UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES
Research Assistantship Directory (2018-2019 Academic Year)

Updated: 08/15/2018

Researcher
Stephen J. Aguilar
Assistant Professor of Education
aguilars@rossier.usc.edu
213-740-6864

Current Research Topics under Investigation
1) **Learning Analytics** - We use big data in education to understand, design, build, and evaluate technologies that support learning in various educational contexts.

2) **Visualizations** - Data driven educational insights are often communicated through visualizations. Our lab studies how visualizations can impact learning and motivation.

3) **Self-Regulated Learning** - We study various technologies that support—or interfere with—students’ study strategies and habits.

4) **Academic Motivation** - We examine the potential effects of educational technologies on students’ academic motivation.

Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
- Data collection and analysis
- Willingness to learn
- Any experience with coding (Python, R, etc.) is a plus, but **not** a requirement!
- Will be trained and supervised by graduate students

Opportunities to
- Be included as an author in future publications (subject to contribution)
- Learn the basics of quantitative data collection
- Be trained on using an eye-tracker

To learn more about my work, visit the Learning Analytics and Psychology in Education Lab (LAPeL) website: [http://lapel.tech](http://lapel.tech)

Office Location: 600B Waite Philips Hall
Office Hours: by appointment, email to schedule
Current Research Topics under Investigation
My lab investigates gene-environment interplay in human behavior. We are currently studying externalizing psychopathology, including aggression, antisocial behavior and substance use, although we also look at internalizing problems such as depression and anxiety. We have been studying these in a longitudinal twin study, which involves over 750 sets of MZ and DZ twin pairs who have been extensively assessed from ages 9-20 years old. Assessments include clinical interviews, surveys, psychophysiological recording, neuroimaging, and cortisol reactivity. We have also geocoded addresses for home and schools of the twins, and have linked these to air pollution databases, which enable us to study the effects of exposure on behavioral development. The USC Risk Factors for Antisocial Behavior (RFAB) study provides a rich source of data for investigating genetic and environmental influences in a wide range of behaviors across adolescence and emerging adulthood.

Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
Students who have strong quantitative and analytical skills and interest in gene-environment models of behavior.

Office Location: SGM 623
Office Hours: Wednesday 2-3:30 pm and by appointment. Email contact is best.

Current Research Topics under Investigation
The core mission of the Image Understanding Laboratory is to understand how we get mind from brain. Check out our lab website geon.usc.edu. The current major projects are:

1. How we are able to identify people on the basis of their face or voice. This research includes a study of the neural basis of congenital prosopagnosia.
2. Understanding how a scene or object can be recognized in a fraction of a second, even when we have never encountered that image previously.
3. An investigation of the neural basis of perceptual and cognitive pleasure, based on a gradient of opioid receptors in the same pathway by which image understanding is achieved.
4. Creativity, in the specific domain of humor generation, based on tracking remote associations in the brain.

We employ a variety of methodologies, such as neuroimaging, research with patients, cross-cultural investigations, and, in collaboration, single unit recording in and behavioral studies in monkeys and pigeons. We are planning to initiate studies in intracranial recordings of individual neurons in human patients undergoing surgery for epilepsy.

**Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**
We seek bright, motivated students, the earlier in their academic career, the better. A science background and technical skills, such as programming and math are a plus but we can train you. Taking my PSYC 440 or 540 course is also a plus. The ultimate goal is for the student to be able to make a contribution to the research that is sufficient for her or him to qualify as a coauthor on a peer-reviewed journal publication and/or a presentation at a world class conference. We don’t want drones. Do look at recent students and alumni from the lab to see how much they have accomplished.

**Office Location:** NHB 316  
**Office Hours:** By appointment. Thursday afternoons are best or call cell.

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**Researcher**  
Gerald C. Davison, Ph.D.  
Professor of Psychology and Gerontology  
gdaviso@usc.edu

**Current Research Topics under Investigation**  
Cognitive and emotional factors in video gaming. Assessment of cognition and affect involves both questionnaires and my think-aloud method, Articulated Thoughts in Simulated Situations.

**Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**  
Careful attention to detail, strong interest in cognitive factors in clinical psychology. Reliability. Coursework in intro and abnormal psychology.

**Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants**  
Commitment to the project

**Office Location:** SGM 902  
**Phone:** 213-740-2235

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**Researcher**  
Morteza Dehghani  
mdehghan@usc.edu
Contact: Katie Horton (Lab Manager); katelynh@usc.edu; (310) 947-1262

**Current Research Topics under Investigation**
Research assistants are encouraged to have passion for interdisciplinary work between computational science and social science to bridge multiple research topics and techniques in a new way. A few main and current focuses of the Computational and Social Science Lab include:

1. Human values and natural language processing in various medias using both human coders and computer programs.

2. How language is processed in the brain, utilizing natural language processing, machine learning, and fMRI in the USC Brain and Creativity Institute

3. Taking natural language processing techniques one step further to conduct more sophisticated studies.

More information can be found at our website: [http://dornsife.usc.edu/labs/cssl](http://dornsife.usc.edu/labs/cssl)

**Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**
- Detail oriented and interest in interdisciplinary work.

- Independent, diligent, hard-working.

- 3.3 GPA or higher.

- Able to commit to a minimum of 10 hours of research per week.

- A minimum commitment of one semester, but a preferred commitment of one year.

**Office Location:** SGM 607  
**Office Hours:** Flexible, by appointment

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**Researcher**  
Vita Droutman  
vdroutman@gmail.com  
(310) 382-4140

**Current Research Topics under Investigation**

I have number of different research interests, the following topics are the ones I am currently focus on:

1) Understanding risky adolescent decision making in social contexts and its neural bases.
2) Examining effects of Mindfulness meditation on risky tendencies in children, adolescents and young adults.

3) fMRI study on risky decision making by men who have sex with men.

**Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Students who are planning to apply to graduate school with an interest in Social or Developmental Psychology or Neuroscience. Interest in data collection and working with subjects, opportunity to learn fMRI technique.

**Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Detail oriented, self-motivated, able to commit 4-8 hrs a week.

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**Researcher**
Genevieve Dunton, Ph.D., MPH
dunton@usc.edu
**Web:** reach.usc.edu
**Phone:** (323) 442-8224

**Current Research Topics under Investigation**
Our mission is to understand the etiology of health behaviors related to obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease risk in children and adults, with a particular focus on physical activity and eating. Our projects use remote sensing and communication technologies such as smartphones, accelerometers, and GPS to better understand causes and correlates of health behaviors. During the fall of 2018, students will be involved in a variety of research projects to investigate physical activity and sedentary behaviors in young adults (ages 18-25 years) using wearable smartwatch technologies and smartphone applications. Projects will also involve opportunities to learn about clinical fitness assessment and neuroimaging methodologies.

Students will have the opportunity to gain hands-on research experience while working with faculty, staff, and students at the Keck School of Medicine Department of Preventive Medicine. Students may assist with a range of research activities including participant scheduling, recruitment, material preparation, equipment management, data collection, compliance calls, and data entry.

**Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**
Ability to travel to lab either by car or via USC shuttle to Soto office. Able to commit to a minimum of 5-6 hours per week.
**Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants**
Students who are highly motivated, detail-oriented, have strong interpersonal and communication skills and is willing to learn and work as an important member of a research team.

If you are interested, please email Christine Naya with a copy of your resume at (naya@usc.edu)

**Office Location:** Soto Street Building, 3rd floor, Room 302E  
**Office Hours:** By appointment

The Hierarchy, Networks and Technology Lab is looking for undergraduate Research Assistants (RAs)! The HiNT (Hierarchy, Networks and Technology) Lab is looking for undergraduate Research Assistants for the 2018-19 school year. This is great opportunity to gain valuable research skills, bolster your applications for graduate programs, and have the opportunity to develop your interests within the field.

**Researcher**
Nate Fast  
[https://www.nathanaelfast.com/](https://www.nathanaelfast.com/)

**Current Research Topics under Investigation**
We are an interdisciplinary research lab interested in the psychological determinants and consequences of hierarchy, networks, and technology. Click here to learn more. We read about, discuss, and conduct research on a wide range of topics, including power and status, judgment and decision making, cultural transmission, meaning, social networks, and the psychology of technology.

**Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**
We are looking for motivated, conscientious, and responsible undergraduate students with a GPA of 3.4 or higher. No previous research experiences necessary, but RAs are asked to give a minimum 1-year commitment for 8-10 hours / week. Some of these hours will need to be done in the lab and some can be completed from a personal computer.

Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants RAs  
Should be professional, detail-oriented, hardworking, and broadly interested in hierarchies, networks and/or technology.

If you are interested, please email a copy of your most recent CV to Liz Quinn at quinne@marshall.usc.edu. Deadline is 09/15/18 but early applicants are encouraged.
Current Research Topics under Investigation
Current studies examine the role of emotion in decision making, both intrapersonal perspective and with regard to how emotion displays impact the decisions of others in interdependent tasks. Much of this work uses advanced computer technology to simulate or measure aspects of human interpersonal behavior (e.g., simulating and measuring emotional expressions and gestures). We also explore the use of computer technology for the screening, diagnosis and treatment of mental health.

Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
GPA 3.3 or higher, two semester min 8hr / week commitment
Ability to travel to lab either by car or via USC shuttle.

Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants
Experience using SPSS, SAS or R statistical programs, computer programming experience a plus.
Specific knowledge of findings and theories in emotion research (esp. from social psychology perspective) and/or experience with peripheral psychophysiology are a plus.

Office Location:
Institute for Creative Technologies (ICT)
12015 Waterfront Drive
Playa Vista, CA 90094

Phone: (310) 574-5700

Researcher
Duke Han, Ph.D. ABPP-CN
Duke.Han@med.usc.edu
Web: https://www.hanresearchlab.com/
Phone: (626) 457-6629

Current Research Topics under Investigation
Our lab investigates decision making in older adults through the Finance, Cognition, and Health in Elders Study (FINCHES). Older adults are often faced with important decisions in financial and health matters, and these decisions often have significant consequences on independence and wellbeing in old age. We use a multifactorial approach that includes cognitive, behavioral economic, and magnetic resonance imaging techniques to understand factors associated with financial exploitation in non-demented older adults.
Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
- Able to commit to a minimum of 8 hours per week
- Minimum commitment of one semester
- Knowledge of Microsoft Office programs, especially Excel.
- Experience using statistical software such as SPSS or R is a plus.
- Ability to commute to Alhambra campus

Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants
- Independent, hardworking, with attention to detail
- Strong interest in cognitive psychology and/or neuropsychology
- Strong interest in interacting with older adult research participants
- Interest in applying to graduate school in psychology, neuroscience, etc.

Office Location: Department of Family Medicine, Alhambra Campus
Office Hours: Monday through Thursday, 9am-5:00pm

Researcher
Richard John
richardj@usc.edu
213-740-4011

Current Research Topics under Investigation
Risk Perception, Deterrence. Jury Decision Making

Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
Interest in judgment and decision making, risk analysis, decision analysis, legal decision making, or behavioral economics. You should be able to devote 4-8 hours per week to research.

Office Location: SGM 621
Office Hours: by appointment

Researchers (multiple faculty listed)
Adam Leventhal, Ph.D., Raina Pang, PhD, Matthew Kirkpatrick, PhD, Jessica Barrington-Trimis, PhD

Contact Email: Ana Hilleboe, Project Assistant. hilleboe@usc.edu
Web: https://heal.usc.edu/
Phone: 323-442-2598

USC-HEAL Research Studies on Smoking and Vaping Patterns and Cessation
Opportunities are available for bright, motivated, and curious students to gain hands-on human-subjects based research experience while working with faculty, staff, and students at the Keck School of Medicine Department of Preventive Medicine. Students should have strong organizational, listening and interpersonal skills.

**Current Research Topics under Investigation**

Ongoing studies under supervision of the USC-HEAL faculty include:

1. A placebo-controlled, double-blind clinical trial examining the effects of the hormone oxytocin on smoking urge.
2. A smoking cessation EMA study that examines the nature and mechanisms of a smoking romantic partner’s influence on an individual’s craving and smoking during attempted smoking cessation.
3. A qualitative study that involves interviewing young adults regarding their transitions between vaping and smoking.
4. A clinical trial that will investigate the efficacy of high doses of an antidepressant in aiding smokers with psychiatric symptoms to quit smoking.
5. A prospective cohort study to study patterns of vaping and smoking cannabis and nicotine products in young adults.

**Required Minimum Commitment**

- one 8-hour volunteer shift or two 4-hour volunteer shifts during normal business hours
- two semesters of commitment to the Student Research Assistant position
- attendance at weekly lab meetings at the Health Sciences Campus, Fridays 2:30-4pm

**Office Location:** CSC 271 (USC Health Sciences Campus)

**Office Hours:** Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm

To be considered for the position:

Complete an application at: [https://heal.usc.edu/undergraduate_assistantships.php](https://heal.usc.edu/undergraduate_assistantships.php)

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**Researcher**

Steven R. López, Ph.D.
Email: jaquelin@usc.edu*

*Please contact jaquelin@usc.edu regarding undergraduate research positions in the lab

**Lab webpage:** [https://dornsife.usc.edu/labs/culture-and-mental-health/](https://dornsife.usc.edu/labs/culture-and-mental-health/)

**Current Research Topics under Investigation**

The Culture and Mental Health Lab’s most current and largest project assesses whether a community education program can reduce the time it takes for people who develop serious mental illness to seek mental health care, specifically within San Fernando Valley’s Latino community.
Responsibilities and Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants

Responsibilities will include interview transcription, data entry, data organization, and administrative tasks for the La CLAve project. Volunteer Research Assistants will become familiar with psychological research methods and clinical psychology measures, as well as gain skills in audio transcription and data entry and management using SPSS. Opportunities to engage in individual mentored research are available given lab resources and student initiative.

We ask that RAs commit to 8-10 hours/week for a minimum of one semester. Hours will need to be completed during lab hours (8:30AM - 5PM, Monday through Friday). No prior research experience required. We seek responsible, motivated, and detail oriented students with an interest in research that addresses mental health care disparities. While not required, we would give preference to applicants with a high level of proficiency in Spanish.

Office Location: SGM 1001

Researcher
Susan Luczak
luczak@usc.edu
(213) 740-9192

Current Research Topics under Investigation
I have two projects students can become involved in that examine risk and protective factors for drinking and smoking: 1) a longitudinal family study in Mauritius now focused on adolescent and young adult drinking and smoking, and 2) using technology (iPhones, breath analyzers, transdermal alcohol monitors) to assess real-time alcohol consumption in college students.

Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
Highly motivated, reliable, and detail-oriented. Able to commit 8 hours per week.

Desired qualifications for Research Assistants
Knowledge of SPSS and Excel preferable. GPA 3.0 or higher.

If interested, please email Dr. Luczak with a copy of your resume and your unofficial transcript.

Office Location: SGM 826
Office Hours: By Appointment

Researcher
Gayla Margolin
margolin@usc.edu
(213) 740-2308
Current Research Topics under Investigation
In the Family Studies Project, we aim to identify factors that affect how young adults behave in close relationships—with dating partners, with friends, and even with their own children. We look particularly closely at the influences based on childhood experiences of aggression and adversity. To delve deeply into young adults' romantic relationships, we collect data on their physiological reactivity, compassion, and also capture behavioral samples of how dating partners talk with one another. If you are interested in becoming a research assistant, please read our webpage, submit a resume and fill out the form available on our website on the Prospective Students page: http://dornsife.usc.edu/labs/margolinfamilystudies/admission/

Specific qualifications for Research Assistants
Research assistants will be involved with processing physiological data as well as coding real-life discussion collected in either the lab or in couples’ homes. Research assistants should have 8 hours minimum per week (10 or more preferred) to work on the research. The ability to work as part of a team and attention to detail are essential.

Desired qualifications for Research Assistants
Desired qualifications include interest in and/or experience with learning about psychological methods such as physiological measurement and/or behavioral observation. GPA of 3.5 or higher is desired. If interested, please email Dr. Margolin with a copy of your resume and your transcript (unofficial is fine).

Phone Number: (213) 740-2308
Office Hours: By Appointment

Researcher
Mara Mather
mara.mather@usc.edu

Current Research Topics under Investigation
We use functional neuroimaging and behavioral methods to investigate how emotion influences memory and cognition. We also examine age and sex differences in these processes. For more information see: http://www.matherlab.com

Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
No previous research experience necessary but should be able to commit at least 12 hours per week (preferably doing blocks of 4-5 hours). If interested, contact the lab at least two to three weeks prior to the start of the semester.

Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants
Should be professional, enthusiastic, hardworking, committed, and interested in our areas of research. Have experience working with older adults. Software programming skills.
Contact: matherlab@usc.edu; please apply for a position here: https://goo.gl/forms/GJCjdRoXjgpHlmM2

Office Location:
USC Davis School of Gerontology
3715 McClintock Ave Room 341
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0191

Researcher
Beth Meyerowitz
meyerow@usc.edu
Phone: best to contact me by email

Current Research Topics under Investigation
I do research on post-traumatic stress among survivors of genocide. In the current project, we are learning about the challenges and rewards that face individuals who engage with post-genocide testimony as interviewers, indexers, researchers and students.

Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
Basic knowledge of and experience with SPSS
Completion of stats course with good grade
Willingness/interest in listening to and coding interviews about engaging with genocide testimony
Knowledge of and commitment to following IRB requirements for working with interview and questionnaire data about sensitive topics

Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants
Past research experience

Office Location: SGM 516
Office Hours: TBD

Researcher
Toby Mintz
tmintz@usc.edu

Current Research Topics under Investigation
The USC Language Development Lab investigates many aspects of language development in infants and children. We study how infants and toddlers learn what sequences of sounds are words in their language, what the words mean, and the syntax of their language that organizes words into sentences. We use a variety of approaches and populations, including laboratory
experiments in language processing with infants, toddlers, and adults, as well as computational modeling of learning mechanisms.

We are currently seeking one or two highly inquisitive and motivated undergraduate Research Assistants to contribute to our research efforts for our infant experiments.

**Beneficial Research Experience for RA’s**

- RAs assist in running experiments, including help with setup of equipment and software, creating experimental stimuli, analysis of data, and interacting with the parents and children while they are in the lab.
- RAs are also involved in all aspects of subject recruitment, including managing the subject database, and email/telephone scheduling.
- RAs attend biweekly lab meetings.
- RAs who are especially interested in ongoing participation in lab activities will have the opportunity to be trained in running the experiments themselves, and to carry out independent projects in the lab for course credit and/or as part of the USC Dornsife SURF and SOAR programs.

**Qualifications**

- Successful candidates should be comfortable interacting with parents and children, and should also work well in a team.
- Experience with the software we use in the lab will be highly valued. These include the R programming language, PRAAT, Microsoft Excel and Access. Experience with other programming languages is also a plus, but not required. General ease and facility with computers is essential.
- The ideal candidate would be majoring in Cognitive Science, Linguistics, or Psychology, and have an interest in the lab’s research topics.
- A time commitment of 5-10 hours a week for at least one semester is expected. This includes attendance in biweekly lab meetings.
- As we do considerable testing on Saturdays, availability during the day on Saturday will be an advantage.

**To Apply**

Interested individuals should email a CV and brief statement of interest to langdev@usc.edu, with the subject line "RA position", and should include a rough indication of their weekly availability. Applications will be considered until the positions are filled.

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**Researcher**

Daniel Nation, Ph.D.

danation@usc.edu

Faculty Profile: [https://dornsife.usc.edu/cf/psyc/psyc_faculty_display.cfm?person_id=1048163](https://dornsife.usc.edu/cf/psyc/psyc_faculty_display.cfm?person_id=1048163)

VaSC Lab Website: [http://dornsife.usc.edu/labs/vasc-lab](http://dornsife.usc.edu/labs/vasc-lab)

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**Current Research Topics under Investigation**
We study how aging of the vascular system may contribute to cognitive aging, mild cognitive impairment, and dementia. The goal of our research is to improve our understanding of age-related neurodegenerative disease and our ability to identify at risk individuals during the earliest stage of disease when preventative efforts may be most effective. Our current projects include:

- Characterization of circulating angiogenic and progenitor cell function in patients with age-related cognitive decline and mild cognitive impairment (MCI)
- Neuroimaging (MRI)-based biomarkers of age-related cerebrovascular dysfunction
- Development of neuropsychological measures sensitive to subtle cognitive changes in older adults
- Investigation of blood-based markers of vascular aging

**Responsibilities and Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Responsibilities will include a combination of the following: scoring neuropsychological assessments and coding questionnaires, data entry and organization, participant recruitment, assist with MRI scans, prepare for participant study visits, assist during blood draws and prepare plasma from human blood samples, assist in wet lab with cell culture and flow cytometry experiments, and other administrative tasks. There are also opportunities to work one-on-one with a graduate student mentor depending on lab needs and student initiative. Students should have a genuine interest in age-related cognitive disorders and dementia (including Alzheimer's disease and stroke/cerebrovascular disease), neuropsychological testing, brain imaging, or stem cell and molecular biology. Students majoring in Psychology, Human Biology, Neuroscience, Cognitive Science, Gerontology or other related majors are encouraged to apply.

We require a commitment of 8 hours/week for a minimum of two semesters (can include a combination of Spring, Summer and Fall, but we prefer a full academic year). Candidates must also be comfortable interacting with older adults and speaking with people over the phone.

**Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants**

- Highly detail-oriented and organized
- Ability to manage ongoing projects independently
- Proficiency in Excel and some experience with SPSS preferred; software programming skills a plus
- Comfortable handling human biological specimens (extensive safety training will be provided)
- Coursework in Intro to Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, Cognitive Neuroscience, Statistics, or Research Methods preferred
- Interest in pursuing graduate studies or a career in clinical research or related field

**Office Location:** SGM 1010  
**Phone:** (213) 740-4503
Office Hours: By appointment. E-mail contact is best. If you're interested in a position, you may also: Apply Online

Researcher
Daphna Oyserman
oyserman@usc.edu

Current Research Topics under Investigation

How do identities matter for judgment and motivation? We all belong to different groups and have social roles. How do these groups shape how we understand the world around us and motivate people to act in line with these groups?

What do people do when something feels effortful? Sometime people rise to a challenge, while other times they shy away. How does an experience of effort influence our actions and the way we think when we are working on a task? Is that a character trait or something easy to change?

How do we think about ourselves in the future? When we imagine our future selves, what does that look like and how does imagining our future selves affect how we act now?

What do we mean when we say something is due to culture or about culture? How does culture matter in the way we think and what we think about?

Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
We are looking for motivated psychology students who are interested in gaining research experience and enjoy collaborating with others and sharing their ideas. Our research assistants can gain experience with all aspects of conducting research in psychology. At the planning stage, they help develop and pretest materials for our studies; at the data collection stage, they run experiments in our labs, recruit participants on campus and sometimes collect data in other locations; at the data analysis stage, they help with data entry, statistical analysis, and the graphing of results; they also help with programming online surveys and laboratory experiments.

If you are interested in learning more about being a Research Assistant position with us please see our website: http://dornsife.usc.edu/mindandsociety/ra-opportunities/

Office Location: Mind & Society Center, Suite 205, VPD Building.
Office Hours: Please email ofisher@usc.edu for more information on RA positions.

Researcher
Stephen J. Read
read@usc.edu
Current Research Topics under Investigation
1. Neural network models of social behavior and social reasoning. We are constructing neural network models of human motivation and personality, social perception and impression formation, and decision-making.

2. We are looking at how cues in social situations can trigger the pursuit of goals in those situations.

3. We are examining how people use their self-knowledge to make personality judgements of other people.

4. Deep learning. We are studying how you can construct representations of social knowledge by analyzing millions of words of fiction.

5. Legal and everyday decision-making. We are conducting a series of studies on the role of emotion and motivation in various decision-making situations, including legal situations.

Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
For 3, NN modeling, programming or math background would be highly desirable

Phone Number: (213) 740-2291
Office: SGM 821

Researcher
Darby Saxbe
dsaxbe@usc.edu
Contact: Katie Horton; katelynh@usc.edu (Lab Manager); (310) 947-1262

Current Research Topics under Investigation
The NeuroEndocrinology of Social Ties (NEST) Laboratory research consists mainly of parenting and relationship stressors during pregnancy.

1. The Hormones Across the Transition to Childrearing (HATCH) Study explores the potential family dynamic of first-time parents from prenatal to postpartum events to relate psychological factors and hormonal levels.

2. The “Fathering the Brain” project explores the neurological stimulation in a father throughout the course of his partner’s pregnancy.

3. By looking at a broad range of samples (including saliva, blood, and hair), the NEST laboratory explores interrelated levels of cortisol, testosterone, oxytocin, and prolactin during the transition to parenthood.
Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
3.3 GPA or higher.

Interest in family psychological relationships.

Interest in biopsychology.

Willingness to learn how to code, use SPSS, and work independently.

Office Location: SGM 716 D
Office Hours: Flexible, by appointment

Researcher
David Schwartz
socialdevlab@gmail.com

Current Research Topics under Investigation
Adolescent School Adjustment Project: This study examines how adolescents cope with their peers to determine how various coping strategies impact adjustment over time.

Other Projects: We also have several other projects that look at various aspects of social relationships during childhood and adolescence. Topics include bullying, conformity and popularity, perceptions of social competence, etc.

RA Activities: Data collection, data entry, literature searches, participant recruitment, study design

Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
-Experience with SPSS, Excel
-GPA 3.5 or higher
-Two semester minimum; 6-8 hours per week
-Detail-oriented, reliable, motivated

Office Location: SGM 625
Office Hours: By appointment

Researcher
Gale M. Sinatra
gsinatra@rossier.usc.edu
702-303-4328
Current Research Topics under Investigation
1. public understanding of controversial issues in science
2. text and graphics used to communicate complex or controversial issues in science
3. science learning in K-12 and higher education
4. the psychology of science denial

Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
Data collection and analysis
Will be trained and supervised by graduate students

To learn more about our lab’s research see: http://motivatedchangelab.com

Office Location: 600C Waite Philips Hall
Office Hours: by appointment, but in most days

Researcher
Norbert Schwarz
norberts@usc.edu

Current Research Topics under Investigation
What makes life meaningful? How do people decide whether their life is meaningful? How might culture, religion, and our own decisions influence our well-being?
How do people come to believe things are true? Why do people believe weird things? And how does misinformation stick? We examine the variables that bias people to think things are true and why false information often takes hold.
What is the role of feelings in all of this? How do moods, emotions, and bodily sensations influence our thoughts?

Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
We are looking for motivated psychology students who are interested in gaining research experience and enjoy collaborating with others and sharing their ideas.
Our research assistants can gain experience with all aspects of conducting research in psychology. At the planning stage, they help develop and pretest materials for our studies; at the data collection stage, they run experiments in our labs, recruit participants on campus and sometimes collect data in other locations; at the data analysis stage, they help with data entry, statistical analysis, and the graphing of results; they also help with programming online surveys and laboratory experiments.

If you are interested in learning more about being a Research Assistant position with us please see our website: http://dornsife.usc.edu/mindandsociety/ra-opportunities/

Office Location: Mind & Society Center, Suite 205, VPD Building.
Office Hours: Please email ofisher@usc.edu for more information on RA positions.
Current Research Topics under Investigation
We are a neuroimaging research group focused on studying the development of the human brain. Our current studies, Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) and Prenatal Alcohol and SIDS and Stillbirth (PASS), aim to collect sMRI, fMRI, and DTI data along with measures of participants’ cognitive ability, environment, behavior, and prenatal exposures to get a better picture of typical vs atypical development of the brain.

Depending on a candidate’s experience and the needs of the study, RA duties may include:

1. Participate in collection of data (conducting interviews, tests),
2. Interact with parents (interviews, follow-up calls),
3. Data Entry,
4. Analysis of data (produce summary tables, graphs, neuroimage processing)

Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
GPA 3.3 or higher. At least an 8-10 hr/week commitment and reliable transportation to the CHLA campus. Enthusiasm to work with children and families from diverse backgrounds.

Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants
Applicants should be independent and motivated. Ability to commit to flex hours preferred (weekend/holiday/evening). Spanish-speaking a plus (subject to language test). No research experience necessary. Knowledge of scripting languages in Excel, R, or bash a bonus if interested in data analysis but not required.

Office Location:
Children’s Hospital Los Angeles
Smith Research Tower
4650 Sunset Blvd. #130
Los Angeles, CA 90027
Current Research Topics under Investigation
My lab will be working on several projects: One is the monitoring and modeling of family eating behaviors and dynamics, using mobile health technologies in the lab and in the home. The second is using virtual humans on mobile technologies to help youth and young adults in several areas, including dealing with depression and a suite of virtual humans we hope to develop for survivors of childhood cancers. We are also working with Scripps on the new Precision Medicine Initiative. Tasks will include in-lab and in-field testing of technology, recruitment, literature reviews, and team meeting.

Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
Students should be reliable and enjoy individual as well as collaborative tasks. There are several opportunities for extended involvement in lab projects. We therefore require a minimum of one full semester commitment (prefer two semesters) with at least 6-8 hours free per week for lab participation.

Office Location: VPD 405
Office Hours: By appointment

The Culture, Diversity and Psychophysiology Lab (CDP Lab) is looking for Research Assistants (RAs) for the Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 semester!

The CDP Lab is looking for motivated, conscientious, and responsible undergraduate Research Assistants for the 2018-19 academic year. This is a great opportunity to gain valuable research experience, bolster your applications for graduate programs, and have the opportunity to develop your interests within the field.

Researcher
Sarah Townsend
https://www.marshall.usc.edu/personnel/sarah-townsend

Current Research Topics under Investigation
The CDP Lab specializes in research on issues surrounding social class, race/ethnicity and gender. Click here to learn more.
Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
RAs will be responsible for running participants through social psychological experiments using self-report and psychophysiological methodologies. We are looking for RAs with a 3.3 GPA or higher, who are detail-oriented, hardworking and are broadly interested in culture, diversity and/or psychophysiology.
If you are interested, please email Liz Quinn at quinne@usc.edu for an application.
Dr. Wakslak is looking for motivated, conscientious, and responsible undergraduate Research Assistants for the 2018-19 academic year. This is a great opportunity to gain valuable research experience, bolster your applications for graduate programs, and have the opportunity to develop your interests within the field!

Researcher
Cheryl Wakslak
https://www.marshall.usc.edu/personnel/cheryl-wakslak

Current Research Topics under Investigation
Dr. Wakslak’s research focuses on basic questions of cognition and interpersonal connection, establishing the way that people use different styles of thinking to help them connect with those closer to them and those farther away. In much of this work she explores the role of abstraction in facilitating connections across distance. She uses these insights to look at a range of organizationally relevant outcomes, including communication, learning, leadership, venture-capital investment, and decision-making. Her findings have been published in numerous scholarly outlets, including top journals in management, marketing, and psychology.

Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
RAs will be responsible for running participants through social psychological experiments using self-report and psychophysiological methodologies. You may also be involved in field studies conducted during entrepreneurship pitch competitions and in coding archival video data of such pitch contests. We are looking for RAs with a 3.4 GPA or higher, who are detail-oriented, hardworking and are broadly interested in social distance and language abstraction. If you are interested, please email Liz Quinn at quinne@marshall.usc.edu for an application.

Researcher
Scott Wiltermuth
wiltermu@usc.edu
703-304-3075

Current Research Topics under Investigation
The IDEA (Interpersonal Dynamics and Ethical Applications) Lab researches how socio-environmental factors affect people’s reactions to unethical behavior and their likelihood of behaving unethically themselves. We also research how interpersonal dynamics, such as synchrony and dominance, affect people’s willingness to cooperate with others.

Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
GPA 3.3 or higher. No previous research experiences necessary, but RAs are asked to give a minimum 1-year commitment with at least 5 hours per week free to conduct research activities.

Office Location: Hoffman Hall, 405
Office Hours: By appointment

Researcher
Dr. Wendy Wood
wendy.wood@usc.edu

Current Research Topics under Investigation
Why do people continue to perform bad habits even when they don’t want to? How can good habits be used to meet important life goals? What are ways to change unwanted habits? Topics of interest: social media habits, eating habits, exercise habits
http://dornsife.usc.edu/wendywood/research-articles/

Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
Seeking reliable students who enjoy collaborating with others and sharing their ideas during our lively, once-a-week lab meetings (usually Mondays at 4pm). We offer many opportunities for extended involvement in lab projects and therefore require a minimum of one full semester commitment (prefer two semesters) with at least 5 hours free per week for lab participation. Commitment to project involvement is essential. Students who participate in the lab often go on to graduate school in social psychology or marketing.

Potential honors students encouraged to join. Typically, we have one or more students working on an honors project each year.

 Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants
Intro psych and social psych coursework, along with a research methods class, may be helpful. Knowledge of basic statistics and experience with SPSS is a plus, though not required. Anyone with flash programming experience would be a wonderful addition to the team!

Office Location: SGM 805
Phone: 213-740-5504
GRADUATE STUDENTS
NOTE: STUDENTS SEEKING PSYC 490 CREDIT FOR RESEARCH EXPERIENCE MUST BE WORKING UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF A FACULTY MEMBER. THE INDIVIDUALS LISTED BELOW ARE GRADUATE STUDENTS AND MAY NOT SERVE AS YOUR PRIMARY SUPERVISOR TOWARDS 490 CREDIT. CONSULT WITH THEIR SUPERVISING FACULTY MEMBER CONCERNING THE POSSIBILITY OF 490 CREDIT.

Nina Christie (Monterosso lab)
ncchrist@usc.edu

Current Research Topics under Investigation
My primary interest is in opiate addiction. Currently, I am working on a longitudinal study in following current drug users over time to measure changes in decision-making and life circumstances. I am interested in how individual differences and environmental circumstances impact decision-making as it relates to delay-discounting, impulsivity, and drug use behaviors. My current study takes place at a harm reduction facility (a needle exchange) in downtown Los Angeles near skid row. I am also interested in work on public attitudes towards harm reduction programs more generally, and in how to disseminate information about substance use disorders to the public in order to increase awareness, reduce stigma, and shape policy to better help those who are living with these disorders.

Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants
Research assistants are expected to help with the data collection, (including data management and entry) for the longitudinal study mentioned above. RA’s will go in pairs to the needle exchange in downtown and recruit/conduct follow-up appointments with participants. This is hands-on experience working with intravenous drug users. The study consists of surveys, an audio-recorded interview, computer tasks to measure delay-discounting, and recording biomarkers (heart rate). RA’s must be willing to commit approximately 8 hours per week (in about 4 hour blocks for travel time to the exchange, completing the assessments, and travel time back to campus). Year long commitments are strongly preferred. Prior to beginning, RA’s will need to complete CITI training modules and HIPPA certificate (reach out for details).

Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants
- Energetic and passionate about psychology, neuroscience, addiction, and/or public health
- A method of transportation (i.e. car) for visits to the facility downtown (not required, but strongly preferred)

**Office Location:** HNB B27  
**Office Hours:** By appointment, please reach out if you are interested!