

Ben Prystawski

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EDUCATION

Stanford University

Ph.D. in Psychology, Advisor: Noah Goodman

Stanford, California, USA

2021–2026 (expected)

University of Toronto

B.Sc. in Computer Science and Cognitive Science, GPA: 4.0/4.0

Toronto, Canada

2017–2021

EMPLOYMENT

Max Planck Institute for Intelligent Systems

Research Intern, Rationality Enhancement Group

Advisor: Falk Lieder

Tübingen, Germany

Summer 2020

University of Toronto

Research Intern, Cognitive Lexicon Lab, Department of Computer Science

Advisor: Yang Xu

Toronto, Canada

Summer 2019

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

Minds and Machines, Prof. Jiajun Wu

SYMSYS 1

Winter 2025

Foundations of Cognition, Prof. Noah Goodman

PSYCH 205

Spring 2024

Experimental Methods, Prof. Michael Frank

PSYCH 251

Autumn 2023

Probabilistic Models of Cognition: Learning and Reasoning, Prof. Noah Goodman

PSYCH 220A/CS 428A

Spring 2023

Experimental Methods, Prof. Michael Frank

PSYCH 251

Autumn 2022

PUBLICATIONS

Boyce, V., **Prystawski, B.**, Tan, A., & Frank, M. C. (2025). Idiosyncratic but not opaque: Linguistic conventions formed in reference games are interpretable by naïve humans and vision–language models. *Proceedings of the 47th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*.

Prystawski, B., & Goodman, N. D. (2025). Thinking fast, slow, and everywhere in between in humans and language models. *Proceedings of the 47th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*.

*Wurgaft, D., ***Prystawski, B.**, Gandhi, K., Zhang, C. E., Tenenbaum, J. B., & Goodman, N. D. (2025). Scaling up the think-aloud method. *Proceedings of the 47th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*.

Boyce, V., **Prystawski, B.**, Abutto, A. B., Chen, E. M., Chen, Z., Chiu, H., Ergin, I., Gupta, A., Hu, C., Kemmann, B., Klevak, N., Lua, V. Y. Q., Mazzaferro, M. M., Mon, K., Ogunbamowo, D., Pereira, A., Troutman, J., Tung, S., Uricher, R., & Frank, M. C. (2024). Estimating the replicability of psychology experiments after an initial failure to replicate. *Collabra: Psychology*, 10(1).

Prystawski, B., Arumugam, D., & Goodman, N. D. (2023). Cultural reinforcement learning: A framework for modeling cumulative culture on a limited channel. *Proceedings of the 45th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*, 526–533.

- Prystawski, B.**, Li, M., & Goodman, N. (2023). Why think step by step? Reasoning emerges from the locality of experience. *Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems (Oral)*, 36.
- Prystawski, B.**, Thibodeau, P., Potts, C., & Goodman, N. D. (2023). Psychologically-informed chain-of-thought prompts for metaphor understanding in large language models. *Proceedings of the 45th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*, 2311–2317.
- Singhi, N., Mohnert, F., **Prystawski, B.**, & Lieder, F. (2023). Toward a normative theory of (self-) management by goal-setting. *Proceedings of the 45th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*, 748–754.
- Prystawski, B.**, Grant, E., Nematzadeh, A., Lee, S. W. S., Stevenson, S., & Xu, Y. (2022). The emergence of gender associations in child language development. *Cognitive Science*, 46(6), e13146.
- ***Prystawski, B.**, *Mohnert, F., Tošić, M., & Lieder, F. (2022). Resource-rational models of human goal pursuit. *Topics in Cognitive Science*, 14(3), 528–549.
- Nogas, J., Li, T., Yanez, F. J., Modiri, A., Deliu, N., **Prystawski, B.**, Villar, S. S., Rafferty, A., & Williams, J. J. (2021). Algorithms for adaptive experiments that trade-off statistical analysis with reward: Combining uniform random assignment and reward maximization. *Causal Inference Challenges in Sequential Decision Making: Bridging Theory and Practice - a NeurIPS 2021 Workshop*.
- Prystawski, B.**, Gelpi, R., Lucas, C. G., & Buchsbaum, D. (2021). Modelling recognition in human puzzle solving. *Proceedings of the 43rd Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*, 1907–1913.
- Gelpi, R., **Prystawski, B.**, Lucas, C. G., & Buchsbaum, D. (2020). Incremental hypothesis revision in causal reasoning across development. *Proceedings of the 42nd Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*, 974–980.
- Prystawski, B.**, Grant, E., Nematzadeh, A., Lee, S. W. S., Stevenson, S., & Xu, Y. (2020). Tracing the emergence of gendered language in childhood. *Proceedings of the 42nd Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*, 1087–1093.

* denotes joint first authorship.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Norman H. Anderson Research Award , Stanford University. \$2,000 award to support graduate student research	2022, 2023
Provost’s Scholar , University of Toronto \$200 graduation award for academic merit	2021
Undergraduate Student Research Award , Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council \$6,000 award to support undergraduate research over the summer	2019
Samuel Beatty Scholarship , University of Toronto \$1,500 scholarship awarded for academic merit	2018
University of Toronto Scholar \$7,500 entrance scholarship	2017

MENTORING

Naomi Solomon , Undergraduate student, Stanford University (honors thesis)	2024-2025
Aditya Tadimeti , Undergraduate student, Stanford University	2024-2025
Vivek Vajipey , Undergraduate student, Stanford University	2023-2025
Justin Shen , Undergraduate student, Stanford University	2023-2025
Emily Bunnapradist , Undergraduate student, Stanford University (summer intern)	2023

SERVICE

Reviewing

- Cognitive science society: 2021-2025
- ICML workshops: 2024-2025
- NeurIPS workshops: 2024

Departmental Service, Department of Psychology, Stanford University

- Graduate program committee: 2022-2024
- Friday seminar organizing committee: 2023-2024