

Ed O'Brien

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EMPLOYMENT

- 07/18 – present Associate Professor of Behavioral Science
University of Chicago Booth School of Business
Charles E. Merrill Faculty Scholar
- 09/19 – 03/20 Morrison Scholar Fellow in Marketing
UCLA Anderson (visiting scholar year)
- 07/14 – 07/18 Assistant Professor of Behavioral Science
University of Chicago Booth School of Business
Willard Graham Faculty Scholar

EDUCATION

- May 2014 Ph.D., Social Psychology
University of Michigan
Pat Gurin Award for Best Research Program
Philip Brickman Memorial Prize for Best Paper
Golden Walnut Award for Best Talk
- May 2009 B.S., Psychology
Saint Joseph's University
Summa cum laude
University Scholar (top student of graduating class; > 1,000 students)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Social cognition
Change perception
Enjoyment and hedonic adaptation
Prediction vs. experience

HONORS & AWARDS

- 2023 APS Janet Taylor Spence Award for Transformative Early Career
Contributions (Association for Psychological Science)

2023	Frontiers Rising Star in Social Psychology
2023	ISSEP Best Paper Award (International Society for the Science of Existential Psychology)
2019	SPSP Sage Young Scholar Award (Society for Personality and Social Psychology)
2019	SESP Fellow (Society of Experimental Social Psychology)
2018	Poets & Quants 40 Under 40 Most Outstanding Business School Professors
2017	ISCON Early Career Award (International Social Cognition Network)
2016	APS Rising Star Award (Association for Psychological Science)
2016	Psychology Today Up-and-Comer
2015	Pacific Standard Top 30 Thinkers Under 30
2012	SJDM Hillel Einhorn New Investigator Award, Runner-up (Society for Judgment and Decision Making)
2010	SPSP Best Poster Award (Society for Personality and Social Psychology)
2010	SPSP Travel Award (Society for Personality and Social Psychology)
2010 – 2013	NSF Graduate Research Fellowship (National Science Foundation)

JOURNAL ARTICLES

*** *Denotes supervisee*

O'Brien, E. (in press). Judging Change: A Flexible Threshold Theory. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*.

***Klein, N., & O'Brien, E. (2023). Threshold Violations in Social Judgment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 125, 284-315.

***Li, X., Hsee, C. K., & O'Brien, E. (2023). "It Could Be Better" Can Make It Worse: When and Why People Mistakenly Communicate Upward Counterfactual Information. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 60, 219-236.

***Winet, Y., & O'Brien, E. (2023). Ending on a Familiar Note: Perceived Endings Motivate Repeat Consumption. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 124, 707-734.

Weingarten, E., Duke, K., Liu, W., Hamilton, R. W., Amir, O., Appel, G., Cerf, M., Goodman, J. K., Morales, A. C., O'Brien, E., Quoidbach, J., & Sun, M. (2023). What Makes People Happy? Decoupling the Experiential-Material Continuum. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 33*, 97-106.

***Kardas, M., Schroeder, J., & O'Brien, E. (2022). Keep Talking: (Mis)Understanding the Hedonic Trajectory of Conversation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 123*, 717-740.

***Wald, K., & O'Brien, E. (2022). Repeated Exposure to Success Harshens Reactions to Failure. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 103*, 1-18.

O'Brien, E. (2022). Losing Sight of Piecemeal Progress: People Lump and Dismiss Improvement Efforts That Fall Short of Categorical Change—Despite Improving. *Psychological Science, 33*, 1278-1299.

O'Brien, E. (2022). The “Next” Effect: When a Better Future Worsens the Present. *Social Psychological and Personality Science, 13*, 456-465.

O'Brien, E. (2021). A Mind Stretched: The Psychology of Repeat Consumption. *Consumer Psychology Review, 4*, 42-58.

**Winner, ISSEP Best Paper Award
(International Society for the Science of Existential Psychology)**

O'Brien, E. (2020). When Small Signs of Change Add Up: The Psychology of Tipping Points. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 29*, 55-62.

***Kristal, A. C., O'Brien, E., & Caruso, E. M. (2019). Yesterday's News: A Temporal Discontinuity in the Sting of Inferiority. *Psychological Science, 30*, 643-656.

O'Brien, E. (2019). Enjoy It Again: Repeat Experiences are Less Repetitive Than People Think. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 116*, 519-540.

O'Brien, E., & ***Kassirer, S. (2019). People are Slow to Adapt to the Warm Glow of Giving. *Psychological Science, 30*, 193-204.

O'Brien, E., & Smith, R. W. (2019). Unconventional Consumption Methods and Enjoying Things Consumed: Recapturing the “First Time” Experience. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 45*, 67-80.

***Klein, N., & O'Brien, E. (2018). People Use Less Information Than They Think to Make Up Their Minds. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 115*, 1322-13227.

***Kardas, M., & O'Brien, E. (2018). Easier Seen Than Done: Merely Watching Others Perform Can Foster an Illusion of Skill Acquisition. *Psychological Science, 29*, 521-536.

O'Brien, E., ***Kristal, A. C., Ellsworth, P. C., & Schwarz, N. (2018). (Mis)imagining the Good Life and the Bad Life: Envy and Pity as a Function of the Focusing Illusion. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 75, 41-53.

O'Brien, E., & ***Roney, E. (2017). Worth the Wait? Leisure Can Be Just as Enjoyable with Work Left Undone. *Psychological Science*, 28, 1000-1015.

***Klein, N., & O'Brien, E. (2017). The Power and Limits of Personal Change: When a Bad Past Does (and Does Not) Inspire in the Present. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 113, 210-229.

O'Brien, E., & ***Klein, N. (2017). The Tipping Point of Perceived Change: Asymmetric Thresholds in Diagnosing Improvement Versus Decline. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 112, 161-185.

Chopik, W. J., O'Brien, E., & Konrath, S. (2017). Differences in Empathic Concern and Perspective Taking Across 63 Countries. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 48, 23-38.

O'Brien, E., & ***Kardas, M. (2016). The Implicit Meaning of (My) Change. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 111, 882-894.

***Klein, N., & O'Brien, E. (2016). The Tipping Point of Moral Change: When Do Good and Bad Acts Make Good and Bad Actors? *Social Cognition*, 34, 149-166.

O'Brien, E. (2015). Mapping Out Past Versus Future Minds: The Perceived Trajectory of Rationality Versus Emotionality Over Time. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 144, 624-628.

**Runner-up, SJDM Hillel Einhorn New Investigator Award
(Society for Judgment and Decision Making)**

O'Brien, E. (2015). Feeling Connected to Younger Versus Older Selves: The Asymmetric Impact of Life Stage Orientation. *Cognition and Emotion*, 29, 678-686.

Konrath, S., Chopik, W. J., Hsing, C., & O'Brien, E. (2014). Changes in Adult Attachment Styles in American College Students Over Time: A Meta-Analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 18, 326-348.

Campbell, T., O'Brien, E., Van Boven, L., Schwarz, N., & Ubel, P. A. (2014). Too Much Experience: A Desensitization Bias in Emotional Perspective Taking. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 106, 272-285.

O'Brien, E. (2013). Easy to Retrieve but Hard to Believe: Metacognitive Discounting of the Unpleasantly Possible. *Psychological Science*, 24, 844-851.

O'Brien, E., Konrath, S., Grühn, D., & Hagen, L. (2013). Empathic Concern and Perspective Taking: Linear and Quadratic Effects of Age Across the Adult Lifespan. *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*, 68, 168-175.

O'Brien, E., Ellsworth, P. C., & Schwarz, N. (2012). Today's Misery and Yesterday's Happiness: Differential Effects of Current Life-Events on Perceptions of Past Well-Being. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48, 968-972.

O'Brien, E., & Ellsworth, P. C. (2012). More Than Skin Deep: Visceral States Are Not Projected Onto Dissimilar Others. *Psychological Science*, 23, 391-396.

O'Brien, E., & Ellsworth, P. C. (2012). Saving the Last for Best: A Positivity Bias for End Experiences. *Psychological Science*, 23, 163-165.

O'Brien, E., Anastasio, P. A., & Bushman, B. J. (2011). Time Crawls When You're Not Having Fun: Feeling Entitled Makes Dull Tasks Drag On. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 37, 1287-1296.

Konrath, S., O'Brien, E., & Hsing, C. (2011). Changes in Dispositional Empathy in American College Students Over Time: A Meta-Analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 15, 180-198.

INVITED CHAPTERS

*** *Denotes supervisee*

***Winet, Y., & O'Brien, E. (writing). Learning From Lived and Re-Lived Experience. In K. E. Vail, D. R. Van Yongeren, R. J. Schlegel, J. Greenberg, L. A. King, & R. M. Ryan (Eds.), *Handbook of the Science of Existential Psychology*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

O'Brien, E. (in press). Things Change—But When? A Top-Down Approach to Understanding How People Judge Change Thresholds. In K. Taku & T. K. Shackelford (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Changes in Human Perceptions and Behaviors*. London, UK: Taylor & Francis.

O'Brien, E. (2022). Look Back, Not Ahead? Time Use and the Value of Revisiting Past Experiences. In C. Hoerl, T. McCormack, & A. Fernandes (Eds.), *Temporal Asymmetries in Philosophy and Psychology*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

*** *Denotes supervisee*

O'Brien, E. *Temporal Impression (Mis)Management*.

Hagen, L., & O'Brien, E. *The Trap of Temporal Gaps*.

Garcia-Rada, X., John, L. K., O'Brien, E., & Norton, M. I. *The Revised-is-Better Heuristic*.

***Winet, Y., & O'Brien, E. *The Time Course of Novelty-Seeking vs. Familiarity-Seeking*.

***Roberts, A. R., ***Baron, C., & O'Brien, E. *Self-Other Differences in Advised Time Use*.

Hagen, L., & O'Brien, E. *Temporal Inference in Word-of-Mouth Influence*.

***Hong, S., & O'Brien, E. *Hedonic Adaptation Depends on How You Measure It*.

***Christensen, K., & O'Brien, E. *Temporal Connection and Market Value*.

***Zaw, S., & O'Brien, E. *Repeated Failures to Change Reveal a Hidden Harshness to Growth Mindset*.

***Su, T., & O'Brien, E. *Change Perception Beyond Change Detection*.

SELECTED BUSINESS PRESS

*** *Denotes supervisee*

Business & Op-Ed Writing

***Wald, K., & O'Brien, E. (2023). The Perils of Watching Success. *Character & Context*, January 23.

O'Brien, E. (2021). Humans Are Hard-Wired to Expect the Worst. *Washington Post*, May 24.

O'Brien, E. (2020). There's A Psychological Reason We Won't Return to Normal Right Away After Society Reopens. *Los Angeles Times*, June 1.

***Yoon, J., Whillans, A. V., & O'Brien, E. (2019). How To Make Even the Most Mundane Tasks More Motivating. *Harvard Business Review*, July 24.

O'Brien, E. (2019). We Use Less Information to Make Decisions Than We Think. *Harvard Business Review*, March 7.

Smith, R., & O'Brien, E. (2018). Why You Should Eat Popcorn With Chopsticks—And Other Psychological Tricks to Make Life More Enjoyable. *The Conversation*, June 6.

***Kardas, M., & O'Brien, E. (2018). Watching An Expert Do Something Makes You Think You Can Do It Too. *Harvard Business Review*, May 21.

O'Brien, E. (2017). Stop Putting Off Fun for After You Finish All Your Work. *Harvard Business Review*, July 7.

O'Brien, E., & ***Klein, N. (2016). It's Hard to Shake a Bad Reputation. *Fortune*, July 7.

Radio/Podcast Guest

O'Brien, E. (2021). How To Make Boring Work Feel New Again. *Fast Company (Creative Control podcast)*, October 21.

O'Brien, E. (2020). Finding Joy in Repeat Experiences, Even During a Pandemic. *NPR (Ideas Network)*, November 23.

O'Brien, E. (2019). Confidence: Why It Misleads Us. *BBC (The Why Factor podcast)*, May 22.

O'Brien, E. (2019). Close Enough: The Lure of Living Through Others. *NPR (Hidden Brain podcast)*, October 21.

O'Brien, E. (2018). YouTube Isn't As Good A Teacher As You Think. *Chicago Booth Review*, July 30.

O'Brien, E. (2017). It's Getting Worse! The Science of Negativity Bias. *Canvas8*, March 24.

O'Brien, E. (2012). Why The Best Chocolate Is The One You Eat Last. *NPR (All Things Considered)*, February 14.

CHAired CONFERENCE SYMPOSIA

***** Denotes supervisee**

Hagen, L., & O'Brien, E. (SESP 2022, Philadelphia PA). Have Times Changed? Causes and Consequences of (Mis)Perceiving the Past.

O'Brien, E. (SPSP 2022, San Francisco CA). The Social Psychology of Change Perception: Preconceptions, Prejudice, and Progress.

O'Brien, E. (SESP 2021, Santa Barbara CA). Pitfalls of Progress: Unintended Negative Consequences of Positive Social Change.

O'Brien, E. (SPSP 2021, virtual). Pitfalls of Progress: Unintended Negative Consequences of Positive Social Change.

***Winet, Y., & O'Brien, E. (SPSP 2021, virtual). "When" Matters: Exploiting Time and Timing to Maximize Well-Being.

***Wald, K., & O'Brien, E. (SPSP 2021, virtual). Adversity Begets Adversity: How Failures Create Further Negative Consequences.

***Kardas, M., & O'Brien, E. (APS 2017, Boston MA). New Directions in Empathy-Gaps Research: Insights for Improving Learning, Social Interactions, and Well-Being.

O'Brien, E. (SESP 2016, Santa Monica CA). Mistaken Intuitions About Hedonic Experience: Unforeseen Pleasures of the Monotonous, the Mundane, and the Unknown.

***Molouki, S., & O'Brien, E. (APS 2016, Chicago IL). The Trouble of Believing in Self-Improvement.

***Steinmetz, J., & O'Brien, E. (SPSP 2016, San Diego CA). Impression (Mis)Management: The Unforeseen Social Consequences of a Positive Self.

O'Brien, E., & Schwarz, N. (SESP 2012, Austin TX). Life Goes On: Perceiving Change in Self and Circumstances.

O'Brien, E., & Ellsworth, P. C. (SPSP 2012, San Diego CA). Where Have All the Good Times Gone? Causes and Consequences of Perceiving a Positive Past.

O'Brien, E., & Ellsworth, P. C. (SESP 2011, Washington DC). Misperceptions in Mental State Inference.

CONFERENCE TALKS

2023	ACR, AOM, IACM, SPSP
2022	ACR, APS, SESP, SJDM, SPSP
2021	INFORMS Marketing Science, SESP, SJDM, SPSP
2020	ACR, SJDM, SPSP
2019	AOM, Choice Symposium, SJDM
2018	BDRM, SPSP
2017	ACR, APS, SJDM, SESP
2016	ACR, APS, SESP, SJDM, SPSP
2015	ACR, SJDM, SPSP
2014	ACR, BDRM
2013	SCP, SPSP

2012	ACR, SESP, SPSP
2011	SESP, SJDM
2010	IAREP-SABE, SJDM

CAMPUS TALKS

Invited	UPenn Wharton (Marketing) UPenn (Annenberg)
2023	Yale SOM (Marketing)
2022	Illinois Urbana-Champaign Gies College of Business (OB)
2021	UCSD Rady (Marketing) Simon Fraser Beedie School of Business (Marketing) Data Colada panelist
2020	Stanford GSB (Marketing) Zoom U Behavioral Lab
2019	UCLA Anderson (Marketing) UToronto Rotman (Marketing) Cornell (BEDR) Duke Fuqua (Marketing) Berkeley Haas (Management) Harvard Business School (NOM)
2018	Michigan (Psychology)
2017	Michigan State (Psychology)
2016	Chicago Booth (Behavioral Science) Waterloo (Psychology)
2015	Illinois Chicago (Psychology)
2014	Michigan (Psychology)
2013	Stanford GSB (OB) NYU (Psychology) Chicago Booth (Behavioral Science) UCLA Anderson (Marketing) Cornell Johnson (Marketing) Yale SOM (Marketing)

Harvard (Psychology)
Minnesota Carlson (Marketing)
Indiana University (Psychology)

TEACHING

M.B.A.: Managing in Organizations (Chicago Booth, BUSN 38001)

Each year since 2015; next scheduled Summer 2024

Full time program, evening program, and weekend program

Evaluations (927 respondents over 9 courses): Mean = 4.9, Median = 5.0, Mode = 5.0

Ph.D.: Current Topics in Behavioral Science (Chicago Booth, BUSN 38903)

2016, 2018, 2020, 2023

Evaluations (32 respondents over 4 courses): Mean = 5.0, Median = 5.0, Mode = 5.0

Undergraduate TA (Michigan)

Spring 2013, “Introduction to Social Psychology” (PSYCH 280)

Fall 2012, “Social Cognition: Thinking About Your Life” (PSYCH 487)

Spring 2012, “Introduction to Psychology” (PSYCH 111)

STUDENT ADVISING & PLACEMENTS

2023	Yuji Winet (Chicago Booth Ph.D. student—dissertation chair) <i>Placement: Assistant Professor of Marketing, Duke (Fuqua)</i>
	Kristina Wald (Chicago Booth Ph.D. student) <i>Placement: Postdoc in Operations, Information and Decisions, UPenn (Wharton)</i>
2022	Xilin Li (Chicago Booth Ph.D. student) <i>Placement: Assistant Professor of Marketing, CEIBS</i>
	Annabelle Roberts (Chicago Booth Ph.D. student) <i>Placement: Assistant Professor of Marketing, UT Austin (McCombs)</i>
2021	Cora Baron (Chicago Booth research assistant) <i>Placement: Ph.D. student in Psychology, UC Santa Barbara</i>
	Kate Christensen (UCLA Anderson Ph.D. student) <i>Placement: Assistant Professor of Marketing, Indiana University (Kelley)</i>
2020	Mike Kardas (Chicago Booth Ph.D. student) <i>Placement: Assistant Professor of Management, Oklahoma State (Spears)</i>

- Mike White (Chicago Booth research assistant)
Placement: Ph.D. student in Management, Columbia Business School
- Xuan Zhao (Chicago Booth Postdoc)
Placement: Research Scientist at Stanford (SPARQ)
- 2019 Nadav Klein (Chicago Booth Ph.D. student)
Placement: Assistant Professor of Organizational Behavior, INSEAD
- 2018 Alex Kristal (Chicago Booth lab manager)
Placement: Ph.D. student in Marketing, London Business School
- 2017 Samantha Kassirer (Chicago Booth master's student)
Placement: Ph.D. student in Management, Northwestern (Kellogg)
- 2016 Ellen Roney (Chicago Booth research assistant)
Placement: Master's student in Social Work, University of Washington
- Janina Steinmetz (Chicago Booth Postdoc)
Placement: Assistant Professor of Marketing, City University of London (Bayes)
- Jaewon Yoon (Chicago Booth research assistant)
Placement: Ph.D. student in Organizational Behavior, Harvard Business School
- Haotian Zhou (Chicago Booth Postdoc)
Placement: Assistant Professor of Management, ShanghaiTech University
- 2015 Brittany Tausen (Chicago Booth Postdoc)
Placement: Assistant Professor of Psychology, Seattle Pacific University
- 2014 Julia Briskin (Michigan research assistant)
Placement: Ph.D. student in Psychology, Wayne State
- Curtis Grayer III (Michigan research assistant)
Placement: Law student, Notre Dame
- Lauren Lutzke (Michigan research assistant)
Placement: Ph.D. student in Psychology, USC
- Taylor Rothman (Michigan research assistant)
Placement: Law student, UChicago
- 2013 Yara Ganem (Michigan research assistant)
Placement: Lab manager in Psychology, Vanderbilt

Craig Sanders (Michigan research assistant)
Placement: Ph.D. student in Psychology, Indiana University

2012

Alvin Chan (Michigan research assistant)
Placement: Master's student in Psychology, University of Edinburgh

Anne Derrenberger (Michigan research assistant)
Placement: M.B.A. student, DePaul

Jonathan Fischell (Michigan research assistant)
Placement: Medical student, University of Maryland

Hannah Noah (Michigan research assistant)
Placement: Medical student, UNC

Other research assistants: Mick Adkins; Shinhae Bang; Danielle Brace; Ali Breeding; Danielle Brodsky; Tanya Burgess; Anum Chaudhry; Allison Endres; Ethan Goldsmith; Melody Haxton; Danielle Hicks; Nick Johnson; Sarah Lee; Kaleah Mabin; Radhika Menon; Kathryn Mitchell; Miguel Ortega; Adam Parada; Matt Pilon; Harry Reibman; Matt Thomas; Nick Thomas; Shun Wang; Colin Zaporski

SERVICE

To the field

Associate Editor:
Social Cognition (2023-2026)

Editorial Review Board (2021-2023):
Journal of Personality and Social Psychology

Conference reviewer:
ACR, BDRM, SCP, SJDM, SPSP

Grant reviewer:
National Science Foundation

Ad-hoc reviewer (recent examples):
Psychological Review; Psychological Science; Journal of Personality and Social Psychology; Journal of Experimental Psychology: General; Journal of Experimental Social Psychology; Management Science; Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes; Journal of Behavioral Decision Making; Perspectives on Psychological Science; Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences; Nature Human Behaviour

To Chicago Booth

Dissertation committee chair:

Yuji Winet

Dissertation committee member:

Melissa Beswick; Mike Kardas; Xilin Li; Sarah Molouki; Natalie Wheeler

Curriculum paper advisor:

Melissa Beswick; Xilin Li; Yuji Winet

Undergraduate honors thesis advisor:

Ellen Roney; Jaewon Yoon (at Michigan: Yara Ganem; Hannah Noah; Taylor Rothman)

Center for Decision Research workshop organizer (2016, 2019, 2023)

Faculty mentor, National Leadership Alliance

Faculty mentor, Rising Scholars Program

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

ACR (Association for Consumer Research)

SESP (Society of Experimental Social Psychology)

SJDM (Society for Judgment and Decision Making)

SPSP (Society for Personality and Social Psychology)

PERSONAL

U.S. Citizen

Born: 1986, Camden NJ

Married: 2015, Braunschweig Germany

Children: 1 (Born: 2022, Santa Monica CA)