

## Sophomore Early Research Program 2019- 2020 Social Science Faculty Projects

### Social Sciences: Projects in Environmental Studies, Philosophy, Psychology, and the Wellesley Centers for Women

#### Environmental Studies

Beth DeSombre

*Post-Policy System Evolution*

Post-policy system evolution - book project that examines how environmental regulation, once adopted, sets up systemic changes that frequently make policies easier and cheaper to implement than initially predicted. General social science background necessary (economics and political science especially helpful along with knowledge of environmental issues); the student will gain archival and data analysis skills, along with working on reviews of the relevant academic literature and working to identify and gather information on case studies.

#### Philosophy

Corrine Gartner

*Aristotle on Theoretical and Practical Wisdom*

In both *Nicomachean Ethics VI* and the *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle seems to suggest that there is a sharp divide between theoretical and practical knowledge (i.e., knowledge of ethics): the objects of the former are necessary, changeless universals, while the objects of the latter are contingent particulars. However, there are also places in the *NE* discussion, as well as elsewhere in Aristotle's corpus, which generate tension for this clean division. Perhaps there might, after all, be a kind of theoretical practical knowledge that takes as its object ethical universals. If so, would the practically wise individual need to possess such knowledge? Would this sort of knowledge be partially constitutive of the virtue of practical, as opposed to theoretical, wisdom? These are the questions we will tackle, undertaking a close reading of *Nicomachean Ethics VI*, which is where Aristotle offers his account of practical wisdom. We will generate and then examine alternative strategies for addressing some of the *prima facie* incompatible claims that Aristotle makes concerning the virtue of practical wisdom.

The student researcher will develop close reading and analytic reasoning skills through reading and discussing dense passages from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Eudemian Ethics*, and *Posterior Analytics*. The student will also perform a literature review and construct an annotated bibliography, gaining library research skills in the process. Necessary qualifications: Strong preference for a student who has completed at least one course in Philosophy.

Mary Kate McGowan

*Words in Action*

I am co-authoring a textbook in applied philosophy of language and would like a student to read draft chapters for clarity and accessibility. Topics covered by the book include: lying, deception, and perjury; telling and testimony; silencing; consent; generics; slurs; threats; jokes; promises; gender and language; indirection; linguistic oppression. Other tasks include summarizing articles, finding relevant examples in media, devising paper topics and discussion questions.

## **Psychology**

Angela Bahns

*Stereotypes as Justifications of Prejudice*

Do stereotypes cause prejudice, or does prejudice cause stereotypes? Students in my lab will run experiments to test whether prejudice is a general evaluation or a specific emotion. Students will work on developing and pilot testing research materials to create novel prejudices and stereotype content that evokes a specific negative emotion. Students will gain familiarity with experimental research methods in psychology and together we will consider the application of our research findings to social issues such as how to reduce prejudice.

Christen Deveney

*The Neurocognitive Mechanisms Associated with Irritability.*

The student will work with a faculty sponsor to design, implement, and/or analyze data from research paradigms examining the neurocognitive mechanisms of irritability. The student will be trained in researching and reviewing relevant literature. Based on the student's interests, she/he/they will be trained to analyze electroencephalographic (EEG) activity that has been previously collected or will help to design a new study investigating whether irritability is associated with atypical neural responses to emotional faces.

Tracy Gleason

*Real and Imaginary Relationship Schemas in Early Childhood*

Young children's relationship schemas (cognitive structures) can be accessed by studying their real relationships and relationships invented with imaginary companions (ICs). Through analysis of interviews with parents and children and diaries of ICs lives, my student and I will research the developmental significance of ICs in children's understanding of the social world. Aside from gaining experience and exposure to literature, theory, and concepts in social and cognitive development, my student will learn about coding and analysis of both quantitative and

qualitative data, basic statistics, and presentation of data. The goal will be preparation of a poster presentation for submission to an international psychology conference.

Margaret Keane

*Understanding Human Memory*

The aim of our research is to understand human memory and related cognitive processes. We conduct experiments with Wellesley undergraduates in which participants may be asked to remember information presented to them within an experimental task, to make judgments or choices among alternative answers, to recall memories from their own lives, or to generate hypothetical scenarios. A SERP student will assist in collecting these data, scoring participant responses, generating spreadsheets to display the data, and creating graphs and tables to summarize the findings. The experience will also include close reading of the empirical literature on human memory.

## **Wellesley Centers for Women**

Linda Charmaraman

*Media, Wellbeing, and Social Identities*

The SERP intern for the Youth, Media, and Wellbeing Research Lab at the Wellesley Centers for Women would be assisting with analyzing psychological survey and interview data from middle school students (and their parents) on students' social technology use, psychosocial health, and behavioral health associated with the early stages of using social media, including phone use, gaming, YouTube videos, etc. In anticipation of the upcoming 2020 election, the intern will also be analyzing sociopolitical data about media and identities from the 2016 presidential election and 2018 midterm elections. Ability to work at Cheever House at least twice a week on a regular basis is critical, preferably in the afternoon hours when data collection in schools is most likely to occur. Experience with analyzing qualitative or quantitative data is recommended but not required. Interest in interdisciplinary mixed methods research methods, graduate studies, or youth development work also a plus.