

PSY 390 Research Opportunity – Fall 2021

Faculty member or graduate student

Dr. William G. Graziano, Professor – Social Psychology
Regina Henares, Graduate Student – Social Psychology

Description of research area

Our lab conducts research broadly on personality and how personality motivates interpersonal interactions. Recently, research in our lab has focused on Person Orientation and Thing Orientation (POTO). POTO is a motivational mechanism that describes how interests in people and/or things guide human behavior. These two orientations are related to preferences for academic majors and even responsiveness to other people.

Over the last 25 years, in collaboration with graduate and undergraduate students, we formed research teams to specifically explore the interpersonal aspects of people orientation like attraction, cooperation, helping and conflict. These seemingly different topics can be linked through motivation. This has led us to also systematically investigate the Big Five dimension of agreeableness in terms of motivation to maintain good relations with others and helping behavior. These processes are linked to self-control and social accommodation, activities central to social living. We believe our studies show that persons who are motivated to get along with others, like more people, are less prejudiced, cooperate more with others, and give more help than do their peers.

Description of undergraduate participation

We hold weekly lab meetings where we discuss new research ideas and current projects. On top of these one-hour lab meetings, RAs will have the opportunity to be involved in hands-on experiences throughout the research process, including research idea development, programming studies into Qualtrics, and data analysis using SPSS and R. (Prior knowledge of these programs would be good but it is not required.)

Research setting

Labs in the Psychological Sciences building.

Number of assistants needed

2-4

Contact information

Regina Henares – rhenares@purdue.edu