



Northeastern University

Psych NUws: The Newsletter of the Northeastern
University Psychology Department

Department of Psychology

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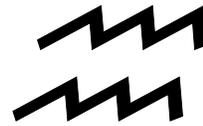
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Psych

NUws



The Newsletter of the Northeastern University Psychology Department Volume 11, Number 1 (September, 2004)

From the Editor

And hello again! The years roll around quickly. We hope you are all well rested and ready for a great academic year. A welcome to the new students! For your information, **Psych NUws** is written for the whole Psychology Department, but especially for the undergraduate students. It contains news, information, updates, announcements, and opportunities (and sometimes irrelevant humor!). We like to snapshot interesting careers in psychology, and we also like to publish news from our graduates. Reading about the paths taken by recent grads can be very helpful to you, regardless of whether that path is highly successful or

has proved to be a dead end. Sometimes our former students stay in a psychology-related career path; sometimes they find something completely new; and sometimes they are still feeling like they are treading water, not having found the inspiration they are waiting for. The lessons being acquired through life experience are useful in any of these scenarios, and we hope that by passing them on to you, you will profit too.

Aside from giving you a big welcome, I want to urge you all to **VOTE IN NOVEMBER!!** Voting is a very precious privilege and it should never be wasted. You may need to plan ahead to get an absentee ballot if you are from outside of Massachusetts. Our country

desperately needs the involvement of its young people in the political process, no matter where you stand on the political spectrum.

Apathy is not just “not doing something”—it is producing an outcome whether you like it or not.

Saying “my vote doesn’t matter” is wrong—your vote does matter.

Saying “it’s all the same no matter which candidate wins” is wrong—the candidates and their parties differ on many important philosophical and policy issues.

VOTE!!!

--Prof. Hall

From the Chairman

Welcome to a new year in the Psychology Department!! Let’s begin with a brief recap of last year, our first year in semesters. Last year’s entering class consisted of around 140 students, once again helping to make Psychology one of the largest majors in the University with around 600 majors. Our Office Staff won the Presidential Aspiration Award, a well-deserved honor. We welcomed 26 new members to Psi Chi, the Psychology honorary society, and the Psychology Club had another great year topped off by the annual trip to the Eastern Psychological Association, held in Washington D.C. last April. Seventy of your classmates graduated in June, 50% with honors.

And this year? The entering class has around 120 students (freshmen plus transfers). In addition to our new students, we welcome a new faculty member, Dr. Jay McLaughlin. Dr. McLaughlin received his Ph.D. from the University of Rochester and has just

completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Washington. His work focuses on endogenous opioid mechanisms modulating stress. (Don’t ask me what it means. I’m a social psychologist.) Dr. McLaughlin is jumping right into teaching. He will be offering a senior level course, Seminar in Psychobiology, this fall, and Laboratory in Psychobiology in the spring.

This year the Psychology Club will continue its wide range of activities (from attending Blue Man Group to seminars about preparing for graduate school to attending the Eastern Psychological Association meetings). I strongly encourage you to participate in the club. Northeastern can be a big place. The club provides the opportunity for you to become part of a community made up of peers with similar interests. Meetings are held every other week in the Psychology Lounge (and a free lunch is provided). We also will have an induction for students who qualify for membership in the Psychology National Honor Society, Psi Chi. If you are interested, please pick up an application form in the Psychology Office (125 NI), and/or go and see the Psi Chi advisor, Professor Colvin.

We also continue to use our Department website (www.psych.neu.edu) to provide information and to make available a range of opportunities to you. For example, as has been the case in the past, we have a listing of all of the courses that will be offered throughout the year. You can also view syllabi for these courses.

Our Peer Mentoring program will be available for the sixth year. Upperclass Psychology majors will be available to answer questions, tutor, and provide advice. Please keep in mind that these students are available not only for academic tutoring, but also to talk about issues of concern to you. We are

here to help you with your problems, but you may be more comfortable talking to a peer. If so, take advantage of the peer mentors. The peer mentors can also help make you aware of the wide range of opportunities that the Department and the University have to offer. We encourage you to take advantage of this unique program. To do so, you should go to our website, and click on Peer Mentoring. (If you would like to serve as a peer mentor, please contact Professor Block, our Head Advisor.)

There are lots of other opportunities that are available in the Department. For example, you can receive course credit for conducting research in the laboratories of our faculty. Over 120 students took directed studies last year. We have a certificate program in Applied Behavioral Analysis. As a Psychology major, you can pursue certification in Education. We have an advisor, Professor Snyder, who is responsible for all of our Psychology majors who are interested in this career path. Professor Kales offers a set of courses and activities that focus on eating disorders. And this does not even touch on the potential offered by Co-op.

So, the Department offers a wide range of opportunities. And we know what happens when students take advantage of these opportunities. This summer we sent questionnaires to our recent graduates to see what they are up to. I have to say that I was very impressed by what we found. Our students either have or are pursuing Masters or Ph.D.s in clinical, counseling, education, social work, social psychology, public health, biological science, and criminal justice. They have degrees in nursing, law, medicine, veterinary medicine, and dentistry. They are working as counselors, psychiatric technicians, researchers, salespeople, corporate recruiters, police officers and caseworkers.

Our graduates report that they were well-prepared when they left here. For example, one writes: "I am completely satisfied with how my education prepared me for the activities that I have engaged in over the past two years. Throughout my graduate work in psychology it was evident that compared with some of my fellow students I was exceptionally knowledgeable in many areas of psychology. This was a very reassuring and gratifying experience." I should note that this student has moved away from psychology into politics. He is currently working on a national election campaign, but he still feels that the education that he received helps him. Here's another graduate who is currently working on a Masters in Social Work: "To be honest, my experience at Northeastern overall was very valuable. I learned an enormous amount and felt like I had so much more experience (work & clinical) than my classmates." Here's a graduate who worked in sales and is now looking to enter veterinary school: "I cannot think of anything that should have or could have been done better. My experience at Northeastern was great and I know I've had more good teachers and mentors at NU than did friends of mine who went elsewhere—even at an Ivy League school. I don't think I'm missing anything."

These are just a few of the many favorable responses that we have received, but in reading them, you should keep something very important in mind. These evaluations come from students who took advantage of the opportunities that we have to offer. These are the students who were members of the Psychology Club, who joined Psi Chi, who took advantage of our advising system, who made a point of getting to know their professors, who sought out research experience with faculty members through directed studies, and who went on Co-ops that provided relevant work experience. The fact that the Department provides

opportunities means nothing unless you take advantage of them. And there is an added benefit. When you take advantage of what we offer, you will find that you are part of a group of people that have similar interests and goals. The feeling of community that comes from participation will enrich your stay, adding a great deal to your experience.

So, the form that your experience takes here has everything to do with you. The success of your predecessors shows that the Psychology program has the necessary ingredients. By taking advantage of the opportunities that we have provided, you can ensure that the ingredients come together in a way that ensures your success.

Finally, I would like to point out that on the homepage of our website you will

NEWCOPE—WHAT IS IT?

Are you concerned with your appearance? Do you have body issues with weight? Is dieting your regular style of eating? If so, *NEWCOPE* may be something you want to learn more about. *NEWCOPE* is Northeastern's Eating and Weight Concerns Project. *"Because problems with eating behavior often are linked to psychological stress and development crises, it is not surprising that college is a particularly challenging time for the young adult"* (E.F. Kales, Wellnews). This is just one major reason why college campuses have high demand for supportive and educative eating disorder programs such as *NEWCOPE*.

Our mission is to provide students with support through resources and information, as well as promoting awareness on issues related to eating disorders, weight, and body image. This program was designed to respond to the needs of students who struggle with coming to terms with their body images. Members are there to talk about your

find Contact the Chair. You can send me e-mail by clicking on this. I hope that you do. Comments and feedback about any aspect of our program would be helpful to me. I will be happy to answer your questions, or to direct you to someone who can. I hope that you take advantage of all of the opportunities that you can, and then let us know what you think about them. In later issues of this newspaper I will be updating you on other initiatives as the year unfolds. Good luck in the coming year!!!

--Prof. Harkins

concerns, listen to your questions and offer you different resources to help the issues you may be battling. Through many varied outlets, *NEWCOPE* is an organization dedicated to providing support education for students in need. All information shared is 100% confidential.

NEWCOPE also participates in Eating Disorders Awareness Week. During this week, an information desk is set up in the Curry Student Center which provides resources for students who have questions, additional pamphlets, flyers and informational brochures. Also, throughout the week, one of *NEWCOPE's* Campus Outreach task force designs an intervention activity and lecture to be presented at all of Northeastern's freshman dormitories (high risk population). During these sessions, video clips are shown, background information about eating disorders and symptoms are discussed and question and answer session takes place. Another Awareness Week activity includes "Fearless Friday." Fearless Friday is one day devoted to eating freely, without the pressure to diet or count calories.

Stop by our Drop-In Center in the Wellness Office at 111 Dockser Hall. Also, attend one of our weekly Body Talk sessions. Contact us to find out the times. Or, visit our website at www.dac.neu.edu/newcope/ or email your questions to newcope1@hotmail.com. We are here for you!

--Rae Mannino

NUws of our Grads: Katie Femino, '03

Since graduating, I have begun the School Psychology Masters/Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) program here at Northeastern. The School Psychology program is housed under the Bouve College of Health Sciences in the Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology Department. For those of you are not familiar with the field, school psychologists are qualified to conduct psychological, behavioral and psychoeducational assessments, consult with teachers, administrators, and parents; counsel children in individual and group settings; and develop prevention strategies. I am enjoying the program thus far and am looking forward to applying my coursework to the upcoming practicum experience this fall.

In addition to the master's program, I'm also involved in the Interdisciplinary Early Intervention Certification Program offered through the Bouve College. As part of the required practicum experience, I've been participating in home visits, parent/child groups, team meetings, assessments and school transition meetings.

Reflecting upon my undergrad experience at NU, I would encourage you to take advantage of the psychology department's research lab-assistant

opportunities and to build your resume with a broad range of Co-op experiences. These experiences were extremely beneficial to me in enhancing my undergraduate education and in preparing me for graduate school. Also, use your professors as resources. You'll find that they are very willing to share their experiences and to provide you with useful advice and information during the somewhat confusing process of trying to decide what to do after graduation.

NUws of our Grads: Jenna Lavery, '03

I graduated with my BS in Psychology. I am currently completing my second semester at Boston College, working towards my MA in Mental Health Counseling. I'm planning to specialize in children and adolescents and will hopefully be placed in a college counseling center for my internship next year. When not at school, I work as an ABA (Applied Behavioral Analysis) therapist and supervisor for an Early Intervention program. My job has proven to be a surprising complement to my academic program, having strengthened my understanding of behavioral intervention, family dynamics, and interpersonal boundaries.

Reflecting upon my undergraduate years, I remember feeling anxiety over not knowing exactly what I wanted to do when I graduated. My advice to current students struggling with similar issues would be to relax and get involved in the field somehow. Investigate different graduate programs, work in a lab, talk to your professors, and have some fun as well. By being open to new experiences and exploring different paths, you will be able to discover the best options for your future.

NUws of our Grads: Crystal Mileti, '02

Since graduation, I have mostly focused on working full time and preparing for the law school application process. I wanted to pay off some of my undergraduate debt, and I wanted to regroup and prepare for the law school entrance exam. I began working at Hebrew Rehabilitation Center for the Aged in Boston as a research assistant. I worked on a study looking at the effect of exercise on the health of elderly nursing home residents. I was responsible for obtaining consent, sometimes from proxies in the case of people unable to make daily decisions, such as Alzheimer patients. This was very demanding because it required me to gain the trust of many individuals. I also gathered baseline physical measurements.

Now, I have been working at McLean Hospital for over a year as a clinical research assistant in the Brain Imaging Center. I have learned about MRI technology and its application in research. I work primarily on studies that involve substance abuse, such as heroin. I have learned about the physical and chemical deficits that develop in the brain. I am able to develop my writing skills by developing protocols. Also, as a result of screening all types of individuals for studies and contacting physicians, researchers, and subjects, I have been able to develop my communication skills.

I studied for approximately 6 months for the LSAT exam and have been extensively researching my options for law school. I don't yet know what type of law I would like to practice, but I am interested in learning about many different and new areas and will determine my specialty as my education progresses.

Gaining Admission to Grad School: It's Never Too Soon to Start

Applying to graduate school can be an arduous process. However, much can be done to decrease application stress and increase the likelihood of being accepted. Ideally, many of these activities (e.g., developing relationships with faculty, maintaining a competitive GPA, becoming involved in research projects) should be initiated early in the undergraduate career.

Many schools emphasize GRE scores, particularly the verbal and quantitative sections of the general test, and some require the psychology subject test. Most programs require at least three letters of recommendation. Students should seek letter writers who have known them in multiple contexts (e.g., research, departmental organizations, or committees). Finally, experience in independent research (e.g., honors thesis, conference presentations, journal publications) can work favorably for the applicant.

The personal statement should outline why you chose to pursue graduate education in psychology, your goals, experiences you have to supplement those goals, and reasons for applying to that particular program.

Students may jeopardize their chances by restricting the number of schools to which they apply. Just as with applying to college, you should pick a range of "easier" and "harder" schools to get into.

A final important aspect is the student's overall "fit" with the program. There is considerable variability across programs, and certain students may not match well with certain programs. "Fit" involves compatibility with the overall philosophy and orientation of the

program, as well as being matched with a specific faculty member in terms of research interests, work ethics, and personality.

Avoid procrastination.

If you are offered an interview, be prepared for a variety of interview settings. For instance, you may be interviewed by faculty members and/or graduate students, in one-on-one or group settings. You should prepare a list of the types of questions that might be asked, and prepare a list of questions you want to ask. Get informed about the program, and conduct mock interviews with faculty or friends. The interview serves the dual purpose of allowing both parties to assess whether an applicant is a good fit for the program.

And a P.S. from Prof. Hall: Always feel free to ask our graduate students about this process. They are our local experts and will be very happy to talk to you!!

--Summarized from *APS Observer*,
December 2003.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM YOUR CO-OP FACULTY

**Interested in doing Co-op for
Spring/Summer 1 of 2005?**

Step one: Attend one of the following
MANDATORY meetings:

Wed., 9/15, 12-1, 274 NI
Tuesday, 9/21, 12-1, 274 NI
Thursday, 9/23, 3-4, 274 NI

These meetings will cover everything
you need to know for Co-op including
how to use the NEU Cool system, Co-op
procedures and requirements, and
important dates.

Step two: Make an appointment with
your Co-op Faculty in September:

Psychology A-Ma: Cynthia Crespin, 154
NI, 373-3456, c.crespin@neu.edu
Psychology Mc-Z: Michelle Israel, 151NI,
373-3464, m.israel@neu.edu
Behavioral Neuroscience (all students):
Michelle Israel
Linguistics (all students): Cynthia
Crespin

NOTE: You will not be allowed to go out
on Co-op unless you attend one of
these meetings AND meet with your Co-
op Faculty!!

Co-op Prep Class Info: MANDATORY CO-OP PRE-REQUISITE

To be eligible to do co-op, you must
first successfully complete a
MANDATORY Co-op Prep course. This is
a one credit course, which students take
in addition to their other four classes.

If you are a Psych major and your last
name begins with A-Ma or if you are a
Linguistics major, register for key #
52555, Prof. Crespin's co-op prep class.

If you are a Psych major and your last
name begins with Mc-Z or if you are a
Behavioral Neuroscience major, register
for key # 63001, Prof. Israel's co-op
prep class.

**No student is allowed to co-op without
being enrolled in or having passed this
course.**

If you have any concerns, questions, or
difficulty getting registered for this
course, please contact Prof. Crespin at
c.crespin@neu.edu or Prof. Israel at
m.israel@neu.edu

Co-op Q & A

What is Co-op?

Co-op is a cornerstone of
Northeastern's curriculum whereby
students alternate periods of
coursework with 6 month long periods
of full-time paid work. The
combination of academic study and
work produces an overall learning
experience that gives greater meaning
to each student's studies and more
direction to his or her career
development.

Why should students do Co-op?

Participation in cooperative education
allows Arts and Sciences majors to
examine a variety of issues they have
learned in academic coursework.
Students who complete a co-op
experience also bring the knowledge
they've gained in the workplace back to
classroom discussions.

Since the career interests of Arts and
Sciences majors are diverse, the specific
learning goals for students on co-op

will vary, depending upon individual students' career aspirations.

Overall, the learning goals include:

- Intellectual Growth (including critical thinking and communication skills),
- Academic Growth (including increased knowledge of the field of interest and the development of technical skills),
- Personal and Professional Growth (including the cultivation of ethical and social awareness and career and individual development).

Who is eligible to go on Co-op?

Students who have maintained the GPA required in their major course of study, have taken and passed the mandatory co-op prep course, have reached the second semester of their sophomore year, and have met with their Co-op Faculty before the deadlines for that session have expired.

Could you explain the mandatory Co-op class?

At some point before their first Co-op (most students do this in their Freshman or Sophomore year) students take the MCOPU101 Professional Development Co-op class. This class provides students with the tools necessary to successfully obtain, and excel in, a co-op position. Course highlights include career assessments, resume writing, interviewing, and discussions on important topics such as ethics and professional behaviors. This course provides a great deal of information to assist students as they begin their search for their first co-op position and helps build a foundation of career development skills. No other University prepares their students as thoroughly as Northeastern for the "real world" of job searching.

When do students go on Co-op and what is the process?

Co-op is a three step process. It includes preparation, action and reflection. The "preparation" spans the entire semester before student wishes to go on Co-op. It includes the resume work, referrals, interviewing, etc. The "action" is the six months when the students are working in their Co-op positions from January to June, or July through December. The reflection component varies in each discipline, but usually takes place after a student returns from Co-op.

How many Co-ops do students in Arts and Sciences do?

Although Co-op is optional for Arts and Sciences majors (excluding Architecture and students on scholarships - for them it is mandatory), the majority of our students undertake at least one Co-op during their education at Northeastern. Most do one or two Co-ops.

Where, geographically are these Co-op jobs?

Most Co-ops are in the Boston area. We continue to offer opportunities in other places, but the bulk of positions are local.

Can I do a Co-op closer to home?

Yes. A position can get approved when a student starts early, and works diligently with the Co-op faculty. We are very willing to work with students to help them develop opportunities closer to home.

How do students jobs "progress" if they do more than one Co-op?

Some students are very sure of their career goals and work "vertically". They compete for and choose positions which help them progress up the career ladder

of their chosen field. A lot of students, however, choose positions “horizontally”. This could be a student who tries two or three entry level jobs within different areas. An example of this would be a psychology student trying to see if they would prefer working as a psychologist, a researcher, or an educator. This student may explore all three choices during their Co-ops, and it will help them decide where to focus their energy and time.

Isn't the vertical approach better for the student?

Not necessarily. Many people change careers many times during their working years. This exploration helps students

Good Research Tidbits You Can Tell Your Family and Friends

Do you ever go home on holiday, or hang out with friends, and experience that sinking feeling when they ask you what you've been learning as a psychology major? You think to yourself, “How do I even begin?” “Would they find it that interesting?” or “Oops, what HAVE I been learning?!” The net effect is probably a severe case of being tongue-tied.

Well, here's a solution for you! From time to time, we will pass along very tellable findings that you can whip out when the need arises. Of course you should know that research is never totally neat or conclusive. When you actually read the original research, you will see that there are often qualifying statements, limitations, alternate

“rule out” some of the less attractive options for them before they leave school.

What is the biggest myth of Co-op?

Co-op is not a magical gumball machine where the student shows up and the perfect job rolls out. It is an academic experience that takes work and determination. If a student works hard, he or she usually sees a positive return.

--Prof. Crespin

interpretations, loose ends, and unanswered questions. But, sometimes, the findings can be easily summarized and some of them will be interesting and understandable even to your family and friends who don't know much psychology.

So try these (if you want the citation information ask Prof. Hall):

- Younger achievement age predicts shorter life for governors. Among 1,672 male governors, the younger they were when elected governor, the younger they died.
- Taking music lessons increases children's IQ. This was shown in a study in which children were randomly assigned to a music lesson group or a control group.
- IQ has been going up all around the world ever since IQ tests were

invented. Every few years, the major tests are re-normed so that the

“average” seems the same. In

actuality, the tests have become harder and harder, thus “hiding” the previous worldwide gains.

- There’s a common belief that highly creative people suffer more mental illness than the average population. It’s true according to numerous studies, and especially true for artists and poets.
- You know the stereotype that associates men with dogs and women with cats? Well, studies show that there actually is a disparity in ownership, such that men are more likely to own dogs and women are more likely to own cats.
- Being in a discussion group with members of minority groups increases the intellectual complexity of the thoughts of majority group members. Also, the racial diversity of one’s friendship group predicts more intellectual complexity.

Psych NUws is a joint effort of the faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, and staff of the Northeastern University Psychology Department. Direct all inquiries and contributions to the Editor, Prof. Judith Hall. We especially welcome contributions from undergraduates!

OPPORTUNITIES



The Speech Perception Lab needs you if American English is your native language, you have no speech or hearing disorders, and you are between 18 and 45 years of age. We pay \$10/hr for one or two hour experiments, scheduled at your convenience. Call 373-4462 for details.