

It's All in Your Head

Willamette University Psychology Department Quarterly Newsletter

From The Chair...

Hello, all, and welcome to the spring semester. I hope you all had a good winter break and the first month of classes has gone well. You will note that we actually have a title for the newsletter now. The Psychology Department faculty voted and selected "It's All in Your Head" from among six entrants. The winner of the Bistro gift certificate is Allisa Jones. Congratulations!!

I want to let everyone know of some important upcoming events either in the Psychology Department or elsewhere but which may be of interest. These events will also be listed in the

calendar of events section as well. Wednesday, April 11th is the first ever Student Scholarship Recognition Day. While there will be no classes this day, we do hope to have some psychology student representatives presenting their scholarly work to the campus (more on this later). Tuesday, April 24th at 6:00 pm are Honors Presentations. There is mandatory attendance for our seniors (to show support for your fellow students), but all psychology majors are encouraged to attend. You can watch some of our best student present and defend their scholarly work (and perhaps get ideas of your

own??) In early May, members of the Psychology Department faculty will be traveling to and presenting at the Western Psychological Association conference I Maui, HI. While this may be too far to encourage student travel for this year's conference (not to mention expensive), next year's WPA conference is in Vancouver, BC. We've had many students in the past attend WPA and other conferences so if you think you might like to do so (particularly if you'd like to present your own research), please come talk with a Psychology Department faculty
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Mark Your Calendars

Mark your calendars for these upcoming events...

Monday, February 19th

LECTURE: "**Learning and Perception: Why do we see color where there is none?**"
Lorraine Allan, McMaster University, 4:15 pm, Psychology Auditorium, Reed College. Free and open to the public. For more information call 503/777-7755.

LECTURE: "*Cravings of the Mind: Drug Anticipation and Drug Addiction*" Shepard Siegel, McMaster University, 7:30 pm, Vollum Lecture Hall, Reed College. Free and open to the public. For more information call 503/777-7755.

Week of March 19th—23rd
SPRING BREAK!!!

Tuesday, April 10th

Senior Assessments (required for all seniors)
6:00 pm—9:00 pm, Smullin 222

Wednesday, April 11th

Student Scholarship Recognition Day—NO CLASSES!

Tuesday, April 24th

Psychology Honors Presentations, 6:00 pm—8:00 pm, Smullin 222

Sunday, May 13th

GRADUATION!!

February 2001

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Happy
Valentines
Day!

Anticipated Psychology Schedule for Fall 2001

FALL 2001

Meredy Edelson

Psych 394 – Internship
Psych 354 – Psychology of Women
Psych 337 – Child Psychopathology OR

Jim Friedrich

Psych 394 – Internship
Psych 336 – Social Psychology

Sue Koger

Psych 430/1 – Seminar: Ecological Psychology
Psych 130 + lab – Evolutionary Psychology

Larry McBride

Psych 340 + lab – Learning
Psych 330 – Developmental Psych: Infancy and Childhood

Karen Solomon

Psych 252 + lab – Research Methods & Analysis I
Psych 110 – Intro to Psychology

Mark Stewart

Psych 253 + lab – Research Methods & Analysis II
Psych 351 – Sensation/Perception

Mary Ann Youngren

Psych 394 – Internship
Psych 335 – Clinical/Abnormal Psychology

Anticipated 400-level courses in Spring 2002

Psych 430/1 Psychology of Language
Psych 430/1 Memory
Psych 440 Techniques of Counseling



Autism and Mental Retardation by Meredy Goldberg Edelson

Did you know that not all individuals with autism are mentally retarded? You might have seen an individual with autism—their behavior often stands out. They may be nonverbal or unresponsive to their environment, they may be over- or under-reactive to sensory stimuli, they may engage in bizarre or stereotyped behavior such as hand-flapping, spinning, or rocking, and they may have difficulty interacting appropriately with others. For a long time, family members, educators, and researchers necessarily assumed that individuals with autism must be re-

tarded. In fact, if you read the literature on autism, you will see many statistics citing that up to 3/4 of individuals with autism are also mentally retarded. In order to be diagnosed with mental retardation, an individual must score lower than 70 on a standardized test of intelligence, must have adaptive skills deficits (such as difficulty dressing and bathing oneself) and must evidence these problems prior to age 18. Why is it that so many individuals with autism are believed to also be mentally retarded? Perhaps it is because of the way in which we assess intelligence in individuals. If

you've ever taken a test of intelligence you know that there is a standard method of administration, that at least parts of the test are often timed, and that you needed to respond to an examiner's questions verbally. Clearly, individuals with autism may have difficulty with each of these. It is important to remember that all individuals, regardless of their perceived disabilities, may have strengths which go unseen. Especially when making judgments of one's abilities, it is vital that we are sensitive to the issues which can interfere with our formation of an accurate judgment.

And Now a Word from Psi Chi...

Psi Chi inducted nine new members earlier this month. Congratulations and welcome to the following students!

Kate Cowen
Annie Hastain
Angela Imdieke
Hayley Kimble
Aaron Pelley

Kari Peterson
Lisa Rybka
Alyssa Story
Devon Ward-Thommes
Travis Harrison has passed the Psi Chi President's torch to Angela Imdieke who will finish out the year as President.

Balloting is underway for the Psi Chi Service Award. This award is voted on by Psi Chi members and bestowed upon the member who has contributed in an exceptional way to meeting successfully the local chapter's goals and the national aims of Psi Chi. Ballots will be cast via email and the award announced at a later date.

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member. Submissions are usually due in October or November. Finally, commencement this year is May 13th. Good Luck to our seniors as they approach this important milestone!

I would like to share some additional bits of information. First, as you may or may not know, Willamette is saying goodbye to the old arena registration system. We will now have a new web-based registration in place for fall registration. The good news is that no one will need to wake up early on a Saturday to hand out sticky labels. The bad news is that, because this is the first time, no one knows whether registration will run smoothly. The Psychology Department has met with the staff of the Registrar's Office to try and facilitate this process. If, however, you find that there are problems with your schedule due to glitches in the system,

please see me, and we'll see what we can do. Second, juniors and seniors will shortly be receiving ballots so that they can vote for two of the three Psychology Awards given to seniors each year: The Kaestner Award for the outstanding senior psychology major and the Evans Award for the senior displaying the most passion and dedication to psychology. Please be sure and vote and return your ballots by March 1st. The more students who take the time to vote the more meaningful the selections are. The third Psychology Award, the Psi Chi Service Award, is determined by a vote of the Psi Chi membership.

Finally, the Psychology Department would like to congratulate Jim Friedrich on receiving the first-ever Lawrence D. Cress Award for excellence in faculty scholarship. As many of you know, Jim has multiple research inter-

ests spanning such topics a persuasion, social cognition, and the teaching of statistics. In addition, his scholarship is often integrally connected with his teaching; and Jim frequently involves students in his research. We certainly believe that Jim was the ideal selection for the Cress Award. Congratulations!!

As always, please let me know if you have any comments, questions, concerns or feedback regarding the Psychology Department (or if you feel we could use the newsletter better to meet students' needs). Until next time...keep studying!

Sincerely,

Meredy Goldberg Edelson

Associate Professor and Chair

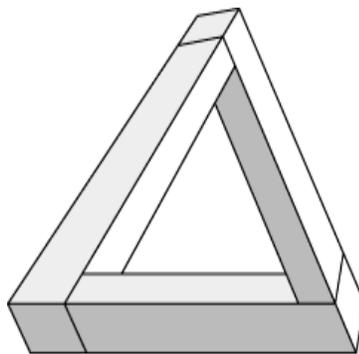
Are you Visually Intelligent? by Mark Stewart

Researchers estimate that over 80% of the information we take in each day enters through our eyes. This holds true whether one is actively reading text or passively watching TV. Neuroscientists are quick to point out that nearly half of the brain's cortex is devoted to processing visual information. In terms of neural representation, that's a lot of real estate! Little wonder then that vision researchers have recently begun peddling a new construct: *visual intelligence*.

Through a combination of useful demonstrations and keen insights into the scientific literature, cognitive scientist Donald Hoffman, in his new book, *Visual Intelligence: How We Create What We See*, introduces us to this new way of characterizing vision. Consider the following example, where he uses an Escher-like figure to highlight the complexities of what goes into our being able to see:

"What is wrong with this triangle? Could you use wood and nails to build something in three dimensions that looks just

like this? In fact you can, although it might take you a while to figure out what shape you would need to construct. Why is it so hard to figure out?



Because your wooden construction would look like this image from only one very special viewpoint. Your visual intelligence normally rejects interpretations of images which would entail that the eye is viewing the image from a very special viewpoint. So your visual intelli-

gence refuses to tell you what the construction should be. Instead you must rely on your rational intelligence to figure it out, and your rational intelligence is, in these matters, much slower than your visual intelligence" (Hoffman, 1998, p. 15).

Vision guilty of fabrication...and in spite of reality? Surely this is the stuff of soothsayers, not scientists. Guess again. For several decades now, vision researchers have sought to tease apart the complexity of our visual abilities in hopes of more closely examining the smaller, potentially simpler building blocks underlying each, (ah, but such is the enterprise of science: study first the simple, then the more complex!). Hence the concept of visual intelligence: our ability to actively and automatically construct extremely complex visual scenes on the basis of much simpler and oftentimes limited sensory input. For more on Hoffman's research, as well as the work of other vision scientists, feel free to chat me up.

**Willamette University
Psychology Department
Quarterly Newsletter**

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PLEASE DELIVER TO:

Negative Reinforcement as utilized by I/O Psychologists

www.willamette.edu/cla/psych

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Research & Methods Analysis I,
Sensation & Perception.

**Sue Koger & Mary Ann Youngren
are on sabbatical during 2000-
2001.**