

Sarah S. Willen

Sarah S. Willen, PhD, MPH is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Connecticut and Director of the Research Program on Global Health and Human Rights at the university's Human Rights Institute. A former NIMH Postdoctoral Fellow in Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School, she holds a PhD in Anthropology and an MPH in Global Health, both from Emory University. She is a two-time recipient of the Rudolf Virchow Prize from the Critical Anthropology of Global Health Caucus of the Society for Medical Anthropology.

Willen has authored over 35 articles and book chapters on issues of migration and health, health and human rights, social justice mobilization, medical education, and other topics, including recent pieces in the *Lancet* ("[Syndemic Vulnerability and the Right to Health](#)"), *Health and Human Rights Journal* ("[Health Is a Human Right — at CDC?](#)"), *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* ("[Do 'Illegal' Migrants have a Right to Health? Engaging Ethical Theory as Social Practice at a Tel Aviv Open Clinic](#)"), and *Social Science and Medicine* ("[How is health-related 'deservingness' reckoned? Perspectives from unauthorized im/migrants in Tel Aviv](#)"). She is editor or co-editor of three books and five special journal collections. Her book *Fighting for Dignity: Migrant Lives at Israel's Margins* (2019) was recently published by the University of Pennsylvania Press.

Her work has received support from the National Science Foundation, Fulbright-Hayes, the Social Science Research Council, the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, the Lady Davis Fellowship Trust, the Amy Adina Schulman Memorial Fund, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, among other sources. A former Member-at-Large of the Executive Board of the Society for Medical Anthropology, she serves on the editorial/advisory boards of *Social Science & Medicine*, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, and *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry*.

Willen is currently Principal Investigator of [ARCHES | the AmeRicans' Conceptions of Health Equity Study](#), an interdisciplinary, mixed-methods study of how people in the United States think about health, fairness, and social interconnectedness ("health-related deservingness"), funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Books

- (2019) *Fighting for Dignity: Migrant Lives at Israel's Margins*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- (2011) *Shattering Culture: American Medicine Responds to Cultural Diversity*. Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good, Sarah S. Willen, Seth Hannah, Ken Vickery, and Lawrence T. Park (eds). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- (2010) *A Reader in Medical Anthropology: Theoretical Trajectories, Emergent Realities*. Byron Good, Michael M.J. Fischer, Sarah S. Willen, Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good (eds.). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- (2007) *Transnational Migration to Israel in Global Comparative Context*. Sarah S. Willen (ed.). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Journal issues (guest edited)

- (2019) "Invoking Health and Human Rights in the United States." Special section of *Health and Human Rights Journal*. Sarah S. Willen, guest editor. 21(1).
- (2013) "Cultural Competence in Action: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Four Case Studies in Medical Education." Special issue of *Culture, Medicine, & Psychiatry*. Elizabeth Carpenter-Song and Sarah S. Willen, guest editors. 37(2).
- (2012) "Migration, 'Illegality,' and Health: Mapping Vulnerability and Debating 'Deservingness.'" Special issue of *Social Science & Medicine*. Sarah S. Willen, guest editor. 74(6).
- (2012) "Horizons of Experience: Reinvigorating Dialogue between Phenomenological and Psychoanalytic Anthropologies." Special Issue of *Ethos*. Sarah S. Willen and Don Seeman, guest editors. 40(1).
- (2007) "Exploring 'Illegal' and 'Irregular' Migrants' Lived Experiences of Law and State Power." Special Issue of *International Migration*. 45(3). Sarah S. Willen, guest editor. 45(3).

Peer-reviewed publications ([select](#))

- (2019) "Health Is A Human Right – at CDC? Ethnographic Insights from a Federal Museum Exhibition." *Health and Human Rights Journal*. 10(1): 163-177.
- (2017) Willen, Sarah S., Michael Knipper, César E. Abadía-Barrero, & Nadav Davidovitch. "Syndemic Vulnerability and the Right to Health." *The Lancet*. 389: 964-77.
- (2015) Fleischman, Yonina, Sarah S. Willen, Nadav Davidovitch, & Zohar Mor. "Migration as a Social Determinant of Health for Irregular Migrants: Israel as Case Study." *Social Science & Medicine*. 147: 89-97.
- (2014) "Plotting a Moral Trajectory, *Sans Papiers*: Outlaw Motherhood as Inhabitable Space of Welcome." *Ethos*. 42(1): 85-100.
- (2012) "Introduction: Migration, 'Illegality,' and Health: Mapping Embodied Vulnerability and Debating Health-Related Deservingness." *Social Science & Medicine*. 74(6): 805-811.
- (2011) "Do 'Illegal' Migrants have a Right to Health? Engaging Ethical Theory as Social Practice at a Tel Aviv Open Clinic." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 25(3): 303-330.
- (2011) Willen, Sarah S., Jessica Mulligan, & Heide Castañeda. "Take a Stand Commentary: How Can Medical Anthropologists Contribute to Contemporary Conversations on 'Illegal' Immigration and Health?" *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 25(3): 331-356.
- (2010) Willen, Sarah S., Antonio Bullon, & Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good. "'Opening Up a Huge Can of Worms': Reflections on a 'Cultural Sensitivity' Course for Psychiatry Residents." *Harvard Review of Psychiatry* 18:247–253.

Awards and Honors ([select](#))

Faculty Fellow – UConn Humanities Institute (2013–14)

Rudolf Virchow Award – Critical Anthropology of Global Health Special Interest Group, Society for Medical Anthropology (2004, 2012)

Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning & Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Education – Harvard University (2008, 2009)

Fellow – Center for Health, Culture & Society, Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University (2005-06)

David R. Blumenthal Award in Jewish Studies & the Humanities – Emory University (2004)

Marjorie Shostak Prize for Excellence & Humanity in Ethnographic Writing – Emory University (2003)

Teaching interests

Undergraduate: Medical anthropology, immigration and health, the Middle East, anthropology of Jewish communities

- [Course website](#) for ANTH 3300 – Medical Anthropology

Graduate: Embodiment and experience, anthropology and the clinical encounter, health and human rights, dignity and health, interdisciplinary perspectives on flourishing and well-being

Collaborations

Principal Investigator, [ARCHES | the AmeRicans' Conceptions of Health Equity Study](#) (2017–present)

Network partner, [WAIT – Waiting for an uncertain future: the temporalities of irregular migration](#) , University of Bergen, Norway (2015–)

Co-founder and co-editor, ["AccessDenied: A Conversation on Unauthorized Im/migration and Health"](#) (2009–15)

Media

- ["Anthropologist Chronicles a Nation's Deportation Campaign ."](#) *UConn Today*, 8/26/19.

- [“A New InCHIP Grant Investigates Americans’ Perspectives on Health Equity.”](#) *InCHIP Research News*, 11/28/17.
- [“Embodied Belonging: In/exclusion, Health Care, and Well-Being in a World in Motion – Workshop Report.”](#) *Medizinethnologie*, 11/22/17.
- [“UConn Anthropologist Sarah Willen Awarded Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Grant to Investigate Americans’ Perspectives on Health Equity.”](#) 9/12/17.
- [“‘Who Deserves a Healthy Life?’ A community conversation and emerging research study.”](#) *UConn Humanities Institute Blog*, 3/8/17.
- [“Social Conditions Play a Role in Migrant Health.”](#) *UConn Today*, 5/1/17.
- [“Recent Publication by Global Health & Human Rights Faculty .”](#) *UConn Human Rights Institute Blog*, 3/21/17.
- [“The Right to Health Care .”](#) *UConn Today*. 1/2/12.