

Xingyu (Shirley) LIU

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EDUCATION

Ph.D, Experimental Psychology, UC San Diego (UCSD)	2020-2026 (expected)
Advisor: Prof. Craig McKenzie	
MSc by Research, Psychology, University of Edinburgh	2019-2020
Advisors: Profs. René Mõttus and Billy Lee	
Distinction in outstanding thesis	
B.A.s, Psychology & French, Pomona College	2015- 2019
Advisors: Profs. Sharon Goto, Richard Lewis and Jack Abecassis	
<i>Cum laude</i> with distinctions in outstanding theses	

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Rational decision-making: How do normative models of rational decision-making evolve over time? What are good criteria for determining whether a decision is rational?

Second-order preferences: What should we do when we have preferences that we wish we didn't have? How do these preference conflicts differ from self-control conflicts?

Social inferences: How do people make causal inferences about other' preferences? How do people strategically signal desirable traits about themselves to others?

Self-nudges: How do people design their own choice environments to facilitate better choices? What are the factors that impact the effectiveness of self-nudges compared to traditional nudges?

FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

Norman Anderson Travel Grant (Accepted, \$1,949)	2026 (accepted)
Research travel grant, UCSD Department of Psychology	
Summer Graduate Teaching Scholar (\$1,000)	2025
UCSD Teaching and Learning Commons	
Katzin Prize (\$10,000/year)	2020-2025
Fellowship for exceptional incoming graduate students, UCSD	
Norman Anderson Travel Grant (\$2,754)	2025
Research travel grant, UCSD Department of Psychology	
Norman Anderson Travel Grant (\$810)	2024
Research travel grant, UCSD Department of Psychology	
Norman Anderson Travel Grant (\$1,440)	2023
Research travel grant, UCSD Department of Psychology	
General IPE PhD Fellowship (\$5,000)	2022
Research fellowship, the Institute of Practical Ethics, UCSD	

SHORE Fellowship	2020
Competitive housing fellowship for graduate students at UCSD	
Rosen Travel Grant (€ 1892)	2018
Senior thesis research fellowship, Pomona College	

PUBLICATIONS

- McKenzie, C. R. M., Sher, S., **Liu, X. S.**, & Kleiman-Lynch, L. J. (2025). When and why framing effects are neither errors nor mistakes. *Mind & Society*.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11299-025-00338-9>
- **Liu X.S.**, & McKenzie, C.R., & Schachner, A.(2025). When default options explain away preferences: a causal reasoning account of mental state reasoning from default options. *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society*, 47.
<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9bq3d5ch>
- Stewart, R.D., Diaz, A., Hou, X., **Liu, X. S.**, Vainik, U., Johnson, W., & Mõttus, R. (2024). The ways of the world? Cross-sample replicability of personality trait-life outcome associations. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 112, 104515.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2024.104515>
- **Liu, X.S.**, (2021). What motivates us to go on strike? Social and moral norms and their impact on strike participation in individualist and collectivist situations in western cultures. *Journal of European Psychology Students*, 12(1), pp.1–15.
<http://doi.org/10.5334/jeps.507>

MANUSCRIPTS

- **Liu X.S.**, & McKenzie, C.R., & Schachner, A.(in prep). A generalized causal reasoning account of mental state reasoning from default options.
- McKenzie, C.R., **Liu, X.S.**, Sher, S. (in prep). Who accepts description invariance?
- **Liu X.S.**, McCauley, T., & McCullough, M.E. (in prep). Watch me be self-controlled.
- **Liu, X.S.**, McKenzie, C.R., Winkielman, P., McCullough, M.E. (in prep). Second-order preferences: Origins and implications.
- **Liu, X.S.**, Pilegard, C., McKenzie, C.R., Leong, L. (in prep). Are self-nudges effective?
- **Liu, X.S.**, & Mõttus, R. (in prep). Happy and in control: exploring cultural differences in the relationship across cultures using IPIP dataset. <https://psyarxiv.com/c7wsd/>

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Talks

- **Liu, X.S.**, McKenzie, C., & Schachner, A. (Sept 2025). When default options explain away preferences: a causal reasoning account of mental state reasoning from default options. Talk presented at *Subjective Probability Utility and Decision Making (SPUDM)*.

Lucca, Italy.

- **Liu X.S.**, McCauley, T., & McCullough, M.E. (June 2025). Watch me be self-controlled. Talk presented at *Human Behavior and Evolution Society (HBES)*. Atlantic City, NJ, US.
- **Liu, X.S.**, Leong, L., McKenzie, C. & Sher, S. (Aug, 2023). Who accepts description invariance? Talk presented at *Subjective Probability Utility and Decision Making (SPUDM)*. Vienna, Austria.

Posters

- **Liu, X.S.**, Pilegard, C.; McKenzie, C.R. (Accepted, 2026). Self-nudges in the classroom. Poster to be presented at *Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP), Judgement and Decision-Making Preconference*. Chicago, Illinois, US
- **Liu, X.S.**, Pilegard, C.; McKenzie, C.R. (Nov, 2025). Self-nudges in the classroom. Poster presented at *Society for Judgement and Decision-making (SJDM)*. Denver, Colorado, US
- **Liu, X.S.**, McKenzie, C., & Schachner, A. (July 2025). When Default Options Explain Away Preferences: A Causal Reasoning Account of Mental State Reasoning from Default Options. Poster presented at *Cognitive Science Society (CogSci)*. San Francisco, CA, US
- **Liu X.S.**, McCauley, T., & McCullough, M.E. (May 2024) Watch me be self-controlled. Poster presented at *Human Behavior and Evolution Society (HBES)*. Aarhus, Denmark.
- **Liu, X.S.**, Leong, L., McKenzie, C. & Sher, S. (Nov, 2023). Self-nudging self-control. Poster presented at *Society for Judgement and Decision-making (SJDM)*. San Francisco, CA, US.
- **Liu, X.S.**, Leong, L., McKenzie, C. & Sher, S. (July, 2023). Are self-nudges effective? Poster presented at *Cognitive Science (CogSci)*. Sydney, Australia.
- **Liu, X.S.** & Mõttus R. (July, 2022). Happy and in control. Poster presented at *European Conference of Personality (ECP)*. Online.
- **Liu, X.S.**, Leong, L., McKenzie, C. & Sher, S. (Nov, 2021). Who accepts description invariance? Poster presented at *Society for Judgement and Decision-making (SJDM)*. Online.

TEACHING EXPERIENCES

Instructor of Record, Judgement and Decision Making, UCSD 2025

- Designed and taught a 5-week course on judgement and decision-making (6hrs/week, 35students)
- Regularly used discussions, live demos, and peer instructions with high participation rates
- Students completed a large-scale writing project with 3 rounds of revisions and feedback

Guest Lecturer, Lingnan University 2023

Lecture on Judgement and Decision-making, invited by Dr. Cheuk Long Chan

Graduate Teaching Assistant, UCSD 2021-present

- Industrial/Organizational Psychology (FA25, FA22)
- Clinical Assessment (SP25)
- Laboratory in Research Methods (WI26, WI25, SP24)
- Eating Disorders (FA24)
- Cognitive Psychology (SS24, SP23)
- Developmental Psychology (FA24)
- Creativity (SP22)
- Psychology of Law (FA21)
- Criminology (WI21)

MENTORING EXPERIENCES

Graduate Mentor, Undergraduate Research Assistants, UCSD 2024 - 2025

Jennifer Lozano, Alan Lopez (University of Wisconsin-Madison), John Rodriguez

Graduate Mentor, Undergraduate Honors Thesis, UCSD 2024 - 2025

Amy Liu, Daphne Constantino

PEER REVIEWER

Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics

Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Society for Judgement and Decision-making (SJDM)

Cognitive Science Society (CogSci)

Subjective Probability Utility and Decision Making (SPUDM)

Human Behavior and Evolution Society (HBES)

ACADEMIC REFERENCES

Prof. Craig McKenzie cmckenzie@ucsd.edu

Prof. Michael McCullough memccullough@ucsd.edu

Prof. Adena Schachner adschachner@ucsd.edu