



Out of Our Minds...

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Department of Psychology
<http://www.psyc.uvic.ca>



Out of my mind ...

E. Brimacombe, Department Chair

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Psi Chi sponsors a drive to support the UVic Family Centre. Donations of non-perishable food items, toys, and toiletries gratefully accepted. Donation box is in reception area.



Ahhh, the semester ends

I sat down with visions of sharing some words of comfort and joy to cap off the semester with a sense of warmth and positive reflection. After sitting, thinking, thinking, my mind scanning through memories of the term, I recognized that conveying those simple sentiments of comfort and joy is difficult for me. Not because I have any shortage of comfort and joy-soaked memories of the term. The difficulty for me is in extracting the simplicity of those sentiments – comfort and joy- from the complicated life slices that contain them. The comfort and joy are mixed in situations packaged together with regret, sorrow, short-sightedness, happy anticipation turned to thoughtful reflection.

Let me take you to a childhood memory that will I think give you a sense of my tangled mental webs of comfort and joy ... As a kid I loved catching bugs in jars – watching a caterpillar chew paths through leaves was fascinating to me. Once I caught a big buzzy housefly. With great intentions of giving the fly a comfortable habitat, I dropped a caramel in the jar. I thought the fly would be happy, feasting on something sweet. A friend called me away and I – with great concern that my fly be well-cared for - set the jar on the windowsill where the sun was streaming in. I skipped away thinking “bye bye happy fly” thoughts. When I returned the sun had melted the caramel. My “happy fly” was dead, stuck to the brown goop. My mom gave me a hug.

For me, comfort and joy glimmer through most situations I encounter – even sticky, sad situations where my well-intended efforts have flopped. The memory I shared could be viewed as incredibly simple: poor planning, dead fly, no room for comfort and joy. But to me that experience was much more complicated, much richer in emotion than simply sad situation/sad feelings together with it. There are for me pieces of comfort and joy in that reminiscence.

I think it is rare occasions that give us pure hits of joy or sorrow. I think the challenge is to recognize the glimmers of joy in situations that where sorrow feels all-consuming.

As we observe a break from the semester's rhythm, I wish you all a rejuvenating transition to the New Year! See you back in 2007!

PsychOS: The term in review ...

Hi there,

I hope the exam period treated you fairly and your stress ball has not been compressed into a black hole.

This semester has been a busy one for PsychOS, involving a healthy amount of change for all of the salty veterans in the group. If you have not been fortunate enough to make it to one of our events or hear about it during our rounds to all the first and second year Psyc classes, here's a quick recap.

In September we started the ball rolling on a new year full of possibility. There were great many new faces out for PsychOS, which meant many new friendships forming and much excitement in the air. On top of this, we were adjusting to life with a roommate, as we began to share the resource room with our newly minted honours society, Psi Chi. This transition has been made very easy by how clean they are. They are truly a dream roommate. After deciding to fundraise for the Vancouver Island Head Injury Society and a successful club and course union day recruiting session, we started planning our first Club Crawl.

October came along, and with it came the implementation of our weeks of planning for the Club Crawl. It was a huge hit, and I have heard nothing but raving reviews from people about it. Photos from the event were plastered all over Facebook.com (for those of you who are not aware of this social phenomenon, go investigate), but are probably not all appropriate for a university department newsletter. After the club crawl we had little time to recover as our bake sale was coming fast. The money has not been counted yet, but I can say we have a pickle jar full of loonies, quarters and bills for the VIHIS! It was definitely a success. Our first PsychOS dinner was in October as well, which was held at Syn Bar and Grill (great martinis), and was full of good times.

November brought us more planning, as our Winter Social was coming up. After much hard work and planning, we threw our first ever Salsa Dancing Winter Social. Close to 100 people came out to show off their moves, get a couple free dancing lessons, and get away from the torrential rain. This event was another fundraiser for VIHIS, pulling in over \$300!!

Suddenly December was here, and we were all a little surprised at how quickly the time went by this semester. Hopefully it will be just as enjoyable next semester and I'm sure you will see us around, soliciting people to come out to events!

Have a safe and relaxing holiday season,

Tom Johnson

President - UVic Psychology Organization of Students

"This semester has been a busy one for the PsychOS, involving a healthy amount of change for all of the salty veterans in the group"



visit PsychOS
on-line at
<http://web.uvic.ca/~psychos/>

Dr. Steve Lindsay will be honoured at a celebration hosted by the Learning and Teaching Centre in January to acknowledge UVic award winning instructors. Steve recently received the UVic Social Sciences Faculty Award for Teaching Excellence.

Bravo!!



How to win an NSERC Scholarship: A guide for applicants (and their supervisors)

By Ron Skelton, Graduate Advisor

How to win an NSERC Scholarship ...

- If you are applying for a Master's scholarship, have a GPA greater than 8.8.
- If you are applying for a doctoral, have 3 pubs before your second year in the PhD.
- Write a great proposal and get great letters.



Yes, I'm kidding, but only partly. If you meet those criteria, you are almost sure to get a scholarship. If you don't, read on.

I was at the university NSERC-allocation committee recently. At the meeting, there were reps from 16 departments organized into 8 subcommittees picking 49 of 91 applicants to send to the competition in Ottawa. Last year, 75% of UVic's applicants were successful (compared to national average of 65%). Applicants from PSYC were considered alongside applicants from all natural science and engineering departments on campus. The goal of the committee was to send the very best applications to Ottawa, because the greater the success rate, the greater UVic's allocation will be next year.

The process begins with each subcommittee putting their top names up on a whiteboard (top = 40-70%) in rank order within the subcommittee. Subcommittees are then polled about the competitiveness of their lowest ranked applicant(s) and some are dropped. Applicants for Doctoral fellowships without any pubs* rarely make it to the board or get dropped quickly.

Ditto for applicants for Master's scholarships with GPAs less than 8.0.

Then, every name on the board is checked to make sure it belongs there. For doctoral applicants, if the pub count is low (0-1), the quality of the letters and proposal are considered. They need to be outstanding. GPA's don't matter much at this level (as long as they are above 7.5 or so). For Master's applicants, if the GPA is below 8.5, then the quality of the proposal and letters is considered. Poorly written proposals or unenthusiastic letters are kisses of death. Be sure to involve your supervisor in your application process, especially for their advice on your written proposal. For applications for a Master's scholarship, publications aren't expected but are a tremendous asset if present. A pub might even rescue an applicant with a GPA in the 7.5-8.0 range.

Lots of other things can come into play if an application is on the recommend/not borderline, but without any pubs (for Doc's) and 1st class GPA's (for MSc's) they can only help a little. Be sure to look around for other advice (can you say "Google"?) and don't be put off by how high the bar appears to be. If you get into a lab, enjoy the work and make a real contribution, there will be a future for you in science.

* Papers accepted or published in referred journals

The 2007 meeting of the Canadian Society for Brain, Behaviour, and Cognitive Science comes to UVic June 15 – 17th 2007!

The Canadian Society for Brain, Behaviour, and Cognitive Science (CSBBCS) is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancement of Canadian research in experimental psychology and behavioral neuroscience. The 2007 meeting in Victoria will unite faculty members and students of the UVic Psychology Department with scientists from across the North America. The conference will feature symposia, posters, and a distinguished lecture.

Dr. Michael Masson serves as organizer/host for this event.

Learn more about CSBBCS: <http://psych.mcmaster.ca/bbcs/>

Introducing Dr. Jason Cressey *By Janet Stepaniuk*

Dr. Jason Cressey did both undergraduate and postgraduate work at Oxford University with Michael Argyle, the late great social psychologist in Britain. Post Secondary education is quite different in the UK (Cressey's place of birth) and he felt particularly fortunate to have enjoyed an entirely tutorial-based schooling (himself, sometimes one other student, and a professor) without the high cost of today's present tuition.

Always particularly interested in interpersonal communication, it was a dream come true to be mentored by one of the world's leading authorities in the field. "Michael Argyle was a kind and gracious man who allowed me great freedom to research where, when and with whom I wished, and I shall always be grateful for this," said Cressey. "The system in the UK is somewhat different for graduate students, as there are no research projects to which one must 'fit in'...doing a PhD is truly a liberating experience in that a student can pick anything they wish and, if it's deemed of academic interest, chances are you'll be able to independently research it. In my case, I was interested in friendship and social skill development from a cross-cultural perspective, and so worked with children in the UK, western Canada and what is now Nunavut, up in the high Arctic. The Inuit were particularly interesting, and exhibited a 'delayed childhood' compared to the other two groups. There's something to be said for living in such isolation - and what beautiful physical isolation it is! For two Summers I never saw the sun set."

Although Dr. Cressey does not do formal research he maintains that his eyes are always open. He spent most of the time since finishing his PhD researching the role of dolphins and whales in world mythology, folklore and traditional (often sacred) rituals. He strongly believes that myths are rich in 'truths' which we would benefit from remembering - something Jung suggested, of course. This was borne out of his life-long love affair with dolphins and whales, and finds himself anecdotally researching people's responses to encountering cetacea in the wild in the trips that he leads each year for people to go to far flung places and have that magical wild encounter. "It's an immense joy and privilege to see that old connection humans have shared with cetacea re-ignited the moment a Toronto-based lawyer, for example, jumps in the water and is overwhelmed with the sight of a baby humpback whale just meters in front of her. It's a life-changing kind of experience," says Cressey.

In addition to the dolphin trips he runs, he also runs seminars and does a fair amount of corporate training - applying the many insightful principals of interpersonal communication and social psychology to professional settings and scenarios. Sharing ideas such as non-verbal communication techniques or how the fundamental attribution error might influence people's perceptions of their co-workers is immensely rewarding to see those years of academic study actually being put to practical use that benefits many people.

Future plans include research into the world of dolphins and whales and their relationship with humans over millennia will soon culminate in the publication of his first book 'Once Upon A Tide: Dolphins and Whales in Mythology, Folklore and Sacred Rituals'

In addition to all of this is his love of teaching, and being a sessional at UVic. He finds this very enjoyable and rewarding. "I find the students to be bright, alert and enthusiastic compared to other places I've taught, and I hope that my passion for the subject is infectious. I see myself teaching here for some time to come, and also developing the courses I have now started teaching through UVic's Continuing Studies department, which are also proving popular."

Having moved to Salt Spring a year ago, it's a joy to be discovering hiking and biking in a way that was never so easy in downtown Vancouver, which was home for more than 12 years. He also loves cooking - as a lifelong vegetarian with a spouse that doesn't eat wheat he finds himself carving out a niche in culinary repertoire.

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Asked for a thought to leave us with Dr. Cressey stated, “to be present, at all times - for the present is all we ever have! Nothing ever happened in the past, it happened in the NOW. Nothing will ever happen in the future, it will happen in the NOW. When I came to finally realize this very simple but powerful truth, my over-active mind got rightly relegated to a place where it functions as a useful tool alongside my heart and soul! *“Now, they never taught me that at Oxford!”*”



Jason Cressey was recently featured in the Times Colonist and Ottawa Citizen. Click here to read the article

<http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/story.html?id=1de18960-bc32-4f89-b311-58e6abaa5027>

Jason Cressey's website @ www.people-oceans-dolphins.com



You could be here!



The Brain and Cognition Seminar meets Friday afternoons, 3 – 4:30 pm in the Reading Room.

The schedule of speakers is available at <http://web.uvic.ca/psyc/cognitive/seminar.html>

Everyone Welcome!

And more opportunity to enjoy the Department's research buzz ...

The Social Psychology Seminar meets every 2 weeks, Tuesday afternoons, 3:30– 4:30 pm, Cornett A228 or 229.

Check the schedule at <http://web.uvic.ca/psyc/social-seminars.html>

What are your plans for the holidays?



Leora Dahl

Graduate Student

"I'll be here in Victoria enjoying time with my family and my dissertation."

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Janet Stepaniuk

Research Assistant

"All I want for Christmas is SPSS (15)"



Paul Taylor

Secretary, Psychology Office

"I plan to not stuff myself. And then I'll stuff myself."

Psi Chi News

As the year draws to a close, we look back at the excellent semester for Psi Chi, and then turn our attention forward to the year to come. This October, we held an induction ceremony, welcoming our 28 new members over refreshments and a word from Dr. Marty Wall. Our new executive board was elected soon thereafter. We would like to welcome Lara Pierce as the new Web Manager as Kyoko Urano has completed her degree and will be moving on.

Thanks for the great work Kyoko! Check out the site at <http://web.uvic.ca/~psichi/>. Since this time, Psi Chi has been involved in a food drive for the UVic Family Center. We would like to thank everyone for their donations that will help student families in need over the holidays and beyond.

We also recently held our General Meeting, working to plan an exciting upcoming semester for Psi Chi. Like a fireworks show after the midnight countdown, we intend to start the New Year with a bang. Members of Psi Chi and the Honors class are going to be speaking to the PSYC 100 classes about future study in the Department, and the excitement of doing personal research. We then will be visiting many second and third year classes in order to drive for new membership. A second induction ceremony will follow soon after.

In addition to raising awareness for psychology and Psi Chi within the department, we will soon be traveling to local high schools to raise awareness for possible future study in Psychology. Also this semester, both Graduate school, Honors study, and Psychology careers info sessions will assist our students in the often overwhelming task of anticipating and preparing for the final years of their degree, and the path they follow subsequently. Finally, our honors class and other student research will be featured in the new Psychology Students Of Vancouver Island Poster Session (PSOVIPS) on April 5th.

With so much in store, we can be sure that the New Year will be a great one for Psi Chi. As our members work diligently to finish the final years of their degree, Psi Chi will work to provide support and resources to make the struggle easier. Our resource room at A175 is open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Friday mornings, where our members are ready to provide advice and answer any questions. Happy Holidays to the entire department. Have a relaxing and well needed break so as to be prepared for the explosion of color and sound that will undoubtedly follow in the New Year.

Sincerely,

Kyle Mathewson, psichi@uvic.ca

Visit Psi Chi Online: <http://web.uvic.ca/~psichi/>



Leek and asparagus tart

-from the recipe files of Cathrine Jansen



Prep Time: 10 mins

Cook Time: 45 mins

Makes: 4 servings

1	deep dish 9-inch (23 cm) frozen unbaked pie shell	1
1/2 lb	fresh asparagus, cut into 2-inch (5 cm) pieces	250 g
1	leek (white part only), sliced	1
1 tbsp	vegetable oil	15 mL
1 cup	shredded Swiss cheese	250 mL
2	eggs	2
1/2 cup	Hellmann's Real or Light Mayonnaise	125 mL
2 tsp	Dijon mustard	10 mL
1/4 tsp	each salt and pepper	1 mL
1/2 cup	milk	125 mL



Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Partially thaw pie shell (about 10 minutes). Pierce pastry bottom with fork and bake 10 minutes.

In skillet, cook asparagus and leek in oil over medium heat until tender, about 5 minutes. Place on bottom of baked pie shell. Top evenly with cheese.

In small bowl, whisk together eggs, mayonnaise, mustard and seasonings. Gradually whisk in milk until smooth. Pour over cheese in pie shell and bake 35 minutes, on lower rack, or until set and lightly browned.

Winter Solstice

The year gathers
 laden,
 into stillness:
 A heartbeat in the warmth
 of eternal dark.
 A long, ardent embrace,
 A calming inhalation
 And the year steps out on the crisp
 glints of dawn.
 exhaling a bright spring song.