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Research opportunities are available in the Psychology Department, the Curry School of Education, and the Medical School. Research assistants (RAs) have the opportunity to work in a variety of psychology labs. As a RA, students learn important skills not easily taught in the classroom, such as learning how to: use technical equipment, interact with participants, code and analyze data, and design experiments. RAs are typically expected to work 10 hours per week.

Doing a RAship is strongly recommended for students who are considering a Distinguished Majors Project. RAships are also valuable experiences for graduate school, medical school, law school, and other professional schools. In the research labs, faculty, post-docs, and graduate students are available to discuss graduate aspirations and to write letters of recommendations.

Procedure for Adding Research

1. Contact the lab where you would like to participate.

2. Add yourself to the permission list for PSYC 3590 under the section for the professor's lab. If the lab director is in a department other than the Psychology Department (e.g., Curry School of Education, Medical School), you should use Prof. Freeman as the instructor.

3. The lab contact person will send a list of approved students to Ms. Dawdy, the Undergraduate Coordinator, who will invite you to add the lab. If you have any questions send email to nrn6ya@virginia.edu.
**Language Processing Lab**  
**Beverly Colwell Adams**

We study spoken and written language processing through syntactic ambiguity. Our current research examines how syntactically and semantically ambiguous sentences are comprehended. American, Dutch, French, and Korean students hear computer-generated speech in American English, Dutch, French, and Korean. We vary the amount of time between linguistic phrases of spoken language. The results will have important implications for instruction and bi-lingual communication. RA duties include 1) reading original research articles, 2) running the study/studies, 3) entering and analyzing data, 4) preparing experimental materials, as well as 5) preparing for conference presentations.

Contact: Prof. Adams <bca5y@virginia.edu>

**Virginia Institute of Development in Adulthood**  
**Joseph Allen**

The VIDA Project is a longitudinal study examining the influence of social relationships, autonomy, and attachment processes on psychosocial development. We are exploring how young adults develop and manage friendships with their peers, and how family relationships influence qualities of these peer relationships. Data is collected on several different areas of adolescence and young adulthood, such as the quality of family relationships, friendships and romantic relationships, peer pressure, school achievement, delinquency, and internalizing behaviors. We use a variety of measurement methods, including self-reports, semi-structured interviews, parent-reports, peer reports, and observations of family and peer interactions.

RA tasks include conducting interviews with participants, data entry and checking, transcribing, and other administrative tasks. We train RAs to use computer programs and the protocol for conducting interviews with participants. RAs who work on the project for multiple semesters have the opportunity to take on higher level responsibilities (such as coding data, scheduling participants, and writing a thesis) and may apply for paid positions.
Selected Publications or Presentations with Undergraduates


Human Dynamics Lab

Steven Boker

Our research explores how people coordinate their movements and facial expressions during conversation. RAs will be involved in all parts of the project including learning to use state of the art com-
puter software that tracks the body movements and facial expressions. We are looking for motivated students interested in the psychology of social interaction as well as the technical aspects of laboratory science in psychology.

The project is in collaboration with researchers at the University of Rochester, University of Zurich, and Max Planck Institute in Berlin, so RAs will also have a chance to meet faculty and graduate students from other institutions. Priority will be given to students who can commit to at least two semesters.

Contact: Prof. Boker, <boker@virginia.edu>

**SIGN COMMUNICATION, AUTISM, AND PSYCHOLINGUISTICS LAB**

**John Bonvillian**

Our laboratory group continues to develop a simplified, manual sign-communication system. The initial focus of this project was to develop a system of communication for mute or severely speech-limited individuals, such as children with autistic disorder, Down syndrome, or cerebral palsy. In more recent years, we have developed a one-handed version of our sign system. The reason for developing a one-handed version is that many persons who have lost their spoken language skills as a result of strokes also have experienced a loss in their ability to use one of their arms and hands.

In current work, we are trying to considerably increase the size of our simplified sign system lexicon. To do this, we need to find or to create manual signs that are easy to form and that resemble their referents. We then test these signs in a memory study to determine whether the signs are accurately produced and recalled by experimental participants. We are undertaking this increase in lexicon size to meet the needs of students who wish to use our simplified signs to facilitate their acquisition of foreign language vocabulary.
items by pairing our signs with foreign language vocabulary items in the learning process. Some knowledge of sign communication is helpful in this research.

Contact: Prof. Bonvillian <jdb5b@virginia.edu>

Recent Publications or Presentations with Undergraduates


Neural Development and Organization Lab

Peter Brunjes

Our lab is involved in probing a number of issues surrounding the organization and development of sensory systems in the brain. Sensory systems are useful models for examining how the brain
works: they often have clear cut circuitry, and it is relatively simple to manipulate the amount and type of information processed by the system. Our work centers around the olfactory system, which offers a number of unique features that make it an excellent model for studying the development and organization of the brain. Most of our recent work centers on studying the basic organizational features of the system, including understanding how odors are encoded in the olfactory cortex, and whether these representations change with olfactory experience.

When first joining the lab, RAs are usually responsible for participating in one aspect of an ongoing project as they are trained in various laboratory techniques. Once proficient, RAs often have the opportunity of developing more independent projects, many of which have become distinguished major projects.

Contact: Prof. Brunjes <brunjes@virginia.edu>

### Emotion and Cognition Lab

**Gerald Clore**

We are primarily interested in studying the effects of emotional experience on cognitive performance and behavior. Some of our research questions are: 1) Do emotions influence how we perceive our environment and ourselves? 2) Do emotions help us remember? 3) Do happy people think differently than sad people?

The small, cohesive atmosphere of our lab group provides opportunities for RAs to become intimately involved in all aspects of the research process. First-semester RAs are mainly responsible for scheduling participants, running experiments, and working with data. With increasing experience, lab members are encouraged to participate in the development of new research designs and the interpretation of results.

Contact: Alex Schiller <schiller@virginia.edu>
Our research focuses on the neural bases of emotional behavior, regulation, and experience, including a particular interest in the social regulation of neural processes underlying emotional responses. These interests integrate a variety of tools and methods, including observational behavior coding to electroencephalography (EEG) to functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI).

RAs are typically involved in a number of activities, including running experiments, entering and analyzing data, and completing literature searches. There tends to be an emphasis on learning about and utilizing psychophysiological methods.

Contact: Karen Hasselmo <keh7g@virginia.edu>
Website: www.affectiveneuroscience.org

Selected Publications or Presentations with Undergraduates


Social Behavior and Decisions Lab

Benjamin Converse

Work in our lab revolves around questions of cooperation and
competition. For example, how do people evaluate their helpers and their rivals? Does the way people think about their rivals affect their style of competition or their motivation to win? What factors influence people’s emotional and behavioral responses to receiving help from others? We are further interested in how the answers to these questions lead to behaviors and decisions that promote or undermine stable social systems.

RAs will have the opportunity to participate in weekly lab meetings and many phases of the research process, including preparing and conducting experiments and surveys, managing study data, and working with the research team to refine experimental procedures. As RAs become more experienced in the lab, there will be opportunities to take a more advanced role in the research process.

Contact: Johanna Cohoon <jlc7tu@virginia.edu>

Memory Processes Lab
Chad Dodson

Our research focuses on memory with an emphasis on the occurrence of false memories, overconfidence in one’s memories and changes in memory across the lifespan. For example, some of our research examines eyewitness memory. We have observed with a typical eyewitness suggestibility paradigm that older adults are much more likely than younger adults to assert confidently that they remember witnessing an event that was only suggested to them. Some of our current projects are examining whether this age-related effect generalizes to more naturalistic eyewitness settings and whether there are variables that can minimize the occurrence of these kinds of high confidence errors.

We are looking for engaging, thoughtful and motivated research assistants. RAs are involved in designing new studies, recruiting participants and entering and analyzing data.

Contact: Alex Werntz <ajw3x@virginia.edu>
Website: faculty.virginia.edu/dodson/
**Child and Family Studies Lab**

**Robert Emery**

Our broad research interests include children, families, family relationships, family conflict, and various psychological processes of special importance to families such as the genetic vs. environmental contributions to development and psychopathology. Special consideration is often given to ways in which research findings are applicable to legal/policy issues. Currently, our research specifically addresses the “marriage benefit,” the physical and mental health advantages associated with being married. This work tackles the basic but essential question of whether marriage actually causes benefits well-documented to be correlated with it (such as less depression, greater longevity, and increased income) or whether these marriage benefits result from nonrandom selection into marriage. We predominantly use the twin design to pursue a variety of specific questions related to the marriage benefit.

RA duties include conducting literature searches, data entry and checking, facilitating studies, and other administrative tasks.

Contact: Bailey Ocker <blo9n@virginia.edu>

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**Visual Development and Plasticity Lab**

**Alev Erisir**

Postnatal development of the brain is characterized by a plastic stage during which abnormal sensory stimulation can lead to life-long changes in the organization of visual cortex. Our lab aims to understand the biological mechanisms that enable this plasticity. What makes some young neurons lose their ability to respond to alterations in the sensory environment at the end of a critical period? What are the mechanisms by which the critical period of developmental plasticity is initiated, and terminated? Is there a change in the neurotransmitter receptor function in the visual cortex that can signal the onset or the offset of this period? Using anatomical techniques including
immuno-electron microscopy, tract-tracing and confocal microscopy, we aim to reveal the changes that occur in visual system connectivity and glutamate receptor localization during and after the critical period of visual plasticity.

Upon joining the lab, RAs are assigned to an ongoing project. At the initial stages of the training, RAs learn tissue preparation techniques, light and electron microscope use and digital image analysis. Typically after several months of active contribution, RAs start formulating a project that they may use as their distinguished major thesis. Attending our regular lab meetings is also recommended. At least two semesters of commitment is required.

Contact: Prof. Erisir <erisir@virginia.edu>

**Selected Publications or Presentations with Undergraduates**


**Child Language and Learning Lab**

**Vikram Jaswal**

Our research focuses on how children (between 1 and 5 years of age) learn about the world, and how learning language changes how
they think and reason about objects, events, and people.

RAs assist with everything from the design of the studies to the gathering of materials to the collection of data and data analysis. Because RAs interact with children and their parents, it is crucial that you enjoy being around young children. Students interested in cognitive development or cognitive science are encouraged to apply. A year-long commitment is required.

Contact: Robyn Kondrad <rlk4s@virginia.edu>
Website: faculty.virginia.edu/childlearninglab

Selected Publications or Presentations with Undergraduates


Auditory/Music Perception Lab

Michael Kubovy

We are interested in how the brain organizes visual and auditory information. We are currently working on several projects including: 1) Segmentation of auditory patterns; 2) Auditory and visual cross-modal interactions in perception; 3) Figure-ground segregation; and 4) Rhythm perception of syncopated patterns.

Research Assistants usually work closely with a graduate student, and their duties mainly include preparing experimental materials, conducting experiments, and assisting in data analysis. RAs must
be responsible and have organizational skills. Background in music is a plus, but not required. There are also opportunities for advanced RAs to develop their own projects.

Contact: Minhong Yu <minhongyu@gmail.com> or Laura Getz <lmg5ep@virginia.edu>
Website: faculty.virginia.edu/kubovylab/

Selected Publications or Presentations with Undergraduates


Early Development Lab
Angeline Lillard

Our lab is interested in how children interact with pretend, fantasy, imagination and media and how this interaction influences their cognitive and social development. Student research assistants help recruit participants, test children in the lab, help with coding and data entry. Students will work closely with one or two graduate students on their current research projects. Applicants should have some experience working with children. The Early Development Lab is located near North Grounds on Millmont Street.

Contact: Rebecca Dore <rebeccadore@virginia.edu>
Website: faculty.virginia.edu/ASLillard/home.html

Selected Publications or Presentations with Undergraduates


**Social Neuroscience Lab**  
*James Morris*

Our lab focuses on the neural bases of normal and social function using a multimodal approach. By using such techniques as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), electroencephalography (EEG), scalp-recorded event-related potentials (ERP), and eye-tracking, we seek to understand how social behavior and brain processes interact. Past studies have focused on pretend play in adults, face recognition for in-group and out-group members, imitation, and self-transcendence.

Undergraduate RAs play an integral role in the lab. Duties include running subjects, data collection and analysis, stimuli creation as well as the opportunity to work alongside graduate students and create original research ideas. Experience with programming is preferred.

Contact: Brandon Ng <bwn7zb@virginia.edu>  
Website: uvasocialneuroscience.com/Home.html

**Implicit Social Cognition Lab**  
*Brian Nosek*

We are examining how conscious or non-conscious aspects of people’s attitudes can influence judgments and behavior. Although attitudes include aspects that they can report, we are particularly interested in the influence of automatic, non-conscious attitudes, especially when they differ from the attitudes people can directly report.

RAs are involved in running experiments, entering and analyzing data, and helping create new studies. Other duties might include data entry, literature searches, article reviews, and study design. Interested students can also assist in programming computer stud-
ies related to behavioral research. RAs attend lab meetings with faculty and graduate students to gain research experience and expertise.

Contact: Jordan Axt <jra3ee@virginia.edu>
Website: www.briannosek.com/labgroup

**Selected Publications or Presentations with Undergraduates**


**Culture and Well-Being Lab**

Shigehiro Oishi

We are conducting experiments on the following projects: 1) Misunderstanding and understanding in interpersonal perception; 2) Cultural differences in happiness; 3) Residential mobility and its relation to prosocial behavior and consumer behavior; and 4) Physiological measures of well-being.

RA responsibilities include preparing experimental materials, conducting experiments, entering data, coding, and data acquisition. Applicants must be responsible and motivated about doing psychological research.

Contact: Thomas Talhelm <tat8dc@virginia.edu>
Website: people.virginia.edu/~so5x/index.htm

**Selected Undergraduate Presentations and Publications**


Shared Understanding and Social Identity Lab
Shigehiro Oishi

Our research examines how interpersonal interactions and the beliefs we attribute to others, shape our beliefs, feelings and actions—particularly those beliefs relevant to stereotyping and prejudice.

RA responsibilities include conducting experiments, preparing and organizing research materials, recruiting participants, entering data, coding videotaped interaction and/or written materials, and participating in lab meetings.

Contact: Ashley McCormack <amm4ac@virginia.edu>

Sexual Orientation, Human Development, and Family Lives
Charlotte J. Patterson

Our research focuses on issues related to sexual orientation, human development, and family lives. How does sexual orientation influence family formation and family lives? How is this affected by the legal and public policy climates in which children, youth, and families live? These are some questions under study in our group.

Several studies are underway now. In one current project, we are working to compile data about community-level factors that might influence the experiences of lesbian and gay individuals and their families. We use zip codes to match this dataset to data from many other studies and examine the associations between factors such as political climate, number of households headed by same-sex couples, and number of LGBT organizations, on one hand, with psychological outcomes, on the other.

In another current study, we are working with a large sample of English-speaking gay fathers from the United States and abroad. This research is intended to examine modes of family formation among gay men of different ages, experiences of fathering among gay men, and modes of family functioning among gay father families. In addition, we have collected information from a subsample of these gay fathers’ adult children to try to understand their experiences as children of gay parents.
Research assistants usually work closely with a graduate student, and their duties may include reading original research studies, preparing materials for new studies, transcribing and coding data, and assisting in data analysis. There are also opportunities for advanced RAs to develop their own projects.

Contact: Samantha Tornello <slt6a@virginia.edu>
Website: http://people.virginia.edu/~cjp/application.html

Selected Publications or Presentations with Undergraduates


**Perception Lab**  
**Dennis Proffitt**

Our research involves visual perception of the spatial layout and the environment. What people consistently see is not what is really out there. We conduct this research both in our labs and outside, on various hills and flat stretches on UVA grounds. We investigate how the perception of space can be affected by the internal states of the body. We are interested in topics such as: 1) How effort/energetics can affect how long distances appear, and how steep hills look, 2) How social and emotional factors influence perception and cognition, 3) How we scale distances and sizes of objects to our body, and 4) How the environment affects individuals’ well-being.

We seek fun, motivated RAs to help with various research projects. RAs attend weekly lab meetings, do data entry and analysis, and run experiments that could require the operation of virtual reality equipment, projection screens, and devices that measure physiological potential. Experiments are performed in rooms within Gilmer Hall as well as in outdoor fields around grounds.

Contact: Rebecca Weast <raw5dy@virginia.edu>
Website: faculty.virginia.edu/perlab

**Selected Publications or Presentations with Undergraduates**


**PROJECT DATE**

**N. Dickon Reppucci**

Project DATE is a research project examining the quality of romantic relationships among adolescents in our community. Specifically, this project is intended to provide local information about (a) the frequency of teen dating violence and victimization among at-risk adolescents in our community, (b) the risk factors related to experiencing relationship violence, and (c) the protective factors which predict positive relationship outcomes. This study is currently concluding its second wave of data collection, therefore RA duties will primarily include: entering and coding data, performing basic data cleaning, reviewing and summarizing articles relevant to the study, and tracking adolescents enrolled in the study for future possible data collection. Preference will be given to students who can register for 3 credit hours, and who have taken or are currently taking PSYC 3460. An interview, unofficial transcript and résumé are required.

Contact: Alison Nagel <agn3f@virginia.edu>

**Adolescent Sexuality and the Law Project**

**N. Dickon Reppucci**

The project on Adolescent Sexuality and the Law focuses on a) factors that influence adolescent sexual-decision making and b) adolescents’ and adults’ knowledge and perceptions of statutory rape and age of consent laws in their state. We hope for this project to shed light on individual and family-level processes that promote healthy sexual relationships and/or prevent unhealthy ones. Additionally, this project seeks to determine who adolescents consult about sexual-decisions and the impact of these discussions on their sexual behaviors. RAs duties will include: entering and coding data, reviewing and summarizing articles relevant to the study, and possibly assisting with data collection in community settings. Preference will be given to students who can register for 3 credit hours and who
have taken or are currently taking PSYC 3460. An interview, unofficial transcript and résumé are required.

Contact: Alison Nagel <agn3f@virginia.edu>

**Police Interrogation Project**

**N. Dickon Reppucci**

The goal of the project is to assess community member’s perceptions of issues related to police interrogation of juveniles. Specifically, we are attempting to gain a better understanding of what factors impact people’s perceptions of adolescent competencies within an interrogation context. RAs duties will include: entering and coding data, reviewing and summarizing articles relevant to the study, and possibly assisting with online data collection management.

Preference will be given to students who can register for 3 credit hours and who have taken PSYC 3460. An interview, unofficial transcript and résumé are required.

Contact: Todd Warner <tcw9fr@virginia.edu>

**Cognitive Aging Lab**

**Timothy Salthouse**

We study aging of cognitive functioning by administering a wide variety of cognitive tasks to participants ranging in age from 18-90+. The tasks assess different types of cognitive abilities, such as memory and spatial abilities. Among the questions that we are interested in are: 1) Which aspects of cognitive functioning are affected by aging? 2) When does age-related cognitive change begin? And 3) what factors affect the rate of cognitive aging?

Research assistants are primarily responsible for administering tests to participants in the project as well as scheduling appointments, scoring tests, and entering and checking data. Prospective RAs should have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher, be mature and responsible, and have an interest in interacting with diverse populations from the community. Because the laboratory is located behind Barracks Road Shopping Center, reliable transportation is needed.
Research assistants can work for either credit or pay, and there are opportunities to work full-time for pay during the summer. 
Contact: <CognitiveAgingLab@virginia.edu>
Website: www.mentalaging.com

Psychometric Lab
Karen Schmidt

Our research involves item response theory (IRT) measurement and focus on methodology to enhance construct validity and measuring individual differences. Current and ongoing projects include objective measurement of personality and individual experiences of pain, faking good detection in personality inventory responses, self-efficacy, reasoning and spatial visualization, AIDS knowledge, and international learning experiences in varying age groups.

RAs gain experience in all aspects of the research process, including learning sophisticated statistical and measurement procedures such as multiple regression, item response theory modeling, and structural equation modeling. RAs learn how to search and summarize research articles, create Web design of surveys, doing Web-based data collection, conducting SPSS data analysis (including data coding, transformation, IRT analysis, and graphing), and creating reports and presentations. Reliable, independent, and creative assistance is strongly considered for co-authorship. Interested students should have completed PSYC 3005, and preferably PSYC 3006.
Contact: Prof. Schmidt <kschmidt@virginia.edu>
Selected Publications or Presentations with Undergraduates


We study how people reason and make decisions. These processes have important consequences in everyday life, and we keep an eye towards how they can inform the legal system. Questions we research include: How do people decide who or what caused a bad outcome? Do judges think differently than jurors? What kind of evidence is particularly influential? When do people purely follow the law, and when are they influenced by their own beliefs and morality? Do any of these processes work differently in other cultures?

This small, fun lab seeks dedicated, enthusiastic students. RA duties include gathering materials, running experiments, entering and analyzing data, helping create new studies, and adapting to and managing research issues as they emerge. RAs are expected to attend weekly lab meetings and give a 20-30 minute presentation at one of them. Senior RAs may be given the opportunity to design and run their own studies.

Website: people.virginia.edu/~ert8f/SpellmanLabHome.html

Selected Publications or Presentations with Undergraduates

Sparkman, E. ’12, Gilbert, E. A. (2011). University of Virginia Double Hoo Research Award ($5,000 award to study cultural differences and the hindsight bias).


Program for Anxiety, Cognition, and Treatment

Bethany Teachman

Our lab studies cognitive processes that contribute to the development and maintenance of psychopathology, with a particular interest in anxiety disorders. We evaluate cognitive processing, including biases in attention, interpretation, and memory that cause harm in anxiety as well as other forms of mental illness. We are especially interested in automatic cognitive processing and in understanding how thoughts that occur outside of our control or awareness contribute to emotional dysregulation.

We are looking for RAs interested in working on studies of cognition and psychopathology. RAs help with recruiting and running subjects and attend weekly lab meetings to gain general experience with conducting research. There are also opportunities for advanced RAs to later develop their own projects.

Contact: Alexandra Werntz <ajw3x@virginia.edu>
Website: www.teachman.org

Selected Publications or Presentations with Undergraduates


fear. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, Orlando, FL.


**Auditory Perception Lab**

**Ching-Ling Teng**

Our lab is interested in how experiences, especially early period of postnatal experiences shape sensory processing, and how they, when changes are made, affect perception and behavior. We use multi-/single-unit electrode recording techniques to map auditory neurons responses in vivo. Combining with computational models and psychophysics, we ask questions about how these enriched or deprived experiences could functionally alter a subject's perception and behavior.

A commitment of one year of RA experience is desired. The first semester will involve literature reviews, computer simulations, setting up experiments and administrative tasks. The second semester will involve data acquisition and analysis. Students who apply must have strong quantitative background. Current project involves training rats to distinguish speech sounds and to investigate neocortical pro-
cesses underlying categorical perception.

Contact: Prof. Teng <teng@virgina.edu>

**Selected Publications or Presentations with Undergraduates**


**SOCIAL COGNITION AND BEHAVIOR LAB**

**Sophie Trawalter**

In our lab, we study phenomena related to diversity. We are especially interested in how individuals develop competencies for life in diverse spaces. Some current lines of research examine 1) stress and coping responses to interracial contact, 2) prejudice detection, and 3) the social ecology of privilege. The goal of our research is to find ways to improve intergroup contact and intergroup relations so that all members of society may attain positive life outcomes.

We are looking for student research assistants who can help with: collecting data (e.g., running studies in the lab, distributing surveys, coding nonverbal data), conducting literature searches, and entering data.

Contact: Prof. Sophie Trawalter <strawalter@virginia.edu>

**PERSONALITY AND GENETICS LAB**

**Eric Turkheimer**

Our research interests are divided into two main areas of study: behavioral genetics and personality assessment. From a behavioral genetics standpoint, we attempt to understand and predict adolescent externalizing behaviors such as risk-taking and substance abuse using genetically informed designs and sophisticated statistical models. Our interest in personality assessment drives us to explore new methods of personality disorder measurement and classification using both self- and peer-report.
RAs will have the opportunity to gain valuable research experience. Their integration into the lab consists of working alongside graduate students and faculty on ongoing projects as well as new research ideas that may develop. Typical RA duties include data entry and analysis, literature searches, and information gathering. While not mandatory, strong quantitative skills are recommended.

Contact: Bailey Ocker <blo9n@virginia.edu>

**Behavioral Neuroscience Lab**

**Cedric Williams**

Our research is designed to understand how hormonal changes in the body and the physiological changes they produce following exposure to meaningful or emotionally arousing events, influences neural circuits in the brain to encode these experiences into memory more effectively. These types of questions are approached with the use of a battery of behavioral learning tasks, immunocytochemistry as well as in vivo microdialysis to identify the types of chemical transmitters that are released in the brain to affect memory storage. The combined approaches are expected to reveal the functional relevance of anatomical and chemical interactions that take place in the brain during the memory formation process. An understanding of how meaningful or arousing events influence neural activity in specific anatomical regions will provide a model of how the brain transforms representations of everyday experiences into permanent memories.

Contact: Prof. Williams <clw3b@virginia.edu>
Website: www.virginia.edu/psychology/people/detail.php?id=174

**Early Steps Lab**

**Melvin Wilson**

The Early Steps Project is a multisite, longitudinal, treatment-control study of 731 ethnically-diverse families from urban (Pittsburgh, PA), suburban (Eugene, OR), and rural (Charlottesville, VA) sites. Families were recruited from WIC offices when children were 2 years old. As children are now enrolled in elementary school, the aims of the current project include: 1) refining an intervention model aimed
at supporting parenting skills to address children’s adaptation to school and development of self-regulatory skills, 2) examining the consistency of developmental models of problem behavior, emotional adjustment, and normative self-regulation in childhood in a large sample of diverse and potentially at-risk children, and 3) examining risk markers, such as children’s problem behavior and lack of school readiness, to evaluate the long-term impact of intervention on pathways to later drug abuse and other risky behaviors.

Eligible students should: have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.00, be psychology major or intend to be psychology major, completed 9 hours of psychology courses (ideally completed PSYC 3005/3006), be 2nd or 3rd year (4th year students sometimes considered), and pay for a $20 criminal background check (required for all staff)

Students must be available at least two days a week between 1 PM–8 PM, and being available on Saturdays is also desirable because RAs are involved in data collection in participants’ homes. RAs must feel comfortable working with young children and to working with a very diverse population. We encourage students to consider working with us for at least 2 consecutive years. Fluent Spanish speakers also are encouraged to apply.

RAs support project staff in data collection by baby sitting siblings or filming assessments in participants’ homes, conducting standardized neighborhood observations, and accompanying staff when they go to schools and aftercare settings to do live coding of children’s behavior, as well as lab-based tasks such as preparing materials for assessments, data entry, phone interviews with parents and children, filing, and other similar lab support tasks.

Contact: Leilani Brower <lrb6z@virginia.edu>

Social Psychology Lab
Timothy Wilson

Our lab invites motivated, sharp, and sociable undergraduates to help us prepare and run studies that explore people’s emotions and thoughts. We study people’s knowledge about their own feelings, behaviors, abilities and personalities. Our research focus is on emo-
tional reaction to different events in life, and an individual's ability to predict his or her own reaction.

RAs are involved in all parts of the research process. Their main responsibility is to run social psychology studies, process and analyze the results, and see how the results fit social psychology theories. There are also lab meetings where research issues are discussed.

Contact: Casey Eggleston <cm5hv@virginia.edu>
Website: people.virginia.edu/~tdw/
**Virginia Youth Violence Project**  
**Dewey Cornell**

We are engaged in projects designed to help schools reduce bullying and improve school climate and safety. We have also developed student threat assessment as an alternative to zero tolerance suspension. One of our ongoing projects involves helping 35 local schools measure the nature and extent of bullying in elementary, middle, and high schools. We also have a statewide project to measure what kinds of school programs are effective in reducing bullying and improving school safety conditions in Virginia. Finally, we are working on a national project to develop standard measures of school safety and the characteristics of a positive school climate.

Undergraduate RAs have opportunities to help analyze survey data on bullying and school climate and to develop research presentations and papers. We also need help maintaining and expanding a website and Facebook page as a resource to schools and researchers. An advanced student could identify a project using one of our databases. Experience with SPSS, Excel, and PowerPoint is desirable. Enthusiasm, conscientiousness, reliability, and attention to detail are essential. We have a weekly meeting at 9 am on Mondays.

Contact: Prof. Cornell <dcornell@virginia.edu>  
Website: youthviolence.edschool.virginia.edu

**Efficacy of After-School Program**  
**David Grissmer**

The project uses a random lottery before kindergarten entrance to experimentally evaluate the WINGS for Kids after school social emotional learning (SEL) program. This study will use multiple methods (child assessments, qualitative family interviews, teacher and WINGS leader surveys, and observations) to understand whether high-risk students who are enrolled in WINGS have stronger outcomes than similar students who are not in WINGS. We will track three kindergarten entry cohorts that will receive from one to three year of WINGS participation by project end, for an estimated 300 total participants from 4 schools in treatment and control groups.

Contact: David Grissmer, Phd <dwg7u@virginia.edu>
**National Center for Research on Early Childhood Education**

**Bridget Hamre**

We are seeking students who are interested in being involved in a large educational research project. One team of students will be responsible for coding classroom video using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System. A second team of students will work on data from child assessments and classroom observations. Scheduled hours are flexible and opportunities for work over breaks and summer exist.

Contact: Tess Krovetz <tbk6d@virginia.edu>
Website: www.ncrece.org

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**Effective Classroom Interactions**

**Bridget Hamre**

The ECI research project at the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) is an educational research project testing an online teacher professional development intervention. RAs will be assisting with coding of classroom teacher-child interactions. RAs may also be asked to help in other aspects of the project including data transcriptions, cleaning and entry. Training will be provided. Preference will be given to students who are interested in working for credit the entire year. Scheduled hours are flexible and opportunities for work over breaks and summer may be available.

Contact: Brittany Kerr <bnk5d@virginia.edu>
Website: curry.virginia.edu/research/centers/castl

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**Autism Studies Laboratory**

**Jane Hilton**

Our current research interest is on the effectiveness of various popular intervention approaches for teaching young children with this diagnosis communication skills. We are examining specific communication skill sets to determine if a particular treatment approach facilitates these skills more than other approaches.
Additional ongoing research involves the use of gestures by young children. All typically developing children use gestures prior to using spoken words for communication. Gesture use in children diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder has also been examined and found to differ from gestures used by typically developing children. Ongoing research is looking at early gesture use in young children with autism and determining if any changes are noted following intervention during a 6-week communication program. We are located in the new Sheila C. Johnson Clinic in Bavaro Hall.

Contact: Prof. Hilton <jch7b@virginia.edu> or call at 924-4625.

CHILD LANGUAGE DISORDERS LABORATORY
LaVae Hoffman

Specific Language Impairment (SLI) is a communication disorder characterized by a failure to develop age appropriate language abilities despite normal hearing and vision, normal nonverbal intelligence, nurturing and interactive child care in a monolingual environment, normal gross neurological functioning and the absence of significant emotional or behavioral disturbance. Approximately 7% of school-age children meet the diagnostic criteria for SLI, and these children often struggle in school settings because of difficulty learning to read and establishing satisfactory peer relationships. The Child Language Disorder Lab is interested in the information processing abilities of school age children who have this difficulty, the efficacy of language interventions, and how we can improve their academic experiences to lead to greater success in their lives.

Current studies revolve around the assessment of narrative language abilities in children who have SLI, as well as typically developing children; exploratory analysis of clinical profiles of children who have good treatment outcomes following intensive language intervention; and analysis of parental engagement with school age children. RAs work closely with graduate students. Students must be available at least 2 mornings or afternoons a week. A weekly laboratory meeting will be scheduled.

Contact: Prof. Hoffman <lmh3f@virginia.edu>
MyTeachingPartner – Math/Science Research
Carolyn R. Kilday

MyTeachingPartner—Mathematics/Science offers innovative curricula and embedded on-line teacher supports aimed at supporting school readiness for at-risk pre-kindergarten students. We are currently collecting data from a small pilot project and preparing for a large efficacy trial. RAs would attend weekly meetings and could be involved in coding and analysis of data, reviewing the literature, writing reports, and developing presentations. Experience with SPSS, Excel, and Microsoft Word/PowerPoint is desirable. Excellent organizational, communication, and collaboration skills are essential. Help support this research to empower both teachers and their students as they become confident mathematicians and scientists.

Contact: Mable Kinzie <kinzie@virginia.edu>
Website: www.mtpmathscience.net/

Young Women Leaders Program
Edith Lawrence and Nancy Deutsch

Young Women Leaders Program (YWLP) is a psycho-educational mentoring program that empowers at-risk middle school girls to be leaders by combining the benefits of one-on-one mentoring with targeted group activities. YWLP is currently investigating the processes that contribute to the program’s success in promoting healthy growth in girls and expanding part of its curriculum focused on building connections with girls internationally. We have an ongoing study of both the middle school girl participants and the college women mentors including ongoing survey data and archived interview and observational data.

RA responsibilities include the following tasks: 1) Working with survey data from girls, parents, and college women (coding, entering, checking, running statistical analyses, and organizing project files), 2) Working with interview and observational data from girls and college women (coding qualitative data) 3) Researching topics related to the project through literature reviews, 4) Attending weekly lab meetings, and 5) Helping team members prepare presentations and papers. Additional research hours may be available for assisting.
Augmentative and Alternative Communication
Filip Loncke

We focus on processes that are involved when individuals communicate through non-standard modalities. We are running two major projects: (1) the development and field-testing of communication boards as an assessment tool for individuals without functional speech. Through picture-and-word communication boards, basic skills such as picture preference, choice making, categorization, memory, combinatorial awareness, and literacy are measured. The boards are being field tested in five countries (and three languages). We analyze and process the feedback from clinicians and educators, and measure validity and reliability of the instrument; (2) the use of graphic symbols by individuals with low literacy skills to navigate
through websites. Do graphic symbols (pictures) make things easier to understand? Our data suggest that the answer to that question is not always so clear. We are running a number of simulation studies that address polysemy of graphic symbols as well as strategies used by individuals to interpret them.

Contact: Prof. Loncke <filip.loncke@virginia.edu>

Selected Publications or Presentations with Undergraduates


National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning

Robert Pianta & Bridget Hamre

The NCQTL project is located within the Curry School of Education’s Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) and is currently partnering with numerous early childhood research labs nationally to develop and pilot professional development supports for early childhood education professionals in Head Start. Primary RA responsibilities will include researching media exemplars of early childhood teaching practices, assisting with course material preparation, transcribing pilot study interviews, as well as helping with other research tasks.

Contact: Wanda Weaver <wlw6n@virginia.edu>
Website: curry.virginia.edu/research/centers/castl/project/NCQTL

4Rs

Robert Pianta, Bridget Hamre, & Jason Downer

We are involved in research initiatives designed to develop and study professional development supports for early childhood education professionals. Students interested in the projects will be responsible for coding classroom video using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) as well as other coding systems to study student and teacher interactions.

Contact: Kyle Bourassa <kjb5x@virginia.edu>
Website: curry.virginia.edu/research/centers/castl
Mathematics Tutoring for Struggling Students
Sarah R. Powell

In a typical elementary classroom, a subset of students struggle with mathematics skills such as counting, addition, and subtraction. In this project, we provide individual tutoring to second- and third-grade students who struggle with mathematics.

RAs act as tutors in elementary schools in the Charlottesville area. Tutors teach students specific counting strategies for solving addition and subtraction problems and provide instruction on the meaning of mathematics symbols. Tutors follow tutoring protocols prepared by the research team, so tutors do not create their own lessons. Tutors do not need to have teaching experience, but tutors should enjoy working with young students. Tutoring takes place during elementary school hours.

In addition to tutoring, RAs conduct pre- and posttesting in whole-class and individual settings. RAs must have a car to drive to schools in the Charlottesville area. (Mileage is reimbursed at the federal rate.) RAs receive all necessary testing and tutoring training from the research team. RAs also help with test grading and data entry upon completion of tutoring.

Contact: Sarah Powell <srpowell@virginia.edu>

Youth-Nex: Program Evaluation and Community Consultation
Maryfrances Porter

This branch of Youth-Nex, the UVA Center to Promote Effective Youth Development, uses science to directly advance evidence-based and data-driven programming for youth in Virginia localities and the State of Virginia. Building on the existing community strengths, we rigorously test effectiveness of programming, initiatives, and policies to improve implementation and create sustainable change, as well as provide reliable information on youth topics.

At any time we have several projects underway with local and state partners. Projects often include: the development and implementation of needs assessments (i.e., data collection with residents
and/or service providers), data collection/entry regarding the impact of youth programs, conducting of qualitative interviews or focus groups/transcription/data entry, data collection regarding the efficacy of program implementation, white paper/brief development (synthesis of research on specific topics written for lay readers).

Research assistants may work at Ruffner Hall, collect data directly from people in the community, and/or may complete some or all work within a local agency. Second, third, and fourth year students are welcome to apply; cumulative GPA must be at least 3.0; previous community or volunteer work strongly preferred; previous research experience strongly preferred. Students must submit an unofficial transcript and resume. Students who are fluent in Spanish are encouraged to apply, as well as students from diverse backgrounds.

Contact: Maryfrances Porter, PhD <mporter@virginia.edu>

**Social Development Lab**

*Sara Rimm-Kaufman*

We are conducting a series of studies on elementary classroom environments and the extent to which they contribute to children’s self-control, social skills, and achievement. For example, one large scale, experimental study involves 24 inner city schools. Specifically, we are examining the effectiveness of an intervention called the Responsive Classroom (RC) Approach. The RC Approach offers teachers a set of principles and practices to build their capacity to manage behavior and teach in the classroom.

RAs observe and code videotapes of elementary school classrooms in order to better understand classroom social processes, especially during mathematics instruction. RAs have an opportunity to learn a lot about elementary school classrooms. In addition to observing classrooms, we need help with data entry, basic descriptive data analysis, and other miscellaneous tasks. RAs must be clear-thinking, responsible, reliable and detail-oriented. Further, we require at least a one year commitment to the lab.

Contact: Julia Thomas <jbt4u@virginia.edu>
Websites: www.socialdevelopmentlab.org,
www.responsiveclassroom.org
Preschool Relationship Enhancement
Catherine Sanger

The Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning is seeking students who are interested in being involved in an educational research project testing an intervention focused on teacher-child relationships. RAs will be asked to help in many aspects of the project such as: scoring assessments, entering data, cleaning data, coding videos, and preparing materials for participants. Preference will be given to students who are interested in working for credit the entire year. Scheduled hours are flexible and opportunities for work over breaks and summer exist.

Contact Catherine Sanger <ces2jg@virginia.edu>
Website: www.uvaprep.com

Continuum of Positive Behavior Support
Martha Snell and Tina Stanton-Chapman

The major goal of our project is to develop and test a comprehensive social competence intervention referred to as a Continuum of Positive Behavior Supports (CPBS) in Head Start (HS) classrooms. The project will develop: a) an implementation manual with step-by-step guidelines and fidelity of intervention checklists; b) a manual to guide inservice training and staff training materials (e.g., videotaped examples, role play activities, consultation guidelines); c) classroom materials (e.g., social skill lesson plans and toys); and d) reliable measures sensitive to intervention effects on staff and children which can be used in further research.

The CPBS includes two levels a) universal strategies used with all children in a classroom including class-wide positive behavior support (PBS) methods to teach social competence and prevent and respond to problem behavior and b) individualized interventions involving assessment-based individualized PBS plans implemented only with children who require more intensive methods to reduce problem behavior and build social skills.

RAs will be involved in data management activities for a survey and follow-up interviews with HS personnel. The survey and inter-
views are designed to identify attitudes, beliefs, current practices and challenges in regard to teaching social skills and discipline. Students will assist with survey data input and transcription and coding of interview tapes.

Contact: Prof. Voorhees <mmv5r@virginia.edu> or Sarah Hadden <dsh5gn@virginia.edu>

**PeerTalk Lab**  
**Tina Stanton-Chapman**

Our project focuses on developing effective interventions for children with language delays and problem behavior in Head Start settings. The interventions use storybooks and thematic toys to teach children the following skills: initiations, turn-taking, sharing, and obtaining a peer's attention.

RA duties include transcribing intervention session tapes, scoring of standardized assessments, completing treatment fidelity checklists and social validation measures, and observational coding.

Contact: Kristen Jamison <kjamison@virginia.edu>

**Exercise Psychology Lab**  
**Diane Whaley**

The purpose of this project is to decrease obesity through increasing activity in area youth (Charlottesville and Albemarle County) involved in programs at the Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA. We propose that significant adults (B&G and Y staff) are well equipped to influence the behaviors of youth through their positive interactions, feedback, and support of fun activities. A critical part of the program is measuring actual physical activity behavior in youth, as well as the staff behaviors that prompt that activity. Research assistants will be trained to use an observational tool (the SoFit measure) and observe actual programs at a variety of locations around the area. Observers will work in groups of two.

Contact: Prof. Whaley <dwhaley@virginia.edu>
The Study of Adolescent Girls
Joanna Lee Williams

The Study of Adolescent Girls (SoAG) is a randomized evaluation of a mentoring program for middle school girls in Charlottesville and Albemarle County. RA’s will be trained to conduct community-based interviews with middle school girls and their families. Access to a car is required as interviews take place in Charlottesville & Albemarle. RAs will also attend weekly or bi-monthly meetings and may be involved in data entry. Students must be available to complete 2-3 one-hour interviews per week.

Contact: Prof. Williams <jlwilliams@virginia.edu>

Preschool Relationship Enhancement Project
Amanda Williford

The Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning is seeking students who are interested in being involved in an educational research project testing an intervention focused on teacher-child relationships. RAs will be asked to help in many aspects of the project such as: scoring assessments, entering data, cleaning data, coding videos, and preparing materials for participants. Preference will be given to students who are interested in working for credit the entire year. Scheduled hours are flexible and opportunities for work over breaks and summer exist.

Website: www.uvaprep.com
Our laboratory investigates how best to assess and quantify risky driving of all types, and the possibilities for improving driving performance through the development of both behavioral and medical interventions. Specifically, our current projects include: 1) How diabetic hypoglycemia impairs driving and whether Diabetes.Driving.com, an interactive behavioral intervention, can reduce hypoglycemia-related risk of driving mishaps; 2) Whether Virtual Reality Driving Simulation training can help rehabilitate individuals recovering from a traumatic brain injury; 3) How long-acting methylphenidate impacts driving performance of young adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD); 4) Whether preparatory Virtual Reality Driving Simulation Training of novice drivers with Autism Spectrum Disorder will improve on-road driver performance; 5) How frequently Post-Operative Cognitive Dysfunction occurs among seniors undergoing cardiac surgery, and whether such impairments of activities of daily living can be rehabilitated; 7) Whether performance in the Virtual Reality Driving simulator predicts senior drivers who do and do not have video-documented recurrent driving mishaps; 8) Whether aerobic...
exercise improves executive functioning of adolescent drivers and whether executive function relates to adolescents driving safety.

We are developing a sophisticated acceleration-base, virtual reality driving simulator for testing, training and therapy- see photos. Research Assistants will be involved in data collection and coding, literature review, grant and manuscript preparation, research team meetings and future planning of grants and projects.

Offers potential RAs: 1) an innovative and cutting-edge virtual reality facility, 2) work that has immediate and significant implications, 3) an opportunity to interact and collaborate with people of varying levels of experience, including undergrads, recent college grads, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows and various faculty (e.g., psychologists, psychiatrist, cardiologists, gerontologists, engineers) who have been in the field for many years.

Contact: Prof. Cox <djc4f@virginia.edu>

**Selected Publications or Presentations with Undergraduates**


Cox D. J., & **Davis M. T. ’06** (2009). Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Driving Safety. In Verster J (Eds.), *Drugs, Driving and Traffic safety*.

**Behavioral Medicine Type 1 Diabetes Lab**

**Linda Gonder-Frederick**

We have openings for RAs with an interest in interdisciplinary behavioral medicine. RAs work on a variety of NIH-funded, non-profit, and pharmaceutical projects related to behavior and diabetes management. We make an effort to ensure that RAs get solid training experience on the many aspects of research in behavioral medicine.

RAs are a valuable and integrated member of an interdisciplinary research team, composed of psychologists, psychology fellows, graduate students, endocrinology fellows, statisticians, biomathematicians, and endocrinologists. We offer training experience and an opportunity for students to gain perspective on interdisciplinary behavioral research in a hospital setting. We are interested in students willing to commit to a two-year position, including possibly the summer.

Contact: Prof. Gonder-Frederick <ccf7u@virginia.edu>

**Selected Publications or Presentations with Undergraduates**


**Addictions Lab**
Karen Ingersoll and Jennifer Hettema

Our laboratory is located within the UVA Center for Addiction Research and Education, where we conduct clinical research designed to investigate treatments for substance related disorders. We currently have several research projects underway, including: 1) What treatments work best to increase medication compliance and decrease drug use among individuals who are HIV positive and use cocaine, 2) What treatments work best to decrease the risk of alcohol exposed pregnancies among women who drink and do not use proper contraception, 3) What in session therapist and client behaviors impact the outcome of addictions treatment, and 4) What are effective methods for encouraging doctors to talk with their patients about addictions issues. Many of our studies focus on a particular form of therapy called Motivational Interviewing.

Available activities for RAs include conducting participant interviews, coding tapes of therapy sessions, entering and analyzing data, reviewing literature, and participating in research team learning opportunities. Opportunities to author or co-author manuscripts or posters and conduct independent research projects are available for motivated students.

Contact: Prof. Hettema <jhettema@virginia.edu>

**Family Violence Lab**
Shelly Jackson

We have completed a project examining four types of abuse perpetrated against persons over the age of 59: financial exploitation, physical abuse, neglect, and a combination of abuses. We are in the process of writing up the findings and preparing them for publication. RAs provide assistance with manuscript preparation. This may include literature review, reviewing manuscripts, editing, preparing submission materials, and various other related tasks.

Contact: Prof. Jackson <slj4u@virginia.edu>
Clinical Pharmacological Research Unit

Bankole Johnson

CPRU is committed to research using new investigational medications that may lead to new pharmacotherapeutics for the treatment of drug dependence. Currently we are conducting inpatient clinical trials of investigational medications that are examining the effects of the medications on drug-induced craving and neurocognitive functioning in both alcohol and cocaine dependent individuals.

RAs who join the CPRU research team will gain valuable clinical trials research experience. Typical RA responsibilities include but are not limited to: administration of outcome measures to study participants, data scoring, data entry, literature reviews, administrative duties (copying, study binder creation, answering telephone), take participants on walk/smoke breaks. In addition, RAs will gain exposure to working with the Institutional Review Board by way of documentation review, protocol creation and maintenance, informed consent process, and protected health information regulations.

Good organizational skills, attention to detail, and interpersonal skills required, as well as computer experience (e.g., MS Office, Internet). Additionally, RAs must dress professionally.

Contact: Prof. Gunderson <ewg2n@virginia.edu>

Laboratory of Cognitive Neurodynamics

William B. Levy

Our laboratory studies the biological bases of cognition and behavior using computational models. A large, and continuing project is to understand hippocampal function with simulations based on neurons and synapses. Another project seeks to understand the role of memory in PTSD and its symptoms, particularly hyper-reactivity and poor sleep. This work is building models of the brainstem systems controlling sleep and the peripheral stress reactions.

Reading courses are available for students who seek a strong background before entering the lab. Occasionally enough such work can culminate in a small review article which can be submitted for publication. Laboratory research consists of computer simulations.
and data analysis. Student who do exceptional research work during the year may qualify for a paid summer research position.

Contact: Prof. Levy <wbl@virginia.edu>

**Integrative Medicine Projects**

**Justine Owens**

Recent research projects are: 1) mindfulness-based stress reduction, 2) psychological factors in healthcare outcomes, 3) acupuncture treatment efficacy and mechanism of action, and 4) mapping and nurturing the path of wisdom in physicians and patients. This last project is a study of physicians who have made serious medical errors and chronic pain patients who have successfully managed chronic pain. The premise of this study is that physicians and patients who have successfully faced major life challenges are exemplars of finding wisdom out of adversity. All of our projects share a common interest in the measurement of stress and the development of life skills and treatments for successful stress management. We are working on a standardized medical evaluation of accumulated stress (allopathic load) using measures such as heart rate variability (HRV), EEG beta/theta ratio, cortisol, and immune function, toward the integration of alternative medical treatments into the conventional health care system.

RAs participate in projects at various stages from grant proposal, patient recruitment, data collection, literature review, data processing, manuscripts and presentations. RAs also help with a database and Website for a new non-profit organization.

Contact: Prof. Owens <owens@virginia.edu>

**Behavioral Neuroendocrinology Lab**

**Emilie Rissman**

Our global interests are in mechanisms that regulate interactions between the environment, brain and behavior. One focus of the lab is on the role of sex chromosome genes in sexually dimorphic behavior. We are interested in how the discrepancies between males and females in sex chromosome gene expression affect brain...
and behavior. A second interest is to determine how endocrine disrupting compounds (EDC) act on the developing brain. We recently showed that gestational exposure to Bisphenol A (BPA), in doses similar to those humans typically experience, produce changes in juvenile social behavior and gene expression in brain. Moreover some of these changes persist for at least four generations after the initial exposure. This makes them truly transgenerational effects. Currently we are pursuing four avenues based on these findings. For example we know that BPA interferes specifically with social recognition in juveniles. We are examining DNA methylation of the candidate genes we discovered, vasopressin and oxytocin, in specific neural regions. We are conducting breeding studies to determine which parent is responsible for the transgenerational effects of BPA. With that information we will move to germ cells to pinpoint the exact epigenetic mechanisms, which modify expression of the candidate genes. Finally, we are setting up parallel studies using another class of EDCs, also found in plastic, the phthalates. EDCs are pervasive in the environment and their mechanisms of action are complex, these include acting as endocrine mimics but also they can modify steroidogenic pathways and affect DNA methylation.

Undergraduate assistants, depending on the project can expect to conduct behavioral observations, tissue preparation, learn western blotting to quantify protein levels, qRT PCR quantification of gene expression, and/or immunocytochemistry.

Contact: Prof. Rissman <rissman@virginia.edu>

Behavioral Health and Technology Lab
Lee Ritterband

Current projects include a large national trial to evaluate an Internet intervention for insomnia, a trial of an Internet Intervention for spinal cord injury patients, and a skin cancer prevention project and a game to reduce asthma attacks in children. Upcoming projects include an Internet intervention for pregnant women with Type I diabetes, and an Internet intervention to reduce alcohol exposed pregnancies.
RA responsibilities include pilot testing our Internet interventions, participating in multi-disciplinary meetings, conducting literature searches, helping with manuscript preparation, organizing and coding data, and more. Interested and motivated students can often work with a faculty member to analyze and present data through posters, conference presentations, or manuscripts. We prefer to recruit 2nd and 3rd year students, but will consider 4th year students with a strong interest in the eHealth field. Summer hours may be available (and sometimes for a paid position).

If interested: Email a brief letter of interest and include 1) your interest in this position, 2) your current year in school, 3) your major, 4) your cumulative GPA, 5) your work and research experience, and 6) the names of 2 references.

Contact: Christina Frederick <ccf7u@virginia.edu>
Website: bht.virginia.edu
Neuroimmunology and Behavior
Lisa Goehler

In addition to making us just feel tired and yucky, being sick also influences our moods and our ability to think clearly. This comes about because the immune system is able to signal and interact brain regions that ultimately contribute to affective and cognitive functions, such as memory. But how, exactly, can the immune system and the brain interact with each other? Can anything be done about the fatigue, foggy thinking, depression, and anxiety that can accompany chronic diseases such as fibromyalgia, cancer, autoimmune disease (multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis) and heart disease?

The focus of our work is on understanding the neurological and immunological mechanisms that allow things like inflammation, infections, or chronic diseases to influence our behavior, and on testing how interventions that induce relaxation (meditation, yoga) can improve mood and cognitive symptoms in people with chronic diseases.

We are located in the Center for the Study of Complementary and Alternative Therapies (CSCAT) in the School of Nursing. RAs work on ongoing projects, allowing them to learn the various techniques we use and become familiar with the issues involved in the work we do.

Contact: Prof. Goehler <goehler@virginia.edu>
Mental Health Law Lab
Richard Bonnie

The Institute for Law, Psychiatry and Public Policy is an interdisciplinary program in mental health law and forensic services that is engaged in academic programs, forensic evaluations, professional training, and public policy consultation and review. The Mental Health Law Lab is focused on researching effective means of implementing policy and interventions to improve outcomes for mental health consumers.

The Psychiatric Advance Directives project relates to increasing self determination and empowerment among people with serious mental illness by developing models to incorporate the facilitation of psychiatric advance directives into mental health care service delivery systems, and researching the effects of psychiatric advance directives on rates of coercion among mental health systems and mental health outcomes.

RAs would primarily be involved in data collection activities, which include coordinating and conducting structured interviews of mental health consumers about their experiences with psychiatric advance directives and their mental health symptoms.

Contact: Jessie Kostelnik, PhD <jao5j@virginia.edu>
Our interdisciplinary lab focuses on the organizational, social, and psychological forces that regulate individual and group behavior. Our research approach integrates several behavioral regulators, including incentives (economics), structure (organizational theory), and person-context fit (social psychology). For instance, we investigate how people can (ironically) decrease their economic risks by putting themselves in a more rather than a less vulnerable position. Our other on-going projects include 1) whether having superstars in the organization is an effective mechanism of social organization 2) can self-control boost creativity, 3) what are some of the unanticipated benefits to swearing, and 4) is it really “lonely at the top.”

As a research assistant of this lab, you will receive hands-on training in social psychology and business management. You will also partake in the development of theoretical discoveries and the advancement of scientific knowledge. Your role includes preparing and conducting lab experiments, coding videos, entering data, and attending lab meetings. We are looking for young scholars who are organized and responsible. Computer experience, analytical skills, and ability to work with a team preferred.

Contact: Prof. Eileen Y. Chou <eileen.chou@virginia.edu>
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Undergraduate Studies Office

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