Issue 1, March 2011



Psychology news, upcoming events, history of psych, faculty interviews & relationship tips

send comments to psa.editor@psych.ubc.ca or visit www2.psych.ubc.ca/~psa/



Psyched!

Welcome to UBC's first ever Psychology newsletter!

Sponsored by the Psychology Student Association, this newsletter aims to keep students and faculty alike in the know about one of UBC's most diverse and populated departments.

We hope to provide insight about opportunities for student involvement and career possibilities after graduation, information about the new and exciting research being explored and reveal the many subfields and career trajectories available within the field.

Not to mention, we hope to provide a platform for staff and students to speak to their interests, contribute articles to the newsletter and express their opinions on a monthly basis.

Read on to find out more!

"Education is not just the filling of a pail; it is the lighting of a fire."

Skinner (1904-1990), American psychologist

A Letter from the Editor: On New Beginnings



Ashley Whillans

I am a 3rd-year Honours student interested in happiness and health. I am currently working with Dr. Elizabeth Dunn studying well-being and happiness in older adults.

We here at *Psyched!*, the Psychology Student Association (PSA) Newsletter, have dedicated our first issue to the theme of New Beginnings. Not only because we are hoping to start a newsletter that sticks around, but also because we believe that psychology mirrors humanity: it is constantly changing, growing and expanding alongside society; for better and for worse.

In fact, psychology is growing at a rapid pace. You probably have realized the scope of the research done in psychology while attempting to write a review paper. When your search terms result in 100,000 hits, you know you have a long night ahead of you.

According to the American Psychological Association, in 2010 over 200,000 journal entries were added to Psychinfo. While it took until 1998 to produce the first 1 million entries, Psychinfo currently boasts over 3 million abstracts.

With so much in publication, it seems as if psychology undergoes a new beginning on a regular basis. Additionally, with so much movement and change in the field of psychology, and in our favourite subject matter, namely, people, it is not enough to be up to date as psychology students: we need to be cutting edge.

Thus, *Psyched!* aims to help UBC students stay informed about the latest research and upcoming educational events, sponsored by UBC organizations such as the PSA.

Publishing primarily online, our mission is to give psychology students at UBC a place to voice their opinions, to pose their questions and to discuss important psychological topics.

As for new beginnings? Upon reading this first issue, I challenge every psychology student and faculty member to reflect upon the new beginnings they wish to incite, as professional mental health practitioners and academic researchers of the present and the future.

UBC—look out for *Psyched!* in your inboxes in late April for the Grad School and Academic Issue. Until then, happy beginnings! Ψ

Ashley Whillans *Psyched!* Founding Editor The Psychology Student Association of UBC

Contributors

Jeff Chua

I am a 2nd year psychology student hoping to major in Cognitive Systems. I really want to explore the

research and opportunities at UBC that are related to the brain, behaviour and cognitive science.

Urooba Jamal

I'm a 1st year student at UBC contemplating pursuing a career in journalism. Currently enrolled

Originally from Montreal, I am still relatively new to Vancouver, but have found a big place for it in my heart.

Lauren Slattery

My current interests in Psychology vary! I am interested in exploring addiction and certain DSM-

IV diagnoses from a neurological and evolutionary perspective. I am also fostering an interest in applied psychology. I am a West Coaster at heart; I love to hike, bike, trail run, sail, ski, and play soccer!

Kino Zhao

I'm a 3rd year psychology and philosophy double major. I am interested in Clinical Psychology as well as Psychology of Religion

(or anything about religion). I'm also a travelholic who loves reading and all the nerdy stuff.





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in Psych 100, psychology has already piqued my interest! I'm a self-proclaimed maximalist, a vintage-clothes lover, a book worm, a wannabe social media aficionado, and a bad conversationalist.

Ariella Nudell aka Dr. Love

I am a 3rd year Psychology major, interested in sexuality and relationships.





PsΨch Stimuli

Check out our upcoming PSA events!

New PSA Office Hours: Kenny Rm. 2007

Monday 10am–4pm Tuesday 10am–3pm Wednesday 10am–4pm Thursday 10am–4pm

Want to Contribute?

The PSA Newsletter is looking for graphic designers, photographers and writers. Contribute to this brand-new, once a month Psychology Student Association newsletter and help make UBC psychology history.

Email Ashley Whillans at psa.editor@ psych.ubc.ca for more information.

Upcoming PSA Events in March

GRE Prep Night Jeopardy-style

Tuesday, March 16 4-6pm Irving K. Barber Room 155

Whether you are already preparing for the GRE or are thinking about taking it, this is where you want to be in March. We'll be hosting this night jeopardy-style with questions that will give you practice and exposure to the types/topics that you will encounter on the exam, as well as providing useful information and tips on the best ways to make those hours spent studying the most beneficial. Great prizes, great people, great food!

Wine and Cheese with Profs

Tentative Date: Thursday, March 24

A mix and mingle with various professors in the Psychology Faculty, this is an opportunity to get to know some of your own professors as well as those whose classes you've never taken before in a relaxed environment outside of the classroom. This is a fun and casual night, and another chance to get to gather information on what kind of research is being done.

Other UBC events

Department Happenings

Open to undergraduate, graduate students and profs!

Jim Blascovich, UC Santa Barbara Thursday, March 10, 12:30pm

UBC Pain Lab Open House Celebrate UBC Research Week

Come see what the Pain Lab is all about. Monday, March 7, 10am, Kenny Room 1604. For more information about research week go to *celebrateresearch.ubc*. *ca/about/*

Canadian Network for International Surgery Presents *Jungle Fever*

CNIS student volunteers at UBC help African medical students learn Essential Surgical Skills with *Jungle Fever* fundraiser. Ubiquitous Rhythm will perform live and DJ Plaise will keep up the beat. This event is sponsored by Genesis Security and Red Bull. We will be giving away FREE RED BULL! More info about the event can be found at *cnis.ca/2011/01/ubc-studentevent-safer-africa*.

Friday, March 11, 8pm–1am, Abdul Ladha Centre

Advising

BA Undergraduate Advising

Drop-in advising available Tuesdays and Fridays 10am–12pm and 2–4pm in Kenny Room 2502.

Advising Appointments can be pre-booked for Wed. or Thurs by calling the Psychology Reception 822-2755. Contact us at ugadvisor@psych.ubc.ca

BSC Undergraduate Advising

Kiran Soma 604-827-5820, Kenny 3505 Boris Gorzalka 604-822-3095, Kenny 3511

Conference on Counter-intuition

Interested in doing good for society? Have you taken a chance to think critically about what that really entails? As a delegate at "ISSA Presents: Counter-intuition" you will have the opportunity to listen to renowned speakers on controversial topics such as Drug Policy, Public Health, and Humanitarian Work.

Wednesday, March 2nd, 5:30–10:00pm, IKE Room 261

\$5 admission includes dinner! Register at *issa.rezgo.com*.

Miles for Mental Health Project

The Canadian Mental Health Association– Simon Fraser Branch will host BC's only run & walk for mental health in Queen's Park, New Westminster. Run 5km or walk 2.5km to show your support for the cause. Each participant will be helping reduce stigma and raise awareness—will you be one of them? See *mentalhealthrun.ca* for more info.

Monday, May 7th, Queen's Park, New Westminster

Interested in pursuing an Honours degree?

Honours enquiries: By appointment. Contact Sheila Woody at swoody@psych.ubc. ca or find more information about the Honours Program at *psych.ubc.ca/ug-pgm/pup*. *psy#bah*

Contact us

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Get Psyched!

How to turn your historical frown upside down and learn to appreciate... Freud?

BY ASHLEY WHILLANS

Does the prospect of sitting among stacks of History books scare you? Do you accidentally forget to study the pages of your psych text that mention those aren't they dead already psychologists like Skinner, Freud and Watson?

Well, if psychology is your thing, I have some bad news. You might need to undo your implicit bias via some good ole' classical conditioning, because the history of psychology is important for your future. Wondering why? Read on.

As UBC History of Psychology professor Dr. Andrea Perrino informed Psyched in an email interview, as psychologists and psychologists-in-training, we need to be informed of the field's past in order to understand where it is today and where it is headed.

But, history's boring, right? Let's be honest, we all love to gripe about how we cannot bear to hear one more word about those old dead guys. However, as Perrino explained, there is utility to learning about classic research and researchers.

For example, it is through understanding these individuals that we can come to a broader understanding of our multifaceted field.

"Studying the history of psychology enables us to both recognize diversity within psychology and to create a synthesis among the disparate elements. Each area in psychology lends itself and borrows from that of another," she said.

Not to mention, learning about researchers is more interesting than you would think! Researchers of the past were not isolated super brains; they had lives, albeit fascinating ones.

"Some of these researcher's lives are better than the latest blockbuster," Perrino



History of Psychology Mini Quiz

1. Which German scientist is considered the father of psychology?

2. Which psychologist used to skip out of his Harvard lab to play ping pong? This researcher loved ping-pong so much; he actually taught pigeons how to play! (see an example at *youtube.com/ watch?v=vGazyH6fQQ4*)

3. Which famous philosopher, who influenced psychology with his theory of mind-body interaction, had his head buried in Sweden, and his body buried in France, upon death – due to a coffin that was too small for his body?

4. Which psychologist carpooled early with some friends, and while waiting for his classes to start at UBC wandered into a psychology lecture?

admitted. "They were scandalous or humorous, wore interesting attire, dated their grad students, took drugs in the interest of curiosity, lamented their loves, and blew up their laboratories."

So next time you see Freud or one of his colleagues mentioned, don't groan and shut your textbook—hang in there, you might just need to take a deep breath and appreciate the subtleties of each researcher's theoretical tune.

"We must listen to the music of a band many times to appreciate the talent, to understand the nuances, to be able to name that tune among the songs we hear on the radio," Perrino reflected.

"When we discuss the lives and times of the psychologists we study, we are handed an autobiography and then head backstage to meet the band that [we] have played in [our] earphones for years," she said. 5. Another UBC prof had a similar experience to #4. Which UBC economics/ psychology professor had their first experience with psychology while teaching a class of undergraduates?

6. Who was the first woman to earn her PHD in the field of Psychology?

7. Which psychologist was deathly afraid of the number 62, and was an advocate and user of cocaine?

Wilhelm Maximilian Wundt
B.F. Skinner
Descartes
Albert Bandura
Joe Heinrich
Joe Heinrich
Teeud

Finally, when next approaching a black and white photo in your text of a grimacing man wearing a buttoned up collared shirt, I challenge you to avoid tuning out. Instead, tune in and ask yourself how their ideas and the ideas of other psychologists of the past are still relevant today.

"The past provides a backdrop on which to build the future," Perrino added. "When we look back and understand the origin of expressions, techniques and technologies, and when we analyze the mistakes and discoveries of our ancestors, we effectively build our own research and practice" she said.

So, see these psychological figures with fresh eyes, and be curious. Who knows maybe by reading the past, you may be inspired with a research question and yourself become attached to the cliché . . . and the rest was history. Ψ

Monkey See, Monkey Do Mental health and YOU!

BY LAUREN SLATTERY

It is difficult to read a newspaper, listen to the radio, or visit the Student Union Building without noticing, hearing or reading the words mental health. Do psychology students realize the importance of mental health in their personal lives, and are they aware of the surging career opportunities in this growing field? They should.

Mental Health Developments at UBC

There has been growth in the university's attention to mental health care as evidenced by UBC Counselling Services and growing student initiatives like the AMS Wellness Centre, the newly-formed Kaleido-scope support group and the Mental Health Awareness Club (MHAC).

MHAC is a hundred person organization

that provides support, wellness upkeep initiatives, and career/academic-related seminars. The MHAC's executives, Thao Dao and Erin Brown, emphasized "inter-professional collaboration" in mental health care and research starting at the undergraduate level.

The MHAC helps fulfil their strategy with a club population that includes occupational therapists, medicine, and psychology students as well as a monthly guest speaker series featuring professionals from a broad range of disciplines.

As the spotlight shines more brightly on mental health issues, psychology students have unique opportunities for both our personal health and career directions and the former will strengthen the latter. Turning to that social-learning slang, "monkey see, monkey do," we can begin to help others by first helping ourselves. Ψ

Get Involved!

A note to all of us who have an appreciation for mental wellness or academic and career interests in mental health: the MHAC is seeking emerging leaders or members at large. For more info, visit *ubcmhac.sites.olt.ubc.ca*

Upcoming MHAC Events

The UBC Mental Health Awareness Club (MHAC) would like to invite you to the monthly educational session and potluck to learn about different topics related to mental health & wellness, with Seia Roots. MHAC will provide drinks, but please bring a potluck item if you would like to participate.

Wednesday, March 2 at 4:15pm in Lab 1&2/Department of Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy (3rd floor of the UBC Hospital).

Riding the wave of the future: Neuroimaging as a diagnostic tool

BY JEFF CHUA

Over the last few decades, an alternative route to understanding psychological and neurological health problems has emerged through the use of neuroimaging tools.

Dr. Todd Handy, the director of the UBC neuroimaging lab, explained the mechanisms by which cognitive neuroscience has application potential for clinical practice, by determining diagnosis.

"In using neuroimaging methods we want to understand what's different across the population in one group relative to [another] group," he explained.

However, this process isn't always easy. Although comparing individual samples to large populations is clearer, within sample comparisons can evade diagnosis.

"To take single individuals and give them some fMRI or EEG based tests, use their measure and then use that to classify where this person belongs in the ADHD category or the normal category with a single data set is harder to [determine]," he said.

Consequently, diagnosis using neuroimaging would require cross-sectional studies to provide comparison data, a clearer definition of what normal is and a greater understanding of individual variations, like epigenetics and environmental factors.

There are also other challenges in applying this technology to clinical practice, such as cost and availability. Handy explained that access to scanners requires a lot of equipment preparation, with a charge of about \$500-600 an hour.

Yet, clinical application is worth pursuing. In terms of relevant applications, Handy is involved in research looking at visual-motor interactions, cognitive impairments such as elderly who frequently fall down and a new project based on the idea of Chemo-brain studying cancer patients who complain of cognitive deficits after finishing chemotherapy.



While methodologies may not be perfect, and not even suitable for current use as a diagnostic tool; differentiating a psychopath from a non-psychopath, finding evidence for a precursor of mental diseases and studying those suffering from cognitive problems will help the public and further understanding of the complex mechanisms of our brains.

Maybe in future we will be able to use these imaging techniques as a clinical tool. For now research and technology has some work to do, before neuroimaging becomes the diagnostic tool of choice. Ψ

Like a lot? Like a little?

BY ARIELLA NUDELL AKA DR. LOVE

"At Student Union Building (SUB): Female, Black hair. Girl with tanned skin. You were with a friend and used a chair as a table. You have a Tie-Died shirt on today. So pretty and I wish I knew you."

During finals last semester, you may have noticed groups of students huddled around a computer screen, excited and laughing. No, they were not studying for Psych 350 Human Sexuality; rather they were studying the people around them.

Likealittle.com is a new social networking site which enables students across North American campuses to anonymously flirt with one another. Logging on is simple, you enter the sex, hair colour, location of the person you're seeking out, and then flirt!

In an email interview with creator Evan Reas, current student at Stanford University, Reas admitted the only reason why he and his two friends, Prasanna and Shubham, created Likealittle was their lack of ability to get girls.

"It is difficult and awkward to make that first move and [we] knew that first hand from seeing cute girls around [us] and just being too shy to say hello," he wrote.

If everything is anonymous, one must ask themselves if any of these flirts are actually followed through with. However, Reas claims there have been many success stories.

"It has been used as an ice-breaker, a way to find a missed connection, a way to platonically meet up with a new friend or a way to simply compliment somebody that may just respond to say thanks," he answered enthusiastically.

Now, what makes Likealittle so interactive and fun is the comment option. Anyone who visits the site can anonymously comment on all posts and while doing so gets a fruit as their cover name.

As Reas explained, "Fruit names contribute to the positive, playful spirit of the site. People find it difficult to take negative comments seriously when they've been written by a Blueberry."

Reading all the posts on the website, the psych undergrad in me started to wonder,

was there a noticeable difference between men's posts and women's posts? While Reas doesn't see much of a difference, men appear to write a little more sexually, which Likealittle tries to take off the site if the comment are too explicit.

One very interesting post caught my eye, "At Anywhere: Female, Other hair. I'm tired of being single and being taken to clubs by my well-meaning friends to hit on drunks girls for no other reason than because it's the social norm. Does anyone want to just have a nice sober date without all of this crap? I know it comes off as desperate, but I'm tired of that whole scene; I'm ready to conquer my shyness instead of hiding it with alcohol."

This post received 18 comments from girls explaining how this guy would be able to approach them. The author of the post went on to write that just going up to a girl always comes off as creepy, especially if

Example thread:

New ways to spark campus romance

you are not the most attractive guy. So, just how did Likealittle suggest he could get rid of his creep status?

Cucumber replied, "It's not creepy at all....most of the time I really want guys to come up to me, but it never happens, and I wonder about all the chances I'm missing out on."

So as shy as one may be, Likealittle can act as a catalyst to push you forward toward meeting your potential other or, it might act as a thicker mask to hide behind. The point is it gives you the option. You can act on your anonymous comment or just keep writing while wondering "what if"?

Reas believes that Likealittle has the chance to change the dating game, "I think it will change the way that people interact in many ways (flirting, chatting, connecting, meeting) with people who are around them." But for it to work, you need to believe in it, too. Ψ



At Spanish: Male, Brunette. In Spanish Class, the class is a joke but its

At Spanish: Male, Brunette. In Spanish Class, the class is a joke but its been really cool getting to know u randomly through bad spanglish conversation. You're a super cute wrestler, to bad but u have a gf. 8 mins ago | Study > Class Share | Like | Comment | Abuse

At Zapata: Female, Redhead. Gingers DO have souls, because you're sucking mine out of my chest.

12 mins ago | Residential > Stern Hall

Share | Like | Comment | Abuse

Lucuma says Gingers can do that. They harvest them to compensate! 8 mins ago Like | Abuse

At outside spanish class: Male, Brunette. I saw you when I walked across



Stumbling on Psychology: Professors share their foray into the field

BY KINO ZHAO

So there you are, sitting in a classroom with 200 other students and a nice big textbook, eager to learn about a fascinating field called psychology. You are there to learn about what psychologists do. However, you may or may not know why you are sitting there, and also may or may not know where you are going in the future.

At times like these, it is always helpful to hear what the person standing in the front of the lecture hall has to say about their journey into the field.

"I thought it would be interesting to know about how people thought," Dr. Ron Rensink told The PSA. He wasn't alone.

"Psychology intrigued me," explained Dr. Sunaina Assanand. "In particular, I believed that through my psychology [courses], I could gain insight into myself, other people and social interactions," she said.

While general interest in human behaviour was a common motivator, other professors had more specific experiences in mind.

"When I was in my last year of high school, one of my close friends became very depressed and ended up dropping out. He was also a heavy drug user, and was ultimately diagnosed with bipolar disorder," revealed Dr. Catherine Winstanley. "This was one of my main motivations to study the effects of psychoactive drugs on brain function and behaviour."

As passionate researchers and professors today, it might surprise you to find out that not all had psychology in mind when first entering university.

"As an undergraduate, I completed a degree in chemistry," explained Assanand. "I worked for some time in the field and discovered that I wanted to participate in a profession that provided greater interaction with people."

Dr. Shelia Woody became interested in Psychology while reading Freud's Interpretation of Dreams. Although, she added, "I don't know much more about Freud's work than I did when I graduated high school; my career has taken a very different direction."

Dr. Andrew Baron's career also didn't exactly turn out as planned.

"I went [to university] thinking I wanted to study political relations and that I wanted to eventually go on and be an FBI, and do foreign counter terrorism," he said.

Surprised? I know I was. I thought I was the only one fantasizing about joining the team of Criminal Minds. It seems that when professors were students, they knew just as much or as little as we do about what they were going to end up doing.

"I didn't realize how much really cool science goes on in Psychology departments. I thought it was all subjective navel-gazing, rather than empirical hypothesis testing," admitted Winstanley.

"It's a lot more complicated than what I imagined when I first got excited by it," added Baron.

While it may be complex, that did not stop these professors from pursuing psychology.

Dr. Elizabeth Dunn revealed her secret, "For my honour's project, I did three experiments. All of them failed miserably, but I was hooked!"

Next time when you scratch your head over inconsistent data, remember that great psychologists make mistakes too!

"The best advice I've got and the best things I did when I was this age, in college or university, was to give it time. It takes time to figure out what you're interested in and what you are not interested in," advised Baron.

He also offered another sound piece of advice, "Working in research labs is a great way to figure that out. It helps you to identify or rule out some aspects of psychology you're not interested in."

So, next time you are sitting in that 200 seat lecture wondering just how this information relates to you, take comfort in knowing that you don't have to have it all figured out, chances are your prof didn't either when they were in your position. Ψ

Vital Vocabulary

Words every psych student should know

BY UROOBA JAMAL

Would you like to be able to execute intellectual banter effortlessly? Do you get urges to emulate your PhD holding psychology prof? Or, are you a first year student looking to have a surreptitious edge over your peers?

The most parsimonious method of fulfilling these desires is to habituate three key words into your everyday colloquy. Marring daily conversations with verbosity is a sure-fire way to place yourself on a distinctively elevated pedestal.

Zone of proximal development (zəun/ əv/proksiməl/di'veləpmənt/) Phase of learning during which children can benefit from instruction.

Imagine a hypothetical situation in which you hypothetically take a class for which you have no intrinsic motivation. In a hypothetical sense, it is allowing you to fulfill some hypothetical requirements that are needed for your hypothetical major.

Let's say, hypothetically, you miss a few lectures and are absent for a few quizzes-hypothetically, of course. Imagine that the dramatic interlude that consists of showing your parents your grades looms upon you. Imagine that you are quite scared of such a proposition, as your grade for that class is as low as the potential permissibility of using Jersey Shore cast member, Snooki's book as a source of scholarly, academic writing.

Instead of extracting from the plethora of bad excuses that may be ingrained in you, consider letting your guardians know that the class material was simply not in your zone of proximal development. So distracted will they be from your astounding verbal proclamation, they will fail to remember to pay attention to content, and in turn, will fail to reprimand you.

Misinformation effect (mɪsɪn'fɔːmeɪʃ(ə) n/ı'fekt/) Creation of fictitious memories by it was ... ah, words can't describe!





are you sure? that's what they do

providing misleading information about an event after it takes place.

These two words are probably the most applicable to one's daily life. A bit of tomfoolery can be conducted, if there is correct implementation, too. A good example would include, your significant other accusing you of cheating.

Whether or not this is true, instead of retorting that you'd never compromise your favourable views on monogamy, followed by a monologue who's main purpose is to provide reassurance of your love for them, turn the tables and accuse them of having fallen victim to the misinformation effect. Their embarrassment at having been taken advantage of and awe at your omniscience knowledge will require them to never again blatantly accuse you.

Schema ('ski:mə/)

Organized knowledge structure or mental model that we've stored in memory.

University freshman are severely prone to having preconceived notions about the four year academic limbo they're going to experience at their choice institution of higher learning.

"[I was told] university's gonna be big, hard, difficult," said Matthew, a first year Science student.

Traditional media has especially assisted in conjuring up sentiments about the university experience. Movies emblazon fabrications of college life. Magazines attempt to paint vivid pictures. Television programming is responsible for the predispositions first year students have about said university experience. It is safe to conclude that we have volatile schemas.

Simply categorizing these assessments as things I've previously constructed is adorably naïve; say they are a part of your schema, instead, and watch as eyebrows raise in impressed splendour.

Be it for good, evil, or neutral purposes, accommodating even just these three words into your daily vocabulary will allow you to reap many benefits. If above all else, it'll assist you with acing that psychology exam! Ψ

Definitions are from: "Psychology: From Inquiry To Understanding", published by Pearson Canada.