

## **Stress, Anxiety, and Wellbeing (SAW) Laboratory**

Dr. Christopher J. Budnick & Dr. Michael Nizhnikov – [budnickc1@southernct.edu](mailto:budnickc1@southernct.edu),  
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### Research Interests:

- FoMO
- Industrial Organizational Psychology
- Occupational Health

Provided Description: Participation in the Stress, Anxiety, and Wellbeing Laboratory requires a minimum 3.20 GPA, fit regarding research interests, and at least 10 hours of availability. This laboratory requires a two (2) semester minimum commitment. Student-designed and executed projects (independent projects, theses) represent most of the lab's work. Projects typically focus on technological influences on human functioning (e.g., nomophobia, FoMO, telepressure), factors contributing to stress and anxiety, as well as coping methods to help reduce the detrimental effects of such. Other work focuses on wellbeing, especially in working adult student samples. Students in the lab are expected to engage in all aspects of the scientific process, from study design through the reporting of results via presentations at relevant regional, national, and international conferences.

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## **R.E.A.D.S. Laboratory**

Dr. Cheryl Durwin & Dr. Dina Moore – [durwinc1@southernct.edu](mailto:durwinc1@southernct.edu),  
[moored14@southernct.edu](mailto:moored14@southernct.edu)

### Research Interests:

- Our lab focuses on improving the reading skills of school-age children by evaluating children's skills using theory-based and research-based reading and language assessments and implementing theory-based interventions targeted to the particular reading difficulties of individual children. In short, we investigate the efficacy of assessments and interventions while providing a free service to schools

by training and supervising undergraduate research assistants who work directly with children at school sites.

Provided Description:

Our lab is committed to partnering with local elementary schools to help them improve students' reading while offering our undergraduate research assistants valuable experience working directly with children in a school setting, learning to administer and score assessments, and learning to deliver an intervention. There is no multi-semester commitment. However, students who stay with our lab for two semesters or more will gain experience with both testing/scoring (done in the fall and late spring semesters) and implementing an intervention with children (only in spring semesters). In addition to test administration and scoring, which is a critical skill for those who want to pursue school psychology, students will be offered the opportunity to present posters at on-campus and regional conferences.

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### **Evolution and Social Behavior Laboratory**

Dr. Kelly Stiver – [stiverk1@southernct.edu](mailto:stiverk1@southernct.edu)

Research Interests:

- Examining cooperation in competitive contexts, in both fish and humans. All research takes an evolutionary perspective.

Provided Description:

My primary research examines behavior in a cooperative but highly competitive wild-living fish (the ocellated wrasse). For this project, student involvement is most often conducting computer-assisted behavioral observations from video recordings. More experienced RAs may aid in training new RAs. I am also examining kin- and in-group biases in outcomes of competitive sports. RAs for this research will primarily work on searching and summarizing related literature. For both areas of research, RAs will learn about data entry and statistical analysis. A multi-semester commitment is preferred (particularly for the fish research) but not required. Specific work hours are flexible and students can work relatively independently once trained. There will be access to a lab space and necessary technology (particularly for the video-based observation work).

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## **Social and Clinical Research Laboratory**

Dr. John Jacobs – [jacobsj1@southernct.edu](mailto:jacobsj1@southernct.edu)

Research Interests:

- Social mobility
- Depression
- Relationships

Provided Description:

Currently, it's coding and analyzing life history narratives.

Actively Recruiting New Students: No

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## **Young Adult Psychopathology Research Group**

Dr. Kenneth Walters – [waltersk4@southernct.edu](mailto:waltersk4@southernct.edu)

Research Interests:

- College student mental and behavioral health

Provided Description:

Research assistants participate in data collection, data analysis, literature review, and presentation of findings at scientific and professional conferences.

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## **Social Behavior in Gaming**

Dr. Gayle Bessenoff & Dr. Kelly Stiver – [bessenoffg1@southernct.edu](mailto:bessenoffg1@southernct.edu),  
[stiverk1@southernct.edu](mailto:stiverk1@southernct.edu)

Research Interests:

- Understanding social interactions in and around video games from the perspective of social psychology and evolutionary theory.

Provided Description:

We look at the circumstances (e.g. anonymity, competition) driving pro- and anti-social interactions in both in-person and online gaming. We currently use the game Super Smash Brothers Melee as our model game, but are expanding into other types of player vs player fighting games. Research is survey-based as well as computer-assisted observation of tournament game data. Multiple semesters encouraged but not required. Student experiences: data entry and management, programming (if student has programming experience), data analysis, searching the literature and summarizing peer-reviewed journal articles, feedback on research instruments (e.g. surveys) and manuscripts.

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### **Behavioral Neuroscience Laboratory**

Dr. Kelly Bordner – [bordnerk2@southernct.edu](mailto:bordnerk2@southernct.edu)

Research Interests:

- Prenatal drug administration
- Anxiety
- Behavior and brain analysis
- Learning and memory
- Social interaction

Provided Description:

Our lab is currently exploring consequences of prenatal drug exposure, as they relate to changes in both brain and behavior. We offer opportunities to gain hands-on experience conducting basic research using a variety of laboratory techniques, including behavioral analysis of non-human species and wet-lab assays. Students should be expected to commit to a minimum of 2 sequential semesters and must complete a variety of certifications prior to being permitted to work in the lab. Students are expected to actively contribute to our overall research goals and present the results of our findings at local and regional research conferences.

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## **Psychology of Music Laboratory**

Dr. Katherine Marsland – [marslandk2@southernct.edu](mailto:marslandk2@southernct.edu)

### Research Interests:

- Music
- Subjective wellbeing
- Concentration
- Motivation
- Stress

### Provided Description:

We are interested in the effects of musical experiences on subjective-well being, concentration and motivation. Our current study focuses on the effects of listening to vagus stimulation music on stress and affect. We are also in the process of designing a study that will examine the effects of listening to music that includes binaural beats on concentration and flow. Multiple semesters is encouraged but not required. Students gain experience reviewing the literature and writing study summaries, study development and design, in-person data collection, data coding and entry and data analyses. Last year students presented posters at two student conferences. We plan to submit posters to two professional conferences next fall and prepare a manuscript for submission.

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## **Social Observations in Culture and Individual Attitudes (S.O.C.I.A.L) Laboratory**

Dr. Gayle Bessenoff – [bessenoffg1@southernct.edu](mailto:bessenoffg1@southernct.edu)

### Research Interests:

- Interplay of societal and individual norms in attitudes and behavior
- Sexism

- Heterosexism
- Racism
- Effects of social media use
- Women's body image
- Spirituality
- Sexual harassment
- Work ethic norms

Provided Description:

Two current projects include examining morningness bias (social perceptions of morning vs night persons) and superstitions/rituals in collegiate athletes. Student interns would help with literature searches, provide feedback on research instruments and manuscripts, and assist with data coding and analysis. Multiple semesters encouraged but not required.