

Psych at Work Weekly

Free for students & faculty - \$2

VOL. 12, NO.6 (*) NATIONAL UNIVERSITY STUDENT EDITION (*) 6 SEP 2025

THIS WEEK IN THE NEWS: SHAPING THE FUTURE OF I-O PSYCHOLOGY, LEADERSHIP NARCISSISM & HR PRACTICES, EMOTIONAL AI AT WORK, THE RISE OF PSYCHOSOCIAL SAFETY CLIMATE, SOUTH AFRICAN I-O SCHOLARS GO DEEP..

EXTRA!! EXTRA!!

Four editorials by Martin CJ Mongiello

THE FIELD OF I/O PSYCHOLOGY

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Industrial-organizational psychology is stealing the spotlight as the engine driving modern work, dissecting everything from what sparks people to give their best to how leaders inspire, teams thrive, and cultures adapt. From C-suites to think tanks, from federal offices to coaching sessions, these specialists are rewriting the rules of work and proving their influence reaches farther than almost any other profession.



MAJOR HISTORY MADE IN WORLD WAR I WITH PSYCHOLOGY TESTS

When the United States entered World War I in 1917, the military faced a problem: how to quickly and fairly assign over a million recruits to the right roles. Enter psychologists Robert Yerkes and his team, who developed the Army Alpha and Army Beta intelligence tests—the first mass-administered psychological assessments. *Page 2.*

NORTH POLE - SOUTH POLE. HATE IN THE MODERN WORKPLACE

APA research shows that extreme liberals and conservatives process political information in strikingly similar ways, suggesting that extremity—not ideology—shapes their responses. *Page 3.*

REBECCA THURSTON, PHD: SPEAKING OF PSYCHOLOGY: HOT FLASHES, HEART HEALTH, AND HORMONES: RETHINKING MENOPAUSE

Rebecca Thurston, PhD, shattered the old idea that menopause is just a “women’s nuisance” by proving its symptoms are biomarkers of serious long-term risks like heart disease and Alzheimer’s. She has revolutionized the industry by pushing for innovative treatments and redefining midlife as a powerful, transformative chapter rather than a slow decline. *Page 3.*

Four editorials by Martin CJ Mongiello

The Field of Industrial Organizational (I/O) Psychology

The Science of Work. I/O psychology is the study of human behavior in work settings. It applies psychological principles and research methods to help organizations solve problems, boost productivity, and improve employees' well-being. Think of it as "psychology in a business suit."

by Martin CJ Mongiello
EXTRA!! EXTRA!!



Core Topics Explored in the Field

1. Employee Selection & Assessment
 - Designing fair and effective hiring systems.
 - Building psychological tests and structured interviews.
 - Examining bias and improving equity in hiring.
2. Training & Development
 - Creating learning programs that actually stick.
 - Exploring adult learning, skill acquisition, and leadership training.
3. Work Motivation & Performance
 - Why some give 110% and barely 10% on other days?
 - Researching incentives, rewards, and motivations.
4. Job Satisfaction & Well-being
 - Burnout, stress management, and work-life balance.
 - Linking employee happiness to business outcomes.
5. Organizational Culture & Leadership
 - What makes a healthy workplace culture?
 - How leadership style impacts morale and turnover.
6. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)
 - Studying bias in hiring, promotions, and everyday work.
 - Designing interventions to create fairer workplaces.
7. Human Factors & Ergonomics
 - Applying psychology to physical and digital tools.
 - Making technology and processes more friendly.

Career Paths for I/O Psychologists

I/O psychologists have a toolkit that's valuable across industries, so career paths are plentiful and diverse.

1. Corporate Roles
 - Talent Management Specialist – designing systems for hiring, training, and promotions.
 - Organizational Development Consultant – advising on culture change, leadership pipelines, and mergers.
 - Human Resources Analyst – applying data and psychology to people-related decisions.
2. Consulting Firms
 - Many I/O psychologists work as external consultants, diagnosing workplace problems and implementing evidence-based solutions for multiple clients.
3. Government & Military
 - Designing assessments for law enforcement, military, or civil service roles.

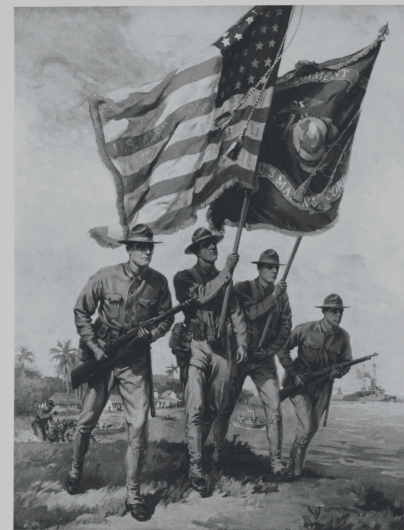
- Running large-scale job analysis and classification projects.
4. Academia & Research
 - Professors, researchers, or writers advancing knowledge about workplace behavior.
 - Studying cutting-edge issues like AI's impact on jobs, remote work, or implicit bias.
 5. Healthcare & Nonprofit Sectors
 - Improving systems for caregiver burnout, volunteer management, or employee well-being in mission-driven organizations.
 6. Executive Coaching & Leadership Development
 - Helping leaders maximize their effectiveness with a psychologist's insight into behavior, personality, and performance.

Why It Matters Right Now

Modern workplaces are in flux: AI is reshaping jobs, remote work is redefining "the office," and DEI remains a pressing concern. I/O psychologists stand at the center of these debates, providing both hard data and human understanding. In short: I/O psychologists don't just study work—they help reimagine it.

Major history made in World War I with Psychology Tests

"SPIRIT OF 1917"



Looking at the beginnings of Industrial-Organizational Psychology: Born in the Trenches of World War I. When the United States entered World War I, the military faced a problem: how to quickly and fairly assign over a million recruits to the right roles (Ando, 2022). Enter psychologists Robert Yerkes and his team, who developed the Army Alpha and Beta intelligence tests—the first mass-administered psychological assessments.

These new tests, designed to evaluate soldiers' cognitive abilities (even for those who were illiterate or non-English speakers), marked the first large-scale application of psychology to organizational and personnel needs. The project not only helped the war effort but also demonstrated psychology's practical value to government and business leaders. After the war, industries adopted similar testing to hire and promote workers, solidifying psychological assessment and job analysis as cornerstones of what would become Industrial-Organizational psychology. In short, the trenches of WWI didn't just change geopolitics—they launched psychology into the modern workplace, including for transitioning veterans (Shepherd et al., 2021).

Rebecca Thurston, PhD: Speaking of Psychology: Hot flashes, heart health, and hormones: Rethinking menopause

In the annals of psychology, Rebecca Thurston, PhD, stands out for transforming menopause from a narrowly defined medical stage into a recognized pivot point for women's lifelong health. Her research has firmly established the connection between vasomotor symptoms and heightened risks of cardiovascular disease and Alzheimer's, elevating what was once dismissed as a private inconvenience into a matter of public health significance. This reconceptualization represents not only a clinical advance but also a key contribution to the development of psychology as a discipline, positioning women's midlife experiences at the center of scientific and applied inquiry (American Psychological Association, 2025).

Equally important, Thurston's work reverberates in the modern workplace, where women now span five to six generations simultaneously across the labor force. Understanding menopause as both a biological and psychosocial inflection point equips organizations to better address equity, retention, and leadership development. Her findings illuminate how structural supports—ranging from healthcare benefits to workplace flexibility—can sustain productivity and protect long-term well-being, ensuring that women at midlife are not forced out of professional pathways but are empowered to continue contributing at the highest levels. In this respect, Dr. Thurston's scholarship is more than research—it is an essential framework for aligning psychology with the realities of a multigenerational workforce and for advancing justice, inclusion, and organizational excellence.

Although Dr. Thurston's research has truly been hailed as groundbreaking, it has not been without detractors. Some scholars contend that the workplace implications she draws may overextend the clinical findings, creating expectations for systemic organizational change that certain leaders resist as costly or disruptive. Such critiques reflect the contested terrain of applying health psychology to organizational structures, where science intersects with entrenched cultural and economic interests (Forbes, 2024; Mindset Health, n.d.; Meyer, 2001; Nappi & Cagnacci, 2024).

Endorsements of this work by male students and scholars introduce an additional layer of complexity. Within academic discourse, such support can be interpreted less as solidarity and more as appropriation—an act of speaking for, rather than alongside, the lived realities of women. The risk exists that male validation, such as by this author, may inadvertently perpetuate patriarchal structures by granting greater legitimacy to women's scholarship only when echoed by men. Thus, while Thurston's contributions are properly situated as a cornerstone of modern applied psychology, critical awareness is required to ensure that recognition does not reinforce the very inequities her work seeks to dismantle (Crittenden & Wright, 2013).



Doctor Thurston was recently featured on Episode 345 of Speaking of Psychology PODCAST with the American Psychological Association. Image from the APA.org website used for academia only.



North Pole - South Pole. Hate in the Modern Workplace

The American Psychological Association (APA) press release titled "Political Polar Opposites May Be More Alike Than They Think" (APA, 2025) unveils compelling evidence that politically extreme liberals and conservatives exhibit strikingly similar patterns in processing political information, thereby challenging long-standing assumptions about ideological asymmetry.

This revelation suggests that it is extremity, rather than ideological orientation, that predominantly shapes how individuals interpret and respond to political stimuli—and underscores the psychological commonalities underlying polarized positions.

In illuminating these cognitive processes, the findings carry profound implications for efforts to mitigate political division and foster cross-partisan understanding, as they call upon institutions and scholars to reshape assumptions about political cognition and reconsider approaches to depolarization and dialogue.

The study drew upon a deliberately caustic YouTube clip from the 2016 U.S. vice-presidential debate between Senator Tim Kaine and Governor Mike Pence, selected to expose participants to highly charged partisan exchanges. Under carefully controlled conditions, individuals watched this debate while undergoing functional MRI scans and simultaneous monitoring with physiological measures such as eye-tracking and galvanic skin response, allowing researchers to capture neural and bodily reactions in real time. The findings revealed a compelling insight: “extremists across the political spectrum exhibited convergent neural processing when exposed to politically charged content” (de Bruin & FeldmanHall, 2025, p. 10), demonstrating that extremity itself—rather than ideological orientation—was the primary driver of shared cognitive and emotional responses.

Another remarkable aspect of this study is the discovery that extreme individuals displayed not only synchronized brain activity but also synchronized physiological arousal, such as galvanic skin conductance responses, when exposed to inflammatory political content.

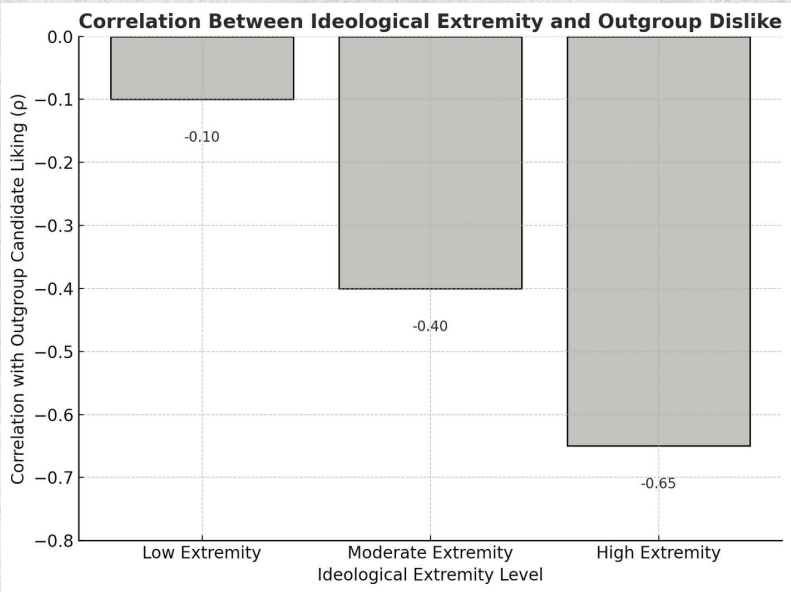
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It is noted, "At Yerkes Initiative, the board of the American Psychological Association in Philadelphia set up 12 committees to study the military applications of psychology" (Andó, 2022, p. 135).

As Andó (2022) underscores, the Yerkes Initiative—wherein the American Psychological Association convened twelve committees in Philadelphia to examine the military applications of psychology—constitutes a defining historical inflection point in the discipline. Far from a mere organizational response to wartime exigencies, this initiative institutionalized the systematic application of psychological science to the selection, classification, and training of military personnel, thereby legitimizing psychology’s utility in matters of national consequence. Within the historiography of the field, this episode is properly regarded as a seminal contribution to the emergence of industrial-organizational psychology, insofar as it demonstrated, for the first time at scale, the discipline’s capacity to translate theoretical constructs into operational protocols of measurable impact. In so doing, the Yerkes Initiative furnished both the epistemological and methodological scaffolding upon which modern I/O psychology was constructed, securing its standing as a field uniquely situated at the nexus of scientific inquiry, organizational governance, and public policy (Andó, 2022).

Recent scholarship continues to expand the methodological and technological scope of military psychology, ranging from advanced quantitative modeling of human performance to innovative approaches for studying trauma in service members through online platforms (Biggs, 2022; Forkus et al., 2023).

De Bruin and FeldmanHall (2025) found that political extremity, rather than ideology, drives shared neural and physiological responses to divisive political content. Extremists on both ends showed synchronized brain and body patterns, while moderates displayed diverse reactions, underscoring that polarization stems from cognitive rigidity more than belief differences.



How ideological extremity correlates with outgroup dislike—the more extreme the views, the stronger the negative feelings toward the opposing candidate. Chart by Martin CJ Mongiello.

STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

Psych at Work Weekly

Psych at Work Weekly is a professional newspaper devoted to the study and practice of industrial-organizational psychology. Each issue provides research-based reporting on workplace behavior, leadership, organizational culture, employee well-being, and the science of human performance. Our editorial team upholds the highest standards of accuracy, integrity, and scholarly rigor in selecting and preparing material for publication. Psych at Work Weekly reserves the right to accept, edit, or deny any submitted articles, commentaries, or letters to the editor at its sole discretion, in order to maintain professional standards and relevance to the field. Acceptance of a submission does not imply endorsement of its views, and denial does not diminish the professional standing of the contributor. We remain committed to publishing content that advances industrial-organizational psychology while fostering informed dialogue among scholars, practitioners, and business leaders.

Published by Martin CJ Mongiello
Mongiello Holdings, LLC
Incorporated in the Chancery of Delaware and the State of North Carolina
IRS FEIN 45-4134185
With DBAs of The United States Presidential Service Center and the Global Embassy of Culture
301 Cleveland Avenue
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Submission Guidelines – Psych at Work Weekly

Manuscripts should be submitted in Microsoft Word or PDF, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman, and generally between 1,000–2,500 words (short pieces 500–1,000). All citations must follow APA 7th Edition, and figures must be high-resolution files with permissions secured by the author. Submissions must be original, not under review elsewhere, and will undergo editorial review with possible peer review at the board’s discretion. By submitting, authors grant Psych at Work Weekly the right to publish, edit, or decline work while retaining copyright unless otherwise arranged. Images used with permission as a news source, academic project, or under licensing paid for with a Canva Premium Subscription.

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