DISSESSATION TOPICS AVAILABLE 2017/2018

This document lists PPLS academic staff available to supervise MSc dissertations for the 2017/2018 academic year, along with a brief statement of research interests, and a description of topics that each staff member is willing to supervise. In some cases, specific projects may be described; in others, a more broad description of a research area is given. In addition to the specific topics suggested, it is possible for you to suggest your own topic to a potential supervisor.

It is up to you to approach supervisors to discuss topics (not relevant for Philosophy students). Your dissertation topic will be negotiated with your supervisor and must be agreed by both parties. Any student can be supervised by any academic staff member, provided that the topic is approved by your taught Programme Director as a topic relevant to your MSc programme; this includes staff members external from PPLS.

Once you have agreed upon a dissertation topic with a supervisor, the Programme Director must be informed, and asked to approve the topic. Only then will your project with that supervisor be confirmed.

Your dissertation topic should ideally be confirmed by the end of February, and considerably earlier if the project is complicated or likely to involve special populations (e.g. children, neuropsychological patients) or requires NHS approval.

Please be aware that supervisors might have limited places, so you should not necessarily expect to be accepted for your first choice of project.

Students in the MSc Philosophy, MSc Mind, Language and Embodied Cognition and MSc Epistemology, Ethics and Mind programmes are required to submit a dissertation proposal mid-way through semester 2, and to nominate 2 or 3 potential supervisors. A supervision allocation will be determined once all proposals have been submitted. Further details can be found in the programme handbooks.

The recommended word limit for the dissertation is 8,000 words for taught MSc students (check your programme handbook for specifics), and 25,000 to 30,000 words for MSc by Research students.

The submission deadline for the dissertation is 4pm, Thursday 16th August 2018. Details of how to format the dissertation will be made available online.

MSc by Research students must complete an intention to submit form at least two months prior to the deadline, these students will be contacted directly by the PG Office.
PHILOSOPHY

Students in the MSc Philosophy, MSc Mind, Language and Embodied Cognition and MSc Epistemology, Ethics and Mind programmes are required to submit a dissertation proposal mid-way through semester 2, and to nominate 2 or 3 potential supervisors. A supervision allocation will be determined once all proposals have been submitted. Further details can be found in the programme handbooks.

Dr Matthew Chrisman

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Research Interests
Metaethics, philosophy of language, epistemology, political philosophy.

Prof Andy Clark

Office: 6.14 (DSB)
Email: Andy.Clark@ed.ac.uk
Web: http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/andy-clark

Research Interests
Philosophy of mind, artificial Intelligence including robotics, artificial life, embodied cognition, and mind, technology and culture.

Please note that I can only supervise a maximum of two dissertations this year.

This year, I’d especially like to supervise work on predictive processing and the construction of conscious experience. This could include work on agency, the sense of self, subjective experience, and the personal / sub-personal distinction – all as they appear on the assumption that the brain implements a hierarchical probabilistic prediction machine.

Dr Alix Cohen

Office: 4.13 (DSB)
Email: Alix.Cohen@ed.ac.uk
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Research Interests
Early modern philosophy, Kant, Kantian ethics, Rousseau, Hume.

Dr Guy Fletcher

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Research Interests
Metaethics, ethics, political philosophy, philosophy of language.

Dr Emma Gordon

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Research Interests
Intellectual virtues, norms of assertion, emerging enhancement technologies, and the nature of understanding.

Dr Alistair Isaac

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Web: https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/alistair-isaac

Research Interests
Philosophy of mind, philosophy of psychology, philosophy of science.

Prof Jesper Kallestrup

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Email: Jesper.Kallestrup@ed.ac.uk
Web: http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/jesper-kallestrup

Research Interests
Philosophy of language, epistemology, philosophy of mind.
Dr Inna Kupreeva
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Web: https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/inna-kupreeva

Research Interests
Ancient and medieval philosophy, ancient logic, early science, history of medicine.

Dr Suilin Lavelle
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Research Interests
Philosophy of mind, cognitive science.

Dr David Levy
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Research Interests
Moral philosophy, Wittgenstein, Simone Weil and Plato.

Dr Andrew Mason
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Research Interests
Ancient philosophy and early modern philosophy.
Dr Elinor Mason

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Research Interests
Ethics, moral responsibility, free will, feminism and metaethics.

Prof Michela Massimi

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Research Interests
General philosophy of science, history and philosophy of modern physics and early modern philosophy (especially Kant).

Dr Casey McCoy

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Research Interests
Philosophy of science and the philosophy of physics.

Dr Aidan McGlynn

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Research Interests
Epistemology, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind and feminism.
Prof Pauline Phemister
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Web: http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/pauline-phemister
Research Interests
Early modern philosophy, especially the rationalists and Locke, and philosophy of nature.

Dr Bryan Pickel
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Web: http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/bryan-pickel
Research Interests
Metaphysics, philosophy of language and history of analytic philosophy.

Prof Duncan Pritchard
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Research Interests
Epistemology, skepticism, philosophy of mind and cognitive science, philosophy of science, philosophy of education and philosophy of religion.

Dr Brian Rabern
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Research Interests
Philosophy of language, formal semantics and philosophical logic.
Dr Alasdair Richmond

Office: 6.11 (DSB)

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Research Interests
Metaphysics (especially time and space), philosophy of science, the British empiricists (especially Hume on miracles).

Prof Michael Ridge

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Research Interests
Ethics, political philosophy, action theory, epistemology, philosophy of mind and philosophy of language.

Dr Debbie Roberts

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Research Interests
Metaethics, metaphysics, ethics and aesthetics.

Prof Dory Scaltsas

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Research Interests
Creative lateral thinking and emotional intelligence, ancient philosophy and contemporary metaphysics.
Dr Anders J. Schoubye
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Research Interests
Philosophy of language, formal semantics, pragmatics, formal epistemology, logic and philosophy of mind.

Dr Wolfgang Schwarz
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Research Interests
Formal epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of language and logic.

Dr Paul Schweizer
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Topics
- Philosophy of Mind, Cognitive Science, AI
- Computation in Physical Systems
- Philosophy of Language

Dr Martin Smith
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Research Interests
Epistemology, formal epistemology, philosophy of law and logic.
Dr Mark Sprevak

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Research Interests
Philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, metaphysics, and philosophy of language (with particular focus on the cognitive sciences).

Dr Mog Stapleton

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Research Interests
Embodied and enactive approaches to the affective and cognitive sciences.

Dr Patrick Todd

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Research Interests
Free will, moral responsibility, metaphysics, ethics and philosophy of religion.

Dr Nick Treanor

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Research Interests
Metaphysics, epistemology and the philosophy of mind.
Dr Tillmann Vierkant

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Research Interests
Philosophy of mind, free will, mental actions, mind reading, consciousness, implicit / explicit mental processing, neuro-ethics, philosophy of psychology and cognitive science.

Dr Dave Ward

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Research Interests
Philosophy of mind and cognitive science

Dr Keith Wilson

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Research Interests
Perception and the senses, philosophy of science and the mind, and the relevance of philosophy and philosophical debate to wider society.

Dr Sam Wilkinson

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Research Interests
The influence of emotion on perception, cognition of language.
Dr Bonnie Auyeung

Office: S30 (7GS)

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Web: http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/bonnie-ayuyeung

Research interests
Autism, early child development (social and cognitive development, neural development, eye gaze), sex differences, neurodevelopmental outcomes

Topics
- Infant and early child social and cognitive development
- Neurodevelopmental sex differences
- Autism and developmental disorders
- Development of new measures of social and cognitive behaviour

Dr Nic Chevalier and I offer opportunities for co-supervised MSc dissertations on cognitive and / or social-affective development in children.

Dr Thomas Bak

Office: S3 (7GS)

Email: Thomas.Bak@ed.ac.uk
Web: https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/thomas-bak

Research interests
Cognitive effects of bilingualism across the lifespan, translation and adaptation of cognitive and motor tests into different languages and cultures, the interaction between movement, language and cognition in neurodegenerative diseases

Projects
- **Cognitive effects of bilingualism**

Such projects could look at the relatively recent and hotly debated question whether bilingualism can influence cognitive functions across the lifespan. Potential projects could examine different types of bilingualism (from early balanced one to learning new languages in later life), different tasks and different populations.


Bak TH, Vega-Mendoza M, Sorace A (2014) Never too late? An advantage on tests of
auditory attention extends to late bilinguals. Frontiers in Psychology no. 5: 485. Online publication 26 May 2014.


University of Edinburgh

- **Movement, language and cognition in neurodegenerative diseases**

Current bureaucratic hurdles make direct work with patients as part of an MSc project impossible, so the most clinical work I can offer is using already collected and anonymised patient data, in particular Edinburgh Motor Examination (EMAS) and Boston Cookie Theft Description for Boston Diagnostic Aphasia Examination (BDAE). An exception would be overseas students having access to patients in their own countries.

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**Dr Kasia Banas**

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Research interests
Healthy eating, gender and health, vegetarianism, social psychology, health psychology, social psychology of language.

I am interested in supervising projects related to the broad areas outlined above. I also have a couple of specific projects that I would love to have students involved in:

- **How accents affect what we believe** (co-supervised with Dr Lauren Hall-Lew in Linguistics)

Recent evidence suggests that sentences spoken in a non-native accent are less likely to be perceived as true than sentences spoken in a native accent (Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010). This is normally interpreted as an effect of increased processing difficulty. We are interested in investigating whether there might be a more social explanation for this phenomenon (i.e. native accents are perceived more positively in general, and therefore are also seen as more credible). We do have some preliminary data on the perception of various English, Scottish and non-native accents, and would like to extend this further to include other accents, as well as conduct a more explicit investigation of the psychological phenomena involved.


- **Looking for comfort food: attentional bias for food stimuli during episodes of negative affect** (co-supervised with Dr Chris Egan, and Dr Emily Newman in
Clinical Psychology)

Evidence shows that certain characteristics (e.g. external eating) make people more likely to attend to food stimuli during stressful times (Newman et al., 2008). We are interested in investigating this relationship between traits (such as external or emotional eating) and situational variables (stress or emotion) further using eye-tracking technology.


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**Prof Timothy C. Bates**

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Principal Research Grouping  
Differential Psychology

Research interests  
- Personality, particularly conscientiousness  
- Testing replication, especially in education: e.g. Mindset  
- Genetics: Both molecular and twin studies on anything from optimism to unemployment  
- Improving education  
- Improving intelligence and rationality

I am also happy to discuss any ideas related to my research or research.

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**Prof Holly Branigan**

Office: S13 (7GS)

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Principal Research Grouping  
Language, Cognition and Communication

Research interests  
My main interests are in language production in adults, children and bilinguals, particularly relating to syntax (what are the processes and representations involved in combining words to form complex expressions? how do children and non-native speakers acquire and develop these processes and representations, and how do they differ from those of adult native speakers?) and communication in dialogue, including
human-computer interaction (how do people adapt their language to fit their conversational partners? what kind of evidence do they use to make inferences about what their partner knows?).

Projects
I would be interested in supervising any dissertation relating to language production or dialogue from a cognitive perspective. Please note that research involving children must be organised well in advance. Some example project areas are listed below:

- Structural priming in children
- Alignment in human-computer interaction
- Cross-linguistic interference in bilingual production
- Syntactic processing in children's language production

Dr Nicolas Chevalier

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Research interests
While working on a project or assignment, you may need to prevent mind wandering and ignore the temptation to check your emails and Facebook page. Efficient control over your thoughts, actions and emotions will help you stay on task and get it done. In contrast, children tend to be “all over the place”, not exerting cognitive control (also referred to as executive functioning) as well as do adults. Yet, emerging cognitive control during childhood is one of the best predictors of academic achievement and later life outcomes such as health, income, or criminal records. Impaired cognitive control is also often observed in developmental disorders such as autism and ADHD. Given the key role of cognitive control in child development, the study of its development has become one of the “hottest” topics in developmental science. My work uses behavioural, eye-tracking, and electrophysiological (ERPs) measures to address how pre-schoolers and school-age children process environmental information to determine how and when to engage cognitive control.

Projects on cognitive control development will give you the opportunity to learn how to design and conduct an experiment with children of various ages, and to familiarize yourself with the collection and analysis of behavioural (reaction times, accuracy), eye-tracking (e.g., gaze time, pupillometry), and electrophysiological (event-related potentials – ERPs) data.

Dr Bonnie Auyeung and I offer opportunities for co-supervised MSc dissertations on cognitive and/or social-affective development in children.

**Students are advised to contact Dr Chevalier as soon as possible in the academic year for availability**
Prof Sergio Della Sala

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Principal Research Grouping
Human Cognitive Neuroscience

Research interests and topics
Cognitive neuropsychology, in particular memory and amnesia or visuo-spatial and representational neglect, and the cognitive deficits associated to Alzheimer’s Disease.

I am prepared to supervise projects proposed by MSc students within the field of my expertise.

Dr Morag Donaldson

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Principal Research Grouping
Developmental Science

Research interests
Language development and language impairment in children. University students’ study skills.

Topics
• Classroom explanations – how do the types of explanations that are produced in classroom contexts differ between children with language impairments and children with typical language development? This project would involve analysis of a dataset of naturalistic data that has already been collected.
• Production of cohesive devices (e.g., connectives, anaphoric expressions) in children’s speech and/or writing.
• How could university students be helped to improve the coherence and/or clarity of their arguments in written assignments?

I am also happy to discuss students’ own ideas for projects related to my research interests. Research with children takes a lot of time, and so it is important to get started early.
Dr Alex Doumas

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Principal Research Grouping
Human Cognitive Neuroscience; Language, Cognition and Communication and Developmental Science

Research interests
Humans routinely make inductive inferences that far outstrip those made by even our closest primate cousins. Broadly, I am interested in how humans (and non-human machines) develop the kinds of representations that support these inferences. More specifically, I am interested in how systems can and do learn structured relational representations (like above, next-to, or chases). Relational reasoning (reasoning based on the relational roles that objects play rather than the literal features of those objects) is ubiquitous in human cognition, but relational representations are exceedingly difficult to learn. The power of relational representations stems from their promiscuity: Our representation of a relation like more, for instance, can take any possible arguments (e.g. the dog can weigh more than the cat, the winnings can be more than the losses, and the relative neatness of one particular cartoon alien can be more than the neatness of another particular cartoon alien). In other words, the representation of the relation is invariant with respect to its arguments. However, we never actually experience generalised instances of relations in our environments. Our experience of relations in the world occurs only in the context of specific objects. So, our representation of a relation like more is disembodied, or untied to any specific objects, but our experience with more-ness in the world has precisely the opposite property.

How, then, do we learn these kinds of relational concepts? How is it that children by (roughly) the age of 5, reason about many relational concepts like experts, while no non-human animal seems able to even approximate truly relational thinking? In my lab we use both empirical (with children and adults) and computational methods to get at answers to these and other related questions.

Topics
- Relational reasoning
- Development of relational reasoning
- Capacity limits in human relational reasoning
- Training regimens and acquisition of relational concepts
Dr Sue Fletcher-Watson

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Research interests
Autism; social cognitive development; infant cognitive development; technology based support and education.

Topics
I am interested in supervising students on the following specific topics but am also happy to hear student-led proposals relating to my research interests above:

- development and validation of a large battery of ‘social’ images depicting not just human content but other forms of social information (e.g. culturally or emotionally significant items and locations) via verbal descriptions or eye-movement recording
- development of recommendations for the design of clinical trials / research studies with populations with learning disability from stakeholder input
- exploration of the subjective experience of spending time with autistic people, by non-autistic people including autism professionals
- Understanding the social interaction profiles of autistic people on social media

**Maximum 2 students

Prof Catharine Gale

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Principal Research Grouping
Centre for Cognitive Ageing & Cognitive Epidemiology

Research interests
My areas of expertise are cognitive and life course epidemiology. My main research interests are the relationship between cognitive ability in youth and subsequent health, life course influences on cognitive ageing and the development of physical frailty, and the part played by mental health and wellbeing in later health outcomes. I’m also interested in how personality traits affect health outcomes.
Dr Elena Gherri

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Principal Research Grouping
Human Cognitive Neuroscience

Projects

- **An electrophysiological investigation of the reference frames upon which tactile attentional selectivity operates (ERP project)**

Recent investigations of attentional selectivity in touch have demonstrated the existence of a lateralised Event-Related Potential component which is elicited over the hemisphere contralateral to the target side during tactile search tasks (Forster, Tziraki & Jones, 2016). This component labelled N140cc has been suggested to reflect the attentional selection of the target when competing information is presented to the body. Despite the original claim that tactile selectivity operates according to a somatotopic reference frame (Forster et al., 2016), recent evidence from our lab (Ambron, Mas-Casadesus & Gherri, submitted) suggests that tactile selectivity is at least in part based on an external or ‘abstract’ reference frame as suggested by the fact that the N140cc was modulated by body posture when target and distractors were presented to opposite hands and the distance between the hands was manipulated (hands close or far apart). The aim of the present study is to assess the contribution of both the somatotopic and external reference frame to the N140cc using a different postural manipulation which is known to induce a conflict between these spatial codes (hands crossed vs. uncrossed). When participants cross their hands the abstract spatial code is reversed (e.g. the left hand now occupies the right side of space) while the somatotopic code is unaffected (e.g. the left hand remains left regardless of position in external space). By looking at the polarity, onset time and amplitude of the N140cc ERP component, it will be possible to determine which reference frame plays a dominant role (if any) and the contribution of the secondary reference frame.

- **Plasticity of body representation: is tactile selectivity aided by the magnification of body representation? (ERP project)**

Previous work has shown that a mild over-the-counter anesthetic cream applied to participants’ lips induced many subjects to perceive their lips as larger and improved the accuracy in a two-point discrimination task (Ambron, Medina, Coley, & Coslett, under review). Importantly, the two-point discrimination accuracy improved as function of the degree of increase in perceived lips size. These results have been interpreted as evidence of the effect of body form representation on tactile discrimination. One possible mechanism subtending the beneficial effect of magnification is the increase of the cortical representation of the body, as demonstrated in vision (Ambron, White, Faseyitan, Kessler, Medina & Coslett, under review). Here we investigate these results further and test whether this increase in the perceived size of the lips would also modulate tactile selectivity. Using a distractor
interference task in which a tactile target and a tactile distractor are simultaneously presented to the lips we measure the electrophysiological correlate of target selection (N140cc, Forster, Tziraki & Jones, 2016). Previous evidence from our lab (Ambron, Mas-Casadesus & Gherri, submitted) have suggested that when the distance between these stimuli is increased the N140cc amplitude is enhanced. If the anesthetic application magnifies lips representation, thus increasing the distance between target and distractor applied to the lips, we should observe a systematic increase of the target-related N140cc lateralized component.

Requirements for ERP projects
Students working on this project will learn to collect and analyse ERP data. For this reason, they should be already familiar with behavioural data collection and basic statistical data analysis. This project is ideal for two students working together during data collection (Although highly motivated students, or students with prior ERP experience can work on their own).

- **Investigating peripersonal space (Behavioural projects)**

Consistent evidence shows that the body representation in the brain is highly flexible and quickly adapts following apparent or real changes to the body (e.g. Farne et al., 2000; Graziano et al., 2000; Pavani et al., 2000) as well as following active tool-use that extends reachable space (e.g. Iriki et al., 1996; Maravita et al., 2002). Here, we develop a novel task to measure peri-personal space and its plasticity.

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**Dr Paul Hoffman**

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Research interests
I am interested in how the brain represents semantic knowledge (verbal and non-verbal knowledge about the world) and how we regulate our use of this knowledge in different situations (for example, the knowledge involved in playing a piano is different to that required for moving a piano). I use a variety of techniques including neuropsychology, psycholinguistics, neuroimaging and connectionist computational modelling; my projects typically involve designing and running a behavioural experiment.

I am happy to supervise projects in this area. Some possible projects are listed below - all would be suitable for two students working together on data collection.

- **Non-verbal tests of semantic cognition**

There are many tests that probe levels of verbal knowledge (e.g., vocabulary tests) but hardly any that probe non-verbal knowledge. This project would involve designing and validating a new test of non-verbal knowledge to complement existing verbal tasks. It would require some creative thinking in coming up with suitable categories of knowledge to probe and finding images for them.
• **Probing the neural basis of knowledge with divided visual fields**

Visual field experiments involve presenting stimuli to either the left or right visual field, so that they are preferentially processed by the left or right cerebral hemisphere. This technique is often used to investigate the cortical lateralisation of cognitive processes. This project would use a visual field paradigm to test recent claims about the lateralisation of different types of semantic knowledge.

• **Processing meaning under divided attention**

Some recent data have shown that processing the meanings of words is impaired by the performance of a concurrent task, particularly when the meaning-based task places high demands on cognitive control. This project will investigate how these effects differ in young and older adults. We might expect to show older adults to show larger detrimental effects, consistent with a general decrement in cognitive control.

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**Dr Zoe Hopkins**

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All topics will be conducted jointly with Prof Holly Branigan:
• Role of executive functioning in children’s language alignment
• Affective factors in children’s language alignment
• Relationship between children’s syntactic and lexical alignment

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**Dr Wendy Johnson**

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Web: [http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/wendy-johnson](http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/wendy-johnson)

Principal Research Grouping
Differential Psychology

Research interests
Individual differences: structure of intelligence and personality, life-span development of intelligence and personality, health and aging, genetic and environmental transactions and their influence on behavior, intelligence, and personality

Topics
Pretty much anything, but especially anything related to intelligence, personality,
academic achievement, health outcomes (mental and physical), genetics, sample selection, cognitive and physical ageing, or education. I could supervise any of the research methodology students. Many students who work with me will end up using archival data from existing studies. While this simplifies the data accumulation process considerably, these projects usually make it up in complexity of statistical analysis. Students working with me should have solid basic analytical skills and willingness and ability to acquire more.

Dr Peter Lamont

Office: F34 (7GS)

Email: Peter.Lamont@ed.ac.uk
Web: https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/peter-lamont

My research focuses primarily on the history and psychology of extraordinary phenomena, from a historical and discursive perspective. I am happy to supervise projects in this area, and in other areas of historical psychology.

Dr Billy Lee

Office: S40 (7GS)

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Web: https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/billy-lee

Principal Research Grouping
Language Cognition and Communication

Research interests
I am interested in Phenomenological Psychology and use experience-near qualitative methods to explore and to understand people’s lived experiences. I welcome proposals for projects to explore gender, identity, sexuality, relationships, mental health, well-being, therapy and counselling, and other areas of marginal or different experience. I am currently exploring understandings of the talking therapies and the development of therapeutic talking and listening in counsellors.

Topics
- Gender, identity and sexuality
- Mental health, relationships and well-being
- Psychotherapy, counselling and social communication
**Prof Robert Logie**

Office: F9 (7GS)

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Web: http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/robert-logie

Principal Research Grouping
Human Cognitive Neuroscience

Research interests
Research and teaching interests lie in the cognition of human memory in the healthy brain across the lifespan, focused on experimental behavioural studies of working memory.

Topics
I am available to supervise MSc projects next summer using cognitive, behavioural, experimental approaches to the study of any area of memory in healthy human adults.

**Maximum 2 students.**

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**Dr Steve Loughnan**

Office: UF40 (7GS)

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Research interests
The psychology of attributing humanity and moral concern to people (dehumanization, objectification) and to animals (anthropomorphism). The psychological impact of inequality and scarcity.

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**Dr Michelle Luciano**

Office: S26 (7GS)

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Web: http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/michelle-luciano

Research interests
I study the genetic (quantitative and molecular) and environmental determinants of behaviour, e.g., cognitive ability, personality, mood, and well-being. My research utilises established population based cohorts where data are already available, so you will be expected to undertake more complex statistical analysis in lieu of data collection. However, I am happy to supervise students’ own projects (including data collection) in any area of differential psychology.
Topics
- Reading and language skill
- Personality
- Wellbeing
- Mendelian randomization to infer causality
- Polygenic prediction

Dr Sarah MacPherson
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Principal Research Grouping
Human Cognitive Neuroscience and Centre for Cognitive Ageing & Cognitive Epidemiology

Research interests
My research interests are the assessment and understanding of frontal lobe functions such as memory, executive abilities and social cognition and how they are affected by healthy adult ageing and brain damage. I am happy to discuss the supervision of other potential projects related to my research, in addition to the topics below.

Topics
- Factors influencing source memory performance in healthy ageing.
- The examination of semantic and acoustic verbal fluency data in healthy ageing.
- Understanding cognitive estimation performance in aging.
- The influence of rewards on performance on frontal executive tests.
- The ecological validity of social cognition assessment in healthy aging?
- The assessment of multitasking abilities in healthy adult aging.

Dr Rob McIntosh
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Web: https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/robert-mcintosh

Project
- Neurological and sensorimotor bases of the experience of weight in lifting

When we lift objects, we experience their weight, based on kinaesthetic feedback from the hand and arm. But we also have illusory weight experiences, influenced by the sensory cues available before lifting. For instance, small-volume objects are
judged heavier than larger-volume objects of equal weight (size-weight illusion), and an object is judged heavier if its surface appearance makes it seem to be made of a less dense material (material-weight illusion). These counter-intuitive illusions suggest that the predictions that we make (unconsciously) about an object’s weight have a powerful influence on our conscious experience during lifting.

Where in the brain are these predictions generated? To address this question, we have recently tested patient DF, a 62 year-old woman with profound problems of visual object recognition following damage to occipito-temporal visual areas. DF is one of the most famous cases in all of Cognitive Neuroscience. Our data suggest that DF experiences neither the size-weight illusion nor the material-weight illusion, when given sight of the objects prior to lifting; but she does show a robust size-weight illusion when she is allowed to explore them by touch. This pattern, if reliable, has important implications for understanding weight perception. But, in order to test whether the pattern is robust and meaningful, we need to compare DF statistically against sufficiently large samples of healthy individuals performing the same tasks.

This project will use size-weight and material-weight illusions to characterise lifting behaviour and weight perception under different sensory cue conditions, and to provide normative data for statistical comparison against patient DF; there may be an opportunity for further data collection in DF herself. The project will involve motion tracking and force measurement, detailed analysis of these kinematic data, and specialised case-control statistics for testing neuropsychological dissociations. Full training will be provided in all methods.

Starter references


Collaborator: Dr Gavin Buckingham, University of Exeter.

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**Dr Adam Moore**

Office: S32 (7GS)

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Web: [https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/adam-moore](https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/adam-moore)

Principal Research Grouping
Human Cognitive Neuroscience

Research interests
- Moral judgement, particularly the cognitive mechanisms that underpin this; the psychology of corruption
- Motivation and the desire for power; influence of individual differences in desire for power on decision making
• Logical reasoning; mental models and probability heuristics models of reasoning

I am also happy to discuss any ideas related to my research or research interests.

Dr Alexa Morcom

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Research interests
My research focuses on the cognitive neuroscience of human memory: basic mechanisms, and how memory changes as we age. We use behavioural as well as neuroimaging methods, both event-related potentials (ERPs) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI).

Episodic memory involves conscious long-term memory for specific events. It is one of the mental abilities most affected by ageing. Events are less likely to be recollected in detail, and memory errors are more likely. It is currently unknown to what degree these memory difficulties can be explained by failures of memory control, for example in memory search, and to what degree they reflect basic difficulties distinguishing in memory between similar events.

Two projects are available this year. One (EEG/ERPs) involves memory control and ageing, and the other two involve memory control in young adults (fMRI). Both are part of the same wider project for which the most relevant single reference is (Morcom, 2016). These projects are technically demanding, and both require work to start before the summer, the fMRI project in particular. There is lots of room for students to input into the research, though less so at the design stage than in some projects. You will be encouraged to work independently as well as being given hands-on training in data acquisition and analysis. You will interact with others in the lab and gain advanced technical skills and high-level knowledge of memory research.

Topics

• Using ERPs to study proactive memory control

This project is suitable for TWO students working together. Older people’s memory difficulties are thought to be due at least in part to problems with memory control due to loss of integrity of the prefrontal cortex [see (Morcom, 2016) for review, and (Luo & Craik, 2008) for background on memory and ageing]. Older people show impairments in proactive mental control functions which are critical for the regulation of behaviour in the absence of external prompts. We are investigating whether these impairments contribute to episodic memory decline (Keating et al., 2017; Morcom, 2016).

Although recollection is often triggered by cues in the world around us, people also strategically ‘self-cue’ memory to influence what is brought to mind. These processes are difficult to study, since behavioural measures of memory judgments do not
distinguish the different stages operating prior to (and after) successful retrieval [see (Morcom, 2016)]. You will use electroencephalographic event-related potentials (ERPs) to investigate how young and older adults prepare to retrieve specific information from memory. This is related to work by 2014-15’s MSc students (Keating et al., 2017) and by 2016-17’s students [in preparation – please ask]. The practical starting point is the paradigm used by (Herron & Wilding, 2006).

References


- **Getting ready to remember: an fMRI study**

This will be a challenging project, including experience of detailed task design for fMRI, behavioural design and piloting, and fMRI data collection and analysis. It is suitable for ONE exceptionally motivated student with strong programming and statistical skills. Experience with cognitive neuroscience methods or memory research would also be an advantage but specific fMRI experience is not expected, and full training will be given.

This project delves into more detail about how people self-cue memory (see project A). It will involve fMRI data collection and preliminary analysis to test a specific hypothesis to be agreed with the student, within an already-determined design. The study will take place at the new scanner at Little France’s Brain Research Imaging Centre (BRIC2) which opened this year: [http://www.ed.ac.uk/clinical-sciences/edinburgh-imaging/research/research-facilities/brain-research-imaging-centre](http://www.ed.ac.uk/clinical-sciences/edinburgh-imaging/research/research-facilities/brain-research-imaging-centre).

Recollection is highly dependent on cues, and is thought to occur when the processing of a cue overlaps sufficiently with the stored information about an event. This close interrelationship between encoding and retrieval is proposed by long-established theoretical principles of episodic memory (see Morcom, 2016) for a brief review). These principles are now being put to the test using functional imaging to measure brain activity during successful memory retrieval, separating this from the processing of the cues themselves. This study is a pilot for future planned work investigating cognitive ageing using fMRI.

fMRI allow us to study recollection by measuring the associated reinstatement of patterns of cortical activity present during the original events. Reinstatement is
thought to be the neural basis of recollection, allowing people to ‘relive the past’ (Danker & Anderson, 2010). The paradigm we will use is based partly on a study by our collaborator Henson, which detected reinstatement of activity specific to individual events (Staresina, Henson, Kriegeskorte, & Alink, 2012). The stimuli involved scene images, and the reinstatement was found in parahippocampal cortex, in the medial temporal lobes, which is specialised for scene processing. In this project you will be able to examine reinstatement in a similar task. We will also ask whether reinstatement occurs before recollection, in response to memory cues, building on earlier work by (McDuff, Frankel, & Norman, 2009)***.

References


***Note: these studies use multivariate pattern analysis methods which you would not be required to learn for the MSc project.

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Dr René Mõttus

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Research interests
I am interested in individual differences, mostly on the personality side.

Topics
- Within-individual variability of personality (within-days fluctuations and their relations with situational experiences; studies using mobile phones)
- Personality and the prediction of life-outcomes
Dr Eva Murzyn
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Principal Research Grouping
Social Psychology

Research interests
I’m interested in how people play video games. Potential topic areas include individual differences in personality and game play, moral choices in games, and collaboration and competition in multiplayer games. I use both quantitative approaches (questionnaire and experimental methods) and Thematic Analysis.

Topics
- Toxic and collaborative behaviours in MMO and MOBA games
- Individual predictors of moral choices in video games
- E-sports performance
- Serious and educational games

Prof Martin Pickering
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Principal Research Grouping
Language Cognition and Communication

Research interests
I am interested in language production, comprehension, dialogue, bilingualism, and reading. At the moment, I am particularly interested in studying interactive language as a form of "joint action" (whereby the use of prediction and covert imitation appears to make "smooth" dialogue possible), and in the question of whether interlocutors represent their partners' utterances in the same format as their own. However, I am also interested in "traditional" psycholinguistic questions, particularly as relating to syntax, semantics, and discourse.

Topics
- Joint production of utterances
- Structural priming and language production
- Language switching in bilinguals
Dr Hugh Rabagliati

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Principal Research Grouping
Developmental Science; Language Cognition and Communication

Research interests
I study language acquisition and conceptual development, and have a side interest in the relationship between language and attention / awareness. Current projects focus on the role of linguistic prediction in language development, on word learning, on the psycholinguistics of language production in young children, and (in adults) on the relationship between language and consciousness. I am also particularly interested in meta-science, and would be happy to supervise meta-analyses on important topics in cognitive development.

Dr Sinéad Rhodes

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Research interests
Neurodevelopmental disorders especially ADHD, autism, Williams syndrome, interventions in ADHD, executive functions and memory in developmental disorders, social cognition in ADHD, autobiographical memory and depression, cognitive predictors of maths and literacy.

I have three specific topics available for suitable candidates in 2017/18:
- Memory decay in children with ADHD
- Cognitive factors associated with reading comprehension difficulties in ASD
- Cognitive factors underlying depression in adolescents with ASD

Dr Richard Shillcock

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Principal Research Grouping
Language, Cognition and Communication
Research interests
My research interests involve experimental and modelling
approaches to understanding normal and impaired isolated word recognition and
binocular reading of text; hemispheric interaction; philosophical issues in cognitive
modelling and theory construction; the mental lexicon.

Projects

• **Connectionist modelling of scene perception phenomena**

How do we know where to look in a scene? Psychologists have studied this question
using paradigms such as eye-tracking and change-blindness. They have theorized
about what aspects of the task and of the visual stimuli affect where the eyes move to
in a scene. We will use a new approach based on a deep hemispheric principle of the
brain, in conjunction with an existing simulator. The student will assemble stimulus
materials from a variety of sources and test them with the simulator and draw
theoretical conclusions.

Some facility with operating systems and programming languages would be useful.
The particular computational framework used will be Caffe:
[http://caffe.berkeleyvision.org](http://caffe.berkeleyvision.org)

A flavour of the work being done on saliency in scenes can had from this website:
[http://saliency.mit.edu/results_mit300.html](http://saliency.mit.edu/results_mit300.html)

More information is available on request.

• **Analysis of an existing eye-movement database**

We will analyse a novel aspect of a very large database of binocular eye-movements
in reading in English, Chinese, Arabic, Hebrew or Spanish, or in English-dyslexic. Some
facility with R would be desirable. The first reference below is an example of our
theorizing within this domain (but the project would not be at this level). The second
reference gives the flavour of some of the effects that amy be apparent in the
dyslexics’ data.

reading. Attention, Perception & Psychophysics. 72 (8), 2184-2203.

[http://www.research.ed.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/characterizing-binocular-
eyemovements-in-reading-in-esotropic-duanes-syndrome(3006431c-e924-49e0-aff5-ac55ef8de070).html](http://www.research.ed.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/characterizing-binocular-
eyemovements-in-reading-in-esotropic-duanes-syndrome(3006431c-e924-49e0-aff5-ac55ef8de070).html)

• **Artificial Grammar Learning**

We will employ a new means of presenting AGL stimuli to reinforce a new
hemisphere-based interpretation of what is going on in AGL. An in-preparation paper
is available on request.
I am happy to talk about students’ individual ideas for projects within the field of eye-tracking or visual word identification.

Dr Sarah Stanton
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Web: http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/sarah-stanton

Research interests
I use a social psychological approach to understand the cognitive and affective aspects of close relationships and their effects on behaviour, physiology, and health and well-being. I am particularly interested in how promoting positive relationship experiences benefits close others immediately and over time. My expertise lies in a theoretically-driven, dyadic, multi-method approach to studying close relationship dynamics.

Topics
• Close relationships and health/well-being
• Enhancing attachment security and responsiveness within relationships
• Affective processes within relationships
• Bias and accuracy in partner judgments

Dr Patrick Sturt
Office: G29 (7GS)
Email: Patrick.Sturt@ed.ac.uk
Web: https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/patrick-sturt

Principal Research Grouping
Language, Cognition and Communication

Research interests
I am interested in the moment-by-moment processes by which people assign meanings to sentences during language comprehension. More generally, I am interested in how people infer a hierarchical structure from linear or sequential perceptual input in linguistic and non-linguistic domains (e.g. in processing linguistic sentences, mathematical formulae, musical phrases, etc). At a more abstract level, I am also interested in the nature of the mental representation of hierarchical structure in language and other domains.

Projects
• Eye-tracking of mathematical expressions: Mathematical Garden Paths
• Incrementality and structural representations in mathematics and language

I am also happy to supervise any other project that falls within my area of expertise,
and which I judge to be realistic for an MSc project. Topics could include; the time-course of dependency formation in sentence processing; processing of pronouns and anaphora; processing of non-linguistic structural information; etc. If you have ideas for projects, please come to discuss them with me.

Prof Caroline Watt

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Email: Caroline.Watt@ed.ac.uk
Web: https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/caroline-watt and https://koestlerunit.wordpress.com/

Research interests
Methodological and replication issues in parapsychology, testing claimed role of altered states of consciousness in extrasensory perception (ESP) task performance, the psychology of paranormal beliefs and experiences.

Topics
- Testing hypothesised ESP abilities using the ganzfeld method
- Individual differences in controlled lab ESP task performance
- The role of perceived childhood control in the development of paranormal beliefs

Dr Alex Weiss

Office: B18 (7GS)

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Web: http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/alexander-weiss

Principal Research Grouping
Differential Psychology

Research interests
Broadly speaking, I am interested in personality and subjective well-being. I study these via several techniques, especially those that lend themselves to answering evolutionary questions. These include studying these traits in other species (especially nonhuman primates); behaviour genetic studies; and examining relationships between personality and outcomes, including mortality, aging, and depression. I believe more powerful and convincing studies are those that use multiple approaches. I am also interested in multivariate statistical analysis, including factor analysis, structural equation modelling, growth curve analysis, and survival analysis.

Topics
I am willing to supervise students interested in a broad range of questions related to personality evolution.
Dr Sue Widdicombe

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Web: https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/sue-widdicombe

Principal Research Grouping
Language Cognition and Communication

Research interests
I am interested in self and identities, interaction, culture, discursive psychology and conversation analysis, and interviews as interaction.

Projects
I am willing to supervise projects related to any of the topics above (e.g. particular identities, how they are constructed and used as resources in and for interaction); or projects designed to show how some particular business (of making decisions, formulating clients’ problems, developing relationships) gets done through interaction (e.g. in meetings, therapy, internet interaction). I am happy to supervise projects that take a discursive psychological approach to youth culture, culture and self, national or religious identities, or self-descriptions. I also have an interest in research interactions and knowledge production, including interviews as a vehicle for social scientific research.

Dr Maria Wolters

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Web: https://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/people/staff/Maria_Wolters.html

Principal Research Grouping: Informatics / Human Cognitive Neuroscience (for Psychology)

Research Interests
My main research goal is to investigate how technology can support people with chronic illness in living rich and meaningful lives.

Topics:
- Computational modelling of semantic and phonemic fluency data
- Technology as a cognitive prosthesis - techniques for helping people remember tasks, facts, and words
- Cognitive aspects of the usability of computer systems
- The effect of depressive states and dysphoria on people’s interaction with technology or social media

You can find more information about how I supervise
here: http://mariawolters.net/teaching/prospective-students/
Dr Peter Ackema

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Web: https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/peter-ackema

Research interests
Theoretical syntax and morphology

Topics
Happy to supervise any project within my research area, which broadly speaking is theoretical syntax and morphology. I am especially interested in topics that concern the interaction between these two modules of grammar (such as agreement, incorporation, correlations between the inflectional make-up of a language and its syntactic behaviour, lexical integrity effects, phrasal derivation) but any topic that concerns syntax or the 'syntactic side' of morphology is suitable. A lot of my own work is focused on Germanic languages, but I'm certainly happy to supervise topics on other languages as well.

Dr Rhona Alcorn

Office: 2.13 (DSB)

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Research interests
Middle English linguistics, older Scots linguistics, historical dialectology, the relationship between sounds and spelling, spelling systems in general.

Prof Ronnie Cann

Office: 2.10 (DSB)

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Research interests
Formal semantics and syntax; the interaction of semantics, pragmatics and syntax; dynamic and non-transformational models of grammar; cognitive and model-theoretic semantics; historical morpho-syntax.
Topics
- The syntax, semantics and/or pragmatics of case-marking
- Syntax and semantics of prepositional and other adjuncts
- Vagueness and context dependence of word and sentence meaning

Dr Vicky Chondrogianni
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Email: V.Chongrogianni@ed.ac.uk
Web: https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/vicky-chondrogianni

Research interests
First and second language acquisition of morphosyntactic phenomena; child bilingualism; language and cognitive development in bilingual children; children with developmental language disorders; sentence processing in bilinguals.

Topics
I am happy to supervise topics related to language and cognitive development in bilingual children and in children with developmental language disorders, as well as to sentence processing of morphosyntactic phenomena (e.g. subject-verb agreement, tense, articles, pronouns, wh-questions, relative clauses) in bilingual children.

Dr Chris Cummins
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Web: https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/chris-cummins

Research interests
I’m interested in how we understand and successfully convey meaning in context, and attempt to address this using psycholinguistic methods. I work on topics including implicature, presupposition, quantity information, and the structure of conversation.

Topics
I’d be happy to supervise on topics in the areas mentioned above.

Dr Christine Cuskley
Office: 1.16 (DSB)
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Web: http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/christine-cuskley
Topics
- The emergence and dynamics of linguistic rules
- The relationship between lexical and morphological stability and frequency
- The role of interaction in grounding and establishing a communication system
- The relationship between population (social and demographic) structure and linguistic structure / language change
- The role of iconicity and systematicity in language learnability, acquisition, and evolution
- The potential for shared sensory biases to underlie sound symbolism and contribute to lexical structure

Dr Joseph Gafaranga
Office: 3.05 (DSB)
Email: J.Gafaranga@ed.ac.uk
Web: https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/joseph-gafaranga

Research interests
Discourse and Conversation Analysis (theoretical and applied); Bilingualism (sociolinguistic and interactional dimensions).

Topics
I am happy to supervise any topics in the above areas of interest.

Prof Nik Gisborne
Office: 2.03 (DSB)
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Web: https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/nikolas-gisborne

Research interests
Dependency theory; English syntax; lexical semantics; syntactic change and grammaticalization.

Topics
Happy to supervise in Syntax, Semantics, Syntactic Change; Grammaticalization and World Englishes.
Dr Lauren Hall-Lew

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Web: http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/lauren-hall-lew

Research interests  
Sociolinguistics; phonetic variation and change in English

Topics  
• Sociolinguistics

Prof Caroline Heycock

Office: 2.10a (DSB)

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Web: https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/caroline-heycock

Research interests  
Syntax; the syntax of Germanic languages, particularly Faroese; the syntax of copular constructions; syntactic variation and change.

Topics  
Anything that falls within my research interests. I am also always happy to co-supervise with another member of staff with complementary interests / expertise.

Dr Patrick Honeybone

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Web: https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/patrick-honeybone

Research interests  
Historical Phonology, Phonological Variation, Phonological Theory and Northern Englishes.

Topics  
• Phonological theory  
• Historical phonology  
• The phonology of English: structural, dialectological and / or historical issues  
• English in the North of England  
• Variation and dialectology
Dr Pavel Iosad

Office: 3.08 (DSB)

Email: Pavel.Iosad@ed.ac.uk
Web: https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/pavel-iosad

Research interests
Phonological theory, in particular featural structure, the phonology-phonetics interface and historical phonology. I am also interested in various topics in historical linguistics and historical dialectology.

Topics
- Categorical vs. gradient patterns in phonology
- Phonological analysis, with particular reference to feature theory
- Historical phonology, including phonological reconstruction
- Using evidence from variation (e.g. dialect variation) to address diachronic issues
- Using evidence from 'traditional' sources (e.g. dialect descriptions, dialect surveys) to address any of the above questions.

My own work is focused on Celtic and Scandinavian languages, so I welcome any projects related to these. I have also worked on Romance and Slavic varieties; in general I am happy to work with any languages you suggest.

Prof John Joseph

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Web: http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/john-e-joseph

Research interests
Language and identities; language and politics; history of linguistics and semiotics.

Topics
Available to discuss with students whatever topics in the above areas they may wish to carry out.

Prof Simon King

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Web: http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/simon-kings

Research interests
Speech synthesis and automatic speech recognition.
Topics

- Speech synthesis for low resource languages or domains, especially using unsupervised machine learning
- Speech synthesis of audiobooks
- Speech processing to improve the intelligibility of speech, including for hearing aid users
- Measuring cognitive load / listening effort for synthetic speech
- Automatic detection of synthetic vs. natural speech
- Any other topic in speech synthesis, including both unit selection and statistical parametric methods

Dr Warren Maguire

Office: 3.07 (DSB)

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Web: https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/warren-maguire

Research interests
Dialectology, varieties of English/Scots, phonetic and phonological variation and change

Prof Geoffrey Pullum

Office: 2.23 (DSB)

Email: Geoffrey.Pullum@ed.ac.uk
Web: https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/geoffrey-k-pullum

Research interests
General issues in syntactic theory; the grammar of Standard English; the philosophy of linguistics.

Topics
Happy to supervise any project within my competence, subject to agreement with the student concerned.
**Dr Michael Ramsammy**

Office: 3.03 (DSB)

Email: M.Ramsammy@ed.ac.uk
Web: [http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/michael-ramsammy](http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/michael-ramsammy)

Topics
Laboratory and theoretical approaches to phonology, experimental phonetics, sociophonetics, sign-language linguistics (BSL), language change/historical phonology in Romance or Germanic languages, Caribbean Creoles.

**Dr Hannah Rohde**

Office: 2.06 (DSB)

Email: Hannah.Rohde@ed.ac.uk
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Research interests
Pragmatic and psycholinguistics.

Topics
Happy to supervise topics related to psycholinguistic approaches to questions in pragmatics. Particularly relevant are topics in the establishment of discourse coherence, the contextual cues that guide ambiguity resolution, the role of expectations in processing, and the interpretation and production of referring expressions. Current research includes open projects on deception, implicature, pronoun interpretation, event structure, information structure, reference expectations driven by Chinese classifiers, and individual differences in the understanding of common ground, among others. Methods might include visual-world eye-tracking, reading time, story continuations, and dialogue games.

**Prof Kenny Smith**

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Web: [http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/kenny-smith](http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/kenny-smith)

Research interests
I am interested in the evolution of communication, human language, and the human capacity for language. I use computational models and experiments with human participants to investigate these questions, simulating (in the computer or in the lab) the processes of language learning, language transmission, and communicative interaction. I’d be interested in supervising dissertations involving these techniques individually (e.g. looking at language learning or language use during communication).
or in combination (e.g. how do languages evolve as a result of their learning and use). I can suggest specific research questions and experiments.

Prof Antonella Sorace

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Research interests
Language development in child and adult bilinguals; bilingualism and general cognition; gradience at the lexicon-syntax interface. I direct the research and information centre Bilingualism Matters (www.bilingualism-matters.ppls.ed.ac.uk).

Topics
I would be interested in supervising dissertations (by myself or in collaborations with colleagues in LEL or Psychology) on the following areas / topics:

- **Early (child) bilingualism**
  
  Age effects in child bilingualism. Interactions of age of onset and type of input exposure. Interface conditions on syntactic realization, especially at the syntax-pragmatics interface (e.g. anaphoric forms) and at the syntax-lexicon interface (e.g. intransitive verbs and unaccusativity).

- **Late (adult) bilingualism**
  
  Limits of adult L2 ultimate attainment; linguistic and cognitive characteristics of very advanced (near-native) L2 speakers. Language and processing in late bilinguals. Effects of L2 on L1; comparison of advanced L2 acquisition and individual L1 attrition; L1 attrition in first and second-generation speakers.

- **Language and general cognition in early and late bilingualism**
  
  Is there a ‘bilingual advantage’ for general cognition in late bilinguals? Effects of bilingualism vs. multilingualism on general cognition. Bilingualism in minority languages. Bimodal (signed + spoken language) vs. unimodal bilinguals.

I also have a number of collaborative projects with researchers in Europe and in the US on various aspects of bilingualism. If you are interested in linking your dissertation to one of these projects, I will provide more details.
Dr Graeme Trousdale

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Topics
- Constructional approaches to language variation and change
- Morphosyntactic variation and change in British English dialects

Dr Rob Truswell

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Email: Rob.Truswell@ac.uk
Web: http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/robert-truswell

Research interests
Syntax, semantics, linguistic interfaces, syntactic change, language evolution, history of English.

Topics
I am happy to discuss topics in any of the above areas, but currently particularly interested in:

- the relationship between language change and language typology
- event structure
- syntax and semantics of relative clauses
- syntax and semantics of pronouns and binding
- quantifier scope
- corpus-based analysis of grammar change

Prof Alice Turk

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Email: A.Turk@ed.ac.uk
Web: https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/alice-turk

Research interests
Phonetics: Speech production, speech perception; prosodic structure; timing.

Topics
I am happy to discuss topics in any of the above areas, but currently particularly interested in:
- Explaining patterns of systematic variability in speech
- The relationship between prosodic structure and contextual predictability
- Are speech articulations coordinated temporally or spatially?
- Timing variability in speech movements as evidence for phonological representations and theories of speech motor control
- The possible role of periodicity in speech motor control

Dr Linda Van Bergen

Office: 3.02 (DSB)

Email: L.VanBergen@ac.uk
Web: http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/linda-van-bergen

Research interests
English historical syntax (especially word order and negation), old and middle English language

Topics
I am happy to supervise most topics that focus on an aspect of the history of the English language.

Dr Maria Wolters

Office: 4.32a (IF)

Email: Maria.Wolters@ac.uk
Web: https://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/people/staff/Maria_Wolters.html

Principal Research Grouping: Informatics / Human Cognitive Neuroscience (for Psychology)

Research Interests
My main research goal is to investigate how technology can support people with chronic illness in living rich and meaningful lives.

Topics:
- Discourses of health, illness, and wellbeing on social media
- Pragmatics of human-computer interaction
- Attitudes towards spoken dialogue systems and synthetic speech (naturalness, perceived personality, perceived interpersonal skills)
- The effect of the language used in user interfaces on the way L2 English speakers of different ability levels and backgrounds interact with technology

You can find more information about how I supervise here: http://mariawolters.net/teaching/prospective-students/