

# OMRAN K. SAFI

---

PhD Student, Cognitive Psychology  
University of British Columbia

Email: [omranksafi@gmail.com](mailto:omranksafi@gmail.com)  
Website: [omransafi.com](http://omransafi.com)

---

## EDUCATION

---

**Doctor of Philosophy in Cognitive Psychology** 2023-27  
University of British Columbia  
Supervisor: Dr. Daniela Palombo

**Master of Arts in Cognitive Psychology** 2021-23  
University of British Columbia  
Supervisor: Dr. Daniela Palombo  
Thesis: Investigating the effects of emotion on temporal duration memory using naturalistic virtual reality

**Bachelor of Arts in Psychology** 2020  
University of British Columbia  
Specializing in Cognitive Psychology

**High School Diploma** 2015  
Point Grey Secondary  
Graduated with honors

## AWARDS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

---

**Canada Graduate Scholarship – Doctoral** 2025-2028  
**Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC)**

- Amount: \$40,000

**President's Academic Excellence Initiative PhD Award** 2025/26  
**University of British Columbia**

- Amount: \$1,215

**Graduate Travel Award** 2025  
**Psychonomic Society Annual Meeting**

- Amount: \$750 (USD)

**Graduate Student Travel Award** 2025  
**University of British Columbia, Department of Psychology**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount: \$650</li> </ul>	
<b>Graduate Student Travel Award</b> <b>University of British Columbia, Department of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies</b>	2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount: \$500</li> </ul>	
<b>Graduate Fellowship</b> <b>University of British Columbia, Department of Psychology</b>	2024/25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount: \$7,784</li> </ul>	
<b>Dean of Arts Graduate Student Research Award</b> <b>University of British Columbia, Faculty of Arts</b>	2023/24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount: \$1000</li> </ul>	
<b>Four Year Doctoral Fellowship</b> <b>University of British Columbia</b>	2023-27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount: \$18,200</li> </ul>	
<b>Graduate Fellowship</b> <b>University of British Columbia, Department of Psychology</b>	2023/24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount: \$2,500</li> </ul>	
<b>President's Academic Excellence Initiative PhD Award</b> <b>University of British Columbia</b>	2023/24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount: \$1,215</li> </ul>	
<b>Graduate Student Travel Award</b> <b>University of British Columbia, Department of Psychology</b>	2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount: \$650</li> </ul>	
<b>Graduate Student Travel Award</b> <b>University of British Columbia, School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies</b>	2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount: \$500</li> </ul>	
<b>Faculty of Arts Graduate Award</b> <b>University of British Columbia, Department of Psychology</b>	2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In recognition of academic achievement</li> <li>• Amount: \$13,500</li> </ul>	
<b>Faculty of Arts Graduate Award</b> <b>University of British Columbia, Department of Psychology</b>	2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In recognition of academic achievement</li> <li>• Amount: \$15,000</li> </ul>	

## PUBLICATIONS

---

**Paper – Safi, O.K.,** Shi, Y., Lin, T., Yu, T., Wilson, I.S., Madan, C.R., Palombo, D.J. (2025). Evaluative Conditioning Using Virtual Reality Events. *Cognition and Emotion*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2025.2528928>

**Paper –** Bontkes, O.R., **Safi, O.K.,** Lacusta, S., Wilson, I., & Palombo, D.J. (under review). Emotion Differentially Modulates Phenomenological Ratings and Narrative Descriptions of Mental Imagery in Episodic Future Thoughts. *Emotion*.

**Paper - Safi, O. K.,** Shi, Y., Madan, C. R., Lin, T., & Palombo, D. J. (2023). The effects of emotion on retrospective duration memory using virtual reality. *Psychological Research*, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00426-023-01909-6>

**Paper -** Petrucci, A.S, McCall, C, Schofield, G, Wardell, V, **Safi O.K,** & Palombo, D.J. (2025). The relationship between environmentally induced emotion and memory for a naturalistic virtual experience. *Cognition and Emotion*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2024.2333067>

**Paper –** Balance, B.C., Tuen, Y., Petrucci, A.S, Orwig, W., **Safi, O.K.,** Madan, C. R., Palombo, D. J. (2022). Imagining Emotional Events Benefits Future-Oriented Decisions. *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17470218221086637>

**Paper – Safi, O. K.,** Tommasi, M., Sun, B., Thornley, J., Dodani, A. (2020). Carbon Footprint Information Promotes Sustainable Food Choices. UBC SEEDS. <https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/undergraduateresearch/18861/items/1.0392724>

## PRESENTATIONS

---

**Presentation (2024) –** Of What and When: Memory Content and Recalled Duration (UBC Cognitive Area Workshop)

**Presentation (2023) –** Investigating the Effects of Emotion on Temporal Duration Memory Using Naturalistic Virtual Reality (UBC Cognitive Area Workshop)

**Presentation (2023) –** Immersive Affective Dilation: Investigating Temporal Duration Memory Using Virtual Reality (UBC Psychfest 2023)

**Presentation (2020) –** Tracking Independent Information Signals Across Regions of Interest. (UBC Cognitive Area Workshop)

## INVITED TALKS & GUEST LECTURES

---

**Invited Talk (2024)** – The Virtual Sandbox – A Novel Paradigm for Investigating Memory (UBC DMCBH Mindscape)

- Voted most engaging presentation
- Second place for best talk

**Invited Talk (2023)** – Bridging the Gap; Studying the Effects of Emotion on Memory for Time Using Virtual Reality. (Virtual Reality as a tool for Cognition, Behaviour, and Health)

**Invited Talk (2023)** – The Sweet Spot of Memory (UBC Neuroscience 201 Course)

**Guest Lecture (2023)** – Conducting Cognitive Science Research (UBC Psychology 309 Course)

**Invited Talk (2020)** – Tracking Independent Information Signals Across Regions of Interest (Memory for Events Lab, University of Alberta)

## CONFERENCE WORKS

---

**Poster (2025)** – Safi, O.K., Wilson, I. S., Marty, K., Palombo, D.J. – In Search of Time: Memory Contents Influence Subjective Duration Memory. *Psychonomic Society Annual Meeting*.

- Received Graduate Travel Award (\$750 USD)

**Talk (2025)** – Safi, O.K. & Palombo, D.J. – Of What and When: Memory Contents and Retrospective Duration. *Northwest Cognition and Memory (NOWCAM) Conference*.

**Poster (2025)** – Safi, O.K., Bontkes, O. R., Palombo, D.J. – Making Time for the Future: Effects of Emotion of Duration in the Mind’s Eye. *Northwest Cognition and Memory (NOWCAM) Conference*.

**Poster (2024)** – Safi, O.K., Bontkes, O.R., Palombo, D.J. – Making Time for the Future: Effects of Emotion on Duration in the Mind’s Eye. *Psychonomic Society Annual Meeting*.

- Invited Workshop – Leading Edge Workshop of Future Thinking

**Talk (2024)** – Safi, O.K., Shi Y., Lin T., Madan, C.R., Palombo, D.J. - Tugging on Time Using Virtual Reality; The Effects of Emotion on Retrospective Duration Memory. *Northwest Cognition and Memory (NOWCAM) Conference*.

**Poster (2024)** - Safi, O.K.\*, Shi Y., Lin T., Yu, T., Grewall, A., Madan, C.R., Palombo, D.J. – Bridging the Gap; A Novel Paradigm for Investigating Memory. *Northwest Cognition and Memory (NOWCAM) Conference*.

**Talk (2024)** – Palombo, D.J, **Safi, O.K.**, Cocquyt, C., Wardell, V. - The Temporal Tapestry of Emotional Memory: Untangling the Threads. *Cognitive Neuroscience Society*.

**Poster (2024)** – Grewall, A., Yu, T., Wilson, I., **Safi, O.K.**, Palombo, D.J. – Cued Recall of Negative and Neutral Co-Pairs in Virtual Reality. *UBC Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference*.

**Poster (2023)** – **Safi, O.K.**, Shi, E., Madan, C. R., Palombo, D.J. - Immersive affective dilation: Investigating temporal-duration for emotional events using virtual reality. *International Conference on Learning and Memory*.

**Poster (2023)** – **Safi, O.K.**, Shi, Y., Lin, L., Madan, C. R., Palombo, D.J. - A Novel Virtual Reality Paradigm for Inducing Emotion. *Society for Affective Science Annual Conference*.

**Poster (2023)** – Yu, T., **Safi, O.K.**, Kryklywy, J. H., Palombo, D.J. - Creating a Database of Affective Stimuli for Virtual Reality Research. *UBC Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference*.

**Poster (2022)** – **Safi, O.K.**, Kryklywy, JH, Todd, RM, Palombo, D.J. - Investigating the effects of emotion on temporal duration memory using naturalistic virtual reality. *Society for Affective Science Annual Conference*.

**Poster (2022)** – **Safi, O.K.**, Bontkes, O, Palombo, D.J.- Assessing the perceptual characteristics of emotional and non-emotional simulations using Natural Language Processing. *Northwest Cognition and Memory (NOWCAM) Conference*.

**Poster (2022)** – Yiran, S, **Safi, O.K.**, Palombo, D.J. - Transfer of Valence in Virtual Reality. *UBC Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference*.

**Talk (2020)** – Carbon Footprint Information Promotes Sustainable Food Choices. Northwest Cognition and Memory (NOWCAM) Conference.

**Poster (2020)** – **Safi, O.K.**, Li, A.C., Cheng, A.F., Schuetz, C.G. - Assessing Cue-Induced Craving in Individuals with Methamphetamine Addiction Through Portable EEG Technology. *Department of Psychiatry 2020 Virtual Research Day*.

**Poster (2020)** – **Safi, O.K.** - Climate Change, Affect, and The Overview Effect. *UBC Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference*.

\*Poster accepted but conference cancelled due to Covid-19

## SCHOLARLY REVIEW

---

**Ad Hoc Reviewer** – Emotion (November 2024). Assisted supervisor with review

**Ad Hoc Reviewer** – Cognition (December 2021). Assisted supervisor with review

**Ad Hoc Reviewer** – Behavior Research Methods (March 2022). Assisted supervisor with review

## **TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS**

---

- Psyc 102: Introduction to Developmental, Social, Personality, and Clinical Psychology (Dr. Mark Lam, 01-04/2026)
- Psyc 333: Memory: Historical, Clinical, & Cognitive Perspectives (Dr. Daniela Palombo, 09-12/2025)
- Psyc 102: Introduction to Developmental, Social, Personality, and Clinical Psychology (Dr. Andrew Rivers, 05-06/2025)
- Psyc 311: Psychology of Sport (Jeff Sauve, 01-04/2025)
- Psyc 311: Psychology of Sport (Jeff Sauve, 09-12/2024)
- Psyc 311: Psychology of Sport (Jeff Sauve, 05-06/2024)
- Psyc 309: Cognitive Processes (Dr. Daniela Palombo, 01-04/2024)
- Psyc 311: Psychology of Sport (Dr. Jeff Sauve, 09-12/2023)
- Psyc 309: Cognitive Processes (Dr. Daniela Palombo, 01-04/2023)
- Psyc 333: Memory: Historical, Clinical and Cognitive Perspectives (Dr. Daniela Palombo, 09-12/2022)
- Psyc 309: Cognitive Processes (Dr. Todd Handy, 09-12/2022)
- Psyc 307: Cultural Psychology (Dr. Benjamin Cheung, 01-04/2022)
- Psyc 309: Cognitive Processes (Dr. Daniela Palombo, 09-12/2021)

## **SUPERVISION AND MENTORING**

---

### **Directed Studies:**

- Ashton Thorpe
- Charles Lin
- Theodore Yu
- Akash Grewall

### **Research Assistants:**

- Jasneet Sabrao
- Christy Wong, Research Assistant
- Felisca Levana
- Sanjana Subramaniam
- Samriddhi Verma
- Maya Lehman
- Brigitte Browett
- Erin Chiu
- Aditya Sanghi
- Amber Geekee
- Daniel Simoes Brandao

- Devishi Mehra
- Julia Halfen
- Lavelle Liu

## MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

---

**Psychonomic Society:** Member (2025/26)  
**Canadian Psychological Association:** Member (2025/26)  
**Psychonomic Society:** Member (2024/25)  
**Spark Society:** Member (2022 - Present)  
**Society for Affective Science:** Member (2021 - Present)  
**Cognitive Science Society:** Member (2020 - Present)  
**Cognitive Systems Society:** Member (2017-2020), Executive (2018-2020)  
**UBC Psychology Students Association:** Member (2019-2020)

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

---

**Graduate Student (MA)** 2021-23

Memory and Imagination Lab – University of British Columbia

- Investigating recall of elapsed time for emotional and non-emotional contexts
- Investigating duration memory for emotional and non-emotional imagined future events
- Investigating duration memory for emotional events using virtual reality
- Developing and validating a novel set of emotional stimuli for use in virtual reality

**Research Assistant** 2020

Memory and Imagination Lab – University of British Columbia

- Investigating the relationship between emotion and temporal memory
- Examining relationship between emotional arousal and temporal proximity judgements
- Developing a study aiming to examine how emotion affects temporal judgements in episodic future thought

**Tracking Independent Information Signals Across Brain Regions** 2020

Motivated Cognition Lab – University of British Columbia

Supervisors: Dr. James Kryklywy and Dr. Rebecca Todd

- Project focused on methodological innovation for neuroimaging analysis
- Analysis of emotional and sensory communication information in the brain
- Statistical analyses and graphical representation using R
- Matrix manipulations in MATLAB
- Neuroimaging processing and displaying done in AFNI
- RSA script in Python

## **Senior Thesis\***

2020

Behavioral Sustainability Lab - University of British Columbia

Motivated Cognition Lab – University of British Columbia

Supervisors: Dr. Jiaying Zhao and Dr. Rebecca Todd

\*Data collection disrupted due to Covid-19

- Examining the affective responses produced by VR induced overview effect and its effect on climate change attitudes
- Produced novel idea of examining relationship between the overview effect and climate attitudes
- Conducted literature review
- Created study design and protocol
- Completed and obtained ethics approval (UBC BREB)
- Rendered stimulus in Unity – 3D Model of Earth
- Collect, record, and analyze subject data
  - Heart Rate, Galvanic Skin Response, and Questionnaires

## **Behavioral Sustainability Lab**

2019-Present

University of British Columbia

- Worked on my senior thesis examining the consequences of the overview on climate change attitudes
- Completed and obtained ethics (UBC BREB)
- Dynamic model of Earth created in Unity
- Coded aspects of the environment in C# (atmosphere, cloud movement, earth rotation)
- Coded player movement scripts in C#
- Coded Oculus Rift headset and Oculus controller integration in C#
- Prepared surveys in Qualtrics measuring several psychological variables (PANAS-X, AWE-S, INS, Climate Concern)
- Learned use of Empatica E4 wristband to collect physiological data (Heart Rate & GSR)
- Learned to use QRSTool, an open source software, to analyze physiological data

## **Behavioral Reward Affect & Impulsivity Neuroscience (BRAIN) Lab**

2019 - 2020

University of British Columbia

- Project focusing on using the MUSE (portable EEG headband) to assess implicit craving in clinical populations with concurrent stimulant use and mental disorders
- Project aiming to use the MUSE headband to identify a novel biomarker for craving and relapse
- Worked on ethics applications for new studies and add-ons for ongoing studies
- Presented poster at Psychiatry Research Day

## **Motivated Cognition Lab**

2018 – Present

University of British Columbia

- Worked on study investigating the influence of physiological arousal on reward
- Head research assistant for experiment examining attentional biases and emotion



- Received supervision for senior thesis
- Learned proper EEG usage – electrode handling and running participants
- Learned EEG preprocessing and data analysis (EEGLAB & ERPLAB)
- Worked on project aiming to find a novel analysis technique for fMRI data
- Learned to use Analysis of Functional NeuroImages (AFNI) – an open source environment for processing and displaying fMRI data

## SKILLS

---

**Programming Languages:** C, C#, Python, R, HTML/CSS, Java Script

**Machine Learning:** TensorFlow, Keras

**Statistical Programs:** R, SPSS, JASP, G-Power, Jamovi

**Experimental Technology:** PsychoPy, QRSTool, Afni (Neuroimaging), MATLAB, EEGLAB & ERPLAB, Qualtrics

**Web Frameworks:** WordPress, Weebly, Squarespace

**Visual/Audio Programs:** Unity, Meshroom, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Audacity

**Natural Languages:** English, Dari, Farsi, Hindi, Urdu, Spanish

## CERTIFICATIONS

---

<b>Computational Neuroscience Course</b>	2025
Neuromatch Academy	

<b>VCH Privacy and Confidentiality</b>	2019
Vancouver Coastal Health	

<b>Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans</b>	2016
Tri-Council Policy Statement 2: CORE	

## COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

---

<b>Graduate Student Representative</b>	2024/25
UBC Psychology EDI Committee	

<b>Science Communication</b>	2022/23
Lakehead University's 19 <sup>th</sup> Annual Research & Innovation Week's Community Outreach Event	

<b>Cognitive Area Representative</b>	2024/25
UBC Psychology Graduate Student Council	

<b>Graduate Student Representative</b>	2023/24
UBC Psychology Climate Action Committee	
Worked alongside faculty members to create a climate action plan aimed to lower department emissions in line with the broader goals of the university.	
<b>Graduate Student Representative</b>	2023
UBC Psychology Search Committee	
Evaluated applications for joint faculty position across Psychology and Computer Science departments.	
<b>Cognitive Area Representative</b>	2022/23
UBC Psychology Graduate Student Council	
<b>Peer Mentor</b>	2022-24
UBC Psychology Diversity Membership Program	
Provide professional development support and mentorship for students from historically underrepresented and/or diverse backgrounds	
<b>Poster Judge</b>	2022
UBC Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference	
Evaluated research posters at the department of psychology annual undergraduate research conference	