

**UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES**  
**Research Assistantship Directory (2023-2024 Academic Year)**

**Updated: 05/09/2024**

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**NEW SUMMER OPPORTUNITY**

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**Researcher**

Caitlin Sayegh, PhD

cssayegh@chla.usc.edu

**Phone:** (323) 361-7748

**Current Research Topics Under Investigation**

“Interested in digital health approaches to supporting youth with chronic health conditions? We are seeking undergraduates to support a usability trial building and evaluating a new phone app + human coaching intervention to help adolescents and young adults take their medications more consistently. Research students would be trained in traditional behavioral research activities like collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data, and would also have the unique opportunity for coaching adolescents by phone calls and text messages to engage with the app and resolve barriers to consistent medication taking. This aspect of the research can be very helpful for exploring your interest in clinical careers such as medicine, nursing, therapy, counseling, and education, and developing applied, patient-facing skills. This research can be done 100% remotely, or you can come in person to the CHLA Behavioral Health Institute at 3250 Wilshire Blvd., LA CA 90010.”

**Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**

**It is required to enroll in a research course during this opportunity, such as Psyc 290x or 490x**

**Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants**

See above

**Will students be able to participate in this lab experience in person, hybrid, or virtually during Fall 2023 and Spring 2024?**

Summer 2024, Hybrid

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## 2023-2024 Opportunities

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### **Researcher**

Laura Baker

lbaker@usc.edu

**Web:** <https://dornsife.usc.edu/laurabakerphd/>

**Phone:** (213) 740-2261

### **Current Research Topics Under Investigation**

1. gene-environment interplay in human behavior - I have a large dataset on 750 sets of twins and their families, studied longitudinally from ages 9-21 years, with a focus on aggression and externalizing behavior problems, but also have extensive data on internalizing problems, personality, social and biological risk factors for antisocial behavior. I am seeking students who can assist with digitizing and organizing the data, and am open to proposed questions of interest for data analysis and possible thesis or publication.

2. The science of yoga and meditation - I am in the midst of organizing a new book on this topic, and seek students to help with literature review and organization.

### **Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Meticulous and reliable; some experience with data analysis is a bonus; interest in the science of yoga and meditation and willingness to help research for a new book on this topic.

### **Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants**

See above

### **Will students be able to participate in this lab experience in person, hybrid, or virtually during Fall 2023 and Spring 2024?**

Fall 2023, Hybrid

Spring 2024, Hybrid

**Office Location:** SGM 623

**Office Hours:** W 2-3:30 pm

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### **Researcher**

Susan Luczak

[luczak@usc.edu](mailto:luczak@usc.edu)

**Web:** <https://dornsife.usc.edu/labs/susan-luczak/>

**Phone:** N/A

### **Current Research Topics Under Investigation**

In my clinical psychology laboratory, we are currently focusing on two NIH-funded studies: one that brings people into the lab to consume alcohol while wearing numerous biosensors and being measured on breath alcohol and various physical responses to alcohol, and one that examines alcohol metabolism factors specific to individuals of Asian heritage that affect long-term alcohol-related health risks. Students would be part of a team that includes students, staff, and faculty in the Psychology and Math Departments, and like prior undergraduates if they do well as a volunteer there would be future opportunities for SURF/SOAR/URAP awards and 290/490 courses.

### **Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Highly motivated, reliable, and detail-oriented. Able to commit 8-10 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.

### **Will students be able to participate in this lab experience in person, hybrid, or virtually during Fall 2023 and Spring 2024?**

Spring 2024, In Person

**Office Location:** SGM

**Office Hours:** By appointment

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### **Researcher**

Adam Leventhal, PhD

adam.leventhal@usc.edu

**Web:** <https://heal.usc.edu/>

**Phone:** (323) 442-8222

### **Current Research Topics Under Investigation**

Dr. Leventhal's primary research interests: • understanding drug use and other health behaviors (e.g., exercise, eating, risk taking) as mood-altering agents • smoking cessation • addiction psychopharmacology and genetics • addiction among individuals with mental health problems or other populations subject to health disparities (e.g., African Americans, Women).

### **Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**

• Career interest in research or following topics: psychology, epidemiology, statistics, adolescents and young adults, and/or substance use • Available 8-10 hours total per week, with at least one 4-hour shift • Available to support data collection (in-person) at local high schools • Great time-management and organizational skills • Comfortable with participant outreach and engagement

### **Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants**

• Creative and content design skills • Experience with literature reviews • Quantitative data management experience

### **Will students be able to participate in this lab experience in person, hybrid, or virtually during Fall 2023 and Spring 2024?**

Spring 2024, Hybrid

**Office Location:** Soto Street Building, Health Sciences Campus 1845 N. Soto Street, Los Angeles, CA 90032

**Office Hours:** Monday – Friday, 8:30am – 5:00pm

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### **Researcher**

Duke Han

Duke.Han@med.usc.edu

**Web:** [www.hanresearchlab.com](http://www.hanresearchlab.com)

**Phone:** 6264575858

### **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. • Ability to commute to Alhambra campus

### **Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Independent, hardworking, with attention to detail • Experience using statistical software such as SPSS or R is a plus. • 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.

### **Will students be able to participate in this lab experience in person, hybrid, or virtually during Fall 2023 and Spring 2024?**

Fall 2023, In Person

Spring 2024, In Person

**Office Location:** HSA  
**Office Hours:** Monday-Thursday

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### **Researcher**

Laura Baker  
lbaker@usc.edu  
**Web:** <https://dornsife.usc.edu/usctwins/>  
**Phone:** (213) 740-2261

### **Current Research Topics Under Investigation**

Gene-environment interplay in human behavior; science of yoga and meditation

### **Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Curiosity, reliability, and meticulousness

### **Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Experience with statistical analysis preferred

### **Will students be able to participate in this lab experience in person, hybrid, or virtually during Fall 2023 and Spring 2024?**

Fall 2023, In Person / Hybrid

Spring 2024, In Person / Hybrid

**Office Location:** SGM 623

**Office Hours:** W 2-3 pm

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### **Researcher**

Mara Mather  
mara.mather@usc.edu  
**Web:** [matherlab.com](http://matherlab.com)  
**Phone:** (213) 740-9543

### **Current Research Topics Under Investigation**

We use functional neuroimaging and behavioral methods to investigate how emotion influences memory and cognition. We are also investigating how both sympathetic and parasympathetic function affect brain function and cognition in aging and how interventions that increase parasympathetic activity may enhance brain function in older adults.

### **Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Must be able to commit at least 12 hours per week (preferably doing blocks of 4-5 hours) for a minimum of 2 semesters; Must be highly detail-oriented; Must be reliable, punctual, and have a good history of time management; Must be a team player. Research Assistants are most often involved with running experiment sessions with participants, coding and entering data, preparing stimuli, doing literature searches, and recruiting participants for studies. Depending on the project, there is also the opportunity to assist with data analysis.

### **Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Experience working with older adults and software programming skills are a plus, but not required.

### **Will students be able to participate in this lab experience in person, hybrid, or virtually during Fall 2023 and Spring 2024?**

Fall 2023, In Person / Hybrid

Spring 2024, In Person / Hybrid

**Office Location:** GER 341

**Office Hours:** 9AM-5PM

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### **Researcher**

Santiago Morales

santiago.morales@usc.edu

**Web:** <https://dornsife.usc.edu/labs/bead/our-research/>

**Phone:** (213) 821-0764

### **Current Research Topics Under Investigation**

At the BEAD Lab, we examine individual differences in social and emotional development. We are interested in why and how individuals differ in how they express and regulate their emotions – often starting from a very young age. We want to understand how characteristics of the child (e.g., temperament) and their environment (e.g., parenting and peers) interact to create the differences we observe in children’s social and emotional lives. To do this, we combine several methods including behavioral observations, computer-based tasks (eye tracking), and neuroscience measures (EEG and fMRI).

### **Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Students will learn how to interact with families and young children in a research context, how to utilize sophisticated equipment to collect data (e.g., eye tracker and EEG), and how to analyze and interpret those data.

### **Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants**

At least 4 semester commitment (including summers); GPA of 3.5 or above; at least 7 hour per week commitment; Preference will be given to Sophomores and Juniors.

**Will students be able to participate in this lab experience in person, hybrid, or virtually during Fall 2023 and Spring 2024?**

Fall 2023, In Person

Spring 2024, In Person

**Office Location:** 1017

**Office Hours:** N/A

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**Researcher**

Richard John

richardj@usc.edu

**Web:** N/A

**Phone:** N/A

**Current Research Topics Under Investigation**

- Various topics in Psychology and Law: quantifying thresholds such as beyond reasonable doubt (BRD), probable cause (PC), reasonable suspicion (RS), presumption of innocence (POI); estimating actual recidivism rate for various crimes that account for underreporting and non-prosecutions and non-convictions; estimating accuracy of forensic methods, e.g., firearms.
- Mitigation of soft-target terrorism.
- Measurement of accuracy and bias in classifying true and false information related to health, climate change, and other political issues.
- Validity of behavioral measures of risk taking.
- Modeling decision making for high stakes gambles using archival data from game Shows.

**Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Interest and curiosity about the selected topic. Enthusiasm to read and interpret previous literature.

**Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Solid background in research methods (314 and/or 316 a plus).

Solid background in probability and statistics is a plus.

Knowledge of software tools (e.g., Excel, SPSS, R, a plus).

**Will students be able to participate in this lab experience in-person, hybrid, or virtually during Fall 2023 and Spring 2024?**

In-person for both semesters.

**Office Location:** SGM 713

**Office Hours:** By appointment; usually on campus Tues, Wed, and Thurs; Zoom anytime.

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## **Researcher**

Daphna Oyserman

Amabel Jeon ([youngbin@usc.edu](mailto:youngbin@usc.edu))

**Web:** <https://dornsife.usc.edu/daphna-oyserman>

**Phone:** (213) 740-2219

## **Current Research Topics Under Investigation**

Throughout her work, Professor Oyserman examines how apparently “fixed” differences between groups and individuals may in fact mask highly malleable situated processes that can be profoundly influenced through small interventions that shift mindset. For an idea of what topics are currently under investigation, please see her most recent publications on her website.

## **Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Strong communication, interest in motivation

## **Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Interest in a career that entails making sense of social influence

## **Will students be able to participate in this lab experience in person, hybrid, or virtually during Fall 2023 and Spring 2024?**

Spring 2023, In Person

Spring 2023, Hybrid

Spring 2023, Virtual

**Office Location:** VPD 205

**Office Hours:** Email our lab manager, Amabel Jeon ([youngbin@usc.edu](mailto:youngbin@usc.edu)), during business hours.

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## **Researcher**

Norbert Schwarz

Amabel Jeon ([youngbin@usc.edu](mailto:youngbin@usc.edu))

**Web:** <https://dornsife.usc.edu/norbert-schwarz/>

**Phone:** (213) 740-2223

## **Current Research Topics Under Investigation**

Professor Schwarz's theoretical approach emphasizes the socially situated and embodied nature of cognition and the role of feelings and subjective experiences in judgment and decision making. He pursues these basic processes in different domains, including public opinion, consumer behavior, well-being, and the psychology of self-report. For an idea of what topics are



currently under investigation, please see the most recent publications on his CV, found on his website.

### **Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Strong communication, interest in cognition and decision making

### **Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Interest in a career that entails making sense of people's subjective experiences

### **Will students be able to participate in this lab experience in person, hybrid, or virtually during Fall 2023 and Spring 2024?**

Fall 2023, In Person / Hybrid / Virtual

Spring 2024, In Person / Hybrid / Virtual

**Office Location:** VPD 205

**Office Hours:** Email our lab manager, Amabel Jeon ([youngbin@usc.edu](mailto:youngbin@usc.edu)), for more information.

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### **Researcher**

Jonathan Gratch

[gratch@ict.usc.edu](mailto:gratch@ict.usc.edu)

**Web:** <https://people.ict.usc.edu/~gratch/>

**Phone:** N/A

### **Current Research Topics Under Investigation**

Conflicts often arise from differences in underlying values. Our research explores how values shape emotions, behaviors and outcomes in negotiation and conflict resolution. We adopt a multidisciplinary approach that combines psychological theories with artificial intelligence methods. Our current efforts focus on the use of large language models (e.g., GPT-4) to both annotate human behavior and to simulate the behavior of human partners within controlled experiments. We are seeking volunteers interested in participating in this research.

### **Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Volunteers are required to commit at least 10 hours/week during the fall or spring semester. Candidates should have a basic understanding of applied statistics (e.g., how to run an ANOVA).

### **Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants**

We especially welcome volunteers fluent in Mandarin and prior experience with python programming.

### **Will students be able to participate in this lab experience in-person, hybrid, or virtually during Fall 2023 and Spring 2024?**

Our lab is off campus at USC's Institute for Creative Technologies in Playa Vista. Ideally, volunteers would participate in person for weekly lab group meeting on Fridays 11:15-12:15. Volunteers can work in person at ICT if desired but not required. Expect 1-2 weekly 1hr meeting with faculty or PhD student throughout the semester

**Office Location:** Institute for Creative Technologies

**Office Hours:** on request

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### **Researcher**

Stephen Aguilar

aguilars@usc.edu

**Web:** <http://lapel.tech>

**Phone:** (202) 258-8130

### **Current Research Topics Under Investigation**

Student Motivation; study strategies, educational technologies (high school/college); educational data mining.

### **Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Interest in education and/or psychology; interest in technology/data science.

### **Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants**

quantitative data analysis is a plus; self-motivated; good with email and asynchronous work; coding experience (R, python, Stata).

### **Will students be able to participate in this lab experience in person, hybrid, or virtually during Fall 2023 and Spring 2024?**

Fall 2023, Hybrid

Spring 2024, Hybrid

**Office Location:** WPH 600B

**Office Hours:** Will vary/by appointment

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### **Researcher**

John Monterosso

[johnrmon@usc.edu](mailto:johnrmon@usc.edu)

**Web:** <https://dornsife.usc.edu/labs/monterosso/>

**Phone:** N/A

### **Current Research Topics Under Investigation**

Addiction, eating, brain imaging, vaping, emotion.

### **Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Evidence of being responsible, commitment to projects

### **Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants**

To be involved in the ongoing vape-brain imaging study, need to be available at least 1 day in the AM per week since participants are run in the morning.

### **Will students be able to participate in this lab experience in person, hybrid, or virtually during Fall 2023 and Spring 2024?**

Fall 2023, In Person

Spring 2024, Hybrid

**Office Location:** BCI Rm 252. Lab HNB B19

**Office Hours:** By appointment

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### **Researchers**

Cassie Gonzales, M.A.

[cwgonzal@usc.edu](mailto:cwgonzal@usc.edu)

Faculty Supervisor: Jonathan Tarbox, Ph.D., BCBA-D

**Web:** <https://dornsife.usc.edu/autismfs-lab/>

**Phone:** N/A

### **Current Research Topics Under Investigation**

Broadly, the Autism and Family Support lab is focused on improving access to high quality, appropriate, and neurodiversity affirming treatment for autistic youth and their families. Research assistants will work on our current project, The Support and Training on Autism for Newly Diagnosed Families (STAND) Pilot Study. The STAND study aims to test the effectiveness of the STAND intervention, a 6-week virtual training group for caregivers of children who have recently been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The STAND intervention aims to help families get on the right track in supporting their autistic child in the waiting period between diagnosis and the start of services. STAND groups are led by a facilitator and provide participants with reliable information on ASD and ASD services, guidance on developing goals for their child that align with their values, training on how to support their child's communication and behaviors, and guidance on how to prepare for their child's future. Research participants complete two data collections (survey, qualitative interview) before and after treatment.

### **Specific Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Research assistants responsibilities include study recruitment outreach, participant enrollment, data collection (e.g. send and manage surveys, conduct qualitative interviews), data processing (e.g., scoring standardized forms, transcribing interviews), and intervention support (e.g.,

scheduling, distributing handouts).

**Desired Qualifications for Research Assistants**

Able to Commit 6-10 hours per week

Prior experience with or knowledge of autism spectrum disorder and/or other neurodevelopmental disorders.

Prior experience or education in research methods (e.g., Psych 314, Psych 100, prior research experience) and data management programs (e.g., Excel coding, Qualtrics).

Prior experience or comfort with communicating with parents over the phone and by email.

Interest in learning about or pursuing careers in psychology working with individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders.

Ability to commit to the full academic year, with possibility of continuing into the next Year.

**Will students be able to participate in this lab experience in-person, hybrid, or virtually during Fall 2023 and Spring 2024?**

Virtual with possibility of in person in the future (in-person not a requirement).

**Office Hours:** By appointment, please email [cwgonzal@usc.edu](mailto:cwgonzal@usc.edu).