



Psychology

Newsletter



**Research
Experience
Scheme**
p. 2

Happy Halloween!

Welcome back, we hope everyone had a great summer break! The first term of the year has begun and we hope everyone is ready to hit the books and are prepared for the road ahead.

This version of the newsletter will update you on the exciting research in the department, and hopefully give you some insight on the student's behalf. We have tried to include various pieces that will give you coverage of all that is going on in the department at the moment. The pieces range from reviews to interviews, so there should be something for everyone. Thank you to all the members of the newsletter team who contributed to this issue, and on their behalf we hope you enjoy reading!

We are always happy to welcome new members to the newsletter team, so if you want to write for us send me an email!
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**60 Seconds
Interview**
p.3

**Student
Corner**
pp.4-5

**Immanent
Justice
Reasoning**
pp.6-7

Psychology Society
p.8

**News in the
Department** p.9

Research Experience Scheme

During the spring term of my first year I completed the research experience scheme (RES) under the supervision of Dr Rakow. On the scheme I was given the chance to help out with, and talk about, his research on Judgement and Risk choice. I was initially drawn to Dr Rakow's work after having read a truly fantastic book by Daniel Kahneman, 'Thinking, Fast and Slow'. Dr Rakow's work was heavily related to some of the ideas and concepts mentioned within the book and I was eager to get as involved with the research as I could.

The first few sessions on the scheme involved meeting with Dr Rakow, discussing various theories, concepts, and ideas involved with the topic of Judgement and Risk. These sessions frequently lasted two hours and were a great opportunity for me to really consolidate the knowledge I had gathered previously in my spare time. Theories I had previously found difficult to comprehend and digest, were explained to me in such a clear and concise manner, that I left each session with a resolute sense of progression and understanding. I was even compelled to re-read the book, twice!

After these initial sessions of discussion, where we really clarified key terminology and concepts, I was then tasked with locating relevant research on the topic. Both recent publications and classic literature were sent my way for extra reading.

Following this I was allowed to take a very hands on approach with the study. As Dr Rakow and his PhD student were ready to begin gathering data, I was recruited to assist with the process of collecting data from participants. This involved; taking participants through the process of the study, briefing them on the purpose of the research and, of course, debriefing them all at the end. It was an incredible opportunity to get a real experience of the practical application of collecting data.

Another invaluable opportunity offered to me via the RES was to volunteer at a full day multi-disciplinary seminar held at City University in London. Dr Rakow and Prof Ayton organised the event and I was fortunate enough to spend the day within earshot of all the guest speakers. I learnt so much that day. I was able to see, and be part of, the organisation and facilitation that goes into running a full day seminar successfully. I was able to hear talks from a distinguished cast of academic and occupational experts. I wholeheartedly encourage students to make the most of this brilliant scheme. The chance at this point in one's academic journey to work so closely alongside stellar academic researchers is both incredibly rare and tremendously beneficial. For such a highly competitive scheme, I advise those interested in getting first-hand experience of academic research to try as hard as you can to make sure you get a place! My time on the RES was unbelievably enjoyable, and rewarding, and I feel that my personal development has progressed dramatically as a result.

by Alistair Thorpe

60 SECONDS INTERVIEW

Dr. Dean Wybrow

As a former student of the university of Essex, how many energy drinks did you have before exams?

None, I cannot stand energy drinks. It is really bad for you. I despair it when I see people drinking them. Even though I know they are desperate. The best thing would be a good night of sleep.

If you could be a celebrity for a day, who would you be?

A footballer, someone like Theo Walcott because he is really fast.

Oldest memory you can remember?

I was in primary school and I did not feel well so I told the teacher, but the teacher didn't take me seriously. So I snuck out of the class, went to the office and told them to call my mum and went back to class. Later my mum came to pick me up and it was this awkward situation because the teacher did not know I went behind her back.

What was your first concert?

I haven't been to a lot of concerts, but I love going to gigs, it was a little concert in a pub in Southend, where I am from.

If you could have a superpower, what would it be?

Something really simple like having the ambiguity to jump really high, because if you could fly, you will just get into a lot of trouble. You will get on the news and have a lot of paparazzi following you.

Favourite song at the moment?

Calicio County by Steve Earle. It's a country blues song about people working at a minimum wage in America and they have to steal things.

What was the last sport you played?

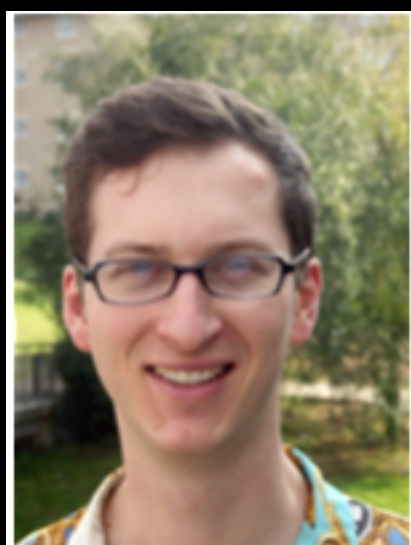
Football. I played a game with lecturers from the department and others as well on the university pitch.

Favorite TV show?

Dexter, Totally gripping.

Tea or Coffee?

Neither, I would rather have a hot barley drink.



by Madiha Shabir



Student Corner

by Vivian Ng
Q & A with first and second years

Second Year Student:

Q. Right, to start off, can you give me 5 adjectives to describe the string of emotions you are feeling right now about this year and your course?

A. Erm, I'm a bit ill at the moment from fresher's flu, but I'm feeling calm. We've only just started. Refreshed and excited for the New Year. Anxious for stats, but this year I'm going to hit the ground running! And I'm happy about this year. I don't have any negative emotions at the moment but wait till next week.

Q. Obviously, this is your second year now, compared to last year, do you feel prepared?

A. Yes, I am prepared. I almost have all my textbooks, just waiting for one more textbook to come through Amazon. I know I have to keep up with the reading this year, I genuinely have to.

Q. We know that starting university is hard for first years, so could you give them some useful 'dos and don'ts' to help them get used to the structure of the course?

A. Do seek help if you don't understand anything or are unsure about a specific topic, it'll just get worse if you don't do anything about it. Do plan essays and lab reports well in advance. Don't leave things till the last minute because things will just pile up and that will stress you out. And don't suffer in silence. If there is a problem, find someone to talk to and try to sort any issues as soon as you can.

Q. Anymore useful tips to offer?

A. Definitely get more involved with psychology aspects. Especially in the department and with the psychology society meetings.

Q. Do you have a question you want to ask a first year?

A. Yes. Have you got involved? Because now I have realised how important it is to get stuck in with everything. Employers need to see that you have a life.

Those were some thoughts and advice from a current second year who is clearly showing enthusiasm and is really pumped about their course. Next, we spoke to a first year student to see if we could clear up any uncertainties and see how she is.





Student Corner

by Vivian Ng
Q & A with first and second years

First Year Student:

Q. Okay, so could you give me about 5 adjectives that describe the emotions you are feeling about your course?

A. Enjoyable, interesting, informative, challenging and fast-paced.

Q. Are you feeling prepared for your course?

A. I have mixed feelings. I would like to say that I am well prepared but this is a new place, new country, new system to get used to, I do worry a bit. However, I like to believe that I will do well in my course.

That's perfectly normal to have all these mixed feelings, trust me.

Q. Can you tell me your likes and dislikes so far in the department? It could be anything, but maybe how you find the lectures, staff, the teaching labs (just some ideas if you get stuck)

A. I haven't gotten to experience much to be honest, but what I like is that the lecturers seem to be quite friendly, they're willing to help and they are pretty good at explaining. It certainly makes me feel better that there is support from the department when necessary. There is nothing specific that I would dislike. It only surprised me a bit when this huge amount of work was thrown at me during the first week of lectures. It did make me a bit scared [laughs]. However, I think I will be able to manage the workload, just need some getting used to.

Yeah, the lecturers are good at explaining things. I know they repeat what they say a few times, but reword their explanations to reach a variety of students because we all learn in different ways. I guess it's only the first teaching week so all you've been doing is listening to introductions. But you do more practicals like using the SPSS software. Don't be put off by the workload, I know it's a lot to cover. There are always Moodle and lecture handouts to help aid your learning.

Q. If you could ask a second year any question, what would it be?

A. Did you find the first year difficult? Test/exam wise, mostly.

The exams weren't really hard because they're mostly multiple-choice questions. There's just so much to learn so they can't possibly test you on every single thing in the textbook.

Q. I spoke to a second year too and asked them what question they would ask you and she would like to know whether you've involved yourself in any aspects of psychology.

A. Like volunteering and stuff? Not really

Our first year student seems to be getting along pretty well, keen to get started and she is slowly adapting to how the course is set out. It's good to know that she feels the department has a team of friendly lecturers to make her feel comfortable and welcome. It's the first month back and even though she hasn't gotten involved with anything yet, there is still plenty of time and we're sure she would be eager to get stuck in with the wide range of activities the department has to offer!

Through the looking glass: Focusing on long-term goals increases immanent justice reasoning

Mitchell J. Callan, Annelie J. Harvey, Rael J. Dawtry, Robbie M. Sutton

Does what goes around comes around? Do we reap what we sow? Do we get what is coming to us? Individuals have a need to believe that they live in a world where people generally get what they deserve; good people should have good outcomes and bad people should have bad outcomes. This allows people to engage in effective goal-directed behaviours and plan for their future. The just-world phenomenon is an assumption that a person's behaviours reflect the -good or bad- causal attributions, respectively. This goes hand-in-hand with a form of moral reasoning; immanent justice. In fact, it has been found that people increase their immanent justice reasoning when they focus on their long-range goals that automatically activate the need to perceive the world as just.

I recently met with Dr Mitch Callan to discuss his recent research into immanent justice, here is a quick over view of his work. Callan et al. (2013) were concerned with the notion that immanent justice reasoning is a social-cognitive strategy used to construe events as being consistent with a just world. In their study, participants were required to list either their long-term or short-term goals and then to think about a random bad upshot which occurred to a bad (or a good) person. They suggested that when individuals think about their life goals, they attribute certain outcomes using their immanent justice reasoning.

The effect of the target person's moral worth (good vs. bad) on immanent justice attributions indeed occurred more strongly when participants were first asked to think about their long-term goals, than for participants focused on their short-term goals. Setting goals gives people's life direction, boosts motivation to complete both desirable and undesirable tasks, and helps to persist in trying to become better regardless of the setbacks and obstacles that might impede the faster achievement of dreams.

However, every single individual in this world come across different difficulties and amenities due to factors such as their income, their physical condition and social pressure. Effort will be rewarded in the end for anyone who strives for a certain thing and this is basically the notion of the belief in a just world which is observed in everyday life. For example, the best students are usually those who work hard, revise often, keep notes and organise their time effectively, and, contrary, those who do not are often the ones who have bad marks and fail. Moreover, poor people that have many difficulties in their life and might not be able to reach a specific goal due to their misfortune see life in a different way; most of them appreciate the little things and small joys in life, they endeavour to raise money by, let say, cultivating and selling food, in order to survive, which is their primary and fundamental goal.

The achievement of goals always shifts to self reward. Usually, people who set long-term goals and strive for their achievement are more magnanimous, moral and fair than others. The belief in a just world and seeking goals both seem to be associated with the belief in a moral universe that involves immanent justice. Sometimes people tend to make some negative sorts of attributes, such as that some ill people deserve their illness, a robber deserved to be imprisoned and so on. But what does the just-world belief do to people? It might be the fact that this phenomenon enables people to encounter their physical and social environment as if they were stable and orderly. Consequently, without such a belief it would be difficult for the individual to commit himself to the pursuit of long-range goals or even to adjust social behaviour on a daily basis.

Reviewed by Veronica Savva

Psychology Society

by Abiee Hill

Events and updates

As a society we are passionate about everything psychology related, and we have a variety of events which reflect our enthusiasm for the subject. Some of the events which have already occurred this term include a social 'meet and greet' and a film screening. For the 'meet and greet' we met in Level Up at 7pm where we socialised and played card games, charades and pool then continuing on to the SU Bar afterwards. The film night was a joint screening with the Film Society where we watched 'Unknown'; a psychological thriller starring Liam Neeson. The night was lively, with lots of people attending, plenty of snacks (Maltesers being a personal favourite) and pizza. For those of you who were unable to attend, the film is certainly worth a watch!

Don't feel like you've missed out as we have a wide range of events coming up which include:

- 4th November – Debate/Game Show – 7pm
- 18th November – Fundraising Event (selling Krispy Kreme Doughnuts to raise money for Colchester Mind) – 12–5pm, Square 3
- 29th November – Freud Museum, London – 10:30–5pm

As you can see, the socials range from the fun and brain-testing meet ups, right through to raising money for a good cause! Of course, these are only a few of the socials we have planned up until Christmas... Others can be found on our society page on Essexstudent.com where you can buy your Psychology Society membership for just £5! (There's also a link to the Facebook page so you can join the group and hear about everything that is happening.) It's a no brainer!

If you think any of these socials sound like fun, or wish to make some new friends, then the Psychology Society is definitely for you! We have so many different types of socials; there will certainly be something to tickle your fancy, whether it's meeting up to socialise, going out on group trips, or watching demonstrations with research equipment.

Advertisement: First year representative

For all you first year Psychology students out there who are wanting to get more involved with their year group, but aren't sure how... this may be just the thing you've been looking for! We are looking for a first year student to become the first year representative, to be involved in the Psychology Society regarding social media and to talk with fellow first year Psychology students to come up with new and exciting ideas for the society. This is a great opportunity for you to get involved in Psychology at Essex, and will look great on your CV! All you need to do to apply is go onto the society's page on Essexstudent.com and submit a manifesto of no more than 500 words.

News in the Department

We would like to say congratulations to Professor Sheina Orbell, who was recently appointed Adjunct Professor at Curtin University (Perth, Australia). The picture shows her (3rd from the left) and other appointed academics at an award ceremony held by the Faculty of Health Sciences at Curtin University. Well done Professor Orbell!



It is with great sadness that the Department of Psychology at Essex informs you of the death of Emeritus Professor Christine Temple. Christine had been a member of the University for 23 years and served as the Founding Professor and first Head of the Department of Psychology. Christine, who only retired through ill health in the summer, died at St Helena Hospice in Colchester on Wednesday October 22nd.

Christine came to Essex from Royal Holloway where she had established and directed the Developmental Neuropsychology Unit. A first-class honours graduate from the University of St Andrews in her native Scotland, she studied for her MA at the University of California and undertook her doctoral studies at the University of Oxford.

Christine was a very successful researcher: In a series of classic papers in the early 1980's, she convincingly demonstrated that individuals with developmental dyslexia could suffer from impairments in single word reading that were just as selective as those that had recently been observed in cases of acquired phonological dyslexia and acquired surface dyslexia. In the next few years, Christine extended her work into areas such as the study of children's arithmetical disorders and developmental word finding impairments. In so doing, she pioneered the use of single case studies in the investigation of developmental disorders and was instrumental in the emergence of an area of research known as developmental cognitive neuropsychology. In her monograph of the same name published in 1997, Christine demonstrated how this modular approach to the study of developmental disorders could provide insights into the nature of cognitive development in a variety of different areas. Such work set in train a debate about the merits of using models of adult performance to explain cognitive development that continues today.

Between 2004 and 2010, a lot of Christine's time was occupied by her work as a pro-vice chancellor and member of the University of Essex's senior management team. Nevertheless, she maintained a steady output of important research into the effects on cognitive development of genetic impairments including Williams syndrome, Klinefelter syndrome and Turners syndrome.

The department remembers Christine for her energy, intellect and vision. She will be greatly missed.