

Gustavo Arruda Franco

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EDUCATION

The University of Chicago

Bachelor of Arts in Sociology with Specialization in Research Methodology

2016 – 2021

RESEARCH

NORC at the University of Chicago

Chicago, IL

Research Associate II

July 2024 – Present

- Co-developed design research team, helping to secure C-suite authorization through strategic presentations, coordinating cross-departmental partnerships, and pitching wraparound qualitative service offering for national probability panel provider
- Coordinated research for design-focused projects including science media evaluation (NSF-funded), visitor experience study with ethnographic observations and stakeholder interviews for major touristic organization in Chicago, and healthcare service design initiative developing a local community feedback infrastructure
- Managed research operations tasks across 17 projects employing diverse methodologies: quantitative surveys with panel vendors, ethnographic observations (onsite intercept and digital video analysis), focus groups, stakeholder interviews, virtual environmental scans, with 75+ total interviews conducted in English and Spanish
- Conducted literature review on linguistic and cultural barriers facing immigrant caregivers for national aging study, contributing to a poster presented at the 2025 Gerontological Society of America conference
- Earned Employee Recognition Award and advanced to "Exceptional Contributions" overall performance rating within 18 months, recognized for strategic business development, innovative research operations, and exceptional client engagement

Research Supportive Services Inc.

Chicago, IL

Freelance Research Assistant

March 2023 – April 2023

- Recruited hard-to-reach populations for several focus group sessions, as part of a Pew Research Center project dedicated to Asian-American immigrants and their relationship with religion
- Developed and executed recruitment strategies by identifying and visiting key community partners, such as direct service non-profits, libraries, local businesses, and religious temples
- Translated cognitive interview guide for UX survey from Big 5 tech client to Brazilian Portuguese, then transcribed and translated the video of some of the interviews to English

Chicago Center for HIV Elimination at UChicago Medicine

Chicago, IL

N2 Research Specialist

August 2021 – June 2022

- Increased response rates from 13% to 32% of longitudinal study with 400 Black sexual minority men and trans women, after developing new interviewer training, research incentive policies, and performance tracking systems
- Developed REDCap database to centralize collection and reporting of para-data, after cleaning, recoding and joining multiple datasets, and before increasing granularity of outreach and recruitment metrics
- Disseminated interviewer internship postings among relevant undergraduate forums, supported job interviewing process, trained and supervised interns

Research Coordinator at PrEP/Parate Social Marketing Campaign

August 2021 – June 2022

- Translated questionnaire to Spanish, then programmed it on Qualtrics, before disseminating survey in the Latine community to measure their awareness of HIV prevention as baseline of our social marketing campaign
- Coordinated and documented focus groups with Latine LGBTQ+ community partners, which later informed graphic design, web development, photography, video production, and outreach roles
- Created GIS visualizations to help target our interventions through Chicago Transit Authority ads

Survey Lab at the University of Chicago
N2 Research Assistant

Chicago, IL
December 2020 – August 2021

- Conducted twenty-one online and in-person standardized interviews with Black gay men and trans women, with the objective of understanding barriers to adoption of HIV prevention medication (PrEP)
- Contacted marginalized participants in a long-term longitudinal survey, scheduling visits and payments
- Collected spatial and social media data of participants in addition to the interviews, in addition to coordinating HIV/STIs testing and collection of biospecimens

LabCritica (Dance and Performance Criticism Lab at UFRJ)
Research Intern

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
July 2017 – September 2017

- Assisted in the editorial process of a new book, doing technical translations and compiling references
- Helped to script, conduct and transcribe interview with the curator of a major Brazilian contemporary art museum
- Prepared reports about potential donors

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Center on Society and Health at Virginia Commonwealth University
UX Writer

Remote
May 2023 – July 2024

- Wrote two health equity dashboards while translating data to wider audiences — throughout full cycle of research, strategy, and execution —, later receiving recognition from press and Virginia's Secretary of Health
- Conducted and analyzed qualitative usability tests with six users over videocalls, using insights to execute content writing, digital strategy and overall user experience of our digital products
- Automated hundreds of reports, using conditional logic and string manipulation to present key metrics and data visualizations to both funders and general audience, while following latest accessibility recommendations

Waited for Work Authorization from U.S. Immigration

July 2022 – February 2023

- Transitioned to freelance research after arrival of work authorization, which required independent business development done at professional conferences and social media, such as MAPOR, AAPOR and LinkedIn
- Founded a queer DJ collective with eight permanent members, over 15 collaborators and volunteers, and two Chicago queer art partner organizations, which produced 12 donation-based parties to over 400 attendees
- Produced social media content for arts and culture work, including graphic design and audiovisual production

Adrielle Modas

Bom Jesus de Goiás, Brazil
July 2020 – September 2020

[Pro-Bono Digital Marketing](#)

- Managed \$1000 budget project to rebrand a brand with no digital presence at the beginning of COVID
- Collaborated with a designer and the sales team to sustainably implement online sales, content, paid social and influencer strategy, ultimately helping to triple the monthly sales within one quarter
- Interviewed stakeholders and created profiles of main competitors to identify local positioning of recently acquired clothing retail store

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

Duncan, D. T., Park, S. H., Chen, Y. T., Dolotina, B., Worrall, W. R., Hanson, H., Durrell, M., **Franco, G. A.**, Morse, S. S., & Schneider, J. A. (2023). HIV Care Engagement Is Not Associated with COVID-19 Vaccination Hesitancy during the Initial Peak of the COVID-19 Pandemic among Black Cisgender Sexual Minority Men and Transgender Women in the N2 COVID Study. *Vaccines*, 11(4), 787.

- Study found **no link** between HIV care engagement and COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among **Black gay/bisexual men and transgender women** early in the pandemic (Apr–Jul 2020). Points designers to **broader barriers**—trust, access, and messaging—rather than assuming care engagement drives intent.

PRESENTATIONS

Johns, M. M., Rodriguez Tiburcio, A., **Arruda Franco, G.**, Zhong, S., Ricketts, I., Howe, M., & Piedra, L. M. (2025, November 12-15). *Role of dementia diagnosis and relationship type on caregiving relational quality among Latino caregivers: Results from the Latino Aging Caregiver Network Study* [Poster presentation]. Gerontological Society of America 2025 Annual Scientific Meeting, Boston, MA, United States.

- Examines how diagnosis status and relationship type relate to **caregiver–care recipient relational quality** in Latino families—clarifies pain points and support needs of **informal/family caregivers** to inform service design and care navigation.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Bray, E., Zeynalova, B., **Arruda Franco, G.**, Treptow, T., & Garfin, C. (2025). *NOVA Building Stuff evaluation: Final report*. Slover Linett at NORC. <https://informalscience.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/NOVA-Building-Stuff-Evaluation-FINAL-REPORT.pdf>

- **Evaluation of an NSF-funded project using Twitch/YouTube for informal STEM learning**; mixed methods surfaced practical tactics—clear on-ramps/stay-ramps, moderator norms, and platform-fit formats—with actionable recommendations to broaden reach, build community, and deepen learning.

Opera America, & Slover Linett at NORC. (2024). *Understanding opera's new audiences: Research report*. Opera America. <https://www.operaamerica.org/industry-resources/2024/202411/understanding-opera-s-new-audiences-research-report/>

- **NEA-funded national study of 11,000+ operagoers at 36 U.S. companies**; contributed to data analysis and data charts that highlight motivations, barriers, and audience experience, providing clear findings for opera leaders, and is credited in the report.

Arruda Franco, G. (2021). *Healing the Nation: Portrayals of Democracy in Official Social Media Profiles of Igreja Universal during the Election of Bolsonaro in 2018*. University of Chicago. <https://doi.org/10.6082/UCHICAGO.10864>

- **BA sociology thesis using qualitative content analysis of Facebook and YouTube posts** from a Brazilian Pentecostal megachurch during Brazil's 2018 presidential election; mapped how platform-native storytelling framed democracy, illustrating how digital media can gradually recalibrate political common sense.

DIGITAL PROJECTS AND DATA PRODUCTS

Hahn, L., France, T., Redmond, M., Lee, J. H., **Franco, G. A.**, Sen, A., Garrett, L., & Chapman, D. (2024). *Virginia Wellbeing Dashboard*. Virginia Commonwealth University, Center on Society and Health. Retrieved June 17, 2025, from <https://www.vawellbeingdashboard.org/>

- **Role: UX writer & content writer**; supported **UX research**. Wrote plain-language labels, tooltips, and explanations for predictive wellbeing scores and social factors, and helped test content so agencies and community groups could use the data for planning.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Chicago Music Scene Fellowship — \$3,000 (2024)

Project: Outdoor Dance Music Programming Series

- Designed and launched a battery-powered public-space sound system for an LGBTQ+ collective, bringing Latin American, Caribbean, and Black Chicago sound-system traditions into the city's lakefront.
- Funded eco-friendly PA upgrades and guest artist fees for a 3-event summer series at Hollywood Beach (a long-standing LGBTQ+ gathering spot).
- Addressed gaps in access and representation in Chicago's LGBTQ nightlife by offering free, public, welcoming events that centered Black, Brown, trans, queer, and first-generation immigrant communities.

Odyssey Scholarship

2016 – 2021

- International recipient of a full-ride scholarship for all 4 years of college at the University of Chicago

Out for Undergrad Marketing Conference

October 2020

[*Student Keynote Speaker*](#)

- Selected from among 150 attendees to deliver a keynote speech at the final day of an annual LGBTQ+ leadership conference for undergraduates

PRESS & MEDIA COVERAGE

“Understanding ‘Other’ Arts Attendance in the United States,” National Endowment for the Arts — *Responses to the 2022 SPPA* (2024)

- Cited 3× as a contributing researcher proposing clear, people-focused measures for community-based arts (e.g., vogue/ballroom)—looking beyond headcounts to how people participate, feel welcome, and benefit.
- Link: <https://www.arts.gov/impact/research/responses-to-the-2022-SPPA/understanding-other-arts-attendance-in-the-united-states>

“Putopia’ Creates an Organic Scene at Hollywood Beach,” *Windy City Times* (Sept 6, 2025)

- Feature on the battery-powered, free series centering Black, Brown, queer, and trans Chicagoans at a historically meaningful LGBTQ+ beach.
- Link: <https://windycitytimes.com/2025/09/06/putopia-creates-an-organic-scene-at-hollywood-beach/>

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Intersectionality and Public Health Symposium

University of Chicago (Remote)

Student Staff

May 2021

- Supported the Coordinating Committee, from the Healthy Regions & Policies Lab at the Center for Spatial Data Science at the University of Chicago, during assigned panels throughout the day
- Interfaced with symposium guests, moderating the Zoom chat and discussions in breakout rooms
- Took notes of assigned panels, later circulated with guests

CERTIFICATIONS

Grant Writing Suite Certificate — Chicago State University, Continuing Education

April 2025

- A to Z Grant Writing
- Advanced Grant Proposal Writing
- Becoming a Grant Writing Consultant

Learn SQL Course Certificate — CodeAcademy

May 2025

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Statistical Packages: R, SPSS, SQL

Qualitative Data Analysis: Dedoose

GIS: QGIS

LANGUAGES

Portuguese: Native

Spanish: Advanced

REFERENCES

Prof. Dain Borges, Associate Professor of History

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