



Voluntary Internship Programme in Research (VIP-R)
Psychology
Academic Year 23/24
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

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Optimising Treatment: Depression and Functional Recovery

Project: Systematic review in depression and functional recovery

Supervisor: Dr. Elayne Ahern

Roles/Responsibilities of Intern:

The intern will join an existing project and work with the research team to assist the following:

- Screening of relevant study records in accordance with defined study eligibility criteria, firstly, at title/abstract level and, secondly, at the full-text level (incl. sourcing full-text articles of relevant records) using Covidence software. Training will be provided.
- Data extraction/quality assessment for included studies using template provided by the Project Supervisor.
- Assist the generation of summary tables for the included studies.

Desired Criteria:

- Familiarity with systematic review methodology and quantitative research designs (e.g., randomised controlled trials, observational studies)
- Interest and motivation to engage in a new research methodology (systematic review)
- Organisational skills, such as the effective documentation of processes during record screening.

Heart and Mind: Psychological Well-Being and Physical Health

Projects: A range of projects examining the predictors of psychological well-being, including systematic reviews and meta-analyses (e.g., examining the links between depression and physiological responding to stress).

Supervisor: Dr. Siobhán Griffin

Roles/Responsibilities of Intern:

- Gaining familiarity with the systematic review process.
- Abstract screening and full text screening (training provided) via COVIDENCE software.
- Other tasks related to the projects, such as data extraction.

Desired Criteria:

- For this role, the candidate will need to have excellent attention to detail
- Willingness to learn new skills
- Knowledge of experimental design
- Some knowledge of systematic reviews and the process involved

The Self, Emotions, Meaning in Life

Project: Emotions & the Self, Meaning in Life, Heroism, Stress

Supervisor: Professor Eric R. Igou

Roles/Responsibilities of Intern:

- Reviewing literature relevant to the study at hand
- Creating study materials
- Collecting data
- Analyzing data (with support)
- Participating in meetings of the SOCOUL Lab
- Maintaining the website of the SOCOUL Lab

Desired Criteria:

- Interest in the subject areas above: Wanting to know more about how the human mind works and why people behave the way they do as a function of the social context (social psychology & social cognition)
- Willingness to explore and engage in discussions about research in lab settings (SOCOUL Lab: <https://socoullab.wordpress.com>)
- Willingness to learn statistical analyses using SPSS and/or R
- Interest in an academic career (PhD, perhaps more)

Projects

Emotions: I am interested in existential connotations of emotions such as boredom and disillusionment: They convey that either the situation or life in general is less meaningful than desired. I then examine how people manage such experiences. Example: Van Tilburg & Igou (2017) (<https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2016-48139-001>).

Person perception: People make inferences about others as a function of cues (e.g., middle initials, displayed eccentricity; see Van Tilburg & Igou, 2014a, 2014b). What leads to the perception that other people are boring, and how do people respond to that? (see also: Van Tilburg, Igou, & Panjwani, 2022; <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/01461672221079104>).

Heroism motivation: What affects whether or not people are motivated to engage in heroic acts? I am particularly interested in emotions as a facilitator of heroism motivation. Example: Igou et al., (2018) (<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02375/full>)

Emotions and Stress: Recently, I started research on stressors and emotions in everyday life using wearable sensors (watches). Example: Whiston et al., (2022) (<https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/9979798>)

My main collaborators are:

- Wijnand van Tilburg; Senior Lecturer at the University of Essex; first graduating PhD student in Psychology at UL; winner of the 33rd Ig Nobel Prize (2023) for Education
- Elaine Kinsella: Associate Professor at UL
- Paul Maher: Associate Professor at UL
- Andrew Moynihan: Assistant Professor at UL
- Herbert Bless: Mentor and Professor at the University of Mannheim

Emotions and Political Cognition

Project: Emotions and Political Cognition Lab Internship

Supervisor: Dr. Paul Maher

What we are looking for

The Emotions and Political Cognition (EPC) Lab is looking for research assistants to help support our lab activities (see below). The tasks involved include:

- Identifying data sets that contain variables of interest to the lab.
- Supporting data collection by administering our online data collection accounts (e.g. Prolific).
- Reviewing literature to identify key papers of interest.
- Taking part in lab discussions.

What we do

Our research mainly concern emotions, attitudes, and political orientation, and we have a preference for the use of experimental methods. The theoretical basis for our work comes from models of *meaning regulation* (e.g. Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006) and *self-categorization* (Turner, 1999). This approach assumes that people have a general motivation to maintain their sense of meaning in life through cognitive organization, and that information that disrupts this organization triggers different forms of negative affect and attempts to reaffirm meaning. Below are 3 broad examples of the type of work we do.

1. Emotions and politics

I am interested in the social-cognitive and motivational components of political polarization. My research investigates how negative epistemic emotions can lead people to polarize their political views/behavior. For example, a project may investigate if experiencing *disillusionment* leads people to recall information congruent with their existing political beliefs (social-cognitive component) because they are motivated to maintain a sense of meaning in their lives (motivational component).

2. Attitude networks

People enact attitude positions by sharing their opinions on social media or in conversation. When people agree on certain attitudes, or opinions, a connection is established. These connections can be mapped on an attitude network (or opinion network), that links people who agree on certain attitudes (e.g. pro/anti science attitudes) and links different attitudes when the same person enacts them (e.g. pro-vegan and pro-choice). Such networks can reveal the structure of social groups in society. An FYP project may investigate how attitude sharing influences the extent to which people identify with social groups.

3. Disillusionment

I am also interested in exploratory research aimed at understanding the nature of disillusionment and disillusioning experiences. For example, a project may investigate what thinking styles (e.g. need for cognitive closure) or personality variables (e.g. openness to experience) make people susceptible, or resistant, to the experience of *disillusionment*.

1. The Moral Psychology of #MeToo

Supervisor: Dr. Cillian McHugh

Roles/Responsibilities of Intern:

- Assist in cleaning a large database of tweets relating to the #MeToo campaign.
- Students will be asked to survey the tweets saved at ([link to #MeToo tweets](#)) and identify strategies for removing noise/junk/trolling content.

Desired Criteria:

- Attention to detail
 - Patience
 - Ability to take initiative
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2. Effects of Psychological Distance on Mental Abstraction

Supervisor: Dr. Cillian McHugh

Roles/Responsibilities of Intern:

- Finalise data collection materials for this project
- Set up the data collection lab according to requirements of project team
- Manage the data collection for this project

Desired Criteria:

- Attention to detail
- Punctual, reliable, responsible (able to *manage* data collection)
- Ability to take initiative

Intercultural Competence: Training and Research

Project: Developing materials for intercultural competence training, running activities and designing a few studies to test the efficacy and effect of these training on peoples awareness, sensitivity and competence to deal with cultural diversity.

Supervisor: Dr. Anca Minescu

Roles/Responsibilities of Intern:

The intern will join an existing project and work within the Sanctuary with Psychology group, the Migration and Diversity Lab group as well as the Erasmus + Funded project INTERCOMP to assist the following:

- Making summaries of existing literature
- Preparing activity packs for various types of intercultural competence trainings: for example, for orientation of international students, for introductions of a diverse team/cohort of people at first meeting, for exploring cultural similarities and differences, for developing perspective taking skills, for problem solving and conflict management
- Generating some nice visuals or PowerPoint slides on the activities.
- Shadowing me on trainings.

Desired Criteria:

- Curiosity about cultural identities, cultural differences and also interest in education/training.
- No specific experience or prerequisite knowledge required.
- Willingness to join an ongoing project.

Self-Awareness, Relationship Closeness, Trust

Project: Self-awareness, relationship closeness, trust | experimental research | communication via online media (e.g., Zoom) and in the lab

Supervisor: Dr. Ann-Christin Posten

Roles/Responsibilities of Intern:

The intern will join an existing project and work with the research team to assist the following:

- Systematic review on literature on self-awareness and trust
- Running experimental studies as experimenter in online settings (e.g., via Zoom) and in the laboratory
- Come up with experimental scripts and write experimental protocols

Desired Criteria:

- Familiarity with quantitative research designs
- Being comfortable to interact with participants face-to-face in the lab as well as online
- Understanding of systematic review methodology

Project:

Digital communication has become highly important over the last years. However, little is known about how the settings in online meetings affects people's behaviour. Have you ever thought about whether seeing yourself in an online meeting on the screen (e.g. in Teams or Zoom) will affect how you act? We are interested to find this out! You will engage in experimental settings with participants online and in the lab to investigate if self-awareness (i.e. seeing oneself on screen) affects the participants' behaviour (i.e. biases their responses). We will also run lab studies with different communicative set-ups and investigate how closeness to others affects people's reactions in terms of trust, helping, and punishment. These studies are part of an international collaboration with MEF University in Istanbul on self-awareness, interpersonal closeness, and trust. You will work closely with the international team and engage in meetings to discuss ongoing research.

European Perspectives on Education in Clinical Psychology

Supervisor: Dr. Elaine Rogers

Roles/Responsibilities of Intern:

- Desk research on undergraduate and post graduate education and training programmes across Europe.
- Other tasks that may arise on the clinical programme, e.g. assisting with selection process

Desired Criteria:

- Applicant would have to be organised, able to work independently, and as part of a team.
- The role will involve co-ordinating with colleagues in other European universities within the YERUN network

Self, Identity, and Intergroup Relations

Project: Chance to work on any of several studies on A) Group Compatibility & Well-Being, B) Superordinate Group Identification, Group Compatibility & Intergroup Attitudes, C) Validation of a Group Compatibility Scale, D) Economic Inequality between Social Groups & Ingroup Identification

Supervisor: Dr. Jenny Roth

Roles/Responsibilities of Intern:

Design specifics of studies (e.g., a manipulation of superordinate group identification, manipulation of economic inequality); Set up studies in Qualtrics; Search literature for relevant studies; Analyse data; Write up reports

Desired Criteria:

Familiarity with quantitative research design and data analysis; Motivation to contribute to quantitative research projects