Making Sense of the World Via a Simple Rule of Thumb: The Inherence Heuristic and its Consequences

By Andrei Cimpian

As humans, we want to understand the world around us—to explain why things are the way they are: Why are some people rich and others poor? Why do girls like pink? Why do we drink orange juice for breakfast? This impulse to explain what we observe emerges from a young age, as is probably apparent to anyone who has been around little children, and continues unabated into adulthood. But how do people actually generate these explanations?

A moment’s reflection reveals that, for many of these why questions that we seem motivated to ask, finding a complete answer would require much careful thought and deliberation. They are often the sorts of questions that social and natural scientists spend many years puzzling over. And yet, despite the complexities involved, most of us can make a guess at an answer almost on the spot. (You can give it a try.) These explanatory guesses may not be very detailed or nuanced, but they nevertheless supply a sense of understanding and therefore fulfill that basic drive to make sense of the world.

In our lab, we have recently started to investigate the process by which these quick-and-easy ballpark explanations are generated. We have found that people often make use of a simple heuristic (that is, a rule of thumb) in this process. This heuristic leads them to assume, as a best first guess, that the broad patterns they observe in the world can be explained by the inherent features of the entities involved in these patterns. For example, maybe the rich have certain inherent qualities that help them succeed—they may be particularly smart or hard-working. Similarly, people often reason that girls like pink because there are some inherent features of this color that make it particularly suitable for girls—it is pretty, delicate, and flower-like. These are the sorts of answers that first come to many people’s minds when they try to explain what they observe in the world. Because the explanations generated by this rule of thumb rely so heavily on inherent (rather than extrinsic or historical) features, we have dubbed it the inherence heuristic.

There are several important things to note about this heuristic. As with any simplification or shortcut, it often points us in the wrong direction. Many of the patterns that we observe in the world (such as girls’ association with all things pink) are in large part explainable by historical factors (such as marketing campaigns by department stores) rather than by inherent properties. However, our typical reliance on the inherence heuristic makes us overlook these historical or extrinsic factors even when we possess knowledge of them. This does not mean that we simply cannot factor this sort of evidence into our explanations—we obviously can. However, it seems that overcoming the lure of the inherence heuristic requires some additional cognitive effort. In one study, for example, PhD student Erika Salomon and I found that participants who were distracted (because we had asked them to remember a long number over a delay) showed an enhanced preference for inherence-based explanations relative to participants who did not have the distracting memory task to perform. This is exactly what one would expect if effort was needed to overcome or revise the easy intuitions supplied by the inherence heuristic. Along the same lines, Erika and I have found a relationship between people’s reliance on the inherence heuristic and their cognitive abilities, as well as their cognitive style (specifically, their preference for effortful, nuanced thinking). That is, although the output of the inherence heuristic exerts a widespread influence on how people make sense of the world, those who have high cognitive abilities or who strongly prefer careful deliberation to quick, shoot-from-the-hip intuitions seem more likely to escape its grasp.

Another notable feature of the inherence heuristic is its developmental course. Because children have both limited cognitive resources and limited knowledge of historical/extrinsic facts, the inherence heuristic appears to be all the more influential at younger ages. For example, former Honors student

(continued on page 7)
Greetings! The campus is buzzing with activity as 43,000 students (a new record) return to campus little. I was still in the Navy, United cut back on their operations and I had to find other work. I spent that summer in Pensacola, FL, as a deck gunner. I was still in the Navy, United for the airlines.

On aircraft carriers? In 1979, I decided to leave the Navy and join the United Airlines. I was still in the Navy, United cut back on their operations and I had to find other work. I spent that summer in Pensacola, FL, as a deck gunner. I was still in the Navy, United for the airlines.

The Vietnam War was winding down during my time in the Naval Aviation Schools Command. Upon graduating and getting my Wings on December 7, 1973, the Navy saw fit to make me a flight instructor. I also became a junior maintenance officer, then Personnel Officer, and in early 1975, I was advanced to intermediate maintenance officer. I also became a junior maintenance officer, then Personnel Officer, and in early 1975, I was advanced to intermediate maintenance officer. I also became a junior maintenance officer, then Personnel Officer, and in early 1975, I was advanced to intermediate maintenance officer. I also became a junior maintenance officer, then Personnel Officer, and in early 1975, I was advanced to intermediate maintenance officer. I also became a junior maintenance officer, then Personnel Officer, and in early 1975, I was advanced to intermediate maintenance officer.

Having grown up in the small, downstate Illinois town of Greenville, I arrived at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign a little wet behind the ears in the autumn of 1964. My sister, Carmen (Baldwin) Hankins, received her MS degree in Mathematics from the University that spring, but I had visited the campus little. One of the first people to greet me on my arrival was a graduate student acting as a counselor and they made the judgmental statement, “Are you nice, nice, and nice, nice? My first day on campus was less than ideal, but fortunately I stuck it out, succeeded in completing my bachelor’s degree, and my experiences at Illinois ultimately revealed my career path and led to my personal happiness. I met the love of my life, and now wife of forty years, Joan (Koval) Baldwin, at the University. I was introduced to Joan by her Chemistry 108 lab partner, Dennis Lane, who was also my roommate, when we were freshmen. I decided to propose to Joan in our sophomore year. As a starring student I had no money to take Joan off to some nifty place to propose marriage. My family had few financial resources to support me at college since my father passed away when I was eleven years old and I was one of seven siblings and a number of us were forced to work during the summer in order to support ourselves. I was still in the Navy, United cut back on their operations and I had to find other work. I spent that summer in Pensacola, FL, as a deck gunner. I was still in the Navy, United for the airlines.

The postcard said, “Check one: Surface, Subsurface, Coastal, Air.” I chose Air. I then set about joining the Naval Reserve, taking a battery of tests, and getting a flight physical. I spent that summer in Pensacola, FL, as a deck gunner. I was still in the Navy, United cut back on their operations and I had to find other work. I spent that summer in Pensacola, FL, as a deck gunner. I was still in the Navy, United for the airlines.

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The Department of Psychology would like to thank L. Gene and Catherine Lemon, psychology in the public service.

Dr. Lanier was invited in 1950 to head the Department of Psychology at Illinois after a long period as a professor at Northwestern University. He was under his leadership that the department was raised without effective access to a conventional signed or spoken language. Dr. Goldin-Meadow discovered that the children invent their own gestural communication systems that take on many of the forms and functions of language.

Another major line of Dr. Goldin-Meadow’s research has examined the gestures produced by hearing children while they speak. Gesturing while speaking is a robust part of language use—we gesture even when talking on the phone or to blind listeners, for example. Gestures signal aspects of our thoughts that are not also conveyed by our words, sometimes thoughts of which we are unaware. Dr. Goldin-Meadow discovered that mismatches between speech and gesture signal a readiness to learn and change. She and her students have examined the value of these mismatches in predicting language development outcomes, and in predicting which children will profit most from classroom instruction.

Finally, most intriguingly, Dr. Goldin-Meadow has found that gesturing helps children learn, in part by providing a representational format for keeping track of their thoughts, much like a paper sketchpad.

Dr. Susan Goldin-Meadow was the featured speaker for the Department of Psychology’s Lyle Lanier Lecture on Monday, October 7, 2013, 8 p.m. at the Alice Campbell Alumni Center.

Dr. Goldin-Meadow is the Bradfield Hum Distinquished Service Professor in the Departments of Psychology, Comparative Human Development, and the Committee on Education at the University of Chicago. She earned a B.A from Smith College (1971), and, inspired by a junior year abroad at the Institut des Sciences de l’Éducation in Geneva, completed her Ph.D. in developmental psychology at the University of Pennsylvania (1979). She began her academic career as an assistant professor at the University of Chicago in 1976, and has stayed there throughout her career, with the exception of a brief visiting professorship on our own campus (1981).

Dr. Goldin-Meadow’s research explores the role of gesture in language and cognition. She is best and most widely known for her work on the invention of Home Sign systems for profoundly deaf children who are raised without effective access to a conventional language.

Lyle H. Lanier received an undergraduate degree from Vanderbilt University in 1923, and an MA (1924) and PhD (1926) from Peabody College.

Dr. Lanier was invited in 1950 to head the Department of Psychology at Illinois after a distinguished career at Vanderbilt University, New York University, and Harcourt College. It was under his leadership that the department recruited the excellent faculty that established Illinois as one of the best departments in the country. He had a very broad concept of psychology that encompassed basic research with a deep commitment to placing psychology in the public service.

The Department of Psychology would like to thank L. Gene and Catherine Lemon, and Lyle Lanier, Jr. for establishing the Lyle H. Lanier Fund in memory of Catherine and Lyle’s father, head of the Department of Psychology (1951–1959), dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (1959–1968), and provost of the Urbana campus (1960–1972).

In honor of his many contributions, the Department organized the Lanier Lecture Series to illustrate how the scientific approach to the analysis of mind and behavior can yield results of significance to a variety of human concerns. The Lanier Lecture brings a distinguished psychologist to campus whose work is of interest to the general campus and local community. Previous Lanier Lectures have included:

- Marta Bartusiak, Yale University; Society of Medicine
- Linda Breslin, University of California, San Diego
- Hazel Rose Markus, Stanford University
- Richard Nisbett, University of Michigan
- Daniel Kahneman, Princeton University
- Avraham Caspi, King’s College; London; University of Wisconsin-Madison

Fall 2013 Lyle Lanier Lecture

Alumni Share Advice

Thirty-five psychology alumni came back to campus on Monday, February 25, 2013 to offer students insight on how a degree in psychology can prepare them for a future career. Four of the alumni, The Honorable Jeffrey Ford, Leannexa Garza, Carrie Geady, and Dr. James Leonard participated in a panel discussion from 4-5 p.m. in Room 142, Psychology Building. The alumni shared information about their career paths and experiences followed by a question and answer session. Students had the opportunity to meet one-on-one with alumni from 5-6:30 p.m. in the Psychology Atmum. If you are interested in participating in the department’s 2014 event, contact Cheryl Berger, Assistant Head for Alumni Relations at (217) 333-3429 or cberger@illinois.edu.

Psychology Alumni Participants

- Andrea Aquilar (MA 1996, PhD 1999), Research Assistant Professor, Department of Comparative Biosciences, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Illinois; Assistant Director, Children’s Environmental Health Research Center at Illinois
- Bradley Avshalom (BS 1984) Staff Psychologist, Neuropsychologist, Department of Veteran Affairs
- Alicia Brannon (BS 1992), Brannon HR Consulting, Owner, Nawashi Learning Center; Co-owner
- Kent Carter Phipps (BS 1986), Associate Director, The Career Center, University of Illinois
- Denise Dallmier Burger (BS 1993), MA 1994), Director of Human Resources, Horizon Hobby, Inc.
- Laura Faynor-Ciha (BS 1983), Licensed Clinical Psychologist
- The Honorable Jeffrey Ford (BS 1973, JD 1976), Circuit Judge, Sixth Judicial Circuit, Champaign County
- Leanna Garcia (BS December 2011, MSW December 2013), Full-time graduate student, School of Social Work, Pennsylvania University of Illinois
- Diane Greco-Colebro (BS 1980, Psychology, MSW 1981), Adoption Social Worker, Lifelink International Adoption
- Tonja Hrones (BS 1986), Psychology, MS 1994, Animal Science), Animal Facilities Coordinator, Division of Animal Resources
- Dale W. Hoke (BS 1971), Adjunct Instructor of Psychology, Heartland Community College
- Mario Karayannis (BS 1983), Partner, Brady & Jernim, LLP
- Sandra Katz (BS 1977), Director, Upward Bound College Prep Academy, Assistant Dean, Office of Minority Student Affairs, University of Illinois, Site Supervisor; School Districts in Chatham, Danville, Highland, Ottawa, Peoria, Plano, Pianco, Rock Falls, IL; Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, AZ
- Sue Kiener Keller (BS 1992, MSW anticipated 2014 University of Illinois), Psychosocial Rehabilitation Clinician and Case Manager, Community Elements
- Loren Kuzuhara (BS 1985), Teaching Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Gregory Kyousas (BS 1979), Director of Education & Outreach Programs, Center for Alzheimer Disease and Related Disorders, Southern Illinois University School of Medicine
- Dr. James Leonard (AB 1977, MD 1981, University of Illinois Medical School-Chicago), President and CEO, The Carle Foundation
- Karen McLaughlin (BS 1994, Psychology, MS 1997, SRU), Assistant Director, Labor & Employee Relations, Academic Human Resources, University of Illinois
- Mark Mallor (BS 1974 Psychology & Economics, MBA 1976, President, Anthem Capital Group, Inc.
- Bree Ocasio (BS 2003), Senior Physical Therapist, Carle Therapy Services
- April Ponte (BS 2010), Admissions Counselor, Office of Undergraduate Admissions, University of Illinois
- Stephanie Record (BS 1993, Psychology, MSW 2001, MSW 2007, University of Illinois, LCSSW 2009), Executive Director, Circis Nucyrc
- Ronald Rothchild (BS 1980 Psychology; MSW 1984), Psychotherapist, Private Practice
- Robert Schumacher (MA 1987, PhD 1989), Executive Vice President, G3U, User Center

Thank you to Leslie Lofthus Van Buskirk and Ashley Petrick for sending statements to include in our Career Information Night program.
Psychology Alumni Advisory Board News

We are excited to update you on the progress of our key platforms: internships, mentoring, communications, board enrichment, and development.

Internships
We are pleased to announce the continued growth and success of the Department’s internship program and student interest in Psychology 405: Internship Captivate Experience. The number of students who have enrolled in the capstone course after completing a summer internship has doubled each year. The success of the course is directly attributable to Robert Wickesberg, Associate Head for Undergraduate Affairs, who developed and has taught the course since its inception in 2009.

The capstone course connects students’ summer internship experiences with their academic major in psychology and to their career goals. Students reflect, discuss, and build on their internship experiences, to help them identify the skills and abilities they have and need to be successful. They participate in both individual assignments and team projects that facilitate their ability to communicate in the many different careers available to students with a degree in psychology.

The Alumni Board would like to focus on offering more internship opportunities for psychology undergraduate students. We firmly believe that an effective internship can make a difference in both undergraduate students. We firmly believe that an effective internship can make a difference in both undergraduate

Communications
The Alumni Board is pleased to announce that the Department of Psychology’s networking group on LinkedIn has over 1,200 members. Artwork with us on LinkedIn “University of Illinois Department of Psychology Networking.”

Let us know what career and professional networking advice is valuable to help launch our students into their careers and what information is useful to our alumni who are more established in their careers and/or are seeking new opportunities for growth.

One of the Board’s goals for the 2013-2014 academic year is to develop a seminar to educate undergraduate students on the benefits of joining LinkedIn. We are working with Palm, an undergraduate student organization that focuses on the study of psychology, to spearhead this effort.

Become a Psychology Facebook Fan
Update Your Information psychology.illinois.edu/alumni

Board Enrichment
The Board Enrichment Committee is exploring avenues to further enhance relationships between Alumni Board members and current faculty and students. In particular, strong consideration is being given to a proposal to support an Early Career Lecturer by a recent Psychology graduate to share their experiences with faculty and students. Similar attention will be given to ideas encouraging the collaboration of current faculty and students with our undergraduate and graduate alumni.

Mentoring
The Psychology Mentor Program was launched at the beginning of the 2012-2013 academic year. We are currently in the process of soliciting feedback from the student/alumni participants to fine-tune the program. Our goal is for students to benefit from the wisdom and experience of alumni and receive “real-world” guidance regarding career planning and skills development that cannot be provided solely in a classroom setting. We anticipate that both students and alumni will find the program a rewarding experience.

Shape the Future Today
Our first Shape the Future Today Campaign was a huge success. One goal of the campaign was to provide financial support for qualified undergraduate students in psychology who take on unpaid summer internships related to their field of interest. To date, 10 students have received the Alumni Board’s Professional Development Award and we look forward to supporting more students in future years. Our second goal was to utilize a portion of the funds to update classroom media technology to support web-based learning, participation in webinars, web-based conferences, lectures and interviews.

We are now formulating the Shape the Future II Campaign. In addition to supporting the above listed goals, we would like to fund an endowed scholarship to be awarded each year to a qualified undergraduate student. An additional goal is to apply a portion of the funds to a lecture series organized by a psychology graduate student organization, Students of Psychology Ally for Averting Cliquism (SPALK), formed with the goal of hosting exceptional speakers to give talks that appeal to individuals throughout the nine divisions in the department.

If you have any suggestions for any of the above committees, or would like to learn more about the Alumni Advisory Board and its initiatives, please contact Leslie Vermillion, Senior Director of Development, LAS Office of Advancement at (217) 333-7108 or ljverb@illinois.edu.

Professional Development Award Recipients

Kristal Vance completed an internship at Envision Innovation in Schuylkill, IL.

Envision Innovation is a small nonprofit that addresses the needs of people who are looking to build environments that create the connection and safety that lead to more meaningful and productive relationships. Vance was trained as a session facilitator and played an active role in workshops for colleges, churches and businesses.

Barzano plans to pursue a career in a human resources generalist. Her internship assisted her with learning about human resources with real-world hands-on experience, helped her make professional connections, network, and learn the “tricks of the trade” from an outstanding mentor, Durrell Williams, at the mental health center.

Alumnus Receives Honorary Degree

Fred B. Volkmar, MD was selected by the UIUC Alumni Student Senate to receive an honorary degree of Doctor of Science. The nomination is the University’s highest honor and recognizes his role as one of the leading experts in the world on the diagnosis and treatment of autism and related disorders. He was presented with the degree at commencement on May 12, 2013.

Volkmar is the Irving B. Harris Professor of Child Psychiatry, Pediatrics, and Psychology and Director of the Yale University Child Study Center, Yale University School of Medicine. He is also the Chief of Child Psychiatry at Yale-New Haven Hospital, New Haven, CT. Volkmar received his BS degree from Illinois in 1972, graduating with high Honors and Highest Distinction in Psychology. He received a Master’s degree in Psychology at Stanford while simultaneously completing an MD at the Stanford School of Medicine in 1976. Volkmar was a 2006 recipient of the Department of Psychology’s Distinguished Alumni Award.

Kris Kristofferson, a 1970 graduate of the University of Illinois College of LAS, was honored at the Alumni Awards Banquet for his contributions to music, literature, and film. He received an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters from the Alumni Board.

Olivia Stenberg (BS ’12) and I have found that 4-year-olds are more likely than 6-year-olds and adults to think that coins are round, that boys have short hair, or that fire trucks are red because of some inherent reason (e.g., there’s something about coins that makes it impossible for them to be any other shape) rather than because that’s simply what people decided at some point in the past. Because of their strong inherent-based situations, younger children also reason that none of these observed patterns can be changed (even if everyone wanted to change them) and that these patterns have always been and will always be exactly as they are now.

Aside from shedding new light on the process by which humans make sense of the world, this research has important implications for the way we relate to one another and to the larger sociopolitical systems in which we are embedded. If we tend to see the world as being a certain way due to immutable inherent factors (e.g., rich people are rich because they have certain desirable traits), then we might also judge the current societal status quo to be fair and legitimate. As a result, we may see little reason to advocate for any sort of change to the system, even when it works to our disadvantage (as it so often does for many groups that are disadvantaged and oppressed). This example highlights the power and reach of the cognitive shortcut identified by our lab. The inherent heuristic is not only a basic feature of how the mind works but also a source of new insights into other psychological phenomena of great practical and societal importance.

Pictured L-R: Former College of LAS Dean Ruth Watkins, Vice President & Chancellor Phyllis Wise, Fred R. Volkmar, President Robert Easter (Photo by L. Brian Stauffer, News Bureau)

Dr. Andrei Cimpian received a PhD in Psychology from Stanford University in 2008 and has been an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Illinois since then. His research focuses on the development of human concepts about natural and social categories, as well as on the development of beliefs about ability and achievement. He was selected to be a 2012-2013 Fellow of the Center for Advanced Study at the University of Illinois. Dr. Cimpian’s research has been published in journals such as Behavioral and Brain Sciences, Psychological Science, Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, Cognitive Psychology, Cognition, Developmental Psychology, and Child Development.
Faculty Recognized for Professional Excellence

**FACULTY AWARDS**

**Ross Named Interim Dean of College**

*Brian Ross* has been appointed Interim Dean of the College of LAS. Ross previously served as interim head of the Department of Psychology (2011-2012), and Interim Associate Dean for the College (2012-13).

**American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)**

*Neal Cohen* has been named a fellow of the AAAS. Cohen was recognized for his contributions to science and technology at the Fellows Forum held on February 16, 2013 during the AAAS annual meeting in Boston, MA.

**LAS Centennial Scholar**

*Kara Fedemierer* is one of ten faculty members who have been named Centennial Scholars in honor of the 100th anniversary of the creation of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois. This award is in recognition of her scholarly productivity and contributions to the educational mission of the College of LAS.

**Social and Behavioral Research Council Mid-Career Research Award**

*Edelin Verona* is the winner of the inaugural Mid-Career Research Award by the Social and Behavioral Research Council at the University of Illinois in recognition of her commitment to academic excellence. The Social and Behavioral Research Council was established to highlight the accomplishments and activities of social and behavioral scientists at the University of Illinois and to enhance research strengths in these areas, especially through interdisciplinary collaboration.

**William James Lifetime Achievement Award**

*Edward Diener* (Professor Emeritus) has been chosen to receive the William James Lifetime Achievement Award for Basic Research presented in honor of the 25th Anniversary of the Association for Psychological Science (APS). This award is in honor of the profound impact that his research has had on the field of psychological science over the past quarter century. This is APS’s highest honor, recognizing a lifetime of significant intellectual contributions to the basic science of psychology and the very best that our science has to offer. The psychology department is very proud and honored to have Professor Ed Diener in the department.

**Professorial Scholars**

The Department of Psychology has established a new tradition of honoring faculty members who have achieved promotion to Associate or Full Professor with the title of Professorial Scholar. The Professorial Scholar titles are named after eminent emeritus faculty members in our department. The appointments serve as recognition of our colleague’s outstanding achievements in research, teaching, and service, as validated by their promotion in rank. We honor not only our newly-promoted faculty members but our esteemed emeritus faculty members as well.

The appointments are in effect for one year and each provides a discretionary fund to support scholarly activities. The following have been named Professorial Scholars effective January 1, 2013:

- Edward Shoben Professorial Scholar in Psychology
  - Aaron Benjamin

- Emanuel Donchin Professorial Scholar in Psychology
  - Kara Fedemierer

- Julian Rappaport Professorial Scholar in Psychology
  - Michael Khal

- Evelyn Satoff Professorial Scholar in Psychology
  - Justin Rhodes

**TEACHING EXCELLENCE**

**Graduate Student Organization Instructional Award**

This award is presented to faculty for excellence in teaching and advising at the graduate level. The 2013 recipient is *Aaron Benjamin* from the Cognitive Division.

**Mabel Kirkpatrick Hohenboken Award**

*Michael Khal* was selected as the 2013 recipient of the Hohenboken Award. This award recognizes departmental faculty who consistently contribute instruction, research, and service to students, and the quality of instructional outcomes, develop innovative approaches to teaching, and influence the curriculum.

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**NEW FACULTY JOIN PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT**

*Jaime Derringer* is an assistant professor in the Social-Personality Division. She is interested in how genetic and environmental influences explain individual differences. Her research focuses on (1) applying psychometric methods to refine genetic associations with broadly-defined phenotypes, (2) estimating how certain environments (such as stress) enhance or dampen genetic influences, and (3) identifying “genetic risk” scores that may predict individual outcomes. Derringer joined the department for the 2013 fall semester.

**FACULTY RETIREMENT**

*Kay Bock* retired in August 2013 after twenty-two years in the Department of Psychology. Bock received a BA from Bucknell University (1961), AM degree (1973) and PhD (1975) from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and a Diploma (2001) Staatsausweis Niederlandes Ahs Tweekuul Uii (Netherlands National Examination of Dutch as a Second Language, Advanced: official certification of advanced competence in Dutch speaking, writing, reading, and listening).

Prior to her appointment at Illinois in 1991, Bock was a professor at Michigan State University, visiting assistant professor at the University of Oregon, visiting lecturer in the Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences at MIT, and an assistant professor at Cornell University.

Bock’s research focuses on how people turn thoughts into speech. There are three questions behind much of the research. One is how the features of ideas affect language forms. A second question has to do with the cognitive processes that control how words are arranged. A third issue involves what goes wrong when speakers make errors in selecting or arranging words. The answers to these questions draw on theories about language and about cognitive processes, and emerge from new experimental techniques for examining language production.


Bock served as an editor for the Journal of Memory and Language (2005-08), associate editor of the Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition (1995-97), and co-editor of Language and Cognitive Processes (1992-94), and as a consulting editor and/or on the editorial boards of many publications including Psychological Science, Journal of Memory and Language, Cognition, Language and Cognitive Processes, Memory & Cognition, and Psychonomic Bulletin & Review. She has also been a member of grant panels for the National Institute of Health, National Institute of Mental Health, National Science Foundation, National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, and provided external evaluation and consulting to a wide variety of groups.

Bock is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association (Division 3), American Psychological Society, Cognitive Science Society, and Linguistic Society of America, Psychonomic Society (Governance Board 2001-06; Publications Committee 2001-05; Chair of Governing Board 2006-06); GUV (Midwestern honor society for fledging experimental psychologists 1962-99), and Board of Governors 1986-89.
Are We Attracted to People Who Resemble Our Parents?

By Marie E. Heffernan, MA

One of the curious things about human relationships is that we sometimes fall in love with individuals who bear a striking resemblance to our parents—a phenomenon that has caught the attention of psychologists and relationship researchers (Heffernan & Fraley, 2015a). Take Alison, for example (Perron, 2009). Alison is married to a man who resembles her father in many ways. Both men are interested in politics and the stock market, and they both share the name Mike. They also physically resemble one another. Alison acknowledges the similarities between the two men, “I have a great relationship with my father, so I suppose I looked for a partner who shares some of his good qualities.”

Background

Previous research has suggested that exposure to parents and caregivers can shape the kinds of features that individuals are attracted to when they grow up, potentially resulting in attraction to parent-similar others. Some of this evidence comes from animal studies. For instance, Konrad Lorenz (1937, 1970) found that baby goslings “imprint” on the first moving object they see. When Lorenz himself was the first object the goslings saw, they followed him around as if he were their mother. Curiously, when these goslings reached sexual maturity, they directed their mating behavior toward objects that resembled the object they imprinted on—in Lorenz’s case, human beings. Evidence that animals prefer caregivers similar in mates has been shown in a variety of species such as sheep, goats, and primates (Kendrick et al., 1998; Morris, 1969).

In addition to this animal research, research on human mating and attraction has suggested that humans also prefer individuals who resemble our caregivers. In one study, researchers found that adopted women were more likely to marry a man who resembled their adoptive fathers than their biological fathers (Berenbaum et al., 2001). Another research team focused on body hair to examine this issue. They found that women who had hairier fathers were more attracted to men with body hair and were more likely to have a hairy romantic partner compared with women whose fathers were less hairy (Rantala, Polikii, & Rantala, 2010).

Research Question and Methodology

My advisor, R. Chris Fraley, and I were interested in further exploring whether, in fact, people are more attracted to others who share characteristics with their parents. To do so, we focused on a characteristic that is relatively easy to assess retrospectively: the age of a person’s parents when that person was born (Heffernan & Fraley, 2013b). For example, some people might have been born to young parents and thus were exposed to their parents’ youthful appearance in early life. Others might have been born to older parents and were exposed to a parent’s less youthful appearance in early life. This difference in exposure may influence people’s attraction to faces of varying ages. Specifically, we hypothesized that people who were born to older parents might be more attracted to older-looking faces compared with people born to younger parents.

To examine this possibility, we administered an online survey to a sample of over 2,000 participants. In the first part of the study, participants completed a photo-rating task in which they rated the attractiveness of 25 photographed faces of their preferred gender. The photographs were obtained from the website fuxty.com and individuals in the photographs were of varying ages. In the second part of the study, participants provided demographic information as well as information about their parents such as the age of their parents when the participant was born. Upon completing the study, participants were given personalized feedback about the kinds of features that they found most attractive.

Research Findings

Consistent with evolutionary psychological research (and the Hollywood cliche for youthfulness), our analyses revealed that in general, people were more attracted to younger versus older faces. However, more critical to our hypothesis was whether this preference for younger faces was the same for people born to older versus younger parents. We found that people born to older parents showed a reduced preference for younger faces, supporting our hypothesis. In other words, participants who were born to older parents were more attracted to older-looking faces compared with participants who were born to younger parents. This suggests that people tend to be attracted to others who share certain characteristics with their parents, in this case, age.

There are two potential explanations for these findings. The first, sexual imprinting, suggests that the same mechanisms that are responsible for learning the characteristics of caregivers in early life are also responsible for shaping what people find attractive in adulthood (Arons, 2011). The second mechanism, mere exposure, suggests that people may prefer others who are more familiar to them. Because parents are highly familiar, people may be attracted to parent-similar others because they seem familiar too (Kurtz-Wilson & Zajonc, 1980; Montland & Buck, 1992; Zajonc, 1968). One way in which sexual imprinting and mere exposure explanations differ from each other is that sexual imprinting posits a sensitive period in development (e.g., the early years of life) during which exposure to parents would have the greatest impact on adult preferences, and exposure outside of this period would have a smaller effect on preferences. Mere exposure, on the other hand, does not necessitate a sensitive period, and instead suggests that people may be impacted by their environments throughout development. One of the goals of our future work is to better understand whether there is a sensitive period for the acquisition of human mate preferences to help us trace apart these two explanations.

In summary, our research findings are consistent with the idea that experiences with parents and caregivers may play a role in shaping what people find attractive as adults. This might explain why someone like Alison fell in love with Mike, a man who resembled her father in many ways.

Marie Heffernan is a 5th year PhD student in the Social, Personality, and Organizational division. Dr. R. Chris Fraley is her primary research advisor. Marie’s research focuses on adult attachment, romantic attraction, and close relationships.

She is interested in how people’s experiences with caregivers in early life impact their relationships in adulthood. In her work, she has examined the early stages of romantic relationships, such as initial attraction and how people become emotionally attached to new romantic partners. She received the psychology department teaching award in 2012. She also recently received the Graduate College Marie Morse Wood Fellowship for her work on conflict in in-law relationships.

Chow Honored for Teaching Excellence

Congratulations to Philip Chow (Clinical-Community Division) who was selected as the 2013 recipient of the Department of Psychology’s Teaching Award. Chow was an instructor in Psych 100: Introductory Psychology for Fall 2009/Spring 2010, and Psych 238: Abnormal Psychology Fall 2011/Spring 2012.

Chow has been on the List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent every one of the four semesters he taught classes in the department. He also earned the special distinction for being among the top 10% of instructors on the “Outstanding List,” which has a higher cut-off than “Excellent,” all four semesters.

Chow’s philosophy on teaching is composed of three integrative core beliefs:

• First, a successful teacher invokes in his students a genuine curiosity and growth beyond simply knowing the facts.

• Second, to enhance learning in his students, a successful teacher must make the material come alive in a way that is easily relatable and spark interest.

• Third, a successful teacher is flexible enough to respond to the feedback and emerging needs of his students.

Chow constantly strives to cultivate a classroom environment that promotes self-exploration. He believes that when students are part held accountable for their own learning, it gives them a sense of ownership and empowerment that fosters growth and discovery.

He has adopted a style of teaching that places an emphasis on communicating the class material via many different channels including videos, in-class demonstrations, free-writing exercises, and group work to achieve active learning.

Chow believes that one’s ability to be flexible and effectively utilize feedback is essential to being a successful teacher. “I believe that being an effective teacher is a never-ending process of growth, as one must be willing to try new techniques and revise one’s own methods in order to better serve students.”

Student comments were overwhelmingly positive:

“Phil took the budding curiosity I had in psychology and turned it into the focus of my career goals.”

“He made the class very interesting and I could tell he was very passionate about the content. It was the only class this semester that I looked forward to attending.”

“He was always happy to see us, tried to get to know us, and was prepared for class, and wanted us to learn. One of the best instructors I’ve ever had.”
Generous Donors Assist Students

The Department of Psychology is grateful to the generous donors who have established fellowships and awards in honor of family members and distinguished faculty and staff who have influenced their lives. Gifts from alumni and friends enable the department to support the research of our most promising students.

GRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS

Sarah Anderson Scholarship
The Sarah Anderson Scholarship was established to provide scholarships to graduate students in psychology who are academically qualified but who are in need of financial help in order to secure their PhD. The scholarship was awarded to Jing Luo, a first-year student in the Social-Personality Division.

Jeffrey Dallenbach Fellowship
The Jeffrey Dallenbach Fellowship is awarded to a graduate student conducting basic research in experimental psychology. The fellowship was awarded to Deborah Crown, a first-year student in the Visual Cognition & Human Performance Division.

Nancy Hirschberg Memorial Award
Nancy Hirschberg was a member of the psychology department here in Champaign from 1964 until 1976. She joined the psychology faculty from 1964 until 1976, when she started to become influential. Shortly after her death in February 1979, her friends and colleagues at both campuses met to establish the Nancy Hirschberg Memorial Fund to create a living remembrance with the hope that her memory will serve to encourage others to attain their full potential. The result is the Nancy Hirschberg Memorial Award that is presented each year to a psychology graduate student who, during that year, has performed outstanding original research or scholarship in areas related to Professor Hirschberg’s interests. These areas include individual differences, personality, human judgment, and multitask analysis. The award consists of a cash prize and inscription of the recipient’s name on a plaque which is kept on permanent display in the third floor.


Charles L. Hulin Fellowship
The Hulin Fellowship was established in 2000 by students, colleagues, and friends of Professor Charles L. Hulin, who co-founded the department’s Industrial/Organizational Psychology program at Illinois. Bertha Rangel, a first-year student in the I/O Division, received the fellowship for the 2012-2013 academic year.

J. McVicker Hunt Award for Excellence in Graduate Research
The J. McVicker Hunt Award was established in 2005 to honor the contributions of J. McVicker Hunt to the field of developmental psychology. Hunt was a faculty member in the Department of Psychology from 1951-1974. Hunt’s book, Intelligent and Environment published in 1961, has been credited for laying the groundwork for Project Head Start, and the importance of early childhood education.

Evelyn Hobson Fellowships in Psychology
Evelyn Hobson was a graduate of Harvard, Wellesley, and Columbia. She was a noted child psychologist in the Los Angeles area, taught at UCLA, and started the Department of Psychology at Pomona College. Evelyn and her husband, Bill Hobson, had a keen interest in higher education and through the generosity of two papers, “The role that racism plays in the development of identity, self-concept, and acculturation. Her research demonstrates the role that racism plays in socialization, identity, and acculturation. Her research demonstrates that addressing the needs of one of Champaign-Urbana’s most vulnerable populations, African-American adolescents involved in the juvenile system. It is her noteworthily accomplishments in both research and practice that have led to Nancy’s receiving this award.

Sarah C. Mangelsdorf Graduate Award in Psychology
Sarah C. Mangelsdorf Graduate Award in Psychology was established in 2008 to support the teaching or study of child psychology in the Department of Psychology. The department awarded fellowships to Larisa Hussak, and Michelle Miernicki, both first-year students in the Developmental Division.

Frederick & Ruby Kanfer Award
Frederick H. Kanfer, a member of the Department of Psychology from 1973 until 1995, was a pioneer in the behavioral therapy movement and a founding father of self-management therapy. To honor his legacy, his family established the Frederick and Ruby Kanfer Award, to be presented to a psychology student whose scholarship and or service in the field of clinical/ community psychology is aimed at improving the psychological lives of all individuals. The Department of Psychology would like to thank the Kanfer family, his colleagues, and friends whose generous contributions helped to endow the fund.

Nancy Joseph is the 2013 recipient of the award. Her research demonstrates the role that racism plays in socialization, identity, and acculturation. Her research demonstrates that addressing the needs of one of Champaign-Urbana’s most vulnerable populations, African-American adolescents involved in the juvenile system. It is her noteworthily accomplishments in both research and practice that have led to Nancy’s receiving this award.

Rue Micklos Fellowship
The Rue Micklos Fellowship Fund was established in 2008 to support the teaching or study of child psychology in the Department of Psychology. The department awarded fellowships to Larisa Hussak, and Michelle Miernicki, both first-year students in the Developmental Division.

Herbert Woodrow Fellowship
The Woodrow Fellowship is awarded to the most promising graduate students in the Department of Psychology doing basic scientific research in the field of psychology. The fellowship was awarded to Ryan Lah, a first-year student in the Behavioral Neuroscience Division.

Janet Tirsch Memorial Award
The Janet Tirsch Award, established in memory of this enthusiastic participant in undergraduate research, was presented to Olivia Albertson for her senior honors thesis, “The relationship between conscientiousness and physical health.” Albertson began her graduate studies in personality psychology at the University of California-Davis in the fall.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS

Julie Sutton-Osgood Psychology Award
The Julie Sutton-Osgood Psychology Award was established in 2006 by family and friends in memory of Sutton-Osgood whose career goal was to become a practicing physician. Sutton-Osgood trained as an emergency medical technician (EMT) and worked summers for an ambulance company while she was enrolled as a psychology student at Illini. After graduation she completed a paramedic course and worked for Superstar Ambulance Company and the ED/ICU coordinator at St. Mary’s Hospital and Hope Children’s Hospital. A few years later she attended physician assistant school while she continued to work full-time. Sutton-Osgood fulfilled her goal to become a licensed Physician’s Assistant. The Julie Sutton-Osgood Award in Psychology is intended to help students realize their dream of becoming either a physician or another type of medical practitioner.

Alison Trude (Cognitive Neuroscience) received the 2013 award, which is designed to honor an outstanding female graduate student who has exhibited excellence in research, scholarship, teaching, and has shown the potential to be an academic leader.

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The sixth Julie Sutton-Osgood Award in Psychology was awarded to Leah Schmollin who is pursuing a medical degree at the Mayo Clinic Medical School.

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UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS

James E. Spoor Scholarship Recipients

Thirteen undergraduate students received a James E. Spoor Scholarship based upon their outstanding academic achievements.

HONORS IN PSYCHOLOGY

The Honors Program, coordinated in 2012-13 by Professor Daniel Simons, is a three-semester sequence of courses designed to offer outstanding undergraduates an opportunity to do sustained scholarly work on a specific research project, culminating in the preparation of an undergraduate Bachelor's thesis, and a poster presentation at the Honors Program Fair. Students who complete the program graduate with “Honors in Psychology.” Ten students presented their research at the Honors Program Fair on April 25, 2013.

GRADUATING WITH DISTINCTION IN PSYCHOLOGY

Graduating with Distinction requires significant research and academic effort by students. Students must work for two semesters on a research project with a faculty member and prepare an undergraduate bachelor’s thesis. Those graduating with Distinction on May 12, 2013.

DIVISION AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Your generous gifts to the Partnership for Psychology Fund bolster our funding of awards for outstanding undergraduate research and academic accomplishments.

HONORS TIMES | Department of Psychology University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

GRADUATING WITH DISTINCTION IN PSYCHOLOGY

Undergraduate Clinical-Community Science Award

Corinne Kacmarek was nominated for the award for her excellence in clinical research and community practice. Kacmarek worked in the laboratories of both Professor Howard Breinbaurn and Associate Professor Nusse Aimes, completing an honors thesis, and was involved in several projects that bridge community action and clinical practice. Kacmarek’s involvement with community engagement, specifically the Geis Advocacy Program, Community Elements, and the ACCESS Initiative was stellar.

Community Action Award

Kimberly Bryan demonstrated her capacity for encouraging data-driven processes and applied research as it relates to responding to at-risk youth. She took an ecological approach to examining factors related to caregivers stress, a phenomenon that is quite common among caregivers of youth with serious emotional challenges, but often understood only in terms of individual attributes. This project demonstrates Bryan’s budding ability to engage in applied research with direct implications for intervention. She has been an outstanding advocate and peer supervisor in the Girls’ Advocacy Project and an exemplary research assistant for the ACCESS Initiative. Bryan’s involvement in the local community and her genuine passion for community psychology research and action exemplify the principles of the Community Action Award.

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EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

LAS Leaders

Newton joined LAS Leaders in the fall of her freshman year and it is one of the groups that helped make her feel comfortable on campus and helping younger students. Newton is currently serving as an intern for LAS 101: Freshman Seminar and believes it will be one of her favorite experiences at Illinois. As a student intern her job is to give a more personal introduction to topics that concern all new students on campus. Some of the topics that are covered include an in depth look at plagiarism, class registration, goal setting, study strategies, and proper etiquette for emailing a professor. She will also meet with students one-on-one to get to know them better and learn about their interests and goals. Newton said she loves talking about the U of I, making people feel more comfortable on campus and helping younger students find their place, just as she found her comfort zone on campus.

C-U Crossfit

Crossfit is something Newton got involved with after recovering from major ankle surgery the summer after her freshman year. Crossfit is known as “the sport of fitness” and involves everything from Olympic weightlifting movements, power lifting, some gymnastic strength movements, and a lot of running. She started doing it as a way to stay in shape since she was no longer participating in gymnastics. However, now it has become more than just a way to stay in shape, it is her biggest hobby and newest passion. This summer Newton started competing in Crossfit competitions and was awarded 2nd place at her first competition.

During the school year Newton tries to work out every day at 6 a.m., just to make sure she can fit it into her schedule. Working out in the morning is what gives Newton the energy to focus during class. She said that all the athletes there are very friendly, and the coaches are awesome, and it is a great to be involved with this group of people.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

LAS 101: Freshman Seminar

Newton is currently serving as an intern for LAS 101: Freshman Seminar and believes it will be one of her favorite experiences at Illinois. As a student intern her job is to give a more personal introduction to topics that concern all new students on campus. Some of the topics that are covered include an in depth look at plagiarism, class registration, goal setting, study strategies, and proper etiquette for emailing a professor. She will also meet with students one-on-one to get to know them better and learn about their interests and goals. Newton said she loves talking about the U of I, making people feel more comfortable on campus and helping younger students find their place, just as she found her comfort zone on campus.

Psychology at Illinois

First and foremost, one of the main reasons Newton would encourage someone to consider psychology at Illinois is for the diversity the program offers. She said just about every branch of psychology is represented at Illinois and each branch has incredible faculty. In her first two years at Illinois she has taken classes in biological psychology, social psychology, personality psychology, cognitive psychology, neuropsychology, clinical psychology and community psychology. She said there is literally something here for everyone.

Even though Newton wants to pursue clinical psychology, she feels confident saying that she understands and has some experience with the other fields of psychology. She also thinks it’s really cool that often times when you are reading a textbook you will see that the research experiments they use as examples were actually done at the Illinois. Call her a psychology nerd but she thinks that is an awesome!

Additionally, she said the research opportunities you can be involved in as an undergraduate are vast. She does not think other universities can compare. Newton said another great thing about the psychology department at Illinois is the passion and encourage students to use their psychology degrees in different ways. They encourage psychology majors to look into law school, medical school, business, and many other career paths. Getting a degree in psychology at Illinois means you will have a quality foundation on which to transition to other fields.

Psych 340: Girls Advocacy Project

Newton said it is difficult to speak in detail about the Girls Advocacy Project because the content of the course directly involves members within the C-U community. However, she will say that the class is truly a pioneer in the field of juvenile justice research, and specifically the holistic treatment of females in the system. She thinks the class is one that other universities should incorporate into their programs as a focus on treating adolescent girls from a strength-based perspective.

Another great thing about the project is that there are multiple undergraduate teaching assistants who have gone through the process of being an advocate, so having them as mentors is incredibly helpful and not something that other classes offer. This coming year Newton will be an undergraduate teaching assistant for the course and she looks forward to being able to mentor the new advocates just as she was last year.

Psych 290: Research Experience in Psychology

Similarly to the Girls Advocacy Project, her 290 research experience is one that directly involved members of the C-U community. Newton was involved with one aspect of Associate Professor Nicole Allens research that focuses on the community response to intimate partner violence. She is currently working with a graduate student in Allens lab. Emily Dworkin, on a conference presentation and co-authoring a research paper. Newton feels honored to be able to work on the project because Dworkin is so knowledgeable and has taught her so much on how to prepare for conducting her own research in the future.

Newton is proud of her accomplishments to date. She wants to devote her energy to a few different careers and became a well-rounded, productive member at her university. She is also proud of the fact that she has managed to make all As and Bs in her coursework too.

Illinois has offered Newton amazing experiences. She has spent the past two years exceeding many expectations and will strive to achieve even more during her remaining two years on campus. Between all of the extracurricular activities and academics, she will always have an end goal to help make a difference in people’s lives. +

UNDERGRADUATE SPOTLIGHT: EMILY NEWTON

Emily Newton was interviewed by David Rothmund, Summer 2013 Psychology Marketing Communications Intern

When Emily Newton applied to colleges she knew that she was ready to make a break from living in the south her entire life. Newton is a big believer in change and she followed that philosophy when she accepted the offer of admission to the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign three years ago.

When she arrived on campus, Newton was already thinking about how she only had four years to leave her mark at Illinois and how important it was to gain as much as possible from the experience. Newton’s goal was to become involved with more than academics to enrich her college experience, but without spending herself too thin. During her freshman year Newton was to become involved with more than academics to enrich her college experience, but without spending herself too thin. During her freshman year Newton was to become involved with more than academics to enrich her college experience, but without spending herself too thin. During her freshman year Newton was to become involved with more than academics to enrich her college experience, but without spending herself too thin.

Several of her avoid becoming bored and to make connections on and off campus.

Since joining the organization, Newton has been taught proper etiquette skills for business dinners and meetings, and she has learned how to initiate conversations with alumni of diverse backgrounds and careers. During her sophomore year Newton served as the Vice President of Internal Relations for the organization and was in charge of organizing social events for the members. This year she is serving as the Vice President of Outreach and will be organizing the Leaders’ community service activities for the year. Newton said being a part of the executive board has been an awesome experience and she feels honored to be a part of a group where each individual has accomplished an incredible amount during their time at Illinois.

Flippin’ Illini

Joining club gymnastics was one of the very first things Newton did when she came to Illinois. Newton was a competitive gymnast until she was sixteen and knew the club team would be a great place to make friends on campus. She thinks that being on a club sports team is one of the best things you can do. It gives you something to construct when do to when you have extra free time, and it gives you time to get away from academics when they become stressful.

Newton said the greatest thing about club gymnastics is that it is a large variety of people with different skill levels can do it. Anyone can join the team and you can practice as intensively as you want, or you can practice just for fun. She took it very seriously her freshman year and participated in a few competitions which she found to be very exciting. At the end of her freshman year, Newton had major ankle surgery so she decided not to pursue gymnastics anymore. Newton met her best friends at school through the club team and she is still involved in their activities, although Crossfit has become her main focus outside of academics.

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ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

LAS 101: Freshman Seminar

Newton is currently serving as an intern for LAS 101: Freshman Seminar and believes it will be one of her favorite experiences at Illinois. As a student intern her job is to give a more personal introduction to topics that concern all new students on campus. Some of the topics that are covered include an in depth look at plagiarism, class registration, goal setting, study strategies, and proper etiquette for emailing a professor. She will also meet with students one-on-one to get to know them better and learn about their interests and goals. Newton said she loves talking about the U of I, making people feel more comfortable on campus and helping younger students find their place, just as she found her comfort zone on campus.

Psychology at Illinois

First and foremost, one of the main reasons Newton would encourage someone to consider psychology at Illinois is for the diversity the program offers. She said just about every branch of psychology is represented at Illinois and each branch has incredible faculty. In her first two years at Illinois she has taken classes in biological psychology, social psychology, personality psychology, cognitive psychology, neuropsychology, clinical psychology and community psychology. She said there is literally something here for everyone.

Even though Newton wants to pursue clinical psychology, she feels confident saying that she understands and has some experience with the other fields of psychology. She also thinks it’s really cool that often times when you are reading a textbook you will see that the research experiments they use as examples were actually done at the Illinois. Call her a psychology nerd but she thinks that is an awesome!

Additionally, she said the research opportunities you can be involved in as an undergraduate are vast. She does not think other universities can compare. Newton said another great thing about the psychology department at Illinois is the passion and encourage students to use their psychology degrees in different ways. They encourage psychology majors to look into law school, medical school, business, and many other career paths. Getting a degree in psychology at Illinois means you will have a quality foundation on which to transition to other fields.

Psych 340: Girls Advocacy Project

Newton said it is difficult to speak in detail about the Girls Advocacy Project because the content of the course directly involves members within the C-U community. However, she will say that the class is truly a pioneer in the field of juvenile justice research, and specifically the holistic treatment of females in the system. She thinks the class is one that other universities should incorporate into their programs as a focus on treating adolescent girls from a strength-based perspective.

Another great thing about the project is that there are multiple undergraduate teaching assistants who have gone through the process of being an advocate, so having them as mentors is incredibly helpful and not something that other classes offer. This coming year Newton will be an undergraduate teaching assistant for the course and she looks forward to being able to mentor the new advocates just as she was last year.

Psych 290: Research Experience in Psychology

Similarly to the Girls Advocacy Project, her 290 research experience is one that directly involved members of the C-U community. Newton was involved with one aspect of Associate Professor Nicole Allens research that focuses on the community response to intimate partner violence. She is currently working with a graduate student in Allens lab. Emily Dworkin, on a conference presentation and co-authoring a research paper. Newton feels honored to be able to work on the project because Dworkin is so knowledgeable and has taught her so much on how to prepare for conducting her own research in the future.

Newton is proud of her accomplishments to date. She wants to devote her energy to a few different careers and became a well-rounded, productive member at her university. She is also proud of the fact that she has managed to make all As and Bs in her coursework too.

Illinois has offered Newton amazing experiences. She has spent the past two years exceeding many expectations and will strive to achieve even more during her remaining two years on campus. Between all of the extracurricular activities and academics, she will always have an end goal to help make a difference in people’s lives. +
The following students and staff were recognized for excellence during the past year. All recipients receive certificates and have their names inscribed on award plaques that are kept on permanent display in the Psychology Building.

**Arnie Miller Achievement Award**
Andrew Case was selected by the Champagni Area Psychological Society (CAPS) to receive the Achievement Award for his contributions to underserved ethnic minority communities in Champaign-Urbana. All of Case’s community engagement efforts stem from his program of research which focuses on juvenile justice, racism, and resilience. Case is completing a one-year clinical internship at the Yale School of Medicine.

**Graduate College Clean Energy Education Fellowship**
Erika Salomon (Social-Personality-Organizational Division) received the two-year fellowship in support of her research that examines how efficacy beliefs and group identity influence conservation intentions and behavior.

**Graduate College Dissertation Fellowship**
Philip Chow (Clinical/Community Division) and Niwako Sugimura (Developmental Division) received the fellowship for their proposed dissertations. Chow’s dissertation is entitled, “The Role of Perceptions of Emotional Utility in Depression.” Sugimura’s is entitled, “Trajectories of Victimization Across the School Years: Individual and Contextual Predictors.”

**Herman Eisen Award**
Natalie Watson received the award for her research on using mindfulness meditation as an intervention technique and her work de-stigmatizing mental health issues in the African-American community. She was also awarded a Graduate College Focal Point Grant for her research and work in the community.

**Ed Scheiderer Memorial Research Award**
Laura Crocker received the award because of her ability to bring together the basic and applied sides of psychological research and to envision links between them that have the potential to change lives. She is particularly concerned with how interactions among emotion, motivation, and cognition and their underlying brain mechanisms contribute to risk for psychopathology.

**Graduate Teacher Certificates**
The department is proud to announce the following psychology graduate students (pictured below): Kristin Divis, Emily Hankassy, Justin Hepler, Melinda Jensen (not pictured), Melanie Tannenbaum, and Zhenzi Wang received Graduate Teaching Certificates through the Center for Teaching Excellence. This program is designed to encourage TAs to develop their teaching skills and reflective practice. It provides opportunities to document teaching experience, professional development, and the constructive use of student feedback.

Andrew Case (Pictured on left) earned the Teacher Scholar Certificate from the Center for Teaching Excellence. This program is designed to encourage instructors to become scholars of teaching by providing a structured process for the exploration of pedagogy from a discipline-based perspective. It also helps TAs develop a deeper understanding of the scholarly duties required in an academic position.

Laura Crocker

**National Science Foundation Pre-doctoral Fellowship**
Three Developmental Division students, Larisa Hussak, Michelle Miernicki, and Cynthia Yuen, were awarded NSF Fellowships in the 2013 competition.

**Graduate College Marion Morse Wood Fellowship**
Marie Heffernan (Social-Personality) and Pei Pei Setoh (Developmental) are recipients of the fellowship that supports Illinois graduate students whose research focuses on interpersonal communication.

Sandra Goss Lucas Award for Excellence in Teaching Introductory Psychology
The award was established in 2006 in honor of Sandra Goss Lucas, who served as the director of the Introductory Psychology course for 11 years. Nathan Hudson (Social-Personality Division) received the 2013 award for his outstanding contributions as an instructor in Psych 100.

**Incoming Graduate Students & Visitors**

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**Incoming Graduate Students & Visitors**

Clockwise: Larisa Hussak, Michelle Miernicki, and Cynthia Yuen

Back Row (L-R): Jean Ming Ceiin Wei, Paul Shao, Yuta Kazumi, Peter Onish, Juan O’Keefe Salon, Daniel Storage, Rose St. Clair, John Westbrook Not pictured: Alina Robinson, Luopao Zhang, Silon Collins

Middle Row (L-R): Lionel Mendoza, Vicente Rogers, Zhizhuo (Marshall) Wang, Nathaniel Hall, Cybelle Smith, Feng Zhang (visitor), Cawinne Harrington, Stack Bennett, Gabaghren, Anne Weidon, Joel Thomas, Christian Williams, Michael Kazan

Front Row (L-R): Cynthia Yuen, (visitor), Yifan Hu, Angela Lee, Rahym Manzuk, Rachel Amrhein, Tanja Kang, Ashwarya (Ani), Anna Madison, Faith Siwe, Yi Lin

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organized the 13th Professor Fritz Drasgow held in Houston, TX, April 11-13, 2013.

L-R: Patrick Wadlington, Bradley Brummel
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L-R: Alyssa Mitchell Gibbons, Emily Solberg
L-R: Tahira Probst, Vicki Magley, Mindy Bergman
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L-R: Emily Grijalva, Timothy Buckley
Front Row (L-R): Wei Wang, Kisha Jones, Fritz Drasgow, Emily Grijalva, Seth Spain, Minyung Liu
Back Row (L-R): Bertha Rangel, Jing Jin, Liwen Liu

L-R: William Schiemann, Gunnar Schrah
L-R: Liberty Munson, Mindy Bergman
L-R: Sang Eun Woo, Vicki Magley

I continue to do charity work. Joan and I mentor students in math and reading in our local schools with Communities In Schools of Peninsula (CISP). I serve on the CISP Board of Directors as Public Relations and Resource Development Committee Chairman, on our local YWCA Advisory Council, and I am active in Rotary. As I write this, our Rotary is rebuilding a charity thrift store that burned last year. When I say we are rebuilding, I mean that we will be cutting boards and pounding nails.

You may at this point be asking, “What does all this have to do with a degree in psychology?” My answer is simple, “everything.” I have utilized the knowledge that I learned at the University of Illinois in my various roles and in dealing with people and helping children. As an undergraduate I focused primarily on industrial and child psychology. I use what I learned in child psychology every week as I help elementary, middle school, and high school students who are struggling with reading and/or math. Often, their home life is more of an issue than any real learning deficiency. I find out what they like and relate that to math or reading. They go from a D or F to a B+. They are my pride and joy.

During my years as a Boeing 747 Captain, I never had an altercation with a crew member and I had up to 22 crewmembers on each flight. Admittedly, giving the chief purser a pound of Ben’s candy before each flight may have had something to do with that. Further, I always invited my crew to dinner at my expense while he interviewed. When he emerged, he said, “I like to tag along. I suggested we rent an airplane and fly up, and we did just that. I waited in the lobby while he interviewed. When he emerged, he said, “They want to talk to you.” I protested that I had not even heard of them before, much less filled out an application. He said, “They know, they still want to talk to you.”

Long story short, I got the job. I left the Navy on September 1, 1979, and started with TXI the following month. TXI bought Continental Airlines (CAL) in 1981, and kept the Continental name. In 1983, we went on strike. It lasted more than two years. In 1985, I again interviewed with United and was hired as “pre-hired.” Does this sound like Groundhog Day?

The 1980s were tumultuous in the airline business, which was deregulated in 1978. No sooner had I completed training at United than we went on strike from that company, too. I actually named my first dollar of revenue for United in March of 1986. I worked for the company for 27 years and retired two-and-one-half years early at the end of June, 2012. Meanwhile, CAL and UAL merged; so in all, I worked for “The Company” for nearly 34 years. With my Navy time, I flew for 40 years.

Concurrently with flying, I sponsored Cambodian refugees, was a Big Brother in the Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America program, worked as a shop foreman and service writer for an automotive shop, became a stock broker, and taught high school and college. Computers are my passion, so I wrote a textbook entitled, “Introduction to Structured Programming.” I served my pilots union as a local council officer, nationwide officer, and on numerous committees. I was also active in political party work serving as a volunteer, precinct committee officer, and legislative district chairman. I often stated over the last decade that I was engaged in so full-time jobs but the only ones I wanted to leave was the one that paid me.
Stephen Antos (PhD ’78) is the new chief scientist at Retail Solutions, Inc. (RSi). At RSi, he will expand the current data analysis efforts and create new applications for marketing and sales.

Robert Bray (PhD ’74) received the John C. Flanagan Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Psychological Association for his career long research achievements in military psychology. Bray is the senior program director of substance abuse epidemiology and military behavioral health at R.I International.

Jamie Von Roenn (BS ’75) is a professor of oncology and palliative medicine, particularly on the integration of palliative medicine skills and principles into oncology care.

John Drydenhofer (BS ’95) has been named a Tennessee Medical Association (TMA) Quarterly Public Health Champion for 2013. His work has brought recognition for more than 20 years of service and leadership in clinical and public health at the federal, state, and local levels, most notably as an advocate for a healthier Tennessee as state health commissioner. Drydenhofer received his medical degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and named his trustor of Public Health at the University of Utah, where he also completed his residency in Occupational Medicine.

Rice Jones (BS ’18, UIC; PhD ’19, UIC) is a current member of the Elgin Community College Board of Trustees. Jones is co-founder of the youth arts organization, Hamilton Wines, and a partner at Evaluations Solutions, Inc., providing evaluation and professional development services.

Laura Carlson (BS ’94) has been appointed vice president, associate dean, and chair of the Graduate School at the University of Notre Dame. Carlson has been a faculty member in the Department of Psychology at Notre Dame since 1994 and served as associate dean of the Graduate School for the past four years.

Lindsay Anderson (BS ’93) was named chair of the Illinois Board of Higher Education by Governor Pat Quinn in June 2013. Anderson is a senior advisor in the Quinn administration and also served as chair of the Illinois Campaign Finance Reform Task Force. She received a JD from the Chicago-Kent College of Law.

Daniel Applegate (BS ’16) received a master’s degree in Clinical Counseling from Eastern Illinois University (August ’13) and entered the PhD program in Counseling Education and Supervision at Idaho State University in August 2013. He was also a visiting intern counselor at the Evansville Eliot Counseling Group in Champaign, IL (summer ’13). He has received several awards including Research/Creative Activity Grant (Spring ’12), Chi Sigma Iota Epiklos Chapter, Counseling Honor Society: Vice President (Spring ’12), Williams Travel Grant (Fall ’12), Spring 2013 Research/ Creative Activity Grant (Spring ’13), and CEP Outstanding Graduate Student Award (Spring ’13).

Eric John Daniels (PhD ’07) was awarded the 2011 American Psychological Association Early Career Award for Distinctive Contributions to Research.

Urmimala Dutta (PhD ’12) was awarded the 2013 Best Dissertation in a Topic Relevant to Community Psychology by the Society for Community Research and Action (SERA) Division (27) at their Biennial Conference in June 2013. Dutta is an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts Lowell.

Colin “Clay” Fischer (BS ’05) is pursuing a doctorate in School Psychology with an emphasis in Pediatric Neuropsychology at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. She currently works as a full-time School Psychologist at a high school in Naperville, IL. Fischer plans on graduating with her PhD degree in May 2015.

Joshua Jackson (PhD ’11) was highlighted as a rising star in the Association for Psychological Science’s journal, The Observer, for creating new directions in the field of Psychology. Jackson is an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology at Washington University in St. Louis, MO.

Antonietta Kossouki (BS ’16) worked for about six years as a paraprofessional in a public elementary school after graduating from the Illinois. During that time she received a MS in Educational Psychology from Loyola University Chicago and an MSE in Library and Information Science from Dominican University. In November 2012, she accepted the position of school librarian for the Alphonso Academy and Center for the Arts in Chicago, IL.

Aparajita Mohanty (PhD ’07) has been named a Rising Star by the Association for Psychological Science APS. http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/publications/observer/2013/may-june-13/
Invest in the Future of the Department

The Department of Psychology at the University of Illinois has a reputation for excellence. The ability to maintain a challenging and dynamic environment is the key to continued excellence.

**GIVE ONLINE:**

psychology.illinois.edu/giving

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Mentor a Psychology Undergraduate Student

You can find the Mentor Program Guidelines and Application at: psychology.illinois.edu/alumni/MentorProgram.html.

Contact head undergraduate advisor, Gary Wszalek, if you have questions about the Mentor Program at (217) 333-6478 or via mentoring@cyrus.psych.illinois.edu.

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Psychology E-Newsletter

You can find a link to the E-newsletter at: psychology.illinois.edu/alumni/newsletter/index.html. Let us know if you would like to be added to our email list at: alumni@cyrus.psych.illinois.edu.

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Update Your Information:

Update us on your latest news and current email address at: psychology.illinois.edu/alumni

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Network on LINKEDIN

Join Psychology’s alumni networking group “University of Illinois Department of Psychology Networking” and expand your professional network.

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Become a Psychology FACEBOOK Fan

Find us at “University of Illinois Psychology Department” and keep up-to-date on important news and events.