

Sophie Wohltjen

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Academic Appointments

2025 – Present	Assistant Professor of Psychology University of Tennessee, Knoxville
2025 – Present	Honorary Research Fellow University of Wisconsin - Madison
2022 – 2025	Post-doctoral Research Associate University of Wisconsin - Madison <i>PI: Paula Niedenthal</i> , Niedenthal Emotions Lab
2016 – 2022	Graduate Student Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH <i>PI: Thalia Wheatley</i> , Dartmouth Social Systems Lab
2014 – 2016	Post-Baccalaureate Research Fellow National Institute of Mental Health, Bethesda, MD <i>PI: Alex Martin</i> , Laboratory of Brain and Cognition

Education

2016 – 2022	Ph.D. , Psychological and Brain Sciences Dartmouth College , Hanover, NH Dissertation: Examining Coupled Attention from Individual Differences to Dynamic Interactions
2010 – 2014	B.A. , Cognitive Science, B.A. , Music University of Virginia , Charlottesville, VA Thesis: Ambiguity and Complexity as Factors in Simultaneous Rhythm and Sentence Processing

Honors and Awards

2025	NSF Standard Grant Award (\$350,000, Co-PI with Dr. Paula Niedenthal): “Interpersonal Synchrony and Successful Social Connection”
2023	Society for Affective Science High Ranking Abstract Award
2022	NIH Training Program in Emotion Research Postdoctoral Training Award

2021	Social and Affective Neuroscience Society Poster Award
2019	Society for Affective Science Poster Spotlight Award
2019	Neukom Travel Grant
2017	Dartmouth Graduate Student Council Conference Grant
2014	University of Virginia Highest Distinction award in Cognitive Science
2014	University of Virginia Highest Distinction award in Music
2013	Charles S. Roberts Scholarship
2013	Raven Society Membership at University of Virginia
2010	University of Virginia Echols Scholar

Publications

Published Manuscripts

2025	Niedenthal, P. M., & Wohltjen, S. (2025). Historical Migration Patterns and the Evolution of Culture. <i>Current Research in Ecological and Social Psychology</i> , 100243. [link]
2025	Wohltjen, S. , Colon, Y., Zhu, Z., Huang, A., Miller, K., Li, Y., Mutlu, B., & Niedenthal, P. (2025). Uniting theory and data: The promise and challenge of creating an honest model of facial expression. <i>Cognition and Emotion</i> , 1-15. [link]
2024	Wohltjen, S. , & Wheatley, T. (2024). Interpersonal eye-tracking reveals the dynamics of interacting minds. <i>Frontiers in Human Neuroscience –Interacting Minds and Brains</i> , 18. [link]
2023	Turkstra, L., Hosseini-Moghaddam, S., Wohltjen, S. , Nurre, S.V., Mutlu, B., & Duff, M. (2023). Facial affect recognition in context in adults with and without TBI. <i>Frontiers in Psychology – Emotion Science</i> , 14. [link]
2023	Wohltjen, S. , Zhong, Y., Colon, I., Zhao, O., Ward, E., Li, Y., Mutlu, B., & Niedenthal, P. (2023). Discovering facial behaviors in the wild. <i>Affective Science: Proceedings of the Society for Affective Science 2023</i> .
2023	Wohltjen, S. , Toth, B., Boncz, A., & Wheatley, T. (2023). Synchrony to a beat predicts synchrony with other minds. <i>Nature Scientific Reports</i> , 13(3591). [link] [data and code] Media Coverage: Psychology Today
2021	Wohltjen, S. & Wheatley, T. (2021). Eye contact marks the rise and fall of shared attention in conversation. <i>Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences</i> , 118(37), 1-8. [link] [data and code] Media Coverage: Scientific American , Forbes
2020	Wohltjen, S. & Wheatley, T. (2020). Eye contact is a marker of alignment in conversation. <i>Proceedings of the ACM Collective Intelligence</i> .

- 2018 Avery, J.A., Ingeholm, J.E., **Wohltjen, S.**, Collins, M., Riddell, C., Gotts, S.J., Kenworthy, L., Wallace, G., Simmons, K., & Martin, A. (2018). Neural correlates of taste reactivity in autism spectrum disorders. *Neuroimage Clinical*, 19, 38-46. [\[link\]](#)
- 2017 Mellem, M., **Wohltjen, S.**, Gotts, S., Ghuman, A., & Martin, A. (2017). Intrinsic frequency biases and profiles across human cortex. *Journal of Neurophysiology*. [\[link\]](#)
- 2016 Getz, L., **Wohltjen, S.**, & Kubovy, M. (2016). Competition between rhythmic and language organization: The importance of task demands. *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, (69). [\[link\]](#)

Manuscripts Under Review and in Preparation

Lee, R.T., **Wohltjen, S.**, Vaddadi, S., Wisener, C., Miller, K., & Niedenthal, P. (in prep). Affective predictability and social connection.

Zhu, Z., **Wohltjen, S.**, Li, Y., & Niedenthal, P. (in prep). A hierarchical framework for clustering video facial expressions with emotion alignment.

Wohltjen, S., Zhu, Z., Miller, K., Li, Y., Mutlu, B., & Niedenthal, P. (in prep). Faces in the wild: A dataset of dynamic, spontaneous, social facial behaviors.

Wohltjen, S., Goldman, M., & Wheatley, T. (in prep). Hanging on to *almost* every word: Pupillary asynchrony between storytellers and listeners predicts enhanced memory for surprising, exciting story moments.

Wohltjen, S. & Wheatley, T. (in prep) Rapt with attention: Spontaneous eye blink rate decreases as conversation partners become more engaged.

Invited Talks

- 2026 American Museum of Science and Energy
Community Lecture on the Science of Attraction
- 2024 University of Texas at Austin
Psychology Department
- 2024 University of Tennessee–Knoxville
Psychology Department
- 2024 University of Michigan (virtual)
Center for Complex Systems
- 2024 International Research Listening Seminar (virtual)
Organizers: Guy Itzhakov and Avraham Kluger
- 2023 Facial Affect Conferences (virtual; co-author with Dr. Paula Niedenthal)
Organizers: Joshua Correll, Debbie Ma, and Bernd Wittenbrink

2023	University of Southern California USC Affective Computing Group, PI: Jonathan Gratch
2023	Bar-Ilan University (virtual) Social Neuroscience Lab, PI: Ilanit Gordon
2022	University of Wisconsin–Madison Psychology Department
2021	Western Kentucky University (virtual) Psychology Research Practicum
2019	Dartmouth College, Perception, Memory, and Neurodiversity Lab, PI: Caroline Robertson

Conference Talks

2026	Society for Affective Science, Invited Methods Roundtable Pittsburgh, PA <i>Approaches to Capturing Affective Synchrony</i>
2025	Society for Affective Science, Symposium Portland, OR <i>Exploring the Dynamics of Interpersonal Synchrony across Contexts and Relationships</i>
2024	Society for Affective Science, Invited Methods Workshop New Orleans, LA <i>Capturing and Assessing Dyadic Interactions</i>
2024	Society for Affective Science, Symposium Talk New Orleans, LA <i>The Promise and Challenge of Creating an Honest Model of Facial Expression</i>
2023	Society for Affective Science, Flash Talk Long Beach, CA <i>Discovering Facial Behaviors in the Wild</i>
2021	ACM Collective Intelligence Conference, Conference Paper Presentation Virtual <i>Eye Contact is a Marker of Alignment in Conversation</i>
2019	Society for Affective Science, Poster Spotlight Presentation Boston, MA <i>Eye Contact Facilitates Shared Attention in Conversation</i>

Posters

Advisees are underlined

- 2025 Miller, K., **Wohltjen, S.**, & Niedenthal, P. (2025). Exploring individual differences in vocal and facial synchrony. Society for Affective Science, Portland, OR.
- 2024 Miller, K., **Wohltjen, S.**, & Niedenthal, P. (2024). Conversations in synchrony: Does synchrony increase feelings of connection via emotional accuracy in dyads? Society for Affective Science, New Orleans, LA.
- 2023 **Wohltjen, S.**, Goldman, M., & Wheatley, T. (2023). Hanging on to *almost* every word: Pupillary asynchrony between storytellers and listeners predicts enhanced memory for surprising, exciting story moments. Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Atlanta, GA.
- 2023 Colon, Y. I., **Wohltjen, S.**, Zhong, Y., Li, Y., Mutlu, B., & Niedenthal, P. (2023). Faces in the wild: Clustering facial expressions using face movement trajectories. Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Atlanta, GA.
- 2022 Goldman, M., **Wohltjen, S.**, & Wheatley, T. (2022). Salience and predictability as tools for good storytelling. Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Francisco, CA.
- 2021 **Wohltjen S.** & Wheatley, T (2021). Sharing attention during eye contact in natural conversation. Social and Affective Neuroscience Society, virtual.
- 2021 Goldman, M., **Wohltjen, S.**, & Wheatley, T. (2021). Investigating the role of salience and predictability in good storytelling. Society for Personality and Social Psychology, virtual.
- 2020 **Wohltjen, S.** & Wheatley, T. (2020). Sharing attention during eye contact in natural conversation. Social and Affective Neuroscience Society, cancelled.
- 2019 **Wohltjen, S.** & Wheatley, T. (2019). Eye contact facilitates shared attention in natural conversation. Society for Affective Science, Boston, MA.
- 2019 **Wohltjen S.** & Wheatley, T. (2019). Eye contact facilitates shared attention in natural conversation. Social and Affective Neuroscience Society, Miami, FL.
- 2017 **Wohltjen, S.**, Mellem, M., Ghuman, A., Gotts, S., & Martin, A. (2017). Neural Frequency Abnormalities in Social Brain Regions in Autism Spectrum Disorders. Social and Affective Neuroscience Society, Los Angeles, CA.
- 2016 Collins, M. A., Milleville, S. C., **Wohltjen, S.**, Ingeholm, J. E., Wallace, G. L., Simmons, K., Gotts, S. J., & Martin, A. (2016). Food-Related Symptoms in Autism Are Related to Aberrant Gustatory System Functional Connectivity. Society for Neuroscience, San Diego, CA.

- 2016 **Wohltjen, S.**, Mellem, M., Gotts, S., Ghuman, A., & Martin, A. (2016). Neural Frequency Abnormalities in Social Brain Regions of Autism Spectrum Disorder. NIH Post-bac Poster Day, Bethesda, MD.
- 2016 Mellem, M., **Wohltjen, S.**, Ghuman, A., & Martin, A. (2016). The Cortex Displays Regional Intrinsic Frequency Biases. Cognitive Neuroscience Society, New York, NY.
- 2015 Mellem, M., Ghuman, A., **Wohltjen, S.**, & Martin, A. (2015). Intrinsic Frequency Biases across the Posterior-Anterior Cortical Hierarchy. Society for Neuroscience, Chicago, IL.
- 2015 **Wohltjen, S.**, Mellem, M., Ghuman, A., & Martin, A. (2015). Resting State MEG Reveals Intrinsic Frequency Differences between Sensory and Frontal Cortices. Presented at the NIH Post-bac Poster Day, Bethesda, MD.
- 2014 **Wohltjen, S.** Getz, L., & Kubovy, M. (2014). Ambiguity and Complexity as Factors in Simultaneous Rhythm and Sentence Processing. L. Starling Reid Undergraduate Psychology Research Conference, Charlottesville, VA.

Courses Taught

Social Psychology

Instructor of Record, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Human Emotion: From Biology to Culture

Discussion Section Instructor and Teaching Assistant, University of Wisconsin - Madison

Cognitive Neuroscience

Guest lecturer, Western Kentucky University

Introduction to Psychology

Teaching Assistant and Guest Lecturer, Dartmouth College

Emotion

Teaching Assistant and Guest Lecturer, Dartmouth College

Research Methods in Psychology

Lab Instructor, Teaching Assistant, and Guest Lecturer, Dartmouth College

Abnormal Psychology

Teaching Assistant, Dartmouth College

Selected Student Advising

Graduate Students

2026 – present	Reese Chadwick Ph.D. Student University of Tennessee, Knoxville
2026 – present	Daniel Adams Ph.D. Student University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Undergraduate Students

2023 – 2025	Karina Miller '23 Niedenthal Emotions Lab Manager University of Wisconsin – Madison
2023	Obsune Osso '25 PREP undergraduate Summer Research Scholar University of Wisconsin – Madison
2018 – 2022	Maria Goldman '22 Honors Thesis student • STAMPS scholar • Presidential Research Scholar Dartmouth College
2017 – 2021	Peter Kaiser '21 Second Year Research Scholar • Presidential Research Scholar Dartmouth College
2017	Jason Dunlap '18 ASURE Program Summer Research Scholar Dartmouth College

Professional Activities & Service

Service

2026	Exhibition of Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement poster judge
2025 – 2028	Society for Affective Science Preconference Planning Committee Co-chair
2024 – 2026	Society for Affective Science Abstract Review Board
2023	Post-doctoral Mental Health Focus Group Member
2020 – 2021	Dartmouth Graduate Student Council
2020	Skype a Scientist Program Guest Lecturer
2019 – 2022	Graduate Student Peer Mentor
2019 – 2021	Social Area Graduate Student Representative
2018 – 2021	Building Inclusivity to Advance Science (BIAS) Group Member
2018 – 2019	Social Area Lab Meeting Coordinator

2017 – 2018 Graduate Research Roundtable Co-Chair

Advising Committees

Comprehensive Exam Committee: Emily Brayton

Student Advisory Committee: Qi Guo

Professional Memberships

Social and Affective Neuroscience Society

Society for Affective Science

Society for Personality and Social Psychology

Workshops

2024 University of Wisconsin-Madison Delta Program: Research Mentor Training

2023 University of Wisconsin-Madison Delta Program: Design an Inclusive Canvas
Dream Course

2023 University of Wisconsin-Madison Waisman Center: Breaking the Bias Habit Training

2021 Dartmouth Center for the Advancement of Learning: Future Faculty Teaching Series

2020 The Love Consortium: Community Event

2020 Academics for Black Survival and Wellness

Ad Hoc Reviewing

Acta Psychologica • American Psychologist • Behavioral Research Methods •
Biological Psychology • Biopsychosocial Science and Medicine • Biotechnology and
Biological Sciences Research Council • eLife Sciences • Emotion • Frontiers in
Psychology • Journal of Eye Movement Research • Journal of Neuroscience •
Methods in Psychology • Motivation and Emotion • National Science Foundation •
Nature Communications Psychology • Nature Humanities and Social Sciences
Communications • Nature Scientific Reports • NeuroImage • Psychological Science •
Visual Cognition