The holidays are almost here and our faculty and students are busy at work grading, working on research projects, and submitting articles and grants. As I mentioned in the last newsletter, the Psychology Department is temporarily based in Clark Hall while Dudley Moorhead Hall is upgraded with air conditioning. We are in the process of planning the move back to DMH for the start of the spring semester.

This semester Dr. Matthew Capriotti and Dr. Evan Palmer joined our tenure-track faculty. You can read more about their work on pg. 3-4. We also highlight recent publications from our faculty and students on pg. 5 and information about recent grants our faculty received on pg. 8.

Thank you to those of you who responded to our alumni survey last semester and over the summer! We received over 300 responses and I’m currently organizing the data so that each of our programs can see how their alumni responded and use that information to guide program planning. All of the responses will be presented in aggregate without any individual identifying information.

Please consider donating to the Psychology Department as you plan your end-of-year giving (see pg. 7). Our students directly benefit from these donations through upgrades to our classrooms and scholarships.

Thanks for reading and enjoy the holidays!
Erin Woodhead, Assistant Professor

Changes in Psychology Department Staff

In May the department planned a retirement lunch to celebrate the career of one of our administrative staff, Elva Connell. Elva was employed as the Psychology Department Coordinator, a position she started in 2007. She previously worked in Undergraduate Studies at SJSU prior to joining the Psychology Department. She did a lot of work behind the scenes with convocation, class scheduling, and countless other tasks for faculty and students. Congratulations to Elva on her retirement!

This semester another one of our staff members, Erlinda Yanez, stepped down to pursue other professional interests. Erlinda has worked at SJSU for over 25 years, joining the Psychology Department as Administrative Support Coordinator in 2011. She worked part-time in Psychology and part-time in Mexican-American Studies. Erlinda will continue to work at SJSU as the Administrative Coordinator for the Aspire/McNair Program. We wish her the best of luck!
Welcome to our new faculty in the areas of cognitive and clinical psychology!

Evan Palmer, PhD

1) What classes are you teaching at SJSU?
This semester, I am teaching the graduate seminar in cognition and undergraduate courses in cognition and human factors. Next semester, I will be teaching cognition, perception, and human factors, which are essentially my three main fields.

2) Which class is your favorite to teach and why?
I would have to say that teaching cognition is my favorite because it’s such a great topic that is relevant to everyday life and has opportunities for lots of demos in class. Thinking, memory, attention, perception, mental imagery, problem solving, decision making... these are activities we do all the time in many different contexts but most people do not stop and think about how it all works. By the time my students are done with the cognition course, I can really see them applying the concepts, piecing everything together, and being able to use the knowledge they have gained to reason about how the mind works in different scenarios.

3) What are your research interests?
Broadly, my research interests center on perception, cognition, and human factors - how do you get information into the human mind, think about it, and then use it in real-world scenarios. Recent research topics include optimizing air traffic control displays using perceptual cues to improve data pickup from operators, exploring perceptual representations of websites using eye tracking, gamifying visual search training to improve attentional selection of certain colors and shapes, and improving communication between doctors during patient handoffs by studying their mental models of patient information.

4) What were you doing prior to coming to SJSU?
For the last 9 years, I was an assistant and then associate professor in the Human Factors area of the Psychology department at Wichita State University. Before that, I spent 4 years as a post-doctoral research fellow studying visual attention at Harvard Medical School. My undergraduate and graduate degrees are both from UCLA.

5) What drew you to the position at SJSU?
Well, first and foremost, SJSU is a great school! My wife and I are both from California and arrived at a time in our lives when we wanted to move back home and be closer to family. So, I went on the job market and fortunately there was an opening at SJSU for a professor interested in human factors and psychology. This has turned out to be such a great fit for me – I am enjoying being a member of both the Experimental Psychology MA and the Human Factors MS programs.

6) Do you have any ongoing studies that alumni could participate in?
I am still in the process of ordering equipment, training graduate students, and getting my lab set up. We are hoping to be collecting data starting in the Spring of 2017. Our initial research will be focusing on gamification techniques and virtual reality immersion, and once we are up and running I would be happy to give anybody interested a tour of the lab!

7) What’s your favorite part of being on the Psychology faculty at SJSU?
I think my favorite part is that my teaching and research interests align so well with the needs of the department. I feel valued and that I am making important contributions already. Also, everybody in the department has been incredibly friendly and welcoming and have made me feel right at home. This is really a special group!
Matthew Capriotti, PhD

1) **What classes are you teaching at SJSU?**
My specialization is in clinical psychology, and child clinical psychology specifically, so much of my teaching is in these areas. This year, I am teaching courses on research methods, child psychopathology, and clinical assessment. I look forward to continuing in these areas and expanding to teach other courses here at SJSU.

2) **Which class is your favorite to teach and why?**
I love teaching statistics. This is outside of my main training background in clinical psych, but I really love the challenge of taking a topic that is intimidating for many students and making it accessible, relevant, and, dare I say, even enjoyable. It’s so rewarding to see students gain mastery and confidence with this material, especially those who come in identifying as people who are “bad at math.” I was fortunate to have great instructors who did this for me during my college and graduate school career.

3) **What are your research interests?**
I have two primary areas of research. One focuses on developing, testing, and disseminating behavioral treatments for tic disorders such as Tourette syndrome, and other obsessive-compulsive spectrum disorders. In this work, I use a translational approach that encompasses everything from lab studies looking at different procedures for decreasing tics to clinical intervention studies and numerous other types of investigation. Right now, I have an intervention study examining the utility of videoconferencing technologies for delivering an evidence-based treatment for tic disorders remotely (i.e., bringing the clinician into the client’s home).

My other area of research relates to factors that influence the health of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people. I am particularly interested in studying factors that promote resilience in the face of diversity among young LGBTQ people. I also study approaches to maximizing the impact of cutting-edge HIV prevention tools, such as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).

4) **What were you doing prior to coming to SJSU?**
I was a postdoctoral fellow at University of California San Francisco (UCSF) in the Department of Psychiatry. I did a blend of research in the above areas plus clinical work doing behavior therapy with children, adolescents, and their families. Before that, I was working on my PhD at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

5) **What drew you to the position at SJSU?**
A number of things! First and foremost, I was excited about the teaching opportunities here. I really enjoy working with a diverse array of undergraduate students, and SJSU felt like a perfect place to do that. I was also really excited about teaching in our unique, strong Masters program in Clinical Psychology. At the same time, I also really appreciated how the department values and supports faculty research, which is something I’m passionate about. On the interview, it was also clear that the culture was warm and collegial, so I was excited to join a cooperative and supportive group of faculty. Last but certainly not least, I fell in love with the Bay Area during my time in San Francisco, so the opportunity to stay local and enjoy the area was a huge plus as well.

6) **Do you have any ongoing studies that alumni could participate in?**
Yes! I collaborate with colleagues at UCSF on a large-scale research study called The Population Research in Identity and Disparities for Equality (PRIDE) Study, which is a cohort study looking at many aspects of health and wellness among LGBTQ people. If folks are interested in learning more or participating, they can visit pridestudy.org.

7) **What’s your favorite part of being on the

Abstract: Huntington disease (HD) is an autosomal dominant, progressive neurodegenerative disorder for which there is no cure. Predictive testing for HD is available to asymptomatic at-risk individuals. Approximately half of the population undergoing predictive testing for HD consists of young adults (≤35 years old). Finishing one’s education, starting a career, engaging in romantic relationships and becoming a parent are key milestones of young adulthood. We conducted a qualitative study to explore how testing gene-positive for HD influences young adults’ attainment of these milestones, and to identify major challenges that pre-symptomatic young adults face to aid the development of targeted genetic counseling. Results of our study demonstrate that 1) knowing one’s gene-positive status results in an urgency to reach milestones and positively changes young adults’ approach to life; 2) testing positive influences young adults’ education and career choices, romantic relationships, and family planning; 3) young adults desire flexible and tailored genetic counseling to address needs and concerns unique to this population. Findings of this study contribute to the understanding of the impact of predictive testing for HD on young adults, and highlight issues unique to this population that call for further research, intervention and advocacy.


Abstract: In the United States, acceptance of sexual minorities (e.g., gay men and lesbians) has increased substantially since the early 1990s. This study examined whether authoritarians’ attitudes have been influenced by the societal shift toward greater acceptance of sexual minorities. Using data from the American National Election Studies collected between 1992 and 2012, we tested a model in which authoritarianism, endorsement of egalitarian values, and social norms shifting in the direction of tolerance predict individual attitudes toward sexual minorities and LGBT rights issues. Results indicated that 1) there was a subset of authoritarians who endorsed egalitarian values, 2) authoritarians in general became more tolerant (i.e., held less negative attitudes) toward sexual minorities between 1992 and 2012, and 3) “egalitarian authoritarians” held more positive attitudes toward sexual minorities than other authoritarians. The findings contribute to contemporary theory and research on authoritarianism, which is moving from a monolithic view of authoritarianism to one in which culture and core values activate and shape manifestations of authoritarian tendencies.


Abstract: Background: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is associated with increased health care utilization, medical morbidity, and tobacco and alcohol use. Consequently, screening for PTSD has become increasingly common in primary care clinics, especially in Veteran healthcare settings where trauma exposure among patients is common.

Objective: The objective of this study was to revise the Primary Care PTSD screen (PC-PTSD) to reflect the new Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) criteria for PTSD (PC-PTSD-5) and to examine both the diagnostic accuracy and the patient acceptability of the revised measure.

Design: We compared the PC-PTSD-5 results with
those from a brief psychiatric interview for PTSD. Participants also rated screening preferences and acceptability of the PC-PTSD-5.

PARTICIPANTS: A convenience sample of 398 Veterans participated in the study (response rate = 41%). Most of the participants were male, in their 60s, and the majority identified as non-Hispanic White.

MEASURES: The PC-PTSD-5 was used as the screening measure, a modified version of the PTSD module of the MINI-International Neuropsychiatric Interview was used to diagnose DSM-5 PTSD, and five brief survey items were used to assess acceptability and preferences.

KEY RESULTS: The PC-PTSD-5 demonstrated excellent diagnostic accuracy (AUC = 0.941; 95% C.I.: 0.912-0.969). Whereas a cut score of 3 maximized sensitivity (k[1] = 0.93; SE = 0.041; 95% C.I.: 0.849-1.00), a cut score of 4 maximized efficiency (k[0.5] = 0.63; SE = 0.052; 95% C.I.: 0.527-0.731), and a cut score of 5 maximized specificity (k[0] = 0.70; SE = 0.077; 95% C.I.: 0.550-0.853). Patients found the screen acceptable and indicated a preference for administration by their primary care providers as opposed to by other providers or via self-report.

CONCLUSIONS: The PC-PTSD-5 demonstrated strong preliminary results for diagnostic accuracy, and was broadly acceptable to patients.


Abstract: Mental representation of the future is a fundamental component of goal-directed behavior. Computational and animal models highlight prospective spatial coding in the hippocampus, mediated by interactions with the prefrontal cortex, as a putative mechanism for simulating future events. Using whole-brain high-resolution functional magnetic resonance imaging and multi-voxel pattern classification, we tested whether the human hippocampus and interrelated cortical structures support prospective representation of navigational goals. Results demonstrated that hippocampal activity patterns code for future goals to which participants subsequently navigate, as well as for intervening locations along the route, consistent with trajectory-specific simulation. The strength of hippocampal goal representations covaried with goal-related coding in the prefrontal, medial temporal, and medial parietal cortex. Collectively, these data indicate that a hippocampal-cortical network supports prospective simulation of navigational events during goal-directed planning.


Abstract: The advent of high-resolution magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) has enabled in vivo research in a variety of populations and diseases on the structure and function of hippocampal subfields and subdivisions of the parahippocampal gyrus. Due to the many extant and highly discrepant segmentation protocols, comparing results across studies is difficult. To overcome this barrier, the Hippocampal Subfields Group was formed as an international collaboration with the aim of developing a harmonized protocol for manual segmentation of hippocampal and parahippocampal subregions on high-resolution MRI. In this commentary we discuss the goals for this protocol and the associated key challenges involved in its development. These include differences among existing anatomical reference materials, striking the right balance between reliability of measurements and anatomical validity, and the development of a versatile protocol that can be adopted for the study of populations varying in age and health. The commentary outlines these key challenges, as well as the proposed solution of each, with concrete examples from our working plan. Finally, with two examples, we illustrate how the harmonized protocol, once completed, is expected to impact the field by producing measurements that are quantitatively comparable across labs and by facilitating the synthesis of findings across different studies.
Presentations/Conference Proceedings


Grants

**Dr. Clifton Oyamot Awarded Grant from SJSU**

Dr. Oyamot received a University Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (RSCA) grant for a project investigating factors that intensify and lessen authoritarian intolerance. The current project, to be completed in spring 2017, focuses on the role of religious beliefs in influencing authoritarians’ sociopolitical attitudes (e.g., attitudes toward sexual minorities; political ideology preferences). This project is the next step in a program of research that has resulted in 4 journal articles, 2 presentations at an international conference, and 2 master’s theses.

**Dr. Kevin Jordan Awarded $7.8 Million Grant**

Kevin Jordan has been awarded a $7.8 million grant that will fund a three-year cooperative agreement between the Army Aviation Development Directorate (ADD) at the NASA Ames Research Center and the Psychology Department at San José State University. The proposed research will fill knowledge gaps in the areas of adaptive autonomy, future lift systems, and human-centered display design. The work will be carried out in collaboration with Army scientists in the autonomous rotorcraft, flight controls, and human-systems interface technical areas, respectively, within ADD. Dr. Jordan and his research team will also seek to apply models of flight control to aid in predicting the response characteristics of current and future unmanned rotorcraft such as helicopters. This knowledge can then be applied to address specific problems in a variety of aerospace settings. By understanding the effectiveness of machine vision technologies and advanced obstacle field navigation algorithms, researchers can improve the robustness and reliability of guidance and control laws for autonomous rotorcraft flight through unfamiliar airspace, as well as landing in unfamiliar and often hostile terrain.

**NSF Awards $482K to Technology Pathways Program**

A cross-disciplinary team of SJSU researchers has been awarded nearly a half million dollars by NSF to develop a Technology Pathway Program (TPP) for non-STEM majors at SJSU and at CSU East Bay: Engineering Professor Belle Wei, Center for Faculty Development Director Amy Strage, Computer Engineering Department Chair Xiao Su, Psychology Assistant Professor David Schuster, Psychology Assistant Professor Valerie Carr, Psychology Professor Cheryl Chancellor-Freeland, Software Engineering Adjunct Professor Hungwen Li, and General Engineering Adjunct Professor Morris Jones. Given the emergence of big data and the growth of the technology based economy, the demand for workers who have both domain knowledge and technical skills is growing. The TPP program will incorporate relevant technical concepts into non-STEM students’ curriculum. Behavioral and social sciences students will be targeted for the program at SJSU, as will health sciences students at CSU East Bay. Using a cohort structure and student-centered pedagogical strategies for STEM-related disciplines, TPP leaders will establish a learning community consisting of professors, industry professionals and students. A combination of in-person meetings and online tools will be used to facilitate community engagement and operations, and a series of curricular and co-curricular activities will create a balance of “high-tech” and “high-touch” educational practices.

Plans also call for the propagation and transferability of the project. The team aims to work with other campuses to develop similar interdisciplinary technology programs, and also seeks to work with other CSU faculty in using the developed curricular and pedagogical materials to facilitate their own adoption of the TPP program.
Student Accomplishments

Mariela Acevedo, a second-year graduate student in our Clinical Program, was recently awarded a scholarship through the California MFT Stipend Program.

The California MFT Stipend Program is funded through the Mental Health Services Act and administered by the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development to address the statewide workforce need for mental health practitioners in underserved communities of California.

Congratulations to Mariela!

Donate to the Department

Please join alumni and friends in supporting Psychology at San José State University. In an era of extraordinarily limited resources, your tax-deductible gift goes a long way to help our mission of delivering a high-quality education each year to more than 5000 students who enroll in our Psychology courses.

Just as important, your gift is extremely encouraging to today’s faculty and students. For when you give, you show your pride and belief in what we do.

To provide your tax-deductible gift online, visit this link (or copy and paste http://www.sjsu.edu/psych/Donate/index.html into your browser).

Click on the “Give Now” button and follow the instructions. To provide your gift by mail, please make your gift check payable to Tower Foundation of SJSU and mail to: Tower Foundation of SJSU, One Washington Square, San Jose, CA 95192-0257. Please be sure to include a note that your gift is for the Psychology Department and students.

On behalf of all of our Psychology faculty and students, sincere thanks.
Alumni Profiles

Rebecca Garcia

1) What program were you in at SJSU and when did you graduate?
I was in a Psychology Major and I graduated with a BA in Psychology in 2015.

2) What are you up to now in your professional life?
Currently, I am attending the University of California-Irvine, School of Law. I am in my second year and have one to go. Additionally, I am an extern at the Orange County District Attorney’s Office.

3) Did you envision doing this type of job while you were at SJSU?
After figuring out that I loved Psychology, I had to figure out what I wanted to do with my degree. I took some polisci classes and realized that I really wanted to go to law school. So even though it wasn’t my first thought, by graduation I knew that this was the path that I wanted to take.

4) What were your interests in psychology while at SJSU, and are they the same now?
I was really interested in the athletics side of psychology and also with how law and psychology intersect. Clearly, the law and psychology intersection is still very relevant for my future. I was a cross country and track runner when I was at SJSU and so my interests were really piqued by this part of it. I am still interested in this area and always will be, but it has taken a back seat as of now. One area of psychology that I had an interest in, childhood/familial loss and trauma really piqued my interest because of one of my incredible Professors, Dr. Fanos. She was truly an inspiration for this type of work and allowed both my sister and I to help her with her research on Congenital heart failure in newborns. This allowed us to see a side of Psychology that also had its hand in medicine. Unfortunately, I no longer work on those types of cases, but they will always be interesting to me.

5) What was your favorite class at SJSU and why?
I think that I had many favorite classes while at SJSU. It is hard to pick just one, but I think that the classes in which I truly enjoyed learning were taught by Professor Fanos, Professor Oyamot, and Professor Chancellor-Freeland. It was such a wide variety of topics and skills that these professors allowed to hone that they almost all fall in different categories. Professor Fanos allowed me to perfect my writing and research skills while Professor Oyamot taught very valuable lessons on social psychology and how the world interacts with psychology on a daily basis and in so many ways. Professor Chancellor-Freeman’s courses took me down my interest in the biological levels of psychology and the different effects that chemicals have on the brain. If I had to narrow it down, it would be those three professors and their respective classes.

6) What was your most memorable moment as a student?
I think my favorite moment would be my last Presidential Scholar Ceremony. I think it really hit me in that moment what kind of hard work I had put in to becoming a Presidential Scholar. I had first got the Dean’s Scholar award while my twin sister, Breanna (BA in Psychology), received the Presidential Scholar award. I think that looking back, it did seem like a competition but it was a moment of how we both built each other up and made sure we were both accountable. Standing there with her at the ceremony made me realize how incredible the whole “college” experience was.

7) Describe your experience in the SJSU psychology department in one sentence.
My experience in the SJSU psychology department was a great, intensive learning experience in which I would have not made it through without my twin sister, the rest of my supportive family, and each and every one of the professors that helped me along the way.
Breanna Garcia

1) What program were you in at SJSU and when did you graduate?
I was a psychology major and graduated with a BA in psychology in 2015.

2) What are you up to now in professional life?
I entered a doctoral program for clinical psychology straight after graduating, I am currently a 2nd year doctoral candidate at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

3) Did you envision doing this type of job while you were at SJSU?
After taking an AP psychology course in my senior year of high school, I knew that I wanted to make a career out of something psychology related. I always knew that I wanted to go to graduate school for psychology, but it wasn’t until my 2nd year in undergrad that I really began to envision myself going on to get my doctorate. It wasn’t until I started working with Dr. Joanna Fanos within the psychology department that I really began to think that going on to a doctoral program straight away after graduation was an attainable goal.

4) What were your interests in psychology while at SJSU, and are they the same now?
I was lucky enough to be afforded the opportunity to get involved with research being done by Dr. Fanos. Our projects focused on maternal depression within mothers of infants born with congenital heart defects and the stressors associated with the transition to college for freshman athletes at the university. While these were not areas that I originally envisioned myself doing research in, I was incredibly grateful to have been given the opportunity to even work with Dr. Fanos. She has an incredible background as a researcher in childhood sibling loss and trauma, which was one of the reasons why I was so excited to work with her. I have always been interested in developmental psychopathology, with a particular interest in working with depressive disorders and disruptive behavior disorders in children and adolescents. Today, I work in a lab that focuses on the relationship between childhood internalizing and externalizing disorders, and more specifically childhood irritability. So, while my interests while at SJSU were different from the research that I do now, it was the work that I did with Dr. Fanos that really made it so that I could eventually get into a program doing the work that I was passionate about.

5) What was your favorite class at SJSU and why?
I may have to be “that person” and say that I enjoyed every psychology course that I took over my 4 years at SJSU. I am a really big psychology nerd, I can honestly say that every one of the courses that I took offered me something that I found to be incredibly valuable to my education and future graduate work. I have to say, though, that the courses that I took from Dr. Darmala, Dr. Fanos, Dr. Gregg, and Dr. Oyamot were ones that I will always remember. I think that those professors were all significant to my experience within the SJSU psychology department, whether it was through research experience, writing letters of recommendation, or simply teaching courses that I was incredibly interested in. They all inspired and motivated me to continue my work through undergrad with the goal of going on to get my doctorate.

6) What was your most memorable moment as a student?
My most memorable moment as a student would be the psychology department’s graduation. Not only was it the culmination of 4 years of incredibly hard work, but it was an experience that I got to share with my twin sister (who also received her BA in psychology). Finishing out my experience as a SJSU student was a sweet moment, and being with my sister and friends and watching them all achieve this great accomplishment was definitely one for the books.

7) Describe your experience in the SJSU psychology department in one sentence.
My experience in the SJSU psychology department was everything, and I have to thank each and every one of the professors who played a role in my journey for without their encouragement, motivation, and assistance I wouldn’t be where I am today.
The 26th Annual Psychology Convocation was held on May 26, 2016 at the San Jose State University Event Center. We include some photos from this year’s event to highlight the great work of our students and faculty! Congratulations class of 2016!