



# SOCIOLOGY CONNECTIONS

a networking event celebrating alumni and current students

## SPEAKERS

**Mari Bijimenian**, *J.D. candidate SJU Law School, Director of Public Relations for the Criminal Law Society*

**Gabriela Calahorrano**, *Staff Attorney, NYU Immigrant Defense Initiative Washington Square Legal Services Inc.*

**Angela Di Mercurio**, *Assistant Vice President in Finance Regulatory Engagement at Citi*

**Joe Padgett Herz**, *Ph.D. candidate, SUNY Albany, Research Assistant, National Science Foundation grant*

**Jaelyn Hill Rucker**, *Educator at Merrick Academy in Queens*

**Jahlani Jackson**, *Claims Examiner, D.C. Department of Employment Services*

**Glynis Johns**, *CEO and Founder, Black Scranton Project*

**Nicholas LaChance**, *Student Services Coordinator at New York College of Chinese Medicine; Field Researcher at University of Michigan*

**Abby Molos**, *Admissions Counselor, SJU*

**Pablo Sanchez**, *Data Analytics Manager at Northwell Health's Center for AIDS Research & Treatment (CART)*

**Meischa Sineno**, *Research and experimentation, software industry*

**Chriss Sneed**, *Director of Applied Learning at the Athena Center for Leadership at Barnard College*

**Matthew Wilson**, *Leads the Correctional Education Partnership at LaGuardia Community College*

**May 5<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 – 8:30 PM**

**Faculty Club**

**(Sun Yat Sen Memorial Hall, SJU)**

**WEBEX**



Organized by Department of Sociology & Anthropology,  
St. John's College, and co-sponsored by CRES

**RSVP**



## Program

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*Welcome and acknowledgements*

*Alumni Panel*

*Alumni & Students Informal Conversations (breakout rooms for Webex participants)*

*Concluding thoughts & final announcements*

## Speakers' Full Bios

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### **Mari Bijimenian**

Mari Bijimenian graduated magna cum laude from St. John's University in May 2022 with a B.A. in Sociology and a minor in Philosophy. She is currently pursuing her J.D. at St. John's University School of Law in the Class of 2025, where she was admitted through the Red Storm Scholars Special Admissions Program with an Alumni Merit Scholarship, and where she is a Senior Staff Member of the American Bankruptcy Institute Law Review and the Dispute Resolution Society, as well as the Director of Public Relations for the Criminal Law Society. This fall, she will begin her role as an Assistant District Attorney at the New York County (Manhattan) District Attorney's Office.

Mari has extensive legal experience, particularly in the prosecution of domestic violence cases. As a Student Assistant District Attorney in the Queens District Attorney's Office Domestic Violence Bureau, she worked closely with survivors of domestic violence, conducting witness interviews, compiling discovery, and assisting in case development. She has also interned at the Manhattan District Attorney's Office in the Appeals Bureau, where she worked on legal research and appellate advocacy.

Beyond her legal work, Mari is deeply committed to international human rights advocacy. She has contributed to efforts combatting human rights violations against Armenian nationals abroad, including fair trial violations and the abuse of prisoners of war, and has worked with the Armenian National Committee of America to advance federal policy initiatives supporting humanitarian aid and Armenian Genocide education and awareness. Fluent in Armenian and passionate about seeking justice both domestically and globally, Mari is dedicated to a career in public interest law.

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### **Gabriela Calahorrano**

Gabriela Calahorrano '13CPS, '15G is Staff Attorney with New York University Immigrant Defense Initiative Washington Square Legal Services Inc. (NYU IDI), that serves the immigrant community at New York University. In that role Ms. Calahorrano provides immigration legal assistance to students, faculty, administrators and their immediate family members. Prior to her current role, Ms. Calahorrano worked at the Central American Refugee Center (CARECEN), a non-profit organization that serves immigrant communities on Long Island. In that role, Ms.

Calahorrano provided free legal consultations, know your rights presentations, and legal representation to immigrant community members on Long Island.

Ms. Calahorrano is a graduate of Hofstra University School of Law. She was equally interested in pursuing a doctoral or law degree when she completed her M.A. in Sociology at St. John's in 2015. She chose law school so that she could take a more hands-on approach to helping others in her community. As an undergraduate at St. John's, Ms. Calahorrano pursued a double major in Legal Studies and Psychology. She also participated in the selective Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program, that allowed her to work closely with a faculty member on a research project and present her findings at the 22nd Annual National McNair Research Conference and Graduate Fair. Ms. Calahorrano graduated early with her undergraduate degree and went on to complete her M.A. in a year and a half.

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### **Angela Di Mercurio**

Angela completed the BS/MA program in Communication Arts and Sociology, graduating in 2019. She is an Assistant Vice President in Finance Regulatory Engagement at Citi. Previously, she worked at UBS as a Regulatory Relations Manager and in Private Wealth Management. Angela holds Series 7 and Series 66 licenses and has a keen understanding of prudential regulation and stakeholder management. Originally from San Diego, California, Angela currently resides in Massapequa, NY.

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### **Joe Padgett Herz**

Joe Padgett Herz graduated from SJU with his BA and MA in Sociology in 2020. Currently, he is in a double program obtaining his PhD in Sociology and MA in WGSS. He is a research assistant on an NSF funded study on the social movements of over and under population panics. In particular, he focuses on eugenics, techfeudalism, and related ideologies.

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### **Jaelyn Hill Rucker**

Jaelyn Hill-Rucker is a proud alumna of St. John's University, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology in 2023. Currently, she is pursuing a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) at Relay Graduate School of Education, furthering her commitment to education and student

development. Jaelyn is dedicated to shaping young minds as a Fourth Grade Educator at Merrick Academy in Queens, New York, where she fosters a supportive and engaging learning environment for her students.

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## **Jahlani Jackson**

Jahlani graduated with his Bachelor's of Arts in 2021, followed with his Master's of Arts in 2022. Currently, he works as a Claims Examiner for the Department of Employment Services, a subsidiary government body beholden to the USDOL.

His academic background is in Sociology, which he studied for the six years of his double-degree program and loved every minute. Regarding extracurriculars, his background has always been Student Development where he held leadership positions in the university's orientation program, as well as being a part of the Common Ground Dialogue and Discover New York programs.

Since that time, he has been on a mission to return to the classroom as a professor, intending to get his doctorate. In the interim, he has been fortunate enough to join the district government of Washington, DC as a Claims Examiner with the Department of Employment Services and while sometimes challenging, the work has been wholly rewarding. Even though the work he currently does is not his end goal, he looks forward to describing in a bit more depth the ways that our field of study prepared him for a role like this.

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## **Glynis Johns**

Glynis M. Johns is a dedicated historian, advocate, and community leader who has established a strong and influential presence for the African-American community in Lackawanna County. She collaborates with state and local officials on key projects across Pennsylvania, ensuring Black history and culture remain at the forefront.

As the founder and CEO of the Black Scranton Project, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and local history initiative, Glynis is committed to preserving and celebrating Black culture in the Scranton region. Her work has earned her significant recognition, including Governor Josh Shapiro's Inaugural Keystone Award for Service to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (2024) and the Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce's Inaugural Changemaker Award (2024). She was also named a 2023 New America Us@250 Fellow and featured in the 2024 City & State PA Power 100 List of Black Trailblazers.

Beyond advocacy, Glynis is a storyteller. She delivered a TEDx Scranton talk on “Why Local Black History Matters” and was featured in the Emmy Award-winning short documentary *The Institutions Preserving Black History in Northeastern PA*. Currently, she is leading the development of the Black Scranton Project Center for Arts and Culture (BSPCAC)—a future hub for BIPOC arts, culture, and entertainment in the region.

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### **Nicholas LaChance**

Nicholas graduated with his Masters of Arts in Sociology in 2023. Since graduating he has served as an adjunct professor of Sociology, as well as a Student Services Coordinator in higher education. Nicholas has also worked on a research project for the University of Michigan and hopes to continue his career in higher education moving forward.

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### **Abby Molos**

Abigail Molos is a dedicated higher education professional and a proud double alumna of St. John’s University. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Communication Arts with a concentration in Media Ethics and Advocacy in 2023, followed by a Master of Arts in Sociology in May 2024.

In August 2023, Abigail joined the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at St. John’s University as an Admission Counselor, where she currently oversees recruitment efforts in her home state of New Jersey and Rockland County, NY.

Committed to fostering inclusivity and access in higher education, Abigail is an active member of the New Jersey Association for College Admission Counseling (NJACAC). She serves on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee, where she focuses on professional development initiatives and leads the LGBTQ+ Special Interest Group. Additionally, she is a member of the Inclusion, Access, and Success (IAS) Committee, which is dedicated to student programming. In this capacity, she also serves as Co-Chair of Rainbow Key, a specialized initiative designed to support queer and transgender students throughout the college admissions process.

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## **Pablo Sanchez**

Pablo J. Sanchez (M.A. Sociology, '14) leverages his background in sociological research in his career focused on data for social good. As the Data Analytics Manager at Northwell Health's Center for AIDS Research & Treatment (CART), he leads data initiatives that support the center's delivery of comprehensive care, addressing the intersecting social determinants of health crucial for patients living with HIV.

Pablo previously spearheaded data initiatives addressing global poverty at The Hunger Project and leads annual applied research projects centered on decolonization and ethical engagement in Ecuador. He was a Fulbright Fellow in Minas Gerais, Brazil, in 2015. Pablo is passionate about applied research and community-led development, interests he explores further as an Adjunct Professor at St. John's University.

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## **Meischa Sineno**

Meischa E. Sineno graduated with honors in May 2021 with a Master of Arts in Sociology. She now works in the software industry, collaborating closely with research and experimentation teams to design and execute data-driven strategies that enhance user experiences. A Tampa, FL native, Meischa currently resides in Austin, TX, where she recently purchased her first home. She enjoys exploring the city's outdoors and quirky food scene with her spouse and their pup, Rue.

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## **Chriss Sneed**

Chriss Sneed is the Director of Applied Learning at the Athena Center for Leadership at Barnard College. There, Chriss leads the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs designed to resource and embolden young changemakers with tools needed for their current and future leadership journeys.

Outside of Athena, Chriss has held senior-leadership positions at for-profit consultancies, 501(c)3s, and visiting lecturer positions at several colleges including Wesleyan, Connecticut College, and SJU. An award-winning Fulbright Scholar and Sociology PhD Candidate, they've published book chapters, articles, and academic magazine features, co-edited a journal issue, and presented/engaged in research at conferences in the US, Cuba, Canada, Peru, and Brazil. Chriss

has a Masters of Arts in Sociology from University of Connecticut, graduate certificate in Feminist Studies (also from UConn), and a dog named Charles - ask for photos!

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## **Matthew Wilson**

Matthew Wilson sought to change his future after incarceration by joining the Prison-to-College-Pipeline program, earning 18 credits before his release on October 31, 2016. He attended LaGuardia Community College, received the Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship, and earned a BA in Communication and Media Management and a Master's in Sociology. Now, he leads the Correctional Education Partnership at LaGuardia, helping those affected by mass incarceration access educational opportunities.

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