Psychology

School of Social Sciences

Welcome to the latest Psychology newsletter

November 2018

In this month's newsletter, you'll find the regular updates on our activities, from learning and teaching achievements, new grants and publications, to the conferences and outreach events we've been part of.

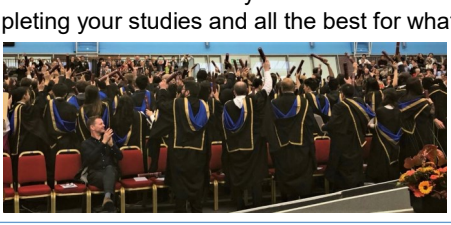
To keep up to date with the latest news from the team as it happens, follow us on Twitter @HWPsych or find us on Facebook.

Links: Social Sciences | Psychology | Twitter | Facebook

The newsletter displays best on tablets (PDF attached also).

Winter graduations

This month, we celebrated the achievements of our graduates, primarily from the MSc Business Psychology in Edinburgh, while Toni Fallon was also formally awarded her PhD. The celebrations move to Dubai and Malaysia over the coming weeks. From all the team a very well-deserved congratulations on completing your studies and all the best for what comes next!



Follow our updates on Twitter @HWPsych

Forthcoming events

Research Seminars/Events
- Dementia Research Showcase
28 November, MBG20
Details

Full **Psychology Research Seminar** details are available on Facebook.

Latest publications

Our latest publications are listed here, but you can find a full list via the Heriot-Watt Research Portal.

Phu, B. & Gow, A. J. (2019). Facebook use and its association with subjective happiness and loneliness. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 92, 151-159. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2018.11.020

Smith, E., Gow, A., Forsyth, L., Bryne, B., Howells, L., Anderson, A., and Maggie's Centres (2018). The Relationship Between Psychological Flexibility, Value-Based Living and Emotional Well-Being in People Affected by Cancer. *Journal of Global Oncology*, 4:Supplement 2, 115s. doi: 10.1200/jgo.18.57800

In the news

Graduation celebrations at Heriot-Watt

UK research study to improve online safety for autistic children

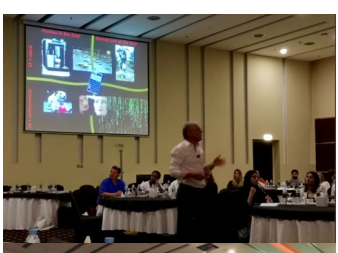
One Scotland blog: Provocation piece – Women and Girls in STEM (Mel McKendrick)

Student voice

In "Student voice", we hear from our students. Every contribution is different, so if you have something you'd like to share, get in touch with Alan Gow. This month, we hear from students involved in the Volunteer Research Assistant scheme.

By Sabrina Bringuier, James Kilgour and Simone Marchetti: The Volunteer Research Assistant (VRA) scheme is an opportunity to get hands-on experience working on research. It serves as a platform to expand knowledge in research and develop working relationships with other students and professors. We were excited to join because we are all interested in the skills the scheme is designed to develop. We have been working on a study, funded by Alzheimer Scotland, which looks at the significance of tDCS stimulation on working memory binding and evaluates brain activity during the memory binding process. We hope our findings can be used in developing possible treatments for Alzheimer's by identifying how stimulating specific neural networks affects memory binding, a key deficit in some cognitive impairments. Being involved in a study with potential application in a clinical setting is an exciting prospect; throughout the process, we have learned how to operate different testing equipment, recruit participants, manage data, report results, and how to approach journals for publication. These skills will be incredibly valuable during our careers, but they have also been extraordinarily helpful in navigating research-related coursework. The VRA experience has shaped our knowledge and team skills in ways we could not have anticipated. It has also provided insight into possible interests for our own 4th year dissertations and instills confidence for our own research.

Conferences and outreach



Our Psychology Research Seminars for this semester conclude with a Dementia Research Showcase later this month organised by the Memory Lab. The event is free but places are limited and must be booked in advance: www.hw.ac.uk/dementiaresearch. Event details for the next seminars are above with a fuller list on the Facebook page.

It's also been a busy few weeks for colleagues in Dubai, having hosted the latest International Psychology Conference Dubai in October. And this month, Lucy Bolton and Greg Fantham ran an interactive and engaging evening workshop at the Gloria Hotel, Dubai. With a great turnout of about 85 attendees, from various backgrounds, the topic was Artificial Intelligence (AI) from a psychological perspective. Greg took the stage first to discuss the use and integration of AI in the workplace, considering how, as humans, we interact with such technology. The audience were faced with some tricky ethical dilemmas that we could well face in reality in the near future! Lucy then led the second half of the workshop, taking the audience to a more personal psychological level, thinking about our day-to-day interactions with AI, and our attachment to our smart devices, discussing issues around work-life balance and addiction. The session concluded with reflections on how we can work collaboratively with AI without allowing our social connections and identities to be put at a disadvantage.

The team regularly present at national and international conferences and at a range of public engagement events. A selection of the most recent include:

Tamariz, M. (2018). Cumulative cultural evolution = Darwinian evolution. 2nd International Conference of the Cultural Evolution Society, Tempe, Arizona, USA, 22nd October.

Tamariz, M. & Kamal, J. (2018). Horizontal and vertical pathways of cultural transmission in Scotland and Malaysia. 2nd International Conference of the Cultural Evolution Society, Tempe, Arizona, USA, 24th October.

Garraffa, M. & Sedda, A. (2018). Core regions for syntactic processing. BNS meeting, London, UK, 1st November.

Gow, A. J. & Luciano, M. (2018). What Keeps Us Sharp? Presentation at the Age Scotland Edinburgh and Lothians Meeting of Older People's Groups and Organisations, Edinburgh, UK, 6th November.

Niechcial, M. (2018). What Keeps You Sharp? People's views about preserving thinking skills in old age. Presentation at the British Geriatrics Society Autumn Meeting, London, UK, 14th-16th November.

Gow, A. J. (2018). From ageing cohorts to real-world interventions in cognitive ageing. Research seminar at the Centre for Ageing Research, Lancaster University, UK, 14th November.

Learning and teaching

The second of two undergraduate Open Days was held at the end of October, with Maria Garraffa, Dan Hale, Alan Gow, Thusha Rajendran, Anna Sedda and Sue Cowan fielding questions from potential applicants across the day. Many thanks to the student volunteers assisting at the Open Days too!

Students in Psychology and students in the BSL interpreting programme were offered the opportunity to be trained on the needs of Deaf people in a clinical setting. The training was supported by the Heriot-Watt Annual Fund and involved lectures from experts in Deaf culture and role play sessions with Deaf actors and professional clinical psychologists. This was a unique opportunity for students in SoSS, and valuable for those considering a career in Clinical Psychology and Mental Health.

Meet the team

Each month we profile members of our team based across our campuses in Edinburgh, Dubai and Malaysia.

Dr Kirin Hilliar, Assistant Professor (Dubai)
Kirin joined HWUDC in September 2018. An Australian, she completed her B.Psychology, M.Psychology (Forensic) and PhD at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in Sydney. Her work has covered areas in forensic, clinical and organizational psychology, and has included assessing serious offenders in prison; treating forensic patients in high-security hospital settings; the selection and development of government employees; and providing psychotherapeutic services to adolescents, adults and couples. Her past research has focused on face recognition accuracy. In the UAE, she is keen to contribute to the implementation and growth of best practices in forensic psychology. She continues to work part-time in private practice.

Dr Ioannis (Yiannis) Argyropoulos, Senior Psychology Technician
Yiannis received an MSc in Cognitive Neuropsychology (2008), MRes in Psychology (2009) and a PhD in Psychology (2014) at Oxford Brookes University (OBU). He briefly taught Research Methods and Statistics at OBU before he joined HWU in August 2014 as Psychology Technician. Yiannis supports staff and students with their research, manages the labs, maintains the Student Research Participation (StReP) system, teaches PsychoPy to Year 3 psychology students and updates the research websites. Yiannis received the Technical Support Psychological Teaching Award by the British Psychological Society in 2016.

Dr Zuhrah Beevi, Assistant Professor (Malaysia)
Zuhrah joined Heriot-Watt in 2015, having previously taught at the International Medical University Malaysia. Her research focuses on the application of clinical hypnosis in the management of pregnancy, labour, and postpartum, as well as cancer. Zuhrah gives talks and contributes to public awareness campaigns on the efficacy of clinical hypnosis in medicine. She works with organizations that promote clinical hypnosis as a complementary treatment, for example, as Vice President of Malaysian Society of Clinical Hypnosis. With colleagues at Heriot-Watt Malaysia, Zuhrah teaches English to the Heriot-Watt Cleaners, a project that was awarded the Spirit of Heriot-Watt 2018. She teaches across the undergraduate programmes, such as Psychology of Mental Health (Year 3).

Dr Ria Vaportzis, Postdoctoral Research Associate (Edinburgh)
Ria is a postdoctoral researcher on the project The Intervention Factory, which explores whether taking up new activities might help older people's cognitive skills. She is interested in cognitive changes in healthy ageing and neurodegenerative disorders, as well as interventions that may delay or postpone cognitive decline or improve cognitive abilities in older adults and patients with neurodegenerative disorders. Having completed a PhD at Monash University in Australia, she moved to the UK in 2014 to assume her first postdoc (also at Heriot-Watt). She will be starting a lectureship at the University of Bradford in December 2018.

Team news

Louise Delicato joined the team as Assistant Professor in Edinburgh.

Kate Sullivan, Lorna Camus and Federico Brusa joined the team as PhD students in Edinburgh.

Research in the Department of Psychology, School of Social Sciences, at Heriot-Watt University is grouped by three main themes: Cognition, Brain and Behaviour; Lifespan Health and Wellbeing; and Work, Society and Environment. Find out more about our research at www.psych.hw.ac.uk or follow updates on Twitter @HWPsych.