



Fall 2009

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Gray Matters

Psi Chi's Undergraduate Newsletter for Psychology Majors

Letter from Psi Chi's President: What Psi Chi Means to Me

Mirjana Ivanisevic

I joined the Psi Chi Psychology Honor Society when I was in my sophomore year. I am currently in my senior year and I can certainly say that my involvement with Psi Chi has opened up many opportunities for me in my undergraduate career. I served as the vice president of Psi Chi my junior year and I am currently serving as the president of Psi Chi.

The one thing that I truly value about my experience with this organization is the extensive knowledge I have obtained about what is required from an undergraduate student when applying to graduate school in psychology. Being a member and organizer for events that Psi Chi hosts has allowed me to not only learn about different opportunities, but also become a participant. I have had the opportunity to learn about The Georgia State Undergraduate Research Conference (GSURC), the Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference (PURC), Practicum Fair, GRE prep sessions, as well as information sessions about how to make CV's, write personal statements, and prepare for graduate school.

Furthermore, being a member of Psi Chi has taught me to take initiative and become involved. Being knowledgeable about the various events that I can participate in, I gained the confidence to work on a poster and present it at both PURC and GSURC. I attended the Practicum Fair, and later courageously drafted an e-mail to a few psychology professors expressing my interest to work in their laboratory. Being involved with Psi Chi has shaped my undergraduate experience by both making me a better researcher and a more confident student who is preparing to apply to graduate school next year.

As a current member of Psi Chi, I encourage everyone who is currently a Psychology major or minor to become a Psi Chi member. Being a member has helped me make my undergraduate experience memorable, learn more about the various career paths available and establish lasting friendships with my peers. I encourage you guys to get involved to develop and similarly benefit from the aforementioned competencies.



Volunteer and Practica Opportunities for Psychology Majors

Emily Andrews

Volunteering gives one the opportunity to directly effect positive change in the lives of individuals as well as in their communities. In addition to this, volunteering can have specific benefits for psychology majors. It can help to develop important interpersonal skills, identify a particular population or issue that you are interested in, and see how a non-profit organization or clinic is organized and managed. There are many local organizations which provide experiences relevant for psychology majors. Ten programs are highlighted below that represent a diverse range of opportunities.

Volunteer Opportunities

Making the Transition

This organization serves African American males ages 16-25. Through classes, workshops, discussion groups and study assistance, they provide helpful resources and support to successfully “make the transition” into adulthood.
www.makingthetransition.org

Partnership Against Domestic Violence

This organization provides shelter, a twenty-four hour crisis hotline as well as emotional and legal support for women and

children affected by domestic violence.
www.padv.org

Youth Art Connection

This program is affiliated with the Metro Atlanta Boys and Girls club; it offers workshops as well as a supportive environment for youth to explore their creativity.
www.youthartconnection.org.

Safehouse Outreach Mentoring Program

This organization is dedicated to serving those who have been labeled unreachable by society. The mentoring program connects volunteers with a child who has an incarcerated parent.
www.safehouseoutreach.org

Refugee Resettlement and Immigration Services of Atlanta (RRISA)

This organization works with recently immigrated refugee families to help them successfully adjust to life in the United States. There are separate programs to address the specific needs of adults and children.
www.rrisa.org

Practica Opportunities

Cool Girls, Inc.

This program seeks to increase self-esteem and achievement as well as promote overall positive development among girls from low income communities through mentoring, education and academic assistance.
www.thecoolgirls.org

Hillside Hospital

This community clinic, which offers a residential treatment program, treats children and adolescents who are severely emotionally disturbed.
www.hside.org

Georgia Center for Child Advocacy

This organization works with children who have suffered physical or sexual abuse.
www.georgiacenterforchildadvocacy.org

Women’s Resource Center

This organization is dedicated to the empowerment of women, particularly those who are survivors of rape and domestic violence.
www.wrcdv.org

Oxford House

This is a self-run recovery center that offers a supportive environment for those recovering from drug and alcohol abuse.
www.oxfordhousega.org

I encourage everyone to volunteer at least once during their undergraduate program. For those interested in learning more about becoming involved in an applied practicum through the psychology department, go to: <http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwpsy/3052.html>. Those interested in learning more about local volunteer opportunities can visit the Office of Civic Engagement located in room 320

in the Student Center
<http://www.gsu.edu/service/>



How to Prepare for Graduate School

Marinda E. Brown

Deciding to major in psychology is a big step. Some people are fortunate enough to have been exposed to psychology in high school, and decide to major in psychology starting during their freshman year. There are also people, like myself, who discovered their interest in psychology while pursuing other career goals. In this scenario, you may find yourself a few steps behind everyone else. Here are five tips to help get on track regardless of when you began to pursue psychology.

Tip 1: Find a mentor and get involved in research

It's important to find a good mentor to help guide you in the right direction. After you have a general idea of what interests you, contact professors and ask them questions about their research. If you are still interested after your discussions, you should inquire about volunteer opportunities in their labs. Volunteering in a lab allows you to obtain experience conducting research and allows you to develop a close relationship with a professor. Being involved in research also gives you an opportunity to present at undergraduate

conferences such as PURC or GSURC.

Tip 2: Attend group advisement sessions or take Careers in Psychology

Both group advisement sessions and Careers in Psychology (PSYC 2030) are great resources for learning more about the field. Some of the topics discussed include career options in psychology and preparation for employment or graduate school.

Tip 3: Look at graduate school applications and program websites

Many graduate school websites provide a list of suggested undergraduate courses. This can serve as a helpful guide when choosing what courses to take, because there are only a few classes that are required and you have a lot of freedom to choose the courses which make up the core of your undergraduate program.

Tip 4: Get involved in extracurricular activities

Getting involved in extracurricular activities is also very important. Some of the benefits include leadership experience, elite discounts, scholarships, fellowships, and awards. For example, the Ronald E. McNair Scholar Program offers a paid summer internship, GRE test preparation, graduate school fee waivers, and assistance with graduate school preparation. Psi Chi offers grants to support undergraduate research and has an undergraduate journal that publishes student research.

Tip 5: Write an honors thesis

Completing an honors thesis gives you a taste of what to expect in graduate school. It's an opportunity to explore a topic of your choice while utilizing the principles and methods of your discipline. First, you must find a faculty member to be your advisor. A thesis can either be a literature review, a meta-analysis, a conceptual model or original research, which could involve collecting your own data or working with data from a faculty member. The thesis is typically completed over two semesters, one for research and one for writing.



Writing a Curriculum Vitae

Emily Andrews

For those who are interested in graduate school, knowing how to properly write a Curriculum Vitae (CV) is critical. It is a very important component of the application, illustrating one's achievements and competencies. While many students know what a CV is, they are unfamiliar with the process of putting one together. In this article, I will highlight the basics of a CV's content and structure as well as some tips to make it stand out.

A CV details one's academic and research history as well as other relevant awards, recognitions and experiences. It is the document required when applying to academic institutions. Unlike a

resume, a CV is longer and more comprehensive and grows as one progresses in his or her academic career. The average length of a CV for an undergraduate applying to graduate school is around two to three pages, but it would be longer for an individual who has had some professional or research experience before applying to graduate school. A CV is divided up into sections which are chosen and arranged based on their importance and relevancy to the program or position being applied for (e.g., if applying to a clinical program, one would list research and clinical experience first). The sections relevant for an undergraduate applying to graduate school would typically include: Education, Awards, Fellowships, Honors, and Grants, Presentations, Research Experience, Research Interests, Related Work Experience, Community Outreach, References and possibly Publications and Languages. The final product should be clear, concise and contain no grammatical errors or typos.

I recently interviewed Dr. Kelly Lewis, who gave me some helpful information about what makes a CV stand out. Some of her suggestions include studying abroad, taking time off and making scholarly contributions to one's field of interest. Studying abroad shows that one has gained appreciation for other cultures and ways of life. Taking time off after earning one's bachelors degree can be beneficial, but only if this time was used to acquire skills and experiences relevant to

the program(s) to which one wishes to apply. Finally, some accomplishments which make a candidate stand out include publications, conference presentations and receiving research grants or scholarships. To help determine the current strength of your CV, Dr. Lewis recommends writing a draft. This will allow you to evaluate where there are gaps and what experiences could help make you a more qualified and well-rounded candidate for your chosen program. This is better done early in one's undergraduate program.

For those interested in learning more about how to write and strengthen a CV, Psi Chi will be hosting a CV workshop in November. An e-mail will be sent out to psychology majors as soon as a specific date and time is chosen.



Words of Wisdom from the Wise

Johnny Garretson

I am currently considering many graduate programs from around the country in order to pursue my career goal in psychology. While filling out my applications I have begun to wonder: what will give me the edge? What will get me noticed? Utilizing our wonderful resources available here at Georgia State, I asked our professors the following question: "What advise would you give to psychology majors at

GSU thinking about graduate school?" Their answers were very helpful:

David Washburn, Ph.D.

"Contact faculty whose research interests you and ask "Are you accepting students?" and "What are you looking for in a student?" Get involved in research to present (e.g., at PURC, GSURC, SEPA) or to submit for publication."

Andrea Weyermann, Ph.D.

"My advice to psychology majors at GSU thinking about graduate school is to be PROACTIVE EARLY. They should make appointments with their advisors, research schools on the web and talk to as many professors as they can about their interests. Also, the department now offers a Careers in Psychology course that can help students learn what they need to know in order to help them develop into a viable graduate school candidate."

Gwen Frishkoff, Ph.D.

"Two questions to ask yourself: 'What part of psychology research excites you the most?' (reading articles, designing experiments, collecting data, analyzing data, writing papers) 'What psychological questions are you most passionate about?'"

Frank Floyd, Ph.D.

"Find opportunities to participate in both research and clinical practica. You'll get valuable experience, a chance to see if you actually like this work, and connections with faculty and

Internships

Emily Shaver



Completing an internship is a great way get first-hand experience in your field of interest. It is an opportunity to build rapport with future potential employers and to determine whether or not you are interested in pursuing a particular field, such as counseling, human resources or social work. In this article, I will share my experiences as an intern.

I am currently completing an internship with the Atlanta Intervention Network (AIN), a counseling center which offers drug and domestic violence education classes. The attendees of the classes have been court-mandated to participate for a specific amount of time. My main duty is to work with the counselors and help them to answer probationers' questions. I have found much of what I have learned in my psychology classes to be very relevant to my duties at AIN. For example, the program is based on an existentialist perspective, which I learned about in my Theories of Personality course. This is a philosophical school of thought which stresses the individual's position as a self-determining agent, responsible for his or her own choices. During my time at AIN, I have obtained a tremendous amount of experience in the field of counseling psychology. For others interested in becoming involved in an internship, I would suggest: establishing a relationship with individuals in your field of interest, attending career fairs and searching for opportunities online.

I highly recommend completing an internship as an undergraduate. To find out more about internship opportunities, visit the University Career Services office located in room 260 University Center. Another resource is Panther Career Net, found on the university's main webpage, which provides more information about career opportunities in a variety of fields.

to make yourself more competitive. 2) Find a way to make your research experience show up on your resume/CV - a poster presentation or honors thesis 3) Take a practice GRE early to give yourself time to take a preparation course/study if needed. 4) If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Use the year to better prepare yourself (e.g., a full time post-bac research position, a master's program, an academic preparation program)"

Dominic Parrott, Ph.D.

"Meet with a psychology faculty member at least 18 months before you plan to apply so that you can select research experiences that will maximize your likelihood of admission."

Sherry Broadwell, Ph.D.

"1) Start planning early! Don't wait until you are a junior! 2) Make the effort to get to know your professors [they are an invaluable resource and you're going to need letters]. 3) Utilize departmental resources; the graduate student advisers, for example, are very helpful. 4) Take challenging classes and apply yourself. 5) Apply for practica if you are eligible [work hard to be eligible!] 6) Seek out opportunities to assist in labs. 7) Engage in volunteer work that you find meaningful. 8) Don't attempt to work full time and take a full load of classes. Allow yourself the time and flexibility to do well in your classes, even if it takes you a little longer to graduate."

supervisors who can write recommendation letters for you."

Diana Robbins, Ph.D.

"LOTS of research experience. Best would be several semesters with the same mentor, working on the same or related studies, culminating in a conference presentation and/or manuscript to a journal. Other advice: be proactive. faculty can write strong letters of recommendation when they know a student very

well, especially through work in a research lab. "

Marika Lamoreaux, Ph.D.

"Get research or internship experience! It shows you are invested in the discipline, and that you know what you're getting yourself in to."

Page Anderson, Ph.D.

"My 2 cents for Ph.D. programs: 1) Get involved in research to find out whether you like it and

Sarah Brosnan, Ph.D.

“I tell students considering graduate school that the most important thing they can do is get research experience as an undergraduate. We have a number of mechanisms which all students can take advantage of to facilitate this, including practicum, doing an honors thesis, and presenting at PURC or GSURC.”

Scott Weaver, Ph.D.

“Get to know faculty and help them get to know you through high quality work, meaningful participation in class, and becoming involved in their research laboratory.”

Rachelle Cohen, Ph.D.

“You will need to have letters of recommendation from people who know the student well. Instructors in classes are adequate, but not ideal, as references. Better recommendations come from people who have seen a student in action (like practicum supervisors).”

I recommend all people who are considering applying to a Ph.D. program have at least 2 semesters of research practicum under the belts (they can get a letter of recommendation from their faculty supervisor). Students should be very professional and dependable in practicum and/or volunteering positions. Supervisors are compelled to be honest in their letters. If a student is not dependable or professional, they are unlikely to obtain a good letter of recommendation.

A good place to start in terms of researching this is a book called Graduate Study in Psychology. It comes out every year and has information from most programs on their GPA and GRE requirements, number of students who receive funding, typical number of students accepted each year, etc.”

Tracie Stewart, Ph.D.

“I would advise getting involved in research as soon as possible -- ideally in more than one research lab. Grades and GRE scores are also important, of course. But a recommendation from a faculty member who can attest to your strong contributions to their research lab is invaluable.”

Kim Darnell, Ph.D.

“Going to graduate school is not a substitute for having an actual career plan.

Do your homework at University Career Services and find out what graduate degree, if any, is necessary for the career you want to pursue.

Don't assume that a Ph.D. is your only option (or even the best option) for a graduate degree in psychology. For some careers, a Master's degree or a Psy.D. are more than sufficient.”

After reading all of these helpful suggestions, I felt much more confident completing my applications. I also realized that graduate school is not right for everyone, nor is it required for success. I suggest that you take the advice of our professors, get involved, and take your future

seriously. You will thank yourself later if you prepare yourself now.



Introducing the New Stats-Methods Courses: 3510 and 3530

Analia Romina Stormo

In an attempt to better serve its students, the psychology department has decided to fuse the former statistics (Psyc 3010) and research methods (Psyc 3030) classes into one new sequence of courses that combine the teaching of both methods and statistics: Introduction to Research Design and Analysis (Psyc 3510) and Advanced Research Design and Analysis (Psyc 3530). Beginning this Fall, the former statistics course is being discontinued and replaced by Introduction to Research design and analysis while Advanced research Design and Analysis will begin to be offered in Spring 2010.

I recently met with one of students' favorite psychology professors, Dr. Kim Darnell, who provided me with great information regarding these new courses.

Romina: First of all, why did the psychology department decide to combine statistics and methods?

Dr. Darnell: One of the main driving forces behind fusing the classes together was to teach the

statistics in the context of the specific research method in which it would be used. In the past, with the separate methods and stats class, the main issue was that students got to 3030 and did not remember anything about stats! Students were re-learning statistics during research methods and during stats we had to provide students with some knowledge of research methodology so that they could understand statistical analysis and concepts. Another reason for the change was to make a more transparent connection between the methods that we use and the kind of statistics to analyze the data that those methods generate.

Romina: What is the format of Introduction to research design and analysis?

Dr. Darnell: We introduce statistical analysis once students have learned about the specific methodology in which those statistical measures are used. For the most part, the first four weeks of the class are focused on research methods, mainly getting used to the terminology of research that students need to be comfortable with. Then, we start talking about different descriptive methodology such as behavioral observation, content analysis, and so on. Once students have learned about descriptive methodology, we move on to talk about the kind of statistics that are used with it. When we discuss the basics of experimental designs, we talk about the kind of analysis that goes with experiments, although 3510 focuses mostly on descriptive studies.

Romina: So, is most of the material related to experimental design and statistical analysis related to experiments taught in 3530?

Dr. Darnell: Yes. For about the first half of semester on 3530 we talk about analysis related to experiments and the rest of the semester the students work on their research project, which involves preparing a complete IRB proposal according to the guidelines to work with human subjects at GSU, just like every faculty member or grad student does.

Romina: What are the advantages of this new research project compared to the former APA paper students had to complete for 3030?

Dr. Darnell: After passing the class, students will be ready to think about research methods in a more sophisticated way and they will be much more familiar with the research process. To write an IRB proposal, students will have to gather some pilot data to see if there is a pattern of results that is consistent with what they are expecting to find, put together an informed consent form, and unlike the previous APA research paper required by 3030, this class will involve a more elaborate literature review of their topic of interest. Overall, this class allows students to think about research on a bigger scale. For example, if a student working at a lab is interested in a topic, they could choose that topic to complete the research proposal requirement for this class. Also, they could potentially submit their proposal

to the IRB in order to run their study and write a research paper about it. Another advantage for those interested in writing a senior thesis is that they could use this class to prepare the IRB proposal for their thesis project.

Romina: Are there any major differences between 3510 and 3530 that you would like to mention?

Dr. Darnell: Yes, there are some major differences: 3510 course has 75 student slots and 3530 has only 25 slots. Now, 3530 is also a critical thinking through writing course (CTW). And as of this Fall, all majors at GSU have to take two Critical thinking through writing courses in their major. So, all psychology majors will meet part of that requirement by taking 3530. Another difference is that 3530, in which students write their IRB proposal, requires students to come to lab every week while the lab component of 3510 is fulfilled through online activities. For every chapter of the book on 3510, students have to complete online interactive workshops and quizzes. One of the goals for 3510 was to maximize the use of technology in order to give students more flexibility in completing the requirements of the course and encourage a more independent learning experience of the material.

Romina: What about examinations, are they also taken online?

Dr. Darnell: In 3510, all of the examinations are done online, which are based on multiple-choice and fill in the blank

questions. Students schedule their examinations through SONA system, from which they may choose a day and time to take a test. Since students will be taking test at different times, each student takes a slightly different test. As for the advanced class, there may be more short answer and essay questions. Let me also add that students should take examinations very seriously, because, as of this fall, students only have two chances to complete 3510 or 3530. If they don't pass the class with a C or better, they can re-take each class only once. So if they're not able to pass each class in two tries, they will not be allowed to sign up for the class again. And since 3510 and 3530 classes are required for the psychology major, any students who cannot pass 3510 or 3530 will have to change their major to a different field other than psychology.

Romina: Any advice for students that are planning on taking these classes, other than studying hard for these classes if they want to be psychology majors?

Dr. Darnell: We recommend that students take the classes in a sequence. Optimally, we would like students to take 3510 in the spring of their sophomore year and 3530 in the fall of their junior year. That may seem early, but it is also the case that some of the 4000 level classes which did not have statistics or methods as a prerequisite, will soon have 3510, and possibly 3530, as prerequisites. Also, students who are thinking about grad school

should take 3510 and 3530 earlier rather than later because then they may have a better chance of getting into a lab and use that knowledge.



Subfields of Psychology Represented at Georgia State

Community Psychology

Emily Andrews

The field of community psychology emerged in the 1960's due to a frustration with clinical psychology's limited focus on individual pathology. Community psychology is characterized by an emphasis on prevention over treatment and an ecological perspective. Individuals and groups are always considered in their social, political, historical and cultural context. Great respect for individuals from diverse groups as well as for human potential are also important components of community psychology. Research in the field is often applied and involves developing interventions aimed at empowering individuals and communities, and ultimately, effecting social change.

Counseling Psychology

Analia Romina Stormo

Counseling psychology is an applied field of psychology offered by departments of education or psychology. As does

clinical psychology, counseling psychology deals with the etiology, diagnosis, and treatment of mental illness but it tends to place more emphasis on helping normally functioning populations cope with "problems of living" such as marital or vocational issues. In addition, counseling psychology pays special attention to the social context in which individuals interact in order to assess issues related to their mental health. Common research topics in the field include gender and diversity issues with an emphasis on multiculturalism.

Clinical Psychology

Analia Romina Stormo

Clinical psychology is the most popular and largest field within psychology. These psychologists usually deal with the etiology, diagnosis, and treatment of various psychological disorders such as depression or phobias in both research and applied settings. Most Ph.D programs in clinical psychology are based on a scientific-practitioner model, which provide students with the skills necessary to become researchers and clinical practitioners. For those who are mostly interested in clinical practice, a Psy.D. (doctor of psychology) degree, which emphasizes clinical training over research, may be a better fit to their needs.



Social Psychology

Glenna Read

Social psychology is the scientific study of how people influence and are influenced by others. Social psychologists study a wide range of topics including discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping, violence and aggression, pro-social behavior, interpersonal relationships, group behavior, persuasion, and diversity. Social Psychology is different from Sociology in that social psychologists focus on the individual rather than the group. For more information on social psychology visit the Social Psychology Network at <http://socialpsychology.org/social.htm>.

Behavioral Neuroscience and Neuropsychology

Johnny Garretson

The Behavioral Neuroscience and Neuropsychology programs here at GSU offer many different and interesting concentrations of study. Georgia State's graduate programs are nationally ranked, and specialize in the behavioral neurosciences, developmental neuropsychology, and experimental neuroscience. Researchers at Georgia State are seeking to discover more about the neural basis of behavior, dynamic systems, neurotherapeutics, and the properties of neural circuits. Through the use of advanced research methodologies, our

graduate students and faculty remain on the cutting edge of neuroscience research. A recent approval for the creation of a neuroscience specific Ph.D. program has opened up opportunities for this research institution to expand and become more attuned to the global trend of science. By continually making advancements in the field, collaboration of Georgia State's well-published neuroscience faculty, and discovering new possibilities in the world of science, our researchers exhibit their passion to learn the mysteries of the brain while projecting GSU's neuroscience program to a excel on a global scale.

Developmental Psychology

Renee Burgess

Training in developmental psychology has a long standing history at Georgia State University. The developmental psychology program here at Georgia State was established in fall 1998. The research conducted in the developmental labs focuses on both normative development as well as aspects of atypical development. Some of the areas of particular interest to the core faculty include typical and atypical development of communication and language and incorporates genetic, neuropsychological, perceptual, cognitive, communicative, methodological, and social context concerns. Faculty also focus research on the academic performance and achievement of

elementary and secondary school age children.

For those interested in learning more information about the graduate programs at Georgia State, visit http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwpsy/graduate_programs.html.



How to Apply for Graduation

Renee Burgess

Senior year is here and graduation is just around the corner. Many students are unaware of all the steps involved in applying for graduation. In this article, I will explain the process as well as highlight important deadlines.

1. Apply and Pay the Graduation Fee

All students who are planning on graduating must file a formal application for graduation with the Graduation Office located in 231 Sparks Hall. Students applying for a bachelor's degree should apply in the semester in which they expect to attain their 90th semester hour or two semesters before the expected graduation date, whichever comes first. The deadline for those graduating in the spring of 2010 has already passed. The deadline for graduating in the summer of 2010 is January 10th, 2010. If you realize that you have missed a deadline, contact the

Graduation Office as soon as possible as there is a chance that your application will still be accepted. Every student applying for graduation must fill out an Application for Graduation, which can be found online or in the Graduation office, as well as pay a graduation fee of \$50. Payment Acceptable forms of payment include cash, checks, or money orders. No credit or debit cards are accepted.

2. Academic Audit

The Graduation Office will inform the student's specific college when the application is filed. The Graduation Office will not look at an application for graduation or complete an academic audit until the semester that the applicant graduates. It is very important to visit the appropriate Office of Academic Assistance; they will conduct an audit to ensure that graduation requirements are met.

3. Important Dates and Deadlines

All special test scores (Regents, CLEP, Advanced Placement and Legislative exams), transcripts from other institutions and grade adjustments for previous terms (I and IP grades), must be on file in the Office of Registration and Academic Records by specified dates for each semester, for graduation in fall of 2009 the deadline 5:00 p.m. on November 24, 2009. Students who know they will not graduate in the semester for which they applied should contact the Graduation Office. Students may either

e-mail the Graduation Office at graduation@langate.gsu.edu or complete the Change of Graduation Date form and return it to 231 Sparks Hall. If the e-mail option is selected, please note that this method is only valid if the student receives an e-mail confirmation from the Graduation Office.



Learn About and Become Involved in Diversity Related Issues at GSU

Claire Lisco

Georgia State's incredibly diverse student body is one of its strongest attributes. There are many organizations on campus which promote diversity and provide diversity education. In this article, I will highlight how some of these organizations, including the psychology department's diversity committee, promote and conceptualize diversity.

Psychology Department Diversity Committee:

The goals of the diversity committee are to promote educational and professional development, excellence in scholarship, social analysis and ethics, organization development, equal access and opportunity. The committee defines diversity in two ways, the first being the support of and advancement of oppressed or underrepresented members in society and the second being diversity of thought

and worldview, which is an important component of a learning environment.

Some of the opportunities for undergraduate students last semester included the **semester meeting** showcasing the different research opportunities with professors studying diversity related topics and a talk by **Dr. Beverly Tatum** (president of Spelman College), author of "Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together In the Cafeteria". Also, there is a diversity award at the **Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference (PURC)**, given to the student with the most inspiring diversity related research. Finally, the psychology department's website shows funding opportunities for those from diverse backgrounds and/or those interested in diversity issues. If you have any questions regarding the diversity committee, please feel free to contact me, the undergraduate representative, and I will try to answer any questions or direct them to the committee chair (clisco2@student.gsu.edu).

Safe Zone:

Become an ally for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Questioning students both on and off campus. The goal of this group is to help promote awareness and acceptance of these members in society and to provide a safe environment for the discussion of topics related to sexual identity.

http://www.gsu.edu/safezone/mis-sion_statement.html

Intercultural Relations Dialogue Groups- “Evolving Experiences: A Dialogue Series”:

This group allows for the discussion of different cultural topics and requires a five week commitment. It is facilitated in order to remain fair and aims at the development of new relationships as well as an awareness of the topics being discussed.

<http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwicr/evolvingExperiences.htm>

Intercultural Ambassador Peer Education Workshops:

Intercultural Ambassador Peer Educators are trained to supervise difficult dialogue for other students. These workshops may be requested two weeks in advance by Georgia State students and include topics such as stereotyping, privilege, triggers for anxiety and sexual and gender identity. See the website below for specifics on the risk level or difficulty of discussion topics.

<http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwicr/peerEducator.htm>

Some Psychology courses which cover diversity-related topics:

1. Multicultural Issues in Psychology
2. Cross Cultural Psychology
3. Intro to African American Psychology
4. Psychology of Women
5. Social Psychology



New Neuroscience Major at Georgia State

Johnny Garretson

There have been many relatively recent advances in how neuroscientists study behavior and we have thus gained a better understanding of “why we do what we do”. Due to the growing interest in this exciting field of study, a committee of faculty is currently organizing a curriculum for an undergraduate Neuroscience program estimated to be available here at GSU in the fall of 2011.

The proposed Neuroscience undergraduate program will feature many new and interesting courses related to the study of the brain and behavior, including the Principles of Neuroscience and The Scientific Method in practice. New electives about electrophysiology, plasticity, neuroendocrinology will also be offered; although, this aspect of the major is still in its infancy. Core faculty members in the Neuroscience Institute will instruct the required courses of the new major, and electives will be taught by visiting lecturers and associate professors. The committee is currently is trying to gauge the amount of undergraduate interest in the new major in order to highlight the need for this program at GSU.

Undergraduates may be asked to participate in the later stages of the planning process.

A graduate level neuroscience program has recently been developed and select graduate students will soon make the transition to their desired Neuroscience Ph.D. program. This new addition will create a need for undergraduate research assistants. Students interested in neuroscience should contact and network with researchers here at Georgia State. Becoming involved in graduate student research is the very best way to prepare for graduate school; moreover, conducting research in your field of interest will benefit you in your search for the right school and program.

Students who have research experience as undergraduates are far more likely to be accepted into graduate school when compared to students without any experience in the field. The neuroscientist who I have spoken with suggests that in order to discover your career in neuroscience, you have to get involved in the field early. This means: be prepared, get involved with research, and keep an eye out for the neuroscience undergraduate major coming soon to GSU.

and we have thus gained a better understanding of “why we do what we do”. Due to the growing interest in this exciting field of study, a committee of faculty is currently organizing a curriculum for an undergraduate

Neuroscience program estimated to be available here at GSU in the fall of 2011.



PSYC 4800 - Seminar in Psychology - Neurobiology of Music

Chris Goode

Have you listened to music yet today? If not, you probably will before the day is over. We spend close to 20 billion dollars per year worldwide on music alone. This figure doesn't take into account music for film, television, radio, games, or commercials, or hardware like stereo systems for our homes, cars, pockets, refrigerators, beds and even showers. Today you can buy sunglasses, pens, and even toothbrushes that play mp3 music files! Why is music such an integral part of almost everyone's life? This is one of the questions we are trying to answer this semester in a new seminar called Neurobiology of Music.

The course is one of a new series of critical thinking through writing (CTW) seminars offered through the Department of Psychology. Each of these seminars is designed as a capstone experience for senior students. New students entering Georgia State University this year (including transfer students) will be required to take at least two CTW courses from their major department. Another new

course, Advanced Research Design & Analysis (PSYC3530), is also a CTW course and it will be offered beginning next semester (PSYC3510 is a prerequisite). Additional seminar courses will be offered beginning in Spring and Fall, 2010, each dealing with a special topic in psychology.

The Neurobiology of Music seminar gives students the opportunity to explore our current understanding of the neural mechanisms underlying the experience and enjoyment of listening to and producing music. We started this semester with a detailed introduction to the auditory system from the ear to the brainstem to the auditory cortex, and discussed how musical stimuli are handled by a system that has evolved to process many other important sounds, such as language.

We have discussed some basic music theory and listened to examples of consonant and dissonant intervals, major and minor modes, melodic contours, the timbre of different sounds, etc. Each of these musical concepts has some physiological representation in the central nervous system. We continue to explore these neurobiological mechanisms in detail.

While many of the assignments are written, this course (and CTW courses in general) are not writing intensive per se. Rather, we emphasize a critical analysis of primary literature as well as the popular press, through class discussion as well as writing. At

the beginning of the semester I asked the class to read Daniel Levitin's *This Is Your Brain on Music*. This book has become very popular and it offers an excellent and accessible introduction to both music theory and the main neuroscience of music topics that are currently being researched.

As a musician and a neuroscientist, this course gives me an opportunity to combine two important areas of my life, and to help students apply neuroscience concepts to some very interesting questions: How did the ability to enjoy and create music arise? Does it represent some kind of evolutionary adaptation or does it merely take advantage of a system designed for processing non-musical stimuli (e.g. language)? Does listening to music convey any particular benefit to the listener (e.g. the "Mozart" effect)? Why (and how) can music give us such intense, emotional experiences? How does the auditory system convert musical stimuli into neural signals that we experience as music? Can listening to or performing music change your brain permanently? We're having a wonderful time trying to answer these and other questions about music and the brain. I hope to offer this course again in Fall 2010.



Study Abroad Opportunities for Psychology Majors

There are some very exciting study abroad opportunities for psychology majors this year. The programs cover a range of different topics, from skin bleaching to terrorism to human rights, and span over three continents. Gray Matters has invited the program directors to share more information about their programs.

The Psychology of Skin Bleaching in Tanzania

The program will take place during May term 2010 and will feature exciting week-long stays in Dar es Salaam and Bagamoyo, Arusha and Zanzibar with short day trips to surrounding areas. Students will have the opportunity to participate in experiential learning within a variety of community contexts including: (1) visits to numerous historical sites, monuments and museums (e.g., slave market, slave caravan, colonial buildings); (2) visits to contemporary sites that sell and market skin bleaching creams and treat skin bleaching conditions; (3) discussions and lectures with experts on skin bleaching products and practices and its linkages to East African history and psychology; (4) safaris in some of the most popular game drives in Africa and visits to some of the most pristine beaches in the world; and (5) after-hours enjoyment in local restaurants and entertainment

venues. Experiential learning, lectures, and discussion will focus on Tanzania's transition from slavery to colonization to skin bleaching, with classes taught by faculty from Georgia State University and University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) and/or the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS).

The course is open to students (at Georgia State or other universities) over the age of 18 with a serious interest in Africa. Students must be in good standing with Georgia State or their home institution at the time of the trip in order to participate and receive credit. All participants must attend a one-day orientation session before the trip. Students from other universities are encouraged to apply. Participants who successfully complete the courses will receive 3 semester hours of credit through Georgia State University. Undergraduates should register for PSYC4030 (Cross Cultural Psychology) and graduate students should register for PSYC6030 (Cross Cultural Psychology). Students from other schools should follow their institution's regulations concerning transfer credits. All accommodations will be guest houses or hotels in double or triple rooms.

For more information contact: **Kelly M. Lewis, Ph.D.**, Georgia State University, Psychology Department, phone: 404/413-6210; e-mail: *klewis28@gsu.edu*.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: January 29, 2010 Because program size is limited, early application is strongly advised. Individual interviews may be scheduled with students upon receipt of application.

Psychological Causes and Consequences of Terrorism

You will have the unique opportunity to learn about the causes and consequences of terrorism, in a place where terrorism's legacy is still highly visible and relevant, yet where you are not in any danger from that legacy (indeed, there is less per capita violence in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry than in Atlanta). There is a long history of sectarian violence between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, dating from 1608 when British settlers supplanted native Irish families in Northern Ireland, carrying through Ireland's civil war over Northern Ireland, and culminating in a period known as "The Troubles." The Troubles started in the 1960s and were characterized by terrorist acts by both Protestants and Catholics, including regular attacks and counter-attacks, riots, and killings. The Troubles were finally concluded with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, creating a formal cease fire. Although it has been over a decade, the legacy of terrorism is still quite salient.

Living in Ireland you will be exposed to people and places that

still bear the scars of terrorism and regular news stories about the practical reality of creating a lasting peace. We will be departing from Atlanta on June 14th and will spend roughly a week in Northern Ireland visiting places of historical importance. We will then go to Dublin, where we will live for three weeks. You will take classes and volunteer in Irish community service organizations where you will have the opportunity to learn about what Irish life is really like, rather than having a shallow tourist-only experience. While in Dublin we will visit places relevant to the build-up to Ireland's civil war and get a more in depth contextual understanding of

The Troubles and its legacy. Students will earn 6 credits: 3 credits for the social psychological causes and consequences of terrorism and 3 credits for developmental perspectives on terrorism.

For more information contact:
Marika Lamoreaux
(mlamoreaux@gsu.edu; 404-413-6295) or **Elizabeth Sheehan**
(esheehan@gsu.edu; 404-413-6267).

APPLICATION DEADLINE:
February 1st, 2010.



Human Rights in Argentina: From Dictatorship to Democracy

Human Rights in Argentina is an exciting 2½ week examination of Argentina's transition from dictatorship to democracy. The program is conducted in English with no knowledge of Spanish required.

Students will visit Cordoba (Argentina's second largest city) and Buenos Aires. Activities will include lectures taught by professors from the National University of Cordoba in departments such as history, political science, and psychology. Lectures will also be presented by human rights activists. Field trips relevant to the program, tourist sights (e.g., Che Guevara's house and museum), and visits to human rights organizations will also be a major component of the program.

For more information, contact:
Gabriel Kuperminc, Ph.D.,
Psychology Department,
phone: 404/413-6281;
e-mail: gkuperminc@gsu.edu.

APPLICATION DEADLINE:
February 5, 2010.

*For information on Psi Chi
and how to join visit*
<http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwpsy/3055.html>

*To access previous editions
of Gray Matters visit*
<http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwpsy/y/2648.html>



Psi Chi Events for Fall Semester 2009

Glenna Read

Psi Chi hosts many events during each semester, most of which are open to any psychology student. Attending these events is a great way to get involved with Psi Chi and learn about how to make the most of your membership.

This semester Psi Chi hosted and participated in several events including:

Major Matters on September 9th from 11:30 to 1:00 is an event designed to help students choose their major and become involved with extracurricular groups related to their major.

The **Practicum Fair** (an annual event, this year held on October 13th) is a way for psychology students to become acquainted with various applied and research practica offered by Georgia State University.

The **Poster Making Session** on October 19th provided valuable information regarding how to create a research poster for a conference like PURC or GSURC.

Attending the **Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference**, or PURC, held on October 30th from 9:30 to 1:00, is a great way to become familiar with the research going on right here at Georgia State.

The **Psi Chi Induction**, held on November 4th from 5:00-6:30, features speaker, Dr. Robins. The Induction Ceremony also functions as the general Psi Chi meeting and members are able to sign up to get involved in events during this time.

The **Psi Chi Social** on November 10th from 4:30-5:30 (UL 1199) allows Psi Chi members to meet and mingle. Come learn about Study Abroad opportunities with psychology faculty during a brief information session at the start of this program.

Psi Chi members will receive emails about upcoming events, so remember to check your email in order to take advantage of these great opportunities

NOTE: Prospective members: The deadline for turning in applications for Spring Induction is Monday, March 1, 2010.

