

**Yi Zhang**yzhang51@usc.edu | <https://yzhang96.github.io/>**Education**

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- 2020 – Present **University of Southern California**, Los Angeles, CA  
PhD in Psychology, degree expected May 2025; GPA: 4.00/4.00
- 2020 – 2022 **University of Southern California**, Los Angeles, CA  
MA in Psychology
- 2014 – 2018 **New York University**, New York, NY  
B.A., Psychology (with Honors), Philosophy (double major); GPA: 3.85/4.00

**Research Experience**

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- Aug. 2020 – Present **Social Learning and Choice Lab, University of Southern California**  
(PI: Leor Hackel, Ph.D.)  
*PhD Student and Researcher.*
- Designed and conducted eight experiments to investigate how associative learning affects empathy, resulting in one publication and two conference presentations.
  - Designed and conducted online experiments, cross-sectional surveys, and a two-month longitudinal study to examine how social network dynamics influence group identification and well-being, resulting in one manuscript under review and two conference presentations.
  - Designed quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, and an experiment with naturalistic conversations to investigate how emotion regulation shapes responses to moral disagreements.
- July 2018 – July 2020 **Social Cognitive & Affective Neuroscience Lab, Columbia University**  
(PI: Kevin Ochsner, Ph.D.)  
*Lab Manager and Research Coordinator.*
- Assisted in the planning and execution of eight research projects and managed their IRB protocols.
  - Created and modified fMRI experiment scripts in PsychoPy and E-Prime.
  - Ran fMRI experiments using a Siemens 3T scanner; collected, preprocessed, and analyzed behavioral and fMRI data.
  - Trained research assistants on recruitment procedures, MRI operation, data collection and analysis.
  - Coordinated and participated in weekly lab meetings on lab projects, articles, and analysis techniques.
- Sep. 2017 – May 2018 **Social Cognitive and Neural Sciences Lab, New York University**  
(PI: Jonathan Freeman, Ph.D.)  
*Honors Student and Research Assistant.* Thesis title: “Perception of in-group and out-group prejudice between racial and political contexts: The role of social identity”  
Advisors: Anne Hill, Jonathan Freeman, Ph.D.
- Designed and conducted a computer-based behavioral study.
  - Analyzed questionnaire and mouse-tracking data using R.
- Mar. 2017 – June 2018 **Social Perception and Evaluation Lab, New York University**  
(PI: Jay Van Bavel, Ph.D.)

**Research Assistant.**

- Conducted multiple studies investigating the behavioral and neural mechanisms of intergroup punishment in political contexts. Conducted literature search, created stimuli via PsychoPy, and analyzed data using SPSS; completed training on fMRI operational procedures.

June 2017 – **Adult ADHD Program, NYU Langone Medical Center**  
 Dec. 2017 (PI: Leonard Adler, M.D.)

**Research intern.**

- Conducted research on adult Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).
- Performed prescreens for prospective patients and research participants and shadowed patient screening by psychiatrist.
- Assisted with data collection and analysis, and the archival of PHI and related research documents.

**Manuscripts and Publications**

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**Zhang, Y., Helion, C. & Hackel, L.** An emotion regulation framework of interpersonal moral disagreement. Manuscript in preparation. Department of Psychology, University of Southern California.

**Zhang, Y., Hackel, L.** Generalization of rejection and acceptance in social networks. Under review at the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*.

**Zhang, Y., Hackel, L.** Reward association with mental states shapes empathy and prosocial behavior. Accepted and in press at *Psychological Science*.

Cosme, D., Kang, Y., Tartak, J. C., Ahn, J., Corbani, F. E., Cooper, N., ... **Zhang, Y., ... & Falk, E.** (2022). Study protocol: Social Health Impact of Network Effects (SHINE) Study. PsyArXiv. <https://psyarxiv.com/cj2nx/download?format=pdf>

**Conference Presentations**

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**Zhang, Y., Hackel, L.** (2025). Reward association with mental states shapes empathy and prosocial behavior. Data blitz presented at *Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2025 Conference*, Denver, CO.

**Zhang, Y., Hackel, L.** (2024). Emotion regulation predicts response to moral disagreements in relational contexts. Poster presented at *Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2024 Conference*, San Diego, CA.

**Zhang, Y., Hackel, L.** (2023). Anticipated acceptance mediates the relationship between network density and social identification. Poster presented at *Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2023 Conference*, Atlanta, GA.

**Zhang, Y., Hackel, L.** (2022). Generalized response to social rejection and acceptance in social networks. Poster presented at *Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2022 Conference*, San Francisco, CA.

**Zhang, Y., Hackel, L.** (2021). Learning empathy via Pavlovian conditioning. Poster presented at *Society for Affective Science 2021 Conference*, Online.

**Zhang, Y., Stanoi, O., Ochsner, K., & Falk, E. (2020).** Enhanced craving for alcohol in social context predicts centrality in undergraduate social network. Poster to be presented at the *Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2020 Conference*, New Orleans, LA.

**Zhang, Y., Hill, A., & Freeman, J. (2018).** Social identity shapes perception of in-group and out-group bias between racial and political contexts. Talk presented at *NYU Undergraduate Research Conference*, New York, NY.

## **Teaching Experience**

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Spring 2024	Guest lecturer for PSYC-355, Social Psychology
Spring 2023	Teaching assistant for PSYC-100, Introduction to Psychology
Fall 2022 & Fall 2023	Teaching assistant for PSYC-274, Statistics
Spring 2022, 2024, & 2025	Teaching assistant for PSYC-165, Drugs, Behavior, and Society

## **Skills**

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### **Research Methodologies**

- Behavioral: online survey, in-lab experiment, social network analysis, natural language processing, ecological momentary assessment (EMA).
- Neuroimaging: fMRI data collection, processing, and analysis.

### **Programming**

- R, Python, SPSS, Bash, SQL, Matlab, Javascript, HTML/CSS

### **Software**

- Qualtrics, Microsoft Office, Adobe Photoshop.
- FSL, PsychoPy, E-Prime, PsychToolbox, MouseTracker.

## **Science Writing and Communication**

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Zhang, Y. (July 2025) Rethinking empathy in the era of artificial intelligence. *Neureality* (神经现实).

Zhang, Y. (May 2022) Do we still need empathy in a fractured world? *Neureality* (神经现实).

## **Honors and Awards**

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2022	Honorable mention, APS Student Grant
2017 – 18	Psi Chi, New York University Chapter
2017 – 18	Dean's Undergraduate Research Fund (DURF), New York University
2014 – 18	Dean's List for Academic Year, New York University

## **Professional Memberships**

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2018 – Present	Member, <i>Society for Personality and Social Psychology</i>
2021 – Present	Member, <i>Society for Affective Science</i>
2021 – Present	Member, <i>Association for Psychological Science</i>