

TIEN (TIAN) YANG

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., University of Michigan

Psychology (Area: Cognition & Cognitive Neuroscience)

Expected 2030

- **GPA:** 4.0/4.0
- **Advisor:** Dr. Thad Polk

Honours B.Sc., University of Toronto

Psychology Research Specialist & Anthropology Minor

September 2021 – June 2025

- **GPA:** 3.89/4.0
- **Honours Thesis:** *Using fMRI Co-Fluctuations to Understand Network Specialization in Aging* (Advisor: Dr. Katherine Duncan)

PUBLICATIONS

Under Review

Woodbury, M., Duan, C., Brol, E., Seeger, R., **Yang, T.**, & Schlichting, M. L. *Prior spatial knowledge differentially impacts learning in children and young adults*. Manuscript under review at *PLOS One*.

PRESENTATIONS

Yang, T., Simmonite, M., Liu, B., Maddox, E., Reardon, N., Wyatt, K., & Polk, T. (2026, March). *Age-related neural dedifferentiation is driven by reduced reliability* [Conference presentation: Data blitz talk and poster]. Cognitive Neuroscience Society (CNS) 2026 Annual Meeting, Vancouver, BC, Canada.

Yang, T., Youm, A., Wilford, R., Peng, J., Cohn, M., & Duncan, K. (2025, November). *fMRI co-fluctuations reveal age-related declines in network segregation: A role for basal forebrain* [Poster presentation]. Society for Neuroscience (SfN) 2025 Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA, United States.

Dupuis, K., Gans, H., Gourley, A., Salad, J., **Yang, T.**, Hwang, J., & Chasteen, A. L. (2025, October). *Early life arts discouragement experiences and consequences: Findings from interviews with older adults* [Conference talk]. 2025 Meeting of the Canadian Association of Gerontology, Montreal, QC, Canada.

Yang, T., Wilford, R., Youm, A., Cohn, M., & Duncan, K. (2025). *fMRI co-fluctuations reveal age-related declines in network specialization: A role for basal forebrain* [Poster presentation]. Psychology Research Specialist Thesis Poster Fair, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada.

Yang, T. (2025). *fMRI co-fluctuations reveal age-related declines in network specialization: A role for basal forebrain* [Honours thesis presentation]. Psychology Research Specialist Presentation, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada.

Yang, T. (2024). *Investigating mnemonic and decision-making biases in recognition memory judgements* [Mini-thesis presentation]. Psychology Research Specialist Presentation, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada.

Yang, T., Gans, H., & Chasteen, A.L. (2024). *Older adults' experiences of ageism* [Poster presentation]. Research Opportunity Program Poster Fair, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada.

Woodbury, M., Blumenthal, A., Hung, N., Shahezian, M., Im, J., Saharov, D., Chen, K., Zhao, S., Hoang, B., Abolghasem, Z., **Yang, T.,** Castrillon, M., Clarke, C., Schlichting, M.L., & Mack, M.L. (2023). *Category learning differs over development by category-defining feature and task framing* [Poster presentation]. Canadian Society for Brain, Behaviour, and Cognitive Science (CSBBCS), Guelph, ON, Canada.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Graduate Researcher, Computational & Cognitive Neuroscience (Polk) Lab

Supervisor: Dr. Thad Polk

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

August 2025 – Present

- Led studies examining neural dedifferentiation in aging using fMRI

Honours Thesis Student, UTEA Research Award Student, Duncan Lab

Supervisor: Dr. Katherine Duncan

University of Toronto, Toronto

January 2024 – April 2025

- Designed and conducted resting-state fMRI and eye-tracking studies examining memory, recognition bias, and neural dedifferentiation in aging; analyses inform multiple manuscripts and conference presentations

Research Project Student, Intergroup Relations Lab

Supervisor: Dr. Alison Chasteen

University of Toronto, Toronto

September 2023 – April 2025

- Led quantitative (Qualtrics survey) and qualitative (interview) studies on ageism, moral judgment, and behavioral responses across adulthood

UTEA Research Award Student, Research Assistant, Budding Minds Lab

Supervisor: Dr. Meg Schlichting

University of Toronto, Toronto

September 2022 - April 2025

- Supported behavioral and fMRI studies on learning and memory development; contributed to data collection, analysis, and writing

SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS

University of Toronto, University of Toronto Excellence Award (UTEA) 2024
Undergraduate summer research fund (\$7500)
Funded Project: Investigating Mnemonic and Decision-Making Biases in Recognition Memory Judgements
Supervisor: Dr. Katherine Duncan

University of Toronto, University of Toronto Excellence Award (UTEA) 2023
Undergraduate summer research fund (\$7500)
Funded Project: How Does Prior Spatial Knowledge Affect New Learning for Children?
Supervisor: Dr. Meg Schlichting

ACADEMIC AWARDS

University of Michigan, Jay and Kay Peters Psychology Student Award 2026
Graduate student award (\$1,000) supporting academic and professional development

University of Michigan, Rackham Conference Travel Grant 2025
Travel funding (\$900) supporting participation in an academic conference

Cognitive Neuroscience Society, Graduate Student Award 2025
Competitive research award recognizing outstanding poster abstracts; selected from international submissions (~10 recipients); includes conference recognition and travel support (\$100)

Canadian Psychological Association, Certificate of Academic Excellence 2025
National award recognizing the top undergraduate, master's, and doctoral theses in psychology, endorsed by the Council of Canadian Departments of Psychology

University of Toronto, Robert J. Glushko Senior Thesis Award 2025
Competitive departmental award (\$500) for an outstanding undergraduate thesis in cognitive science

University of Toronto, International Experience Award 2022
Travel award (\$3000) to fund participation in the Study Abroad program

University of Toronto, Dean's List 2022-2024
Recognition of academic achievement of obtaining high GPAs

University of Toronto, Admission Scholarship 2021
Admission scholarship (\$7500)

University College Scholarship Committee, J. S. McLean Scholarship 2021

Admission scholarship (\$1000)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Graduate Student Instructor, PSYCH240 (Introduction to Cognitive Psychology)
University of Michigan, January 2026

PEER REVIEW EXPERIENCE

- Ad hoc reviewer (with mentorship from Thad Polk), *Neuropsychology*, 2026

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Laboratory Biosafety Training
SickKids Hospital, Online, December 2023

ToNI MRI Level 1 Training
Toronto Neuroimaging Facility (ToNI), Online, November 2022

TCPS 2: CORE-2022 Certification
Panel on Research Ethics, Online, October 2022

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Student Advisory Committee, Generative AI September 2024 – April 2025
University of Toronto

- Contributed to discussions and provided insights on emerging challenges and opportunities related to AI integration in academic settings

Research Volunteer February 2023 – September 2024
SickKids Hospital, Toronto

- Assisted in clinic and recruitment days by greeting children, logging information on RedCap, and guiding the participants through the blood donation processes

Volunteer Martial Arts Instructor February 2023 – February 2025
Wayland Li Martial Arts Centre, Toronto

- Taught students across different age groups the martial arts and Tai Chi basics

Communications Assistant, Centre for Ethics September 2022 – June 2025
University of Toronto, Toronto

- Assisted in preparing, hosting, and publicizing Centre activities and events (e.g., talks by faculty members, weekly presentations by Centre fellows)

LANGUAGES

Mandarin Chinese: Native or bilingual proficiency

English: Full professional proficiency

French: Beginner proficiency

RESEARCH SKILLS

Research Methods

Neuroimaging Methods:

- Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) – design, preprocessing, and analysis

Psychophysiological Methods:

- Eye-tracking – analysis

Programming Languages

- R
- Python
- MATLAB

Analysis/Statistical Methods

- General Linear Model (GLM)
- Functional Connectivity
- Multivariate Pattern Analysis

Software & Packages

- fMRIPrep
- MRIQC
- Nilearn
- SPM