Graduate Program in Psychology

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Program Overview

The Graduate Program in Psychology at Rutgers University-Newark has been producing outstanding psychologists for several decades in four main areas: developmental, perception and social psychology, and cognitive neuroscience. We boast a 2:1 student-faculty ratio, unparalleled research opportunities, and full funding for up to five years for all doctoral candidates. With this unique combination, our Program has attracted national recognition from a variety of sources, including *U.S. News & World Report.*

Our faculty, whose pioneering research is pushing the boundaries of the field, includes a winner of the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers, a recognized "legend" in alternative dispute resolution by the NJ Bar Association, a winner of the prestigious NIH Pathway to Independence Award, and a winner of the Bonnie and Vern Bullough Award (from the Foundation for the Scientific Study of Sexuality and the Kinsey Institute).

Student Profile

Megan Geerdts Recipient of the 2012 Colin Beer Distinguished Teaching Award, her research in developmental psychology focuses on anthropomorphic animals in children's media and their effect on children's conceptual knowledge about animals.

All work closely with students and are dedicated to training the next generation of outstanding psychologists.

Students admitted to our Graduate Program in Psychology are a diverse and highly selective group who come together to form a close-knit learning and scholarly community. They routinely present their research at top international scientific conferences and have recently published in peer-reviewed journals such as *The Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, The Journal of Sexual Medicine,* and *The Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment.*

Rutgers-Newark's Psychology Program offers graduate students an intimate, nurturing environment with active, caring faculty mentors, under whose close supervision they hone their research skills and receive guidance on conference presentations. Our graduate students are also considered professional colleagues, playing an active role in hiring new faculty, admitting new students, and deciding on matters that affect the graduate program.

Our award-winning full-time faculty are:

Kent Harber (Social) focuses on positive feedback biases toward minorities, psychological resources on social and physical perception, and emotional disclosure.

Harold Siegel (Social) studies adult attachment and emotional eating, interventions to increase attachment security, college student success, and sexual offending.

Luis Riviera (Social) investigates implicit social cognitive mechanisms underlying stereotyped attitudes, self-concept, and health of stigmatized individuals.

Ken Kressel (Social) focuses on interpersonal, social, and organizational conflict, as well as the behavior and thinking of professional mediators.

Paul Boxer (Developmental) studies the development of aggressive and antisocial behavior from child-

hood to adulthood, and the impact of violence in communities, prisons, families, peer groups, and the media on psychosocial development. He also examines how developmental theory can most effectively inform the implementation of evidence-based interventions for problem behavior.

Vanessa LoBue (Developmental) studies perceptual, cognitive, and emotional development over the lifespan, focusing mainly on infants and young children. She examines how we become sensitive to emotionally valenced stimuli, and how we learn to be wary of threat.

Gretchen Van de Walle (Developmental) investigates the perceptual and conceptual information that infants employ to better understand their environment, and how the early acquisition of language influences this understanding.

Elizabeth Bonawitz (Developmental) focuses on the learning mechanisms and conceptual representations required to support early developing beliefs about the world and other people. She uses a combination of tools: empirical research on infants, young children, and adults; and computational methods inspired by recent advances in machine learning and computer science.

Maggie Shiffrar (Perception) uses psychophysical methods to study how the visual system analyzes the structure and movements of the human body. The work seeks to understand perception-action couplings, often using point-light displays of biological motion to explore the role of attention, emotion, and individual differences, including motor and social abilities.

Alan Gilchrist (Perception) studies perception of surface color, using psychophysics, with a special emphasis on perception of black, white and gray shades. He focuses on how the visual system disentangles the color of the illumination from the color of

Student Profile

Andrea Lewis Recipient of the 2010 Samuels Fellowship, along with a 2012 fellowship at the Mortimer D. Sackler Summer Institute at Weill Cornell Medical College, her research in cognitive neuroscience focuses on how environmental stimuli gain emotional salience and, in turn, motivate behavior.

the surface, and how depth perception influences the visual computation of surface color.

Mauricio Delgado (Cognitive & Social Neuroscience) performs functional neuroimaging of reward processing and aversive learning, emotion regulation, and neural mechanisms of control to study the influence of social context on human decision-making.

William Graves (Cognitive & Social Neuroscience) performs functional brain imaging of language and cognition, focusing on reading, dyslexia, how we glean meaning from print, and how performance impacts functional brain images.

Stephen Hanson (Cognitive & Social Neuroscience) focuses on computational neuroimaging of language supporting functions, learning, memory, and categorization, along with large-scale decoding of brain function and effective connectivity theory.

Barry Komisaruk (Cognitive & Social Neuroscience) maps brain activity in women and men during sexual response and orgasm under normal conditions and after hysterectomy or prostatectomy. He also specializes in the development of fMRI neurobiofeedback methodology to voluntarily modify brain function, perception, hormone secretion, and behavior.

E.B. Tricomi (Cognitive & Social Neuroscience) performs functional neuroimaging of learning and decision making, studying the influences of affec- tive information on cognitive processing while focusing on the neural basis of goal-directed and habitual behavior.

Beyond the Classroom

Rutgers-Newark's Psychology Department has greatly expanded its reach in recent years through collaborations and interdisciplinary research with other schools and programs on campus, including the Center for Molecular and Behavioral Neuroscience, the Criminal Justice program, the Rutgers Law School, the School of Social Work, and the prestigious Rutgers School of Business, with whom our department now offers a joint degree.

We are affiliated with the new Rutgers-Newark Child Care Center, which provides preschool and daycare to children of university faculty, staff, and students as well as professionals in the Newark community. We've equipped the Center with two-way mirrors, observational recording

equipment, and state-of-the-art computing to facilitate research in child development.

The Psychology Department also hosts a bi-monthly colloquium series, which brings an array of researchers from other institutions to present and discuss their work.

Finally, we are also the home of RUBIC, a state-of-the-art functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) brain-scanning facility. Affiliated with the Psychology Department and the Center for Molecular and Behavioral Neuroscience, RUBIC houses groundbreaking research on language, decision-making, learning and memory, emotion and effective behavior, human sexual behavior, and computational neuroimaging. Under the direction of Professor Stephen Hanson, RUBIC has attracted

Student Profile

Dominic Fareri Recipient of the 2009 Teaching Assistant of the Year Award and the Graduate Student Excellence Award, his research in cognitive neuroscience looks at how the representation of rewarding experiences in the brain is influenced by social factors.

widespread media attention, including segments by ABC News and BBC Television, and is drawing researchers from other institutions in the region, including New York University, the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, the Kessler Foundation, New Jersey Institute of Technology, and

countless departments across the Rutgers University system.

About Rutgers

Founded in 1766, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, is one of the nation's premier public research institutions. Encompassing three campuses, it serves more than 50,000 graduate and undergraduate students from all 50 states and 125 countries, providing programs of exceptional academic quality taught by a dedicated and distinguished faculty.

Rutgers-Newark, one of the nation's most diverse campuses, enrolls more than 10,000 students and is located in the heart of Newark's academic and cultural district, only 20 minutes from New York. The district offers an array of intriguing opti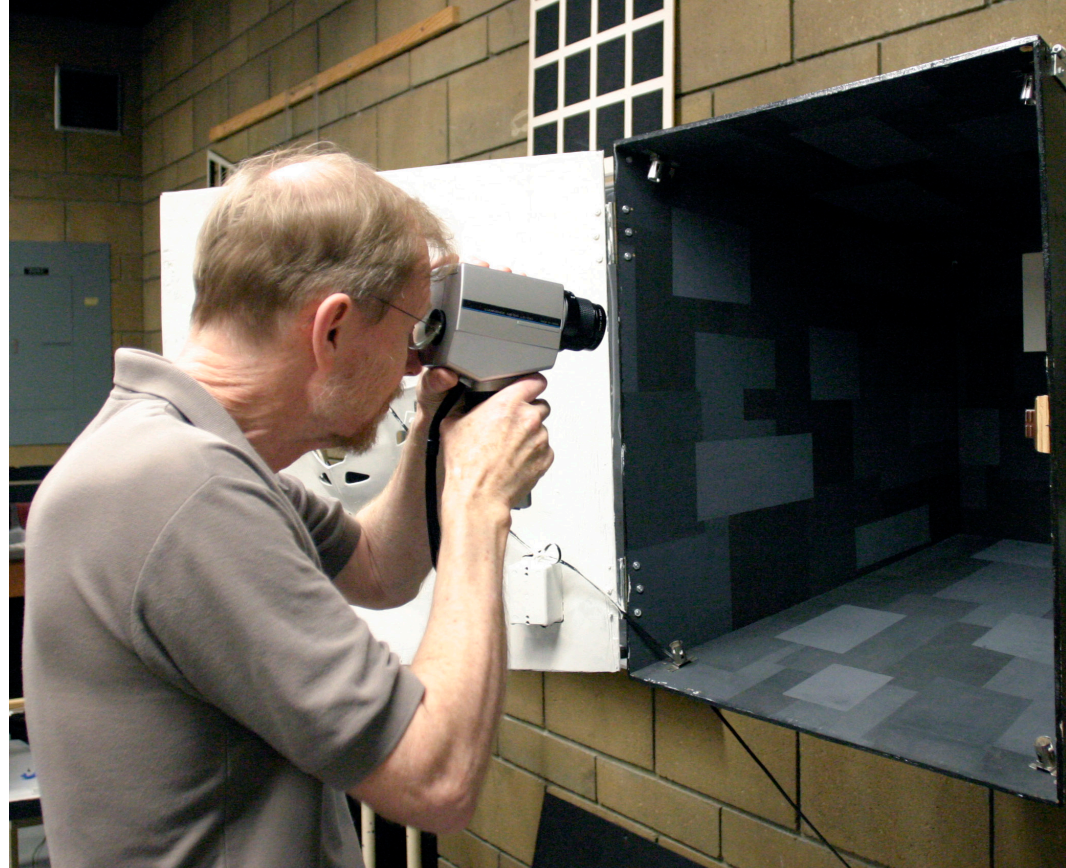ons, such as the Newark Museum and Newark Public Library, urban gems located just two blocks from campus, along with a thriving art gallery scene that includes Aljira – a Center for Contemporary Art, the City Without Walls Gallery, and Rutgers-Newark's own Paul Robeson Art Gallery, where we hold our Writers at Newark Reading Series. Newark is also home to the New Jersey Historical Society, the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, and a vibrant dining scene.

For More Information

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