A Year In Transition
In This Issue

Learn about how our McGill psychology community has been adjusting to our hybrid research, teaching, & learning environments.

Catch up on some of the great online events we have had to celebrate our graduates & undergraduates.

Read our spotlight piece about how McGill psychology researchers are using network science to study Montreal bilinguals and deepen our understanding of real-world language use.

Keep up with our McGill psychology alumni and read about their great achievements since leaving McGill.

We pay tribute to two legends in the field of psychological science, Tony Marley and Ronald Melzack, and the legacies they left behind.
What a long, strange trip it’s been. Long before this became a popular everyday saying of unknown origin to many people, it was a lyric in an iconic rock song of yesteryear (for the benefit of non-baby boomers I will provide a hint at the end). Unfortunately, at least covid-wise, the trip looks like it will be a bit longer and stranger than hoped given the amazing scientific feat of the mRNA vaccines. Interestingly, one of the key social and medical problems at present, vaccine hesitancy, is right in psychology’s wheelhouse. Indeed, there are a couple groups in our Department of Psychology looking at different aspects of vaccine hesitancy including cultural influences, individual influences (e.g., needle fear), and measurement issues (e.g., Vaccine, 2018, 36, 660-667).

More broadly, the pandemic has also highlighted the crucial importance of psychological research striving to improve individual and community mental health. A key issue addressed in the research programs of other groups in the department are the distinctive adverse effects of stressful situations that are out of people’s control. Continuing with the theme of the department’s contributions to addressing hot social issues, others are studying diverse areas such as anti-black racism, language, pain, decision-making, and artificial intelligence. The extent to which basic theoretical research blends with potential clinical and social application is perhaps distinctive to the field of psychology and remains one of the reasons that many students are drawn to this exciting area. Despite some challenges related to purely online or hybrid online/in-person teaching (hopefully all in-person soon), the large but high-quality education mission of the department discussed in previous newsletters (see previous newsletters for more information) is still truckin’ on!

It goes without saying that the last couple years have been hard on many people but it has also deepened my appreciation of the dedication and creativity of the students, staff, faculty, and graduates of our outstanding department.
As part of our reflection on the collective and ongoing fight against institutionalized and structural racism, McGill Psychology’s Dr. Eric Hehman and Vanier PhD Scholar Eugene K. Ofosu discuss their work on the impact of communicating norms at individual, group, and institutional levels.

Your work focuses on norms and their impact on behaviour at various levels. Describe what norms represent in this context?

Hehman: Norms are a set of both explicit and implicit rules that govern how individuals within a group or context are expected to behave, think, and feel. They exert a strong influence on attitudes and behaviors, in that individuals often modify their views and actions to align with the perceived norms in their environment.

Based on your work, what is the value of communicating norms when it comes to individual attitudes or group behaviour?

Hehman: At a government level, some of our own recent research has examined how communicating norms through legislation can cause changes in prejudice. My graduate student Eugene Ofosu led a project testing whether same-sex marriage legalization in the U.S. caused changes in anti-gay attitudes. Specifically, with approximately 1 million responses over a 12-year window, this research tested whether same-sex marriage legalization was associated with changes in the trend of anti-gay prejudice over time. We found that while anti-gay prejudice was decreasing over time prior to same-sex marriage legalization, following each state’s legalization of gay marriage, anti-gay prejudice decreased at roughly double its previous rate. This finding isn’t just specific to the U.S. either, since research teams have replicated this work in Europe using a similar study design.
Has there been any work to show that social or societal movements can enact norm change?

Ofosu: One of the big takeaway points from our paper is that norms caused a particular legislation, and this legislation further reinforced the norm itself, almost pushing a cyclical loop between norms, prejudice, and behaviour. So to contextualize this within individual movements like Black Lives Matter and the potential power they have to impact norms, prejudice, and behaviour, some social psychologists have taken a look at bias, prejudice, attitude, and norms within this framework. What they found is that during BLM protests, white folks’ racial attitude became less pro white and more pro Black. This finding also held true for both implicit and explicit attitudes and across the political spectrum.

And there’s a ripple effect that occurs with norms affecting departmental, institutional, and organizational attitudes?

Ofosu: There are behaviours that we have seen as a result of or spurred on by the Black Lives Matter movement, and these are also seen on a global level. These movements have served as momentum for legislation banning neck restraints or chokeholds, a tactical discipline that has been associated with a disproportionate number of deaths. We have also observed an increase in the rates of confederation monuments coming down or being moved into museums where they are being appropriately contextualized, talks about renaming army bases and major tourist attraction that were named after individuals who either supported slavery or actively delayed the abolishment of the slave trade.

So as a take-home message, what does this body of work tell us about the value of communicating norms, at any level?

Ofosu: Well we know that norms, attitudes, and legislation can have a reinforcing relationship with each other, whereby one results in the other or vice versa. In which case, one of the big take-home messages of the interconnectedness between norms and broader societal movements such as Black Lives Matter is that speaking up in one’s family, department, and just general society could have a galvanizing effect on people around you.

Support for the Black Lives Matter movement

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Source: Pew Research Center, 2016; “On Views of Race and Inequality, Black and Whites are Worlds Apart”;

Q&A by Effie J. Pereira. Full interview at McGill Psychology Department website. For more on this work:

Research in the News

How accurate are first impressions on a first date?

McGill Psychology’s Ph.D. candidate Lauren Gazzard Kerr talked to *McGill Newsroom* about her work with Dr. Lauren Human on using a novel speed-dating paradigm to explore whether we can rely on first impressions to accurately assess someone’s personality.

Sex differences in brain aging


For the love of a good book

New evidence by McGill Psychology’s Ph.D. candidate Shelby Levine and her co-authors Sarah Cherrier, Dr. Anne Holding, and Dr. Richard Koestner in the *Journal of American College Health* shows that recreational reading may reduce psychological distress.

Measurement practices in large-scale replications

McGill Psychology’s M.Sc. student Mairead Shaw and her supervisor Dr. Jessica Flake recently reported a systematic review of current measurement practices and the construct validity of measures in large-scale replication studies in *Canadian Psychology*.

COVID response proves we can act on climate change

A collaboration from McGill University Earth & Planetary Science’s Dr. Eric Galbraith and McGill Psychology’s Dr. Ross Otto shows that our collective response to COVID-19 proves that the world can act on climate change.
How much control do we have on our minds?
McGill Psychology’s Ph.D. candidate Effie Pereira’s recent work with co-authors Lauri Gurguryan and Dr. Jelena Ristic in *Frontiers in Psychology* examined how our internal degree of attentional control determines the outcomes we have when our minds wander.

A comparison of limited-information test statistics
Using simulation studies, McGill Psychology’s Ph.D. student Josh Starr, Dr. Carl Falk, and Dr. David Vachon recently uncovered that two test statistics, \( M_z \) and \( C_z \), offer valuable and complementary information about model fit.

Hacking the APS convention
McGill Psychology’s Dr. Jessica Flake co-authored an article about the history of hackathons within the tech industry and how these collaborative working groups have been adopted by the open-science movement to improve the psychological sciences.

Suicide is preventable, but we need better data
McGill Psychology’s Ph.D. candidate Danielle Rice talked to *Global News* about why it’s imperative for Canada to have a better picture of suicide and its impact across broad contexts.

Why do COVID-19 conspiracy theories keep spreading?
McGill Psychology’s Dr. Jordan Axt spoke to *MTL Blog* about the eruption of conspiracy theories since the start of the pandemic and why they spread in the first place.

What does a lonely brain look like?
*The Globe and Mail* spoke to McGill Psychology’s Dr. Nathan Spreng on his latest work about how the experience of loneliness, which is known to have a punishing effect on physical health, is also linked to differences in the brain.
Supporting the construction of autobiographical memory

In their latest publication for *Hippocampus*, McGill Psychology’s Ph.D. candidate Lauri Gurguryan, undergraduate student Mathilde Rioux, and Dr. Signy Sheldon examined how the brain retrieves autobiographical memories.

Systemic racism in Canada

*Global News* talked to McGill University Division of Social & Transcultural Psychiatry’s Dr. Myrna Lashley on the reluctance that individuals have in admitting to the problem of systemic racism.

A computational model of infant learning & reasoning

McGill Psychology’s Dr. Thomas Shultz and postdoctoral researcher Dr. Ardavan Nobandegani presented Neural Probability Learner & Sampler (NPLS) in *Psychological Review* to provide a computationally sufficient mechanism to explain infant probabilistic learning.

La mélodie de l’antidouleur

*L’actualité Magazine* spoke to McGill Psychology’s Dr. Mathieu Roy about his research on the ability of relaxing music in reducing pain and whether music can be used as an effective intervention for pain management.

One gene may influence a romantic partner’s affection

McGill Psychology’s postdoctoral researcher Dr. Gentiana Sadikaj talked to *Psychology Today* about her latest work with Dr. Debbie Moskowitz, Dr. David Zuroff, and Dr. Jennifer Bartz on the impact of the CD38 gene on partner perceptions and affect.

Sex bias in pain research

McGill Psychology’s Dr. Jeffrey Mogil’s latest work in *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* discussed emerging evidence of a biased literature that has not focused on differential pain mechanisms for males and females.
Unravelling the science of emotions

Popular science podcast Magic of the Mind spoke to McGill Psychology’s Dr. Anna Weinberg about how emotions help us survive, the different effects of fear and happiness on the body, and the importance of social buffering in stressful situations.

All-optical approaches to studying psychiatric disease

McGill Psychology’s Ph.D. student Christopher Lafferty and Dr. Jonathan Britt published a *Methods* review of the utility of all-optical approaches that can concurrently record and manipulate neural circuits to generate new psychiatric disease models.

Emotional eating in quarantined kids

The *New York Times* spoke to McGill Psychology’s Dr. Bärbel Knäuper about the ways that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the interconnectedness of sleep, exercise, structure, and mental health.

Evidence base update for key transdiagnostic measures

In their latest publication in the *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, McGill Psychology’s Ph.D. candidate Nicole Dryburgh and supervisor Dr. Melanie Dirks evaluated the psychometric properties of social skills and social competence measures.

Understanding primate evolution for speech production

McGill Psychology’s Dr. Michael Petrides published in *Proceedings for the National Academy of Sciences* exploring how different brain areas relevant to complex vocal control in human speech may have emerged during primate brain evolution.

Engaging in personally meaningful therapy

McGill Psychology’s Dr. David Dunkley, Dr. David Zuroff, and collaborators at the Jewish General Hospital just published in the *Journal of Social & Clinical Psychology* on the importance of engaging in therapy for personally meaningful motives.
Our last in-person Orientation BBQ & Graduate Student Colloquium in 2019 was well attended and we loved celebrating our incoming Ph.D. students with a little bit of fun in the sun!

We had great turnouts for our online clinical, social, cognitive, and quantitative Brown Bag Talk Series this year. A big thank you to our organizing committees and all of our wonderful faculty, postdoctoral, and graduate speakers!

A big thank you to our Hebb, Bindra, and Macnamara Lecture Series invited speakers for their distinguished talks over the past two years. Pictured left to right: Dr. Deanna Barch (Washington University in St-Louis), Dr. Nilanjana Dasgupta (University of Massachusetts at Amherst), Dr. Cecilia Flores (McGill University), Dr. Susan Gelman (University of Michigan), Dr. David Kaplan (University of Wisconsin-Madison), and Dr. Michael Sullivan (McGill University).
Though we were not able to celebrate our McGill Psychology undergraduates and graduates during convocation, we had a virtual celebration to acknowledge the hard work of all of our graduating students throughout their time with us. Our students have always been an integral part of our department and our community for many years now, and we wish them nothing but the best moving forward!

Every year, research projects carried out by McGill Psychology Department undergraduate students culminate in a day-long celebration, consisting of poster sessions, talks, and a huge reception. Although the pandemic kept us from celebrating the event in person, we recognized the commitment, passion, strength, and hard work of our undergraduates through a Virtual Poster Board in order to highlight their outstanding achievements. While our celebration may have changed in delivery these years, the spirit and pride we have in our students remains the same!

To further educate ourselves and others on issues surrounding equity, diversity, and inclusion, graduate students from the McGill Psychology Department organized a panel on Racial Bias and Use of Force in Policing. This panel featured scholars and experts on the topic of anti-racist and anti-oppressive policies, and was just a small step towards educating others on current affairs, white privilege, and the lived experiences of Black individuals and people of colour. We encourage all to watch this informative panel and to continue to seek information on this important issue.
McGill Psychology Department researchers have used network science – a mathematical technique for revealing connections and patterns – to gain novel insights into Montrealers’ experience of using French and English. The unique approach has brought to light subtle differences as to which social settings Montreal bilinguals discuss certain topics and whether they use French, English or both languages to discuss those topics.

The study, published in the Journal of Neurolinguistics, follows a trend in language science to pay closer attention to the context in which language is used, but the researchers have gone a step further with their analysis of the topics bilinguals talk about. “In the cognitive sciences, when people study language, they’re almost always looking at how people use language, at what’s going on cognitively or in the brain,” explains the study’s senior author, Dr. Debra Titone, psychology professor at McGill and Canada Research Chair in Language and Multilingualism. “But what’s unique about this work is that we’re using mathematical tools to get at what people talk about.”

Montreal bilinguals’ language use highly variable

The researchers surveyed 115 French-English bilinguals, 66 of whom identified French as their stronger, or ‘dominant’, language, while the other 49 identified English as their dominant language. The participants were asked which of the two languages they used to talk about 21 different topics – ranging from sport to politics to religion – in each of five communicative contexts: at work, at home, at school, with their family, and in their social life. The findings revealed unique patterns for each of the five settings.
“On one end of the spectrum, we found the work context is more compartmentalized in terms of the number of things people are talking about and the number of languages they’re using to talk about those topics,” says lead author, Mehrgol Tiv, a doctoral candidate in experimental psychology at McGill. “At the other end, in their social lives, we found people were talking about all 21 of the topics, and they’re using both languages to talk about those topics.”

While many Montreal bilinguals are required to use their non-dominant language in their work or study environment, the researchers found that non-dominant language use was also common in the more relaxed setting of social interactions with family and friends. “That could be a characteristic of Montreal, where you have these highly proficient bilinguals in a city that is itself pretty bilingual,” Tiv says. “In other cities where they might not be so much language diversity, it could be harder to find a non-dominant language appearing in, let’s say, a social context.”

HIGHLIGHTING DIFFERENCES IN LANGUAGE USE

The researchers acknowledge the results of the study were heavily influenced by the profile of the study participants – predominantly university students from in and around the McGill community. But, with collaborators in Montreal, Ottawa and Florida, they are already working on projects to apply their network science method across a broader range of demographics and languages.

“The broader theme we are really interested in pursuing is to better socially contextualize language and understand the role of individual differences,” Tiv says. “We see this this level of detail as something to leverage as opposed to casting it off as something that’s not meaningful, which has traditionally been done in the field.”

Written by Fergus Grieve and reprinted with the permission of the Media Relations Office, Institutional Communications, of McGill Newsroom.
Meet our 2019 / 2020 class of McGill Psychology graduate students, pictured left to right, top to bottom: Samira Feizi, Taryn Berman, Raymond Luong, Camiel van Zundert, Agnès Belkacem, Huma Shireen, Alicia Duval, Monica Vaillancourt, Jess Di Sante, Thalia Garvock, Catalina Enestrom, Amy Gregory. Not pictured: Erin Macdonald, Ege Biçaker, Alexia Miller.

Congratulations to our Ph.D. candidates for successfully defending their dissertations this past year through in-person and online means. Pictured left to right, top to bottom: Dr. Kimberly Carrière, Dr. Kayleigh-Ann Clegg, Dr. Valerie D’Amour-Horvat, Dr. Paige Ethridge, Dr. Mallory Frayn, Dr. Jürgen Germann, Dr. Paul Grunberg, Dr. Brenda Harvey, Dr. Anne Holding, Dr. Kristin Horsley, Dr. Sunmee Kim, Dr. Miriam Kirmayer, Dr. Sonia Krol, Dr. Emily Moore, Dr. Jonas Nitschke, Dr. Effie Pereira, Dr. Danielle Rice, Dr. Aislinn Sandre, Dr. Rebecca Scheurich, Dr. Trisanna Sprung-Much, Dr. Sivaniya Subramaniapillai, Dr. Mehrgol Tiv, Dr. Naomi Vingron, and Dr. Zhen Xu.
We had some great feature stories on our McGill Psychology postdoctoral researchers and graduate students through our *In The Spotlight* monthly series. Read more about their life paths into science and research and what they love most about their work.

Congratulations to Ph.D. candidate and Vanier Scholar Eugene Ofosu, who won the prestigious *Gordon Allport Intergroup Relations Prize* in 2020 from the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues!

Ph.D. candidate Amanda Ravary won the *Student Publication Prize* from the Society for Personality & Social Psychology for her work on understanding the implicit social cognition of body image insecurity!

Shout out to Ph.D. candidate Gyeongcheol Cho, who won the *Most Popular Paper of 2020 Award* at the Journal of Marketing Analytics!

A big honour for our Ph.D. student Mairead Shaw, who won the *Best Article Award in Canadian Psychology* in 2020 from the Canadian Psychological Association!

M.Sc. student Helen Thai was chosen as one of 20 winners of the *McCall MacBain Scholarship* for her work examining the motivation for recovery and help-seeking behaviours among those living with psychosis.

Congratulations to Ph.D. candidate Nicole Dryburgh, who won the *Graduate Student Talk Award* at the Post-doc & Graduate Student Blitz during the 2020 Centre for Research in Human Development conference!
Although travel was restricted over the past two years, the McGill Psychology Department was well-represented at in-person and online national and international conferences – the Auditory Perception, Cognition, and Action Meeting; the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society; the Canadian Science Policy Conference; the Flux Congress; the International Symposium on Bilingualism; the Inuit Studies Conference; the Mental Health and Law Conference; the Object Perception, Attention, and Memory Conference; the Paintalks Conference; the Psychonomic Society Annual Meeting; the Quebec Network of Junior Pain Researchers; the Society for Personality and Social Psychology Annual Convention; the Society for Psychophysiological Research Conference; the Society for Research in Psychopathology Conference; and the Society for the Science of Motivation conference. Congratulations to all for continuing to engage in knowledge translation efforts in the name of science!
The McGill Psychology Students’ Association (MPSA) organized some wonderfully successful online events throughout the year that helped our undergraduate community feel less isolated during the pandemic. Their informational sessions, meet-and-greets, career planning, mentoring sessions, and graduate student panels were all very well-attended and we are proud to celebrate their great work in bringing us all together!

Join us in congratulating our 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 McGill Psychology undergraduate students for their illustrious Summer Research Fellowships!

**Arts Research Internship Award (ARIA):** Miriam Cheety, Ariane Desmarais, Bertha Lapitsky, Daris Lisus, Judith Mappin, Hannah Shiller, Chloe White, Michelle Yan.

**Psychology Undergraduate Research Award (PURA):** Megan Baran-Goldwax, Katrine Bergeron, Sophie Boutin, Marlee Brownstein, Rosie Chaykin, Sarah Chin, Melissa Cimaglia, Ignacio Perez Montemayor Cruz, Elise Desbarats, Doug Dong, Amanda Gossack, Libby Lassman, Brian Liu, Jasmine Kotsiopoulos, Alicia Martineau, Megan Peters, Sabrina Provencher, Mathilde Rioux, Katya Santucci, Joelle Schaffer, Nellie Siemers, Claire Suisman, Chloe White, Juanyu Yang.

**Science Undergraduate Research Award (SURA):** Sebastien Sorger Brock, Yiwei Cao, Carla Castillo, Elise Desbarats, Juliette Dupertuyys, Odessa Grimard, Victoria Fratino, Ruqayya Hirji, Leo Holton, Seonwoo Hong, Justin Kahlil, Sarah Lee, Yilan Lin, Myriam Lizotte, George Lungoci, Emma Malcomber, Hector Leos Mendoza, Charlotte Sacre, Emma Somer, Xinbei Wan, Shelley Xia, Xinyi Zhang, Yong Zhang, Lisa Zhu.

**Undergraduate Student Research Awards (URSA NSERC):** Noah El Rimawi-Fine, Alexander Stoljar Gold, Sarah Lee, Cai Li, George Lungoci, Ethan Mendell, Jean Nahas, Ella Sahlas, Alexandra Saliba, Michelle Yang.
One of MPSAs last in-person events in February 2020 was Trivia Night with Profs, where McGill Psychology professors and undergraduates had a blast sharing some science and pints!

The McGill Tribune did a great feature story on McGill Psychology Department undergraduate student Tedy Markova, a 21-year-old Bulgarian figure-skater who hung up her skates on a successful international career!

For those interested in something to keep you busy during the pandemic, McGill University undergraduate Morgan Sweeney put together Magic of the Mind, a podcast to explore the science of the mind through audio fantasy!

A big congratulations to McGill Psychology undergraduate Ruo Feng for winning the Network Analysis Poster Talk Award for her work investigating bilinguals' language attitudes!
Transformative early-career contributions

Congratulations to McGill Psychology undergraduate alumnus and Northwestern University’s Dr. Nour Kteily for winning the Association for Psychological Science Janet Taylor Spence Award for his ground-breaking work in the psychological sciences!

Significant determinants of pain-related outcomes

McGill Psychology Ph.D. alumni Dr. Junie Carriere and Dr. Esther Yakobov recently published a systematic review of the literature assessing the relationship between perceived injustice and pain-related outcomes in individuals with musculoskeletal pain.

Timbral differences enhance orchestral segregation

Congratulations to McGill Psychology undergraduate alumnus and University of Toronto’s Manda Fischer who examined the effect of orchestral timbre and within-stream blend on the degree of auditory stream segregation.

Passion and grit in the pursuit of long-term goals

Congratulations to McGill Psychology Ph.D. alumnus and Université du Québec en Outaouais’ Dr. Jérémie Verner-Filion for showing that passionate individuals have the potential to display high perseverance of effort and consistency toward their interests.

Modulation of stress systems to social threat assessment

McGill Psychology Ph.D. alumnus and University of Vienna’s Dr. Nida Ali demonstrated that intact biological systems adaptively support organisms during stress by focusing attention towards specific stimuli that are relevant to the threat.
Keeping the beat – it’s all in your brain

Recent work from McGill Psychology Ph.D. alumni Dr. Brian Mathias and Dr. Anna Zamm demonstrate that a sense of rhythm comes from the brain as they uncover neural markers related to rhythmic synchronization.

Exceptional contribution to psychological knowledge

Congratulations to McGill Psychology Ph.D. alumnus and University of Calgary’s Dr. Daniel Kopala-Sibley who was honoured with the Canadian Psychological Association President’s New Researcher Award!

Language proficiency and executive control

McGill Psychology Ph.D. alumnus and University of New Brunswick’s Dr. Veronica Whitford recently published work examining the impact of individual differences on cross-language activation of meaning by phonology.

Wandering minds and novel technologies

A big congratulations to McGill Psychology Ph.D. alumnus and University of Waterloo’s Dr. Effie Pereira for being awarded the Lupina Foundation Postdoctoral Research Fellowship for her innovative work in bringing the laboratory into the real world.

One size does not fit all

Congratulations to McGill Psychology undergraduate alumnus and University of New Brunswick lecturer Emilie Lacroix for her work examining patterns of body esteem development in early adolescence and identifying predictors of developmental subtypes.

Recognizing outstanding contributions to science

A big congratulations to McGill Psychology Ph.D. alumnus and Indiana University Bloomington’s Dr. Peter Finn for his recent election as Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science!
When goal pursuit gets hairy

Congratulations to McGill Psychology Ph.D. alumnus and New York University’s Dr. Anne Holding for her recent paper investigating how individuals’ stress hormone cortisol changed during goal pursuit across the academic year.

Saving without barriers

McGill Psychology undergraduate alumnus Anne Hand worked on a behavioural finance project with the Inter-American Development Bank demonstrating the feasibility of an intervention to promote voluntary pension savings among South American countries.

Emotionality biases autobiographical memory recall

Congratulations to McGill Psychology undergraduate alumnus and University of Toronto Ph.D. student Stephanie Simpson for her latest publication showing that emotional words more reliably impact autobiographical memory recall.

Newly elected CPA Fellow

Congratulations to McGill Psychology Ph.D. alumnus and University of Calgary’s Dr. Tavis Campbell who was recently named a Canadian Psychological Association Fellow!

What makes social connection so vital to our well being?

McGill University alumnus and former McGill Psychology adjunct Dr. Susan Pinker explains why face-to-face connection is a human necessity.
Resilience during uncertainty?

Congratulations to McGill Psychology Ph.D. alumnus Dr. Jonas Nitschke for his latest publication demonstrating that greater social connectedness during the COVID-19 lockdown was associated with reduced distress and fatigue.

Recognition of vocal socioemotional expressions

McGill Psychology Ph.D. alumnus and Queen's University’s Dr. Michele Morningstar examined whether listeners’ ability to identify a speaker’s emotional state depended on the level of ‘emotional intensity’ with which an emotion was conveyed.

How do you survive the PhD?

McGill Psychology undergraduate alumnus Dr. Elena Ilioi shares some really helpful advice, strategies, and mindsets in a field guide to surviving the Ph.D.

How do workers and employers cultivate friendships?

McGill Psychology Ph.D. alumnus Dr. Miriam Kirmayer provided some great advice on how companies and individuals can promote meaningful connections at work, especially given our need to physical distance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The lived subjective experience of human relationships

Congratulations to McGill Psychology alumnus and Columbia Business School’s Dr. Maya Rossignac-Milon for their recent publication examining perceptions of shared reality in dyadic relationships.

The protective role of social support during COVID-19

McGill Psychology Ph.D. alumnus and University of Windsor’s Dr. Lance Rappaport recently published a paper with undergraduate alumnus Alexandra Mactavish to document the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of children in Canada.
A big congratulations to two pillars of the McGill Psychology Department, Dr. Jeffrey Mogil and Dr. Brett Thombs, who were announced as *Fellows to The Royal Society of Canada*, one of the highest academic honours in Canada!

McGill Psychology Department’s Dr. Debbie Moskowitz has been honoured with the Canadian Psychological Association *Gold Medal Award for Distinguished Lifetime Contributions to Canadian Psychology*! Join us in congratulating Dr. Moskowitz for this well-deserved recognition of her foundational contributions to the psychological sciences.

Congratulations to McGill Psychology’s Dr. Richard Koestner on receiving the Canadian Psychological Association *Donald O. Hebb Award for Distinguished Contribution to Psychology*. Dr. Koestner has contributed tremendously to the development of Self Determination Theory and we are proud to celebrate this great achievement with him!

McGill Psychology’s Dr. Melanie Dirks and Dr. Signy Sheldon were awarded with the *Principal’s Prize for Excellence in Teaching* in 2019 and 2021, respectively. Our department is privileged to have such excellent educators who continue to inspire students and keep them engaged during the pandemic.

A huge congratulations to McGill Psychology’s Dr. Debra Titone, Dr. Robert Zatorre, Dr. Rosemary Bagot, and Dr. Sarah Racine on their *Canada Research Chair* appointments, highlighting their research excellence and world-class scholarship over the years!
Congratulations to McGill Psychology’s Dr. Anna Weinberg for receiving the distinctive Principal’s Prize for Outstanding Emerging Researchers! Dr. Weinberg has widely published and is numerously cited in the field of anxiety and depression research, and it is an incredible honor to have such a significant scholar as a part of our scientific community!

Congratulations to McGill Psychology’s Dr. Jessica Flake and Dr. Jordan Axt for being named Association for Psychological Science Rising Stars! This award celebrates early career researchers who have made an impact in the field of psychological science!

Congratulations to McGill Psychology’s Dr. Natasha Rajah, who was selected as the 2019 recipient of the Haile T. Debas Prize for her actions to promote equitable diversity at the Faculty of Medicine! In 2018, Dr. Rajah started the Montreal Pod for the 500 Women Scientists organization to provide a safe space for women in science to meet with mentors and peers.

A new school for students with special needs, named L’École Régionale Brenda Milner / Brenda Milner Regional School after the esteemed Dr. Brenda Milner, has opened up in Châteauguay, a suburb of Montreal. This new specialized school will support students with intellectual disabilities and associated disorders with specialists in the field and high-end and high-tech classrooms.

A big congratulations to McGill Psychology’s Dr. Nathan Spreng and The Neuro’s Dr. Danilo Bzdok who were awarded $2.7M from the National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Aging to investigate the relationship between loneliness and brain functioning in typically aging people and in people at risk for Alzheimer’s disease.

A big congratulations to McGill University researchers, who were listed as some of the most cited academics around the world on Web of Science!
In Memoriam

DR. TONY MARLEY (1940 – 2021)

Marley was born and grew up in the small town of Fremington, Devon, where he won a Devon County Scholarship to earn a B.Sc. in Mathematics with First Class Honors from the University of Birmingham. He then received a Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania, and a Post-Doctoral Miller Institute Fellowship at the University of California at Berkeley. He was a Professor Emeritus at McGill University where he served as professor and former Chair of the Department of Psychology. He also held appointments as Adjunct Professor of Psychology at the University of Victoria, and Adjunct Research Professor at the Institute for Choice at the University of South Australia.

Marley was a brilliant scholar of mathematical and computational models of perception and cognition and their empirical study. For this work, he was a recipient of numerous awards including a Fulbright, Woodrow Wilson Foundation Fellowship, Killam Fellowship, and served as the President of the Society for Mathematical Psychology and on the Editorial Board of the Journal of Mathematical Psychology for 30 years.

In addition to his scholarly work, Marley had a passion for collecting Meccano, Inuit, and Aboriginal Australian art, walking his Australian Shepherds on the beach, wearing bowties, attending live jazz, traveling the world, and during the pandemic, playing online chess with his grandson.

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In Memoriam

DR. RONALD MELZACK (1929 – 2019)

Melzack was born on July 19, 1929, to a working-class family. His father, Joseph, worked in a clothing factory and opened a second-hand bookstore. Without the financial means to send all three of the Melzack boys to university, it was decided that Ronald would go to McGill while his two siblings worked at the bookstore.

At McGill, it wasn’t until he took an introductory psychology course that Melzack found a subject that truly piqued his interest. Melzack came under the tutelage of renowned psychologist Donald Hebb, the Chairman of Psychology at the time. Hebb would serve as Melzack’s Master’s and PhD supervisor. In 2008, Melzack said he all but stumbled into pain research while working with Hebb. “It was an absolute fluke,” he said at the time. While working with Hebb on the problem-solving ability of dogs, Melzack noticed that the animals that had been raised in relative isolation barely reacted when, in their exuberance, they accidentally ran into a low-hanging pipe. “I began to realize that pain is subjective. You may have an injury, but the injury is not the pain,” he said. This chance observation would form the basis of his PhD thesis and, eventually, the development of the seminal publication 1965 Gate Control Theory of Pain.

With the theory, he and Patrick Wall argued that psychological factors and environment play a large role in feeling pain, and that pain is subjective and ultimately at the mercy of the brain. This overturned the then-accepted view of pain as a primitive and static danger warning system.
On the recommendation of Herbert Jasper, a brilliant neurophysiologist at McGill and one of the pioneers of the EEG, Melzack pursued his postdoctoral work in the pain laboratory of Dr. William K. Livingston at the University of Oregon Medical School. While working with people suffering from debilitating chronic pain, Melzack met a patient named Mrs. Hull. “Mrs. Hull had a great impact on me,” said Melzack in the 2008 interview with the Reporter. “She was a woman in her late 70s with diabetes. She developed gangrene and had to have both of her legs amputated. I liked her; we talked a lot, her and her marvellous husband Willy. I was a bachelor then, and I would take them for afternoon drives on Sundays, and we became quite friendly. She was a highly intelligent person with a good vocabulary, and I began to collect her descriptive words about pain like ‘burning,’ ‘shooting,’ ‘crushing,’ ‘horrible’ and ‘excruciating.’ The list, supplemented with descriptors from other patients formed the basis of the *McGill Pain Questionnaire*, which he devised in 1975. Today, the questionnaire is still the world’s most widely used method for measuring pain in clinical research, having been translated into 50 languages.

In recognition of his breakthrough research, Melzack was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada (1995) and received the Prix du Québec for research in pure and applied science (1994). Among numerous awards, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada (1982), was honoured with a Killam Prize (2001), and earned the Grawemeyer Award for Psychology (2010).

On top of his ground-breaking research Melzack also left his mark as a mentor to young scientists in the early stages of their careers. John O’Keefe, co-winner of the 2014 Nobel Prize in Medicine, credits Melzack with helping lay the foundation for his seminal work. O’Keefe received his doctorate in physiological psychology from McGill in 1967, with Dr. Melzack acting as his supervisor. In a 2014 interview with the McGill Reporter, O’Keefe remembered Melzack as “a terrific mentor. I have a lot to thank him for.”

Perhaps the most succinct tribute paid to Ronald Melzack in the weeks since his passing came from Steven Pinker, famed cognitive psychologist and linguist. “Ron was a great scientist – a pioneer in our understanding of pain – a great humanitarian, dedicated to the relief of human suffering – and an unpretentious, generous mensch,” wrote Pinker. “He leaves a legacy not only in those who remember him, but in every human in perpetuity whose pain is relieved by scientific knowledge.”

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