

# Sylvia Darling

*née Simioni*

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## Research Interests

My research explores how Central American migrants use technology to cross international borders and how sociotechnical strategies can support their safety and human dignity on the migrant trail. I use participant observation and in-depth interviews to convey the experiences of communities in Latin America and the United States impacted by transnational violence.

## Education

2018 — 2023 PhD in Information, University of Michigan  
School of Information  
Advisor: Dr. Kentaro Toyama

2012 — 2014 BA in Anthropology and Latin American Studies, University of Virginia  
College of Arts and Sciences, Graduated with Distinction

## Awards

2021 Outstanding Mentor Award Nominee, UROP, University of Michigan  
2019 ACM CHI Best Paper Award  
2018 ACM CHI Best Paper Award  
2017 Eli Segal AmeriCorps Education Award  
2014 Phi Beta Kappa, University of Virginia

## Publications

**Simioni, S.**, and Toyama, K. (under review). Coyotes, Cartels, and Connectivity: Technology Use among Honduran Migrants. In 24th ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing (CSCW 2021). Full Paper.

Dillahunt, T.R., **Simioni, S.**, Xu, X. (2019). Online Grocery Delivery Services: An Opportunity to Address Food Disparities in Transportation-scarce Areas. *Proceedings of the 2019 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (CHI '19). **Best Paper Award.**

**Simioni, S.**, Martell, A., McDonald, A., Mhaidli, A., Guberek, T., Toyama, K., Schaub, F. (2018). Designing Digital Literacy and Security Trainings for Latinx Immigrants in the United States. In *Fourteenth Symposium on Usable Privacy and Security* (SOUPS '18). Workshop Paper.

Guberek, T., McDonald A., **Simioni, S.**, Mhaidli, A., Toyama, K., Schaub, F. (2018). Keeping a Low Profile?: Technology, Risk and Privacy among Undocumented Immigrants. *Proceedings of the 2018 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '18)*. **Best Paper Award.**

## Funding

2021 Fulbright Research Award, Honduras, Institute for International Education  
2021 Tinker Field Foundation Research Grant, U-M International Institute  
2021 Predoctoral Fellowship, Honorable Mention, Ford Foundation  
2020 Internship Grant, U-M School of Information  
2020 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Research Grant, U-M School of Information  
2019 Tinker Field Foundation Research Grant, U-M International Institute  
2019 Research Mini-Grant, U-M School of Information  
2019 Conference Travel Grant, U-M Rackham Graduate School  
2019 Doctoral Travel Grant, U-M School of Information  
2019 Graduate Research Fellowship, Honorable Mention, National Science Foundation  
2018 Doctoral Merit Scholarship, U-M School of Information  
2018 SOUPS Student Grant, National Science Foundation  
2018 Master Travel Grant, U-M School of Information  
2017 Achievement Fellowship, U-M School of Information  
2012 Access UVa Scholarship, University of Virginia

## Presentations

2019 Researching Digital Tools to Explore Opportunities for Social Impact. Invitation by Prof. Jasmine Jones for Guest Lecture at Berea College, Kentucky. November 2019.  
2019 Online Grocery Delivery Services: An Opportunity to Address Food Disparities in Transportation-scarce Areas. ACM CHI, Glasgow, Scotland, UK. May 2019.  
2018 Designing Digital Literacy and Security Trainings for Latinx Immigrants in the United States. USENIX SOUPS, Baltimore, Maryland. August 2019.

## Teaching

### Graduate Student Instructor

WN 2021 SI 501 Contextual Inquiries and Consulting Foundations  
*Also taught in Fall 2019*

### Graduate Student Instructor

FA 2021 SI 389 Putting the H in HCI: Human Perception, Cognition and Mental Processes  
*Also taught in Fall 2020*

## Related Professional Experience

**2020 Graduate Student Research Assistant**  
UMSI School of Information, with Dr. Kentaro Toyama

Leads recruitment and conducts semi-structured interviews with doctoral students enrolled in University of Michigan programs to gain their perspectives on administrative responses to mental health concerns. Revises interview protocol to include attitudes on advisor relationships, treatment based on intersectional identities, COVID-19 impacts, and program-specific concerns.

**2020 Research Collaborator**  
UMSI School of Information, with Dr. Michaelanne Dye

Conducts semi-structured interviews with communities in Havana, Cuba to learn how the Spanish concept “resolviendo” is manifest on the island as a cultural ideology in efforts to understand sociotechnical innovations borne from widespread economic constraints. Co-leads participant recruitment, interviewing, and analysis of qualitative data.

**2018 Graduate Student Research Assistant**  
U-M School of Public Health, under Dr. Paul Fleming and Dr. William Lopez

Liaised among immigrant rights grassroots organizations, social service providers, and mixed-status families in Washtenaw County in support of developing a Block Captain model for facilitating advocacy leadership positions for members of the Latinx community. Co-developed strategies for lateral Block Captain-social service provider relationships and self-acquisition of information relating to social service needs.

**2018–2019 Research Assistant**  
UMSI Research Experience for Master’s Students, under Dr. Tawanna Dillahunt

Conducted semi-structured interviews and a field experiment with individuals living in transportation-scarce and low-income areas in southeastern Michigan to observe grocery selection behaviors and explore design opportunities to enable compatible payment methods and engender health empowerment. Led onboarding and analysis of qualitative data and assisted in recruitment and analysis of quantitative data.

**2017 Research Assistant**  
UMSI Digital Privacy for Vulnerable Communities, under Dr. Kentaro Toyama

Transcribed, translated, and assisted in conducting semi-structured interviews with members of vulnerable communities to observe technology practices. Co-led digital security trainings geared

toward enabling better access to and knowledge of technological benefits and risks. Edited recruitment forms, interview protocols, and assisted in inductive coding of qualitative data.

### **2017–2018 Information Mentor**

U-M School of Information, Office of Academic and Student Affairs

Served as student liaison for prospective students and increased knowledge of UMSI programs and admissions through engagement in blogs, social media, webinars, and email. Supported outreach efforts for existing partners and explores opportunities for new partnerships aligned with UMSI goals and priorities. Led diversity initiatives to promote recruitment and provide resources for first-generation and otherwise nontraditional students.

### **2016–2017 Refugee AmeriCorps Service Member**

Episcopal Migration Ministries, Miami Office

Founded volunteer program with positions in employment readiness, social services support, cultural integration, ESL tutoring, financial literacy, and donations assortment for refugee clients. Managed 70+ volunteers and in-donations inventory to assist in the arrival and housing setup for incoming refugee families. Ran monthly orientations that introduced the public to the geopolitical context of refugee resettlement and trained volunteers in developing cross-cultural skills and sensitivity to diverse backgrounds.

## **Memberships**

Association for Computing Machinery, Student Member

American Anthropological Association, Student Member

Black in Computing, Ally

Cornell University Designing Technology for Social Impact, 2018 Inaugural Cohort

Digital Privacy for Vulnerable Communities Research Lab, Student Member

Graduate Employees' Organization, Union Member

Health Inequities and Immigration Research Lab, U-M School of Public Health, Member

Information Communication Technology for Development Research Lab, Student Member

Michigan Interactive Social Computing, Member

Social Innovations Group, Student Member

U-M Rackham Institute for Social Change, Cass Commons, Detroit

Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights, Communications Committee Volunteer

## **Languages**

Spanish (Spain; Honduras), fluent

'Spanglish' (Miami), fluent