

Professor David Schieber, Northwestern University

“Sociology of Autism”



Description: Over the past 50 years, there have been enormous changes in how academic researchers understand autism. Since autism is a neurological difference with social difficulties as a major attribute, it is important for sociologists (in addition to psychologists) to be able to speak clearly about what autism is and what the embodied experience of living with autism is like. What is autism? If autism has always existed, who had it and in what communities can we find it? How do sensory and emotional differences translate into social difficulties through social interaction? Sociology can help us get at these questions.

More so, as the diagnostic boundaries for autism have expanded, so has our understanding that anyone can be autistic (not just nerdy white men.) This talk will finish up by thinking about autism at it's intersections. Why was autism blamed for decades on “refrigerator moms?” What does it mean for a woman to have a “resting bitch face?” Why are police interactions with Black autistic kids so deadly? Once we look at autism through an intersectional lens, we can get closer to answering questions like these in a meaningful way.

Broadly speaking, this talk serves as an invitation to use the strengths of sociological theory and analysis to speak on current academic debates and understandings surrounding autism.

David Schieber is an Assistant Professor of Instruction in the Department of Sociology at Northwestern University. David's teaching interests lie at the intersection of work and organizations, culture and cultural production, health and medicine, gender and sexuality, and economic sociology. David spends much of his time teaching Northwestern undergraduates on both the Evanston campus and through the Northwestern Prison Education Program.

Thursday
January 9, 2025
12:30-2:00pm

Parke 222
1870 Sheridan Road
Evanston, IL 60208

**For Zoom info
please contact:**

sociol@northwestern.edu