

Fourth Annual Psychology Research Colloquium, Metropolitan State University

November 22, 2014, Library, Room 302 (EcoLab)

Presenters, Projects, and Abstracts

Keynote Speaker:

Dr. Kerry Kleyman – “Blending Into the Background?: The Influence of Situation Cues on Perceptions of Racially Ambiguous”

The large and increasing number of biracial or multiracial individuals blurs racial boundaries and challenges longstanding racial classifications. Based on the notion that people have implicit expectations that certain situations are more likely to be characteristic for some racial groups rather than others, it is hypothesized that observers rely on situational cues to disambiguate the targets. Across two studies, an assimilation effect was found; ambiguous targets were perceived as darker when paired with a Black situational cue, and perceived as lighter when paired with a White situational cue. Further results suggest implications for individual differences and the cross-race effect. Overall, categorization of racially ambiguous faces appears to be influenced by the situation, as well as the level or symmetry of ambiguity, and belief and attitude structures of the perceiver. Implications for eyewitness testimony and other identification tasks are discussed.

Student Research Presentations:

Valerie Wilwert -- “I Read it in a Magazine: The Socialization of a Changing Culture in the Millennial Generation”

Differences in attitudes between different birth cohorts reflect the culture of each generation. Content analysis analyzed common themes of Millennial-focused media. Physical vanity was found throughout the covers sampled, but later covers included a significantly greater emphasis on individualism and narcissism, both impacting and reflecting changes in ideology between generations.

Fanice Thomas – “Becoming Beautiful: The Influence of Western Body Ideals on Kenyan American’s Body Image”

Studies show an existing relationship between exposure to thin-idealized media images and increased body dissatisfaction. It was hypothesized that Kenyans exposed to thin-ideal images would report more body dissatisfaction than those exposed to overweight images. Findings suggest that exposure to Western media-ideal images contributes to an increase in body dissatisfaction among Kenyan Americans.

Katie Herzog – “A Nation of Sheep? Ingroups, Outgroups, and the Moderating Effects of Political Sophistication”

This current study sought to examine possible moderating effects of political sophistication on claimed ideology and judgment of political scandal. Based on the Black Sheep Effect (BSE) it was hypothesized that individuals higher in political sophistication would judge candidates from their own party more harshly. Results revealed an issue specific BSE.

Laura Harder – “The Revolving Door Effect: Burnout and Learned Helplessness in Human Services”

In this study, the Revolving Door Index (RDI) was created as a means to capture experiential levels of the hypothesized Revolving Door Effect and its role in burnout. Results demonstrated that the RDI serves as a stronger predictor of burnout than traditional measures of control and reward.

Student Posters:

Bao Her, Angela Lanik, & Sara Swanson: “Does Color Impact Creativity?”

Several somewhat surprising components of the environmental context – including color – can stimulate creative thinking (see e.g. Lichtenfeld, et al., 2012). The goal of the current study was to examine the effects of color on creativity when color was a property of the critical object in the task (as opposed to an irrelevant component of the task). Participants completed an unusual uses task on a colored paper clip for two minutes. We examined whether the color of the paper clip influenced the creativity of the responses.

Erin Leisen, Jamie Luttrell, & Glen Jaspers: “Smells Like Helping Behavior”

Research has shown that pleasant odors in an environment can result in increased helping behavior (see e.g. Gueguen, 2012). In a 2x2 experiment, a confederate dropped a scarf or gift card in a neutral or pleasantly scented environment. We looked for differences in the duration to the onset of helping behavior with regard to the odor and the perceived value of the dropped item.

Mallory Johnson, Ruth Keicher, Sarah Kuntz, & Ben Lister: “Impact of Social Norms and Watching Eyes on Recycling Behavior”

Recycling is good for the environment! The purpose of this study was to investigate whether signs conveying information about social norms placed strategically near trash cans encouraged people to recycle. We observed recycling behavior with two different types of signs; one influenced the participants’ perception of both public opinion about the desired behavior and the individual’s perception of the desired behavior. The second was an image of watching eyes on a sign. We recorded the number of people who trashed recyclables and those who used a recycling bin.

Anna Rupp, Kailan Johnson, Cheng Xiong, & Rico Lopez: “Consumers’ Perception of Positive and Negative Ads”

Have you ever wondered why consumers purchase certain products? Many advertisements seem to focus on presenting consumers with memorable slogans. In our experiment we used advertisements with positive and negative slogans to investigate the extent to which the valence of the slogans influenced participants’ reports of intent to purchase, likability, and whether they would recommend a product to a friend.

Natasha Smith, Corinne Miles, Michael Matt, & Eliza Nicholson: “The advantages of note-taking: how to get an A!”

Previous research has provided evidence for higher test scores as a result of organized note-taking techniques (see e.g. Bui et al., 2010). In a 2x2 design, the current study manipulated the type of notes (organized vs. unorganized) taken during a short video and the type of question (open or closed-ended) on a quiz. We examined whether or not the organization of the notes influenced participants’ short-term memory for information depending on the type of test question.

Stephen Doody, Rich Downs, & Shawn Veldey: “Build a Fruit Tree Orchard and They Will Come: Creating Eco-Identity via Community Gardening Activities”

Theories of eco-identity, community development and community service gardening activities were addressed in the current study. The project explored how ecologically-based gardening and fruit tree planting activities helped to establish and define an eco-identity among diverse participants.

Shane Wethers: “Influences of Contextual Information on Standardized Tests”

Standardized tests have become the norm for assessing performance of not only students, but also teachers and school districts. However, the validity of these tests continues to be questioned. Context can have powerful effect on comprehension and recall, both of which are important during testing. This study examines the influences of relevant contextual information on memory and understanding. Additionally, how context can play a role in standardized test performance.

Suggested citation format:

AuthorLastName, F. M. (2014, November). *Title of presentation goes here*. Paper/Poster presented at the Metropolitan State University Psychology Research Colloquium, St. Paul, MN.