

Spring 2014

Volume 2, Issue 1

# Psychology Department Newsletter

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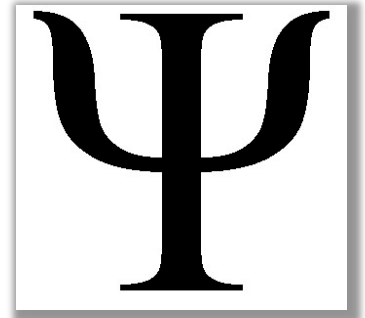
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Editors' Credits

## Editor's Welcome!

Psych Club is proud to introduce the second annual Psychology Department Newsletter!

It is our hope that this newsletter will help bridge communication between the faculty and students by showcasing some of the amazing opportunities and research happening within the Department.

Inside you will find spotlights on psychology classes, a new faculty member, an outstanding student, and so much more. We hope this newsletter makes you as proud as we are of ASU's Psychology Department. Enjoy!



## A little about Psychology Club

Psych Club has been a Registered Student Organization for only 3 years. While we are still a relatively new club, we are growing every year.

Psych Club is open to all ASU students, no matter your GPA, major, or minor. Essentially, it is for anyone who has even the slightest interest in all that psychology has to offer. We exist mainly as a social organization, facilitating conversations relevant to psychology and trying to bridge the gap between upper- and lower-classmen.

We hold business meetings once a month and host a *Psych Night* once a semester. In the past, *Psych Night* has included games, movies, food, and great fellowship.

Aside from our social activities, Psych Club prides itself in participating in a fundraiser and community walk each semester to raise awareness for different psychological causes. This past year we raised money for the Walk to End Alzheimer's and Walk Now for Autism Speaks.

With a department as large as psychology, we still have a lot of room to grow. However, we are excited about our accomplishments thus far, and we are looking forward to many more successful years in the future!

## Teacher Spotlight: Dr. Drew Curtis



Let's give a big welcome from the Angelo State family to Dr. Drew Curtis, who will be completing his first year as a professor at Angelo State.

Dr. Curtis graduated with a B.S. in Psychology and minored in philosophy at Sam Houston University in 2005. In his senior year, his research on conformity helped him determine that his interests were in research and counseling and clinical work.

He continued at Sam Houston University and received his Masters in Clinical Psychology in 2007. During that time he was a teacher's assistant, where he fell in love with teaching. He also did some private practicing dealing with cases of substance abuse.

After his Masters, he taught as an adjunct for SHU and a community college called Lone Star College. He was teaching seven classes a semester during this time!

In 2008 he was accepted into a Ph.D. program at Texas

Women's University for Counseling Psychology. In 2012-13 he completed an internship at the University of Houston at Clear Lake.

After his internship, he started at ASU. During his interview for the position here, he enjoyed meeting the faculty and staff, which was a positive experience for everyone.

Currently, he is teaching abnormal psychology and two graduate classes in counseling. He really enjoys teaching those classes because it is typically the field people think about when referring to psychology. This is the class where you learn what "crazy" looks like.

He enjoys debunking myths of different disorders, teaching students what these disorders truly look like, and explaining good ways of treatment for them.

Dr. Curtis' main research interest is in the area of deception. That's right everyone, Dr. Curtis likes lying.

Primarily, he examines deception in therapies and professional relationships, looking at what the therapists and nurses believe about deception and their attitudes towards clients who lie. This research is closely following the research of Dr. Paul Ekman in facial expression and nonverbal communication.

Recently, he submitted a paper on interpersonal deception, investigating the little white lies people in a relationship will tell their significant other. He is also

interested in researching postpartum depression and the grief in parents of still-borns.

When asked what he would tell aspiring psychology majors he said, "When it comes to having a degree in psychology, the question isn't what you CAN do with it, it's what CAN'T you do with it, as psychology will always be important. As long as there are people, we will always have that demand for psychology."

For those who are considering a degree in psychology, he feels like it is a good way to get in touch with the human aspect of life. Whether looking at it in a social or clinical setting, it provides a unique opportunity to study ourselves and to understand more about what it means to be human.

On the more personal side, Dr. Curtis confessed his dislike for pickles or peas, which was the same answer he gave when applying for his PhD.

He really likes music and was in a couple of bands who performed in the Houston and Austin area. Although he is not in a band anymore, he still picks up his guitar and plays every now and then.

He has a wonderful family with his wife and three children. Ladies and gentlemen, the man behind the beard: Dr. Curtis.

--Nathan Reyes

## Student Spotlight: An Interview with Joshua Hansen



Joshua Hansen is a double major in Angelo State University's Psychology and Philosophy programs. He has plans to enter into a graduate program for either Neuroscience or Cognitive Science and spend his life devoted to studying the human brain and consciousness.

I sat down with him to find out a little more about his time here at ASU:

*How has psychology impacted your experience here at ASU?*

I find the field and the study of the human brain fascinating. It makes a huge difference when you're passionate about the subject matter. I've been given the opportunity to create and conduct two different studies, which has given me invaluable experience in both research design and data analysis.

*What has been one of your favorite subjects within psychology?*

So far my two favorite psych classes have been social psychology and cognition.

*How do you plan on using the lessons you've learned in psychology in your future goals?*

I learned so much during my independent research. I learned

to constantly be on guard against personal biases (of which I have plenty). I learned that whatever can go wrong typically will go wrong, so have contingency plans.

*What advice can you give to undergraduates?*

Don't take this time for granted. Realize how truly fortunate you are to have access to a college education and apply yourself thoroughly. Also, a support network is crucial, because the college experience can be overwhelming at times. You need people in your corner who will continue to support and encourage you.

*What's an interesting fact about you?*

My chopstick skills are atrocious, and I don't trust clowns.

--Kelsey Merritt

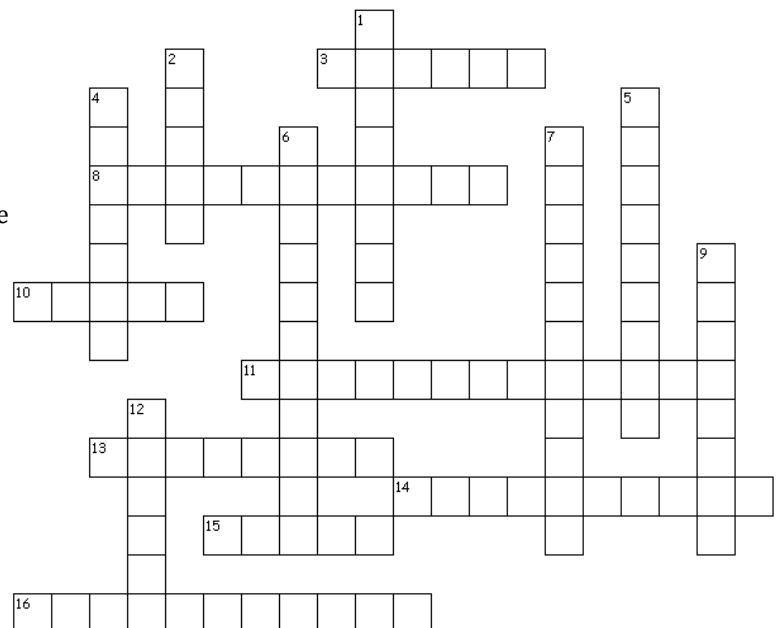
## Psychology Crossword

### Across

3. Collection of subjects drawn from a population
8. Variable being changed in an experiment
10. Described the Id, Ego, and Super Ego
11. Type of study that measures degree of relationship
13. Change in behavior or knowledge that results from experience
14. Testable prediction
15. Found of Functionalism
16. Beliefs about people based on their membership in a particular group

### Down

1. Extent to which a test measures what it is supposed to
2. Considered the father of modern psychology
4. Drugs that can relieve pain
5. Variable being measured in an experiment
6. View that psychology should be based solely on behavior
7. Extent to which a test yields consistent results
9. Type of memory that is conscious and intentional
12. Learned distinction between masculinity and femininity



## Class Spotlight: Human Sexuality

The class Human Sexuality is a very popular elective course that gets filled up quickly. Sexuality is important for personal growth and development, making it an integral part of Psychology.

The subject sexuality encompasses close contact, love, commitment and intimate relationships. The course presents students with the most current research in the field, and covers sexuality throughout every stage of life.

There is no requirement to share anything personal in this class, but the course does have a student forum called "Can We Talk?" where students are able to ask their classmates any questions they might have about

sex, sexuality, and relationships etc.

Due to both the subject matter and many students' desire to remain partially anonymous, this course is offered online by Dr. Singg, who has taught this course for the last three years. The course is ADA compliant and Dr. Singg assigns activities to make her students

feel less isolated.

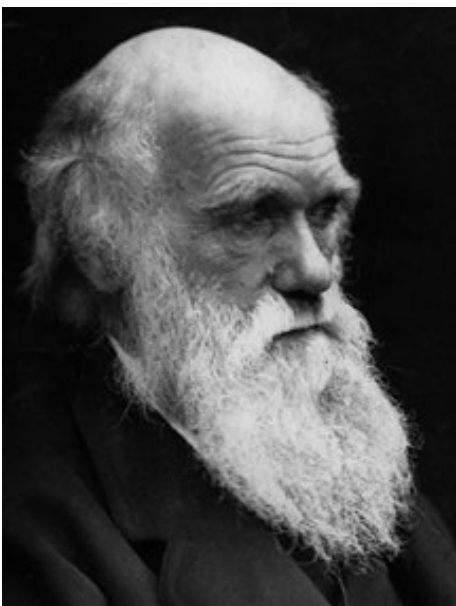
Her goal is to teach her students how to have positive, respectful, and responsible relationships and to replace any feelings of fear or ignorance they may have with positive feelings toward sexuality.

This course is worth three elective hours and is geared towards juniors and seniors.

--Jordan Walker



## Class Spotlight: History of Psychology



*Charles Darwin*

History of Psychology is a class that many students see in the course catalog and then skip right over. However, you may want to take a double look.

When you ask a student to define psychology, you will get as many answers as there are students. History of Psychology seeks to answer that question and explain how the field of psychology got to be as diverse as it is today.

Dr. Forbes teaches the class, and he said that it is the only course that examines psychology as a whole and tries to make connections across all fields of psychology.

Students will be asked to

*read, think, and respond* to freestyle questions. The class is not built on stock questions or multiple-choice quizzes, which makes the course surprisingly interesting.

To give you a taste of some of the things you will learn, Dr. Forbes said that his favorite part of the class to teach is Darwin and evolutionary psychology. Natural selection occurs not only on the biological level, but also on the social and cultural level, which are often not talked about.

Students should be prepared to explore a fascinating adventure through the past 125 years of psychology.

--Sean Motl



## Confessions of a Counseling Psychologist

There are many opportunities for future psychologists, but for this year we decided to get input from one of Angelo State University's very own. Kristie Walton is one of the two profound counselors in the University Health Clinics and Counseling Services.

Walton received her bachelor's degree in behavioral sciences from East Texas Baptist University in 2002. She went on to receive her master's degree in psychology from University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in 2004. Walton has over 8 years of experience in the mental health field.

This is her statement: "A bachelor's degree with a major in psychology might be helpful for getting a job in probation and corrections or low level psychiatric hospital jobs. A Master's Degree in psychology opens the door to higher pay and more jobs, but the degrees are specialized.

"For example: I have a Master of Arts in Psychology. My master's program met the requirements of the state board to be qualified to complete required internship hours and sit for the exam to become a Licensed Professional Counselor in the state of Texas as well as a National Certified Counselor.

"There are also master level degrees in psychology that would allow a person to become a psychological associate. I also know you can get a master's in organization psychology, but I'm not sure how many jobs are available or in demand in that field.

"My personal experience is that psychology is not generally considered an entry-level degree, but a degree that allows for specialized, terminal master's degrees.

"Additionally, there are careers in teaching and research and psychiatric testing with doctorate degrees in psychology."

--Logan Kinkade

## Undergraduate Research Experience

Have you ever been sitting in class and had a burning desire to ask a question, but didn't? Or have you ever been reading something and wanted a better explanation than provided?

The Undergraduate Research Experience at ASU offers the unique opportunity for students to seek out answers to their own questions.

As psychology students, many of us are naturally curious about human behavior and the way people interact with the world around them. We want to know not only the way people behave, but *why*.

Dr. James Forbes has said that one of the most important things that you can do is to ask questions. He also

said that independent research is the opportunity for students to take charge of the curriculum and their education by exploring topics that are personally interesting.

Under the supervision of a faculty member, students can design and execute their own significant research project in either a semester- or year-long timeframe. For proposals that are accepted, students received an additional scholarship and funding to conduct their research project.

While it may sound like a daunting task, the experience is priceless. Dr. Forbes has mentioned that at the end of your education, it is not the multiple-choice tests that you are going to remember; it is the life-skills that you develop.

Independent research is the opportunity to build a variety of skills such as: critical thinking, problem solving, time management, and the ability to see a significant project through to the end.

Students who are interested and capable should check out the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research (CITR) for more information. Their website is <http://www.angelo.edu/dept/citr/>. Simply navigate to the Undergraduate Faculty-Mentored Grants tab on the side for detailed instructions.

Ultimately, to put it into psychology lingo, the penalty for failure is way low, and the reward for success is way high.

--Sean Motl

## Faculty Research Spotlight: Directed by Cheryl Stenmark, Ph.D. *Ethical Decision-Making Project*

Dr. Stenmark is currently working alongside Dr. Kreitler on a project exploring techniques people could use in order to make better ethical decisions.

In their study participants are asked to make an ethical decision; one group of participants is instructed to use a “cognitive map”, another group is instructed to freely express their thoughts about the ethical issue through expressive writing, and a control group is not given specific instructions to think

about the problem ethically before making their decision.

The first two groups are asked to write what they are thinking as they apply the decision-making strategies, and all three groups of participants are asked to write down their decision and forecast the outcome of the problem.

Dr. Stenmark and Dr. Kreitler are currently in the process of rating the qualitative information from this experiment to determine if the different strategies impact the

ethicity of decisions or the quality of forecasts. They hope to find that the cognitive map will result in the best decisions and most accurate forecasts, but are also interested in looking at peoples natural thought processes when they are asked to think through an ethical problem.

This research could possibly be used to develop training interventions that help individuals or organizations improve decision-making when it comes to ethical dilemmas.

--Jordan Walker

## Community Spotlight: Sonrisas Therapeutic Riding



Sonrisas means “smiles” in Spanish, and whether you are a psychology student or not, that is exactly what you will be doing when you volunteer for this amazing organization.

Sonrisas Therapeutic Riding offers an amazing opportunity to serve and give back to the community. Sonrisas

provides horseback riding therapy to children with physical, mental, and emotional challenges.

In my experience, volunteering at Sonrisas as been extremely rewarding. It is amazing to see the transformation of some of these kids when they are riding a horse.

Volunteers get the unique opportunity to interact with these children while they ride. As a side-walker, you assist the children with different activities that help with their cognitive, social, sequencing, balance, and coordination skills.

If working directly with children does not interest you,

there are also opportunities to complete a training that will allow you to lead the horses. You can also participate in Sonrisas’ Annual Ride-A-Thon.

As a non-profit that charges nothing for their services, volunteers are critical and almost always needed. For more information on how to get involved, you can contact Sonrisas at (325)-949-4837 or visit their website at [sonrisasriding.org](http://sonrisasriding.org)

--Sean Motl

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*“There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man.”*

*Winston S. Churchill*

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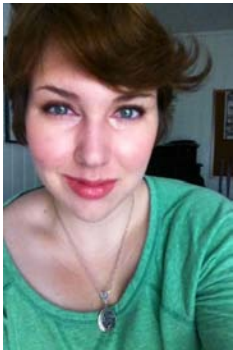
## Newsletter Contributors

First, we would like to thank all those involved in the making of the second annual Psychology Department Newsletter: Dr. Drew Curtis, Dr. James Forbes, Dr. Cheryl Stenmark, Dr. Sangeeta Singg and Ms. Kristie Walton. Thank you for your time and contributions. Also, we would like to extend a special thanks to our faculty advisor, Dr. Kreitler, for her endless support of Psych Club.



Sean Motl is an Honors, psychology student in his senior year. He currently serves as Psych Club's President. In the fall, he will attend UT Southwester Medical Center in Dallas to fulfill his dream of becoming a physician to underserved, vulnerable populations.

Nathan Reyes is a psychology major with a minor in criminal justice. He would like to pursue a career with either the D.E.A or the F.B.I. He enjoys ASU's proximity to larger cities and its affordability as compared to other universities. He currently serves as Psych Club's Vice President



Kelsey Merritt is a senior, Honors student at ASU with her major in psychology and a double minor in communications and kinesiology. She currently serves as Psych Club's Secretary. Her plans after graduating include traveling to Europe and attending graduate school for Communication Studies at ASU.

Logan Kinkade graduated from Priddy ISD in 2010. She is a senior psych major at ASU and will graduate in the Fall. She is currently the Treasurer of Psych Club and the President of the Gender Studies Association.



Jordan Walker is originally from Weatherford, Texas. She has been at ASU for one year and loves it. She is an Honors student and an active member of Psych Club. As a psychology major, she hopes to one day pursue a career in counseling.

