

JESSICA STEPHENSON

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EDUCATION

New York University, New York, NY

M.S. in Applied Statistics for Social Science Research

Sept. 2023 - Dec. 2025

Concentration: Data Science for Social Impact

GPA 3.9

Rutgers University Honors College, New Brunswick, NJ

B.A. in Cognitive Science, Minor: Philosophy (Cum Laude)

Sept. 2017 - May 2021

Major: 4.0, Overall: 3.7

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

West Interpersonal Perception Lab, New York University

July 2023 - Present

Quantitative Research Associate | Dr. Tessa West

Assisting with data wrangling and cleaning in R, automating transcription workflows, and developing a Sales-force database to streamline participant recruitment. Research explores how status, power, and group dynamics influence persuasion and relationships across real-world settings.

Conceptual Development and Social Cognition Lab, New York University

July 2022 - Present

Research Associate | Dr. Marjorie Rhodes

Designing and conducting studies to examine how children and adults use pragmatic cues to interpret generic language and form essentialist beliefs, while generating empirical data to inform a Bayesian model of this developmental pathway. This work uses video stimuli and Qualtrics surveys for data collection, and analysis is done in R. First author of a full publication with poster presentation at Cognitive Science 2025 conference.

Mind and Development Lab, Yale University

May 2021 - June 2022

Research Assistant | Dr. Paul Bloom

Supported research on how children and adults evaluate moral standing in humans, animals, and robots, and how they reason about the nature of morality. Contributed to study design, administered structured interviews with child participants, scheduled study appointments, conducted literature reviews, and assisted with manuscript preparation.

Dept. of Neuroscience and Cell Biology, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Sept. 2018 - June 2022

Research Associate | Dr. Mladen-Roko Rasin

Conducted wet-lab cellular biology research on neuronal development, focusing on post-transcriptional regulation in the central nervous system. Collected experimental data and supported lab operations. Created a searchable database of experimental reagents. Co-authored a peer-reviewed publication in *Nature Communications*.

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

July 2025

Speaker knowledge modulates the effects of generic language on essentialist beliefs

[Forthcoming at CogSci 2025]

June 2021

Dehumanization of Prisoners as a Function of Punitive Attitudes [Poster]

April 2021

Eccentric Beliefs: Bayesianism, The Psychological Immune System, and Post-Racial Worldviews

[Senior Honors Thesis, Advised by Dr. Andrew Egan] [[🔗](#)]

April 2020

Translational derepression of Elavl4 isoforms at their alternative 5' UTRs determines neuronal development [co-authored publication] [[🔗](#)]

May 2019

The Role of Ribosomal Protein L7 in Developing Neocortical Neurons [Poster]

SKILLS

Technical Tools:

Programming: R (e.g., tidyverse, ggplot2), Python (e.g., pandas, seaborn), Java

Reproducible research: RMarkdown, Quarto, Overleaf, LaTeX

Database and Survey: REDCap, Qualtrics, Airtable, Salesforce

Research: Zotero, Google Scholar, other scholarly databases

Publishing: Git/GitHub, Microsoft Office Suite, Google Drive, Adobe Creative Cloud, Wordpress

Methods & Analysis:

Supervised learning & statistical modeling:

- Linear, logistic, multilevel, and Bayesian regression (including MCMC)
- regularized regression (Lasso, Ridge)
- Tree-based methods (decision trees, random forests, gradient boosting),
- Model validation and optimization (cross-validation, hyperparameter tuning, model selection)

Unsupervised learning & measurement models:

- Item response theory
- Clustering (k-means, k-prototypes, hierarchical, model-based, latent class analysis,
- Dimensionality reduction (factor analysis, PCA)

Causal inference:

- Propensity score matching
- regression discontinuity, difference-in-difference,
- instrumental variables
- sensitivity analysis

Text analysis & NLP:

- Tokenization, POS tagging, word embeddings, document-term matrix construction
- sentiment analysis, topic modeling, thematic coding

Other Skills:

Experimental Design: Stimuli design, survey and task design, pre-registration, pilot-testing, data collection

Research administration: Database development, public engagement, IRB preparation, scheduling appointments

Teaching: curriculum development, inclusive pedagogy, mentorship

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

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|---|-----------------------------------|
| • Statistical Computing (in R) | • Multi-Level Modeling |
| • Causal Inference | • Messy Data and Machine Learning |
| • Frequentist Inference | • Psychometric Measurement |
| • Bayesian Inference | • Ethics of Data Science |
| • Practicum in Applied Statistic: Probability | • Data for Social Impact |
| • Intermediate Quantitative Methods | • Data Journalism |
| • Generalized Linear Models and Extensions | • Philosophy of Mind |

AWARDS

2017-2021

Rutgers James Dickson Carr Scholarship Recipient

2018-2019

Rutgers Aresty Undergraduate Research Fellowship

2021

Rutgers Paul Robeson Scholar

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies

Sept. 2024 - Present

Adjunct Lecturer, Statistics for Social Change

Designing and teaching an undergraduate course connecting statistical methods to social justice and public policy. Facilitating inclusive classroom discussions on bias, fairness, and the role of data in shaping social systems.

BabyChildTeen@NYU

July 2022 - Present

Recruitment Coordinator

Managing multi-lab participant recruitment for the BabyChildTeen@NYU research group. Designing and maintaining public-facing communications and websites. Building partnerships with organizations and leading community workshops to increase engagement with developmental research. Maintaining a centralized participant database used by 8 labs and overseeing the development of a new system for recruitment tracking, participant outreach, and data management.

Rutgers University Digital Writing Center

Sept. 2020 – May 2021

Tutor

Participated in a semester long internship studying various pedagogic theories and applied theoretical tutoring frameworks in one-on-one tutoring sessions with undergraduate students taking introductory language composition courses.

Rutgers Chapter of Nu Rho Psi National Honors Society

Sept. 2019 – May 2021

Vice President

Organized community outreach and fundraising events to support brain health organizations. Planned an Undergraduate Research Symposium to expand opportunities for students to present their work and gain experience in academic research. Mentored underclassmen on topics related to academic success, navigating research opportunities, and building confidence in scholarly environments.

The Mental Note Journal

Aug. 2019 – May 2020

Editor

Participated in a double blind, three-tier review process of original college-level research papers, theoretical works, and commentaries pertaining to the Cognitive Sciences.