

MIND OVER MATTER

UNT UNDERGRADUATE PSYCHOLOGY NEWSLETTER



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A Note from the Editor-in-Chief

I am ecstatic to share this edition of Mind Over Matter with you all. This year, the Undergraduate Psychology Newsletter provides students insight into many different aspects of Psychology such as relations to social media, different forms of therapy, graduate school information, and a new class offered at UNT. While this information is helpful, it is important to note that when considering graduate school, students should really try and engage with the Psychology Department. So, in addition to reading about the exciting facets entailed in here, see how you can get involved in different ways. As always, the Psychology Department is here for you and they want you to be successful.

Mind Over Matter will continue to provide students with helpful and engaging resources. Best wishes to the undergraduates as you begin, or continue your college career. College can seem difficult at times, but there are many resources that make it more manageable.

- Brooke Tompkins

PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

BY JEFFERY RUTHERFORD

In 2019, there is more public demand than ever for qualified psychologists with specializations in many diverse fields that you might not initially expect, including sports, art, engineering, and even social media. More and more, the fields of media and technology offer unexpected career options for psychologists.

On April 7th, I spoke with Dr. Katie Hansen, who attended the University of Texas at Austin, for her undergraduate education, and Princeton, where she earned her PhD in Social Psychology. Dr. Hansen currently serves as a Quantitative UX Researcher and Specialist in People Analytics for one of today's most popular social media companies. Dr. Hansen took the time to answer some questions about her work in the field of Psychology and describe steps an ambitious student might take in order to follow a similar career path to hers:

How did you first learn about and become interested in the field of Psychology?

"After finishing my PhD in Social Psychology, I wasn't sure what sort of non-academic jobs existed for a researcher like myself. It turns out there are a lot: market research, UX research, and people analytics are the primary ones that come to mind."

What requirements are necessary in terms of education and experience?

"A PhD is certainly not necessary for UX research, but a degree in a social science is very useful: I work with other psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, and political scientists, to name a few! I'd recommend getting some sort of hands-on research experience, such as working as research assistant in a psychology lab."

Most of Dr. Hansen's research is of a quantitative nature, including both UX research and people analytics. I asked her to explain the difference between these two fields of work:

"In UX research, my goal is to help product designers and engineers better understand their users so that they can build amazing things that people want to use. I might do a survey to gauge people's interest in something we are considering building, to assess their satisfaction with something that just launched, or to determine why they stopped using a certain part of the app.

In people analytics, my goal was to help HR and leadership better understand the needs of the employees. One way I did so was through running engagement surveys to see where the company was doing well, where there was room to improve, and where leadership should focus their attention first."

Would you say that demand for Psychology students and graduates is growing in the fields of technology and social media?

"Both UX research and people analytics are growing fields, and I think people with a background in psychology bring a valuable point of view to both professions!"

Do you think that as technology and the capabilities of social media become more advanced, the importance of psychology in those fields will grow or become more relevant?

“As technology plays a larger and larger role in our daily lives, I think it will be increasingly important for tech companies to have employees with expertise in understanding human behavior.”

When my interview with Dr. Hansen concluded, I could not help but feel excited to be a Psychology student. There are more and more new fields demanding qualified psychologists so that companies and organizations can better understand human behavior and how the public reacts with products such as social media applications, and in order to help make social communication and connection safer and more productive. It appears as though the demand for well-trained psychologists in unexpected areas of the professional world will only continue to grow.



ACCELERATED RESOLUTION THERAPY (ART)

BY HANNAH KELM

Accelerated Resolution Therapy (ART) is a newly-emerging form of psychotherapy based on the psychotherapeutic method of Eye-Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). Practitioners of ART seek to reprogram the way the brain stores trauma and distressing events and how trauma physically and/or emotionally manifests in order to help victims. ART builds upon the foundations of *ART builds upon the foundations...to create procedurally-focused trauma that frees patients from having to continuously relive their trauma during therapy*

EMDR, cognitive behavioral therapy, gestalt, imagery re-scripting, and exposure therapy to create procedurally-focused trauma that frees patients from having to continuously relive their trauma during therapy. This is one of the main differences between ART and EMDR – EMDR has a more open, content-based design, whereas ART focuses more on fixed imagery procedural therapy.

As ART is still in its formative stages and being developed at a private practice rather than a university or other research environment, it currently suffers from a lack of research. However, the research that does exist suggests that this direct method of treatment may yield revolutionary new ways to lessen the symptoms of even long-term trauma victims.

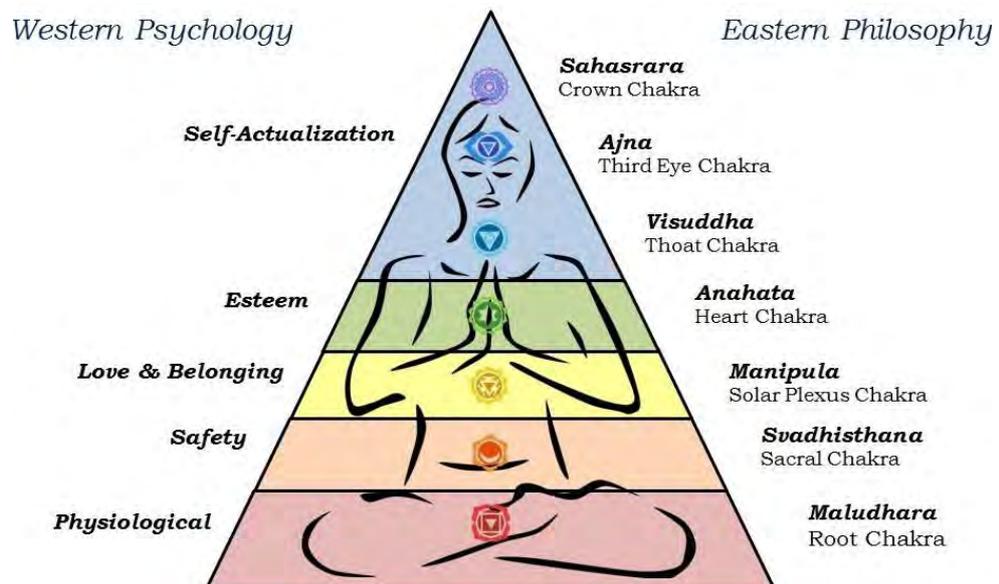
Note: for references please see Hannah Kelm, hannahkelm@my.unt.edu

EASTERN VS. WESTERN PSYCHOLOGY

BY BROOKE TOMPKINS

In most psychology courses taught at UNT, the background focuses on Western influences. Historically, the general orientation of Western Psychology has been towards the observation, categorization, and alteration of observable behavior. In contrast, the Eastern Psychology's orientation traditionally focuses on the operation of the mind and therapeutic methods to free the individual from suffering. Since Eastern Psychology is inwardly-focused, it may appear narcissistic or nihilistic; however, it offers therapy for everyday life based on teachings designed to help people progress towards optimal psychological functioning and well-being.

Regarding individual perspective, Western psychological influences have primarily focused on reductionist views – reducing processes to the most elemental level and investigating them as single variables in isolation. There is a negative perspective of this Western reductionist view: humans are intersubjective



beings that interact with other people and environmental factors in constant states of flux – some argue that they cannot be reduced to parts, but must be understood in a more comprehensive context. Conversely, Eastern psychological perspectives posit an interactive nature of reality, with life being a universal process of which every individual is an essential part. Eastern systems maintain that the individual must first decide to seek change and help themselves via inner exploration and the restructuring and cultivating of mental processes, and perhaps also the guidance of others who have experienced similar processes.

Another comparative aspect is psychotherapeutic approaches. Buddhism, Taoism, and yoga are not readily comparable to religious or philosophical systems commonly practiced in the West. Western Psychology has become increasingly interested in helping “normal” individuals reach their maximum psychological potential.

Eastern Psychology maintains that our ambitions, beliefs...and views of the nature of reality are illusory owing to social-and-self-conditioning.

In Eastern Psychology, all people are in need of therapy because no one exists free from

delusions, projections, or uncurbed desires. Eastern Psychology maintains that our ambitions, beliefs, desires, expectations, preconceptions, and views of the nature of reality are illusory owing to social-and-self-conditioning. Since people think and act in accordance with these illusions, they invariably suffer in some way: disappointment, frustration, pain, etc. However, through the process of meditation and mindfulness, individuals can examine the inner workings of their minds and come to understand the nature of illusion and how it arises. They then come to experience a profound change in attitude and perspective.

FACULTY SNAPSHOT: DR. ADRIEL BOALS

BY ANDALUSIA HINOJOS

Dr. Adriel Boals is currently a professor in the UNT Psychology Department Behavioral Science Program. He completed his B.S. in Psychology at the University of Florida in 1995 and received his Ph.D. in Social Psychology from North Carolina State University in 2002; he completed a post-doctorate degree in Cognitive Psychology at Duke University. Now Dr. Boals has taught at UNT for twelve years.

Dr. Boals' area of research is trauma, specifically the causes of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as well as Posttraumatic Growth. A large percentage of the population has experienced trauma at some point of their lives, and Dr. Boals finds that people

actually handle traumatic events very well. Recently he has been studying Posttraumatic Growth (PTG), the period over which trauma grows. In his research lab, Dr. Boals utilizes autobiographical trauma narrative analyses, allowing him to better understand trauma victims' psychological processes and how they initially became traumatized. Once trauma has occurred, the only way to understand it is via memories. Dr. Boals is studying expressive writing intervention and how it can be a helpful coping process; event centrality is another way people experience trauma that Dr. Boals studies. This type of experience is hard to treat, because people tend to tie their identities to their trauma in these situations.

Going forward, Dr. Boals hopes to do away with some stigmas about PTSD. There has typically been stigma surrounding PTSD, especially during World Wars I and II. During WWI, PTSD – or “shell-shock” as it was understood at the time – began to be identified as a concern as doctors and scientists began to realize that even while soldiers are physically fine, they may not be mentally or emotionally healthy. We now understand that PTSD – a term coined in the 1980s – can happen to anyone and is not limited to soldiers. Society has always had difficulty understanding the intricacies of mental health and accepting those who suffer from mental illness, but in recent years the stigma has decreased and will hopefully continue to do so.



A GRAD SCHOOL GUIDE: QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK

BY HANNAH BOYD

Once you have completed your bachelor's degree, you may consider continuing your education and pursuing a master's degree, PhD, or some other type of post-graduate degree. Before doing so, there are several questions that you should first ask:

How many credits are required to complete your degree program?

The number of credits required to complete your degree program will naturally affect how long it will take you to finish graduate school. This number can vary considerably depending on the university and the program in question. Many colleges offer master's degree programs requiring around thirty credit hours – make sure you know how many credits your program requires before enrolling in it and plan accordingly.

How long will it take to complete my degree? Will I need to be a full-time graduate student?

It is important to know how long you should expect to take to complete your post-graduate program – whether or not you plan to be a full-time graduate student will affect this. It will also affect whether or not you will be able to enroll in certain graduate programs, as some universities do not allow grad students to be part-time.

What is the cost of tuition?

This question is usually relatively easy to answer, as many universities have tuition prices listed on their websites for easy reference – bear in mind that some schools post their tuition as price per-semester hour, as opposed to price per-semester. Take the time to do research and plan accordingly to save money!

What else should I know before applying to graduate school?

Once you have answers to these questions, it is time to find out what you need in order to enroll in graduate school. Seek information about the application processes of the graduate programs you intend to apply for: where do you apply? Can you do so online, or do you have to do so in person? If you must apply in person, where do you go to do so? What is the cost to apply? Find out application prices ahead of time so that you can start saving in advance, especially if you plan to apply to multiple schools at once.

Find out how many letters of recommendation you need in order to apply to graduate school – every college is different, but most require around three recommendation letters. You would be wise to plan ahead of time and cultivate positive personal relationships with professors who you would like to write recommendation letters for you.

Graduate schools care about the GPAs of incoming students: some have strict GPA requirements that you must meet before they will consider your application, whereas others use sliding scales, taking into account GRE scores and other qualifying factors. Bear in mind that the cost of GRE testing may add to your graduate school expenses and plan accordingly.

Finally, many graduate programs require applicants to submit a personal essay or letter, so make sure your writing skills are professional and on-point before

embarking on your application process.

Asking and tracking down answers to the questions above will benefit you immensely as you begin your post-graduate journey. Graduate school is tough enough as it is – make sure you go into it with as much information as possible.

NEW PSYCHOLOGY CLASS AND CONCENTRATIONS

BY DR. CHARLES A GUARNACCIA, PHD.
UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Friends, at this, the end of our spring 2019 semester, as Psychology Undergraduate Program Director, I want to let you know about advances in your Psychology Department Undergraduate program.

PSYC4849: Psychology of Addictive Behaviors

First, is a new course this fall 2019, PSYC4849: Psychology of Addictive Behaviors (17999). This upper division course is a first-time offering in our department, developed by our own Dr. Casey Guillot, Ph.D. Dr. Guillot is an expert in this topic and directs the UNT DEAR (Disposition, Emotion, & Addictions Research) Lab. As this is a new offering, it is being offered as a Topics in Psychology, PSYC4849, course.

This course covers the etiology, theories, cognitive neuroscience, and psychological and behavioral effects of addictive behaviors, including substance use, gambling, and other behaviors being considered as potential addictions (e.g., binge eating, hypersexuality, and compulsive electronic media use). Given the range of topics covered, it will be a great course for both those of you interested in treatment of addictions and/or the neuroscience of additions.

This course will be offered fall 2019 in CHEM352, MWF 1-1:50 (across Mulberry from Terrill Hall). Since the course is an upper division course and the room capacity is only 76, it is likely to fill quickly. Since it will fill quickly, I want to give this early notice to Psychology majors. Please enroll for this course ASAP; if it is full, please get on the waitlist.

Concentrations in Psychology

The second piece of exciting Psychology Department news is the development of concentrations in Psychology. These are planned for inclusion in the fall 2020 catalog, so there are limited details now. Dr. Kristal Clayton, Dr. Terry Davis, and I are working with Psychology Advising to development these concentrations. Dr. Clayton is spearheading these efforts for UNT at Frisco, Psychology.

Thus far there are plans for undergraduate concentrations in four areas. These concentrations were selected as we believe they will help you in your Psychology career. The four planned Psychology Concentrations are Forensic Psychology, Health Psychology, Industrial Organizational (IO) Psychology, and Sports Psychology.

This is the first time for concentrations in our department, so you may or may not be familiar with what concentrations are at UNT, as our department has not had them before. Concentrations allow you to take a series of specific related courses and, if you complete these concentration courses, your UNT Psychology degree will list your concentration both on your transcript and on your degree.



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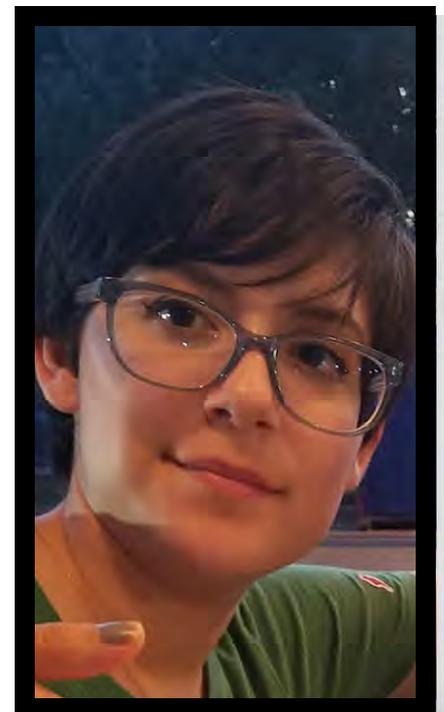
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