John T. Cacioppo, scientist of loneliness who expanded psychology’s reach, dies at 66

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John T. Cacioppo, whose research into human bonds and connections expanded the horizons of psychology, generating an entirely new discipline — social neuroscience — and key insights into loneliness, died March 5 at his home in Chicago. He was 66.

The cause was not immediately known, said his wife, Stephanie Cacioppo, a fellow University of Chicago scholar with whom he shared an office desk and strikingly divergent research interests. While he studied loneliness, examining its neural, hormonal, cellular and genetic roots, she studied love and its effects on human health.

An unlikely academic who became the first member of his family to graduate from college, Dr. Cacioppo (pronounced cass-ee-OH-POE) was president of a dizzying array of psychological societies, the founder of several research journals and a scholastic pillar of the University of Chicago. In addition to serving as a professor of psychology, he directed the university’s Center for Cognitive & Social Neuroscience, led its social psychology program and was the founding faculty director of Arete, a program that helps Chicago professors find funding for large-scale research projects.