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Research Profile:

Dr. Preston Foerder

Dr. Preston Foerder joined the UTC faculty in August 2012. He received his undergraduate degree from Tufts University where he doubled majored in Psychology and Theater. He then began his career as a professional puppeteer; he toured, worked for many companies, and was a street performer. Later, Dr. Foerder earned his Master's of Arts with a focus on animal behavior and conservation at Hunter College of the City University of New York and his PhD from the Biopsychology and Behavioral Neuroscience program at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.



Dr. Preston Foerder

Puppeteering actually lead Dr. Foerder into researching animal behavior. He visited zoos often, to carefully watch the movement of the animals so that he could replicate that movement in his puppets. His observations at the zoo generated an interest in studying comparative psychology, which is the study of behavioral mechanisms in animals, in relation to those in humans. In fact, after earning his Master's degree, Dr. Foerder worked as a zookeeper at the Bronx zoo, and that experience convinced him to further his education to become a professor in comparative psychology.

UTC's Department of Psychology does not have live animal labs, so Dr. Foerder conducts his research into animal behavior at zoos, aquariums, nature centers, and other places around Chattanooga. Currently, Dr. Foerder is working on a study that examines social organization and personality in alligators at the Tennessee Aquarium. Using the Animal Observer app, he and his student research assistants, collect data on the behavior patterns of individual alligators, affiliations among the alligators, and displacements. They are also looking for evidence of consistent behavior patterns within individual alligators to test their hypothesis about whether alligators demonstrate stable personality traits.

"People are generally interested in animals and we need to know more about their behavior to conserve them in the wild," said Dr. Foerder. "Also, by studying these animals we learn about our own behavior and cognition... if they think and see things differently than we do, then why?"

"We need to know about animal's behavior to conserve them."



Dr. Foerder is also working with the chimpanzees at the Chattanooga Zoo by using internet technology to connect the chimp from Chattanooga to chimps at another zoo. This study is designed to provide environmental enrichment for the chimpanzees because it expands their group size, which is much larger in the wild.

Another animal behavior study that Dr. Foerder is hoping to start soon will investigate the cognition of cats, an animal species that has been studied very little. He is still working to see if an eye tracker can be used effectively with cats. This has turned out to be a more challenging task than anticipated. Indeed, when he used the eye tracking technology with one cat, he was able to detect eye movement, but was not able to complete the experiment because the cat was not a very willing participant. Most cat owners will not be surprised by this experience.

"By studying these animals we learn about our own behavior."

Dr. Foerder says his favorite aspect about his research is the animals. "I like being around animals, that is one of the reasons I went in to this" said Dr. Foerder. "I am very interested in them, I just like watching them behave."

In the future, he plans on studying cognition in our mascot, the mocking bird! He will also continue to work with new Master's students and the animals they are interested in.

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga



PSI CHI

THE INTERNATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY
IN PSYCHOLOGY

Psi Chi - The National Honor Society in Psychology

is an international honor society with a mission to encourage excellence in scholarship and advance the science of psychology. Psi Chi offers more than \$400,000 in annual awards and grants to members who apply. Because their programs are open only to Psi Chi members, there is a much smaller pool of competitors than other programs.

Lifetime memberships are available to undergraduate and graduate students, as well as faculty and alumni. Other benefits include, networking and research opportunities, access to Psi Chi's career center, and membership looks great on a resume!

Psi Chi University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

While the UTC Chapter of Psi Chi encourages students to join the Psi Chi National Honor Society, their chapter is a little different than others because they understand that not everyone will have the GPA requirements to join. Accordingly, all students are encouraged to attend Psi Chi meetings (Mondays at 4:45pm in Rm 394 of 540 McCallie). Meeting topics include: information about graduate school, conferences participation, and even community activism - UTC Psi Chi participated in the 2018 Chattanooga Autism Awareness Walk. If you haven't checked out Psi Chi at UTC, come out to the first meeting in January and get involved.



Psi Chi Officers

Back row: Dr. Preston Foerder (Faculty Advisor), Adam Olson (Treasurer), Emme Woodward (Social Media Ambassador), Aubrey Buttrey (Membership Coordinator), Yankarlos Taveras (Secretary)

Front row: Donica Hilario (Vice President), Molly Hudson (President), Beth Rachlin (Social Event Coordinator) (Graduate Student Adviser Sally Swanson and Fundraising Chair Maggie Dempsey are not pictured).



The Psi Chi symbol comes from the Greek words *psyche* (mind: scholarship and enrichment) and *cheires* (hands: fellowship and cooperation in research).



Headquarters for Psi Chi - The National Honors Society is right here in Chattanooga!



The Psi Chi organization funds student scholarships, research grants, and travel awards through their online portal. Funding mechanisms also exist for graduate students & faculty.



With over 1130 Psi Chi chapters nationwide, membership offers many ways of connecting with faculty and programs to help your chances of success!

Meet UTC's Psi Chi Members!



Back row: Yankarlos Taveras, Aubrey Buttrey, Nicole Harty, Claire Peugeot, Joanna Hill, Halle McGuire, Adeola Ijyode, Emily Roumen, Beth Rachlin, Dr. Preston Foerder.

Front row: Emme Woodward, Braden Sanford, Taylor Allay, Emily Halvorson, Delaney Perry, Molly Hudson, Donica Hilario, Adam Olson.



Meet Our Psychology Majors



Amber Bailey is from Jackson, TN. She thinks UTC's Psych Department is set apart from others because every professor is willing to help students succeed. She says that students are given many different opportunities to get involved and learn outside of the classroom. One example of this is the RiverCity I-O Psychology conference, where she learned about the field she's planning to pursue.

Amber's goal is to go to graduate school either at UTC or at Appalachian State where she hopes to study I-O Psychology. Amber says that she is "able to go to any of my professors for professional advice, and my wonderful adviser Angelique has laid out exactly what I need to do to get where I want to be."

Amber's Best Advice? Don't get so caught up in making perfect grades that you forget to involve yourself in the community around you. Go to all of the Psych mixers, join clubs that interest you, and don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it.

Yankarlos Taveras is from Chattanooga, TN. He chose to come to UTC to pursue a career in clinical psychology. Specifically, he would like to work with individuals with autism, as his brother has autism. While at UTC Yankarlos has gotten practical experience as a research assistant in Dr. Ozbek's Olfaction lab, as well as teaching assistant for Dr. Zelin and Dr. Foerder. He is also currently the secretary for Psi Chi. In all, he says



the Department of Psychology has provided him with a plethora of opportunities for his personal and academic development. His favorite thing about UTC is its accessibility to research opportunities. "Undergraduate assistantships are available and our professors encourage us to participate in and pursue research!"

Yankarlos's Best Advice? Make yourself as present in the department as possible. Go to office hours! Do your homework and study in the Psych Department! This will show your professors how important your development in this field is to you.

Angelique's Advice

Ready or not, it is final exam time. Here are a few tips as you prepare.

- # 5: Determine what you are up against** Do you know how much the final exam is worth? What's the format (multiple choice, essay, etc.), is the final comprehensive or over a few chapters? Knowing this information can help with your study plan.
- # 4: Location is everything** Try to find a nice, quiet, and comfortable location to study. The library and dorm rooms are acceptable, however restaurants with loud noise may not be ideal.
- # 3: Turn off social media** Trust me, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, etc. will still be there when you are done with finals.
- # 2: Don't cram the night before** Cramming causes anxiety, which inhibits your ability to retain information. Set aside time everyday for studying and set realistic goals.
- # 1: Try your best** Remember that you studied hard and have confidence in yourself. You can do it!

Make Your Studying Stick



Remembering something is a simple process. By paying attention well enough, you encode information into your memory in such a way that it can be retrieved later. It's not magic. At least it shouldn't be magic. *pro tip:* If you know magic, what are you doing at this school?

The Levels of Processing Theory tells us that we remember information best when we think about it deeply. This means considering the meaning of what you are learning, drawing new connections, thinking about how the new information applies to your own life, and testing your memory often.

So: spread out your studying, think about how the material connects to your own life, test yourself often, and don't forget to get a good night's rest!

Alumni Spotlight



Kathleen Phelps

is a UTC Psychology graduate with a desire to become a Pediatric Neuropsychologist. As she works toward her future career, she has had the opportunity to work with Syrian refugees in Germany, assessing how prejudice affects their resilience and assimilation to their



new culture. She will continue research for this project upon moving to Istanbul, Turkey in February for three months before returning to the US and hopefully beginning a position at one of the graduate schools she is applying to.

If you want to learn more about Kathleen's research, email her at phelps.kathleen@yahoo.com

The View from Room 382

As we complete another successful semester and enter the busy holiday season, we in the UTC Department of Psychology have much for which to be thankful. First, I want to thank our outstanding faculty and staff for their unwavering commitment to our students. Our marvelous office staff, Allison Stone and Judy Gallagher, keep the wheels of progress turning smoothly in the face of sometimes daunting challenges. The best academic advisor on campus, Angelique Cook, continues to go the extra mile to ensure our majors know how to navigate their way through their academic journey. Finally, our amazing full- and part-time faculty demonstrate their commitment to the advancement of knowledge and the intellectual development of their students on a daily basis.



Of course, we wouldn't be here without our students. We thank you for choosing to join us to advance your education and for the many contributions you make to the Department, the University and the surrounding community.

In closing, I want to congratulate all of our December graduates, and thank them for letting us be a part of their lives and wish them well in the future! To our returning students, we'll see you in January!

And to all, I wish you and your families peace and happiness in this holiday season!

Dr. O

Great Things are Happening!



Drs. Alex Zelin & Kristen Black received \$3,988 from the Girls Preparatory School (GPS) for their project entitled "Team Building for Faculty at the Girls Preparatory School."

Congratulations Drs. Zelin &

Sally Swanson, one of our Research Masters graduate students, accepted an offer to study with Dr. Jordan Labouff in the PhD program at the University of Maine! Congratulations Sally!



Dr. Jill Shelton was awarded \$1,000 in a Faculty Achievement Award (FAA) from the College of Arts & Sciences for her project entitled "*The Utility of Auditory and Visual Cues for Facilitating Strategic Monitoring in Prospective Memory.*"

Congratulations Dr. Shelton!



Interested in an
Independent Study
opportunity to
develop your
science writing skills?

Contact Dr. Clark about getting involved with the Psych Department newsletter!
Amanda-Clark@utc.edu