The School of Psychology is proud to introduce two new members of academic staff. Dr Ayse Uskul joined the department last term and Dr Rachel Calogero returned to Kent this month.

Dr Ayse Uskul is a social/cultural psychologist with research interests focusing on how living in different cultural settings shapes social cognition, conceptions of self, and interpersonal relationships. She started her studies in psychology at Bogazici University in Istanbul. She then completed an MA in social psychology at the Vrije University in Amsterdam before moving to York University in Toronto for her PhD in social psychology. After a 2-year postdoctoral fellowship at the Research Centre for Group Dynamics at the University of Michigan funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council in Canada, Ayse took her first academic position at the University of Essex. She joined our School in December 2012.

Her current research is organized around three major themes:

a) Socio-economic basis of social relationships: In this project, Ayse investigates how social structures (e.g., economic activities) that encourage different degrees and types of social interdependence shape cognitive (e.g., cognitive styles) and social functioning (e.g., responses to social exclusion).

b) Cultural conceptions of honour: In this comparative project, she studies cultural variations and similarities in the salience and forms of honour and emotional and behavioural responses to honour-relevant situations.

c) Culture and health behaviour change: This line of work cuts across research in social, cultural and health psychology in which she tests the effectiveness of novel strategies in health behaviour change among members of different cultural groups.

In addition, Ayse is interested in the role of self-regulatory mechanisms in social cognition (e.g., processing of health messages), social interaction (e.g., aggression), and mental well-being (e.g., depression), social/cultural psychological processes in question comprehension and responding in survey contexts, and the role of social power in emotion recognition in voice.

Dr Rachel Calogero is a social psychologist and University of Kent alum. She completed her B.A. in Psychology at Virginia Wesleyan College, and undertook an M.A. in Psychology at the College of William and Mary. After working for a considerable period at the The Renfrew Center for Eating Disorders in Philadelphia (an inpatient treatment centre for women with eating disorders), Rachel finished her PhD at Kent and was later awarded a 15-month postdoctoral fellowship from the Economic and Social Research Council to further develop her doctoral research.

Rachel is interested in the social psychological underpinnings of why people tend to justify and accept social systems that oppress and harm them. Her research spans and integrates the areas of social, political, applied, and clinical psychology to examine the scope of impact of these justifications on a variety of outcomes related to individual and social well being.

Much of her work has examined gender as a fundamental organizing framework of human behaviour. In particular, she has examined how gender roles and identification shape and direct all sorts of meaningful social actions from support for social policies to exercise.

Her wider interests include understanding the problems of (and solutions to) objectification, the role of epistemic motives in activating open or closed-mindedness, the contexts in which mindfulness functions as a psychological buffer against maladaptive thinking and behaviour, and the sociocultural factors associated with disordered eating and dysfunctional exercise.

A press release about Rachel’s article which has recently been published in Psychological Science titled ‘Self-Objectification May Inhibit Women’s Social Activism’ is available at the following link: bit.ly/XBCa9g.

Well done Michelle!

On 31st January, final year student Michelle Vermeulen was awarded a prize from the CanterburyAssociationofWomenGraduates (CAWG). The prize is given annually to a female student in recognition of her commitment and achievement. Several CAWG committee members and Psychology staff attended the prize-giving and were pleased to congratulate her. As President of the Psychology Society, Michelle is an active member of the undergraduate community’s within Psychology at Kent and also achieves very commendable results. Thus she is a truly worthy recipient of the prize - well done Michelle!
Research Clinical Psychologist and Kent Psychology alum, Dr Simon Clarke, tells us what has happened since graduating.

Why did you choose to study psychology?
I struggled with mental health difficulties for a number of years as a teenager and in my early twenties, until I was helped by a psychologist. I wanted to help other people in the way that I had been helped. Along with this, people are endlessly interesting and a degree in psychology provides a good foundation for working in a number of person-related industries.

What did you enjoy in your studies?
I really enjoyed learning about group processes – groups are a fundamental aspect of life, and how we relate to the groups of which we are part is vital. I also enjoyed the modules on history/philosophy of psychology as I think it’s helpful to look at the discipline from a broader perspective than just inside psychology. I learnt to enjoy stats eventually – which helps with all those research papers!

What are you doing now?
I qualified as a clinical psychologist in 2009 and now work in a split clinical/research role for Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust and the University Of Nottingham. My clinical work is based in a general hospital and involves implementing psychological treatments for patients with chronic pain; my research work is for the Arthritis Research UK Pain Centre and involves investigating the psychological mechanisms of pain and developing psychological interventions for osteoarthritis.

How did you end up in your current role?
Upon graduating, I worked at the University of Kent as a psychology research assistant for a year and then worked for a year at the Institute of Psychiatry as a researcher on a project looking at outcomes for involuntary detention for patients under the Mental Health Act. I then worked as an assistant psychologist in Medway. These posts gave me a good balance between research/clinical experience which was enough to get me onto a clinical psychology training course. After qualifying in 2009 I worked in an early intervention in psychosis service in London for two years, before moving over to my current role.

How has your degree in psychology helped in your work?
My undergraduate degree has provided me a foundation for much of what I do now. The research skills I learnt as an undergraduate have been invaluable, even in my clinical role, as psychologists are increasingly being asked to provide evidence for what they do.

What are your plans/ambitions for the future?
I want to get more involved in academic research, in both the development of treatments and in furthering our understanding of psychological mechanisms in emotional/behavioural disorders. I believe it is vital that psychological interventions are based on good research evidence and sound psychological theory. I also think it’s vital that we base psychological treatments and services on the experiences of people using them and not just the priorities/interests of researchers/clinicians.

Do you have any careers advice for students who are about to graduate this year?
Always keep an open mind about career options and don’t allow yourself to become too focussed down a particular pathway too early. Clinical training is a worthwhile pursuit but always have a back-up plan. Competition is fierce and it can take at least 2-4 applications before you’re successful. However, don’t get discouraged and ignore the myths about clinical training (e.g. “it’s impossible to get on”). It is possible and definitely worth it once you’re qualified, but you do have to be prepared for the long-haul.

The School of Psychology wishes a fond farewell to Dr Olga Zubko this month. Olga has been a fantastic asset to the department as both a student and staff member over a number of years, and we wish her great success in her very promising career.

Olga completed her MSc in Psychology by Research, PhD and Postdoctoral research at Kent, having graduated with a BSc Psychology from St Andrews University, Scotland.

Her MSc by Research and PhD focused on understanding how we recognise faces. During her PhD she won travel awards from the Experimental Psychology Society and BPS for a 6 month sabbatical at Harvard Medical School to study the behaviour who are congenitally face-blind.

Her experiences at Harvard Medical School further whetted her appetite for neuropsychological research and, from an international field of applicants, she was selected to be the postdoctoral study coordinator for Dr David Wilkinson’s Medical Research Council (MRC) clinical trial – the first ever MRC research grant awarded to the School of Psychology. The trial required Olga to work with sufferers of a common and refractory brain condition known as hemi-spatial neglect in which sufferers fail to notice or respond to information on their left hand side.

Her main role was to identify, diagnose and then treat (and assess) eligible patients with a novel form of electrical stimulation that targets the balance organs of the inner ear. The work was emotionally, physically and mentally demanding and according to her mentor, Dr David Wilkinson, she performed it tirelessly. ‘Olga sits at the heart of the success of our MRC trial. Aside from the practical rigour that she brought to the study, Olga showed great compassion and sensitivity to the families and patients involved. Equally able to hold her own with senior hospital managers and academics, Olga has a rare combination of skills that make her well-suited to translational research that bridges the university-hospital divide.’

Olga’s new appointment is at the very prestigious Institute of Psychology, King’s College London where she will be involved in the management and conduct of multiple clinical trials, as opposed to just the one conducted here in the School.

Olga had this to say about her time in Psychology at Kent:
"I arrived in Canterbury in 2006, with a mild Scottish twang, a couple of suitcases and a vague idea of what Psychology was all about. Six and a half years later I finally mustered the courage to leave this marvellous bubble and move down the road, to London. I leave with a Doctorate, true friends, unforgettable memories, now a completely unidentifiable accent, a van full Canterbury-related possessions and a slightly better idea of what Psychologists do. This has been a fantastic ride and I would highly recommend it! I am really excited to see what awaits me in the Big City, but I’m getting a return ticket to London on Tuesday when I finally leave, so that if King’s isn’t as fun as they promised, I will be back in time for the Fresher’s BBQ!"


Abrams, D., Vasiljevic, M., & Wardrop, H.M. (2012). Prejudice reduction, collective action, and then what? Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 35 (6), 15-16. doi: 10.1017/S0140525X12001136 (Commentary on Dixon, Levine, Reicher, & Durrheim: Beyond prejudice: Are negative evaluations the problem and is getting us to like one another more the solution?).


Recent Publications

Kent Psychologists in the Media

On 25th February Dr Jane Wood appeared on the BBC’s Inside Out South East discussing the value of families for offenders and in reducing reoffending rates.

Jane’s work with offenders has shown that constructive and frequent contact with families can often mean that they are more likely to have somewhere to live when released and have the potential of a job. The support from a family can also help offenders to settle back into society and rehabilitate.

To find out more about Jane’s research please go to: bit.ly/XLBeUI

Congratulations

Congratulations to Karen Douglas who is Co-I on a project with Jim Ang (PI) and Farzin Deravi (Co-I) from the School of Engineering and Digital Arts. The project is entitled “Cognitive and Behaviour Concepts of Cyber Activities” and they have been awarded a total of £10,552 by BAE Systems (Operations) Ltd.

Congratulations to Tim Hopthrow (PI) and Dominic Abrams (Co-I) who have been awarded £5,000 from BAE Systems (Operations) Ltd. for a project entitled “DHCSTC Tools and Techniques for Influence Activities Mental Simulation”.

Congratulations to Roger Giner-Sorolla who has been awarded £5,000 by BAE Systems (Operations) Ltd. for a project entitled “DHCSTC Tools and Techniques for Influence Activities Apologies”.

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kentpsychologist
New Enterprise and Initiative Taking Skills module is great success

This autumn, a number of final year Psychology students successfully completed the brand new SP640 Leadership, Enterprise and Initiative Taking Skills module. The module’s purpose was to enable participants to develop their skills, personal qualities and knowledge in relation to the changing work world. Inquiry methods such as the conversation cafe, search conference, and action learning were used to draw out and build on what students already knew, and make the most of each others' resources. There was the opportunity to practise negotiation, facilitation, motivation, initiative taking and assertiveness skills, as well as develop action learning groups for supporting learning.

The School of Psychology would like to thank Martin Large, module convenor in 2012/13, for his contribution to the smooth running of this module which was really enjoyed by students.

We are pleased to be able to offer this module again to students in the next academic year.

Thank you for taking part in the NSS

Psychology at Kent would like to thank all those students who spoke up about their experience as a student in our School. The latest figures show that we had the 17th highest response rate in the University. However, there is still time for you to enter the survey at www.thestudentsurvey.com. Eligible students have until the end of April 2013 to give us their views. We hope to receive even more responses in the coming weeks so that we can respond to feedback and continue to offer our students excellent student experience.

Pictured left are some of the lucky winners of the School of Psychology NSS prize-draw, which we ran in February, with their Dolche Vita vouchers in hand.

The #positive uses of #Twitter

PhD student and Associate Lecturer, Daniel Jolley (@mr_jolley), gives us insight into his uses of Twitter and its benefits.

Twitter has become a great resource to share knowledge, and also engage with similar minded people. Specifically, you are able to ‘follow’ people of interest (e.g., this could be a selection of famous psychologists), and potentially exchange ideas with them. You can also follow Twitter accounts for organisations such as @BPSOfficial, @ResearchDigest and @PsyPAG which tweet about issues concerning psychologists, and also current research within the broad umbrella of ‘psychology’. In particular, @ResearchDigest provides daily news snippets on a variety of interesting pieces of research, which otherwise you might not have come across. Other Twitter accounts of interest include @KentPsychology, which tweets information about the School of Psychology which current, prospective and former students might like to know, like updates on research produced by Kent Psychologists, staff-student events and so on.

Further, you are also able to get involved with ‘Twitter Chats’. These involve several Twitter users coming together to talk about a particular topic at a given time. This is facilitated by users searching the topic hash tag, which enables you to follow the conversation, and also join in by using the hash tag in your own tweets. For example, the BPS Social Psychology Section (@SocialPsychUK) holds a fortnightly Twitter Chat using the hash tag #SPSchat. Previous topics have included interdisciplinarity, pathways to impact, using social media, plus a variety of others. With #SPSchat, the topics are suggested by the followers, thus it is user focused.

There are hundreds of these Twitter chats, most likely several at any given hour, so it is likely you will be able to find one on any subject that you fancy. Being involved in these chats provides a great opportunity for you to participate with others with a similar interest. These can be fellow undergraduates, postgraduates and researchers in the field, who you might not have engaged with otherwise. Therefore, Twitter is a helpful resource that allows all these different people to interact at their own convenience. Twitter might not be for everyone, but the hash tag function, and also being able to ‘follow’ others’ tweets, certainly offers a great way to keep up to date with topics, organisations and also people of interest.

Library Induction Winners

Some members of the winning team in the Welcome Week Library Induction met recently with lecturer Dr Anna Brown and Emma Furdener from the Library to receive Blackwell gift vouchers each worth £25 - well done Adela and Anna!

Need Help/Advice?

If you have any personal or academic issues that may affect your ability to study you can talk to Lisa Clark, Student Advisor for Psychology.

Please email her at: psychadvisor@kent.ac.uk

There is a range of services available to all Kent students including the following:

• Careers and Employability Service
• Disability and Dyslexia Support Service
• International Students
• Counselling
• Chaplaincy
• Medical

Plus many more...

You can find more out about Student Services from the following webpage: www.kent.ac.uk/guidance/

Any Suggestions?

If you have any comments or suggestions for the staff in the School of Psychology, then you can feed these back to us by using our suggestions box located outside the Psychology Student Office (Keynes M1.13).

Kent Psychologist

The School of Psychology’s Newsletter is for students and staff. We welcome contributions from both staff and students for future issues. If you would like to write an article or have any news you’d like to share, please contact Carly Turnham.

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