March 2025

PSYCHOLOGY NEWSLETTER



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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

DR. TARA GRUENEWALD

Associate Professor & Chair
Department of Psychology



Dear Psychology Panthers,

Welcome to our Spring Semester Newsletter!

Our Newsletter Editor, Dr. Berardi, and Student Assistant, Hibah Ali, have put together a wonderful newsletter highlighting some of the activities and accomplishments that our students, faculty, and staff have been up to since our end of the semester newsletter last fall.

I am thrilled to see the different areas of research Psychology students are engaged in as highlighted in the Student Scholar Symposium Award profiles. Psychology is a big-tent discipline and psychological theories and concepts apply to diverse areas of human behavior, health and well-being. Be sure to read our awardee profiles to learn more about how student researchers are advancing psychological knowledge and its application to improving the human condition.

The Spring Semester is always a busy one with end of the year capstone projects, commencement, and other activities for our graduating seniors, the CUE Spring Student Scholar Symposium, our Internship and Teaching Assistant Symposium, and many other events and activities. We look forward to participating in them with you.

In the meantime, we hope you have a fabulous Spring Break week filled with all that brings you peace, joy, and relaxation.

Best, Dr. G

UPCOMING EVENTS

Spring Break

MARCH 24-28 2025

Psychology Internship and TA Poster Symposium

APRIL 7 2025

Beckman 404 @ 5:45pm

Psi Chi @ WPA Convention

MAY 1-4 2025

Las Vegas, NV

Psychology Senior Celebration

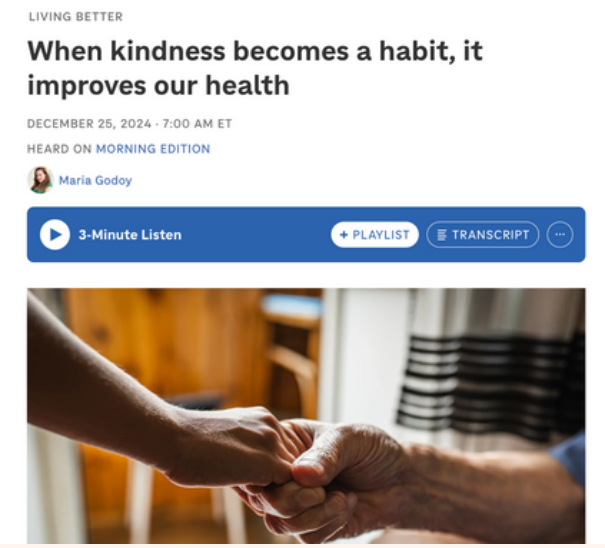
MAY 22 2025

Argyros Forum 209 @ 5pm



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PAST HAPPENINGS



Drs. Gruenewald and Boehm on NPR

December 25, 2024

NPR STORY

"Research shows that people who volunteer regularly have a lower risk of mortality and better physical health as they age."

12th Annual Conte Center Symposium

February 18, 2025

Early Human and Life Span Development Lab



TOP ROW (from left to right): Shannon Gerdts Vasu (staff), Emily Sweiss (post-doctoral fellow), Sophie Srivastava (staff), Dr. Laura Glynn (principal investigator), Kendra Leak (lab manager)
BOTTOM ROW (from left to right): Dr. Elysia Davis (associate professor at University of Denver), Tatiana Rodriguez (student), Annamaria Zandueta-Duarte (staff), Amber Sharma (staff), Valentyna Simon (staff), Vanessa Vargas (staff), Megan Maxwell (graduate student)



Megan Peters, University of California, Irvine
"Towards Quantifying Qualitative Experience: Introspective Psychophysics"

"Theorizing and Modeling in Neuroscience" Conference

January 16 - 17, 2025

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ADJUNCT FACULTY PROFILE

How long have you been part of the Chapman Community?

3 years

What are the key responsibilities/roles in the department?

I teach PSY 203 - Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences - here at Chapman University, and I love it! I get the opportunity to guide students through challenging statistical course material in an educational and engaging way. I believe everyone is capable of learning and understanding statistics, even the students who claim, "I'm not good at math." My goal at the end of the semester is for students to feel confident in their statistical abilities and walk away thinking that statistics isn't that bad :) In addition to teaching, I am also a support system to students.



Dr. Brittany Ingersoll

Can you share a recent accomplishment, whether it be academic or personal?

A non-academic, personal accomplishment of mine is that my husband and I hiked Mount Fuji in Japan this past semester. The weather conditions were not ideal - it was cold, rainy, and windy, but we still had a wonderful experience! It was truly a bucket list item for both of us.



What has been your most memorable experience at Chapman?

My favorite memories are generated by building connections with students. Over the past three years, I have met some amazing students. I love to see past and present students around campus and learn about life updates, study abroad trips, and career goals. To all my current and previous students - if you see me around campus, come say hello!

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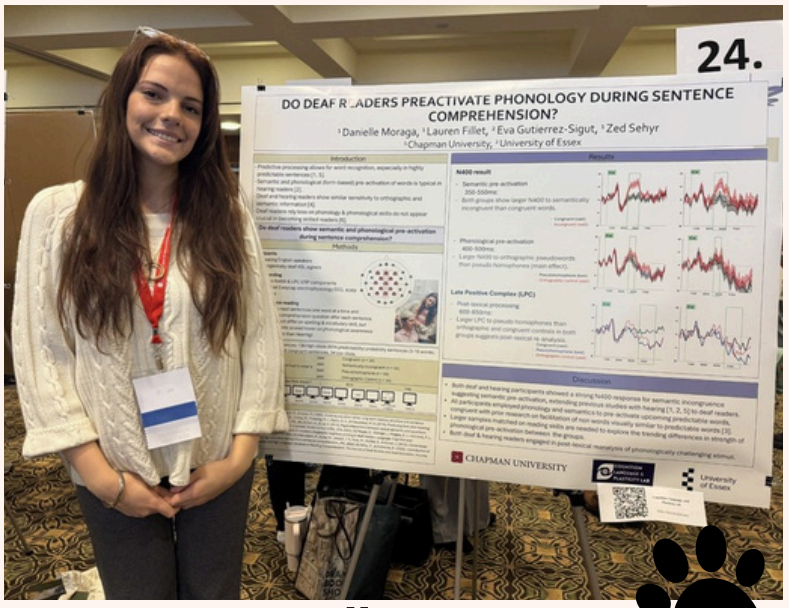
Student Scholar Symposium Poster Award Winner

Which faculty member supervises your research?

Dr. Zed Sehyr

Please provide a brief description of your research project.

The project focused on deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals and how their brain supports reading compared to individuals with hearing. Specifically, we explore how deaf and hearing readers predict words while reading sentences. Using EEG (electroencephalography) to track brain activity, we're investigating whether deaf readers activate phonological (sound-based) information while reading or if they rely on different strategies. This research helps us better understand how language experience shapes reading comprehension.



Danielle Moraga

Where did you get the idea for this project

This idea comes from a long-standing question in language and reading research: how do we predict words while reading? Since hearing readers use sound-based cues, we wanted to see if deaf readers —who process language visually—do the same. By looking at brain activity, we can see if their strategies differ and what that tells us about how the brain adapts to different experiences.

What did a typical day look like when completing this research?

Each day involved participant outreach, checking our screening survey, verifying participants' eligibility, scheduling lab appointments, and preparing the EEG setup. In the lab, I guided participants through the experiments while monitoring brain activity. After sessions, I helped clean the equipment and organize and process data. Every day was a mix of science, problem-solving, and teamwork!

What was the best part of this research project?

The best part was getting hands-on experience with neuroscience and EEG data collection, applying what I've learned in my psychology and neuroscience classes. Dr. Sehyr's guidance helped me deepen my understanding of the brain processes behind reading. I also enjoyed working with participants from the deaf and hearing communities and seeing how our research contributes to language accessibility.

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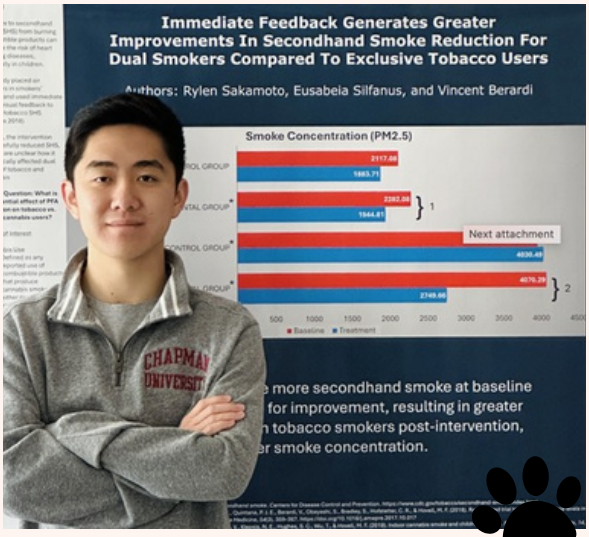
Student Scholar Symposium Poster Award Winner

Which faculty member supervises your research?

Dr. Vincent Berardi

Please provide a brief description of your research project.

An analysis of smoke concentration data gathered in a previous study examining the impact of audio feedback and coaching interventions.



Rylen Sakamoto

Where did you get the idea for this project

This project serves as background research for a future study from Professor Berardi's lab.

What did a typical day look like when completing this research?

The team often worked independently to identify trends in the data through the SPSS application, before compiling the results in lab meetings. These meetings would consist of discussing the potential causes behind the study's outcomes and understanding how several variables may have influenced the data.

What was the best part of this research project?

The part I enjoyed most was noticing trends that defied my initial expectations, such as which group experienced the greatest decrease in smoke concentration. Collaborating with my team and supervisor to explain the data gave me great insight into how surface-level assumptions can blind people to nuance and create intensified biases in our perspectives.

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Student Scholar Symposium Poster Award Winner



Bijou Allard

Which faculty member supervises your research?

Dr. Julia Boehm

Please provide a brief description of your research project.

I'm studying whether personal growth—continuously understanding oneself—helps protect thinking and memory as people age. Our findings using data from the Midlife in the United States Study indicate that personal growth could be a way to support brain health as we get older.

Where did you get the idea for this project

The U.S. population is older than ever before, and more people are experiencing age-related cognitive decline. Previous research suggests that psychological well-being can help protect cognitive health. I focused on personal growth because it may be a trait that helps people cope with stress—especially during midlife—building resilience against cognitive decline over time.

What did a typical day look like when completing this research?

A typical day involved literature review and data analysis, along with troubleshooting in SPSS to ensure our results were accurate.

What was the best part of this research project?

My favorite part was writing and presenting my findings—I believe the power of good science lies in how well it's communicated. Taking the data and turning it into a story is what gets me most excited.

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FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Recently Published Manuscripts

- **Berardi V,** Lan T, Guirguis A**, Maoz U.** (2025) Towards Automatically Shaping Behavior in mHealth Trials: An Empirical Investigation of Potential Procedures. PLoS One, 20 (1)
- Fowers, R., Coza, A., Chung, Y., Ghasemzadeh, H., Cloonan, S., Huberty, J., **Berardi**, V., & Stecher, C. (2025). Identifying Common Patterns in the Time of Day of Mindfulness Meditation Associated with Long-Term Maintenance. Behavioral Sciences, 15(3), 381
- **Boehm, J. K.**, Adams, M., & Boylan, J. M. (In Press). Sources of well-being and cardiovascular health: A mixed methods investigation from the MIDUS Study. Social Science & Medicine. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.117903
- Qureshi, F., Woodward, K., Kubzansky, L. D., & **Boehm, J. K.** (In Press). Childhood prosocial behavior and body mass index: Longitudinal findings in the Millennium Cohort Study. Health Psychology.
- Radin, R., Vaccaro, J., Fromer, E., Ahmadi, S., Guan, J., Fisher, S., Pressman, S., **Hunter, J.F.**...Prather, A. (2025) Digital meditation to target employee stress: A randomized clinical trial. JAMA Network Open 8.1 (2025): e2454435-e2454435
- Gavenas J, **Schurger A,** and **Maoz U.** Probing for Intentions: The Early Readiness Potential Does Not Reflect Awareness of Motor Preparation. Imaging Neuroscience (2025) 3 imag_a_00465
- Lashgari E, Chen E, Gregory J, **Maoz U.** A systematic review of Flotation-Restricted Environmental Stimulation Therapy (REST). BMC Complementary Medicine and Therapies (accepted)
- **Robinette, J. W**. & Moran, T. O. (2025). Household income, Neighborhood Poverty, and Epigenetic Age: Differences Between Men and Women. *Biopsychosocial Science and Medicine*

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FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Internal/External Grants Received

Dr. Aaron Schurger

Bial Foundation project Fund ($55,000)

Dr. Uri Maoz

2025: Association for Psychological Science and the William K. and Katherine W. Estes Fund ($20,000)

Submitted External Grants

Dr. Aaron Schurger

BSF Bi-National Research Grant ($148,650)

Dr. Vincent Berardi (PI) and Dr. Laura Glynn (Co-I)

NIH R01 Proposal “Tracking Residential Air Quality to Quit Smoking.” ($2.5 million)

Additional Achievements

Dr. John Hunter is the new director of the Center for Undergraduate Excellence (CUE)

Dr. Aaron Schurger’s book "Empirical Theories of Consciousness: The Grand Tour" has been accepted for publication and is due out in the Fall

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HAPPY NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

CONTACT US:

Vincent Berardi, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
berardi@chapman.edu

Hibah Ali
Student Assistant
hiali@chapman.edu

