



## INTERNS & GRADUATES

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Several of our students have begun new internships this year. Elie Hessel is at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine in Chapel Hill, NC. Gena Gorlin is completing her internship at the Alpert Medical School of Brown University in Providence, RI. Jessica Beadel is in Dayton, OH at the VA Medical Center, and Yishan Xu is in San Diego, CA. Her internship is with Sharp Healthcare.

Graduating from the program this year were Jenna Rowen, Meg Reuland, Riana Anderson, Jen Green, and Chris Beam.

Congratulations to everyone and best of luck in the future!

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# New Psychology Department Faculty Members

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Amrisha Vaish is a new assistant professor in the University of Virginia's Department of Psychology. She earned her Ph.D. at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany in 2010, and completed a 4-year postdoctoral fellowship at the same institution. Amrisha's Early Social Development Lab at U.VA is focused on how young children perceive and respond to their social worlds, in particular how children become moral and cooperative people. These include developing social emotions (such as sympathy, guilt, and gratitude), cognitions (such as the ability to evaluate moral actions and intentions), and behaviors (such as helping and sharing). One of Amrisha's recent studies showed, for instance, that the moral emotion of guilt emerges by 3 years of age: When children of this age cause harm to someone, they show guilt and attempt to repair the harm. Amrisha also studies the development of more basic social and cognitive skills such as the ability to understand the emotions, desires, and actions of others.

Amrisha has moved to Charlottesville with her husband (Tobias, also featured in this newsletter) and 3-year-old son, and they are all loving getting to know Charlottesville, especially the great restaurants and parks!

Toby Grossmann is a new assistant professor in the University of Virginia's Department of Psychology. He earned his Ph.D. at the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences in Leipzig, Germany, and worked as a Research Fellow at the Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development at the University of London, UK. Toby's Babylab at UVA focuses on early social and emotional abilities that enable infants to interact with others. By using non-invasive and child-friendly methods such as electroencephalography (EEG), functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS), and eye-tracking technology, Toby's research examines changes in infant brain function while important developmental milestones are achieved. He studies these processes across a range of situations in which infants can glean social and emotional information from faces, voices, and body motion. One of his recent studies showed that, already by the age of 7 months, infants are able to read very subtle social and emotional cues from the eyes. Toby also studies what factors explain and predict differences in infants' early social and emotional development.





# In the Spotlight: Gilmer Vacations!

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For this year's fun photo theme I asked faculty and students to send in photos of their recent vacations.



Erin Horn reports that she spent her summer coaching Little League Baseball. This season her team went undefeated with a record of 22-0! They won their 2nd League and City Championships in a row.



Alex Wertz and Audrey Wittrup went to Long Beach Island this summer on vacation.



Diana Dinescu on vacation out west this summer with her boyfriend Bryan, and fishing in Romania with her family.





# In the Spotlight: Gilmer Vacations!

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Bethany Teachman on vacation in India this summer with her mother.



Bethany's family (her husband, daughters, and their cousins) enjoying a boat ride under Niagara Falls.



Susan Lane with her family at Jockey's Ridge State Park in Nagshead, NC, this Spring.



Jeff Glenn and his girlfriend Charlene in Iceland this summer.

## Awards and Honors: Students and Faculty

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### **Bethany Teachman:**

- Bethany received the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies Outstanding Mentor Award

### **Diana Dinescu:**

- Diana is the Quantitative Collaborative Graduate Student Affiliate
- She received the Maury Pathfinder Award for best MA thesis in the Psychology Department.
- Diana received the Quantitative Collaborative Bynum Research Grant

### **Emily Loeb**

- Emily was selected as a Distinguished Teaching Fellow for this academic year.

### **Jamie Albright**

- Jamie was awarded the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship

### **Alison Nagel**

- Alison won a prize for her poster at the 2015 Huskey Research Exhibition
- She is a VEST Affiliate Fellow this year and will be a full fellow for the following 2 years.

### **Gena Gorlin**

- In 2015 Gena won the Rebecca Boone Memorial Award for Excellence in Teaching

### **Jeff Glenn**

- Jeff received a Presidential Fellowship in Data Science for this academic year.

### **Marlen Gonzalez**

- Marlen received a Presidential Fellowship in Data Science for this academic year.

### **Lee Llewellyn:**

- Lee welcomed her first grandson Jude this summer. Adorable photo to the right!



## Awards, Honors, and Updates: Alumni

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### **Mary Jo Coiro (1997)**

- Mary Jo is an Assistant Professor in the Psychology Department at Loyola University

### **Mia Smith Bynum (1999)**

- Mia received Fellow Status in Division 43 (Family Psychology) of the APA

### **Monica McConnell (2000)**

- Monica is a current board member for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, South Carolina Chapter. She continues to be part of the local effort to provide suicide prevention training to schools in the state, by providing multiple trainings per year to help educate staff about suicide and suicide prevention.
- Under Monica's direction, the Child and Welfare program was recognized as an Outstanding Community Partner by the Department of Social Services.

### **James Reilly (2003)**

- James was recently promoted to Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine.

### **David Sbarra (2004)**

- David was elected President of the Academy of Psychological Clinical Science

### **Anthony Chambers (2004)**

- Anthony was selected to be the Associate Editor for the APA Journal "Couple and Family Psychology: Research and Practice"
- He recently took over as the new Chief Academic Officer and Vice President of Education and Research at the Family Institute at Northwestern University
- He is the current President Elect for APA's Division 43 "Society for Couple and Family Psychology"

### **Amy West (2004)**

- Amy is now an Associate Professor with tenure at UIC

# Awards, Honors, and Updates: Alumni

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## **Brian D’Onofrio (2005)**

- Brian received the Early Career Impact Award from the Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences (FABBS)

## **Susan South (2006)**

- Susan was named an associate editor of the Journal of Research in Personality

## **David Klonsky (2006)**

- David received the Shneidman Award, given annually by the American Association of Suicidality to recognize outstanding scientific contributions by a researcher under age 40.

## **Monnica Williams (2007)**

- Monnica’s work on looking at the connection between PTSD and racism was featured on NPR and in the New York Times this summer.
- She received a grant from the APF titled “Reducing Microaggressions and Promoting Racial Harmony”. The purpose is to develop a new measure of microaggressions and to create an intervention to reduce racism and promote connection between diverse people.
- Monnica recently became tenured.

## **Josh Magee (2010)**

- Josh was appointed as Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at Miami University
- He received a K23 Grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse titled: “Text Message Support to Prevent Smoking Relapse in Community Treatment Settings”

## **Matthew Lerner (2013)**

- Matthew was a Finalist for the National Institutes of Health, Director’s Early Independence Award
- He received the Young Investigator Award for the International Society for Autism Research (INSAR)

## **Shari Steinman (2014)**

- Shari received the NARSAD Young Investigator Award

## **Riana Anderson (2015)**

- Riana received the Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship and is now at the University of Pennsylvania's Applied Psychology and Human Development Division



## Featured Research: Elise Clerkin

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Whereas mindfulness involves the ability to bring one's full attention to the present moment without judgment, addiction can be conceptualized as an inability to accept the present moment, coupled with a habitual drive to achieve the temporary relief or pleasure that is expected to be provided by indulging in substance use. Together with my graduate students (Laurel Sarfan and E. Marie Parsons) and collaborator (Joshua Magee), we recently tested whether trait mindfulness facets and coping motives (i.e., drinking to reduce anxiety) functioned as serial mediators accounting for the relationship between symptoms of social anxiety and drinking problems among a diverse, community-based sample of individuals with co-occurring social anxiety symptoms and alcohol dependence.

As predicted, the relationship between social anxiety symptoms and drinking problems was serially mediated by acting with awareness in the present moment and drinking to cope. Further, the relationship between social anxiety symptoms and drinking problems indirectly flowed through accepting without judgment. Finally, replicating prior work among college student samples, results indicated that coping motives mediated the social anxiety symptoms and drinking problems link. These findings, if reflecting causal pathways, suggest that in addition to

trying to directly restructure or change negative cognitions and anxiety, another viable intervention strategy for individuals with co-occurring alcohol dependence and social anxiety might be enhancing clients' mindfulness skills, particularly the skill of acting with awareness in the present moment. First, based on our findings, interventions focused on strengthening the mind-

and alcohol problems. For example, for the aforementioned client, rather than judging his biased cognitions and anxiety as experiences that must be changed, a viable intervention approach might be helping this client learn to tolerate and accept the full range of human emotions without trying to modify the content. Overall, it is noteworthy that the present results suggest continuity between the possible effects of cognitive-behavioral and mindfulness skill-based approaches in this context, offering clinicians several possible routes for breaking the association between social anxiety and drinking problems.



fulness skill of acting with awareness could lead to fewer coping motives to drink, which ultimately could lead to fewer problems related to drinking. Theoretically, the individual who is able to pause in order to more fully consider the situation might be able to limit the types of drinking that are known to produce heightened alcohol-related problems, such as drinking to cope with anxiety. Second, results from this study indicate that enhancing nonjudgmental acceptance of thoughts and emotions might be another critical pathway for breaking the link between social anxiety

*-Elise Clerkin ('10)*



## Alumni News - Update from Peter Tuerk

For this Alumni Update I was asked to comment on what my job involves, how I got my current position, and what my favorite and least favorite aspects of work are. These questions seem to be geared for providing at least some information to current graduate students regarding potential future options and choices, which is what I aimed for. I am currently an Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) in Charleston, S.C., where I serve as Director of Research Training for the psychology internship program. I also serve as Section Chief of the PTSD Clinical and Telehealth programs at the Charleston VA Medical Center, and am a national trainer in evidence-based treatments for PTSD in the VA system. Very broadly, the things I enjoy most about my job are working as a scientist-practitioner and taking part in the constant failures and steady successes related to innovating care through technology, research, or clinic policy. I received my doctorate in 2007 after completing internship at the MUSC/VA Charleston Consortium. After internship, my mentors in Charleston offered me a job. Still broke from the internship interview trail, this seemed like a pretty good deal to me. The faculty here were an authentic group of people and the academic and clinical ecology seemed conducive to pursuing a career as a scientist-practitioner. Reflecting on why I was offered the job, I would have to guess that it was probably some mix of research productivity during internship, providing



conscientious clinical care on rotations (for example always getting back to referral sources with information after a course of care, like Dr. Llewellyn taught us), and since people hire people, not cv's, I think there was a personality match that met expectations for collegial and enjoyable professional relationships. Though I also suppose it's entirely possible that the first top three choices turned them down! I'll never know and will never ask as my interpretation is good enough for me and potentially way less egodystonic.

When I started at the PTSD clinic, we had a staff of three clinicians, providing care locally to patients who lived close enough to the medical center to attend in-person treatment. Currently, we have a staff of 20 providers and have expanded the delivery of evidence-based specialty care to 10 associated facilities in three states via telehealth technology,

including home-based telehealth. Through all the stops and starts of helping to develop the program, I am proud of our team, of our thoughtful expansion, and of the careful attention to clinic dynamics and team work that have enabled successful telehealth partnerships and real EBT delivery in real-world settings. Critical to this success has been the framework we developed to track programmatic and clinical data along the continuum of mental health care. Administratively, we track referral source, intake attendance, workload, utilization, and a number of other process-oriented outcomes. Clinically, along with self-report measures and some limited neuropsych, we integrate objective challenge tasks, psychophysiological assessments via mobile applications, and full CAPS diagnostic assessments into standard exposure-oriented clinical care, and have developed treatment fidelity programming, including weekly group-based

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video-review supervision for all the therapists. We are currently planning to launch ecological momentary assessment in the coming months. These practices, which are often employed in research settings, are much more challenging to implement in standard clinical care settings; they require trial and error, creative resource acquisition, team building, constant outreach, and probably more than anything, the ability to withstand a consistent barrage of crushing setbacks without becoming disheartened. The ultimate benefit is not only a higher standard of care for people in need, but also a well-adjusted clinical team with a sense of purpose (which I can confidently claim, knowing that no one from our team is on this mailing list!). The process also provides a rich source of data to support targeted research inquiries, funded trials, and publication productivity.

Broadly, my research interests include augmenting EBTs for PTSD to improve clinical outcomes or foster broader dissemination. Within this rubric, that often includes an interest in mechanisms of disorder and change, but I usually try to keep a pragmatic slant on questions that take into account treatment delivery ecologies and settings. Currently, my funded research as PI includes clinical trials related to extinction enhancement with pharmacological agents (VA-funded), EBT dropout reduction (DoD-funded), and the integration of technology into behavioral assessment and treatment (NIH-funded). Many dually-appointed VA/academic positions have the benefit of

allowing one to submit and work on grants with more than one institution. This has clearly helped me to establish and maintain research funding, not just by expanding opportunities to be PI, but more so because it created opportunities for me to work on teams in multiple realms as a collaborator, Co-I or site-PI. As a junior faculty member, I found myself comparatively competent in the realms of statistics, methodology, and science writing (thanks to Gilmer's curriculum and my graduate mentors, Drs. Turkheimer, Pianta, and Reppucci), but there is no doubt that the other main reason I have independent research funding now is due to the generosity of colleagues since graduate school who included me in grants, mentored me along the way, and continue to do so. I'm not trying to be gracious, that's just a fact.

A few years ago I was lucky enough to be nominated for and awarded the VA's Olin E. Teague Award for Career Achievement in the Rehabilitation of War-Injured veterans. Most distinctions come with opportunities or expectations for work, and that distinction led to invitations to chair committees developing policy for telehealth-delivered EBTs nationally. That experience in part led to an invitation from Springer International to serve as Series Editor for their Behavioral Telehealth Series. Around the same time we were invited to conduct clinical trainings in EBTs for PTSD in Japan, in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake and nuclear disaster. Though I never aspired to or envisioned chairing task-force commit-

tees, managing edited volumes, or spending 11 months preparing for and returning from multiple trips to the furthest time zone, at the time I hadn't completely learned the value (or skill) of saying no. Though these were and are meaningfully useful endeavors, they also provided valuable lessons in time-management and in prioritizing competing worthwhile values. Here I should also mention that my wife, Elena, who received her doctorate in psychology at Ruffner, obtained an MUSC faculty position at the Family Services Research Center implementing multisystemic therapy, and has since parleyed her skills into local politics leadership and scientifically-informed community activism, faced similar challenges in balancing professional values. There is no doubt that for us, as clinical psychologists, time is our most precious resource.

I started this update by saying that being a scientist-practitioner is my favorite part of work; as the cliché goes, it is also my least favorite part. It turns out that doing science and doing clinical work/administration at the same time, and with enough volume for each to meaningfully inform the other, is really a pain in the neck. Just the emails from either world can be overwhelming, put them together and it's impossible not to be disappointing someone at any given moment. That just comes with the territory. I'm not one of those professors who can get up at 5:00 AM, jog, and review two manuscripts before breakfast. I would love to be, but that's

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just not in my composition, which, left to its own devices would tend to lean more towards the absent-minded professor type (except for the inconvenient matter that I'm not old or grey enough to pull that off and there is just no room to fancy oneself as a big-picture idea person; the devil is always in the details). Disheveled hair aside, if I wanted to be a scientist-practitioner, I had to resign myself to acquire the consistent capacity and bandwidth to do so. After internship, I not only still had a lot to learn about scientific standards, grantsmanship, and clinical management, but I still had a lot to learn about keeping those standards up while under a fairly constant stream of pressure. Cultivating attention to detail, timeliness, and thoroughness even when under the gun in several realms was a hard fought and learned skill, and by no means have I gracefully mastered it yet. Even with well-developed and learned time management skills, I still think being a scientist practitioner in the electronic information age is extremely demanding. I try not to take time away from my family, who are without a doubt the best thing that has ever happened to me, so I tend to take time away from other things I enjoy, like playing enough music, hiking, or enough just sitting still and thinking. But it helps to know that I have chosen this career, continue to choose it, and con-



tinue to see great value in my relationships with colleagues, mentors, and mentees, and in our clinical outcomes. Particularly pleasing are the moments of realizing a head-scratching completely unexpected finding in our data, which for me can be more enjoyable and more valuable than uncovering a hypothesized effect. These moments are further apart than I would like, and they are separated by a sea of administrative tasks, but you can't have your pudding unless you eat your meat. So far the pudding has been pretty good.

If you care to, please check out this brief Ted Talk I gave on PTSD theory and treatment: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORs3-tRokGU>, there are also some prolonged exposure training videos we produced for youtube that might be interesting as well: <https://www.youtube.com/user/PeterTuerksChannel>. Thanks, and take care.

Peter

*-Peter Tuerk ('07)*



## Clinical Area Softball Game

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Last Fall, students, faculty, and their families participated in the Clinical Area vs Cognitive Area softball game.

## Welcome First Year Students!

The Clinical Department welcomes First Year Students Miranda Beltzer, Sarah Coe-Odess, and Sara Medina-Devilliers. Please read on to learn a little more about them!



Miranda Beltzer is from Scarsdale, NY. She graduated from Harvard in 2013 and stayed in the Boston area to do research at McLean Hospital for two years after-

wards. She is very excited to be in Charlottesville now as a proud member of the PACT lab, working with Bethany Teachman. Miranda's research interests include how perceptions of control, certainty, and agency may contribute to emotional reactions and maladaptive behaviors in anxiety disorders, and how attention biases may maintain anxiety disorders.

Born in Los Angeles, CA, Sarah Coe-Odess graduated from Swarthmore College ('15) as an Honors Psychology and English major. At Swarthmore, she co-lead a group cognitive-behavioral adolescent intervention and wrote her thesis on the impact of the Penn Resiliency Project on adolescent subjective well-being. She is excited to continue to research adolescent resiliency in Joe Allen's lab. Her particular interests include the impacts of social relationships on adolescent stress, confidence, and autonomy.



Sara Medina-DeVilliers joins the clinical area to work with Jim Coan. Sara is interested in investigating how empathy and its com-



ponents, such as perspective taking and emotion contagion, develop and how they mediate various psychopathologies. Specifically, she wants to look at empathy and social support as a dyadic interaction through fMRI, EEG and psychophysiological measures. She received her BA degree from Dartmouth College and her home town is Fredericksburg, VA. For the past two years, Sara was the Project Coordinator for the VAN Lab at UVA, and is really excited to continue bugging all the wonderful people there now that she will be a grad student! She really loves to climb and do other outdoorsy things. Sara also volunteers at the Sexual Assault Resource Agency as an ER Advocate, advocating on behalf of survivors of sexual assault.

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*Let me know about your recent awards and media mentions so that I may include you in our next newsletter! (send updates to Susan Lane, [sfl3f@virginia.edu](mailto:sfl3f@virginia.edu))*



**We're on the Web - Check out the department website!**

**<http://avillage.web.virginia.edu/Psych>**