

Research Capstone in Psychology

Research in Applied Psychology (33-824)

Prerequisites: 33-214 + 33-544

Dr. Crockett studies the health consequences associated with different relationship types (e.g., friendships, dating relationships, long term committed partnerships). Her primary dependent variable is cortisol, which is a stress hormone associated in health consequences including immune and cardiovascular functioning. These research interests make Dr. Crockett an interdisciplinary psychologist. Her hypotheses are often grounded in health psychology, social psychology, and/or close relationship theory.

Dr. Erin Crockett



Research in Behavioral Neuroscience (33-834)

Prerequisites: 33-214 + 33-434

Dr. Guarraci does research in Behavioral Neuroscience. She and her students investigate the neuronal and hormonal control of reproductive behavior. She uses female rats as a preclinical model of sexual motivation. Most recently she and her students have been studying the nexus of sexual motivation and drugs of abuse in the brain. Her studies often address issues when hormones change across the lifespan: around the time of puberty onset and around the time of reproductive senescence (i.e., menopause).

Dr. Fay Guarraci



Research in Developmental Psychology (33-864)

Prerequisites: 33-214 + 33-344

Dr. Lara's program of research surrounds social cognition (or theory of mind) and emotions. More specifically, she studies children's (4- to 10-year-olds) and adults' beliefs about and experiences of the connections between expectations and affect (i.e., preferences and emotions). She focuses on age-related differences and continuity, as well as individual differences (e.g., levels of optimism, working memory).

Dr. Karen Lara

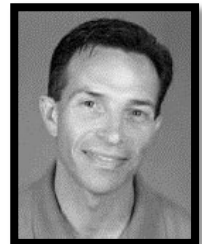


Research in Clinical Psychology (33-844)

Prerequisites: 33-214 + 33-424

Dr. Neighbors's research focuses on high-risk behaviors and personality traits that can serve as precursors for psychological disorders. Examples of relevant high-risk behaviors include drug and alcohol abuse, risky sexual behavior, and pathological eating. Problematic personality traits of interest include Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. We focus on examining the correlates of these behaviors and traits and testing models to reveal the patterns of intercorrelation (e.g., moderation and mediation). The work is guided by attachment theory, and the quality and nature of interpersonal relationships are correlates of interest. Other correlates examined have included: stress and coping, emotion regulation, conflict management, sexuality, sexual fantasies.

Dr. Bryan Neighbors



Research in Cognitive Evolutionary Psychology (33-884)

Prerequisites: 33-214 + 33-374

Dr. Perilloux studies human evolved cognition in the mating realm. She is interested in how humans evaluate, prioritize, and utilize cues when making mating decisions. This might involve studying attractiveness judgments, flirting, mate choice, or any other number of mating-related behaviors and psychology. Dr. Perilloux's research operates from an evolutionary perspective: she combines evolutionary biology and cognitive psychology in an interdisciplinary approach to the study of human mating.

Dr. Carin Perilloux



Internship Capstone in Psychology

An internship is an opportunity to gain field experience involving “real-world” applications of knowledge from a given discipline. An academic internship combines this opportunity with the completion of academic work designed to help students maximize their learning experience. Academic internships in Psychology require departmental faculty approval and supervision, and may be completed for elective credit or to fulfill the capstone requirement.

What are the initial steps I need to take?

Consider your goals for completing an academic internship, your area of interest for an internship (e.g., mental health, forensic, health psychology), and your desired timing (capstone internships are predominantly conducted during the summer following the junior year). A complete list of steps is provided on the Psychology Department website.

How do I pick an internship site?

After giving some thought to the issue of how an internship can meet your goals and the type of internship desired, you should schedule a meeting with your Academic Advisor to discuss specifics and timing. You may also want to meet with departmental faculty (particularly if your Academic Advisor is outside of Psychology), and/or the department’s Internship Coordinator (Dr. Neighbors) for further consultation. A list of internship sites from past students can be found on the department’s website. These sites represent a variety of available opportunities, but many students choose to seek out sites beyond this list. We encourage this, because internships should meet an individual student’s needs. All proposed internships, past or new, will be thoroughly vetted by department faculty for potential approval.

Criteria for internship sites:

- The work of the internship is psychological in nature.
- Intern responsibilities allow the student to draw from previous knowledge in psychology, to learn new psychology-related information, and to apply these in performing tasks new to the student.
- Responsibilities must not be beyond the skill and training of an undergraduate student.
- Students must be provided with on-site supervision from a field professional with advanced training and education (typically Master’s degree or higher) in psychology or a related discipline (e.g., social work, criminal justice).

When should I complete my internship?

Capstone internships must be conducted in either the Junior or Senior year. The Psychology Department considers the summer following the junior year to be the ideal time to complete a capstone internship, because this allows for an immersive experience without the outside time demands of a full Fall/Spring course load. Summer internships also offer the possibility of experiences outside the Austin metro area.