Quantifying Happiness

Want to know what makes people happy? Ask a happiness economist.

→ Economics professor Faress Bhuiyan studies the effects of relative consumption on happiness, which he explains as "the idea that I'll be satisfied with one apple if others have none, but I'd probably feel deprived with one apple if everybody else has two."

Here's what he learned from his research about what makes us happier and what doesn't:

+ Good health
+ Religion
+ Marriage
+ Traveling
+ Charitable giving
+ Equitable income (having as much money as your peers have)
+ Trust in your government
+ Sense of self-determination

− Winning the lottery
− Being rich
− Buying cars, jewelry, and other material goods

FARESS BHUIYAN IS AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS.

National Treasures

Expand your worldview by studying other cultures.

➜ Religion professor Michael McNally teaches his students about Native American religious traditions, but he also wants them to get out of the classroom and learn directly from the people who practice those traditions. Students have visited the American Indian Center in Minneapolis and the White Earth Reservation in northwestern Minnesota to work on projects alongside members of indigenous communities.

McNally's students helped the White Earth Nation of Ojibwe compile a report on the importance of wild rice to their community, which was submitted to the United Nations as part of its formal review process to track instances of racial inequality worldwide. His students also research threatened Native American sacred sites in their home states, including Minnesota's own Little Cedar Spirit Tree on Lake Superior.

In order to use original sources for a dissertation on American Christian missions, McNally set out to learn the Ojibwe language. He found Ojibwe traditions so compelling that he abandoned his original project and became a scholar of Native American religions instead. "I hope that my students are transformed in some way, as I have been," he says. "I want them to be able to think about the world differently."

MICHAEL MCNALLY IS A PROFESSOR OF RELIGION. HE IS ALSO A 1985 CARLETON GRADUATE.

Your Mind at Work

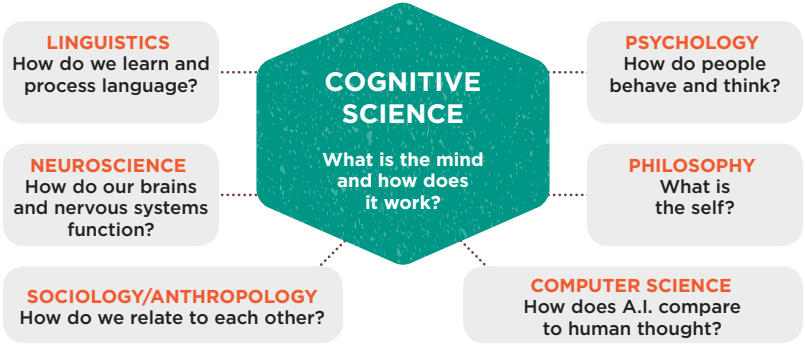
There's more than one way to study a brain.

➜ A psychologist, a neurobiologist, and a computer scientist walk into a bar . . . or maybe it is a university dining hall. But together they advance a new discipline—cognitive science—into American academia.

As a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania, Kathie Galotti was among the first people to study the intersection of psychology and computer science. Now, Galotti researches how people make decisions in real-life scenarios—rather than relying on the theoretical and simulated thought exercises psychologists traditionally favor. She's even collected and analyzed data on the processes students use to select a college, and how they go on to choose a major.

KATHIE GALOTTI IS A PROFESSOR OF COGNITIVE SCIENCE.

The components of cognitive science



Plays Well with Others

Think of jazz as democracy in action.

➜ "A jazz piece will only succeed if all the musicians are collaborating and cooperating," says music lecturer Laura Caviani. "Everyone gets to have a say."

Members of a jazz ensemble play improvised solos in the middle of a piece, but when it's not their turn they're focused on helping the performing soloist—or the group as a whole—sound good. Communication is essential, because by tradition a jazz group doesn't have a conductor to steer them through the music.

Caviani believes it's just as important to help students work well together as it is to foster their personal musical style. Even students who take private lessons have a chance to learn from one another when they perform and discuss their pieces at joint weekly sessions.

"The highlight of my teaching is when students inspire each other," says Caviani. "My job is to empower them to run the band themselves."

LAURA CAVIANI IS A SENIOR LECTURER IN JAZZ PIANO AND DIRECTOR OF THE JAZZ PROGRAM.


INK
DICTIONARY

Redefining Brit Lit

Would you rather read a book about a place or travel there yourself?

➜ At Carleton, you can do both. Every year the English department sponsors a term-long program in London, where students explore the city and its vast literary traditions.

English professor Arnab Chakladar shows students that literary London goes far beyond the quintessential Dickens and Woolf. “London is a postcolonial city,” he says, which is why he assigns works written by immigrants and their descendants: “Writers like Salman Rushdie and Zadie Smith have reshaped our conception of English identity and literature.”

Not ready to pack your bags just yet? Register instead for the postcolonial literature seminar he teaches on campus in Northfield. Or indulge your inner Indiana Jones in his “Imperial Adventures” class with what Chakladar calls “trashy adventure books” from the late 19th century.

RECOMMENDED READING

Brick Lane
Monica Ali

The Buddha of Suburbia
Hanif Kureishi

The Insidious Dr. Fu Manchu
Sax Rohmer

The Lonely Londoners
Sam Selvon

Small Island
Andrea Levy

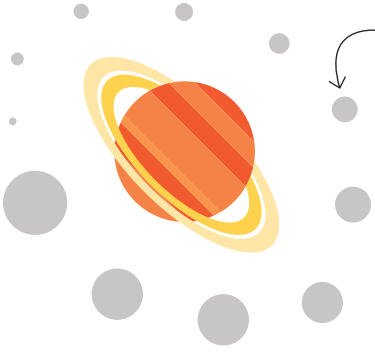
White Teeth
Zadie Smith

ARNAB CHAKLADAR IS AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH.

Water Worlds

Astrobiology takes a deep dive into the search for extraterrestrial life.

➜ Astrobiologist Rika Anderson works with astronomers to combine her oceanic research with their observations to try to figure out which celestial bodies could potentially host life.



CASE IN POINT: ENCELADUS

Saturn's sixth-largest moon

Covered in ice

Geysers spew water vapor into space, forming one of Saturn's rings

"Many of us think life on Earth originated near deep-sea hydrothermal vents like the ones I study," says Anderson. "So if Enceladus's geysers come from a subsurface ocean of liquid water, the ingredients for life could be there. We don't know yet—we're still learning about it.

"Even if we never find life somewhere else, thinking about it helps my students tackle fundamental questions about what life is," says Anderson.

RIKA ANDERSON IS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF BIOLOGY. SHE IS ALSO A 2006 CARLETON GRADUATE.


URGENTE

Letters as Literature

You can learn a lot from old letters.

➜ When's the last time you got a letter? Not an email, a text, or a tweet, but a handwritten letter in a stamped envelope that traveled some distance to reach you.

"By teaching a course on epistolary writing, I'm introducing students to a temporal world that is not theirs," says Spanish professor Silvia L. López. Her students read 20th-century letters that have been translated into Spanish—from political prisoners to their allies, between lovers, or among poets living in different countries—and discuss how to apply literary theory to this unique form of writing.

"The letter is, to some degree, an unstable object," says López. "It must traverse time and space to be read, and it may become lost or be intercepted. And it's always incomplete, because it's waiting for an answer.

"From ideas of self-representation to the physical act of putting one's hand to paper to write something personal, there are many topics that we can consider through letters. My students get excited about that."

SILVIA L. LÓPEZ IS A PROFESSOR OF SPANISH.

Ask the Statisticians

Take math out of the classroom and into the community.

➜ "Getting the right number is important," says statistics professor Katie St. Clair, "but I focus on how to use the right number in the right argument." Math is only part of the equation. Students in St. Clair's "Statistics Consulting" course also learn how to explain the numbers to decision makers who want to use them.

For example, St. Clair's students have helped school administrators in Carleton's hometown of Northfield assess how well students who learn English as a second language are doing academically compared to their native-speaking peers. Another team worked with researchers from the University of Minnesota to estimate zebra mussel populations in local lakes.

A third student research group got a taste of local government by working on a civic project titled "Creating an Age-Friendly Northfield." "The students analyzed the results of a survey on the experiences of older people in our community and presented their report to the mayor and the city council," says St. Clair. "Other cities have hired professional consultants to do this sort of work, but our students did a great job."

KATIE ST. CLAIR IS AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS AND STATISTICS.

Go Glocal

Picture a park or an open field near your home. What do you actually know about that place?

➜ "You probably have a strong connection to places around your home, but you might not have associated what's happening locally with global events," says environmental studies and political science professor Kim Smith. "That's what we do in environmental studies. We take a *glocal* approach—both global and local."

Smith teaches students how to find broader meaning in landscapes by using as a case study one of Carleton's most cherished places: the 800-acre Cowling Arboretum.

KIM SMITH IS A PROFESSOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AND POLITICAL SCIENCE.

HISTORY
What happened here in the past?

SOCIOLOGY
How do people interact with this land?

BIOLOGY
Where do different plants and animals live?

CLIMATE SCIENCE
How might climate shifts affect this place?

ANTHROPOLOGY
Could human migration patterns affect this land?

LAND MANAGEMENT
What effects could nearby agriculture or pest control have?

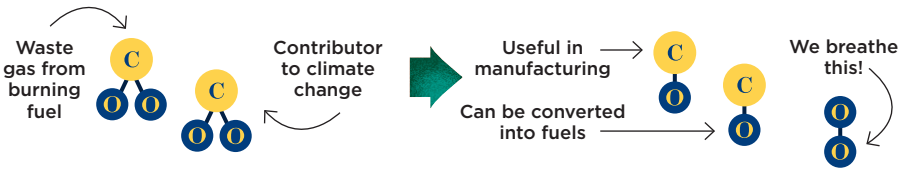
ETHICS
Are there right and wrong ways to use this land? What is its value?

RAISE YOUR HAND.
ASK US A QUESTION:
admissions@carleton.edu

carleton.edu/explore

Molecule Mash-Up

How can we make carbon dioxide more useful?
Turn it into carbon monoxide and oxygen.

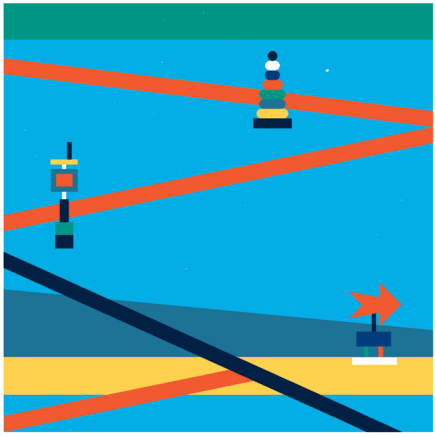


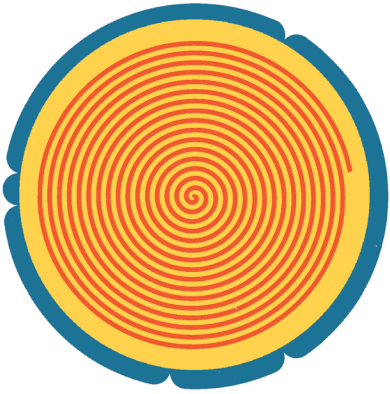
➜ Looks simple, right? But carbon-oxygen bonds are incredibly strong. So chemistry professor Matt Whited and his students invented a rhodium complex that would shake those stubborn oxygen atoms loose via a chemical reaction.

“We sketched out the new material we wanted to make and then asked ourselves, ‘How can we deconstruct this into molecules that we already have available or could easily make?’ ” says Whited.

Now Whited and his students are considering how to convert the carbon monoxide they’ve created into methanol, meaning that one day our carbon dioxide emissions could become race car fuel.

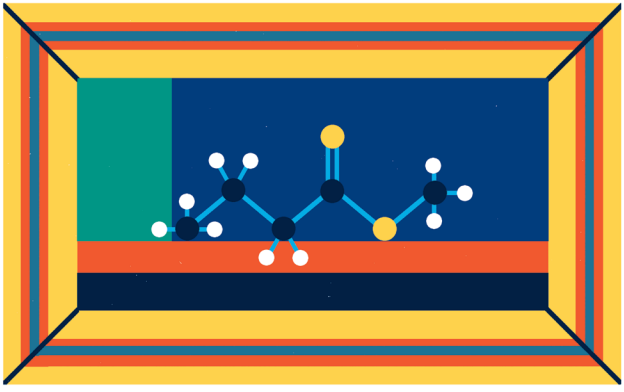
MATT WHITED IS AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY.






CONTEMPLATIVE DISTANCE


GO!



Art Can Be Anything

What will you make?

➜ Art professor David Lefkowitz majored in art because it seemed like the most interdisciplinary thing he could do. “As a 21st-century artist, you can choose any topic, research it, and find a way to respond to it through art,” he says. “And your art might inspire others to think about it too. Art is a great catalyst for conversation.”

Recently he’s been considering how the content of an image is affected by the technology used to create it. For example, how did the composition of early photographs compare to hand-drawn sketches of similar subjects? Or to selfies now?

Lefkowitz cautions his students not to be too seduced by technology. “I’m still a huge proponent of analog observation,” he says. “Drawing forces you to slow down and observe things in a way that you don’t have to when you just snap a picture on your phone.”

DAVID LEFKOWITZ IS A PROFESSOR OF ART. HE IS ALSO A 1985 CARLETON GRADUATE.


I MIGHT GO TO THE STORE
I MIGHT COULD GO TO THE STORE

If You Would Say It, It's Not Wrong

Where you live often influences how you speak.

→ "Linguists aren't interested in issuing grammar edicts," says linguistics professor Cherlon Ussery. "We explain how people actually speak and uncover the rules that speakers of any language are constantly accessing, usually unconsciously."

For example, which one of these phrases is correct?

A I might go to the store.

B I might could go to the store.

The answer is: it depends on whom you ask. Your English teacher would point you firmly toward answer A. But if you grew up speaking southern dialects of American English, answer B might be your first choice. This conundrum is one type of issue that linguistics students tackle. "By examining segments of various languages, my students discover that what some people call mistakes are actually predictable variations," says Ussery.

CHERLON USSERY IS AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF LINGUISTICS.