

# Ashley Lucia Torres, Ph.D.

## *Computational Social Scientist*

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Training and experience in both qualitative and quantitative research, with a focus on digital platforms, communities, and user interactions/behavior. Skilled at translating complex data into insights for product and design teams. Passionate about improving user experiences on social media platforms, websites, and other digital products.

## **SKILLS**

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**Software Skills:** R, STATA, Texera, SQL, SPSS, Tableau, Figma, MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint, Canva

**Quantitative Skills:** ANOVA, t-tests, regression, chi-squared tests, correlation, exponential random graph modeling, social network analysis, sentiment analysis

**Research Skills:** digital ethnography, content analysis, survey design, interviews, qualitative coding, A/B testing, experimental and quasi-experimental design, usability testing

**Professional Strengths:** strong verbal and written communication, ability to multitask, detail-oriented, collaborative, ability to frame insights for cross-functional teams

## **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

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### **Ph.D. Researcher**

**September 2019 – December 2025**

University of California, Irvine

- Led four end-to-end research initiatives analyzing large-scale behavioral and interaction data to uncover population-level patterns in online user behavior and digital community dynamics
- Conducted customer and user experience research on platforms including Twitter/X and Tumblr, identifying how platform affordances shape engagement behaviors, social performance, and interaction patterns
- Built, cleaned, and integrated custom datasets combining individual-level, relational, and contextual data to model user journeys, exposure, and interaction trends
- Applied social network analysis to large-scale relational datasets to identify drivers of engagement, community structure, and information flow
- Qualitatively analyzed 5,000+ user-generated posts to surface sentiment patterns, engagement signals, and emerging social norms in digital environments
- Developed new sampling methodologies for collecting organic social media data, improving validity of behavioral insights and reducing sampling bias
- Authored and executed R scripts for statistical modeling and data visualization
- Supervised and mentored a 7-person research team, establishing workflows, documentation, and quality controls to ensure data reliability and research consistency
- Presented research findings and user insights to academic and cross-disciplinary stakeholders to inform understanding of online behavior and platform design
- Mentored undergraduate and graduate researchers through early-stage research design, analysis, and insight development

### **Research Assistant for Dr. Kristin Turney**

**June 2021 – June 2025**

University of California, Irvine – *Jail and Family Life Study*

- Co-authored two papers with a diverse team of researchers from conception to publication, leading one
  - Contributed to mixed-methods population research examining the impacts of incarceration on families and social networks
  - Deductively coded qualitative data from 300+ in-depth interview transcripts to support integrated quantitative/qualitative analyses of behavioral patterns
  - Produced analytic tables, figures, and data visualizations used in peer-reviewed manuscripts and presentations
  - Managed data consistency and documented uses of the full sample across 5 teams of researchers

**Research Assistant for Dr. Kristin Turney and Dr. Naomi Sugie****June 2023 – September 2024**University of California, Irvine – *Jail Data Infrastructure Project*

- Conducted user-focused research to evaluate and improve the usability of Texera, a collaborative data analysis platform, identifying friction points and opportunities to enhance researcher workflow and experience
- Partnered cross-functionally with computer science, data, and social science stakeholders to translate user needs into platform improvements and prioritize feature enhancements
- Designed and executed usability testing sessions, synthesizing qualitative feedback and behavioral data into actionable recommendations for improving user engagement and accessibility
- Developed 5 end-to-end user guides and onboarding documentation, improving product adoption and reducing learning curve for new users
- Conducted market and competitive research on comparable platforms, identifying areas where existing tools excelled or fell short, and surveyed potential users to understand unmet needs and feature priorities
- Leveraged R within Texera to generate visualizations and support three research initiatives, using data insights to inform UX and workflow improvements and provide proof-of-concept to stakeholders
- Contributed to iterative product refinement by documenting user journeys, surfacing pain points, and communicating findings to technical teams

**Research Apprentice for Dr. Daniel Schneider****September 2016 – February 2017**

University of California, Berkeley

- Served as a research assistant for Ph.D. candidate Matthew Stimpson's doctoral dissertation
- Collected quantitative and qualitative data for nearly 300 CEO hires (1950-2015) using archival data
- Began the qualitative coding process of newspaper articles announcing a subset of hires

**INSTRUCTIONAL EXPERIENCE**

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Taught classes of 30-300 undergraduate students about a range of sociology, psychology, and computational topics

- Trained undergraduate students to use R and STATA for data manipulation and statistical analysis
- Taught students advanced statistical techniques, such as Pearson's correlation, t-test, chi-square, ANOVA, simple linear regression, and multivariate regression
- Contributed to a >5% average increase in course scores and pass rates in the statistics sequence compared to the prior year by redesigning explanations, practice materials, and student support systems
- Demonstrated advanced MS Excel and PowerPoint skills (use of formulas, charts, and figures)
- Provided mentorship for over 20 undergraduate students through their preparations for graduate school and entering the job market

**Instructor** – University of California, Irvine**June 2025 – August 2025***Probability and Statistics***Teaching Assistant** – University of California, Irvine**September 2019 – June 2025****EDUCATION**

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**Ph.D. Sociology** – University of California, Irvine**December 2025***Social Network Analysis & Digital Culture*

Relevant Coursework: Informant Accuracy, Analysis of Social Network Data, Digital Anthropology

**M.A. Demographic and Social Analysis** – University of California, Irvine**December 2022****B.A. Sociology** – University of California, Berkeley**May 2018***Honors and High Distinction*