Dr. Melissa Villa Nicholas

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Academic Appointments

University of California, Los Angeles, **Associate Professor III**, July 2025–present
University of California, Los Angeles, **Assistant Professor II**, July 2024–July 2025
University of Rhode Island, **Associate Professor I**, July 2023–July 2024
University of Rhode Island, **Assistant Professor I**, July 2017–June 2023
University of Rhode Island, **Lecturer**, August 2016–June 2017

Education

PhD, Information Science, Minor: Queer Theory, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 2016
M.A., Library and Information Studies, University of Wisconsin–Madison, 2012
M.A., Cultural Studies, Claremont Graduate University, 2010
B.A., Literature; B.A., Global Studies, Azusa Pacific University, 2005

Affiliations

Chicano Studies Research Center, UCLA
DataX, UCLA
Latino Policy & Politics Institute, UCLA
Research Affiliate, Global Responsible Technology Lab, University of Mannheim, Germany

Research Interests

Latinx histories of information technologies; Latinx information studies; critical data studies; science and technology studies; migration and borders; AI governance

Books

A18.[1] Villa-Nicholas, M. (2023). *Data Borders: How Silicon Valley is Building an Industry around Immigrant Data*. University of California Press.

A16. Villa-Nicholas, M. (2022). *Latinas on the Line: Invisible Information Workers in Telecommunications*. Rutgers Press.

Books Under Contract

C4. Villa-Nicholas, M. (Under contract with UC Press). *Mexican migrant women in the age of A.I.* University of California Press.

[1] Numbering aligns with UCLA's personnel review bibliography

C3. Chaar López, I., Córdoba Ramírez, D. I., Rivera Andrade, S. F., Montaño, D., Amaya Schaeffer, F., Castorena-Sáenz, N., & Villa-Nicholas, M (Under contract negotiations, forthcoming 2028). *Border Ecologies: Life in Transit*. In contract negotiation with *Open-Source Manifolds* at *University of Minnesota Press.*

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

C1. Villa-Nicholas, M. (Accepted with revisions for the *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*). "Visual representations of Latines with technologies in the for-profit college scam era."

C5. Villa-Nicholas, M. (Summer 2026). "María: Las mujeres migrantes en el centro de la historia de la tecnología." *Relaciones.* Fronteras: migración, corporalidad y trabajo en la relación México-Estados Unidos, siglos XX-XXI.

A20. Villa-Nicholas, M. (Spring 2026). The Shadowed self archetype of Mexican gender and technology in Michael Peña films. *Label Me Latina/o*, 16(1).

A17. Sweeney, M., & Villa-Nicholas, M. (2022). Digitizing the 'ideal' Latina information worker. *American Quarterly*, 74(1).

A12. Villa-Nicholas, M., & Sweeney, M. (2020). Designing the 'good citizen' through Latina identity in USCIS's virtual assistant 'Emma.' *Feminist Media Studies*, 20(7).

A11. Villa-Nicholas, M. (2019). Latinx digital memory: Identity making in real time. *Social Media and Society*, 5(4).

A10. Austin, J., & Villa-Nicholas, M. (2019). Information provision and the carceral state: Race and reference beyond the idea of the 'underserved.' *The Reference Librarian*, 60(4).

A8. Villa-Nicholas, M. (2018). Teaching intersectionality: Pedagogical approaches for lasting impact. *Education for Information*, 34(2).

A7. Villa-Nicholas, M. (2018). Terror by telephone: Normative anxieties around obscene calls in the 1960s. *First Monday*, 23(5).

A6. Villa-Nicholas, M. (2018). Discerning fake information. *Teaching Media Quarterly*, 6(1).

A5. Velez, L., & Villa-Nicholas, M. (2017). Mapping race and racism in U.S. library history literature, 1997–2015. *Library Trends*, 65(4).

A4. Villa-Nicholas, M. (2017). Ruptures in telecommunications: Latina and Latino information workers in Southern California. *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies*, 42(1).

A2. Villa-Nicholas, M. (2015). Latina/o librarian technological engagements: REFORMA in the digital age. *Latino Studies*, 13(4).

A1. Villa-Nicholas, M. (2014). Latina narratives of information technologies: Towards a critical Latina technology study. *Media-N*, 10(3).

Peer-Reviewed Book Chapter

A9. Villa-Nicholas, M., Drake, T., & Tidline, T. (2019). Healing justice: An approach of caring for intersectional LIS professionals. In *Social justice and activism in libraries: Essays on diversity and change*. McFarland Press.

Peer-Reviewed Scholarly Reference Works

A19. Villa-Nicholas, M. (2025). *Women's history in computing: A case study of women in the workforce*. Women's History Database. ABC-CLIO.

Guest-Edited Journal Special Issues

C6. Córdoba Ramírez, D. I., & Villa-Nicholas, M. (Summer 2026). Fronteras: migración, corporalidad y trabajo en la relación México-Estados Unidos, siglos XX-XXI. *Relaciones.* (Guest Editors).

C7. Córdoba Ramírez, D. I., & Villa-Nicholas, M. (Summer 2026). Introducción. *Relaciones*. (Guest editors of the special issue *Fronteras: migración, corporalidad y trabajo en la relación México-Estados Unidos, siglos XX-XXI*).

A13. Velez, L., & Villa-Nicholas, M. (2020). Information studies, race, and racism. *Open Information Science*. De Gruyter Publishers. (Guest editors).

Invited Book Chapter

A3. Villa-Nicholas, M. (2016). The invisible information worker: Latinas in telecommunications. In S. Noble & B. Tynes (Eds.), The intersectional internet: Race, sex, class, and culture online. Peter Lang Digital Editions Series.

Peer-Reviewed Conference Proceedings

A15. Sweeney, M. E., & Villa-Nicholas, M. (2021). *Strategic visibilities: Digitizing the Latina information worker*. *AoIR Selected Papers of Internet Research, 2021*. https://doi.org/10.5210/spir.v2021i0.12248

A14. Velez, L., Villa-Nicholas, M., & Sweeney, M. (2020). *Critical data approaches to the interconnected library*. Juried panel published in the *Proceedings of the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) Annual Conference 2020: Transforming LIS Education in an Interconnected World*. Association for Library and Information Science Education. http://hdl.handle.net/2142/108744

Sweeney, M. E., Cooke, N. A., Noble, S. U., & Villa-Nicholas, M. (2014). *Social justice in library and information science*. In *iConference 2014 Proceedings: Breaking Down Walls—Culture, Context, Computing*. iSchools. https://doi.org/10.9776/14213

Commissioned Book Reviews

C8. Villa-Nicholas, M. (2027). Review of *Code work: Hacking across the U.S./México techno-borderlands*, by H. Beltrán, and *Border tunnels: A media theory of the U.S.-Mexico underground*, by J. Llamas-Rodríguez. *American Quarterly*. Invited book review, forthcoming.

Proceedings (non-peer reviewed)

Depew, M., Loder, C., James, D., Mott, M., Pascal, C., & Villa-Nicholas, M. (2015). Pipelines and Pathways into the Information Professions. In iConference 2015 Proceedings.

Non-Peer Reviewed Essays & Public Scholarship

D1. Ringrose, K., Villa-Nicholas, M., & Mathey, S. (2026). Data borders: Tracking, surveillance, and the (anti)immigration economy. *Georgetown Public Policy Review*.

D2. Villa-Nicholas, M. (2026). Data Borders: Three Years Later. Invited post for *Platypus*, the Committee for the Anthropology of Science, Technology & Computing (CASTAC) Blog for the American Anthropological Association.

E3. Villa-Nicholas, M. (2024). The Chilling Truth Behind Silicon Valley's Surveillance of Immigrants. UC Press Blog.

E2. Villa-Nicholas, M. (2020). Data body milieu. *Feminist Media Studies*, Commentary & Criticism.

E1. Villa-Nicholas, M. (2019). Missing cells: The growing economic value of immigrant and refugee biological data. *Bitch Media*.

Works Under Review

C2. Velez, L., Rosquillo, M., and Villa-Nicholas. (Peer review article under Revise and Resubmit). "Mapping Latine-Focused Scholarship in Library and Information Science: Growth, Visibility, and Collaboration Across Five Decades."

Research in Progress

Latinx Metadata Project (2024–). Co-authored Institute of Museum and Library Services (**IMLS**) funded project with LaTesha Velez and Michelle Rosquillo. Research project examining Latinx metadata, information organization, and equitable knowledge representation in libraries and archives.

Small Language Models as a Political Maneuver (2026–). Co-authored project with Andrea Bertozzi and Anna Robinson-Sweet. UCLA DataX Interdisciplinary research project examining the political, social, and historical implications of small language models (SLMs), AI governance, and computational power within information infrastructures.

"Mapping race and racism in U.S. library history literature, 2016-2026." (2026-) Co-authored work with LaTesha Velez.

Chaar López, I., Córdoba Ramírez, D. I., Rivera Andrade, S. F., Montaño, D., Amaya Schaeffer, F., Castorena-Sáenz, N., & Villa-Nicholas, M. (2023-) *Ecologías fronterizas: la vida en tránsito.* (Spanish and Bilingual manuscript fully written, proposing to Mexican academic press *Históricas* after publication of English text).

Technical Reports

Furner, J., Leazer, G., Montoya, R., and Villa-Nicholas, M. (2027). *Department of Information Studies self-study (2018-2026): Master of Library and Information Studies*. University of California, Los Angeles. Prepared by the faculty of the Department of Information Studies; submitted to the American Library Association Committee on Accreditation, Submitted September 2026.

Karno, V., Ma, Y., Mandel, L., Moen, M., and Villa-Nicholas, M. (2018). *Graduate School of Library and Information Studies self-study (2010–2017): Master of Library and Information Studies*. University of Rhode Island. Prepared by the faculty of the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies; submitted to the American Library Association Committee on Accreditation, February 1, 2018.

Grants

External

Institute of Museum and Library Services. (2024–2027). Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program: Early Career Grant. University of North Carolina at Greensboro, with LaTesha Velez (Principal Investigator), Michelle Rosquillo, and Melissa Villa-Nicholas (Project Collaborator and Consultant). RE-256641-OLS-24. $282,201.

Willy Street Coop. (2012). Willy Street Coop Grant. Wisconsin Labor Oral History Project. (Co-coordinator). InfoShop/Family Farm Defenders. Madison, Wisconsin. $220.

Internal

UCLA Office for Inclusion. (2026-2027). Faculty Career Development Award for Mexican Migrant Women in the Age of A.I. book project. (Principal Investigator). $15,000.

UCLA Luskin Center for History and Policy. (2026). Whittier Oral History, The Community Archives Lab. (Principal Investigator).

Center for the Study of Women Faculty Research Center (2026). Mexican Migrant Women in the Age of A.I. (Principal Investigator). Barbra Streisand Center, UCLA. $6,000.

DataX Pilot Projects Grant. (2026). “It Doesn’t Have to be this Way: Small Language Models as a Political Maneuver.” (Co-PI with Dr. Andrea Bertozzi, Mathematics Department). DataX UCLA. $16,000.

Mellon Foundation. (2025–2026). Mellon Digital Humanities Course Development Grant (Co-Principal Investigator). Digital Humanities, UCLA. $10,000.

School of Education and Information Studies. (2025-2027). Going Public Grant: La Historia Museum (Co-Principal Investigator with Michelle Caswell and Miriam Posner). UCLA. $10,000.

UCLA Community Engagement (2025–2026). Community Engagement Course Development Grant (Co-Principal Investigator). UCLA. $5,000.

Institute of American Cultures. (2025-2026). Institute of American Cultures Research Grant (Principal Investigator). UCLA. $3,000.

Social Science Institute for Research, Education, and Policy. (2022–2023). SSIREP Research Grant (Principal Investigator). URI. $7,000.

College of Arts & Sciences. (2022). Dean's Summer Faculty Research Grant (Principal Investigator). URI. $5,000.

Center for the Humanities. (2021). Subvention Grant (Principal Investigator). URI. $1,000.

Office of Research Development. (2021). Project Completion Grant (Principal Investigator). URI. $3,000.

College of Arts & Sciences. (2019-2022). Dean's Opportunity Fund. Webinar Series. URI. $2,000.

University of Rhode Island. (2019–2020). Faculty Career Enhancement Grant (Principal Investigator). URI. $7,298.

Honors and Awards

- Association of Borderlands Studies Past President Book Award **(**2025). For *Data borders: How Silicon Valley is building an industry around immigrants*.
- McGannon Center Book Award**,** Fordham University (2023). For *Data borders: How Silicon Valley is building an industry around immigrants*.
- Labor Tech Network Book Award, Honorable Mention (2022). For *Latinas on the line: Invisible information workers in telecommunications*.
- Diversity and Inclusive Excellence Award**,** University of Rhode Island (2021).
- Library Juice Press Paper Contest (2020). For Austin, J., & Villa-Nicholas, M. (2019). Information provision and the carceral state: Race and reference beyond the idea of the "underserved." *The Reference Librarian, 60*(4).
- Smalley Fellowship**,** Department of Gender and Women's Studies, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (2015).
- i3 Schools PhD Teaching Fellowship, University of Pittsburgh (2014).
- James Krikelas Award, Honorable Mention**,** University of Wisconsin–Madison (2012).
- REFORMA Scholar**,** REFORMA: The National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking (2011).
- Dianne McAfee Hopkins Award**,** University of Wisconsin–Madison (2011).
- Advanced Opportunity Fellowship**,** University of Wisconsin–Madison (2010–2011)

Invited Keynotes & Distinguished Lectures

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2027). "Data Borders." [keynote]. University of Texas El Paso.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2025, March). "Data borders: How Silicon Valley is building an industry around immigrants." [Virtual keynote]. Brown University.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2023). "Data borders: How Silicon Valley is building an industry to know immigrants." [Keynote]. University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, College of Communication & Information Science, Discerning Diverse Voices Symposium.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2015). "Latina information workers in telecommunications: Intersectional experiences in the Bell System." [Barbara and Donald Smalley Distinguished Lecture]. Department of Gender and Women's Studies, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Invited Lectures, Panels, and Scholarly Engagements

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2026). Invited participant, UCLA DataX Roundtable on AI, Power, Finance, the Environment, and Justice**,** University of California, Los Angeles. Discussion with Karen Hao and invited scholars, civil society leaders, and policy practitioners.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2025). "María: Las mujeres migrantes en el centro de la historia de la tecnología." Fronteras: Migración, corporalidad y trabajo en la relación México–Estados Unidos, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Ciudad de México, México.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2025). Invited lecture for Data Borders Book Club. [Virtual lecture]. University of Maryland, iSchool.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2025). "Data borders." [Invited Book Talk]. McCourt School of Public Policy, Georgetown University.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2025). "Data borders: How Silicon Valley is building an industry to know immigrants and responses." [Invited webinar]. Meet the Author Series, Association for Information Science and Technology.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2025). "Libraries, labor, and perpetual obsolescence: A recent history of the future." [Virtual invited response]. Massachusetts Historical Society.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2024) Data Borders: How Silicon Valley is Building an Industry Around Immigrants. Invited lecture, UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center and Department of Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2024). "Data borders: Storytelling in the age of A.I." [Virtual panel]. Big Data & Society.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2024, April 5). "Silicon Valley and storytelling in building AI for citizenship surveillance." [Invited symposium lecture]. *The Humanities in the AI Future*, Center for the Humanities, Washington University in St. Louis, St. Louis, MO.

Chaar López, I., Córdoba Ramírez, D. I., Rivera Andrade, S. F., Montaño, D., Amaya Schaeffer, F., Castorena-Sáenz, N., & Villa-Nicholas, M. (2024, March). [Collaborative retreat workshop]. Techno Fronteras Retreat, University of California, Santa Cruz.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2023). "Data borders: How Silicon Valley is building an industry to know immigrants." [Invited lecture]. Center for Critical Internet Inquiry (C2i2), University of California, Los Angeles.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2023). "Teaching incarceration in LIS." [Invited webinar]. San Francisco Public Library, Jail and Reentry Library Services.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2022, October). *Data Borders: How We Are All Intimately Entwined in Detention and Deportation.* Virtual Seminar Series, Center for Latinx Digital Media, Northwestern University.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2021). "Innovative technologies: Opportunities and challenges." [Invited lecture]. Innovation and the Future of LIS: Technology, Ethics, and Inclusion, Tenth Annual Allen Smith Symposium, iSchool, Simmons.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2021). Latino tech talent. [Virtual roundtable]. Aspen Institute.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2020). "Biotechnology and data citizens on the U.S.-Mexico border." [Colloquium presentation]. University of California, Los Angeles.

Austin, J., & Villa-Nicholas, M. (2019). "Reimagining the public: Library services to people in jails and prisons." [Invited webinar]. Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services, American Library Association.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2019). "Histories of Latinx tech labor: 1870–present." [Invited lecture]. Harrington Forum, University of Rhode Island.

Sweeney, M., & Villa-Nicholas, M. (2019). "Cultural affordances of 'Emma,' USCIS's Latina virtual assistant." [Invited lecture]. Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard University.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2018). "The intersectional process: Revise, fail, revise again." [Invited lecture]. Faculty Development Series, University of Rhode Island Libraries, University of Rhode Island.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2017). "Latina information workers in telecommunications." [Invited lecture]. Special Interest Group for Computers, Information, and Society. Computer History Museum.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2016). “Latina information workers in telecommunications: Intersectional experiences in the Bell System.” [Colloquium presentation]. Department of Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles.

Conference Papers, Panels, Posters, Roundtables

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2025, September). “Framing empowering conversations about Latine patrons.” [Panel presentation]. REFORMA National Conference, Long Beach, CA.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2024, July–August). Multiple seminars and roundtables. Oxford Summer Media Institute: *Technology, Policy, and Democracy in Flux*. [Participant in workshops, roundtables]. Jesus College, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2023, September). Panel presentation: “Data Borders: How Silicon Valley is Building an Industry Around Immigrants.” SIGCIS SHOT.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2023, October). Roundtable: “Latinx Internet Studies.” Association of Internet Researchers (AOIR), Philadelphia, PA.

Sweeney, M. E., & Villa-Nicholas, M. (2021). “Strategic visibilities: Digitizing the Latina information worker.” [Conference paper]. Association of Internet Researchers Annual Conference, virtual.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2021, October). Panel presentation: “Borderlands and/as machine: Technoscience in unequal and uncertain life worlds.” 4S, Virtual.

Velez, L. T., Villa-Nicholas, M., & Sweeney, M. E. (2020). “Critical data approaches to the interconnected library.” [Juried panel presentation]. Association for Library and Information Science Education Annual Conference.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2019, September). *Collecting people as data.* Panel presentation with Jeanie Austin and Miriam E. Sweeney. Society for Social Studies of Science (4S) Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA.

Austin, J., Villa-Nicholas, M. (2018, September). “Crossing institutional divides: Services to incarcerated patrons as a bridge between public libraries and library and information science education.” [Panel presentation]. Joint Conference of Librarians of Color, Albuquerque, NM.

Villa-Nicholas, M., Arias, S., Fieffe, K. (2018, September). Poster presentation: “Teaching and applying intersectionality in the LIS classroom.” JCLC.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2017, September). Paper presentation: “‘I am so versatile—I can be used for just about everything’: Race, gender, and the perfect digital Latina laborer.” Society for the Social Studies of Science.

Velez, L., & Villa-Nicholas, M. (2017, January). "The evolution of critical theories in library history literature, 1997–2015." [Poster presentation]. Association for Library and Information Science Education Annual Conference.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2015, September). "How to read and write for graduate school." [Invited online lecture]. Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2016, September). Lecture: "Modern librarianship." Student ALA Lecture.

Depew, M., Loder, C., James, D., Mott, M., Pascal, C., & Villa-Nicholas, M. (2015, March 26). "Pipelines and pathways into the information professions." [Session for Interaction and Engagement]. iConference 2015, Newport Beach, CA.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2014, May). Paper presentation: "Neoliberal intimacies: Latina/o information workers." Gender, Bodies, Technologies Conference, Blacksburg, VA.

Sweeney, M. E., Cooke, N. A., Noble, S. U., Villa-Nicholas, M., & Roberto, K. R. (2014, March). "Social justice in library and information science." [Panel presentation]. iConference 2014, Berlin, Germany.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2013, September). Panel presentation: "The development of the Distributed Open Collaborative Courses (DOCCs)." Information Technology and Africa: Practices, Potentials and Challenges, Urbana, IL.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2013, May). "Back to the future! Adelante: A historical account of REFORMA in the digital age." [Conference presentation]. *Responding to Crisis: Historical and Contemporary Strategies of Resistance*, 17th Annual History Graduate Student Association Conference, University of California, Irvine, Irvine, CA.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2013, April). Panel presentation: "Nostalgic reflections: Producing citizenship with archival social media." HASTAC, Toronto, Canada.

Villa-Nicholas, M. and Sacks, S. (2012, September). Paper presentation: "From the anti-apartheid movement to the Madison occupation: Representing dissent in the digital world." Protest on the Page: Print Culture History in Opposition to Almost Anything, Madison, WI.

Villa-Nicholas, M., Kahn, M., Sacks, S. (2012, April). Poster presentation: "A collaborative story: Librarians and activists partnering to preserve local history." Wisconsin Association of Academic Librarians, Lake Geneva, WI.

Villa-Nicholas, M. (2011, November). Panel presentation: "LIS Access Midwest Program." Wisconsin Library Association, Milwaukee, WI.

Invited Course Lectures

- Villa-Nicholas, M. (2026, Oct). Lecture: "Silicon Valley storytelling in the age of AI." Information Studies, UCLA, for Dr. Jonathan Furner.
- Villa-Nicholas, M. (2026, February). Lecture: "Data Borders." Digital Humanities, UCLA, for Dr. Miriam Posner.
- Villa-Nicholas, M. (2025, November). Lecture: "Silicon Valley storytelling in the age of AI." Information Studies, UCLA, for Dr. Thuy Vo Dang.
- Villa-Nicholas, M. (2025, May). Lecture: "Data Borders." Information Studies, UCLA, for Dr. Miriam Posner.
- Villa-Nicholas, M. (2024, November). Lecture: "Data Borders." Information Studies, UCLA for Dr. Greg Leazer.
- Villa-Nicholas, M. (2024, November). Lecture: "Silicon Valley storytelling in the age of AI." Information Studies, UCLA for Dr. Thuy Vo Dang.
- Villa-Nicholas, M. (2023, March). Lecture: "Latinxs designed as AI." Science and Technology Studies, Brown University.
- Villa-Nicholas, M. (2022, March). Lecture: "Latinas on the line." Borderlands, Technology, Race, University of Texas at Austin for Dr. Iván Chaar Lopez.
- Villa-Nicholas, M. (2021, March). Lecture: "Data Borders." Introduction to Latinx Studies, URI, for Dr. Julie Keller.
- Villa-Nicholas, M. (2019, March). Lecture: "100+ Years of Solitude." Simmons College, School of Library and Information Science, for Dr. Colin Rhinesmith.
- Villa-Nicholas, M. (2018, November). Lecture: "The intersectional internet." Doctoral Seminar, Annenberg School of Communication, University of Southern California.
- Villa-Nicholas, M. (2017, May). Lecture: "Latinas in information labor." Doctoral Seminar, iSchool, University of California, Los Angeles, for Dr. Sarah Roberts.
- Villa-Nicholas, M. (2017, Spring). Lecture: "Information labor." Seminar, Media and Communication, University of Southern California, for Dr. Safiya Noble.

Curriculum Development and Teaching

Curriculum Development, URI

- Created Track in Information Equity, Diverse Communities & Critical Librarianship
- Created LSC 524 History of Libraries
- Created LSC 513 Social Justice in Young Adult and Children's Literature
- Created LSC 512 Immigrant & Migrant Information Contexts & Practices
- Created LSC 511 Critical Disability Approaches in Information Studies

University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

- Theoretical Traditions (Doctoral seminar: 2026)
- Internet and Society (Undergraduate course: 2026)
- History of Technology (Graduate course: 2026)
- Academic Assemblages (Doctoral seminar: 2025)
- Information Technology, Borderlands, & Surveillance (Grad course offered: 2025, 2026)
- Critical Disability Approaches to LIS (Graduate course offered: 2024)

University of Rhode Island (URI)

- Critical Disability Approaches to LIS (Course offered: 2018–2024)
- Social Justice in Children's and Young Adult Literature (Course offered: Fall 2018–2024)
- Immigrant and Migrant Information Contexts and Practices (Course offered: Spring 2018–2024)
- Searching for Answers: Meeting Users' Information Needs (Course offered: 2017–2024)
- Multiculturalism in Libraries (Course offered: 2017–2024)
- Introduction to Information Science and Technologies (Course offered: 2016–2024)
- Humanities Information and Materials (Course offered: 2017–2024)
- Document, Assess, and Evaluate (Course offered: 2017–2024)
- History of Libraries (Course offered: 2017–2024)

University of Pittsburgh

- Research Methods & Design, i3 Institute (Undergraduate Course offered: 2014)

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

- Race, Gender, and Information Technologies (Undergraduate Course offered: 2013)

Service

University Service

Admissions Committee, IS, UCLA	2026-2027
Assistant Professor Hiring Committee, Chair, IS, UCLA	2026-2027
Committee on Library & Scholarly Communication, Academic Senate, UCLA	2026-2027
Merit Review Committee, Chair, IS, UCLA	2026-2027
Committee on Accreditation, IS, UCLA	2025-
Faculty Advisory Committee, DataX, UCLA	2025-
Faculty Advisory Committee, Chicano Studies Research Center, UCLA	2024-
Admissions Reviewer, IS, UCLA	2025-
"Going Public" Grant Reviewer, SEIS, UCLA	2025-2026
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee, SEIS, UCLA	2024-2026
Director Hiring Committee for GSLIS, Chair, URI	2023-2024
Admissions Committee, GSLIS, URI	2017-2024
Curriculum Committee, GSLIS, URI	2016-2024
Faculty Senate, URI	2019-2022
Service and Life Faculty Senate Subcommittee, URI	2019-2022
Ad Hoc Committee to Establish an Online Accelerated Program	2018-2022
Internal Grant Reviewer, Office of Research Development, URI	2021-2022
Latin American/Latino Studies Minor, URI	2017-2018
Student American Library Association Faculty Advisor, GSLIS, URI	2017-2024
Committee to Implement the Strategic Plan, Harrington School, URI	2019-2020
Committee on Accreditation, GSLIS URI	2016-2018
Technology Committee, GSLIS, URI	2016-2017
Graduate Recruitment Representative, GSLIS, URI	2017-2022

Editorial and Peer-Review

First Monday
Information and Culture
In the Library with a Lead Pipe
Journal of Community Informatics (JoCI)
Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies (JCLIS)
Journal of Radical Librarianship
MIT Press Reviewer
UC Press Reviewer
UT Press Reviewer

External Service

IMLS Grant Reviewer	
National Science Foundation (NSF) Grant Reviewer	
National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Grant Reviewer	
Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) 2026 Conference Planning Committee	2025-2026
Labor Tech Research Network Book Award Committee	2024
Aspen Digital Institute Latino Tech Talent	2021
RI Statewide Library, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Day	2018-2019
Rhode Island Library Association, Full Board	2016-2017

Selected Media

Features, Podcasts, Public Scholarship

- Vox (2026). Interviewed for "What would J.R.R. Tolkien think of Palantir?" by Benjamin Stephen.
- New Books Network Newsletter (2025). *Scholarly Sources with Melissa Villa Nicholas*. (Newsletter interview).
- Bucket List Community Café (2025). "Denver Residents Protest Palantir Headquarters in Downtown." Interviewed on the topic of Palantir.
- Hausmann, S. (Host). (2025, April 26). Melissa Villa-Nicholas, Data Borders: How Silicon Valley Is Building an Industry Around Immigrants [Audio podcast episode]. *New Books Network*.
- Common Ground with Sonja Wolf Podcast (2025). Interviewed on the topic of *Data Borders*. (Audio podcast episode). Spotify.
- Villa-Nicholas, M. (2025). Interview with Otis Noble on the topic of *Data Borders*. [Media Interview]. C2I2, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Seuferling, Philipp. (2025). "Tech, Stones, and Stories: How the Violence of Border Tech Is a Historical Matter." *Public Books*, Border Tech series commissioned by Geraldo Cadava, A. Naomi Paik, and Catherine S. Ramírez.
- Big Data & Society BookCast (February 2024). Interview on the topic of *Data Borders: How Silicon Valley is Building an Industry Around Immigrants*. (Audio podcast episode).
- UCLA School of Education and Information Studies. (2024, November 12). "Data Borders: How Silicon Valley Is Building an Industry Around Immigrants." [Faculty interview with Melissa Villa-Nicholas].
- The Majority Report with Sam Seder (July 2023). "Big Tech at the Border." (Radio broadcast).

- El Café Latinx Podcast. (2022). Melissa Villa-Nicholas and making Latinx realities visible in academia (P. Boczkowski, Interviewer) (Audio podcast episode). In El Café Latinx. Spotify.
- Peet, Lisa. (May 2021). Interview. "The University of Rhode Island Launches MLS Track in Information Equity, Diverse Communities, and Critical Librarianship." *Library Journal*.
- Gooding-Call, A. (2021, March 8). *A history of racism in American public libraries*. Book Riot. (Features and cites Velez & Villa-Nicholas, 2017.)
- Moore, Kendall. (2019). Interview in the documentary "Decolonizing Science." (Film interview).
- Hodge, T. (Interviewer). (2019, March 13). "Mapping race and racism in U.S. library history literature, 1997–2015." [Research interview with LaTesha Velez and Melissa Villa-Nicholas]. Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services, American Library Association.

Scholarly Impact (Reviews of my Books)

- Glenna, Matthews; Review: *Data Borders: How Silicon Valley Is Building an Industry Around Immigrants*, by Melissa Villa-Nicholas. *California History* 1 August 2026; 103 (3): 150–152. doi: https://doi.org/10.1525/ch.2026.103.3.150
- Bhattacharyya, Raka. (2026). Data Borders: How Silicon Valley Is Building an Industry Around Immigrants. By Melissa Villa-Nicholas, *International Journal of Communications*, Volume 20, 2026, pages 2442-2445, https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/28744/5534
- Olea-Calixto, Joel Daniel. (2025). Data Borders: How Silicon Valley Is Building an Industry Around Immigrants. By Melissa Villa-Nicholas, *Western Historical Quarterly*, Volume 56, Issue 1, Spring 2025, Pages 65–66, https://doi.org/10.1093/whq/whae060
- Pereira, Andrés. (2024). Data Borders: How Silicon Valley Is Building an Industry around Immigrants: by Melissa Villa-Nicholas, Oakland, CA, University of California Press, 2023, $95.00 (hardcover), $29.95 (paperback and ebook). Journal of Borderlands Studies, 39(4), 787–788. https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2024.2356768
- Marr, Timothy. (2024) "Networks of Apprehension and the Everywhere Border." *American Quarterly*, vol. 76 no. 1, p. 127-140. Project MUSE, https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/aq.2024.a921583
- Varley-Winter, Olivia**.** (2023) "Data Borders." *Significance* 20, no. 6: 45. DOI: 10.1093/jrssig/qmad100
- Alegria, Sharla. (2023). Latinas on the Line: Invisible Information Workers in Telecommunications by Melissa Villa-Nicholas. *Contemporary Sociology*, vol. 52, no. 3, pp. 285–87. JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/stable/27235607

Graduate Student Mentorship and Research Supervision

Doctoral Student Advising

- Provides ongoing faculty mentoring in research design, grant writing, publication strategy, and academic career development.
- Supports with grant-funded research opportunities.

- Advises doctoral scholarship and professional development, paid with multiple grants as an Intern.

Graduate Student Research Supervision

- Supervises Graduate Student Researcher (GSR) appointment funded through the UCLA DataX Pilot Project.
- Awarded the DataX grant in the amount of **$8,000** to student researcher to co-author small language model's article
- Supervised Graduate Student Researcher (GSR) appointment supporting funded research activities and project development.

Graduate Student Mentoring

- Advised 30 MLIS students per year (2017–2024) on academic planning, professional development, and career placement in librarianship and information professions.
- Mentored students in research design, Institutional Review Board (IRB) applications, scholarly writing, conference presentations, and peer-reviewed publication.
- Wrote letters of recommendation supporting graduate fellowships, scholarships, internships, conference participation, and professional awards.

Student Publications and Scholarly Outcomes

- Supervised an Independent Study that resulted in IRB approval, a peer-reviewed journal publication for In the Library with a Lead Pipe, and a conference presentation at the New England Library Association (NELA).
- Mentored graduate students in developing a scholarly poster accepted for poster presentation at the Joint Conference of Librarians of Color (JCLC).

Graduate Fellowships, Scholarships, and Awards

- Ongoing collaboration (research, writing, presentations) with graduate students at University of North Carolina-Greensboro through **IMLS** grant (2024-present)
- Wrote recommendation letter for a graduate student who received the **Southern California Association of Law Libraries (SCALL) Scholarship** (2026)
- Nominated five graduate students for the **URI Graduate School Fellowship** (2018-2022)
- Wrote a recommendation supporting a student in obtaining the **Library of Congress Internship** (2019).
- Mentored graduate student in successful applications resulted in the **ALA Spectrum Scholarship** (2018)

Professional Student Leadership

- Faculty Advisor, Student American Library Association (SALA), University of Rhode Island (2017–2024).

- Mentored graduate student leadership and professional engagement through the Student ALA chapter.
- Nominated students for national leadership opportunities, including the **ALA Student-to-Staff Program**.

Community Engagement

Esperanza Laboratories: A DataX Project, Murrieta, CA 2025-

- Facilitate 1:1 information and technology partnerships
- Founded and facilitated community-based writing workshops supporting Latina participants in personal storytelling, digital literacy, and academic and professional writing, in English and Spanish
- Developed culturally responsive curriculum integrating critical information literacy, oral history, and community-engaged research methodologies.

CSULA-UCLA LIS Pathways, co-coordinator 2026-

- Create a program between CSULA and UCLA LIS faculty, librarians, and staff
- Plan recruitment events
- Discuss and create emerging internships
- Build social networking between CSULA librarians and UCLA IS

Grupo Esperanza, TODEC Legal Center 2025-

- Grocery, school supplies fundraising and organizing
- Grocery delivery for families targeted by ICE

MVUSD Latino Parent Advisory Committee 2023-

- Advise on Latino issues for MVUSD
- Update on Folklórico events

Ballet Folklórico Corazón de Mi Tierra 2023-

- Coordinate school wide practices
- Weave headpieces relevant to regional dances
- Connect and network school wide resources

San Francisco Public Library's Reference by Mail 2017- 2024

- Coordinate students into groups to answer Reference by Mail courses
- Partner with coordinator on curriculum applications
- Respond to Reference by Mail reference questions

Community Writing Workshops, Freelance, California and Wisconsin 2012–2014

- Designed and facilitated community writing workshops promoting literacy, storytelling, and creative expression for diverse community participants at Rainbow Books, Madison, WI and around Southern California

- Trained and continued mentorship under cartoonist Lynda Barry
- Organized workshop logistics, educational materials, and community partnerships to increase public engagement with writing and literacy initiatives

Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center 2012-2014

- Volunteers coordinate the Midwest Zine Fest
- Table radical librarian's zine table
- Organize Zines ongoing in Zine library
- Organize Books to Prisoners collection

Madison Infoshop 2010-2012

- Digitize, catalog, and organize zines
- Maintain Zine library hours
- Volunteer at Infoshop and Family Farm Defenders tabling and protests
- Preserve oral history through digital projects
- Organize education and protests for the preservation of the Penokees

Guadalupe Homeless Project 2007- 2008

- Intake of incoming residence
- Organize food and clothing
- Organize databases for volunteers

Peppertree Kids Lake Elsinore 2006-2007

- Established homework house within residence
- Tutoring kids K-12
- Event plan and fundraise

Cerritos Kids, Azusa, CA 2004-2006

- Tutor for after school in-residence program
- Attend leadership meeting among tutors and coordinator
- Organize activities & crafts

AIDS Project LA 2003-2004

- Organize case files in database
- Interview clients for client file
- Write referrals for clients based on needs

Community Engaged Presentations

Villa-Nicholas, M. (April 2026). Presenter, Tovashal Career Fair. Murrieta Valley Unified School District, Tovashal Elementary School, Murrieta, CA.

Consulting

- Surveillance Technology Oversight Project. (2025). NY, New York. A People's Handbook of Surveillance.
- Expanding Information Access for Incarcerated People, San Francisco Public Library (2020-present), funded by The Mellon Foundation
- Aspen Institute Latinos & Society Program & Aspen Digital. (2021). A roadmap to empowerment: The future of Latinos in a digital economy [Consultant contribution]. The Aspen Institute. https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/roadmap-to-empowerment/

Digital & Public-Humanities Projects

A Radical Digital History of the Madison InfoShop, DesignLab @ UW Madison	2012
A Collaborative Story: A Partnership Between Librarians and Activists, Omeka	2012
Radicals in Wisconsin, An Oral History Project, Madison, WI	2012
LibraryThing Digital Zine Project, The Madison InfoShop, Madison, WI	2012

Professional Memberships

Association for Borderlands Studies (ABS)
Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR)
Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE)
Aspen Institute
REFORMA: The National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos
Society for Social Studies of Science (4S)
Social Science Institute for Research, Education, and Policy (SSIREP), URI

Professional Development

Oxford Media Institute Certificate, Oxford	2024
Quality Matters Certification (8 courses), URI	2020- 2022
Basic Brightspace Competency Certificate, URI	2020
High Impact Teaching Seminar, URI	2017
Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning Training, URI	2016
Urban Scholars Certificate, UCLA	2007

Honors Societies

Beta Phi Mu, international honor society for library and information studies
Sigma Tau Delta, international honor society for English

Published Creative Works

Villa Nicholas, M & Nicholas, M. *Pásale: A Novel*. (2017). Floricanto Press.
Villa Nicholas, M. and Nicholas, M. (2017). Se Me Olvidó. *The Grief Diaries.*
Nicholas, M. and Villa Nicholas, M. (2017). Culture. *Dear Journal.*

Program Development

Voices for Information Equity Webinar Series, University of Rhode Island (2020–2023)

- Founded and organized a nationally attended webinar series featuring leading scholars and practitioners on race, gender, technology, and information equity.
- Secured institutional funding and coordinated programming that helped launch URI's Information Equity, Diverse Communities, and Critical Librarianship curricular track.
- Managed speaker recruitment, event logistics, and public outreach, attracting hundreds of attendees and more than 500 registrants for individual events.

Work & Volunteer Experience

Website Manager, Department of Gender and Women's Studies, UIUC, (January 2012 – August 2016)

- Directed digital communications supporting departmental scholarship, events, and public engagement.
- Managed web, social media, and multimedia content to expand the department's public presence.
- Produced digital media, promotional materials, and communications to enhance outreach and academic programming.

Research Assistant & Teaching Assistant, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, UIUC (2013-2016)

- Conducted research on diversity initiatives and student access within library and information science.
- Developed grant proposals and funding materials supporting institutional and IMLS initiatives.
- Compiled scholarship and funding resources to expand opportunities for underrepresented students.
- Built curriculum and taught LIS courses for undergraduates

Research Assistant, Library and Information Studies (LIS) Access Midwest Program (August 2012 – August 2013)

- Coordinated the LIS Access Midwest Summer Institute promoting diversity in graduate education.
- Designed and maintained program websites and digital communications using WordPress and Drupal.
- Produced multimedia resources supporting student recruitment, outreach, and program visibility.

Project Assistant, LIS Access Midwest Program (September 2011 – May 2012)

- Coordinated diversity-focused programming supporting recruitment into library and information science.
- Collected and presented data informing program assessment and diversity initiatives.
- Managed digital communications and multimedia resources to strengthen community engagement.

REFORMA Student Group Leadership, UW-Madison (2010-2012)

- Coordinated special events that support Spanish speakers in libraries in Madison, WI
- Coordinated bi-lingual story time and educational institutes
- Coordinated educational outreach events that support master's students

Reference Desk Intern, Madison Central Library (May 2011 – August 2011)

- Delivered research and reference services to diverse community members through multiple service channels.
- Advanced patrons' digital literacy through technology instruction and information support.
- Developed public humanities programming such as book club discussion guides and led book clubs for Madison's Big Read community initiative on the book Enrique's Journey by Sonia Nazario

Information Desk Staff, MERIT Library, University of Wisconsin–Madison (September 2010 – July 2012)

- Provided research consultations and reference instruction to undergraduate, graduate, and faculty users.
- Delivered technology instruction and troubleshooting for research, multimedia, and educational software.
- Developed bilingual Spanish-language collections and managed collection development resources.

Volunteer Coordinator, Public Counsel Law Center (2007–2008)

- Coordinated pro bono attorney engagement across civil tort and immigration legal services.
- Managed legal documentation and case records using ProLaw case management software.
- Designed and facilitated Guardian ad Litem training to strengthen community legal advocacy.

Volunteer Coordinator, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Los Angeles (2006–2007)

- Directed volunteer recruitment, training, and retention supporting community housing initiatives.
- Coordinated educational orientations and volunteer engagement for community participants.
- Maintained volunteer information systems to support organizational planning and outreach.
- Planned all events for Volunteer GALA including food, entertainment, location and schedule

Azusa Senator, Associated Student Body (ASB), Azusa, CA (2004-2005)

- Supported ASB meetings and business
- Organized and supported student related events
- Propose, plan, and initiate the 'Azusa Board' at APU campus
- Laise between city council and university, including attending biweekly city council meetings