



InCognito

For your monthly study-related needs and feeds.

December 2014

Suggestions, feedback or comments? Let us know at newsletter.cognito@gmail.com.

Kate Backhouse in Jerusalem



With the escalation of Operation Protective Edge over the summer my internship was looking more and more doubtful. After much deliberation and hesitation I decided to come anyway. I had never before been to a country that's at war and I was surprised when I arrived in a city where people were still calmly sipping on cappuccinos, and not covering inside or permanently wearing helmets. It seemed to be life as normal in the metropolitan Tel Aviv, tanned bodies were lazily lounging on the beach, bearded hipsters peacefully posing at cafes, and shoppers ignorantly browsing store fronts. It wasn't until the second night when the sirens went off and we rushed to the bomb shelter downstairs, that the Gaza war seemed nearby. With the booms above of the iron dome intercepting the missiles, I realised that this would be an interesting 6 months.

Two days later the ceasefire was called and a fresh round of peace talks promised for a brighter future. So with the war over I started my internship at the department of medical neurobiology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The first few weeks were spent familiarizing myself with the work done at the lab, getting to know my colleagues and planning my research. Whereas in my previous internship I received a lot of help and support from my supervisor,

here I was left completely to my own devices. Although the lab has many resources and I had the freedom to use any method (fMRI, TMS, EEG etc) and countless different kinds of sensory substitution devices (vision to tactile, distance to sound, infrared to sound....) I decided to keep the project simple so that I was sure I could be on my flight back to Amsterdam in exactly 6 months time. I chose a behavioural design where I track the changes in phenomenology and visual acuity for a blind user of a vision-to-sound sensory substitution device. It means that I get to work closely with blind participants and train them with an SSD, with aim of getting them to a level where they can independently navigate through an environment and recognise faces. It's an interesting and rewarding project and I am happy with its development.

Despite working on my internship 5 days a week, I've found myself with more free time on my hands than I had back home. This means that there's plenty of time to enjoy the many activities available here, such as surfing, tanning, paragliding, hiking, and traveling the country. I've also started volunteering at the African Refugee Centre where I teach English. I've met many interesting people there who have such incredible stories to tell, and who have taught me so much about life in East Africa

and the struggles they face in Israel.

I have to say that so far I have learned far more about Middle Eastern and Sudanese history and politics, than I have about neuroscience. I am constantly confronted with cultural differences, and continually shocked at how different the attitudes are here than in Europe. After two months I have just about grown accustomed to sharing my morning commute with armed soldiers and prayer chanting orthodox Jews. I am now used to the persistent security checks at every bus station and every mall, and I have learned to tolerate the strong opinions that everybody has about the situation. But what I have not yet adapted to is the tense atmosphere that is always present, especially in light of the recent terror attacks. We are advised not to use public transport in Jerusalem and to be constantly vigilant, which gives rise to a strained mood. The whole situation is completely new for me, the carefree life in Amsterdam did not prepare me for this.

That being said, I am having a good time. The weather is still upwards of 25 degrees and there's an abundance of good food and great nightlife to enjoy. Being here is a unique experience and I'm definitely making the most of it.

AGENDA

Drinks @ CREA

Every Tuesday, 21:00-late

Cognito Sinterklaas evening

3 December, 18:00, Kleine Wittenburgerstraat 144

The ultimate Dutch holiday will be celebrated cheerfully with presents and a lot of food! Therefore, please bring two small presents (of together 5 euros), a dinner dish (if you're an international student, preferably from your own country!) and - when you feel the need to - alcoholic drinks. Non alcoholic drinks and the traditional Sinterklaas sweets will be taken care of!

IIS Christmas drinks

8 December, after STICS, CREA

The IIS wouldn't be the IIS, if any opportunity to have drinks together would be left unused. Therefore, the last STICS meeting of the year 2014 will be followed by (very early) X-mas drinks! Note that this STICS meeting, for a change, will be on a Monday!

Beta Break Quiz

10 December, 12:00-13:00, Central hall, Science Park

The monthly beta break will this month consist of a very competitive quiz with beta science related questions, in which students from all different studies will battle with each other. Josipa and Alastair will represent our master programma and fight courageously for our honour!

Stargazing night

19 December, 18:30-22:00, Science Park

Every month the Anton Pannekoek institute organises a stargazing night at the Science park.

Participation is free of charge but registration is required and can be done at: <http://www.astro.uva.nl/publiek/aanmeldingsformulier/> (opens 12 December).

Alumnus profile: Barbara Braams

Our first ever alumnus profile is here! Each month we will ask one alumnus to answer a couple of questions. Both alumni who went into research and who decided to do something entirely different will be represented.

What is your current occupation?

Currently I am a PhD student in Eveline Crone's Brain and Development Lab at Leiden University. I study development of reward processing. In adolescence there is an increase in risk-taking behavior and I focus on the link between risk-taking behavior and neural correlates of reward processing. Furthermore, I study whether social factors are important for reward processing and whether the influence of these social factors changes over development.

How did you end up in your current position?

During the last year of my master I thought a lot about what I wanted to do and whether or not I wanted to stay in academia. I knew I really liked research, but I didn't have a crystal clear idea about what kind of project I would want to do for my PhD. Although I didn't really know what kind of topic I wanted to do, I did know that I wanted to work in an inspiring research group and with an inspiring supervisor.

A year before my graduation, during the CSCA Summer School Eveline Crone gave a talk about adolescence and brain development. I really liked the talk and also thought Eveline would be

a great supervisor. When I was looking for PhD positions, luckily, there was a position in her lab, so I applied and got the job.

What do you like about your job?

People often think that research is boring because you are behind the computer all day and write papers. I think this job is very different every day and I like the variation in work. Sometimes I'm at the scanner, collecting data and working with children and adolescents, other times I'm analysing the data or writing a paper. Besides doing research, I am also a teacher for courses in the Bachelor and I supervise Master theses. For me research and teaching makes a very nice combination.

What do you dislike about your job?

Actually, I don't think there's anything I dislike about my job.

Which things that you've learned at the MBCS do you still use regularly?

During my research internships I learned many skills that I still use today. Different supervisors have different ways of, for instance, organising data or use different programs to do analyses. Learning more than one way of doing things helped me a lot when I started my PhD project.

Also, we learned about the review process of a paper and how to write a review and response letter. This was extremely useful when I received the reviews from my first paper.



Barbara Braams

Graduated: August 2010

Track: Cognitive Neuroscience

Looking back, what would you've done differently in order to end up where you are now?

I don't think I would do anything differently. To get a PhD position, it's a big plus to do a research master and the internships were a great addition to my CV.

Why did you decide to stay in academia?

Some people are completely done with research after they write their final thesis and they never want to do another research project in their life. After I finished my second internship and handed in the thesis I felt that I wasn't quite done with doing research yet, I enjoyed the whole process and was looking forward to learn more about research in a PhD. Now I'm almost done with my PhD and I still very much enjoy research, so I guess I will stay in academia a bit longer :)

What is your ultimate advice to the current students?

What works for me is to always put 100% effort into everything I do. You can't always say yes to everything that crosses your path. I try to be specific in selecting those things that will help me achieve the goals I would like to achieve. Also, I try to do the things that I do as best as I can and to challenge myself to do it even better next time.

Faces of Science

If you would like to know more about Barbara's work, you can find more information on the website of Faces of Science. Faces of Science is a new project from the Royal Academy of Sciences, aiming at giving insight in the life of PhD students in different disciplines. PhD students regularly write blogs about their whereabouts. Also, you can find short 3 minute movies about the topics of their work on the website www.facesofscience.com

A message from the ABC Journal

Attention! The deadline for the second issue of the ABC Journal is **19 December**, so please send your internship reports to abcjournal.uva@gmail.com and help us create an archive of all the great internships done in our master programme. Don't worry about submission guidelines: these are only applied when your report is selected for full publication. All other reports will be published as abstracts, but you may of course choose to send in your report as an abstract in the first place.

Interested in joining the ABC Journal? There will be an open meeting on December 19th; watch our [Facebook page](#) for the time and place.

For more information check out our website at <http://bit.do/abc-journal>, contact us at abcjournal.uva@gmail.com, and don't forget to like us on Facebook!





FOOD FOR THOUGHT: DDUG-BOK-GI

Korean recipe by Yuhee Kim.

One of the characteristics of Korean food is “Spicy”. Yes, Koreans love spicy food. There are lots of possible explanations for why Koreans love spicy food and one of the most common beliefs is that Koreans are enthusiastic as well as hot-tempered, so we should eat spicy food to relax the tension and kick the stress out.

The favorite street food of most Koreans must be “ddug-

bok-gi (떡볶이)” which is boiled rice cake covered in spicy sauce. I used to eat this almost every other day when I was in Korea and you can find a little food truck selling this on any street in Korea.

Ingredients

- 250 ml water
- 250 g rice cake
- 100 g fish cake
- 10 g anchovy
- 2 tbsp Korean Chili paste (Go-Choo-Jang, 고추장)

- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 onion
- Green onion
- Pinch of garlic

Procedure

1. Cut the rice cake and fish cake into slices about the size of a little finger. Chop the veggies to the same size and crush the garlic.
2. Put the anchovy into boiling water for 5 minutes.
3. Remove the anchovy and add the chili paste into the wa-

- ter to make a sauce.
4. Once the chili paste is well mixed with the water, add the rice cake and chopped garlic to the sauce and boil together for a while. Make sure that the rice cake absorbs the chili sauce well.
 5. Add the fish cake, onion, and green onion.
 6. Add as much sugar as you want, but not more than 2 tablespoons.
 7. Enjoy!

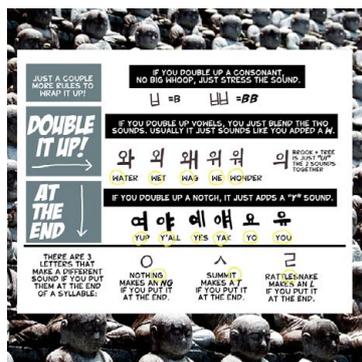
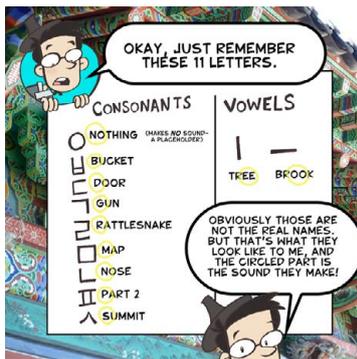
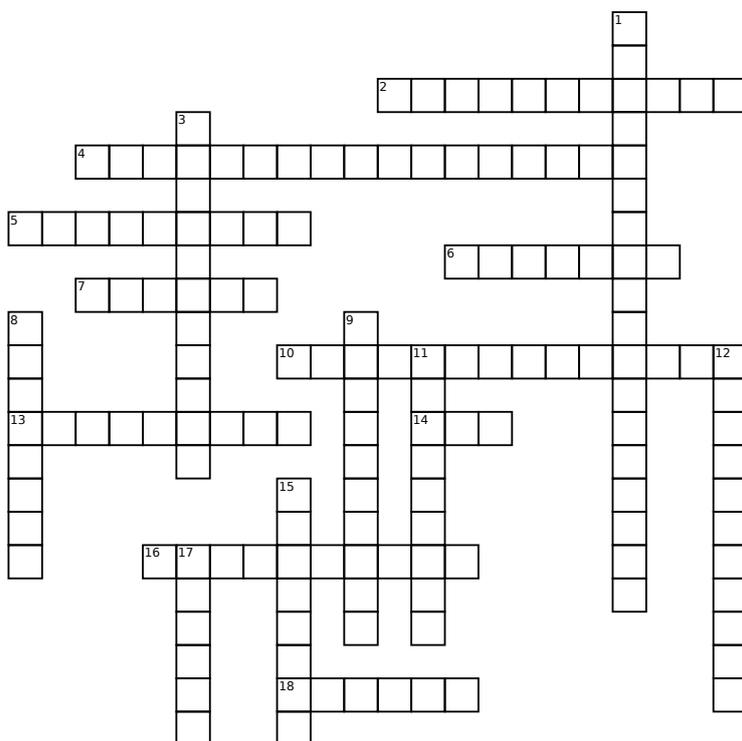


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Words inCognito: cryptic crossword

A cryptic crossword is somewhat like a normal crossword puzzle, except all clues are riddles in themselves. An example of a typical cryptic crossword clue is "Disguised as a newsletter", which would be 'in cognito', the title of this newsletter and a synonym for 'disguised'. Good luck on this MBCS-themed brain teaser!



- Across
- 2 Breakfast for redheads (11)
 - 4 Exploding biscuits at the dinner table (9,8)
 - 5 The fighting starts after Christmas (6,3)
 - 6 An icy person (7)
 - 7 Get rid of your emotions! In just 4 weeks! (6)
 - 10 This holiday has a touch of racism to it (5,9)
 - 13 The whole world turns white (4,5)
 - 14 Just one of santa's little helpers in Dutch? Or another one? (3)
 - 16 Dutch specialty: Sinterklaas' spicy nuts! (10)
 - 18 With the right mind-set God will descend (6)

- Down
- 1 Santa supplies us with socks (9,9)
 - 3 Does Alexander Graham chime? (6,5)
 - 8 Christmas gifts are not of the past (8)
 - 9 You can taste the temperature drop on the back of your tongue (6,4)
 - 11 I will never become experienced with Christmas trees (9)
 - 12 (Not) a quiet evening when you sing this song (6,5)
 - 15 This Dutch piece of Sinterklaas arts & craftwork comes unannounced (8)
 - 17 There potentially is an actual chicken in this cocktail (6)

BIRTHDAYS

- Laura Han**
2 December
- Siméon Lahaije**
3 December
- Alexander Laufer**
14 December
- Claire Owen**
15 December
- Willemijn van Woerkom**
17 December
- Eliska Prochazkova**
20 December
- Luisa Prochazkova**
20 December
- Anna Lien Bouhuis**
21 December
- Rianne van Rooijen**
23 December
- Katharina Wehebrink**
24 December
- Twan Kieboom**
26 December

HOROSCOPE



Capricorn
22 December - 19 January

The Capricorn is pragmatic, industrious, and determined, sometimes to the point of stubbornness. Even though you have been questioned by your family and friends about why you have chosen various goals throughout your life, you will quietly and diligently work towards fulfilling your ambitions. This month, you will be confronted with a series of challenges that test your motivation to fulfill your life's greatest dream. This is a crucial time for you to endure the devastating criticism and the unjust ridicule, and finally prove that you are worthy of fulfilling your ultimate ambition to become the world's greatest cat behaviour consultant. With sober diligence, you will take methodical steps, one after another, to conquer the ignorant doubts of others, and to prove that all the countless nights were worth it, spent with volumes of scholarly works detailing the urination habits of domesticated felines. They said you couldn't do it. But your fate is in your hands alone.

- Lucky shape: donutzoid
- Lucky animal: dancing hamster
- Lucky color: salmon-pink