

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

SAWSSAN AHMED, Ph.D.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Wayne University, Ph.D 2006

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RESEARCH AREA

Research topics include sociocultural factors and health in Arab American adolescent and young adults; immigration status and psychological treatment outcomes in adolescents; and acculturative stress and Iraqi refugee mental health.

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

- Sociocultural factors and health in Arab American adolescent and young adults
- Immigration status and psychological treatment outcome adolescents
- Acculturative stress and Iraqi refugee mental health
- Culture and screening for anxiety and depression in pregnant Arabic speaking women

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

- Literature searches, data entry, data interpretation and writing and presenting results.
- Independent data analyses and research writing skills and presenting at regional and national conferences are also encouraged.
- Project management

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

- Literature searches, data entry, data interpretation and writing
- A one-year commitment of 8-10 hours a week.
- Interest in pursuing graduate school.
- Writing and organizational skills.
- Previous research experience
- Self-motivated

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

LUCIA ALCALÁ, Ph.D.

PROFESSOR

UC Santa Cruz, P.h.D 2014

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RESEARCH AREA

Developmental Psychology, Cultural Psychology, Children's Thinking

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

CULTURAL ASPECTS OF CHILDREN'S COGNITIVE AND PROSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Prosocial development, initiative, & social responsibility
- Collaborative practices and
- Executive Function skills in indigenous children
- STEM learning, informal science learning

I am interested in exploring how cultural values and expectations impact children's cognitive development. My cross-cultural research has explored this topic across different communities including, Yucatec Maya and P'urhépecha indigenous groups in Mexico and Mexican-immigrants and European American children in California.

**OTHER TOPICS OF INTEREST:*

- Developmental consequences of globalization and
- Children's rights laws and neoliberal policies
- Patterns of internal and external migration of indigenous families (ITESO, Guadalajara)
- CSUF students' experiences with Service-Learning courses and their development of civic engagement

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

- Library research
- Transcription of interviews in English and Spanish
- Data coding (interview and video data)
- Data analyses
- Help with planning future studies
- Pilot testing & application of cognitive tests

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

- Bilingual (Spanish) preferred but not required
- Sophomore standing or higher
- 2+ semester commitment
- Statistical knowledge preferred but not required
- Interested in developmental and/or cultural psychology

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

KRISTIN BEALS, Ph.D.

PROFESSOR

UCLA, Ph.D. 2003

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RESEARCH AREA

Social Psychology, Queer Psychology, Health and well-being. Stigma

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

Our research lab centers the queer experience. We study the lives and relationships of LGBTQIA+ individuals. Most recently we have been studying the experience of “coming out” later in life. We often use social psychological theories and principles from health psychology to inform our work.

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

Always looking for students who want to commit to being involved in all aspects of the research process: study design, participant recruitment, study completion, analysis, and presentation of results.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

Interest in topic. Plan to continue to graduate school. Good grades. Prefer that you have had Social Psychology and Psychology of LGBT experiences..

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

ELLA BEN-HAGAI, Ph.D.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

UC Santa Cruz

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RESEARCH AREA

Cultural, ethnic, and racial identities, political conflict, and activism. LGBTQ+ identity

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

My lab is currently conducting a large study to understand support for the Black Lives Matter movement across different ethnic groups (Latinx, Muslim, Jewish, Asian). I also lead a small research group that focuses on the question of how LGBTQ+ identity changed in the last decades? To answer this question, me and a group of graduate and undergraduate students are analyzing interviews with transgender, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and queer people of different generations (Millennials compared to Baby Boomers) and racial backgrounds.

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

- data management and analysis of data sets
- literature searches
- report writing
- develop and carry out individual or group research project
- write journal reflections and critiques of assigned articles (weekly)
- attend 1-hour weekly lab meetings to discuss assigned article and research project progress

These responsibilities will be assigned based on the immediate needs of the lab and RA interests.

All RAs are required to devote a minimum of one full calendar year to working in the lab

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

General professional conduct (e.g., responsible completion of tasks, punctuality, ability to work effectively as a team); ability to conduct a comprehensive literature review; strong academic writing skills;

All interested students should contact Dr. Ben Hagai to schedule a short interview

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

MELINDA BLACKMAN, Ph.D.

PROFESSOR

UC RIVERSIDE, Ph.D. 1996

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RESEARCH AREA

Industrial / Organizational Psychology & Applied Social
Psychology (Sports and Health Psychology)

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

- Personnel selection interviews and the accuracy of personality judgments in organizational and professional sports settings.
- Counterproductive behavior in the workplace
- Diet Adherence strategies, nutrition psychology.

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

- Collect data
- Enter data into SPSS
- Help analyze the data

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

- Completion of Psych. 101, 201, 202, 300 & 391 with a final grade of "B" or better.
- Strong SPSS skills.
- Flexible schedule

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

IRIS BLANDON-GITLIN, Ph.D.

PROFESSOR

CLAREMONT GRADUATE UNIVERSITY, Ph.D. 2004

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RESEARCH AREA

Memory, Deception, Confessions in the Legal System

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

The research in my lab is generally focused on understanding the social-cognitive factors that influence how people process and remember faces, events, and evidence. My research examines the following broad questions:

- (1) What are the processes involved in creating true and false memories of events, and what characteristics differentiate them?
- (2) Are there valid tools to distinguish between true and false accounts of events?
- (3) How observers (e.g., jurors) perceive and evaluate true or false evidence elicited with certain tactics? and relatedly?
- (4) What psychological factors influence memory for faces? See my publications and read relevant articles before contacting me.

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

RUSS ESPINOZA, Ph.D., MFT
PROFESSOR

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA, Ph.D 2005

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RESEARCH AREA

Psychology and Law - Prejudice in the legal system, juror decision making, and socio-demographic influences in the U.S. criminal court system.

How does Aversive Prejudice (contemporary prejudice) explain contemporary societal views on psychology, politics and the legal system.

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

- We are examining how excessive force by police is perceived by jurors when race and socioeconomic status of victims are varied.
- The team is also examining how mental illness, race of defendant, and gun control views of jurors influence juridic decisions.
- Lastly, we are examining how the death penalty is viewed by society and prospective jurors, and if this is demonstrated inprejudicial decision making.

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

To contribute to all aspects of research and research design including conception of experiments, literature searches, running of participants, data entry, data interpretation, and writing and presenting of results at conferences

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

A one-year commitment to the research team, the ability to work autonomously, responsibly, and a jovial outlook! Also, the ability to play a musical instrument and the love of rock and roll is always a plus.

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

JAMES GARCIA, Ph.D.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS, Ph.D. 2017

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RESEARCH AREA

Health Equity/Disparities in Racial/Ethnic and LGBTQ People of Color (PoC) Communities.

- Intersectional discrimination and health in LGBTQ PoC
- Heart and Brain health in Racial/Ethnic and LGBTQ PoC
- Health psychology, Neurorehabilitation/Rehabilitation Neuropsychology
- Students can learn more about my research here: <https://psychology.fullerton.edu/psi/>

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

- Experimental manipulation of psychosocial stress and measuring cardiovascular reactions of LGBTQ People of Color
- Documenting the magnitude of associations between intersectional discrimination and varied health outcomes for LGBTQ People of Color
- Social determinants of heart and brain health for Racial/Ethnic communities and LGBTQ People of Color
- Racial/ethnic differences in functional outcomes for patients admitted to inpatient medical rehabilitation facilities.

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

- Help with recruiting participants for lab and survey-based studies
- Assist with creating materials (e.g., flyers, protocols) for research studies
- Support with data collection and data entry
- Must be comfortable and/or willing to be trained in placing electrodes on the human thorax body area.
- Must be comfortable and/or have prior experience working with LGBTQ+ persons in a research setting
- Attend lab meetings regularly
- Help with presenting research findings through mock presentations and at research conferences
- Other research-related tasks as delegated by Director of PSI Lab (Dr. García)
- Must respond to general emails within 24 hours; participant-related emails must be responded to immediately

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

- 4 hours per week, could be Wed, Fri, and/or Sat.
- Must be a Psychology Major
- Have taken PSYC 202, 300 and passed with a B+ or better
- **If graduate student:** must have taken at least one graduate-level research method or statistics course and passed with a B+ or better.
- Overall GPA of 2.95 and above
- 2+ semester commitment (so 1 academic year)
- Interest in graduate school (any area, including the health professions)
- Must email Dr. García to interview

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

DAVID GERKENS, Ph.D.

PROFESSOR

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY, Ph.D. 2017

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RESEARCH AREA

Memory, Meta-Memory, Creative Cognition, Predictive Processing
Cognition in general and Positive Psychology

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

Most of my research revolves around memory accessibility. In some experiments my research team and I perform manipulations that make a memory of an experienced stimulus less accessible (i.e., we block memory) and in other cases we try to make memory of non-experienced stimuli accessible (i.e., false memories). We also explore how different manipulations (e.g., spatial cueing) and individual differences (e.g., self-representation) influence the accessibility of memories for different types of stimuli (e.g., negative or positive) or cognitive processing biases. Presently we are testing the predictive processing hypothesis using a visual working memory change detection paradigm. I have also recently begun exploring research in the area of positive psychology. There are a number of interventions that influence well-being. There is also evidence that one's mood state, well-being, and degree of happiness affects one's cognitive processes. Presently graduate students working with me are looking at gratitude and mindfulness. The projects above are ones for which I have ongoing research programs, however, if you have interest in some other topic within cognitive psychology (esp. false memories, source memory, metacognition, or creativity) contact me to discuss other possible projects

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

Reading and discussion of research articles, collecting data from participants, coding and entering data, creation of experiment materials (possibly PsychoPy, PowerPoint, or web-based), co-authoring of poster presentation from research project, and when possible, presenting the research at a professional conference like WPA.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

Interest in cognitive psychology. Having taken and done well in one of my classes STRONGLY encouraged. Familiarity with MS Excel, SPSS, and PowerPoint a plus. Knowledge of PsychoPy, HTML, JavaScript, or Perl would be fantastic. Commitment to work on the project both fall and spring terms – research projects take time!

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

AARON GOETZ, Ph.D.

PROFESSOR

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY, Ph.D. 2007

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RESEARCH AREA

Evolutionary Psychology

- Intrasexual Competition (male-male competition and female-female competition)
- Sexual Coercion (men's perpetration and women's avoidance)
- Sexual Psychology (e.g., female sexual response)

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

- Perceptions of Formidability (what makes someone look tough?)
- Gun Ownership (what factors predict gun ownership?)
- Testing the Shadow of Sexual Assault Hypothesis (women's fear of SA)
- Women's Mating Strategies

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

- Assistance with project development (e.g., methodology), possible data collection and entry; discussing research articles
- Opportunities for coauthorship exist

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

- No research experience is required
- Research assistants must have some sort of formal exposure to adaptationist perspectives on behavior. This could be Dr. Goetz's Evolutionary Psychology course, Dr. Lukaszewski's courses, or even courses in evolutionary anthropology by Dr. Pillsworth, Dr. Patton, or Brandon Rose.

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY
2025

ASYA HARRISON, Ph.D.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, Ph.D. 2021

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RESEARCH AREA

Her research explores three main questions; a) how do parents in the U.S. socialize their children about the vexing role of race, ethnicity, and social hierarchy, b) what is the bidirectional nature of racial socialization between parent and child, and c) how do the race-related messages Black youth receive/produce influence their racial identity development and perceptions of structural inequality? Her current research projects examine the racial socialization practices of Black and White parents (non-comparatively). One project is related to exploring developmental changes in African American parents' racial socialization practices and messages. The second uses qualitative data to develop a measure to access White parents' ethnic socialization messages.

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

AARON LUKASZEWSKI, Ph.D.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

UC SANTA BARBARA, Ph.D. 2010

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RESEARCH AREA

Research areas include status hierarchy; leadership; group cooperation; personality variation; social comparison; social valuation; partner preferences; anthropometrics

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

Determinants of self-evaluation & social partner evaluation

- Psychology of personality trait perception
- Psychology of social comparison
- Niche diversity as a driver of personality structure
- Self-interested underpinnings of moral judgment
- Cross-cultural studies of above topics

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

VARIABLE ACROSS PROJECTS

Example duties include:

- Implementing data collection protocols
- Data collation and organization
- Data analysis
- Literature review
- Being part of a larger community of evolutionary behavioral scientists here at CSUF

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

Interest in rigorous training in evolutionary psychology (as exemplified by desire to attend lab reading groups, etc.)

- Conscientious and dutiful
- Success in research design and statistics courses (not required)
- Desire to attend graduate school in evolutionary studies or psychology (not required)
- Some previous coursework providing exposure to evolutionary behavioral science (not required)

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

WILLIAM MARELICH, Ph.D.

PROFESSOR

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RESEARCH AREA

Health Psychology, Quantitative Methods, Sports Psychology

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

- Scale Development of a Courage Measure
- Sport Psychology and Baseball Mythology
- Health decision-making

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

- Data Analysis (SEM and Multilevel Modeling, GEE Analyses, Segmentation)
- Knowledge of qualitative data coding
- HTML and Website manipulation

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

- SPSS, SAS, R
- Advance statistics background
 - Item writing experience
 - Qualitative experience

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

LISA MORI, Ph.D.

PROFESSOR

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA, Ph.D. 1987

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RESEARCH AREA

Clinical psychology: college students' attitudes towards and beliefs about mental illness, psychological and psychiatric treatments, and mental health professionals. Differences across gender, ethnicity/race, psych history, etc., investigated. Factors such as ethnicity, cultural values, and gender orientation that may influence perceptions of collegiate sexual assault, victim blame, and judgments of incident report-ability, punishment, and perceived physical and psychological aftereffects of sexual assault explored.

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

- Effects of type of mental illness, therapy modality, and client characteristics such as cultural values on judgments of mental illness, treatment necessity and openness to seeking professional help, therapist competence, and treatment efficacy of ethnically diverse college participants.
- Situational and sociocultural factors influencing opinions of sexual assault, victim blame, and incident reportability within dating/social acquaintance contexts.

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

- Require two semester (fall and spring) commitment; estimated time commitment of 10 hours/week; must be able to attend weekly lab meetings. (My lab interviews prospective applicants in the spring semester for the next academic year: fall and spring semesters. If interested, email drmorislab@gmail.com.)
- Interested and enthusiastic about research; hardworking; responsible; reliable; motivated; able to take initiative; good oral and written communication and interpersonal skills; team player; emotionally stable; honest; high level of integrity.
- Achievement oriented; able to work independently when necessary; good common sense and sense of humor; able to ask for clarification or direction when needed.
- Knowledge of statistics and SPSS for Windows, Qualtrics, HTML, other technical skills desirable.
- Completed Introduction to Statistics, Research Methods, (preferred) PSYC 300 (Intermediate Research & Statistics), and (preferred) PSYC 341 (Abnormal Psych) with a B or better. Completion of Advanced Statistics a plus.

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

ANGELA-MINHTU NGUYEN, Ph.D

PROFESSOR

UC RIVERSIDE, Ph.D. 2010

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RESEARCH AREA

Through research, I aim to center marginalized voices and empower scholars from minoritized backgrounds. I take an interdisciplinary, anti-colonial, critical race, intersectional, and assets-based perspective to research, and I conduct research in pursuit of social justice, equity, and solidarity. I aim to support and nurture research collaborators as we seek ways to disrupt the status quo in academic and research spaces. Currently, I am investigating the role of race/racism, culture and biculturalism, gender/sexism, sexuality/heterosexism, and SES/classism in Southeast Asian American first-generation college students' higher education experiences

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

- Higher education experiences of Southeast Asian Americans (those of Viet, Khmer, Lao, Hmong descent)
- Coalition-building among people of color (intra-minority solidarity) and refugees (refugeetude)
- Intersectionality: identity negotiation and management of Asian American women and LGBTQ+ folx of color

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

- Attend weekly lab meetings
- Conduct literature reviews
- Collect data
- Analyze data

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

- Cumulative and psychology GPAs of 3.0 or higher
- Completion of or enrollment in PSYC 101, 201, and 202
- Able to commit for 6 hours/week for 2 consecutive semesters
- Sense of responsibility, attention to detail
- Ability to work well with others
- Desire to learn and openness to feedback

ADDITIONAL DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR MASTER'S STUDENTS:

- Ability to commit to 20 hours/week
- Interest in pursuing a research career and/or PhD
- Background in Ethnic Studies (courses, minor, or major)

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

YUKO OKADO, Ph.D.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY, Ph.D. 2012

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RESEARCH AREA

Student persistence and mentoring in STEM / Psychology
Underserved students' academic experiences and needs
College student mental health and adaptation to COVID-19
Prevention of stress-related illnesses
Risk and resilience
Pediatric psychology / psycho-oncology

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

- STEM outreach through virtual agent-based mentoring
- Career exploration in Psychology using virtual agents
- Psychosocial and academic adjustment to COVID-19

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

- Qualitative data coding
- Data management
- User testing for online surveys, portals, and virtual agents
- Social media / PR outreach
- Study administration (e.g., recruiting and running participants, checking data)
- Literature / online search
- Lab-related administrative tasks

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

- Strong interest in going to graduate school or seeking research-related employment in the future
- Excellent communication skills
 - Conscientious, proactive, detail-oriented, and well-organized
 - Minimum 3.20 Psychology GPA
 - Available to take 3 credit units (~8-9hrs / week commitment)
 - Plan to be part of the lab for 2+ semesters
- See more information at Dr. Okado's lab at: <https://sites.google.com/fullerton.edu/okadolab/home>

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

JESSIE PEISSIG, Ph.D.

DEPT. CHAIR/PROFESSOR

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA, Ph.D 2001

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RESEARCH AREA

Cognitive Psychology

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

I study visual perception. More specifically, I explore how humans and animals visually learn about their environment. In my current experiments I am studying how makeup and other changes affect the perception of facial attractiveness. I am also looking at whether female hormones are related to different characteristics of female attractiveness. We are collecting a database of faces that will help us test these theoretical hypotheses

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

- Run human participants in experiments.
- Assist with programming experiments and data analysis.
- Enter Data.
- Create experimental stimuli.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

- Some upper level psychology coursework, such as Learning and Memory, Cognitive Psychology, or Biopsychology, is helpful.
- Psychology GPA above a 2.75.

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

ADAM ROBERTS, Ph.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

UCLA, Ph.D 2025

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RESEARCH AREA

Biopsychology, learning and memory, synaptic plasticity, behavior

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

- Project 1: Investigating behavioral memory using larval zebrafish.
- Project 2: Using advanced microscopy and optogenetics to visualize memory formation and identify memory engrams.
- Project 3: Developing zebrafish models of autism spectrum disorder.

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

Working with larval zebrafish, collecting behavioral data, analysis of data, and preparing data for publication. Use of confocal microscopy to visualize memory formation and identify memory engrams.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

Basic laboratory skills, flexible schedule, and a basic understanding of the scientific method. Must be responsible and reliable.

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY
2025

CHRISTINE SCHER, Ph.D
PROFESSOR

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIV., UCSD, Ph.D. 2000

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RESEARCH AREA

Research focuses on cognitive and developmental risk/ maintenance factors in anxiety and depression. Especially interested in these factors following traumatic stress.

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

Mindfulness correlates of emotional distress among trauma survivors.

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

Self-motivated, with a strong interest in learning the research process from start to finish. Clear personal/ professional goals for developing research skills.

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY
2025

NANCY SEGAL, Ph.D.

PROFESSOR

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, Ph.D. 1982

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RESEARCH AREA

Twin studies, behavior genetics, evolutionary psychology, developmental psychology

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

Twin relationships, intelligence, personality, adoption, twins reared apart, twin families, and unrelated look-alikes

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

Data entry, data verification, literature search

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

SPSS, Mac expertise

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

ERIKO SELF, Ph.D.

PROFESSOR

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, Ph.D. 1993

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RESEARCH AREA

Aging Burden of caregivers of people with dementia
Secondary data analysis of publicly available data sets
I am also open to other topics of student's interest

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

- Find the factors (physical, social, emotional, etc.) that help to alleviate burden of caregivers of people with dementia
- Find the factors (behaviors and other attributes) that help to preserve cognitive functions into older age
- Find the factors (behaviors and other attributes) that help to preserve overall health among old people

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

- Attend weekly lab meeting
- Present assigned articles at the lab meeting and participate in discussion
- Learn the structure of large data sets and how to use them
- Construct a survey study to clarify the relationship between multiple variables
- Conduct appropriate data analysis
- Prepare conference presentations (posters) and journal manuscripts

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

- Excellent scientific writing skills
- Strong quantitative skills
- Responsible and punctual actions
- Students who want to go to graduate schools and/or healthcare schools such as medical, dental, and optometry school are welcome

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

SUSAN SY, Ph.D.

PROFESSOR

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RESEARCH AREA

Family and cultural contexts of children's educational experiences in elementary school

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

- We use a large nationally representative database (the Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey – Kindergarten Cohort; ECLS-K) to examine family influences on children's educational experiences in grades K-5. Students learn about the ECLS-K and choose a topic to research based on their interests and what is available in the dataset.

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

- Develop your own research proposal based on your specific interests, individually or in collaboration with other RAs
- Learn how to use a large national dataset
- Weekly Friday lab meetings (usually 10-11am); about half are in person and the others are via zoom - attendance is required
- Write discussion questions and keep journal reflections for assigned readings that we discuss during in person meetings
- Lead one lab meeting discussion on an article of your choice, toward the end of the semester
- Recommended, but not required: submit proposal to WPA conference (deadline is usually in December)

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

Required: strong statistical background; solid knowledge of SPSS, Word, and Excel; general professional conduct (e.g., responsible completion of tasks, punctuality, ability to work effectively as a team); ability to conduct a comprehensive literature review; strong academic writing skills; successful completion of PSYC 201, 202, and 300.

All interested students should contact Dr. Sy to schedule a short interview.

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

JENNIFER TREVITT, Ph.D.

PROFESSOR

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT, Ph.D. 2000

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RESEARCH AREA

Biopsychology, behavioral pharmacology, nutritional psychology, stress, exercise, anxiety, fibromyalgia, pain

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

THE EFFECTS OF FIBROMYALGIA ON PHYSICAL AND COGNITIVE FUNCTION

Project 1: Re-entry of data into a format to be used for longitudinal and cross-sectional analysis

Project 2: Examination of the impact of antidepressant medication on cognitive function in participants with fibromyalgia

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

- Data Entry
- Cataloging
- Cross-Referencing Medication Data

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

Basic laboratory skills, some science background, statistics, excellent writing skills, flexible schedule. Must be responsible & reliable.

FACULTY RESEARCH SUMMARY 2025

LAURA ZETTEL-WATSON, Ph.D.
PROFESSOR

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE, Ph.D. 2004

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RESEARCH AREA

Psychology & Aging

CURRENT RESEARCH TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION:

Social support networks of at-risk individuals as they age.

- individuals aging “alone” (i.e., no family nearby)
- individuals with Fibromyalgia and chronic pain

Gerotechnology

Specifically, I am interested in the roles that extended family members, friends, and acquaintances play in helping to maintain the psychological, emotional and functional well-being of these individuals as they age, and how technology can enhance social support.

SPECIFIC RESEARCH ASSISTANT DUTIES NEEDED:

- Library research
- Data entry/coding
- Data analysis

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:

- GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Junior standing or higher
- 2+ semester commitment
- Statistics knowledge
- Interest in aging!