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BEN ROCHFORD

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EDUCATION

2023 - Present Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology, Duke University
Certificate in College Teaching, Certificate in Society-Centered AI

2023 - 2026 M.A. in Sociology, Duke University

2019 - 2023 B.S. in Computer Science, Georgia Institute of Technology
Highest Honor

RESEARCH AREAS

Artificial Intelligence and Society
Political Polarization
Social Psychology
Mental Health

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Marie Neubrander, Markus Reiter-Haas, **Ben Rochford**, Maxwell B. Allamong, Chris Bail, D. Sunshine Hillygus, Alexander Volfovsky. (2026). *Can Platform Design Encourage Curiosity? Evidence from an Independent Social Media Experiment.* International Conference on Web and Social Media (ICWSM), Forthcoming.

Ben Rochford, Cathy Lee, Michelle Qiu, Alexander Volfovsky, D. Sunshine Hillygus, Christopher Bail. (2025) *A Sociological Turing Test: Social Identity Cues Shape Who is Classified as Human Online*. https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/c8sn3_v1

Sachin Pendse, **Ben Rochford**, Neha Kumar, Munmun De Choudhury. (2025) *The Role of Partisan Culture in Mental Health Language Online.* ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW), 2025.

Ben Rochford, Sachin Pendse, Neha Kumar, and Munmun De Choudhury. (2023) "Leveraging Symptom Search Data to Understand Disparities in US Mental Health Care: Demographic Analysis of Search Engine Trace Data." JMIR Mental Health, 10, e43253

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Will We Offload Moral Judgments to AI Systems?
Sole author. The Polarization Lab, Duke University

Mapping the Development of Cultural Backlash Against "AI Slop"
Co-authors: *Richard Jean So, Hoyt Long, Zini Zhang*

How do interactions with chatbots shape understanding of current events?

Co-author: *Alexander Tolkin*. The Polarization Lab, Duke University

Do Social Identities Shape Trust of AI Systems?
Co-author: *Alexander Tolkin*. The Polarization Lab, Duke University

People to Prompts: Can Interview Data Improve LLM Survey Simulations for Underrepresented Groups?
Co-authors: *Lorcan Neill, David Gonzales Chavez, Christopher Bail*
Duke University; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

PRESENTATIONS

2025 "AI and Social Problems" – Invited Lecture, Duke Explainable AI course, Fall 2025

2025 "A Sociological Turing Test" – Roundtable presentation
Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Chicago, Illinois

2025 "Very Human Biases in Human AI Interaction"– Invited lecture
Summer Institute in Computational Social Science, Lake Como, Italy

2025 "Bot or Not? Identity Biases in the Perceived Humanity of Online Profiles" – Oral presentation
Responsible AI Symposium 2025, Duke University, Durham, NC

2025 "Identity cues impact perceptions of online accounts as artificial" – Roundtable presentation
Tar Devils (Duke-UNC Sociology Symposium), Durham, NC

2024 "The Role of Partisan Culture in Mental Health Language Online" – Oral presentation
International Conference on Computational Social Science 2024 (IC2S2), Philadelphia, PA

2022 "Using Symptom Search Data to Understand Disparities in U.S. Mental Healthcare" – Poster
ACM conference on Equity and Access in Algorithms, Mechanisms, and Optimization (EAAMO), Washington, DC

2022 "Symptom Search and Unequal Access to Mental Healthcare" – Oral presentation
Georgia Tech Undergraduate Research Symposium, Atlanta, GA

EXPERIENCE

Graduate Fellow, Society-Centered AI August 2025 - Present
Duke University

Organizer, Instructor July 2025
Summer Institutes in Computational Social Science: Lake Como 2025

Lead Program Assistant August 2024 - Present
Summer Institutes in Computational Social Science, Tech for Open Minds (Global)

Graduate Researcher August 2023 - Present
Polarization Lab, Duke University

Summer Institutes in Computational Social Science July 2024
University of Pennsylvania, 2024 Cohort

Undergraduate Researcher January 2021 - May 2023
Social Dynamics and Well-being Lab, Georgia Institute of Technology

Software Engineering Intern, Full Stack May 2021 - August 2021
Workforce Intelligence, Pegasystems

Data Engineering Intern June 2020 - August 2020
Shenandoah Telecommunications Company

LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

Co-Chair, Graduate Student Forum 2026 - Present
Duke Sociology

Volunteer, GPSG Community Pantry 2025 - Present
Duke University

Board Member, Duke Wesley Foundation 2025 - Present
Duke University

Section Leader, Georgia Tech Marching Band 2021 - 2023
Georgia Institute of Technology

President, Georgia Tech Wesley Foundation 2022
Georgia Institute of Technology

Eagle Scout, Boy Scouts of America 2018
Troop 30, Staunton, VA

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

Graduate Research Fellowship Program – Honorable Mention 2025
National Science Foundation

SAGE Research Spotlight Interviewee 2025
ASA Annual Meeting

Institutional Fellowship 2023 - 2025
Duke University

LaRoche Merit Scholarship 2019 - 2023
Georgia Institute of Technology

Outstanding Student Leader 2023
Georgia Institute of Technology

REFERENCES

Dr. Christopher Bail *(Ph.D. advisor)*
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Dr. Munmun De Choudhury *(B.S. advisor)*
Georgia Institute of Technology
Munmun.Choudhury@cc.gatech.edu

Dr. Lynn Smith-Lovin
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Dr. Jennifer Hasler
Georgia Institute of Technology
Jennifer.Hasler@ece.gatech.edu