

Notre Dame Institute *for*
ADVANCED STUDY



The Impact of Laughter and Humor in History and Today's Digitized World

This Templeton Colloquium at the NDIAS
is offered due to the generosity of
the John Templeton Foundation
and through a grant to the
Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study.

Cover Image: *Blessed is the Gift of Laughter*
Artist: Hazel Bowman

Program

for

The Impact of Laughter and Humor in History and Today's Digitized World

A Templeton Colloquium
led by

Otto Santa Ana

Templeton Fellow at the NDIAS

April 7-8, 2016

Notre Dame Conference Center
200 McKenna Hall

In this two-day Templeton Colloquium, Professor Otto Santa Ana will explore several key topics, including the evolution and biology of laughter and humor; the social, developmental and philosophical implications of humor as an expression of human creativity; and the increasingly powerful impact of political humor in our digitized world.

This colloquium, made possible through the generosity of the John Templeton Foundation and a grant to the Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study (NDIAS), brings together scholars from various disciplines and fields, including anthropology, biology, philosophy, political science, psychology, and sociology to examine fundamental questions and pressing social issues about laughter and humor.

Thursday, April 7, 2016

- 8:00 a.m. Continental breakfast available
East Lounge, McKenna Hall
- 9:00 a.m. The Anthropological Evolution of Laughter and Humor
Presenter:
Susan D. Blum, *University of Notre Dame*
Agustin Fuentes, *University of Notre Dame*
Moderator:
Ilana Gershon, *Indiana University*
- 10:30 a.m. Break
East Lounge, McKenna Hall
- 11:00 a.m. The Evolution and Development of Humor
Panelists:
Greg Bryant,
University of California, Los Angeles
Darcia Narvaez, *University of Notre Dame*
Moderator:
Donald L. Stelluto, *University of Notre Dame*
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch
Lower Level, McKenna Hall
- 2:30 p.m. The Biology and Neurology of Laughter and Humor
Panelists:
Matthew M. Gervais, *Rutgers University*
Joseph O. Polimeni, *University of Manitoba*
Sophie Scott, *University College London*

Moderator:
Lee Gettler, *University of Notre Dame*

5:45 p.m. Dinner
Lower Level, McKenna Hall

Friday, April 8, 2016

8:00 a.m. Continental breakfast available
East Lounge, McKenna Hall

9:00 a.m. Creativity, Humor, and Play

Panelists:
D. Fox Harrell,
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
John Morreall, *College of William and Mary*

Moderator:
David Bentley Hart,
Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study

10:30 a.m. Break
East Lounge, McKenna Hall

11:00 a.m. Politics and Intersectionality in Laughter and Humor

Panelists:
Jody C. Baumgartner, *East Carolina University*
Raúl Pérez, *University of Denver*
Simon Weaver, *Brunel University London*

Moderator:
Donald L. Stelluto, *University of Notre Dame*

12:45 p.m. Lunch
Salon C Dining Room, Morris Inn

2:30 p.m. Conclusions and Discussion of Closing
Thoughts and Comments

Presenter:
Otto Santa Ana,
University of California, Los Angeles

Moderator:
Brad S. Gregory, *University of Notre Dame*

5:45 p.m. Closing Dinner
Lower Level, McKenna Hall

Notes

Colloquium Presenters and Moderators

Jody C. Baumgartner is Professor of Political Science at East Carolina University. His research is focused on the office of the U.S. Vice-President, political humor and the media, political elections, humor and popular culture, and presidential politics. He is the author of *The American Vice Presidency Reconsidered* (2006) and *The Vice Presidency: From the Shadow to the Spotlight* (2015), co-author of *Conventional Wisdom and American Elections: Exploding Myths, Exploring Misconceptions* (with Peter L. Francia, 2010), *Politics Is a Joke!: How TV Comedians Are Remaking Political Life* (with S. Robert Lichter and Jonathan Morris, 2014), and co-editor of *Laughing Matters: Humor and American Politics in the Media Age* (with Jonathan S. Morris, 2007). His current research focuses on presidential elections and includes a forthcoming article "Does the 'Road to the White House Run Through' Letterman? Chris Christie, Letterman, and Attack v. Self-Deprecating Humor."

Susan D. Blum is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Notre Dame. She is also a Fellow of the Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies, the Kellogg Institute for International Studies, and the Institute for Educational Initiatives. Professor Blum focuses on questions about the nature of the self and its relation to language, meaning, and society. Her areas of specialty are cultural, linguistic, and psychological anthropology; childhood and higher education; applied morality; deception and truth; multilingualism; person and self; ethnicity, nationalism and identity; food; anthropological theory; China and the United States; and cross-cultural comparison. She is the author of monographs focused on the context of ethnic and national identity in China (*Portraits of "Primitives": Ordering Human Kinds in the Chinese Nation* (2001) and *China Off-Center: Mapping the Margins of the Middle Kingdom* (2002, co-edited with Lionel M. Jensen)), deception and truth in China and across cultures (*Lies that Bind: Chinese Truth, Other Truths* (2007)), and plagiarism among U.S. college students (*My Word! Plagiarism and College Culture* (2009)). Her most recent works are *"I Love Learning; I Hate School": An Anthropology of College* (2016), and *Making Sense of Language: Readings in Culture and Communication* (3rd ed., 2016).

Greg Bryant is a cognitive psychologist and an associate professor in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. His research is interdisciplinary and focused on the evolution of communication and social behavior, especially ways that acoustic structure in vocalizations is shaped by communicative goals.

In his work, he examines a variety of vocal phenomena across diverse cultures including infant-directed speech, vocal emotion, laughter, and perceptions of physical strength. He is the author of more than 35 journal articles, book chapters, and other scholarly writings. He was awarded a Paul S. Veneklasen Research Foundation grant (2012) and currently serves on the editorial boards of *Frontiers in Evolutionary Psychology* and *Neuroscience and Metaphor and Symbol*.

Agustín Fuentes is Professor and Chairperson of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Notre Dame. His current research foci include cooperation and bonding in human evolution, ethnoprimateology and multispecies anthropology, evolutionary theory, and public perceptions of, and interdisciplinary approaches to, human nature(s). He is the author of *Core Concepts in Biological Anthropology* (2006); *Evolution of Human Behavior* (2009); *Biological Anthropology: Concepts and Connections*, 2nd ed. (2011); and *Race, Monogamy and Other Lies They Told You: Busting Myths About Human Nature* (2012). He is also editor or co-editor of nine works including *Primates in Perspective*, 2nd ed. (with C. Campbell, K.C. MacKinnon, S. Bearder, and R. Stumpf, 2011), *Monkeys on the Edge: Ecology and Management of Long-Tailed Macaques and their Interface with Humans* (with M.D. Gumert and L. Jones-Engel, 2011), and *Ancestral Landscapes in Human Evolution Culture, Childrearing and Social Wellbeing* (with D. Narvaez, K. Valentino, J.J. McKenna, and P. Gray, 2014). His work has been supported by grants from the John Templeton Foundation, the National Geographic Society, the Andrew Mellon Foundation, the Society for Research in Child Development, and the National Science Foundation. In 2012-2013, Professor Fuentes was awarded a fellowship at the Center for Theological Inquiry, Princeton, New Jersey, for its 2012-2013 "Inquiry on Evolution and Human Nature."

Ilana Gershon is Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Indiana University; she is also currently a fellow at Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study. Her intellectual interests include linguistic anthropology, science studies, media studies, legal anthropology, anthropology of democracy, and anthropology of work. She is interested in how new media affects highly charged social tasks, such as breaking up or hiring in the United States. Her current research addresses how new media affects hiring in the contemporary U.S. workplace. She is the author of *The Breakup 2.0: Disconnecting over New Media* (2010), *No Family Is an Island: Cultural Expertise among Samoans in Diaspora* (2012), and *A World of Work: Imagined Manuals for Real Jobs* (forthcoming). She has also published, and edited special issues on topics ranging from ignorance, reflexivity, media ideologies, to the "newness" of new media.

Professor Gershon received a fellowship at Stanford University's Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences and a New Zealand Society fellowship at Birkbeck College's Center for New Zealand Studies. She has also been awarded grants from the National Science Foundation, the Social Science Research Council and the Wenner-Gren Foundation.

Matthew M. Gervais is a biological anthropologist and Post-Doctoral Associate in the Department of Anthropology at Rutgers University. He also serves as Assistant Director of The Human Generosity Project. His work focuses on psychological systems supporting derived forms of human sociality, their evolutionary origins, and their variation across individuals and populations. He has a regional focus in the Pacific, particularly Yasawa, Fiji. He is the co-author (with D. S. Wilson) of "The Evolution and Functions of Laughter and Humor: A Synthetic Approach" (2005) and more than 10 additional articles and book chapters.

Lee Gettler is Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Hormones, Health, and Human Behavior Laboratory at the University of Notre Dame. His research is focused on how men's hormonal physiology responds to major life transitions, such as marriage and fatherhood, especially how human neuroendocrine system accommodates the demands of new parenthood, such as childcare, sleep dynamics, and psychosocial stress. Through interdisciplinary and global collaborations, he has expanded his focus to apply this perspective to family systems, including the psychobiology of motherhood and fatherhood, parents' physical and mental health, and child growth and development. The global reach of his fieldwork includes the United States, the Philippines, and the Republic of Congo. He is the author of more than 30 scholarly publications in journals such as *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *Hormones and Behavior*, *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, *American Journal of Human Biology*, *American Anthropologist*, *Current Anthropology*, *Acta Paediatrica*, and *Current Pediatric Reviews*. His research has been supported by the Jacobs Foundation, the Rukavina Family Foundation, the Wenner Gren Foundation, and the National Science Foundation.

Brad S. Gregory is Professor of History and Dorothy G. Griffin Collegiate Chair at the University of Notre Dame, and he serves as Director of the Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study. He specializes in the history of Christianity in Europe during the Reformation era and on the long-term influence of the Reformation era on the modern world. His principal research interests center on Christianity in the Reformation era (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), including magisterial Protestantism, radical

Protestantism, and Roman Catholicism approached comparatively and cross-confessionally, the long-term ideological influences and institutional consequences of the Reformation era on the making of the modern Western world, and methodology and theory in the understanding of religion and history. His first book, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (1999) received six book awards. His most recent book is a wide-ranging reinterpretation of the making of the modern Western world entitled *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (2012).

D. Fox Harrell is Associate Professor of Digital Media in the Comparative Media Studies Program and in the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). His research focuses on the relationship between imaginative cognition and computation. He founded and directs the MIT Imagination, Computation, and Expression Laboratory (ICE Lab) to develop new forms of computational narrative, gaming, social media, and related digital media based in computer science, cognitive science, and digital media arts. Professor Harrell has worked as an interactive television producer and as a game designer. He is the author of *Phantasmal Media: An Approach to Imagination, Computation, and Expression* (2013) and more than 70 articles and book chapters. Professor Harrell's research has been supported by grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Endowment for the Humanities, and collaboration with the Qatar Computing Research Institute. Professor Harrell has received a number of prestigious awards, including an NSF CAREER Award (2010), a Fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (CASBS) at Stanford University (2014-2015), and a Lenore Annenberg and Wallis Annenberg Fellowship in Communication (2014-2015).

David Bentley Hart is a Templeton Fellow in residence at the NDIAS for the 2015-2016 academic year. His most recent appointment is as the visiting Danforth chair of St. Louis University; he has also held positions at The University of Virginia, Duke University, and Providence College. His specialties are philosophical theology, systematics, patristics, classical and continental philosophy, and Asian religion. His most recent work has concerned the genealogy of classical and Christian metaphysics, ontology, the metaphysics of the soul, and the philosophy of mind. Hart's principal scholarly books are *The Beauty of the Infinite* (2003); *The Doors of the Sea* (2005); *In the Aftermath* (2007); *Atheist Delusions* (2009); and *The Experience of God* (2013). He has also published a popular history of Christianity (2007), a volume of short stories, and over 150 articles in such scholarly journals as *Modern Theology*, *The Scottish Journal of*

Theology, and *Pro Ecclesia*, as well as in such trade publications as *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *First Things*, and *Commonweal*. He has served as an endowed fellow of the Center for Theological Inquiry in Princeton. In 2011, he was awarded the Michael Ramsey Prize of the Church of England.

John Morreall is Emeritus Professor of Religious Studies at the College of William and Mary. An internationally recognized expert on the philosophy of humor and on its benefits, Professor Morreall is the author of *Taking Laughter Seriously* (1983), *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor* (1987), *Humor Works* (1997), *Comedy, Tragedy, and Religion* (1999), *Comic Relief: A Comprehensive Philosophy of Humor* (2009), *Laughing All the Way* (2016), and more than 70 articles and book chapters on humor. His work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Asahi Shimbun*, *The Manchester Guardian*, *Forbes*, and *The Economist*. He has taught courses on humor since 1983 and, in 2000, an international conference was held in Amsterdam based on his book *Humor Works*. Since 1988 he has served on the editorial board of *Humor: The International Journal of Humor Research* and he currently serves as Honorary President of the International Association for the Philosophy of Humor. In 2004 and 2005 he was elected President of the International Society for Humor Studies.

Darcia Narvaez is Professor of Psychology at the University of Notre Dame. Her research explores questions of moral cognition and moral development over the lifespan in multiple contexts (e.g., family, school). She examines how early life experience influences moral functioning and moral character in children and adults. She integrates neurobiological, clinical, developmental and education sciences in her theories and research about moral development. She is the author of *Neurobiology and the Development of Human Morality: Evolution, Culture and Wisdom* (2014), for which she won the 2015 William James Book Award from the American Psychological Association, and co-editor of *Evolution, Early Experience and Human Development: From Research to Practice and Policy* (with J. Panksepp, A. Schore, and T. Gleason, eds., 2013); *Ancestral Landscapes in Human Evolution: Culture, Childrearing and Social Wellbeing* (with K. Valentino, A. Fuentes, J. McKenna, and P. Gray, 2014); and *Handbook of Moral and Character Education* (2nd ed., with L. Nucci, and T. Krettenauer, 2014). She is executive editor of the *Journal of Moral Education* and also writes a popular blog for *Psychology Today* titled "Moral Landscapes."

Raúl Pérez is an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology and Criminology at the University of Denver. His research and teaching interests span several areas, including race, ethnicity and racism, social inequality, law and society, culture, theory, and humor and comedy studies. His research examines how racial discourse shifted in the U.S. from the pre-civil rights era to the present, with an eye on how racist humor evolved in the world of comedy as a result of the civil rights movement. His current work focuses on the circulation of racist humor across social and institutional contexts in the “color-blind” era, including online environments, the criminal justice system, politics, and higher education. His work has appeared in various academic journals including *Discourse & Society*, *Ethnicities*, and *Social Semiotics*, as well as *Time* magazine, *The Grio*, *Latino Rebels* and *Racism Review*. In 2015 he received the Oliver C. Cox Article Award from the American Sociological Association.

Joseph O. Polimeni is Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Manitoba. An evolutionary psychiatrist with more than 20 years practicing general psychiatry, Professor Polimeni’s work has focused on the evolutionary origins of schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and humor. He is the author of *Shamans Among Us: Schizophrenia, Shamanism and the Evolutionary Origins of Religion* (2012) and co-author (with J.P. Reiss) of “The First Joke: Exploring the Evolutionary Origins of Humor” (2006).

Sophie Scott is Deputy Director of the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience at University College London, and an occasional stand-up comedian at University College’s Bright Club. She focuses on the neurobiology of speech perception, including the functional sub systems in human auditory cortex, the evolution of speech, the difference between intelligibility and comprehension, and profiles of recovery in aphasia. Her current research also includes a project examining reading and rehabilitation in hemianopic alexia. She is the author or co-author of more than 130 publications including “Laughter – the Ordinary and the Extraordinary” (2013), “The Social Life of Laughter” (2014), and “Individual Differences in Laughter Perception Reveal Roles for Mentalizing and Sensorimotor Systems in the Evaluation of Emotional Authenticity” (2015). Her work has appeared in scholarly journals such as *Psychological Science*, *Cerebral Cortex*, *Language Cognition and Neuroscience*, the *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, and *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*.

Donald L. Stelluto is Associate Director of the Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study. He received his Ph.D. in U.S. constitutional history

from the University of Maryland, College Park and he specializes in U.S. constitutional history and the nineteenth century, with a focus on the American Civil War era. Dr. Stelluto is the author of several articles on western legal history, the American South, and the Civil War era, and co-editor, with Vittorio Hösle, of *The Idea of a Catholic Institute for Advanced Study*. His current project, "A light that reveals its true meaning," is a book-length examination of legal and constitutional developments in the mid-19th century South. He is the project leader and a member of a team awarded a \$1.58 million research award in 2012 from the John Templeton Foundation.

Simon Weaver is Lecturer in Media and Communications and a member of the Centre for Comedy Studies Research at Brunel University London. His research focuses on overlapping areas in sociology, communications and media studies and includes social and cultural theory, the work of Zygmunt Bauman, semiotics, representations of disability and 'deformity' in media, rhetoric in discourses of health, racist and offensive humor, humor and rhetoric, and the sociology of race, ethnicity, and racism. He is the author of *The Rhetoric of Racist Humour: US, UK and Global Race Joking* (2011) and more than 30 book chapters and articles in journals that include *Current Sociology*, *Sociology*, *Social Semiotics*, *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, and *Ethnic and Racial Studies*.

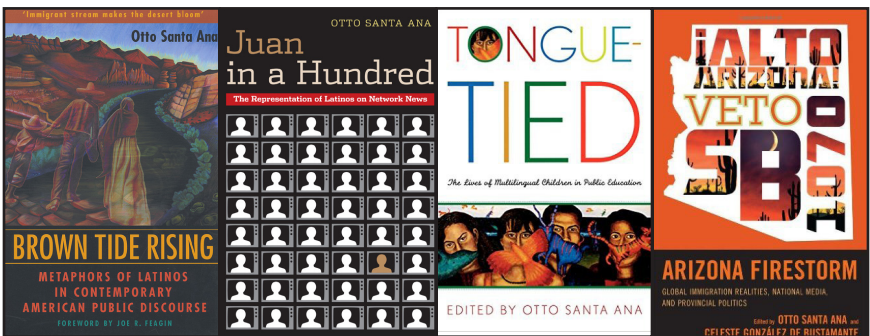


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Otto Santa Ana is Professor in the César Chávez Department of Chicana/o Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles; he is also a Templeton Fellow in residence at the NDIAS for the 2015-2016 academic year. His research focuses on ways that mass media reinforces unjust social relations, from newspapers to television news to mass media humor. He is the author of *Brown Tide*



Rising: Metaphoric Representations of Latinos in Contemporary Public Discourse (2002), which was awarded the American Political Science Association Best Book on Ethnic and Racial Political Ideology in 2002, *Juan in a Hundred: Representation of Latinos on Network News* (2013), for which he received the 2013 Ralph J. Bunche Award of the American Political Science Association for the best scholarly work in political science on ethnic and cultural pluralism, editor of *Tongue-Tied: The Lives of Multilingual Children in U.S. Public Education* (2004), and co-editor of *Arizona Firestorm: Global Immigration Realities, National Media and Provincial Politics* (2012). He has received fellowships from the John D. Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation, as well as the National Endowment for Humanities Enduring Questions Award for teaching on a fundamental concern of human life.



In Grateful Appreciation

The Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study is grateful to the following campus units and individuals for the generosity of their creativity, expertise, unique talents, and time.

Anthony Travel	David B. Hart, Moderator
Robert J. Bernhard	Kaneb Center for Teaching & Learning
Janice Camparone	Mail Distribution Center
Conference Center Staff	Thelma Meléndez de Santa Ana
Melanie DeFord	The Morris Inn
Claude Devaney	Eric Nisly
Traig Foltz	OIT Multimedia
Kristina Furse Davis	Lauri Roberts
Ilana Gershon, Moderator	
Lee Gettler, Moderator	

Thank you to the artist

Hazel Bowman

for granting us permission to use her image,
Blessed is the Gift of Laughter.

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We extend a special thank you to

Otto Santa Ana

who envisioned this colloquium, articulated its chief ideas, and drew together a superb team of presenters, moderators, and discussants.

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We extend a special thank you to

The John Templeton Foundation

for their generosity and support of this event and the Institute's grant "Pursuing the Unity of Knowledge: Integrating Religion, Science, and the Academic Disciplines."

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