

education

S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications

Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY

Bachelor of Science, May 2014

Dual Majors Psychology, Advertising

Minor LGBT Studies

Syracuse University London Study Abroad Program, Spring 2013

Renée Crown University Honors Program, 2010 – 2014

- Invited as one of approximately 150 of 3392 incoming freshman

Cumulative GPA: 3.85, Psychology GPA: 3.97

academic honors & awards

Summa Cum Laude (cumulative GPA over 3.8)

Phi Beta Kappa, 2013

- Invited as a junior and one of only 65 Syracuse University students invited in 2013

Newhouse Scholar, 2014

- One of thirteen students from the Class of 2014 chosen for outstanding academic accomplishments; one of four nominees selected by Newhouse for consideration for the University Scholar award

Catherine L. Covert Research Award, 2014

- One of four recipients chosen for the best scholarly paper in mass communications written in the last year (see Kim, Searls, & Biocca, in prep)

Allport Scholar Award, 2014

- One of fifteen recipients, recognized for achievements in written communication, research methodology, oral communication, and computer/technology skills

Allport Award for Excellence in Applied Psychology, 2014

- One of eight recipients, demonstrating achievements in applied service and experience, written communication, and oral presentation

Dean's List, 2010-2014 (maintained GPA of 3.4 or higher)

Founder's Scholarship, 2010-2014

- Highest level merit-based scholarship awarded to incoming students

research experience

Honors Capstone Project

Syracuse University, Supervisor: Leonard Newman, Ph.D.

Fall 2013 – Spring 2014, Syracuse, NY

- Developed stimulus materials and experimental procedures: wrote fake news article and edited films to create mood induction clips
- Implemented experiment and collected data online using Qualtrics Research Suite, and analyzed data using SPSS
- Presented findings to faculty and students at the Honors Capstone Presentation Day

Summer Research Intern, Social Perception, Action, & Motivation (SPAM) Lab

New York University, Supervisor: Emily Balcetis, Ph.D.

Summer 2013, New York, NY

- Brainstormed experiment ideas and designed stimulus materials later implemented in the lab's on-going research projects
- Recruited participants and ran experiments both in the lab setting and outdoors on the streets and in the parks of New York City, interacting with a variety of people

Project Title:

"The Threat of an Innocent Victim: How Perspective Taking and Mood Affect Perceptions of Victims"

Project Title:

"The Perfect Storm of Threat: Just-World Beliefs, Self-Perspective, and Victim Blame"

Project Title:
"The Effects of
Avatar Realism
on Heart Rate
Variability, Feelings,
Thoughts, and
Behaviors"

- Coded and analyzed data for multiple studies being conducted at the SPAM Lab, using SPSS to run a number of statistical tests
- Participated in weekly workshops and discussions of psychological theories, methods, designs, and data analysis, during which I presented research findings and progress updates to my colleagues

**Senior Research Assistant, Media, Interface, and Network Design (M.I.N.D.) Lab
Syracuse University, Supervisors: Frank Biocca, Ph.D. and Sung Yeun Kim, Ph.D.**

Fall 2011 – Summer 2013, Syracuse, NY

- Conducted multiple studies with human participants dealing with human-computer interactions and gender-specific social cues
- Gained extensive experience with physiological equipment and data: collected EKG, EMG, GSR, and HRV data using Biopac Systems equipment; conducted post-processing to remove artifacts, and analysis using Biopac's AcqKnowledge software
- Aided junior research assistants in learning and executing experimental procedures, answered conceptual questions about our studies, and helped solve any technical problems with the various data collection and analysis systems we used
- Produced promotional materials for the M.I.N.D. Lab and associated research projects, including videos and multimedia presentations
- Managed day-to-day laboratory activities, dealing with scheduling, participant contact, university and IRB relations, and conducting experiments

publications & presentations

Searls, R. (in press). The Threat of an Innocent Victim: How Perspective Taking and Mood Affect Perceptions of Victims. *Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone Projects*.

Kim., S. Y., Searls, R., & Biocca, F. (in prep). *Avatar Identification in Violent Video Games: The Effects of Game Context and Identification on Aggression and Negative Emotions*.

Kim, S. Y., Searls, R., Costa, M., Shin, Y., & Biocca, F. (2013). *The Effects of Avatar Realism on Heart Rate Variability, Feelings, Thoughts, and Behaviors*. In International Communications Association's 2013 Annual Conference Proceedings.

Searls, R., & Mulford, A. (2013). *The Perfect Storm of Threat: Just World Beliefs, Self-Perspective, and Victim Blame*. Paper presented to students and faculty at New York University, New York, NY, USA, August 2013.

honor society memberships

Kappa Tau Alpha (Journalism and Mass Communications), 2013

Phi Kappa Phi, 2012

Psi Chi (Psychology), 2011

Golden Key Society, 2011

National Society of Collegiate Scholars, 2011

references

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