

<b>School/Department:</b>	Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences Department of Psychology, Education and Child Studies Clinical and Health Psychology
<b>Project Title:</b>	What's in a face? The neuro-psychophysiological mechanisms underlying altered face processing in anxiety disorders.
<b>Abstract:</b>	<p>Anxiety disorders are the most frequent mental disorders with an estimated lifetime-prevalence of 10-15%. Anxiety disorders are characterized by an excessive or persisting fear or anxiety (American Psychiatric Association 2013). Altered learning mechanisms are involved in the etiology and the maintenance of anxiety disorders (Mineka and Oehlberg, 2008) and classical conditioning has proven to be an excellent laboratory model for these learning mechanisms (Pavlov, 1927).</p> <p><i>Faces</i> are salient and social stimuli, which serve for a fast identification of threats allowing then a prompt engagement in behavioral defensive responses (Öhman, 2009). In particular, the gaze direct informs about the location of the threat and consequently affects the behavioral tendencies (Roelofs et al., 2010). Faces can be particularly threatening for individuals suffering from <i>social anxiety disorders</i> (SAD, also called social phobia).</p> <p>In a similar but distinct fashion, the <i>context</i> can also inform about the location and imminence of a threat (Maren et al., 2013; Mobbs et al., 2020). Broadly, the context has been defined as the set of circumstances around of an event and can be conceived with several facets (Maren, et al., 2013). Faces can also be differently perceived depending on the context in which are presented (Wieser and Brosch, 2012).</p> <p>This project aims to study the inter-relation between faces and contexts in order to shed light on which mechanisms lead to perceive a face (exaggeratedly) threatening. Moreover, we will focus on inter-individual differences in defensive responses to social stimuli by using multiple physiological (startle reflex, heart rate, skin conductance), behavioral (ratings), and brain measures (steady-state visual evoked potentials, ssVEPs; event-related potentials, ERPs).</p> <p>In short, the current project provides a unique opportunity to acquire a broad scientific basis by conducting research at the intersection of experimental psychology and clinical psychology.</p>
<b>Requirements of candidate:</b>	<p>Background: Experimental Psychology, Biological Psychology, Cognitive Neuroscience.</p> <p>Good knowledge of programming (experimental software) is a plus (e.g., Presentation, E-Prime); Experience with EEG is helpful, but not necessary.</p>

	<p>Master's degree: Yes</p> <p>EUR requirement: See Table Information about English requirements</p> <p>(If the faculty does not have special English requirements, general requirement from Admission Office is applied)</p>
<b>Supervisor information:</b>	<p>Supervisor: Prof. Dr. MJ Wieser.          Email address: <a href="mailto:wieser@essb.eur.nl">wieser@essb.eur.nl</a>          Personal website: <a href="https://www.eur.nl/en/essb/people/matthias-wieser">https://www.eur.nl/en/essb/people/matthias-wieser</a></p> <p>Second supervisor: Dr. M Andreatta          Email address: <a href="mailto:andreatta@essb.eur.nl">andreatta@essb.eur.nl</a>          Personal website: <a href="https://www.eur.nl/en/essb/people/marta-andreatta">https://www.eur.nl/en/essb/people/marta-andreatta</a></p> <p>Selection of recent peer-reviewed articles [Google Scholar]:          Prof. Dr. M.J. Wieser:  <a href="https://scholar.google.de/citations?user=v7CuUtUAAAAJ&amp;hl=nl">https://scholar.google.de/citations?user=v7CuUtUAAAAJ&amp;hl=nl</a>).</p> <p>Dr. M. Andreatta  <a href="https://scholar.google.de/citations?user=Vb4Una0AAAAJ&amp;hl=nl">https://scholar.google.de/citations?user=Vb4Una0AAAAJ&amp;hl=nl</a></p> <p>Recent common publication list (last 5 years):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stegmann, Y., <b>Andreatta, M.</b>, Pauli, P., &amp; <b>Wieser, M. J.</b> (2021). Associative learning shapes visual discrimination in a web-based classical conditioning task. <i>Scientific Reports</i> 11, 15762</li> <li>2. <b>Andreatta, M.</b>, Genheimer, H., <b>Wieser, M. J.</b>, &amp; Pauli, P. (2020). Context-dependent generalization of conditioned responses to threat and safety signals. <i>International Journal of Psychophysiology</i>, 155, 140-151.</li> <li>3. <b>Andreatta, M.</b>, Neueder, D., Herzog, K., Genheimer, H., Schiele, M. A., Deckert, J., ... <b>Wieser, M. J.</b>, &amp; Pauli, P. (2020). Generalization of Conditioned Contextual Anxiety and the Modulatory Effects of Anxiety Sensitivity. <i>Neurotherapeutics</i>, 1-14.</li> <li>4. Stegmann, Y., Reicherts, P., <b>Andreatta, M.</b>, Pauli, P., &amp; <b>Wieser, M. J.</b> (2019). The effect of trait anxiety on attentional mechanisms in combined context and cue conditioning and extinction learning. <i>Scientific Reports</i>, 9(1), 1-12.</li> <li>5. <b>Andreatta, M.</b>, Neueder, D., Genheimer, H., ..., <b>Wieser, M.J.</b>, &amp; Pauli, P. (2019). Human BDNF rs6265 polymorphism as a mediator for the generalization of contextual anxiety. <i>Journal</i></li> </ol>

	<p><i>of Neuroscience Research</i>, 97, 300– 312.</p> <p>6. Kastner-Dorn, A.K., <b>Andreatta, M.</b>, Pauli, P., &amp; <b>Wieser, M.J.</b> (2018). Hypervigilance during anxiety and selective attention during fear: Using steady-state visual evoked potentials (ssVEPs) to disentangle attention mechanisms during predictable and unpredictable threat, <i>Cortex</i>, 106, 120-131.</p> <p>7. Wu, L., Winkler, M. H., <b>Wieser, M. J.</b>, <b>Andreatta, M.</b>, Li, Y., Pauli, P. (2015). Emotion regulation in heavy smokers: experiential, expressive and physiological consequences of cognitive reappraisal. <i>Frontiers in Psychology</i>, doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01555. [OA].</p>
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**English requirements:** Please refer to Erasmus University China Center official website for your information [www.eur.nl/eucc](http://www.eur.nl/eucc)

*Erasmus University China Center -> CSC Scholarship -> "I am a prospective CSC PhD Candidate" -> Table 1*

Please note that each institute requires difference level of English, make sure to find the right institute. 2022 CSC-PhD programme information will be shared and updated soon!