

Serena Ahmad

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OBJECTIVE

- To obtain a research or writing position at Michigan State University while enrolled as a medical student

CAREER SUMMARY

- Conducts behavioral neuroscience research under Dr. Jamie Roitman for UIC Department of Psychology
- Designed a research project utilizing intracranial self-stimulation and brain stimulation reward to determine the effects of amphetamine administration on reward motivated behavior in rat cohorts
- Presented on prior neuroscience research on intracranial self-stimulation reward and progressive ratio at the 2024 Chicago Society for Neuroscience conference and the UIC Spring 2024 Research Symposium
- Studies to complete a B.S. in Neuroscience, minor in Logic, Argumentation, and Writing, and neuroscience Honors Capstone to graduate in May 2025

ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

- Collaborated with University of Illinois's Public Health Alliance to host a "Demystifying Overdose" workshop to equip students with resources on addiction management and harm reduction for the Xylazine-Fentanyl epidemic.
- Arranged a "Treat With Care" academic workshop where campus housing residents assembled care packages for cancer patients at Northwestern's Lurie Cancer Center, to promote empathy for disadvantaged patient populations in Chicago
- Hosted large scale academic workshops on applying mental health discourse to personalized, effective academic success through strategies like habit stacking, time blocking, and goal tracking
- Sent out academic alerts for 150+ students per semester and held meetings with each one to create action plans for boosting grades and successfully navigating the academic year

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- Regulated intracranial self-stimulation (ICSS) neuroscience experiments on rat cohorts to gauge effort input and electrical stimulation of brain regions within the mesolimbic dopamine system
- Determined discriminability and stability of brain stimulation reward for progressive ratio effort tasks
- Performed surgeries placing electrodes in rat brains for immunohistochemistry experiments
- Conducted rat brain perfusions and subsequent histology for photometry and microscopic data collection
- Compared rat reward-motivated behaviors to human behavior and cognition to determine rapid changes in decision-making during addictive cycles

PUBLIC SPEAKING EXPERIENCE

- Served as Limited Preparation and Public Address Captain for three years with University of Illinois Chicago Speech & Debate Team, a nationally ranked Top Five program in competitive public speaking
- Advocated against systemic injustices targeting incarcerated Black mothers, fentanyl-xylazine drug victims, genocide victims, and numerous BIPOC communities
- Honed public speaking and speech writing skills, emotional range, and tonal control in seven disciplines, including After Dinner Speaking, Communication Analysis, Extemporaneous Speaking, Impromptu Speaking, Informative Speaking, Persuasive Speaking, and Prose Interpretation

PROFESSIONAL WRITING EXPERIENCE

- Researched best practices for reducing clinical disparities in reproductive and maternal healthcare
- Refined professional interviewing skills by gathering input from women in medical leadership and teaching positions at various University of Illinois programs

- Advocated for stronger and equitable care and infertility treatment, specifically targeting BIPOC women

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

- **Academic and Residential Complex**, UIC Campus Housing, Chicago, IL
Academic Senior Peer Mentor, August 2023-Present
- **J.M. Roitman Lab**, Department of Psychology, UIC Behavioral Sciences Building, Chicago, IL
Behavioral neuroscience research assistant, February 2023-Present
- **Jin Lab**, Department of Biophysics, UIC College of Medicine Research Building, Chicago, IL
PCR genotyping laboratory aide, November 2022-March 2023
- **Gowrishankar Lab**, Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology, UIC College of Medicine, Chicago, IL
Cell culture research assistant, January 2022-November 2022
- **TriCity Lung and Sleep, P.L.L.C.**, Bay City, MI
Pulmonary sleep care administrative assistant, January 2018-August 2022

EDUCATION

- **University of Illinois at Chicago**, Chicago, IL
Fourth year Honors College student, Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience, minoring in Logic, Argumentation, and Writing, 2021-Present

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS/ COMMUNITY SERVICE

- **UI Health Hospital**, Chicago, IL
Radiology and outpatient pediatrics volunteer, February 2024-Present
- **Midwest Brain Injury Clubhouse**, Chicago, IL
Activity aide and direct care volunteer, June 2023-Present

AWARDS/ SCHOLARSHIPS

- 2023-2024, 2022-2023, 2021-2022 Dean's List at University of Illinois at Chicago
- Nu Rho Psi National Honors in Neuroscience, Alpha Upsilon Chi Sigma Tau Delta English Honors
- 2024 David E. Featherstone Memorial Scholarship in Behavioral Neuroscience Research
- 2024 Hirsch Family Award in Neuroscience Education
- 2024 Olive Chancey Keuhn and Alfred L. Kuehn Scholarship recipient
- 2024 Asynchronous Speech Championship First Place National Champion in Persuasive Speaking
- 2024 National Speech Championship Top 2 in Impromptu, Top 3 in Extemporaneous and After Dinner
- 2024 American Forensics Association Top 5 National Finalist in Extemporaneous Speaking, National Forensics Association Semifinalist in Persuasive Speaking and Informative Speaking
- 2023 Peter and Elsie May Klassen Memorial Award Scholarship recipient
- 2023 Illinois Intercollegiate Forensics Association 1st Place Oratory State Champion
- 2022 and 2023 Illinois Intercollegiate Forensics Association 1st Place Impromptu Speaking State Champion
- 2023 AFA 19th place in National Individual Sweepstakes, AFA Semifinalist in Persuasive and Impromptu

PUBLICATIONS

- S.S. Ahmad, et al. "Brain Stimulation Reward Supports High Discriminability and Stable Responding in Progressive Ratio Tasks," March 1, 2024, Chicago Society for Neuroscience Annual Chapter Conference
- Interstate Oratory Association 2023 Semifinalist and publication for "The Pretense of Protection"
- 2022 *Still Life* contest featured award winner and publication for the poem "The Polarity of our Anatomy"
<https://issuu.com/svsu/docs/stilllife2021>
- Ahmad, Serena (2022) "Fruitful Apologies," *Language Arts Journal of Michigan*: Vol. 37: Iss. 2, Article 8. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.9707/2168-149X.2357>