

BENJAMIN WEISSMAN

Assistant Professor, Psychology – College of the Holy Cross (starting Fall 2026)

Director - CLIPlab

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EDUCATION

- 2019 Ph.D., Linguistics, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
 Dissertation: “The role of linguistic meaning in the concept of lying”
 Committee: Marina Terkourafi, Darren Tanner, Peter Lasersohn, Tania Ionin
- 2017 M.A., Linguistics, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- 2014 B.A., Linguistics; B.A., History, College of William & Mary
 Honors Thesis: “Linguistic strategies of authority in the television program *The Wire*” (Highest Honors)

PUBLICATIONS

- Under review **Weissman, B.** Who is [not] expected to use singular *them*? Evidence from real-time language processing. Under review at *Journal of Cultural Cognitive Science*.
- 2025 **Weissman, B.** Social meaning in reverse: Expectations of English role nouns based on speaker identity. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 242, 141-155.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2025.04.008>
- 2024 **Weissman, B.,** Thamsen, L, Engelen, J., and Cohn, N. Compositional Affordances of Emoji Sequences. *Language@Internet*, 22(Special Issue), 57–73.
<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/li/article/view/40795>
- 2024 **Weissman, B.,** Cohn, N., & Tanner, D. The electrophysiology of lexical prediction of emoji and text. *Neuropsychologia*, 198, 108881.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2024.108881>
- 2024 **Weissman, B.** Can an emoji be a lie? The links between emoji meaning, commitment, and lying. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 219, 12-29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2023.11.004>
- 2023 **Weissman, B.,** Engelen, J., Baas, E., & Cohn, N. The lexicon of emoji? Conventionality modulates processing of emoji. *Cognitive Science*, 47(4), e13275.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/cogs.13275>

- 2022 **Weissman, B.** Emoji semantics/pragmatics: investigating commitment and lying. In *Proceedings of The Fifth International Workshop on Emoji Understanding and Applications in Social Media*. <https://doi.org/10.18653/v1/2022.emoji-1.3>
- 2022 **Weissman, B.** What counts as a lie in and out of the courtroom? The effect of discourse genre on lie judgments. In L. Horn (ed.), *From Lying to Perjury: Linguistic and Legal Perspectives on Lies and Other Falsehoods*. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110733730-014>
- 2020 Terkourafi, M., **Weissman, B.**, & Roy, J. Different scalar terms are affected by face differently. *International Review of Pragmatics*, 12(1), 1-43. <https://doi.org/10.1163/18773109-01201103>
- 2019 **Weissman, B.** The roles of linguistic meaning and context in the concept of lying. PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. <https://hdl.handle.net/2142/106230>
- 2019 **Weissman, B.** Emojis in sentence processing: An electrophysiological approach. In *Companion Proceedings of The 2019 World Wide Web Conference*. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3308560.3316544>
- 2019 **Weissman, B.** Peaches and eggplants or. . . something else? The role of context in emoji interpretations. In *Proceedings of the Linguistic Society of America*, Vol 4 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.3765/plsa.v4i1.4533>
- 2018 Tanner, D., Goldshtein, M., and **Weissman, B.** Individual differences in the real-time neural dynamics of language comprehension. In K. Federmeier & D. Watson (eds.), *Psychology of Learning and Motivation: Current Topics in Language (Vol 68)*. Cambridge, MA: Academic Press. <https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.plm.2018.08.007>
- 2018 **Weissman, B.** and Terkourafi, M. Are false implicatures lies? An experimental investigation. *Mind & Language* 34(2). <https://doi.org/10.1111/mila.12212>
- 2018 **Weissman, B.** and Tanner, D. A strong wink between verbal and emoji-based irony: How the brain processes ironic emojis during language comprehension. *PloS One*, 13(8), e0201727. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0201727>
- 2018 Terkourafi, M., Catedral, L., Haider, I., Karimzad, F., Melgares, J., Mostacero, C., Nelson, J., and **Weissman, B.** Uncivil Twitter: A sociopragmatic analysis. *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict* 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlac.00002.ter>

POPULAR SCIENCE PUBLICATIONS

- 2021 “Emojis aren’t debasing language – they’re enriching it.” *The Guardian*. August 10, 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/aug/10/emojis-debasing-language-symbols-communication>

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

- 2026 **Weissman, B.** “Exploring the lying-commitment link experimentally.” *Measuring Commitments in Communication*. Nijmegen, Netherlands. June 18-19, 2026.
- 2024 **Weissman, B.** “Can an emoji be a lie? The links between emoji meaning, commitment, and lying.” *Cambridge Semantics, Pragmatics & Philosophy (SPP) Group*. November 15, 2024.
- 2023 **Weissman, B.** “Commitment via images and emoji in text messages.” *Seminar on Graphicons and Digital Communication*. Guangzhou/online. January 14, 2023.
- 2022 **Weissman, B.** “Processing emoji in real time.” Keynote at *Emoji2022 - 5th International Workshop on Emoji Understanding and Applications in Social Media*. July 14, 2022.
- 2022 **Weissman, B.** “Exploring emoji processing.” *Emoji Talk*. Oxford, UK. May 21, 2022.
- 2019 **Weissman, B.** “Emojis in sentence processing: An electrophysiological approach.” *Emoji2019 - 2nd International Workshop on Emoji Understanding and Applications in Social Media*. San Francisco, CA. May 13, 2019.
- 2019 **Weissman, B.** “The role of linguistic meaning in the concept of lying.” *Yale Linguistics Friday Lunch Talk Series*. New Haven, CT. April 19, 2019.
- 2017 **Weissman, B.** “An ERP study of emoji-generated irony” *University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign Linguistics Seminar*. Urbana, IL. March 13, 2017.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2026 **Weissman, B.** “Opinions about Artificial Intelligence modulate false beliefs from AI-generated language” – Poster presentation at *The 39th Annual Conference on Human Sentence Processing*. Cambridge, MA, March, 2026.
- 2025 Or, S., **Weissman, B.**, & Shetreet, E. “Deception with GCIs” – Poster presentation at *The 11th Experimental Pragmatics Conference*. Cambridge, UK, September, 2025

- 2025 **Weissman, B.**, Engelen, J., & Cohn, N. “Experimentally comparing mental representations of text sentences and emoji-only sequences” – Oral virtual presentation at *The Emoji Workshop*. Oslo, Norway, August, 2025.
- 2025 **Weissman, B.**, Engelen, J., & Cohn, N. “Colorless green emoji sleep furiously: Exploring structural priming between text sentences and emoji strings” – Poster presentation at *The 38th Annual Conference on Human Sentence Processing*. College Park, MD, March, 2025.
- 2025 **Weissman, B.**, Hubbard, R., & Tanner, D. “Lexical processing differences between words and emoji: Evidence from neural oscillations” – Poster presentation at *The 38th Annual Conference on Human Sentence Processing*. College Park, MD, March, 2025.
- 2024 **Weissman, B.** “Assessing the commitment account of lying by manipulating intent to deceive” – Oral presentation at *The 6th International Conference of the American Pragmatics Association*. St. Petersburg, FL, September, 2024.
- 2024 **Weissman, B.** “How does a speaker’s intent to deceive affect scalar inference and lie judgments?” – Poster presentation at *Experiments in Linguistic Meaning 3*. Philadelphia, PA, June, 2024
- 2024 **Weissman, B.** “Who is [not] expected to use singular they?” – Poster presentation at *The 37th Annual Conference on Human Sentence Processing*. Ann Arbor, MI, May, 2024.
- 2023 **Weissman, B.** “Quantifying the effect of deceptive intention on scalar inference and lie judgments” – Poster presentation at *The 10th biennial meeting of Experimental Pragmatics*. Paris, France, September, 2023.
- 2023 **Weissman, B.** “Predictions and uptake of social meaning in others’ utterances: Gender-neutral vs. gender-marked role nouns” – Oral presentation at *The 18th International Pragmatics Conference*. July, 2023.
- 2023 **Weissman, B.** “Attributions and predictions of social meaning in others: the case of English role nouns” – Poster presentation at *The 36th Annual Conference on Human Sentence Processing*. Pittsburgh, PA, March, 2023.
- 2022 **Weissman, B.** “Commitment and lying across modalities” – Oral presentation at *The 4th International Conference of the American Pragmatics Association (AMPRA-5)*. November, 2022.
- 2022 **Weissman, B.** “Emoji semantics/pragmatics: Investigating commitment and lying” – Oral presentation at *Emoji2022*. July, 2022.
- 2022 **Weissman, B.** “Speaker commitment and message modality” – Poster presentation at *The 35th Annual Conference on Human Sentence Processing*. March, 2022.

- 2022 **Weissman, B.**, Engelen, J., Thamsen, L., and Cohn, N. “The combinatorial properties of emoji” – Poster presentation at *The 35th Annual Conference on Human Sentence Processing*. March, 2022.
- 2019 **Weissman, B.** “Experimental insights on the relationship between pragmatics, lying, and misleading” – Poster presentation at *The 32nd Annual CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing*. Boulder, CO, March, 2019.
- 2019 **Weissman, B.**, Cohn, N., and Tanner, D. “Multimodal prediction in text + emoji sentences: an ERP study” – Poster presentation at *The 32nd Annual CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing*. Boulder, CO, March, 2019.
- 2019 **Weissman, B.** “Peaches and eggplants or... something else? The role of context in emoji interpretations” – Poster presentation at *The 93rd Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America*. New York, NY, January, 2019.
- 2018 **Weissman, B.** “Lie judgments, what is said, and a predisposition to disagree” – Oral presentation at *The 4th International Conference of the American Pragmatics Association (AMPRA-4)*. Albany, NY, November, 2018.
- 2018 **Weissman, B.** “Emojis and prediction in sentence contexts” – Poster presentation at *The 10th Annual Meeting of the Society for the Neurobiology of Language*. Quebec City, Quebec, August, 2018.
- 2018 **Weissman, B.** and Tanner, D. “Ironic emojis are processed like ironic words” – Poster at *The 31st Annual CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing*. Davis, CA, March, 2018.
- 2017 Tanner, D. and **Weissman, B.** “Is an emoji worth a thousand words? Neural responses to emoji-generated irony” – Oral presentation at *The 58th Annual Meeting of the Psychonomic Society*. Vancouver, BC, November, 2017.
- 2017 **Weissman, B.** and Terkourafi, M. “False implicatures and the lying/misleading distinction” – Oral presentation at *The 15th International Pragmatics Conference*. Belfast, UK, July, 2017.
- 2017 Terkourafi, M and **Weissman, B.** “Investigating the role of politeness in the interpretation of scalar terms: Does ‘some people loved your poem’ mean the rest of them hated it?” – Oral presentation at *The 15th International Pragmatics Conference*. Belfast, UK, July, 2017.
- 2017 **Weissman, B.** and Tanner, D. “Brain potentials elicited by ironic emojis in sentence context” – Poster presentation at *The 30th CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing*. Cambridge, MA, April, 2017.

- 2017 **Weissman, B** and Tanner, D. “ERP brain responses to emoji-generated irony” – Poster presentation at *Cognitive Neuroscience Society 2017 Annual Meeting*. San Francisco, CA, March, 2017.
- 2017 **Weissman, B.** and Tanner, D. “An ERP study of emoji-generated irony” – Poster presentation at *CSLI Workshop: Bridging Computational and Psycholinguistic Approaches to the Study of Meaning*. Stanford, CA, February, 2017.
- 2016 **Weissman, B.** “False implicatures, lying, and patterns of what is said” – Oral presentation at the *3rd International Conference of the American Pragmatics Association*. Bloomington, IN, November, 2016.
- 2016 **Weissman, B.** and Terkourafi, M. “Are false implicatures lies: An experimental investigation” – Poster presentation at *Trends In Experimental Pragmatics Workshop*. Berlin, Germany, January, 2016.

SUPERVISED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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| 2026 | Harris, B. & Weissman, B. “Individual Differences in Perceptions of Pseudo-Profound BS” – Poster presentation at <i>The Holy Cross Academic Undergraduate Conference</i> . Worcester, MA, April, 2026. |
| 2026 | Ruppel, A. & Weissman, B. “The Influence of Speaker Identity on Memory for Inaccurate Information” – Poster presentation at <i>The Holy Cross Academic Undergraduate Conference</i> . Worcester, MA, April, 2026. |
| 2026 | Conlan, M. & Weissman, B. “False Beliefs from AI are Influenced by Peoples' Opinions about AI” – Poster presentation at <i>The Holy Cross Academic Undergraduate Conference</i> . Worcester, MA, April, 2026. |
| 2026 | Peng, J. & Weissman, B. “How Do People Translate Sentences to Emoji?” – Poster presentation at <i>The Holy Cross Academic Undergraduate Conference</i> . Worcester, MA, April, 2026. |
| 2026 | Loya Lopez, J. & Weissman, B. “Comparing Expectations for US and Mexican Spanish Speakers” – Poster presentation at <i>The Holy Cross Academic Undergraduate Conference</i> . Worcester, MA, April, 2026. |

MEDIA AND PUBLIC WRITING

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| 2023 | Quoted in “Your 🧠 On Emoji.” <i>Nautilus Magazine</i> . August 22, 2023. https://nautil.us/your-%F0%9F%A7%A0-on-emoji-365823/ |
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- 2022 Quoted in “Uffizi gallery director Schmidt lays down email rules in Italy.” *BBC*. December 22, 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64063047>
- 2022 Featured on WAMC/NPR’s Academic Minute. July 18, 2022. <https://academicminute.org/2022/07/benjamin-weissman-rensselaer-polytechnic-institute-emoji-language-or-communication/>
- 2021 Appearance on *Times Radio UK* with Henry Bonsu. August 13, 2021.
- 2019 Quoted in “How the sexy peach emoji joined the resistance.” *Washington Post*. October 1, 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/how-the-sexy-peach-emoji-joined-the-resistance/2019/09/30/4b0d292e-e142-11e9-be96-6adb81821e90_story.html
- 2018 Research highlighted in “Our brains process irony in emojis, words in the same way” – *University of Illinois News Bureau*, September 5, 2018 <https://news.illinois.edu/view/6367/690952>
- 2017 Featured on Mashable/Snapchat. “The brain interprets sarcasm in emoji the same way as in words, study shows.” *Mashable*. April 19, 2017. <https://mashable.com/article/brain-interprets-sarcasm-emoji>
- 2017 Research highlighted in “Sarcasm Looks the Same in the Brain Whether It’s Words or Emojis” – *ScienceNews*, March 28, 2017. <https://www.sciencenews.org/article/sarcasm-looks-same-brain-whether-its-words-or-emoji>

FUNDING AWARDS

- 2025 College of the Holy Cross JD Power Center Research Associate Program (McKinley Conlan ’28)
- 2024 Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute School of Humanities Arts and Social Sciences Flash Grant
- 2020 Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute School of Humanities Arts and Social Sciences Flash Grant

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2025-present Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, College of the Holy Cross
- Cognition & Memory**
Developed curriculum, designed and taught all course materials
- Psychology of Language**
Developed curriculum, designed and taught all course materials
- Language, Gesture, and Emoji**
Developing curriculum, designing and teaching all course materials

2019-2025	Lecturer, Department of Cognitive Science, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Introduction to Cognitive Science Developed curriculum, designed and taught all course materials Introduction to Linguistics Developed curriculum, designed and taught all course materials Advanced Topics in Linguistics (Psycholinguistics) Developed curriculum, designed and taught all course materials Cognitive Psychology Developed curriculum, designed and taught all course materials
2024	Master's Thesis supervisor, Department of Cognitive Science, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
2020-2025	Undergraduate advisor, Department of Cognitive Science, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

ADDITIONAL TRAININGS AND CERTIFICATIONS

ongoing	JEBI Foundations Certificate, College of the Holy Cross
2021	Intergroup Dialogue Training (Levels 1 + 2)

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

2023-2024	Innovative Pedagogy Faculty Fellowship, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
2023-2024	HASS Flash Grant, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
2019-2020	HASS Flash Grant, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
2016, 2018	2x Department of Linguistics Silver Jubilee Award for Outstanding Teaching Assistant, University of Illinois
2018	Graduate Student Travel Grant recipient for abstract submitted to American Pragmatics Association (AMPRA-4)
2015-2018	5x Teachers Ranked as Excellent, University of Illinois
2014	School of Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics Fellowship (3-year award), University of Illinois

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

2025	Middle States Commission (MSCHE) Accreditation Curriculum Review Committee, Department of Cognitive Science, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
2021-2025	HASS Fellowship Evaluation Committee, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

- 2017-present Reviewer for *Analysis, Biological Psychology, Cambridge Elements, Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral Neuroscience, Computers in Human Behavior, Discourse and Communication, Discourse Processes, Journal of Pragmatics, Journal of Quantitative Linguistics, Language and Cognition, Language and Communication, Lingua, Memory & Cognition, PLOS ONE, Pragmatics & Cognition, Social Semiotics*
- 2015-2016 Illinois Language and Linguistics Society 8 Conference Committee
- 2016-2018 Electrophysiology and Language Processing Laboratory, University of Illinois (Lab Director: Darren Tanner)

REFERENCES

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| Dr. Marina Terkourafi | Professor, Leiden University | m.terkourafi@hum.leidenuniv.nl |
| Dr. Neil Cohn | Associate Professor,
Tilburg University/Visual Language Lab | neilcohn@visuallanguagelab.com |
| Dr. Darren Tanner | Senior Applied Research Scientist,
Microsoft AI For Good | dstanner@gmail.com |