

About the Ph.D. in Educational Neuroscience Program

Building on our mission to educate the next generation of students, scholars at the NSF-funded Gallaudet University Science of Learning Center, Visual Language and Visual Learning (VL2), launched the pioneering Ph.D. in Educational Neuroscience (PEN) Program in 2014. This program explores how humans learn throughout life, from infancy to adulthood, with a focus on the neuroplasticity of visually-guided learning, which plays a key role in language acquisition, bilingualism, literacy, and higher cognitive processes like action perception, math, memory, attention, and emotional and social development. The PEN Program at Gallaudet University uniquely contributes to groundbreaking research with significant implications for educating all children, especially young visual learners. Recently, the PEN Program has expanded its scope of training to include the first Certificate in Educational Neuroscience (CEN). This graduate certificate will support students wishing to enter the field of cognitive and educational neuroscience and share the knowledge with graduate students enrolled in related programs. The CEN will begin accepting applications in the fall of 2024.

Proud Sponsors

The 2023-2024 PEN Distinguished Lecture Series in Educational Neuroscience is sponsored by the William H. and Ruth Crane Schaefer Endowment, the Ph.D. in Educational Neuroscience (PEN) Program, and the Science of Learning Center, Visual Language and Visual Learning (VL2).

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Contact Us

**Distinguished Lecture Series Director and
PhD in Educational Neuroscience Director**

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Gallaudet University's Ph.D. In Educational Neuroscience
(PEN) Program is proud to announce the

PEN Distinguished Lecture Series in Educational Neuroscience 2024-2025

*Exploring the Foundations of
Human Development and
Consciousness*

This series honors world-renowned scientists and aims to form a bridge
between basic science discoveries and their meaningful benefits for society.



Please register to join our presentations via webinar.
Note three presentations will also be in-person.

<https://tinyurl.com/Register-PEN-DLS24-25>



About This Year's Presenters

This high-profile lecture series honors our presenters -- true pioneers in science -- who work in various sister disciplines to Educational Neuroscience. All lectures will continue to be broadcast as webinars, with a few presenters also presenting in person on campus. After each presentation, our esteemed guests will take questions from the audience. The PEN Distinguished Lecture Series has evolved over time to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion by ensuring speakers from underrepresented groups and addressing the impact of diversity and bias on brain development and learning among the topics. We hope the series will continue to inspire young scholars from all backgrounds and foster greater scientific discussion around inclusion, diversity, and equity. Please join us as our presenters open the doors to their research labs and share their field-advancing discoveries in the field of language, consciousness, and the environment in relation to learning and development.

Presenters

September 19, 2024
2:00-3:30 p.m. EST

Feelings are the Source of Consciousness

Professor in Psychology, Philosophy and Neurology, University of Southern California



Dr. Antonio Damasio

Dr. Antonio Damasio is the David Dornsife Professor of Neuroscience, Professor of Psychology, Philosophy, and Neurology, and Director of the Brain and Creativity Institute at the University of Southern California. Trained as a neurologist and a neuroscientist, Damasio has made seminal contributions to understanding brain processes underlying affect and consciousness. He has received many awards, most recently the Paul MacLean Award for Outstanding Neuroscience Research in Psychosomatic Medicine, 2019. Dr. Damasio is a member of the National Academy of Medicine, a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a member of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences, and the European Academy of Sciences and Arts. He has been named "Highly Cited Researcher" by the Institute for Scientific Information and also holds Honorary Doctorates from several universities. For a complete biography please visit our website.

October 17, 2024
2:00-3:30 p.m. EST

Environmental Influences on Brain Plasticity

Associate Professor in Psychology, University of Pennsylvania



Dr. Allyson Mackey

Dr. Allyson Mackey is an Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Mackey holds a Ph.D. in Neuroscience from the University of California, Berkeley, and a B.S. in Biological Sciences from Stanford University. She completed her postdoctoral training at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dr. Mackey is a CIFAR Azrieli Global Scholar, a Jacobs Foundation Scholar, and serves on the Scientific Advisory Council of the National Center on the Developing Adolescent. She is the recipient of the Rising Star Award from the Association of Psychological Sciences and the Early Career Award from the International Mind Brain and Education Society. She studies individual differences in brain plasticity and development with an eye toward personalizing the type and timing of educational interventions. For a complete biography please visit our website.

December 5th, 2024
2:00-3:30 p.m. EST

Imaging the Minds and Brains of Human Infants

Professor in Cognitive Neuroscience Associate Dean of Science, MIT

In-person and webinar



Dr. Rebecca Saxe

Dr. Rebecca Saxe is the John W. Jarve (1978) Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience and the Associate Dean of Science at MIT. She studies the development and neural basis of human cognition, focusing on social cognition. Saxe obtained her Ph.D. from MIT and was a Harvard Junior Fellow before joining the MIT faculty in 2006. She has received the Troland Award from the National Academy of Sciences, a Guggenheim fellowship, the MIT Committed to Caring Award for graduate mentorship, and is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Science.

Join the presentations:

<https://tinyurl.com/Register-PEN-DLS24-25>

To view past presentations, visit:

<http://vl2.gallaudet.edu/pen-distinguished-lecture-series>

February 13th, 2025
2:00-3:30 p.m. EST

Brain Basis of Language Development

Professor in Psychology and Human Development, Vanderbilt University

In-person and webinar



Dr. James R. Booth

Dr. James R. Booth is the Patricia and Rodes Hart Professor of Educational Neuroscience in the Department of Psychology and Human Development at Vanderbilt University. The focus of his current research is to understand the brain mechanisms of the development of language, reading, and related cognitive processes in typical and atypical populations. Dr. Booth has been continuously funded by the federal government for over three decades and has published extensively in diverse journals. He has served in various roles both within and outside of the university, such as departmental chairperson, grant review member, and journal editor. Dr. Booth aims to facilitate the interaction between the fields of development, cognition, and neuroscience and apply this knowledge to improve the lives of children.

March 13th, 2025
2:00-3:30 p.m. EST

Causes and Consequences of Exploration Across Development

Associate Professor in Psychology and Neural Science, New York University



Dr. Catherine Hartley

Dr. Catherine Hartley is an alumna of Stanford University and New York University. She conducted her postdoctoral training at the Sackler Institute for Developmental Psychobiology at Weill Cornell Medicine. Dr. Hartley's research focuses on characterizing the learning, memory, and decision-making processes that support goal-directed behavior across development and how dynamic changes in brain circuits give rise to these functions. Dr. Hartley's research has been supported by the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Mental Health and Drug Abuse. Her research has been recognized with numerous awards (e.g., the National Academy of Sciences, the Association for Psychological Science, the Society for Neuroeconomics, and more). A central goal of her research is to understand the adaptive benefits of how individuals learn and make decisions at different developmental stages, as well as how specific learning and decision-making biases contribute to psychological vulnerability or resilience. For a complete biography, please visit our website.

April 10th, 2025
2:00-3:30 p.m. EST

To be announced.

Associate Professor in Liberal Studies, RIT/NTID

In-person and webinar



Dr. Rain Bosworth

Dr. Rain Bosworth is an associate professor in the Department of Liberal Studies at RIT/NTID. She is a deaf experimental psychologist studying the development of perception and language in infants and children in her Perception, Language, and Attention in Youth (PLAY) Lab. For her doctoral degree at the University of California, San Diego, she studied visual motion processing and attention in deaf adults to understand better how deafness and sign language experience impact perceptual abilities. She is currently investigating visual and tactile exploratory behaviors in infants, children, and adults to address questions about how we learn and process sign language. She has also studied how easily visual abilities are recovered in children treated for congenital eye disorders. Together, these lines of research reveal how early sensory input shapes perception, cognition, and language processing.

In-person talks will take place in the **I. King Jordan Student Academic Center (JSAC), room 1011.**

A small reception with light refreshments will follow.

Attendees can also join these talks by registering for the webinar.