

PsychologiCal

Dear Psychology Alumni,



Change is in the air. While I'm sure many of you have read of the challenges that the University faces, the news is not all doom and gloom. This newsletter is designed to give you a taste of the many activities that make our department such a vibrant place. We remain at the center of cutting edge research, and we continue to make the changes required to maintain our preeminent position as

part of the leading public institution for higher education.

New leadership

After seven years of superlative service as our chair, Steve Hinshaw will be returning to full-time teaching and research. We are grateful for his tireless dedication to the department. Three cheers for Steve! I have started my term as the new Chair of the Department of Psychology. I have been at Berkeley for over 20 years, including service as the department vice chair during most of Steve's tenure and the Director of the Institute of Cognitive and Brain Sciences from 2000-2010. Joining me as part of the department's leadership team are Professors Frédéric Theunissen and Silvia Bunge, who will serve as vice chairs. Frédéric is working to restructure the undergraduate major and Silvia is taking steps to provide better support for our graduate students. I am very fortunate to be able to work with these two dynamic and committed individuals.

New faces

Psychology continues to be a popular undergraduate major on the campus; we currently have 740 psychology majors. Our graduate program is as competitive as ever: In 2010-11, we had 653 applications for our five programs, admitted 28 individuals, 19 of whom accepted. This is our highest acceptance rate since my time at Berkeley, indicating the drawing power of our faculty and campus. We have successfully recruited a number of award-winning faculty over the last few years. Sheri Johnson (Clinical), Matthew Walker and David Whitney (Cognition, Brain & Behavior), and Fei Xu (Change, Plasticity, & Development) came to us from faculty positions across the United States and Canada. Sonia Bishop (Cognition, Brain & Behavior) joined us following a post-doctoral fellowship at Cambridge University.

After a one-year hiatus, the University is back in the recruiting business. We are thrilled to welcome our most

recent faculty hire, Iris Mauss. Iris will be a member of our Social-Personality area. She is featured in an interview in this newsletter. The department will also be searching this year for a new faculty member to join our Behavioral Neuroscience group.

New places

Tolman Hall has been home to the department for nearly 50 years, and has served the department well. However, the time has come to plan for a new home. Our building has a rating of 'poor' in terms of earthquake safety, just one step above the lowest possible rating. We're also engaging in discussions about what psychology labs should look like in the 21st century. As with all major building projects on campus, a partnership between the state, university, and private donors will be required to make these plans concrete (and steel).

With a little help from our friends...

We strive to ensure that the best students have access to a Berkeley education through undergraduate scholarships and graduate student fellowships. Once here, we know they will have ample opportunities to learn from and conduct research with our extraordinary faculty. To help us accomplish these goals, we are launching the Friends of Cal Psychology Fundraising Campaign this fall. We hope you will pause to reflect on how your time with us has enriched your life, and consider making a gift to the Department of Psychology. Information is available on our website or go to:

<http://psychology.berkeley.edu/giving/>

I look forward to sharing more news with you in the coming years.

Go Bears,

Rich Ivry
Chair, Department of Psychology

Stay in touch with Cal Psych online!



What have you been up to lately? Send an email update to calpsychnews@gmail.com.



"Like" UC Berkeley Psychology on Facebook for news updates, pictures, and more!



Visit our homepage:
<http://psychology.berkeley.edu>

Faculty News

Ozlem Ayduk received a Templeton Research Grant on her project called "From good intentions to virtue: Training self-distancing to promote prosocial affect, cognition and behavior." This research will test the short- and long-term efficacy of an emotion regulation intervention focused on self-distancing training in promoting prosocial responding.

Silvia Bunge was appointed to the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. She was also awarded the James S. McDonnell Foundation Scholar Award for the Understanding of Human Cognition.



Serena Chen became a Fellow of the Society of Personality and Social Psychology (Div. 8 of APA), and received a Social Sciences Distinguished Teaching Award (see Chen, far right, displaying

her award with her graduate students Juli Breines, Muping Gan, and Amie Gordon).

On September 25, 2011, **Alison Gopnik** was invited to speak at NBC's Education Nation conference in New York City on the importance of early childhood education. Other invited speakers included Warren Buffett, Melinda Gates and Arne Duncan.

Steve Palmer received an NSF award for his research on human preferences for color and spatial composition.

Jack Gallant made national science news headlines for his work exploring how the brain processes dynamic visual events. Gallant and his team used fMRI technology to

measure blood flow through the visual cortex of the brain while participants watched short video clips. A computer program "learned" the patterns of brain activity that co-occurred with visual patterns from the movie clips. The program was then able to reconstruct visual images based on fMRI data.

Both *Smithsonian* magazine and Slate.com featured **Bob Levenson's** use of the 1979 boxing film *The Champ* to induce sadness in subjects in emotion experiments.

Tania Lombrozo received the National Science Foundation CAREER award from the Perception, Action, and Cognition and Division of Research on Learning Programs for her work on the role of explanation in cognition. She was also awarded the James S. McDonnell Foundation Scholar Award for the Understanding of Human Cognition.

Dacher Keltner and the Greater Good Science Center are hosting a \$4.5-million science initiative on the science of gratitude, which will fund 12 projects around the country.

Steve Palmer and **Art Shimamura's** book, *Aesthetic Science: Connecting Minds, Brains, and Experience*, will be published by Oxford University Press this fall.

Research from **Fei Xu's** Infant Cognition and Language Lab was featured in the spring 2011 issue of the *Berkeley Science Review*.

Sheldon Zedeck will be awarded a 2011 Lifetime Achievement Award at the First Israel Organizational Behavior Conference for his work in the fields of organizational behavior and industrial/organizational psychology. The award will be presented at a special reception at the conference at Tel-Aviv University in December 2011. For more information, visit the conference website: <http://recanati.tau.ac.il/Eng/iobc>

First-year spotlight: Lisa Johnson

Area: Cognition, Brain & Behavior

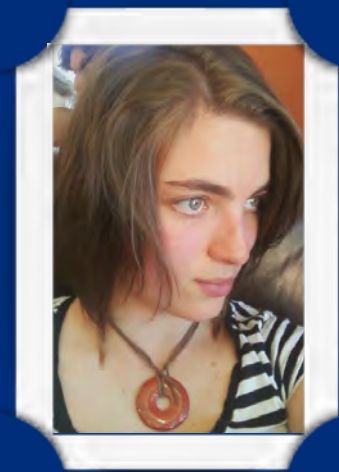
Advisor: Silvia Bunge

Hometown: New York, NY

Favorite problem in psychology: The challenge of capturing the elusive area of abstract thought.

What would you be doing if not in grad school: There's this bar in Chicago that was shut down in 2004 for having "dangerous and hazardous conditions," called "Slow Down! Life's Too Short". I've always wanted to buy that place and bring it back in all its glory.

When not in Tolman, you'll find me: Floating around somewhere between Barker Hall and the East Coast.



The Friends of Cal Psychology Campaign

Our current and emeriti faculty and their families have come together to help form the **Friends of Cal Psychology**, a group of faculty, alumni and friends who are committed to maintaining the excellence of the Department's graduate and undergraduate training through different fundraising initiatives.

The Graduate Student Support Fund

Dear Psychology Alumni and Students,

Back when we were just starting our scientific careers, the prospect of joining Berkeley's Psychology Department was enhanced by our knowledge of the exciting work being done by the faculty. After a few years, it became clear that the high quality of our academic experience came equally from the exceptional graduate and undergraduate students who composed our program, year after year and generation after generation. Our time here has been greatly enriched by the wonderful students we have known and with whom we have shared our intellectual lives.

We believe that the splendid faculty of the department will continue to be a magnet for outstanding new students. However, we also realize that the threat of increasing expenses and declining state resources may make it difficult for students to choose Berkeley over other universities with more flexible and generous sources of support. As part of the Friends of Cal Psychology campaign, we have chosen to spearhead a new fundraising initiative to support our graduate students – valuable young colleagues to us, and terrific mentors to our undergraduates. We invite you to support our graduate students with a gift to a new fund we have seeded, the Graduate Student Support Fund.

Please consider making a gift online at: <http://psychology.berkeley.edu/giving/>

Thank you for joining us in our efforts to enhance support for future generations of graduate students at Cal.

Regards,

Erv Hafter
Al Riley
Steve Palmer
Karen DeValois
Phil and Carolyn Cowan

New Endowments Created by our Faculty and their Families



Arnold Leiman Graduate Student Support Fund

To provide dissertation support for outstanding Psychology Graduate Student Instructors. The fund was established in memory of Prof. Arnold Leiman by his family.

Mark R. Rosenzweig Graduate Student Support Fund

To support outstanding graduate students with a preference given to students working in the field of biological psychology. This fund was established in memory of Prof. Mark Rosenzweig by his family.



Christina Maslach Graduate Student Support Fund

To support outstanding graduate students working in the field of social psychology.

Martha and Sheldon Zedeck Graduate Student Support Fund

To support outstanding graduate students with a preference for students conducting research in applied and/or quantitative psychology.

Q&A

With graduate researcher **Luma Muhtadie**

Luma is a third-year graduate student in the Clinical Science program.

What are your broad research interests?

I am interested in the dynamic and reciprocal interplay between social cognition and emotion (in both mind and body) within meaningful social contexts. For example, why do social-evaluative contexts raise the specter of failure for some people and cause them to feel threatened, while others are more inclined to view this type of scenario as an opportunity to impress and feel energized as a result? What individual difference variables and features of the social environment interact to predict these divergent responses in the mind and body? And how do such responses relate to illness and well-being over time?

Who are your advisors/collaborators?

My primary advisor is Sheri Johnson, who specializes in the study of bipolar disorder, an illness characterized by profound impairments in social and emotional functioning. My research with Sheri involves applying multi-method experimental paradigms toward gaining a better understanding of the specific types of experiences – particularly social experiences – that are likely to set off extreme emotional responses or undermine regulatory efforts in this population and confer vulnerability to mood episodes.

I am also mentored by Wendy Mendes, a social psychophysicologist at UCSF. In addition to helping me to develop my theoretical and technical skills in psychophysiology, Wendy continually inspires me to think of new ways to vividly re-create immersive social contexts within the lab.

My projects with Sheri focus on how rigid or maladaptive responses to key social contexts might contribute to psychopathology; my work with Wendy at UCSF examines the opposite end of that spectrum: how the ability to flexibly calibrate autonomic responses to shifting contexts and demands might relate to exquisite attunement to the self (interoceptive awareness) and others (social-emotional accuracy) across the lifespan.

What inspired your interest in these topics?

I spent three years doing post-baccalaureate research at Stanford before entering graduate school, and those years have really shaped my interests and approach to research in graduate school. During that time, I worked with a variety of populations (clinical and healthy; young and old), explored questions emphasizing different levels of analysis



(biological, psychological, and social/cultural) and acquired data using a range of techniques (experience sampling, autonomic and endocrine physiology, observational). Two important themes emerged from those post-baccalaureate experiences: the importance of considering individuals within ecologically meaningful contexts (especially the social world) and the degree to which emotional responses, including reciprocal interactions between mind and body, influence health and well-being.

Reading very broadly and attending conferences in areas outside of clinical science is also crucial to my process of idea development. I draw heavily on research from social, personality, and biological psychology, and try to adopt and adapt thoughtful paradigms and techniques from these areas for use in understanding emotional disorders.

Although I tend to do much more of my learning through reading and research than coursework, John Kihlstrom's "Social Cognition" seminar and Darlene Francis' "Biological Embedding of Social Factors" seminar shaped my thinking in important ways.

What kind of methods do you employ?

All of my mentors – current and past – have emphasized a multi-measure, multi-method approach in their own research and I have inherited this tradition. Autonomic

physiology is the lynchpin of my research because it enables online measurement of dynamic responses to salient events, circumvents deliberate (and unconscious) distortions in responding, and has potentially important links to physical and mental health. At the same time, autonomic physiology *must* be integrated with self-report, observational, behavioral, and other biological (e.g., hormone) data to get the clearest possible story. Physiology data in isolation is about as informative as a mood ring.

Would you like to share information about a current project that is especially representative of your work? What was the manipulation/method, expected/actual results?

I am currently analyzing data for my Masters thesis, which examines stereotype threat in bipolar disorder. More than a decade of social psychology research has shown that members of stigmatized groups underperform on cognitive tasks when they fear confirming negative stereotypes. Research on the underlying mechanisms finds that cueing disparaging stereotypes during motivated performance tasks gives rise to negative emotions, physiological “threat” responses, and concomitant efforts to self-regulate via suppression – all of these processes hijack the limited working memory resources needed for successful performance on complex cognitive tasks. Although stereotype threat has been well studied across a range of stigmatized groups, it has never been examined in people with mental illness.

A sizeable literature suggests that people with bipolar disorder show significant cognitive deficits, yet no study to date has considered whether these deficits might be an artifact of the social context in which testing occurs. In studies of cognition in bipolar disorder, data are typically collected in paradigms bearing all the hallmarks of a stereotype threat induction. Specifically, diagnostic interviews that highlight participants’ illness and impairments are administered prior to testing, and participants with the disorder are informed that their performance will be compared with that of a healthy control group. Negative stereotypes about the illness are thus made salient before testing, raising the specter of failure and specter increasing the likelihood that

stereotype threat responses will be engendered.

Accordingly, I designed a between-subjects (bipolar vs. control) experiment that examines affective and physiological responses (electrocardiography, impedance cardiography, and blood pressure), as well as cognitive performance outcomes, under conditions of high versus low stereotype threat. In the high-threat condition, participants perform a cognitive task immediately after a diagnostic interview and the task is framed as “a test of general intelligence” in which “the performance of people with bipolar disorder will be compared to a group of people with no mental illness.” In the low threat condition, the same cognitive task is completed after a series of creativity measures and presented as a “task of right-brained thinking and creativity.”

I anticipate that people with bipolar disorder in the high-threat condition will show higher levels of negative affect and an autonomic response profile that is consistent with threat (bad stress) versus challenge (good stress) appraisals relative to their counterparts in the low-threat condition and controls in both conditions. I anticipate that these threat responses will ultimately lead to poorer performance on the cognitive task. I am also examining whether administering a brief reappraisal intervention to half the bipolar group in the high-threat condition can attenuate this stress arousal and improve cognitive performance.

What do you like about being in the Berkeley Psychology Department?

I love the emphasis in our department on developing a deep and flexible program of learning and research. I think this is a great way to develop the skills that we will need for a career in research. I love the collegial and supportive atmosphere among students in all areas of our department: it is impossible to pose a question, seek advice, or ask for a resource on the psych grads email list without getting a flood of enthusiastic responses from a peer group that is eager to help. The diversity of faculty and student research interests creates a vibrant and consistently motivating atmosphere.

First-year spotlight: Jasmine Mote



Area: Clinical Science

Advisor: Ann Kring

Hometown: Greenville, OH

Favorite problem in psychology: How to bridge the schism between the academic and non-academic worlds in terms of making scientific research accessible and exciting to everyone.

What I would be doing if I wasn't in grad school: Trying to make a name for myself either directing films or becoming a professional baker/cake decorator. In other words: still poor.

When not in Tolman, you'll find me: Experimenting with my new slow cooker, sleeping, or trying to keep up with two of my favorite TV shows (*Curb Your Enthusiasm* and *Breaking Bad*).

Q&A

With new faculty member Iris Mauss



Iris Mauss talks with us about her research and transition to the Bay Area.

How did you become interested in psychology?

I feel like I've always been interested in psychology. I can't remember an "a-ha!" moment; I was always really naturally drawn to the topic. When I went to high school in Germany, my interest in psychology was more formally inspired by classes in education, psychology, and literature. A lot of German novels of the 20th century (Thomas Mann, Franz Kafka) are very psychological, and those inspired my interest in understanding the human mind and human behavior.

Also, growing up in Germany, you take a lot of classes that try to explain the Third Reich and Nazis and their behavior, and for a German person, that's always a really difficult topic to grapple with. One of the big questions in that realm is "How could people possibly behave in this way?" I think that question leads to a great number of interesting questions about psychology.

Your research focuses on emotions and emotional regulation. Can you tell us more about what you've been working on recently?

What my lab and I are working on focuses on trying to understand how emotion regulation and emotion contribute to people's adjustment to stressful life events. Stressful life events that we examine cover the whole range of things that people encounter in their daily lives; for example, getting laid off, going through a divorce, a loved one dying. It turns out that many people have devastating and long-lasting negative reactions to these type of events, but, maybe even more interestingly, many people don't.

Some people even respond in a way we call post-stress growth, so they do even better after stressful events than before. We're interested in trying to understand those individual differences in responses to stressful life events, and we think that emotions and emotional regulation play a really important role in this. Some people are able to regulate their emotions in a way that helps them overcome stressful life events well, and others, not so much.

Related to that, we're interested in developing training programs or interventions that target a particular type of emotional regulation that seem to be crucial in determining people's reactions to stressful life events. At the moment, we're doing a couple of different training projects targeting emotional regulation. We're seeing whether people can actually learn to use emotional regulation effectively, and in turn, whether that helps them deal with stressful life events in better ways.

What types of emotional regulation would help me come out of a stressful life situation better than I came into it with?

It turns out there's no one magic bullet. A couple of the types of emotional regulation that we're interested in and seem to be very effective are acceptance and reappraisal. Acceptance is especially interesting because it's almost paradoxical at first glance; basically, it entails being able to experientially engage with and not judge the negative emotional experience as well as the daily occurrences of negative emotion – essentially, having the ability and willingness to deal with negative emotions like anger and sadness. People who tend to do that naturally are able to

down the line respond to stressful life events more effectively.

One of the studies we're doing uses mindfulness based meditation to teach people to face negative emotional experiences without having to judge or respond to them. In the course of this acceptance process, something almost magical happens; people respond with less negative emotion. What's so interesting to me is what happens during that process. Some people have suggested that by looking at the negative event and accepting it, you're distancing yourself in some way from negative emotion, and that in turn allows other effective processes to take place.

The second type of emotional regulation that we're interested in is reappraisal. That's when you are able to very flexibly shift your perspective on emotional events so as to alter their emotional impact. Again, we found two things: one, that people who are able to do this develop lower rates of depression and anxiety symptoms after highly stressful life events. We're also working on a training that teaches people to use this particular type of emotional regulation more effectively. Specifically, we are teaching people a type of reappraisal that allows them to engage positive emotions.

It's fascinating that emotional regulation isn't a fixed trait, and that you've trained people to regulate their own emotions.

It's really important to us – we're hoping that we can put this research to use. That was always our strong hypothesis. If you think about it, emotional regulation is a skill that should be highly trainable and learnable. We were hoping that would be the case.

What are you most excited about in terms of moving back to Berkeley?

In some ways it feels like I'm coming home. I'm most excited about the academic environment; being in the Bay Area as an affective scientist is just perfect because there's so much going on, especially in the field of affective science. I'm really excited about moving to Berkeley because there are so many faculty and grad students whose research is interesting to me – I think there will be opportunities for many exciting collaborations, and I got a really good sense of that when I talked with people at Berkeley when I interviewed.

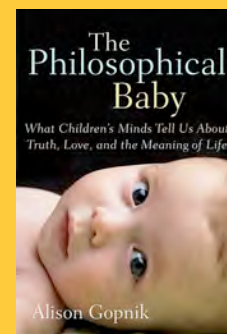
What do you like to do outside of work?

I like being in nature – mountains or the beach – and I really like to read, and watch movies. I really love to travel – some of my favorite places are Central America, Europe, and I also love traveling within the US and California. I've been to Southeast Asia as well. I feel like I have many more places to see!

Reading Corner: Books by our Faculty



Shimamura, A. P. and Palmer, S. E. (Eds.). (2011). *Aesthetic Science*. New York: Oxford University Press.



Gopnik, A. (2010). *The Philosophical Baby*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

NEWSLETTER STAFF

Editor-in-Chief

Jane Hu

Layout Editor

Will Griscom

Features Editor

Michelle Rheinschmidt

Copy Editor

Jeanne Arch

Faculty Editor

Prof. Silvia Bunge

SUBMISSIONS

We would love to hear from you. We welcome:

- Alumni and faculty news
- Lab and faculty profiles
- Tips about upcoming events
- Photographs of recent events

Please email us at calpsychnews@gmail.com

or write to:

PsychologiCal
3210 Tolman Hall
Department of Psychology
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720-1650

PsychologiCal
3210 Tolman Hall
Department of Psychology
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720-1650

PSYCHOLOGICAL

FALL 2011

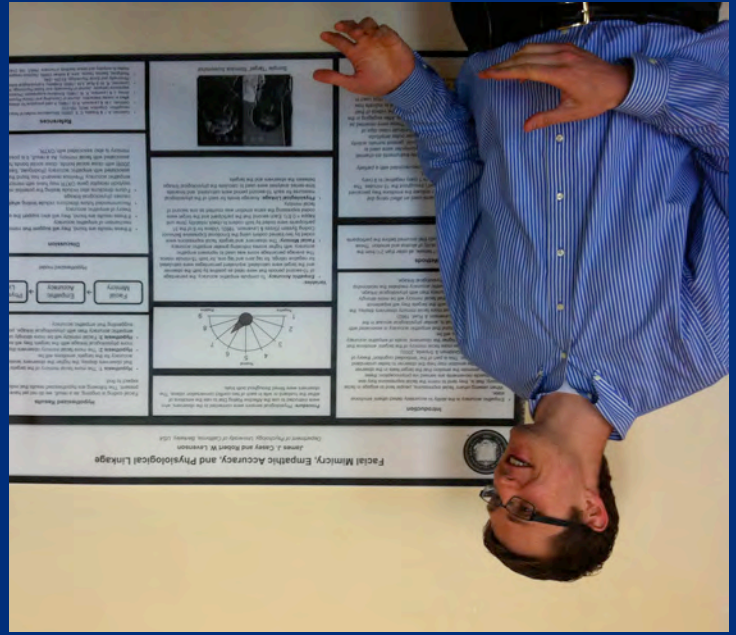
Welcome!

Editor's note

Welcome to the inaugural issue of Psychological, the UC Berkeley Psychology Department's biannual newsletter. Whether you're an alum, current student, faculty member, undergrad, or just curious about psychology at Berkeley, we're sure you'll learn something new about Cal research and researchers in each issue.

In this issue, you'll find the latest news about what's going on in Tolman Hall: new students, new faculty members, new funds for graduate students, and new research. We hope that by sharing our news with you, you will also share your news with us - look inside for ways you can stay connected to Cal Psych on and off the web.

Jane Hu



Clinical Science graduate student Jim Casey, presenting his work at the annual Second-Year Poster Session.