Graduate Admission and Training in Social Psychology at The University of Kansas

Highlights of the Graduate Program in Social Psychology

- Training in basic theory and research in social psychology
- Careful mentorship and apprenticeship model of training
- Highly individualized plan of training
- Access to world class quantitative training, certification as a quantitative specialist
- Located in a fun college town with great quality of life.
- Specialized instruction and mentorship on a range of theoretical and applied problems
- High levels of interaction between faculty and students
- Cutting edge research on a variety of related topics
- Constant stream of visiting American and International scholars
- Special funds for research support
- Support for conference travel
- Carefully supervised opportunities to learn and practice teaching skills
- Large supply of volunteer research participants
- Faculty laboratories and access to shared lab space
- Dedicated volunteer undergraduate research assistants
- Excellent track record of placing graduates in academic and research positions

Current Research Interests:
Faculty

Glenn Adams  
(Stanford, 2000) Cultural Psychology of relationships, knowledge, and denial/ignorance  
Webpage

Monica Biernat  
Program Director (Michigan, 1989) Stereotyping and prejudice, shifting standards.  
Webpage

Nyla Branscombe  
(Purdue, 1986) Intergroup relations, social identity, psychological well-being.  
Webpage

Chris Crandall  
(Michigan, 1987) Justification of prejudice, political psychology, similarity among friends  
Webpage

Omri Gillath  
(Bar-Ilan, 2003) Close relationships, attachment, social neuroscience, evolutionary psychology.  
Webpage

Mark Landau  
Webpage

Rachel McDonald  
(Queensland, 2013) Social norms, environmental psychology, climate change, psychological distance.  
Webpage

Ludwin Molina  
(UCLA, 2007) Intergroup relations, political psychology, group-based power asymmetries.  
Webpage

Distinguished Graduates of the Kansas Social Psychology Program

Angela Bahns, Ph.D. 2012, Wellesley College  
Laura Billings, Ph.D. 1999, Southwestern Illinois University  
Paul Biner, Ph.D. 1985, Ball State University  
Beverly Brummett, Ph.D. 1996, Duke Medical School  
Chris Burris, Ph.D. 1995, St. Jerome’s University, Canada  
Melanie Canterbury, Ph.D. 2012, Louisiana Public Health Institute  
Tara Collins, Ph.D. 2012, Winthrop University  
Lauren Crain, Ph.D. 1999, HealthPartners Research Foundation  
Silvana D’Anello, PhD. 1997, Universidad de Los Andes, Venezuela  
Vanessa Edkins, Ph.D. 2007, Florida Institute of Technology  
Scott Eidelman, Ph.D. 2004, University of Arkansas  
Amy Eshleman, Ph.D. 2001, Wagner College  
Kathleen Fuegen, Ph.D. 2002, Northern Kentucky University  
Donna Garcia, Ph.D. 2006 Cal State University, San Bernardino  
Jeff Greenberg, Ph.D. 1982, University of Arizona  
Richard Harvey, Ph.D. 1995, St. Louis University  
Eddie Harmon-Jones, M.A. 1994, U. of New South Wales  
April Horstman-Reser, Ph.D. 2007, Nebraska Methodist College  
Iva Katsaroka-Miller, Ph.D. 2009, Transylvania University  
Tugce Kurtis, Ph.D. 2013, University of West Georgia  
Laura Leviton, Ph.D. 1978, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
Anca Miron, Ph.D. 2005, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh  
Sahana Mukherjee, Ph.D. 2014, Gettysburg College  
Michelle Nario-Redmond, Ph.D. 1996, Hiram College  
Abogni N’Gbala, Ph.D. 1996, Universite de Paris, France  
Laurie O’Brien, Ph.D. 2002, Tulane University  
Susan Owen, Ph.D. 1996, Athens State University  
Amy Posey, Ph.D. 1995, Benedictine College  
Tom Pyszczynski, Ph.D. 1985, University of Colorado  
Stephen Reysen, Ph.D. 2009, Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Zachary Rothschild, Ph.D. 2013 Bowdoin College  
Nuray Sakalli, Ph.D. 1996, Middle East Technical University  
Phia Salter, Ph.D. 2010, Texas A & M University  
Michael Schmitt, Ph.D. 2002, Simon Fraser University  
Patricia Schoenrade, Ph.D. 1986, William Jewell College  
Elizabeth Self, Ph.D. 1991, Eastern New Mexico State U.  
Amanda Sesko, Ph.D. 2011, University of Alaska Southeast  
Linda Silka, Ph.D. 1978, University of Maine  
Paul Silvia, Ph.D. 2001, U. of North Carolina-Greensboro  
Sheldon Solomon, Ph.D. 1980, Skidmore College  
Lynne Steinberg, Ph.D. 1985, University of Houston  
Eric Stocks, Ph.D. 2005, University of Texas-Tyler  
Daniel Sullivan, Ph.D. 2013, University of Arizona  
Shelley Theno, Ph.D. 1996, University of Alaska-Anchorage  
Jo-Ann Tsang, Ph.D. 2005, Baylor University  
Theresa Vescio, Ph.D. 1995, The Pennsylvania State University  
Daniel Wann, Ph.D. 1991, Murray State University  
Ruth Warner, Ph.D. 2008, St. Louis University  
Julie Weir, Ph.D. 1991, Pittsburg State University  
Allan Wicker, Ph.D. 1967, Claremont Graduate University  
Cynthia Willis-Esqueda, Ph.D. 1991, U. of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Rex Wright, Ph.D. 1982, University of North Texas
What is unique about the Kansas Social Program?

Social psychology has a long and distinguished history at the University of Kansas. In 1946, Roger Barker (Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award from APA, 1964) became Chair. In that same year, Fritz Heider (founder of social cognition) joined the Department (Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award, 1965). Since then, Kansas has been a world leader in research and training of graduate students. A recent article puts the KU program at the 92nd percentile of effective training programs in the USA for placing new faculty into Ph.D. training programs (Ferguson & Crandall, 2007).

Contract System The Social Program at KU sees graduate training as a clear departure from the undergraduate mode of course requirements and study plans. Instead, students develop a contract, which is individually tailored and infinitely flexible to the student's personal goals. The Social Program does not have fixed requirements. Instead, each student, in consultation with faculty, writes a unique contract for their own graduate education. This contract creates an opportunity to state the student's professional goals and to discuss these goals with the advisor and other faculty. Student decide which coursework is most appropriate to meeting those objectives, and students enroll only in those classes that meet their goals. If students' goals change, the contract can be amended accordingly. The contract lays out a student's plan for research, with near-term plans fairly specific, and long-term plans more general. The contract also states the student's plan for professional development, such as quantitative skill and teaching training.

Cooperation and Collaboration

Although individual faculty have their own labs, the Social Program officially (and effectively) endorses an open and collaborative environment—students are encouraged to work with multiple faculty members. This allows students to become familiar with a wide range of theoretical perspectives and research methods, and to diversify their theoretical and methodological portfolio, and to build an interdisciplinary approach. At KU, faculty and students collaborate with each other across labs, programs and Departments.

Visitors

One main advantage of the Social Program is the constant stream of visitors. With visits by collaborators, international and domestic visitors, and invited speakers (to the Ferne Forman Lecture, the Heider series, and the weekly social brown bag), students and faculty are exposed to cutting edge research. Students have personal meetings and meals with many of these speakers, with wide-open discussions. These interactions often form the basis for future collaboration and open the way to many other opportunities.

International Focus

The Social Program is international in scope. For decades we have had students from nations such as China, Germany, India, Pakistan, Turkey and Venezuela, and visitors most recently from France, The Netherlands, and Spain. Social Program faculty currently have active collaborations, including grants, with colleagues in Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Ghana, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Spain, and Turkey. KU has reciprocal relations with graduate schools in Costa Rica, Germany and Venezuela. Graduate students have received Fulbright and other awards to study in Japan, The Netherlands and Turkey.

Social Atmosphere

The Social Program is defined by a sense of community. Friday Brown Bags, are followed by a happy hour in downtown Lawrence, with plenty of food, drinks, and chat. Well-attended and fun, they are interesting for the range of conversations, from that day's program talk, social research, film, politics, literature, music, philosophy, or simply just "catching up" with one another. Fridays are a cornerstone of the Social Program community.
Lawrence is a great place to live...

Lawrence is a college town of about 90,000, home to both the University of Kansas and Haskell Indian Nations University. The state capital, Topeka, KS, is about 25 miles west of Lawrence, and Kansas City, MO is about 45 miles to the east. The heart of Lawrence is its vibrant downtown, which includes many landmark buildings dating to the civil war era. Shopping, dining, and an excellent Arts Center with a variety of community events make Lawrence a great place to be.

Lawrence, KS is one of the few cities in the U.S. founded strictly for political reasons—in 1854, the New England Emigrant Aid Society founded Lawrence in effort to keep the territory free from slavery. Sacked and burned by William Quantrill and a group of pro-slavery Missourians in 1863, Lawrence rebuilt and emerged with the motto, "From Ashes to Immortality." Both the Oregon and Santa Fe trails run through Lawrence and Douglas County, Kansas. Lawrence was the boyhood home of poet Langston Hughes whose novel Not Without Laughter is said to be based on his life in Lawrence, and was also home to the beat writer and artist William S. Burroughs.

Some Rankings: The National Trust for Historic Preservation ranked Lawrence among its "Dozen Most Distinctive Destinations," touting it as one of the best-preserved and unique communities in America. Lawrence has been rated among the top 15 in "The 100 Best Small Arts Towns in America" by author John Villani. USA Today ranked Lawrence as one of the least segregated communities in the country. In the September 2000 issue of Reader's Digest "New Choices: living even better after 50," Lawrence is listed #4 in college towns to which most people want to move. The National Endowment for the Arts has ranked Lawrence in the top 12 among cities in the U.S. with the largest percentage of professional artists in the work force. WheatFields Bakery & Cafe was awarded the 2004 Best Breads in Kansas designation by the Kansas Restaurant Association and Kansas Wheat Commission. Clinton Lake was ranked among the top 50 lakes in the country by Boating World Magazine, July 2000.

Here’s a link to a New York Times article about visiting Lawrence:

Quotes from Former and Current Graduate Students

KU has a fantastic social program—a first-rate faculty with a diversity of interests, a collegial environment that encourages collaboration, and a contract system that facilitates a “student-centered” experience. Lawrence is easily one of the best college towns in the country. — Scott Eidelman

The core faculty are internationally known and respected scholars; the program routinely brings in first-rate scholars from other universities to discuss theories and research with the graduate students. — Eric Stocks

By the time I left the Kansas Social Program, I not only had a Ph.D., I was published, had experience in teaching and research, and had a job. The research and teaching opportunities helped me build a great vita; out of four job interviews, I got three offers. — April Horstman Reser

While the weekly research meetings provide intellectual stimulation, the happy hour experiences that follow provide invaluable opportunities to interact socially with faculty. When I interviewed for academic positions and during my first years as a new faculty member, I came to appreciate how valuable both those experiences were in terms of communicating clearly with colleagues. — Amy Eshleman

I’ll always remember my “Lawrence experience” with fondness and gratitude. As a graduate student at Kansas, I was privileged to work with a distinguished and enthusiastic faculty who collectively exposed students to a broad and diverse range of research programs, taught the importance of theory-driven research, instilled an appreciation for the rich history of social psychology at Kansas, and provided the much-needed but sometimes overlooked informal mentoring and socialization that is a critical component of a well-rounded graduate education. — Laura Billings

Our program followed a model that values graduate students’ collaboration with multiple faculty members, intellectual creativity and the opportunity for graduate students to pursue their own research interests, and spending time together socially as a program at a weekly happy hour for faculty, graduate students, and their families. - Angela Nierman

The KU Social Psych program is like a family—a nurturing, comradely environment where everyone knows and cares about everyone else’s research and interests. — Daniel Sullivan