

Sergio Ponce de Leon
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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Consciousness science, philosophy of mind, artificial intelligence. Computational, philosophical, & empirical approaches.

EDUCATION

PhD, Cognitive and Information Sciences	2021 – 2026 (expected)
<i>University of California, Merced, School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts</i>	
Dissertation (in preparation): Consciousness, complexity, and silent neurons: Philosophical and empirical investigations for integrated information theory (IIT)	
MS, Cognitive and Information Sciences	2025
<i>University of California, Merced, School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts</i>	
MS, Information	2019
<i>University of Michigan, School of Information</i>	
Specializations: Human-Computer Interaction; Information Analysis and Retrieval	
Non-degree seeking coursework in mathematics & computer science	2005, 2015
<i>Washtenaw Community College</i>	
BS, Environment	2008
<i>University of Michigan, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts</i>	
Specialization: Urban and Environmental Planning	

TRAININGS & WORKSHOPS

MESEC Winter School 2024	March 19 – 23, 2024
<i>Mediterranean Society for Consciousness Science</i>	
Special Advanced Course: Integrated Information Theory of Consciousness	September 8 – 17, 2023
<i>Neuroscience School of Advanced Studies</i>	
9 th Science Factory: TMS–EEG Summer School and Workshop	May 27 – June 2, 2023
<i>Aalto University School of Science, Department of Neuroscience & Biomedical Engineering</i>	

SPONSORED RESEARCH

Funding Consciousness Research with Registered Reports	January 2023 – Present
<i>Templeton World Charity Foundation / Center for Open Science / ASSC</i>	
Project: Detecting differences in conscious contents using EEG complexity measures (Stage 1 IPA)	
Awarded: \$31,936 USD	

AWARDS

BrainStorm Neuroscience Pitch Competition Semi-finalist	June 2025
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Mind Science

Project: Does brain activity cause consciousness? A TMS experiment

Student Poster Competition (**2nd place**)

June 25, 2023

Association for the Scientific Study of Consciousness 26

Poster: Detecting differences in conscious contents using EEG complexity measures

PUBLICATIONS

Ponce de Leon, S., & Yoshimi, J. (in preparation). *Does Husserlian phenomenology support the axiomatic framework of integrated information theory (IIT)*.

Ponce de Leon, S., & Yoshimi, J. (2025). Integrated information theory (IIT) and the testability of the silent neuron predictions. *Neuroscience of Consciousness*. [under review]

Ponce de Leon, S., Backer, K. C., Monti, M. M., & Yoshimi, J. (2025). Detecting differences in conscious contents using EEG complexity measures. *In principle acceptance of Version 3 by Peer Community in Registered Reports*. <https://osf.io/kdsau>

PUBLIC TALKS

Consciousness science: progress and problems, Society for Brain Mapping and Therapeutics 21st Annual World Congress (March 15, 2024) (*invited).

Detecting differences in conscious contents using EEG complexity measures, University of California, Los Angeles Department of Psychology MontiLab (December 11, 2023) (*invited).

Integrated information theory and the testability of the silent neuron predictions, Monash University School of Psychological Sciences MoNoC/Tsuchiya Lab (May 16, 2023) (*invited).

Does brain activity cause consciousness? A TMS experiment, University of California, Merced Department of Cognitive and Information Sciences Weekly Brownbag (April 10, 2023).

Simulating the perturbational complexity index at the edge of chaos, University of California, Merced Department of Cognitive and Information Sciences Annual Project Mini-Conference (May 9, 2022).

Philosophical and scientific foundations of integrated information theory, University of California, Merced Cognitive and Information Sciences Weekly Brownbag (April 25, 2022).

CONFERENCE POSTERS

Ponce de Leon, S., Yoshimi, J. Does Husserlian phenomenology support the axiomatic framework of integrated information theory (IIT), *Association for the Scientific Study of Consciousness 28*, Heraklion, Crete (July 6 – 9, 2025).

Ponce de Leon, S., Yoshimi, J. Integrated information theory (IIT) and the testability of the silent neuron predictions, *Association for the Scientific Study of Consciousness 27*, Tokyo, Japan (July 2 – 5, 2024).

Ponce de Leon, S., Backer, K.C., Yoshimi, J. Detecting differences in conscious contents using EEG complexity measures, *Association for the Scientific Study of Consciousness 26*, New York, NY (June 23 – 25, 2023).

Ponce de Leon, S., Backer, K.C., Yoshimi, J. Detecting differences in conscious contents using EEG complexity measures, *Aalto University School of Science, Department of Neuroscience & Biomedical Engineering 9th Science Factory: TMS–EEG Summer School and Workshop*, Espoo, Finland (May 27 – June 2, 2023).

GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCHER APPOINTMENTS

<i>University of California, Merced</i>	Detecting differences in conscious contents using EEG complexity measures	08/2025 – 12/2025
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TEACHING ASSISTANT APPOINTMENTS

<i>University of California, Merced</i>		
Philosophy of Cognitive Science – COGS 110/PHIL 110 (~45 students)	01/2025 – 05/2025	
Introduction to Neural Networks in Cognitive Science – COGS 103 (~45 students)	08/2024 – 12/2024	
Introduction to Phenomenology – PHIL 150 (~24 students)	01/2024 – 05/2024	
Consciousness in Philosophy & Cognitive Science – COGS 177/PHIL 173 (55 students)	08/2023 – 12/2023	
Philosophy of Cognitive Science – COGS 110/PHIL 110 (62 students)	01/2023 – 05/2023	
Introduction to Neural Networks in Cognitive Science – COGS 103 (~30 students)	08/2022 – 12/2022	
Computational Cognitive Neuroscience – COGS 123/CSE 173 (39 students)	01/2022 – 05/2022	
Introduction to Philosophy – PHIL 001 (42 students)	08/2021 – 12/2021	

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

<i>University of California, Merced</i>		
Lab Manager, Cognitive and Information Sciences Weekly Philosophy Lab Meetings	09/2023 – 05/2025	
Professional Development Officer, CIS Graduate Student Group	08/2023 – 07/2024	
Advisory Mentor, Mentorship for Undergraduates Program	02/2024 – 05/2024	
Organizer, Cognitive and Information Sciences Weekly Brownbag Meetings	01/2023 – 05/2023	

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

<i>PMA Consultants, LLC</i>	Ann Arbor, MI
Senior Director, Product Management	2019 – 2021
Director, Product Design & Development	2016 – 2019
Senior Associate, UX Research & Design	2014 – 2016
Associate, UI Design & Customer Support	2013 – 2014
Senior Specialist, UI Design & Digital Marketing	2011 – 2013
Specialist, Technical Writing & UI Design	2008 – 2011

SKILLS & LANGUAGES

Programming: Python, R, Git, JavaScript, HTML, CSS, MATLAB, SQL, PHP, C++

Data Analysis: Bayesian Data Analysis, Generalized Linear Models, EEGLAB/ERPLAB, Information Visualization

Machine Learning: Artificial Neural Networks, Natural Language Processing, Reinforcement Learning

Languages: English (Native), Spanish (Basic)