

Psychology Department Faculty 2024-2025

Cay Anderson-Hanley

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[Cay Anderson-Hanley, Ph.D. Website](#)

My research interests lie primarily in the realm of clinical neuropsychology and health psychology. In particular, I am interested in the neuropsychological effects of exercise for older adults, especially as it might relate to the maintenance of cognitive and emotional functioning, and the prevention of dementia. Recent studies completed in my lab indicate the executive function benefits of both strengthening exercise as well as virtual reality- enhanced exercise (cybercycling or pedaling & playing the iPad-based iPACES neuro-exergame) for older adults. Other recent research out of my lab has examined the effects of therapy groups for older adults, expressive writing for the emotional and physical well-being of dementia caregivers, and the benefits of exercise in schizophrenia and autism.

George Bizer

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As a social psychologist, I have broad research interests that include marketing and advertising, persuasion, perceptions of fairness and unfairness, attitude measurement, and social norms.

Zachary Buchin

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My research on human memory is broadly focused on applying cognitive principles to educational practice. I am particularly interested in retrieval-based learning and the testing effect, in which retrieval practice (e.g., recall, flashcards, practice questions, etc.) benefits later memory to a greater degree than more typical study-based strategies (e.g., rereading, copying, etc.). Specifically, my research examines: (1) how these memory modifying effects of retrieval are affected by divided attention/distraction; (2) the generalizability of retrieval-based learning across educationally-relevant factors (e.g., task complexity and prior knowledge); and (3) the indirect effects of testing on learning (e.g., taking a practice test on A will enhance the benefits from later restudy of A as well as later initial study of new material B). I plan to examine these topics both in the lab as well as in the classroom (e.g., assessing the effectiveness of different evidence-based learning and study strategies).

Daniel Burns

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I study human memory. Recently, my students and I have studied 1) the relationship between memory confidence and repetitive checking behaviors, as seen in individuals with OCD (Do people check more because they have less confidence in their memories?), 2) the extent to which evolution has shaped or fine-tuned our memory systems to facilitate the remembering of some information more than others information, 3) the paradoxical finding that perseverating about dying improves memory functioning.

Giselle Ferguson

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My work broadly examines individuals' emotions and personalities, and how those both shape and manifest in individuals' experiences of stress and well-being. However, all these components continue to change across the lifespan, due to differing social roles and networks, cognitive capacities, and physical ability, so I make sure to study adults of different ages, with a special focus on older adulthood. I especially enjoy exploring these topics using measurement in daily life, to observe processes as they unfold in response to naturally-occurring events and circumstances. The methodology for collecting these measurements is also one of my central concerns; for example, how the measurement methods used in daily life may not always be the most ecologically valid for such a naturalistic context, or may benefit from being adjusted to be more accessible and valid for the contexts or populations we study. Recently, I have started to examine the specific words individuals use to describe their emotions, and how well those words map onto the terms we psychologists often use to assess emotion on questionnaires.

Marlow Guerrant

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I am passionate about utilizing research as a tool to understand and address social problems, particularly those facing diverse LGBTQ+ populations such as immigrants, Latinx persons, and transgender and gender non-conforming individuals. More specifically, my research is focused on health equity and understanding factors which influence health-seeking behaviors and health outcomes. I am particularly interested in sexual health, diagnoses tied to sex assigned at birth (e.g. gynecological cancers, prostate cancer), inclusive sexual education and health promotion, and factors such as self-efficacy, sense of community, communication, and prior experiences in healthcare settings. As a community psychologist by training, I often utilize community-based and participatory methods in my work.

Joshua Hart

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[Joshua Hart, Ph.D. Website](#)

I have three overlapping areas of research interests: (1) The effects of psychological security and insecurity. Humans are fundamentally motivated to feel secure, which affects us in many ways. I and my students have studied the effects of security and insecurity on close relationships, self-esteem (e.g., academic, athletic, and appearance goals), attitudes (e.g., belief in evolution and intelligent design; support for military interventions and political candidates, belief in conspiracy theories), risk-taking, information-processing, and decision-making. (2) Attachment and close relationships. I am interested in how security-related individual differences (especially attachment style) influence close relationship and non-relationship phenomena. (3) Self-esteem and belief systems. I am also interested in the ways that people enhance and maintain their self-esteem and beliefs about the world. Therefore, research on self-esteem or worldviews (e.g., politics, religion, morality) is generally in my wheelhouse.

Cameron Kay

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[Assessment & Research Methodology Lab](#)

The overarching goal of my research is to identify the psychological factors that lead people to behave in antisocial ways. Recently, I have examined the associations of antagonistic personality traits (e.g., narcissism; psychopathy) with conspiracy beliefs, homonegativity, and gaslighting. To examine the correlates of these behaviors, however, it is necessary to have scales that are psychometrically sound and data that is sufficiently free of error. As such, a second focus of my research involves developing and validating new scales, while a third focus of my research involves designing tools for improving data quality.

Ayse Payir

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[Ayse Payir, Ph.D. website](#)

My research interests lie at the intersection of cognition, emotion, and imagination in early to middle childhood. The overarching goal of my research is to explore how children understand the world: Do they understand it primarily in terms of natural causes or are they disposed, from an early age, to invoke supernatural causes? I am particularly interested in the following research questions:

1. How do children imagine alternatives to reality?
2. How do these alternatives influence emotional experience and moral judgments?
3. How do cultural factors determine the boundaries of these alternatives?
4. How do children and adults reason about the phenomena that they cannot experience firsthand, such as religious and scientific entities and claims?
5. What are the origins of the perceived conflict between science and religion?
5. How do seemingly contradictory scientific and religious explanations develop from childhood to adulthood?"

Mariah Purol

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I'm interested in understanding how people create, enhance, and maintain a good life—one that they find satisfying. In particular, I am focused on the role that social relationships play in this sense of satisfaction—especially romantic relationships. My work examines how both individuals' and their partners' characteristics influence their relationship satisfaction, life satisfaction, and well-being. To that end, I'm interested in how we create happy satisfying lives as individuals (studying traits like gratitude and optimism), and as relationship members (studying constructs like interpersonal perceptions and personality in romantic relationships and in friendships).

Chad Rogers

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[Chad S. Rogers, Ph.D. website](#)

Much of my prior work has been focused on speech comprehension in young and older adults. My approach represents a combination of cognitive psychology, neuroscience, linguistics, and audiology. My specific research topics of late are: **(1) The neural reorganization of speech processing.** I am interested in how young and older adults may engage different routes to successful speech processing by recruiting different neural mechanisms revealed through EEG, structural and functional MRI. **(2) Effortful listening and its impact on semantic processing.** In difficult listening situations people report expending cognitive effort to achieve successful speech comprehension. I am interested in how people use meaning and semantics as a “shortcut” to reduce effort. **(3). Linguistic and acoustic contributions to auditory memory.** I am also interested in how variables like syntax and background noise make information not only difficult to understand, but also less likely to be remembered.

Stephen Romero

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Current research pursues three general goals: (1) Investigating neuronal plasticity associated with acquisition of new cognitive skills, recovery of function after brain injury, and associated with neurological and psychological disorders. These studies include the use of behavioral, neuroimaging and EEG methods with patients and unimpaired volunteers; (2) Investigating the role of optimism in cognitive skill learning through the use of behavioral, EEG, and Neuroimaging methods with patients and unimpaired volunteers; (3) Investigating neurological basis of musical processing through the use of behavioral, EEG, and Neuroimaging methods with patients and unimpaired volunteers.

D. Catherine Walker

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My research focuses on body image, eating disorders, and disordered weight- and shape-control behaviors. Specifically, individuals with body dissatisfaction repeatedly engage in body checking or body image avoidance behaviors, to gain or avoid information about their shape, weight, and size. My research has examined how body checking and avoidance behaviors impact body image and weight- and shape-control behaviors. I also have a research interest in body image and disordered eating and exercise behaviors in men. Lastly, my research focuses on clinical applications of prevention and treatment for eating disorders and body image dissatisfaction.

Carol Weisse

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My research examines the dying process from both patient and caregiver perspectives. I am particularly interested in a model of care where patients with home insecurity and/or caregiver instability receive care by non-familial caregivers in community-run residential care homes. My research team has been studying the management of symptoms such as pain, anxiety, and restlessness and how caregivers dispense hospice-prescribed medications. I am also investigating creative ways of using narratives about dying (e.g. through theater, public art, film etc..) to improve death literacy.