

Updated May 15, 2025

Elijah J. Watson, MA

elijahwatson2025 (at) u.northwestern.edu | [linkedin.com/in/elijahjiles](https://www.linkedin.com/in/elijahjiles)

Website: ejwatson.github.io

EDUCATION

PhD in Anthropology, Northwestern University (expected 2026)

- NIH F31 Fellow & NSF Graduate Research Fellow
- Certificates
 - Society, Biology, and Health
 - Management for PhDs, Northwestern Kellogg School of Management (completing during summer 2025)
- *Committee:* Chris Kuzawa (advisor), Thomas McDade, Sera Young, Lucia Petito, Julia Behrman

MPH in Epidemiology, Northwestern University (expected 2026)

MA in Anthropology, Northwestern University (2023)

BA in Anthropology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2019)

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed manuscripts

1. Chihua Li, Rebecca Stebbins, Grace Noppert, Constanza Carney, Chunyu Liu, Ashley Sapp, **Elijah Watson**, and Allison Aiello. (2024). Peripheral Immune Function and Alzheimer's Disease: A Living Systematic Review and Critical Appraisal. *Molecular Psychiatry*. ([link](#))
2. Margaret Butler, Britney Smart, **Elijah Watson**, Shreya Narla, and Lauren Keenan-Devlin. (2023). Breastfeeding durations differ at the intersection of race/ethnicity and educational attainment in a nationally representative sample from the US. *Journal of Human Lactation*. ([link](#))
3. Melissa Manus, **Elijah Watson**., Sahana Kuthyar, Delia Carba, Nikola Belarmino, Thomas McDade, Christopher Kuzawa, and Katherine Amato. (2023). Prenatal household size and composition are associated with infant fecal bacterial diversity in Cebu, Philippines. *American Journal of Biological Anthropology*. ([link](#))
4. Amanda Thompson, Khristopher Nicholas, **Elijah Watson**, Enrique Terán, and Margaret Bentley. (2019). Water, food, and the dual burden of disease in Galápagos, Ecuador. *American Journal of Human Biology*. ([link](#))

Manuscripts under review

Elijah Watson, Delaney Glass, and Lucia Petito. "Toward New Directions in Human Biology: A Roadmap for Anthropological Causal Inference with Observational Data." Revised and Resubmitted to *American Journal of Human Biology*.

Manuscripts in progress

Elijah Watson, Thomas McDade, Michael Kobor, Calen Ryan, Nanette Lee, Linda Adair, and Christopher Kuzawa. “Evaluating epigenetic clocks as biomarkers of aging among middle-aged women in the Cebu, Philippines.”

Elijah Watson, Joshua M. Schrock, Christina Hayford, Daniel T. Ryan, Rana Saber, Nanette Benbow, Michael E. Newcomb, Alexis R. Demonbreun, Elizabeth M. McNally, Richard T. D’Aquila, Brian Mustanski, and Thomas W. McDade. “Racialized economic segregation in Chicago and COVID-19 antibody prevalence before the 2020 vaccine rollout: An application of Bayesian multilevel regression and poststratification”

Elijah Watson, Thomas McDade, Michael Kobor, Calen Ryan, Nanette Lee, Linda Adair, and Christopher Kuzawa. “Early life typhoon exposure and epigenetic aging in adulthood: Evidence from the Cebu Longitudinal Health and Nutrition Survey” (*dissertation paper*)

Elijah Watson, Thomas McDade, Michael Kobor, Calen Ryan, Nanette Lee, Linda Adair, and Christopher Kuzawa. “Socioeconomic status across the life course and epigenetic age acceleration in adulthood: Evidence from two generations of a Filipino birth cohort study” (*dissertation paper*)

Elijah Watson. Effects of schooling on the risk of intimate partner violence among women in the Philippines: Quasi-experimental evidence from the Demographic & Health Surveys and an educational policy reform (*dissertation paper*)

PRESENTATIONS, PUBLISHED ABSTRACTS, AND LECTURES

Oral presentations

1. **EJ Watson**, Delaney Glass, Lucia Petito. “Toward New Directions in Human Biology: A Roadmap for Causal Inference with Observational Data.” Human Biology Association. Baltimore, MD. April 2025.
2. **EJ Watson**. “It’s Biomedical Standard Time somewhere: Unsettling the framing of epigenetic aging as a causal mechanism linking social and environmental exposures to health.” EpiCause 2024: Causality in Epidemiology’ meeting at the Institute of Philosophy and Scientific Method. Johannes Kepler University of Linz, Austria. May 2024.
3. **EJ Watson**, TW McDade, CP Ryan, NR Lee, JL MacIsaac, K Dever, P Atashzay, MS Kobor, CW Kuzawa. “Evaluating the convergent and predictive validity of epigenetic age acceleration measured from common epigenetic clocks in Cebu, Philippines.” Human Biology Association. Los Angeles, CA. April 2024.
4. **Watson, EJ**, HJ Bethancourt, A Nickow, SL Young. “Water insecurity experiences and psychological distress among impoverished Ghanaian households.” UNC Water & Health Conference. Chapel Hill, NC (virtual). October 2021.

Poster presentations

1. **Watson, EJ**, LC Petito, TW McDade, SL Young, CW Kuzawa. “Intergenerational educational attainment and mental health in young adulthood among a Filipino birth cohort.” Society for Epidemiologic Research. Portland, OR. June 2023.
2. **Watson, EJ**, AL Thompson. “A descriptive analysis of gender, migration status, and inflammation among adults living in the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador in 2012.” Human Biology Association. Reno, NV (virtual). April 2023.
3. **Watson, EJ**, AK Johnson, C. Scott Smith, M Newcomb, R Saber, JM Schrock, DT Ryan, AR Demonbreun, B Mustanski, R D’Aquila, EM McNally, TW McDade. “Neighborhood racialized economic segregation and SARS-CoV-2 seropositivity among a Chicago adult community-based sample.” Society for Epidemiologic Research. Chicago, IL. June 2022.
4. **Watson, EJ**, ME Bentley, AL Thompson. “Social Predictors of Diet Quality in Galápagos, Ecuador.” Human Biology Association. Cleveland, OH. March 2019.

Lectures / Talks / Panels

1. “Statistical versus causal inference.” (Remote). Invited panelist for a round table discussion hosted by the Frontiers in Social Evolution (FINE) Seminar — October 2022.
2. “A primer on using directed acyclic graphs for causal inference.” Workshop presentation for Northwestern’s Evolutionary & Ecological Approaches to Health research group meeting – October 2022.

FELLOWSHIPS, SCHOLARSHIPS, & AWARDS

- **E.E. Hunt, Jr. Student Award for Outstanding Podium Presentation**, Human Biology Association — 2024
- **Tuition Scholarship**, Short course on causal inference, Department of Epidemiology, Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health — 2022
- **Travel Award**, Interdisciplinary Association of Population Health Scientists — 2022
- **Society, Biology, and Health Cluster Fellow**, Northwestern University — 2021
- **National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship** — 2020
- **Honigmann Undergraduate Thesis Award**, UNC Dept. of Anthropology — 2019
- **Travel Award, Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, Center for Communicable Disease Dynamics** — 2019 Conference to Increase Diversity in Mathematical Modeling & Public Health

GRANT SUPPORT

Awarded

- **F31 Ruth L. Kirschstein Predoctoral Individual National Research Service Award (NRSA)**: “Socioeconomic status across the life course and

Updated May 15, 2025

epigenetic age acceleration in adulthood: Evidence from two generations of a Filipino birth cohort study” (National Institutes of Health/National Institute on Aging)

- **UNC Frances L. Phillips Travel Scholarship:** Awarded to support travel to the Galapagos Islands and South Africa for fieldwork and experiential learning to inform future research on food and water insecurity. June 2019 – December 2019 (\$9,500)
- **UNC Undergraduate Research Consultant Team Grant:** Pilot study of food and water security on Isla Isabela, Galápagos (*collaboration with the Universidad San Francisco de Quito & UNC-USFQ Galápagos Science Center*) – 2019 (\$10,000)
- **UNC Gillian T. Cell Senior Thesis Research Grant** – 2018
- **UNC Summer Internship Grant** – Awarded to support research practicum and training in statistical programming at the Carolina Population Center.

RESEARCH POSITIONS & RELATED EXPERIENCE

UNC Center for Galápagos Studies / Galápagos Science Center

Field Research – Isabela Island, Galapagos, 6/2019–8/2019

Carolina Population Center, UNC-Chapel Hill

Research Intern, 5/2018–7/2018

UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, Department of Epidemiology

Research Assistant, 2/2018–5/2018

Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town, South Africa

Refugee/Migrant Employment Access Programme Intern, 8–12/2017

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record – Northwestern University

- **“Climate Change and Sustainability in Health Care”** – Winter 2025
 - Elective seminar for first year medical students at the Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine
 - Lead seminar coordinator (in attendance at all sessions) and lecturer for 2 out of 5 sessions

Teaching Assistant – Northwestern University

- **“Intermediate Epidemiology”** – BIOSTAT 401 – Fall 2023
 - Taught by Dr. Amy Johnson and Dr. Andrew Naidech (MPH/MS course)
 - Lectured on “Causal Inference with Directed Acyclic Graphs”
- **“Introduction to Epidemiology”** – BIOSTAT 301 – Summer 2023
 - Taught by Peter Serrano, MPH (MPH/MS course)
- **“The Social Determinants of Health”** – Global Health 222 – Spring 2023
 - Taught by Dr. Charlayne Mitchell (undergraduate course)
- **“Introduction to Global Health”** – Public Health/Global Health 390 – Fall 2022

Updated May 15, 2025

- Taught by Dr. Bill Leonard (combined undergraduate/MPH course)

Workshop Instructor – Northwestern University

- **R for Social Data Science** – 6 week summer workshop attended by students and one faculty member in the Society, Biology, and Health graduate cluster program

PUBLIC WRITING

“Opinion: Climate studies, National Institutes of Health Under Attack” — op-ed in the [Asheville Citizen Times](#) (2025)

OUTREACH

Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago / Northwestern Science in Society Program
Science Club Mentor, Pedersen-McCormick Boys & Girls Club (2023 – 2024)

SERVICE

Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine, Program in Public Health
Curriculum Committee (2025 – Present)

Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science

Student Committee, Webinar Co-Chair (2023 – Present)

MENTORSHIP

Silas Colombara, Undergraduate Research Mentee, Northwestern (2023 – Present)

MEMBERSHIPS

Population Association of America, Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science, Society for Epidemiologic Research, Human Biology Association

RESEARCH SKILLS

- Statistical analysis using R (advanced), Stata (proficient), SAS (basic)
- Quarto/RMarkdown
- Git/GitHub