Faculty mentor: Jamil Zaki

Research supervisor(s) (name, position, email): Isabella Kahhale, Research Assistant, ikahhale@stanford.edu

Project topic(s): Prosocial Lying, Criminal Justice System & Empathy

Brief description of scientific issues: There are two projects that an undergraduate intern may have a role in. One is looking into the factors that might influence prosocial lying, or the tendency to be dishonest with the motivation of making someone feel better. We are interested in investigating whether certain situations may prompt someone to be brutally honest at the expense of hurting someone’s feelings, while understanding that the honesty may be in the target’s best interest.

A second project I am currently developing will seek to gain insight into the role that empathy, or a lack thereof, plays in the criminal justice system. A potential direction might be a study that looks at differences in proposed criminal sentences based on whether hypothetical jurors received empathy-inducing information about a hypothetical defendant or neutral information.

Skills required:

Knowledge or completion of a psychology statistics course and programming in R strongly preferred. If not, the intern must be willing to learn R to organize and analyze data. Strong interpersonal skills.

Skills to be learned:

-Running and analyzing data from behavioral experiments.
-Reading psychology and neuroscience papers.
-Conducting literature reviews on given topics. Potential analysis of fMRI data.

Part-time internship

Contact person (with email): Isabella Kahhale, ikahhale@stanford.edu