

Joshua W. Z. Hew

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Education

University College London *Sep 2025 – Sep 2026*

MSc Cognitive and Decision Sciences

- **Representative courses:** Computational Modelling of Cognition, Applied Deep Learning, Designing and Analysing fMRI experiments

University of Edinburgh *Sep 2021 – May 2025*

MA (Hons) Philosophy and Psychology (First Class Honours)

- **Dissertation:** “Learned helplessness in dynamic causal environments: The impact of controllability and reward prevalence” (85%). Supervisor: Neil Bramley

Publications

Hew, J., Tarighat, A., Corley, M., & Horne, Z. (2024). Examining structural and semantic predictors of announced sarcasm on r/AskReddit. In *Proceedings of the 46th Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society*.

In preparation:

Hew, J., & Bramley, N. R. Causal inference and learned helplessness.

Hew, J., Rottman, J., & Horne, Z. The language of doubt impacts consensus judgements.

Presentations & Talks

Learned helplessness in dynamic causal environments: The impact of controllability and reward prevalence

- Talk presented at Bramley Computational Cognitive Science Lab (March 2025).
- Talk presented at British Psychological Society Undergraduate Conference, University of Abertay (March 2025).

The language of doubt impacts consensus judgements

- Talk presented at Cognition, Computation and Development Lab, University of Edinburgh (October 2024).

Examining structural and semantic predictors of announced sarcasm on r/AskReddit

- Poster presented at Social Data Science Poster Session, University of Edinburgh (June 2024).
- Poster presented at Cognitive Science Conference, Rotterdam (July 2024).
- Talk presented at Brain, Cognition and Development Seminar, University of Edinburgh (Nov 2024).

Awards

Carnegie Trust Summer Vacation Scholarship (£3800) *Summer 2024*
University of Edinburgh Our Minds Scholarship (£1600) *Summer 2024*

Research Experience

Cognition, Computation and Development Lab (PI: Zachary Horne) **University of Edinburgh**
Research Assistant *Jan 2024 - Apr 2025*

- Administered 2 online experiments exploring how prior beliefs influence consensus judgements, using real-world agreement statistics from Pew Research. Discovered that information framed to imply doubt reduces the influence of prior beliefs, guiding subsequent studies on behavioural responses to aggregated information.
- Conducted an experiment to probe participant intuitions about the distributions of events and beliefs. Used this to investigate whether people systematically underestimate the probability of these distribution yielding overlapping evidence by chance.
- Applied Huggingface models and cosine similarity methods to quantify the uniqueness of comments on

