



Spotlight on Psychology

Psychology at Oxford

Psychology – the scientific study of behaviour – is a rich and diverse field. Psychologists in Oxford are engaging in fascinating research that captures the full spectrum of the discipline, from understanding brain physiology through to social and cultural effects on behaviour. This breadth of science is reflected in our undergraduate teaching, whether students choose to read psychology as a single subject ([Experimental Psychology](#)), jointly with [Philosophy](#) or as part of our new degree course in [Biomedical Sciences](#). From 2013 we also hope to be offering a new course in [Psychology, Philosophy and Linguistics](#).

Lectures and lab classes take place in the department, but much of the tutorial teaching is provided in College.

At St John's, we admit three or four students per year to read Experimental Psychology or Psychology with Philosophy, and two students per year to read Biomedical Sciences.



Meet our tutors

[Kate](#) (left) is our Tutor in Psychology and she is responsible for organising the subject in College. Her [research](#) focuses on how we understand and process language.

[Susie](#) (right) is our Teaching Fellow in Psychology whose [research](#) investigates the nature of psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety.



[Sandra](#) is a neurophysiologist who works closely with the psychology tutors, as do [Alison](#) and [Dave](#), tutors in Philosophy, and Paul who looks after the teaching of statistics.

Also in this edition

- [Careers](#)
- [Finding out more about psychology](#)

The courses

BA [Experimental Psychology](#)

BA [Psychology and Philosophy](#)

You might also be interested in [Biomedical Sciences](#) (which can lead to a BA Neuroscience).

Subject choices at A Level or equivalent

There are no essential subject requirements when applying for Experimental Psychology (EP) or Psychology and Philosophy (PP). One or more science or maths subjects is recommended. Applicants for Biomedical Sciences (BMS), must be studying at least two sciences or maths subjects.

Research project

All EP students, and some PP students complete an independent research project as part of their degree. Our students have completed projects in a range of different topics, reflecting the diversity of our subject and the broad range of expertise in psychology at St John's and in Oxford.

Recent projects have included studies with children, patients with neurological disease or psychological disorders, and rodents; a variety of methods have been used including neuroimaging, electrophysiology, and eye movement recordings. Our students regularly produce projects of a very high quality and some even end up being published in the scientific literature.



Careers in Psychology

Teachers and applicants often ask us what our students go on to do, after graduation. Many of our graduates stay within psychology, studying for a PhD or beginning professional training to work as a clinical, educational or occupational psychologist. Others train as teachers, lawyers, accounts, medics or join the civil service.

Recently, Kate welcomed back to St John's students who had graduated in 2006 and 2007. Over lunch, they filled her in on their career since graduation.



Former Experimental Psychology students Tom, Hannah and Miki, with Kate

Jersey boy **Tom** is Research & Development Manager at Saville Consulting, an occupational psychometrics firm specializing in the development of aptitude assessments.

Lancashire lass **Hannah** stayed in Oxford to do a doctorate, working with Kate investigating the nature and causes of comprehension impairments in children. She is now at Southampton University, researching language and cognitive development in children with cochlear implants.

Miki is from Macedonia; after Oxford she moved to Kent where she is just finishing her PhD in Social Psychology.



Left to right: Natalya (EP), Emily (PPP), and Tom (EP)

Liverpudlian **Natalya** is now a Strategy Executive at ITV (and has even worked on The Only Way is Essex!)

Emily and **Tom** are both from London. Emily completed a Masters in Occupational Psychology at City University and she is now an Organisation Development Consultant at Barclays.

Tom has recently qualified as a solicitor and works for Clifford Chance. He specialises in derivatives, synthetic products and carbon trading and will soon be moving to Singapore on secondment to the Funds department.

Professional Accreditation

Our Experimental Science, and Psychology and Philosophy degrees are accredited by the British Psychological Society, which means you can go straight on to professional training in different areas of psychology.

The University [careers service](#) supports students throughout their degree, on graduation and beyond, to find work experience, internships and jobs in their chosen field. While studying at Oxford, it is also possible to gain additional experience by supporting existing research projects during the vacation.

Find out more about [career prospects](#) for psychology graduates.

“ Since leaving Oxford, I've found the skills I acquired during my degree invaluable.

The combination of in depth tutorial teaching and opportunities for independent research was really important when applying for further professional training—and I learned how to think!

”

Finding out more about psychology

Students do not need to have studied psychology before they apply to us. However, they do need to be able to demonstrate that they know what psychology is, and why they have a passion and enthusiasm for the subject. This is also true for those doing A Level Psychology where we expect ample evidence that applicants have read beyond the curriculum.

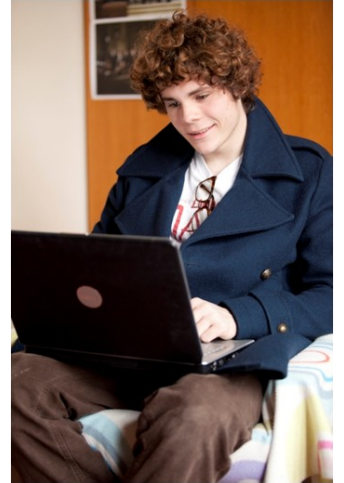
The Oxford Department of Experimental Psychology website has a list of [recommended reading](#) for students, and we've included some other suggestions from our tutors here.

Online resources

The British Psychological Society has an outstanding [blog](#) and [Facebook page](#) featuring some of the latest research across all areas of psychology. Other excellent blogs include [Mind Hacks](#), [Bad Science](#), and [Neuroskeptic](#). The last two are fantastic for learning about the importance of critical thinking and learning how to evaluate evidence – key skills our students need.

There are also some very good Twitter discussions on all things psychological. The British Psychology Society provides a list of "[psychologists who tweet](#)".

Oxford Neuroscientist Jan Schnupp has produced some lovely [videos](#) and on-line lessons. See a human brain and learn about how it works!

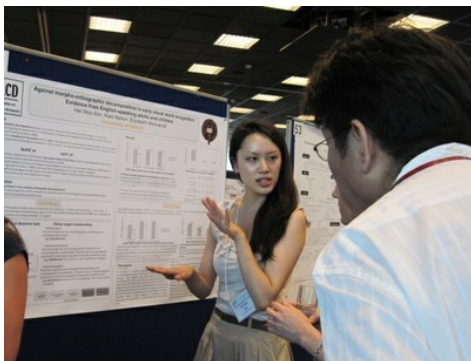


Books

There are lots of fantastic popular books to engage and inspire budding psychologists and neuroscientists. Our tutors have recently enjoyed Christopher Chabris and Daniel Simons' *The Invisible Gorilla: And Other Ways our Intuitions Deceive Us*. Check out the [videos](#)!

Oxford graduate Cordelia Fine has two beautifully written and fact-packed books: *Delusions of Gender: How Our Minds, Society and Neurosexism Create Difference* and *A Mind of its Own: How Your Brain Distorts and Deceives*.

Richard Wiseman's *59 seconds* offers plenty to think about, and classics by Oliver Sacks are always worth a read. Ben Goldacre's *Bad Science* inspires us to think critically and evaluate evidence.



Open Days

The Psychology Department holds [Open Days](#) for Year 12 students, where you can meet tutors and current students, and find out more about applying for any course including psychology.

UNIQ Summer School

Find out more about the University's Summer School for Year 12 students from UK state schools at www.ox.ac.uk/uniq.

Contact us

If you have any questions about studying psychology at Oxford, that aren't answered by the information here or on our websites, you can contact us. For general enquiries about applying for psychology, email admissions@psy.ox.ac.uk. For questions about studying at St John's College, email admissions@sjc.ox.ac.uk.