universität wien
Faculty of Psychology

Master's theses in Health & Environmental Psychology

"Let's go for a walk in the park and talk it through": Can contact with nature help couples during times of stress?

A growing body of research shows that spending time in and around natural settings such as parks, gardens, farms, mountains, rivers, and coasts can benefit mental and physical health, reduce stress, and build psychological resilience, in part because being in nature supports greater mindfulness and creative problem solving. However, nearly all of this work has focused on individual well-being neglecting the fact that one of the biggest predictors of our mental health is our close relationships with romantic partners. Building on two recent theoretical developments, relational restoration theory (RRT) and nature-based biopsychosocial resilience theory (NBRT) we are looking to support MSc students interested in testing whether couples can manage stressful situations better during (or shortly after) contact with nature. If supported this could offer important insights for both everyday relationship maintenance, as well as more formal couples therapies which are currently conducted mostly indoors with all the limitations that presents.

WE OFFER

- Weekly meetings with the main supervisor
- Links to a large EU wide interdisciplinary project looking at nature-based resilience led by the supervisory team
- The opportunity to design your own research ideas on how best to test this question

YOUR SKILLS

- English at C1 or above – the whole consortium works in English
- An interest in interdisciplinary work and perspectives
- Willingness to work as part of a team (as well as deliver a unique thesis)
- Determination to finish the MSc in two semesters (Oct 26- Sept 27)

Please send:

a) a CV

b) Grades to date

c) an Expression of Interest (Max 500 words) to Mat White - mathew.white@univie.ac.at