

Ed O'Brien

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

07/18 – present Associate Professor of Behavioral Science
University of Chicago Booth School of Business
Charles E. Merrill Faculty Scholar

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)

SELECTED HONORS & AWARDS (click [here](#) for full list)

2023 APS Janet Taylor Spence Award for Transformative Early Career Contributions

2023 ISSEP Best Paper Award

2019 SPSP Sage Young Scholar Award

2019 SESP Fellow

2018	Poets & Quants 40 Under 40 Most Outstanding Business School Professors
2017	ISCON Early Career Award
2016	APS Rising Star Award
2016	Psychology Today Up-and-Comer
2015	Pacific Standard Top 30 Thinkers Under 30
2012	SJDM Hillel Einhorn New Investigator Award, Runner-up
2010 – 2013	National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship

SELECTED PAPERS (click [here](#) for full list; N = 43 published) * Denotes supervisee**

• **TOPIC: Change Perception & Change Management** •

***Klein, N., & O’Brien, E. (in press). Threshold Violations in Social Judgment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

***Li, X., Hsee, C. K., & O’Brien, E. (in press). “It Could Be Better” Can Make It Worse: When and Why People Mistakenly Communicate Upward Counterfactual Information. *Journal of Marketing Research*.

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

***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.

***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.

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

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

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., 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). 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.

• **TOPIC: Repeated Exposure & Hedonic Adaptation** •

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

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

Winner, ISSEP Best Paper Award

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.

***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.

***Kardas, M., & O'Brien, E. (2018). Easier Sen 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.

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.

• Selected Book Chapters •

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.

• Selected Working Papers •

click [here](#) for links

O'Brien, E. *A Flexible Threshold Theory of Change Perception in Self, Others, and The World*.

***Klein, N., & O'Brien, E. *More Evidence for Flexible Thresholds in Judging Social Change*.

O'Brien, E. *Temporal Impression Management*.

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

O'Brien, E. *Things Change: Using Repeated Measurement as a Tool for Psychological Theory*.

SELECTED BUSINESS PRESS (click [here](#) for full list)

*** Denotes supervisee

• Selected Business Writing •

***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.

***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.

• Selected Op-Ed Writing •

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.

• Selected Podcast/Radio 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). Close Enough: The Lure of Living Through Others. *NPR (Hidden Brain podcast)*, October 21.

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

CONFERENCE TALKS

2023	SPSP
2022	SESP (symposium chair + talk), SPSP (symposium chair + talk), ACR, APS, SJDM
2021	SESP (symposium chair + talk), SPSP (symposium chair + talk), INFORMS Marketing Science, SJDM
2020	ACR, SJDM, SPSP
2019	AOM, Choice Symposium, SJDM
2018	BDRM, SPSP
2017	APS (symposium chair + talk), ACR, SJDM, SESP
2016	SESP (symposium chair + talk), SPSP (symposium chair + talk), APS (symposium chair + talk), ACR, SJDM
2015	ACR, SJDM, SPSP
2014	BDRM, ACR
2013	SCP, SPSP
2012	SESP (symposium chair + talk), SPSP (symposium chair + talk), ACR
2011	SESP (symposium chair + talk), SJDM
2010	SJDM, IAREP-SABE

INVITED TALKS

2023	University of Pennsylvania (Annenberg School for Communication), University of Pennsylvania (Wharton Business School), Yale University (Yale School of Management)
2022	University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (Gies College of Business)
2021	University of California San Diego (Rady School of Management), Simon Fraser University (Beedie School of Business), Data Colada (panelist)
2020	Stanford University (Stanford Graduate School of Business), Zoom U Behavioral Lab

2019	University of California Los Angeles (Anderson School of Management), University of Toronto (Rotman School of Management), Cornell University (Behavioral Economics and Decision Research), Duke University (Fuqua School of Business), University of California Berkeley (Haas School of Business), Harvard University (Harvard Business School)
2018	University of Michigan (Psychology)
2017	Michigan State University (Psychology)
2016	University of Chicago (Booth School of Business), University of Waterloo (Psychology)
2015	University of Illinois Chicago (Psychology)
2014	University of Michigan (Psychology)
2013	Stanford University (Stanford Graduate School of Business), New York University (Psychology), University of Chicago (Booth School of Business), University of California Los Angeles (Anderson School of Management), Cornell University (Johnson Graduate School of Management), Yale University (Yale School of Management), Harvard University (Psychology), University of Minnesota (Carlson School of Management), Indiana University (Psychology)

TEACHING

M.B.A.:	Chicago Booth, <i>Managing in Organizations</i> (2015 – present)
Ph.D.:	Chicago Booth, <i>Current Topics in Behavioral Science</i> (2016, 2018, 2020, 2023)
Undergraduate:	Michigan, <i>Introduction to Psychology</i> (2012); <i>Social Cognition: Thinking About Your Life</i> (2012); <i>Introduction to Social Psychology</i> (2013)

SELECTED STUDENT ADVISING & PLACEMENTS (click [here](#) for full list)

Yuji Winet (Chicago Booth Ph.D.)	Placement: Assistant Professor at Duke University (Fuqua School of Business)
Mike Kardas (Chicago Booth Ph.D.)	Placement: Assistant Professor at Oklahoma State University (Spears School of Business)
Nadav Klein (Chicago Booth Ph.D.)	

Placement: Assistant Professor at INSEAD (Organizational Behavior unit)

Annabelle Roberts (Chicago Booth Ph.D.)

Placement: Assistant Professor at University of Texas at Austin (McCombs School of Business)

Xilin Li (Chicago Booth Ph.D.)

Placement: Assistant Professor at CEIBS (Marketing unit)

Kate Christensen (UCLA Anderson Ph.D.)

Placement: Assistant Professor at Indiana University (Kelley School of Business)

Samantha Kassirer (UChicago master's)

Placement: Ph.D. student at Northwestern University (Kellogg School of Business)

Alex Kristal (lab manager)

Placement: Ph.D. student at London Business School (Marketing unit)

Lauren Lutzke (undergraduate RA)

Placement: Ph.D. student at University of Southern California (Psychology)

Mike White (undergraduate RA)

Placement: Ph.D. student at Columbia University (Columbia Business School)

Jaewon Yoon (undergraduate RA)

Placement: Ph.D. student at Harvard University (Harvard Business School)

Cora Baron (undergraduate RA)

Placement: Ph.D. student at University of California Santa Barbara (Psychology)

Craig Sanders (undergraduate RA)

Placement: Ph.D. student at Indiana University (Psychology)

Ellen Roney (undergraduate RA)

Placement: Master's student at University of Washington (Social Work)

Curtis Grayer III (undergraduate RA)

Placement: Law student at University of Notre Dame (Notre Dame Law School)

Taylor Rothman (undergraduate RA)

Placement: Law student at University of Chicago (University of Chicago Law School)

SERVICE

To the field:

Editorial board (*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*)

Conference reviewer (SPSP, SJDM, BDRM, AOM, ACR, SCP)

Grant reviewer (National Science Foundation)

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

To Chicago Booth:

Dissertation committee chair (Yuji Winet)

Dissertation committee member (Mike Kardas; Xilin Li; Sarah Molouki; Natalie Wheeler)

Curriculum paper advisor (Yuji Winet; Xilin Li; Melissa Beswick)

Undergraduate honors thesis advisor (Jaewon Yoon; Ellen Roney; Taylor Rothman; Yara Ganem; Hannah Noah)

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

Faculty mentor, National Leadership Alliance

Faculty mentor, Rising Scholars program

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

AOM, APS, IACM, SESP, SJDM, SPSP

PERSONAL

U.S. Citizen (Born: 1986, Camden NJ)

Married to Linda Hagen (Married: 2015, Braunschweig Germany)

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