

Experimental Psychology

Newsletter



FALL 2023

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On behalf of the program faculty, welcome to our latest newsletter. We are beyond proud of the amazing accomplishments of our students and alumni! Keep sending your updates to experimentalpsyc@towson.edu, and let us know if we can help in any way. We hope you enjoy the newsletter and as always, thank you for taking the time to read it!

Justin Buckingham, Program Director



Anne Snyder,
2nd Year GA



Kelly Roen,
1st Year GA



Justin Buckingham,
Program Director

Welcome First Years!



Students

Eitan Scher
Leilani Maiden
Kateryn Reyes-Fuentes
Jayne Konatsotis
Cecelia Stewart
Paul Neary
Kelly Roen
Ryann Gollings
Samantha Battista
Ashley Todd-Diaz
Megan Nagle

Advisors

Dr. Michael Ent
Dr. Kerri Goodwin
Dr. Jeff Kukucka
Dr. Justin Buckingham
Dr. Jeff Kukucka
Dr. Bryan Devan
Dr. Jared McGinley
Dr. Michael Ent
Dr. Geoffrey Munro
Dr. Abby Mello
Dr. Justin Buckingham



Welcome Back Second-Years!

Congratulations Graduates!

Best of Luck to Our 2023 Graduates

Brittney Workman, Laura Humm, Alex Bravo, Sam Bennett,
Maggie Biller, Marissa Spears, Brianna Donaldson-Morton,
Ting Huang, Bryce Lund, Lexie Mathis, Rene Perez



Alumni Updates

Anthony Garove - 2020 Graduate

Anthony started his 2nd year in the Survey and Data Science Ph.D. program at the University of Maryland Joint Program in Survey Methodology. He also became an adjunct professor at the University of Baltimore and is teaching Introduction to Psychology to students enrolled in the Second Chance College Program at Jessup Correctional Institution.



Kristen Judy - 2021 Graduate

Kristen recently took a position at the University of Maryland School of Medicine working as a clinical research specialist in oncology.



Bryce Lund- 2023 Graduate

Bryce is employed as a research project coordinator at Sheppard Pratt's Institute for Advanced Diagnostics and Therapeutics (IADT) studying treatment-resistant mood disorders.



Lexie Mathis- 2023 Graduate

Lexie recently became employed as a clinical research coordinator at Kennedy Krieger Institute.



Sam Bennett- 2023 Graduate

Sam started his 1st year in the Psychological and Brain Sciences Ph.D. Program at Washington University in St. Louis.



Esau Garcia - 2020 Graduate

Esau recently left the private sector after accepting a role as Data Analyst for "Communities in Schools Charlotte-Mecklenburg," one of the largest educational nonprofits in the state of North Carolina.



Student & Alumni Presentations

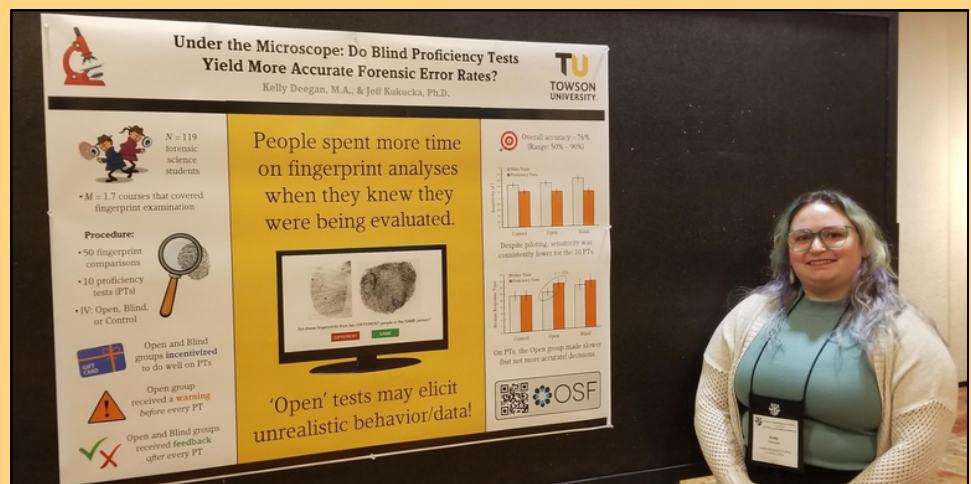
Esau Garcia, 2020 Graduate

Esau presented the findings of "Attendance + : Incentivizing for Chronic Absenteeism" a research project taken on by Communities in Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg at the 2023 CISNC Impact Conference: Gearing Up for Success.

Kelly Deegan, 2022 Graduate

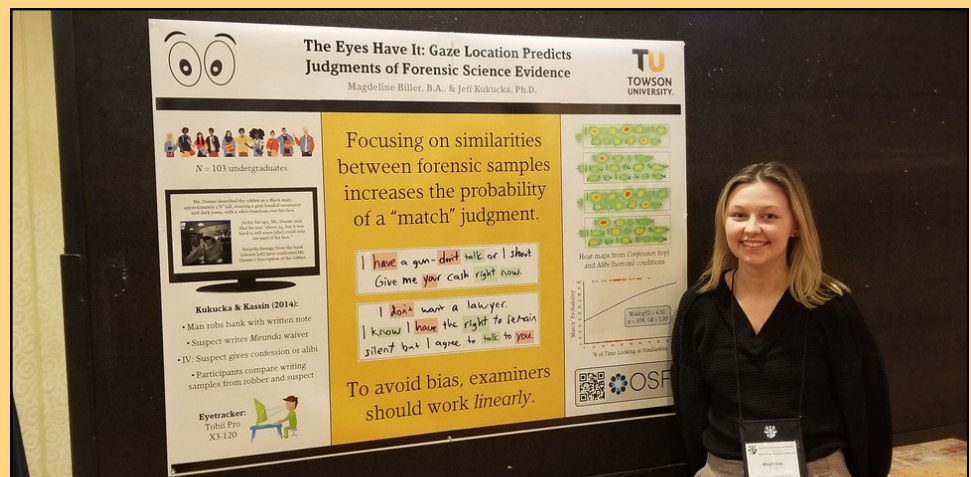
Deegan, K., & Kukucka, J. (March, 2023). *Under the microscope: Do blind proficiency tests yield more accurate forensic error rates?*

Poster presented at the American Psychology-Law Society Annual Conference, Philadelphia, PA.



Maggie Biller, 2023 Graduate

Biller, M., & Kukucka, J. (March, 2023). *The eyes have it: Gaze location predicts judgments of forensic science evidence.* Poster presented at the American Psychology-Law Society Annual Conference, Philadelphia, PA.



Sam Bennett, 2023 Graduate

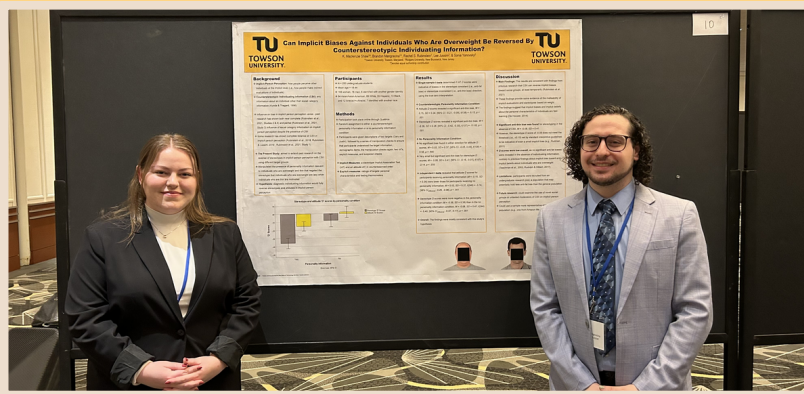
Klein, A., Bennett, S., Weidler, B.J., & McGinley, J.J. (May, 2023). *Heart rate variability is related to emotional responding but not traditional executive function metrics.* Poster presented at the 35th annual convention for the Association for Psychological Science, Washington, D.C.

Student & Alumni Presentations

Sam Bennett, 2023 Graduate:

Eibner, M., Bennett, S., McGinley, J.J., Hicken, L., Weidler, B.J. (November, 2022). *Cognitive Consequences of Auditory Task-Elicited Eye Movements*. Poster presented at the 63rd annual meeting for the Psychonomic Society, Boston, MA.

Bennett, S., McGinley, J.J., Hicken, L., Hilchey, M.D., Weidler, B.J. (November, 2022). *Spatial Auditory Task-Elicited Systematic Eye Movement: Voluntary or Reflexive?* Poster presented at the 63rd annual meeting for the Psychonomic Society, Boston, MA.

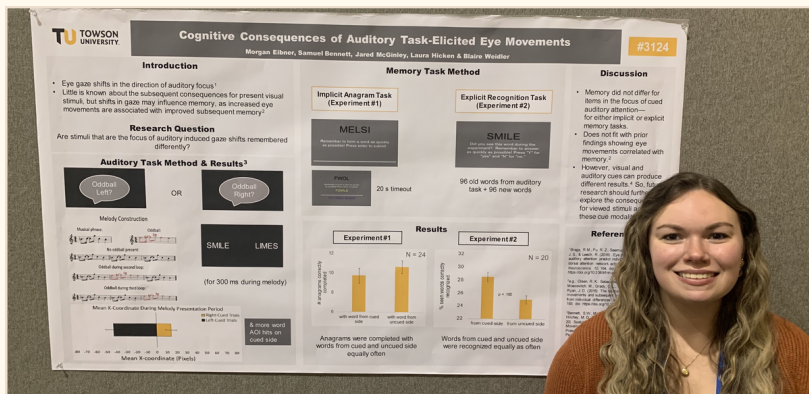
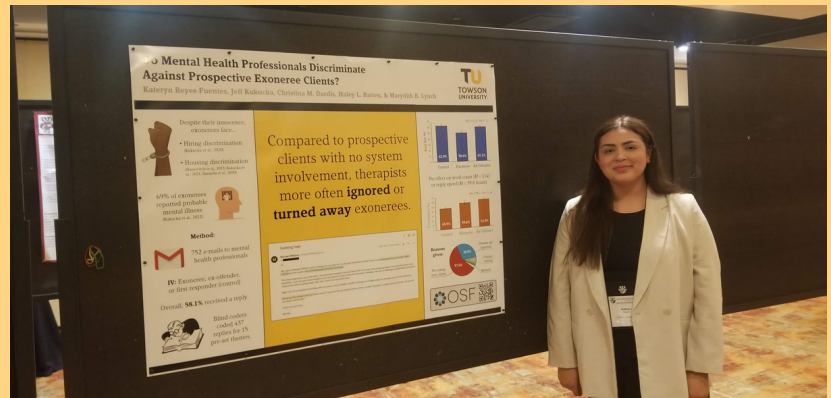


Mackenzie Shaw & Brandon Mangracina, Current Students

Shaw, K. M., Mangracina, B., Rubinstein, R. S., Jussim, L., Yanovsky, S. (March 2023). *Can implicit biases against overweight individuals be reversed by counterstereotypic individuating information?* Poster presented at the Eastern Psychological Association Annual Conference, Boston, MA.

Kateryn Reyes-Fuentes, Current Student

Reyes-Fuentes, K., Kukucka, J., Dardis, C., Batten, H. L., & Lynch, M. B. (2023). *Do mental health professionals discriminate against prospective exonerated clients?* Poster presented at the American Psychology-Law Society Annual Conference, Philadelphia, PA.



Morgan Eibner, Current Student

Eibner, M., Bennett, S., McGinley, J.J., Hicken, L., Weidler, B.J. (November, 2022). *Cognitive Consequences of Auditory Task-Elicited Eye Movements*. Poster presented at the 63rd annual meeting for the Psychonomic Society, Boston, MA.

Student & Alumni Publications

Tiana Cruz, 2012 Graduate

Abebe, I., Wang, Y.-W., O'Connor, S., Cruz, T. E., Keum, B. T., & Sifat, M. (2023). Satisfaction with online/in-person social interactions and psychological well-being: The mediating role of social connectedness. *Current Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-04870-0>



Rosie Shrout, 2013 Graduate

Shrout, M. R., Renna, M. E., Madison, A. A., Malarkey, W.B., & Kiecolt-Glaser, J.K. (2023). Marital negativity's festering wounds: The emotional, immunological, and relational toll of couples' negative communication patterns. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, 149, 105989.



*This publication received an Editor's Choice Distinction for its noteworthy contribution to science

Shrout, M. R., Weigel, D. J., & Laurenceau, J. P. (2023). Couples and concealable chronic illness: Investigating couples' communication, coping, and relational well-being over time. *Journal of Family Psychology*. Advance online publication.



Shrout, M. R., Wilson, S. J., Renna, M. E., Madison, A. A., & Kiecolt-Glaser, J.K. (2023). "We've got this:" Middle-aged and older couples' satisfying relationships and we-talk promote better physiological, relational, and emotional responses to conflict. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 85(2), 154-164.



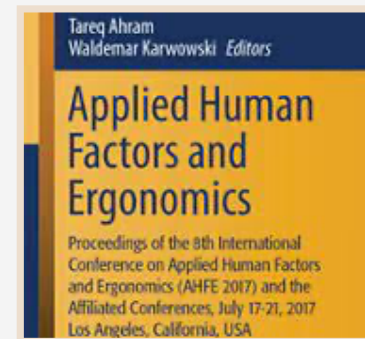
Shrout, M. R., Black, A. E., Wilson, S. J., Renna, M. E., Madison, A. A., Kiecolt-Glaser, J. K., & Reis, H. T. (2023). How aging couples' emotional and physiological associations change across positive, supportive, and conflictual discussions: Roles of capitalization and responsive behaviors. *Biological Psychology*, 177, 108500. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsycho.2023.108500>



Student & Alumni Publications

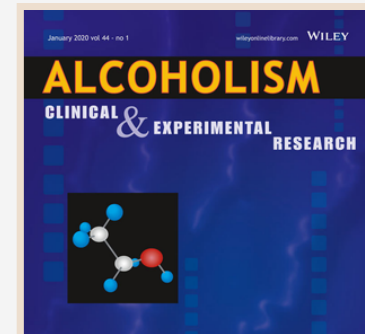
Iliona Scully, 2014 Graduate

Coelho C.J., Garets S.B., Bailey J.D., Frank T.A., Scully I.D., & Cades D.M. *Human factors issues of advanced rider assistance systems*. 14th International Conference on Applied Human Factors and Ergonomics, San Francisco, CA, United States. 2023, July 20-24.



Cherish Ardinger, 2016 Graduate

C. Ardinger, C. C. Lapish, C. L. Czachowski, N. J. Grahame (2022). A Critical Review of Front-loading: A Maladaptive Drinking Pattern Driven by Alcohol's Rewarding Effects. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* (ACER). PMID: 36239713.

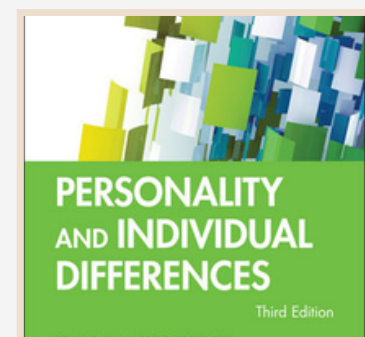


Fernanda Andrade, 2018 Graduate

Andrade, F. C.*, Erwin, S.*, Burnell, K., Jackson, J., Storch, M., Nicholas, J., & Zucker, N. (2023). Intervening on social comparison on social media: An electronic daily diary pilot study. *JMIR Mental Health*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.2196/42024> (*equal contribution)



Andrade, F. C., Hoyle, R. H., & Burnell, K. (2023). Adjusting to the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States: The role of personality and situational factors on the maintenance of everyday behaviors. *Journal of Health Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13591053221144440>



Andrade, F. C., & Hoyle, R. H. (2023). A synthesis and meta-analysis of the relationship between self-control and physical activity, eating, and sleep. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 205, 112095. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2023.112095>



Lexie Mathis, 2023 Graduate

Mathis, L. M. (2023). The Effects of Face Masks on Emotion Interpretation in Socially Anxious Individuals. *Graduate Student Journal of Psychology*, 20. <https://doi.org/10.52214/gsjp.v20i1.10167>



Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Geoff Munro

What are some fun things that people should know about you?

I try to maintain interests outside of my work life in order to stay refreshed at work. These interests include competitions (e.g., basketball, board games, trivia, ping pong), arts and culture (ranging from high-brow stuff like art museums and wine tastings to low-brow stuff like horror movies and rock concerts), and enjoying nature (swimming in the water under a waterfall would have to be included in my "perfect day"). I also enjoy making art (usually paintings using acrylic paint) that is so bad it should probably not be viewed by other humans.

What led you to your field and where you are now in your career?

I was originally a math major in college, but I found myself thinking and talking about content from my PSYC 101 class far more than from my math classes. Thus, I changed my major to psychology. My original interests were in the area of clinical psychology, so I did an internship my senior year. I observed that good clinical psychologists are usually socially skilled and have a lot of empathy, which led me to conclude that clinical psychology was clearly not for me. I was also very interested in social issues and the logic of good research practices, so I applied to graduate programs in experimental and social psychology. I was lucky enough to find a graduate school mentor, Dr. Pete Ditto, who shared my interests in social issues and research methodology. It was also in graduate school where I learned that, despite my crushing fear of public speaking, I enjoyed teaching others about social psychology and the research process. That led me to focus on teaching (while continuing my research program) at two different schools before landing the job at Towson University in 2002.



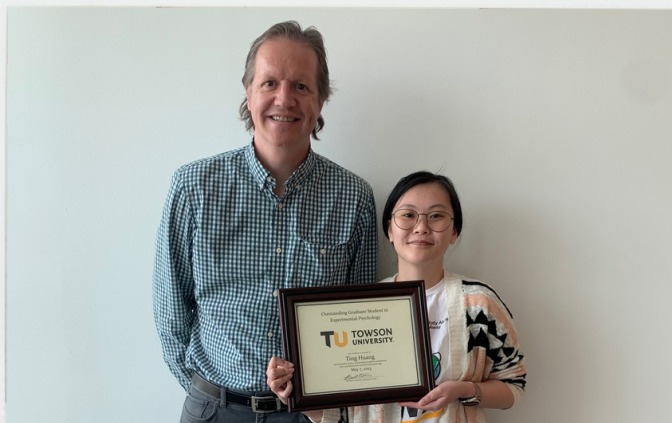
What are you currently researching?

Recently, I have attempted to merge my research program in motivated reasoning (the kind of wishful thinking we engage in when we want to reach a particular conclusion because it will make us feel good) with my appreciation of the Earth's natural beauty. For example, several students and I completed a project on a topic we call "climate privilege." Many who live in the U.S. (and other rich countries) have the privilege of being able to consume a far more than average amount of fossil fuel resources to support our luxurious lifestyles (e.g., air conditioning, travel, etc...). At the same time, we are somewhat more protected from the harsh consequences of climate change than most people in the world. One might hope that these facts would lead people in the U.S. to engage in more climate-friendly actions. In our research, however, we found that when exposed to these facts, many U.S. citizens responded defensively by doing things like downplaying the importance of climate change or justifying the over-consumption of resources in the U.S. Currently, we are conducting another line of research to test whether the experience of awe (e.g., encountering vast natural beauty like space, an ocean, or mountain views) reduces the kind of motivated reasoning biases that were found in the climate privilege research.



How are experimental psychology students involved in your research?

I want experimental psychology students to feel the same passion for research that I felt in graduate school and have continued to feel throughout my career. Thus, I want them to select topics that are interesting to them. At the same time, I can best mentor them within topic areas in which I have some expertise. Thus, we will often work together to find first-year project and thesis ideas that integrate students' interests with my areas of expertise. I also encourage students to assist me with research projects that I conduct with undergraduate students so that they can gain more research experience and have the opportunity to help manage a lab as well.



Any advice for experimental psychology students?

Some people might have a grand plan about what they want to do in their career, so they set goals and work to achieve them along the way towards completing the grand plan. That's definitely not me, and I don't think most people are like that. I basically kept stumbling forward, learning things along the way that nudged me in one direction or another. Now I find myself with a good job that I mostly like that gives me a decent amount of freedom both on the job and outside of the job. I'm not suggesting that planning and setting goals is a bad idea, but, for many people, having the willingness to make a left turn away from the grand plan when opportunities arise and to be flexible about career pursuits as life happens is perfectly acceptable.

Student Spotlight

Brianna Donaldson-Morton

What excites you most in your current program?

I am in the dual-title "Psychology" and "Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies" program. I'm really excited to tap into the WGSS classes, as the topics are very interesting. For example, they offer "Feminist Pedagogy", "Trans of Color Critique" (exploring the intersections of gender diversity and race), and "Queer Ecology" (how our physical landscape is Queer...really interested in this). The classes offered in WGSS are dope. I'm currently in a social vision class, which explores the social aspects of visual perception. It is a fascinating class, and we are constantly generating research ideas that we could explore in the lab. In general, the research is what I'm most excited about! My lab has been amazing; we value and emphasize collaborative work and help each other explore our areas of interest and workshop ideas. It is a great environment to be in.

How did your research and work experiences at Towson launch you into your current PhD program at Penn State?

At TU, I was the GA and then the coordinator for Sexuality and Gender Diversity through the Center for Student Diversity (CSD). I was originally introduced to the advisor I work with now, Dr. Jes Matsick, through a colleague within the CSD. Once I had expressed my interest in Penn State, he had cc'd me on an email introducing me. Jes and I didn't get to communicate much during that time, but she at least knew who I was and remembered my name when the department was reviewing applications.

Coming out of the Experimental Program at TU set me up nicely because I don't need to propose a new master's thesis at PSU, but instead, I can defend my master's from TU. My fellow students who didn't enter the Ph.D. program with a master's must propose and defend a master's by the end of their 2nd year. This moves my timeline up a bit, allows me to do more research without the added pressure of defending a thesis, and gives me more time to work on publishing my master's thesis. The nice thing about being in the Experimental Program is that there is a higher chance of your master's from TU being accepted by the University (if they have a master's requirement and if it fits the program that you're in).





What does a "day in the life" of a PhD student look like?

My day-to-day kind of changes, but for the most part I usually have one class a day except Mondays. I also TA once a week (I lead one of the lab sections for a methods class) . If I'm not in class or teaching, I'm either in meetings or doing research/homework.



Anything else you would like to share?

If anyone is interested in any of PSUs psychology PhDs, I'd be more than happy to assist or provide insight/answer questions!

Student Spotlight

Brianna Donaldson-Morton

What advice do you have for current students?

TU did a great job preparing me for the seminar-style classes we have in the program. Our seminars are discussion heavy and we critically dissect these papers. Push yourself to not just understand the article but understand how that article connects to the other articles you read, your own research, other theories, and its broader impacts. I'm in advanced social psych this semester, and my professor is always pushing us to dig deeper and expand on our thoughts. Take the time to do that now, stay engaged in the discussions you currently have, and push yourself to take that discussion a step further.

Network, talk about your goals and interests as often as you can, and have your "elevator" pitch ready. As a first year, I'm constantly being introduced to faculty, other grad students, administration, etc., and people want to know more about you but these interactions are often really short. Don't be afraid to reach out to a faculty member or grad student that you want to get to know or work with. People love talking about their research and they love the initiative.

If there are graduate associations, join them! I'm a part of two and on the social committee for one of them. It's a great way to meet students in other departments and colleges.





PSI CHI "Pie a Professor" Fundraiser



Congrats Graduates!



TU Research and Creative Inquiry Forum



TU EXPY takes on Italy for a study abroad summer program!



Welcome 1st Years!