Senior Thesis Program

by Kaitlyn Ferris ('10)

The Senior Thesis Research Program is designed for psychology majors so they can participate in year-long research in a topic area of their choice. In order to be eligible for the Senior Thesis Program, students must be a junior or senior Psychology major with a Psychology grade point average of 3.30 or better. Students work hand in hand with a faculty advisor to develop, research and carry out an experiment in their specific topic area. In a sense, the Senior Thesis Program is a preview of what many students will go on to complete in graduate school. The course work associated with completing a Senior Thesis is broken down into two main components. The first component encompasses researching your topic of interest and proposing it to your faculty advisory committee. Once the initial proposal is approved, the actual experiment which tests the research question can be carried out. The Senior Thesis Program culminates with a formal presentation and defense of the research findings in front the student's thesis committee. Some of the topics this year's Senior Thesis students are investigating include: the effect of feminist perspectives on stereotype threat susceptibility, whether position on a football field is linked with specific personality traits, and whether the implicit attitudes associated with rape myths can be altered. If you're interested in applying for the Senior Thesis Program in the future please contact Dr. Connie Wolfe, Senior Thesis Program Coordinator, in the Psychology Department.

Research Opportunities

by Melissa Martin ('11)

Interested in conducting research? The Psychology Department offers many different opportunities for students to get involved in. One option for students is to work with faculty members as research assistants, and to act as collaborators. Here at Muhlenberg, the faculty members in the Psychology Department are extraordinary mentors, teachers, and researchers. Many students volunteer their time for the experience, but others participate in the research experience as a credited course. Students may enroll in the Psychology Apprenticeship course (PSY270; 0.50 credits) or complete an Independent Research credit (PSY970; 1.00 credit).

If students are planning on continuing their education in psychology, such as going to graduate school, then it is important to get research experience. It is a good way to work closely with faculty members and to strengthen research skills. Being able to collaborate well with others, as well as design studies and input data into computer programs to run statistical analyses, are important skills to have as researchers. Even if students are not planning on continuing a career based on conducting research, practicing such skills is very beneficial. So, if you have a particular area of interest in Psychology or want to find one, ask around and find a faculty member to collaborate and share your ideas with.

Inside this issue:
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My Experience at Adolescent Transitions Program

by David Porrino '11

This semester, I have participated in an off-campus internship at the Adolescent Transitions Program at Lehigh Valley Hospital. Adolescent Transitions is a partial hospitalization program that is designed for children between the approximate ages of 12 to 18 who were sent to the hospital for mental or emotional issues, and are in the process of going back to school. Sometimes, going back to school is the last thing that adolescents want to do after suffering from emotional problems. This program offers adolescents a smoother shift from hospital life to a school setting.

As an intern, my responsibilities are to be present at staff meetings, sit in on group therapy, and write “Group Progress” and “Individual Progress” notes. These are updates on the behavior of the adolescents on an individual and group basis. These notes are signed by an Adolescent Transitions therapist and sent to patients’ insurance companies.

My experience at Adolescent Transitions has been nothing short of spectacular. I have gained a tremendous amount of knowledge about therapy and counseling techniques as well as different types of psychological medication. In addition, I have had many rewarding experiences because I have seen patients who have entered a complete mess, and left with a sense of purpose, ready to go back to school.

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Sex Differences in Susceptibility to a Modified Poggendorff Illusion

by Melissa Katz ('11), Joe Mulvihill ('11)

Are there differences between men and women? Previous studies have shown that men have better visuospatial abilities than women. Declerck and De Brabander (2002) investigated this difference by using the Poggendorff illusion, which is a geometric optical illusion. They found that men performed better than women. The current study widened the distance between the lines in the Poggendorff illusion. We then displayed the illusion and had the participants complete a survey asking their gender and which line segment they thought was more correct. Our hypothesis that widening the distance between the lines would make the relationship between gender and susceptibility to the Poggendorff illusion clearer, was supported. Out of the 32 Muhlenberg students who participated, nine out of the 15 men chose the correct line, but only four out of the 17 women chose the correct line. This suggests that men have better visuospatial skills than women.

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Psychology Courses: Fill up too fast?

by Melissa Martin ('11)

Freshmen and sophomore Psychology majors often worry about getting closed out of classes for the major. Frantically, they e-mail professors hoping to be “signed” into them, but are often turned away. The reason is- there is plenty of time to finish the requirements for the major. The major consists of at least 10 courses- Intro to Psych, Psych Stats (and its pre-requisite), Research Methods, 3 core courses (200-level), 2 advanced courses (300-400-levels) and 1 Advanced Lab and Design course. And the best part is, most classes are available every semester. If they’re not offered every semester, then they are offered once a year such as Personality Psychology, Psychology of Adolescence, Cognitive Processes, and Psychology of Women. Special Topics courses are the only exception. These courses go into extensive details on a single topic and so professors rotate teaching these, based on their own research specialties. Some recent topics include Contemporary Racism, Inclusion/Exclusion, and Amnesia. The point is, there is no need to worry about not being able to take the classes you want. There are plenty of fantastic options, and a wide variety of topics that are covered. So if you are a freshman, concerned about not having enough time to complete the major, take a deep breath. Sign up for general academic requirements and other courses of interest, as you look forward to continuing the major.

Check out the major requirements: www.muhlenberg.edu/main/academics/psychology/major

NAMI Awareness 5K Run

Date: May 2, 2010 - 9:30am

Race Distance: 5K through the park on macadam and gravel trail
Registration Fee: $25
Registration & Packet Pick-Up: 8:30 a.m. - 9:15 a.m. on the day of the race. Registration forms received after April 21 will receive t-shirts upon availability. All participants will receive one raffle ticket. Raffle held at 11:30 a.m. Must be present to win. Location: Bicentennial Park, 5450 Liberto Lane, Bethlehem (East Allen Township) Contact: Janet Bandics - 610-882-2102; for online registration, go to http://www.namipalehighvalley.org/Events.aspx
Update on Psi Chi: The International Honor Society of Psychology

Advisor: Dr. Harring
President: Sarah Rutstein ('10)
Vice President: Samantha Busa ('11)
Secretary: Emily Morse ('10)
Treasurer: Kristina Ciarlo ('10)

In the fall semester Psi Chi hosted a talk given by Dr. Gotthard in which she discussed some of her current research. The discussion was entitled "Behavioral Neuroscience: Can Drugs be Used to Erase Traumatic Memories That Contribute to the Development of PTSD?" Students were given the opportunity to hear what kind of research was currently occurring in the field of memory and PTSD as well as ask many questions about Dr. Gotthard’s current work. In addition to the talk, Psi Chi hosted in the fall, Psi Chi also played a role in running the Psychology Department’s Psych Day that took place at the end of first semester.

In the current semester, Psi Chi is hosting an informal discussion for current psychology students on the various options for graduate school in psychology. Additionally, Psi Chi sponsored a talk by Muhlenberg Alum, Dr. Abramowitz on his research on Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. Psi Chi plans on helping out in the spring’s Psych Day, as well as holding its annual spring induction on May 5th where we will be inducting many new qualified members.

Congratulations Psi Chi Seniors!
Olivia Alvarez, Rachel Ammerman, Kaitlyn Archibald, Kristina Ciarlo, Erica Cohen, Danielle Coluccio, Stephanie Cram, Jonathan Farber, Kaitlyn Ferris, Elizabeth Gaffney, Nicole Gallub, David Gardner, Hanna Glidden, Alison Long, Helena Manzella, Laura Mayerson, Janelle Mentrikoski, Danielle Morrone, Emily Morse, Michelle Murphy, Jessica Ruane, Ariel Rogers, Sarah Rutstein, Kristen Sabia, Samantha Silverberg, Amanda Tompkins, Laura Tumulty, Jenna VanWaalwijk, Caryn Viverito, Alixandra West, and Laura Winger

****Congratulations! Spotlight on Students****

CONFERENCEs: Kaitlyn Ferris ('10) presented "The Effect of Feminist Perspectives on Stereotype Threat Susceptibility" and Erin Futrovsky ('10) presented "Feminine vs. Feminist: Sex and the City through the Lens of Post-modern Feminism" at the Sixteenth Annual Undergraduate Conference in Women’s Studies Conference on March 27, 2010 at NCC, Bethlehem Township, PA; Johanna Block ('11) along with Eric Gonzalez (NSC)('10) will be presenting at the Midwestern Psychological Association in Chicago, IL, in April; Joshua Cohen (NSC)('11) will be presenting at the Association for Psychological Science in Boston in May; Samantha Silverberg ('10) "Who gets what? Adolescents’ distribution of school resources." Poster to be presented at the Society for Research on Adolescents, Philadelphia, PA; Laura Cole ('10) “Experiences and Understandings with Diversity: How They Affect Faculty Pedagogical Practices at a Liberal Arts College. Presented at the 7th Annual Undergraduate Conference on Social Justice/Social Research, Allentown, PA

INTERNSHIPS: Rachel Ammerman('10), Katherine May('10), Jennifer Rickel('10)

-Autism Resources Community Hub (ARCH); Alan Bass(12)-Philadelphia Flyers, NHL; Nicole Baumgartner(11), Laura Brehm(‘11), Arielle Rogers(’10), Alixandra West(’10), Denise Whiteman (’10)- Transitions Adolescent Partial Hospitalization Program, Lehigh Valley Hospital; Jill Feldman(’10), Ari Jacobson(’10) - Vitalistic Children's Therapeutic Center and School; Savyon Lang(10)-Lehigh Valley Hospital: Adolescent Transitions Program & Preadolescent Treatment Home (PATHS); Janelle Mentrikoski(‘10)-LV Health Network, Behavioral Health Dept.; Julie Mosgowski (’11) Admissions Internship; Julie Roberts (NSC)(‘11) - St. Luke's Hospital Dept. of Community Health; Alexa Rosenberg(11)-Occupational Therapy Dept., Lehigh Valley Hospital; Jessica Ruane(‘10)-Lehigh Valley Health Network-Organizational Development Dept.; Nora Stark(10)-Jewish Family Service of the Lehigh Valley; Ariel Unger(10)-Raub Middle School and Mercy Special Learning Center

SUMMER 2010 RESEARCH COLLABORATOR GRANT RECIPIENTS: Jason Boulter ('11), Abbey Rabinovich ('12), Cory Hackmyer (NSC) ('11) - Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and the use of propanol to manipulate memory; Advisor: Dr. Gotthard; Demetrail Tate (NSC) ('11)-Memory reconsolidation, Advisor: Dr. Gotthard; Alexandra Ripkin ('11)-An exploratory study of traumatic stress among transgender clients in urban areas, Advisor: Dr. Richmond

Rosenberg Award Recipient: Samantha Busa ('11) - The effect of diagnostic labeling and race on teacher expectations for children with pervasive developmental disorders, Advisor: Dr. Sciutto

Phi Beta Kappa: Rachel Ammerman ('10), Kristina Ciarlo ('10), Danielle Morrone ('10), Andrea Rosenfield '11, Kristin Sabia ('10), Natalia Sleziak ('11), Alixandra West ('10)

Awards: Amanda Bernecker ('10) - winner of the Jeanette Eichenwald Interfaith Award from IJCU
Spotlight on Faculty  Interview with Dr. Dohn  (Dori Lewis ’11)

Q. Where did you study?
A. For undergraduate education, I went to Hofstra on Long Island. I was a Psych major, and a Computer Science minor. I started as Computer Science major only, but later I realized that sitting in front of a computer all day writing computer programs was not the job or life that I wanted. I took an Intro to Psych class as an elective and became keenly interested in the subject. For Graduate school, I went to William and Mary and achieved a Master's degree in Psychology, then went on to Rutgers University to get my PhD in Social Psychology.

Q. Where did you teach prior to coming to Muhlenberg?
A. I was a visiting Professor at Kutztown University.

Q. Why did you chose Muhlenberg?
A. I chose Muhlenberg because I liked the faculty, and the teaching here is different. My schedule allows time for research and campus opportunities.

Q. How do you like it here? Why?
A. I love Muhlenberg! It has the whole package! Plus, I live in Bethlehem, which is a short commute.

Q. What kind of research have you done in the past? What kinds of research are doing now?
A. In the past I’ve done research on the Terror Management Theory (TMT), also the psychology of religion, humor, morality, and celebrity worship, which are affiliated with TMT. Now I am continuing research on TMT.

Q. Has your research been published? Where? When?

Q. Can you give me some words of wisdom for all those undergraduates wanting to continue after college and do social research?
A. It is most important to develop a strong interest in a specific field in social psychology. It’s important to have passion about a certain subject, be focused and have a plan. Develop a strong focus!

Muhlenberg to Graduate 77 Psychology Majors

David Abrams, Olivia Alvarez, Rachel Ammerman, Kaitlyn Archibald, Amanda Berneger, Kiera Bianchini, Matthew Blank, Mairin Breault, Patrick Brodarick, Patrick Carr, Christina Cho, Kristina Ciarlo, Erica Cohen, Laura Cole, Danielle Coluccio, Stephanie Cram, Christine deBenedictis, Jonathan Farber, Jill Feldman, Kaitlyn Ferris, Jacob Freeman, Jennifer Friedman, Erin Futrovsky, Elizabeth Gaffney, Nicole Gallub, Thomas Gambuzza, David Gardner, Kristyn Gentile, Hanna Glidden, Ari Jacobson, Odelya Kadosh, Joslyn Kenowitz, Savyon Lang, Phyllicia Lee, Alison Long, Carl Lynch, Helena Manzella, Katherine May, Laura Mayerson, Janelle Mentrikoski, Danielle Morrone, Emily Morse, Michelle Murphy, William Osei, Kristen Peacock, Hannah Poles, Patricia Rabinowitz, Jennifer Raimo, Jonathan Richmond, Jennifer Rickel, Arielle Rogers, Jessica Ruane, Sarah Rutstein, Kristen Sabia, Mary Samot, Rebecca Scarborough, Christine Schaefer, Ryan Shaughnessy, Andrea Shulman, Samantha Silverberg, Mara Silverman, Nora Stark, Rebecca Stein, Emily Strode, Laura Sukonick, Amanda Tompkins, Brittany Trenker, Laura Tumulty, Emily Turpin, Ariel Unger, Jenna VanWaalwijk, Caryn Viverito, Dahlia Walton, Alixandra West, Denise Whitman, Hannah Wilkowski, Laura Winger
Muhlenberg Students Participate in LVAIC Undergraduate Psychology Conference hosted by Moravian College, April 17, 2010

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Psychology Day

by Samantha Busa

Psychology Day is a semi-annual event where students are able to present and discuss research. Students from Research Methods, Advanced Lab, Independent Studies, and Internships are able to talk about their experiences to younger and older students inspiring them to do more research in the future and stressing the importance of research. In addition to poster sessions and paper presentations, there is a keynote speaker who gives a presentation at the beginning of Psychology Day.

Last year, Dr. Dohn opened the event about his research on celebrities and the Terror Management Theory. This year’s speaker is Samantha Silverberg (’10) who will be presenting her research on, “Who gets what? Adolescents’ distributions of school resources,” that she and Dr. Sinno presented at the Society for Research on Adolescents Conference in Philadelphia. Psychology Day will be on Tuesday, May 4, 4:20 - 6:35 p.m. in Moyer Hall.

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Psychology Club!

This has been a great year for Psychology Club! We started off the school year by welcoming Dr. Dohn to the department. He presented his research on Terror Management Theory, along with the documentary *Flight From Death*. Next, we held a fundraiser to raise money for the local Community Bike Works program, and our biggest fundraiser of the year was our Psychology t-shirt sale. At the end of the semester, we held an informal information session for freshmen about the major and the corresponding classes, which was found to be very beneficial.

In this present semester, we screened the psychology-related documentary, *Boy Interrupted*. Immediately following the viewing, a group discussion was held by a few faculty members to talk about the issues raised in the film. Lastly, the club is excited to be helping out with Psych Day for the first time, on May 4th from 4:20-6:35 pm in Miller Forum. This has been a successful year for the club, and we hope to increase our involvement even more in the future.

Wanna join?

Psychology Club is a great way to stay connected with faculty members and fellow Psychology majors. Our goal is to promote the study of Psychology to the rest of the school, while staying active in the community. If you have any questions or want to get involved, please e-contact our present secretary, Sydney Miller (sm235883@muhlenberg.edu) or president, Dori Lewis (dl236174@muhlenberg.edu).