

Dr. Kristin Brethel-Haurwitz and **Dr. Elise Cardinale** are joint recipients of the 2018 Harold N. Glassman Distinguished Dissertation Award in the Social Sciences for their dissertations, *“Multidetermined Concern: Roles for Affective and Cognitive Processes in Empathy and Altruism”* and *“An Investigation of the Role and Specificity of Affective Deficits in the Development of Callous Unemotional Traits and Antisocial Behaviors,”* respectively. Each completed her Ph.D. in Psychology under the mentorship of Professor Abigail Marsh of the Department of Psychology.

Dr. Brethel-Haurwitz’s dissertation is described as a “seminal social scientific inquiry into the roots of human altruism” that increases our understanding of emotion processing and brain pathways that promote altruism in some individuals. Through careful brain-imaging analyses, she discovered enhanced self-other neural mapping in the brains of altruists observing others’ distress, as well as an increase in communication between two structures—the amygdala and the periaqueductal gray—in the brains of altruists self-reporting an increased motivation to help; these findings conclusively link, for the first time, both empathic resonance and activity in parental care circuits to altruism. Dr. Brethel-Haurwitz is a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Cardinale’s dissertation examines heterogeneity in the psychopathology of conduct problems, particularly the role of callous and unemotional traits, characterized by a lack of empathy, remorse, or guilt, in adolescents. Through her thorough and meticulous research, Dr. Cardinale discovered that poor moral decision making in adolescents with these traits is mediated by amygdala dysfunction that results in problems understanding why it is unacceptable to cause others to feel afraid—ruling out a popular alternative hypothesis that these adolescents’ symptoms result from perceptual causes. Her research is groundbreaking and has important implications for understanding the etiology of the disorder and for developing future treatments. Dr. Cardinale is a postdoctoral fellow in Dr. David Pine’s Mood & Anxiety Program at the National Institute of Mental Health.

The Graduate School is very proud to award Drs. Brethel-Haurwitz and Cardinale with the Glassman Dissertation Award in the Social Sciences.