

What's Going On?

This is an exciting time for our psychology department. Check out some new updates below!

- Two students from Dr. Heather Ness-Maddox's research class had papers accepted for publication to MGA's *Knighted: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Undergraduate Research* for the upcoming issue. **Congratulations to Kristene Peterson and Ruqiyah Muhammad!**
- The Psychology Department is creating a new Special Topics course for Spring 2026. Stay tuned for more information!

Psychology in the News

Recent research suggests that a reason college students may struggle with insomnia is due to loneliness rather than spending too much time on devices. Click [here to read the full article](#).

The annual World Happiness Report partnership of the University of Oxford, the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, and Gallup suggests that kindness will make you happier than a higher salary. Click [here for the full article](#).

A new study including 4,598 participants from five countries reveal that forgiveness could increase one's overall mental health. Click [here for the full article](#).

Ask A Professor

What is the difference between introverts and extroverts?

Answer: Introverts gain energy from low-stimulus settings such as a quiet evening with a few close friends, reading, watching TV, or playing with a pet. Extroverts gain energy from high-stimulus settings to include socializing in large settings, giving a presentation, or attending a sporting event.

If you have a psychology question, let us know! Email questions to amanda.chase@mga.edu

Faculty Forum-What Are the Faculty Up To?

Dr. Elizabeth Walker volunteered to serve as the chair of Faculty Affairs Committee. Way to represent!

Senior Lecturer, Cory Smith was the MGA nominee for the Regents' Teaching Excellence Awards for Online Teaching and presented on the science of Mindfulness for MGA's Wellness Week on April 15.

Dr. Heather Ness-Maddox's Experimental Psychology, Research Methods, and Directed Research courses presented research during the poster presentation at MGA's Interdisciplinary Student Conference on April 10.

Dr. Hinze recently delivered a poster presentation on memory and AI (Hinze, 2025) and co-authored a student-led spoken presentation on misinformation (Maschenik et al., 2025). He also co-authored an article on study strategies in the *Journal of Experimental Education* (McCarthy et al., 2025). Full [citations and abstracts are available here](#).

You're Joking!

Why was the psychology major such a good musician?

- He was classically conditioned.

How many psychotherapists does it take to change a lightbulb?

- Just one...but it will take nine sessions.

Student Spotlight



Do you know of a psychology student who would be a great candidate for our Student Spotlight? Let us know! We would love to showcase them in our next issue! Please email recommendations to Amanda Avera at amanda.chase@mga.edu

This month, we are featuring Hannah Colvard. She comes to us from Forsyth, GA and is planning to continue her education to become a clinical psychologist. Her passion is the adolescent population and hopes to administer psychological testing to this group to help them “better understand and manage their mental health.” She will be graduating with her bachelor’s in psychology in December 2026.

Her favorite part of MGA is “how many opportunities there are to get involved and make your college experience your own. From student organizations to campus events, there’s always something happening and a space for everyone.”

Hannah is very involved with campus life and events. On March 10, 2025, she created and facilitated a mental health panel on the Cochran Campus that showcased professionals and students sharing their experiences with mental health and stress management.

Favorite Quote: "Our wounds are often the openings into the best and most beautiful part of us." - David Richo

Fun Fact: Hannah enjoys painting and dancing.

Grow Your Research Portfolio

Are you interested in assisting with a psychological research project? Our faculty need your input! Dr. Scott Hinze, Dr. Heather Ness-Maddox, Dr. Chi Cheung, and Dr. Paul Gladden are conducting a wide variety of research projects and are looking for student assistance.

Working on a professor-led research project is a valuable addition to a student's resume' and career. Masters programs and future employers look favorably on projects such as these because it shows that students can think critically, work in groups, and communicate in a professional manner. Jump in and get involved!

Memory and Cognition Lab (directed by Dr. Scott Hinze)

Dr. Scott Hinze is the director of the Memory and Cognition lab. His primary research interests are in memory, study strategies, acquiring and avoiding misinformation, and learning from text. Any students interested in how we think, or how we learn complex information, may be a good fit for this lab. New students may be interested in continuing a recent or ongoing project, like those listed below. Recent and Ongoing Research

1. How do different study strategies affect memory and cognitive effort, measured by pupil dilation?
2. How do people deal with misleading information?
3. What are the effects of learning from study strategies (e.g., self-explanation) completed on a screen, compared to paper?
4. How do students learn from different text genres (anecdotes vs. informative stories vs. textbook descriptions)? If interested in potentially serving as a research assistant, contact scott.hinze@mga.edu.

LEGO Lab (directed by Dr. Heather Ness-Maddox)

Dr. Heather Ness-Maddox researches how people understand stories across various types of media as well as the effects stories can have on their audiences. Her specific interests are in visual Literacy, Emotion, Graphic narratives, and Other topics (i.e., LEGO lab). Her current research projects include

1. Creating a readability scale for comic books and graphic novels. Interested students would help code and categorize images in comic book stories.
2. A research study involving understanding video games, lead by another student researcher. Interested students would help the student researcher run participants in the LEGO lab room on the Macon campus and help code participant transcripts

Students are welcome to participate in ongoing projects and to develop their own ideas for related studies. Students interested in this area will gain experience generating research questions, analyzing data, and interpreting results. It is preferred if students have taken PSYC 3001 and/or 3002, but students expressing a willingness to take initiative and work in a team setting will be given special consideration. If interested in gaining experience as a research assistant, contact heather.nessmaddox@mga.edu.

Strategic Mindset, Math Learning and Vaccine Hesitancy (Directed by Dr. Chi Cheung)

I am currently working on 3 lines of research (see below). I am happy to help students develop their own research projects as well.

1. Strategic mindset in learning: Strategic mindset is the propensity to look for better strategies to improve one's performance. Data showed that students with a strategic mindset are more likely to use metacognitive strategies and have better academic outcome. This project aims at understanding the factors that contribute to the development of strategic mindset.
2. Mathematics and Visual Cognition: Previous studies have shown that perceptual qualities of a mathematical expression, such the spacing between the operands, can affect performance in computation. This project aims at testing how visual perception may support the cognitive processes for solving math problems.
3. Vaccine hesitancy: According to the WHO, vaccine hesitancy refers to the delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccines despite availability of vaccination services. This project aims at understanding factors that contributes to vaccine hesitancy.

If interested in potentially serving as a research assistant, contact chingai.cheung@mga.edu.

The Sona Research Participation System allows psychology students to earn bonus points by participating in psychology studies (if they are enrolled in a course that uses the Sona system) and to recruit participants for their own research projects. For more information, please contact chingai.cheung@mga.edu.

Evolutionary Psychology and Adaptive Individual Differences Lab

(directed by Dr. Paul Gladden)

I'm currently recruiting research assistants for the following potential projects:

1. Contextualized Personality Stability: Developing a self-report measure of behaviorally flexible personality attributes, based on a theoretically principled Taxonomy of Situations-guided by thinking about evolutionary adaptive problems.
2. Individual differences in verbal instructional control.
3. Personality and other psychological correlates of blank-slate like beliefs (e.g., beliefs about differences between males and females and the role of biological influence on behavior).
4. Individual differences in attributions of others' voluntary control over Beliefs.
5. Empirically Explaining Differences in Views about the Degree of Perceived Conflict or Harmony Between Science and Theology: God Concepts, Rationality, Scientific Thinking, Intellectual and Religious Humility, and Perceived Psychological Conflict between domains of Science & Theology. If interested in potentially serving as a research assistant, contact paul.gladden@mga.edu.