Alexander Porto

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

EDUCATION

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

Universität Leipzig
Predoctoral 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

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 in process). Probabilistic claiming as meta-comparative practice. [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

(†) *invited*

(*) *refereed*

Jumblese, Picturing, and Representational Systems[†]
CO Haag—Universität Potsdam
with Joost Pietschmann & Luz Christopher Seiberth   April 2025

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'Aglio   April 2024

The Picture Theory of Symbolic Development in Early Childhood*
Conference of Multimodality in Early Interactions for ECRs
University of Warwick 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

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

Doctoral Practicum 2022 — 2025 (400 hours)
Duquesne University
Rita M. McGinley Psychology Clinic
Clinical Supervisor: Liz Pienkos, Ph.D.

Community-Based Psychology Fellow 2022 — 2023
Duquesne University
Project: Program development (literature review, undergrad mentorship) for community-engaged service and research in partnership with ARYSE

AWARDS & FUNDING

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

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

- **Programming:** R, Python (PyGaze, PsychoPy), SPSS, Pure Data, OpenPose, GitHub, OpenMusic, Jupyter Notebooks, ChucK, lab.js, HTML, Qualtrics, LaTeX
- **Languages:** English (Native Language), German (CEFR B2-C1), French (CEFR A2)

COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Alexander Kranjec
Paul Pangaro
Christine Cuskley
Marcus Perlman
Luz Christopher Seiberth
Julio Santiago
Robert Hepach
Alexander Basalyga
Nikolai Huckle
Joost Pietschmann
Shantanu Tilak

REFERENCES

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