

Curriculum Vitae
Melissa Rizzo
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Education

Doctor of Philosophy. (May 2019). Ohio University, Athens, OH

- School of Communication Studies, Scripps College of Communication
- Areas of Specialization: Interpersonal, Family, and Organizational Communication
- Secondary Area of Specialization: Health Advocacy and Campaigns
- Advisor: Dr. Laura W. Black
- Committee Members: Drs. Lynn M. Harter, Stephanie Tikkanen, and Charlie Morgan
- Dissertation: *Missing Piece of the Puzzle: Identity and Supportive Communication in Adoption Search and Reunion*

Master of Arts. (December 2015). Ohio University, Athens, OH

- Communication Studies
- Advisor: Dr. Charee Thompson

Master of Arts. (December 2013). Ohio University, Athens, OH

- Organizational Communication
- Advisor: Dr. Nicole Blau
- Thesis: Stand Up Against Bullying: An Anti-Bullying Program

Bachelor of Science. (December 2012). Ohio University, Lancaster, OH

- Communication Studies

Associate of Arts. (June 1994). Ohio University, Lancaster, OH

- Computer Science - Applied Business

Scholarly Interests

My primary research is focused on identity construction and supportive communication in both interpersonal and mediated contexts. I am interested in how our well-being is related to the ability to express ourselves authentically and be supported by our families and communities. Moreover, I seek to understand how we can advocate for better public policy to improve the health and well-being of marginalized communities, specifically adoptees from closed adoptions. I am currently writing about the bioethical implications of personal genomic testing (e.g., Ancestry.com) by adult adoptees to discover their birth family information. My research includes quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies, with published work in the areas of health, family, and modern technologies. My teaching philosophy has emerged from my study of identity and well-being as I strive to understand students' unique fields of experience and motivations for learning, to co-create a climate of understanding, inclusivity, and productivity in my classrooms. In all of my classes, we focus on leadership, collaboration, and mindful communication to improve our academic, professional, and personal relationships.

Academic and Professional Appointments

Assistant Professor (August 2021 – present)

Ohio University, OHIO Honors College

Courses Taught:

- HC 2400: Introduction to OHIO Honors (7 sections online)
- HC 2401: Engagement lab (8 sections; 2 online)
- HC 2600: Ethical Community Engagement (2 section)
- HC 2610: Ethical Research and Creative Activity (1 section)
- HC 2620: Ethical Leadership (4 sections; 2 online/hybrid)
- HC 2905: One Health Communication (1 section)
- HC 2905: Maps, Networks, & Pathways (1 section)

Adjunct Instructor (January 2023 – present)

University of Cincinnati Clermont

Courses Taught:

- COMM 2081 Business Communication

Adjunct Instructor (August 2021 – present)

George Mason University

Courses Taught:

- COMM 101: Fundamentals of Communication (12 sections online; asynchronous)

Visiting Assistant Professor (August 2019 – August 2021)

College of Wooster, Department of Communication Studies

Courses Taught:

- COMM 11100: Introduction to Human Communication (3 sections online/hybrid)
- COMM 15200: Public Speaking (hybrid)
- COMM 20011W: Family Communication (Writing Intensive)
- COMM 22100: Interpersonal Communication
- COMM 22500: Small Group Communication (hybrid)
- COMM 31100: Theories of Communication (2 sections online/hybrid))

Undergraduate Independent Study Advisor

- Mentored students on study design, credible sources, and methodology
- Instructed students on synthesis of literature, development of research questions, and connecting findings to previous research
- Mentored students on writing practices, including plagiarism, writing style guides, etc.
- Provided constructive feedback on content, organization, and grammar
- Met weekly with advisees to discuss progress on their thesis
 - 2020-2021 academic year (4 senior theses)
 - 2019-2020 academic year (6 senior theses)

Graduate Teaching Associate (Fall 2012; August 2015 – May 2019)

Ohio University, School of Communication Studies

Courses Taught:

- COMS 1030: Public Speaking (5 sections)
- COMS 2050: Techniques of Group Discussion (7 sections; 2 sections online)
- COMS 2500: Organizational Communication (1 section)
- COMS 1010: Fundamentals of Human Communication (TA; 2 sections)
- COMS 2350: Introduction to Communication Theory (TA; 1 section)
- COMS 3200: Communication and New Technology (TA: 1 section)
- COMS 3920: Practicum in Communication Education (TA; 1 section)
 - Led weekly leadership discussions with seven undergraduate teaching assistants
 - Mentored students in best leadership practices to improve peer relations in the class

Adjunct Instructor (January 2014 - August 2015)

Ohio University, Regional Campuses, Department of Communication Studies

Courses Taught:

- COMS 1010: Fundamentals of Human Communication (2 sections; 1 section online)
- COMS 1030: Fundamentals of Public Speaking (7 sections)

Internship (October 2012 - February 2013)

Great Heights Marketing and Communications Company

Responsibilities:

- Project Assistant for the Ohio Educational Technology Conference 2013 (OETC13)
- Assisted in creating content for social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Co-presented an informational session (Get Connected @ OETC13)

Scholarly Activity _____

Media Publications

Rizzo, M. (2022 – present). Co-producer and Contributor. *The Anna Jinja Show*. Pacifica Network.

Journal Articles

Rizzo Weller, M. (2022). “I want the piece of paper that is my history, and why the hell can’t I have it?”:

Original birth certificates and adoptive identity. *Journal of Family Communication: Family Communication and Adoption Special Edition*, 22(3), 271-287.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2022.2097234>

Blau, N. & **Rizzo Weller, M.** (2022). The impact of interpersonal expectancies on family experiences during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Submitted to the *Ohio Communication Association Journal*, 60, (16-26).

Rizzo Weller, M. & Hosek, A. M. (2020). “Birth mothers’ experiences of privacy turbulence in relation to closed adoption information.” *Journal of Family Communication*, 20(3), 250-64.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2020.1761807>

Rizzo Weller, M. (2019). "I guess they're all real moms then": Constructing motherhood through language in the adoption community. *Adoption Quarterly*, 22(4), 265-83.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10926755.2019.1675836>

Rizzo Weller, M. (2018). Relay for life as a storytelling occasion: Building community in the midst of suffering. *Health Communication*, 33(4), 510-12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2016.1278505>

Book Chapters and Case Studies

Rizzo, M., Tikkanen, S. A., & Cripe, E. T. (2023). Hell hath no fury like a woman's scorned friend: Reflected anger in academic mother online groups. In S. Trocchio, L. Hanasono, R. Dwyer, J. J. Borchert, & J. Y. Harvie (Eds.), *It Takes a Village: Academic Mothers Building Online Communities*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Rizzo, M. (2022). "According to science, this is who I am": Personal genome testing and adoption reunions. In M. R. McGinley, J. K. Burk, & J. S. Ward (Eds.), *Communicating with Our Families: Continuity and Interruption*. Lexington Books.

Rizzo Weller, M., Hosek, A. M., & Cherry, J. (2022). Embracing the transition to social media in parent-teen communication. In M. R. McGinley, J. K. Burk, & J. S. Ward (Eds.), *Communicating with Our Families: Continuity and Interruption*. Lexington Books.

Tikkanen, S. A & **Rizzo Weller, M.** (2021). Technology and the parent-adolescent relationship. In K. Wright & C. Liberman (Eds.), *Casing Mediated Communication*. Kendall-Hunt Publishing.

Rizzo Weller, M. (2018). Breaking up the BAND: Group communication and social media. In J. Mazer (Ed.), *Communication and social media: Case studies across personal and professional relationships* (pp. 64-71). Oxford University Press.

Manuscripts in Progress

Hosek, A. M.,...**Rizzo, M.** Math is for Life. We use it every day:" Examining memorable messages parents give to their children about math education and predictors of their own math self-anxiety, math self-concept, and math self-efficacy. (Submitted to Atlantic Journal of Communication.)

Rizzo, M. Constructing a culture of compassion in an adoption services non-profit organization. (To be submitted to *Communication Studies*.)

Rizzo, M. "I don't want to hurt their feelings": Supportive communication and emotion work in adoption search and reunion. (To be submitted to *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*.)

Conference Presentations and Panels

Rizzo Weller, M. (April 2022). "I don't want to hurt their feelings": Emotion work in adoption search and reunion. Presented at the *Eastern Communication Association Conference*. Philadelphia, PA.

Rizzo Weller, M. (April 2022). Constructing a culture of compassion in an adoption services non-profit organization. Presented at the *Eastern Communication Association Conference*. Philadelphia, PA.

- Rizzo Weller, M.** (April 2022). Effects of COVID on nonverbal communication within the family context: Proxemics and territory. Presented at the *Eastern Communication Association Conference*. Philadelphia, PA.
- Hosek, A. M., Densmore, C., Rubinsky, V., Waldbuesser, C., **Rizzo Weller, M.**, & Cueller, J. M. (November 2021). "Math is for life. We use it every day:" Examining memorable messages about math education, math self-anxiety, math self-concept, and math self-efficacy. Presented at the *National Communication Association Conference*. Seattle, WA.
- Rizzo Weller, M.** (March 2021). Interview with a scholar. Presented at the *Eastern Communication Association Virtual Conference*. Cambridge, MA.
- Blau, N. & **Rizzo Weller, M.** (March 2021). The impact of interpersonal expectancies family experiences during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Presented at the *Eastern Communication Association Virtual Conference*. Cambridge, MA.
- Rizzo Weller, M.** (March 2021). How do we manage this? Researching teacher and student experiences during COVID-19. Presented at the *Eastern Communication Association Virtual Conference*. Cambridge, MA.
- Okamoto, K. E. & **Rizzo Weller, M.** (November 2020). "Gaming fitness: Toward a theory of competition as a form of supportive communication." [Paper panel canceled]. *National Communication Association Virtual Conference*. Indianapolis, IN.
- Rizzo Weller, M.** (November 2020). "Identities at the Crossroads: The Intersection of Identities as Resistance." [Discussion panel canceled]. *National Communication Association Virtual Conference*. Indianapolis, IN.
- Rizzo Weller, M.** (November 2020). "Communication crossroads in the family: Navigating transitions." [Discussion panel canceled]. *National Communication Association Virtual Conference*. Indianapolis, IN.
- Rizzo Weller, M.** (November 2020). "Mediated communication at the crossroads: Case studies to examine the current state of CMC across contexts and content." *National Communication Association Virtual Conference*. Indianapolis, IN.
- Rizzo Weller, M.** (April 2020). Adoptee identity construction and original birth certificates. *Accepted to the *Eastern Communication Association Conference*, Baltimore, MD. [Conference canceled]
- Rizzo Weller, M.** (April 2020). Students' perception of instructor age in active learning classrooms. *Accepted to the *Eastern Communication Association Conference*, Baltimore, MD. [Conference canceled]
- Rizzo Weller, M.** (November 2019). "'According to science, this is who I am': Adoptee identity gaps and personal genome testing. Presented at the *National Communication Association Conference*, Baltimore, MD.

- Rizzo Weller, M.** & Hosek, A. (April 2019). "My privacy was never promised nor ever desired": Mothers' privacy expectations about adoption information. Presented at the *Eastern Communication Association Conference*, Providence, RI.
- Blau, N., **Rizzo Weller, M.**, Waldbuesser, C., & Tikkanen, S. (April 2019). Facebook me!: Exploring friendship maintenance on social media. Presented at the *Eastern Communication Association Conference*, Providence, RI.
- Black, L. W., Ivancic, S. R., and **Rizzo Weller, M.** (February 2019). "I'm deteriorating, I'm aging...but sometimes I play really well": Embodied identity paradoxes in a women's recreational soccer group. Presented at the *Western Communication Association Conference*, Seattle, WA.
- Rizzo Weller, M.** (October 2018). "I guess they're all real moms then": Constructing motherhood through language in the adoption community. Presented at *Ohio Communication Association Conference*, Orrville, OH.
- Rizzo Weller, M.** (September 2018). "Someone had to hold me": Searching for identity in adoption search and reunion. Presented at *Communication in the Americas Symposium III*, Athens, OH.
- Rizzo Weller, M.** (April 2018). Tweens and teens: Media richness theory and disclosure with parents using CMC. Presented at the *Eastern Communication Association Conference*, Pittsburgh, PA.
- Tikkanen, S. & **Rizzo Weller, M.** (April 2018). The impact of structure on response decisions for recipients of distressing disclosures: The bystander effect. Presented at the *Eastern Communication Association Conference*, Pittsburgh, PA.
- Blau, N. & **Rizzo Weller, M.** (April 2018). "'Facebooking' our political legacy: The relationship between political disclosure on social media and conflict management style. Presented at the *Eastern Communication Association Conference*, Pittsburgh, PA.
- Rizzo Weller, M.** (November 2017). Guarding the family gate: Conditional membership into birth families after adoption reunions. Presented in the Scholar to Scholar session at the *National Communication Association Conference*, Dallas, TX.
- Rizzo Weller, M.** (March 2017). College students' perceptions of microaggressions and various responses on Yik Yak. Presented at the *Eastern Communication Association Conference*, Boston, MA.
- Rizzo Weller, M.** (March 2017). Adoption reunions and uncertainty. Presented at the *Eastern Communication Association Conference*, Boston, MA.
- Blau, N. & **Weller, M.** (October 2014). Developing and executing a bullying awareness day in middle school. Presented at the *Ohio Communication Association Conference*, Columbus, OH.
- Crawford, M., **Weller, M.**, Schindler, S., & Hagman, J. (October 2013). Adobe Connect: A keystone to communication in eLearning. Presented at the *Ohio Communication Association Conference*, Marietta, OH.

Weller, M. & Schindler, S. (April 2013). The evolution of US Airways' crisis communication plan: Using case studies to bring learning to life. Presented at *AURCO Conference*, Lancaster, OH.

Weller, M. & Schindler, S. (April 2013). The evolution of US Airways' crisis communication plan. Presented at the *Ohio University Student Expo*, Athens, OH.

Weller, M. & Miller, J. (February 2013). Get connected. Presented at the *Ohio Educational & Technology Conference*, Columbus, OH.

Invited Panels, Lectures, and Teaching

Rizzo Weller, M. (April 2019). Survey interviewing. Guest teaching in *Principles and Techniques in Interviewing*. Athens, OH.

Rizzo Weller, M. (March 2019). Providing leadership in groups. Guest teaching in *Techniques of Group Discussion*. Athens, OH.

Rizzo Weller, M. (October 2018). Informative interviewing. Guest teaching in *Principles and Techniques in Interviewing*. Athens, OH

Rizzo Weller, M. (September 2018). The cultural metaphor. Guest teaching in *Introduction to Organizational Communication*. Athens, OH.

Rizzo Weller, M. (September 2018). Constitutive approaches. Guest teaching in *Introduction to Organizational Communication*. Athens, OH.

Rizzo Weller, M. (August 2018). Life as a doc student - graduate student mental wellbeing: Experiences and strategies to maintain mental wellbeing. *Teacher Training Academy* conducted in Athens, OH.

Rizzo Weller, M. (August 2017). Life as a doc student - graduate student mental wellbeing: Experiences and strategies to maintain mental wellbeing. *Teacher Training Academy* conducted in Athens, OH.

Rizzo Weller, M. (March 2017). Online social support. Guest teaching in *Communication and New Technology*. Athens, OH.

Rizzo Weller, M. (March 2017). Online social movements. Guest teaching in *Communication and New Technology*. Athens, OH.

Rizzo Weller, M. (February 2017). How anonymity impacts willingness to respond on Yik Yak. Presented at *Winter Colloquium Series*, Scripps Hall, Athens, OH.

Awarded Grants

Original Work Grant. (Spring 2018). Awarded to support the research and creative activity conducted by graduate students at Ohio University.

Service Activities

Membership in Professional Associations

National Communication Association. (Fall 2016 – present)

Eastern Communication Association. (Fall 2015 – present)

Ohio Communication Association. (Fall 2013 – present)

Service to the Discipline

Reviewer. (2022). *Journal of Family Communication*; Setting the Agenda feature

Reviewer. (2021). *Journal of Family Communication*; Special Edition: Communication and Adoption

Reviewer. (2021). *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*.

Reviewer. (July 2021). *Ohio Communication Association Conference*, Youngstown, OH.

Panel Chair. (April 2020). An interview with women interpersonal communication scholars. *Eastern Communication Association Conference*, Baltimore, MD. [Conference canceled]

Panel Chair. (April 2020). Influencing and innovating: Communication and the power of social media. *Eastern Communication Association Conference*, Baltimore, MD. [Conference canceled]

Secretary of the Nonverbal Communication Division. (2019-2021). *Eastern Communication Association*.

Reviewer. (November 2019). Applied communication division of the *Eastern Communication Association*

Reviewer. (June 2019). *Ohio Communication Association Conference*, Xavier, OH.

Panel Chair. (April 2019). Nonverbal communication and different experiences in the classroom. *Eastern Communication Association Conference*, Providence, RI.

Panel Chair. (April 2019). Overcoming interpersonal communication barriers via relational maintenance, disclosure, and social support. *Eastern Communication Association Conference*, Providence, RI.

Reviewer. (December 2018 - 2019). Undergraduate scholar conference for the *Eastern Communication Association*.

Reviewer. (November 2018). *Adoption Quarterly*.

Reviewer. (2018 – present). Nonverbal communication division of the *Eastern Communication Association*.

Reviewer. (2017 – present). Interpersonal division of the *Eastern Communication Association*.

Service to the Department/School

Search Committee Member (February – May 2023). *Dean Position for the Honors Tutorial College*. Ohio University. Athens, OH.

OHP in RHE Committee Member (October 2022 – present). *Recruiting Regional Campus Students into the OHP*. Ohio University. Athens, OH.

Search Committee Member (July 2022). *Assistant Professor Position for the Ohio Honors Program*. Ohio University. Athens, OH.

Committee Member. (April 2021). *James R. Turner Prize in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Committee*, Wooster, OH.

Assistant Planner. (July-October 2017). *Organizational Communication Mini Conference*, Athens, OH.

Panel Chair. (September 2015). "Educational challenges in communication across the Americas" at the *Communication and Social Change Symposium*, Athens, OH.