

# the Standard Deviation

The Official Newsletter of the Manhattan College Department of Psychology

## Need a pep talk?

Get inspired on page 3 when you read one alum's story about goals, setbacks, and determination.

## Want to make a difference in the world?

Meet an alum who's doing just that! Learn how Jaclyn Munson went from a psychology major to an activist and lawyer. (Page 7)

## Research Opportunity

Looking for research experience? Go to page 11 to find out which professor is looking research assistants.

## Mental Health Awareness Week

The Psych Club's annual Mental Health Awareness week is April 23 - 26. Page 14 has the details.



## Chair's Welcome

It is hard to believe that we only have a few more weeks left of the spring semester. What's even harder to believe is how much work we all still have in front of us! But remember, your past is a good predictor of your future, so if you've gotten through challenging times before, you'll make it through again.

For me, the 2018-19 academic year has been like no other. There were definitely some hiccups along the way, but also some victories (so many wins- read about faculty and student successes on every page of the newsletter). Maybe you're finishing your first year of college (wow!) or completing your senior seminar project (double wow)? Regardless- each and every one of us deserves a pat on the back (and a nap).

I look forward to the end of the semester when we can take a breath and take notice of the hard work many of you have demonstrated: Poster presentations and other end of the semester papers and projects, the Psi Chi induction and Honor's



## Course Spotlight: PSYC 346: Psychology of Adolescence

- Taught by either Dr. Kelly Marin or Dr. Martha Mendez-Baldwin, and offered each semester (as well as online during intersessions)
- Fulfills the Developmental Distribution

Dr. Marin answers questions about the course:

**What's it about:** The fascinating transitional period between childhood and adulthood known as adolescence. We critically evaluate the scientific research as well as the voices of adolescents in order to explore all the good, bad, and ugly aspects of this time.

**Dr. Marin's favorite topic?** Each semester I discover a new one. However, I think this semester I have most enjoyed talking about identity development. Adolescence is really the first time an individual is motivated to ask- who am I?

**What surprises students?** How much the timing of puberty impacts one's development- whether someone is early, late, or "on time" determines a lot of the adolescent experience.

Convocation, and, of course, graduation.

The end of the spring semester is bitter-sweet for some of you, as you complete one chapter of your life only to start a new one- and one that likely feels unfamiliar. It's exciting, but also probably a little scary. As I said before, uncertainty is neutral. So move forward- and be sure to trust yourself.

As the semester ends, so does my time as interim chair. I want to thank all of my colleagues for their support. I really couldn't have done it without you, nor would I have wanted to. I've enjoyed discovering new things about our wonderful department and interacting with so many students (even if it was only to sign a form). I appreciate the patience from colleagues and students- whether it was a delayed (or forgotten) email, rescheduling a meeting last minute, or needing a few extra days to get grades back- or the newsletter out. It never went unnoticed on my end.

Best of luck as the end of the semester pressure amps up. There's no turning back now, but we got this.

Dr. Kelly Marin  
Interim Chair  
Department of Psychology

Spring has sprung!



# A Graduate School Pep Talk

**With Danielle Tarantino**

Ph.D. Student at Pennsylvania State University in I/O Psychology



This is the time of year that students are getting acceptance and rejection letters from graduate programs. Learn about one alum's journey and how she dealt with the hurdles.

During my senior year at Manhattan College, my goal was to get into an IO Psychology PhD program immediately after I graduated. This is not what happened. At the time, I had chronic migraines and had to take a gap year to give myself more time to prepare for my applications. This was my first setback, as I really wanted to start my career as soon as possible. During my gap year, I worked for a research institute, applied to PhD programs and was ready to get back into school. I spent hours upon hours on my applications and then when Spring came around...I got rejected from all of the PhD

programs I applied to! At first, I was devastated. I was a competitive candidate and didn't understand why I didn't get in anywhere. I already felt like I was behind because I had taken a gap year, and now I knew I had to wait another year to apply again.

I had applied to a Master's program in IO Psychology as a back-up and was accepted into the program. I was constantly hearing that the ideal path is to go straight into your PhD and to avoid Master's programs, so I was very hesitant at first. Ultimately, I decided to do it to gain more knowledge of the field with the intention of finishing with my Master's and then applying to PhD programs again. During my first semester, I wasn't sure if I made the right choice. I desperately wanted to be involved in research, but my program was more applied than research-based. I decided to set up a meeting with one of my professors and told him that I wanted to be involved in research and that my goal was to get into a PhD program. Luckily enough, a graduate research assistant position opened up a few months later, and the same professor I met with offered me the job. I began working on a university-wide assessment project, conducting research that was accepted to the 2019 Annual SIOP Conference, and I should have two publications by the end of this summer. With this new research experience, I decided to apply for PhD programs again. My top choice program, both times I applied, was Pennsylvania State University. This was also my "reach" school – one I never thought I'd get into, but this time around, I did! I will be starting my PhD studies in IO Psychology at Penn State in August and I couldn't be happier.

I graduated Manhattan College in 2016. My goal was to start a PhD program in 2016. It is 2019 and I am just starting it, and that's okay. This is something that I think is really important for undergraduate students to hear. There is no rush! I always felt this pressure to start my PhD immediately after graduation, so when I got rejected from all the programs I applied to, I didn't know what to do. PhD applications also take a lot of time and effort to complete, so it can feel really bad if you don't get accepted anywhere. Sometimes, it may seem easier to give up and say "well, at least I tried" and decide to start a full-time job, which is fine if that's truly what you want, but if your goal is to get a PhD – do not give up! Graduate programs are competitive and it's important to do whatever you can to strengthen your application if you don't get in or if you do decide to take a year off. Manhattan College had fully prepared me for graduate school; I had a very high GPA, research experience, a poster that was presented at EPA, and courses in IO Psychology, which many universities don't offer. However, my GREs were a tiny bit above average, and I think this hurt my application. GREs are important; give yourself enough time to study for them before you take them. I took them twice and even with tutoring my scores didn't change too much, so instead of focusing on studying for the GREs, I focused on getting my Master's and strengthening other aspects of my application.

The importance of GREs varies greatly depending on the program – but it will only work in your favor if you have above average scores, so study (and not just a few weeks before the test – months and months before!)

If you're like me and feel like you can't get your GREs scores up, getting your Master's degree can be beneficial. Yes, it is not the ideal path if your goal is to get your PhD, especially because it can be expensive, but if you have to do it, it is okay! I've heard people say that some PhD program coordinators don't want Master's students because they want to essentially train them with their program alone. This is not necessarily always true and was actually the opposite of what I experienced.

In my case, the professor I applied to do research with at Penn State was looking for someone who could "hit the ground running" with research, which is where my Master's degree benefited me greatly as I already have a firm grasp on key topics in IO Psychology and the research process. Yes, Master's programs are expensive – but look for opportunities to reduce the cost. I went in paying full tuition but am graduating tuition-free because of my graduate assistantship. This leads me to my next piece of advice – create relationships with your professors! Talk to them, ask them for advice, tell them your goals; they want to and will help. If I had not met with my professor and explained to him my passion for research and my goal of getting a PhD, I may have not been offered the graduate assistantship which not only helped my PhD applications, but also allowed me to not have to worry about loans or tuition.

The entire process of applying to graduate school and waiting for decisions can be extremely overwhelming and scary. Please reach out to professors and other students for support; don't go through this process alone! And please don't let it set you back if you don't get in anywhere your first time around. Always keep your long-

term goal in mind and stick to it. Do not feel rushed. You do not have to have your PhD by the time you're 26. It's okay to take a gap year if you need it, as long as you do something productive. It's okay to not take the "ideal path" that everyone else may be taking as long as your path works for you and you're doing something you love. I didn't want to take a gap year and I didn't want to be in a Master's program, but I made sure I was doing what I loved (research!) which helped me deal with these setbacks in a positive and productive way. I encountered a lot of roadblocks in my journey since I graduated from Manhattan College but I always kept my goal and passion in mind which helped me get through them. Although at times it has been very difficult, it has been completely worth it because I am finally attending my dream program, even if it's 3 years after graduation!

My final piece of advice is for any students interested in graduate school in Psychology: PLEASE take Nuwan's Psychological Testing course! It can be difficult but you will be much more prepared than most other students once you start graduate school with the knowledge taught in this class. It helped me greatly my first semester!

## Broderick Psychology Medal

Every spring the department honors a senior who we believe best represents the psychology department in and out of the classroom. It's someone that we believe will go on to succeed in a career in the field of psychology or related field.



**Eva Pugliese** is this year's Broderick Psychology Medal recipient. Congratulations!

Eva Pugliese is earning a B.A. in Psychology with a minor in Biology. Eva was a Summer Jasper Research Fellow under the supervision of Dr. Nuwan Jayawickreme. Her project was entitled "The Relationship Between Pulmonary Injuries and Psychopathology in Fire Department of New York First Responders to the 9/11 World Trade Center

Attacks." She says, "This was a very personal project for me, as my father was a first responder to 9/11 and suffers from both physical and psychological illness from this event. If I had not majored in psychology, I do not believe I would have been able to propose a project like this. I observed a phenomena happening in my personal life, and questioned it from multiple perspectives." In addition, Eva co-authored a chapter with Dr. Jayawickreme titled, "Pain and Culture: Differences in Experience and Treatment, Challenges of Measurement and Some Recommendations" in the Handbook of Psychosocial Interventions for Chronic Pain: An evidenced-based guide. Eva has also worked with Dr. Jay Friedenberg as a research assistant studying visual aesthetics. As a result of her research experiences, Eva has presented at the annual meeting for the Eastern Psychological Association and at the Eastern Colleges Science Conference. Eva is a member of several honor societies, including Psi Chi, as well as various organizations on campus, most notably she is the Co-President of *Take Back the Night*.

Eva will graduate with the Class of 2019 on May 17th. In the Fall, she will begin Wagner College's second degree nursing program. However, before that, she will take a well deserved trip to the Dominican with her friends!



**Jaclyn Munson, J.D.**  
**Graduate of Northeastern**  
**University School of Law**

Since graduating from Manhattan College in 2010, Jaclyn has explored several career paths before trading her Yankee's hat for a Fenway Frank and moving to Boston to attend Northeastern University School of Law.

In the years prior to law school, Jaclyn worked in medicinal research at NYU School of Medicine and became a writer for Mic, AlterNet and The Daily Beast, focusing on women's rights and reproductive justice. Jaclyn's first articles were investigative pieces from her time going undercover to Crisis Pregnancy Centers, which are largely religious centers that seek to prevent women from accessing

# Alumni Spotlight

reproductive healthcare, including abortions. Jaclyn helped expose several Centers in New York City and continued to write about a women's right to bodily autonomy.

In 2015, Jaclyn took her passion for law and politics to Hillary For America, where she worked with the Presidential campaign by speaking with prospective voters and canvassing. Later that summer, Jaclyn began law school to pursue her interest of the intersection between law and politics. Jaclyn's focus on law school was drawn from her experiences in politics, as a writer, and woman in STEM during her time at NYU School of Medicine, where she observed pay inequity, sexual harassment and gender discrimination by the institution, and its male scientists, doctors and researchers. Determined to close the wage gap and make more room for women in all areas of society, Jaclyn decided to attend law school with the hopes of someday becoming a legislator. During law school, Jaclyn focused on employment discrimination cases involving race, sexual orientation and gender. Jaclyn is now a practicing attorney at John Hancock Investments in Boston, where she is helping to change the ratio in an environment historically dominated by male attorneys and male business professionals. In the future, Jaclyn still dreams of running for either local or federal office. As for now, she is

determined to continue helping women achieve equity and visibility in the workplace.

Jaclyn is forever grateful to her family, her fiancée Alexandra Schuman, and her friends, who have continued to support and encourage her (even as she studied for the bar exam). She credits her parents and grandparents for her work ethic, who taught by example that nothing comes easily. Lastly, Jaclyn thanks Manhattan College for laying the foundation for her future during her undergraduate education, and Kelly Marin for her continued support and mentorship throughout the years.



# GET TO KNOW YOUR PROFESSOR



**DR. JAY  
FRIEDENBERG**

What do you enjoy most about teaching at MC?  
The students. I enjoy the close working relationships with the students, meeting with them individually and in small groups to advise them on presentations and debates in my classes. It is great also to work with research assistants, developing experiments in our lab and having them learn the scientific process. I additionally enjoy teaching classes on new and interesting topics like robotics or the psychology of aesthetics.

**If you could travel anywhere it would be...** I love exotic locales and have done extensive traveling to places around the globe like Thailand and India. The feeling of being immersed in a foreign culture is wonderful. It helps to expand my understanding of psychology. Ancient ruins are a big attraction too. Places I would love to visit but have not yet been are Carthage in Tunisia and Borobudur in Indonesia.

**Best advice you ever received was...**

To follow my desires. You have to find out what makes you happy and do it, otherwise life is pretty meaningless. However one must take into ability

into account. It has to be something you're good at. Loving something but not being good at it will result in frustration and failure. Not loving something but being good at it will result in boredom and apathy.

**Four people that you'd like to have coffee with...**

**Ayn Rand, Thomas Jefferson, Claude Monet, and Leonhard Euler.** Rand was probably one of the world's most brilliant philosophers and literary authors. She founded the philosophical movement of Objectivism that advocates the use of reason. Jefferson was a proponent of liberty and individual freedom. Monet was a French Impressionist artist whose work I greatly admire. I would love to be able to travel back in time to sit by his side and watch him paint. Euler was arguable the worlds greatest mathematician, second-most published (900 papers) and contributed to more areas of mathematics than any other person.

**What is one thing in your field you wish you could teach everyone about?**

The complexity and wonder of the human brain and how it creates conscious experience. There are a lot of mysteries in the universe. This is one of the major unsolved puzzles in science.

**Which of your research projects are you most excited about?**

I'm currently working on a project looking at the perceived beauty of tiling patterns. Tiles have been used throughout history as a form of decorative art in architectural friezes, wall paper patterns and graphic design but few people understand their underlying geometric properties. In a series of studies we are looking at how polygons, symmetry and other characteristics affect how beautiful people think they are.

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## Honors & Awards

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### Medal for Excellence in the School of Liberal Arts

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**Jacob Sarasin** (Psychology Major with two minors: Mandarin Chinese and Political Science) will be awarded the Medal for Excellence in the School of Liberal Arts at the Honor's Convocation in May. Congratulations on the highest distinction in the School of Liberal Arts!

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### Peace and Justice Studies Medal

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**Anna Doerr** (Psychology/Peace and Justice Studies double major) will be awarded the Peace and Justice Studies Medal at the Honor's Convocation in May. Great work, Anna!

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### Jasper Summer Research Fellows

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The following psychology majors have been awarded Jasper Summer Research Fellowships:

**Eva Bartsch** - Mind Your Stress: Implications of Student Stress Mindset on Stress Perception, Academic Performance Satisfaction and Overall Well-being

**Penelope Combs** - The Real Housewives (and Househusbands) of the US Military: Does self-reliance and collectivism predict life satisfaction in military spouses?

**Naouras Mousa Almatar** - Is the Relationship Between Perceived Discrimination and Increased Acculturative Stress Moderated by Feelings of Social Exclusion in Muslim Immigrants in the U.S.?

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### Branigan Scholars Grant

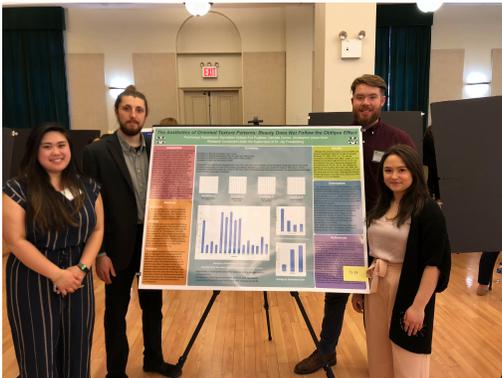
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**Melissa Samanoglu** has been awarded a Branigan Grant to explore her project: My Mother's Mosque: New Forms of Identity and Belonging in Immigrant Narratives

# Student Research

## Eastern Colleges Science Conference

Dr. Friedenberg and students presented a poster at the 2019 Eastern Colleges Science Conference that met April 6 at Manhattan College. The title of the poster: The Aesthetics of Oriented Texture Patterns. Beauty Does Not Follow the Oblique Effect. The work was coauthored with Eva Pugliese, Christopher Urban-Klein, and Daniella Correa. Naomi Uy and Preston Martin also helped present.



Joshua Miller-Dwyer also presented a poster at the 2019 Eastern Colleges Science Conference. The title of the poster: Examining the occurrence of non-fatal shark attacks on bottlenose dolphins off Bimini, The Bahamas. Authors included: Joshua Miller-Dwyer, Kelly Melillo-Sweeting, and Maria Maust-Mohl.

## Research Opportunity

Dr. Martha Mendez-Baldwin has 2 spots available for research next Fall. Ideal candidates for the positions should be interested in child or adolescent development and be motivated to do research. Email Dr. MB with a statement of research ideas if you are interested.

## Advanced Research Methods

Congratulations to all of our seniors who completed, or are on their way to complete their **Senior Seminar: Advanced Research Methods** projects under the guidance (and patience) of Drs. Kimberly Fairchild and Danielle Young. The faculty in the department know how challenging it can be to conduct your own research, so hats off to all of you!

This year's Annual Psychology Poster Session will be held on May 3rd (3:00 - 4:00 pm) in Kelly Commons 5.02.

The event is open to all- so grab some pizza, learn something new, and get an idea of what you'll be doing your senior year!





## Faculty Accomplishments

### Dr. Maria Maust-Mohl

Congratulations to Dr. Maria Maust-Mohl who was awarded tenure and promotion. Well-done!



### Dr. Jay Friedenber

Dr. Jay Fridenberg published:

Friedenberg, J. (2019). Beauty in the eye of the beholder: Individual differences in preference for randomized visual patterns. *Experimental Psychology*, 66(3), 1-14.



Photo by [Victor Freitas](#) on [Unsplash](#)

### Dr. Nuwan Jayawickreme

Dr. Nuwan Jayawickreme published:

Jayawickreme, N., Rasmussen, A., Karasz, A., Verkuilen, J., & Jayawickreme, E. (2019). Network models can help focus research on the role of culture and context in psychopathology, but don't discount latent variable models. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 42, e14.

Nuwan was selected to attend the *Mental Health, Public Health and Atrocity Prevention* workshop to be held by the Cardozo Law Institute in Holocaust and Human Rights and the Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation on June 9-10, 2019 at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University.

Nuwan is chairing a symposium: Jayawickreme, N. (2019, May). Confirmatory Factor Analysis Models of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: A Critique and Some Better Practice Suggestions. Chair of oral symposium at the 31st Annual Convention of the Association for Psychological Science, Washington, DC.

### Dr. Danielle Young

Dr. Danielle Young participated in a faculty panel, Allyship and Intersectionality: Real Talk during Women's Week 2019.



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# Psychology Club

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**Psych Club hosted a Paint N Sip on March 12<sup>th</sup>.**



**Psych Club's annual Mental Health Awareness Week - April 23-26.**

**PSYCHOLOGY CLUB MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK EVENTS  
TUESDAY APRIL 23RD - FRIDAY APRIL 26TH**

**TUESDAY APRIL 23RD 4-5 PM- A CONVERSATION ON MENTAL HEALTH IN CORNERSTONE (MIGUEL 209) COLLABORATIVE EVENT BY JUSTPEACE, PSYCHOLOGY CLUB AND THE COUNSELING CENTER**

**WEDNESDAY APRIL 24TH 12- 1 PM- POSTER MAKING ON FOUNDER'S BRIDGE, COME MAKE ENCOURAGING POSTERS FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS!**

**THURSDAY APRIL 25TH 7 PM- MOVIE SHOWING OF SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK IN HAYDEN 100, COME ENJOY A MOVIE, FOOD, AND A DISCUSSION!**

**FRIDAY APRIL 26TH 12-1 PM- MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS TABLING ON FOUNDER'S BRIDGE, GRAB A BROCHURE AND RIP YOUR STRESS AWAY!**



Some of you might remember coming to Manhattan College on an Accepted Students Day as a high school senior. It's a day for accepted students to visit campus, be bombarded by too much information, and meet faculty and students. I want to thank several current students who helped the department out this year. A special thank you to **Julia Ettore** and **Preston Martin** for escorting students from point A to point B and **Olivia Anderle, Julia Ettore, Eva Pugliese, and Brittney Vargas** for volunteering on a Sunday to be part of a student panel discussing their experience as a psychology major at Manhattan College. Many thanks to you all!

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## Bravo Class of 2019

The Faculty of the Department of Psychology congratulates all of our graduating seniors! We look forward to honoring you at the undergraduate commencement on May 17th.

