

Leah A. Ouellet

Northwestern University | School of Education and Social Policy
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Areas of expertise: punishment, criminal justice policy, policy reform, criminal legal decision-making, adolescence & emerging adulthood, qualitative methods

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

2026 - **Assistant Professor**
Rutgers University, Newark, NJ
School of Criminal Justice

EDUCATION

2026 **Northwestern University**, Evanston, IL
School of Education and Social Policy
Human Development and Social Policy (HDSP), PhD (expected June 2026)

Dissertation: “Juvenile Life without Parole & Shifting Punitive Thought”

Committee: Simone Ispa-Landa (Chair, HDSP/Sociology)
Dan McAdams (HDSP/Psychology)
Quinn Mulroy (HDSP)
Christopher Seeds (Criminology, Law, & Society, UC Irvine)

2017 **Wayne State University**, Detroit, MI
Department of Criminal Justice & Criminology
Criminology & Criminal Justice, MS

2013 **University of Michigan**, Ann Arbor, MI
Ford School of Public Policy
Public Policy, BA

FELLOWSHIPS & FUNDING

2024-2026 **National Institute of Justice**
Graduate Research Fellowship (\$166,500)

2024 **Community Foundation of Southeastern Michigan, Michigan Justice Fund**
Rapid Response Grant, “Just Poetry: A Community Conversation about Juvenile Life Without Parole in Michigan,” (\$7,000; role: event co-creator & organizer)

2022-2025 **Arnold Ventures Foundation**
“Second Chances: A National Outcomes Study of Safe and Equitable Decarceration Among People Serving Juvenile Life Without the Possibility of

Parole,” (\$861,692; title on grant application: research associate; Principal Investigator: Dr. Laura Abrams, UCLA)

2020-2023 **Institute for Education Sciences**
Graduate Training Fellowship (\$144,000)

REFEREED PUBLICATIONS

- 2026 Ture, S., Lam, P., **Ouellet, L.**, Simpson, A., Hassinen, K., McAdams, D. & Reischer, H. “Agency and Communion Across Nine Years of Middle Adulthood: Between- and Within-Person Associations with Psychological and Developmental Outcomes.” *Journal of Adult Development*, 33(2). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10804-026-09553-1>
- 2026 **Ouellet, L.**, Brydon, D., Abrams, L., Ward, J., Jackson, D., Turner, R., Bennet, J., Howard, R., & Xu, A. “Understanding Variation in Juvenile Life Without Parole Legislation following *Miller*.” *Criminology and Public Policy*, 25(1). <https://doi:10.1111/1745-9133.70011>
- 2025 Nuamah, S., & **Ouellet, L.** “Claiming Citizenship: The Political Labor of Black Women’s Resistance.” *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*. 1–21. <https://doi:10.1017/S1742058X25100039>
- 2024 Bennett, J., Brydon, D., Ward, J., Jackson, D., **Ouellet, L.**, Turner, R., & Abrams, L. “In the Wake of *Miller* and *Montgomery*: A National View of People Sentenced to Juvenile Life Without Parole.” *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 93. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2024.102199>
- 2024 Cowan, H., McAdams, D., **Ouellet, L.**, Jones, C., Mittal, V. “Self-concept and Narrative Identity in Individuals at Clinical High Risk for Psychosis.” *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, 50(4), 848-859. <https://doi.org/10.1093/schbul/sbad142>
- 2023 Abrams, L., Canlione, K., **Ouellet, L.**, & Melillo, A. “Pathways to Freedom: The Evolution of the Parole Process for Youth Lifers in California.” *The Journal of Qualitative Criminal Justice and Criminology*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.21428/88de04a1.c6458869>
- 2023 **Ouellet, L.** & Wareham, J. “Prosecutor Decision-Making Following Juvenile Life Without Parole Sentencing Reform.” *Youth Violence & Juvenile Justice*, 21(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/15412040231173345>
- 2019 Larson, M., Xu, Y., **Ouellet, L.**, & Klahm, C. “Exploring the Impact of 9,398 Demolitions on Neighborhood-Level Crime in Detroit, Michigan.” *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 60, 57-63. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2018.11.002>

BOOK CHAPTERS

- 2025 Mulvey, P., **Ouellet, L.**, McAdams, D. “Exploring the Foundations of Life Story and Narrative Research within Criminal Legal Lived Experience Scholarship.” In *Division on Corrections and Sentencing Handbook: Lessons from Lived Experience (Vol. 10)*. Eds. Wright, K., Fader, J., LeBel, T., Dum, C.
- 2024 Jackson, D., Abrams, L., Brydon, D., Bennett, J. & Ward, J., **Ouellet, L.**, & Turner, R. “Examining the Health of People Serving Juvenile Life Without the Possibility of Parole: Setting a Research Agenda.” In *Division on Corrections and Sentencing Handbook: Contemporary Issues in Health and Punishment (Vol. 9)*. Eds Fahmy, C., Novisky, M., Link, N. Routledge.

MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW

Ward, J., Jackson, D., Brydon, D., Abrams, L., & **Ouellet, L.** “Examining Equitable Decarceration of Individuals Sentenced to JLWOP in the United States.” *Journal of Criminal Justice*.

MANUSCRIPTS IN PROGRESS

Ouellet, L. “The Transition from Adolescence to Adulthood for Youth Sentenced to Life Without Parole.”

Ouellet, L., Brydon, D., Abrams, L., Turner, R., Ward, J., Bennet, J. & Jackson, D. “Codifying the Hallmark Features of Youth: Understanding How the *Miller* Factors Shape Sentencing Legislation.”

PRESENTATIONS, POSTERS, & INVITED LECTURES

2025 **Ouellet, L.** “*Understanding How Courtroom Workgroups Across Counties Implement Juvenile Life-Without-Parole Reform.*” Accepted at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology, Washington, DC.

Ouellet, L. “*The Rise of Juvenile Life Without Parole.*” Invited Lecture, University of Michigan School of Social Work MSW Program.

Mulvey, P., **Ouellet, L.**, McAdams, D. “*Understanding Life Story and Narrative in Lived Experience Criminal Legal Scholarship.*” Accepted at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology, Washington, DC.

Ouellet, L., Ward, J., Brydon, D., Bennett, J.Z., Jackson, D., Turner, R., & Abrams, L. “*Understanding Resentencing and Release Outcomes Amongst Child-lifers Eligible for Sentence Review Following Miller.*” Presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology, Washington, DC.

Abrams, L., Brydon, D., **Ouellet, L.**, & Howard, R. “*Getting Past the Gate: Navigating Administrative Hurdles to Conduct Research with Lifers.*” Presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology, Washington, DC.

Brydon, D., Bennett, J., Ward, J., Jackson, D., **Ouellet, L.**, Turner, R., & Abrams, L. "*Adversity and Connectedness: Examining Social Support and Mental Health Among Incarcerated Lifers.*" Presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology, Washington, DC.

Ouellet, L. "*Juvenile Life Without Parole Reform and the Courtroom Workgroup: How the 'Hallmark Features of Youth' are Defined and Operationalized within Sentencing Courts' Decision-Making Processes.*" Accepted at the annual Law & Society Association meeting in Chicago, IL.

2024 **Ouellet, L.**, Brydon, D., Turner, R., Abrams, L., Ward, J., Bennet, J., & Jackson, D. "*Mapping Juvenile Life without Parole Legislation throughout the United States.*" Presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Public Policy Analysis & Management in National Harbor, MD.

Ouellet, L. "*The Rise of Juvenile Life Without Parole.*" Invited Lecture, University of Michigan School of Social Work MSW Program.

Brydon, D., Bennett, J.Z., Abrams, L., **Ouellet, L.** "*Policy Impacts on Children Sentenced to Life Without Parole: A Three-State Case Study.*" Presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Public Policy Analysis & Management in National Harbor, MD.

Ouellet, L., Brydon, D., Turner, R., Abrams, L., Ward, J., Bennet, J., & Jackson, D. "*Codifying the Hallmark Features of Youth: Understanding How the Miller Factors Shape Sentencing Legislation.*" Presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology in San Francisco, CA.

Ward, J., Abrams, L., Jackson, D., Bennett, J.Z., **Ouellet, L.**, Brydon, D., Turner, R. "*Examining Equitable Decarceration of Individuals Sentenced to JLWOP in the United States.*" Presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology in San Francisco, CA.

Ouellet, L., Brydon, D., Turner, R., Abrams, L., Ward, J., Bennet, J., & Jackson, D. "*It's a State Thing: Mapping State-Level Policy Reform Across the United States Related to Juvenile Life Without Parole Sentencing.*" Presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Social Work Research in Washington, D.C.

2023 Bennett, J.Z., Brydon, D., Ward, J., Abrams, L., Jackson, D., **Ouellet, L.**, & Turner, R. "*Current Status of The Juvenile Lifer Population Post-Miller and Montgomery: Where Are They Now?*" Presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology in Philadelphia, PA.

Ouellet, L., Brydon, D., Turner, R., Abrams, L., Ward, J., Bennet, J., & Jackson, D. "*Mapping Juvenile Life without Parole Reform throughout the United States.*" Presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology in Philadelphia, PA.

- 2022 **Ouellet, L.** “*Prosecutors and Sentencing Policy Reform: Understanding Prosecutor Decision-Making Following Miller and Montgomery.*” Presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology in Atlanta, GA.
- 2021 **Ouellet, L.** “*The Transition to Adulthood for Juvenile Lifers.*” Presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology in Chicago, IL.
- 2017 **Ouellet, L.** “*Resentencing Michigan’s Juveniles Serving Life Without Parole: An Analysis of County Decisions.*” Presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology in Philadelphia, PA.
- Sutton, C., Herring, M., Lorentz, K., **Ouellet, L.**, Saif, S., Hansen, D., Schyllander, A. “*Political Discourse Amongst Adolescents: Is it Still Gendered?*” Presented at the annual conference for the Michigan Political Science Association in Ypsilanti, MI.
- Ouellet, L.**, Larson, M., Klahm, C. “*Razing Detroit: An Exploratory Analysis of the Impact of Concentrated Demolitions on Neighborhood-Level Crime And Disorder.*” Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences in Kansas City, MO.
- 2016 **Ouellet, L.**, Smith, B., Klahm, C. “*Overstressing the Influence of Police Stress: A Review of the Evidence.*” Poster presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology in New Orleans, LA.

TEACHING

- 2024-2025 Instructor of Record at Wayne State University
Undergraduate *Race, Crime, and Justice*
- 2022-2023 Instructor of Record at Wayne State University
Undergraduate *Race, Crime, and Justice*
- 2021-2022 Teaching Assistant at Northwestern University
Undergraduate *Policymaking and Implementation*
- Teaching Assistant at Northwestern University
Undergraduate *Field Methods*
- 2020-2021 Teaching Assistant at Northwestern University
Undergraduate *Child and Adolescent Development*
- 2017-2018 Instructor or Record at Wayne State University
Mixed undergraduate & graduate, *Special Topics in Criminal Justice: Art and Justice*
- 2016-2017 Directed Study Supervisor at Wayne State University

Mixed undergraduate & graduate

Teaching Assistant at Wayne State University
Undergraduate *Introduction to Criminal Justice*

Teaching Assistant at Wayne State University
Undergraduate *Juvenile Delinquency*

SERVICE & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- 2017-2024 Co-Creator & Organizer of “Just Poetry: A Community-Based Event about Notions, Perceptions, and Experiences of Justice,” annually held in Detroit, MI, to showcase different topics featuring criminal justice professionals and directly impacted poets
- 2021-2024 Brown Bag Committee at Northwestern University: Student representative coordinating departmental speaker series and professional development for peers
- 2020-2022 Graduate Student Advisory Council Member for the Northwestern Prison Education Program at Northwestern University
- 2015-2017 Learning Community Project Coordinator at Wayne State University: Created and coordinated a day-long service project for undergraduates, involving over 100 students and eight different non-profit service locations in Detroit

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

“*Publishing with Interview Data*,” Consortium for the Advancement of Research Methods and Analysis, Texas Tech University. Instructed by Heather Vough. June 2-June 5, 2025.

Research Practice Partnership with a regional school district. Report title: “*In-school Truancy at Franklin High*,” Principal Investigator: Simone Ispa-Landa., Spring 2023.

“*Grant Writing*” Multidisciplinary Program in Educational Sciences, Northwestern University. Instructed by Julie Cwikla. Nov. 4-5, 2021.

“*R: Regression Modeling*” Northwestern IT Research Computing Services, Northwestern University. August 9-13, 2021.

AD HOC JOURNAL REVIEWER

American Journal of Criminal Justice
Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice
Journal of Research on Crime and Delinquency
Journal of Adolescent Research

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

The Second Look Network
American Society of Criminology
Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences
Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management
Law & Society Association