

# Suzanna Donato, M.A.

## EDUCATION

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**University of California, Los Angeles, *Los Angeles, California*** September 2019- Present  
4th Year Doctoral Student, Clinical Psychology  
GPA: 3.95/4.00

**University of California, Los Angeles, *Los Angeles, CA*** December 2020  
M.A. in Clinical Psychology  
Thesis: Alcohol Use Disorder Severity Moderates Clinical Response to Varenicline  
Advisor: Lara Ray, PhD

**Clemson University, *Clemson, South Carolina*** May 2018  
B.S. in Psychology, Minor in Communications  
GPA: 3.63/ 4.00 Major GPA: 3.83/4.00

## ACADEMIC HONORS AND AWARDS

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APA Division 12 Leadership Award, UCLA Psychology Department Nominee	December 2022
Research Society on Alcoholism's Student Merit Award	June 2022
UCLA Translational Neuroscience of Drug Abuse Program Predoctoral Fellowship	2020-2022
National Institute on Drug Abuse (T32 NIH, PI: Edythe London) (\$25, 320 per year)	
UCLA Stanley Sue Distinguished Researcher Award	2021
Research Society on Alcoholism's Student Merit Award	June 2021
UCLA Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Fellowship (\$6,000)	Summer 2020
UCLA Department of Psychology Fellowship (\$21,000)	2019-2020
Letter of Clinical Excellence, UCLA Psychology Clinic	2020- 2021
President's List (4.0), <i>Clemson University</i>	2017- 2018
Dean's List (3.5-3.99), <i>Clemson University</i>	Fall 2016

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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**Graduate Student, *UCLA Addictions Laboratory, Los Angeles, CA***  
September 2019-Present

- **Primary Advisor: Lara Ray, Ph.D.**
  - Attend weekly individual meetings with Dr. Ray to conceptualize research studies, prepare for upcoming conference presentations, and facilitate progress on graduate program requirements
  - Participate in weekly laboratory meetings with primary advisor and fellow lab members to discuss ongoing research studies and professional development
  - Collaborate with other prominent substance use research laboratories within Los Angeles to share ideas and present significant research findings

**Research Assistant, *Medical University of South Carolina, Institute of Psychiatry, Charleston, SC***  
May 2018-July 2019 (Full Time Position)

- **Principal Investigator: Howard Becker, Ph.D.**
  - Managed division of research assessing the effects of early childhood stress resultant of maternal neglect on later alcohol use and stress sensitivity in adolescence

- Conducted operant self-administration work to examine whether prior exposure to stress has an effect on later alcohol seeking behavior during stress induced relapse
- Responsible for managing and maintaining database of all ongoing research data to present to fellow lab members at weekly laboratory meetings
- Participated in meetings with principal investigator to plan future studies and monitor the lab's adherence to grant requirements
- Collaborated with current graduate students to analyze research data and prepare findings for publication

**Research Assistant**, *Medical University of South Carolina, Department of Neuroscience, Charleston, SC*  
 May 2017- August 2017 (Volunteer Position, 20 hours per week)

- **Principal Investigator: Peter Kalivas, Ph.D.**
- **Supervisor: Sade Spencer, Ph.D.**
  - Co-conducted research investigating the neuroplasticity of specific regions in the rodent brain underlying drug relapse behavior
  - Managed daily operant self-administration work for ongoing studies involving cocaine-dependent and THC-dependent rodents
  - Updated research database daily with latest data to monitor study progression and identify any problems (such as animal performance concerns, equipment malfunctions, etc.)
  - Executed surgical procedures to prepare animals for study or to fix any equipment malfunctions

**Student Investigator**, *Clemson University, Creative Inquiry Program, Clemson, SC*  
 August 2016- May 2018

- **Faculty Advisor: Marjie Britz, Ph.D.**
  - Analyzed different case studies of popular criminals from the 20<sup>th</sup> century to identify common patterns of behavior and mutual characteristics
  - Utilized different media outlets to analyze how society differentiates between good and evil in criminal actions.
  - Generated several research papers in APA format to practice presenting findings to the academic society

**Student Investigator**, *Clemson University, Creative Inquiry Program, Clemson, SC*  
 August 2017- December 2017

- **Faculty Advisor: Benjamin Stephens, Ph.D.**
  - Contributed to ongoing research study titled "Does a Psychology Research Methods Course Enhance Critical Thinking"
  - Evaluated student's critical thinking abilities using the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) to determine the effectiveness of the research course in improving critical thinking abilities in undergraduate students
  - Composed abstract of our research findings along with other team members to submit to southeastern psychological association's annual conference, as well as co-constructed research poster to present at the conference
  - Collaborated with other team members and faculty advisor to formulate research plan for future semesters

## **CLINICAL EXPERIENCE**

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**Advanced Graduate Student Trainee**, *UCLA Psychology Clinic, Los Angeles, CA*  
 September 2022-Present

- **Supervisor: Dr. Trevor Schraufnagel, Ph.D. and Dr. Jayson Mystkowski, Ph.D.**
  - Provide individual psychotherapy to adults with various presenting problems using multiple evidence-based modalities

- Receive weekly supervision in advanced cognitive behavioral therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, and integrative therapy.
- Maintain clinical records and patient billing via the electronic health record system 'Point-n-Click (PNC)'

**Predoctoral Trainee, Sepulveda Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA**

August 2021-August 2022

- **Supervisor: Dr. Melissa Lewis, Ph.D.**
  - Conduct weekly comprehensive intake interviews for adult veterans seeking care in the Addictive Behaviors Clinic.
  - Lead a biweekly early recovery skills group as part of the intensive outpatient program. Group topics are informed by the SAMSHA's Matrix Model and includes topics such as relapse prevention, exploring triggers, and psychoeducation about substance use.
  - Lead weekly emotion management groups based around important skills from dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT).
  - Conduct weekly individual therapy sessions with adult veterans seeking cognitive behavioral therapy for substance use disorders (CBT-SUD).
  - Consult with supervisor in weekly case consultation meetings and collect feedback on clinical techniques.
  - Collaborate with a multidisciplinary team within the clinic to ensure comprehensive care for each veteran.

**Graduate Student Trainee, UCLA Psychology Clinic, Los Angeles, CA**

September 2019-Present

- **Supervisor: Dr. Phillip Sayegh, Ph.D. and Dr. Danielle Keenan-Miller, Ph.D.**
  - Conduct intake interviews for adult and adolescent patients seeking assessment for neuropsychological testing or psychotherapy.
  - Conduct weekly Telehealth individual therapy sessions with adult and child client using acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), Managing and Adapting Practices (MAP), and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT).
  - Conduct comprehensive in-person psychoeducational and neuropsychological assessments for adult client
  - Prepare and provide detailed reports on patient's history, presenting problems, and diagnostic information, as well as assessment results, case conceptualization, and clinical recommendations
  - Consult with supervisor in weekly case consultation meetings and collect feedback on clinical assessment techniques
  - Maintain clinical records and patient billing via the electronic health record system 'Point-n-Click (PNC)'

**Graduate Student, UCLA Addictions Laboratory, Los Angeles, CA**

September 2019-Present

- **Primary Advisor: Lara Ray, Ph.D.**
  - Conduct clinical assessments of substance use disorders and related mental disorders, including the Timeline Follow-Back, SCID5, Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment for Alcohol, and the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale
  - Perform brief clinical intervention utilizing motivational interviewing, psychoeducation, and personalized feedback to encourage reductions in drinking for heavy drinkers participating in a medication assisted "practice quit-attempt".
  - Will conduct brief neuropsychological battery for patients with AUD and advanced liver disease.
  - Participate in weekly meetings with primary advisor and fellow lab members to discuss clinical assessment techniques and ways to maximize the participant experience (e.g. diversity-related issues, ethical considerations, and updating resource packets)

**Graduate Student Trainee, UCLA CBT for AUD Clinic, Los Angeles, CA**  
September 2020-July 2021

- **Supervisor: Dr. Lara Ray, Ph.D.**
  - Conducted semi-structured intake interviews with clients via telehealth to determine program eligibility
  - Conducted telehealth individual therapy sessions with adult clients presenting with an alcohol use disorder according to manualized CBT protocol.
  - Maintained up-to-date patient records using the practice management software 'Theranest'

**Psychotherapy Group Co-Facilitator, UCLA Health Department of Psychiatry, Los Angeles, CA**  
March 2021- June 2021

- **Supervisor: Dr. Lara Ray, Ph.D.**
  - Co-facilitated a 6-week psychotherapy group for women experiencing long-term mental health issues from COVID-19 using a cognitive-behavioral framework.
  - Attended weekly supervision with Dr. Lara Ray, a licensed clinical psychologist, to discuss therapeutic techniques and plan group sessions.

**Intern, Medical University of South Carolina, Center for Drug and Alcohol Abuse, Charleston, SC**  
May 2016- August 2016 (Intern Position, 20 hours per week)

- **Supervisor: Dr. Viktoriya Magid, Ph.D.**
  - Observed outpatient groups focused around adults and adolescents with substance abuse related problems to gain experience in clinical settings as well as working with a diverse community
  - Attended intake assessments for new patients to understand different diagnostic procedures as well as the various treatment options for substance related problems
  - Participated in one-on-one patient appointments between Dr. Magid and various clients to address the underlying issues relating to substance abuse as well as treatment strategies such as identification of negative thought patterns and development of coping skills
  - Towards the end of the experience, directed two adult group therapy sessions and several adolescent group therapy sessions under the limited supervision of Dr. Magid, and helped conduct new client assessments.
  - Conducted research on different psychotherapies such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, mindfulness-based therapy, behavior therapy, and family therapy to prepare for daily group therapy sessions and individual treatment sessions

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

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**Teaching Associate, University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA**  
Fall 2021- Present (2 Year/6 Quarter Position)

- **Professor of Record: Dr. Rena Repetti, Ph.D.**
  - Served as the primary instructor for an upper-level undergraduate clinical internship course (PSYCH 194A/195A Fieldwork in Psychology)
  - Planned, prepared, and presented weekly seminars on topics relevant to the field of mental health and clinical work
  - Coordinated internship placements between students and external sites in the Los Angeles area
  - Led weekly supervision with students to discuss ongoing projects, ethical considerations, and feedback on their placement.

**Teaching Assistant, University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA**  
Fall Quarter 2020

- **Professor: Dr. Aaron Blaisdell, Ph.D.**
  - Served as teaching assistant for a large undergraduate Comparative Psychobiology course

- Supported student education through weekly office hour appointments and email communication
- Assist in exam preparation and grading

**Teaching Assistant, University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA**

Fall Quarter 2019

- **Professor: Dr. Melissa Paquette-Smith, Ph.D.**
  - Served as one of the teaching assistants for a large undergraduate Introductory to Psychology course
  - Supported student education through weekly office hour appointments and email communication
  - Conducted weekly in class labs to facilitate learning and emphasize important course concepts
  - Provided guest lecture to 300 undergraduate students on the topic of substance abuse and current research studies in the UCLA Addictions Laboratory

**Guest Lecturer, University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA**

Fall Quarter 2019

- **Course: Clinical Psychology Internship**
  - Guided an undergraduate lecture on substance abuse disorders, involving the discussion of etiology, risk factors, and current treatment options
  - Discussed different identifying factors of substance use disorders around college campuses and resources available at UCLA for students seeking help with a substance use disorder

**Guest Panelist, University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA**

Fall Quarter 2019

- **Course: Clinical Psychology Internship**
  - Served on a panel with fellow graduate students to lead a discussion on the graduate application process and overall graduate school progression
  - Responded to individual student goals with proper means of action and resources available on campus to assist them

## **MENTORING EXPERIENCE**

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**Graduate Mentor, UCLA Undergraduate Research Journal for Psychology (URJP), Los Angeles, CA**

Fall 2022- Present

- **Faculty Advisor: Aaron Blaisdell, Ph.D.**
  - Meet one-on-one with UCLA undergraduates to mentor them during the graduate school application process, review application materials, and practice interviews.
  - Participate in panels and workshops for undergraduates about graduate school
  - Supervise a small team of undergraduate editors to guide them through refining papers that are accepted to the URJP journal

**Research Mentor, UCLA Addictions Laboratory, Los Angeles, CA**

September 2020-Present

- **Primary Advisor: Lara Ray, Ph.D.**
  - Assist in lab recruitment of undergraduate research assistants (RAs) and establish lab expectations for remote mentoring.
  - Mentor undergraduate psychology students on an independent research project and associated poster presentations at the Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference
  - Lead weekly RA meetings to discuss professional development and important research articles within the field of substance use

**Research Mentor, Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, SC**

May 2018-July 2019

- **Primary Advisor: Howard Becker, Ph.D.**
  - Mentored DART and NIDA summer research interns on independent projects for poster presentations at the annual MUSC Research Day event

## **UNIVERSITY INVOLVEMENT**

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**Elected Student Representative**, UCLA Clinical Area Committee, *University of California, Los Angeles*  
Fall 2022- Present

- Represented the fourth-year class at monthly faculty meetings and summarized important department information into a comprehensive document to be distributed to students

**Contributor**, Psychology in Action, *University of California, Los Angeles*

2020-Present

- Authored original articles focused on disseminating scientific knowledge to the general public via blog articles on the graduate student-run webpage, Psychology in Action (PIA).
- Mentored various undergraduate students through the conceptualization and completion of their own scientific writings for PIA's "Pre-Graduate Series"

**Member**, Psychology Graduate Student Association, *University of California, Los Angeles*

2019- Present

**Member**, Underrepresented Graduate Students in Psychology, *University of California, Los Angeles*

2019-Present

**Elected Member**, Admissions Committee, *UCLA Clinical Psychology Program*

Fall 2020- Spring 2021

- Review applications, assist in coordination of interviews, interview applicants, and provide feedback to clinical psychology faculty for admission decisions
- Host admissions events for prospective students and partake in interview process

**Elected Member**, Clinic and Placements Committee, *UCLA Clinical Psychology Program*

Fall 2020- Fall 2021

- Further refine student training in clinical science, review clinic practices and monitor adherence to program requirements

**Elected Member**, Research and Professional Development Committee, *Clinical Psychology Program*

Fall 2019 – Summer 2020

- Further develop student training in professional development to promote career development in clinical science, plan Clinical Area Program meetings and other research and professional training activities

## **BOOK CHAPTERS**

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Nieto, S., Donato, S., Gillis, A., & Ray, L.A., (in press). Laboratory Based Approaches to Medications Development for Alcohol Addiction. In S. Mueller & M. Heilig (Eds.), *Alcoholism and Alcohol-related Diseases*, New York, NY: Springer

## **PEER- REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS**

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**Donato, S.,** Nieto, S., & Ray, L.A. (2022). The Brief AUD Severity Scale: An Initial Analysis of the Psychometric Properties. *Alcohol and Alcoholism*.

Grodin, E. N., **Donato, S.,** Du, H., Green, R., Bujarski, S., & Ray, L. A. (2022). A Meta-Regression of Trial Features Predicting the Effects of Alcohol Use Disorder Pharmacotherapies on Drinking Outcomes in Randomized Clinical Trials: A Secondary Data Analysis. *Alcohol and Alcoholism*.

**Donato, S.,** Green, R., & Ray, L. A. (2021). Alcohol use disorder severity moderates clinical response to varenicline. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 45(9), 1877-1887.

Venegas, A., **Donato, S.,** Meredith, L. R., & Ray, L. A. (2021). Understanding low treatment seeking rates for alcohol use disorder: A narrative review of the literature and opportunities for improvement. *The American journal of drug and alcohol abuse*, 1-16.

Neito, S. J., Baskerville, W. A., **Donato, S.,** & Ray, L. A. (2021). Lifetime heavy drinking years and alcohol use disorder. *The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*.

Lim, A. C., Green, R., Grodin, E. N., Venegas, A., Meredith, L. R., **Donato, S.,** ... & Ray, L. A. (2020). Alcohol Cue-Induced Ventral Striatum Activity Predicts Subsequent Alcohol Self-Administration. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*.

Baskerville, W. A., Nieto, S. J., Ho, D., Towns, B., Grodin, E. N., Li, C., **Donato, S.,** ... & Ray, L. A. (2020). Baseline Drinking Patterns in Non-Treatment Seeking Problem Drinkers. *Alcohol and Alcoholism*.

## **MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW**

Dunn, D., **Donato, S.,** & Keenan-Miller, D. (under 2nd review). Perceived Helpfulness of Previous Therapy: A Predictor of Premature Termination. *Professional Psychology: Research & Practice*.

Grodin, E., Montoya, A., Cruz, A., **Donato, S.,** Anada-Baskerville, W., & Ray, L.A. (under 2nd review). Identifying Treatment Responders to Varenicline for Alcohol Use Disorder Using Two Machine Learning Approaches. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*.

Meredith, L.A., Burnette, E., Nieto, S., **Donato, S.,** Du, H., Grodin, E., Green, R., Magill, M., & Ray, L.A. (under 1st review). Testing Pharmacotherapies for Alcohol Use Disorder with Cue Exposure Paradigms: A Systematic Review of Human Laboratory Trial Methodology. *Neuropsychopharmacology*.

## **MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION**

Nieto, S., **Donato, S.,** Gillis, A., & Ray, L.A., (in preparation). Laboratory Based Approaches to Medications Development for Alcohol Addiction. Invited Chapter for *Alcoholism and Alcohol Related Disorders*.

Ray, L.A., Montoya, A., Anada-Baskerville, W., **Donato, S.,** Cruz, A., & Grodin, E. (in preparation). Gabapentin for the Treatment of Alcohol Use Disorder: A Machine Learning Approach. *Clinical and Psychological Science*.

**Donato, S.,** Meredith, L. R., Nieto, S., Burnette, E., & Ray, L.A. (in preparation). Refining Medications Development for Alcohol Use Disorder: A Systematic Review of Randomized Clinical Trial Methodology. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*.

Ray, L.A., Nieto, S., Meredith, L.A., Burnette, E., **Donato, S.,** Magill, M., & Du, H., (in preparation). The Relationship between Medication Effects on Subjective Response to Alcohol and on Cue-Induced Alcohol Craving. *Neuropsychopharmacology*.

## **ORAL PRESENTATIONS**

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**Donato, S.** & Grodin, E. (2022, April). *Alcohol and Substance Use Disorders: Considerations for Adolescent Trauma-Based Care*. Oral presentation for the UCLA Treatment and Research for the Underserved with Stress and Trauma (TRUST) Lab Clinical Training Workshop, Los Angeles, CA.

**Donato, S.,** Nieto, S., & Ray, L.A. (2022, February). *The Brief AUD Severity Scale: An Initial Validation Evaluation*. Oral presentation at UCLA Translational Neuroscience of Drug Abuse Training Program, Los Angeles, CA.

Brooks, A., **Donato, S.,** & Ray, L. A. (2021, May). *Racial and demographic differences between AUD treatment and non-treatment seekers*. Virtual oral presentation presented at UCLA's Undergraduate Research Showcase, Los Angeles, CA.

**Donato, S.,** Green, R., & Ray, L. A. (2021, May). *Alcohol use disorder severity moderates clinical response to varenicline*. Virtual Oral presentation at T32 UCLA & UCI Joint 2021 Retreat, Los Angeles, CA.

**Donato, S.,** Green, R., & Ray, L. A. (2021, April). *Alcohol use disorder severity moderates clinical response to varenicline*. Oral presentation at UCLA Department of Psychology Clinical Area Program Meeting, Los Angeles, CA.

**Donato, S.,** Green, R., & Ray, L. A. (2020, October). *A multidimensional approach to alcohol use disorder severity and outcomes in a randomized clinical trial of varenicline*. Oral presentation at UCLA Translational Neuroscience of Drug Abuse Training Program, Los Angeles, CA.

## **POSTER PRESENTATIONS**

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**S. Donato,** S. Nieto, & L.A. Ray (June 2022). *Psychometric Properties of the Brief AUD Severity Scale*. Poster presented at the 45th Annual RSA Scientific Meeting, Orlando, Florida.

E. Grodin, A. Montoya, A. Cruz, **S. Donato,** W. Anada-Baskerville, & L.A. Ray (June 2022). *Identifying Treatment Responders to Varenicline for Alcohol Use Disorder Using a Qualitative Interaction Trees Analysis*. Poster presented at the 45th Annual RSA Scientific Meeting, Orlando, Florida.

A. Cruz, A. Montoya, E. Grodin, **S. Donato,** W. Anada-Baskerville, & L.A. Ray (June 2022). *A Case Study with RCT of Varenicline Using Two Machine Learning Approaches*. Poster to be presented at the Symposium on Data Science & Statistics (SDSS) Scientific Meeting, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



- A. Patrikyan, **S. Donato**, & L.A. Ray (May 2022). *Analysis of Alcohol Use Disorder Severity Sub-types in a Randomized Clinical Trial of Varenicline*. Poster presented at the 2022 UCLA Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference (PURC) in Los Angeles, California.
- S. Donato**, R. Green, & L.A. Ray (June 2021). *A multidimensional approach to alcohol use disorder severity and outcomes in a randomized clinical trial of varenicline*. Virtual poster presented at the 44th Annual RSA Scientific Meeting.
- S. Donato**, S. Bujarski, & L.A. Ray (June, 2020). *Capturing cumulative alcohol exposure: alcohol "pack years"*. Poster accepted for presentation at the 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual RSA Scientific Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana.
- E.M. Anderson, S. Brown, **S. Donato**, M. Lopez, H.C. Becker, C.W. Cowan. (June, 2019) *Knockdown of the epigenetic modifier G9A reduces alcohol drinking and blocks stress-potentiated alcohol drinking*. Poster presented at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual RSA Scientific Meeting, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- W.C. Griffin, S.K. Brown A.N. Lane, S.E. Reasons, **S. Donato**, L.A. Ralston, H.L. Haun, H.C. Becker. (June, 2019). *Influence of the ventral hippocampal to accumbens pathway on ethanol drinking in ethanol dependent and non-dependent mice*. Poster presented at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual RSA Scientific Meeting, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- McKinney, M., Grier, K., **Donato, S.**, Kirchner, C., McWhite, C., & Stephens, B. (March, 2018). *Does a psychology research methods course enhance critical thinking?* Poster presented at the Southeastern Psychological Association 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, Charleston, South Carolina.

## **TECHNICAL SKILLS**

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**Data Analysis:** SPSS, SAS, R, Stata, Prism GraphPad

**Microsoft:** Word, Excel, PowerPoint

**Animal Related (Mice and Rats):** Animal Husbandry, Injections, Brain and Blood Collection, Surgical Procedures including stereotaxic techniques and catheter placement, behavioral testing

**Laboratory:** Brain Slicing (via Cryostat and Vibratome), Histological Techniques, Fluorescent Microscopy, Operant Techniques

**Clinical Skills:** SCID diagnostic procedures, neuropsychological assessment methods, therapeutic techniques (cognitive behavioral therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, mindfulness training, family therapy), Managing and Adapting Practice (MAP) Direct Service Training, American Psychological Association Telepsychology Practices Training