

Berkeley Psychology INSIGHT

Letter from the chair

Dear Alumni and Friends,

This Fall semester started off looking more pre-pandemic than any other since 2020. It was truly energizing to see faculty, students, and staff bustling around campus, with classes back to in-person format. This Fall semester, we also hosted our final event in celebration of Berkeley Psychology's 100th anniversary – an in-person gathering in Berkeley Way West with featured talks by Professors Celeste Kidd, Matthew Walker, Dacher Keltner (videos available [here](#)), along with demonstrations of eye-tracking and transcranial magnetic stimulation research techniques. The talks were well-attended and terrific!

We also had the pleasure of several special lectures, including a fascinating lecture on the neurobiology and evolution of vocal learning and spoken language by Professor Erich Jarvis of Rockefeller University, and one by our own Professor Oliver John on the Big Five model of personality and how personality traits, in interaction with the environment, shape many important life outcomes.

This Fall, we also began the search process for *three* new faculty hires for our department—a clear sign of campus's acknowledgement of the strength and vibrancy of our department and the importance of maintaining our top-ranked status. All the while, our faculty and graduate students continue to win awards for their teaching, research, and mentoring.

Still, the Fall was not without challenges. Indeed, this Newsletter is a bit delayed due to a UC-wide, historic strike of academic workers, including our graduate students and postdocs, that began in mid-November. We recognize that our graduate students and postdocs are *vital* to our ability to teach, learn, conduct research, and serve the public—and thus, stood in solidarity with them in their efforts to secure a fair contract. Thankfully, the unprecedented, six-week strike concluded with an agreement ratified in late December, but among other things, it reveals why financial support for our graduate students, in particular, has been and remains one of our top fundraising priorities.

Turning to 2023, we will join together to recover from the now-resolved strike, host many job candidate visits, and continue to adjust to living with Covid in the background. As always, we have much work to do – in our classrooms, labs, and society at large, doing our part to find ways to make the world safer, more equitable, more peaceful, and more sustainable.

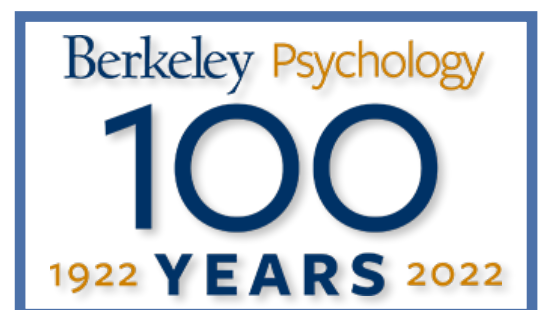
Best wishes for a healthy and productive 2023!

Give to Psychology, [HERE](#)

Also please send us your stories and life updates — we feature alumni stories on our website and would love to hear from you!

And keep in touch with us via [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and our [Department website](#).

Serena Chen
Professor and Chair



Honors and Awards

FACULTY

Mark D'Esposito, Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience, was named this year's recipient of the Fred Kavli Distinguished Career Contributions Award, an award given to senior cognitive neuroscientists for their exceptional and sustained research, leadership, and mentorship.

Stephen Hinshaw, Professor of Clinical Psychology, was recognized for his ongoing commitment to mentorship with the 2023 APS Mentor Award. This award signifies a dedication to fostering the careers of students and colleagues through consistent care, guidance, and availability. Stephen Hinshaw was also awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award by Eunethydis, a European research group focused on hyperkinetic disorders, for a distinguished career dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with ADHD.

Ozlem Ayduk, Professor of Psychology, received the Carol and Ed Diener Award in Personality Psychology. This award recognizes a scholar in the middle of their career for substantial contributions to the field of personality psychology.

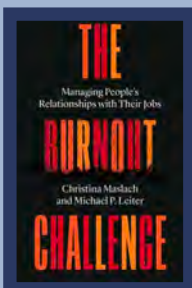
Bill Thompson, Assistant Professor of Psychology, was awarded the NOMIS and Science Magazine Young Explorer Award, a new award that seeks to recognize and reward bold researchers who ask fundamental questions at the intersection of life and social science, form collaborative relationships, and pursue their work with ingenuity and drive.

Arianne Eason, Assistant Professor of Psychology, was awarded the SAGE Early Career Trajectory Award. This award recognizes early career scholars who have made outstanding achievements in social and personality psychology research, teaching, and service to the field.

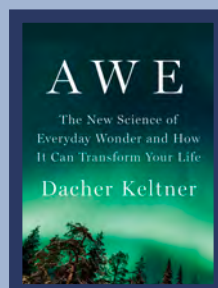
Faculty Book Releases

Just in time for your 2023 reading list!

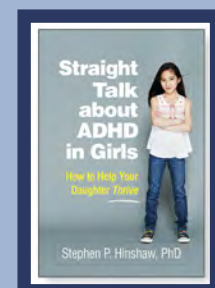
Christina Maslach, Professor of Psychology Emerita, released a book with Michael P. Leiter, Professor of Organizational Psychology at Deakin University, entitled "The Burnout Challenge". In their book, they discuss mismatches between a job and an individual that can increase the risk of burnout: a state of physical, emotional, or mental exhaustion caused by work-related stress.



Dacher Keltner, Professor of Psychology, released a new book in January 2023 called "Awe: The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How It Can Transform Your Life". In his book, he discusses the mystery and the history of awe and how new research reveals the foundational and transformative effect awe can have on our brains, bodies, and communities.



Stephen Hinshaw, Professor of Clinical Psychology, released a new book in Fall 2022 entitled "Straight Talk about ADHD in Girls: How to Help your Daughter Thrive". The book provides important information about how to understand the needs of girls with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), a disorder originally believed to be rare to nonexistent in girls.



DEPARTMENT NEWS



Research Experience Pathways in Psychology

This past Fall, a group of graduate students with input from faculty, launched an initiative to lower barriers for underrepresented and minority groups to access higher education in Psychology. **Jefferson Ortega** (Whitney Lab), along with **Valerie V. Ekko** (Whitney Lab manager), **Emily Chau** (Srinivasan Lab manager), **Alejandro Campero Oliart** (Ayduk & Mendoza-Denton Lab), **Stephanie Alderete** (Xu Lab), **Nick Nguyen** (Hinshaw Lab), and **Mahesh Srinivasan, PhD**, created the **Research Experience Pathways (REP) in Psychology** program. Many factors result in a lack of opportunities for underrepresented students to pursue graduate studies and the lack of diversity in academia, research, and graduate studies remains alarming. REP is a semester-long program that provides the opportunity for undergraduate students from groups that have been historically underrepresented in Psychology to gain hands-on research experience under the guidance of a faculty member and a graduate student mentor. In addition to conducting research, REP students will also attend weekly professional development workshops where they will participate in reading and critiquing scientific articles, develop and improve their resumes with the help of graduate students, learn about applying to graduate

DEPARTMENT INITIATIVES

school, and listen to the research and personal stories of invited faculty and graduate students. The program will culminate with students presenting their research at a department-wide poster session. REP is a transformative project that will not only deeply benefit the students who participate but enrich the UC Berkeley psychology community as a whole. It is a striking example of the continued departmental tradition of student-led initiatives that benefit a growingly diverse and representative Psychology department. Read more [here](#).



Faculty-Graduate Student Committee

Academic departments, like any workplace, benefit from clear communication and transparent and collaborative policy setting. In an effort to work towards this ideal, department and graduate student leaders established a representative committee of graduate students, staff, and faculty over the summer. **The Faculty-Graduate Student Committee** contains graduate representatives from each year on a one-year term in addition to key departmental faculty and administrators and will meet twice a semester to find collaborative solutions for graduate and departmental concerns. This effort will increase ties across departmental roles and is intended to become a stable feature of the Psychology Department.

Publications

Adapting to Movement Errors

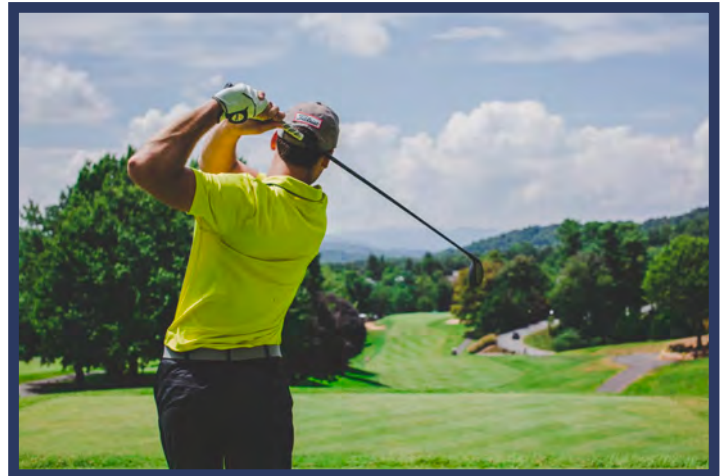
Motor adaptation allows humans to successfully complete tasks irrespective of changes in the body (e.g., fatigue) and the environment (e.g., strong winds). However, how the sensorimotor system drives this adaptation and what role various senses play remains unknown. In a recent study published in [eLife](#), [Jonathan Tsay](#) and [Rich Ivry, PhD](#) computationally showed that knowing where your body was in space, or proprioception, was sufficient to predict motor adaptation while reaching ([test yourself here](#)). Their model, called PReMo, argues against the common assumption that adaptation is driven by visual feedback, opening up the field for future research.



Learning in an Indigenous Population

Education in indigenous cultures varies greatly compared to that of industrialized cultures, but what leads to differences in learning? In their study published in [PLOS One](#), [Isabelle Boni](#) and [Steven Piantadosi, PhD](#), examined different possibilities for what might cause later learning of counting in Tsimane' children, an indigenous group in the Bolivian Amazon. They found that number performance increases with schooling, and only Tsimane' children who have attended school accurately count arbitrarily large sets. These results highlight the importance of formal education in learning the meanings of number words.

RESEARCH DISCOVERIES



Adulthood Impacts of Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is experienced by millions of children worldwide, but how this affects learning and brain chemistry has been largely unknown. In a paper published in [Current Biology](#), recent Psychology graduate, [Wan Chen Lin, PhD](#) with [Linda Wilbrecht, PhD](#), tested mice that experienced irregular amounts of food during adolescence (mimicking insecurity), in decision-making tasks. While female mice had unchanged task performance, male mice were inflexible and responded to rewards differently. Interestingly, dopamine, a neurotransmitter involved in learning, motivation, and human psychiatric disorders, was altered in only the male mice that experienced food irregularity. Their findings suggest that food insecurity has long-term impacts into adulthood, underscoring the importance of this global issue.



Publications

RESEARCH DISCOVERIES

The Effects of Emotion Suppression

Suppressing emotions, e.g., holding back tears when you're feeling sad, seems like it would negatively affect personal relationships. But, does it? In a study published in the [International Journal of Psychophysiology](#), [Felicia Zerwas, PhD](#), [Regina Ebo, PhD](#), recent PhD graduates [Belinda Carillo, PhD](#) and [Helena Karnilowicz, PhD](#), and [Iris Mauss, PhD](#), discovered emotional suppression had a more nuanced effect. In a large sample of romantic couples, they found that spontaneous emotional suppression negatively affected how an individual experienced the conversation. Interestingly, the individual's romantic partner was unaffected by the suppression, indicating the importance of studying types of suppression across different pairs.



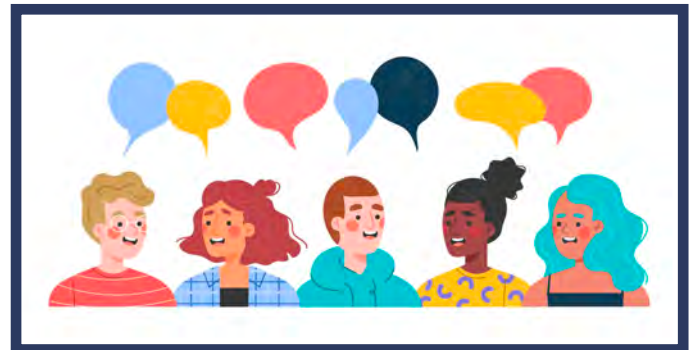
How do children learn stereotypes?

Young children often believe stereotypes, such as "girls are bad at math." But, how do they learn this? One possibility is inference, or "reading between the lines" of what a speaker says. To test this, [Roya Baharloo](#) and [Monica Ellwood-Lowe](#) with [Mahesh Srinivasan, PhD](#), in [Developmental Science](#), described two fictitious social groups to preschoolers, praising one group (e.g., "the Stripeys are good at building chairs") and not the other. Preschoolers were able to infer that the group not mentioned by the speaker was unskilled in relation to the praised group, especially in a context where both groups were described. These results underscore how children may indirectly learn negative stereotypes, even when not explicitly stated.



Brain Folding Relates to Impulsivity

Emotion-related impulsivity (ERI) is a personality trait that is defined by frequent losses of self-control during strong emotion states, such as giving into cravings, engaging in reckless behavior, or saying regrettable things when upset. ERI is consistently associated with mental health problems including depression, eating disorders, and substance use disorders, yet little is understood about how ERI is represented in the brain. In a study published in [Biological Psychiatry](#), [Matthew Elliott](#) with [Sheri Johnson, PhD](#), and [Kevin Weiner, PhD](#), found that certain folding patterns on the surface of the brain were related to more severe levels of this form of impulsivity. Because cortical folding is sensitive to both genetic and environmental factors, this study may inform future research on therapies that can alleviate the unwanted effects of ERI.



Incoming PhD Students 2022



Left to right: Sarah Oh, Elizabeth Cisneros, Maria Martin Lopez, Leighann Ashlock, Sarah Ryan, Maria Luciani, Annya Dahmani, Stephanie Alderete, Conrado Eiroa Solans, Karthikeya Ramesh Kaushik, Nick Nguyen, Kelly Dombek

Meet our 2022 PhD student cohort!

Our 2022 PhD student cohort brings an exceptional group of students to Berkeley who hail from Spain, India, Vietnam and across the United States. They all have diverse academic backgrounds ranging from computer science to political science to psycholinguistics. Their future research will include exploring reasoning and decision-making in children, investigating components underlying motor adaptation, studying the impacts of socio-ecological factors on human development, and researching interpersonal relationships through the lenses of emotion regulation, authenticity, and sleep. We are thrilled to welcome such a talented and diverse group of students to our department and are excited to share with you all that they accomplish! [Read more about our new students here.](#)

Charter Hill Society for Psychology

The Charter Hill Society is a community of alumni dedicated to supporting UC Berkeley Psychology, its students and faculty, and each other. Members will be invited to special programming for Psychology as well as to events with Charter Hill members from around the College. Recent lectures and events have featured Nobel laureates and leading figures in Psychology and Neuroscience.

Charter Hill members make a three-year pledge to the Psychology Department of \$1,000 or more per year. Gifts directly support the students and faculty of Berkeley Psychology.

To become a member of the Charter Hill Society, make a three-year recurring commitment at tinyurl.com/GiveBerkeleyPsych. (One-time gifts can also be made.)

For more information or questions, contact Anya Essiounina:
anya.essi@berkeley.edu

PSYCHOLOGY CELEBRATES 100 YEARS AS A DEPARTMENT

Psychology has been a part of Berkeley since the 1800s, but it wasn't until 1922 that our Psychology Department was officially established with 4 faculty members, no building, and only a few graduate students. Now, our collaborative and diverse department boasts **36 faculty members, over 100 PhD students, and around 1000 undergraduates**. We are home to 6 distinct yet integrated areas: clinical science, cognition, cognitive neuroscience, developmental, behavioral and systems neuroscience, and social and personality psychology, that all conduct award-winning and innovative research. Our hard work in cultivating an exceptional learning and research environment bears out in consistent rankings that place our Psychology Department #1 in

Berkeley Psychology
100
1922 YEARS 2022

U.S. Surveys & Reports and in the top 5 Psychology departments across both national and international reports. Our exceptionalism is also driven by our ability to grow, to learn and to adapt. We look forward to expanding our department through three faculty searches this year and remain humbled by the collaborative nature and strong community that continues to drive our department. Please see our [official website](#) for 100 year info and events.

Support Berkeley's Psychology department by donating during the year's **Big Give**, UC Berkeley's 24 hour fundraising effort! Gifts from our alumni and friends will support our graduate students and will ensure that the Berkeley Psychology Department remains one of the most distinguished in the world. [Donate here!](#)

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