

ZHIXING SUN

Volen National Center for Complex Systems MS 062
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EDUCATION

Brandeis University

Master of Arts in Psychology (Advisor: Prof. Jennifer Gutsell), GPA: 4.0/4.0

- Thesis: *The Effect of Spatial Attention on Same-Culture/Race Bias in Emotion Processing*

Waltham, MA

August 2023 – May 2025

Kenyon College

Bachelor of Arts with Honors in Psychology, *summa cum laude*

Gambier, OH

August 2019 – May 2023

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Topics

- Social Perception, Social Neuroscience, Group Bias, Empathy, Face Processing

Methods

- General Linear Modeling, Structural Equation Modeling, Electroencephalogram (EEG), Event-related Potentials (ERP)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Frank, J.E., Sun, Z., Gutsell, J.N. (May 2025). *Frontal Alpha Asymmetry and Political Group Bias Toward Sadness Members*. Poster to be submitted at the *Annual Meeting for Trends in Psychology Summit*, Boston, MA.

Sun, Z. and Gutsell, J.N. (April 2025). *Attention and Self-race Bias: How Spatial Cues Affect Emotion Recognition Across Racial Group Memberships*. Poster submitted to the *Annual Meeting for the Social and Affective Neuroscience Society*, Chicago, IL.

Sun, Z., Franks, J.E., and Gutsell, J.N. (February 2025). *Cultural Orientation and Emotional Resonance: Increased EEG Neural Synchrony with Political Ingroup Sadness*. Poster to be presented at the *Annual Convention of the Society of Personality and Social Psychology*, Denver, CO.

Sun, Z. and Engell, A.D. (April 2023). *Cultural Differences in Holistic Processing: A Behavioral and EEG Study*. Data Blitz Talk given at the *Midwestern Psychological Association*, Chicago, IL.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Empathy Systematic Review Project - Extraction Phase

Group Project, Social Interaction and Motivation Lab at Brandeis University

Waltham, MA

Dec. 2024 – Present

- Extracted key entities and constructs from empathy-related literature to build a comprehensive database for a systematic review
- Completed structured templates for articles to generate machine-readable plain-text files using designated packages in R
- Validated resource-intensive entities in extracted templates with the Extraction Validation App (EVA) to ensure accuracy

The Effect of Spatial Attention on Same-Culture/Race Bias in Emotion Processing ^[1]

Master's Thesis, Social Interaction and Motivation Lab at Brandeis University

Waltham, MA

Aug. 2023 – Present

- Conducted an EEG/ERP study to examine how spatial attention shapes bias in processing emotions across cultural/racial groups
- Assessed different neural markers as participants viewed emotions categorized by cultural/racial group membership
- Replicated previous findings demonstrating that emotion processing is not entirely involuntary or exogenous
- Investigated that spatial attention amplifies the preferential processing of emotional expressions from ingroup members
- Suggested that cultural/racial bias in emotion processing depends on focal attention with variability influenced by the target's cultural/racial identity

Delayed Synchrony Study

Group Project, Social Interaction and Motivation Lab at Brandeis University

Waltham, MA

Apr. 2024 – Dec. 2024

- Led EEG sessions to investigate neurological processes underlying empathy and action processing across political beliefs
- Analyzed cultural orientation effects on sensorimotor resonance (mu suppression) by political group membership
- Assessed frontal asymmetry differences in response to emotions displayed by affiliated political group members
- Found that collectivism levels predicted sensorimotor resonance in response to political ingroup sadness

Cultural Differences in Holistic Face Processing

Undergraduate Honors Thesis, with Prof. Andrew Engell, Kenyon Psychological Neuroscience Lab

Gambier, OH

Sept. 2022 – May 2023

- Developed a behavioral and EEG study to examine how cultural identity influences face perception skills
- Designed a visual paradigm with 320 Mooney and scrambled faces to assess reaction time and accuracy rate
- Analyzed behavioral performance and N170 ERP data across 20 participants from two different cultural backgrounds
- Found no significant differences in behavioral performance or N170 ERP between cultural groups in identifying Mooney faces
- Suggested that holistic face processing is distinct from other visual processing shaped by cultural identity

HONORS & AWARDS

GSAS Master's Student Conference and Research Award	Brandeis University, 2024
Graduate Students Affair (GSA) Travel and Research Grant	Brandeis University, 2024
Master's Merit Scholarship	Brandeis University, 2023
Departmental Honors Thesis	Kenyon College, 2023
Dean's Merit List	Kenyon College, 2020 - 2023

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant at Brandeis University:

PSYC34b: Social Psychology	Spring 2025
PSYC52a: Research Methods and Laboratory in Psychology	Fall 2024
PSYC51a: Statistics	Spring and Fall 2024

Course Tutor at Kenyon College:

PSYC200: Statistical Analysis in Psychology	Fall 2022 and Spring 2023
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SKILLS

Statistical Data Analysis: R, SPSS, JASP

Programming: MATLAB (EEGLAB), Python

Language: Mandarin, English, and Japanese

Standardized Test: GRE (V160 + Q170)

REFERENCES

Dr. Jennifer Gutsell

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