

# Hannah Pearson

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## Research Interests

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I am interested in how religion and culture impact our identity, thoughts, and behavior as well as how we interact with others within and between religious and cultural groups both in person and on social media.

## Academic Positions

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**Warren Wilson College, Swannanoa, NC**

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology

2025-present

## Education

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**University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Honolulu, HI**

2023 - 2025

Ph.D., Social Psychology

Advisor: Dr. Joni Y. Sasaki, Culture and Religion Lab

Dissertation: *Lay Perceptions of Contemporary American Jewish Identity in the United States*

**University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Honolulu, HI**

2020 - 2023

M.A., Social Psychology, Cumulative GPA: 4.0/4.0

Advisor: Dr. Joni Y. Sasaki, Culture and Religion Lab

MA Thesis: *Lay Perceptions of Animal Culture*

**North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND**

2015 - 2019

B.S., Psychology

Minors in Neuroscience and Religious Studies

Magna Cum Laude, Cumulative GPA: 3.82/4.0

Honors Thesis: *Can naive observers detect suicidality in face images? A replication and extension of Kleiman and Rule (2013)*

## Non-Degree Programs:

**The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Rothberg International School,**  
Taglit Israeli Multiculturalism, Jerusalem Israel

Winter 2019

**Stanford University, Spiritualism and the Occult, Stanford CA**

Fall 2019

**Summer Institute for Social and Personality Psychology (SISPP)**

Summer 2023

## Publications

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- Pearson, H. I.** & Sasaki, J. Y. (In Press). Integrating culture into the cognitive science of religion. *Religion, Brain, and Behavior*.
- Lo, R. F., **Pearson, H. I.**, Sasaki, J. Y., & Chen, J. M. (2025). Colorism in East and Southeast Asia. In R. Hall, & N. Mishra (Eds.) *International handbook of colorism: Bigotry beyond borders* (pp. 297-319). Routledge Press.
- Hoogeveen, S., Sarafoglou, A., Aczel, B., Aditya, Y., Alayan, A. J., Allen, P. J., ... **Pearson, H. I.**, ... & Wagenmakers, E.-J. (2023). A many-analysts approach to the relation between religiosity and well-being. *Religion, Brain, & Behavior*, 13(3), 237–283. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599X.2022.2070255>
- \*Pearson, H. I.**, \*Lo, R. F., Sasaki, J., Y. (2023). How do culture and religion interact worldwide? A cultural match approach to understanding religiosity and well-being in the Many Analysts Religion Project. *Religion, Brain, and Behavior*. <https://osf.io/6cqy2/>
- Sasaki, J. Y., & **Pearson, H. I.** (2022). The centrality of meaning in culture and religion: Implications for cultural neuroscience and neurosemiotics. In A. M. Garcia & A. Ibáñez (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Semiosis and the Brain*.
- Balas, B. J., & **Pearson, H. I.** (2019). The flashed face distortion effect does not depend on face-specific mechanisms. *Scientific Reports*, 9, 1612. DOI: 10.1038/s41598-018-37991-9
- Balas, B. J., Gable, J. & **Pearson, H. I.** (2019) The effects of blur and inversion on the recognition of ambient face images. *Perception*, 48, 58-71. DOI: 10.1177/0301006618812581
- Balas, B. J., & **Pearson, H. I.** (2017). Intra- and extra-personal variability in person recognition, *Visual Cognition*, 25:4-6, 456-469, DOI: 10.1080/13506285.2016.1274809

*\*Denotes joint first authorship*

## Manuscripts In Preparation and Under Review

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- Pearson, H. I.** & Balas, B. J. (Under Review) Can naive observers detect suicidality in face images? A replication and extension of Kleiman and Rule (2013). Preprint DOI: 10.31234/osf.io/prfm3
- Pearson, H. I.** & Sasaki, J. Y., (In preparation) The impact of religiosity on COVID-19 precautions following a mortality salience. <https://osf.io/f4rs2>

**\*Pearson, H. I.,** \*Lo, R. F., Shields, A. E., Kanaya, A. M., Eliassen, H. A., Cole, S. A., Daviglus, M. L. & Sasaki, J. Y. (In preparation). Religiosity, social participation, and well-Being: Results across four cohorts of the Study on Stress, Spirituality, and Health.

**Pearson, H. I.,** Sasaki, J. Y. (In preparation). Lay Perceptions of Jewish Identity.

**Pearson, H. I.** Sasaki, J. Y. (In preparation). Lay Perceptions of Animal Culture.

Kwon, H. **Pearson, H. I.,** Sasaki, J. Y. (In preparation) Lay Perceptions of Cultural Appropriation.

Tsai, J., Cohen, A. B., Pasek, M., & **Pearson, H. I.** (In preparation) Zero sum empathy towards the Israel and Palestine conflict.

*\*Denotes joint first authorship*

## Research Appointments

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**Graduate Research Assistant** 2021 - Present

University of Hawai'i The Office for Evaluation and Needs Assessment Services

Work under Dr. Jack Barile evaluating Hawai'i's state MedQUEST system and the implementation of Community Integration Services

**Graduate Student Researcher** 2020 - Present

University of Hawai'i Culture and Religion Lab

Work under Dr. Joni Sasaki to investigate the interaction between religion and culture within psychology

**Research Coordinator** 2019 - 2020

Stanford Graduate School of Business (GSB) Behavioral Lab

Facilitate social psychology research for the GSB faculty and graduate students

**Undergraduate Research Assistant** 2015 - 2019

NDSU Visual and Cognitive Neuroscience Lab

Worked under Dr. Benjamin Balas studying unfamiliar face recognition and perception

**Leadership Alliance Scholar** Summer 2018

Harvard Intergroup Neuroscience Lab

Worked under Dr. Mina Cikara studying intergroup empathy between political parties

### **Undergraduate Research Assistant**

Fall 2017

NDSU Language Learning and Processing Lab

Worked under Dr. Erin Conwell to study language processes and homophones using eye trackers

### **Undergraduate Research Assistant**

Spring 2017

The Social Development Lab at NDSU

Worked under Dr. Wendy Troop-Gordon to study bullying and aggression on social media

## **Oral Presentations**

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**Pearson, H. I. & Sasaki, J. Y. (2025)** Lay Perceptions of Contemporary American Jewish Identity. *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Conference*. Minneapolis, MN.

**Pearson, H. I. & Balas, B. (2019).** Detecting Suicidality and Impulsivity in Unfamiliar Face Images. *NDSU Explore: Undergraduate Excellence in Research and Creative Activity Conference*. Fargo, North Dakota.

## **Poster Presentations**

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**Pearson, H. I., Sasaki, J. Y., & Kim, H. (2025)** Is God a conservative?: The moderating role of power in the religion-conservatism link. *Society for Personality and Social Psychology Convention*. Denver, CO.

**Pearson, H. I., Lo, R. F., & Sasaki, J. Y. (2024).** A cultural match approach to understanding religiosity and well-being in the Many Analysts Religion Project. *Society for Personality and Social Psychology Convention*. San Diego, CA.

**Pearson, H. I. & Sasaki, J. Y. (2023).** Lay Perceptions of Animal Cognition and Culture. *Society for Personality and Social Psychology Convention*. Atlanta, GA.

**Pearson, H. I. & Sasaki, J. Y. (2022).** Religiosity and COVID-19. *Society for Personality and Social Psychology Convention*. San Francisco, CA.

**Pearson, H. I. & Balas, B. J. (2020).** Detecting suicidality and impulsivity in unfamiliar face images. *Society for Personality and Social Psychology Convention*. New Orleans, LA.

- Pearson, H. I. & Balas, B. J. (2019).** The effects of blur and inversion on sorting ambient face images by identity. *Society for Personality and Social Psychology Convention*. Portland, OR.
- Pearson, H. I., Vollberg, M. Guesser, B., & Cikara, M. (2018).** Imagine That: The Impact of Episodic Simulation on Intergroup Empathy. *The Leadership Alliance National Symposium*. Hartford, CT.
- Pearson, H. I. & Balas, B. J. (2018).** The effects of blur and inversion on sorting ambient face images by identity. *The Annual Meeting of the Vision Sciences Society*. St. Pete's Beach, FL.
- Pearson, H. I. & Balas, B. J. (2018).** The effects of blur and inversion on sorting ambient face images by identity. *Red River Psychology Conference*. Moorhead, MN.
- Pearson, H. I. & Balas, B. J. (2017).** Factors that do and don't make flashing faces more distorted. *The Annual Meeting of the Vision Sciences Society*. St.Pete's Beach, FL.
- Pearson, H. I. & Balas, B. J. (2017).** Factors that do and don't make flashing faces more distorted. *Red River Psychology Conference*. Moorhead, MN.
- Pearson, H. I. & Balas, B. J. (2016).** Intra- and extra-personal variability in person recognition. *The Annual Meeting of the Vision Sciences Society*. St.Pete's Beach, FL.

## Teaching and Mentoring

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**Lead Instructor**, Warren Wilson College  
 Introduction to Psychology  
 Social Psychology

Fall 2025  
 Fall 2025

**Lead Instructor**, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Department of Psychology

Human Sexuality  
 Supervisor: Dr. Joni Sasaki

Summer 2024

**Guest Lecture**, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Psychology Department  
 Graduate Intro to Clinical Psychology: *The UH Diversity Committee*  
 Research Methods: *Introduction to Research & Sources*  
 Clinical/Abnormal Psychology: *Applying to Graduate School*

Spring 2024  
 Spring 2024  
 Spring 2021

**Course Tutor**, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Religious Studies Department

Biblical Hebrew  
 Professor: Rabbi Melvin Libman

Fall 2023

**Teaching Assistant**, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Department of Psychology

Introduction to Social Psychology  
 Professor: Dr. Joni Sasaki  
 Professor: Dr. Sakaria Auelua-Toomey

Fall 2020  
 Spring 2025

Introduction to Clinical Psychology	
Professor: Dr. Frank Floyd	Spring 2021
Professor: Katie Rozzell	Spring 2023

Introduction to Abnormal Psychology, Professor: Dr. Frank Floyd	Spring 2021
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Introduction to Psychology	
Professor: Salena Diaz, MA	Fall 2021
Professor: Dr. Kristin Pauker	Fall 2022
Professor: Dr. Kristin Pauker	Fall 2024

Survey of Research Methods	
Professor: Dr. Charles Liu	Spring 2022
Professor: Dr. Santiago Papini	Fall 2023
Professor: Dr. Santiago Papini	Spring 2024

<b>Supervision of Research Assistants</b> , University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa	2019-Current
Rylie Goto, Tiana Matsuda, Megan Miyahara, Sheemrun Ranja, Selah Kone, Kayla Ryan, Tara Sweatt	

<b>Supervision of Research Assistants</b> , Stanford University, GSB	2019-2020
Nicholas Sligh, Kim Marnh Saechao, Justin Cortez, Stanley Wong	

## Honors and Awards

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<b>UHM Psychology Department Diversity Award (\$500)</b>	2025
<b>SCORE SPARRC - Travel Award (\$3000)</b>	2025
<b>UH Psychology Department Gartley Award (\$1000)</b>	2025
<b>Nominated for Frances Davis Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching for a Graduate Assistant</b>	2024
<b>UH Manoa SEED Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access and Success Grant (\$500)</b>	2024
<b>UHM Psychology Department Merit Award (\$400)</b>	2024
<b>Study on Stress, Spirituality, and Health Catalyst Fund (\$20,000; Co-PI)</b>	2023-2024
<b>UHM Psychology Department Qualtrics Award (\$3000)</b>	2023
<b>UHM Psychology Department Gartley Award (\$1300)</b>	2023
<b>UHM Graduate Student Organization Travel Grant (\$1000)</b>	2023
<b>Kappa Alpha Theta Individual Grant (\$1285)</b>	2023
<b>UHM Psychology Department Qualtrics Research Award (\$2020)</b>	2022

<b>UHM Psychology Department Gartley Award (\$900)</b>	2022
<b>Nominated for Frances Davis Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching for a Graduate Assistant</b>	2021
<b>UHM Psychology Department Gartley Award (\$1900)</b>	2021
<b>PsiChi Honor Society Induction</b>	2021
<b>Kappa Alpha Theta Foundation Scholarship (\$5500)</b>	2020
<b>Leadership Alliance Fellowship, Harvard University (\$5000)</b>	2018
<b>Israeli Multiculturalism Study Abroad Trip (fully funded)</b>	2018
<b>E.V. Estensen Award NDSU Psychology Department (\$300)</b>	2018
<b>Mary Jane Parker Beach Scholarship (\$1475)</b>	2018

## Technical Skills

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**Proficient in:** MatLab, NVivo, Qualtrics, TurkPrime, MTurk, Prolific, Sona, R, SPSS, JASP, E-Prime, Audacity, FaceGen, Mac OS, Windows OS, Microsoft Office Packages, Google Tools

**Some experience in:** Adobe Acrobat, Tableau.

## Professional Development and Membership

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SCORE Project for Advancing Research on Religion and Cooperation Summer Methodology Workshop	August 2025
SISPP Courses and workshops: Psychology of Religion: Historical, Contemporary, and Future Directions Text Analytics: Uncovering Psychological Insights via Natural Language	Summer 2023
Anti-Defamation League - Glass Leadership Institute Scholar	2023
International Research Network for the Study of Science & Belief in Society PhD Workshop	March 2021
International Research Network for the Study of Science & Belief in Society member	2021 - Present
International Society for the Science of Existential Psychology	2021 - Present
American Psychological Association	2021 - Present
Society for Personality and Social Psychology member	2019 - Present

## Leadership and Service

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UHM Psychology Department PhD Recruitment Weekend Committee Member	2024
Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Peer Mentor	2024
Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Mentoring Lunch Host: <i>Navigating Academia as a First Generation College Student.</i>	2024
UHM Psychology Department PhD Recruitment Weekend Committee Member	2023
Diversity Committee, Student Chair, UH Mānoa Psychology Dept	2022 - 2024
Society for Personality and Social Psychology Mentoring Lunch Chair	2022-2023
Society for Personality and Social Psychology Student Committee Member	2022-2023
Hawaiian Humane Society Volunteer Dog Walker, Foster Assistant & Foster <i>As of 7/2024, 184 on site hours served + 21 in-home foster animals</i>	2022- Present
Diversity Committee, Course Curriculum and Climate Survey Subcommittee Member, UH Mānoa Psychology Dept	2021 - Present
Hillel Hawai'i Graduate Student Leader, UH Mānoa	2020 - Present
Student Representative, Psychology Department, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa	2020 - 2021
Writing Group Facilitator for the SPSP student writing groups.	2020 - 2021
<i>Ad Hoc Reviewer:</i>	
Journal of Experimental Social Psychology	
Mental Health, Religion, & Culture	
Religion, Brain, and Behavior	
Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin	