

Adrian Wilson

232 Anthropology and Art Practice Building
Berkeley, CA 94720-3710

+1 510 642 3392
adrian.wilson@berkeley.edu
adrianwilson.net

(current as of October 2025)

Education

2016–2026	Ph.D. Sociocultural Anthropology (expected completion: July 2026) University of California at Berkeley Designated Emphasis in Science and Technology Studies Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Dissertation: "Economic Imaginaries of Development Experimentation in Kenya"
2015–2016	M.Sc. Social Anthropology (<i>with distinction</i>) London School of Economics and Political Science
2011–2015	M.A. Economics University of Massachusetts Amherst
2005–2007	M.A. Human Geography University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
1998–2002	B.A. Political Science University of California at Berkeley

Fellowships, grants, and awards

Awards and honors

2025	Bennetta Jules-Rosette Graduate Essay Award, Association for Africanist Anthropology (\$500)
2022	M. Estellie Smith Award, Society for Economic Anthropology (\$2,500)

Extramural grants and fellowships

2023	CERES Scholar, CERES: Connecting the EdTech Research Ecosystem, University of California at Irvine (\$14,100)
2021-2022	Andrew W. Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellowship, Social Science Research Council (\$27,900)

Intramural grants and fellowships

2024	Summer Dissertation Writing Grant for Advanced Arts and Humanities and Humanistic Social Sciences Students, University of California at Berkeley (\$6,000)
2024	Dissertation Completion Fellowship, Graduate Division, UC Berkeley (\$27,000)
2020	Andrew & Mary Thompson Rocca Dissertation Research Grant, Center for African Studies, UC Berkeley (\$6,000)
2019	Andrew & Mary Thompson Rocca Pre-Dissertation Research Grant, Center for African Studies, UC Berkeley (\$4,000)
2016-2017	Anthropology Department First-Year Fellowship, UC Berkeley (\$24,000)
2011-2012	Graduate School Fellowship, University of Massachusetts Amherst (\$16,000)
2006	Tinker Foundation Field Research Grant, Institute of Latin American Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (\$2,000)
2005-2007	Graduate School Merit Fellowship, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (\$15,000)
2005-2006	Scholars for Tomorrow Fellowship, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (\$5,000)

Publications

Refereed articles accepted for publication

- 2025 "Refusing money, rejecting relations: the epistemological and political consequences of a development randomized controlled trial in Western Kenya." Lead author, with Mario Schmidt. Submitted to *Current Anthropology* in August 2024; accepted for publication October 2025.

Refereed articles in submission

- 2025 "Hayek's anthropology: freedom, evolution, and the ghosts of neoliberalism." Submitted to *Politics and Society* in June 2025.

Non-peer-reviewed publications

- 2023 "When economists shut off your water." *Africa Is a Country*, 1 November 2023 (with Faith Kasina, Irene Nduta, and Jethron Ayumbah Akallah) ([link](#)). Cross-posted in *Developing Economics*, 11 December 2023 ([link](#)).
- 2012 "Coal-blooded: putting profits before people." Lead author and researcher. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Indigenous Environmental Network, and Little Village Environmental Justice Organization ([link](#)).

Academic presentations and talks

Invited talks

- 2025 "Refusing money, rejecting relations: The epistemological and political consequences of a development experiment in Western Kenya." Lubna Chaudhry Human Rights Lecture Series, Binghamton University, 6 November.
- 2024 "Randomized field experiments and the uncertain power of evidence" (*revised version*). With Fiona Gedeon Achi. Center for Effective Global Action, UC Berkeley, 30 May.
- 2023 "'Water is life': economics, ethics, and experimentality in Nairobi" (*expanded version*). Department of Anthropology, Gender, & African

Studies, University of Nairobi / Anthropological Association of Kenya, 30 October.

2022 "Busara from an anthropological perspective." With Mario Schmidt. Busara Center for Behavioral Economics, Nairobi, 21 July.

Conferences and professional meetings

2025 "Development economics and anti-Blackness in Kenya." Paper on panel: "Blackness as praxis: departures from hegemonic science." Annual Meeting, Society for Social Studies of Science, 4 September.

2024 "The ambiguous labor of development research data collection in Kenya." Paper on panel: "Invisible labors." M. Estellie Smith Award winner presentation. Annual Meeting, Society for Economic Anthropology/Society for the Anthropology of Work, 19 April.

2023 "Engaging with Sylvia Wynter's history of science: a primer." Paper on panel: "IYKYK: STS in dialogue with Black Studies." Annual Meeting, Society for Social Studies of Science, 9 November.

2022 "Urban experiments: cities as laboratories." With Mario Schmidt. UTA-Do Conference on Urban Studies, British Institute in Eastern Africa, 25 May.

2021 "Randomized field experiments and the uncertain power of evidence." With Fiona Gedeon Achi. Annual Meeting, Society for Social Studies of Science, 6 October.

2007 "Peasant collectives and the question of autonomy: from the Spanish anarchists to the Brazilian Landless Movement." With Wendy Wolford. Session: "The politics and geographies of development." Developing Areas Specialty Group Pre-Conference, Annual Meeting, American Association of Geographers, 16 March.

2006 "Peasant collectives and the question of autonomy: from the Spanish anarchists to the Brazilian Landless Movement." With Wendy Wolford. Conference: "The discourse of autonomy in social movements and political theory today." UC Irvine, 20 May.

Other academic presentations

2025	"Refusing money, rejecting relations: The epistemological and political consequences of a development experiment in Western Kenya." Center for African Studies/Anthropological Inquiry Working Group, UC Berkeley, 11 March.
2023	"'Water is life': economics, ethics, and experimentality in Nairobi." Brown Bag Series, Department of Anthropology, UC Berkeley, 28 April.

Teaching experience

Course design and teaching

2025 (Spring)	<i>Instructor.</i> Anthropology R5B: Reading and Comprehension: Science and Coloniality: Human Subjects Research in East Africa. UC Berkeley.
2014 (Spring)	<i>Instructor.</i> Geography 101: World Regional Geography. Bunker Hill Community College, Boston, MA.
2013 (Fall)	<i>Instructor.</i> Geography 105: California Geography. Ohlone Community College, Fremont, CA.
2007 (Spring)	<i>Co-Instructor and Graduate Advisor</i> (with Prof. Wendy Wolford). Honors 396: Geographies of Development: The Political Economy of Development in Theory and Practice. UNC-Chapel Hill.

Teaching assistant

2025 (Fall)	<i>Graduate Student Instructor.</i> Data Science 104: Human Contexts and Ethics of Data. Prof. Cathryn Carson. UC Berkeley.
2024 (Spring)	<i>Graduate Student Instructor.</i> Economics 100B: Intermediate Macroeconomics. Prof. Shawn Chi. UC Berkeley.
2023 (Spring)	<i>Head Graduate Student Instructor.</i> Anthropology 3AC: Introduction to Sociocultural Anthropology. Prof. Mariane Ferme. UC Berkeley. Course management responsibilities; managed team of four other GSIs.
2022 (Fall)	<i>Graduate Student Instructor.</i> Economics 140: Econometrics. Prof. Ryan Edwards. UC Berkeley.

2020 (Spring)	<i>Graduate Student Instructor.</i> Economics 140: Econometrics. Prof. Stephen Bianchi. UC Berkeley.
2019 (Fall)	<i>Graduate Student Instructor.</i> Anthropology 3AC: Introduction to Sociocultural Anthropology. Profs. Mariane Ferme & Alexei Yurchak. UC Berkeley.
2019 (Spring)	<i>Graduate Student Instructor.</i> Geography 20: Globalization. Prof. Sharad Chari. UC Berkeley.
2018 (Fall)	<i>Graduate Student Instructor.</i> Anthropology 3AC: Introduction to Sociocultural Anthropology. Prof. James Holston. UC Berkeley.
2018 (Spring)	<i>Graduate Student Instructor.</i> Anthropology 3AC: Introduction to Sociocultural Anthropology. Prof. Lawrence Cohen. UC Berkeley.
2017 (Fall)	<i>Graduate Student Instructor.</i> Anthropology 3AC: Introduction to Sociocultural Anthropology. Prof. Charles Hirschkind. UC Berkeley.
2013 (Spring)	<i>Teaching Assistant.</i> Economics 104: Introductory Macroeconomics. Prof. Valerie Voorheis. UMass Amherst.
2006 (Spring)	<i>Teaching Assistant.</i> Geography 21: Introduction to Human Geography: People and Places. Prof. Wendy Wolford. UNC-Chapel Hill.

Guest lectures

2025	"Settler colonialism in Africa." In: Rusana Cieply, Anthropology R5B: Stolen Lands: Indigenous Pasts, Settler Presents, Decolonial Futures, UC Berkeley, 25 April.
2025	"Genres and collaboration: different authors & different audiences." In: Prof. Mauricio Najarro, Science & Technology Studies 250: Science and Technology Studies Graduate Research Seminar, UC Berkeley, 20 February.
2024	"Research ethics and randomized controlled trials: lessons from/on fieldwork." In: Prof. Marguerite Wilson, Human Development 300: Social Science Research Methods, Binghamton University, 10 October. Also presented on the same topic in the same course on 12 October 2023 and 30 September 2020.

- 2024 "Development RCTs and research ethics in economics." In: Prof. Anastasia Wilson, Economics 305: Political Economy, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, 26 September.
- 2023 Guest talk on preparing research proposals. In: Prof. Lawrence Cohen, Anthropology 196: Undergraduate Seminar: Thesis Writing, UC Berkeley, 4 September.
- 2021 "A primer on academic literature reviews." In: Prof. Washington Onyango-Ouma, Anthropology 602: Social Science Research Methods, University of Nairobi, 18 November.
- 2018 "Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*." In: Prof. Lawrence Cohen, Anthropology 3AC: Introduction to Sociocultural Anthropology, UC Berkeley, 23 April.
- 2015 "Understanding capitalism." In: Prof. Denise Yull, Human Development 366: Poverty and Discrimination, Binghamton University, 14 April.

Research experience

- 2020–present Main dissertation fieldwork: ethnographic research study on development economists conducting human-subjects field research in Kenya. Preliminary fieldwork for two months in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda (2019); 10 months fieldwork in U.S. (2020–2021); 13 months fieldwork in Kenya (2021–2022); ongoing occasional research work in U.S. and elsewhere.
- 2012 (Fall) *Research Assistant*. Political Economy Research Institute / Economics for Equity and the Environment, University of Massachusetts Amherst. Supervised by Profs. James Boyce & Michael Ash. Researched environmental justice impacts of U.S. coal power plants.
- 2006 (Spring–Fall) *Research Assistant*. Prof. Wendy Wolford. Various research tasks in support of Prof. Wolford's book, *The Land Is Ours Now: Social Mobilization and the Meanings of Land in Brazil*; helped edit drafts of manuscript.

2006 (Summer) Master's thesis fieldwork: ethnographic research study of anarchist and autonomist collective communities in Spain. Two months fieldwork in Spain.

Service

2023 Reviewer, *Socio-Economic Review*

2023 Convenor & Host, Inaugural Pre-field-Post-field Graduate Student Collaborative, Department of Anthropology, University of California at Berkeley

2021 (Spring & Fall) Graduate Mentor, Undergraduate Mentorship Program, Anthropology Undergraduate Association, University of California at Berkeley

Affiliations

American Anthropological Association (2016–present)

Society for Economic Anthropology (2018–present)

Association for Africanist Anthropology (2021–present)

Society for Social Studies of Science (2019–present)

American Economic Association (2013–present)

American Association of Geographers (2006–present)

Languages

English (native)

German (C1 – proficient)

Swahili (B2 – upper intermediate)

Spanish (B1 – intermediate)

French (A2 – pre-intermediate)

Nonacademic work experience

- 2008-2021 **Researcher** Global Energy Monitor, San Francisco, CA. As a contract researcher for GEM for a total of 36 months between 2008 and 2021, researching global fossil fuel infrastructure for an advocacy-oriented fossil fuel infrastructure database. Lead author of "Coal-blooded: putting profits before people" (2012), an environmental justice analysis of U.S. coal power plants, in collaboration with the NAACP.
- 2007-2009 **Campaigner/organizer** Rainforest Action Network, San Francisco, CA. Organized civil disobedience actions, protests, and online actions in support of RAN's campaigns against mountaintop removal coal mining, Athabasca tar sands extraction, and tropical rainforest deforestation for corporate biofuels. Attended and helped organize protests at COP-15 climate summit in Copenhagen in December 2009.
- 2003-2005 **Co-founder** Cooperative Roots, Berkeley, CA. Co-created zero-equity cooperative housing network, established governing 501(c)3 nonprofit, and purchased and self-renovated two homes housing 25 people in South Berkeley.