

# The Rookie



*The voice of SPSSI graduate students*



## Letter from the GSC Chair

Carlie D. Trott, Colorado State University

Dear SPSSI Graduate Students,

I write to you from sunny Fort Collins, Colorado, where the snow-capped Rocky Mountains—visible from the Colorado State University campus—are a sure sign that winter is coming. This time of year means scrambling towards finals week before pausing to enjoy the hard-earned, collective deep breath of holiday break. As the semester comes to a close, we take another step forward along our academic paths and look ahead to new adventures awaiting us in 2016.

What will the new year hold? For many of us, in the United States, we will elect a new president. Some of us will propose or defend our degree-earning Master's or Ph.D. projects. And, as is characteristic of graduate school, all of us will undergo the highs and lows of new experiences, challenges, and opportunities.

As Chair of the SPSSI Graduate Student Committee (GSC), my goal for the coming year is to represent SPSSI graduate student members in a way that meets our specific needs, while providing opportunities for increased engagement—not only with SPSSI as an organization, but with each other. Meeting this goal for the 2015-2016 year will be a collaborative effort, together with your newly-elected GSC:

**Kristen Hackett**, The Graduate Center of the City University of New York: Chair-Elect

**Julia Tran**, Clark University: Member-at-large Communications Focus

**Angela Robinson**, University of California, Irvine: Member-at-large Academic Focus

**Rashmi Nair**, Clark University: Member-at-large Policy and Applied Work Focus

**Ashley Weinberg**, San Diego State University: Member-at-large Membership Coordinator

Since September, the GSC has been enthusiastically working to brainstorm, plan, and initiate diverse projects in the service of SPSSI graduate student members. Earlier this month, we worked together to prepare, announce, and coordinate a number of symposium topics for graduate student collaboration and submission to the SPSSI 2016 summer conference. Over the coming year, please be on the lookout for additional announcements, resources, and opportunities.

Projects in the early stages of development include, from Julia Tran, an innovative initiative to showcase graduate student research in the newsletter and through social media; from Angela Robinson, valuable opportunities for skill-building and professional development through webinars and conference events; from Rashmi Nair, a vital and informative resource for graduate students seeking policy-focused and applied careers; and from Ashley Weinberg, an essential tool for SPSSI graduate students to establish networks based on shared geographic region and research interests. Kristen Hackett, the SPSSI GSC's Chair-Elect, and I will be working diligently to move these projects forward and to offer additional opportunities for graduate student engagement, including a peer-based mentoring program, social and professional networking events, and student-relevant conference programming.

If you have suggestions for GSC priorities over the coming year, or simply to become more involved with SPSSI, please reach out to me at [carlie.trott@colostate.edu](mailto:carlie.trott@colostate.edu). And, as winter looms, please remember that the SPSSI 2016 summer conference will be here before we know it! I look forward to meeting you there.



## Letter from the Editor

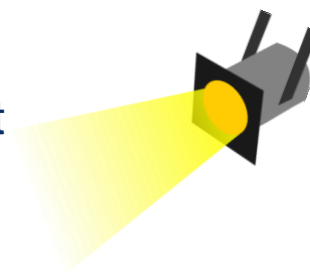
Julia Tran, Clark University

Hello fellow SPSSI members,

As the editor of *The Rookie*, my goal for this issue is to showcase the wonderful research that are being conducted by graduate student researchers in our community. I hope that you'll find these thought-provoking and inspiring. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact me at [spssi.rookie@gmail.com](mailto:spssi.rookie@gmail.com).

Cheers,  
Julia Tran

## Student Spotlight SPSSI Grants-In-Aid Award Recipient



Katie Lee Salis

Stony Brook University, Clinical Psychology

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### Testosterone, Cortisol and Intimate Partner Violence: Testing a Dual Hormone Hypothesis

#### First, could you tell us a bit about your general research interests?

I am interested in the prediction, correlates and prevention of aggressive behavior. Although most of my work has been specific to intimate partner violence, I have also done work with general aggression and conduct disorder in children. Most recently, I have been interested in the hormonal correlates and biological markers of aggression.

#### How did you first become interested in that area of research?

My interest developed from working with my advisor, Dr. K. Daniel O'Leary. Dr. O'Leary is one of the top experts in intimate partner violence. His excellent mentoring was integral in helping me to develop and foster my own specific questions and interests within the field. I think part of this comes from his flexible style, which included allowing my interests to guide my clinical and research training (instead of telling me what

I had to do!).

#### What are the goals of your GIA award project and how do they align with the goals of SPSSI?

Aggression and interpersonal violence are major societal and public concerns. Although risk factors for the prediction of physical aggression have been identified, researchers are only beginning to understand the intricacies of using hormones as biomarkers. The goal of the current study was to contribute to the literature on risk and predictive factors related to aggressive psychopathology. Hopefully this work will eventually help to identify ways to target prevention and intervention efforts at those who need them most. SPSSI's involvement with the Violence Against Women Act and stated goals about interpersonal violence align well with my work. I am so happy to be working alongside SPSSI on this important issue!

**At what stage are you in the project and how has the GIA award helped you get to this stage?**

I am in the writing stage of this project, which will serve as my dissertation. The award was essential in that it helped to fund the analysis of testosterone and cortisol from saliva samples provided by the participants.

**What are your preliminary findings and their implications (or potential implications)?**

Findings from this project suggest that trait-aggression moderates the relationship

between the ratio of testosterone to cortisol (T/C) and intimate partner violence. We hope that this research helps to clarify some of the inconsistencies in the existing literature on hormones and aggression. Further, there is the potential that with future research, we may be able to use this hormonal biological marker as a treatment moderator, screening tool, or even as a measure of treatment success. We are currently planning follow-up studies and look forward to further exploration of this topic!

## Research Spotlight

**Charles Guthrie, M.S.**

Walden University

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### The Effects of In-Group Stereotype Threat on Black American Academic Performance

The National Center for Education Statistics (2014) reported that academic achievement for children in the United States has increased since the 1970s across races. However, the data also indicate that Black American students continue to score lower than their White counterparts across age groups and socioeconomic classes. Psychological research implicates various underlying causes such as stereotype threat in this academic gap.

#### **Stereotype Threats**

Stereotype threats are the psychological discomfort caused by the awareness of negative stereotypes toward one's social group and are expressed in various behaviors (McGlone & Aronson, 2007). Alter et al. (2010) demonstrated the effects of stereotype threat in Black American children. They found that Black Americans tended to perform poorly on a mathematics test after a stereotype threat was minimally invoked (e.g. simply reporting race before the test).

#### **In-Group Epithets and Stereotype Threats**

While stereotype threat research is abundant (e.g., Armenta, 2010; Ganley et al., 2013; Nadler & Clark, 2011), researchers have overlooked how in-group mechanisms (specifically refurbished epithets) interact with the activation of stereotype threats. Contemporary social norms in the United States prohibit negative epithets in intergroup contexts; however, minority groups have utilized variations (contextual and phonological) of historically negative epithets as in-group terms in an attempt to depower the word and reduce its negative social and psychological impacts. (Rahman, 2012). For instance, Black Americans refurbished the N-word as an in-group term that is an exclusive non-hostile, in-group social identification (Alves, 2009).

#### **Proposed Research and Implications**

My proposed dissertational research will explore the role of in-group epithets as moderators of stereotype threat in Black American and their effects on academic performance.

Specifically, I hypothesize that in-group epithets will activate salience in the stereotype domain and elicit stereotype threat reactions in Black Americans. My hypothesis directly contrasts the popular belief that refurbishing previously negative epithets diminish their negative psychological power.

### Research Design

The target sample for this study is Black American students (ages 19 to 22) recruited from community colleges. The proposed project will employ a post-test between-group design in which participants are randomly assigned to one of two conditions (threat or no-threat) that will serve as the independent variable. In both conditions, participants will watch a video of a standup comedian; however, only threat condition videos will contain the refurbished epithet whereas the

no-threat condition videos will not contain the refurbished epithet. The dependent variable of interest is the academic performance which will be measured by a brief academic test (i.e., the End-of-Grade Exam) and participants' GPA (Alter et al., 2010; Sherman et al., 2013). The research hypothesis expects to observe lower test scores from the participants in the threat condition.

### Implications

The possible implications of this research are deeper understanding of the effects of stereotype threat, intragroup relations, and improved interventions for reducing the impact of stereotype threat. Further, I hope to use this research model to explore the effects of similar in-group epithets used in various minority groups (e.g. LGBT, women, etc.).

## Kristen Hackett

Graduate Center of the City of New York  
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Hello! I am Chair-Elect of SPSSI's Graduate Student Committee this year; to be Chair in the following year. I am also in my fifth year of doctoral studies in the Environmental Psychology Program. In general, my research focuses on issues of social (in)justice, (in)equitable resource distribution, and the underlying (un)equal power relations.



In this vein, my research has touched on issues of homelessness and housing policy, equitable urban development, the economic restructuring of the 1970's and the rise of neoliberalism, and democratic practice and political participation. In my approach to research, I strive to understand and explain the human experience in relation to broader policy, political and political economic environments in an effort to develop a holistic and contextual elaboration of the phenomenon under investigation, as well as cultivate a perspective that can speak back to and inform future policy decisions.

My dissertation work aims to examine and document the narratives of students attending university in two international cities on either side

of the Atlantic as these young adults attempt to pursue a stable life amidst anxiety-inducing conditions brought on by important restructurings of the national and global economies. Said another way, this projects asks how do trends of rising income inequality, high rates of un- and under-employment among young adults, and a business- and profit-centric economy become embodied by young adults today and inform everyday decisions, such as what major to choose, how to prioritize time (both on an everyday basis and across one's life span) and how to pursue a stable future? Beyond elaborating an understanding of the socio-material conditions that characterize and inform the lives of these young adults, I am interested in considering the consequences of these developments for our



communities, societies, and democratic health. Increasingly, research suggests that there is an important relationship between economic anxiety and political participation, including work I carried out for my MA thesis (outlined more below). Thus, if trends persist in the direction of economic anxiety for the masses, what are the societal consequences? This study is based in critical and feminist epistemologies, and thus an underlying ambition of this research is to take these narratives as a starting point from which to interrogate and speak back to these changes in our economies.

This research direction grows out of my MA thesis, which elaborated a deeply contextualized understanding of youth political participation and considered their everyday political negotiations in relation to changing socio-material conditions and the broader political economy of today. A larger endeavor of this research is to give weight to youth voices and political behavior in such a way that solutions that refract on the larger political and political economic system rather than on young people themselves can be derived.

### Angela Robinson

University of California, Irvine  
[angelarr@uci.edu](mailto:angelarr@uci.edu)



Hello SPSSI members! My name is Angela Robinson and I am a Member-at-Large (Academic Focus) on this year's GSC. I am currently a first year social psychology PhD student. Since moving here three months ago, I've spent my weekends exploring all that my new home state has to offer, particularly the beaches and burritos. The sunshine and warm weather have been a welcome change from my native Chicago!

Before starting my PhD program, I spent three years living in New Zealand. Living overseas meant many little adjustments. I learned to love black tea with milk. I didn't learn to love the weather—New Zealand isn't tropical like many people think—but I learned to accept that a frigid, windy day is simply called "fresh." There were some salient differences too, particularly regarding different roles fulfilled by certain groups in society. For example, New Zealand police do not carry guns, and interactions between citizens and police are often conversational and friendly. I had the opportunity to conduct research on domestic violence prevention in conjunction with the New Zealand Police's Māori, Pacific and Ethnic Affairs Team. This research documented some of the approaches that immigrant communities use to make prevention programs more accessible and inclusive. New Zealand is small, so even early stage

researchers can make a big impact, and some of my findings have been circulated to high-ranking officials at the New Zealand Police. This inspired me to continue making it a priority to incorporate policy aims into my program of research.

Broadly, my current research aims to identify the factors that facilitate access to social programs and other resources. My past research has investigated how gender, ethnicity, and cultural identities relate to unequal access to political power and social services. Some of my current work examines how beliefs about social mobility relate to beliefs about the underlying causes of social class differences. I am examining how these two sets of beliefs shape support for social services as well as cross-class interpersonal interactions. I am interested in what psychological research can contribute to the development of policy proposals that facilitate inclusion and reduce inequality for those most impacted by systemic barriers.

# Meet your 2015-16 GSC Officers!

Chair



**Carlie D. Trott**

Colorado State University

Chair-elect



**Kristen Hackett**

Graduate Center of the  
City of New York

## MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Academic Focus

Policy and Applied Work Focus

Communications Focus

Membership Coordinator



**Angela Robinson**

University of California, Irvine



**Rashmi Nair**

Clark University



**Julia Tran**

Clark University



**Ashley Weinberg**

San Diego State University

Be sure to visit the updated SPSSI Graduate Student Committee website!  
The GSC has compiled information on funding opportunities, career preparation, and ways  
to increase your involvement with SPSSI.

Go to: [spssi.org](http://spssi.org) -> Students and Early Career -> Click on the 'Graduate Students' tab

## QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? SUGGESTIONS?



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