

Alexander Porto

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EDUCATION

- Duquesne University (Dept. Psychology)** 2022–present
Ph.D. Clinical Psychology
Anticipated Graduation: Dec. 2027/May 2028
Dissertation: *Foundational Properties of Communicative Systems*
Committee: Alex Kranjec, Ph.D., Christine Cuskley, Ph.D., Marcus Perlman, Ph.D., Elizabeth Nickrenz, Ph.D.
Pittsburgh, PA, USA
- Duquesne University (Dept. Psychology)** 2022–2023
M.A. Clinical Psychology
Pittsburgh, PA, USA
- Universität Leipzig** 2018–2020
M.Sc. Early Childhood Research (Focus: Developmental Psychology & Cognitive Anthropology)
Thesis: *A Critical Theory of Childhood Research*
Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Kristina Musholt, Prof. Dr. Patricia Kanngießer
Leipzig, Germany
- Point Park University** 2011–2015
B.A. Psychology
Thesis: *Phenomenological Responses to Architectural Environments*
Pittsburgh, PA, USA

ACADEMIC POSITIONS & EMPLOYMENT

- Universität Leipzig**
Predoctoral Research Fellow 2021–2022
Project: The Production of Symbolic Communication During Language Acquisition
- Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology (Dept. Comparative Cultural Psychology)**
Guest Researcher 2021–2022
Project: The Production of Symbolic Communication During Language Acquisition
- Universität Leipzig**
Graduate Research Assistant 2019–2020
Project: Emotions & Social Cognition
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Robert Hepach
- Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology (Dept. Comparative Cultural Psychology)**
Research Internship 2019–2020
Project: Social Learning in Austronesian Cultures
Supervisors: Dr. Roman Stengelin, Dr. Sarah Peoples

PRACTICUM, PSYCHOTHERAPY & COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY EXPERIENCE

- Doctoral Practicum** Aug. 2025–May 2026
Carnegie Mellon University, Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS)
Pittsburgh, PA
Clinical Supervisors: Stella Yan, Ph.D., Shane Chaplin, Ph.D., Grace Wei, Ph.D., NCC
Responsibilities: Provide individual psychotherapy to undergraduate and graduate students presenting with anxiety, depression, OCD, identity concerns, and adjustment issues within a brief therapy framework (14-session model); conduct intake assessments, treatment planning, and case conceptualization; interpret weekly outcome measures (CCAPS); conduct acute risk assessments and safety planning; serve diverse student populations including international students and LGBTQ+ individuals; collaborate as part of an interdisciplinary team with psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and university liaisons; utilize integrative interventions including psychodynamic (time-limited dynamic therapy), cognitive-behavioral (MBCT/CBT), and humanistic (Gestalt) approaches, as well as MI; participate in weekly group supervision and didactic seminars with fellow practicum trainees and doctoral interns.

Doctoral Practicum

Jan. 2022–May 2026

Duquesne University, Rita M. McGinley Psychology Clinic
Pittsburgh, PA

Clinical Supervisors: Kevin Smith, Ph.D., Liz Pienkos, Ph.D., Lori Koelsch, Ph.D., Jessie Goicoechea, Ph.D.

Responsibilities: Provide long-term individual outpatient psychotherapy (18-36+ months) to community patients (ages 18-60) presenting with major depression, anxiety disorders, borderline personality disorder, substance use disorders, and adjustment difficulties; conduct comprehensive psychodiagnostic assessments for differential diagnosis utilizing objective and projective measures (MMPI-2, PAI, Rorschach R-PAS, NEO PI-R/FFI, TAT SCORS-G System, Sentence Completion, Bender-Gestalt, OQ-45); complete integrated psychological assessment reports and provide feedback sessions to clients; deliver psychotherapy using integrative approaches including intensive short-term dynamic psychotherapy, relational psychodynamic therapy, MBCT/CBT, DBT, and Gestalt therapy; serve diverse clients including male, female, and LGBTQ+ identified individuals; participate in group supervision during summer terms; present seminar-based case material; provide peer consultation.

Community-Based Psychology Fellow

2022–2023

Duquesne University
Pittsburgh, PA

Responsibilities: Collaborated with ARYSE (a refugee resettlement organization) to develop culturally responsive mental health programming for refugee populations; conducted literature review on evidence-based interventions for trauma and acculturation stress; provided supervision and mentorship to undergraduate assistants in the design and presentation of community-based interventions; supported dissemination of program recommendations to community stakeholders and mental health practitioners.

PUBLICATIONS

Porto, A., Huckle, N., Basalyga, A., Santiago, J., Kranjec, A. (2025). Glyph Norming: Human and Computational Measurements of Shape Angularity in Writing Systems. *Behavior Research Methods*. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-025-02682-7>

Porto, A., Basalyga, A., Huckle, N., Santiago, J., Fein, E., Kranjec, A. (2024). Sound Symbolism Across Diverse Writing Systems. *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society*. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3xc6659p>.

Brar, P., Pienkos, L., **Porto, A.**, Wood, H., Sarpal, D., Schreiber, J., Kalarchian, M., Kranjec, A. (2024). Methods and Models for Investigating Anomalous Experiences in Schizophrenia Spectrum Disorders. *Philosophical Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09515089.2024.2305232>.

Contributions: Wrote section on network modeling; general consulting on manuscript development

Porto, A. (under review: revisions submitted; draft available by request). Probabilistic claiming as meta-comparative practice.

Porto, A. (under review; draft available by request). Inference, Language, Situated Conceptualization.

Porto, A. (under review; draft available by request). Naturalizing Negation.

Porto, A. (2023). A Picture Theory of Symbolic Development in Early Childhood. *Theory & Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09593543231192973>

Porto, A., Anderson, L., Kalinich, T., Deane, K. C., Vogel, L. C., Zebracki, K. (2019). Understanding transition for youth with spinal cord injury: Youth and caregiver perceptions. *The Journal of Spinal Cord Medicine*, 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10790268.2019.1574437>

PUBLICATIONS IN PREPARATION

Porto, A., Huckle, N., Basalyga, A., Cuskley, C., Perlman, M., Kranjec, A. (in preparation). Sound-Form Iconicity in Spontaneously Produced Drawings.

Status: Data collected; data analyzed; manuscript in development; abstract and data available by request.

Porto, A., Pietschmann, J., Seiberth, L.C. (in preparation). Jumblese in Experimental Reconstruction: Nominalism, Picturing, and Representational Systems.

Status: Data collected; data analyzed; manuscript written; three workshop presentations given; in informal peer review; abstract and data available by request.

Porto, A., Pietschmann, J., Seiberth, L.C. (in preparation). Jumblese, Picturing, and Representational Systems.

Status: Philosophical scoping review complete; manuscript written; two colloquium presentations; in informal peer review; abstract available by request.

CONFERENCE, WORKSHOP & COLLOQUIUM PRESENTATIONS

(†) *invited*

(*) *refereed*

Porto, A. (2025, October). *Interlocutor: Rules, Functions & Categories—A Workshop on Wilfrid Sellars*[†] [Invited Respondent]. Universität Paderborn.

Porto, A., Pietschmann, J., Seiberth, L. C. (2025, April). *Jumblese, picturing, and representational systems*[†] [Invited presentation]. CO Haag—Universität Potsdam.

Porto, A., Tilak, S., Pangaro, P., Glassman, M. (2025, August). *A lexical analysis of essays written using the ThoughtShuffler and Google search interfaces** [Conference presentation]. American Psychological Association Annual Convention.

Porto, A. (2025, January). *Naturalizing negation*[†] [Invited conference presentation]. Wittgenstein & the Formal Sciences IV, UNESCO World Logic Day.

Porto, A. (2024, December). *Naturalizing negation: Responding to the threefold puzzle of negation* [Colloquium]. Young Network for Wittgensteinian Philosophy.

Porto, A. (2024, July). *Sound symbolism across diverse writing systems** [Conference presentation]. 46th Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society.

Porto, A. (2024, June). *Sound symbolism across diverse writing systems** [Conference presentation]. IMPRS 4th Conference on Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Language Sciences, International Max Planck School for Language Sciences.

Porto, A. (2024, May). *Sound symbolism across diverse writing systems** [Conference presentation accepted]. The Developing Communicators Conference 2024, University of Oslo.

Porto, A. (2024, May). *Sound symbolism across diverse writing systems** [Conference presentation accepted]. 15th Dubrovnik Conference on Cognitive Science: Memory, Space, Language, Center for Advanced Studies of Dubrovnik, Croatia.

Porto, A. (2024, May). *The picture theory of symbolic development in early childhood** [Conference presentation accepted]. 15th Dubrovnik Conference on Cognitive Science: Memory, Space, Language, Center for Advanced Studies of Dubrovnik, Croatia.

Porto, A. (2024, May). *Positive and negative predication: Distinction through unity** [Conference presentation]. Joint Meeting of the Interdisciplinary Coalition for North American Phenomenologists & The Society of Phenomenology and the Human Sciences, Duquesne University.

Porto, A. (2024, April). *The picture theory of symbolic development in early childhood** [Conference presentation]. Midwinter Meeting of the Society for Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology, Duquesne University.

Porto, A., Flynn, C., Dall'Aglia, J. (2024, April). *Drawing connections: Ideas and applications of expressive activity in the clinic* [Conference Presentation]. Midwinter Meeting of the Society for Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology, Duquesne University.

Porto, A. (2024, April). *The picture theory of symbolic development in early childhood** [Conference presentation]. Conference of Multimodality in Early Interactions for ECRs, University of Warwick.

Porto, A. (2022, October). *Reified childhood: Social reification during child development** [Conference presentation]. Emory Symposium for Psychoanalysis & Politics, Emory University.

Porto, A., Anderson, L., Zebracki, K., Deane, K., Vogel, L. (2018, June). *Barriers in accessing adult healthcare for transitioning youth with spinal cord injury** [Conference presentation]. 57th Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Spinal Cord Society.

Porto, A., Anderson, L., Zebracki, K., Deane, K., Vogel, L. (2018, May). *Barriers in accessing adult healthcare for transitioning youth with spinal cord injury** [Conference presentation]. 72nd Annual Meeting of the American Academy for Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Medicine.

Porto, A. (2015, April). *Phenomenological responses to architectural environments* [Conference presentation]. Eighth Annual Meeting of the Society for Humanistic Psychology (APA Division 32).

TEACHING

Statistics for the Psychological Sciences

Spring 2025

Duquesne University (Dept. Psychology)

Responsibilities: Designed new course for the department using R programming and open-source textbooks to create an undergraduate-appropriate intro to statistical programming for psychology; developed syllabus; delivered lectures; administered and graded portfolio exams.

Research Methods in Psychology

Fall 2024, Fall 2025

Duquesne University (Dept. Psychology)

Responsibilities: Developed syllabus; delivered lectures; administered exams; graded coursework; provided undergraduate research mentorship.

Introduction to Psychology

Fall 2023, Spring 2024

Duquesne University (Dept. Psychology)

Responsibilities: Developed syllabus; delivered lectures; administered exams; graded coursework.

Psychological Disorders (Teaching Assistant)

Spring 2023

Duquesne University (Dept. Psychology)

Supervisor: Russ Walsh, Ph.D.

Responsibilities: Graded coursework and exams.

Laboratory in Psychology (Teaching Assistant)

Fall 2022

Duquesne University (Dept. Psychology)

Supervisor: Alex Kranjec, Ph.D.

Responsibilities: Provided undergraduate research mentorship; graded coursework.

Empirical Methods in Early Childhood Research II (Teaching Assistant)

Spring 2020

Universität Leipzig (Dept. Early Childhood Research)

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Robert Hepach

Responsibilities: Supervised master's students in research planning, design, and statistical analysis.

AWARDS, FUNDING & HONORS

Graduate Student Award for Excellence in Teaching

2025–2026

Duquesne University (Dept. Psychology)

Honorarium: \$250.00

Pre-Doctoral Fellowship Award

2021–2022

Universität Leipzig

Research funding: 15,600.00€

Full Scholarship

2019–2020

Capra Course: The Systems View of Life (Schumacher College & Fritjof Capra)

Dean's List Honors

2013, 2015

Point Park University (Dept. Psychology)

SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP & ADDITIONAL SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY

Academic Consultant

2025–present

Laboratory for Cybernetics

Carnegie Mellon University, School of Architecture

Organizing Member

2024–2025

#NewMacy In-Person Meetings

Carnegie Mellon University, School of Architecture

*jointly organized with Paul Pangaro***Visiting Student**

Fall 2023

University of Pittsburgh (Dept. Philosophy)

Sellars as a Metaphysician: Norms and Nature, Appearance and Reality

Invited by Robert Brandom, Ph.D.

Full Member

Young Network for Wittgensteinian Philosophy

Student Member

Cognitive Science Society

Full Member

American Society for Cybernetics

Reviewer

Journal of Humanistic Psychology

Reviewer

Topics in Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation

COMPETENCIES & LANGUAGES

- **Psychological Assessment:** MMPI-2, PAI, CCAPS, BDI/BDI-Y, BAI/BAI-Y, HAM-A, GAD-7, NEO PI-R/FFI, TAT SCORS-G System, Rorschach R-PAS, Sentence Completion, Bender-Gestalt, OQ-45
- **Therapeutic Modalities:** Time-Limited Dynamic Therapy, Intensive Short-Term Dynamic Psychotherapy, Relational Psychodynamic Therapy, MBCT/CBT, DBT, Motivational Interviewing, Gestalt Therapy, Systemic Therapy
- **Clinical Competencies:** Intake Assessment, Treatment Planning, Case Conceptualization, Risk Assessment, Crisis Intervention, Integrated Psychological Report Writing, Assessment Feedback Sessions, Interdisciplinary Collaboration
- **Research Methods:** Experimental Design, Mixed-Methods Research, Computational Modeling, Data Analysis (Bayesian and Frequentist), Philosophical Analysis, Literature Review, Manuscript Development
- **Supervision & Training:** Undergraduate Research Mentorship, Master's Student Supervision, Peer Consultation, Group Peer Consultation
- **Programming:** R, Python (PyGaze, PsychoPy), jsPsych, SPSS, Pure Data, OpenPose, GitHub, OpenMusic, Jupyter Notebooks, ChucK, lab.js, HTML, Qualtrics, L^AT_EX
- **Languages:** English (Native Language), German (CEFR C1), French (CEFR A2–B1)

ACTIVE RESEARCH

Dissertation Research: Foundational Properties of Communicative Systems

Committee: Alex Kranjec, Ph.D., Christine Cuskley, Ph.D., Marcus Perlman, Ph.D., Elizabeth Nickrenz, Ph.D.

Academic Status: Proposal Approved Spring 2025

Publication Status: Studies 1 and 2 have been published.

Time-frame: Aug. 2023–present (defense anticipated Spring 2027)

Brief Abstract: I provide a framework for experimentally reconstructing the evolution of language. I open the dissertation by building a bridge between cognitive linguistics and key movements in the history of philosophy of language. In five experiments, I then validate this bridge using state-of-the-art, cross-methodological techniques from computational cognitive science, linguistics, and philosophical analysis. ([Link to description](#))

Research Practicum: Situated Phenomenological Psychopathology

Supervisor: Liz Pienkos, Ph.D.

Time-frame: Aug. 2025–Dec. 2026

Note: Research independently developed and designed

Description: Philosophical research studying psychopathology from the point of view of phenomenology, embodied social cognition, and philosophy of language.

Anticipated Outcome: Manuscript submitted for publication

Independent Research: Where does vision go? Folk Psychological Conceptualizations of the Sense Modalities

Co-PI: Alex Kranjec, Ph.D.

Time-frame: July 2025–May 2026

Description: Experimental multi-method (behavioral and eye-tracking) research studying how people think about the sense modalities.

Anticipated Outcome: Manuscript submitted for publication

Independent Research: Naming, Verbing, and Symbolizing in Artificial Language Acquisition

Time-frame: May 2025–Dec. 2025

Description: Experimental behavioral research contributing to ongoing debates about category learning and word classes.

Anticipated Outcome: Manuscript submitted for publication

COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Alexander Kranjec

Christine Cuskley

Marcus Perlman

Luz Christopher Seiberth

Julio Santiago

Robert Hepach

Alexander Basalyga

Nikolai Huckle

Joost Pietschmann

Paul Pangaro

Liz Pienkos

Shantanu Tilak

REFERENCES

Dr. Alexander Kranjec

Department of Psychology, Duquesne University
email: kranjeca@duq.edu

Dr. Liz Pienkos

Department of Psychology, Duquesne University
email: pienkose@duq.edu

Prof. Dr. Kristina Musholt

Department of Philosophy (Chair of Cognitive Anthropology), Leipzig University
email: kristina.musholt@uni-leipzig.de

Prof. Dr. Patricia Kanngießner

School of Psychology, University of Plymouth
email: patricia.kanngiesser@plymouth.ac.uk

Prof. Dr. Robert Hepach

Oxford Department of Experimental Psychology, University of Oxford
email: robert.hepach@psy.ox.ac.uk