

Psycho-Babble

Macalester College/ November 2009

Important Dates

Nov. 16-Dec. 4
Spring '10 Registration

Tuesday, Nov. 17,
Psi Chi Induction
7:00 p.m.
Old Main 4th Floor

Thursday, Nov. 26-29
Thanksgiving Holiday

Tuesday, Dec. 1st
Mental Health Careers
Lunch
11:30- 12:30 pm
Olin Rice 352

Saturday, Dec. 5
Kid's Judge

Tuesday, Dec. 8th
Nelson Soken Lunch
11:30 - 12:30 pm
Olin Rice 352

Chair Talk from Jaine

Welcome back from Fall Break! Even though your Fall courses are still in full swing, we're already planning for Spring semester. We are very excited about the courses we'll be offering, including some old favorites and some exciting new opportunities. Please read below for descriptions of our new topics courses and senior seminars, and feel free to talk to your advisor or anyone on the faculty if you have questions.

This time of year also features a variety of informational events about your life after Mac, including a discussion of mental health careers and how to use your BA in Psychology in wide-ranging careers. Stay tuned for more details!

Psych Club Info

Hello all psychology enthusiasts!

As some of you may know we are trying to organize an active psychology club. We are going to try to host some potlucks, psychology-related info sessions, lunch with various faculty and any other programming that you would like to see.

However, our first step is going to make a mass emailing list so we can contact those who are interested rather than bombard you with yet another psych departmental email.

SO, if you would like to receive emails about the psych club and get involved in programming, please email us with your name and email address! Also if you have more questions or comments about psych club or psi chi feel free to email, Zoe (zjacobso@macalester.edu), Hannah (hejohnson@macalester.edu), Sophia (sslote@macalester.edu), or Carly (cklingensmith@macalester.edu).

New Classes for Spring 2010

In Spring 2010, we are offering three classes that are not described in the catalog. If you have questions about these courses, you can contact the instructor directly or direct your questions to Jaine. All three, plus 378-01 Psychology of Language, fulfill the student-led course requirement.

Psyc 375-01 Mood & Anxiety

Sadness, despair, anxiety, dread: This seminar explores contemporary theories and research that help us understand and alleviate mood and anxiety disorders. We will examine evolutionary, cognitive, biological, sociocultural, and developmental perspectives on mood and anxiety, and we will grapple with current controversies concerning diagnosis, comorbidity, prevention and pharmacology of mood and anxiety disorders. The course will also examine the promotion of well-being and positive psychology. Prerequisites: 100, 201, and 252 or permission. TR 9:40-11:10, Olri 300. Jaine Strauss.

Psyc 394-01 Mindreading: Techniques for Probing Human Brain Function

This course will explore currently available techniques for probing the normally functioning human brain. Techniques covered include electroencephalogram/event-related potentials (EEG/ERP), positron emission tomography (PET), functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), diffusion tensor imaging (DTI), and transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS). In addition to covering the mechanisms involved, recent applications and the pros and cons of each technique will be discussed. Prerequisites: 100 or 180; 201; 242, 244 or 248. TR 3:00-4:30 Olri 270. Darcy Burgund.

Psyc 488-02 Inside the Animal Mind

Ever wondered what your dog is thinking or why your cat behaves a certain way? In this seminar, students will be introduced to the questions and concepts in the study of animal cognition. We will take a peek into the animal mind and show that many topics in animal cognition can be studied in an objective and scientific manner. The format of the seminar will include student led discussion of recent topics in the study of animal cognition. Topics may include: animal sensory abilities, abstract representations (e.g., numbers and time), cause and effect detection, memory systems, insight and reasoning, theory of mind, and communication. Book chapters and journal articles will be employed to illustrate these concepts. Prerequisite: Senior major or minor. TR 9:40-11:10 Olri 300. Julia Manors.

Wiertelak Receives Mentoring Award in Neuroscience

Eric Wiertelak, DeWitt Wallace Professor of Psychology and Director of Cognitive & Neuroscience Studies, received the *Award for Mentoring* by the Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience, at a ceremony held during the Society for Neuroscience (SfN) annual meeting in Chicago, Illinois, October 17-21, 2009. Wiertelak was honored for his significant contributions in mentoring young neuroscientists and specifically for founding, co-organizing, and hosting MidBrains, the regional undergraduate neuroscience research meeting for the Midwest. Wiertelak hosted the conference at Macalester in its first three years. It now rotates among host institutions across the upper Midwest. Two other faculty members were also honored at the ceremony for their role in co-organizing the MidBrains Conference. Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience is the international society focusing on neuroscience education and research at the undergraduate level.

Psi Chi Induction is Nov. 17, 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 17 at 7:00 p.m., Old Main 4th Floor, we will induct 10 new members into Psi Chi, the national honorary society for psychology.

Congratulations to: [Ella Bandes](#), [Sylvia Ferguson](#), [Anna Frye](#), [Marie Godwin](#), [Leah Kriebel](#), [Nina Mallory](#), [Logan Sand](#), [Griffin Schwed](#), [Igor Stanceric](#), and [Kristina Vlahovicova](#).

To be invited to join Psi Chi, you have to have an overall GPA of 3.5 or better.

Departmental Baby Boom!!

The Psychology Department is about to have a baby boom—and we couldn't be more excited! In just a few weeks, our visiting faculty member Julia Manor and her husband will have their first child. In mid-March, Sun No and her husband Paul will welcome their first baby, and Jamie Atkins, her husband, and their son Brody are eagerly expecting a new baby in early May. Congratulations to all!

New visiting Faculty for Spring

There are four new visiting faculty who will be teaching in the psychology department this spring and we would like to tell you a little about each of them.

Mary Gustafson Mary Gustafson is returning as a visiting assistant professor, teaching Introduction to Psychology this spring. She has taught the intro class as well as developmental psychology in previous years. She also works with faculty and students through Macalester's Civic Engagement Center, where she helps faculty incorporate community based learning into their courses throughout the campus. Given that focus, students in this year's intro class can expect to be out in the community, seeking to understand the applications of psychology as well as its researched and theoretical underpinnings. Dr. Gustafson holds a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Minnesota.

Julia Manor Julia Manor is a Macalester Psychology Department alumna '04 who recently completed her doctoral degree in animal behavior at the University of Minnesota. She will be teaching Principles of Learning and Behavior as well as a senior seminar, Inside the Animal Mind. She loves teaching and working with animals so is excited to be returning to Mac with the opportunity to do both!

Chris Miller Chris Miller will be co-teaching with Sun No, Social Psychology this spring. He is working on his Ph.D in Social Psychology from the University of Minnesota, where he has conducted research on self & identity, community involvement and political participation.

Hideko Sera Originally from Japan, Dr. Sera completed a BA from Ball State University, IN, and both MA and PsyD degrees from Adler School of Professional Psychology in Chicago. She served as Assistant Director at Dreikurs Psychological Services Center in Chicago, one of the largest community mental health based teaching clinics in the U.S., until 2006. Dr. Sera is currently Associate Professor at Argosy University Twin Cities in 2007. She is currently a program co-chair for the PsyD program. Her interests are in the areas of international psychology, Individual Psychology and its application in non-English cultures, refugee/asylee issues, underserved and marginalized populations, skin tone bias and its implications on mental health, as well as LGBTQ mental health issues.

We are also delighted that two visiting faculty from this semester, **Dan Graham** and **Bruce Hinrichs**, will be continuing in the department this Spring. Dan will teach Health Psychology, and Bruce will teach two sections of Intro to Psychology.

Mesmerizing Major: Ykatirina "Katia" Cardenas



Katia Cardenas

"Mesmerizing Majors are randomly drawn from the list of CNS & Psychology majors."

Favorite Movie: *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*

Favorite Book: *Lovely Bones*

Favorite place to eat in the Twin Cities: Fasika! Ethiopian restaurant on University and Snelling. Soooo good.

What do you do when you are not studying: Theater mostly. I'm in Tartuffe right now which open Friday, Nov. 13th. I'm also in Sirens, so I do a lot of singing too.

Where did you grow up? Everett & Whidbey Island in Washington State, and Sacramento, CA.

Interesting fact about your hometown: Nobody seems to know Sacramento is the capital of CA.

Tell us something about your family: My dad played keyboards for Prince. I drop that one often.

Tell us something that you are pleased with or proud of about yourself. I often eat breakfast for dinner. Oh, and I sang with a wedding band once this summer - not at a wedding - weird.... but I'm proud, indeed.

Amanda Wenzel's Summer Internship

This summer, I participated in the Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program in Cognitive and Behavioral Science at the University of Minnesota. The REU program was a ten week program that consisted of working in a mentors lab while also attending lectures by various faculty, attending seminars on graduate schools, and presenting our own work at the end of the program.

I was fortunate to be placed in Dr. Ann Masten's lab, whose work I was previously familiar with through a topics course I took my sophomore year, Developmental Psychopathology. In general, the Masten lab researches risk and resiliency factors in child development. For the past four summers, the lab has been in two homeless shelters in downtown Minneapolis trying to identify factors that contribute to school success and readiness in kindergarteners and first graders staying at the shelters. My role in the data collection was to interview the parents to learn about their family history and how the parent was responding to the stresses leading to and being homeless. Additionally, I administered a portion of the study in which the child and parent were asked to do various tasks, allowing us to observe how they interact and work together. This experience truly helped me solidify my interests in research. I also felt fortunate to be able to be in such close contact with our participants, because it allowed me to learn more about the homeless population.

In addition to the research aspect of the program, another rewarding part of the summer was the relationships I formed with the other eleven participants and what I learned from them. They showed such a passion, not only for the research they were participating in, but in asking questions about others research and in questioning our lecturers who presented their research to us. Their desire was incredibly inspiring, and encouraged me to do the same, to not just listen to what other people are saying but to challenge it.

Special Lunch Guest - Nelson Soken Dec. 8th Rsvp/Lee

Learning about human behavior, thought, and emotion is fascinating and is something that is all around us. However, have you ever wondered what you will do as a career with a degree in psychology? Come join us for lunch and have the opportunity to talk to someone that had the same questions and concerns when he was a psychology student at Macalester in the 1980's. Nelson Soken will share his story and answer your questions about his own personal journey from Mac psychology student to professional in the workplace.



Nelson Soken, Ph.D.

Nelson Soken, Ph.D., is senior manager of Innovation Initiatives at Medtronic, a medical device manufacturer in Minneapolis, Minnesota, focusing on customer-centric, system-wide strategies. Prior to joining Medtronic, he was manager of information resources at Honeywell International as well as serving in various senior technical positions both in Europe and the U.S. where he participated in corporate strategy initiatives along with executing on technical human factors activities. He received his undergraduate degree in psychology from Macalester College and his doctorate in experimental child psychology from the University of Minnesota. He has published in academic psychology journals, taught university level psychology courses, presented papers at various professional conferences, and conducted training workshops in the U.S. and Europe. Throughout his career, he has been involved in a variety of activities, such as new opportunity identification, product planning, human factors strategy and management, innovation initiatives, knowledge management, competitive intelligence, and leadership development efforts. He is a certified trainer for the Barnes and Conti program *Managing Innovation: Optimizing the power of new ideas* and has taught the program to a wide range of Fortune 500 companies as well as at the University of California Berkeley. Dr. Nelson Soken is co-author of a book on the psychology of innovation entitled *Lead the Pack: Sparking innovation that drives customers wild*.

Internship Lunch Well Attended

Students who attended the Internship Lunch learned generally about interning and also about individual internship experiences from the panel members.

Peggy Polta - interned at the Family Tree Clinic in St. Paul helping patients receive free birth control. She appreciated the formal training and having to learn the skill of consolidating the information for her clients.

Kerri Dale Smith - was at the Hubert H. Humphrey Job Corp, on Snelling across from the Fairgrounds, where she was an Employment Assistant. She meet weekly with students in the school for a ½ hour check-in session where a variety of issues popped up: anger management, substance abuse, pregnancy issues.....

Aubrey Harding - interned at the People's Center Medical Clinic in Minneapolis where she worked on a variety of health education initiatives.

The three internships show a variety on the continuum of structure, from quite structured to little structure. It's important to look at your own learning and processing style to see what works best for you and try to match that.



Michael Porter, from the Internship Office, encouraged students to stop by and look through the many binders they have with information on hundreds of internship sites. He joked that his job is to confuse you with options.

His office can also help you narrow down your search to a specific site, or help you brainstorm different ideas of places you may want to work. Michael handed out a 4 page list of Psychology related ideas for potential internships, listing relevant organizations and positions Mac students have held in the past. He encouraged students to seriously consider an internship as they provide you with valuable information about yourself and your education. If you are interested in going on to graduate school, gaining hands-on experience can help give you that edge over other equally qualified candidates.

Internships can also help you rule out a population or job field for your future. He warned students to apply early as there are many colleges in the Twin Cities and internship spots can fill up fast. If students want help with hometown options, his office can provide some assistance.

Talking to a faculty sponsor should happen early. Developing the learning contract takes time and faculty have many other pressing obligations that could limit their availability. Internships can be such a valuable experience; we hope you'll consider doing one!

**Panel members:
Peggy Polta, Kerri
Dale Smith &
Aubrey Harding**

Psych in the News

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*Be sure and check
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Smart Rat 'Hobbie-J' Produced By Over-expressing A Gene That Helps Brain Cells Communicate

ScienceDaily (Oct. 20, 2009) — Over-expressing a gene that lets brain cells communicate just a fraction of a second longer makes a smarter rat, report researchers from the Medical College of Georgia and East China Normal University.

Dubbed Hobbie-J after a smart rat that stars in a Chinese cartoon book, the transgenic rat was able to remember novel objects, such as a toy she played with, three times longer than the average Long Evans female rat, which is considered the smartest rat strain. Hobbie-J was much better at more complex tasks as well, such as remembering which path she last traveled to find a chocolate treat.

The report comes about a decade after the scientists first reported in the journal *Nature* that they had developed "Doogie," a smart mouse that over-expresses the NR2B gene in the hippocampus, a learning and memory center affected in diseases such as Alzheimer's. Memory improvements they found in the new genetically modified Long Evans rat were very similar to Doogie's. Subsequent testing has shown that Doogie maintained superior memory as he aged.

"This adds to the notion that NR2B is a universal switch for memory formation," says Dr. Joe Z. Tsien, co-director of the MCG Brain & Behavior Discovery Institute and co-corresponding author on the paper published Oct. 19 in *PLoS One*. Dr. Xiaohua Cao at East China Normal University also is a co-corresponding author.

The finding also further validates NR2B as a drug target for improving memory in healthy individuals as well as those struggling with Alzheimer's or mild dementia, the scientists says. link: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/10/091014102030.htm>

Laughing At Others Crosses Cultural Boundaries

ScienceDaily (Oct. 16, 2009) — Laughter is an emotional expression that is innate in human beings. This means laughing at others is also believed to be a universal phenomenon. However, the fear of being laughed at causes some people enormous problems in their social lives. This is known as gelotophobia, a disorder that affects people in all cultures alike.

What is the difference between a shy person and another who suffers from gelotophobia? One of the aims of a study published recently in the scientific journal *Humor*, which was led by a team from the University of Zurich, Switzerland, with the participation of researchers from 73 other countries, was to find out if there is a valid and reliable way of evaluating the fear of being laughed at within different cultures.

"People laugh at others for many different reasons", Victor Rubio, a psychologist at the Autonomous University of Madrid and one of the Spanish researchers taking part in the study, tells SINC.

"This causes an anxiety or fear response in the person affected, leading them to avoid situations in which such circumstances may arise, and this may even become a problem that impacts on their social life", explains the expert.

The lead authors of the research study commissioned 93 scientists to use a questionnaire (translated into 42 languages) on a sample of 22,610 people in order to find out whether they suffered from gelotophobia, which comes from the Greek *gelos*, 'laugh', and *phobos*, 'fear'.

"Our study makes it possible to draw a clear distinction between people who suffer from this phobia and those who do not, as well as showing the scale of cultural differences, which are so important in any possible psychological treatment", says Rubio. link:

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/10/091014102030.htm>