

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. (*forthcoming*). Glyph Norming: Human and Computational Measurements of Shape Angularity in Writing Systems. *Behavior Research Methods*. Preprint & Repository
- 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*

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

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

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

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, L^AT_EX
- **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