

Ava Q. Ma de Sousa
Department of Psychology
University of California, Santa Barbara
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Last updated: Dec 14, 2025

EDUCATION

PhD in Social Psychology, GPA: 4.00/4.00 **2021-Present**
Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences Emphasis *Santa Barbara, United States*
University of California, Santa Barbara
Advisor: Dr. Hongbo Yu

Research MSc in Brain and Cognitive Sciences, GPA: 8.83/10.0 **2021**
University of Amsterdam *Amsterdam, Netherlands*
First-year Thesis Advisor: Dr. Jan Engelmann
The Effects of Incidental Anxiety on Theory of Mind

Literature Thesis Advisor: Dr. Suzanne Oosterwijk
Responses to Emotional Narratives from Ingroup and Outgroup Members

Master's Thesis Advisor: Dr. David Amodio
Effects of Perceptual Dehumanization on Instrumental Learning

Honours BSc in Cognitive Sciences & Psychology, GPA: 3.93/4.00 **2019**
University of Toronto *Toronto, Canada*
Independent Research Project Advisor: Dr. Gillian Einstein
Does Long-Term Hormone Therapy Affect Cognition in Older Transfeminine Women?

Psychology Exchange Programme, GPA: 8.8/10.0 **2017-2018**
University of Amsterdam *Amsterdam, Netherlands*

FELLOWSHIPS, HONOURS & AWARDS

UCSB Graduate Student Association Travel Grant	2025
SANS Diversity Travel Award (500 USD)	2024
UCSB Graduate Student Association Travel Grant (500 USD)	2024
UCSB Graduate Student Association Travel Grant (500 USD)	2023
Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council Doctoral Fellowship (80,000 CAD)	2022-2026
International Doctoral Recruitment Fellowship, UCSB	2021
Early Career Fund Grant, Master Brain & Cognitive Sciences (70 EUR)	2021
Mind and Brain Award, Master Brain & Cognitive Sciences (200 EUR)	2020
Anna And Alex Beverly Memorial Fellowship (2,000 CAD)	2019-2020
Arts & Science Student Union Travel Grant (200 CAD)	2019

Dean's List Scholar at the University of Toronto	2016-2019
Louis Savlov Scholarship In Sciences And Humanities (300 CAD)	2017
University of Toronto Scholar's Award (6,000 CAD)	2015
Warren Goldring Residence Scholarship (1,100 CAD)	2015

PUBLICATIONS

Doriscar, J., **Ma de Sousa A. Q.**, Hoard, L., Perry, S. Gardner, W., Brady, W. (2025). Invisible Wounds: Superhumanization of Black Victims is Associated with Less Moral Outrage in Response to Racial Injustice. *Under Review*. https://osf.io/preprints/psyarxiv/m3g4j_v1

Ma de Sousa A. Q., Tellefsen S., McCray I., Howard S. (2025). When Injustice Mobilizes or Demobilizes: The Conditional Effects of Vicarious Racism on Collective Action Across Racial Groups. *Under review*.

Howard S., Tellefsen S., **Ma de Sousa A. Q.**, McCray I. (2025). The Relationship Between Black Americans' Recent and Lifetime Exposure to Vicarious Racism and Past and Future Collective Action Behaviors. *Under Review*.

Ma de Sousa A. Q., Schwyck, M. E., Furtado Fernandes, L., Ford, E., Babür, B.G., Lu, C., Zimmerman, J.C., Yu, H., Burns, S. M., Baek, E. C. (2025). Loneliness is associated with unstable and distorted emotion transition predictions. *Communications Psychology*.
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s44271-025-00310-w>

Alea Albada, N., Woods, V. E., German, T., & **Ma de Sousa, A. Q.** (2025). Gaining insights: Learning about introduction to psychology from former students' personal stories. In R. R. Totton & C. A. Sanderson (Eds.), *Teaching introduction to psychology*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Ma de Sousa, A. Q., & Yu, H. (2025). A framework for studying the conceptual structure of human relationships. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*.

Ma de Sousa A. Q., Chang, J., Lu, C, Li, W., Zhou, X., Yu, H. How are social emotions computed in relational contexts? Invited Long Abstract Submission. *Affective Science* (2023).

Chang, L. A., Armaos, K., Warns, L., **Ma de Sousa, A. Q.**, Paauwe, F., Scholz, C., & Engelmann, J. B. (2023). Mentalizing in an economic games context is associated with enhanced activation and connectivity in left temporoparietal junction. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*.

Loinaz, I., Barboni-Pekmezian, L., **Ma de Sousa, A.** (2020) Gender differences in child to parent violence risk factors. *Anales de Psicología*, 36 (3), 408-417.

Loinaz, I., **Ma de Sousa, A.** (2020). Assessing risk factors in clinical and judicial child-to-parent violence cases. *European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context*, 12 (1), 43-51.

Loinaz, I., Bigas, N., **Ma de Sousa, A.** (2019) Comparing Intra and Extra-Familial Child Abuse in a Forensic Context. *Psicothema*, 31 (3), 271-276.

INVITED TALKS

Ma de Sousa A. Q., Yu H. (2025, May). *Relational Emotions*. Center for Evolutionary Psychology. Santa Barbara, CA.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Ma de Sousa A. Q., Tellefsen S., McCray I., Howard S. (2026, Feb). *The Reciprocal Link Between Collective Action and Perceptions of Vicarious Racism*, in Symposium: Solidarity and Threat: Emotional and Social Responses Across Groups. Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2026 Annual Convention; Chicago, IL.

Ma de Sousa A. Q., Cui Q., Welborne, B.L., Hong, Y., Ratner, K.G. (2024, April). *Affective and motivational effects of social identity threats*. Social Affective Neuroscience Society Annual Conference, Toronto, Canada.

Ma de Sousa A. Q. Albada, N., German, T., Woods, V. (2023, October). *Bridging the Gap Between the Novice and Experienced Learner with Peer Insight Discussion Videos*. Engaging Teaching Symposium, Santa Barbara, CA.

Ma de Sousa A. Q. Grisco, M., Butler, F. V., Padilla-Garcia, D., Ratner, K.G. (2023, April). *How social identity influences perceptions of and reactions to blatant racism*. Western Psychological Association Convention, Riverside, CA.

Jonušaitė, I., Kühn M., **Ma de Sousa A. Q.**, Pingouras, A., Zimmerman, M. M. L., Campdepadrós Barrios J., Carbello, D., Steijger, M. Stojanović, M. (2021, June) *Bottom-up Curriculum Change: Student Recommendations on More Effective Education about Better Research Practices*, 2021 Meeting of the Society for the Improvement of Psychological Science, Virtual.

Ma de Sousa, A. Q., *Consciousness, Emotion and the Social World*. (2021, June) Talk presented at: The Society for Philosophy and Psychology Annual Meeting, Princeton, NJ (Virtual).

SELECTED POSTER PRESENTATIONS (* indicates trainee)

Tarpar, S. *, **Ma de Sousa A. Q.**, Qin, T., Zhao, S., Chen, A.X., Yu, H., Burns. (2026). *Shifting Relational Norms Across Time: An Analysis of 19th and 20th Century Corpora in the United States and China*. Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2026 Annual Convention; Chicago, Illinois.

Ma de Sousa A. Q., Schwyck, M. E., Furtado Fernandes, L., Ford, E., Babür, B.G., Lu, C., Zimmerman, J.C., Yu, H., Burns, S. M., Baek, E. C. (2025). *Behavioral and neural patterns of predicting emotion transitions: The moderating role of loneliness*. Social Affective Neuroscience Society Annual Conference; April 23; Chicago, Illinois.

Ma de Sousa A. Q., Schwyck, M. E., Furtado Fernandes, L., Ford, E., Babür, B.G., Lu, C., Zimmerman, J.C., Yu, H., Burns, S. M., Baek, E. C. (2025). *Do Lonely Individuals Have Idiosyncratic Neural Representations When Thinking About Their Own and Others' Emotional Transitions?* Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2025 Annual Convention; February 22; Denver, Colorado.

Ma de Sousa A. Q., Yu. H. (2025). Using Large Language Models to Estimate Relational Norms. Cultural Psychology Preconference; Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2025 Annual Convention; February 22; Denver, Colorado.

Ma de Sousa A. Q., Grisco, M. *, Butler, F. V., Padilla-Garcia, D., Ratner, K.G. (2024). Emotional and Motivational Responses to Blatant Prejudice. Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2024 Annual Convention; February 9; San Diego, California.

Ma de Sousa A. Q., Chang, J., Lu, C, Li, W., Zhou, X., Yu, H. (2023) How are social emotions computed in relational contexts? Society for Affective Science 2023 Annual Meeting; March 30th; Long Beach, California.

Ma de Sousa A. Q., Grisco, M., Butler, F. V., Padilla-Garcia, D., Ratner, K.G. (2023). Emotional Responses to Vicarious Racism. Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2023 Annual Convention; February 17; Atlanta, Georgia.

Ma de Sousa A. Q. Butler, F. V., Padilla-Garcia, D., Ratner, K.G. (2022). Emotional Responses to Vicarious Racism. International Society for Research on Emotion Conference; July 18; Los Angeles, California.

Ma de Sousa A.Q., Stillerman, B., Guillard, C.S., Amodio, D. M. (2022) Perceptual dehumanization induces biased reward learning in repeated interactions. Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2022 Annual Convention; February 17; San Francisco, California.

Ma de Sousa A.Q., Stillerman, B., Guillard, C.S., Amodio, D. M. (2021). Perceptual dehumanization induces biased reward learning in repeated interactions. Harvard Women in Psychology Summit, November 12, Virtual.

Ma de Sousa, A. Q., Chang, L., Paauwe, F.S., Engelmann, J.B. (2021). *Effects of Incidental Anxiety on Theory of Mind*. Poster presented at: Social Psychology Preconference, Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2021 Annual Convention; February 10; Virtual.

Ma de Sousa, A. *Consciousness, Emotion and the Social World*. (2019). Poster presented at: The Science of Consciousness Conference; Jun 25-28; Interlaken, Switzerland.

SCIENCE JOURNALISM

Ma de Sousa, A. (2021, October). [How everyday dehumanization influences our empathy and behavior](#). *Cogbites*.

Ma de Sousa, A. (2021, February). [Hanging with the wrong crowd: how those around us affect our morals](#). *Cogbites*.

Jonušaitė, I., Kühn, M., **Ma de Sousa, A.**, Pingouras, A. & Zimmerman, M. (2021). Better Research Practices: Own Your Research Decisions. *ABC Journal*, 11, 40-43.

Ma de Sousa, A. (2020, September 28). [Seven Lessons about Prejudice from Social Neuroscience](#).

Cogbites.

- Reposted by the [Cognitive Science Society](#)

Ma de Sousa, A. (2020, June 1). [Are specific areas in the brain responsible for specific thoughts and behavior? Examining the modularity debate](#). *Cogbites*.

- Reposted by the [Cognitive Science Society](#), September 7th, 2020

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

Creator, Co-Host & Producer, *Minds Matter Podcast* (mindsmatterpodcast.com) (May 2020-Present)

Writer & Editor, *Cogbites* (cogbites.org) (April 2020-2022)

SERVICE

Co-President, *Access Grads Leadership Board* (July 2025 - Present)

Committee Member, *Social Affective Neuroscience Society Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Justice Committee* (Oct 2025 - Present)

Mentor, *Teaching Assistant Advisory Program (TAAP)* (September 2025 – January 2025)

Media & Recruitment Coordinator, *Access Grads Leadership Board* (Sept 2022 – July 2025)

Mentor, *Access Grads* (September 2021 - Present)

Graduate Student Organizer & Founding Member, *ReproducibiliTEA UCSB Chapter* (Jan 2023 - Present)

Panelist, Graduate school preparedness, hosted by CCSP (May 2025)

Panelist, Graduate school experiences, hosted by Access Grads (Feb 2024)

Graduate Student Representative, *UCSB PBS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee* (Dec 2022 – July 2024)

Graduate Student Representative, *UCSB PBS Admissions Committee* (2023 Admissions Cycle)

President, *Cognito Board - Master Brain and Cognitive Science Student Union* (Sept 2020 - Aug 2021)

Head of PR and Communication, *Cognito Board* (2019-2020)

ADHOC REVIEWING

Quarterly Journal of Psychology, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, European Journal of Psychology Open

MENTORING EXPERIENCE

Tara Sarkar (Graduate student mentee, TAAP 2025-)

Celine Tsoi (Graduate student mentee 2024-)

Meghety Mikhaelian (Access Grads Mentee 2024-2025)

Gabriela Palafox (Access Grads Mentee 2024-2025)

Drake Zimmerman (RA, 2024-)

Tianhao Qin (RA, 2024-)

Jackeline Hernandez-Cuevas (RA, FRAP Award Winner, 2023-2024)

Jazmin Vazquez (RA, FRAP Award Winner, 2023-2024)

Julie Acevesamezola (RA, FRAP Award Winner, 2023-2024)

Sydney Scott (RA, FRAP Award Winner, 2022-2024)

Isaiah Lopez (FRAP award: Winter 2024)

Shannon Twomey (RA, 2023-2024)
 Xitlali Velazquez (Access Grads Mentee 2024-2025)
 Kangning Yu (Access Grads Mentee 2023-2024)
 Miles Anim-Appiah (UC-HBCU Summer Intern, Honor's thesis student)
 Maggie Grisco (Honor's thesis student, Gene & Susan Lucas Undergraduate Research Award 2022-2023, URCA award 2022-2023)
 Hannah Yoon (URCA award 2022-2023)
 Anna-Sofia Guerra (Access Grads Mentee; 2022-2025)
 Luisa Fernanda Escamilla (Access Grads Mentee; 2022-2023)
 Kim Tran (Access Grads Mentee; 2022-2023)
 Irena Wong (RA, FRAP Award; Fall 2022)
 Joseph Chang (RA, FRAP award Spring 2022)
 Jimi Tysza (RA, FRAP Award; Spring 2022)
 Robert Hinojos (RA, FRAP award; Winter 2022)
 Jordan Nyitrai (Access Grads Mentee; 2021-2022)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record

Instructor of Record, PSY102: <i>Introduction to Social Psychology</i> , UCSB	Summer 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student assessment: Mean=4.71; Median=5; n=38 <i>The instructor explained course material in a way that helped me learn</i> (scale: 5=strongly agree; 1=strongly disagree) 	
Instructor of Record, PSY102: <i>Introduction to Social Psychology</i> , UCSB	Summer 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average Student Assessment: Mean=4.85; Median=5; n=27 	

Teaching Assistant

Teaching Assistant, PSY150L: <i>Lab in Social Psychology</i> , UCSB	Spring 2025
Teaching Assistant, PSY10B: <i>Introduction to Statistics</i> , UCSB	Winter 2025
Teaching Assistant (Admin), PSY10B: <i>Introduction to Statistics</i> , UCSB	Fall 2024
Teaching Assistant (Admin), PSY1: <i>Introduction to Psychology</i> , UCSB	Fall 2024
Teaching Assistant (Admin), PSY102: <i>Introduction to Social Psychology</i> , UCSB	Spring 2024
Teaching Assistant, PSY10B: <i>Introduction to Statistics</i> , UCSB	Winter 2024
Teaching Assistant, PSY10B: <i>Introduction to Statistics</i> , UCSB	Winter 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average Student Assessment: Mean=1; Median=1; n=5 (scale: 1=excellent; 5=poor) 	
Teaching Assistant (Admin), PSY152: <i>Social Cognition</i> , UCSB	Fall 2022
Teaching Assistant (Admin), PSY150L: <i>Lab in Social Psychology</i> , UCSB	Spring 2022
Teaching Assistant, <i>Introduction to Statistics</i> , UCSB	Winter 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average Student Assessment: Mean=1; Median=1; n=9 (scale: 1=excellent; 5=poor) 	Fall 2021
Teaching Assistant, PSY100: <i>Introduction to Psychology</i> , UC Santa Barbara	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average Student Assessment: Mean=1.36; Median=1; n=52 (scale: 1=excellent; 5=poor) 	
Teaching Assistant, <i>Milestones, Promises & Pitfalls</i> , University of Amsterdam	Fall 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average Student Assessment: 9/10 	

GUEST LECTURES

Ma de Sousa A. Q. Intergroup Relations. (2025, May). Invited Guest Lecture, Social Neuroscience Course (UCSB): Prof. Hongbo Yu

Ma de Sousa A. Q. Replication & Open Science (2024, October). Invited Guest Lecture, Introduction to Social Psychology Course (UCSB): Prof. Hongbo Yu

Ma de Sousa A. Q. Replication & Open Science (2024, April). Invited Guest Lecture, Introduction to Social Psychology Course (UCSB): Prof. Hongbo Yu

Ma de Sousa A. Q. Intergroup Relations. (2024, February). Invited Guest Lecture, Social Neuroscience Course (UCSB): Prof. Hongbo Yu

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

International Society for Research on Emotion	2022-Present
European Society for Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience	2025-Present
Society for Personality and Social Psychology	2020-Present
Social Affective Neuroscience Society	2021-Present
Society for Affective Science	2022-Present
International Society for Self and Social Identity	2022-2023
Society for Social Neuroscience	2020-2022

OTHER SKILLS

Languages: English (Native), French (Native), Spanish (Intermediate), Mandarin (Intermediate-Spoken; Basic-written), Italian (Intermediate), German (Basic), Dutch (Basic)

Statistical Software: R, JASP, SPSS

Programming Languages: Python, Matlab, JavaScript

Neuroimaging software & Packages: FSL, SPM, xjview, MRICroGL

Other Software and Packages: Psiturk, Amazon MTurk, Inquisit, E-Prime

Online Research Platforms: Survey Monkey, Qualtrics