MICHAEL JINDRA
Boston University
Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs
jindraprof@gmail.com michaeljindra.com

Academic Positions

Boston University, Visiting Research Scholar, Institute on Culture, Religion & World Affairs, 2017-
University of Notre Dame, 2009-2017
- Visiting Research Scholar, Center for the Study of Religion and Society and Center for Social Concerns
- Adjunct Associate Professor of Anthropology, Affiliated Faculty in Poverty Studies. Interim Co-Director of Undergraduate Studies, Dept. of Anthropology, 2011-12

Spring Arbor University, MI, 2001-2009, Associate Professor of Sociology (tenured 2007).
Bethany Lutheran College, MN, 1997-2001, Professor (unranked), Division of Social Sciences.
- Chair, Division of Social Sciences, 1999-2001
- Director, Paul Ylvisaker Center for Personal and Public Responsibility, 1999-2001
- 1992-1995 Adjunct teaching while in graduate school; taught anthropology and economics courses

Current Academic Activities, besides writing:
Co-moderator of Heterodox Academy Anthropology listserv
Leading a Higher Ed Reforms project (see articles and Substack below)

Prior Experience, non-academic:

Employer	**Position**
Waste Management, Inc., Oak Brook, IL	Financial & Strategic Planning Analyst, 1987-88
U.S. Peace Corps, Cameroon, Africa	Adviser/Auditor rural credit unions, Cameroon, 1984-86

Education

1997 Ph.D. University of Wisconsin-Madison, Cultural Anthropology.
Dissertation: The Proliferation of Ancestors: Death Celebrations in the Cameroon Grassfields. Field Research, Cameroon 1993-94, including archival research in England and Switzerland.
1991 M.A. University of Wisconsin-Madison, Cultural Anthropology
1989 University of Chicago, Returning Scholars Program, concentrating on courses in anthropology.
1984 BBA University of Wisconsin-Madison Majors in Finance/Banking and International Relations

Books in Progress

The Dilemma of Diversity (first draft complete)

Significant Publications:

"Can a pluralistic perspective on inequality help us to solve it?" Review essay on I*nequality: The View from Manywheres* by Seamus Power. London School of Economics Review of Books, 2026.

"Replicating the Nordic Welfare Model: Policy Prescriptions that Recognize the Cultural Antecedents

of Solidarity" with Amy Lakeman. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 2024. Vol. 44 (9-10): 864–878.

"When Ideology Drives Social Science" (with Arthur Sakamoto), *Chronicle of Higher Education,* March 2023. https://www.chronicle.com/article/when-ideology-drives-social-science

"The Equality – Difference Paradox: National policies on pluralism" (with Seamus Power) in *Contemporary Immigration: Psychological Perspectives to Address Challenges and Inform Solutions,* F. Moghaddam & M. Hendricks, eds. (September 2022, American Psychological Association).

Changing Lives: Contrasts in Structure and Religion at Three Homeless Shelters (with Ines W. Jindra and Sarah DeGenero). Routledge, 2021.

"Religion, Spirituality, Community, and Change at a Residential Homeless Shelter" (with Ines W. Jindra) *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work*, Published online March 2021.

"Relational Work in the Struggle Against Poverty: Balancing scholarly critiques and emancipatory practices in the nonprofit sector" (with Bowen Paulle and Ines Jindra). *Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, Vol. 49(1) 160–179, 2020.

"How Do People Change Their Lives? The Role of the Narrative Interview" (with Ines W. Jindra). *Pastoral Psychology,* 68:195-208, 2019.

"Food, Poverty and Lifestyle Patterns: How Diversity Matters" (with Nicolas Larchet) in *Food and Poverty: Food Insecurity and Food Sovereignty among America's Poor* eds. Hossfeld, Kelly and Waity. Vanderbilt University Press, 2018.

"Connecting Poverty, Culture, and Cognition: The Bridges Out of Poverty Process" (With Ines Jindra) *Journal of Poverty* 22 (1):42-64, 2018.

"Poverty and the Controversial Work of Nonprofits" (with Ines Jindra), *Society,* 53: 634–640, November/December 2016.

"The Dilemma of Equality and Diversity." *Current Anthropology* Vol. 55 no. 3 (2014), with comments and response.

"Inside the Safety Net." *The Hedgehog Review* 16 (3):30-39 (Fall 2014), with Ines Jindra.

Funerals in Africa: Explorations of a Social Phenomenon (co-edited with Joel Noret), Berghahn Books, 2011 (paperback reissue 2013).

Introduction; Chapter One: "African Funerals and Sociocultural Change: A Review of Momentous Transformations across a Continent" (with Joel Noret); Chapter Five: "The Rise of Death Celebrations in the Cameroon Grassfields."

"It's About Faith in Our Future: Star Trek Fandom as Cultural Religion" in *Religion and Popular Culture in America*, Jeffrey Mahan and Bruce Forbes, eds. University of California Press, three

revised versions, 2000, 2005, 2017.

"Culture Matters: Diversity in the US and its Implications." in *Sociological Footprints: Introductory Readings in Sociology,* Cargan and Ballantine, eds. Wadsworth, 2010. (abridged version of below)

"Video Game Worlds." *Society*, Vol. 44, May/June 2007.

"Culture Matters: Culture and diversity in the U.S." *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity and Christian Faith.* Robert Priest and Alvaro Nieves, eds. Oxford University Press, 2006.

"Christianity and the Proliferation of Ancestors: Changes in hierarchy and mortuary ritual in the Cameroon Grassfields," *Africa* 75(3):356-377 (October 2005).

"The Passions of Alternate Media Universes," in Wolfgang Palaver and Petra Steinmair-Pösel (Eds.), *Passions in Economy, Politics, and the Media*. Beiträge zur Mimetischen Theorie, Vol. 17. Münster, Germany: LIT Verlag, 2005.

"The Audience Responds to *The Passion*" pp. 163-180 in *Re-Viewing the Passion: Mel Gibson's Film and Its Critics,* S. Brent Plate, ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004 (co-authored with Robert Woods and Jason Baker).

"Natural/Supernatural Conceptions in Western Cultural Contexts." *Anthropological Forum* 13(2):159- 166 (November 2003).

"Structural ('Objective') Hermeneutics and the Sociology of Religion" *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion* 14:253-275 (2003) (co-authored with Ines Jindra).

"Others Among Us" in *Anthropology and Middle Class Working Families: A Research Agenda,* Mary Overbey and Kathryn Dudley, eds. American Anthropological Association, 2000.

"'Star Trek to Me is a Way of Life:' Fan Expressions of Star Trek Philosophy" in *Star Trek and Sacred Ground: Essays on Star Trek, Religion and Popular Culture*, Jennifer Porter and Darcee McLaren, eds. State University of New York Press, 1999.

"Star Trek Fandom as a Religious Phenomenon" *Sociology of Religion* 55(1):27-51 (Spring 1994). Abridged versions published in several places, including:
Small World: International Readings in Sociology, Charles Tepperman, ed. Prentice Hall, 1997.
Sociology: Snapshots and Portraits, Levin and Arluke, eds. Pine Forge, 1996.

Other Publications, Book Reviews, Blogs, Podcasts, etc.

Personal Substack: https://substack.com/@culturaldiversities
Higher Education Reforms Substack: https://reorientinghighered.substack.com/

Higher Ed reforms, articles for Chronicle of Higher Education:

Higher Ed Needs Checks and Balances (2025)
Can the Academy Reform Itself? (2026)

Articles for American Purpose:
What Would Richard Pipes Say today? (with Paul Behringer) (2022)
We're Not All Running the Same Rat Race (2021)
Culture, Inescapable Culture (2022)

Articles on family and culture issues for Institute for Family Studies are here

Can the Social Sciences be Saved? Podcast, Connors Institute, April 2024
https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/saving-the-social-sciences-w-michael-jindra/id1550017405?i=1000652985544

The Surprising Nordic Lesson for US Welfare:
https://americancompass.org/the-commons/the-surprising-nordic-lesson-for-u-s-welfare/

Academe's Other Diversity Problem:
https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2021/03/25/scholars-should-take-more-comprehensive-approaches-social-programs-order-address

Covid, Health Inequality, and the Avoidance of Behavioral Explanation:
https://heterodoxacademy.org/blog/covid-health-inequality-and-the-avoidance-of-behavioral-explanation/

Review Essay on "The Everyday Life of the Poor in Cameroon" by Nathanael Ojong. African Journal of Economics and Finance 2021.

Are We All Populists? Diversity's Challenge to Our Comfort-Loving Selves
https://areomagazine.com/2019/03/06/are-we-all-populists-diversitys-challenge-to-our-comfort-loving-selves/

Invited Comment on "The Deprivation-Protest Paradox: How the Perception of Unfair Economic Inequality Leads to Civic Unrest," Seamus Power, *Current Anthropology* 59:6 (Dec. 2018).

An Anthropological Interpretation of Modernity: Interview with Arpad Szakolczai and Bjørn Thomassen. *On Knowing Humanity* Vol 3:1 (2019).

Foreword, *Exploring the Rise of Fandom in Contemporary Consumer Culture*, Cheng Lu Wang, ed. IGI Global, 2018.

"The Rise of Antipoverty Relational Work" Stanford Social Innovation Review (online), March 17, 2015.

Review of *Death, Belief and Politics in Central African History*, by William Kalusa and Megan Vaughan, *Africa,* Vol 85, no. 1, February 2015.

"Parenting in the Modern Jungle" (commentary) in *Ancestral Landscapes in Human Evolution: Culture, Childrearing and Social Wellbeing*, Darcia Narvaez et al. eds. Oxford University Press, 2014.

National Science Foundation White Paper SBE 2020 "Understanding the Implications of Increased Lifestyle Diversity," 2011.

"Social Structure, Groups, and Organizations" Chapter revision for *Sociology* (2nd edition), Cynthia Tweedell, ed., Marion, IN: Triangle Publishing, 2009 (with Ines Jindra).

Review of book on UFOs in *Sociology of Religion* (with Ines Jindra), 2008.

Brief essays (three) on electronic entertainment in *Understanding Evangelical Media: The Changing Face of Christian Communication*, Q. Schultze and R. Woods, eds., Intervarsity Press, 2008.

"Cordoning off Culture in Introductory Sociology Textbooks" *Newsletter of the Sociology of Culture Section of the American Sociological Association*, Autumn 2007.

"The Concept and Cultural Anthropology" in *The Concept and the Sciences*, Gayle Beebe and Jon Kulaga, eds. Spring Arbor University Press, 2007.

"Human Rites Activist" (Book review of biography of Mary Douglas) *Books and Culture* 9(3):32-35 (May/June 2003).

"Icecapade" *Wisconsin Academy Review* 49(2):54-55 (Spring 2003).

Book review of *Culture Matters* (L. Harrison and S. Huntington, eds.) *American Anthropologist* 104(3):978-979 (September 2002).

Courses Taught

Cultural Anthropology
Introductory Sociology
Social Theory
Racial and Ethnic Minorities
College Seminar on "Diversity and Equality"
Cross Cultural Studies (including 3 weeks in Switzerland)
Sociology of Religion

"Directed Research" courses with students, on our nonprofits and poverty research.
Others courses including: Cultural Geography, World Politics, Introduction to Africa, a Western Civilization course, American Government, and Micro and Macroeconomics courses.

Presentations and media appearances

Ongoing….
2018-19 presentations at colleges while focusing on book.
2017 Labor Studies Workshop, University of Notre Dame, April 28
2017 Bethany Lutheran College, Featured Speaker, Intercultural Center, March 14.
2017 Harvard University, Workshop in History, Culture & Society, March 3
2017 Rooney Center Workshop, University of Notre Dame, February 24
2016 University of Notre Dame Sociology Culture Workshop, September 5 and March 31 (2017)
2014 University of Brussels (ULB), Belgium lecture "The Dilemmas of Diversity," June 23.
2014 Guest, "Kids Count Radio Show" Indiana Youth Institute, "Why Working Class Men Are Falling Behind"
2013 Guest "Up For Debate" Radio Show Moody Radio on ethics of video game play
2013 Panelist, Community Engagement Faculty Institute, University of Notre Dame

2013 Appearance on "Fresh Outlook" cable talk show, on fandoms and religion.
2013 Presentation to Notre Dame student group on development in Africa
2012 Africa Working Group presentation on "Funerals in Africa" University of Notre Dame.
2012 Appearance on the National Geographic television's *Taboo* episode "Living with the Dead" 2011 Interviewed for CNN.com story "Cost of Elaborate Funerals Puts Strain on Africans, 12/6/2011. 2008 Two presentations to SAU campus forums on racial reconciliation, April and September.
2007 Concordia Theological Seminary guest lectures.
2001 *Community of Learners* lecture, "Alternate Universes of Leisure," Spring Arbor Univ., December.
1997 "Recent Developments in African History" Concordia University-Mequon.
1994 "Anthropology and History" guest lecture, University of Yaounde, Cameroon
1994 Main subject/interviewee on *Talk of the Nation,* National Public Radio, on Star Trek fans, May 19.
1994 and ongoing: Numerous TV, radio, and newspaper interviews about research on Star Trek fans.
1993"Learning from Africa." Keynote Lecture, Teachers Workshop on African and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
1993 "African Traditional Religions" University of Wisconsin-Madison, periodic guest lecturer for introductory course in African Studies.

Papers Presented:

2015 International Association of Critical Realism conference presentation on nonprofits research.
2014 Culture Workshop presentation, "Connecting Culture, Cognition and Poverty: From Theory to Practice Through Bridges Out of Poverty," University of Notre Dame
2013 Co-organizer, Panel on World Funerals, American Anthropological Association Meetings, Chicago
2013 "Neoliberalism and Antipoverty Nonprofits" The Future of NGOs Conference, Chicago.
2013 "Reframing the Poverty Debate, through the Eyes of Nonprofits" RASR workshop, University of Notre Dame.
2011 Culture Workshop presentation. "Cultural Diversity and Inequality: Reframing the Debate," University of Notre Dame
2010 "Lifestyle Diversity and Economic Inequality" University of Notre Dame Sociology department colloquium, April 28.
2009 "Structure, Culture, Individual" Neuroanthropology Conference, University of Notre Dame.
2009 "Cultural Sociology and Inequality: Subcultures and Agency." North Central Sociological Association annual meeting.
2008 "Cultural Sociology and Inequality: subcultures and consumption." ASA annual meeting, roundtable presentation
2005 "Mortuary Ritual and Religious Change in Africa" Baylor University conference on "Global Christianity," November.
2004 "The Proliferation of Ancestors under Christianity in the Cameroon Grassfields." EMS Regional Conference, Trinity International University, April
2003 "Passions of Alternate Media Universes" University of Innsbruck, Austria conference on "Passions in Economy, Politics and the Media: In discussion with Christian theology."
2003 "The Undefended Assumption: Human nature in social theory. Calvin College Consultation.
2001 "Contemporary Religious Practice and the Supernatural" American Anthropological Association annual meeting, Washington D.C.
1999 "Focal Institutions" American Anthropological Association annual meeting, Chicago.
1997 "Christianity and the Proliferation of Ancestors: Changes in hierarchy and notions of death in the Cameroon Grassfields" Conference on African Christianity and Narrative, University of Minnesota, May.
1996 "Ritual/Festival: Historical Changes in the Death Celebrations of the Cameroon Grassfields" African Studies Association annual meeting, 1996.
1995 "Death Celebrations in the Cameroon Grassfields" UW-Madison African Studies Seminar.
1993 "Star Trek Fandom as a Religious Phenomenon." Central States Anthropological Society.

Miscellaneous Academic Activities

Reviewer of manuscripts for various journals, including Current Anthropology, Africa, Qualitative Sociology, Reviews in Anthropology, Journal of Religion and American Culture, Sociology of Religion,

Review of Religious Research, European Journal of Cultural Studies, History of Religions, Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, African Studies Review, Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society, and others.
Outsider Reader for Ph.D. dissertations
Proposal Reviewer for National Science Foundation (NSF)

University of Notre Dame
Taught classes in Anthropology, University Seminar, College Seminar.
Guest lecturer in other classes.
Panelist for Center for Social Concern's Faculty Community Learning Institute, 2013.
Accepted in Center for Social Concern's Faculty Community Learning Institute, May 2012
Affiliated Faculty Poverty Studies Minor
Supervised Numerous Directed Research students
Supervised Summer Research for student with UROP grant
Reviewer of grant applications for Templeton funded Generosity research
Reviewer of Ganey Grant proposals
Invited Speaker at Student groups (e.g. Africa Development group)
Regular participation in workshops (e.g. RASR, Culture) and commentator on graduate student papers and research.

Spring Arbor University:
Academic Advising; presentation to students on International Service (2002); ad hoc grade appeal committee (2002); Set up Blackboard web page for Sociology program and Global Studies; conducted annual Focus Series workshops and Community of Learners talk (2001); teaching cell group (2001).
Organized campus discussion forum on role of video games.
Organized faculty discussions of "academic quality" and set up and moderated listserv for ongoing discussions. Numerous guest lectures in classrooms. Organized, taught and led a 4 credit class/three-week cross cultural experience for twelve students in Switzerland in 2004 & 2006 (with Ines Jindra).

Bethany Lutheran College:
As director of the *Paul Ylvisaker Center for Personal and Public Responsibility*, I led efforts to promote public awareness among students and in the community by facilitating contact between local non-profit organizations and students through hosting meetings and conferences, and by encouraging volunteerism and service learning on campus (e.g. organizing an annual day devoted to volunteerism).

As chair of the Social Science division, I played the key role in developing the curriculum for a new four-year social science concentration.
Academic Advising
Committee activity

- Faculty Rank and Tenure (ad hoc); chaired this committee, which reviewed the college's policy on rank and tenure, and recommended a new policy in the process of implementation.
- Faculty Development and NCA accreditation committees

Attendance at several faculty development conferences.

<u>Honors and Grants:</u>
Learning Beyond the Classroom grants, Fall 2012, Spring 2015.
Ganey Collaborative Research Grant, Center for Social Concerns, 2011.
Research Grant, Spring Arbor Faculty Scholarship 2007-08 for research on diversity and equality.
Research Grant, Spring Arbor Faculty Scholarship 2005 for research on diversity and equality.
Research grant, Spring Arbor Faculty Scholarship 2005 for research on African funerary practices.
Faculty Merit Award, for scholarship, teaching and service to the institution, 2004.
Research grants, Calvin College Summer Seminars and Spring Arbor Faculty Scholarship, 2002 for research on assumptions of social theory connected to Summer 2001 Calvin Seminar.
2002 Winner, American Anthropological Association *Anthropology Newsletter* photo contest, May.

Participation in *Seminar in Christian Scholarship*, "Morality, Culture, and the Power of Religion in Social Life" June-July 2001, Calvin College.
Mankato-area *Ecumenical Task Force on Welfare Reform* grant, funded by the Minnesota Futures Fund to conduct survey and write a report on the relationship between non-governmental social service agencies and churches (1998).
Editor's nomination, Society for the Scientific Study of Religion award "Outstanding article in Religion" (1994), for *Sociology of Religion* article (above).
African Studies Dept of Education Title VI Dissertation Travel Award, 1993.
Vilas Travel Fellowship, Univ. of Wisconsin Graduate School, 1993.
Best Paper (graduate student), Annual Meeting of Central States Anthropological Society, March 1993

Community involvement related to academics

NNN and Chapin Park neighborhood committees, and organizer of events.
Board of Directors, Love, Inc. Jackson MI. 2002-2006
Board of Directors, Stone Soup Community, 2013-2017
Volunteer at schools, ongoing activities and special projects.