

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Provide the following information for the Senior/key personnel and other significant contributors.
Follow this format for each person. **DO NOT EXCEED FIVE PAGES.**

NAME: Carrington C. Merritt

eRA COMMONS USERNAME (credential, e.g., agency login): CARRINGTON_MERRITT

POSITION TITLE: Doctoral Candidate

EDUCATION/TRAINING *(Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable. Add/delete rows as necessary.)*

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE (if applicable)	Start Date MM/YYYY	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	BA	08/2014	05/2018	Psychology & Neuroscience
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	MA	08/2018	05/2021	Psychology (Clinical & Social)
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	PhD	05/2021	05/2025 (expected)	Psychology (Clinical & Social)

A. Personal Statement

I first became interested in racial health disparities research during my undergraduate career when my work in a schizophrenia research lab made me aware of the stark disparities in schizophrenia spectrum disorder diagnoses and recovery trajectories between Black and White individuals in the U.S. While biases in diagnostic approaches and other facets of systemic racism are certainly contributors to these inequities, I became interested in understanding how experiences of racism-related stress become “embodied” in ways that may contribute to increased risk for psychiatric disorders. At the same time in my undergraduate career, I was introduced to the field of social neuroscience and psychoneuroimmunology, and subsequently became fascinated with how these disciplines could be leveraged to understand how racism-related stress “gets under the skin” to impact the health of Black Americans. As such, I pursued dual-enrollment in the clinical and social psychology graduate programs at UNC-Chapel Hill, wherein I could use social neuroscience and PNI methods to explore the mechanisms of racism-related stress and how they may be linked with risk for serious mental illness (e.g., schizophrenia spectrum disorders). However, as my graduate research progressed, I found myself interested in the brain-body pathways linking racism-related stress and health more broadly/transdiagnostically. Now, as a more senior graduate student, my research has expanded to investigate the neural and immunological mechanisms through which racism-related stress impacts various health outcomes (i.e., physical and mental) among Black Americans. Along these lines, my dissertation research is comprised of three different studies, each exploring an aspect of racism-related intergroup stress and immune system or neural functioning. Overall, my goal is to continue to conduct interdisciplinary research that affords better understanding of how the insidious effects of racism become embedded within the body and mind *and* use such research to inform interventions to protect and promote the health of Black individuals.

B. Positions, Scientific Appointments and Honors

Positions and Scientific Appointments

2024-	Teaching Fellow, Psychology & Neuroscience Department, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
2021-2023	Graduate Research Assistant, Psychology & Neuroscience Department, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
2019-	Member, American Psychosomatic Society
2018-2021	Graduate Teaching Assistant, Psychology & Neuroscience Department, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Honors

2023	UNC Dept. of P&N Wadden Award for Distinguished Research in Health Psychology
2021	UNC Dept. of P&N Christopher Agnew Research Innovation Award
2021	UNC Dept. of P&N Innovation in Equity and Inclusivity Award for Service
2021	UNC Dept. of P&N Davenport Honorable Mention for Outstanding Psychological Research by a
2021	Ford Foundation Honorable Mention in 2021 Predoctoral Fellowship Competition
2020	NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Honorable Mention in 2020 Competition
2019	Ford Foundation Honorable Mention in 2019 Predoctoral Fellowship Competition
2018	UNC Office of Undergraduate Research Annual Symposium Best Poster Presentation Award
2017	Psi Chi International Honor Society in Psychology
2017	UNC Summer Undergraduate Pipeline Research Symposium 1 st Place Presentation Award
2016-2018	Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program
2014-2018	Honor Carolina Program

C. Contributions to Science

1. **Brain-Body Mechanisms Linking Racism and Health.** My primary line of research examines the neural and physiological processes engaged during experiences of racism and/or associations with past experiences of racism. This work sheds light on the neural and immunological impacts of racial discrimination as potential mechanisms that contribute to the development of racism-based health inequities.
 - a. **Merritt, C.C.**, Muscatell, K.A. Discrimination and Cardiovascular Health in Black Americans: Exploring Inflammation as a Mechanism and Perceived Control as a Protective Factor. *Psychosomatic Medicine*. Under Revision.
 - b. **Merritt, C.C.**, Muscatell, K.A. Linking Racism-Related Stress and Risk for Psychosis among Black Americans through Physiological and Neural Mechanisms. *Clinical Psychology Review*. In Prep.
 - c. Muscatell, K.A., Alvarez, G.M., Bonar, A.S., Cardenas, M.N., Galvan, M.J., **Merritt, C.C.**, Starks, M.D. (2022). Brain-Body Pathways Links Racism and Health. *American Psychologist*, 77(9), 1049.
2. **Neural Underpinnings of Social and Intergroup Stress.** In complement to my research on the neural mechanisms involved in racism-related stress, I have conducted research on how the brain responds to more general stress and intergroup processes (e.g., social categorization).
 - a. **Merritt, C.C.**, MacCormack, J. K., Stein, A. G., Lindquist, K. A., & Muscatell, K. A. (2021). The Neural Underpinnings of Intergroup Social Cognition: An fMRI Meta-Analysis. *Social cognitive and affective neuroscience*. 16(9), 903-914.
 - b. Muscatell K.A., **Merritt C.C.**, Cohen J.R., Chang L., Lindquist K.A. (2021). The Stressed Brain: Neural Underpinnings of Social Stress Processing in Humans. In: Current Topics in Behavioral Neurosciences.