



GORDON
COLLEGE

Psychology Department Newsletter

Summer 2012



Robert H. Joss Psychology Observation Lab—Open House with psychology majors, spring 2012

Summer's greetings on behalf of the members of the psychology department! We hope this newsletter finds you doing well. We are sending you an update on each one of us, in hopes that you too will keep in touch. It's been a busy and exciting year for us, and we hope for you as well.

This past fall the administration informed us that the department would be moving to the third floor of the Ken Olsen Science Center, on the site where Wood Hall used to be. In January, big red plastic bins appeared on third floor of Frost and we packed up umpteen years of memories and moved them over to KOSC. When the building is finished, we will have four labs; one has been completed so far. This lab, our "psychology observation" room, contains two mounted digital recorders for conducting interviews, a large flat screen monitor, book shelves for our journals, and a built-in white noise generator to mask conversations. Three more labs will be completed—which will quadruple our overall lab space—once the money has been raised. Besides the extra space, we have been approved to acquire over \$88,000 worth of new laboratory equipment. Does anyone know of a donor out there? (And there's donor information attached to this newsletter. ☺)

For the second straight year, psychology is the largest single major on campus. It's great to have so many students excited about our discipline. To harness some of that enthusiasm we recently revived our psychology club so we could keep in touch. And that means with you too! We're always glad to see you, in person or online. Digitally, join us at the Gordon College Psychology Alumni subgroup (of Gordon College Alumni) of LinkedIn, or the Gordon Psychology Alumni group on Facebook (friend Dr. Cook first and she'll send you an invite).

News Flash:

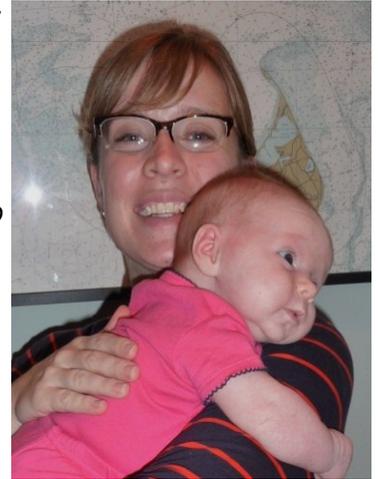
The psychology observation laboratory will be renamed The Robert H. Joss Observation Lab, in honor of, well, guess who. To quote the plaque that will soon be put up: His humor and grace strengthened the psychology department for 38 years!



Alumni Perspectives

Interview with Dr. Christina Riggs-Romaine

Dr. Riggs-Romaine taught a course for us this past spring and will be teaching for us again. In May 2012, she and Dan welcomed Piper Lee into their home and hearts. As you can see, Piper and mom are doing well. Dr. Riggs-Romaine is a Gordon graduate and is currently working at the Salem Juvenile Court. Dr. Bryan Aудay interviewed her during the spring.



After graduating from Gordon in 2002, what factors contributed to your decision to pursue a doctoral degree in clinical psychology?

While I was a student at Gordon, I worked at Anchorage, a group home for adolescent girls in Beverly. As I continued there after graduation, I felt like I needed to know more in order to address the needs of that population. I wanted to use research to see what practices were effective and could lead to meaningful change. After two years as a research coordinator on a large treatment outcome study, I knew I enjoyed clinical research and decided to pursue my Ph.D.

What was the transition like to study psychology at a private secular university?

In some ways, it was a transition. On several occasions, I encountered very explicitly stated anti-Christian views and was initially surprised by the occasional open hostility toward Christianity in general. At a personal level, it was never a problem. Forming collaborative, personal and professional relationships always overcame any negative stereotypes. Generally, my Gordon education and subsequent research experience left me well prepared to engage in academics and research at the graduate level, making it an easy transition.

At what point did you feel drawn to concentrate in the area of forensic psychology?

At Anchorage, while at Gordon, I felt like I found my calling, to work with high-risk, underprivileged adolescents in state systems of care. As I looked at graduate programs, I looked for programs where I could concentrate my research in this area. My advisor was conducting assessment and treatment research with juvenile-justice-involved youth, and I became interested in the juvenile justice system and the ideas of justice as well as treatment for juvenile offenders. In forensic psychology, there are both legal and clinical issues to consider, a balance that is challenging and fascinating to me. The Bible talks frequently about issues of justice for the poor and oppressed and, as a public-sector researcher and practitioner, I feel privileged to work in this area.

What do you enjoy about your current position as a Juvenile Court Clinician?

As a Juvenile Court Clinician, I conduct forensic psychological evaluations of youth who are before the courts on criminal (or delinquent, as we call it in the juvenile system) charges, and in some cases civil matters. I am usually asked to opine on whether a youth is competent to stand trial (that is, able to factually and rationally understand the charges against her and assist her attorney in her own defense) as well as making recommendations regarding the treatment needs of the youth. In this position I get to see a diverse population of youths, all of whom have both significant challenges (including developmental disabilities, mental health problems, trauma, abuse, and neglect) and remarkable strengths and abilities. I enjoy putting the story together for the court, and presenting both the needs and abilities of each individual, to inform the justice system as it determines how to proceed.

Faculty Updates

Interview with Dr. Christina Riggs-Romaine (cont.)

What would you recommend to a Gordon alum who might be contemplating returning to school for a graduate degree in psychology?

The thing I found most helpful was talking to people who had done what I wanted to do (in my case, people who had successfully applied to clinical Ph.D. programs, and later, those working in juvenile forensic settings). This is really helpful to determine what type of graduate degree to pursue. After that it is important to evaluate various programs to find those that will meet your specific training goals. The application process, and even details like the Psychology Subject Test of the GRE, can be tricky to navigate, and someone who has been through it can be very helpful.



Jonathan Gerber, Robert Joss, Bert Hodges, Kaye Cook, Bryan Auday, and Suzanne Phillips—Happy to be in the Ken Olsen Science Center.

Bryan Auday

Even though it seems to me as though I arrived at Gordon for my first “real” job no more than a few years ago, in reality, I just completed my 25th year! In that span, more than 850 psychology majors graduated. I wish I knew what each of you was up to. This past year has been like most of the others, very rewarding. My daughter, Emily, is now 14 years old and has blossomed into a lovely young woman, one who is compassionate, funny, and a precocious writer. My wife, Debbie, continues to work as a 6th grade school teacher and is totally absorbed by a new sport she has picked up, namely, hula-hooping! I continue to foster a passion for neuroscience, having completed my tenth year of directing our neuroscience minor. My current research interests fall into two different areas. The first is a project on the ethical implications of taking cognitive enhancing drugs; I am currently writing a book on this topic that is directed towards an educated general audience. My second interest involves working in the area of neurotheology and looking at biomarkers (essentially EEG brain waves) as a means to assess religious conviction. In terms of fun, I’m an avid sea kayaker. For the past couple of years I have enjoyed teaching kayaking at Gordon.



Faculty Updates

Jonathan Gerber

2011—2012 was another eventful year. We settled into the pace of New England and Gordon, and I continued work on a meta-analysis on social comparison research. This collaboration with Ladd Wheeler (a student of Leon Festinger and Stanley Schachter) is funded by a Faculty Initiative Grant and we have collaborated with a student, Michelle Lee, on parts of it. I have received an honorary appointment at Macquarie University to further facilitate my work on the meta-analysis and we visited Australia this summer to take up this appointment. The visit to Australia was also fortuitous because we welcomed a second child to our family, Ivy, sister to Ralph. Other research continues with students on measuring coolness and interpersonal rejection. This semester's upper-level course on interactive effects in social groups was a great experience, with interesting applications of the scholarly literature on group processes. We talked about the Patriots, why bands are nearly always better than the subsequent solo career, and Scottish country dancing.



Jonathan, Ralph, Alison, Ivy

Bert Hodges

The best thing I get to do every year is learn alongside the wonderful students at Gordon. This past year we had a great time learning together in Cognitive Psychology, Theories in Psychology, and Cross-Cultural Psychology. In Cognitive we explored understanding psychology as a natural science focused on meaning and value. In Theories we focused on thinking, judgment, knowing others, and identity. Cross-cultural is finally getting the respect in psychological circles that it has long deserved, and the students find it absolutely fascinating to read about and discuss. All three courses lead students to wrestle with issues of truth, justice, freedom, and love. Good stuff!



Research and writing this past year have been very productive. Two special issues of journals on which I served as a Guest Editor appeared (see www.groundinglanguage.net/ for more information). Both of these special issues grew out of a conference that I hosted at Gordon in 2009. Articles describing experimental studies on language and color, and on the perception of weight and time also appeared, along with a chapter on language, action, and consciousness in a book edited by a colleague in England. More details about these can be found http://faculty.gordon.edu/ss/py/Bert_Hodges/index.cfm. A group of about eight students worked with me on running studies about what people do when they are asked to speak from ignorance. We found good evidence for a “speaking from ignorance” effect (i.e., disagreeing with the correct answers of others who know more than we do). The studies show that people do this because they are honoring the values of truth, social solidarity, and trust. Other projects include planning a conference, writing a chapter for a handbook, and this fall I give an invited lecture at a conference in Denmark on an ecological, values-realizing approach to thinking. All of these projects are challenging, but it is a great honor to serve one's colleagues in social psychology, language studies, and cognitive science, as well as one's students.

Finally, I'm still coming to grips with the fact that my long time colleague and friend, Bob Joss, will not be gracing our hallways next year. It has been a great honor and pleasure to work alongside him for so many years. And what will we all do for good jokes now?!

Best wishes to all of you. Come see us if you are ever in the Boston area.

Faculty Updates

Suzanne Phillips

I am looking forward to new adventures this upcoming academic year: Dexter has graduated from high school (I can't believe it, either!), so my time is suddenly more flexible. I have scheduled a year-long sabbatical to practice community psychology in Coos County, New Hampshire. I am based at White Mountains Community College (in Berlin), the only higher education institution in the county. My plan is to study factors that influence access to higher education in that particular context. This sabbatical project allows me to bring together my interests in rural populations, post-secondary education, and first-generation college students. It also gives me a chance to answer the question many of you have asked: "What do community psychologists DO (besides teach)?" I plan to return to Gordon in the fall semester of 2013 with an answer. In the next newsletter, I'll let you know how it goes.



Robert Joss

When I started at Gordon in 1974, little did I expect that I would be at Gordon for the long term. In May, I retired after 38 years at Gordon. This has been a decision that I had been contemplating for the last two years.

There have been many highlights in my time at Gordon. Among them, I have enjoyed watching the development of clinical skills in the many students I have had, particularly in the counseling and internship classes. I appreciate the encouraging comments from many of the graduates who have gone on in human services who felt their nascent counseling skills were nurtured in these classes.

My love in psychology has been for exploring the points of contact between law and psychology. Somehow I managed to work that in to most of my courses. I will be continuing in my forensic psychology practice in Salem at least for several more years, Lord willing.

I will certainly miss the wonderful colleagues in the department and the students who I see develop and mature over the years they are at Gordon. However, I won't miss the late nights grading exams.

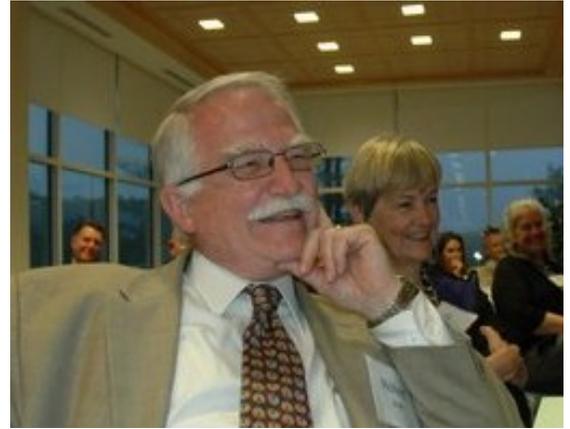
Thank you all for making my time at Gordon such a wonderful experience. See you all at Homecoming!

Kaye Cook

Change happens. My son is an upcoming junior at RPI (Troy, NY). My daughter is in grad school, collecting data for her master's thesis in geology in the Alps this summer (hard life!). My CCCU grant (Christian college alumni) has led to lots of papers, but ended July 1. I have become the new chair of the Psychology Department—and Bob Joss retires. We're still here (most of us anyway); we've added a newbie (as of last year)—Jonathan Gerber; and Suzanne Phillips is on sabbatical and leave for the year. That's probably more change than you think we've gone through, but change we have! And will! We know you've had lots of changes too. Some changes we expect; others we don't. Yet all change can bring about growth. That's Biblical (and Eriksonian). Don't be fooled. Some things stay the same. We're always glad to see you. Come see us, and keep in touch!



Honor Dr. Joss and your favorite Psychology Faculty with a gift to help us keep the department strong!



In the inimitable words of Robert Joss...

Don't let them think Psychology is done by kooks!!! That Psychology isn't a science!!! Outdo those science alumni! The person that gives the most gets either a stuffed mountain lion or black bear (that's called killing two birds (mammals) with one stone!).

And I (Kaye Cook) say: Share a story, tell a joke, challenge Joss's golf game, send a check...send a check? Have a room named in your honor? (the Bill Bugden Animal Behavior Lab? The Barrie Twyon Daignault Counseling Lab?) The possibilities are endless.

Recipe for a Retirement Roast

- 1 part: desire to finish the KOSC psychology lab space
- 2 parts: delight in occupying new offices
- 12 parts: a career well lived
- 27 parts: humor, good will, love

On 20 May 2012, Rob Joss offered himself up to be roasted, as a fundraiser for the Psychology Department Labs. It was great fun but also sad, a bittersweet experience as we all move forward into the next wonderful phases of our lives as a Christian educational community. He will, of course, only be right down the road and (we hope) coming back often.



Email: Development@gordon.edu; kaye.cook@gordon.edu

Snail mail: Development, Gordon College, 255 Grapevine Road, Wenham MA 01984. Please make checks payable to Gordon College and be sure to write "R. H. Joss Observation Lab" on the check.

Donate Online: <https://www.gordon.edu/gordonfundgift>, specify Robert H. Joss Observation Lab in the 'other' field.