

**Psychology Research Day**  
**Missouri Western State University**

**April 30, 2026**

*Poster Presentations from 12:30-1:45 p.m.*

*Murphy Hall 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Atrium*

**Psychology Research Methods (Mock Studies)**

**Stress Effect on Introvert and Extrovert Traits**

*Teresa Vanderpool, Anthony Clark, Xochitl Saenz, & Zack Tyer*

Personality may modify experience of college stress. Extroverts are predicted to be more stressed by online classes and introverts by in-person classes. Study 1 measured stress levels as a function of class type (online/in-person). Study 2 manipulated stressor type (physical/social appraisal/social exclusion), predicting extroverts to be stressed by social exclusion, and introverts by social appraisal.

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Corey White

**Impacts of Short Form Media on Adolescent ADHD**

*Dakota Allen, Sebastian Gutierrez, Charlie Sansonetti, & Bailey Winningham*

The rise of short-form media changes video consumption. We predict short-form media reduces attentional control in people with ADHD. Study 1 assessed if a correlation exists between short-form media consumption and ADHD. Study 2 manipulated media exposure, predicting reducing short-form media consumption would improve attentional control.

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Corey White

**Impact of Social Media Use on Anxiety and Self-esteem**

*Torie Sandoval, Coby Puzo, Shiane Edwards, & Zone Wierenga*

Minimal research on different types of social media consumption exist. We tested for a general association between social media consumption and anxiety and self-esteem, predicting a negative impact from increased use. Study 2 manipulated type of social media consumed (comedy/sports/celebrity-influencer), predicting consumption of media that encourages social comparison as the lever driving anxiety up and self-esteem down.

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Corey White

**Practicum: Applied Work Experience**

**Housing Instability Effects on Child Development**

*Autumn Cervantes-Dymek*

This poster reviews housing instability effects on child development. Relevant research is reviewed, and findings are connected to a student practicum at a Domestic Violence shelter where firsthand observations are made.

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Kayla Waters

**The Psychology of Volunteering: What Drives People to Help Others?**

*Allaina Mace*

While doing my practicum at AFL-CIO Community Services, I learned a lot. In this presentation, I go over some of the programs associated with the agency. I also looked into who volunteers and why they do it.

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Kayla Waters

## **Research Team: Empirical Research**

### **Here Comes the Sun: Does It Matter for Well-being?**

*Marcos Dominguez, Kameryn Kelley, Brett Main, Claudia Pastor Sancho, Torie Sandoval, & Kendall Vienhage*

Prior research links poor weather (e.g., cold temperatures and limited sunlight) to lower well-being. The current study examines the relationship between sunlight, air temperature, and several indices of well-being, including fatigue, perceived stress, social isolation, and rumination, using a combination of self-report and objective weather data.

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Zach Williamson

### **The Cost of Distraction: Effects of Cell Phone Use on Attention and Memory**

*Alison Andzi Quainoo, Gannon Ashford, Sebastian Gutierrez, Morgan Kimler, Sam Schoeberl, & Mallory Walker*

This study examined if cell phone use interferes with attention and memory. Participants watched three videos, followed by a memory quiz. During the videos, participants either paid full attention, scrolled social media, or played a mobile game. Afterwards, participants completed a measure of attention. We predicted distraction impairs memory.

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Christine Ziemer

### **Scrolling Past Bedtime: The Impact of Cellphone Use on Sleep**

*Mackenzie Bottorff, Anthony Clark, Destiny Green, Caitlyn McQueen, & Quinci Stewart*

Sleep is an important part of maintaining well-being, yet many people struggle to get quality sleep. Participants completed a survey assessing smartphone use and sleep quality. The survey included questions about frequency of smartphone use, particularly before bedtime, and questions measuring perceived sleep quality and related behaviors.

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Christine Ziemer

## **Honors/Independent Research: Advanced Empirical Research**

### **Equine Assisted Psychotherapy and the Professional's Point of View**

*Lynn Cassani*

This study explores licensed practitioners' lived experiences in Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) through a phenomenological lens. Using semi-structured interviews, I examine key dynamics fostering therapeutic change, with a focus on the horse's role. Findings enhance understanding of EAP's mechanisms and therapeutic legitimacy.

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Teddi Deka

### **Beyond the Classroom: The Role of Parents in Academic Achievement**

*Allaina Mace*

This study examined relationships between perceived parental involvement and academic success in high school and college using college students ( $N = 124$ ). Through correlations, the results of the study indicate that while college students have a shift towards independence, parental involvement may still benefit their academic careers.

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Teddi Deka

### **Mindfulness, Distraction, and Accelerated Learning**

*Nathan Sheehan*

Participants attempted a standard deviation (SD) equation and then either participated in either guided mindfulness meditation or distraction task. After watching 2x-playback-speed lecture on SD calculation, students were asked to solve another SD equation. Improvement scores were compared to see if meditation improved learning.

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Christine Ziemer

