

Associate Researcher for the Center to Counter Human Trafficking

Dr. Isaac Kimmel is the Associate Researcher for the Center to Counter Human Trafficking at Texas A&M International University. He holds an M.A. in Sociology from the University of Notre Dame, where he will complete his Ph.D. in Sociology in 2025, and a B.A. in Philosophy (Magna cum laude, University Scholar) from the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. Kimmel maintains affiliations with the deNicola Center for Ethics and Culture (dCEC) at Notre Dame and the Center for Information, Technology, and Public Life (CITAP) at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill. Kimmel’s research interests include cultural and media sociology, the framing of social problems in political communication, and the exchange of knowledge and meaning across institutional boundaries.

With the Center to Counter Human Trafficking, Kimmel analyzes the institutional cultures, practices, and resources of South Texas practitioners in multiple fields, in order to identify and address the gaps and misconceptions that impede interdisciplinary response to human trafficking. Kimmel’s prior administrative experience as the Center to Counter Human Trafficking’s inaugural Program Manager shapes his survivor-centered, contextually sensitive approach to organizational problem-solving. Kimmel’s doctoral study, “Needs To Be Done: Congressional Campaign Messaging and Critical Information Needs”, assesses congressional candidates' social media content during the 2020 election cycle as a source of critical information about COVID-19 for their constituents.

Kimmel argues that the symbolic properties of coronavirus countermeasures, scientific institutions, and places all informed how politicians narrated the pandemic and what information they included or left out. In both his research at Notre Dame and his work at TAMIU, Kimmel demonstrates his passion for sifting through high-level discourse to pinpoint and address human needs from the ground up.

