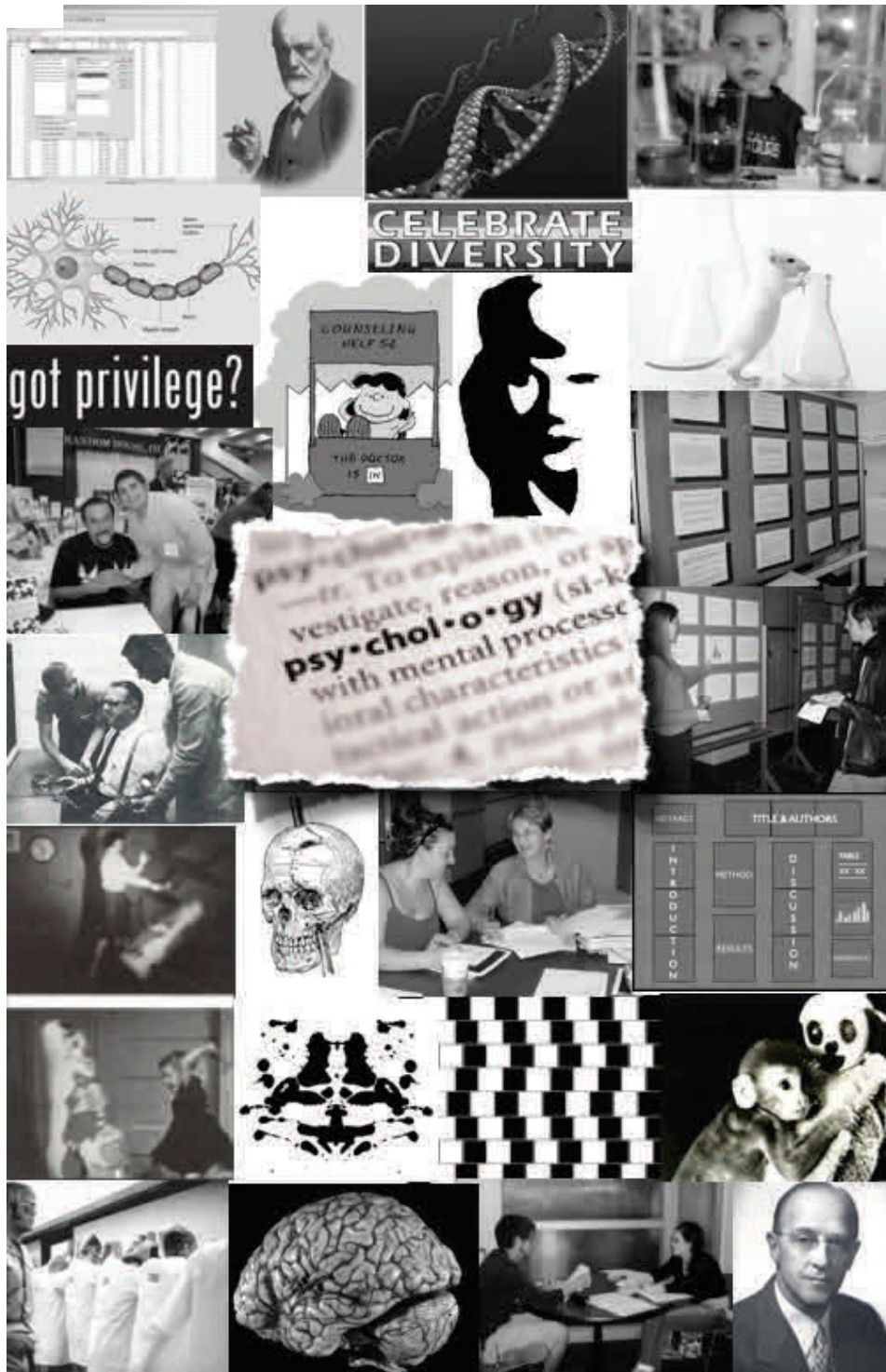


Psychology Day



SPRING 2016 PROGRAM

MAY 6, 2016

NOTES

SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

POSTER SESSION

10:00—11:00 a.m.

Seegers Union Event Space

WELCOMING REMARKS

11:05 a.m.

Seegers Union Event Space

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

11:05—11:35 a.m.

Seegers Union Event Space

11:35 a.m.—11:45 a.m. BREAK

CONCURRENT PRESENTATION SESSIONS

11:45 a.m.—1:20 p.m. Paper Session A—SU 113

11:45 a.m.—1:00 p.m. Paper Session B—SU 108-109

POSTER SESSION

Seegers Union Event Space

LEARNING CONTROVERSIAL MATERIAL

Rachel Truitt, Brian Hauptman, Simon Michel

Previous research suggests that people experience a defensive reaction to learning information that can threaten self-integrity. Here, we examine the reactions and consequences of teaching cognitive dissonance and the bias blindspot, two theories that suggest people use irrational thought that could threaten the self-concept. In Study 1, we examine whether or not teaching the theory of cognitive dissonance can cause cognitive dissonance by using a forced-choice paradigm. In Study 2, we examine whether or not teaching about the bias blindspot in the absence of a self-affirmation negatively impacts working memory and endorsement of the theory.

PAWCEPTION: THE EFFECTS OF DOG SIZE ON PERCEPTIONS OF OWNERS

Thea Doolittle, Amanda Hawthorne, Ashley Kemper, Lauren Polcaro

Research has shown that for women, higher levels of masculine traits and characteristics have become increasingly acceptable over time, whereas gendered expectations for men have remained stagnant (Diekmann & Goodfriend, 2006). The presence of a companion animal and its species can affect the ways that owners are perceived (Budge, Spicer, St. George & Jones, 1997). Our study examined how the size of a dog affects the perceptions of masculinity, femininity and likeability of owners. Participants completed one of four online survey conditions in which we manipulated size of dog and gender of owner. We hypothesized that men with small dogs would be rated less masculine and less likeable compared to other groups. We also hypothesized that that dog size would not affect ratings of women.

DOES THE FAMILIARITY AND TIMING OF THE MUSIC AFFECT IMPLICIT MEASURES OF EMOTION?

Samantha Levine, Sarah Levine, Gina Morrello

The concept of music inducing emotion in humans has been studied extensively. Research by Västfjäll (2010) suggests indirect measures avoid the biases inherent in self-report. The current study uses an indirect measure to look at the subconscious effect of music on emotions. We hypothesized that when participants hear happy, sad or scary music, they would be primed to generate words associated with the corresponding emotion. In addition, we added a familiarity condition including a familiar and unfamiliar song for each emotion. It was hypothesized that participants would have stronger emotional responses to more familiar music. Results showed that the tone of the music did affect the amount of related emotion words written and that more familiar music induced stronger emotions.

PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTING STYLES AND EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS: IS RESILIENCY A MEDIATING FACTOR?

Micaela Laurence

I examined the potential role of resiliency as a mediating factor between parent-child relationships and emotional adjustment among college students. 81 Muhlenberg students completed a cross-sectional survey. Many participants reported that their parents did not fall under just one of the parenting style categories, but demonstrated behaviors from at least two categories. No significant correlation appeared between perceptions of parental bonding and resiliency, although a significant negative correlation did appear between parental affection and anxiety. This suggests that resiliency may not act as a mediating factor between parenting styles and emotional adjustment. In addition, I identified a significant negative correlation between self-reported socioeconomic status and resiliency.

DOES SEMANTIC BLOCKING OCCUR IN NON-LINGUISTIC TASKS?

Cassandra Baker and Brittany Dzieciolowski

We investigated whether the semantic blocking effect is present in a non-linguistic task. We asked people to perform a word association task when presented with groups of words from either the same or different semantic categories to see whether associations were made more slowly when words were from the same semantic category. By using a non-linguistic task, we hoped to see whether this slowing was a result of the lexical retrieval processes in speaking as in previous studies, or if it is related to higher levels of conceptual representation of words. We used five different semantic categories each with five words and corresponding photo associations and used MouseTracker to record reaction time and mouse direction. Data analysis is ongoing.

PERCEIVED PERSONALITY THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Allison Boda, Laura Holdman, Brooke Heisner, Rachel Truitt

Understanding social media's effect on our cognitive, behavioral, and social spheres could lead to uncovering both helpful and harmful aspects of media use and well-being. We hypothesized that people exposed to certain kinds of social media will report lower self-esteem and self-efficacy. We surveyed 53 Muhlenberg students. Participants were separated into a control condition in which they viewed social media posts about animals or an experimental group to look at posts about seemingly popular people. Both groups reflected on how these posts made them feel and received self-affirmations, either before or after, their self-esteem and self-efficacy were measured to potentially increase their self-perception.

DO MUHLENBERG STUDENTS PREFER AN UNDERDOG IDENTITY?

Elizabeth Vlattas, Sarah Geisler

Previous research suggests that people associate positive qualities with underdogs, such as warmth, morality, and tenacity (Vandello, Goldschmied, & Richards, 2007). Social identity theory predicts that we should more strongly identify with groups we perceive more positively (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In the present study, we test if describing one's group as an underdog yields greater identification with that group by describing Muhlenberg college as an underdog, as a topdog, or as neither (control) before asking students to evaluate how strongly they identify with the college. While not significant, the trend of results suggest that students identify more strongly with Muhlenberg when described as an underdog or topdog compared to the control group. We discuss mechanisms and implications.

WHAT DO U MEAN? THE INFLUENCE OF MOOD ON TEXT MESSAGES

Siedah Cazaubon, John Feaster, Jacqueline Harrison, and Melinda Troyka

With today's technological advances, people communicate without the visual cues that face-to-face interactions contain, thus having to rely on their own cognitive processes to interpret a message. According to mood congruence theories, people perceive the world around them in ways that correspond with their current mood (Forgas & Eich, 2013). This study explores the relationship between mood and perceptions of ambiguous text message conversations. Participants' moods were primed with either a sad or happy video. They were then shown ambiguous text message conversations and asked to answer questions about the texts, revealing how they interpreted these messages. We hypothesized that participants in the happy condition would view the texts more positively than those in the sad condition.

SALT – "PEPPER", PENCIL – "PAPER": HIGHLY RELATED ASSOCIATES IN FORM PREPARATION

Alexis Zollo & Corey Rozenblat

Form preparation examines whether participants can exploit word initial sounds in groups of iteratively produced words to facilitate speech onset. It has been tested in a variety of paradigms. In the cued-associates format, participants are given cue-target pairs (chef - "bake") where they must produce the second word aloud in response to the first word appearing on screen. Research suggests that using the cued associates task, all items must share the word initial sound in order for the standard preparation benefit to emerge. We propose that using highly associated cue-target pairs (salt – "pepper") will allow preparation to emerge in sets with an exception item because remembering these pairs costs little attention. Data analysis is ongoing.

OBJECTIFICATION ON TASK ABILITY AND FLOW EXPERIENCE

Jennie Colabatistto, Alexandra Liberto, Rachel Plotke, Anna Robinson

Body image is a prevalent problem amongst young women in America that can impede concentration, focus, and ability to reach peak motivational states. We predicted that women primed with the thin-ideal body standard would perform at lower rates than women primed with neutral images and not experience any measure of peak motivational state. Participants in the experimental condition were shown images of thin models in contrast to the control group who were shown neutral images; both then completed a Lexical Decision Task and completed a survey measuring body image and the extent to which they achieved flow. Understanding how body image concerns affect young women can help schools and colleges create environments that foster healthier body image.

INTERNSHIPS IN PSYCHOLOGY

Miranda Keane, Danielle Psillos, Madeline Tremont

Students who are currently interning at local community organizations will provide summaries of their semester long work. Internship students will describe their learning process, including influential and challenging experiences. This poster can provide students with ideas about future internship opportunities.

HEALTH ANXIETY AND RISK PERCEPTIONS OF THE ZIKA VIRUS

Taylor Beckman, Shoshana Fishbein, Jude Goldman, and Corey Rozenblat

Media has the tendency to exaggerate and affect people's perceptions of given information, through written or visual stimuli. Using the Zika virus as a case study, participants were exposed to one of five conditions: an emotionally charged article or video, a non-emotionally charged article or video, or a control condition. We predicted that visual, emotionally charged media would increase risk perception of contracting infectious diseases as measured through risk perception and health anxiety scores. Through a one-way ANOVA, the largest difference was between the emotionally charged video as compared to the control group. While not statistically significant, the implications suggest that through visual, emotional media people experience higher health anxiety, and a more biased opinion.

TOSS IT UP: THE EFFECTS OF INTERPERSONAL AND INTRAPERSONAL COMPETITION

Liv Amundsen, Ryan Delaney, Genna Post, Michael Silverstein

Social facilitation predicts that people perform differently on a task when in the presence of others. The theory predicts that, for an easy task, people perform better in the presence of others; however, for a difficult task, people perform worse in the presence of others. We were curious if this generalizes to competition. We had participants throw paper balls into a wastebasket, competing against their baseline performance and against a competitor. We predicted participants skilled at the task would perform better when competing interpersonally (against a competitor), and experience less stress and more enjoyment. Conversely, participants unskilled at the task would perform better when competing intrapersonally (against him-/herself), and experience less stress and more enjoyment.

MASCULINITY AND OBJECTIFICATION OF WOMEN

Jennie Colabatistto

Manhood can be defined as a social construct with a set of characteristics and behaviors that all men are expected to possess. Previous research has shown that men feel they need to assert dominance following a threat to their manhood. This study seeks to test whether or not men reassert dominance through the objectification of women (i.e., the dehumanization of women as an object for instrumental use). I will give men false feedback on a gender knowledge test either threatening or affirming their manhood to test if threatened men show a higher preference for photographs depicting objectified women. This study may reveal the harmful effects of the social construction of masculinity and this knowledge can be applied to issues, such as discrimination at work and violence against women.

NOTES

WELCOMING REMARKS

11:05 a.m.

Seegers Union Event Space

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Ginelle Wolfe ('16)

TURN YOUR NEW FOUND INTEREST INTO A RESEARCH PROJECT

Emerging Adulthood is a relatively newly defined developmental stage that includes people in their late teens to mid-late twenties, between adolescence and adulthood. During this time, we become more autonomous decision makers and make many choices about school, work, and relationships. My interest in identity development during this time is what ultimately led me to my senior thesis project, which, in turn, has led me to new paths that will help me make decisions about my future. Emerging Adulthood is a time to explore and to find your interests and passions. Being open to new experiences and ideas, letting yourself get excited about them, and investing in them can lead to curiosity and eventually a research question and project you never imagined you'd delve into!

Paper Session A

SU 113

11:45—12:00

WOULD YOU?; STIGMA AND MENTAL ILLNESS

Meredith Mcallister, Laura Bortnick, Danielle Hutcher, and Amanda Nell

Mentally ill individuals are stigmatized in our culture. People avoid them because of an irrational belief that perceived negative psychological properties could be transmitted. This concept is called the law of magical contagion. In this experiment, we explored the relationship between stigma and magical contagion for a number of mental health problems and physical disabilities. We also examined whether priming participants to think intuitively or rationally would change the level of comfort they felt in hypothetical contagion scenarios.

12:05—12:20

HUMOR AND MORALITY

Jordan Elman, Sabina Muccigrosso, Samantha Walsh

This study examined the relationship between humor and morality and if priming people with specific humor types would affect their decision-making. Sixty-six undergraduate students were asked to watch one of three videos, slapstick humor, intellectual humor or a neutral video showing animals swimming. These were followed by questions using morality vignettes, disgust sensitivity scale and brain or heart thinking. Statistically significant results were found between some of the morality questions and questions on brain or heart thinking. Significance was also found between brain/heart responses and the morality vignettes. Results are discussed in terms of morality responses and humor types.

12:25—12:40

MATCHMAKING IN THE 21ST CENTURY: WHAT DOES YOUR GUT TELL YOU?

Nicole Berger, Monique Goldstein, Ali Smith

We investigated how people perceive using a mutual friend or an online dating site to set them up based on emotional and rational characteristics. Participants were assigned to one of three conditions: Computer Better (online dating sites are better than mutual friends), Computer Equal (online dating sites do just as good a job), or Mutual Friend (traditional method of matchmaking). Participants reported their comfort and perceived effectiveness for the emotional/rational characteristics, as well as their blame/regret toward different factors after being told that the relationship had failed. Participants in the Mutual Friend condition reported significantly more comfort, more perceived effectiveness, and less blame/regret than participants in the two online dating site conditions.

12:45—1:00

UNBELIEVABLE: BASIS FOR SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEFS

Sofia Montgomery, Jenna Lehmann

A Gallup poll from 1996 reported that one in four Americans considered themselves "very" or "somewhat" superstitious. Since the prevalence of superstition is common in America, we were interested in finding out why people believe what they believe. Superstitious beliefs have not only included traditional (e.g. the number 13 is unlucky) and paranormal phenomena, but more controversially, religious ones as well. We also considered how people who are more intuitive thinkers or logical thinkers reasoned their degree of belief. Through a philosophical lens, we conducted an online survey to examine the different types of rationale that a person may base their beliefs off of.

1:05—1:20

RISKY BUSINESS

Estela Valera

There are many variables that might affect risk taking. I had participants complete a DISPORT (risk taking survey) and a short personality test called the IPIP to see how various personality might affect risk. Another possible influence on risk might be daily messages that you receive. One common phrase often repeated is YOLO, which stands for "You only live once". I'd expect that if someone is primed to think of YOLO, they might become more willing to take risks. In this study, some of you read the definition and answered questions about YOLO before filling out the risk survey, half-way through the risk survey, or at the end. This will let us see how when we get you to think about YOLO might alter reported risk taking.

Paper Session B

SU 108-109

11:45—12:00

PASS THE SUPPORT

Emily Lombardo, Krysta Parker, Lindsay Auerbach, Stacy Leinfuss

One-third of college students engage in restrained or uncontrolled eating during their college experience (Arnold et al, 2015). Irregularities in eating habits from stress contribute to diagnosed eating disorders. Research supports that attachment to parents could be a predictor for disordered eating as a response to stress (Alexander, 2013). The present study sought to extend this research to a population of college students. Four surveys were used to conduct this research on 76 undergraduate students. Results indicated that insecure parental attachment predicts uncontrolled eating behaviors among college aged participants. More secure attachment can help individuals to be more equipped to handle stress and less likely to engage in disordered eating behaviors.

12:05—12:20

MODERATING EFFECTS OF SOCIAL SUPPORT ON THE STRESS-SLEEP RELATIONSHIP

Mary Monte, Crystal Specht, Andrea Cohen, Connor Tabak

Sleep deprivation has detrimental effects on adults' health and well-being (Barber, Munz, Bagsby, & Powell, 2010). Many college students don't get enough sleep and insufficient sleep is often attributed to stress (Lund et al., 2010). Previous research has demonstrated that social support moderates the relationship between stress and sleep (Van Schalkwijk et al., 2015). In the present study, we examined this relationship between stress and sleep in currently enrolled college students. In an observational study (n=69) where participants completed scales measuring stress, sleep, and social support. Data analyses suggest that this moderating relationship does exist for college students. These findings emphasize the importance of having social support when dealing with sleep problems in college.

12:25—12:40

PERFECTIONISM AND HEALTH BEHAVIORS: EXAMINING THE MEDIATIONAL AND MODERATIONAL ROLES OF PERCEIVED PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPETENCY AND VULNERABILITY

Dana Brodsky, Deanna Ibrahim, Maya Nisani, Molly Sanford

The current study examines the role of the psychological processes of competency and vulnerability as both a mediator and moderator in the relationship between perfectionism and health behaviors (eating and exercise). Based on the existing literature, we predicted that socially-prescribed perfectionists, compared to self-oriented, may have unhealthy eating and exercise behaviors and attitudes. We found that higher levels of both self-oriented and socially-prescribed perfectionism predict higher behavioral regulation of exercise. Perceived competency moderated, rather than mediated, the relationship between self-oriented perfectionism and behavioral regulation of eating. Perceived competency was also related to both types of perfectionism as well as higher regulation of health behavior.

12:45—1:00

PERCEPTIONS OF EXERCISE AMONG COLLEGIATE ATHLETES AND NON-ATHLETES

Sammi Levine, Jon Marrero, Emily Mebane, Gina Morrello

Our study analyzed if being a collegiate athlete or non-athlete was a moderator in the relationship between perception of exercise and perception of stress. When exercise is viewed as leisurely (free-time) activity it is theorized to decrease stress. Research among athlete populations has shown inconsistencies in relation to this theory because sometimes exercise is viewed as leisurely while other times it is viewed as a stressor (Kimball & Freysinger, 2003). We hypothesized that those who perceive their exercise as leisure will feel less stressed. We also hypothesized that athletes will not see their exercise as leisure, and will therefore be more stressed. Results did not support the hypotheses. However, athletes reported higher levels of a commitment to exercise than non-athletes.



**WANT TO PRESENT YOUR RESEARCH
OR INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE?**

Fall 2016 Psychology Day is tentatively scheduled for December 2016. If you would like to present your research or internship, speak with a professor and/or visit the Psychology Department website for more information!

ABOUT PSYCHOLOGY DAY

Psychology Day is an opportunity for students from all class years to present and discuss findings from the research or internship projects they have conducted that semester or year. New majors can look ahead to the types of research conducted in Research Methods, Advanced Lab, Research Apprenticeships and Independent Studies. More senior majors can look back, note their own intellectual development, and mentor younger students. The student presenters are practicing valuable communication skills. Most of all, students (from any major) and faculty join together as colleagues to celebrate student research.

CONDUCTING RESEARCH

Learning how to conduct empirical research is central to the education of the psychology major. Through research experiences, psychology students strengthen their critical

thinking skills and develop systematic, rigorous ways of thinking about people.

Research in Courses

Students are introduced to research in Introductory Psychology. This foundation continues through the rest of the major, including Research Methods and Advanced Lab. In these courses students develop a unique hypothesis and design a research study to test it. They then follow through by running, analyzing and presenting the study.

Research Apprenticeships

Many students (freshmen through seniors) work with faculty members as research assistants and collaborators. After an apprenticeship, students also often develop their own research ideas and go on to Independent Research or Senior Theses.

Independent Research

We encourage juniors and seniors in particular to consider Independent Research. Students work

closely one-on-one with a faculty mentor in developing and implementing their ideas. Seniors looking for a year-long, intensive experience are encouraged to pursue a senior thesis. Any type of research, but especially independent theses such as these are very positive additions to a graduate school application.

INTERNSHIPS

An internship is a work experience characterized by intentional learning. During this experience, the student assumes a responsible role in an organization and actively reflects on what he or she is observing and learning. Psychology students have held internships in many different settings.

MORE INFORMATION

Visit the Psychology Department website and follow the link for "Students."