

OMRAN K. SAFI

PhD Student, Cognitive Psychology
University of British Columbia

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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 University of British Columbia, Department of Psychology	2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount: \$650 	
Graduate Student Travel Award University of British Columbia, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies	2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount: \$500 	
Graduate Fellowship University of British Columbia, Department of Psychology	2024/25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount: \$7,784 	
Dean of Arts Graduate Student Research Award University of British Columbia, Faculty of Arts	2023/24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount: \$1000 	
Four Year Doctoral Fellowship University of British Columbia	2023-27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount: \$18,200 	
Graduate Fellowship University of British Columbia, Department of Psychology	2023/24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount: \$2,500 	
President's Academic Excellence Initiative PhD Award University of British Columbia	2023/24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount: \$1,215 	
Graduate Student Travel Award University of British Columbia, Department of Psychology	2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount: \$650 	
Graduate Student Travel Award University of British Columbia, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies	2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount: \$500 	
Faculty of Arts Graduate Award University of British Columbia, Department of Psychology	2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In recognition of academic achievement • Amount: \$13,500 	
Faculty of Arts Graduate Award University of British Columbia, Department of Psychology	2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In recognition of academic achievement • Amount: \$15,000 	

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

Guest Lecture (2025) – Remembering Time (UBC Psychology 333 Course – Memory: Historical, Clinical, & Cognitive Perspectives)

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

- Awarded 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 – Cognitive Processes)

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

CONFERENCE WORKS

Poster (Submitted) – Safi, O.K., Lin, C., Marty, K., & Palombo, D.J. – When Space Divides, Time Expands: The Role of Boundaries in Retrospective Duration. *Cognitive Neuroscience Society 2026 Annual Meeting*.

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

Psych 240*:

* An elective course aimed at helping students with no prior experience get involved in hands-on research experience in psychology for course credit.

- Julia Halfen
- Akash Grewall

- Theordore Yu

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

Cognitive Neuroscience Society: Member (2025/26)

Psychonomic Society: Member (2024-26)

Canadian Psychological Association: Member (2025/26)

Psychonomic Society: Member (2024/25)

Spark Society: Member (2022 - Present)

Society for Affective Science: Member (2021 - 2023)

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, Unreal, Meshroom, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Audacity

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

CERTIFICATIONS

Computational Neuroscience Course 2025
Neuromatch Academy

VCH Privacy and Confidentiality 2019
Vancouver Coastal Health

COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Graduate Student Representative 2024/25
UBC Psychology EDI Committee

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

Cognitive Area Representative 2024/25
UBC Psychology Graduate Student Council

Graduate Student Representative 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.

Graduate Student Representative 2023
UBC Psychology Search Committee
Evaluated applications for joint faculty position across Psychology and Computer Science departments.

Cognitive Area Representative 2022/23
UBC Psychology Graduate Student Council

Peer Mentor 2022-24
UBC Psychology Diversity Membership Program
Provide professional development support and mentorship for students from historically underrepresented and/or diverse backgrounds

Poster Judge 2022
UBC Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference
Evaluated research posters at the department of psychology annual undergraduate research conference