



# VITERBO UNIVERSITY

## PSYCHOLOGY

### Department Newsletter

2022

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## DEPARTMENT WELCOME

We were excited to return to a more typical academic year this fall, with more in-person classes and campus events and activities. The past two years have in some ways led to a new normal in higher education, such as more flexibility in our ability to provide content virtually. However, both our students and faculty value the discussions, collaborations, and connections that can take shape and grow in a classroom environment and are difficult to duplicate virtually. Our psychology students are a close-knit group and it has been a pleasure to get see them more often this year as they work together, navigate challenges, and socialize.

As always, we continue to be proud of our student and alumni accomplishments, including research projects, internships, and employment and graduate school placements. Recent alumni have been pursuing careers and graduate studies involving a variety of applications of psychology, including traditional psychology and counseling pathways and growing fields, such as industrial/organizational, forensic, and sport psychology. Now, more than ever, there is a great need in our society for professionals trained to think critically about human behavior and mental health to help find solutions to complicated problems and thorny issues. We are honored that our students play critical roles as the next generation of scholars, educators, practitioners, and lifelong learners.

Read on to hear more about the current happenings in the Psychology Department!

Sincerely,  
Psychology Department Faculty

## ADJUNCT FACULTY & ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



### Tara Allert, EdD, LPC, SACIT

Tara Allert is an alumna of Viterbo's three times over! She completed the B.S. in Substance Abuse Counseling (2016), M.S. in Mental Health Counseling (2018), and Ed.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision (2021). She is also an adjunct faculty in both the undergraduate psychology and graduate counseling programs.

**How long have you been teaching at Viterbo and what courses do you teach?** I have been teaching as an adjunct instructor since Summer 2020. I began teaching at the graduate level in the Master's of Science in Mental Health Counseling (MSMHC) Program. For MSMHC, I have taught Promoting Healthy Lifestyle Choice and Interventions and Integrated Health Care. At the undergraduate level, I have taught

Behavior Disorders for the psychology department

**What sparked your interest in teaching?** Working with really great mentors and professors. I love to connect with students and watch them grow. I work to be as approachable and supportive as possible because I know how vital of a role mentors played in my personal and professional growth. Teaching is an opportunity for me to step into that mentor role for others entering the field.

**What do you enjoy most about teaching at Viterbo?** I love that Viterbo offers small class sizes – it really allows me to better connect with all students. I also appreciate the support from colleagues as it has contributed significantly to my growth as an educator.

**Describe your current position as a professional counselor.** I am currently a school-based therapist (Licensed Professional Counselor – LPC) for Gundersen Health System. I work in the Student Family Assistance Program (SFAP) which is a partnership between Gundersen and the School

## ADJUNCT FACULTY & ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT (cont'd.)

District of La Crosse. I am the SFAP provider for the secondary level (all middle and high schools in La Crosse SD). We offer free short-term mental health support and interventions for district students and families. It is a fantastic opportunity for early intervention or to bridge to longer term support.

**What do you like most about your current position?** I can collaborate with students, families, educators, and a variety of community agencies to best support adolescent mental health. I am grateful to be a part of a program that supports the mental health needs of students and families in our community. I also continue to work as an adjunct instructor and love to see the growth of students over the course of a semester!

**Describe your path from Viterbo to your current position. What steps and career moves got you where you are today?** I applied to the MSMHC program at Viterbo prior to finishing my B.S. in substance abuse counseling because I knew I would need master's-level training to work most effectively as a counselor with individuals struggling with addiction. While in the master's program, I worked with local schools and community agencies. These connections and my work experience in various positions at La Crosse County Human Services influenced my career path, which included working as a therapist at a local private practice for about three years prior to moving into my current role. During this time, I also finished my doctoral studies and began as an adjunct instructor.

**What was the most beneficial thing you did as a student at Viterbo to prepare you for post-graduation?** I believe the most beneficial thing I did as an undergraduate, but even more so as a graduate student, was to find great mentors. I have had a handful of extremely influential mentors during my time at Viterbo, leading to many other opportunities and connections. I wish I had been more involved in campus activities or research as an undergraduate student, but I really leaned into that community and those opportunities in my graduate studies.

**What is your favorite memory from your time at Viterbo?** It is so difficult to pick one favorite memory; however, the best part of my undergraduate experience at Viterbo was most definitely the connections I made with mentors/professors as well as the lifelong friendships I made. I have a number of friends I still stay in touch with from my undergraduate days, and we have endless memories of our time together on campus. Although we are unable to get together often, when we do get together we always pick up right where we left off.

**What is something you do for fun (e.g. hobbies, interests beyond teaching)?** Some of my favorite things include hot yoga, coffee dates, plants, reading or listening to audiobooks, cooking, and baking. My husband and I also have three kiddos (Beckett, 12; Easton, 9; Ryne, 2). Some of our favorite things to do with our kids include going for bike rides, watching their youth sports, and playing board games.

**What advice can you give current or prospective Viterbo psychology students?** The best advice I can give current or prospective students is to get involved and stay connected! Viterbo's smaller class sizes really allows for great mentorship from professors. Connect with professors, peers, and campus groups. Reach out for support and ask to get connected to research and internship opportunities.

*"I have had extremely influential mentors during my time at Viterbo, leading to many other opportunities and connections."*



Wisconsin Counseling Association Conference, 2017, Madison, WI, with fellow Viterbo psychology and counseling students.



ACES (Association for Counselor Education and Supervision) Conference 2021, Atlanta, GA.

## Stephanie Thorson-Olesen

I conducted a research study with the help of psychology major Ahna Henrickson on Rural Substance Abuse Recovery through the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program. I also presented research at the 32nd International Congress of Psychology, the American Psychological Association National Convention, and the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision Conference. I was also elected Faculty Council Chair at Viterbo and was presented the David Van Doren Leadership and Service Award from the Wisconsin Counseling Association, a branch of the American Counseling Association.

## Michael Parker

This past year I expanded the scope of my research on the psychology of conspiracy theories. My collaborator and I have worked on writing a manuscript for publication, and more recently we were approved for two grants to fund additional experimental research in this area. We hope to test our hypotheses regarding the motivational pathways to adoption of conspiratorial beliefs, and exploratory analysis of the data will focus on predicting confidence in conspiratorial beliefs as well as moderator variables such as dogmatism and authoritarianism.

## David Saunders-Scott

I was on sabbatical during the Fall 2021 semester. During my sabbatical, I developed a research project and a new course on the *Psychology of Race, Othering, and Belonging*. My research will explore students' experience of belonging at Viterbo and the extent to which their experience of belonging is associated with college success. I also hope to learn from students, who may have a low experience of belonging, their opinion of the factors that might improve their experience of belonging at Viterbo. Through a multidisciplinary lens, the course will explore the invention of race. Through the lens of psychology, the course will explore how the invention of race leads to othering, and it will use psychological concepts/theories to explore ideas to create communities of belonging.

## Liza Ware

I taught a summer course on Applied Psychology and Personal Growth offered to high school members off the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater La Crosse. It was free to students, thanks to generous support of donors, and helped introduce them to the college experience. It was rewarding to experience the enthusiasm and inquisitiveness of adolescents as they look ahead to their path as college students and adult. I am also co-authoring a manuscript with a graduate of our program, Alexis Bird, on a project she started during her Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship at Viterbo, titled, "The Role of Empathy in Strengthening Children's Connection to Nature." I have also enjoyed becoming more involved in non-profit service, including joining the board of directors of GROW La Crosse, a local organization that connects youth to food and nature through programming such as school gardens and farm camps.

## David Bauer

During 2021 I mentored several students conducting independent research in biology, neuroscience, and psychology through various projects. Broadly speaking, the topics included moral judgment, religiosity, personality, political ideology, and longevity. Many of these projects made use of the R programming language and associated software; I continue to develop and instruct skills in these areas (highly recommended for students planning to conduct research in graduate school). I also assumed the role of Chair of Viterbo's Promotion and Tenure Committee.

## Bill Bakalars

I continue to teach in the substance abuse counseling minor and the Master's in Mental Health Counseling programs. I am actively involved in Viterbo's VOICE grant (Vital Opioid/Substance Abuse Instruction Through Community-based Experiential Training), including teaching substance abuse courses required for students to receive this funding and planning and participating in Community Conversations and Town Halls. Through these activities and curriculum revision work, I am actively involved in education regarding opioid addiction and medication assisted recovery. I also continue my practice with Mayo Outpatient Behavioral Health about 20 hours per week and consultation duties with In-clusa, a statewide mental health management organization.



Liza Ware & summer Boys and Girls Club students.

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



## Shannon Ketcham

### Education

- B.S., Psychology; Minors: English & Servant Leadership, 2010
- M.S., Education, Student Affairs Administration, UWL, 2013
- Ed.D., Educational Leadership, Washington State University, anticipated 2025-26

### Employment

- Manager of Student Programs, Spokane Community College. Oversight of student conduct, student support, and community engagement programs.
- Previous positions: Student Life Coordinator, Austin Community College; Residence Director, University of Texas at Arlington.

**What I most enjoy about my work:** Using a trauma-informed, educational, and restorative justice lens to meet student needs and address impact on the campus community. This includes educating campus stakeholders on student rights and responsibilities and enhancing infrastructure for community engagement and awareness programs through campus and community partnerships.

### Activities at Viterbo

- Internships: New Horizon's Shelter and Outreach; Great Rivers 2-1-1; VU Residence Life
- Research: Viterbo Serenity Scale; Summer Scholars (DPI) Program Evaluation
- Extracurriculars: Residence Hall Council; Psych Club (officer); Orientation Leader; Student Government Association; Student Support Mentor

### Favorite thing about the psychology major:

The many amazing opportunities for engaging in collaborative inquiry and discussions on a variety of topics. This diversity gave me a pragmatic perspective to approach my work and support others.

### Most valuable lesson you learned at Viterbo:

Never stop trying to learn and do not be afraid to fail, it will only help you learn more. I benefitted from wonderful opportunities at Viterbo but, like any student, I had times of significant challenges in and out of the classroom, including basic needs and mental health. Taking opportunities to learn about myself, the campus, the community, and seeking help when needed were the driving factors in walking across that stage.

**Advice for psychology majors:** Take chances and step outside your comfort zone to learn new skills and gain new experiences while at Viterbo. Whether that is participating in the Psychology Club or other student organizations, or taking on that internship that you may not feel like you are ready for or are scared to try – each of these opportunities will help you recognize the strength, learning, community-focused lens, and transferable, person-centered skills that Viterbo helps to develop in you.



## Forest (Rowdy) Yates

### Education

- B.S., Psychology; Minors: Ethics & Substance Abuse Counseling, 2019
- M.A., Forensic and Legal Psychology, with Intelligence Concentration, Marymount University, 2021

### Employment

- U.S. Secret Service Uniformed Division: Currently in month 5 of training after graduating from training academy at Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, New Mexico.
- Naval Criminal Investigative Service, Quantico, Virginia (2020-21): Intern analyst, Office of Forensic Support. Assisted on open investigations, assisted on autopsies, death scenes.

**What I most enjoy about my work:** Working with the Secret Service has been a crazy experience. Every day brings new challenges and it really tests one to make decisions under stress. The instructors are former law enforcement or prior military, so the training that is tactically sound.

### Activities at Viterbo

- Internship: School Counseling, Onalaska H.S.
- Extracurriculars: Baseball team

### Favorite thing about the psychology major:

The tight-knit community in the psychology program. I felt like I knew every professor and student on a personal level, even if I didn't have a class with them. It made me feel welcome and happy that I chose psychology. The professors have a wide variety of skill sets that you learn so much from.

### Most beneficial thing you did at Viterbo to prepare for post-graduation:

Working in the interviewing rooms – it helped me learn what kind of interviewing style I have. I continue to take these lessons from the clinical side and apply them to my interviewing skills as a law enforcement officer.

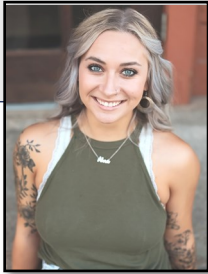
### Most valuable lesson you learned at Viterbo:

Soak up all the information you can, no matter how irrelevant you think it is to your future dream job. The classes you take in the psychology program give you a variety of insight into the field. Some things I learned in my social psychology classes, interviewing classes, etc. still hold relevance for me today. Take it day by day, class by class, and you will walk away with a fulfilling college experience.

**Advice for psychology majors:** You don't have to work in "traditional" psychology careers. There are many fields and careers you can enter with your psychology degree. I hope I can be a point of contact for any prospective students looking to go into the forensic/legal world of psychology.

*"You don't have to work in 'traditional' psychology careers. There are many fields and careers you can enter with your psychology degree."*

# CURRENT STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



## Ahna Henrickson

**Year in School:** Junior

**Major:** Psychology

**Minor:** Substance Abuse Counseling

**Why I choose Psychology:** I realized I loved to study the brain. I enjoy learning why humans or animals behave or react in certain ways based on the working function of the brain. I also enjoy studying human interaction and thought and behavioral processes.

**Favorite thing about being a student at Viterbo:** My ability to grow in any direction. At Viterbo, there have been endless opportunities for me, and countless resources and faculty to help me along the way. I enjoy the sense of community and relationships I have gained throughout my time here.

**Favorite psychology class:** This is a hard choice, but I would have to choose Positive Psychology, Sports Psychology, and Motivational Interviewing. These are my top three only because I was able to learn so much about myself and why I function the way I do. I was also able to learn how to have a healthy and happy lifestyle while recognizing verbal or physical communication cues in myself or others.

**Internships/research projects completed:** I completed Research Methods I and II and a semester of research with a faculty member that led into the Summer Undergraduate Research (SURF) program. I conducted three studies: two with classmates and one on my own with a faculty member, revolving around the biases of individuals recovering from addiction and the hardships of living rural while recovering. For my internship, I have been at Driftless Recovery Services working on initial client contact skills, building lesson plans, facilitating group therapy sessions, and eventually AODA (alcohol and other drug abuse) assessments.

**Post-graduation plans:** I am enrolled in Viterbo's 4+2 program, so I will be rolling straight into the Masters in Mental Health Counseling program. After I complete the bachelor's, I would like to continue working in an outpatient clinic where I can grow my connections and network while gaining more confidence in my counseling style and technique. After graduate studies, I would like to move out of the area to work with other populations and gain experience with the end goal of owning my own practice.

**Advice for Freshmen:** Ask as many questions as you can think of, never be afraid to venture down a path that you are curious about, join any group that interests you, and don't ever tell yourself that you can't do something. Also, if your heart isn't in your first choice major, don't be afraid to switch. I switched in the first two weeks of school, and I have no regrets about making a choice that I now feel so fulfilled with. Learn all you can, take every opportunity you're faced with, and don't forget to enjoy your time in the process.



## Jack Monis

**Year in School:** Junior

**Major:** Psychology

**Minors:** Marketing and Sport management

**Why I choose Psychology:** I have always been interested and passionate about people. Majoring in psychology allowed me to expand on this passion while preparing for the work force. Also, coming into college without a super-defined idea of what direction I wanted to pursue professionally, psychology gave me a variety of interesting options.

**Favorite thing about being a student at Viterbo:** The close-knit community. Having professors and advisors who are willing to go out of their way to assist me has been a huge help academically and professionally as I continue to build my resume and plan for post-graduation.

**Favorite psychology class:** Social Psychology with Dr. Michael Parker. I learned how different social situations can affect individual and group behavior, which has been useful in both my personal and professional life. I also really enjoyed Interpersonal Communication (Interviewing and Helping Relations) with Dr. Stephanie Thorson-Olesen. The communication skills I learned have been useful in my internship, despite not being in a traditional counseling setting.

**Internships/research projects completed:** In my research methods class, my group studied the effect of social identity on the relationship between ostracism and conformity. We analyzed previous psychological literature, designed an experiment, gathered and analyzed data from Viterbo University students, and performed a public dissemination of results. This past semester, I completed an internship with Viterbo's Recreation and Leadership Department. In I created, organized, and oversaw a healthy lifestyle group for students. I designed both digital and print marketing campaigns to increase participation and engagement with the group and created social media content centered around healthy lifestyles.

**Post-graduation plans:** I plan to pursue a master's degree in sport psychology or industrial-organizational psychology or human resource management. As a junior, I am compiling a list of potential programs that interest me and will start the application process over the next few months.

**Advice for Freshmen:** Start and get involved early. The quicker you begin experimenting with things professionally, the more time you have to change your mind and find where your real passions are. Also, make use of the faculty around you as resources and mentors. They are willing to help and can be a huge help in finding internships, research opportunities, etc.

*“At Viterbo, there have been endless opportunities for me, and countless resources and faculty to help me along the way.”*

# Psychology Alumni Updates

Congratulations to all alumni on their accomplishments!

## Fil Clissa-1984

Senior Program and Policy Analyst, Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities.

## Cyndy Patros-1991

I am still director of Coulee Reading Center, however above all, I am enjoying being a part of the lives of my 8 grandchildren.

## Beth R. Clements-1996

In 2014, I became a Registered Nurse. I have had the great opportunity to work as District Nurse for West Salem School District from 2016 to 2021, and currently, my role is an RN in Inpatient Rehabilitation at Gundersen Health System. I live in West Salem with my husband of 18 years, and our three children.

## Jessica Pierzina-2002

Dr. Jessica Pierzina, PsyD, was commissioned as an officer in the United States Army Reserve and currently serves in the 785th Combat Operational Stress Control unit.

## Katie Morse-2004

MSW, Case Western Reserve University, 2016. Worked 10 years for Hamilton County, Ohio (Cincinnati) as a Children's Service Worker and Guardian as Litem. Left in April '21 to be a Recovery Manager for the Southwest Ohio Council on Aging. Also working towards a PATH certification for Equine Therapy.

## Kendra Henry (Granger)-2004

Opened a private practice in November 2021 called Enliven Psych + Health in Rochester, MN.

## Jennifer Keehn, MA LPCC-2007

New position: Clinic Director at Ellie Mental Health, Cottage Grove Clinic.

## Erolyn Sebastian-2013

Currently in Taiwan pursuing a Masters in International Human Resource Management.

## Chantell Phillips- 2013 & 2016

Gave birth to Atreyu Gene Anderson 10/7/21

## Alyssa Sherwood-2016

LCSW, November, 2021. Full-time, mental health provider at Gundersen STJ, Hillsboro. This past summer, two colleagues and I presented our school-based mental health program at the National Rural Health Organization, Missouri, with the hopes of inspiring other rural health organizations to offer the program to local schools.

## Krista Coey-2016

We welcomed a new baby to our family, Soren Penelope, and are

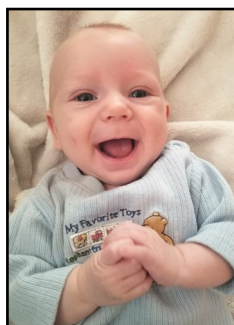
absolutely smitten with her.

## Bekah (Weigel) Helgerson-2016

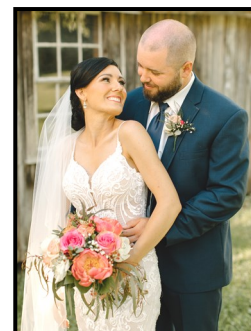
Married this last June, and am completing last semester of a Masters in Social Work and finishing up an internship with the Tomah VA Medical Center. Will graduate in May 2022 and plan to pursue clinical licensure. Currently working as a CASA for Kids Case Manager for Vernon and Monroe Counties.

## Alli Dunne-2020

Moved to Marshfield, WI for a position as a psychometrician for the Marshfield Clinic Health System. I conduct ADHD, Autism, and



Chantell Phillips's new baby, Atreyu Gene Anderson



Dustin & Bekah Helgerson, June 5, 2021



Krista Coey; new baby, Soren; Dad Justin; big sister Sutton



Alyssa Sherwood, MSW, LCSW



Jennifer Keehn, MA



Erolyn Sebastian



Beth Clements, with husband Richard, children: Will, Eva and Sophia.

*Alumni, do you have a memory or update to share?  
Email psychology department chair David Bauer at: [djbauer@viterbo.edu](mailto:djbauer@viterbo.edu)*

# Internships, Projects, & Presentations PAGE 7

Psychology students have been hard at work on a variety of fascinating research projects, internships, and conference presentations. Congratulations to all on their accomplishments!

## Research Methods II (Psyc 330) Projects

### **The Stigma of Alcohol use Through the Lens of Gender and Occupational Status**

- Ahna Henrickson, Brianna Hougom

### **Analysis of the Mediation Effect of Social Identity on Ostracism and Conformity**

- Samantha Lynch, Jack Monis, Zachary Bieze, Evan Saltzman

### **Infidelity and Attachment**

- Lexi Ratzburg, Tayha Cochran, Rekha Drevlow, Korto Thrune

## Advanced Research (Psyc 489) Projects

**Student:** Bailey Benson

**Faculty mentor:** David Bauer

**Research topic:** Personality and Moral Judgment

**Student:** Stephanie Hayne

**Faculty mentor:** David Bauer

**Research topic:** Political Ideology, Religiosity, and Humanitarianism

**Student:** Ahna Henrickson

**Faculty mentor:** Stephanie Thorson-Olesen

**Research topic:** Substance Abuse Recovery in Rural Areas

**Student:** Jared Wilson

**Faculty mentor:** David Bauer

**Research topic:** Narcissism, Gossip, and Work

## Research Presentations

### **Maintaining Sobriety While Living in a Rural Area**

- Ahna Henrickson (2021, November). Wisconsin Counseling Association, Madison, WI.

### **How Will You Decide? An Analysis of the Relationship Between Personality and Moral Judgment**

- Bailey Benson (2021, November). Seven Rivers Undergraduate Research Symposium, Viterbo University.

## Research Presentations (cont'd.)

### **The Relationship Between Political Ideology, Religiosity, and Humanitarianism**

- Stephanie Hayne (2021, April). Scholars' Days Symposium, Viterbo University.

### **Overestimated Performances by Political Ideology**

- Jared Wilson (2021, April). Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.

## Recent Student Internship Placements

**AMS of Wisconsin,** Tayha Cochran

**Boys and Girls Club,** Lindsay Weber

**Dairyland Power Cooperative,** Asia Parkhurst

**Driftless Recovery Services,** Ahna Henrickson

**Family and Children's Center,** Evan Saltzman

**Safe Families for Children La Crosse,** Tori Collier

**Summit Elementary School,** Samantha Lynch

**Viterbo Recreation Department,** Callie Fleming, Jack Monis

**Viterbo Social Justice and Equity,** Rekha Drevlow

**Viterbo VOICE Grant,** Korto Thrune, Barbara Gomez Lopez



Ahna Henrickson, presenting her summer research project at a state conference.



Stephanie Thorson-Olesen and psychology majors Ahna Henrickson, Korto Thrune, and Callie Fleming; Wisconsin Counseling Association Annual Conference in Madison.



Psychology Senior Capstone presentations

# PSYCHOLOGY EVENTS



Psych Club, in collaboration with other campus organizations, sponsored guest speaker Kody Green, local mental health advocate.



Psych Club at Viterbo's annual Fresh Check Day



Psych Club's Halloween Party



Psych Club at Viterbo's Courtyard Carni

## QUESTIONS? CONTACT:

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