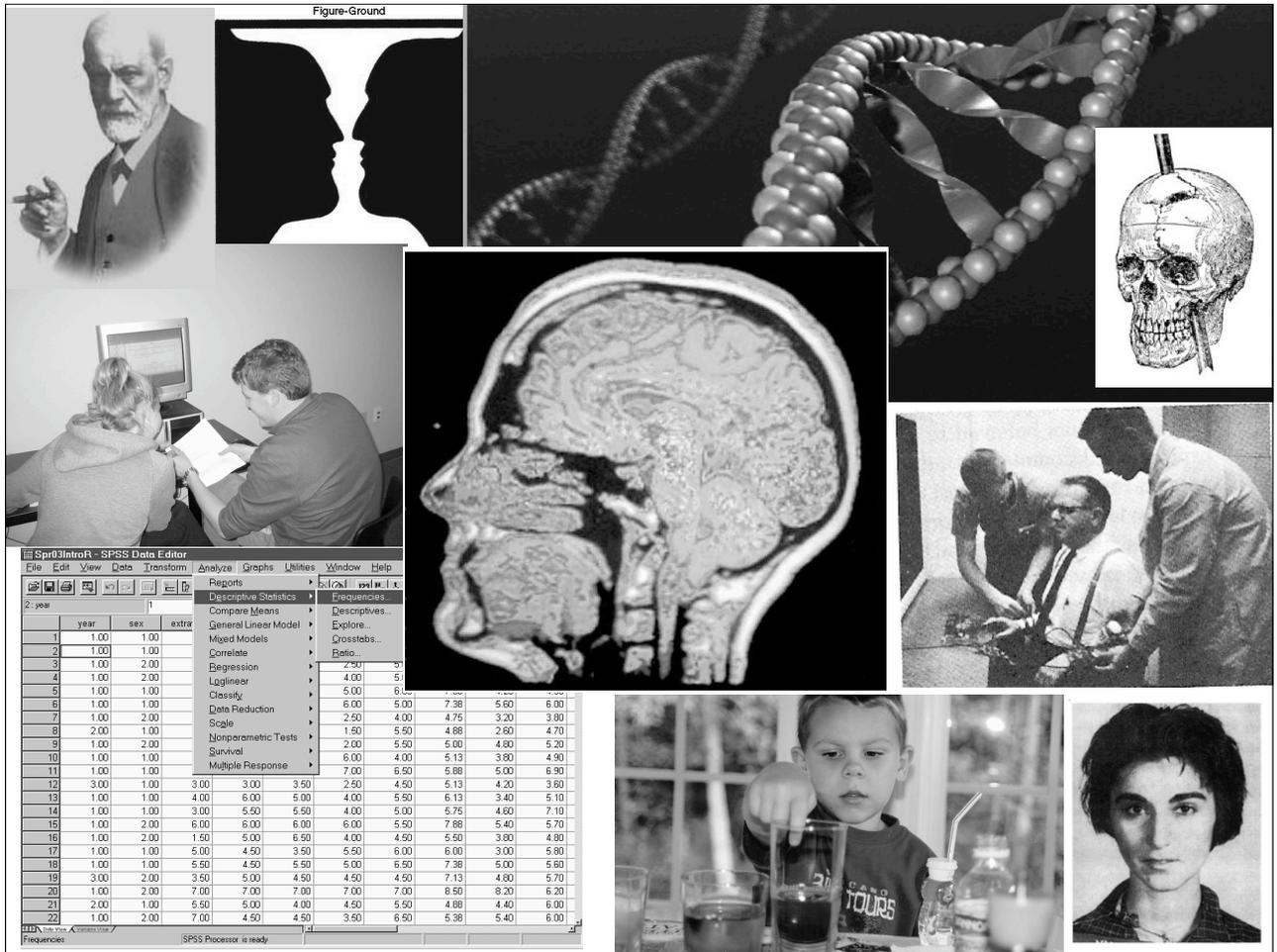


MUHLENBERG COLLEGE

# Psychology Research Day



FALL 2006 PROGRAM  
December 5, 2006 Moyer Hall

# NOTES



## SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

4:20 Welcoming Remarks, Miller Forum, Moyer Hall

4:25 Keynote Speaker, Miller Forum, Moyer Hall

### ***Research Experiences at Muhlenberg & Beyond***

Thomas Prevete '07

Interested in getting involved in research at Muhlenberg College or landing a research-based internship elsewhere over the summer? Tom will discuss the research opportunities available on campus in addition to his involvement in a National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program this past summer at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, OK.

4:45 *Break*

## CONCURRENT ORAL PRESENTATION SESSIONS

4:50 Session 1a - Moyer 109

Session 1b - Moyer 104

5:20 *Break*

5:25 Session 2a - Moyer 101

Session 2b - Moyer 109

5:55 *Break*

6:00 Session 3 - Moyer 101

## POSTER PRESENTATION SESSION

4:45-6:15 Miller Forum, Moyer Hall

SNACKS & BEVERAGES AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT THE EVENT

## DETAILED SCHEDULE & ABSTRACTS

### Session 1a - Moyer 109

**4:50 - 5:05**

*ABSOLUT ALCOHOL EDUCATION PROGRAM: IS IT REALLY EVERCLEAR?*

*Marlena Celebre, Whitney Arons, Jodi Fierstein*

This study was designed to look at the effectiveness of the AlcoholEdu program which Muhlenberg College administers to their students. By looking at overall knowledge of alcohol use and behavior as related to consumption of alcohol we hope to show whether or not the alcohol program which Muhlenberg has implemented has significant effects on students which sustain for all four years of college. We conducted our study by administering surveys to current Muhlenberg College students which assessed knowledge of alcohol, behaviors relating to alcohol use, demographic information, and a personality inventory.

**5:05 - 5:20**

*SEX DIFFERENCES IN VISUOSPATIAL MEMORY*

*Amylin Ader, Kayla Boisvert, Allison Paul, Amanda Thompson*

The purpose of this study was to look at the effects of sex, stress and visual cues on visuospatial memory. Within sex the study also looked at the effect of estrogen on females' memory. To measure this, the researchers used 2 cardboard mazes, one with visual cues and the other with no cues. Subjects used a magnet to guide their way through the maze. In order to do this they had to remember the location of each obstacle hit. Participants answered a stress survey before completing the maze. The researchers found no significant results with any of these variables.

### Session 1b - Moyer 104

**4:50 - 5:05**

*THE EFFECT OF GENDER & BODY ANXIETY ON IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT ATTITUDES TOWARD OBESITY*

*Carey Heller, Larissa Rogan, Zeke Strober, Krista Snyder, Rory Rosenwald*

We examined the impact of gender and body anxiety on implicit and explicit attitude measures pertaining to obesity. The results indicated no significant differences on the implicit attitude measure, regardless of gender or degree of body anxiety. However, males, regardless of body anxiety level, showed more prejudice towards obesity on the IAT. On explicit measures, higher body anxiety was found to indicate more positive attitudes toward obese individuals. Higher body anxiety scores also indicated stronger beliefs that obesity was not under a person's control. Therefore, gender and body anxiety appear to have more impact on explicit attitudes than on implicit attitudes toward obesity.

**5:05 - 5:20**

*THE EFFECT OF AGE AND DRESS ON STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF FEMALE PROFESSORS*

*Rachel Breckman, Heather Podvey, Monica Sella, Kristen Brophy*

This study examined the influence of professor's age and dress on student's evaluations of professors. The same lecture was videotaped being given by a young female professor and an older female professor. Each professor gave the same lecture twice: once in casual attire and once in professional attire. Students were then randomly assigned to one of the four video choices and rated the professors using a modified Student Instructional Report survey. Results found that students rated older professors significantly higher than younger professors on level of enthusiasm. The younger professor was rated as being significantly more attractive than the older professor. Teachers in professional attire were rated as being more professional than the teachers in casual attire.

## Session 2a - Moyer 101

**5:25 - 5:40**

*THE EFFECT OF PRIMING ON COLLEGE AGED FEMALES IN STUDYING BODY ESTEEM AND SELF-PERCEPTIONS OF BODY IMAGE.*

*Lauren Bovelle, Valena David, Katelyn Hancik*

In the present study, we examined the association between body esteem and self-perceived body image in athletes and performers. Participants were 46 women who were 18-22 years old at a small, liberal arts college. We used priming by randomly assigning participants to one of two vignettes, either an athletic or feminine text. After this, the participants completed Body Scale Questionnaire (BSQ) and the Body Esteem Scale (BES). Participants also completed the 2-item Body Shapes Measure. In the present study, we found that the priming using the feminine condition had a greater effect on their overall negative feelings associated with their body esteem. In addition, we found that participating in a performance or athletic event has a positive effect on body esteem in college women, contrary to our hypothesis. It is important to note that the present results do not indicate a causal relationship between performance and body satisfaction.

**5:40 - 5:55**

*KNOWLEDGE OF ADHD*

*Elissa Hughes, GraceAnn Furnari, Katherine Thone*

No abstract submitted.

## Session 2b - Moyer 109

**5:25 - 5:40**

*NEGATIVE PRIMES INFLUENCE PERCEPTIONS OF ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS*

*Thomas Preverte, Lisa Gingold, Carly Michael, Lauren Klein, Marcus Mathieson*

The purpose of this study was to assess the effect of the media's portrayal of relationships on participants' perceptions of relationships. Male and female participants were shown one of two possible video clips, one of which was moderately negative and one of which was extremely negative. There was a significant interaction for how invested participants rated their partners in their personal relationships as a function of the type of prime and gender of participant. While the male character in the video was rated to be more invested in the extreme video clip than the woman, female participants rated themselves to be more invested in their personal relationships than did males.

**5:40 - 5:55**

*THE EFFECT OF LEVEL OF CONTROL AND DISPOSITIONAL OPTIMISM ON COPING WITH STRESS*

*Casey Blodget, Robert Brennan, Tara Large, Amanda Shaffer, Allison Silver*

Past research has been conducted on how perceptions of control influence the way one copes with stressful situations. We looked at how coping strategies differ in high, moderate, and low control situations, as well as across high and low degrees of optimism. A sample of 62 undergraduates was randomly assigned to high, moderate, or low control groups. All participants read a vignette of a stressful situation, and completed a survey that included the LOT-R test for optimism, the Ways of Coping, and an assessment of how stressful and controllable the vignette situation was. Two-way ANOVAs showed that people in high control situations use more distance and problem-solving coping strategies, while those in moderate control situations use more accepting responsibility to cope. Additionally, people in high control situations appraise them as less stressful. People in low control situations appraise them as highly stressful. Optimism had no effect on coping styles. These findings have implications for teaching people how to cope effectively with stressful situations.

## Session 3

### **6:00 - 6:15**

#### *ASPERGERS THROUGH A DIFFERENT LENS*

*Sara Levin, Justine Newman, Raymond Salani III*

The majority of research on Asperger's and high functioning Autism is done from an etic, or outside perspective. The purpose of this study is to develop a knowledge scale of Asperger's and high functioning Autism based on the perspective of individuals on the spectrum. While knowledge scales of Asperger's and high functioning Autism have been created using the DSM-IV criteria, what is unique about our study is that the knowledge scale we intend to create will reflect the opinions and feelings regarding Asperger's and high functioning Autism of those who actually live with it and truly know it best.

### **6:15 - 6:30**

#### *PERCEPTIONS AND BEHAVIORS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS TOWARD INFIDELITY*

*Ashlen Froelke, Heather Eckman, Alexandra Block*

Infidelity is perceived as a major problem among college campuses. Eighty five never married students from Muhlenberg College watched a 10-minute movie clip and completed an anonymous confidential questionnaire that assessed students perceptions and behaviors toward infidelity. There were three different groups in which participants viewed three different movies. One group viewed the movie Unfaithful, the next group watched Family Man, and the last group watched My Cousin Vinny. It was hypothesized that participants who viewed the 10-minute movie clip of Unfaithful would have greater negativity toward infidelity as compared to the participants who viewed the other movies. Additional factors that were looked at were: jealousy, self-esteem, the Big Five, and views on the term "friends with benefits". Preliminary results indicate that there was no significant difference in infidelity among gender but college students do view "friends with benefits" more as a relationship than merely what the title says. There was no statistical significance between the movie that was shown and perceptions of infidelity.

## POSTER PRESENTATIONS

#### *PERCEPTIONS OF DISCRIMINATION*

*Caitlin Bassett, Damara Gonzalez, Alicia Monts, Rachel Kauffman*

No abstract submitted.

#### *RELIGION'S EFFECT ON RACISM*

*Alissa Contantinople, Mehgan Strober, Christina DiLiberto*

No abstract submitted.

#### *EFFECT OF SIMILAR STIMULI ON READING COMPREHENSION*

*Samantha Greenberg, Julianne Roscioli, Danielle Tadros, Jenna Zorn*

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of interference on a reading comprehension task using both content related and non-content related audio-visual stimuli. Researchers hypothesized that content related audio-visual stimuli would have a greater interference effect on the reading comprehension task. Results indicated that stimuli type had a significant effect on reading comprehension score.

## PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH DAY

### *WHERE'S WALDO? THE EFFECT OF SLEEP ON ATTENTION*

*Emily Sidway, Jackie MacFarlane, Katie Mulford, Justin Laplante*

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of sleep on attention. It is hypothesized that the more sleep a person gets the more attentive they will be while participating in a task. Participants were timed on Where's Waldo puzzles to examine the relationship between puzzle times and sleep. One's attitude toward sleep and how it affects one's attention was also analyzed.

### *THE EFFECT OF CELEBRITY ON SELF-PERCEIVED ATTRACTIVENESS*

*Katherine Nicol, Abigail Klein, Meg Coleman, Nikki DeMaio*

Our study intends to explore the effect of celebrity presence on self-perceived attractiveness. Past research has shown that specific facial features are considered more appealing than others and that many celebrities possess these characteristics. Furthermore, celebrities often maintain their status based on their outstanding physical appearance. For the purpose of this study, attractiveness will be defined as the satisfaction and appreciation one feels towards their physical features and body. We hypothesize that the presence of celebrities will lower an individual's perception of their attractiveness and that celebrities will be rated as more attractive than regular people.

### *FEMALE ATHLETICS: DO FEMALE NON-ATHLETES HAVE LESS SATISFACTION WITH THEIR BODIES?*

*Kate Sawyer, Elisa Vicari, Xiomara Fernandez*

The present research examined a possible difference in how satisfied athletes versus non-athletes are with their own bodies. Participants' satisfaction with their bodies was determined by their reaction time to a Stroop task which included half neutral words and half body related words. They were also given a survey assessing their demographics and if they were an athlete or not. We predict that the results of this study will show that athletes have significantly higher response times than non-athletes. Athletes will be affected by the body image words, causing them to have longer response times. We anticipate support for our hypothesis that athletes would have less satisfaction with their own bodies.

### *THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES ON PERCEIVED LONELINESS*

*Carli Segal, Katie Tomasura*

Past research has linked Internet use to lack of social interaction among individuals. The present study investigated the relationship between college students' reported use of Social Networking Websites (i.e.; Facebook and Myspace) and their levels of perceived loneliness. We predicted a positive correlation between these variables. Two surveys were administered to a convenience sample of 32 undergraduate students. We expect results to provoke further research on the effect of the rapidly growing Social Networking Website phenomenon on college students' social interactions.

### *PERCEPTIONS OF INTELLIGENCE AND PERSONALITY*

*Ashley Viviani, Emily Phelan, Kristopher Denboske, Jenn Weaver*

In our study Personality and Perception, we examined the effect of a person's perception of other individuals based solely on their hair color. Within our study, we had pictures of four different people. We altered these pictures by giving each of them four different hair colors (red, black, brunette, and blonde). Participants were then asked a series of questions regarding these individuals' personalities and intelligence. By running a t-test, we predict that hair color will have a significant effect on the perceived personalities and intelligence of the four individuals used within our study.



## WANT TO PRESENT YOUR RESEARCH?

Spring 2007 Psychology Research Day is tentatively scheduled for May 1, 2007. If you would like to present your research, speak with a professor and/or visit the Psychology Department website for more information!

### **ABOUT RESEARCH DAY**

Psychology Research Day is an opportunity for students from all class years to present and discuss findings from the research projects they have conducted that semester or year. It is an opportunity for new majors to look ahead at the types of research conducted in Research Methods, Advanced Lab, Research Apprenticeships and Independent Studies. It is also an opportunity for more senior majors to look back, note their own intellectual development, and mentor younger students. Most of all, we hope that students (from any major) and faculty join together as colleagues to celebrate student research.

### **ABOUT CONDUCTING RESEARCH**

Through research experiences, psychology students develop systematic, rigorous ways of thinking about people. Students also practice valuable communication skills by presenting their research at Psychology Research Day, the LVAIC Undergraduate Psychology conference, and professional conferences.

### **Research in Courses**

Students are introduced to research in Introductory Psychology. This foundation continues through other courses in the major including Psychological Statistics, Research Methods, 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 Honors Theses. For more information about doing an independent research project, contact the faculty member who has an area of expertise related to your interests.

### **Independent Research**

We encourage juniors and seniors in particular to consider conducting an Independent

Research (PSY970). Students work closely one-on-one with a faculty mentor in developing and implementing their ideas. Any type of research, but especially independent theses such as these are very positive additions to a graduate school application. For more information contact the [faculty member](#) who has an area of expertise related to your interests.

### **Honors in Psychology**

Students with a psychology G.P.A. of 3.5 or higher may wish to consider conducting an Honors Thesis in their senior year. Visit the department web page for more information about this program.

