

Alvina Lai

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Education

PhD, Developmental Psychology and Education 2024–Present

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto

Supervisor: Dr. Michel Ferrari.

- Ontario Graduate Scholarship (2025–26) - \$15,000
- SGS Conference Grant - Social Science and Humanities (2025) - \$1,350

MA, Developmental Psychology and Education 2023–2024

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto

Supervisor: Dr. Michel Ferrari.

- CGS-M SSHRC Scholarship (2023–24) - \$17,500

Honours BSc, Psychology & Cognitive Science 2019–2023

University of Toronto; GPA: 3.81/4.00

- Dean's List (2020–2023)
- Katharine Ball Graduate Runner-Up Award (2023) - \$500
- Innis College Alumni Association Scholarship (2022) - \$400
- Innis College Exceptional Achievement Award (2020, 2021) - \$650

Research Contributions

- Lai, A.*, Kim, J.J., Stellar, J. & Ferrari, M. [Manuscript in progress, expected 2026.] *Mindfulness as a Buffer Against Awe-Falsified Insight*. Department of Applied Psychology and Human Development, University of Toronto.
- Lai, A.*, Faddick, K., & Ferrari, M. [Manuscript in progress, expected 2026.] *Pathways Beyond Polarization: A Scoping Review On Political Parasociality and Wisdom Interventions*. Department of Applied Psychology and Human Development, University of Toronto.
- Lai, A.*, Ansloos, J., Fonseca, A., Selim, S. [Manuscript submitted, expected 2026.] *What Influence Does: A Scoping Review of Public Figures, Media, and Suicide Prevention in Canada and the United States*. Department of Applied Psychology and Human Development, University of Toronto.
- Lai, A.*, Faddick, K., & Ferrari, M. (Presented June 2026). *Pathways Beyond Polarization: A Scoping Review On Political Parasociality and Wisdom Interventions* [Poster presentation]. CPA 2026, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

- Lai, A.*, Ferrari, M. (Presented August 2025). *Youth Radicalization in Political Parasocial Relationships* [Poster presentation]. APA 2025, Colorado, USA.
- Lai, A.*, Fonseca, A., Selim, S., Ansloos, J. (Presented June 2025). *The Negative Influence of Public Figures on Suicide Prevention Efforts: A Scoping Review* [Poster presentation]. IASP 2025, Vienna, Austria.
- Saffaran, P., Xanthios, K., Lai, A.*, Goldstein, A., Vervaeke, J., Ferrari, M. (Submitted March 2025). *Examining Moral Injury and Resilience in Iranians Exposed to Political Violence*. Journal of Traumatic Stress.

Invited Talks

- DeSouza, D. (Host). (2026, June 24). A PhD Student's Research Workflow [video podcast episode]. In *Consensus.app Community Voices*. YouTube.
- Lai, A. (2026, February 20). *Can You Be Parasocial With God?* Invited talk, Department of Psychology, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey.
- Lai, A. (2025, January 22). *Can You Be Parasocial With God?* Invited talk, Department of Cognitive Science, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada.
- Lai, A. (2025, October 21). *Can You Be Parasocial With God?* Guest lecture, Department of Psychology, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
- Tjhin, J. (Host). (2025, October 7). Unconscious Alignment: Political Parasociality with Alvina Lai [video podcast episode]. In *Stories of WISE*. Spotify.

Experience

Lab Manager, Toronto Language and Cognition Lab 2024–Present

- Coordinated graduate and undergraduate students
- Assisted with participant recruitment and administrative tasks

Teaching Assistant, University of Toronto 2023–Present

- COG341(2024): Graded assignments, held office hours
- COG250 (2023-): Graded assignments, held office hours, presented guest lectures, led tutorials, and provided student support
- APD1200 (2026): Graded assignments, held office hours, created material for and presented guest lectures

Graduate Assistant, Wisdom and Identity Lab 2025-2026

- Oversaw a domain review on wisdom literature
- Optimized and standardized procedures for coding
- Supervised and coordinated teams of MEd and undergraduate research assistants

Graduate Assistant, Critical Health and Social Action Lab 2024–2025

- Conducted a scoping review on public figures and suicide prevention
 - Supervised and coordinated research assistants
- Research Assistant**, Consciousness and Wisdom Lab 2023–2024
- Assisted in grant writing and projects on wisdom, consciousness, and moral injury
- Research Assistant**, Health, Emotions, and Altruism Lab (Dr. Stellar) 2022–2024
- Collected physiology data for compassion fatigue and self-compassion studies
 - Analyzed arguments for moral reframing and persuasion
- Recording Secretary**, Libram Recording Services 2021–2024
- Took minutes for condominium board meetings
- MA Student & Research Assistant**, Wisdom and Identity Lab (Dr. Ferrari) 2021–2023
- Conducted qualitative analysis and literature reviews
 - Designed surveys in Qualtrics and edited REB applications
- Curriculum Renewal Assistant**, Dr. Rebecca Neel 2022
- Updated PSY322 curriculum content and assessments
 - Conducted literature reviews in social psychology and related fields
- Psychology Peer Mentor**, University of Toronto 2021–2022
- Mentored second-year students on academics and research opportunities
 - Organized academic and research panels
- Research Assistant**, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health 2021–2022
- Transcribed interviews on youth substance use during COVID-19
 - Conducted coding and literature reviews on Indigenous youth coping
- Research Assistant**, Intelligent Adaptive Interventions Lab (Dr. Williams) 2020–2021
- Conducted qualitative analysis and poster presentation on email reminders
 - Managed undergraduate researchers and led lab meetings
- Research Assistant**, Dr. Lorne Tepperman 2019–2020
- Conducted literature reviews and textbook editing on consumerism and globalization
- Research Assistant**, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology 2018–2019
- Proofread project summaries and developed business proposals
 - Conducted market research for HVAC and air purification systems

Organizations

Cognitive Science & AI Students Association, University of Toronto

- Co-President (2022–2023): Oversaw executive team, liaised with faculty, organized multiple conferences and academic/social events
- Communications Director (2021–2022): Managed social media, email, coordinated inter-university panel, and organized academic events
- COG250 Representative (2020–2021): Represented students in an introductory cognitive science class and encouraged involvement

Canadian Positive Psychology Association

- Student Ambassador (2021–2023): Promoted events and edited blog posts

University of Toronto Jungian Association

- Social Media Manager (2021–2023): Advertised and organized academic and social events; managed social media

Psychology Students' Association

- Volunteer (2019–2020): Mentored first-year students and held office hours