaving Academia, and Careers in the Private Sector*, event sponsored by Women in Political Science & Duke Graduate School event. Durham, NC.
- 2017 *Thinking Outside the Box: Careers Outside Academia*, Panel discussion. Department of Sociology, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL.
- 2016 "Why I am consciously uncoupling from academia," Times of Higher Education. June 12, 2016. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/why-i-am-consciously-uncoupling-academia>
- 2016 *American Transformations and the American Dream*. Workshop. Boston AmeriCorps. Boston, MA.
- 2016 [*Liminal Identities*](#). TEDx: Liminal Spaces. Pine Crest School, Ft. Lauderdale, FL.
- 2016 *Clamoring for the American Dream*. Brandeis Diversity Conference. Brandeis University. Waltham MA.
- 2015 *The Baggage of Tourism: Collecting Memories and Navigating Kinship on Diaspora Homeland Tours*. City University London. London, UK.
- 2014 WBEZ The Morning Shift with Tony Sarabia, Do Immigrants Threaten American Customs & Traditions? <https://soundcloud.com/morningshiftwbez/do-immigrants-threaten>
- 2014 *Becoming Worldly by Discovering Heritage: Cultivating Globally Informed Identities on Diasporic Homeland Tours*. Harvard Migration Workshop, Cambridge MA.
- 2013 *Becoming Worldly: Cosmopolitan Sensibilities on Homeland Tours*. Learning from Taglit-Birthright Conference. Jerusalem, Israel.
- 2012 *Narratives Histories of Diaspora: Examples from 3 Cases of Homeland Tourism*. Conference on Homeland Tourism, University of Toronto, Canada.
- 2012 "Is Birthright More Than Freebie Trip?" *The Jewish Daily Forward*. November 21, 2012. <http://forward.com/articles/166159/is-birthright-more-than-freebie-trip/?p=all>

Professional & Practice Associations

EPIC

Cognizant Responsible AI Committee:

American Sociological Association:

Theory, Culture & Society

Other Memberships:

Sociologists for Women in Society

British Sociological Association

International Visual Sociological Association

Critical Ethnic Studies Association

Invited Member

Invited Member/Founding Director

Invited Member of Sociology of Practice Committee

Regular Journal Reviewer

Cultural Studies Association

International Sociology Association

American Studies Association