

# THE FORUM

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## SPSP 2012:

Preparing you to make  
the most out of your  
annual SPSP  
conference

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER:

### Updating you on the Graduate Student Committee events at the 2012 SPSP conference in San Diego, CA..

Well it's that time of year again, the semester is mostly over, and graduate students are looking forward for a few days (or weeks) of much needed rest, or at least some time without courses, TAing, and other responsibilities to actually get some work done on their dissertation or that article you've been meaning to write all semester but just haven't had the time. There is a lot to look forward to at this time of year: the holiday season, seeing our families again, the prospect of a new semester, and best of all, less than 2 months until SPSP 2012!

The GSC has some exciting programs lined up for you for the conference. From the pre-conference on new research methods, to the symposium on alternatives to academia (yes, they do exist!), there is plenty of opportunity to learn something new. There are also great opportunities to socialize and network, both with other students and with distinguished social and personality psychologists. First-time attendees can meet each other and get tips on making the most out of SPSP at a special breakfast, interested students can sit down in an intimate setting with a top researcher at the mentor lunch, and all students are invited for a great night out on Thursday night at Tivoli bar in the Gaslamp district (bring your nametag for a free drink!) For a full description of the activities, see pg. 3 of this issue of the Forum.

If you look at the list of GSC activities and think to yourself, 'Wow, this is great, I want to be involved with this', or if you have other ideas of what would be of interest to your fellow grad students, then you might be interested in serving on the 2012-2013 graduate student committee. We are also looking for new faces to take up the mantle of the GSC, and we need YOU to run for the various positions. Until December 16th, we are accepting nominations for the positions of president and members-at-large. See the call for nominations on pg. 2, and feel free to contact myself or any of the other members of the GSC about more information on what these positions involve. And, whether you are considering running for the GSC or not, please VOTE during the election in late December/early January. The GSC is here to represent all SPSP student members, so let your voice be heard.

I hope you enjoy the holidays, get some much needed rest, forget about psychology for a few days (if that's even possible), and I look forward to seeing each of you at SPSP 2012 in San Diego!

Marina Milyavskaya,  
GSC President 2011-2012

# SPSP ACTIVITIES HOSTED BY THE GSC

By Megan K. Johnson

As the fall semester ends and we get ready to start the spring semester, the Graduate Student Committee (GSC) is excitedly looking forward to this year's upcoming SPSP conference in San Diego. This year, the GSC will be hosting numerous events to make your participation in the conference fun and enjoyable. Below is a detailed list of all the events we will be hosting this year in San Diego. Our hope is that these events will expand your tools as researchers, add to your networks, allow you to interact with faculty members, and increase your thirst for knowledge in the field of Social and Personality Psychology. We cannot wait to see you in San Diego!

## List of Events

### **GSC and Training Committee Preconference: "Expanding the Toolbox: Innovative Methods in Social and Personality Psychology"**

Thursday, January 27,  
8:30am-4:30pm, Room 25A

This pre-conference will give some practical introductions to new and exciting methods that researchers in the field are utilizing and that you, as a student, may want to add to your toolbox. The pre-conference will have six talks covering new and innovative methods that can be utilized to conduct social and personality psychology research. Topics will include: "Using the internet in social and personality psychology research" by Sam Gosling, "Using implicit measures in attitude and personality research" by Wilhelm Hofmann, "Collecting data using smart phones" by Nadav Aharony, and "Using and

Understanding fMRI" by Jennifer Beer. Our group of expert speakers will address the question of "How do you do that?" for various methodological approaches by discussing the advantages and disadvantages of the methods they discuss. They will also address which issues to consider when using or evaluating these methods and will give you more information on how to learn more about them.

### **GSC Special Symposium: "Careers Outside Academia"**

Saturday, January 28, 8:15 – 9:30 am, Room 23

As many of you are well aware, there are not enough tenure-track jobs available to hire all of the graduates from Ph.D. programs in psychology. Additionally, many graduate students have interests in working in more applied settings. This symposium will provide graduate students with information on alternative career routes outside of academia. It will feature three speakers from health care, social networking services, and industrial/organizational behavior fields. Each speaker will discuss their current jobs and how they got to where they are today. Moreover, they will provide in-depth discussion of what their current positions are like and the advantages and disadvantages of their jobs.



Join in the activities!

### **GSC Poster: "Great Expectations: Examining Graduate Students' CVs for Research and Other Qualifications"**

Thursday, January 26, 7:00 – 8:30 pm, Sails Pavilion

Each year, the GSC puts together a poster that is designed to address questions and interests of graduate students. This year, the GSC poster will focus on the average performance level of your fellow graduate students. To examine this, the GSC examined a random sample of graduate student CVs. The poster will discuss information about the "average" graduate students' teaching and research careers including number of publications (total and first-author), number of courses taught, and other job-relevant information. Stop by our poster Thursday evening to see how you (or your students) compare!

## Calling all students:

Interested in becoming the next GSC President or serving as one of the Five GSC Members-At-Large? Then now is your chance! The GSC is accepting nominations and campaign statements for the 2011-2012 Graduate Student Committee. No prior experience is required for these positions. The only requirement is that you are a

current student member of SPSP in good standing. The role of GSC is to provide resources and programs to meet the needs of both graduate and undergraduate SPSP student members. Together, the GSC puts out regular issues of the Forum, plans great events at SPSP, compiles resources that can be useful to students, and informs the SPSP Executive Committee about student needs. If you are

interested in serving on the 2012-2013 GSC, please send the following information to us at [spspgsc@yahoo.com](mailto:spspgsc@yahoo.com) before December 16th, 2011:

1. Name
2. University affiliation
3. Position you are seeking
4. Brief position statement

**ELECTIONS IN DEC.-JAN.**

### **GSC Social Night**

*Thursday, January 27, Tivoli Bar and Grill, 9:00-12:00 midnight  
505 6<sup>th</sup> Ave., San Diego, CA, 92101*

This year, the GSC will be hosting a graduate student social at a local bar and restaurant in the Gaslamp district of San Diego (walking distance to conference center). Come out to meet your fellow graduate students and to get a free drink! Whether you are meeting new students or having a reunion with your colleagues, this is a great place to mingle with other students over some drinks.

### **First Time Attendees Breakfast**

*Friday, January 28, 8:00 - 9:30 am,*

Are you new to SPSP? Well, then we have the social event for you! This year, the GSC is hosting the first annual first time attendees breakfast for all first-time student attendees. This is a great place to meet other students and get some tips on how to make the most out of your time at SPSP.

### **Mentoring Luncheon**

*Friday, January 27 and Saturday, January 28, 1:00 - 2:00 pm, Room 29 CD*

This year, the GSC continues its long-standing tradition of hosting the mentoring luncheons. These luncheons offer graduate students an informal opportunity to discuss their research interests and career development with an established professional in the field. The mentoring lunch will again be held on both Friday and Saturday, providing over 300 students the opportunity to participate. Pre-registration for this event is necessary, so be watching for emails instructing you on how to do this in the near future.

### **GSC 2012 Outstanding Research Awards**

The Outstanding Research Award highlights outstanding student research conducted by graduate student members of SPSP. Interested students were asked to submit applications describing their research, which were then reviewed by student peers. The five students chosen for the award receive a travel award of

\$500 for the SPSP conference (January 26-28, 2012) in San Diego, California. As an additional honor, all winners will be offered the opportunity to meet with a mentor of their choice at some point during the conference.

### **GSC Student Poster Awards and Hall of Fame**

*Thursday, January 26, 7:00 – 8:30 pm, Sails Pavilion*

SPSP 2012 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> year of Student Poster Awards. Contenders submitted their poster abstracts for consideration last fall, and peer reviewers selected finalists to be judged in San Diego. This year, all the finalists will present their posters during the first poster session (posters A1-A35), where secret judges will question them about their posters. Seven winners and fourteen runners-up will be selected from among the finalists based on excellence in research, clarity in presentation, and personal knowledge in a discussion with the judges. Award winners and runners-up receive a small monetary prize and hardware and software provided by Empirisoft. Additionally, for the first time this year, the seven winning posters will be displayed for the entirety of the conference in the Hall of Fame. Come and see for yourself the best graduate student research in Social and Personality Psychology!

## **EXPLORING SAN DIEGO** **BY MOLLIE RUBEN**

Wondering what to do or where to go in San Diego in your free time during SPSP 2012? San Diego is known for its beautiful beaches and outdoor spaces which will allow you to explore and enjoy the region without spending all of your stipends and loans. Enjoy everything from surfing and hiking to learning about the history of the area and enjoying 15+ museums. Here are 10 fun and free things to do while visiting San Diego.

1. Head to San Diego's many beaches, all free to the public, to swim, body surf or hang-ten. Play in the sand, collect seashells or just bask in the sun.
2. Visit La Jolla Cove and see the magnificent sunset on the ocean. La Jolla Cove is one of the most spectacular natural settings in the world.
3. Visit downtown San Diego's Seaport Village for hours of free entertainment, leisurely strolling and window shopping.
4. Stroll through the 16½-block historic Gaslamp Quarter in downtown San Diego and view the renovated turn-of-the-century Victorian architecture, home to boutiques, art galleries, specialty shops and more.
5. Fly a kite along the grassy field in the Tecolote Shores of Mission Bay Park, a 4,600-acre aquatic park.
6. Visit Old Town and witness the living legacy of San Diego history. Guests are also invited to wander free through Old Town's historic buildings, including the blacksmith shop, Seeley Stables, Stewart House, Estudillo House and the oldest schoolhouse in San Diego.
7. Visit the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista for a free tour of the 150-acre facility, including training fields and tracks, athlete dorms and the Otay Lake Reservoir.
8. Step back in time with a stop in Julian, a century-old gold mining town in the Cuyamaca Mountains. Pick up a free map at the Chamber of Commerce for a self-guided walking tour of the area's historic sites and later enjoy a slice of homemade apple pie – a Julian specialty!
9. Go bird watching at the Torrey Pines State Reserve. Located high above Torrey Pines State Beach, the area is home of the rare and ancient Torrey Pine as well as a beautiful protected habitat for swifts, thrashers, woodpeckers and wrentits.
10. Visit one of fifteen museums in town including the Museum of Contemporary Art, New Americans Museum, Museum of Photographic Arts, and Women's History Museum and Educational Center to name just a few.

Taken from <http://www.sandiego.org>, visit for more information.

# HOW TO EXPERIENCE SPSP FOR UNDERGRADUATES

BY KRISTA HILL

## To All Undergraduate Students:

Although very exciting, attending your first conference as an undergraduate can also be a bit overwhelming. On the one hand there will be some incredible opportunities for you such as attending talks given by researchers you have only read about in class, learning about new and innovative research, and possibly even presenting your own research for the first time. On the other hand, it is easy to feel overwhelmed by all of the information and people coming your way. That is why this issue of the Forum is providing you with some tips and tricks for navigating this year's conference.

1. Socialize as much as you can. Although conferences appear to be focused on posters and talks, one of the main reasons to attend a conference is to meet new people and network. This may be your chance to meet a potential future advisor or maybe even a future collaborator. Many advisors love to meet potential graduate students and if you have already applied this is a great chance to introduce yourself and make a good impression. Here are a few more helpful tips for networking:

- Ask your advisor (or whoever you went to the conference with) to introduce you to everyone he or she may know. This is especially important if your advisor knows someone that you may want to work with in the future.
- Attend poster sessions and introduce yourself to people who are presenting. If they have a handout take it and later email them with follow-up questions you may have about their research.
- Attend events specifically geared towards undergraduate students such as the undergraduate luncheon and social hours.

2. Avoiding information overload can help you from feeling overwhelmed throughout the conference and can also help you better retain the information you wanted to remember better. Here are a few tips to avoid feeling overwhelmed:

- Take breaks when you need them. It is 100% okay to skip sessions especially when they do not pertain to your research interests. Many first time conference attendees feel the need to attend every single session and are then burned out by the first day. Therefore, it is very important that you pace yourself and take breaks when needed.

- Look through the conference handbook ahead of time. Pick and choose topics that are of interest to you and then create a schedule for yourself.
- Take the time to just sit back and listen. You do not always need to be taking notes at every talk or poster session that you go to. If there is something that really interests you and you are afraid that you will forget it you can always email the presenter afterwards—he or she will probably be thrilled to hear about your interest.

3. Although socializing is important, you also came to this conference to learn. Here are a few tips to make sure you come away from the conference a bit more knowledgeable:

- Bring a notebook to scribble down notes from presentations as well as any new ideas you may have for your own research that were inspired by what you had heard from others. You may also want to take the time to write down the names of researchers that do work that interests you so that you can later look them up and read more about their research.
- Attend at least one session that is out of your area. Many times what you learn here can be applied to your own research or can even expand the way you think about your research.

Finally, make sure that you have fun and take some time to explore the city. This year we will be in San Diego, which is a beautiful city with plenty to see. Hopefully between the socializing, learning, and fun you will have a great time and want to return next year!

# OPTIMIZING WRITING IN GRADUATE SCHOOL

## **Strategy 1: Construct a project schedule.**

It is easy to put off working on writing up research when it is not clear what needs to be written, because you can always tell yourself that it isn't time to start writing yet. The myth that there will be a perfect time to start writing (e.g. after you read those new relevant articles or after you decide how to structure this argument, etc.) can hold up a writing project indefinitely. Additionally, having several projects for which it is not clear whether you are ready to start writing creates unnecessary anxiety about a nebulous sense of work not getting done. The solution? According to my advisors, when in doubt, construct a detailed project schedule to clear up what needs to be written when and to start writing something immediately.

The project schedule is an excel file that keeps track of every project that will ideally end up published, and its purpose is to document precisely what stage each project is at, what is needed from whom to keep each project moving towards publication, and to keep track of the changing priority level of each project. All of these factors can conveniently be tracked with rows representing projects and separate columns for project titles, collaborators, project status, goals (writing and otherwise), due dates (usually self-imposed), and priority level. The simple act of updating a

project schedule like this several times a week allows you to see at a glance what needs to be written when and what needs to get done so that writing can continue. For example, has a collaborator failed to provide you with something you asked for 2 weeks ago? Has your self-imposed deadline for completing a particular data analysis passed without you noticing? Have you set a deadline yet for writing up the methods and results of a study that recently concluded? Your project schedule will keep you accountable by reminding you what you planned to do when and at what stage every project is. Keeping detailed track of progress on all projects also clarifies what can be written when. For example, if 3 of 4 dissertation studies are complete, perhaps a large part (if not all) of the introduction can be written without waiting for data collection on study 4 to conclude.

## **Strategy 2: Make a writing schedule.**

Once it is clear what needs to be written, time must be found to do it in. We have all heard the following advice about setting up regular writing times but I will re-iterate it because it works: set aside a chunk of time (30 min-2 hrs) 3-5 times per week to write. Do not schedule something else during this time or do something else such as grading.

**By Lillia Cherkasskiy**

Sometimes it feels like “writing up” research for publication is the forgotten fourth task in graduate school, trailing behind conducting studies, teaching, and fulfilling program requirements in terms of how much time and effort we devote to it. This is unfortunate because professional publication is what moves our science forward, qualifies us for academic careers, and allows the discoveries made by psychologists to influence practices in other sciences and the human experience in the real world. As such, writing up and publishing research is an extremely important task, and in this article, I discuss three strategies to optimize it (gleaned from my advisors) so that more writing can be done in less time.

Where will this time come from? As a start, consider claiming it out of time spent daily on checking email, social networking, that half hour between classes when you never get anything done anyway, office hours students do not usually attend, and analyzing data repeatedly before there is high enough power to detect statistically significant effects.

During this time set aside for writing, permissible activities include actual writing and actively preparing to write (e.g. by making or updating your project schedule, outlining, reading author guidelines, researching appropriate journals to submit to, editing your own or collaborators' work, following up with collaborators who owe you comments, etc.). If I find that I have spent more than 5 minutes doing something that I know is not strictly preparing to write (such as re-reading a complete article instead of

skimming the method to verify I am citing it correctly) I make myself stop and switch tasks. In my experience, the key to making a writing schedule work is selecting appropriate tasks for each scheduled writing time. For example, if you have a half hour between classes in the late afternoon, it may be better to outline a new methods section or verify APA style on a completed paper than to start work on the discussion section of your dissertation. This is where having an updated project schedule becomes invaluable: it tells you exactly what your options are and their priority levels so that you can fill the time you have with work on the highest priority project that you feel up to tackling.

### **Strategy 3: Resume writing schedule after interruptions**

Your writing schedule will probably get interrupted very often because of

events outside of your control such as needing to grade 200 essay exams in one week and events within your control such as blowing it off in favor of doing something more fun. Tempting as it is to abandon all effort to stick to a writing schedule in the face of these inevitable failures, research on university professors across disciplines has shown repeatedly that binge writers accomplish less writing and publish less as compared to writers on a schedule. Here are some of the things I tell myself each time I re-establish my writing schedule after frequent failures to stick to it: better now than not at all; It will feel great to be back in the rhythm of writing and getting things done instead of avoiding them and feeling terrible about it; writing and being creative is genuinely enjoyable once I stop procrastinating and delve into it.

## About the Forum

The Forum is published four times a year by the Graduate Student Committee of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology to provide a wealth of advice and support on issues directly relevant to graduate students. The Forum aims to offer strategies for graduate teaching and research, highlight funding and conference opportunities, and promote the wider values of SPSP.

## Meet the 2011-2012 Graduate Student Committee:

As a committee of and for graduate students, the SPSP GSC is committed to advocating the interests, concerns, and ideas of the SPSP graduate student caucus. The GSC serves as a link between students and established personality and social psychologists. We aim to continue beneficial programs started by our predecessors while remaining open to new ideas, so that we may evolve with the times.

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### Upcoming Conferences:

- National Institute on Teaching of Psychology Annual Meeting
  - January 3-6, 2012 in St. Pete Beach, Florida
  - More information: [www.nitop.org](http://www.nitop.org)
- Society for Personality and Social Psychology Annual Meeting
  - January 26-28, 2012 in San Diego, CA
  - More information: [www.spspmeeting.org](http://www.spspmeeting.org)
- Society for Cross-Cultural Research Annual Meeting
  - February 22-25, 2012 in Las Vegas, NV
  - More information: [www.sccr.org](http://www.sccr.org)
- Midwestern Psychological Association (MPA) Annual Meeting
  - May 3-5, 2012 in Chicago, IL
  - More information: [www.midwesternpsych.org](http://www.midwesternpsych.org)
- Association for Psychological Science (APS) Annual Meeting
  - May 24-27, 2012 in Chicago, IL
  - More information: [www.psychologicalscience.org](http://www.psychologicalscience.org)
- International Society of Political Psychology (ISPP) Annual Meeting
  - July 6-9, 2012 in Chicago, IL
  - More information: [www.ispp.org](http://www.ispp.org)

### Teaching Resources

- <http://www.socialpsychology.org/teaching.htm>
  - Your one stop shop for a variety of social psychology teaching resources, including recommended textbooks, classroom activities, demonstrations, assignments, study aids, on-line resources and much, much more!
- [www.teachpsychscience.org](http://www.teachpsychscience.org)
  - TeachPsychScience provides a range of classroom and lab resources such as demonstrations, activities, assignments, exercises and PowerPoint presentations to facilitate teaching research methods, statistics and experimental design in Psychology.
- [www.gocognitive.net](http://www.gocognitive.net)
  - The goal of the GoCognitive web project is the creation of an online center for teaching cognitive psychology and cognitive neuroscience. The website provides online demonstrations of cognitive and neurological phenomenon as well as video content related to research in neuroscience.
- [www.psychradio.org](http://www.psychradio.org)
  - A recently developed webpage that provides a host of podcasts covering all sections of social and personality psychology including Self-Esteem, Implicit Bias and Learned Helplessness.

### Job Search Resources

- We recommend joining graduate student and early career listservs for the various psychological organizations like SPSP or APA. Often, early notification of post-doctoral or faculty position openings will appear there before they are available on a university's website.
- The monthly publications of the APS (observer) and the BPS (the psychologist) have job opportunity sections
- <http://www.spsp.org/student/career.htm> APA Job Search – <http://jobs.psyccareers.com/search.cfm>
- SPSP Student Career Center
- <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/jobs/>
  - APS Employment Network
- [http://www.easp.eu/themes/job\\_offers.htm](http://www.easp.eu/themes/job_offers.htm) BPS Employment Section - <http://www.psychapp.co.uk/>
  - EASP Job Postings
- <http://www.socialpsychology.org/forums/jobforum/>
  - Socialpsychology.org Job Forum

### Funding Resource

- <http://www.socialpsychology.org/funding.htm>.