



Spring 2018 Program - May 4th

Psychology
 @ Muhlenberg College



NOTES

SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

POSTER SESSION

10:00—11:10 a.m.
Seegers Union Event Space

WELCOMING REMARKS

11:15 a.m.
Seegers Union Event Space

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

11:15—11:45 a.m.
Seegers Union Event Space

11:45 a.m.—12:00 p.m. BREAK

ORAL PRESENTATION SESSION A

12:00 p.m.—1:35 p.m. - SU 111-112

POSTER SESSION

Seegers Union Event Space

RESEARCH IN PLACE AND BELONGING

Dr. Erika Bagley, Rachel Bases, Maia Brint, Rachel Plotke, Charles Skoler, Melinda Troyka, Bennett Urian

Sense of belonging is considered a fundamental human need and is related to feelings of safety and connectedness to others. Prior research has shown that sense of belonging in college can be a strong predictor for academic success, retention, and general well-being. It is also shaped by one's social identities. Working with other small liberal arts colleges, our Place and Belonging Study aimed to examine how different social identities impact one's sense of belonging on Muhlenberg's campus. We conducted an online survey followed by in person focus groups that aligned with individuals' preferred social identity. Through our research we hope to use our findings to get a better understanding of marginalized groups on campus and present it to the administration to improve sense of belonging.

VIRTUAL INTERACTION: BRINGING FRIENDS TOGETHER OR TEARING THEM APART?

Yunshan Jiang, Amber Zion, Saryu Chennat, Gal Behiri

Our world is becoming increasingly dominated by virtual interaction, particularly among students in college. The goal of this study was to determine the impact of virtual interaction on the satisfaction of close friendships between college students. We hypothesized that frequent virtual interactions decreases the satisfaction of close friendships, particularly when virtual interaction is substituted for in-person interaction. Our study focused on students at Muhlenberg College. Each participant was asked about his/her communication habits and responded to the McGill Friendship Questionnaire (Mendelson & Aboud, 2012) regarding one close friend.

EVERYDAY MIND READING: EMPATHIC ACCURACY IN CLOSE DATING RELATIONSHIPS

Brooke Bailey, Candice Belina, Karly McCloskey, Kayleigh Scott, Jordan Wuerth

We studied the extent to which having or not having experience with long-term close dating relationships has an effect on one's general empathic accuracy towards strangers. We hypothesized that those who have experience with long-term close dating relationships will exhibit a higher level of empathic accuracy than those who do not because we believe empathic accuracy is a skill and being involved in close relationships provides practice.

LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX, BABY: YOUNG ADULTS SEXUALITY

Eve Atkins, Victoria Wiesmeth, Greer Hardy, Zachary Katz

We will be presenting on the social, spiritual, biological, developmental, and power aspects of sex education as it relates to young adults ranging from 18 to 29 years old. We are looking to contribute and expand on previous sexual education guidelines for the betterment of young adults.

SEX EDUCATION PROPOSAL FOR QUEER ADULTS

Molly Plotkin, Peter Scognamillo, Monica Baum

This poster presentation will be a sex education proposal for queer identifying adults. It will specifically explore the social, spiritual, identity, and power aspects of individuals sexuality during this developmental age.

MY BODY IS MINE, MY BODY IS GREAT: SEX EDUCATION PROPOSAL FOR CHILDREN

Yael Green, Sam Davis, Alexa Urbach, Emily Ancona, Christine Cimpian

Our poster will be a sex education proposal for children from a sex-positive perspective. We will focus on the progression of development by looking into identity, power dynamics, and biological, social, and behavioral changes.

NEW UPDATE AVAILABLE: TEACHING ADOLESCENTS ABOUT SEX

Suzanne Brier, Carli Weimer, Jennifer McGeehan, Sarah Prince

Our poster is a sex ed proposal that focuses on the effects that identity, biology, social factors, psychology, and development have on sexual health in adolescents. Through the lens of these five topic areas, we will discuss concepts such as consent, peer pressure, puberty, gender roles, and contraception.

EFFECT OF RATINGS ON TRANS INDIVIDUALS AS FUNCTION OF UNDERDOG STATUS

Suzanne Brier

Transgender people remain victims of prejudice and discrimination. In the current exploratory study, we investigated whether or not portraying a trans person as an "underdog" (i.e. disadvantaged), as opposed to a "topdog" (i.e. advantaged), would influence evaluations of that individual and of transgender people more globally. Because people generally support and feel warmth towards underdogs, we reasoned that a transgender person perceived to be an underdog would elicit more positive evaluations. Participants read about a college student named Alex who came from a relatively underprivileged background or a relatively privileged background. We assessed participants' feelings of warmth, competence, perceptions of underdog status, and likeability. Participants later learned Alex was transgender; we assessed likeability relative to the first evaluation. We found mixed support for our predictions: Learning that Alex was an underdog elicited greater evaluations of warmth and likeability (not competence). After learning that Alex was transgender, likeability did not differ between underdog and topdog conditions. Within the underdog condition, evaluations of Alex as an underdog predicted greater global support for transgender rights but not for related social attitudes. In the topdog condition, evaluations of the transgender person did not predict global support for transgender rights. Underdog status can be used to indirectly benefit transgender individuals and the group as a whole. This research can inform reduction of stigma towards many social groups.

PAWCEPTION: INFLUENCE OF DOG BREED ON EXPECTED MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY JUDGMENTS FROM OTHERS

Thea Doolittle, Tongyao Su, Dr. Kenneth Michniewicz

Men and women experience social repercussions for violating gender role norms and people, though men in particular, feel uncomfortable when paired with something inconsistent with their own gender identity. Given that people make gender associations with different dog breeds we examined the evaluations from others as a result of being paired with either a masculine or feminine dog breed. Our results support our hypothesis; that when people, especially men, are paired with a dog consistent with their gender identity, they expected to be perceived as more gender typical than when paired with a dog inconsistent with their gender identity.

THE POPULARITY CONTEST OF TWITTER: HOW DECISIONS ON INTERACTING WITH TWEETS ARE MADE

Thomas Herr, Dr. Alexandra Frazer

Particularly in recent years, the impact of Twitter and other social media on public life has become clear. Decisions regarding what products to consume or who to vote for in an election are at least in part influenced by what kind of tweets a user sees on their Twitter timeline. Because of this influence, it is important to understand why certain Tweets are shared and disseminated across a wide audience while others are seen by only a few. In this study, several aspects of tweets including number of likes, retweets, and replies and political affiliation were controlled in order to see their role in the sharing of tweets. Early results indicate that the presence of likes & retweets leads to a higher chance that a tweet will be liked or shared by a user.

POLITICAL PERSUASION

Ilissa Kaufman, Christine Cimpian, Jane Mafale, and Bailey Roberts

Politicians rely on a multitude of tactics to persuade voters to vote for them. Their carefully calculated manipulation of words and sentence structures aid them in this persuasion. How something is said can increase the persuasive effects of a sentence (Schellekens, 2013). The current study seeks to explore the consequences of political persuasion on social media, through the techniques of syntax (word placement) and (positive and negative) framing. We hypothesize that participants will be more likely to agree with the tweets that are positively framed with the subject at the beginning of the sentence, regardless of their political affiliation.

EFFECTS OF ATTITUDES TOWARD CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Julia Cohen, Liza Castello, Hannah Cohen-Oppenheimer, Grace Lingenfelter

This study investigated the effects of attitudes toward capital punishment on decisions surrounding previous death penalty sentences. We wanted to look specifically at how support of capital punishment by Muhlenberg College students, affects the decision-making process when asked about previous court cases that included the death penalty in the resulting sentence. We use MouseTracking software to document and follow the active decision-making process that goes on in different individuals minds' that will eventually contribute to the ultimate decision of if the death penalty is warranted in certain situations, or cases.

PERFORMANCE AND PERCEPTION: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF VISUAL ATTENTION ON A WEBSITE

Kathryn Ambroze, Travis Edmond, Dr. Alexandra Frazer

The primary goal of the study is to examine how attention varies based upon presentation of different stimuli. Research has shown that visual stimuli in the magnocellular system, unlike the parvocellular system, will attract attention in an automatic manner. Emotional stimuli capture attention more so than static emotional stimuli. (Hahn, 2017). In the present study, multiple college websites will be paired with eye-tracking software. Using the data from eye movements (heat maps, fixation points, timestamps) of each participant as well as subjective survey responses, we will aim to answer the questions do visuals or images on a website (1) draw the attention of a user and (2) add to the overall positive/negative feelings of a website? Does imagery hinder the ability to complete a task?

MEMORY, EMOTION AND SAMOYED PUPPIES: AN EXAMINATION OF SKIPPABLE AND NON-SKIPPABLE MID-ROLL ONLINE VIDEO ADVERTISEMENTS

Charles Griffiths, Julianna Mindlin, Michael Bessette, Carly Tilson, Wenyan Feng

This study investigated the effects of skippable video advertisements (SVA). We looked to see if participants who watched a video with an SVA halfway through would have differences in frustration, recollection ability and positive feelings regarding the subject of the advertisement compared with participants who watched a video with a non-skippable advertisement (NSVA). We proposed that participants in the 30 second NSVA condition will be the most frustrated without having an option to skip the advertisement, that people will have the strongest memory of the 30 second NSVA followed by the 30 second SVA, followed by the 5 second NSVA and while the participants may remember the 30 second NSVA best, their frustration will lead to the least positive feelings towards that advertisement.

ART, MUSIC, AND WORK-RELATED STRESS

Allison Boda, Sydney Carey, Steven Smith Jr., Rebecca Bass, Ainsley Hilfiker

Stress is the feeling of being overwhelmed, worried or run-down (Baum 1990). There has been a significant amount of research done on work-related stress in hospice care and several participants reported art therapy had lessened their work-related stress (Huet, 2017). However, there's a gap in psychotherapy involving the effects of art and music therapy on stress in an academic setting. 41 Muhlenberg College students were put in one of four groups (music, art, art and music, and control). They were asked to fill out the Stress Rating Questionnaires, complete their relaxation task and engage in a stressful activity. (Edwards, Edwards, & Lyvers, 2015). The purpose of this study was to examine how therapy through arts can reduce a student's stress level before completing a stressful task.

WELCOMING REMARKS

11:15 a.m.

Seegers Union Event Space

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Rachel Plotke ('18)

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR

From Psych 101 to Senior Thesis, my journey through the field of psychology has been one filled with invaluable research, clinical, and classroom experiences. These three areas are all interconnected, and build upon one another in meaningful ways. I will explore my undergraduate experiences in these three domains and discuss how they have paved the road for my life beyond Muhlenberg.

Paper Session A

SU 111-112

12:00-12:15

MEMORY AND VIRTUAL REALITY

Melissa Miller

Virtual reality (VR) creates memories that mimic those made in real life. In my study, I used VR to study memory interference and retrieval disruptions. Past research has shown that memories made prior to or during exercise are stronger than those made in neutral conditions. There have been conflicting studies on the effects of meditation on memory. My study sought to test which condition would have the highest effect on memory by having participants watch a VR video and then complete a physical task, a meditation task or a control task, before being tested on their memories of the VR video. While no statically significant results were found, the data were approaching statistical significance that showed that participants who had VR experienced did better than those who had no experience.

12:20—12:35

THE IMPACT OF MINDFULNESS ON ADVERTISEMENT RECALL

Benjamin Starr, Mickey Schindler

We investigated the claim that mindfulness impacts an individual's ability to recall advertising messages (Langer, 1989; LaTour et al., 2017). We hypothesized that those high in mindfulness will recall more messages than those low in mindfulness. Participants completed an online pretest assessing innate mindfulness. They were then given either a control condition or a guided meditation, followed by a mindfulness posttest. Participants were then shown three commercials accompanied by Free Recall and Recognition tests. We found no significant relationship between mindfulness and recall. Interestingly, the control group reported higher Free Recall and Recognition than the experimental group. Future research should allow for more time between tests to better assess the intervention's efficacy.

12:40—12:55

MUSIC, MUSICIANSHIP, AND MEMORY

Charles Skoler, Caroline Rafizadeh, Annese Silva

Past research has shown that emotionally arousing music can boost memory. The influence of musical ability on this effect has not been explored, although musicians' cognitive abilities have been shown to differ from those of non-musicians. We explored both the influence of musical ability on music's memory-enhancing effect, and the dependence of this memory-enhancing effect on personal connection to the music, through a manipulation involving three conditions: a radio segment, a participant-selected song, and a song that we selected for high emotional arousal. We found a correlation between emotional arousal and recall on the memory task. Because music is so ubiquitous, these effects could have important implications for the everyday lives of musicians and non-musicians.

1:00—1:15

SELF-TO-STEREOTYPE MATCHING & MUSICAL PREFERENCE

Julia Beatley, Anthony Ware, Wilhelmina Minney

In popular culture, music is thought to play an integral role in one's expression of self. As one develops their sense of identity, their preference for musical genres change. Previous literature is indicative of the strong relationship between one's taste for music and their selfhood (Rentfrow, McDonald & Oldmeadow, 2009). For many, racial identity functions as a large part of one's perceptions of self and of others. We were interested in the implications of the self-fulfilling prophecy and self-to-stereotype matching on musical preference. We hypothesized that participants would express distinct, racialized, stereotypical ideologies regarding the fan-bases of specific genres of music. We predicted that Muhlenberg students would exemplify these biases in their responses to our survey.

1:20—1:35

ARE YOU WHAT YOU LISTEN TO? STEREOTYPES OF MUSIC PREFERENCES

Abby Hedrick, Yael Green, Thea Doolittle

People's musical taste may be influenced by how people identify with the stereotypes held by society toward fans of certain music genres. The purpose of our study is to further investigate this relationship between stereotypes and musical preference, by specifically focusing on stereotypes based on age and gender. We hypothesize that older people will prefer softer music such as classical and jazz/blues, while younger people will prefer more upbeat music like rap and pop. Additionally, we hypothesize that there will be a relationship between music preference and gender such that men will prefer more aggressive music whereas women are more likely to prefer more subtle music like pop. Lastly, we expect that age and gender will influence the stereotyping of others.

NOTES



WANT TO PRESENT YOUR RESEARCH OR INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE?

Fall 2018 Psychology Day is tentatively scheduled for December 2018. 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."