

# The Thalamus

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**Students in the Spotlight: Sean Flanagan**

**By: Teresa McGinley**

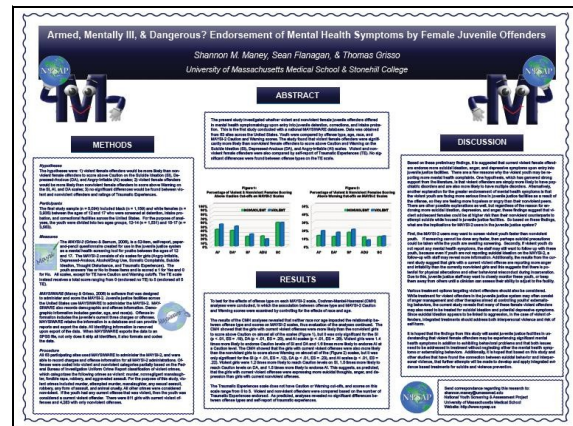
Stonehill senior, Sean Flanagan, recently participated in the American Psychology-Law Society Conference in Miami, FL. The conference took place from March 2 to March 5, 2011 at the Miami Regency Hyatt. Both the European Association of Psychology and Law (EAPL) and the Australian & New Zealand Association of Psychiatry, Psychology, & Law (ANZAPPL) partnered with the American Psychology-Law Society (AP-LS) for the 4th International Congress on Psychology and Law. This international event recognized researchers from across the globe who have made contributions to the field of psychology and law. The conference presented research conducted by not only professionals, but also undergraduates in the field.

"As a first time visitor/participant of an academic conference, I was extremely impressed at the wide breadth of research topics and interests presented by both the

leading academics and practitioners in the field of forensic psychology, as well as undergraduate students. The conference provided a unique opportunity for attendees to sign up for workshops, view posters, as well as sit in on symposiums where researchers give formal presentations of their work. For example, I was able to sit in on a symposium given by a researcher who studied PLC-R scores among white collar

criminals," Flanagan said. The weekend long event gave participants opportunities to interact with one another. Researchers were able to attend many non-academic social events, as well as to meet others in the field and to celebrate the collective accomplishments of the group. Professional and personal relationships were built to extend into the future.

Continued on page 2



Sean Flanagan's poster presentation.

**Stonehill Psychology Alumni**

**By: Caitlin DeCortin**

Talk to any senior or second-semester junior majoring in psychology about their plans for after graduation, and they will tell you their future plans. Deciding on a career focus and professional direction as soon as possible proves imperative for psychology majors, in a field marketed by competitiveness. After graduation, psychology majors usually follow one of two paths: enrolling in graduate school

to obtain a higher degree, or immediately entering the workforce; most psychology professors encourage the former. Most students know that Professor Tirrell, class of '74, is a Stonehill alum. Like many psychology majors, he immediately enrolled in graduate school after graduation. Professor Tirrell obtained both his master's degree and his PhD in experimental psychology over the course of 5 years. He accepted a one

year position at Stonehill. He was then was asked to stay permanently and the rest is history. Stonehill alum, Paul Whalen, class of '86, has also become a professor. As an assistant professor of psychiatry at Dartmouth College, Whalen studies Affective Neuroscience, or what he deems "[the study of] how the brain supports emotional processing in our social interactions." Continued on page 4



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[www.stonehill.edu/x10621.xml](http://www.stonehill.edu/x10621.xml)

## Students in the Spotlight: Sean Flanagan

Continued from page 1...

"Aside from the formal activities of each day, the conference was an incredible chance to network with professionals in the field. Through Professor Maney, a adjunct professor in the Psychology Department at Stonehill and the primary author of the research that I worked on, I was able to meet a lot of great researchers who work out of UMass Medical School, get career advice, and get my name out there as a way of forming future professional relationships," Flanagan explained.

Flanagan served as a research assistant over the summer to adjunct Professor Shannon Maney and Thomas Grisso (of University of Massachusetts Medical School). In their study entitled, "Armed, mentally ill, & dangerous: Endorsement of mental health symptoms by female juvenile offenders," they investigated whether violent and nonviolent female juvenile offenders differed in mental health symptomatology upon entry into juvenile detention, corrections, and intake probation. The study required the use of a juvenile delinquency assessment tool called the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI-2). Flanagan attributed its development to researcher Thomas Grisso. The MAYSI is used as a screening tool to assess mental

health of youths between the ages of 12 and 17. It contains six scales (Angry-Irritable, Depressed-Anxious, Alcohol/Drug Use, Somatic Complaints, Suicide Ideation, Thought Disturbance, and Traumatic Experiences). Scores on the Suicide Ideation, Depressed Anxious and Angry Irritable scales of the MAYSI showed that current violent female offenders express more suicidal thoughts, depressive symptoms, and anger upon entry into juvenile justice facilities. The Traumatic Experiences (TE) scale showed no differences between offense types (violent or nonviolent) and self-report of traumatic experiences.

The researchers hope that their study will assist juvenile justice facilities in understanding that violent female offenders exhibit not only behavioral problems, but also mental health symptoms that must be addressed by treatment programs. This research presented a captivating topic to other researchers at the conference. Flanagan became interested in forensic psychology as a Freshman, declaring a double major in criminology and psychology. Psychology in the Legal System, a course offered by Professor Maney, revealed the wide range of career paths and professions avail-

able within the field.

"After asking Professor Maney how to best get involved with research, clinical work, and where I should start looking for graduate programs, she offered to let me help her with her research. She also advised me to try to get some sort of clinical experience and recommended that I apply at Bridgewater State Hospital where she worked as a psychologist. I got a job there as a mental health worker and continued doing research with her throughout the summer as I lived on campus at Stonehill," Flanagan explained. Flanagan expressed interest in further research utilizing the MAYSI with Professor Maney. He emphasized that working as a research assistant has been beneficial in preparing him for graduate school, as well as demonstrating the importance of conducting research.

"Professor Maney has been so instrumental in helping me get my foot in the door in terms of research, clinical experience, and networking. I am looking forward to continuing to assist her in research as she is finishing up her dissertation for her Doctoral Degree," Flanagan said.

Flanagan reflected on his experience at Stonehill and the resources made available to him. He discussed the department being an

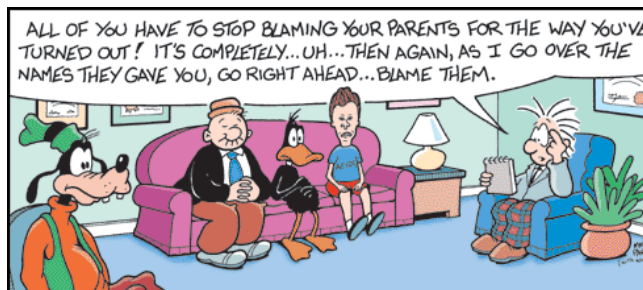
incredible resource to find internships, research, clinical work experience, and networking. These experiences can help students realize what they are interested in or, more importantly, what they may not be interested in. This makes these experiences valuable opportunities when planning a fulfilling future career in psychology.

"My advice to other undergrads here at Stonehill is to speak with your advisor or a professor that you feel you have a good relationship with and be open minded to whatever advice they may have for you. It is really up to you to take initiative to seek out opportunities and establish yourself as an interested student. It always helps to find a professor who conducts research in an area that you are interested in pursuing, but I would recommend that you get involved even if you are not sure it is what you had in mind for a future career."

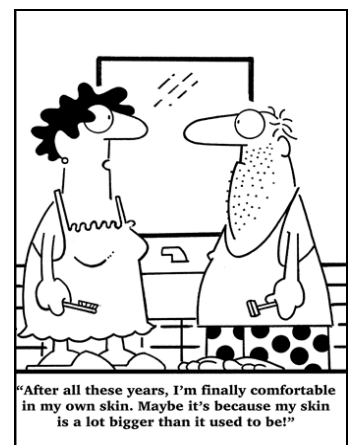
Flanagan summarized his most important lesson: take the initiative to realize and take advantage of the opportunities and resources that are here for you within the Psychology Department, as well as outside of the campus. Future research and accomplishments are anticipated by this already successful psychology and criminology student in the senior class.



## Psychology Humor

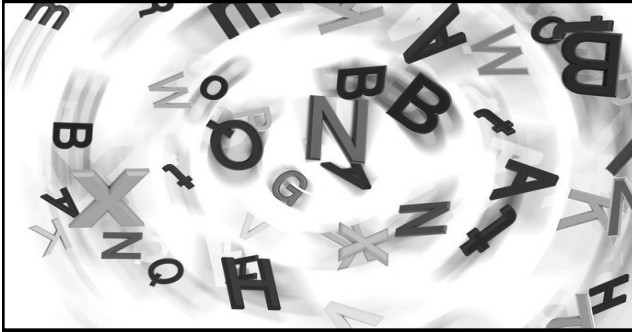


<http://www.offthemark.com/>



## Anagrams: Famous People in Psychology

Rearrange the letters to form the first and last names of ten famous psychology figures. Answers on the back page.



1. Defusing Drum
2. Dwell Whim Nut
3. Jaw Hon Tons
4. Brink Fens
5. Grun Jalc
6. Skier Roe Ink
7. Alarm Boas Wham
8. Viva Van Lop
9. Scar Err Log
10. Lame Jail Swim

## Riddles Answers on back page.

*Each of these stories may seem impossible at first. Can you figure out the solution?*

1. A man and his son were on a tour of an atomic power plant. In the control room, the boy asked if he could see the controls for the reactor core. The head physicist said yes, and explained how the controls worked. After the boy left, the head physicist turned to an assistant and said, "That was my son." How could that be?

2. Three kids went for a walk. About a mile into the walk, they came to a deep, wide river. There was no bridge. They didn't have a boat or raft, or any materials to make one. None of them could swim. How did they get across?

3. Lisa walked out the back door of the farmhouse on a Thursday afternoon and found a man's pipe, a scarf and three lumps of coal lying on the wet grass near the barn. The nearest neighbours lived a mile away, and no-one had visited that day. Where did the objects come from?

4. A true story: a white horse jumped over a castle and landed on a bishop, who immediately disappeared from the landscape. Where did this take place?

<http://www.youramazingbrain.org.uk/teachers/stories.htm#>

## The Association Between Short Sleep Duration and Weight Gain By: Emily Palmisano

Obesity has become an epidemic throughout the United States. While America's growing waistline is caused by a variety of factors, sleep does not characterize something most people would connect with their body weight. This association holds importance for those living in the United States due to the fact that about one-third of Americans are chronically sleep deprived, in addition to the fact that high caloric food is readily available. Since body weight is the byproduct of eating and metabolic regulation, weight gain would be associated with abnormal sleep habits. This is because sleep mechanisms have been found to be involved in hunger and appetite stimulation inducing metabolic functions. While some confounding variables call into question the reliability of the association, sleep deprivation has been directly linked with weight gain.

Fluctuations of leptin and ghrelin, two neurotransmitters that effect appetite and satiety, support the association between obesity and short sleep duration. Short sleep duration creates a build up of ghrelin in the body while decreasing the levels of leptin. This simultaneously creates two problems for homeostasis: one long-term, one short-term. Leptin indicates a long-term report of nutrition to the brain and usually induces an anabolic response, while the ghrelin causes a more immediate response of intense hunger and decrease the metabolic rate. This means that a person who has short sleep duration has fluctuating levels of leptin and ghrelin and has a greater sense of hunger and altered habitual eating times. "With sleep loss...relatively high ghrelin and low leptin levels are associated with increased BMI" (Taheri et al., 2004). Essentially, the metabolism of sleep deprived people will change from the fluctuating levels of leptin and ghrelin. Though individuals



become more hungry, through these neurotransmitter changes, their metabolism is less anabolic. This could initially appear to cause a loss in weight since the metabolism potentially becomes more catabolic. However, it is important to remember the availability of high caloric, desirable food and the sedentary behavior of most Americans. Specifically, "...responses to sleep restriction were associated with a 24% increase in hunger and a 23% increase in [overall] appetite. Appetite for calorie-dense nutrients with high carbohydrate content...increased by 33%-45%" (Spiegel et al., 2004). A clearer trend emerges between short sleep and weight gain in children and adolescents. This means that younger people have a greater chance of being affected by addictive eating behavior caused by sleep deprivation. Potentially, this could affect children by causing them to steadily gain weight as they age, creating generations filled with obesity and cardiovascular difficulties (Trenell et al., 2007). Along with this, "...habitual sleep duration below 7.7 hours was associated with increased BMI, similar to findings in other studies including children, adolescents, and adults" (Taheri et al., 2004). With awareness given to this problem, hopefully, people will realize the results of their actions in terms of future health.

## 2011 Psychology Department Awards

### Students of the Year

Wyatt Donnelly-Landolt  
Michelle Jaques



### Outstanding Interns

Sondra Davis  
John Norris



### Student Researchers Presenting at Conferences

Keri Carvalho  
Kelly Doherty  
Laura Domanico  
Wyatt Donnelly-Landolt  
Sean Flanagan  
Erik Muhlenhaupt  
Lindsey Pinkham

## Stonehill Psychology Alumni Continued from page 1...

However, education is not the only field psychology alumni have entered. John Gorvin, who graduated from Stonehill in 1982, opened up his own practice in Wakefield, MA. As a clinical psychologist, he offers consultation, assessment, and psychotherapy services. He says that while he “entered Stonehill planning to become a psychology major,” he wasn’t quite sure what he wanted to do as a career. After graduating from Florida Tech with his PhD in Clinical Psychology, Gorvin has worked in the field doing everything from working in hospitals and mental health centers to private practices and other “community-based, outpatient settings.” Today, in addition to running his own private practice, he provides one-on-one coaching and sports psychology services to middle school and high school track teams, while also serving as a coach. This incorporates his hobby of distance running into his career.

Elizabeth Razukiewicz, class of 2007, took a slightly different path than many other typical psychology majors. She states that she “got into [her] field of work on a fluke.” Razukiewicz explains, “I was looking for a job that had *anything* to do with psychology because I wanted to take a break before going to graduate school. I was working at my ‘summer job’ and one of my co-workers asked me what kind of job I was looking for. When I explained what I had studied in school and that I wanted to help people, specifically kids and young adults, she told me about an agency she worked for part time.” This agency was the Association for Children with Down Syndrome, and although she didn’t have much experience working with people living with disabilities, Razukiewicz got the job because of her extensive resume and experience with children. She first worked as a Medicaid Services Coordinator, more commonly known as a case worker. Currently as the Day Habilitation Supervisor at the organization she helps create a day program for participants ages 19 to 22. She plans on going for her master’s degree in social work within the next year.

So what do alumni like most about their jobs? For Professor Tirrell—besides the wonderful students of Stonehill College—he likes his colleagues; he calls them a “great bunch of people to work with.” Additionally, Professor Tirrell states that “there is a continual newness because students are always changing;” there is always a new group of students to teach as the semesters pass. John Gorvin says, “It is really an honor to be trusted enough for people to reveal their vulnerabilities and to try to be able to assist them.” He also enjoys the free-

dom that accompanies running his own private practice. “[I] can make my own hours, and can select the types of cases I accept,” Gorvin explains. Elizabeth Razukiewicz loves seeing the daily impact her work has on the lives of her clients: “I know it sounds cliché, but every day I am able to see the difference that I am making and I get to see the progress that the people I work with are making.” She also says that she learns something new every day. Paul Whalen says the thing that he likes most about the field is “the fact that it’s still so new and changing every day. There’s still plenty to do!”

Amidst the plethora of advice alumni have for current psychology majors emerges one universal suggestion: “be flexible.” Whalen had always planned on becoming a therapist, but after taking biological psychology with Professor Tirrell, he “realized that there was an emerging field that emphasized the study of the brain to understand behavior,” and he “was hooked.” Whalen also advocates that students do research during their junior or senior year. “It’s the only way to really know what the field is like. If you find that it’s not for you, the skills you learn in a research lab will serve you no matter what field you go into,” he explains. Razukiewicz also recommends being open to new things. “I had never thought of working with the developmentally disabled and now I am so glad that this job found me,” she says. She also suggests graduate school, but not necessarily in psychology, advising students to “keep your eyes open for anything that may interest you, because psychology really applies to everything.” Gorvin encourages students to take as many courses as they possibly can from both the psychology department as well as other departments on campus. He also suggests students become involved in campus organizations in order to “expand your comfort zone and broaden your horizons” and take advantage of student internships and Career Services. “You won’t have this opportunity many times in your life, so take full advantage of that,” he says. Professor Tirrell says that students must “realize that you are not necessarily going to drop into the exact job that you want...I was lucky.” He explains that students may have to build their resumes first before being able to obtain their dream jobs. The consensus is that no matter what professional path they choose after graduation, students must be willing to be open to any opportunities that come their way, for as Professor Tirrell points out, “[you] never know where life will take you from there.”

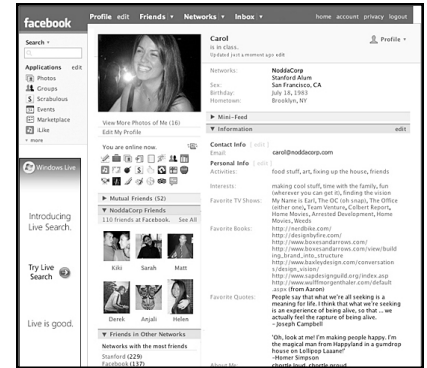
## Psychology in the News

By: Georgia Winters

### Facebook Photo Sharing Reflects Focus on Female Appearance

Michael A. Stephanone of the University of Buffalo focuses much of his research on social networking sites. His most recent study examined on the relationship between a person's perceived self worth and their usage of Facebook, a popular social networking site. The study consisted of 311 participants (49.8% female) with the average age around 23 years old. The participants filled out the contingencies of self worth (CSW) scale and a questionnaire inquiring about their Facebook usage. The CSW scale explores the subjects self esteem based on public-based contingency or private-based contingency. A person whose self worth revolves around being accepted by others, their physical appearance, and desire to compete

against others characterizes a person with a public-based contingency. On the other hand, participants whose self worth forms through private-based contingencies seek academic success, love and support from family, and being a moral human being. The results showed that public-based contingency subjects had greater levels of photo sharing and spend more time online compared to the participants who base their self worth on private-based contingencies. Stephanone concludes that participants (in particular females) whose confidence stems from their appearance tend to share more photos online and have larger networks on Facebook.



Stephanone, M. A. (2011). Facebook photo sharing reflects focus on female appearance. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedaily.com>.

### Dude, You Throw Like a Crybaby!



An interesting study conducted by Frank Pollick and Lawrie McKay of the University of Glasgow examined how emotions expressed in body language affect a person's perception of the sex of the person performing the actions. The researchers created 60 videos (half male and half female actors) using motion-capture systems allowing just the movements of the body to be seen but not the actor's face, garments, or physique. The actors were asked to throw a baseball that expressed a range of emotions, such as sad or angry. Ninety-three college students were randomly assigned to several video clips and asked to guess the sex of the actor and the mood of the behavior. Subjects accurately chose throws conveying sadness 30% of

the time, whereas they correctly chose anger as the emotion 70% of the time. Each participant viewed the same amount of female and male videos, yet 60% of the time the sad throws were judged to be female and 70% of the time the angry motions were guessed to be a male figure. The researchers suggest that the significant difference results from gender stereotyping affecting our judgment of what emotions in our body language are typically male or female.

Pollick, F., Lawrie M. (2011). Dude, you throw like a crybaby!. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedaily.com>.

### People in Jobs Traditionally Held by the Opposite Sex are Judged More Harshly for Mistakes

Victoria Brescoll of Yale University conducted a study that examined how participants would perceive mistakes from people in high-status jobs if the job categorizes one normally associated with a particular gender. The hypothesis stated that people who held a job typically associated with the opposite sex would be judged more harshly if they made a mistake. For the study, they used the president of an all girl's college for their high-powered female job. The typical male position that the researchers used was a police chief. Two hundred participants read one scenario where either a male or female character held one of these stereotyped jobs. For each

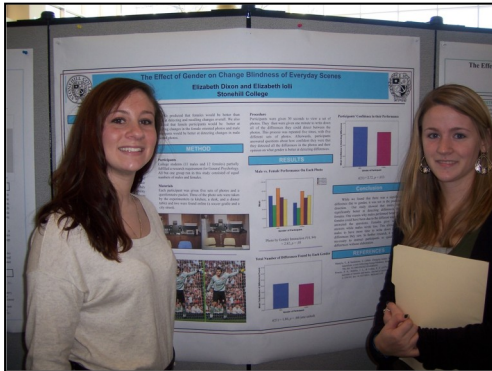
story, the mistake was that the person did not send enough police officers or campus security to respond to a protest. After reading the scenario, each participant judged the person who made the mistake. Results revealed that a person in a position typically held by a member of the opposite sex was judged more harshly. The participants judged the person to be incompetent and not deserving of the status if they were in a job opposing the stereotype of the position. Brescoll concludes that the results support the glass cliff effect which stressed that a person countering a stereotype will more easily fall from a high-powered position.



Brescoll, V. (2010). People in jobs traditionally held by the other sex are judged more harshly for mistakes. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedaily.com>.

## Research Methods Poster Presentation– Fall 2010

A sample of student research presented at the poster conference this past fall.

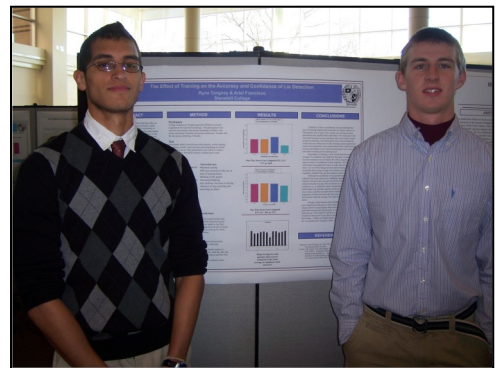


### The Effect of Gender on Change Blindness of Everyday Scenes Elizabeth Dixon and Elizabeth Iolli

This study examined the ability to detect change (change blindness) in males and females. College students (11 males and 12 females) were asked to view five pairs of photos and list the differences they detected between the two photos. Results showed that males were significantly better than females. Males listed more differences, but this may be due to the number of words used to respond during the one-minute response time.

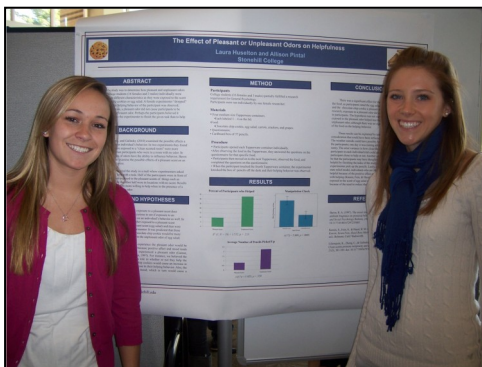
### The Effect of Training on the Accuracy and Confidence of Lie Detection Ryne Tangney and Ariel Francisco

Our study examined whether training improves lie detection. Sixteen females either received lie detection training (using verbal cues, nonverbal cues, or both) or no training at all. Using this knowledge, participants viewed a video of speakers making six statements, indicated whether each statement was a lie or the truth, and indicated their confidence. Contrary to the hypothesis it was found that training did not improve lie detection above chance. Regardless of accuracy, participants were confident in their judgment.



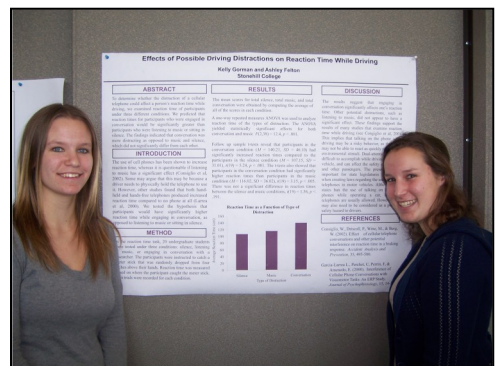
### The Effect of Pleasant or Unpleasant Odors on Helpfulness Laura Huselton and Allison Pintal

The purpose of the study was to determine how pleasant and unpleasant odors affect helping. College students (16 females and 3 males) individually were asked to rate food on different characteristics as they were exposed to the scent of either chocolate chip cookies (pleasant) or egg salad (unpleasant). A female experimenter “dropped” a box of pencils and the helping behavior of the participant was observed. Contrary to the hypothesis, a pleasant odor did not cause participants to be more helpful than an unpleasant odor. Perhaps the participants believed it would be more helpful to the experimenter to finish the given task than to help pick up the pencils.

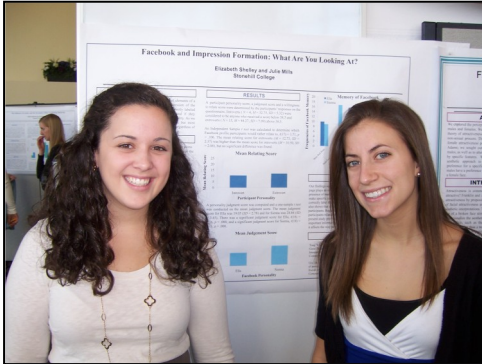


### Effects of Possible Driving Distractions on Reaction Time While Driving Kelly Gorman and Ashley Felton

To determine whether the distraction of a cellular telephone could affect a person’s reaction time while driving, we examined reaction time of participants under three different conditions. We predicted that reaction times for participants who were engaged in conversation would be significantly greater than participants who were listening to music or sitting in silence. The findings indicated that conversation was more distracting as opposed to music and silence, which did not significantly differ from each other.



## Research Methods Poster Presentation– Fall 2010



### Facebook and Impression Formation: What Are You Looking At?

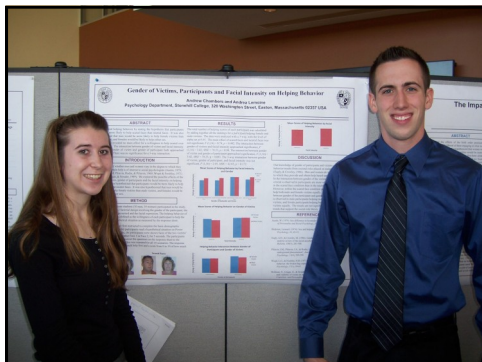
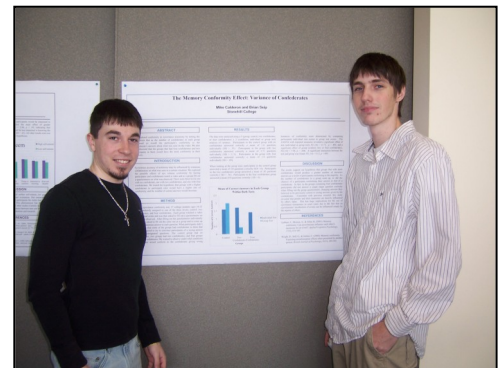
Elizabeth Shelley and Julie Mills

The purpose of our study was to test the individual elements of a Facebook page on an observer's formulated impression of the user, specifically whether or not the participant correctly labeled the Facebook user as an introvert or extrovert and if they identified more with the profile closest to their personality. As we predicted, participants correctly judged each profile but most participants related more with the introverted profile regardless of their own personality type.

### The Memory Conformity Effect: Variance of Confederates

Mike Calderon and Brian Seip

We explored conformity in eyewitness testimony by testing the hypothesis that as the number of confederates in each group increased so would the participant's conformity to the confederate's answers about what was seen on the video. We also hypothesized that the groups that had four confederates and two participants in them would have the most conformity in their answers.



### Gender of Victims, Participants and Facial Intensity on Helping Behavior

Andrew Chambers and Andrea Lemoine

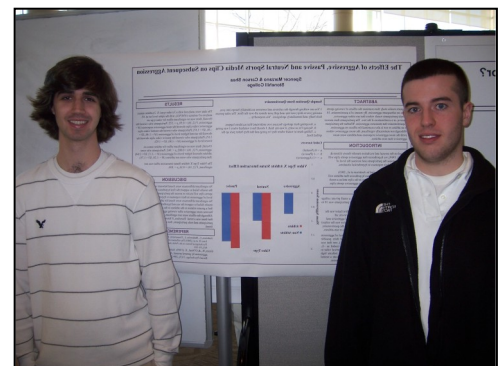
We explored helping behavior by testing the hypothesis that participants would be more likely to help scared faces than neutral faces. It was also hypothesized that men would be more likely to help female victims than male victims, and females would be likely to help either sex. The analysis revealed no main effect for a willingness to help scared over neutral faces. The interaction between gender of victim and facial intensity as well as gender of victim and gender of participant both approached significance. There was no significance for a 3-way interaction.

### The Effects of Aggressive, Passive and Neutral Sports

#### Media Clips on Subsequent Aggression

Spencer Marzano & Carson Shea

A sports media study that examines the effects of viewing sports clips on subsequent aggression. By means of a questionnaire, 18 female participants watch videos that are either aggressive, passive, or a combination of the two. The participants then answer a questionnaire that measures aggression. Whether the participant is an athlete or not is also examined for effects on aggression. Although not statistically significant, the more aggressive videos yield the most aggressive responses and athletes are more aggressive than non-athletes.



## Research with Professor O'Hea

By: Kayla Pirri

This fall, Professor Erin O'Hea taught an advanced psychology research course to aid in her research.

Professor O'Hea explains, "my area of specialty is called health disparities, which means that I'm interested in working with under served groups of medical patients." Recently, she has targeted breast cancer research, exploring her interest in why Caucasian women are diagnosed with breast cancer more often, but African American women have higher mortality rates due to breast cancer.

A grant given by the state of New Jersey allowed Professor O'Hea to provide free breast cancer screening and treatment to women living at a very significant level of poverty that were either uninsured or under insured. Professor O'Hea explains, "My goal was to determine why women who have abnormal results do not come back for further testing or treatment when everything was free." She surveyed 500 women who identified themselves as either Caucasian, African American, or Latino. She looked at predicting factors of whether or not these women intended to follow up with abnormal results, such as their level of depression, anxiety, distrust of Western medicine, and health locus of control.

Professor O'Hea also explained that, "the really great part was that socioeconomic status was controlled for." This allowed her to examine race exclusively, without having to control for the fact that women of lower socioeconomic status tend to be of African American and Latino decent.

The results of these surveys were put into a database, and Professor O'Hea asked her class to form research questions based on the constructs in the database.

Seniors Corey Roos, Michelle Jaques, and Nicole Mannix chose to look at God health locus of control (i.e. belief that God controls the fate of your health) and medical distrust of traditional westernized medicine. They found that these two factors were both related to whether or not the women intended to follow up with abnormal results. The poster has been submitted to a national research conference next fall.

Keri Carvalho and Kelly Doherty presented their research at the Eastern Psychological Association this past March. They did a side piece on Professor O'Hea's study and looked at racial differences in depression and anxiety and found that women tended to be more anxious than depressed across all ethnicities. They also found that Latino and African American women had a higher rate of anxiety than white women and Latino women had higher depression scores than African American women.

Professor O'Hea explained that these results were not consistent with current research and she attributes the high rates of anxiety and depression of Latino women to the fact that Latino women, "are not only facing discrimination and language barriers, but they are feeling the pressure to acculturate." Also, she explained that some that were surveyed are "not [in the United States] on a permanent status, so they are feeling added stressors."



Molly Little and Nicole Evans also did research looking at whether there are racial differences in distrust in traditional medicine. They found that Latino women had the greatest amount of distrust in westernized medicine. These students did not present their research.

Professor O'Hea went on to explain her plans for future research, "In terms of this study, we have a lot of analyses we need to do with this data." She also hopes to do this research again, looking at women of middle socioeconomic status and see if she finds the same effects. Professor O'Hea also continues her research in oncology at UMASS Medical School.

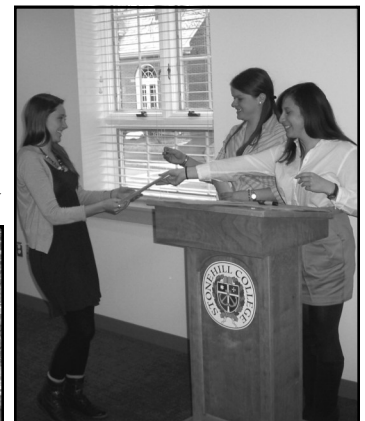
"I also want to get research starting on campus...I am interested in college student's health behaviors," she explains. Professor O'Hea plans to research whether changing someone's behaviors to be healthy and cancer preventative at a young age will carry through their lives and decrease their risk of cancer down the road.

She was also "interested in mindfulness meditation and looking at students' use of those types of techniques to manage stress." Professor O'Hea closed with stating, "I want students to come to me if they are interested in doing research!"

## 2011 Psi Chi Inductees



Kaitlin Andrews	Julia Fagone	Kelsey McCarthy
Elizabeth Buckley	Michelle Fanciullo	Corey Roos
Brian Casaceli	William Grandmont	Alison Rowe
Sarah Chiodi	Casey Gregoire	Kelly Sullivan
Deana D'Ambrosio	Anne Kostic	Aly Weston-Murphy





## Psychology in the Public Eye

### Charlie Sheen: Psychology's Latest Research Participant

By: Teresa McGinley

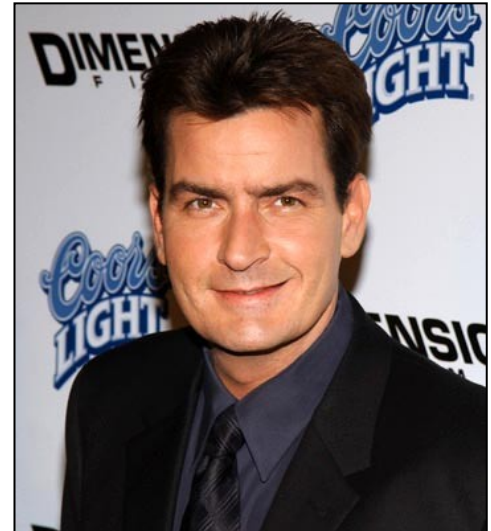
Psychology lives all around us. Subtle facial cues in a pass by greeting, nervously anticipating the grade received on a test, or cueing into someone's emotional status from only a quick glance. These examples all constitute the use of psychology in everyday life but often go unnoticed. The manipulation of this subject in the mass media, however, brings psychological issues to light. Whether diagnosing a celebrity's mental illness or predicting behavior between two individuals in reality shows, psychology lives and thrives in the public eye. We are kept glued to the screen when learning the newest updates in the lives of the rich and famous. Many look for an escape from the mundane routine of everyday life into the fast paced life of a star. These issues inadvertently expose us to many of the central facets of the study of psychology.

Charlie Sheen cast himself into the spotlight by displaying what celebrity psychologists have deemed hypomania. This disorder, previously foreign to those uneducated in psychology, has become a popular phenomenon. Addiction has also been recognized as an important problem based on Sheen's

behavior. The public outcry at Sheen's antics have cast hypomania as a prevalent issue. Dedicated viewers of *Two and a Half Men* find themselves now needing to learn the basics of mental disorders to catch up with their favorite star. Dr. Drew Pinsky works as a celebrity medical journalist and played a part in revealing to the public the psychological symptoms that Sheen exhibits. "Part of the challenge of hypomanic patients is they don't believe they have a problem," said Pinsky. "They believe you're the problem. So, it's very difficult to get them to cooperate."

Few professionals can argue against Sheen's seemingly endless energy, distractibility, grandiose beliefs and hyper sexuality which constitute main symptoms of hypomania. Sheen declared his almost superhuman superiority in a variety of statements to the press.

Psychology, hypomania in particular, has been cast into the public eye by the antics of one individual, leaving many to wonder how psychology applies to the lives of their other beloved celebrities or even those living and working around us.



#### Statements by Sheen:

"I'm a high priest Vatican assassin warlock."

"I have Adonis DNA."

"I'm tired of pretending I'm not special. I'm tired of pretending I'm not a total [expletive] rock star from Mars."

"I'm different, I have a different brain. I got tiger blood, man."

"You borrow my brain for just five seconds, and it would be like 'Dude, I can't handle it. Unplug this'"  
-When asked on Today if he was manic, Sheen denied it, but admitted he was "grandiose."

-According to him, however, since he's a superior human being "who lives a grandiose life" it's not really grandiosity in his case.

-In regards to being a drug addict, "I was banging a seven gram rock that would kill most people. That's how I roll. I have one speed, one gear, go! That's more than normal people could survive. I've got tiger blood."

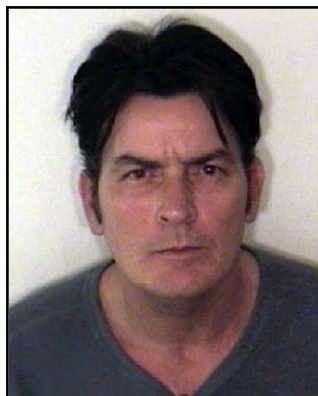
-To cure his drug addiction, he needed no help, no AA, no meds, no time set aside for recovery: "I blinked and I cured my brain."

#### Symptoms of Hypomania According to the DSM IV:

A) A distinct period of persistently elevated, expansive or irritable mood, lasting throughout at least 4 days, that is clearly different from the usual nondepressed mood.

B) During the period of mood disturbance, three (or more) of the following symptoms have persisted (four if the mood is only irritable) and have been present to a significant degree:

- 1) Inflated self-esteem or grandiosity
- 2) Decreased need for sleep (e.g., feels rested after only 3 hours of sleep)
- 3) More talkative than usual or pressure to keep talking
- 4) Flight of ideas or subjective experience that thoughts are racing
- 5) Distractibility (i.e., attention too easily drawn to unimportant or irrelevant external stimuli)
- 6) Increase in goal-directed activity (at work, at school, or sexually) or psychomotor agitation
- 7) Excessive involvement in pleasurable activities that have a high potential for painful consequences (e.g., engaging in unrestrained buying sprees, sexual indiscretions, or foolish business investments)



## Faculty Research By: Alison Patev

*Throughout the Psychology Department, our professors are conducting amazing research that many people aren't aware of! Here is a brief overview of the research being done by Professor Craton and Professor Poirier:*

Have you ever wondered why you like music? Yes, it makes you happy and it makes you want to dance, but have you ever wondered exactly *why* it makes you feel so good? Have you ever questioned why you never hear anyone say "I don't like music!" Professor Lincoln Craton has.

Professor Craton did much of his early research in developmental psychology, but has now shifted his focus to music perception in non-musicians. He believes that non-musicians know more about music than many would think. For the past year, Professor Craton conducted both implicit and explicit research trying to understand how much non-musicians know about harmony. Specifically he wants to discover how much non-musicians understand about rock harmony.

Rock harmony differs from classical harmony in that rock harmonies allow for more chords than "Common Practice." More options exist with rock as to which chords can follow others. In rock music, certain chords follow others that could never follow in classical music.

Professor Craton's interest in music perception stems from his own love of music. He plays the guitar and is member of the Ashmont Hill Jazz Band, along with his wife Paule, Greg Maniero of the Biology Department, and Mike Horne of the Physics Department.

Since last summer, Professor Craton has been working with a team of students, including Laura Domanico, Erik Muhlenhaupt, and Wyatt Donnelly-Landolt, to complete a series of experiments. In one of his explicit experiments, participants are given a task in which they first hear a C major chord played. Then, a target chord is played. The participants rated the target chord based off of two criteria: if the chord was surprising and if they liked the chord. These ratings are then compared to what music theory says that people should find pleasing.

Professor Craton's explicit research determined that non-musician's harmonic knowledge has been underestimated. Non-musicians "know" more about harmony than previously thought. Results showed that the non-musicians are not surprised by the target chord, and also that the non-musicians find the target chord pleasing. Implicit research is still currently underway. This line of research is not only important to the psychology community but also those outside of psychology. "Everybody likes music and doesn't think

about it," says Professor Craton. "Music is universal and... of antiquity."

Professor Craton and his team attempt to explain not odd human behavior, but every day human behavior. We hear and listen to music frequently, but we don't ever truly know what mechanism in our brain makes us enjoy it.

Professor Craton believes it has a lot to do with engagement and expectation. A series of tension-anticipation events, music engages us and plays to our expectations. Something inherent in our brains keeps us interested and waiting to see what happens next.

Professor Craton also has an interesting theory about our mysterious love of music, a theory he thinks just might be right. Humans, he explains, like to attribute agency to everything. When the notes get higher, we think an invisible force moving them up. When they get lower, that force pushes them down. We process music as an unseen force making the notes change from high to low and low to high.

.....  
Professor Craton is not the only member of the Psychology Department who has been conducting groundbreaking work recently. Have you ever wondered why you can't easily recognize the face of an adult you once met? Professor Christopher Poirier has been actively researching to figure out why we are easily able to recognize the faces of our friends and peers, but when it comes to those who are outside our age group, they become more difficult to recognize. Professor Poirier may have the answer to this mystery.

Professor Poirier has been continuing his work on "own-age bias," particularly in face recognition, which is the theory that "people tend to be better at recognizing faces of their own age than another age group," Professor Poirier explains. "For example, college students are better at recognizing other college students than elders."

As a developmental psychologist, Professor Poirier was initially interested in children's ability to estimate age in others. However, after reviewing completed research, Professor Poirier and Professor Craton came upon the own-age bias. Professor Poirier realized there were many unanswered questions about own-age bias and began to conduct research about this subject in 2005 in collaboration with Professor Craton.

All of their data is based on experimental



research. During these experiments, which typically last about half an hour, participants go through two phases. The first phase is the encoding phase, in which participants look at pictures of old and young people and are asked to do tasks such as estimate the age of each person or rate their attractiveness. The second phase consists of the test phase in which participants are presented with a second set of faces. Half of the faces have been presented to the person before, and half of the faces are new. Participants have to decide if they have seen each picture in the first phase or not.

So far, results have shown that people definitely have own-age biases. The biases are stronger in young participants, such as college students, than in older participants. The data has also shown evidence that the bias is caused by how people group others. People classify faces as ingroup or outgroup; ingroup means that someone is "like me," and outgroup means that someone is "different than me."

Professor Poirier sees practical uses for his research. Own-age bias proves important in court cases that require eyewitness testimony. In his everyday life, and the lives of all professors, he sees uses for his research.

"Nearly every semester I need to recognize approximately one hundred new students. I am slowly moving away from this age group [college age], so my ability to accurately recognize college students is declining," Professor Poirier says. He believes that one day his research may help him to improve his ability to recognize faces outside his age group.

## Congratulations Seniors! Graduate School Acceptances

\* = school student  
will be attending

### Alicia Baumann

Boston University's School of Social Work



Alicia Baumann

### Lindsay Beatrice

MA in Mental Health Counseling at Boston College\*  
and Northeastern University



Kayla Caron

### Kayla Caron

MA in Industrial/Organizational Psychology Program  
at University of New Haven\* and SUNY Albany

### Keri Carvalho

MA in Clinical Psychology at Rivier College



Keri Carvalho

### Nicole Censullo

MA in School Psychology at Northeastern University

### Sarah Chiodi

MS in Biostatistics at University of Pennsylvania,  
Boston University, and Emory University



Molly Little

### Sean Flanagan

MA in Mental Health Counseling at Lynch School of  
Education at Boston College, MA in Counseling  
Psychology at Boston University School of Education,  
MS in Counseling Psychology at Bouve College of  
Health Sciences at Northeastern University, and MS in  
Mental Health Counseling at Suffolk University

### Molly Little

NYU Silver School of Social Work and Columbia  
University School of Social Work

### Alison Rowe

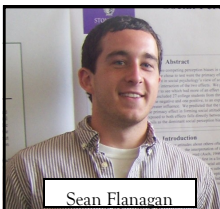
MA in School Psychology at Northeastern University  
and Boston University School of Social Work



Lindsey Pinkham

### Lindsey Pinkham

Tufts School Psychology MA/Ed.S Program\*, Boston  
College MSW, Northeastern School Psychology MS/  
CAGS Program, and Simmons MSW



Sean Flanagan

### Jessica Tosone

MA in Forensic Psychology at Marymount University

### Lindsey Toth

MA in School Counseling at Montclair University and  
Caldwell College

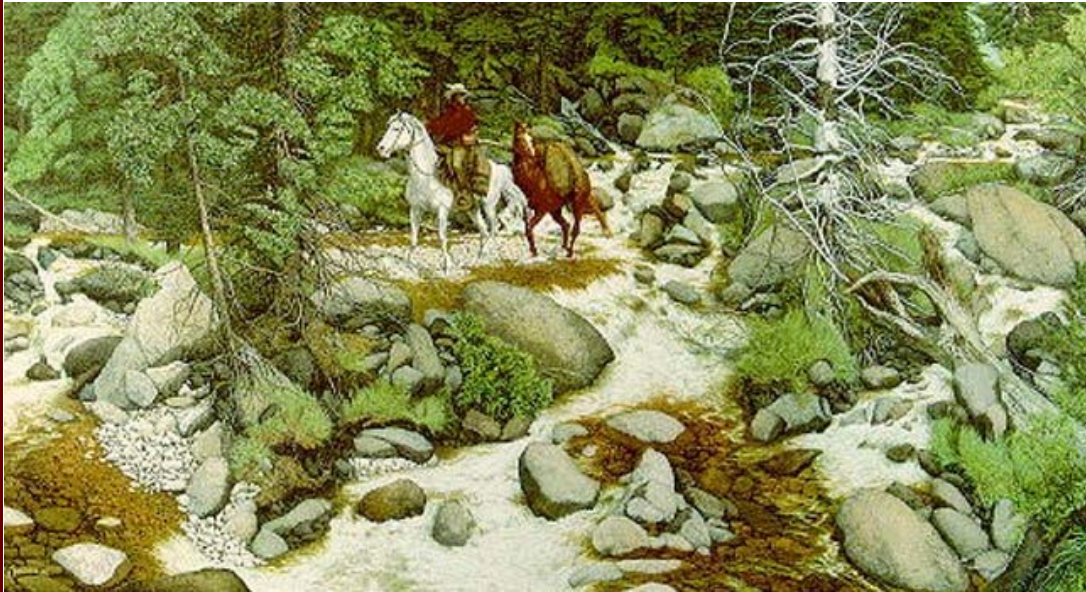
## College Life Stress Inventory

Copy the stress rating number into the last column for any item  
that has happened to you in the last year, then add them.  
Renner and Mackin found that most students test between 800  
and 1,700, but scores have ranged from 182 to 2,571.

Being raped (100)	
Finding out you are HIV-positive (100)	
Being accused of rape (98)	
Death of a close friend (97)	
Death of a close family member (96)	
Contracting a STI (94)	
Concerns about being pregnant (91)	
Finals week (90)	
Concerns about your partner being pregnant (90)	
Oversleeping for an exam (89)	
Flunking a class (89)	
Being cheated on (85)	
Ending a steady dating relationship (85)	
Serious illness to a close friend or family member (85)	
Financial difficulties (84)	
Writing a major term paper (83)	
Being caught cheating on a test (83)	
Drunk driving (82)	
Sense of overload in school or work (82)	
Two exams in one day (80)	
Cheating on your boyfriend or girlfriend (77)	
Getting married (76)	
Negative consequences from drug or alcohol use (75)	
Depression or crisis in your best friend (73)	
Difficulties with parents (73)	
Talking in front of a class (72)	
Lack of sleep (69)	
Change in housing situation (69)	
Competing or performing in public (69)	
Getting in a physical fight (66)	
Difficulties with a roommate (66)	
Job changes (65)	
Declaring a major or concerns about your future (65)	
A class you hate (62)	
Drinking or use of drugs (61)	
Confrontations with professors (60)	
Starting a new semester (58)	
Going on a first date (57)	
Registration for classes (55)	
Maintaining a steady relationship (55)	
Commuting to campus or work (54)	
Peer pressures (53)	
Being away from home (53)	
Getting sick (52)	
Concerns about your appearance (52)	
Getting straight A's (51)	
A difficult class that you love (48)	
Making new friends (47)	
Fraternity or sorority rush (47)	
Falling asleep in class (40)	
Attending an athletic event (20)	
TOTAL	

### Optical Illusion Puzzle

**How many hidden faces can you find in this painting?**



### Riddle Answers

1. The head physicist was the boy's mother.
2. It was winter. The river was frozen and they walked across.
3. The weather had got a lot warmer and Lisa's snowman had melted.
4. On a chessboard. The white knight (horse) was moved over the rock (tower) and landed on the square occupied by the black bishop, which was immediately removed from the board.

### Anagram Answers

1. Sigmund Freud
2. Wilhelm Wundt
3. John Watson
4. B.F. Skinner
5. Carl Jung
6. Erik Erikson
7. Abraham Maslow
8. Ivan Pavlov
9. Carl Rogers
10. William James

### Jumbled Letters

Aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it doesn't mttar in what oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoentn tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be at the rghit pclae.

The rset can be a total mse and you can sitll raed it wouthit porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Amzanig.

### Contributing to this Edition of The Thalamus



Layout/Editors: Teresa McGinley, Georgia Winters

Reporters: Caitlin DeCortin, Teresa McGinley, Emily Palmisano, Alison Patev, Kayla Pirri, Georgia Winters

Advisor: Frances Foote