

# The Thalamus

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## Barbara Aalto: A Beloved Professor and Her Profound Legacy

By: Elise Chappell

Stonehill College's Psychology Department deeply mourns the loss of one of its most remembered and cherished retired faculty members, Dr. Barbara Aalto. Professor Aalto passed away unexpectedly on February 11, 2012, at her home in Lasell Village in Auburndale, Massachusetts. A great loss to her loved ones and the faculty here at Stonehill College, Dr. Barbara Aalto left behind a profound legacy which includes numerous impressive accomplishments during her lifetime.

Dr. Aalto attended Bates College from 1941 to 1944, and then Boston University from 1944 to 1945. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota, which she attended between the years of 1950 to 1955. She completed her doctoral dissertation researching a scale that measured attitudes toward working for the government. She also contributed to major clinical research and application concerning the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) at the University of Minnesota, which is now a

frequently-used tool that helps psychologists assess mental illness. From 1947 to 1950, she worked at University of Massachusetts in Amherst as an instructor. Although she began as an educator in Amherst, most of her teaching and professional career was completed at Stonehill College beginning in 1968. In 1974, she was promoted from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor. She was Psychology Department Chair from 1982 to 1988, and accomplished many things during this time. She hired two new professors and started the Psi Chi Chapter at Stonehill College. In 1996, Professor Aalto was designated Professor Emerita, a title given to a female professor who has retired in honorable standing. This was a fitting title due to all of the hard work and the contributions she had made to the Psychology Department.

When Dr. Aalto first came to Stonehill College, a formal Psychology Department had not yet

been established. She and Professor John Hurley were the only two psychology professors on campus.

*Continued on Page 2.*



Barbara Aalto enjoyed folk dancing.

## International Psychology: An Exploration of Culture Shock

By: Teresa McGinley

Each year, thousands of American students flock to cities in Europe seeking the thrill of a study abroad experience. This excitement soon turns to despair as many students battle feelings of loneliness, depression and confusion in this new place they now call home. But what causes this **culture shock**? Why do these students, long anticipating their abroad adventures, now battle a longing for American food, familiar surroundings, and

friends and family? A look into the psychology behind culture shock attempts to provide an explanation for this phenomenon.

The "culture shock rollercoaster" clearly explains the path each student will take. Primarily, most students experience a honeymoon phase full of excitement at the new experience and fascination at the local habits, types of food, and lifestyle.

The second phase, given differ-

ing names by many psychologists, involves the differences between the old and new culture becoming clearly apparent. Individuals may experience uncomfortable situations due to their strange appearance to members of the culture. This period usually includes physical illness as the body adjusts to new bacteria in the air, the immune system needs to adjust.

*Continued on Page 5.*

## Barbara Aalto

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Since then there have been major changes; however, the development and creation of the Psychology Department couldn't have been accomplished without the help of Dr. Aalto and Professor Hurley. While at Stonehill College, she taught Developmental Psychology I and II, Assessment of Individual Differences, and Birth and Development of Psychology. Since the time of Dr. Aalto's teaching career, many new faculty members have come to Stonehill, each adding their own special touch to the Psychology Department that Dr. Aalto helped create.



Barbara Aalto with her husband and three children.

Two of the professors that Dr. Aalto hired during her time as Department Chair, were Professor Rose Perkins and Professor Bonnie Klentz. Both of them fondly remembered Professor Aalto as a friend and as a coworker. Professor Klentz said, "She was very caring – she cared about her students and colleagues professionally, as well as personally. She had a great laugh, and would love to sit and talk. She was interested in everything from Red Sox to politics to psychology." Dr. Aalto not only hired Professor Klentz, but made her feel at home after she had traveled all the way to New England from the West Coast. Professor Perkins also expressed her admiration for Dr. Aalto. She said, "She was very much an intellectual; you couldn't name a theorist from the past that she didn't know well. She was also an extremely practical person, always having practical expectations about the classroom. She had a special way of bringing a positive light to every situation, something that was unique; she was a wise person, and could find the strength in any situation. It was one of her greatest blessings."

Dr. Aalto contributed many things to Stonehill College's Psychology Department. She helped make it what it is today, and was a

truly professional person as well as a great friend to her colleagues. An intellectual, caring, and accomplished woman, Professor Aalto will surely be missed by all.



Barbara Aalto in High School.

1929

Stock market crashed, and I was unaware of the big news and the beginning of the depression years. I was more aware of the excitement of starting school. I got on the bus for the first grade at age five with my mother saying "what a big girl you are" and feeling very proud.

1941

I loved studying and decided to major in psychology. My mentor, Peter Bertocci was a major influence. He was a wonderful lecturer, more of a philosopher than psychologist, but he inspired me to pursue the field.

1950

Needing a Ph.D. to continue in academics I came in September to the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis with an assistantship in the Psychology Department. I first saw Ensio Aalto at a Halloween party for graduate students and then found he was in many of my classes. Our first date was a drive around Lake Minnetonka, then a theater date to see a melodrama, and later we went to many folk dancing events.

### Excerpts From Aalto's Oral Biography



1955

The female director of the Center never referred to me as Doctor, although she did for all the male Ph.D.s. At the time it did not bother me because I was more proud of the "Mrs." than the Ph.D.. (A thought that might disturb current feminists.)

1968

I joined the faculty of Stonehill College started by the Holy Cross Fathers after World War II. They were just beginning a program in Psychology under the direction of John Hurley. I taught Introductory Psychology and Adolescent Psychology and in later years other measurement and history and systems courses.

1995

I officially retired from Stonehill but continued to teach half time and later one course a semester. During this time I started looking for a retirement home, made many inquiries and site visits.

2000

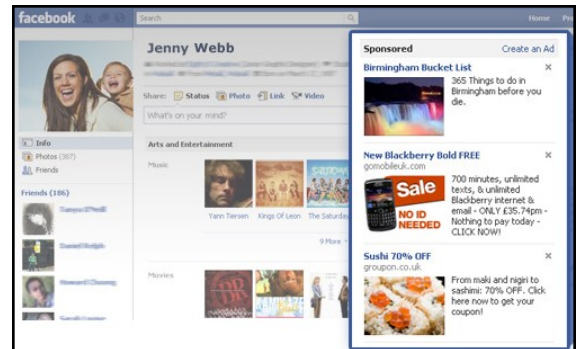
Moved to LASELL VILLAGE June 1 !!!! Continued to teach one course a semester.

## Psychology in the News

By: Georgia Winters

### Facebook Advertising: Consumer Brand Preferences

Perkins and Forehand (2011) examined the effect of advertising on Facebook and other social networking sites. The research was based on the concept of implicit self-referencing which proposed that consumers can identify with a brand even if they do not own, choose, or endorse this brand. The researchers suggested that consumers with high self-esteem have positive feelings toward brands linked to consumers' self-concepts. In the current study, the researchers conducted three experiments. The first experiment asked participants to sort fictitious brand names with terms related to "self" or "other". The "self" brand attitudes were significantly more positive than the "other" category. The second experiment revealed that this effect was stronger for people with high self-esteem compared to those with low self-esteem. The third experiment applied these findings to social networking sites. The researchers examined what occurs when fictitious brands are presented near participants' own social network page. After viewing the page with fake ads, the participants rated the brands that appeared on their own pages significantly more positively without being consciously aware of it.



Perkins A.W., Forehand M.R. (2012). Do consumers prefer brands that appear on their Facebook pages? Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedaily.com>.

### Dreams: Reducing Emotional Sting of Painful Memories

Walker (2011) found that during our dream phase of sleep, our brain processes emotional experiences and reduces their emotional strength. During the Rapid Eye Movement (REM) phase of sleep we have decreased levels of norepinephrine, a chemical associated with stress. Walker created the experiment after a physician working with patients with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) revealed that a new blood pressure drug was preventing patients' recurring nightmares. Through research at UC Berkeley, he tested the hypothesis that REM sleep would reduce the emotional level of a person's experiences. Thirty-five participants viewed 150 emotional images two times, 12 hours apart. The first group saw the images in the morning, and then later that evening. The other group viewed them in the evening and got a full night's sleep before a subsequent viewing in the morning. MRI scans recorded all of the participants' brain activities during the trials. Results revealed that participants who slept between viewings reported a significant decrease in emotional reaction to the images. When the sleeping group viewed images a second time, the MRI scans showed decreased activity in the amygdala, the part of the brain that processes emotions. In addition, the researchers found that electrical brain activity decreased, showing that the lower levels of stress neurochemicals alleviate emotional reactions from the stimulus images. Walker concluded that the blood pressure drug is helping patients with PTSD by lowering levels of norepinephrine which reduces stress in the brain during REM, thus diminishing their nightmares.



Helm E., Yao J., Dutt J., Rao V., Saletin J.M., Walker M.P. (2011). Dreaming takes the sting out of painful memories, research shows. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedaily.com>.

### Selfless Acts of Men Increase with Attractive Females Present

Iredale and Van Vugt (2012) found that men performed more kind and selfless acts in the presence of attractive women. In the study, 65 males and 65 females played a computer cooperating game which gave the participant an opportunity to donate money to a group fund. The donations were selfless acts because others benefitted, but the donator did not receive anything in return. The participants did not know who they were donating to. They did, however, have either an attractive male or female present during the task. Results showed that men donated significantly more money when they were being watched by an attractive female than when the observer was another male. Interestingly, women had no change in the number of selfless acts performed regardless of the observer's gender. The researchers conclude that these kind acts increase when men believe they have the opportunity to copulate.



Van Vugt, M., Iredale, M. (2011). Men behaving nicely: Public goods as peacock tails. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedaily.com>.



## Psychology and Neuroscience Students Accepted Into This Summer's SURE Program

Courtney Birchall will work with John McCoy

Lindsay Castonguay will work with Christopher Poirier

Rachael Donnelly will work with John McCoy

Genelle Goodhue will work with John McCoy

Georgia Winters will work with Bonnie Klentz

## The Uncertain Future of Taunton State Hospital

By: Nikki Remillard

Plans have been set in motion to close down the Taunton State Hospital, the only mental health facility of its kind in Southeastern Massachusetts. The plan would displace 169 patients by the end of December 2012. This proposal has not only led to concerns regarding the wellbeing of the hospital's current patients, but also the accessibility of treatment for Southeastern Massachusetts residents.

Patients are expected to be discharged into the community or moved to either the Tewksbury State Hospital or a new facility in Worcester. Each of these facilities is about an hour away from Taunton, which would be a major concern for both patients and their families. In addition, Taunton State Hospital currently holds several criminally dangerous patients, making relocation of these patients to community-based mental health care a significant problem to consider.

In fact, criticisms have been raised regarding the many concerns of Massachusetts citizens. For example, legislators question the true intent behind the hospital's closing. It has been speculated that the closing has more to do with budget plans and less to do with improving patient care. This is due to the fact that the addition of a new Worcester facility would add hospital beds and therefore increase services in the area. However, if patients from Taunton are forced to be transferred into these beds, then the benefit of these additional services would not be felt by the community.

The hospital's administrators intend to conduct a study to determine what kind of effect their plan would have on the mental health system of Massachusetts. This has also sparked criticism, as many believe that if the intent was truly to improve patient care, this study should have been conducted prior to making a decision to close the hospital.

On Thursday March 22<sup>nd</sup>, over a hundred hospital workers and supporters gathered in protest of the closure. Leading the rally was Senator Marc Pacheco and House Speaker Patricia Haddad. Together they organized speakers including legislators, mental health advocates, hospital employees, and former patients of the hospital. The legislators' speeches supported the thorough research study by announcing a new amendment to the budget. This amendment requires the completion of the study before the hospital can be closed. In addition, the speeches of the former patients and relatives highlighted the unfair burden that would be placed upon the current Taunton patients and their families. They also explained how any access to mental health treatment in the future would be less easily available to Taunton's residents.

Currently, the future of Taunton State Hospital is uncertain. Adequate research and exploration of the situation is necessary before any decisions can be made. Supporting the safety and welfare of Southeastern Massachusetts residents should be a top priority in this decision making process.



Protestors hold up signs at the rally. Photograph from the Taunton Daily Gazette.

## International Psychology: An Exploration of Culture Shock

Continued from page 1...

This becomes stressful as students attempt to find medicines and discover that the kinds available are clearly different from those at home. For example, some medicines abroad are not sold in pill form, but rather a powder that must be mixed with a glass of water.

This causes problems for many American students when they are sick and need to take medicine during the school day. Finally, this stage includes high anxiety due to communication problems and language barriers. Many students struggle when not being able to communicate properly and long for the parental support they have at home.

Next, an adjustment stage takes place when the individual begins to make a routine and adapts completely to the customs, language, and lifestyle of the new culture. This stage may continue to a point of familiarity and comfort for the duration of the study abroad experience. Other individuals may face a second drop into a stage of hostility, loneliness, and homesickness as they long to return to the style of living they are most accustomed to. Most individuals, however, experience this adaptation stage. They begin to love their new home and dread returning to their country as the limited time abroad ends and they face effects of reverse culture shock.

Yes, basic logic would explain that students who leave home for long periods of time may begin to miss their family and way of life; this explanation does not astound many people. However, the reasons behind this homesickness may not be as clear and simple as they are made out to be. Psychological exploration of culture shock reveals the true reasons students from other countries face difficulties when living and studying in other parts of the world. There are 4 categories to explore: cognitive, phenomenological, socio-psychological, and behavioral.

Cognitive differences include the manners of thinking that lie in stark contrast in many countries, individualistic, and holistic cultures. Cultures defined as high context, for example the United States and Britain, have a need to communicate and talk out issues. In low context cultures, Latin Ameri-

ca and Asia as examples, nonverbal communication holds a much higher importance. Individuals need to adapt to the appropriate context in order to avoid miscommunications, or worse, unintended insults to the country's culture.

Phenomenological theory explores how individuals change from a low to high state of self and cultural awareness. The individual cannot use their own culture references to convey and validate aspects of their identity. They become clearly aware of the aspects of their life that depict, for example, "an American lifestyle." This may cause self consciousness and a longing to lose these inbred characteristics and blend in among those in the new country.

A social-psychological view of culture shock explores the capacity an individual has for effective social interaction with locals. If the language in the country is different or new to the individual, communication becomes a daunting task. Lack of understanding or frustration with failed attempts at conversation can lead to a feeling of hopelessness in a new country. Even if the language proves to be the same, differing customs or methods of using the language may hinder effective social interaction between individuals studying abroad and local citizens.

Finally, behavioral psychology addresses how students are facing an active process of dealing with change. A re-socialization experience occurs as students learn the correct ways to live and act in this country, and thus, through this psychological adjustment, begin to shape their behavior. Any type of cultural learning the individual partakes in speeds up adaptation.

Now with this understanding of the effects of culture shock, does this mean you should not study abroad? **Absolutely not!** There are many ways to handle the effects of culture shock, most important being **preparation!** Learning about your host country before leaving can significantly decrease the negative effects of the culture shock phenomenon. To do this successfully you need only to do simple tasks: listen to any and all information you receive about the country, seek social support

### CULTURE SHOCK:

Anxiety that results from losing the familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse, and their substitution by other cues that are strange; a period of mourning for the home world, characterized by feelings of grief and separation anxiety.

from other people studying abroad or from locals you meet who can help you, arrive fully prepared, show optimism, practice acceptance, and utilize self confidence. Different coping strategies consequently provide differing results to individuals. Withdrawal and resentment of the culture results in alienation and isolation. Observing, listening and inquiring about the new culture ultimately provides the individual with a clear understanding of the culture, enhancing their personal cross-culture knowledge.

Traveling to a new country, living there, and continuing your education through studies at a host university is an experience that can completely change your life. Learning from others, inserting yourself into a new culture and advancing your own level of independence provide preparation for a successful future in any field you may choose. Study abroad programs are numerous and opportunities keep growing each year. With 40% of Stonehill students spending at least one semester abroad and the *Office of International Programs* offering choices of over 120 programs in 35 countries, the culture shock phenomenon has clearly not hindered our students from seeking a life changing experience through a semester spent abroad.



Explore your options! Look at the list of approved study abroad programs!

<http://stonehill.edu/x14108.xml>

The Office of International Programs is located in Duffy Academic Center, Room 131.

General Inquiries about Study Abroad Programs can be directed to:

(508) 565-1645 or [international@stonehill.edu](mailto:international@stonehill.edu)

## Military Psychology

### Justice at Home: The Growing Role of Veterans' Courts

By: Laura Dzgoeva

Imagine yourself as a soldier coming back to the U.S. from Iraq or Afghanistan. During your tour of duty, you participated in combat, witnessed horrible acts of violence and lived in an environment of constant stress. Now you have to readjust to civilian life with little to no guidance or ease of transition. You might very well be part of the 11-20% of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan who, as the Bureau of Veterans Affairs reports, have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Reintegration into society is bound to be a disorienting and difficult experience for you, just as it is for many veterans returning from deployment, especially those who develop PTSD.

Many veterans who need treatment and care for their PTSD do not seek it because they are unaware of the resources available to them, rather because there is a stigma in our society associated with asking for help with mental disorders that somehow emasculates them or because they are unable to for any variety of other reasons. PTSD sometimes indirectly leads to criminal behavior, such as substance abuse, domestic violence, and driving under the influence. When these veterans are convicted and sent to the regular courts, they are given their sentence and sent to prison. This is not beneficial for the veterans, nor for society. These veterans, who have a serious anxiety disorder, are thrown into jail with no treatment or therapy available to them. They are given no chance at rehabilitation, only punishment. How are they supposed to heal in this environment?

Enter veterans' courts. These courts, specialized to deal with veterans and tailored to their needs, are experiencing remarkable success. They are not the first courts of their kind, following in the footsteps of other specialized treatment courts such as those existing for drug addiction and mental health. In research sponsored by the National Institute of Justice, findings supported the effectiveness of these specialized courts. Recidivism was lowered due to proper assessment and treatment of people filtering into the drug courts. The same sort of institution is now being applied to veterans with PTSD, sometimes the direct cause of their criminal offenses, who do not benefit from being thrown into the criminal justice system without receiving proper treatment for the disorder.

Veterans' courts are a fairly recent movement, with the first one established in 2008 in Buffalo, New York under Judge Robert Russell. It proved extremely effective, with a recidivism rate of zero, which is supporting a growing movement of veterans' courts throughout the country. Due to the fact that these courts are tailored to the individual needs of veterans suffering from PTSD and other mental health disorders, they act according to a doctrine of rehabilitation and understanding, instead of solely utilizing punishment. Rather than throwing veterans with PTSD into overcrowded jail systems without the proper resources to provide them with the help they need, veterans' courts offer the alternative of a rigorous rehabilitation and training program. This enables veterans to leave the system equipped with tools to live a successful life that is better adjusted to society.

As veterans' courts are fairly new, more research must be conducted before the effect of treatment can be determined. Nonetheless, this growing movement to help rehabilitate our veterans seems, after all, only just.



### What is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder?

Diagnostic criteria for PTSD include a history of exposure to a traumatic event meeting two criteria and symptoms from each of three symptom clusters: intrusive recollections, avoidant/numbing symptoms, and hyper-arousal symptoms. Another criterion concerns duration of symptoms and a final one assesses functioning.



## Military Psychology

### The Doggie PTSD Dilemma

By: Leanne Brooks

Military service members coming back from war have often struggled with the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD. But how does war affect their canine counterparts? A new theory proposed by Dr. Walter F. Burghardt Jr., the chief behavioral physician at the Texas-based Daniel E. Holland Military Working Dog Hospital, suggests that canines serving in war also develop PTSD. By his estimates, 5% of the 650 military service dogs that are currently in the war zone or have been deployed suffer from canine PTSD.

Military service dogs play important roles that require them to be in the front line of duty, such as sniffing for IEDs and mines, searching for suspects, and clearing buildings. They too experience the dangerous and distressing events their handlers face, and therefore also become susceptible to the same physical and mental problems that arise from service in war.

Symptoms of canine PTSD vary from one dog to another, but handlers report that their dogs are not as social with other dogs, will not do things that they used to do or were trained to do, or have had major personality or behavioral changes. Basically, canine PTSD can make it difficult for a dog to perform their job and also affects their ability to relax and socialize off-duty.

The good news is that the dogs can be treated for PTSD in various ways. First, vets work with the dogs by giving them a vacation from their job and allowing them regular play and exercise sessions. Humans and dogs suffering from PTSD have similarly found comfort and healing in a mutually beneficial relationship. If this is not helpful, the dogs will go through "desensitization counter-conditioning" during which they are exposed to a less severe stimulus that is derived from their trigger. The process continues with the dogs being rewarded every time they do not react to increasingly severe stimuli, until they can handle the entirety of their trigger. Finally, some dogs have been treated with the anti-anxiety drug Xanax in order to reduce the severity of their PTSD. This final method of treatment has been quite controversial because some argue that there is not enough research on how the drugs impact humans, let alone dogs. Others argue that the dogs should not have to suffer through PTSD if there is a medication available that could help them.

Opposing viewpoints aside, this new diagnosis of canine PTSD has several implications. First, it suggests that canines do suffer from psychological disorders, such as PTSD, and more research and observation should be conducted to look for other mental diseases. The diagnosis and subsequent treatment of canine PTSD can also be applied to dogs that have been abused or have been in traumatic situations, such as car accidents or fires. Hopefully, more research will lead to additional ways to help our dogs recover from traumatizing, dangerous, or otherwise upsetting events. Now is the time to help man's best friend recover from the traumatic experiences associated with man's worst enemy.

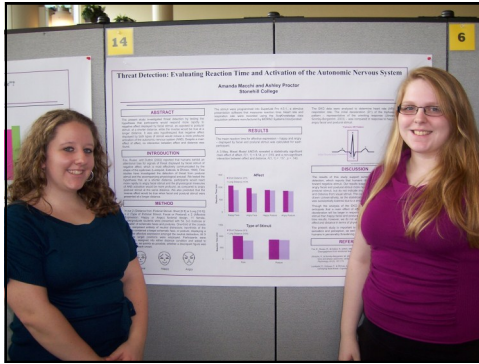


### Military and Mental Health Facts

- 20 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans screen positive for PTSD or Depression.
- The annual divorce rate among female Marines is 9.2%, almost three times the national average.
- In surveys of troops redeploying to Iraq, 20 to 40 percent still suffered symptoms of past concussions, and among troops who experience high levels of combat, about 12 percent in Iraq and 17 percent in Afghanistan are taking prescription antidepressants or sleeping medications.
- The ratio of behavioral health workers deployed to troops deployed dropped from 1 in 387 in 2004 to 1 in 734 in 2007.
- About 50 percent of soldiers and Marines in Iraq who test positive for a psychological problem are concerned that they will be seen as weak by their fellow service members. Almost one in three of these troops worry about the effect of a mental health diagnosis on their careers.
- National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment study estimated that as many as 31 percent of male service members suffered from PTSD at some point after their service.
- About half (53 percent) of those who met the criteria for current PTSD or major depression had sought help from a physician or mental health provider for a mental health problem in the past year.

## Research Methods Poster Presentation– Fall 2011

A sample of the 22 student research presentations at the poster conference this past fall.



### Threat Detection: Evaluating Reaction Time and Activation of the Autonomic Nervous System

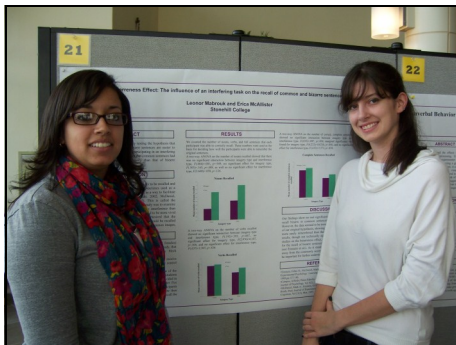
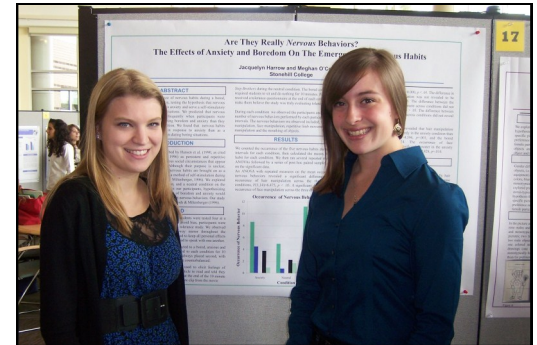
Amanda Macchi and Ashley Proctor

Threat detection from facial and postural stimuli as a function of distance was investigated by employing a 2 x 2 x 2 factorial design. Eleven female participants were exposed to a series of 54 matrices, or “crowds,” at either a short distance (n = 5) or a long distance (n = 6) and asked to determine, as quickly as possible, whether each contained a discrepant figure. The physiological measures – heart rate and heart period variability – of the arousal of the autonomic nervous system were measured using an EKG. A main effect of affect was found, such that negative affect was detected more rapidly from both types of stimuli than positive affect. No interaction was found between distance and type of stimuli. The results of this study support recent research on threat detection from facial stimuli and also contribute to our understanding of the communicative function of postural stimuli.

### Are They Really Nervous Behaviors? The Effects of Anxiety and Boredom on the Emergence of Nervous Habits

Jacquelyn Harrow and Meghan O’Conner

We examined the occurrence of nervous habits during a bored, anxious and neutral condition, testing the hypothesis that nervous behaviors occur as a response to anxiety and serve a self-stimulatory function during mundane situations. Participants were informed that they were partaking in a tolerance study, in order to avoid bias. We subjected the participants to 3 conditions, each lasting 10 minutes, while we observed them from behind a one-way mirror. We predicted that nervous habits would occur more frequently when participants were subjected to conditions eliciting boredom and anxiety than they would during a neutral condition. We found that nervous habits are more likely to occur in response to anxiety than as a mechanism for self-stimulation during boring situations.



### The Bizarreness Effect: The Influence of an Interfering Task on the Recall of Bizarre and Common Sentences

Leonor Mabrouk and Erica McAllister

The Bizarreness Effect study looked at the ability of participants to freely recall bizarre and common sentences using mental based imagery. We explored the bizarreness effect by testing the hypothesis that with the use of mental imagery, bizarre sentences are easier to recall than common sentences after participating in an interfering task. However, our findings suggested that common sentences had a tendency to be recalled more easily than that of bizarre sentences after an interfering task.

### The Impact of Hand Gestures on Information Processing

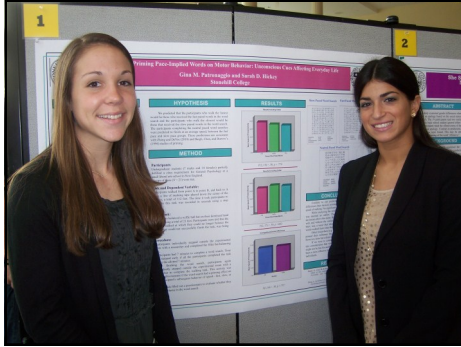
Nicholas Kolenda and Liz Belanger

Conversational hand gestures comprise an integral part of nonverbal communication. Despite the importance of gesturing, it is unclear whether hand gestures facilitate understanding if recipients remain unaware of the gesturing. Although past research indicates that gestures allow communication senders to construct intended messages more easily, little evidence suggests that nonconsciously processed gestures facilitate recipient understanding. The present study examined the effects of a nonconsciously processed gesture on recipient cognition and affect. While instructing participants to complete a task, an experimenter nonchalantly motioned a numerical seven with his hand. After the experimenter nonconsciously gestured the number seven, participants in Experiment 1 were asked to choose a number between one and ten, thereby providing a cognitive measurement of the cue’s effectiveness. Participants in Experiment 2 were subsequently asked to rate how much they liked the number seven, thereby providing an emotional measurement of the cue’s effectiveness. No significant effects were found, which suggests that nonconscious gestures may benefit communication senders more than communication recipients.





## Research Methods Poster Presentation– Fall 2011, cont.



### The Effect of Priming Pace-Implied Words on Motor Behavior: Unconscious Cues Affecting Everyday Life

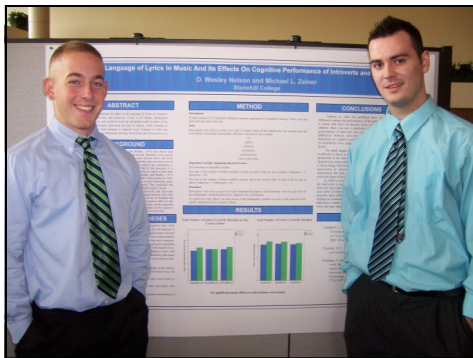
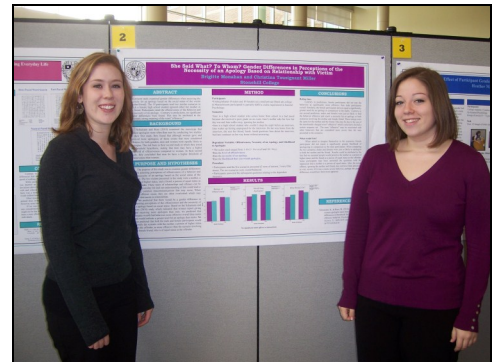
Gina M. Patronaggio and Sarah D. Hickey

The present study examined the priming effect of pace-implied words on speed of a motor task. Undergraduates (14 females, 7 males) were primed with fast-paced, slow-paced, or neutral-paced words through means of a word search. The dependent variable measured the time it took participants to walk 112 feet down a hallway. We predicted that those who received the fast or slow words would walk the distance at a faster or slower pace, respectively, than the neutral group. No significant effect was found. After removing an outlier, there was a trend in which those primed with fast-paced words walked faster than those primed with slow-paced words. These results are inconsistent with past findings.

### She Did What? To Whom? Gender Differences in Perceptions of the Necessity of an Apology Based on Relationship with Victim

Brigitte Monahan and Christina Tousignant Miller

The present study examined gender differences when assessing the necessity for an apology based on the social status of the victim (mother/friend). The 19 participants read two similar scenarios in which a female high school student ignored either her mother or her friend. Participants rated the offensiveness of the behavior and the necessity of an apology. Contrary to predictions, no significant gender differences were found. This may be attributed to issues of the dependent measure and assumptions about the perceived status of the victim.



### Language of Lyrics in Music and Its Effects on Cognitive Performance of Introverts and Extraverts

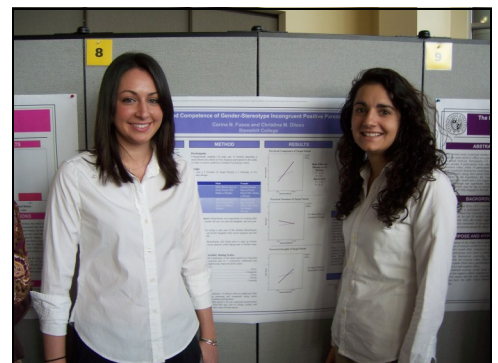
D. Wesley Nelson and Michael L. Zeiner

The present study examined the effect of the language of lyrics on cognitive performance of introverts and extraverts. Using a 2 x 3 design, participants completed a memory task, which involved the immediate recall of letters of the alphabet. Each participant performed the task in silence, while listening to English lyrics, and while listening to Spanish lyrics. Contrary to what was predicted, there were no differences between introversion and extraversion as a function of the lyrics.

### Perceived Competence of Gender-Stereotype Incongruent Positive Parenting Role

Corina N. Fusco and Christina M. DiIeso

This study examined whether an individual in a gender-stereotype-incongruent positive role (stay-at-home dad) was perceived more competent when making a mistake than an individual in a gender-stereotype-congruent role (stay-at-home mom). Participants read parenting scenarios and rated the target's competence. There was a significant main effect for perceived competence depending on whether or not a mistake was made. Although no statistically significant interaction was found, the relationship between gender and parenting performance was in the predicted direction. Unlike the results of past research, the results of this study show that it is possible that making a mistake may have a more negative impact on individuals in the gender-stereotype-congruent role of a stay-at-home mom than their gender-stereotype-incongruent counterparts of a stay-at-home dad.



## Psychology Internship in New York City

By: Lindsay Castonguay

This semester, I stepped out of the bubble of Stonehill College and entered the exciting and lively place of New York City. I am currently living with 15 other students in a Stonehill-owned house in the Bronx for the semester as a part of the NYC Internship program that Stonehill offers to juniors and seniors. Most of the students are business or accounting majors and are forced to travel almost an hour each morning to reach their internships in the busy borough of Manhattan. Being a psychology major and someone who is interested in helping those less well-off in society, I walk about 10 minutes down the street from our house to my internship in the Bronx. Unlike the happy, cheery environment that another student experiences each day as an intern for the hit show *What Not to Wear*, my internship calls me to work with abused children daily.



I am interning at a Child Advocacy Center (CAC) located in the Bronx. A CAC is a place where children are brought if someone suspects that a child has been physically or sexually abused. I work alongside a social worker who conducts the interviews and works with the families. When a family comes in to our center at their specific appointment time, the social worker first talks with the family to get a better understanding of what was reported about the child and why a referral was made. Sometimes, the abuser is someone within the family, so that makes the case a little more interesting and complex. After the social worker speaks with the family, she then brings the child into a child-friendly interviewing room where she asks non-leading questions to determine what has happened to the child and to figure out if the allegations are true. This interview room has a one-way mirror, so multiple people can watch the interview at any given time. The purpose of this mirror and why CACs are so important is that, if there is a criminal offense being investigated, a detective and anyone else from a

law enforcement entity can come and watch the interview all at one time. This prevents the child from being reinterviewed and from being forced to retell his/her story over and over again, which can be a traumatizing experience for the child.

As an intern, I am able to watch the interviews through the one-way mirror. I also am invited to sit in on the initial conference with the parents and to see how the parents view the allegations regarding their child. I have seen a wide range of reactions from parents. Sometimes, they are extremely distraught over what has happened to their child, and, especially with sexual abuse, the parents often do not know the extent of what has happened to their child. Some parents just do not want to come to our center and either avoid their appointment all together, or outwardly show that they are frustrated about the allegations.

The children respond in a much different way from their parents. Prior to embarking on this internship, I was under the impression that these children would be extremely traumatized and upset over what happened to them. On the contrary, these children act just like normal kids, and, particularly with the younger ones, they often do not fully understand what has happened to them. In the interviews, most kids are very responsive and confirm the allegations made in the report. During the visit, most kids just think that our clinic is a fun place to color and watch a movie, which is what I do with them as the families are talking with the social worker. CACs also offer medical exams for abused children, so for physical abuse cases and for most sexual abuse cases where there has been skin-on-skin contact, these children visit with our doctors who are specialized in conducting forensic exams. Sometimes, these exams can also confirm suspected abuse.

This has been a very eye opening experience for me. For starters, the Bronx is like no place that I have ever been to before. Most children come from single parent households and have a mom who had them as a teenager. I have seen countless children in foster homes, and most of these children have lived in multiple foster homes. The abuse that I have seen is also unfathomable. I cannot understand what tempts a person to physically abuse their children by hitting them with objects, or especially how a father can sexually abuse his little girl. I have seen a sibling abusing his younger sibling. In another case, the abuse had gone so far as to where I have met a girl who was raped by a family friend. Seeing these cases day after day can be extremely exhausting. However, I see the positive way that we help families either by helping detectives put a perpetrator in jail, providing services to families who are without life's necessities, or by referring young children to therapy to help them overcome this traumatic experience. I know that I do not want to work in this field forever, but I am happy that I have been here this semester and can see what work is being done to help abused children.

## Professor Promotions

*Congratulations to Professor McCoy and Professor O'Hea!*

**John McCoy was promoted to full professor and granted tenure**

**Erin O'Hea was granted tenure**

## Why do we Dream?

By: Emily Palmisano

Dreams: they have been depicted as deity communications, premonitions, or symbolic messages. Probably one of the best known reasons for dreams is Sigmund Freud's hypothesis that the primary function of dreams was wish fulfillment. Freud theorized that there was both manifest content in dreams and latent content: the actual plot of the dream and an underlying, symbolic meaning respectively. Biologically, another hypothesis has risen from a close source. At the Brockton VA Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Allan Hobson and Robert McCarley proposed the Activation-Synthesis Theory. Professor McCoy explains this theory in his own words:

These investigators pointed out that dreams occur at regular intervals throughout the night. This suggested that the primary motivating force for dreams was biological, not psychological. Indeed, we now know much about the precise mechanisms in the brain that generate the periodic neural discharges that occur when we dream. These neural discharges sweep across the cerebral cortex and are thought to be experienced by the sleeper as visual sensations, memories, emotions, etc. That's the "activation" part of the theory. The forebrain then tries to "make sense" of the stimulation by coming up with a story line. Since the forebrain is working with random visual images, the story line is often bizarre, with time and place being distorted. That's the "synthesis" part of the theory.



The reason for human dreaming has been speculated in both philosophical and scientific circles. Even now, the mysteries involving sleep and dreaming are not completely clear. On a neurological level, sleep may be important in the processing of information, converting short term memories to long term, and/or in the forgetting of non-significant details recorded mentally during the day. Biologically, understanding dreams through REM sleep can help give insight into one reason for human dreaming, however much of the psychological purpose proves to be illusive.

## Group Dynamics

By: Amy Plouff



More and more frequently, individuals are being assigned to group-based work in and outside of the classroom. The effectiveness of groups is highly debated in psychology, with evidence pointing toward both positive and negative outcomes. Researchers Allen and Hecht (2004) suggest that there is a "romance of teams," in which the majority of the population tends to view group-based work as more productive and effective than one individual working alone. Contrary to this belief is research that points out the flaws in team-based work. So, if this evidence exists, why are we still being teamed up and grouped together in classrooms and work settings?

First, a number of social-emotional benefits exist that individuals tend to take away from working with a team. As we know from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, one of the greatest human necessities is the "need to belong." Individuals working together in a group may feel a sense of belonging and affiliation with that group, which satisfies certain social desires. Also, when working with a group, we have the ability to confirm our beliefs with others. It's reassuring to know that other members of the group share our thoughts. Lastly, working in a group can be fun. A monotonous task like stuffing envelopes can become a lot less boring if you're able to chat with others while doing it!

Groups provide attribution opportunities that working alone does not. If you're working alone and you perform poorly on a task, there is no one else to place the blame on except for yourself. If you've ever been part of a group that has failed, you've likely experienced the thought processes in which the group begins to blame outside factors on its negative performance. You'll likely not take individual credit for the group's failure, whereas if you're in a group that is successful, you'll tend to take more individual credit for the group's success.

These social and competence-related benefits of working with a team tend to explain why many individuals prefer working in groups to working alone. Happiness is strongly correlated with performance. People tend to believe that because they feel good about working on a team, they are also being highly productive. On the contrary, many studies of group dynamics actually reveal that when the group's performance is compared to that of its most competent individual member, the individual's performance exceeds the group's. Similarly, although there is a positive bias toward group brainstorming, individuals actually produce more ideas brainstorming alone than those working in a group. Thus, while groups may make individuals feel good, they are not always as productive as we might think.

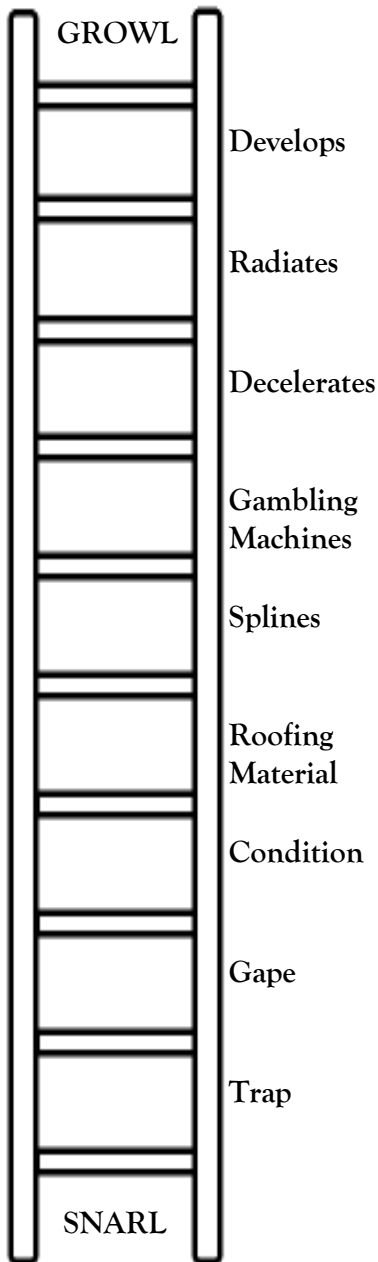


## Word Ladder

A word ladder is a sequence of words formed by changing just one letter each time .

Ex.) CAT - COT - DOT - DOG.  
Can you find the missing words?

Use the clues if you get stuck.



Answers on Back Page.

## Psychology in Advertising

By: Genelle Goodhue

During the day, we might turn the pages of a magazine in the waiting room, flick through the television channels, or drive on the highway. Advertisements are the one thing we experience while performing all of these tasks. We often are not conscious of exactly how many product images and commercials we come across in a single day, as viewing them is so incredibly ingrained in not only our lives, but also our culture.

While we all have turned down the volume or stepped into the kitchen during the commercials, data suggests we are still extremely vulnerable to their messages. One study found that incidental exposure to ads, meaning they were not the primary object of focus, appears to affect the products purchased whether the subject had memory recall of the advertisements or not (Shapiro, et al., 1997). Regardless of how distracted we are from the advertisements, even receiving a small amount of conscious stimulus, we can still be more susceptible to purchasing their product.

This becomes a serious cause for concern when we think about how these corporations are selling their products: with life styles and ideas. Mini vans are shown being able to take the beating of several family vacations and makeup claims to lead to younger looking skin. To sell that product means to sell an ideal and successfully convince consumers that they can obtain it through purchasing this product. While the ideal may vary from taking more vacations to having no visible age spots, these messages can come with huge social consequences.

In 1995, television was introduced to residents of Fiji, which had a rich culture that praised a larger body type. To be skinny was thought to be undesirable. According to Erica Goode of *The New York Times*, 63 female participants averaging 17 years old were surveyed one month following its introduction. Subsequently, in 1998, only three years later, a study of a similar group of girls was conducted. Researchers found that the number of girls who had forced vomiting in order to lose weight rose from the initial 3% to an astounding 15%. The girls that were considered at risk for developing an eating disorder rose from 13% to 29%. While it is well known that eating disorders are more prevalent in industrialized countries, concerns should be raised as only three years of television exposure began to unravel centuries of culture. While advertising certainly was not the only cause, especially with actresses being at an all time thin, studies suggests that advertising certainly lent a helping hand.

One such study conducted with participants 3-15 years of age, found that after viewing only 20 commercials containing an idealized thin female image, the girls reported much higher rates of body dissatisfaction, which even continued for an additional 15 minutes after viewing the commercials (Duane, et al., 2003). This is even more disturbing when set against the frequency of such advertisements. According to *The New York Times*, one market research firm found that the average city resident experienced about 5,000 advertisements a day. We can certainly see the long-term implications of exposure to these advertisements.

Not surprisingly, cosmetic companies are prosperous and diet fads are numerous. It is difficult to expect an improvement in the foreseeable future as these advertisements continue to make corporations billions of dollars. It is an all too real possibility that the emotional states of women will be further bombarded by these unachievable goals for years to come.



## Alumni Career Panel: What can you do with your Psychology Degree?

By: Sarah Hill

On March 6th, 2012, the Office of Career Services and Psychology Society joined forces to host a career panel especially for psychology students. The panel included seven Stonehill alumni who currently work in a variety of psychology-related careers. All of these panelists were enthusiastic about sharing their experiences after graduation and giving valuable advice to students about graduate school and beyond. During the course of this event, students got a chance to hear a little bit about each panelist and even meet with three of their choosing in smaller groups in order to ask more specific questions. After graduating from Stonehill with a degree in Psychology, each of these panelists went on to pursue very different careers.

**Sara Del Vecchio, M.S.N.** is a graduate of the class of 2000. After Stonehill, she graduated from MGH Institute for Health Professionals with a Masters in Nursing, and currently works as a nurse practitioner at NeuroHealth.

**Hilary Marck** is a graduate of the class of 2010 who spent a year in the Dominican Republic as part of Stonehill's International Extension Program after graduation. She now works in a middle school as a Special Education Instructional Assistant and is presently taking classes for her Master's in Social Work at Simmons College.

**Erin McAlonan, M.A.** graduated in 2000 and went on to Lesley University to receive a Master of Arts in Expressive Therapies. McAlonan now works for Child & Family Services, Inc. as a Supervisor for the Intensive Care Coordination program.

**Daniel Graney, Ed.D.** graduated from Stonehill in 1997. He went on to receive a Master of Arts in Forensic Psychology from the City College of New York – John Jay College of Criminal Justice. He presently serves as the Director of Substance Abuse Preventative Services at

the University of Rhode Island.

**John Gorvin, Ph.D.** graduated from Stonehill in 1982, and also received a Master's degree in Counseling Psychology from Boston College and a Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology from Florida Institute of Technology. Gorvin now has his own private practice as a Clinical and Sports Psychologist.

**Emily Murphy** graduated from Stonehill in 2005 and received her Master's of Science in Communication Sciences and Disorders Administration from MGH Institute of Health Professions. She now works as a Speech Language Pathologist in a public school as well as a rehabilitation facility/nursing home.

**Amanda Sexton** is a graduate of the class of 2007. After leaving Stonehill, she received a Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology with concentrations in Child Behavioral Therapy and Child/Adolescent Therapy from Assumption College. She now works for the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts as a Healthcare Coordinator.

In general, students who attended found this career panel to be a very rewarding opportunity, one in which they had the ability to make valuable contacts in the field of psychology and ask many of their own personal questions about possible career options after graduating. These panelists all started with the same undergraduate degree from Stonehill, but went on to pursue unique paths after receiving their diplomas. The wide variety of careers represented by these panelists clearly exhibited to students pursuing a degree in Psychology the vast areas of exploration and the many different professional career paths available to psychology graduates today.

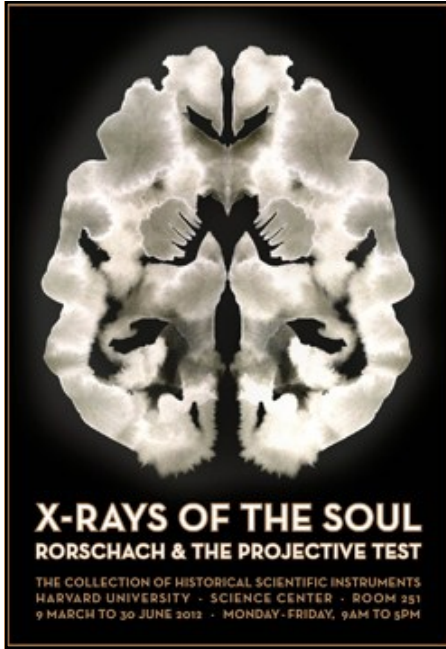
## Ph.D. versus Psy.D.

By: Katie Austin

You've heard of Psy.D. and Ph.D. programs, but are they really that much different from one another? Is one degree better than the other? Trying to decide on which degree to go for can be overwhelming, but there are some differences that you need to take into account when choosing between the two programs. A Psy.D. is a Doctor of Psychology while a Ph.D. is a Doctor of Philosophy. One degree isn't superior to the other; instead it is more a matter of your personal career goals that should be the deciding factor between the two programs. Ph.D. programs have a larger research component than Psy.D. programs, and they train students for research careers, as well as positions in academia. Psy.D. programs focus on clinical training and experience, and not as much on the research. Although some Psy.D. programs offer research experiences, it isn't enough if you want to pursue a career in research. If you are unsure of what your career aspirations are, then apply to different Psy.D., Ph.D., and non-psychology graduate programs and continue exploring your different options. Regardless of your choice, a Psy.D. or Ph.D. program, you should still look at the programs with the same critical eye. Some important criteria to judge programs by are if the program is APA-accredited, what educational experience this program is offering you, and what current alumni from this program are doing. There are both high-quality and inferior Psy.D. and Ph.D. programs out there, and these criteria will help you figure out which ones are which.



## X-Rays of The Soul: Rorschach Exhibit at Harvard



**Rorschach exhibit: What does it look like to you?** Before Hermann Rorschach published his series of cards stained with suggestive blobs of pigment in 1921, most people simply regarded ink blots as pesky spills that ought to be cleaned up. Because of the Swiss psychiatrist's now-famous test, toppled ink became a way to enhance our understanding of the brain. But as an ongoing exhibit at Harvard University's Science Center shows, the history of the Rorschach test is itself a glimpse into the soul of the profession that made it famous.

The exhibit, called "X-Rays of the Soul," traces the history of the Rorschach test, from its creator's untimely death after the initial publication of his technique flopped, to the epic love story of psychologist Henry Murray and artist Christiana Morgan, the Harvard employees who built upon Rorschach's research to create the ground breaking Thematic Apperception Test. At its most influential points, the test helped mental health experts navigate that foggy zone between health and illness in their patients, changing medical treatments, impacting careers, and altering the course of court cases.

It's no wonder that the test has loomed large in popular culture as well, from the paintings of Andy Warhol to the music of hip-hop artist Jay-Z. For almost a century now, Rorschach inkblots have exemplified the scientific quest to peer into the mind – and a popular desire to do the same.

Link to Harvard exhibit: [http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~hsdept/chsi\\_xrays.html](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~hsdept/chsi_xrays.html)

## Professor Bios: Part II

### Professor Susan Zandrow

I was born in New York City, raised on Long Island, and did my schooling at SUNY Binghamton and SUNY Buffalo. As an undergraduate, I became interested in working with autistic children at a research clinic on campus. These children fascinated me with their unusual behaviors, and I was inspired by the research showing that even those with severe special needs could be reached and taught skills. I did my graduate work at Lesley University and later worked at a residential facility for severely autistic children, researching protocols and implementing behavior modification programs and strategies for developmentally delayed clients. After taking some time off to raise my three sons, I went back to teaching at the college level. I started teaching behavior modification at Bridgewater State ten years ago and moved to several other undergraduate offerings there and elsewhere, including developmental psychology courses at Stonehill College.

### Professor Christopher Poirier

I was raised in North Branford, CT. I graduated from Stonehill in 1997 with a major in psychology and a minor in sociology. I earned MS in 2001 and Ph.D. in 2004, in Developmental Psychology from UMass, Amherst. After graduate school, I taught at Saint Lawrence University from 2003 to 2004. I started teaching at Stonehill in 2004. I met my wife at Stonehill and we have two children, an 8 month old girl and a boy turning 4 in June. I enjoy teaching, hiking, skiing, and visiting Las Vegas.

### Professor Ellie Stein

I was raised in Haverhill, MA, with many expectations placed on me, and my only interests were sports and painting, which may explain why I found myself a freshman at Stonehill in 1987 at 42 years old, and graduating in 1989 at 44 with a major in psychology and a minor in sociology. The idea of graduate school was about as far from my mind as sky diving; so how, you might ask did I achieve a Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology at 53 years old and celebrate by jumping out of an airplane? The answer is relatively simple; I had some of the same wonderful professors you have, and they wouldn't hear of me stopping my education. I began my graduate training at Tufts in a doctoral program in experimental psychology, which I realized was not what I was meant for, so after completing the two years of the master's portion of the program, I transferred to MSPP where I did my clinical training. My clinical specialty is trauma, which I balance with my teaching here at Stonehill. It's difficult to believe that I taught my first course at Stonehill, the Psychology of Women, while still in graduate school. Then after completing my doctorate, came back here around 2000 to put more balance in my career. In reality, no one ever leaves Stonehill.

When I'm not here, I enjoy anything that puts me on or near the water: swimming, kayaking, canoeing. I enjoy horseback riding as long as my back holds out, and as long as anyone who is a purist isn't watching my form. My goal for this summer is to get back to painting.



## Professor Tirrell: His Road to Stonehill

I remember the first time I even entertained the thought of making Psychology an area to which to devote my life. I had always wanted to be a teacher but the question was always what I was going to teach. The answer began to take shape during my senior year in high school. I was in a physics class and the physics teacher was out sick. The only substitute the school could find was a local counseling psychologist. For three days, he came in and, rather than teaching us physics, he talked about case after case he had been counseling. I was fascinated. Did people really face such issues and were they really willing to talk about them with someone?

A few months later, I graduated and after a very busy summer, I entered Stonehill as a French major. That did not last long. You see, I have a mild form of dyslexia which causes me to be an extremely slow reader of the English language. I am talking about 15 pages an hour unless there are pictures or large print. Even the most interesting novel doesn't fare much better- about 28 pages an hour. Now, as a freshman, trying to read *Madame Bovary* in French was like trying to wade through hip-deep mud. I am now talking about 5 pages an hour. It was clear to me that my days in French were numbered.

During my sophomore year, Stonehill opened up a new major- Psychology. When I heard the news, I immediately saw my opportunity to escape from wallowing in the mud. I declared it as a major and put my heart and soul into it. In 1974, I graduated from Stonehill with the B.A. in Psychology and went right on to a Ph.D. program in Experimental Psychology at the University of New Hampshire. I specifically chose UNH because its program prepared psychologists to be both specialists in an area as well as teachers at liberal arts institutions. We had to qualify (pass an exam after reading key articles and texts) in five different areas. I qualified in Develop-



"Professor" Tirrell as a Stonehill French Major (1972)



"Professor" Tirrell as a Graduate Student (1977) with Advisor

mental Psychology, Social Psychology, Physiological Psychology, Sensation and Perception, and Personality Theory which meant I could teach a survey course in any of those areas. In addition to becoming well-versed in Statistics, I specialized in Sensation and Perception. By the time I left graduate school, I had research altered visual perception and taught courses in General Psychology, Statistics, and Perception, Language, & Thought.

It so happened that as I was completing my Ph.D., one of my former Stonehill professors decided to go into private practice which meant a position was opening up at Stonehill. I remember thinking, "If I could get the one year position, I would consider it a dream come true." After all, Brassil Fitzgerald, one of my great uncles, had been an English professor here in the 1950's and early 1960's. Another great uncle had at one time been a Holy Cross Father before he started the Paraclete Fathers. And to top all of that, I had written a "What I Want to Do When I Grow Up" paper in 7<sup>th</sup> grade that said I was going to be a priest here at Stonehill. When puberty hit 6 months later, the priest part of it became less appealing.

I have been living my dream for 33 years now. I have taught everything from General to Statistics to Personality, to Practicum to Industrial/Personnel to Theories of Counseling to Brain and Behavior. My perception research went by the wayside, but I did some research in locus of control, spirituality and concept of death. That stemmed from a 10 year cancer support group I ran. I also linked up with Professor Anderson of the Business Department and completed an article on business personalities and corporate fraud. My interests today focus on the role of Christian beliefs on achieving success in life.

What has been a most excellent ride so far is probably three-quarters over and I look forward to the last quarter of my Stonehill Life. I relish every day I spend here, teaching and administering the Department of Psychology. Who would have thought a chance encounter in a physics class would lead to such a fulfilling life?

Psychology Students of the Year



Michelle Fanciullo and Amy Lane



Psi Chi Inductees

Katelyn Austin  
Brianna Bach  
Chelsea Bengtson  
Tara Cantwell  
Jessica Cockroft  
Alexandra Cutillo  
Caitlin DeCortin  
Rebecca Dinerman  
Laura Domanico  
Kathryn Ferlisi

Kelly Gorman  
Danielle Guilmette  
Samantha Harding  
Bryana Killion  
Amy Lane  
Cassandra Lorusso  
Jenna Lussier  
Jennifer Mazzola  
Teresa McGinley  
Julie Mills

Brigitte Monahan  
Rebecca Moore  
Kayla Pirri  
Amy Plouff  
Christine Powers  
Laura Simoncini  
Elyse Stewart  
Christina Tousignant Miller  
Georgia Winters



Outstanding Field Placement Recognition

Jane Dudley  
Laura Domanico



Psychology Research Excellence Recognition

Lindsay Castonguay  
Alexandra Cutillo  
Bryana Killion  
Nicholas Kolenda  
Paige Marquis  
Bryan Perkins  
Grace Walkowicz  
Alyson Weston-Murphy



Neuroscience Research Excellence Recognition

Elizabeth Belanger  
Jacob Boganski  
Maura Ferrarini  
Lisa Lombardini  
Emily Palmisano  
Ashley Proctor

## The Path to Tyranny

By: Alison Patev

With the December death of Kim Jong II and the more recent explosion of the "Kony 2012" movement, the word "tyrant" has been getting a lot of use. It is a word that is synonymous with names like Hitler and Stalin. It is a word that we dislike hearing, one that the world has been fighting to eliminate for hundreds of years. Yet tyrants still keep appearing.

So how are tyrants created? How do people like Hitler, Kim and Kony, who we see as murderous, hateful beings, gain a following and rule their respective groups with hardly a fight against them? Social psychology attempts to explain it.

Social psychologists have developed the Five Steps to Tyranny, a list detailing how people turn from popular leaders to dictatorial tyrants:

1. *"Us versus Them:"* Tyrants aim to create separation between two groups by creating an in-group (us) and an out-group (them). The in-group shares one way of thinking and viewing others. The members of this group become biased against the out-group, creating conflict.

For example, Hitler proclaims that the Aryan race is perfect and all others, especially the Jewish people, are not as good.

2. *"Obey Orders:"* Tyrants will then force all of those under their rule to obey their orders blindly, no questions asked. Punishment for disobeying orders is severe, usually imprisonment or death.

For example, in Jane Elliott's blue-eyes/brown-eyes experiment, she orders the children in her class with blue eyes to ignore those with brown eyes.

3. *"Dehumanization of the Other:"* Tyrants then create an image of the out-group as being inhuman and worthless compared to the in-group. Because the in-group is now blindly obeying orders, they will believe what the leader says. In-group members will begin to call the other group names, compare them to animals, and even go as far as to cause them physical harm.

For example, Hutu soldiers calling Tutsi people "cockroaches" during the Rwandan genocide.

4. *"Stand Up or Stand By:"* This is the point where some dissenters arise in the in-group. These dissenters have realized that the tyrant has no basis for dehumanizing the "Other," and therefore is wrong. Tyrants try to punish these people quickly before their dissension spreads. The dissenters have a choice - make an active decision to stand up against the tyrant or do nothing about the situation. Dissenters who speak up are often imprisoned or put to death.

For example, Mahatma Gandhi peacefully protests the British rule over India in the early 1900's. He was often imprisoned, yet he still kept dissenting.

5. *"Suppress Individuality and Exterminate:"* In the last step, tyrants seek to make all people conform. Individuality is threatening to the tyrant's rule. In order to create more conformity, the tyrant will attempt to exterminate those who are different. This extermination is called "ethnic cleansing," the systematic killing of a certain group of people based on a given characteristic of that group.

For example, Kony orders his LRA soldiers to kill the Acholi people to "purify" Uganda.

It is terrifying to think that in five steps one can become a tyrant. By following this, any oppressive leader could turn his or her power into a tyrannical reign. However, now that the steps which produce tyrants have been identified, psychologists and other scientists can create ways to stop the chain of tyranny. Maybe one day the knowledge of social psychology can help the world live without fear of tyrannical monsters like those of the past.

Can you see the two words embedded in each picture?

Answers on  
Back Page.





## Why do Women Wear a Little Black Dress?!

### Colors & Mood: How the Colors you Wear Affect You!

Many psychology studies have looked into the reasons why certain colors cause us to feel certain ways, some even claiming we *feel* colors more than we see them!

Here is the rundown of basic colors and some of the meanings psychologists have given to them!

**RED:** empowering, draws attention to you, romance and passion, causes cravings for junk food!

**ORANGE:** draws attention and energy, positive energetic mood!

**YELLOW:** cheers you up, intelligence and inspiration, wear this color on an exam day!

**GREEN:** calm and soothing, refreshing, reminds us of nature, a stress reducer!

**BLUE:** peaceful, relaxed, can cause a depressed mood, but more positively sparks creativity!

**PURPLE:** regal and sophisticated, stimulating, boosts energy, creativity and luxury, involved with spirituality and intuition!

**PINK:** romance and happiness, calming and thought to boost mood!

**WHITE:** peace, innocence, simplicity, cleanliness, reflects light, reminds us of summer!

**BLACK:** power, seriousness, authority and responsibility, also known for “giving edge!”



## Learning Styles: How Does Your Learning Style Affect your Grades?

By: Kayla Pirri

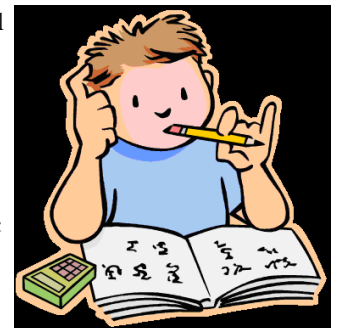
It's 3am, and you're trying to cram as much information into your brain as humanly possible for your first social psychology test of the semester. For some reason unbeknownst to you, the information just will not stick, no matter how much you read and reread your 10<sup>th</sup> edition, 200 dollar, David G. Myers. As you attempt to memorize the logistics of the Stanford Prison experiment and its implications to social psychology research, you begin to tap your pen and turn your study materials into a musical compilation. Suddenly you have no problem remembering the material. The next day, you receive an A+ on your exam.

The above vignette serves as an example of the way in which learning style affects one's ability to do well in school. One's learning style refers to the approach or way of learning that is most effective for the individual and that guides the way one learns. Typical learning styles include visual learning (images and spatial understanding), auditory learning (verbal lessons, discussions, and talking things through), and tactile/kinesthetic learning (touching, doing, and moving). However, other individuals additionally learn through sound and music (aural); using logic, reasoning, and math (logical/mathematical); in groups (social/interpersonal); or when working alone (solitary/intrapersonal).

Traditionally, teachers use tools such as books, repetition, and the pressure of exams for review and reinforcement of classroom material. Although these traditional teaching styles enhance learning for some, they do not work for everyone. Many scholars assert that this gap between learning and teaching styles proves partially responsible for students who are inattentive in class, perform poorly on tests, and are discouraged about learning. These individuals suggest that adjusting classroom instruction to accommodate all learning styles is necessary in order to have a fully inclusive learning environment.

However, Psychological Science in the Public Interest cites four psychologists who argue that current research to support this “matching” idea is not valid and no need exists for professors to alter teaching methods to suit students' learning styles. Harold E. Pashler, a professor of psychology at the University of California at San Diego, is a leading critic who asserts that previous research supporting matching teaching and learning styles is flawed and correlational, rather than causal. He argues the importance of professors matching teaching styles to what is appropriate for the content and lesson, rather than to the learning styles of the students. According to Pashler, the reason for findings that a teacher's awareness of learning styles improves student learning is due to an increased monitoring of appropriate teaching styles. Supporters of the “matching” idea counter him, pointing out that Pashler's bibliography is faulted and they are not impressed nor convinced of these new results.

Nonetheless, it is important for students to be aware of their own learning styles, as this may lead to more effective and enjoyable study tactics. So, what is your learning style? Find out at <http://www.learning-styles-online.com/inventory/questions.php?cookieset=y>.



# Meet the Thalamus Team

My name is **Sarah Hill** and I am a sophomore psychology major from Londonderry, New Hampshire. On campus, I am currently involved in the Stonehill Musical Theater Club as the publicity coordinator and choreographer and I am also a member of the Psychology Society. In the future, I plan to attend graduate school to get a Master's degree in Counseling Psychology.

My name is **Elise Chappell** and I am from Chester, New Hampshire. I am a sophomore psychology major at Stonehill College. I volunteer through Into the Streets and I am a part of Girls from the Hill. I would like to further my education by going to graduate school for occupational therapy or some sort of rehabilitation counseling.

My name is **Laura Dzgoeva** and I am from Boxborough, Massachusetts. I am a sophomore psychology and sociology double major. I've always had an undying passion for the military, and also for psychology! I love bringing the two together, and I hope to eventually work with the military, perhaps in the VA medical system.

My name is **Nikki Remillard** and I am a sophomore psychology major from Essex, Vermont. In the future I plan on attending a graduate program in occupational therapy.

My name is **Genelle Goodhue** and I am a sophomore neuroscience major from Sanford, Maine. This summer I will be a SURE scholar under Professor John McCoy doing research on sleep apnea. In the future, I plan on attending a graduate school in a neuroscience or psychology-related field.

My name is **Emily Palmisano** and I am a junior neuroscience major at Stonehill College. I am interested in pursuing a degree in clinical psychology when I graduate from Stonehill.

My name is **Leanne Brooks** and I am a Freshman from Hugganum, CT. I am a neuroscience major and healthcare administration minor. In my free time, I enjoy playing tennis and watching The Office. I plan on going into medicine, and right now I am most interested in being a Nurse Anesthetist. I am very excited to be writing for the Thalamus, and my interests include health psychology, memory, and current news and research.

My name is **Katie Austin** and I'm from Somers, CT, I'm an elementary education and psychology double major. I'm a junior, and I'm looking to eventually go to graduate school for school counseling or child life, but I may teach for a couple of years before I go to graduate school.

My name is **Amy Plouff** and I am a junior psychology major at Stonehill. I am interested in group dynamics, especially effective group work, and I hope to continue my education in this field by pursuing a Masters degree in Industrial Organizational Psychology.

My name is **Kayla Pirri** and I am a psychology and sociology double major in the class of 2013. My hometown is Cranston, Rhode Island. After graduation, I plan on going to graduate school to obtain either a masters or Ph.D. I am (still) unsure of my future plans, but I hope to work with children in some way.

My name is **Kerry Howard** and I am a first year student at Stonehill. I am majoring in psychology with a minor in mathematics.

My name is **Lindsay Castonguay** and I am a junior from Northbridge, MA. I am a psychology major with a minor in sociology. My current plan for after graduation is to go straight to graduate school and to possibly enroll in a school-counseling program. I enjoy working with children, but I am particularly interested in helping children in middle school or high school. I am hoping to complete an internship during my senior year, working with a school counselor.

My name is **Alison Patev** and I am a junior psychology major. I am from Merrimack, New Hampshire and currently studying abroad in Cork, Ireland.



### Frances Foote: The Thalamus Advisor

I have been working at Stonehill College since 2007. I was first hired into the Business Administration Department as coordinator of the AACSB Accreditation effort. In 2009, I also began working as the Administrative Assistant to the Psychology and Physics Department, and was asked to be the advisor for the re-launched Thalamus newsletter. I am the only employee on campus to have 2 different offices - one in Stanger and one in the Science Building. I graduated from Stonehill College in 1987 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology, and worked as a Clinical Research Associate for a medical device subsidiary of Pfizer, Inc.. I live in Easton with my husband and three children.

### The Thalamus Editors

#### Teresa McGinley

My name is Teresa McGinley and I am from Sandwich, Massachusetts. I am a junior psychology and Spanish double major. I have completed an internship as an Adjustment Counselor through the Brockton School System and am looking forward to conducting research with Professor Craton in the area of music cognition this coming fall. In the future, I hope to attend graduate school to pursue either a Psy.D. or Ph.D. degree in order to have a future working with children and families.



#### Georgia Winters

My name is Georgia Winters and I am from Bristol, Vermont. I am a junior double majoring in psychology and criminology. I am involved in Psychology Society, The Moore Center's Sexual Assault Prevention Group, and Silent Witness Initiative. I have been conducting research with Professor Klentz on her Jury Decision Making Study since my sophomore year. I hope to pursue my Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology with a focus in Forensics in order to become a Forensic Psychologist.

#### Embedded Words

- #1- Victory/Defeat
- #2- Optical/Illusion

#### Word Ladder

GROWL,GROWS,GLOWS,SLOWS,SLOTS,SLATS,SLATE,STATE,STARE,SNARE,SNARL

### THE THALAMUS



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