

# TORY BENSON

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## EDUCATION

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- 2024-2029 **Rutgers University, New Brunswick**  
(expected) PhD in Social Psychology  
Advisor: Diana Sanchez, PhD
- 2018-2022 **University of California, Berkeley**  
B.A. in Psychology (Honors), Molecular and Cell Biology (emphasis in Neurobiology)  
Honors thesis: *Disabilities and dehumanization: When neurotypical is the norm*  
Advisor: Juliana Schroeder, PhD

## AWARDS

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- 2022 Distinction in General Scholarship, UC Berkeley  
Dean's List, UC Berkeley  
Phi Beta Kappa, UC Berkeley
- 2020 Dean's List, UC Berkeley  
Undergraduate Research Apprentice Program Award
- 2018 Dean's List, UC Berkeley
- 2017 National Hispanic Recognition Program Scholar

## PUBLICATIONS AND CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

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- Benson, T.**, Sava-Segal, C., & Finn, E. S. (Accepted). Personality traits predict the valence but not semantic content of narrative interpretations. *Proceedings of the 8th Annual Conference on Cognitive Computational Neuroscience*.
- Varrier, R. S.\*, Su, Z.\*, Liang, Q., **Benson, T. G.**, Jolly, E., & Finn, E. S. (Accepted). Behavioral signatures of social signal detection. *Proceedings of the 8th Annual Conference on Cognitive Computational Neuroscience*. \*Denotes equal contribution
- Benson, T.**, & Schroeder, J. (In Prep). Disabilities and dehumanization: When neurotypical is the norm.

## PRESENTATIONS AND ABSTRACTS

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- Benson, T.**, Schroeder, J. (2024). *Disabilities and dehumanization: When neurotypical is the norm*. Presented at the 2024 Annual meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Diego, CA.
- Benson, T.**, Sava-Segal, C., Finn, E. S. (2024). *Positive or ruminative: How traits shape sentiment and appraisal of ambiguous stimuli*. Presented by Clara Sava-Segal at: 2024 Annual meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Diego, CA.

- Sava-Segal, C., **Benson, T.**, Finn, E. S. (2024). *Multivariate neural pattern changes reflect within-subject shifts in subjective interpretations*. Presented by Clara Sava-Segal at: 30th Annual Meeting of the Organization for Human Brain Mapping, Seoul, Korea.
- Sava-Segal, C., **Benson, T.**, Finn, E. S. (2024). *Multivariate neural pattern changes reflect within-subject shifts in subjective interpretations*. Presented by Clara Sava-Segal at: 16th Annual Meeting of the Social and Affective Neuroscience Society, Toronto, CA.
- Chase, J., Lin, W. C., **Benson, T.**, Wilbrecht, L. (2023). *Convergent gain of function and cognitive inflexibility in mouse models of two autism risk genes*. Presented by Juliana Chase at: 11th Annual Flux Congress, Santa Rosa, CA.
- Sava-Segal, C., Grall, C., Bartolino, K., Equita, J., Bloch, E., **Benson, T.**, Finn, E. S. (2023). *Narrative ‘twist’ shifts neural representations*. Presented by Clara Sava-Segal at: 29th Annual Meeting of the Organization for Human Brain Mapping, Montreal, Canada.
- Varrier, R. S., **Benson, T. G.**, Selesnick, J. M., Liu, P., Sasaki, A. H., Molfese, P. J., Finn, E. S. (2023). *Shared and individual thresholds for social signal detection*. Presented by Rekha Varrier at: 23rd Annual Meeting of the Vision Sciences Society, St. Pete Beach, FL.
- Varrier, R. S., **Benson, T. G.**, Selesnick, J. M., Molfese, P. J., Sasaki, A. H., Liu, P., Finn, E. S. (2023). *What makes a stimulus “social”? A study of shared thresholds and individual differences*. Presented by Rekha Varrier at: 15th Annual Meeting of the Social and Affective Neuroscience Society, Santa Barbara, CA.
- Benson, T.**, Schroeder, J. (2022). *Disabilities and dehumanization: When neurotypical is the norm*. Presented at UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA.
- Benson, T.**, Stein, D., Schatz, D., Schroeder, J., Chatman, J. (2021). *Overclaiming credit in groups: A mistaken strategy*. 2021 Annual meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Virtual.

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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- 2022-2024     **Lab Manager and Research Assistant**, Dartmouth College  
*PI: Emily Finn, PhD*  
 Using ambiguous, naturalistic stimuli to probe idiosyncrasies and group-level features of perception. Investigating what makes a stimulus social, how people assign valence to social stimuli, and why this differs across individuals. Exploring how traits shape perception.
- 2020-2022     **Undergraduate Research Assistant**, UC Berkeley  
*PI: Juliana Schroeder, PhD*  
 Investigating social and moral judgment within dyads and small groups, and towards outgroup members. Conducted senior thesis exploring when and how we dehumanize disabled people and demean their mental capacities.
- 2020-2022     **Undergraduate Research Assistant**, UC Berkeley  
*PI: Linda Wilbrecht, PhD; Supervisor: Juliana Chase, PhD Candidate*  
 Comparing learning and cognitive flexibility between ASD mouse models (SHANK3B, TSC2, TSC1) and their wild-type counterparts. Incorporated a neurodiversity approach in presenting findings such that autism is not framed as purely a deficit.
- 2020            **Undergraduate Research Assistant**, UC Berkeley  
*PI: Anne Collins, PhD; Supervisor: Liza Yartsev, PhD*

Measuring synchronization of neural activity between two (neurotypical, gender-matched) strangers as they get to know each other.

2017 **Summer Research Assistant**, Coastal Marine Biolabs

*Supervisors: Linda Santschi, PhD & Ralph Imondi, PhD*

Tracking neuronal growth in the spinal column of chick embryos to better understand therapeutic targets for synaptogenesis in spinal injuries and movement disorders.

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## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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*\*Denotes full course design and lecturing*

2020-2022 **DeCal Instructor**, UC Berkeley, Department of Molecular and Cell Biology

*\*Neuroscience 101 (4 terms)*

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## INVITED TALKS

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**Benson, T.,\*** & Srinivasan, H.\* (March 2021). *Neurodiversity Celebration Week: ASD Advocacy, Awareness, & the Importance of Belonging*. BASIS Independent Schools, Virtual.

*\*Denotes equal contribution*

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## MENTORSHIP EXPERIENCE

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2024-Present Eli Bailit, Undergraduate at Dartmouth College

Fellowship(s): Undergraduate Research Assistantship (2024)

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## OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY

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2021-2022 **Co-Founder/Co-Coordinator**, Peer-to-Peer Program

Spectrum: Autism at Cal, in partnership with WeEMBRACE

2018-2022 **Vice President**, Spectrum: Autism at Cal

Advocacy club at UC Berkeley aiming to: 1) promote belonging and inclusion of and provide a safe space for autistic/neurodivergent students, 2) combat stereotypes and misconceptions about autism, and 3) outreach to the community through volunteering and collaborations.

2018-2022 **Publicity Chair**, MCBcDNA

MCB-sponsored club aiming to act as a liaison between MCB faculty and students at UC Berkeley by hosting events and providing resources.

2018-2019 **Volunteer**, Exceptional Soccer (ESoccer)

Taught autistic kids foundational soccer skills, led drills, and played scrimmages.

2010-2022 **Volunteer**, Douglas Penfield School of Special Education

(seasonal) Volunteered with kids grades K-3 with disabilities classified as causing significant impairment. Worked on spelling, speaking, counting, motor skills, etc.

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## SKILLS

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### Programming

- Proficient: Python, R

- Familiar: JavaScript, jsPsych, HTML, CSS

### **Cognitive and Social Psychology**

- Extensive experience in designing and analyzing behavioral experiments (Qualtrics, jsPsych; Python, R) and collecting eye-tracking data
- Considerable experience in the application of natural language processing (NLP) tools to text data analysis
- fMRI operator certified, extensive experience in fMRI data collection and preprocessing; familiarity with univariate and multivariate analyses (shell scripting, FreeSurfer; AFNI)

### **Additional Experience**

Wet lab techniques: ELISAs, PCR, plasmid construction

Animal models: mouse handling, behavioral paradigms, certified in anesthesia & euthanasia, trained in ethical treatment of animals through IACUC

### **Language**

English (native), Spanish (beginner/conversational)