

We've Got Issues

Willamette University Psychology Department Quarterly Newsletter

From the Chair

Greetings ~ It's hard to believe that we're already almost halfway through another academic year!

The Psychology Department is delighted to welcome a new face this year. Amy Ramos, a Cognitive Psychologist, is at Willamette as a Lausanne Post-Doctoral Fellow. Professor Ramos is teaching Cognitive Neuroscience this term. She received her B.A. and M.A. degrees in Psychology from California State University San Marcos and completed her Ph.D. (2006) in Cognitive Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience at Iowa State University. Her teaching interests include Cognitive Neuroscience, Cognitive Processes, Neuropharmacology, Research Methods, and Sensation and Perception. Her research investigates the difference between automatic and attention demanding cognitive processes. Her research is also aimed at understanding the neural mechanisms of selective visual attention in individuals with synesthesia. Please help us make Prof. Ramos feel welcome, and stop by to say hello when you have a moment. Her office is located in Walton 229.

We're happy to report that Staci Simmelink-Johnson has returned for another year as a full-time visiting professor, and this term she is teaching two sections of Introduction to Psychology and a seminar on the Psychology of Human Relations, as well as assisting with the Senior Internship Experience. Her office for the 2006-2007 school year is in Walton 229.

We are sad to report that this will be Professor McBride's last year at Willamette, as he has announced his retirement. Prof. McBride joined the Willamette faculty in 1971, after receiving his B.A. and M.A. degrees in Psychology from the University of Idaho and his Ph.D. in Social Psychology at the University of Missouri in Columbia. He has regularly taught Psychology of Learning, Developmental (child and adolescent) Health and Social Psychology, along with many sections of Introductory Psychology. Prof. McBride has consistently co-chaired the meeting of the Oregon Academy of Sciences, and his enthusiasm for cats, college football (go Vandals!), and the music of Paul Revere and the Raiders are well known. Prof. McBride is

truly an icon and will be greatly missed, but we wish him a happy and relaxing retirement!

Thus, the Department is currently conducting a search for a Developmental Psychologist. The candidates who interview on campus will teach a class and present on their research. Students will be invited to attend these sessions and help us evaluate the search finalists.

Finally, you might have noticed that Professor Friedrich is on a sabbatical leave this term. He will be returning spring term.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns with which I might be able to help. Have a wonderful year!

Sue Koger,
Professor and Chair

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Mark Your Calendar...

October 31st
Happy Halloween!

November 4th and December 2nd
Psychology Subject Exams for Graduate Record Examinations (GREs)

November 20th
CLA Web Registration begins.
November 23rd-24th
Thanksgiving Vacation!



Happy
Halloween!

College Binge Drinking

College officials and psychologists exhibit increasing concern over binge drinking in college settings. Operationally, this is defined as five or more consecutive drinks for males, four or more for females. The Harvard School of Public Health estimates the overall prevalence rate on college campuses at about 45%. Students who are doing this by mid-term of their freshman year are likely to continue for the remainder of their college careers.

Those who work in counseling settings are especially worried. A recent "60 Minutes" report found that college students gave negative attributions as reasons for such behavior ("I know I am not pretty"; "guys like me more when I'm smashed"; "I have a zero personality"; "I'm more popular when I'm drunk"). Counseling staff at the University of Washington created an experimentally controlled "drinking party" and gave students alcohol vs. a placebo. Even those in the placebo condition exhibited both "drunken" behaviors and attributions.

At a more empirical vein, Reifman and Watson developed a trait x situational model. Some students were binge drinkers back in high school; some continued, others quit (the reverse also being true). Women who drank excessively in high school were especially apt to binge in college. Campus atmosphere is also predictive. Contrary to stereotype, Greek organizations do not encourage greater binge drinking; in contrast, some living groups reinforce a "party atmosphere" which encourages bingeing. Some colleges tolerate/encourage this and are probably correctly labeled as "party schools".

Some colleges are trying to discourage these activities. University of Puget Sound places great emphasis on the dangers of binge drinking during freshman orientation and sponsors follow-up sessions throughout the freshman year. Late Night Penn State officials feel that total abstinence is naive. In contrast, they try to sponsor alcohol-free events (films, music, concerts, etc.) as alternatives.

Finally, Nelson, et. al. found that legislation can have an impact. They looked at deterrents for drinking at both state and

community levels as defined by MADD (open container laws, age restrictions, etc.). They found that the most stringent laws predicted the lowest rates of binge drinking on the campus of that state, as well as for matched cohorts who were not attending college. Also, making access to alcohol more "spendy" had similar effects.

Nelson, T.F., et. al., (2005). The state sets the rate. *American Journal of Public Health* 95, 441-446.

Reifman, A. and Watson, W., (2003). Binge drinking during the first semester of college. *Journal of American College Health*, 52, 73-81.



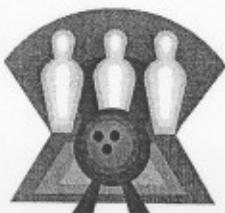
Psychology Club News!

Looking for a fun way to increase your experience level in psychology? Perhaps you just want to meet some people with similar interests to hang out with? Try joining the Psychology Club! Psychology Club is a new, student run club devoted to providing Willamette students with psychological opportunities and experience. Recently, the club selected officers for the semester:

President: Quyen Nguyen
Vice President of Finance: Mary Klann
Vice President of Community Outreach: Joey Elcano
Vice President of Internal Organization: Acacia McGuire
Congrats officers!

In the past, the club has sponsored movie nights and bowling outings. We are currently in the process of planning several other fun events, fundraisers, and community outreach programs for this semester. We are always looking for ideas regarding activities and community service opportunities that the club could take part in, as well as people willing to devote the time necessary to organize these events. Suggestions and volunteers are welcome!

Want to get more informed about psych club? Join the psychology club mail group! Point your internet browser toward this address and click the "join group" button: <https://secure.willamette.edu/services/mailgroups/>



Introducing Professor Amy Ramos...

I was born in Oceanside (San Diego County) California. I loved the San Diego area so much that I decided to stay local for a long time! I started my college career at California State University, San Marcos (located in North County San Diego) where I earned a B.A. degree and decided to stay for the M.A. because it was a great place to study cognitive psychology. I abandoned my San Diego "beach bum/student" life style and headed for graduate school in the Mid-West. I spent three years in the small and lovely town of Ames, Iowa where I completed a PhD in Psychology and Neuroscience.

During my graduate studies, I became extremely interested in synesthesia. Synesthesia is the involuntary physical experience of a cross-modal association. Examples include the ability to hear colors, taste shapes, or experience other equally strange sensory fusions. I'm very thrilled about joining the Willamette Community as a Post-Doctoral Fellow for this academic year. Moreover, I am extremely excited to continue my synesthesia research at Willamette and to have the opportunity to collaborate with students. Currently, two students and I are investigating the role of attention in the synesthetic experience. In addition, I look forward to gaining new teaching experiences and I hope to influence some Willamette students to pursue Cognitive Neuroscience.

Peace,
Amy Ramos

Graduate Record Examinations (GREs)

Prometric Testing Center
1020 Green Acres Rd., Suite 11
Eugene, Oregon 97408
(541)485-4589

University of Oregon
720 East 13th Avenue, Suite 302B
Eugene, Oregon 97403
<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~testing>
(541)346-2772

Prometric Testing Center
14623 McLoughlin Blvd S.E.
Milwaukie, Oregon 97267
(503)659-0486

Prometric Testing Center
1122 NE 122nd Avenue, Suite 106 A
Portland, Oregon 97230
(503)254-4159

Psychology Subject Exams for GREs

Psych Subject Exams for GREs are still pencil-paper tests, offered only three times a year, and will be administered on **November 4** and **December 2, 2006** and **April 14, 2007**. Oregon State University, Portland State University and Linfield are the closest schools for the November test; Willamette is a testing site only for the December exams. For further information, please visit www.gre.com.



Willamette University
Psychology Department
Quarterly Newsletter

Larry McBride, Editor
254 Smullin Hall
503/370.6425

Elizabeth Martineau
Layout & Production
220 Smullin Hall

Please deliver to:



www.willamette.edu/cla/psychology

Psychology Department Faculty—Fall 2006 Courses

Meredy Goldberg Edelson

Professor

253 Smullin Hall, 503/370.6133
medelson@willamette.edu

Psychology of Women & Gender, Child Sexual Abuse, College Colloquium, Senior Year Experience

Jim Friedrich

Professor

259 Smullin Hall, 503/370.6435
jfriedri@willamette.edu

On Sabbatical Fall 2006

Anthony (Tony) Hermann

Assistant Professor

252 Smullin Hall, 503/370.6427
ahermann@willamette.edu

Research Methods & Analysis II, Personality Psychology, Senior Year Experience

Staci Simmelink-Johnson

Visiting Professor

229 Walton Hall, 503/370.6191
ssimmeli@willamette.edu

Introduction to Psychology, Psychology of Human Relations, Senior Year Experience

Sue Koger

Professor and Department Chair

201 Smullin Hall, 503/370.6341
skoger@willamette.edu

Ecological Psychology, College Colloquium

Larry McBride

Associate Professor

254 Smullin Hall, 503/370.6425
(no email address)

Introduction to Psychology, Developmental Psychology: Infant/Childhood, Health Psychology

Jeremy Miller

Assistant Professor

260 Smullin Hall, 503/370.6964
millerj@willamette.edu

Introduction to Psychology, Cognitive Processes

Amy Ramos

Post Doctoral Lausanne Fellow

229 Walton Hall, 503/370.6191
aramos@willamette.edu

Cognitive Neuroscience

Mark Stewart

Associate Professor

208 Smullin Hall, 503/370.6661
mstewart@willamette.edu

Research Methods and Analysis I, Sensation/Perception