

Robert Contofalsky

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EDUCATION

Rutgers University

Ph.D., Cognitive Psychology

- Advisor: Jacob Feldman

Concordia University

Graduate Diploma, Computer Science

McGill University

Bachelor of Arts, Psychology Major; History minor

- CGPA: 3.63/4.00; CGPA of most recent 60 credits: 3.83/4.00
- Thesis: *Supervised Learning of Auditory Categories: A Pilot Study*

New Brunswick, United States

September 2024 - Present

Montreal, Canada

September 2023 - April 2024

Montreal, Canada

January 2019 - September 2022

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

- **Socially Cognizant Robotics for a Technology Enhanced Society - SOCRATES**, Rutgers University, Fall 2024-2025 \$36, 295/year
- **Tomlinson Engagement Award for Mentoring**, McGill University, Fall 2021, \$300

PUBLICATIONS

- Poulson, S., Skvortsova, A., Paz, L., Cui, W., Mandatori, A., Burek, J., Zahra, F., Dinh, A., Boorman, D., Liang, L., **Contofalsky, R.**, & Mogil, J. (2025). Cholecystokinin input from the anterior cingulate cortex to the lateral periaqueductal gray mediates nocebo pain behavior in mice. *Manuscript under review; Nature Communications*.
- Koestner, R., & **Contofalsky, R.** (2021). The Psychological Effects of The COVID-19 Pandemic on Young Adults: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective. *McGill Journal of Human Behaviour*, 1(1), 89-103

PRESENTATIONS

Conference Presentations

- **Contofalsky, R.** (2025). Uniting Physics and Perception: How Constructal Law Governs Human Categorization. 15th Constructal Law Conference (CLC2025). Miami, FL, United States. [[video](#)] [[certificate](#)]

Invited Talks

- **Contofalsky, R.** (2024). Estimating The Reproducibility Of Psychological Science. Invited Speaker for the Tanenbaum Open Science Institute (TOSI) ReproducibiliTea Journal Club. Montreal, Canada.

Poster Presentations

- **Contofalsky, R.**, Feldman, J. (2025). Beyond Mutual Information: Does Utility Affect Categorical Perception? Rutgers Annual Robotics Workshop.
- **Contofalsky, R.**, Feldman, J. (2025). Beyond Mutual Information: Does Utility Affect Categorical Perception? Rutgers Annual Cognitive Science Forum.
- Andrews, C., Angne, H., **Contofalsky, R.**, Dana, K., Padilla Garcia, R., & Wilson, A. (2025). Better anticipating the geographies of robotic and autonomous systems. Paper Presentation at the American Association of Geographers (AAG) 2025 Annual Meeting. Detroit, MI, United States.
- Skvortsova, A., Carrier, S., **Contofalsky, R.**, & Lima V. L. (2022). Nocebo Hyperalgesia In Male but Not Female Mice Is Mediated by CCK-B Receptors. Poster Presentation at the IASP 2022 World Congress on Pain. Toronto, Canada.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

McGill University

Undergraduate Teaching Assistant, Department of Psychology

Montreal, Canada

September 2021 - December 2021

- Course: PSYC 332, Intro to Personality
- Assisted in the delivery of course content to a class of 400 students
- Gave class tutorials, generating and evaluating exam material, enhancing course instruction

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- Rutgers University** New Brunswick, NJ
- Cognitive Psychology Brown-Bag Series – Organizer & Host*
- Independent weekly colloquium with Faculty & Students, advancing scientific discussions & research projects
 - Focused on Student-led presentations in front of the cognitive psychology area
 - Provided formal speaking opportunities for PhD students to fulfill dissertation presentation requirements and gain experience presenting research to faculty

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

- R-Academy** - Founder, Host & Producer June 2023 - Present
- Platforms: YouTube, Spotify, Apple Podcasts — robertcontofalsky.com/#podcast*
- Creator and producer of an academic podcast dedicated to breaking down complex scientific concepts for a general audience, bridging the gap between academia and the public
 - Featured discussions and interviews on various topics; cognitive science, linguistics, moral psychology, and neuroscience, ultimately translating them into relatable and understandable narratives
 - Conducted extensive literature reviews for each episode, ensuring accuracy and comprehensiveness

PRE-DOCTORAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- Intact Financial Corporation** Montreal, Canada
- Behavioural Science Intern – IntactLAB* January 2023 - June 2023
- Created an internal emotional resilience program; increasing employee retention across Canada
 - Analyzed data for 2000+ employees with R; informing company interventions
 - Optimized sales processes for IFC products using various cognitive bias tools
 - Bi-weekly solution presentations to stakeholders led to the adoption of key strategies
 - Conducted a SWOT analysis on AI, contributing to the creation of a roadmap for AI integration

- Douglas Mental Health University Institute** Montreal, Canada
- Research Assistant - Eating Disorders Continuum* June 2022 - September 2022
- Developed an online psychoeducation tool using LimeSurvey & Qualtrics
 - Translated grant proposals, study materials, and email communications from English to French
 - Managed a database with over 6000 participants & 6000 variables using Excel & SPSS
 - Organized weekly group therapy sessions for 4 clinicians to serve 15-30 patients each

- MOGILab** McGill University
- Thesis Student (Principal Investigator: Prof. J. Mogil)* September 2021 - September 2022
- Conducted research on mice & humans regarding the novel “nocebo conditioned hyperalgesia effect”
 - Performed ANOVA's on over 400 mice and controlling for 3 independent factors using Excel & SPSS
 - Upcoming publication expected

- Communication and Consciousness Lab** McGill University
- Thesis Student (Principal Investigator: Prof. S. Harnad)* December 2020 - September 2021
- Designed and managed a pilot study in auditory categorical perception in humans using Python and Javascript for website building
 - Executed Regression Analyses on four sets of 100 supervised learning trials each, using Excel and SPSS, to determine the presence of an auditory categorical perception effect

- McGill University Health Centre** McGill University
- Research Assistant (Principal Investigator: Prof. M.O. Martel)* August 2020 - September 2021
- Aided a chronic back pain study; collected data, recruited patients, organized study materials

- Received high praise and recognition for singlehandedly recruiting over 70% of the active participants
- McGill Human Motivation Lab** McGill University
Thesis Student (Principal Investigator: Prof. R. Koestner) May 2020 - October 2020
- Invited by Dr. Koestner to analyze longitudinal data on Covid lockdown impacts on students from a Self-Determination Theory lens
 - Conducted Regression Analyses & ANOVA's on 380 participants across 5-time periods using SPSS
 - Research efforts culminated in a co-authored publication in *The McGill Journal of Human Behaviour*

UNPUBLISHED PROJECTS

- [Contofalsky, R., Gastellu, N., McGuinness, B., Al Kharusi, S. \(2023\) Can ChatGPT Accurately Represent Human Moral Reasoning?](#)

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **Organizational Software:** Advanced Microsoft Office, Zoom & Microsoft Teams, Google Drive, Sharepoint
- **Statistical Software:** Advanced SPSS, Intermediate R
- **Programming:** Intermediate C++, Java, Python, HTML/CSS, SQL & Beginner PHP
- **Bibliographic tools:** Zotero
- **Digital Media Production & Broadcasting:** Adobe Premiere Pro, Adobe Audition, Photoshop, YouTube Studio, Spotify for Podcasters & Apple Podcasts

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

- English (Native Speaker)
- French (High level reading, writing and speaking)
- Slovak (Basic level reading and speaking)

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

- Private Neuropsychologist Clinic** Montreal, Canada
Personal Assistant January 2020 - January 2021
- Supervisor: Dr. Genevieve Gagnon
 - Helped with administrative tasks in a private clinic

WORK EXPERIENCE

- Bar Bello** Montreal, Canada
Waiter July 2023 - August 2024
- Collaborated closely with bartenders, ensuring timely restocking and seamless service
 - Engaged with a diverse clientele to foster a welcoming environment
 - Expanded knowledge of drink mixology
- Health Care Relocation** Montreal, Canada
Hospital Relocation Technician May 2021 - August 2021
- Deployed across various hospitals, successfully adapting to various working environments
 - Managed cross-hospital equipment relocations, ensuring operational integrity and safety compliance.
 - Inspected and maintained medical equipment integrity within health and safety compliance parameters
- Costco Wholesale** Saint-Bruno, Canada
Meat Department Assistant June 2018 - May 2022
- Served 20+ members daily, enhancing satisfaction and earning team lead praise
 - Resolved member issues personally by coordinating with over 6 departments
 - Helped achieve weekly targets, generating \$300,000 in weekly profit
- McDonald's Corporation** Greenfield Park, Canada
Team leader September 2016 - June 2018

- Led a team of 15 employees to run the most profitable franchise in the South Shore
- Recognized for being among the top 10 fastest drive-thrus in Canada

REFERENCES

- **Dr. Jacob Feldman**
Professor, Department of Psychology; Rutgers University
Email: jacob@ruccs.rutgers.edu
- **Dr. Richard Koestner**
Professor, Department of Psychology; McGill University
Email: richard.koestner@mcgill.ca
- **Dr. Marc-Olivier Martel**
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Dentistry; McGill University
Email: marc.o.martel@mcgill.ca
- **Dr. Jeffrey Mogil**
E.P. Taylor Professor, Department of Psychology; McGill University
Email: Jeffrey.Mogil@mcgill.ca
- **Dr. Stevan Harnad**
Adjunct Professor, Department of Psychology; McGill University, UQAM, Soton
Email: harnad@uqam.ca