

MICAELA RODRIGUEZ

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updated 7/29/25

EDUCATION

- 2021-2026 (exp.) **University of Michigan**
Ph.D. in Psychology (Social Area)
Advisors: Ethan Kross, PhD; Amie Gordon, PhD; Shinobu Kitayama, PhD
- 2021-2023 **University of Michigan**
M.S. in Psychology
- 2016-2020 **Harvard University, *magna cum laude***
B.A. in Psychology (GPA: 3.91)
Highest departmental honors
Advisor: Richard J. McNally, PhD

EMPLOYMENT

- 2020-2021 **Columbia University Irving Medical Center**
Department of Psychiatry & New York State Psychiatric Institute

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Loneliness; Solitude; Social Connection; Emotion Regulation; Health & Well-Being; Culture; Technology

HONORS, AWARDS, & FELLOWSHIPS

RESEARCH

- 2025 **Nan Donald Award, UMich**
Awarded to support a qualitative project on perceptions of solitude across cultures
- 2024 **Robert B. Zajonc Scholar Award, UMich**
Awarded to support cross-cultural research on social isolation, loneliness, and health leveraging an extensive dataset containing over 350,000 participants across 58 nations
- 2024 **Pillsbury Graduate Research Award, UMich**
Awarded to support the development of an original evidence-based loneliness intervention
- 2023 **Philip Brickman Memorial Prize, UMich**
Awarded to the best graduate student research paper published in the Social Psychology Area (for “Sensory Emotion Regulation” in *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*)
- 2023 **Patricia Gurin Research Award, UMich**
Awarded to support an innovative research proposal on identity, diversity, and self-control
- 2023 **Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant, UMich**
- 2023 **Pittsburgh Summer Methodology Series Training Award, UMich**
For intensive workshops in dyadic data analysis and multilevel modeling for longitudinal data
- 2022 **Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant, UMich**
Awarded to support research for doctoral pre-candidates
- 2022 **Institute for Social Research Summer Training Award, UMich**
For intensive summer statistical training in multilevel modeling
- 2022 **Ruth Hamill Graduate Student Research Award, UMich**
Awarded to a social psychology graduate student with a promising research proposal
- 2020 **Gordon W. Allport Prize, Harvard University**
Awarded to an outstanding senior honors thesis in the area of social psychology
- 2019 **Harvard College Research Program Travel Grant**
To support summer travel to Nairobi, Kenya to conduct a four-week positive psychology intervention with low-income adolescents with elevated depression and anxiety symptoms

- 2019 **Harvard College Research Program Grant**
To fund in-person data collection for an original honors thesis study

TEACHING & MENTORING

- 2025 **Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award, Rackham Graduate School, UMich**
Recognizes <1% of graduate students across the university who demonstrate outstanding dedication and excellence as teachers
- 2024 **Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award, Department of Psychology, UMich**
Awarded annually to a graduate student in Psychology for demonstrating excellence, creativity, and intellectual engagement in undergraduate teaching
- 2023 **Outstanding Undergraduate Research Mentor Award, UMich**
Awarded to 2% of graduate students for excellence in mentoring undergraduates to conduct independent scholarly research through the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program

SCHOLARSHIP

- 2021-26 **Rackham Merit Fellowship, UMich**
Competitive supplemental graduate funding for underrepresented students who demonstrate academic excellence and dedication to diversity
- 2020 **Phi Beta Kappa, Harvard University**
Awarded to the top 10% of Harvard graduates for outstanding academic achievement
- 2018-19 **John Harvard Scholar**
Awarded to the top 5% of Harvard undergraduates for academic excellence

FEDERAL GRANTS

- 2025-26 NIH Plasticity of Well-Being Network, Secondary Data Analysis Grant (\$30,000, Co-I; PIs Drs. Ethan Kross & Alexandra Wormley). *Examining the Role of Culture in the Links Between Loneliness, Social Isolation, and Health*.

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

16. Wormley, A. S., Vornlocher, C., Baldwin, C. R., & **Rodriguez, M.** (In Press). Beliefs about God buffer against the health risks of loneliness and social isolation in six major religious groups and 22 countries. *Scientific Reports*.
15. **Rodriguez, M.**, Schertz, K. E. & Kross, E. (2025). How people think about being alone shapes their experience of loneliness. *Nature Communications*, 16, 1594.
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-025-56764-3>
Featured in *BBC News*, *The Independent*, *University of Michigan News*, *National Public Radio*
14. **Rodriguez, M.** & Campbell, S. W. (2025). Re-evaluating solitude: A Nietzschean perspective. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2025.2519296>
13. **Rodriguez, M.** & Campbell, S. W. (2025). From ‘isolation’ to ‘me-time’: Linguistic shifts enhance solitary experiences. *Cognition and Emotion*, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2024.2445080>
12. Nguyen, T. T. & **Rodriguez, M.** (2024). Deconstructing solitude and its links to well-being. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, e70020. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.70020>
11. **Rodriguez, M.**, & Kross, E. (2023). Sensory emotion regulation. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 27(4), 370-390. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2023.01.008>
Received Brickman Award for best paper in the Social Psych Area, UMich
Featured in *The Washington Post*
10. **Rodriguez, M.**, Pratt, S., Bellet, B. W., McNally, R. J. (2023). Solitude can be good if you see it as such: Reappraisal helps lonely people experience solitude more positively. *Journal of Personality*, 93(1), 118-135. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12887>

9. **Rodriguez, M.**, Aalbers, G., & McNally, R. J. (2022). Idiographic network models of social media use and depression symptoms. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 46(1), 124-132. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10608-021-10236-2>
8. **Rodriguez, M.**, Osborn, T. L., Gan, J., Weisz, J. R., & Bellet, B. W. (2022). Loneliness in Kenyan adolescents: Socio-cultural factors and network association with depression and anxiety symptoms. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 59(6), 797-809. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13634615221099143>
7. Lam, P., Simpson, D., John, D., **Rodriguez, M.**, Bridgman-Packer, D., O'Neill, M., & Lewis-Fernández, R. (2022). Differential engagement by race/ethnicity in experimental trials of mental health treatment interventions: A systematic review. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 83(6), 21r14343. <https://doi.org/10.4088/JCP.21r14343>
6. Osborn, T. L., Venturo, K., Gan, J., **Rodriguez, M.**, Alemu, R., Roe, E., Arango, S., Wasil, A., Campbell, S., Weisz, J. R., Wasanga, C. (2022). Depression and anxiety symptoms amongst Kenyan adolescents: Psychometric properties, prevalence rates, and associations with psychological well-being and sociodemographic factors. *Research on Child and Adolescent Psychopathology*, 50(11), 1471-1485. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-022-00940-2>
5. Venturo-Conerly, K. E., Osborn, T. L., Alemu, R., Roe, E., **Rodriguez, M.**, Gan, J., Arango, S., Wasil, A., Wasanga, C., Weisz, J. R. (2022). Single-session interventions for adolescent anxiety and depression symptoms in Kenya: A cluster-randomized controlled trial. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 151, 104040. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2022.104040>
4. Osborn, T. L., Venturo-Conerly, K. E., Arango, S. G., Roe, E., **Rodriguez, M.**, Alemu, R., Gan, J., Wasil, A. R., Otieno, B. H., Rusch, T., Ndeti, D. M., Wasanga, C., Schleider, J. L., & Weisz, J. R. (2021). The Shamiri group intervention for adolescent anxiety and depression in Sub-Saharan Africa: A randomized clinical trial. *JAMA Psychiatry*, 78(8), 829-837. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2021.1129>
3. **Rodriguez, M.**, Bellet, B. W., & McNally, R. J. (2020). Reframing time spent alone: Reappraisal buffers the emotional effects of isolation. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 44, 1052-1067. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10608-020-10128-x>
2. Osborn, T. L., **Rodriguez, M.**, Wasil, A. R., Venturo-Conerly, K. E., ... Shingleton, R., & Weisz, J. R., (2020). Single session digital intervention for adolescent depression, anxiety, and well-being: Outcomes of a randomized controlled trial with Kenyan adolescents. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 88(7), 657-668. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ccp0000505>
1. Osborn, T. L., Venturo-Conerly, K. E., Wasil, A. R., **Rodriguez, M.**, Roe, E., Arango, S., Alemu, R., Gan, J., Schleider, J. L., & Weisz, J. R. (2020). The Shamiri group intervention for adolescent anxiety and depression: Study protocol for a randomized controlled trial of a lay provider-delivered, school-based intervention in Kenya. *Trials*, 21, 938. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13063-020-04732-1>

MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW

* Denotes shared first authorship

Rodriguez, M.*, Baldwin, C. R.*, Wormley, A. S., Vornlocher, C., Kross, E., Tamir, M., & Kitayama, S. Culture shapes the links between loneliness, living alone, and health across 58 nations.

Rodriguez, M., Diamond, E., From, A., Gordon, A. M., & Feinberg, M. (Registered Report). The effects of AI companions on psychological well-being, social life, and interpersonal attitudes and behaviors: An 8-month experimental study.

Rodriguez, M., Motyl, M., & Schroeder, J. Connection in the digital age: Understanding the complex effects of social technology. Book chapter in *Empathy and Artificial Intelligence: Challenges, Advances, and Ethical Considerations*. Cambridge University Press.

Guevarra, D. A., **Rodriguez, M.**, & McNally, R. J. Low-effort emotion regulation: Implications for depression and anxiety. Invited submission to special issue on "Emotion Regulation: Bringing Affective and Clinical Science" in *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*.

Baldwin, C. R., **Rodriguez, M.**, & McNally, R. J. The body as a fundamental system of emotion regulation.
Invited submission to *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*.

CONFERENCE TALKS

Rodriguez, M. (2025, July) “Harnessing the Power of Solitude: A Novel Intervention to Combat Loneliness.” Talk in Symposium, “New Approaches to Address Social Disconnection” at the Summer Institute for Social and Personality Psychology (SISPP), Northwestern University, Evanston, IL.

Rodriguez, M. Diamond, E., From, A., Gordon, A. M., & Feinberg, M. (2025, July) “The Effects of AI Companions on Well-Being, Social Life, and Interpersonal Attitudes Across Seven Weeks.” Talk in **Symposium**, “Humans vs. Machines: Exploring the Social and Ethical Frontiers of Technology” at the 2025 Academy of Management (AOM) Annual Meeting, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Rodriguez, M. & Kross, E. (2025, March) “Sensory Emotion Regulation.” Talk in **Symposium**, “New Perspectives on Effort in Emotion Regulation” at the 2025 Society of Affective Science (SAS) Annual Convention, Portland, OR.

Rodriguez, M. Diamond, E., From, A., Gordon, A. M., & Feinberg, M. (2025, March) “Interacting with an AI Companion Promotes Emotional Well-Being Across Seven Weeks.” Data Blitz at the 2025 Society for Affective Science (SAS) Annual Convention, Emotion Regulation Pre-Conference, Portland, OR.

Rodriguez, M., Schertz, K. E., & Kross, E. (2024, May) “Lonely or Just Alone? Beliefs Shape Experiences of Being Alone.” Talk in **Symposium**, “Innovative Tools to Address Our Loneliness Epidemic: Leveraging Affective, Cognitive, and Behavioral Processes” at the 2024 Association for Psychological Science (APS) Annual Convention, San Francisco, CA.

Rodriguez, M. (2024, Feb) “Lonely or Just Alone? Beliefs Shape Experiences of Being Alone.” Talk in **Co-Chaired Symposium**, “Time Alone: An Asset or Liability to Well-Being?” (Co-Chair: Ethan Kross) at the 2024 Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) Annual Convention, San Diego, CA.

Rodriguez, M. (2023, May) “The Importance of Disentangling Loneliness from Time Spent Alone.” Talk in **Symposium**, “Leveraging Multimodal Data and Methods to Understand Loneliness, its Consequences, and its Treatment” at the 2023 Association for Psychological Science (APS) Annual Convention, D.C.

Rodriguez, M. (2023, Feb) “Understanding the Links Between Social Media Use and Depression: A Longitudinal and Idiographic Approach.” Data Blitz presented at the 2023 Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) Annual Convention, Media and Technology Pre-Conference, Atlanta, GA.

INVITED TALKS

- 2025 UCLA (Social Area Brown Bag Speaker Series, Department of Psychology)
University of Michigan (Personality & Social Contexts Speaker Series, Department of Psychology)
University of Michigan (Patricia Gurin Lecture Series, Department of Psychology)
Center for Positive Organizations (Adderley Research Incubator)
Linfield University (Social Area Brown Bag Speaker Series, Department of Psychology)
- 2024 UNC Chapel Hill (Deepest Beliefs Lab, Department of Psychology)
Harvard University (McNally Lab for Anxiety and Related Disorders, Department of Psychology)

POPULAR WRITING

Rodriguez, M., Pratt, S., & Bellet., B. W. (2023, November). Improving our relationship to being alone. *Character & Context Blog, Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP).*

ADVANCED TRAINING

- 2025 *Summer Institute in Social and Personality Psychology (SISPP)*
Northwestern University; Intervention Science Course, Drs. David Sherman & Emily Dix
- 2024 *Designing Ambulatory Assessment Studies* (SMaRT Workshop, Dr. Aidan Wright)
- 2023 *Dyadic Longitudinal Analysis* (University of Pittsburgh, Drs. Amie Gordon & Kate Thorson)
- 2023 *Longitudinal Multilevel Modeling* (University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Aidan Wright)
- 2022 *Multilevel Models: An Introduction* (University of Michigan (ICPSR), Dr. Mark Manning)

SELECT MEDIA COVERAGE

2025 *BBC News; The Independent; University of Michigan News; National Public Radio*
2023 *The Washington Post, Everyday Health, Medium, El País, Psychology Today*

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

		<i>RATING</i>
FALL 2024	<i>Psychology of Close Relationships</i> , Graduate Student Instructor	4.9/5.0
WINTER 2024	<i>Cultural Psychology</i> , Graduate Student Instructor	5.0/5.0
FALL 2023	<i>Intro to Psychology</i> , Graduate Student Instructor	4.8/5.0
WINTER 2023	<i>Organizational Psychology</i> , Graduate Student Instructor	5.0/5.0
FALL 2022	<i>Intro to Social Psychology</i> , Graduate Student Instructor	5.0/5.0
WINTER 2022	<i>Intro to Social Psychology</i> , Graduate Student Instructor	4.9/5.0

MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONS, ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

WINTER 2024 *Leading Yourself & Managing Your Professional Relationships*, Grader & Tutor
WINTER 2023 *Leading Yourself & Managing Your Professional Relationships*, Grader & Tutor

GRADUATE COURSES

FALL 2024 *Negotiations* (Executive MBA), Teaching Assistant & Grader
FALL 2021 *Intro to Management & Organizations* (MBA), Teaching Assistant

INVITED GUEST LECTURES

FALL 2024 “The Rise of Artificially Intelligent Companions.” *Psychology of Close Relationships*
WINTER 2024 “Culture and Emotion.” *Cultural Psychology*
WINTER 2024 “How You Think About Being Alone Shapes Your Experience of Loneliness.” *Leading Yourself and Managing Your Professional Relationships*
WINTER 2023 “How You Think About Being Alone Shapes Your Experience of Loneliness.” *Leading Yourself and Managing Your Professional Relationships*

MENTORING EXPERIENCE

HONORS THESES SUPERVISED

2024-2025 Hannah Lubowitz (Psychology & Education, UMich)
2024-2025 Natalie Pierce (Psychology & Criminal Justice, UMich)
2024-2025 Megan Pham (Psychology, UMich); *Received Best Thesis Award*
2023-2024 Sofia Micale (Psychology & Cognitive Science, UMich); *Highest Honors*

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

JOURNAL AD-HOC REVIEWING

British Journal of Social Psychology, Cognition and Emotion, Journal of Personality, Personality & Individual Differences, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, PLoS One, Nature Human Behaviour, Social Psychological and Personality Science, Scientific Reports

DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

2024- Departmental Associate, Department of Psychology
Represents social area graduate students at faculty meetings; voting rights at faculty meetings; meet with department leaders to discuss graduate program issues
2023- Integrity Board, Rackham Graduate School
Attend academic misconduct hearings, evaluate cases, and recommend sanctions as part of a Board composed of one graduate student and two faculty members
2023-24 Graduate Admissions Committee, Social Psychology Area
Reviewed and evaluated PhD program applications; interviewed applicants
2023-24 Culture Committee, Social Psychology Area
Organized community-building and professional development events
2022-23 Recruitment Weekend Committee, Social Psychology Area
Helped plan and organize recruitment weekend for prospective PhD students

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

- 2023- Alumni Interviewer (Detroit & New York City)
Conduct interviews with 6-8 undergraduate applicants to Harvard each year; submits evaluation reports to the Harvard Admissions Office
- 2019-20 Committee on Undergraduate Instruction, Department of Psychology
Selected to represent undergraduate students in monthly meetings with faculty members to discuss changes to the undergraduate psychology curriculum
- 2019-20 Undergraduate Planning Committee, Department of Psychology
Organized and led information sessions for prospective psychology majors

AFFILIATIONS

Association for Psychological Science (APS)
International Society for the Science of Existential Psychology (ISSEP)
Society for Affective Science (SAS)
Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP)

CONFERENCE POSTER REVIEWING

Society of Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP), 2024 Annual Convention
Association for Psychological Science (APS), 2022 Annual Convention

OTHER TEACHING AND CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

- 2021-2022 Peer Support Leader, Mood Lifters, Ann Arbor MI
Co-led a 15-week evidence-based, peer-support mental health program for graduate students
- 2020-2021 Clinical Interviewer, Life is Precious Youth Organization, New York NY
Conducted clinical interviews with Latina adolescents experiencing suicidal ideation
- 2019-2020 Clinical Intern, Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Boston University, Boston MA
Facilitated skills development workshops for adults with severe developmental disabilities
- 2017-2020 Debate Chair, Harvard Model Congress, Boston, SF, Hong Kong, Singapore, Tokyo
Taught high school students parliamentary procedures and guided them through government simulation debates; taught over 400 students across 7 national and international conferences
- 2017-2019 Science Teacher and Mentor, Harvard Education Portal, Allston MA
Designed and taught after-school science curricula for middle school students
- 2017, 2018 Instructor, Harvard Summit for Young Leaders in China, Beijing ('17) & Shanghai ('18)
Created and taught two week-long seminars for 100+ high school students in China. Topics were Designing the Modern Skyscraper ('17) and The Morality of Artificial Intelligence ('18)

REFERENCES

1. ETHAN KROSS, PHD
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2. AMIE M. GORDON, PHD
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4. SHINOBU KITAYAMA, PHD
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