

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

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

- 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

Montreal, Canada

September 2021 - December 2021

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Rutgers University

Cognitive Psychology Brown-Bag Series – Organizer & Host

- Independent weekly colloquium with Faculty & Students, advancing scientific discussions & research projects

New Brunswick, NJ

- 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

Personal Assistant

Montreal, Canada
January 2020 - January 2021

- Supervisor: Dr. Genevieve Gagnon
- Helped with administrative tasks in a private clinic

WORK EXPERIENCE

Bar Bello

Waiter

Montreal, Canada
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

Hospital Relocation Technician

Montreal, Canada
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

Meat Department Assistant

Saint-Bruno, Canada
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

Team leader

Greenfield Park, Canada
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@rucss.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