

# Alexander Porto

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**Research Focus:** social cognition, spontaneous semanticity, theoretical cognitive science, philosophy of mind & language

## EDUCATION

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- Duquesne University,** 2022 — ongoing  
Ph.D. Clinical Psychology  
Dissertation: *Foundational Properties of Communicative Systems*  
Committee: Alex Kranjec, Christine Cuskley, Marcus Perlman, Elizabeth Fein
- Duquesne University,** 2022 — 2023  
M.A. Clinical Psychology
- Universität Leipzig,** 2018 — 2020  
M.Sc. Early Childhood Research (Developmental Psychology & Cognitive Anthropology)  
Thesis: A Critical Theory of Childhood Research: Perspectives on Reification, Normativity, and Objectivity  
Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Kristina Musholt & Prof. Dr. Patricia Kanngießer
- Point Park University,** 2011 — 2015  
B.A. Psychology  
Thesis: Phenomenological Responses to Architectural Environments

## ACADEMIC POSITIONS

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

## PUBLICATIONS

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- 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 in process). Probabilistic claiming as meta-comparative practice. [Link to draft]
- Porto, A.** (under review). Naturalizing negation. [Link to draft]
- 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>

## CONFERENCE & COLLOQUIUM PRESENTATIONS

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(†) *invited*

(\*) *refereed*

### **A lexical analysis of essays written using the ThoughtShuffler and Google search interfaces\***

APA 2025

with Tilak, S., Pangaro, P., & Glassman, M.

August 2025

### **Naturalizing Negation†**

Wittgenstein & the Formal Sciences IV,

part of UNESCO World Logic Day

January 2025

### **Naturalizing Negation: Responding to the Threefold Puzzle of Negation**

Colloquium talk for Young Network for Wittgensteinian Philosophy

December 2024

### **Sound Symbolism Across Diverse Writing Systems\***

COGSCI 2024

Cognitive Science Society

July 2024

### **Sound Symbolism Across Diverse Writing Systems\***

IMPRS 4th Conference on Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Language Sciences

International Max Planck School for Language Sciences

June 2024

### **Sound Symbolism Across Diverse Writing Systems\***

The Developing Communicators Conference 2024,

University of Oslo

— accepted; unable to attend

May 2024

### **Sound Symbolism Across Diverse Writing Systems\***

15th Dubrovnik Conference on Cognitive Science: Memory, Space, Language

Center for Advanced Studies of Dubrovnik, Croatia

— accepted; unable to attend

May 2024

### **The Picture Theory of Symbolic Development in Early Childhood\***

15th Dubrovnik Conference on Cognitive Science: Memory, Space, Language

Center for Advanced Studies of Dubrovnik, Croatia

— accepted; unable to attend

May 2024

### **Positive and Negative Predication: Distinction Through Unity\***

Joint Meeting of the Interdisciplinary Coalition for North American Phenomenologists

& The Society of Phenomenology and the Human Sciences

Duquesne University

May 2024

### **The Picture Theory of Symbolic Development in Early Childhood\***

Midwinter Meeting of the Society for Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology

Duquesne University

April 2024

### **Drawing Connections: Ideas and Applications of Expressive Activity in the Clinic**

Midwinter Meeting of the Society for Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology

Duquesne University

— Workshop with Cathleen Flynn & John Dall'Aglia

April 2024

### **The Picture Theory of Symbolic Development in Early Childhood\***

Conference of Multimodality in Early Interactions for ECRs

University of Warwick

— accepted; unable to attend

April 2024

**Reified Childhood: Social Reification During Child Development\***

*Emory Symposium for Psychoanalysis & Politics*  
*Emory University*

October 2022

**Barriers in accessing adult healthcare for transitioning youth with spinal cord injury\***

*72nd Annual Meeting of the American Academy for Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Medicine*  
 — with Anderson, L., Zebracki, K., Deane, K., & Vogel, L.

May 2018

**Barriers in accessing adult healthcare for transitioning youth with spinal cord injury\***

*57th Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Spinal Cord Society*  
 — with Anderson, L., Zebracki, K., Deane, K., & Vogel, L.

June 2018

**Phenomenological Responses to Architectural Environments**

*Eighth Annual Meeting of the Society for Humanistic Psychology (APA Div. 32)*

April 2015

**TEACHING**

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**Statistics for the Psychological Sciences**

*Duquesne University*

Spring 2025

**Research Methods in Psychology**

*Duquesne University*

Fall 2024

**Introduction to Psychology**

*Duquesne University*

Fall 2023, Spring 2024

**Psychological Disorders (Teaching Assistant)**

*Duquesne University*

Spring 2023

**Laboratory in Psychology (Teaching Assistant)**

*Duquesne University*

Fall 2022

**Empirical Methods in Early Childhood Research II (Teaching Assistant)**

*Universität Leipzig*

Spring 2020

**CLINICAL EXPERIENCE**

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**Doctoral Practicum**

*Duquesne University*

*Rita M. McGinley Psychology Clinic*

Clinical Supervisor: Liz Pienkos, Ph.D.

2022 — 2025 (387.25 hours)

**Community-Based Psychology Fellow**

*Duquesne University*

2022 — 2023

Project: Program development (literature review, undergrad mentorship) for community-engaged service and research in partnership with ARYSE

**AWARDS & FUNDING**

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**Pre-Doctoral Fellowship Award**

*Universität Leipzig*

Research funding: 15,600€

2021 — 2022

**Full Scholarship**

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

2019 — 2020

**et cetera**

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**Academic Consultant**

2025—ongoing

*Laboratory for Cybernetics*

Carnegie Mellon University, School of Architecture

**Organizing Member**

#NewMacy In-Person Meetings

Carnegie Mellon University, School of Architecture

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

University of Pittsburgh, Dept. Philosophy (2023)

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

Invited by Robert Brandom

**Member**

Young Network for Wittgensteinian Philosophy

**Member**

Cognitive Science Society

**Member**

American Society for Cybernetics

**Reviewer**

Journal of Humanistic Psychology

**Reviewer**

Topics in Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation

**et cetera, et cetera**

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- **Programming:** R, Python (PyGaze, PsychoPy), SPSS, Pure Data, OpenPose, GitHub, OpenMusic, Jupyter Notebooks, ChucK, lab.js, HTML, Qualtrics, L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X
- **Languages:** English (Native Language), German (CEFR B2-C1), French (CEFR A2)

**COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

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Alexander Kranjec

Paul Pangaro

Christine Cuskley

Marcus Perlman

Luz Christopher Seiberth

Julio Santiago

Robert Hepach

Alexander Basalyga

Nikolai Huckle

Joost Pietschmann

Shantanu Tilak

**REFERENCES**

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**Dr. Alexander Kranjec**

Department of Psychology, Duquesne University

email: kranjeca@duq.edu

**Prof. Dr. Kristina Musholt**

Department of Philosophy (Chair of Cognitive Anthropology), Leipzig University

email: kristina.musholt@uni-leipzig.de

**Prof. Dr. Patricia Kanngiesser**

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