

November 2025

ALKA V. MENON

CURRICULUM VITAE

Department of Sociology
Yale University
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EMPLOYMENT

2018- Assistant Professor of Sociology, Yale University

Faculty Affiliate:

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department
History of Science and Medicine Program
Council on Southeast Asian Studies
MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies
Center for the Study of Race, Indigeneity, and Transnational Migration
Saybrook College

EDUCATION

2018 Ph.D., Sociology, Northwestern University
2013 M.A., Sociology, Northwestern University
2010 B.A., Cornell University
Honors: Summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa

PUBLICATIONS

Book

Menon, Alka V. 2023. *Refashioning Race: How Global Cosmetic Surgery Crafts New Beauty Standards*.
University of California Press. <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520386730>

Awards: 2024 Book Award, Sociology of Body and Embodiment Section, American
Sociological Association

Finalist for the 2024 Ludwik Fleck Prize, Society for the Social Studies of Science

Reviewed in [American Journal of Sociology](#), [Gender & Society](#), [Sociology of Race and Ethnicity](#), [Social Forces](#), [Contemporary Sociology](#), [Symbolic Interaction](#), [Contexts](#), [International Sociology](#), [The Sociological Review](#)

Author Meets Critics: American Sociological Association (2024)

Eastern Sociological Society (2024)

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

* Denotes graduate or undergraduate student co-author, ^ Denotes equal author effort

- Humphrey, Ja'Neil, **Alka V. Menon**, and Miles Pfaff. 2025. "Passing: Fred Korematsu and the Wartime Reconfiguration of Facial Plastic Surgery." *FACE: Journal of the American Society of Maxillofacial Surgeons*. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/27325016251377075>
- Khubchandani, Jasmine A., Sakinah C. Suttiratana, Rosetta Washington, Dawn White-Bracey, Madhav KC, Andrea Silber, Oluwadamilola M. Fayanju, Paris D. Butler, **Alka Menon**, Rachel A. Greenup. 2025. "[Living Flat: Stories from Women of Color After Mastectomy](#)." *Annals of Surgical Oncology*. <https://doi.org/10.1245/s10434-024-16337-y>
- Accompanying invited commentary in the same issue: Khubchandani, J.A., S.C. Suttiratana, R. Washington, D. White-Bracey, M. KC, A. Silber, O.M. Fayanju, P.D. Butler, **A. Menon**, R.A. Greenup. 2025. "[ASO Author Reflections: A Community Partnered Approach to Studying Living Flat after Mastectomy](#)." *Annals of Surgical Oncology*. <https://doi.org/10.1245/s10434-024-16400-8>
- Menon, Alka V.** and Carlo Sariago.* 2022. "Engendering connection: The embodied emotional labor of U.S. cosmetic surgeons." *Social Science & Medicine* 306: 115092. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2022.115092>
- Nelson, C.A., L.M. Pérez-Chada, A. Creadore, S.J. Li, K. Lo, P. Manjaly, A. Pournamdari, E. Tkachenko, J.S. Barbieri, J.M. Ko, **A.V. Menon**, R.I. Hartman, A. Mostaghimi. 2020. "Patient perspectives on the use of artificial intelligence for skin cancer screening." *JAMA Dermatology* 156(5):501-512. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamadermatol.2019.5014>
- Menon, Alka V.** 2019. "Cultural gatekeeping in cosmetic surgery: Transnational beauty ideals in multicultural Malaysia." *Poetics* 75: 101354. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2019.02.005>
- Menon, Alka V.** 2017. "Do online reviews diminish physician authority? The case of cosmetic surgery in the U.S." *Social Science & Medicine* 181: 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.03.046>
- Menon, Alka V.** 2017. "Reconstructing Race in American Cosmetic Surgery." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40(4): 597-616. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2016.1206590>
- Linster, C., **Menon, A.V.**, Singh, C.Y., & Wilson, D.A. 2009. "Odor-specific habituation arises from interaction of afferent synaptic adaptation and intrinsic synaptic potentiation in olfactory cortex." *Learning & Memory* 16(7): 452-59.

Refereed Conference Proceedings

- Menon, Alka V.**, Zahra Abba Omar*, Nadia Nahar*, Lynn E. Fiellin, Xenophon Papademetris, and Christian Kästner. 2024. "Lessons from clinical communications for AI systems." Proceedings of the Seventh AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics, and Society (AIES-24), Volume 7, pp. 958-970, October 16. <https://ojs.aaai.org/index.php/AIES/article/view/31695/33862>

Nahar, Nadia*, Jenny Rowlett*, Matthew Bray*, Zahra Abba Omar*, Xenophon Papademetris, **Alka Menon**, and Christian Kästner. 2024. "Regulating Explainability in Machine Learning Applications: Observations from a Policy Design Experiment." Proceedings of the ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAccT '24). June 7. <https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/3630106.3659028>

Book Chapters, Essays, and Book Reviews

Menon, Alka V. 2021. "Global disease surveillance systems and cooperation in COVID-19: Lessons not learned," in *Corona: Weltgesellschaft im Ausnahmezustand?*, edited by Markus Heidingsfelder and Maren Lehmann. Germany: Velbrück Wissenschaft, pp.117-126.

Menon, Alka V. 2021. *Beauty Diplomacy: Embodying an Emerging Nation*, by Oluwakemi M Balogun. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. *Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews* 50(5):394-395. DOI: [10.1177/00943061211036051a](https://doi.org/10.1177/00943061211036051a)

Menon, Alka V. 2020. *Mobilizing Mutations: Human Genetics in the Age of Patient Advocacy* by Daniel Navon. University of Chicago Press. *American Journal of Sociology* 126(3): 741-743. DOI: [10.1086/710827](https://doi.org/10.1086/710827)

Menon, Alka V. 2016. *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-create Race in the Twenty-first Century*, by Dorothy Roberts. *Spontaneous Generations* 8(1): 109-111.

Op-eds

Amir, Sulfikar and **Alka Menon**. 2021. "Kerentanan Pandemi dan Paradoks Resiliensi." (Title in English: "Pandemic vulnerability and the paradox of resilience") *Media Indonesia* Kolom Pakar. September 27, p. 6.

Lanzarotta, Tess and **Alka Menon**. 2020. "Public health needs the mail: The surprising history of the USPS delivering vaccines and drugs." *Slate*. September 2, 2020. <https://slate.com/technology/2020/09/usps-is-a-public-health-tool.html>
Reprinted in the North Carolina Examiner. <https://ncexaminer.com/public-health-needs-the-mail/>

In preparation

Accepted Menon, Alka V. "Cosmetic surgery," *Handbook on Beauty and Inequality*, edited by Giseline Kuipers and Outi Sarpila.

Accepted Menon, Alka V. "Beauty, Race, and Hierarchy." *Routledge Resources Online- Race and Racism* (formerly the Routledge Encyclopedia for Race and Racism). Edited by J. Solomos.

AWARDS

- 2024 American Sociological Association Sociology of the Body and Embodiment Section Book Award for *Refashioning Race*
- 2024 Society for the Social Studies of Science Ludwik Fleck Prize Finalist for *Refashioning Race*
- 2021 American Sociological Association Section on the Body and Embodiment Best Publication Prize for “Cultural gatekeeping in cosmetic surgery”
- 2021 Yale University Mildred Priest Prize for Best Undergraduate Thesis awarded to senior advisee Jason Louis Contino
- 2017 American Sociological Association Section on the Body and Embodiment Graduate Student Paper Award for “Reconstructing Race and Gender in American Cosmetic Surgery”
- 2016 Robert F. Winch Award for Best Published Graduate Student Paper for “Reconstructing Race and Gender in American Cosmetic Surgery,” Department of Sociology, Northwestern University
- 2010 Cornell University LGBT Studies Undergraduate Prize

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

External Funding

- 2021-2025 Designing Accountable Software Systems, CISE/CCF 2131466, U.S. National Science Foundation. PI: Alka Menon. Co-PIs: Xenophon Papademetris and Lynn Fiellin. Supplement: Summer Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU), 2024
- 2021-2024 Academic Research Fund Tier-1 Grant for “State Politics and the Covid-19 Mitigation in Southeast Asia,” Singapore Ministry of Education. PI: Sulfikar Amir, Collaborator: Alka Menon
- 2016-2018 Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant, SES 1556591, Section of Science, Technology & Society, National Science Foundation, PI: Steven Epstein, Co-PI: Alka Menon

At Yale University

- 2025-2027 AI Course Revision Grant
- 2025 Cross-Divisional Teaching Award (with Xenophon Papademetris for AI, Medicine, and Society course)
- 2024-2026 Institution for Social and Policy Studies Conference Support Award (for Revisiting Biomedicalization workshop)
- 2024 Edward J. and Dorothy Clarke Kempf Memorial Fund Award (for Revisiting Biomedicalization workshop)
- 2024 Institution for Social and Policy Studies-MacMillan Center for Area and International Studies Multidisciplinary Research Grant
- 2024 Women’s Faculty Forum Seed Grant
- 2021-2022 Race, Indigeneity and Transnational Migration Faculty Fellowship

Fellowships

- 2021-2022 Public Voices Fellowship (by the Op-ed Project), Yale University
2014 Social Science Research Council Dissertation Proposal Development Fellowship

CONFERENCE

- 2025 *Revisiting Biomedicalization: Toward a Technology-Focused Approach*, Yale University.
Primary organizer of in-person convening with 30 researchers (sociologists, anthropologists, and historians) to draft a new agenda for revitalizing study of biomedicalization. (February 28-March 1, 2025)

INVITED TALKS

- “AI, Transparency, and Health: Challenges for Trust and Accountability”
-Smith College, Kahn Liberal Arts Institute (March 2025)
-Yale University, Department of Biomedical Informatics and Data Science Rising Star Monthly Colloquium (May 2025)
- “Refashioning Race: How Global Cosmetic Surgery Crafts New Beauty Standards,”
-University of Michigan, Science, Technology, and Society Program (February 2025)
-University of California at San Francisco, Innovative and Critical Perspectives in Social Science Colloquium, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences (January 2025)
-Northwestern University, Sociology (March 2024)
-Texas A&M University, Sociology (April 2024)
-Colby College, Sociology (October 2023)
-University of Toronto, Global and Transnational Studies Department (October 2023)
-University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Sociology (October 2021)
-University of California at Los Angeles, Health and Society Working Group (virtual, November 2021)
-Wesleyan University, Fries Center for Global Studies (March 2019)
-St. Francis College, Department of Sociology & Criminal Justice (October 2019)
-Boston University, Sociology (October 2019)
-Cornell University, Science and Technology Studies Colloquium (November 2019)
-University of California at Santa Barbara, Sociology (November 2019)
-Columbia University, Science, Knowledge and Technology Workshop (October 2019)
-Brown University, Science and Technology Studies Colloquium (December 2018)
- “Opening the Black Box: Explaining Automated Software Systems,”
-Columbia University, Sociology of Algorithms Workshop (November 2023)
- “Beauty Matters: Race and Inequality in U.S. Cosmetic Surgery,” Beauty and Inequality Workshop, KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium (virtual, May 2021)
- Panel Discussion on Race, Beauty, and Bodily Capital in a Comparative Perspective, Harvard University, Social Analysis Workshop (virtual, October 2021)
- “Constructing an Asian Look: Beauty Ideals and Cosmetic Surgery in Malaysia,”

- Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (February 2020)
- Monash University Malaysia, School of Arts and Social Sciences (March 2020)
- New York University, Sociology of Culture Workshop (October 2019)
- Yale University, Southeast Asian Studies Colloquium (October 2019)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (selected)

- “In Pursuit of Health: The Many Meanings of Ozempic,” Society for the Social Studies of Science annual meeting (September 2025, Seattle, WA)
- “Shame, Blame, and Ozempic: The Social Meanings of GLP-1 Use,” American Sociological Association annual meeting (August 2025, Chicago, IL)
- In Pursuit of Health: The Many Values of Ozempic,” Revisiting Biomedicalization: Toward a Technological-Focused Approach Workshop, Yale University (February 2025)
- “Opening the Black Box: Explaining and Justifying Automated Software Systems” (with Zahra Abba Omar*), American Sociological Association annual meeting (August 2024)
- Book Forum on *Refashioning Race*, American Sociological Association annual meeting, Montreal, QC (August 2024)
- “Opening the Black Box: Explaining Automated Software Systems” (with Zahra Abba Omar*), Society for the Social Studies of Science annual meeting, Amsterdam, the Netherlands; also Making and Doing session, Stitching Solutions: Policy Solutions (July 2024)
- “Making AI Experts? Thinking Across Disciplines and Career Stages,” Eastern Sociological Society annual meeting, Washington, D.C. (February 2024)
- Authors Meets Critics session, *Refashioning Race*, Eastern Sociological Society annual meeting, Washington, D.C. (February 2024)
- “Ethnic Options?: Navigating Racial Boundaries in Cosmetic Surgery,” American Sociological Association annual meeting, Philadelphia, PA (August 2023)
- “Opening the Black Box: Explaining Automated Software Systems” (with Zahra Abba Omar*), Law and Society Association annual meeting, San Juan, PR (June 2023)
- “Opening the Black Box: Explaining Automated Software Systems” (with Zahra Abba Omar*), (un)Stable Diffusions, Concordia University, Montreal, QC (virtual, May 2023)
- “Opening the Black Box: Explaining Automated Software Systems” (with Zahra Abba Omar*), Eastern Sociological Society, Baltimore, MD (February 2023)
- “Tracing a New Regime of Global Health Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic,” Social Science History Association, Chicago, IL (November 2022)
- “Beauty Matters: Cosmetic Surgery, Race, and Technologies of Adornment,” Society for the Social Studies of Science, Toronto, CA (virtual, October 2021)
- “‘Looking Right’: Racialized Clinical Judgment in U.S. and Malaysian Cosmetic Surgery,” Session on Culture and Identity, American Sociological Association annual meeting (virtual, August 2021)
- “Racial Projections and the Role of Clinical Judgment in U.S. Cosmetic Surgery,” Body and Embodiment Section Roundtables, American Sociological Association (virtual, August 2020)
- “Guidelines and Global Expertise in the Prevention and Treatment of Ebola Virus Disease,” Problem-Solving Sociology Workshop, Singapore Management University (March 2020)

- “Selling Surgery: The Role of Race in Transnational Medical Markets,” Race in Medicine Beyond the Lab: 21st Century Mobilizations, King’s College London (September 2019)
- “Selling Surgery: The Role of Race in Transnational Medical Markets,” Race in the Marketplace (RIM) Research Forum, Universite Paris-Dauphine, Paris, France (June 2019)
- “Cultural gatekeeping in cosmetic surgery: Transnational beauty ideals in multicultural Malaysia” Session on Popular Culture, American Sociological Association meeting, New York, NY (August 2019)
- “‘Objectifying the Face’: Visualization Technologies and the Doctor-Patient Relationship in Cosmetic Surgery,” Society for the Social Studies of Science annual meeting, New Orleans, LA (August 2019)
- “Cosmetic Surgery and the Problem of Doctor Patient-Communication,” 2nd International Conference on Global Science, Technology, and Society (Global STS 2.0), Hasanuddin University, Makassar and Gowa, Indonesia (July 2019)
- “Feminist Cosmetic Surgeons? Role of Surgeons’ Social Identities in Clinical Interactions.” Sociologists for Women in Society Winter Meeting, Atlanta (January 2018)

OTHER PRESENTATIONS (selected)

- “Shame, Blame, and Ozempic,” Urban Ethnography Workshop, Yale University (October 2025)
- “No Easy Way Out: How Ozempic Transformed American Health,” Comparative Research Workshop, Yale University (September 2025)
- “Beauty Standards,” [Creative Convening on Monstrous Beauty](#), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, May 17, 2025 (conversation with Elise Hu).
- “Emphasizing Historical and Social Continuities in Teaching AI,” AI Day, Yale University (May 2025)
- “The Craft of Asian Aesthetic Surgery,” Asian Americans in STEM Conference, Yale University (May 2024)
- “Cosmetic Surgery,” Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Colloquium, Yale University (January 2024)
- “Lessons from Clinical Communication for Human Centered AI,” AI in Medicine Symposium, Biomedical Informatics and Data Science, Yale School of Medicine (February 2024)
- Panel on Biomedical Technology and Society, Yale Alumni Association, Yale University (November 2023)
- “Medical Software Regulation, AI, and Explanations,” AI Workshop, Schmidt Program on Artificial Intelligence, Emerging Technologies, and National Power, Jackson School of Global Affairs, Yale University (November 2023)
- “Race, Standardization and Cosmetic Surgery,” Department of Plastic Surgery Grand Rounds, Yale School of Medicine (July 2021)

TEACHING & ADVISING

Yale University

- Health and Illness in Social Context—undergraduate lecture (fall 2018, 2020, 2022, 2024)
- Methods of Inquiry –undergraduate seminar (spring 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023)
- Race, Medicine and Technology—seminar for advanced undergraduates and graduate students (spring 2023, fall 2023, fall 2024)

Sociology of Racial Knowledge—seminar for graduate students (spring 2025)
 Senior Essay and Colloquium Seminar--for undergraduate majors writing their senior thesis (fall 2018, spring 2019)
 Comparative Research Workshop—graduate seminar and department workshop (spring 2022, spring 2025, fall 2025)
 AI, Medicine, and Society—undergraduate seminar (fall 2025)

Yale School of Medicine

Medical Software and Medical AI Certificate Program—lecturer for online program

Northwestern University

Sociology of the Body—undergraduate seminar (summer 2016, winter 2016)
 Sociology of Infectious Disease—seminar for medical students (winter 2015)

Advising

Current Dissertation Committees: 4 (one as co-chair), and 3 PhD graduates

Field Exam Committees: 6

MA Thesis Committees: 5

Senior Theses: 18 (including winner of the 2021 Mildred Priest Prize), plus an additional 7 as second reader

Other advising: Sophomore Advisees (2), Freshman Advisees (2), Visiting Graduate Students (3);
 Independent Study (1)

SERVICE

Editorial Board Memberships

2024-present *Sociological Forum*, Eastern Sociological Society

2023-present *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*

2020-2023 *Sociological Theory*, American Sociological Association

National Associations

2022-2025 American Sociological Association Body and Embodiment Section Council Member
 -Mentorship and Membership Committee Chair (23-24)
 -Book Award Committee Chair (24-25)
 2021 American Sociological Association Annual Meeting – Organizer, Regular Sessions on Sociology of Science
 2021 Society for the Social Studies of Science Panel organizer
 2019-2022 American Sociological Association Science, Knowledge, and Technology Section Council Member
 -Star-Nelkin Best Paper Award Committee Chair
 -Mentoring Committee Chair
 2018 American Sociological Association Body and Embodiment Section Graduate Paper Award Committee
 2015-2018 Elected Student Council Member, Science, Knowledge and Technology section, American Sociological Association
 2014-2015 Student Advisory Editor, Student Advisory Board, Social Problems, Society for the Study of Social Problems

Yale

2025-2026	Sociology Department Sussman Dissertation Prize Committee
2025-2026	Committee for the Marshall and Rhodes Scholarships
2024-2025	Sociology Department Hollingshead Lecture Committee
2023	Committee for the Marshall, Mitchell, and Rhodes Scholarships
2023	Yale Institute for Global Health Hecht Award Reviewer
2022-present	First Generation, Low Income (FGLI) Faculty Mentor
2022-2023	Council on Southeast Asian Studies Grant Committee
2022-2023	Sociology Department Sussman Dissertation Prize Committee
2022-2023	Sociology Department Graduate Admissions Committee
2021-2022	Yale Ethnography Hub Informal Working Group
2021	Committee for the Marshall, Mitchell, and Rhodes Scholarships
2021	Sociology Department Junior Faculty Search Committee
2021	First-Year Scholars Summer Program Panel on Faculty Perspectives
2020-2021	Department of History of Science and Medicine Students for Health Equity Action (SHEA) Committee
2020-2021	School of Public Health Racism and Health Junior Faculty Search Committee
2020-2021	Council on Southeast Asian Studies Postdoctoral Fellow Selection Committee
2020-2021	Sociology Department Graduate Admissions Committee
2018-2019	Sociology Department Sussman Dissertation Prize Committee
2018-2019	Sociology Department Mildred Frank Priest Prize Committee
2018-2019	Gender and Social Science Working Group
2018-2019	Postgraduate Fellowships Committee

Professional Development:

2025	Yale Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning Pedagogical Partners Program
2024	Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science Workshop
2021	Yale Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning Accessibility Professional Development Program

Ad-Hoc Reviewer: *American Sociological Review, American Journal of Sociology, Sociological Theory, Gender & Society, Social Science & Medicine, Poetics, Law and Social Inquiry, Qualitative Sociology, Sociological Forum, American Journal of Cultural Sociology, Kybernetes, Cultural Sociology, Theory & Social Inquiry*
Oxford University Press

Podcasts and Social Media: [Culture and Inequality podcast](#), [BBC History's Heroes](#) bonus episode on Madame C.J. Walker, The Annex Sociology Podcast, New Books Network Podcast, [Instagram interview with Alok Vaid-Menon](#), Brown Girl Bookshelf, Top Rank Podcast

Press: [Washington Post](#), [Opera Mundi](#), [Uol](#), [Folha de São Paulo](#), [Deutsche Welle](#), [Göteborgs-Posten](#), [Mother Jones](#), [Highsnobiety](#), [The Zoe Report](#), [Salon](#), [LAist](#), [Connecticut WNPR](#), [CNN](#), [WIRED](#), Media Indonesia, Media Studies Asia