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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Assistant Professor (2023–)
University of Michigan, Department of Psychology

Principal Researcher (2021–2023)
The University of Chicago Booth School of Business

EDUCATION

Carnegie Mellon University (2016–2020)
Ph. D., Behavioral Decision Research
Dissertation title: *“How what goes on in others’ minds affects our choices and well-being”* [LINK](#)

Central European University, Hungary (2012–2016)
Ph. D., Cognitive Science (all but dissertation)

University of Pécs, Hungary (2006–2012)
B.A. & M. A., Economics

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Motivated preferences for information (“belief-based utility”)
Communication and information disclosure
Social inference and social decision-making
Generative AI

PUBLICATIONS

*Indicates student mentee

1. Wojtowicz, Z., Molnar, A., Golman, R., & Loewenstein, G. (2025). Willful Inattention: Keeping Aversive Information Out of Mind. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 66, 102116. [LINK](#)
2. Molnar, A., & Mermelstein, I.* (2025). Utilizing Generative AI to Boost Public Support for Carbon Pricing. In *Proceedings of the 59th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*. Accepted, in press.
3. Molnar, A., & Paolacci, G. (2024). Competition increases the magnitude of dishonest reporting even when controlling for reward uncertainty. *Scientific Reports*, 14, 31980. [LINK](#)
4. Molnar, A., & Golman, R. (2024). Impatience for Information: Curiosity is here today, gone tomorrow. *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, 37(1), e2360. [LINK](#)
5. Molnar, A., Chaudhry, S. J., & Loewenstein, G. (2023). "It's Not About the Money. It's About Sending a Message!": Avengers Want Offenders to Understand the Reason for Revenge. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 174, 104207. [LINK](#)
 — Awarded the Best Conference Paper Award at the 2021 IACM conference
 — Press: [Chicago Booth Review](#)
6. Molnar, A., Moore, A., Fowler, C., & Wu, G. (2023). Seen and Not Seen: How People Judge Ambiguous Behavior During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty*, 66, 141–159. [LINK](#)
7. Molnar, A., & Loewenstein, G. (2022). Thoughts and players: An introduction to old and new economic perspectives on beliefs. In J. Musolino, J. Sommer, & P. Hemmer (Eds.). *The Cognitive Science of Belief* (pp. 321–350). Cambridge University Press. [LINK](#)
8. Molnar, A., & Loewenstein, G. (2022). Ideologies Are Like Possessions: A commentary on Gries, T., Müller, V., & Jost, J. T. The Market for Belief Systems: A Formal Model of Ideological Choice. *Psychological Inquiry*, 33(2), 84–87. [LINK](#)
9. Golman, R., Loewenstein, G., Molnar, A., & Saccardo, S. (2021). The Demand for, and Avoidance of, Information. *Management Science*, 68(9), 6454–6476. [LINK](#)
10. VanEpps, E. M.¹, Molnar, A.¹, Downs, J. S., & Loewenstein, G. (2021). Choosing the Light Meal: Real-time Aggregation of Calorie Information Reduces Meal Calories. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 58(5), 948–967. [LINK](#) ¹joint first authors
 — Awarded the Best Student Poster Award at the 2019 SJDM conference
11. Molnar, A. (2020). How to implement real-time interaction between participants in online surveys: A practical guide to SMARTRIQS. *The Quantitative Methods for Psychology*, 16(4), 334–354. [LINK](#)

12. Molnar, A. (2019). SMARTRIQS: A Simple Method Allowing Real Time Respondent Interaction in Qualtrics Surveys. *Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Finance*, 22, 161–169. [LINK](#)
— Awarded the Technology Innovator Award at the 2023 IACM conference
13. Loewenstein, G., & Molnar, A. (2018). The renaissance of belief-based utility in economics. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 2(3), 166–167. [LINK](#)
14. Heintz, C., Karabegovic, M., & Molnar, A. (2016). The co-evolution of honesty and strategic vigilance. *Frontiers in psychology*, 7, 1503. [LINK](#)

WORKING PAPERS

*Indicates student mentee

15. Zhu, J.*, & Molnar, A. (2025). Blissful (A)Ignorance: People form overly positive impressions of others based on their written messages, despite wide-scale adoption of Generative AI. *Revise & Resubmit, Computers in Human Behavior*. [LINK](#)
16. Molnar, A., & Loewenstein, G. (2025). Disturbed by misbelief: People are upset and avoid others when they think others hold false beliefs, not simply different beliefs. *Revise & Resubmit, Political Psychology*. [LINK](#)
17. Zhu, J.*, & Molnar, A. (2025). The End of Writing as We Know It? Generative AI May Undermine the Social Signaling Function of Writing. *Under review*. [LINK](#)
18. Molnar, A., & Chaudhry, S. J. (2025). The lesser of two evils: Explaining a bad choice by revealing the choice set. *Under review*. [LINK](#)
19. Capraro, V., Globig, L., Rausch, Z., Rathje, S., Wormley, A. S., Olson, J., ... Molnar, A., ... & Van Bavel, J. J. (2025). A consensus statement on potential negative impacts of smartphone and social media use on adolescent mental health. *Under review*. [LINK](#)
20. Molnar, A., & Epley, N. (2024), Beliefs as Barriers: We Can't Forgive Those Who Don't Understand. (*Manuscript available upon request.*)
21. Molnar, A., & Heintz, C. (2016). Beliefs about people's prosociality eliciting predictions in dictator games. *CEU Working Papers, Department of Economics, Central European University*. [LINK](#)

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

**Indicates student mentee*

The Weaponized Science Effect: Using science to attack political opponents undermines the perceived quality of science (with Atakan Atamer* & Sila Mutaf*). *Manuscript in preparation*

Exploring the adoption and impact of Generative AI in communication: Insights from a nationally representative survey (2024-2025) (with Jiaqi Zhu*). *Data collection in progress*

Apologizing, Fast and Slow: The disadvantage of apologizing too soon (with Hyeran Kang*). *Data collection in progress*

Honor-Driven Revenge: A cross-cultural study of Turkey and the U.S. (with Sila Mutaf*). *Data collection in progress*

Disclosure utility theory: Modeling the desire to be understood. (with George Loewenstein, *data collection in progress*)

INVITED TALKS

2025 – Mindworks, The University of Chicago (*virtual talk*)
LIFE Academy, Ann Arbor, MI

2023 – Tuck School of Business, Hanover, NH
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA (*virtual talk*)

2022 – University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
INSEAD, Fontainebleau, France / Singapore (*virtual talk*)

2021 – College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA (*virtual talk*)
Harvard Kennedy School, Cambridge, MA (*virtual talk*)
Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN (*virtual talk*)

2020 – The University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

2019 – University of Cologne, Cologne, Germany

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Regular talk unless stated otherwise

2026 – (*forthcoming*) 59th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, Maui, HI

2025 – (*forthcoming*) Society for Judgment and Decision Making, Denver, CO
Behavioral Economics: Retrospect and Prospect, Bellingham, WA

2024 – Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Diego, CA (*symposium*)

2023 – International Association for Conflict Management, Thessaloniki, Greece
Curiosity, Creativity and Complexity Conference, New York, NY (*poster*)

2022 – Society for Judgment and Decision Making, *virtual conference*
Belief Based Utility Conference, Amsterdam, Netherlands

2021 – JDM preconference, Society for Personality and Social Psychology, *virtual conference*
International Association for Conflict Management, *virtual conference (symposium)*
APA Convention (Division 8: SPSP), *virtual conference (symposium)*

Prior to 2021:

Society for Consumer Psychology Conference, Huntington Beach, CA
NeuroPsychoEconomics, *virtual conference*

Society for Judgment and Decision Making, *virtual conference (poster)*

Early Career Behavioral Economics Conference, San Diego, CA

Boston Judgment and Decision Making Day, Boston, MA

Society for Judgment and Decision Making, Montréal, Canada

Yale Whitebox Advisors Graduate Student Conference, New Haven, CT

Society for Judgment and Decision Making, Vancouver, Canada (*poster*)

Society for Judgment and Decision Making, Boston, MA

Annual Meeting of the French Experimental Economics Association, Besançon, France

Maastricht Behavioral and Experimental Economics Symposium, Maastricht, Netherlands

Foundations of Utility and Risk, Rotterdam, Netherlands

Economic Science Association European meeting, Prague, Czech Republic

WORKSHOPS, PRECONFERENCES, AND SUMMERS SCHOOLS

2025 – Misinformation & Belief Science 2025 Preconference at SPSP (*Co-chair*)

2024 – SPSP Free-Form Friday online workshop on SMARTRIQS and SurvConf, [LINK](#)

Tools for Studying Dyadic and Group Interactions in Online Experiments, SPSP Professional Developmental Workshop, San Diego, CA

2022 – The United States, Europe and World Order, Johns Hopkins SAIS Kissinger Center and Foreign Policy Institute, *virtual panel discussion*

2021 – Introducing SMARTRIQS to Negotiation and Conflict Management, IACM *virtual workshop*

Workshops and summer schools prior to 2021:

Running Social Interaction Studies Online, NYU *webinar*

BRIQ workshop on Beliefs, Bonn, Germany

DGPE workshop on “Belief-Dependent Preferences”, Copenhagen, Denmark

BRIQ Summer School on Behavioral Economics, Bonn, Germany

Behavioral Insights Group Doctoral Workshop, Boston, MA

SJDM Pre-Conference on Economic Inequality, Montréal, Canada

Workshop on Norms and Behavioral Change, Philadelphia, PA

Spring School in Behavioral Economics, San Diego, CA

Modelling Self on Other workshop, Budapest, Hungary

Norms, Actions, Games workshop, London, UK

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Rising Star of the Association for Psychological Science (2025)

IACM 2023 Technology Innovator Award

IACM 2021 Best Conference Paper Award

SJDM 2019 Best Student Poster Award

Presidential Fellowship, Carnegie Mellon University (2019)

\$5,000

Graduate Student Teaching Award, CMU Dietrich College (2018)

Visiting Researcher Award, CMU (2015/16)

\$10,000

Fulbright Visiting Student Researcher Scholarship (2015/16)

\$6,700

Academic Achievement Award, Central European University
(top first-year student in 2012/13)

Pro Communitate Studiorum Facultatis Oeconomiae award, University of Pécs
(top student of the school of economics in 2010/11)

General Electric Scholar Leaders scholarship (2008–2011)

\$3,000

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Michigan (as primary instructor):

Decision Processes, undergraduate (Fall 2025), overall instructor evaluation*: **TBA**

Advanced Decision Processes, PhD seminar (Fall 2025), overall instructor evaluation*: **TBA**

Decision Making & A.I., PhD seminar series (Winter 2025), overall instructor evaluation*: **4.93 / 5**

Decision Processes, undergraduate (Winter 2025), overall instructor evaluation*: **4.83 / 5**

Advanced Decision Processes, PhD seminar (Winter 2024), overall instructor evaluation*: **5.00 / 5**

Decision Processes, undergraduate (Winter 2024), overall instructor evaluation*: **4.87 / 5**

**average of the three university-wide questions about instructors:*

"seemed well prepared for class meetings", "explained material clearly", and "treated students with respect"

Other teaching experience (as teaching assistant & guest lecturer):

Designing a Good Life, MBA level (Booth School of Business, University of Chicago; 3 semesters)

Behavioral Economics & Public Policy (Carnegie Mellon University; 4 semesters)

Decision Analysis (Carnegie Mellon University; 4 semesters)

Behavioral Economics, PhD level (Carnegie Mellon University; 3 semesters)

Behavioral Economics (Carnegie Mellon University; 2 semesters)

ADVISING & MENTORING

PhD students, University of Michigan: (*primary advisee)

Atakan Atamer, *expected graduation: 2028*

Hyeran Kang*, *expected graduation: 2029*

Sila Mutaf*, *expected graduation: 2029*

Dissertation committees, University of Michigan:

Caroline Beckman (*expected graduation: 2028*)

Tanner Nichols (2025)

Jahla Osborne (2025)

Gregory Stanley (2025)

Yiyan (Rose) Wang (*expected graduation: 2026*)

Master's student, University of Chicago: (*primary advisee)

Medha Raju*, *post-graduation placement: Research Design Specialist, University of Michigan*

Undergraduate students, University of Michigan:

Honor's thesis reader (3): Elizabeth Gass, Ilana Mermelstein, Hannah Feng

Supervised independent research (3): Maya Bojan, Rhea Karwal, Minnie Yuan

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES & SERVICE

Organizational affiliations

Association for Psychological Science

Society for Judgment and Decision Making

Society for Personality and Social Psychology

Ad-hoc reviewer

Association of Computing Machinery CHI conference

Behavioral Science & Policy

Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences

International Association for Conflict Management

Journal of the Association for Consumer Research

Journal of Economic Psychology

Justice Quarterly

Management Science

Organization Science

Proceedings of the Royal Society B

Scientific Reports

Society for Judgment and Decision Making

Society for Personality and Social Psychology

The University of Chicago Press

Zeitschrift für Psychologie

Contributions to crowd-sourced research projects

#ManyDesignsCarbon ([LINK](#))

A consensus statement on the impact of social media on adolescent mental health ([LINK](#))

Reproducibility in Management Science ([LINK](#))

Other service

2025–2026: *Chair*, Student Awards Committee, Department of Psychology (Cognition and Cognitive Neuroscience area), University of Michigan

2025: *Organizer*, Decision-making and Artificial Intelligence seminar series, University of Michigan

2024–2025: *Chair*, Graduate Admissions Committee, Department of Psychology (Cognition and Cognitive Neuroscience area), University of Michigan

2024–2025: *Co-Chair*, Organizing Committee of the Misinformation & Belief Science 2025 Preconference at SPSP

2021–2023: *Organizer*, Center for Decision Research Brown Bag seminar series, Booth School of Business, The University of Chicago

REFERENCES

Nicholas Epley (postdoctoral advisor)
John Templeton Keller Professor of Behavioral Science, Booth School of Business, U. of Chicago
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Chicago, IL 60637
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Alex Imas
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Chicago, IL 60637
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Email: alex.imas@chicagobooth.edu

George Loewenstein (Ph.D. committee chair)
Herbert A. Simon Professor of Economics and Psychology, Carnegie Mellon University
5000 Forbes Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Office: (412) 268-8787
Email: gl2o@andrew.cmu.edu

Russell Golman
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Silvia Saccardo
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