2018 AP-LS DISSERTATION AWARD WINNERS
(Awarded in 2019)

Lucy Guarnera is the 1st place dissertation award winner. Her dissertation, entitled “When Women Conceive in Rape: A Mixed-Methods Investigation of Legal Obstacles, Public Misperceptions, and Policy Implications,” involved both qualitative interviews with women who conceived as a result of rape, and a quantitative survey of U.S. community members. One reviewer noted “This is one of the best, if not the best, conceptualized and executed mixed-method study I have ever read.” And another reviewer stated, “the project was an ambitious and creative way to shed light on critical questions … the results are immediately useful to a very vulnerable and poorly represented group.” This dissertation was completed under the supervision of Dr. N. Dickon Reppucci at the University of Virginia.

Pia Hollerbach is the 2nd place dissertation award winner. Her dissertation is entitled “Psychopathic Personality Traits: Assessment and Genetic Correlates.” The research addressed genetic correlates of psychopathy with regard to variation in the monoamine oxidase A (MAOA) and serotonin transporter (SLC6A4) genes, and validated the German version of the PCL-R. One reviewer noted, “This study tackled significant questions, posing research questions that would presumably have been acceptable if broken up into 2 or 3 dissertations!” Another reviewer noted that the “studies utilized large scale samples with rich data to answer meaningful questions that extend our knowledge of the genetic correlates of psychopathy and the utility of the German adaptation of the PCL-R.” Reviewers also commented on the clarity of the presentation and how the choice of analysis plan elevated the sophistication of the research. This dissertation was completed at the University of Zurich, and was supervised by Dr. Andreas Mokros.

Rachel Greenspan is the 3rd place dissertation award winner. Her dissertation, entitled “A New Method of Studying Confidence Malleability: Self-Sourced Misinformation as Post-Identification Feedback,” is the first post-identification feedback study that asked participants to report their identification confidence at two time points. As one reviewer noted, this innovation allowed for the consideration of novel research questions. It was also noted that the research was “impressively thorough” and “highlights / confirms an important conclusion for practice… legal practitioners and decision-makers should only rely on witness’ initial confidence statements.” Dr. Greenspan completed her dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Elizabeth Loftus at the University of California, Irvine.