

# MARIAHL. WELLMAN

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## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

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### Michigan State University

Assistant Professor, Department of Advertising and Public Relations, 2024-present

### University of Illinois at Chicago

Assistant Professor, Department of Communication, 2022-2024

### University of Utah

Associate Graduate Instructor, Department of Communication, 2018-2022

## EDUCATION

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### PhD in Communication, Department of Communication

University of Utah

May 2022

### MA in Journalism, School of Journalism & Mass Communication

University of Iowa

May 2018

### BS in Journalism, *Cum Laude*, Greenlee School of Journalism

Iowa State University

December 2015

## PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

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13. **Wellman, M.L.** & Germic, E.\* (2024). The Ranch Malibu: Operationalizing wellness tourism on TikTok. *Social Media & Society*.

12. **Wellman, M.L.**, Holton, A.E., & Kaphingst, K.A. (2023). “Where do I go? Who do I go to?”: BRCA Previvors, genetic counselors and family planning. *PEC Innovation*. DOI: 10.1016/j.pecinn.2023.100157.

11. **Wellman, M.L.** (2023). “A friend who knows what they’re talking about”: Extending source credibility theory to analyze the wellness influencer industry on Instagram. *New Media & Society*. DOI: 10.1177/1461444823116206.

10. Brown, J.M. & **Wellman, M.L.** (2022). Yoga as an adjunct therapy for musculoskeletal pain and burnout in orthopedic surgery: A trainee’s perspective. *International Journal of Yoga*, 15(3), 250-253. DOI: 10.4103/ijoy.ijoy\_129\_22.

9. **Wellman, M.L.**, Holton, A.E., & Kaphingst, K.A. (2022). Preivorship posting: Why breast cancer previvors share their stories on social media. *Health Communication*. DOI: 10.1080/10410236.2022.2074780.
8. **Wellman, M.L.** (2022). Social media influencer rhetoric and the domestication of Health at Every Size on Instagram. *Rhetoric of Health & Medicine*, 5(1), 38-65. DOI: 10.5744/rhm.2022.5003.
7. **Wellman, M.L.** (2022). Black squares for Black lives? Performative allyship as credibility maintenance for social media influencers on Instagram. *Social Media & Society*. DOI: 10.1177/20563051221080473.
6. Prins, K. & **Wellman, M.L.** (2021). Dodging negativity like it's my freaking job: Marketing postfeminist positivity through Beachbody Fitness on Instagram. *Feminist Media Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2021.1992645.
5. **Wellman, M.L.** (2020). Trans-mediated parasocial relationships: Private Facebook groups foster influencer-follower connection. *New Media & Society*. DOI: 10.1177/1461444820958719.
4. **Wellman, M.L.** (2020). What it means to be a bodybuilder: Social media influencer labor and the construction of identity in the bodybuilding subculture. *The Communication Review*. DOI: 10.1080/10714421.2020.1829303.
3. **Wellman, M.L.** Stoldt, R., Tully, M., Ekdale, B. (2020). Ethics of authenticity: Social media influencers and the production of sponsored content. *Journal of Media Ethics*. DOI: 10.1080/23736992.2020.1736078.  
*Ranked the second most-read article of all time for Journal of Media Ethics.*
2. **Wellman, M.** (2019). A Year in Cultural Studies. 1983: Stuart Hall visits Australia and North America. *Lateral: The Journal of the Cultural Studies Association*. DOI: 10.25158/L8.1.13.
1. Stoldt, R., **Wellman, M.** Ekdale, B., Tully, M. (2019). Professionalizing and profiting: The rise of intermediaries in the social media influencer industry. *Social Media & Society*, 5(1), 1-11.

#### MONOGRAPHS

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**Wellman, M.L.** (under contract). *In search of wellness: How social media influencers transformed an industry*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

#### EDITED VOLUMES

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Borchers, N., **Wellman, M.L.**, & Hudders, L. (under contract). *The Routledge Companion to Social Media Influencers*. Oxfordshire, England: Routledge Press.

#### BOOK CHAPTERS

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Brooks, K.\* & **Wellman, M.L.** (2024). Voters turned political influencers: Social media users maintain popularity by cultivating support for 2020 U.S. presidential election candidates. In Schill, D. & Hendricks, J. (Eds.), *Social Media Politics: Political Disharmony, Partisan Division, & Political Discourse in the 2020 United States Presidential Election*. Oxfordshire, England: Routledge.

**Wellman, M.L.** & Holton, A.E. (2022). Instagram. In Borchard, G.A. (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Journalism: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. DOI: 10.4135/9781544391199.n205.

#### ARTICLES UNDER REVIEW

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**Wellman, M.L.**, Hill, A.\*, & Holton, A.E. How to be human: Turns in health, lifestyle, and wellness journalism.

#### BOOK REVIEWS

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**Wellman, M.L.** (2024). Book review: *The Influencer Industry: The quest for authenticity on social media* by Emily Hund. *Media Industries*. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mij.4246>.

#### WORKS IN PROGRESS

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**Wellman, M.L.** The Hummingbirds: “Deinfluencing” as an authenticity guarantee. Manuscript to be submitted to Public Relations Inquiry.

**Wellman M.L.** Doctors on the defense: Physicians debunk health misinformation on TikTok. Manuscript in progress.

**Wellman, M.L.** & Prins, K.\* Wellness washing: How commercial brands, mass media, and influencers shift the focus from diet culture to “wellbeing.” Manuscript in progress.

#### REFEREED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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25. **Wellman, M.L.** (2024). The Hummingbirds: “Deinfluencing” as an authenticity guarantee. Accepted to the Association of Internet Researchers, Sheffield, October 30-November 2.

24. **Wellman, M. L.** (2024). Expanding the definition of influencers: Moving beyond commercial promotion. Presented at the International Communication Association, Gold Coast, June 20-24.

23. **Wellman, M.L.** (2024). Doctors on the defense: Physicians debunk health information on TikTok. Presented at the International Communication Association, Gold Coast, June 20-24.

22. **Wellman, M.L.**, Owens, C.,\* Holton, A.E., & Kaphingst, K.A. (2023). Filling the gap: BRCA previvors’ content creation as a form of self and community care. Presented at the International Conference on Communication in Healthcare, Puerto Rico, October 22-25.

21. **Wellman, M.L.** (2023). The authoritative share: How wellness influencers balance authenticity and credibility on Instagram. Presented at the Association of Internet Researchers, Philadelphia, October 18-21.
20. **Wellman, M.L.** & Germic, E.\* (2023). The Ranch Malibu: Operationalizing wellness tourism on TikTok. Presented at the Association of Internet Researchers, Philadelphia, October 18-21.
19. **Wellman, M.L.** (2023). The authoritative share. Presented at the Rhetoric of Health and Medicine Symposium, Minnesota, October 13-14.
18. **Wellman, M.L.** (2023). “It’s harder to relate to the people that already figured it out”: Wellness influencers share personal struggles to connect with followers. Presented at the International Communication Association, Toronto, May 25-29.
17. **Wellman, M.L.** (2023). Expertise is a spectrum: The spread of health misinformation within the influencer industry on Instagram. Presented at the International Communication Association, Toronto, May 25-29.
16. **Wellman, M.L.** (2022). “I’m just a friend who knows what they’re talking about”: How source credibility theory manifests within the wellness influencer industry on Instagram. Presented at the International Communication Association, Paris, May 26-30.  
*Top Student Paper, Popular Media & Culture Division.*
15. **Wellman, M.L.** (2022). Black squares for Black lives? Performative allyship as credibility maintenance for content creators on Instagram. Presented at the Western States Communication Association, Portland, February 18-21.
14. Brooks, K. & **Wellman, M.L.** (2022). Voters-turned-political influencers: Social media users maintain popularity by building support for 2020 US presidential election candidates. Presented at the Western States Communication Association, Portland, February 18-21.
13. Prins, K. & **Wellman, M.L.** (2021). #FaithAndFitnessCollide: Spreading the word of multilevel marketing in Christian women’s fitness Instagram posts. Presented at the Association of Internet Researchers (Virtual), October 13-16.
12. **Wellman, M.L.**, Holton, A.E., & Kaphingst, K.A. (2021). Preivorship: How individuals with genetic predispositions for breast cancer present their experiences across social media platforms. Presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (Virtual), August 4-7.
11. **Wellman, M.L.** (2021). White women influencers as biopedagogical actors within the digital wellness industry. Presented at the International Communication Association (Virtual), Denver, May 27-31.

10. **Wellman, M.L.** (2020). Private influencer Facebook groups as self-sustaining spaces for social support and the reproduction of normative behavior. Presented at the National Communication Association (Virtual), November 19-22.
9. **Wellman, M.** (2020). Moving beyond YouTube: Using followers as a built-in consumer base for traditional entrepreneurial ventures. Presented at the Western States Communication Association, Denver, February 21-24.
8. **Wellman, M.** (2020). How social media influencers communicate health information: Analyzing the rhetoric of Sarah's Day. Presented at the Western States Communication Association, Denver, February 21-24.
7. **Wellman, M.** (2019). #MeAndWhiteSupremacy: Using Instagram to engage white women on racism. Presented at the National Communication Association, Baltimore, November 14-17.
6. **Wellman, M.** (2019). What it means to 'be a bodybuilder': Fitness influencers' definition of work, labor, and construction of identity. Presented at the International Communication Association, Washington D.C., May 24-28.
5. **Wellman, M.** (2018). Gold's Gym Venice: How fitness influencers construct authenticity in a commercial space. Presented at the National Communication Association, Salt Lake City, November 8-11.
4. **Wellman, M.** Stoldt, R., Tully, M., Ekdale, B. (2018). Travel influencers and the production of sponsored content. Presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Washington D.C., August 6-9.
3. Stoldt, R., **Wellman, M.** Ekdale, B., Tully, M. (2018). Bridging the gap: Influencers, destination marketers, and intermediaries in the changing travel and tourism media industry. Presented at the International Communication Association, Prague, May 24-28.
2. **Wellman, M.** (2018). Fit Shaming: Online bullying and celebrity in the fitness influencer community. Presented at the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association, Indianapolis, March 28-31.
1. **Wellman, M.** (2017). Twitter as digital union: Exploring blogger reactions to corporate collapse. Presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Chicago, August 9-12.

## RESEARCH

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### ONGOING PROJECTS

Understanding the intersections of wellness trends and political ideology. March 2024-Present  
*With Dan Hiaeshutter-Rice (Michigan State University), Sedona Chinn (University of Wisconsin-Madison), and Ariel Hasell (University of Michigan) studying the connections between wellness influencers, followers, and political ideologies.*

Who has authority on the body during birth? January 2024 – Present  
*With Deanna Holroyd (The Ohio State University) defining authority within the growing holistic labor and birth industry.*

Breast cancer ‘previvorship’ on social media January 2021 – Present  
*With Dr. Kim Kaphingst and Dr. Avery Holton (University of Utah) exploring the social media activities of women who are genetically predisposed to breast cancer.*

#### RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Paid Research Assistant; Department of Surgery January 2021 – March 2022  
Anti-discrimination law, stigma, and treatment for people with opioid use disorders  
Dr. Lyen C. Huang, Dr. Teneille R. Brown, Dr. Leslie P. Francis, & Dr. Adam Gordon

Paid Research Assistant; Department of Communication May – August 2019  
Information seeking & vaccinations among the Utah refugee population  
Dr. Tae Kyoung Lee

Paid Research Assistant; Department of Communication January – May 2019  
Exploring presidential rhetoric surrounding marginalization on Twitter  
Dr. Kevin Coe & Dr. Rachel Alicia Griffin

#### FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

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University of Illinois Chicago; Honors College Faculty Fellow 2023-2024  
*Selected by UIC Honors College. This fellowship includes mentoring undergraduate students and teaching exclusive courses for the Honors College.*

Utah Center for Excellence in ELSI (Ethical, Legal, & Social Implications) Research 2021-2022  
(\$12,400.75)  
Principal Investigator. *Project funded by a \$4 million NIH grant focusing on issues relevant to population screening for genetic conditions in the health care of women and children. Project entitled “Investigating BRCA previvors’ utilization of social media for health decision making and social support.”*

Jay W. and Sharlene B. Glasmann Family Endowed Graduate Fellowship 2021-2022  
(\$3,000)  
*Selected by the Department of Communication fellowship committee. This fellowship is awarded to a graduate student who excels academically and teaches reporting and writing courses.*

Jay W. and Sharlene B. Glasmann Family Endowed Graduate Fellowship 2020-2021  
(\$2,000)  
*Selected by the Department of Communication fellowship committee. This fellowship is awarded to a graduate student who excels academically and teaches reporting and writing courses.*

University Teaching Assistant Fellowship 2019-2020  
 (\$18,700 plus tuition & insurance)  
*Selected by the University of Utah Graduate College fellowship committee. Fellows design and implement an undergraduate course of their choosing within their home department.*

Murray Graduate Student Research Grant 2017-2018  
 (\$1,000)  
*Selected by University of Iowa School of Journalism & Mass Communication to support thesis research and travel expenses.*

## HONORS AND AWARDS

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Top Student Paper, Popular Media & Culture Division May 2022  
*International Communication Association*

Outstanding Graduate Researcher Award May 2022  
*University of Utah, Department of Communication*

Outstanding Graduate Researcher Award May 2021  
*University of Utah, Department of Communication*

Outstanding Graduate Researcher Award May 2020  
*University of Utah, Department of Communication*

Graduate Student Publishing Award May 2019  
*University of Utah, Department of Communication*

Award for Excellence in Teaching; University of Iowa Representative May 2018  
*Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools*

## TEACHING

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### INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD – MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Mass Communication & Public Health; Fall 2024

### INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD – UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

Graduate Research Methods; Spring 2024

Communication Research; Fall 2023

Digital Influencers; Spring 2024, Fall 2023, Spring 2023

Wellness and Technology; Spring 2023, Fall 2022

### INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD - UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

Social Media Journalism; Summer 2022 (Online), Summer 2021 (Online)

Writing for Strategic Communication; Summer 2022 (Online), Spring 2021 (Online)

Media Writing; Fall 2020, Summer 2020 (Online)  
 Constructing Journalism (UTA Fellow); Spring 2020  
 Introduction to News Writing; Summer 2020, Summer 2019  
 Magazine Writing; Spring 2022, Summer 2021 (Hybrid), Summer 2019  
 Digital Journalism; Spring 2019 (Hybrid)  
 Visual Editing; Introduction to Photoshop; Summer 2020 (Online), Spring 2019, Fall 2018

## ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP

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### INVITED TALKS

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| Assesing the credibility of health influencers on social media<br>Academy for Health Communication Innovation; Seton Hall University                       | April 2024     |
| In search of wellness: Exploring the role of influencers in the wellness industry<br>Adler School of Journalism and Mass Communication; University of Iowa | March 2024     |
| Sharing with authority: Social media influencers, credibility, and wellness<br>Department of Communication; University of Wisconsin Madison                | February 2024  |
| Creating a curriculum vitae in graduate school<br>Department of Communication; University of Illinois at Chicago   | September 2023 |
| Job Market 101<br>Department of Communication; University of Illinois at Chicago   | April 2023     |
| Becoming a Scholar of Social Media<br>Junior Achievement of Chicago; Chicago, IL   | February 2023  |
| Media professionalism: Social media and branding skills.<br>Student Media; University of Utah  | August 2021    |
| Marketing your business online: A talk on social media etiquette.<br>Paul Mitchell The School; Ogden, UT   | January 2020   |
| Social media, body image dissatisfaction, and addictive behaviors.<br>Screen Addiction: A Conversation; Salt Lake City Community Engagement Panel          | November 2019  |
| Building a personal brand and disseminating information online.<br>Digital Journalism; University of Utah  | October 2019   |
| Monetizing Instagram for personal and commercial brands.<br>Principles of Journalism; University of Iowa   | March 2018     |
| Self-branding and influencer marketing: What is sponsored content?<br>Principles of Strategic Communication; University of Iowa                            | March 2018     |



Instagram analytics for business: New ways to quantify engagement. September 2017  
Digital Storytelling; University of Iowa

Creating and monetizing influencer videos. February 2017  
Producing Video for Mobile & Social; University of Iowa

## MEDIA COVERAGE

Paddison, L. (2024). Wellness influencers fueled pandemic misinformation. Now they're targeting another crisis. *CNN*, February 5. <http://tinyurl.com/4fmx5jnz>.

Fresh Living. (2023). Why is Utah oversaturated with influencers? *KUTV Fresh Living*, June 27. <https://tinyurl.com/yrs7d92p>.

Kraus, R. (2022). When it comes to celebrity workouts, the real move is 'a lot of money and a lot of time.' *Well + Good*, August 25. <https://tinyurl.com/y6a9hz2d>.

Petersen, J. & Porter, C. (2022). Why are so many social media influencers from Utah? *Salt Lake Magazine*, June 22. <https://tinyurl.com/58ctxeet>.

Kantor, J. (2022). How the rise of the celebrity instructor transformed our relationship with fitness. *The Ringer*, January 6. <https://tinyurl.com/2m2rzyzu>.

Hazlehurst, B. (2021). How influencers evolved past their use-by date. *Coveteur*, September. <https://tinyurl.com/2pam32sf>.

Hazlehurst, B. (2021). How COVID turned small beauty brands into luxury status symbols. *Allure Magazine*, July 15. <https://tinyurl.com/2p82sdbj>.

Rogers, J. (2021). The truth about Clubhouse's self-improvement groups for men. *Men's Health*, June 2. <https://tinyurl.com/yc4yj6fp>.

Csernyik, R. (2020). The problem with the rise of the LinkedIn influencer. *The Globe and Mail*, November 16. <https://tinyurl.com/yxdpftmp>.

Dominguez, M. (2020). Why are there so many fashion photoshoots in downtown Phoenix? *The Arizona Republic Valley 101 Podcast*, October 5. <https://tinyurl.com/y8ytr6bx>.

Petersen, J. (2018). Check your social media influencers. *The Daily Utah Chronicle*, October 11. <https://tinyurl.com/3k2eskhf>.

## SERVICE

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### ADVISING

Gabrielle Roitman, Thesis Committee Member, University of Illinois at Chicago  
Nour Mheidly, Dissertation Committee Member, University of Illinois at Chicago

Abi Leveille, Dissertation Committee Member, University of Illinois at Chicago  
Eloise Germic, Dissertation Committee Member, University of Illinois at Chicago  
Krysten Stein, Dissertation Committee Member, University of Illinois at Chicago; 2022-2024  
Maddie Salunga, Senior Project Mentor, School Without Walls High School; 2022-2023

#### AD HOC JOURNAL REVIEWER

International Journal of Communication  
New Media & Society  
Social Media & Society  
Journal of Communication  
Media, Culture & Society  
Media & Communication  
Journal of Media Ethics  
Journal of Cinema and Media Studies  
American Journal of Preventative Medicine  
Journal of Communication Inquiry  
Culture, Health, & Society  
Journal of Adolescent Research  
Journal of Business Research

#### EXTERNAL GRANT REVIEWER

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada  
The Leverhulme Trust; London, England

#### CONFERENCE REVIEWER

Association of Internet Researchers  
International Communication Association  
National Communication Association  
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication

#### UNIVERSITY SERVICE

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|---|------------------------|
| University of Illinois Chicago, Comm Research Methods Committee | August 2023 – May 2024 |
| University of Illinois at Chicago, COMM X+Y Committee           | August 2023 – May 2024 |
| University of Illinois at Chicago, Quorum Committee             | August 2022 – May 2024 |
| University of Utah, Student Media Graduate Advisor              | July 2021 – June 2022  |
| University of Utah, Undergraduate Research Symposium, Reviewer  | April 2021             |
| University of Utah, New Student TA Orientation, Panelist        | August 2020            |

*“Using Canvas in the classroom during COVID-19”*

University of Utah, Teaching Workshop, Panelist August 2020  
*“Sparking engagement in the online classroom”*

University of Utah, New Student TA Orientation, Panelist August 2019  
*“Tips and tricks for your first semester as a graduate instructor or TA”*

University of Iowa, SJMC Graduate Student Association, Treasurer 2017 – 2018

#### SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

Association of Internet Researchers Doctoral Colloquium, Panelist 2023

George Foster Peabody Awards Committee, Reviewer 2018

George Foster Peabody Awards Committee, Reviewer 2017

#### AFFILIATIONS

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Member, Association of Internet Researchers

Member, International Communication Association

Member, National Communication Association