

Psychological Sciences Newsletter

Winter 2017/2018

Contents

News	1
Media Mentions	2
Public Engagement and Talks	3
Awards and Recognition	4
Grants	5
Conference Activity	6
Doctoral Activity	7
Current Projects	9
Publications	10

News

Birkbeck flying high in Times higher education's first psychology rankings

Psychology at Birkbeck has been lauded in a new Times Higher Education subjects ranking, in the top two for London and 68th in the world; plus grant success for Department of Psychological Sciences.

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/news/birkbeck-flying-high-in-times-higher-education2019s-first-psychology-rankings>

A New Impact Officer for the Department of Psychological Sciences: Louise Atkins

After studying clarinet performance and performance science at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Louise went on to complete cross-faculty doctoral research at the University of South Wales. Exploring health and wellbeing practice, policy and provision in the UK conservatoire sector, Louise's thesis investigated occupational health and wellbeing development for performance enhancement.

Since the completion of her PhD, Louise has worked extensively across the UK conservatoires, both researching and teaching in the areas of music performance psychology, performance enhancement, health and wellbeing and research methods. Louise currently coordinates the Conservatoires UK Healthy Conservatoires Network at the Royal College of Music and is an integration science consultant in elite performing arts settings.



Louise joins Birkbeck from Brunel University London where alongside her academic career she has worked as the Research and Impact Administrator in the College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences. In supporting researchers, logging and monitoring impact and developing impact strategies Louise is passionate about public engagement, knowledge translation, and research implementation.

Public Engagement and Talks

Members of staff from across the department have been engaging in a wide variety of engagement and knowledge transfer activities

Eddy Davelaar will be organising a one-day symposium entitled "Neurofeedback methods and neuroscience approaches" on 20 April.

Iroise Dumontheil featured in the Wellcome Collection's Packed Lunch series – an event where local scientists can be heard in conversation on their latest experiments, life in the lab and why science matters to everyone. The 4th October 2017 session focussed on [Teenage Brains](#), a topic Iroise also focussed on in her talk *Mindfulness meditation training during adolescence* for teacher delegates at the Teenage Brain Conference on 10 October at Ruislip High School



Ulrike Hahn was invited to give the talk *Information networks, truth and value* at the University of Manchester in November 2017 and the Zangwill Seminar *Information networks, truth and value* at the University of Cambridge, Department of Psychology in November 2017. She also spoke at the Max Planck Institute for Adaptive Rationality, Berlin on *Testimony, information networks, truth and value in* December 2017 and at a workshop on Climate Change & Health at Leopoldina German Academy of Science, PIK Potsdam, on *Rationality, reasoning and argumentation in* December 2017.

Ted Melhuish gave the invited talk *Recent Research Evidence Relevant to Policy for Early Education* to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development (OECD) Early Education Network in Paris on November 15th.

Anne Miles attended the Cancer Research Scoping Workshop on 11th December 2017 aimed at helping NHS England shape their research programme in response to the new cancer strategy.

Alex Shepherd has been co-opted onto the executive committee of the Applied Vision Association which promotes vision research and its applications, from cell biology and neuroscience to clinical trials, through regular meetings and an online forum. She attended the first board meeting on January 16th, at Nottingham University.

Fiona Tasker contributed to the inaugural meeting of the Bloomsbury Childhood Study Group with *Who's in the family?* at Birkbeck, University of London on 14th November 2017.

Forthcoming Departmental Seminar Talks

21-Feb Jason Moser, Michigan State University
Title: Neurophysiological mechanisms of cognitive control in anxiety: Themes and variation

28-Feb Beth Grunfeld, Birkbeck
Title: "The only way I know how to live is to work."
Understanding and supporting work following cancer treatment.

7-Mar Philip Clapson, Birkbeck
Title: Death of Consciousness, Birth of a Science: The Theory of Brain-Sign

14-Mar Bonny Oliver, Goldsmiths
Title: Family processes and children's behavioural development

21-Mar Daryl O'Connor, Leeds
Title: Karōshi: Effects of Stress on Health and Wellbeing

28-Mar Elena Antonova, King's
Title: The Neural Dynamics of a Mindful Brain

For more information contact Eddy Davelaar <ubjtb33@mail.bbk.ac.uk>

Awards and Recognition

Congratulations to all our staff receiving awards

Rich Cook for the twenty-sixth Prize Lecture by the Experimental Psychology Society, to be delivered in 2019 at the Manchester meeting of the EPS.



Iroise Dumontheil for the [15th Elizabeth Warrington Prize from The British Neuropsychological Society](#), for distinguished early stage career work in Neuropsychology. She gave her Prize Lecture at the BNS conference on *Social cognition and cognitive control during adolescence* on 2nd November in London.

Lara Maister for the Ronald Tress Prize at Birkbeck for exceptional research by an early career academic.

The Prize celebrates excellence in research by early career academics, as well as the legacy of Professor Ronald Tress CBE, Master of Birkbeck from 1968 to 1977.



New Editorial Team for Contemporary Social Science

Dr John Connolly [left] and Professor Jacqueline Barnes FAcSS [right] join the Editor of the Academy's journal, *Contemporary Social Science*, Professor David Canter FAcSS [centre], as Associate Editors. [Contemporary Social Science](#) publishes quarterly as themed, interdisciplinary issues, covering the full range of social scientific work and with a strong international element.



Grants

Congratulations to all our staff receiving research grants

Jacqueline Barnes (led by researchers at UCL)	Evaluation of Parent Intervention for Challenging Behaviour in Children with Intellectual Disabilities (EPICC-ID)	NIHR	£29,578
Tony Charman (KCL), Emily Jones (Co-I)	Developmental Trajectories in Autism Spectrum Disorder from 6 months to 7 years	MRC	£94,396
Rosanna Edey (based with Clare Press)	The role of human movement cues in social-cognitive abilities	Wellcome postdoctoral ISSF funding for completing PhD students	£17,821
Emily Jones (co-PI)	MICA BRAINTOOLS Phase 1: Optimising neurodevelopmental outcomes for global health	MRC Global Health grant	£199,405
Emily Jones and Emma Meaburn	Delineating neurodevelopmental causal paths to autism symptoms in infancy	Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative	£214,167
Denis Mareschal and Rick Cooper	MOTION (2018-2021)	European Commission H2020-MSCA-ITN-2017	£387,212
Anne Miles	The role of risk of recurrence, bowel function and avoidance of a permanent stoma in patient preferences for treatment for rectal cancer	Bowel Disease Research Foundation	£58,142
Clare Press	Agency and the nature of its dysfunction in ageing and schizophrenia	Wellcome ISSF career break funding	£39,456
Fiona Tasker and Pedro Alexandre Costa	Adopted children's understanding of family identity in lesbian, gay and heterosexual parented families	BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant	£7,226

Conference Activity

Members of staff from across the department have been representing Psychological Sciences at conferences across the world

Rick Cooper presented the talk *Problem Solving and the Modulation of Routine Behaviour* as part of a symposium on problem solving and goal-directed sequential activity at the 39th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, London, July 2017.

Iroise Dumontheil gave a research talk titled *Social cognition and executive functions development during adolescence* at the International Neuropsychological Society mid-year meeting on 6 July in London, as well as *Mindfulness meditation training during adolescence* at the INSTILL Yoga, Education and Well-being conference on 9 July in London, at the Mind & Life Europe European Summer Research Institute on 26 August in Chiemsee, Germany and at the Centre for Educational Neuroscience seminar on 20 October in London. Iroise has also given presentations titles *Relational integration as a domain-general process* at the Fourth Analogy conference on 1 August in Paris, *Self-regulation during adolescence* at the International Mind Brain and Education Society Wellcome Trust pre-conference on 15 September in Toronto, Canada, and *Genetic influences on executive functions in adolescence and adulthood* at the Department of Neuroscience, Psychology & Behaviour's seminar on 27 October in Leicester.

Ulrike Hahn was invited to speak at the Arrogance and Polarisation in Public Debate event in Cardiff, November 2017 on the topic *Can we get rational argument back into public debate?*, and at the conference Rationality in Perception and Cognition, Uppsala, Sweden, October 2017 on *The perception-cognition gap*. She was also invited to give the keynote presentation *Pessimism about unrealistic optimism* at SweCog2017, Uppsala, Sweden October 2017, as well as *The role of Decision Theory in AI* at a Workshop at AI & Decisions, Cambridge, July, 2017, and *Rationality and the role of limited experience* at the 39th Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, London, July 2017. July, 2017, Invited Symposium "Computational Foundations", 39th Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, London: "Why we need NEATs".

Emma Meaburn presented a poster at the International Behavior Genetics Association, in Oslo, July 2017

Ted Melhuish was invited to give a keynote address titled *Early Years' Experience, Long-term Development and Inequality: Research and Policy Implications* in October 2017 to the Australian Faculty of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in Adelaide.

Angelica Ronald presented posters at the International Behavior Genetics Association, in Oslo, July 2017 and at the Genetics Society meeting held at the Royal Society in November 2017. She was also an invited external speaker at Child and Adolescent Twin Study in Sweden annual meeting where she gave the talk *Genetic studies of psychotic experiences in adolescence*, and gave the keynote address *Recent insights into the causes of autism and ADHD and their co-occurrence* at the British Autism Study of Infant Siblings (BASIS) annual meeting, September 2017.

Jonathan Smith gave the following keynote presentations: a) *The personal experience of depression: an investigation with interpretative phenomenological analysis* at the Interpretative phenomenological analysis conference, Glasgow Caledonian University, May 2017; b) *Getting at meaning and meaning making: interpretative phenomenological analysis in action* at the International conference on meaning, Roehampton University, June 2017; c) *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: getting at the meaning of pain* at Institute of qualitative methodology conference, University of Athens, Dec 2017. He also presented the keynote talk *Trying to make sense of lived experience: Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and the meaning of chronic pain* at the Qualitative Report Annual Conference, Nova South-eastern University, Florida, USA, Jan 2018.

Alex Shepherd presented a poster at the 2017 European Conference on Visual Perception in Berlin with colleagues Eamonn Walsh, Algirdas Jonasas, Rachel Rodrigues and Geddes Wyatt on *Increased visual metacontrast masking in migraine using a novel global shape task: no evidence for a lack of inhibition in extrastriate cortex*.

Doctoral Activity

Doctoral candidates at international conferences

Andrea Caso presented a talk *A Neurocomputational Model of Learning to Select Actions* at the 15th International Conference on Cognitive Modelling, Warrick, July 2017, and *A Model of Cognitive Control in the Wisconsin Card Sorting Test: Integrating Schema Theory and Basal Ganglia Function* at the 39th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, London, July 2017 as well as *A Model of Cognitive Control in the Wisconsin Card Sorting Test: Integrating Schema Theory and Basal Ganglia Function* at the 39th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society. Austin, TX.

Sinead Rocha was awarded the *Award for Best Presentation* from the European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music (ESCOM). Awarded 9/2017 at the 10th International Conference of Students of Systematic Musicology, London, UK.

Theses Awarded

Congratulations to all those successfully defending their theses

Candidate: Peter J. Collins

Title: Rationality, pragmatics and sources

Supervisor: Ulrike Hahn

Examiners Prof. Nick Chater, Warwick, Prof Anne Richards, Birkbeck

Candidate: Rosanna Edey

Title: The role of human movement kinematics in internal state inference'

Supervisors: Clare Press and Iroise Dumontheil

Examiners: Francesca Happe (SGDP, Kings College London) and Sabine Hunnius (Donders Institute, Netherlands)

Candidate: Victor Manuel Figueroa Guinez

Thesis title: Lesbian Motherhood in a Chilean Cultural Context

Supervisors: Dr Fiona Tasker and Dr Virge Eatough

Candidate: Constantinos Mitsopoulos

Title: Reinforcement learning approaches to the analysis of the emergence of goal-directed behaviour

Supervisors: Rick Cooper and Denis Mareschal

Candidate: Oliver Pain (from the GEL lab)

Title: Genome-wide Analyses to Investigate the Genetic Factors Underlying Specific Psychotic Experiences in Adolescence and Their Overlap with Psychiatric Disorders

Supervisors: Angelica Ronald and Frank Dudbridge (LSHTM)

Candidate: Nick Sexton

Title: Human task switching and the role of inhibitory processes: A computational modelling and empirical approach

Supervisors: Rick Cooper and Eddy Davelaar

Examiners: Sam Gilbert (UCL) and Jim Grange (Keele University).

Lucía Magis-Weinberg (UCL) and Irene Symeonidou (UCL) whose PhD thesis Dr Iroise Dumontheil co-supervised, both successfully passed their vivas in November 2017.

Theses Examined

Staff from around the department are frequently invited to examine doctoral theses at institutions around the world

Emily Jones examined the thesis of Virginia Carter-Leno at Kings College London, who passed with no corrections.

Emma Meaburn was external examiner of a PhD thesis by Robyn Wootton at the University of Bristol, entitled “The Genetic Aetiology of Subjective Wellbeing and Related Positive Traits”.

Fiona Tasker was external examiner of a PhD thesis by Fatos Bayraktar at the University of Roehampton, London, entitled *Psychological Well-being, Romantic Attachment and Attitudes towards Divorce in Emerging Adults in Cyprus*.

Current Projects

Calling all Parents!



Are you and your relationship partner 'Living Apart Together' (not living together full-time)?
And are you parents?

We would really love to hear from you!

Please complete our research survey on family life, for all parents in and around London. www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/familylifeyou

Please share with colleagues, students and friends.

For more information visit the study website: www.familylifeyou.co.uk or email smanna01@mail.bbk.ac.uk

This research has been approved by the Birkbeck Department of Psychological Sciences Ethics Committee.

Many thanks, Sally Mannan and Fiona Tasker

Birkbeck migraine study, on-line experiment

This on-line experiment aims to track changes in visual perception over several months. We are looking for people who are prepared to participate regularly, ideally daily or every other day, over several months. We aim to track changes over time in performance on objective measures of visual perception, and associate any changes with occurrences of your migraines or headaches. If we can identify changes in your performance associated with migraine or headache proximity to the test session, you may find this useful if you wish to learn to manage when your migraines or headaches occur.

If you wish, we will enter you into a raffle at the end of the experiment: you will be entered into a draw where five £50 gifts will be prizes in a raffle. You will be eligible to enter the raffle if you complete the study.

The study has received ethical approval from the Department's ethical committee.

Perception lab on-line study: Tracking the migraine cycle: everyone is welcome to participate whether you do, or do not, get migraine

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/psychology/e/xp/88/1>

Publications

Journal Articles

- Antoine, P. and Smith, J.A. (2017) Saisir l'expérience : présentation de l'analyse phénoménologique interprétative comme méthodologie qualitative en psychologie. *Psychologie Française*, 62, 373-385. doi: 10.1016/j.psfr.2016.04.001
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Books

Miles, A. The psychological implications of diagnostic delay in colorectal cancer patients. (2017). Chapter 7 in: Timely diagnosis of colorectal cancer. Springer. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-65286-3

Moser, T., Leseman, P., Melhuish, E., Broekhuisen, M. & Slot, P. (2017). European Framework of Quality and Wellbeing Indicators. Curriculum & Quality Analysis and Impact Review of European Early Childhood Education and Care (CARE) report. [Brussels: European Commission](#).

Book chapters

Belsky, J., Melhuish, E., & Barnes, J. (2017). Sure Start Local programmes: Area-based, early-preventative intervention in England. In R. Alexander (Ed.) Research and Practices in Child Maltreatment Prevention, Vol. 2: Societal, Organisational, and International approaches. St. Louis, Missouri; STM Learning, pp 323-332.

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