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## **NEW YORK UNIVERSITY**

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Graduate Administrator: Ian Johnson [ian.johnson@nyu.edu](mailto:ian.johnson@nyu.edu) (212) 998-8901

### **Education**

PhD in Economics, New York University, 2017—2023 (expected)  
Thesis Title: *Essays on Information Acquisition and Avoidance in Games.*  
BS in Economics, Honors with Distinction, Ohio State University, 2013—2017  
BS in Mathematics, Ohio State University, 2013—2017

### **References**

Professor Andrew Caplin  
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### **Teaching and Research Fields**

Experimental Economics  
Microeconomic Theory  
Behavioral Economics

### **Teaching Experience**

Summer, 2022	Intermediate Microeconomics (Instructor), NYU
Fall, 2021	Intermediate Microeconomics, NYU, TA for Andrew Caplin
Summer, 2021	Statistics (Instructor), NYU
Fall, 2020	Intermediate Microeconomics, NYU, TA for Andrew Caplin
Summer, 2020	Statistics, NYU, TA for Isaac Bjorke
Fall, 2019	Intermediate Microeconomics, NYU, TA for Andrew Caplin
Summer, 2019	Statistics, NYU, TA for Isaac Bjorke

### **Research Experience and Other Employment**

2019-2020	Center for Experimental Social Science (NYU), Graduate Research Assistant
2015-2017	Ohio State University, Research Assistant for Prof. Bruce

2015-2016

Weinberg  
Center for Human Resource Research, Student Intern

### **Professional Experience**

Refereeing  
Conferences (Presented)

*Experimental Economics*  
2022 Workshop on Online Social Influence (Dublin), 2022  
European Economic Science Association Conference  
(Bologna), 2022 Science of Philanthropy Initiative Conference  
(Indianapolis), 2022 North American Economic Science  
Association Conference (Santa Barbara), 2022 Annual Meeting  
of the Southern Economic Association (Fort Lauderdale)

Summer Schools (Participant)

2019 Sloan-NOMIS Summer School on Cognitive Foundations  
of Economic Behavior

Organizer

NYU Rational Inattention Research Group (2020-Present),  
NYU Student Micro Theory Lunch (2019-2020)

### **Honors, Scholarships, and Fellowships**

June 2022  
2020-2021  
2017-2022  
2016

NYU CV Starr Travel Grant  
Russell Sage Foundation, Small Grant  
Henry M. MacCracken Fellowship  
L. Edwin Smart Prize for Excellence in Undergraduate  
Economics

2016  
2013-2017

Goldstein Memorial Mathematics Scholarship  
Morrill Excellence Scholarship (Office of Diversity and  
Inclusion)

### **Research Papers**

*Rationally Inattentive and Strategically (Un)Sophisticated: Theory and Experiment (Job Market Paper)*

In a game with costly information acquisition, the ability of one player to acquire information directly affects her opponent's incentives for gathering information. Rational inattention theory then posits the opponent's information-acquisition strategy is a direct function of these incentives. This paper argues that people are cognitively limited in predicting their opponent's level of information, and hence lack the strategic sophistication that theory requires. In an experiment involving a real-effort attention task and a simple two-player trading game, I study the ability of subjects to (1) anticipate the information acquisition of opponents in this strategic game, and (2) best respond to this information acquisition when acquiring their own costly information. I study this by exogenously manipulating the difficulty of the attention task for both the player and their opponent. Predictions of behavior are generated by a novel theoretical model in which Level-K agents can acquire information à la rational inattention. I find an out-sized lack of strategic sophistication, driven largely by the cognitive difficulties of predicting opponent information. These results suggest a necessary integration of the theories of rational inattention and costly sophistication in strategic settings.

*Out of Sight, Out of Mind: An Experimental Study of Charitable Giving, Empathy, and Social Pressure*

Previous literature on charitable giving in the field has shown that (1) people give substantially more when asked and (2) people tend to avoid the ask if possible. There are two potential explanations for this behavior: social pressure, and empathy. The social pressure theory posits that people do not enjoy giving, but dislike saying "no". The empathy theory claims that the ask causes people to have more altruistic

preferences, and thus people may avoid the ask as a self-control device. To separate these two explanations, I formulate empathy as an effect triggered by the giver seeing the ask itself, and social pressure as triggered by the recipient seeing how the giver responds. I utilize an online lab experiment to separate these two theories and test each directly. In the experiment, subjects are assigned to be either solicitors for an NYC COVID-19 relief fund, or to be attentional donors, with a \\$10 endowment. Solicitors write messages encouraging their partners to donate to their charity. Via a probabilistic avoidance mechanism, I vary (1) whether donors are shown the message and (2) whether solicitors see how much their donor gives. Subjects choose to avoid social pressure at a much higher rate than empathy. However, subjects give more when exposed to either. Evidence also points to sizable heterogeneity in sensitivity to and avoidance of these two effects.

### **Research in Progress**

*Equilibria in Simultaneous Information Acquisition Games*  
*Optimal Obfuscation* (with Srijita Ghosh)