

# Social and Population Health Sciences Research Consortium

## Scholars Profile Template



### SocPop Bio

**Name of Scholar:**

Cristina Nigro

**Undergraduate Degree:**

University of Pennsylvania, BA, Biological Basis of Behavior

**Graduate Degree:**

University of California, San Diego, MS, Neurosciences

**Current UCSF Graduate Program:**

History of Health Sciences, PhD(c)

**Advisor:**

Dorothy Porter, PhD

**Year of Study:**

3rd year doctoral student

**Research Interests:**

How changing notions of self-identity and individual responsibility coincided with increasing reliance on neuro-explanations and helped transform the meanings of psychiatric and neurological disabilities in the 20th century U.S.

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I am honored to be a SocPop Scholar studying the interactions between science and society at UCSF, an institution at the forefront of biomedical research. I am interested in uncovering how scientific data embodies cultural values and the reciprocal relationship between basic experimental neuroscience outcomes, patients' disease experience, and scholars' approach to understanding disease. I hope to contribute to a more comprehensive historical understanding of mental illnesses and neurodegenerative disorders so that we might change for the better how we conceptualize, experience, and treat diseases.

I am interested in how the cultural meaning of disease changes over time. My work will explore how changing meanings of "normal" brain functioning are shaped by evolving notions of how the brain encodes information and represents knowledge, which correspondingly affects ideas about "abnormal" brain functioning in disease. I aim to understand how ideas from neuroscientific research on memory, perception, and machine-learning shape our cultural perception of intelligence and the concept of the ideal human brain.

I aspire to an academic professorship in which I train future scholars and conduct research that can help inform policy with a social justice aim.