**TCNJ**
THE COLLEGE OF
NEW JERSEY

*CLASS OF 2018*

# COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

*DEPARTMENT OF
PSYCHOLOGY*

**2018**

## DATE & TIME

*May 18, 2018
12:00 PM to 1:30 PM*

## LOCATION

*Student Recreation Center
The College of New Jersey*

**WELCOME ADDRESS**

**Margaret Martinetti**
Ceremonies Committee Chair

**INTRODUCTION
OF FACULTY**

**CHAIR'S
CONGRATULATIONS**

**Jeanine Vivona**
Department of Psychology Chair

**DEAN'S
CONGRATULATIONS**

**Lisa Grimm**
Associate Dean of Humanities
and Social Sciences

**STUDENT SPEAKERS**

**Kevin Brady
Génesis Rubio**

**SENIOR HONORS
THESES**

**PRESENTATION
OF DIPLOMAS**

**RECESSIONAL**

Jessica Barnack-Tavlaris

Tamra Bireta

Ashley Borders

He Len Chung

Jarret Crawford

Jason Dahling

Candice Feiring

James Graham

Lisa Grimm

Joanna Herres

Arthur Hohmuth

Chu Kim-Prieto

Jean Kirnan

Andrew Leynes

Margaret Martinetti

Betsy Ruddy

John Ruscio

Sandra Sepulveda-Kozakowsi

Aimee Stahl

Jeanine Vivona

Shaun Wiley

Maddie Anthes, *Program Coordinator*

Erin Haughee, *Program Assistant*

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# SOCIAL MEDIA

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**https://psychology.tcnj.edu**

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Lauren Osayi Agho

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Jeslyn G. Alemany

Elena Marie Allen

Ashley Nicole Amos

Shellen Arora

Sergio Arpino

Samantha A. Bass

Megan S. Bassily Ψ

Alexander Ian Batterman Ψ

Allijah Sage Bennett Ψ

Stephanie Lynn Biko

Kelly Renee Bobchin Ψ●

Sabrina Marie Bogovic

Kevin Robert Brady Ψ

Zachary E. Brennan

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David Robert Bruckel

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Sarah Beth Carlon

Keyla M. Carreras

Sarah Margaret Cook

Jesse Dariano

Anthony Joseph Devito, III Ψ

Tatiana Doesschate-Greiner

Olivia Maria Donini Ψ

Carly Ann Dubrosky

Ashley Veronica Dwyer

Abigail Ruth Emmert Ψ

Emily Rose Falco

Bailey Anna Falco

Christopher Ferrante

James S. Flynn

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Hailey Garthwaite

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Sarina M. Gupta

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Kristina Suzanne Hansen

Grace Katherine Hawruk

Terra Elisabeth Heinzel-Nelson

Bailey Margaret Henneberger

Megan Heye Ψ

Audrey Claire Heylmann Ψ

Ψ  Member of Psi Chi, Psychology International Honor Society

●  Completed The College of New Jersey Honors Program

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Emma Hurst

Kimberly T. Iannarone

Bridget Marie Kelly Ψ

Julia Marie Kuzman

Daria Leddy

Stefanie S. Levi

Brittany Ligammari

Breann Lisa

Natalie Manno

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Theresa M. Marsh

Benjamin James Martin

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Angela Rose Miceli

Cristina Lee Nardini

Jamie Nicolich Ψ

Kristin S. Nielsen

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Jessica Mary Pagone Ψ

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Lauren J. Park

Kalyani Parwatkar

Rutu Patel Ψ

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Elizabeth Mirra Staroselsky Ψ

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*Elementary Education*

Desislava Baleva Ψ
*Early Childhood Education*

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*Deaf and Hard of Hearing*

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Ψ  Member of Psi Chi, Psychology International Honor Society
●  Completed The College of New Jersey Honors Program

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*Urban Education, Elementary*

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*Public Health*

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*Communication Studies*

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*Special Education*

Mariah Elizabeth Scott Ψ
*Special Education*

Engy Shaaban
*Special Education*

Samantha Renee Szewczyk
*Early Childhood Education*

Kayla Annette Taylor Ψ
*Early Childhood Education*

**Alexander Batterman,** *Expectancies Enable Meaningless Stimuli to Appear Familiar*

Faculty Sponsor: P. Andrew Leynes

Committee Members: Tamra Bireta, Lisa Grimm

Participants completed a standard recognition memory test with equal proportions of old and new items, while expectancies were manipulated and event-related potentials (ERPs) were measured. As expected, the meaningless stimuli (abstract art images) did not elicit the ERP correlate of familiarity (FN400) under standard testing expectancies, Voss & Paller, 2007. However, the FN400 was observed when expectancies were shifted, which supports associations between FN400 and familiarity.

**Kelly Bobchin,** *Risk of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder among LGBQ Students with a History of Sexual Assault*

Faculty Sponsor: Joanna Herres

Committee Members: Ashley Borders, Aimee Stahl

Campus sexual assault (CSA) has negative psychological consequences, including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depressive symptoms. Although members of the LGBQ community are at increased risk for experiencing CSA and its outcomes, most research in this area ignores this at -risk population. Consistent with the Minority Stress hypothesis, the main aim of this study was to examine whether reactions to disclosure of sexual assault differentially affect the mental health of LGBQ and heterosexual individuals. Findings indicated that positive reactions to disclosure of CSA have a stronger effect for members of the LGBQ community than for heterosexual individuals in terms of decreasing their minority stress and providing them with better mental health outcomes.

**Kevin Brady,** *Estimating Win Probabilities for NFL Games*

Faculty Sponsor: John Ruscio

Committee Members: Jason Dahling, Tiara Falcone

Win probability (WP) models seek to predict the outcome of a game at any moment, allowing us to assess decision making in key situations. For NFL games, WP models range from the relatively simple Pro Football Reference (PFR) model to more complex random forest (RF) models. Using play data from all NFL games since 2001, we found both models to be well calibrated (e.g., for all plays with a .75 probability, the team on offense ultimately won almost exactly 75% of the time). We modified the way the PFR model uses game time to improve accuracy and handle plays in overtime. Our modified PFR model performs slightly better than the RF model for plays throughout regulation and in overtime.

**Olivia Donini,** *Motivational Yoga: Exploring the Effects of Regulatory Fit and Nonfit*

Faculty Sponsor: Lisa Grimm

Committee Members: Ashley Borders, He Len Chung

The current thesis examined the effects of motivational dispositions on success in entering in and holding yoga poses. Participants performed four yoga poses motivated by a sense of achieving gains or avoiding losses. These motivational states matched or mismatched the task environment. The chronic motivational orientations of the participants were also measured. This study investigated mismatch effects in holding yoga poses, challenging the notion that match effects produce success in various tasks. We hope results will provide insight into the motivational factors that influence one's success in physical tasks that may prompt an individual to rely heavily on one strategy for success. Analyses may also show what motivational dispositions may prompt interest and engagement in the practice of yoga.

**Bailey Falco,** *Straight, White Women Who Report That Gender Inequality Is Unfair Acknowledge Their Heterosexual Privilege, But Not Their Racial Privilege*

Faculty Sponsor: Shaun Wiley

Committee Members: Jessica Barnack-Tavlaris, Marla Jaksch

Are straight white women who perceive that women are disadvantaged in general also aware of how they benefit from the disadvantage of sexual minorities and people of color? In a study based on Craig and Richeson's (2016) model of stigma-based solidarity, which proposes that people relate to other group's disadvantage only if they see it as similar to their own, I found that of straight white women (N = 397) who perceived that women are disadvantaged were more aware of their heterosexual privilege, but not their racial privilege. I discuss the implications of my findings for straight white women's ability to work together with sexual minority women and women of color to build a diverse and intersectional feminist movement.

**Rachel Horn**, *Assessing the Absolute and Relative Accuracy of Subjective Calorie Estimation*

Faculty Sponsor: John Ruscio

Committee Members: Jessica Barnack-Tavlaris, Tamra Bireta

Research has shown that even though people often underestimate the caloric content of foods, posting calorie counts on menus tends not to influence purchasing decisions. This thesis examined relative accuracy as the correlation between estimated and actual calories across a large number of appetizers, entrees, and desserts. Health conscious people and those who prefer calorie labeling scored higher on relative accuracy and ordered fewer calories in a hypothetical meal selection. This suggests that calorie labeling is ineffective in part because health conscious people that prefer labeling already use their understanding of which foods contain more and fewer calories.

**Bridget Kelly,** *The Effects of Environmental Enrichment on Delay Discounting for Sucrose Rewards in Long-Evans Rats: A Replication*

Faculty Sponsor:  Margaret Martinetti

Committee Members:  Tamra Bireta, John Ruscio

We replicated a previous study that examined the effect of enrichment on "impulsivity," or the preference for smaller rewards delivered immediately compared with larger rewards presented after a delay. Sixteen Long-Evans rats were randomly assigned to enriched (with "crinkle paper") or control conditions and were trained to press a lever for 5% sucrose solutions in daily sessions. Rats chose between a smaller sucrose reward (2-sec access) available immediately or a larger reward (8-sec access) available after a delay. Based on our previous work, we hypothesized that enriched rats would display greater preference for the smaller, more immediate rewards, but also produce more variable data as a group, compared with controls. Our hypothesis was supported, thus validating our previous findings.

**Cristina Nardini,** *Brain Activity Underlying Action Memory: Behavioral and Neurological Evidence*

Faculty Sponsor: P. Andrew Leynes

Committee Members: Betsy Ruddy, Margaret Martinetti

This thesis investigated the neural components of memory for actions when focus was directed towards or away from the self. Discriminating between specific features was equally high under both conditions, which contradicts similar experiments using word and picture stimuli. This was supported by various measures of brain activity that indicated successful remembering produced similar activation in the same brain regions under both conditions. Because significantly more qualitative and quantitative features are available in actions, more details are naturally bound to the memory trace and a more vivid memory is facilitated. This pioneers a push for more naturalistic stimuli in future memory experiments, provides insight into memory impairment and presents applications to everyday remembering, such as implementing actions into study habits.

**Kalyani Parwatkar,** *Computer Programming and Cognition: The Effect of Learning Styles and Motivation on Computer Programming Ability*

Faculty Sponsor: Lisa Grimm

Committee Members: Tamara Bireta, P. Andrew Leynes

The aim of this project was to evaluate the motivational factors that predict success in computer programming. It was hypothesized that students with an incremental mindset are more likely to be successful at programming and will demonstrate mastery orientation goals due to their belief that intelligence is malleable. Conversely, students who displayed an entity mind-set would be less successful at computer programming, believing that intelligence is fixed. In effect, they would display performance orientation goals. To evaluate these hypotheses, data was collected from current students with computer programming ability. It was found that mastery orientation was a strong predictor of computer programming ability. These findings are pivotal when thinking about the cognitive factors that determine success in computer programming.

**Génesis Andrea Rubio,** *Developmental Outcomes of Latinx Youth Participating in a Peer Mentoring Program*

Faculty Sponsor: He Len Chung

Committee Members:  Jessica Barnack-Tavlaris, Chu Kim-Prieto

This research project was developed in partnership with the coordinator of *El Centro de Recursos para Familias* of Catholic Charities' peer mentoring program. *El Centro* is a Trenton-based non-profit that serves the local Latinx immigrant community. As such, this thesis aims to understand the impact of a year-long formal peer mentoring program on Latinx youth via a 2-year longitudinal program evaluation. There is limited research exploring factors that promote positive youth developmental outcomes of Latinx youth. We hope that this project will not only address this empirical gap but also strengthen the capacities of *El Centro*'s peer mentoring program.

**Shivani Shah,** *The Effects of the Model Minority Stereotype on Perceptions of South Asian American Leaders*

Faculty sponsor: Jason Dahling

Committee members: Lisa Grimm, Shaun Wiley

This thesis explored the effects of the model minority stereotype and perceptions of leadership of Asian Americans. The model minority stereotype views Asian Americans as competent workers, but has adverse effects on Asian Americans' job placement and growth as leaders. Furthermore, we sought to establish a differentiation between South Asians and East Asians, and determine which group was viewed as more prototypical of a leader. Our results indicated that the East Asian American vignette we created fostered more positive perceptions of leadership compared to the South Asian American and Caucasian American vignette. These results are important in understanding what organizations can do to encourage diversity in leadership and change negative perceptions people may have of minority groups.

**Kristi Spicer**, *Effects of Implicit Theories of Intelligence on Novice Computer Programmers*

Faculty Sponsor: Lisa Grimm

Committee Members: Tamra Bireta, P. Andrew Leynes

This thesis investigated the effects of implicit theories of intelligence on the ability of novice female programmers to learn and thrive in computer programming. Participants were taught how to code in Python through an online coding resource and tested on the skills they had learned.  It was found that those with an incremental theory of intelligence (i.e., show concern for improving skills) had higher ratings of confidence and were more eager to continue in both the learning and assessment tasks. Those with an entity theory of intelligence (i.e., show concern for demonstrating competency at a skill) were found to have higher levels of  frustration.  These results have important implications for the incorporation of women in STEM disciplines.

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## HONORS THESES

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**Emma Young,** *Avoidant Coping Moderates Emotional Reactivity to Negative Interpersonal Event in College Students*

Faculty Sponsor: Joanna Herres

Committee Members: He Len Chung, John Ruscio

This thesis explored the relationship between coping strategies and emotional reactivity in college students. Heightened emotional reactivity to stress is correlated with mental health problems. Individuals cope with stress through varied strategies. Whereas some strategies involve stress avoidance, other strategies that are considered more adaptive include attempts to directly remedy the stressor or its consequences. My thesis examined the effects of avoidant coping on students' emotional reactivity to negative interpersonal events. Contrary to hypotheses, participants who reported more avoidant coping experienced *less* emotional reactivity. The study may have captured short-term distress avoidance, rather than the more lasting and potentially maladaptive effects of avoidance. Future research should examine the effects of long-term avoidant coping on the emotional well-being of individuals.

2018
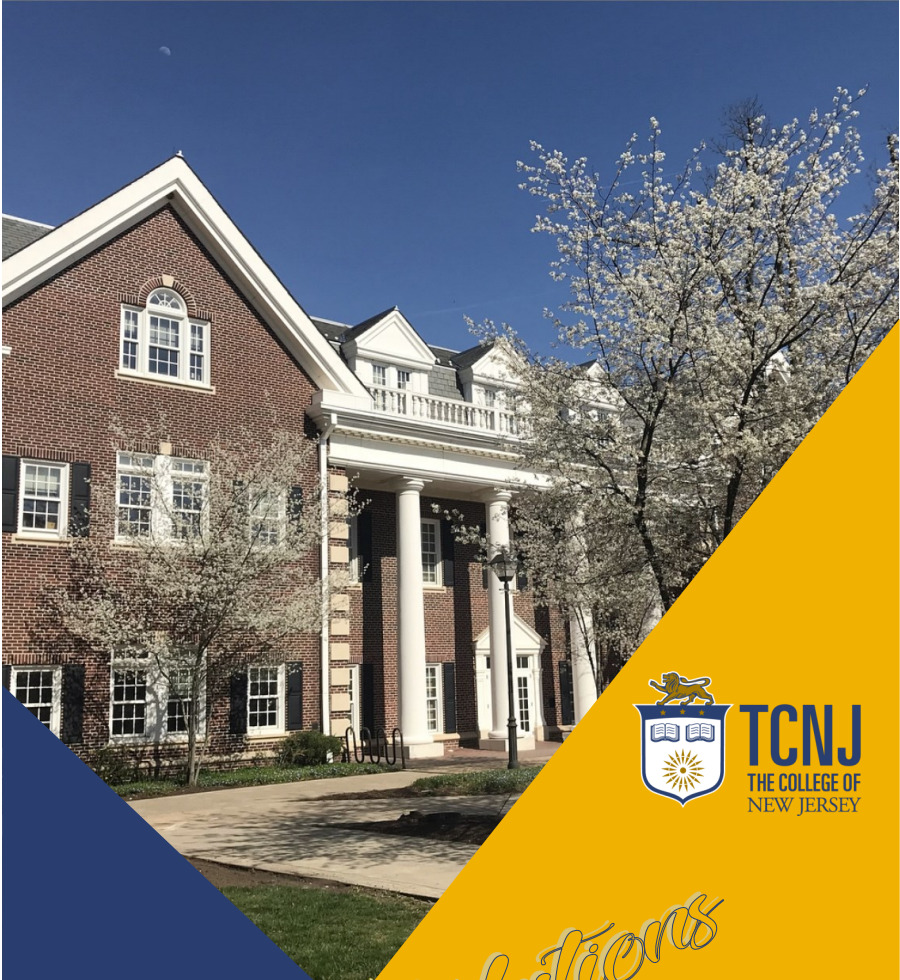
*Congratulations*

to all of our **graduates**
from the Department
of Psychology
faculty and staff!

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